

Braided Pesto and Walnut Bread

Formula by Featured Instructor Pritam Hemnani –All rights reserved worldwide
Makes one loaf

- **25 grams sweet basil leaves**
- **35 grams cashew nuts**
- **60 milliliters (¼ cup) of olive oil**
- **5-7 medium sized cloves of garlic**
- **Salt to taste**
- **250 grams all-purpose flour**
- **3 grams instant yeast**
- **186 grams (¾ cup or 180 milliliters) of milk**
- **13 grams sugar**
- **5 grams salt**
- **60 grams (¼ cup or 60 milliliters) melted butter**
- **50 grams finely chopped walnuts**
- **31 grams (30 milliliters of milk) or egg wash (for glaze).**

Blend together the basil, cashew nuts, olive oil, garlic and salt to taste. Store Pesto up to 4 days in a clean glass jar and top it with 2 Tablespoons/30ml of olive oil. For longer storage freeze for up to 10 days. Thaw in the fridge the night before using.

Warm the milk and butter slightly. Mix together the all-purpose flour, instant yeast, 186 grams milk, sugar and salt. and knead the dough. Start incorporating the butter slowly after the initial 5 minutes of kneading. After kneading for 8-10 min the dough will become supple, soft and will stop being sticky. Cover the dough with a damp towel and allow to raise for 1 ½ to 2 hours at room temperature. Once the dough has risen and doubled in size, punch it down and knead for 2-3 mins.

Flour your work surface and roll the dough into a rectangle of 1 to 2 cm (½ - ¾ inch) thick. Leaving about half an inch from all 4 edges, apply the pesto paste and spread the walnuts evenly. You can also add some grated cheese if you like. Roll into a log from the longer end of the rectangle. Be gentle to ensure there are no tears. Make sure the sides are properly sealed and the end of the log is also properly sealed. Cut the log along the length holding it gently. Start braiding the 2 pieces by entwining them into each other. You can seal the ends together and then make the end meets in a circle. Place this circle in a 7 inch round pan which is greased or lined with parchment. Proof by keeping this aside covered for around 30-45 mins.

Wash with egg or milk and bake in a pre-heated oven at 200C/392F for 30 mins or until nicely browned.