

# Food skills

## Fresh Herbs

Herbs are the leaves, flowers, seeds, stems and roots of aromatic edible plants. They are used to flavour and garnish food.

Herbs with tender stems, like parsley, basil, coriander, mint and chives are usually added at the end of cooking or used as garnishes. Some recipes add them at the beginning of food preparation and cooking process.

Herbs with woody stems like rosemary, oregano and thyme are added at the beginning of cooking process. These herbs retain their flavour in a dried form better than the soft stem herbs.

To substitute dried herbs for fresh – 1 Tablespoon of fresh herbs equals 1 teaspoon dried herbs.



**Basil** has a sweet, strong spicy flavour and can be added to salads and savoury dishes. It goes particularly well with tomatoes.



**Chives** have a mild flavour and is a member of the onion family. A versatile herb with many uses. Commonly used as a garnish.



**Coriander** has a distinctive, strong aromatic and spicy flavour. It is commonly used in Thai, Chinese and Indian food.



**Mint** is one of the most popular herbs, used for flavouring salads, dressing, sauces and drinks.



**Oregano** is an aromatic herb with a slightly bitter flavour. It is used widely in Italian food – most commonly pizza.



**Thyme** and lemon thyme are the most commonly used varieties. Thyme is typically used in savoury dishes like braised or roasted meat, vegetables or fish.



**Rosemary** is a strong flavoured herb that is generally used in small amounts with meat dishes. It is often included in stuffing and marinades.



**Parsley** is the most commonly used herb in NZ. It can be used in a wide range of cooked and fresh foods.



## Pesto – two ways (makes 2 cups)

### Ingredients

#### Parsley/Watercress

3 cups chopped parsley  
or watercress

1 cup of seeds or nuts –  
sunflower seeds, pumpkin  
seeds, almonds, walnuts,  
cashews

1 clove garlic

1 tablespoon lemon zest

¼ cup lemon juice

¼ cup vegetable oil

¼ cup water

#### Asian style

3 cups chopped coriander

1 cup roasted peanuts

1 clove garlic

1 tablespoon chopped ginger

1 tablespoon lemon zest

¼ cup lemon juice

¼ cup vegetable oil

(or ½ sesame ½ vegetable oil)

1 tablespoon fish sauce  
or soy sauce

### Method



Choose the style of pesto – Parsley/watercress or Asian. Place all of the ingredients into a food processor.



Mix to a smooth spreadable paste. Store in an airtight container in the fridge.



#### Serving suggestion

Gently mix pesto through 8 cups of cooked, drained and rinsed pasta. Add enough pesto to flavour.



Or season 8 cups of steamed or stir-fried vegetables with the pesto.

For more recipe ideas and cooking tips visit  
[heartfoundation.org.nz/recipes](http://heartfoundation.org.nz/recipes) and [vegetables.co.nz](http://vegetables.co.nz)