



Carrot top pesto

Serves 4 as a main and several as a dip/canapé topping

I love carrots; they're such a versatile vegetable and one that you needn't waste any of at all. I usually just wash carrots and then cook them but if I do peel (and top and tail) I always keep the peeling to use in a stock. In fact, I always keep a little box of veg peel, gathered over the course of a few days, to make a quick stock or to add to a more traditional slow cook stock. And with the green leafy tops...I make pesto. I almost never make basil pesto, favouring one with parsley and walnuts instead, as once you've had a freshly made Ligurian basil pesto looking out over Cinque Terre....no basil pesto will ever quite live up to that. But if I've happened upon a bunch of carrots with their tops I'll make this pesto, it's somehow more substantial than it's basil and parsley cousins but no less delicious.

1 bunch of carrot tops
A handful of basil
A handful of walnuts (roughly 50g)
100 parmesan, grated
Juice of half a lemon
100ml Olive oil (not extra virgin)
Salt and pepper
Extra virgin olive oil for finishing

1. Toast the walnuts if you wish. To do this place them in a dry frying pan over a medium heat, turning a few times, for a few minutes. Allow to cool
2. Wash the carrot tops and basil gently and place on some kitchen towel to dry. Remove the leafy part of the carrot top from the stalk, reserving the stalk for stock.
3. Chop up the remaining carrot top and pulse in a food processor along with the basil and a pinch of salt.
4. Add in the walnuts, give a quick whizz in the processor and then add half of the cheese. Give another whizz and then add the oil half at a time.
5. Add the rest of the parmesan and the juice of half the lemon. Whizz and then serve perhaps with a slick of olive oil, another squeeze of lemon, a pinch of sea salt and a few twists of freshly ground black pepper.

Serve as a dip along with raw veg or big chunks of bread. Or maybe serve as a canapé on rounds of toasted baguette or crackers. Or as a main meal with pasta. Or try spooned over roasted carrots. Delicious!

