



Creamy Pesto Mussels Recipe



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CREAMY PESTO MUSSELS WITH GRILLED LITTLE GEM LETTUCE



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WHAT YOU NEED - SERVES 2

for the mussels:

1kg mussels
25g pine nuts
50g bunch basil, leaves and thinner stalks roughly torn
2 tbsp olive oil
75ml double cream
15g freshly grated parmesan
1 clove of chopped garlic
a squeeze of lemon juice, to taste
salt and freshly ground black pepper

for the grilled Little Gems:

2 Little Gem lettuces, sliced in half through the root
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp white wine vinegar
1/2 tsp caster sugar
a sprig of rosemary, needles picked & chopped
salt and freshly ground black pepper

crusty bread, to serve

WHAT TO DO: IN THE KITCHEN

1. Tip the mussels into a colander and wash really well under cold running water. Discard any mussels that don't shut when given a sharp tap against the edge of the colander, and pull away any beard-like threads. Set aside.
2. To make the pesto, set a small frying pan over a medium heat and tip in the pine nuts, toasting for a couple of minutes until they smell wonderfully nutty. Add to a food processor and pulse to grind. Add the basil and pulse again. Then add the olive oil, cream, parmesan, lemon and good seasoning of salt and pepper and whizz to a smooth creamy paste. Scoop into a bowl and set aside.
3. To make the dressing for the grilled lettuce, add the olive oil, vinegar, caster sugar, rosemary and a seasoning of salt and pepper to a small jar and shake to combine.

WHAT TO DO: AT THE BARBECUE

1. Fire up the barbecue. If you are using gas, set the burners to a medium high heat and leave to heat up for 10 minutes. Or with charcoal, light the fire and give the coals 30-40 minutes burn time so you have a good bed of glowing embers before you begin to cook.
2. Once the barbecue is ready, prepare the foil parcels of mussels. Take 2 sheets of foil and lay one over the other in a cross shape. Repeat.
3. Divide the mussels between the 2 foil crosses, piling them into the middle. Bring up the sides to create walls and then spoon half of the pesto onto each pile. Tightly seal to make 2 enclosed parcels. Place the parcels onto the grill bars and cook for 10 minutes, turning over a couple of times during cooking.
4. Remove a parcel and carefully open it up - it should be steaming hot and all the shells open. If not, reseal and cook for another 5 minutes. The cooking time may vary depending on the heat of the grill.
5. Whilst the mussels are cooking, cut the lettuces in half through the root. Brush the cut sides generously with dressing and place on the grill, cut side down. Cook for a few minutes until soft and lightly grilled.
6. Serve the mussels and grilled lettuce with plenty of crusty bread to mop up the juices.