

Greens Pizza with Pistachio Pesto

Yield: one 12-inch pizza

This is my favorite pizza in the world, hands-down. There is a Neapolitan-style pizza place near my hometown that serves the most delicious, creative pizzas, which is where the inspiration for this pizza came from. I don't live close to this pizza place anymore, so my own version was born out of necessity because I crave this pizza constantly. It's a salad on top of a great pizza crust, so you feel healthy eating it too! I've always struggled with shaping a pizza into an actual round, but I found the key is freshly made pizza dough. I strongly encourage you to make your own or purchase from a trusted pizzeria. I have a Baking Steel, which I recommend to anyone serious about their pizza. They're not cheap, but it will change the game for home pizza-making. The pistachio pesto here is not going to have the consistency of the traditional basil pesto as it is much more coarse and less pourable.

One ball of Neapolitan-style pizza dough, store-bought or your favorite homemade recipe

PISTACHIO PESTO:

1/4 cup pistachios

1 cup fresh basil leaves

1 large garlic clove, roughly chopped

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

TO SERVE:

3 ounces baby arugula

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

Good-quality extra-virgin olive oil, to drizzle

Coarse sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to sprinkle

Preheat your oven to its highest heat setting (usually 500 to 550°). Place a baking stone or steel in the middle of your oven and let preheat for at least 1 hour.

In the bowl of a food processor, add the basil leaves and pulse to coarsely chop. Add the pistachios and garlic clove and pulse until finely chopped but still chunky. Add the olive oil and pulse until the pesto comes together. Pour the pesto into a small bowl, add the Parmesan, salt and pepper and stir to combine. Set aside.

Lightly flour your work surface and hands. Gently pat down the ball of dough into a circle, rotating as you work. Using the tips of your fingers, gently push down around the edge of the round, rotating as you go, to create the edge. You can use the heel of your palm to gently stretch the dough out into a circle also. Pick up the dough and lightly pass it back and forth between your palms, trying to rotate as you go to form the round. When you have a round of dough approximately 12 inches in diameter, transfer to a large piece of parchment or a pizza peel. Optionally, you can sprinkle a little semolina flour on your parchment or peel to provide a little crunch to the bottom and ensure your pizza releases.

When your baking apparatus has preheated for at least 1 hour, prepare to bake your pizza. Spread the pistachio pesto over the top, leaving a 1-inch border around the edge. Gently slide your pizza onto the baking stone or steel. Bake for six to eight minutes, until the crust is golden brown and charred in spots on the bottom. Remove from the oven and let cool for approximately two minutes. Mound the arugula on top and shower with Parmesan. Drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil and sprinkle coarse salt and pepper over the top. Fold your pizza in half to eat it in the Neapolitan way and to keep most of your toppings on your slice.