

## **CILANTRO-COTIJA PESTO**

Makes 2 cups

### **Ingredients:**

1 cup unsalted raw or roasted pumpkin seeds  
½ bunch fresh cilantro, stems trimmed 2 inches from the bottom  
1 cup fresh basil leaves  
1 cup olive oil, plus extra for storage  
½ serrano chile or 1 jalapeno, coarsely chopped (include seeds for additional spice)  
2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped  
½ crumbled cotija (preferably Cacique brand) or shredded pecorino or Parmesan  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### **Directions:**

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F

Spread the pumpkin seeds in an even layer on a dry baking sheet. Put the sheet in the oven and bake, checking them and shaking the pan every 3 minutes, until they start to dance, puff up and brown lightly, about 10 minutes. Take the pan out of the oven, transfer the seeds to a bowl and let cool to room temperature.

Put the cilantro, basil and olive oil into a food processor, and puree for 2 minutes. Add the chile, garlic, pumpkin seeds and cotija and pulse until you have a coarse puree. Season with salt and pepper to taste. To store, put it into a container with a tight-fitting lid and pour ¼ inch of olive oil over the surface to keep out the air. Each time you use it, stir that oil in, and replace with another ¼ inch of oil before closing the container, this makes an airtight seal that will keep it tasting fresh for up to 10 days.