



# Marlborough gold

Pinoli, the only commercial producer of pine nuts in the southern hemisphere, supplies local Kiwi kitchens – but also exports its Mediterranean-variety nuts to Europe.

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BACK IN 1997, forestry manager Andy Wiltshire and his wife Barbara hatched a plan to grow Mediterranean stone pines (*Pinus pinea*) in Marlborough. Then, with partners Lee Paterson and Zoe Thompson, who shared the pair's forestry expertise and "keen interest in fine foods", they set about planting an orchard the next year.

Twelve years later the first commercial crop of Pinoli pine nuts was harvested, processed and sold. They went down a treat, so new and larger orchards were planted and

the partners built a dedicated processing factory. The Wairau Valley venture is the only commercial producer of pine nuts in the southern hemisphere and Pinoli has been exporting to Europe since 2013.

Mediterranean stone pine nuts are not just tasty, they are healthy too. They're high in protein – 34 percent by weight – and balanced with moderate amounts of mono- and polyunsaturated oils. They have antioxidants including vitamins A, B, C, D, E and K; minimal sodium; and minerals such as

calcium, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus and iron. They taste fresher and sweeter than imported pine nuts. Today, there are seven Pinoli orchards covering 550ha and containing more than half a million trees. They have produced three to five tonnes of pine nuts per year over the past three years, and the Pinoli partners forecast that in 10 years' time they will be producing 10 to 20 times that amount. That's a heck of a lot of pesto. Here are recipes for dishes that make the most of pine nuts:



Spiced Lebanese pine nut and raisin pilaf with chicken.

## Spiced Lebanese pine nut and raisin pilaf with chicken

Prep: 30 minutes  
Ready in: 1 hour  
Serves: 4

*1½ cups long-grain rice*  
*4 Tbsp butter*  
*2 shallots or 1 red onion, finely sliced*  
*2 cloves garlic, minced*  
*2 Tbsp fresh mint, finely chopped*  
*½ cup raisins*  
*1 cup grated apple*  
*1 cinnamon stick*  
*2 cloves*  
*6 black peppercorns*  
*½ tsp each allspice and nutmeg*  
*3 cups boiling water*  
*½ tsp salt*  
*2 Tbsp sesame seeds, toasted*  
*½ cup pine nuts, lightly toasted*

*2 cups shredded roast chicken or turkey, skin removed*  
*1½ tsp sumac*  
*Sliced mint leaves, to serve*

1. Place rice in a sieve and rinse under cold water until water runs clear. Drain.
2. Place butter and shallots in a pan with a tight-fitting lid over medium heat, and cook until translucent. Add rice and stir to coat with butter. Add garlic, mint, raisins, apple and all spices except sumac.
3. Add boiling water and salt, stir and bring to boil. Reduce to low heat and cover. Simmer gently for 15 minutes. Do not open lid. Turn off heat and leave for 5 minutes.
4. Remove lid and fluff up rice with a fork. Add sesame seeds, pine nuts and shredded chicken. Toss, cover with a lid and leave in a warm place for 10 minutes (or wrap pan with a towel). Sprinkle with sumac and sliced mint to serve.

## Lebanese eggplant with pine nuts

**Prep:** 30 minutes  
**Ready in:** 1 hour  
**Serves:** 4

This simple dish of golden fried eggplant, topped with cinnamon-spiced lamb, sweet tomato and pine nuts is a traditional Lebanese meal made for celebrations and gatherings. Serve straight from the oven or at room temperature.

*¼ cup extra virgin olive oil*  
*1 onion, finely diced*  
*2 cloves garlic, minced*  
*450g minced lamb*  
*1½ cups tomato puree or passata*  
*¼ cup red wine*  
*½ tsp ground cinnamon*  
*½ teaspoon ground allspice*  
*½ cup pine nuts*  
*¼ tsp salt*  
*2 large firm eggplants*  
*1 cup grated cheddar cheese*

1. Heat oven to 180°C and grease a large baking tray. Place a large frying pan over medium heat and drizzle in a little olive oil. Sauté onion for 3-4 minutes, add garlic and sauté another minute. Transfer onion and garlic to a plate and reheat pan to medium-high heat.
2. Brown meat then add cooked onions and garlic, plus tomato puree, wine, cinnamon, allspice, pine nuts and salt. Cook on low for 20-25 minutes until the sauce reduces a little. Taste and season.
3. Cut eggplant into 2cm-thick slices. Heat another frying pan, add a drizzle of olive oil and cook eggplant until lightly golden on each side. Add more olive oil as needed. (Alternatively, if eggplants are very large, it is easier to roll up the slices to enclose the filling and bake in an oven dish, packed together.)
4. Place eggplant slices on a greased baking tray, top with a spoonful of lamb and pine nut mix and sprinkle with a little grated cheese.
5. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until eggplant is tender and serve.



Lebanese eggplant with pine nuts.



Pinoli lemon and pine nut shortcake.

## Pinoli lemon and pine nut shortcake

**Prep:** 1 hour  
**Ready in:** 1.5 hours  
**Serves:** 12

This recipe can be made in stages. Make the lemon curd the day before. The pastry can be made by hand or in a food processor then baked the same day. This shortcake keeps well for up to four days and is lovely with a dollop of cream on the side. The pine nuts add a complementary flavour and texture to the richness of the lemon curd.

### LEMON CURD

*1 cup sugar*  
*½ cup lemon juice*  
*finely grated rind of 3 lemons*  
*200g unsalted butter, cut into cubes*  
*4 eggs, lightly beaten*

### PASTRY

*300g plain flour*  
*1 tsp baking powder*  
*100g unsalted butter*  
*115g caster sugar*  
*2 small eggs, beaten*  
*3½ Tbsp toasted pine nuts*  
*2 Tbsp water or milk*

### TO FINISH

*3 Tbsp pine nuts, toasted*  
*1 egg yolk*  
*2 Tbsp milk*  
*3 Tbsp raw pine nuts*  
*icing sugar to dust*

### LEMON CURD

Place the sugar, lemon juice, rind and butter in a small pot and bring to boil. Stir and remove from heat. Bring a large pot of water to a simmer (choose a pot big enough to fit the small pot inside). Whisk the eggs into the small pot of lemon and butter, then place pot over the simmering water and stir constantly until the sauce thickens. Cool.

### PASTRY

Sift the flour and baking powder into the bowl of a food processor and add butter. Pulse until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add sugar, eggs and pine nuts. Pulse again until the mixture just comes together. Add water or milk to bind the pastry. Knead the dough for 1-2 minutes on a lightly floured surface. Press into a thick disc and chill for 30 minutes. On a floured surface, roll out two-thirds of the pastry. Line a lightly greased 23cm loose-based pie tin with the pastry.

### ASSEMBLY

Spoon the cold curd into the pastry-lined tin and sprinkle with toasted pine nuts. Roll out the remaining pastry and cover the filling, pressing the edges to seal. Beat the egg yolk with milk and brush over the top of the pastry. Sprinkle with raw pine nuts. Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C for 40 minutes, until well risen and golden. Dust with icing sugar and let filling set. Serve in wedges with creme fraiche, yoghurt or cream. 🍷