

Toasted Bread Planks with Spinach-Basil Pesto

Recipe developer: Shelli McConnell

1/2 of a 16-ounce loaf ciabatta bread or Italian bread
2 tablespoons olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper
Salt
3/4 cup packed fresh spinach leaves
3/4 cup packed fresh basil leaves
1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted
1/3 cup finely shredded Parmesan or Romano cheese
1 large clove garlic, peeled and cut up
1 teaspoon finely shredded lemon peel
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup olive oil

Preheat oven to 425°F. For bread planks, using a serrated knife, slice bread into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Lightly brush one side of each bread slice with olive oil. Lightly sprinkle the oil side of each bread slice with black pepper and salt. Arrange bread slices in a single layer on a large baking sheet. Bake in the preheated oven for 4 minutes. Turn slices over and bake about 4 minutes more or until planks are crisp and lightly golden. Cool. Store in a covered airtight container for up to 3 days.

For pesto, in a food processor, combine spinach, basil, almonds, cheese, garlic, lemon peel, the 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Cover and process until finely chopped. With the food processor running, add the olive oil in a thin stream until a paste forms. Store in a covered airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

To tote, pack pesto in a cooler with ice. Spread pesto on toast planks to serve. Makes about 12 planks.

From *Pack These 'Envy of the Picnic' Treats*, pages 16 – 19, Summer 2007 issue of *Make Mine Wine*.