

Texas Food Ranch
Recipes



Whole-Wheat Pasta With Kale-Ricotta Pesto

1 bunch kale
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons walnuts, pecans or pine nuts, lightly
toasted, divided use
2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more for serving
Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
1/3 cup whole-milk ricotta cheese
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
1/3 cup olive oil
1 pound whole-wheat spaghetti (or any other noodle)
Freshly ground black pepper

1. Rinse kale and trim away any thick stems, and slice the leaves into 1- to 2-inch pieces. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, plunge the kale into boiling water; immediately drain and plunge into ice water to stop the cooking process and retain color. Drain kale in a colander then use your hands to squeeze out as much moisture as possible. Spread kale on a clean dish towel or paper towel to continue drying while you prepare the pesto.
2. Place 1/4 cup nuts, garlic, salt and red pepper flakes in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until you have a coarse, pebbly mixture. Add the kale, ricotta and Parmesan, and process until combined. With machine running, drizzle in the olive oil through the feed tube until the mixture is smooth.
3. Cook the spaghetti according to package directions, until it's al dente. Just before draining, reserve 1 cup of the cooking water. Place hot noodles and pesto in a large bowl and toss to combine. Add the pasta cooking water tablespoon by tablespoon as needed to loosen the mixture and evenly coat the noodles. Add salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.
4. Serve immediately in large, shallow bowls, topped with a scattering of toasted nuts and plenty of grated Parmesan.

Serves 4–6.

Cook's Tip

I use my salad spinner to wash leafy greens. Submerge them in the basket of the spinner, fill with water and use your hands to shake them around. Pull the basket up and out of the water, allowing any grit to fall to the bottom. Change the water and repeat until the water is completely clean after rinsing, and spin dry to remove excess moisture.