

## Gemelli with Arugula Pesto and Warm Cherry Tomatoes

serves 4 to 6

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### For the pesto

4 oz arugula – rinsed and spun dry  
1/2 teaspoon sea salt or to taste  
1 large garlic clove – skinned  
1/2 cup freshly grated Pecorino Romano  
1/3 cup sliced almonds  
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil  
freshly ground black pepper to taste

### For the pasta

extra sea salt for the pasta water (about 1 tablespoon)  
1 lb gemelli (preferably De Cecco or Martelli)  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
peel of 1/2 lemon – (use vegetable hand-peeler) cut in 1/16" julienne strips  
2 large garlic cloves – skinned and finely chopped  
8 oz assorted cherry tomatoes – halved  
1/4 teaspoon sea salt or to taste  
freshly ground black pepper to taste  
1 small bunch fresh chives – cut in 1/2" pieces (use kitchen scissors)

extra virgin olive oil as garnish

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**Step 1:** For the arugula pesto, place all ingredients in the bowl of a food processor. Process until it forms a creamy paste, about 1 to 2 minutes, scraping the sides of the bowl once. Transfer to a bowl, cover and keep refrigerated until ready to use.

*Cook's note: The pesto will keep for about 3 days in the refrigerator, or 1 month in the freezer.*

**Step 2:** Bring 6 quarts of water to a boil. When the water is boiling, add the salt and the gemelli. Cook pasta until tender but still *al dente*. Drain well.

**Step 3:** While the pasta is boiling, heat a large heavy bottom skillet over high heat. Add the lemon zest and sauté for 1 to 2 minutes until golden and crispy. Add the garlic, and sauté for 30 seconds until the garlic releases its flavor, but doesn't brown. Add the tomatoes, salt, pepper and chives. Sauté for 1 to 2 minutes, until the tomatoes are warmed through but not cooked (or the skins will get tough). Remove from heat, transfer to a bowl and set aside.

**Step 4:** When the pasta is drained, transfer to a large bowl. Spoon the pesto over the pasta and toss well.

**Step 5:** Spoon pasta in bowls. Garnish with the warm cherry tomatoes, drizzle olive oil and finish with some freshly ground pepper. Serve immediately.