

Nettles Pâté

YIELD: 4 cups with fresh nettles;
4½ cups with dried nettles

15 to 20 (60 grams) small to
medium sun-dried tomatoes
(about ½ cup)

4 quarts (225 grams) loosely
packed fresh nettles, or
substitute 2½ cups dried
nettles (55 grams)

1 cup (105 grams) walnut halves

10 medium (100 grams) shiitake
mushroom caps, chopped

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus
a little more for sautéing the
mushrooms

3 garlic cloves, peeled

½ cup (70 grams) whole pitted
Kalamata olives

½ cup (115 grams) feta cheese

⅓ cup (70 grams) grated
Parmesan cheese

Nettles pâté is pesto's voluptuous cousin, thicker and earthier by nature. Smother it on pasta, bake it into lasagna, or spread it on pizza or focaccia. Serve as a dip with crudités or crackers. You can enjoy this dish year-round by following the directions below for dried nettles. If you avoid dairy, substitute extra olives for the feta and Parmesan cheese. Or, use a coconut- or nut-based cheese alternative, tasting for saltiness as needed.

1. Pour just enough hot water over the sun-dried tomatoes to cover, and let sit for 3 hours. If you don't have the time to presoak, soaking them in hot water while you prepare the other ingredients is sufficient. You can also substitute jarred sun-dried tomatoes in olive oil. Strain the soaked tomatoes after hydrating.

2. Prep your nettles:

IF USING DRIED NETTLES: Bring 1⅔ cups water to a boil in a small saucepan. Turn off the heat, add the dried nettles, and stir every 5 minutes as the nettles rehydrate. Set aside (you won't be straining the rehydrated nettles).

IF USING FRESH NETTLES: Strip the nettle leaves from the fibrous stem using leather garden gloves. Wash the leaves thoroughly (it may require several washings). Steam until the nettles are tender yet still vibrantly green. Let the nettles cool with the lid off.

3. Toast the walnut halves in a dry, preheated skillet over medium heat, stirring continuously, until their aroma permeates the kitchen and they are slightly browned, about 1 to 2 minutes. Do not leave unattended, as they can quickly burn. Place the toasted walnuts on a plate to cool. In a small skillet, sauté the mushrooms in a little extra-virgin olive oil over medium heat until tender, about 5 minutes.

4. When the nettles and mushrooms are cool enough to handle, combine all the ingredients in a blender or food processor, and blend until the pâté reaches an even consistency. Add more olive oil and salt, if necessary. Refrigerate for up to 5 days or freeze in small portions.



This recipe is an excerpt from Juliet Blankespoor's book, *The Healing Garden: Cultivating and Handcrafting Herbal Remedies*, a detailed herbal reference, decadent cookbook, and garden manual all in one. Find more details on the book and its accompanying bonuses at healinggardengateway.com.



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Juliet Blankespoor founded the Chestnut School of Herbal Medicine in 2007 and is the school's primary instructor and creative director. The school connects people with plants and the earth through online courses about bioregional herbal medicine.