



Jill Nussinow, MS, RDN The Veggie Queen™ <https://www.theveggiequeen.com>

Creamy Beany Pesto

I have made pesto many times and often I don't use beans but I had some "leftover" white beans that needed to get used. I combined the beans with basil, garlic, nutritional yeast and a bit of plant milk and it was creamy and tasty. You can use any canned white beans for this if you don't have any cooked beans around. Or you can use silken tofu instead.

Often, I add miso to my pesto but I didn't this time.

serve this with your favorite pasta (mine is yellow lentil spaghetti) or over vegetables or whole grains such as quinoa or millet. Today it will be polenta and zoodles (zucchini noodles).

2 to 3 cloves garlic

½ cup or more packed fresh basil, stems removed

2 tablespoons or more parsley, if available

1 cup well cooked or canned white beans, drained if canned

2 tablespoons pumpkin or sunflower seeds, or your favorite nut (optional)

2 to 3 tablespoons unsweetened plant milk to get to desired consistency

2 tablespoons nutritional yeast

½ teaspoon cured sumac (optional) or 1 to 2 teaspoons lemon juice

Add the garlic and basil to a blender or food processor and process for about 1 minute. Add the parsley and beans and process again. Add the plant milk and nutritional yeast. Process until smooth and creamy. Add the sumac or lemon juice, if using.



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Herbed Polenta

Polenta has gone upscale, but it's easy to make at home for pennies. Another bonus: Pressure-cooked polenta doesn't need stirring. You might end up with a lump or two (see Note), but cooking this way saves a lot of time. Adding dried mushrooms or sun-dried tomatoes (see variations below) when cooking polenta adds big flavor. Be sure to use coarse polenta (sometimes called coarse corn grits), rather than cornmeal or corn flour, which are much finer and will turn your pressure cooker into a fine mess.

WE may have this today without the herbs, other than bay leaf, since it will be served with pesto.

Serves 4 to 6

5 minutes high pressure, natural release

½ cup finely chopped onion or 1 tablespoon dried minced onion

2 or more teaspoons minced garlic

4 cups vegetable stock or water

1 teaspoon salt

1 bay leaf

2 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano, or ½ teaspoon dried

1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary, or ¼ teaspoon dried

3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1 cup coarse polenta

1. Heat a stovetop pressure cooker over medium heat or set an electric cooker to sauté; add the oil, if using. Add the onion and sauté or dry sauté for 1 minute. Add the garlic and cook for another minute.
2. Add the water, salt, bay leaf, oregano, and rosemary, along with half of both the basil and parsley; stir. Sprinkle the polenta over the water; do not stir.
3. Lock the lid in place. Bring to high pressure; cook for 5 minutes. Let the pressure come down naturally for 10 minutes, then release any remaining pressure. If the pressure releases before 10 minutes is



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up, let the polenta sit in the pot for the full 10 minutes. Remove the lid, carefully tilting it away from you.

4. Remove and discard the bay leaf. Whisk the polenta to smooth out any lumps. If the polenta seems too thin, stir and simmer over medium heat for a few minutes, or lock the lid back on the cooker and let sit for 5 minutes.
5. Serve as is, or pour into glass pans to cool to at least room temperature. Once cool, bake, grill, air fry or panfry.

Note: If you can't stand lumps, you can cook polenta in a dish instead of cooking directly in the pot. (See "Bowl in Pot" method on page 14.) Add the ingredients to a bowl that fits inside the cooker. Put 1 cup water into the cooker, along with a rack and set the bowl on top, using helper handles (see page 15) if necessary. Lock on the lid and cook at high pressure for 5 minutes with natural release.

Sun-Dried Tomato and Olive Polenta: Add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup finely diced sundried tomatoes before cooking the polenta. After the polenta is finished cooking, stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped olives of your choice. Mushroom Polenta: Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped dried mushroom pieces and 1 cup chopped mushrooms before cooking the polenta. After the polenta is finished cooking, sprinkle with fresh herbs.



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Lentil, Mushroom, Vegetable and Herb salad

The summer is a great time to have warm or chilled salads with ingredients that don't take long to cook, or are raw. Lentils cook quickly in the Instant Pot, and even on the stove usually take only 20 to 25 minutes. Here, I cook the lentils with the mushrooms to eliminate using another pot. You can add any fresh or cooked vegetables to this salad. If you prefer vinegar to lemon juice, use it.

- 1 cup French green, black or regular brown/green lentils, picked over
- 1 tablespoon dried organic minced onion
- 1 teaspoon dried organic minced garlic
- 4 ounces crimini or other mushrooms, sliced
- 1 ½ cups liquid (water or broth)
- ¼ cup diced radishes of any type
- ½ cup diced cucumbers
- 1 carrot, peeled and diced
- ¼ chopped fresh herbs such as parsley, dill, mint, oregano
- 1 lemon, zested
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons toasted sunflower seeds (optional)
- Freshly ground black pepper, if desired

Cook the lentils, dried onion, garlic and mushrooms in the Instant Pot for 6 minutes at high pressure with a natural release. Cook on the stove top until done (20 to 25 minutes with water to cover).

When the lentils are cooked, put them in a bowl to cool for a bit. Add the lemon zest to the warm lentils. When cool, add the remaining ingredients. Stir well. Top with the sunflower seeds, if using.

Garnish with herb sprigs.

This will stay good in your refrigerator for up to 4 days.