

Functional Food

- Polyphenol rich pesto

Pesto is a simple and tasty functional food, which provides an excellent source of polyphenols which have been shown to have immune-modulating function. These plant compounds also have anti-microbial substances which help regulate your gut bacteria.

You can use any herbs you like, grown at home are best but even fresh supermarket herbs will be fine. Rosemary, thyme, basil, coriander, chives and sage are particularly beneficial as is the addition of garlic or wild garlic if available. Olive oil is also a source of polyphenols so use the best quality you can get and ensure it is extra virgin.

Method:

- Chop herbs very finely or grind with a mortar and pestle
- Add olive oil to form a paste
- Ensure this is then completely covered with olive oil so that the herbs are protected from the air
- Cover (e.g. in a small Kilner jar or simply cover the cup) and leave at room temperature for 2-3 days away from direct sunlight
- There could be a slight fermentation process but if your room is too hot, this may cause overgrowth. Discard if you see a green 'scum' form. Options for your next batch include trying a cooler dark room or adding garlic to the mixture which reduces bacterial overgrowth
- Drizzle generously on vegetables, potatoes, pasta, quinoa salads, chickpeas etc.
- Ensure you are adding this to your food after cooking as heat may destroy the plant compounds released in the oil.