



WHITE BEAN AND PARSLEY PESTO CROSTINI

This is one of those recipes you can quickly throw together, transforming some pretty humble ingredients into a crazy satisfying, deliciously creamy, marvelously crunchy snack or appetizer. It really rides the line between a subtle hors d'oeuvre and a crunchy chip with some tasty bean dip. If you have a can of beans in the pantry, some herbs and garlic, and some good bread—even good, stale bread!—you're all set. And if you have dried beans and a little more time on your hands, even better.

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Serves 5 to 10 as an appetizer
(makes 20 to 25 crostini)

Vegan

INGREDIENTS

Baguette, 1, sliced very thinly into rounds (or other crusty bread, or even your favorite crackers)

Olive oil, about ½ cup, plus more for brushing the toast

Nuts, ½ cup walnuts, almonds, or pine nuts

Fresh parsley, 2 bunches (for about 2 cups plucked leaves), washed

Salt, ¼ teaspoon plus a pinch

Parmesan (optional), ¼ cup grated (pecorino works, too)

Lemon juice, 2 to 3 squeezes

White beans, about 30 ounces (two 15-ounce or one 30-ounce can; see Ingredient Notes), rinsed and drained

Garlic, 2 large cloves

1 Toast the bread: Preheat your oven to 400°F. Lightly brush both sides of the bread slices with some of the olive oil and arrange them on a baking sheet. Toast in the oven until light golden brown, keeping a close eye on them so they don't burn. When they are light and golden, try one. The key is to get them totally crispy without over-browning.

2 Make the parsley pesto: In the still-hot oven, toast the nuts on a baking sheet for about 5 minutes or until fragrant and light golden. Watch them carefully (with your eyes and your nose!), as they can go from under- to over-toasted very quickly. When they're cool to the touch, put them in a food processor (or blender, or even a mortar and pestle) along with the parsley, ¼ cup of the olive oil, ¼ teaspoon salt, the Parmesan (if using), and a small squeeze of lemon juice. Process until well minced and combined. Taste and adjust. Need more salt? Perhaps another little squeeze of lemon to brighten it up? When it tastes just right—bright and savory and full of flavor—scrape it into a bowl and set aside.

3 Prep the beans: Put the beans into the food processor bowl, along with one clove of garlic, the remaining ¼ cup olive oil, and a pinch of salt. Process until smooth. (Alternatively, you could just pulse it a few times or even leave the beans whole for a chunkier version. Just make sure your garlic is finely minced or grated, in that case.) Add a squeeze of lemon juice to brighten the flavor. Taste and adjust. Need more salt? Perhaps another little squeeze of lemon to brighten it up? When it tastes just right—bright and savory and full of flavor—scrape it into a bowl and set aside.

4 Assemble the crostini: Rub the remaining garlic clove on a toast, then spoon some beans on top, followed by a little dollop of pesto. Taste and adjust. A touch more salt, lemon, or garlic? Once you've nailed it, make the rest. Arrange on a platter and serve (if they don't get snapped up faster than you can make them).

Ingredient Notes

Pesto: Made here with parsley, but traditionally made with fresh basil, pesto is shockingly easy. That said, you can skip the pesto-making steps and use a favorite store-bought pesto, if you're hankering for a fast snack. But if you have the time and have never tasted homemade pesto, you've definitely gotta give it a go.

Beans: You can use pretty much any white, creamy variety—cannellini, great northern, butter, you name it. Do use canned beans that contain salt. Beans need time to absorb salt, so adding it to the *top* of the beans just isn't the same as starting with beans that have some salt already absorbed into their creamy centers.

Optional Prep

All of the elements—the bean puree, the pesto, and the toasts—can be made in advance. Doing so will allow you to assemble these in a jiffy! Store the bean puree and pesto separately and in the refrigerator for up to 3 days; after cooling completely, the toasts can be stored in a resealable bag on the counter for up to 1 day.

Variations

If you're in the mood for dipping, you can serve the bean puree in a bowl with a hearty drizzle of pesto on top and the toasts on the side.

We use parsley here for an earthy, herby twist on traditional Italian pesto, made with basil. That said, feel free to substitute basil or even arugula for the parsley.

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(SERIOUS) NEW COOK



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