



Collard Green & Peanut Pesto

Ingredients

1 head garlic
10 pieces smoked bacon (julienned)
1 lb. collard greens (stems and ribs removed, roughly chopped)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup toasted peanuts
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Parmesan cheese
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
Juice of 2 lemons
 $\frac{1}{2}$ TBS fish sauce
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cider vinegar
1 tsp salt
1 tsp black pepper
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp red pepper flake

Preparation

1. Place the head of garlic in a piece of aluminum foil and drizzle with olive oil. Add a pinch of salt and pepper. Wrap the garlic head tightly in the foil, place it on a baking sheet and roast at 400F for about an hour, until the entire head is soft throughout. Once the garlic is removed from the oven unwrap it and allow it to cool for ten minutes. Remove the cloves from the husk, and set the soft roasted cloves to the side.

2. Slowly cook the julienned bacon in a sauté pan over low heat so that the fat is slowly rendered and the bacon gets brown and crispy, around 10-15 minutes. Remove the crispy bacon from the pan with a slotted spoon or a strainer and place it on a dry paper towel to soak up the excess grease. Strain and reserve the rendered bacon grease from the pan.
3. Bring 2 gallons of water and 1 cup of salt to a rapid boil. Prepare an ice water bath off to the side. Blanch the collard greens for one minute in the boiling water. Remove them from the blanching pot and immediately shock them in the ice water bath. Once they are cold, remove them from the water bath, squeeze out any excess water, and set them aside.
4. Place your toasted peanuts into your food processor. Pulse twelve times for one second intervals. Add the parmesan and roasted garlic to the food processor bowl and pulse another 12 times for a second at a time.
5. Add the collards, olive oil, lemon juice, fish sauce, bacon grease, vinegar, salt, black pepper, and red pepper flake to the food processing bowl. Process for a minute or until the pesto comes together to the desired consistency. Scrape down the sides of the bowl halfway through, if necessary. Fold the bacon into the pesto or reserve it, to use it as a garnish later.
6. Cover your pesto and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Serving Suggestions

- Fold some of your pesto into cooked fettuccine, serve over grilled asparagus, and garnish with the bacon bits and a poached egg.
- Serve over grilled cobia or swordfish.
- Serve, as a canapé, on crostini or crackers with chèvre.

Courtesy of Sean Fowler, Mandolin Restaurant