5 Ideas for Using Up All That Basil



Using up all that basil growing in your herb garden initially sounds like it'll be an easy task. But now that we're deep into the summer season, you probably realize there's a lot

more of this pungent leafy herb than you ever thought possible.

If left alone to grow, many herbs will eventually start to flower. This turns the flavorful foliage bitter and unappetizing. The key to growing herbs and keeping them from bolting is to harvest often. But when plant growth is in full swing, finding ways to cook with basil can be tough.

Here are 5 ideas for working with all that extra herb on your hands

Pasta

Ask your social network for ideas to use up basil, and they'll probably suggest pesto. But a person can only eat so much pesto. At some point, you'll get sick of it.

But you can pair fresh basil with pasta in more ways than just processing it into a garlicky green paste. One of my favorite ways to use this herb is to slice it up thin and add it to a squash-based sauce—squash is another veg you probably have too much of.

Need a recipe? This one is in my regular rotation, and it's easy to customize with what you have on hand: Summer Squash and Basil Pasta

Dry it

Drying or dehydrating the leaves is an easy way to use up an abundance of this tasty herb. If you plan on dehydrating many herbs, I recommend a dehydrator. Otherwise, use your oven and go low and slow to avoid burning the leaves.

Freeze it

This is another option for preserving basil. Depending on how you plan to use it, you can freeze it as a paste or with

leaves intact. In the dead of winter, when the garden is asleep, you'll thank yourself for putting in the effort to freeze your extra basil. Add cubes of frozen basil to soups, stews, and pasta sauce.

New pesto ideas

Okay, I know I said no pesto. But if you're bored of the usual pine nut and basil combo, there are some clever ways to turn basil into a pasta-ready sauce.

My two favorites include:

Walnut Pesto

15 Minute Creamy Avocado Pasta

Pizza

This is the obvious choice. Fresh basil leaves on pizza add a flavor boost that turns regular pizza into something a bit more gourmet.

Consider making a pesto pizza sauce if you want a convenient way to use up pesto that doesn't involve pasta. Pair the tasty pesto sauce with a few dollops of ricotta, fresh mozzarella, or goat cheese.