

q cuisine: with HOME CHEF HYLTON

Dips and Spreads

That awkward moment... When friends are coming over and you have nothing but biscuits in the pantry to serve said friends while you prepare dinner, or perhaps you're sick of Vegemite on toast and need an interesting alternative. Even if you've been asked to bring some nibbles to a friend's celebration, it's always an easy option to just pick up something from the supermarket on your way, but why not make your own? These options are much tastier, preservative-free, and only require a few pantry items. Lox could make for an awesome cob loaf, and pesto can be served alone, or, mixed with some cream, form the base of a delicious pasta sauce.

Basil Pesto

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup/50g pine nuts*
- 2 cloves of garlic, smashed
- 1 1/2 cup loosely-packed basil leaves**
- 3/4 cup shredded Parmesan
- 5 tbsp olive oil

Method:

1. On a very low heat, warm a non-stick pan, add the pine nuts, shaking regularly to ensure they don't burn. They should slightly change colour, and you should be able to smell the toastiness. Set aside.
2. Place all ingredients, aside from the olive oil, in a blender or the bowl of a small food processor and blend until finely chopped.
3. With the motor running, add olive oil in a slow, steady stream until well combined.

*This is NOT an exact science, and everyone's stove is different. A brand called Lucky sell 50g packets of pre-toasted pine nuts, eliminating the trial and error process.

**Pesto can be made with a wide range of greenery. You might like to try a mixture of basil and rocket, or even baby spinach can work.



Hummus

Ingredients

- 600g canned chickpeas, drained, and rinsed
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp of salt
- 2 tbsp tahini paste
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 3-4 tbsp lemon juice (approximately a lemon's worth)
- 1/4 cup (60ml) cold water
- 100ml olive oil, plus extra to serve

Method:

1. Place all ingredients, aside from the olive oil and water, in a blender or the bowl of a small food processor and blend until finely chopped.
2. Add water and blend again.
3. As with the pesto, with the motor running, add olive oil in a slow, steady stream until well combined.
4. Taste test. Add extra salt or spices to your liking. If you'd like a little more sesame you can even add some sesame oil.

Lox Spread/Dip

Ingredients:

- 150g packet of hot-smoked salmon
- 200g tub of crème fraîche
- Half a red onion, finely diced
- 1-2 tbsp of capers (optional), finely diced.
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 small punnet of dill - finely chopped
- Cracked pepper, to taste

Method:

1. Add all ingredients in a medium bowl and mix well with a fork to break up the salmon and combine ingredients.
2. Adjust salt, pepper and lemon to taste.

