

# LULU PORK CHOP

## Stinging Nettle Pesto

Makes about 1 cup

1/4 pound stinging nettle (about 4 cups) 1/3 cup unsalted walnuts, roughly chopped  
2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt

6 tablespoons olive oil

1/4 to 1/3 cup ricotta cheese (optional)

1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes

1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

- Prep the nettle: Put on a pair of latex or rubber gloves. Pluck the leaves and place in a large bowl. Discard the stems. Rinse leaves a few times, or until water runs clean. Lift out of the water and place on a towel.
- Bring at least 4 cups water to a boil and add the cleaned nettle. Return to a boil and cook for 2 minutes. (You can remove the gloves now.) Drain the leaves and run them under cold water. Using your hands, squeeze out as much water as possible. You will end up with a shrunken green ball.
- In the bowl of a food processor, add the garlic and salt. Process until nuts are ground. Add the nettle and process until evenly blended, followed by the walnuts, also making sure they are evenly blended. Add the oil and whiz a few times.
- Transfer to a bowl. By hand, stir in the ricotta (if using), red pepper flakes, and nutmeg. Keeps well in a glass jar in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

**Taking it to the next level: Nettle Pesto Pasta**

Makes 4 servings

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 cup finely chopped yellow onion

1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas or white beans, drained (or 1 1/2 cups cooked) 2 1/4

to 2 1/2 teaspoons fine sea salt

1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

12 ounces short pasta (rigatoni is a personal fave here)

Juice of 1/2 lemon

Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or pecorino, for finishing (optional)

- Heat a 10- or 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the butter, tilting the pan to coat. Add the onion and cook until soft and translucent, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in the chickpeas and cook until heated through, 2 to 3 minutes. Add 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of the salt to taste, along with the pepper. Take off the heat.
- Meanwhile, cook the pasta. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add 2 teaspoons of the salt. Add the pasta and cook according to the package instructions. Drain, reserving about 1 cup of the pasta water, just in case.
- Transfer the pasta to serving bowl with 1/3 cup of the pesto. (If you waited to use the ricotta, add it now.) Stir until pasta is well coated. Stir in the chickpea business. If sauce seems thick, gradually add a few spoonfuls of pasta water to loosen.
- Lightly squeeze lemon juice all over, stir and taste for seasoning. Finish with grated cheese, if using.

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*Recipes excerpted from "PNW Veg: 100 Vegetable Recipes Inspired by the Local Bounty of the Pacific Northwest" by Kim O'Donnel.*