

BASIL

QUICK INFO

- Basil is an annual in USDA hardiness zones 5b and 6a.
- Basil does not tolerate cool temperatures.
- There are many varieties of basil, including Italian, cinnamon, lemon, lime, Thai and holy. Each has a unique flavor and scent and is used for different culinary purposes.

COOKING TIPS

- Fresh basil should be added at the end of the cooking process, or it risks losing its flavor.
- Italian basil pairs well with tomatoes in sauces or fresh salads.
- Thai basil can be tossed into salads and soups and used in spring rolls.

OTHER USES

- Fresh basil can be used to scent a homemade surface cleaner. Place rinds from two to three lemons, limes or oranges (you can use the juice for other purposes) in a glass quart-sized jar along with four to five sprigs of basil. Cover the rinds and sprigs with white vinegar. Cover and shake the jar and store for two to four weeks out of sunlight. Strain and place in spray bottle and use as a surface cleaner.

STORAGE AND PRESERVATION

- Avoid storing basil in the refrigerator as it wilts in cold temperatures.
- Snip the ends of basil stems and place them in a glass or jar with ½ inch of water. Store on the counter out of direct sunlight for several days.
- Basil leaves can be placed in ice cube trays and covered in water or olive oil, frozen, and used in future sauces or soups.

GROWING TIPS

- Basil does best in full sun.
- Only plant basil when the soil is warm and nighttime lows are above 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Pinch off basil flowers regularly to encourage new growth and a fuller plant.
- Basil is a good companion plant for tomatoes.

QUICK & EASY RECIPE

- **Marinara sauce (fresh leaves):** Combine one 15 oz can diced tomatoes, one 15 oz can tomato sauce, 4-6 crushed garlic cloves, and 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil in a large pot and simmer on low for about 1 hour; add one handful of fresh basil leaves, torn into pieces and season with salt and pepper to taste; simmer 10 minutes longer. Sauce can be frozen for later use or tossed with pasta for immediate use.
- **Basil Pesto (fresh leaves):** Wash and dry about 4 handfuls of fresh basil leaves in a salad spinner; in a food processor, pulse 2 garlic cloves, 1 teaspoon salt, and 2-3 tablespoons of pine nuts (walnuts or almonds are a less expensive alternative); add basil and pulse 8-10 more times; turn processor on and drizzle in olive oil until pesto reaches a thick pouring consistency. Pour over roasted vegetables, pasta, or salad. {Variation – use Thai basil, garlic, a fresh Thai chili, cashews and melted coconut oil.}



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