Culinary Institute of America

TECHNIQUE OF THE QUARTER: EXAMINING SAUCES

Sauces are often considered one of the greatest tests of a chef's skill. The successful pairing of a sauce with a food demonstrates technical expertise, an understanding of the food, and the ability to judge and evaluate a dish's flavors, textures, and colors.

THE PURPOSE OF SAUCES

Most sauces have more than one function in a dish. A sauce that adds a counterpoint flavor, for example, may also introduce textural and visual appeal. Sauces generally serve one or more of the following purposes.

INTRODUCE COMPLEMENTARY OR CONTRASTING FLAVORS

Sauces add flavor to a dish. That flavor can be similar to the flavor of the food you are serving it with. For instance, you might choose a velouté made with chicken stock to serve with a chicken breast dish and one made with shellfish stock to serve with a shrimp dish. Choosing a sauce with a similar base flavor tends to complement and intensify the flavor of the main item. On the other hand, you can choose a sauce that adds a contrasting flavor. A good example would be a red wine sauce that introduces some bright and acidic flavors to a dish that features beef. The contrast between rich, savory beef flavors and the sharp taste of the wine makes the beef stand out.

ADD MOISTURE

A sauce can add moisture to naturally lean foods such as poultry, fish. A sauce can also compensate for the drying effect of certain cooking techniques, especially broiling, grilling, sautéing, and roasting. Grilled foods may be served with a warm butter emulsion sauce like béarnaise or with compound butter. Beurre blanc is often served with shallowpoached lean white fish to add a bit of succulence to the dish.

ADD EYE APPEAL

A sauce can enhance a dish's appearance by adding luster and sheen. Lightly coating a sautéed medallion of lamb with a jus lié creates a glossy finish on the lamb, giving the entire plate more eye appeal. Pooling a red pepper coulis beneath a grilled salmon steak gives the dish a degree of visual excitement by adding an element of color.

ADD FLAVOR

A sauce that includes a flavor complementary to a food brings out the essence of that food. The mild sweetness of poultry is heightened by a sauce flavored with tarragon. The rich flavor of beef is highlighted by a pungent sauce made with green peppercorns, which deepen and enrich the overall taste.

IMPROVE TEXTURE

Many sauces include a garnish that adds texture to the finished dish. Chicken Chasseur is enhanced by a sauce finished

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with tomatoes and mushrooms. A dish that has a distinct texture, such as pan-fried soft-shelled crab, is enhanced by a smooth sauce.

THE GRAND SAUCES

When you hear the term grand sauce, it may refer to a classic system of sauces based upon French culinary standards. Demi-glace, velouté, béchamel, tomato sauce, and hollandaise are often considered the five grand sauces. The grand sauces are also known as mother sauces or leading sauces. These sauces still hold a place of importance in many kitchens, but with the introduction of sauces, both hot and cold, from around the world on the contemporary menu, the concept of the grand sauces has changed.

A grand sauce is a sauce that can be prepared in a significant amount, then finished or flavored so that it is "custom fit" to a particular dish. This approach to sauce-making still has a great deal of relevance in the professional kitchen.

You may hear chefs talk about making pan sauces, reduction sauces, or even replacing the classic repertoire of grand sauces altogether with such items as salsas, vinaigrettes, broths, or essences. Still, the basic principle behind grand sauces is a practical one, and one that is still useful in most kitchens. Instead of a brown sauce, chefs may prefer to use a reduced or thickened stock. Instead of a cream sauce, they may prefer something more contemporary in taste and appearance such as a chutney or a relish. They are still prepared in appropriate quantities and then custom fit to suit a specific dish, often by introducing some of the cooking liquid or fond from the dish.

So, while chefs may disagree about whether or not hollandaise is a grand sauce, or even if grand sauces such as béchamel have a place in the contemporary kitchen, the concept of preparing a high quality sauce, whether in large batches or from a prepared or purchased base, is still important and is widely practiced.

BROWN SAUCES

At one time the term "brown sauce" was equated exclusively with the classic sauces Espagnole and demi glaçe. Today it may also indicate jus de veau lié, pan sauces, or reduction-style sauces based on a brown stock. Regardless of the approach taken, though, the end goal is the same — to make a basic brown sauce that is good enough to be served as is as well as being suitable to use as the foundation of other sauces.

- Espagnole sauce is prepared by bolstering a brown stock with additional aromatics and thickening it with roux.
- Demi glaçe is made by combining equal parts of espagnole and brown stock and reducing by half.
- Jus liés are made by reducing brown stocks (with added flavorings if desired) and thickening them with a pure starch slurry.
- Pan sauces and reduction sauces are produced as part of the roasting or sautéing cooking process; thickeners can be roux, reduction, or pure starch slurries.

SELECT AND PREPARE THE EQUIPMENT AND INGREDIENTS

Brown sauces are typically prepared in a saucepan or pot that is wider than it is tall. This is the most effective means of extracting flavors fully and quickly into the finished sauce.

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- Saucepan or saucepot
- Kitchen spoon, ladle, or skimmer to skim the developing sauce
- Tasting spoons
- Fine strainers
- Containers to hold the finished sauce.

A brown stock of excellent quality with a rich appealing flavor and aroma and well-balanced flavor without any strong notes of mirepoix, herbs, or spices that might overwhelm the finished sauce.

- Bones and trim can be added to the sauce to improve the flavor of the base stock if necessary. If used, cut them into small pieces for better and faster flavor development.
- Tomato puree or paste can be added for a sweet flavor and a good color.
- Additional flavorings or aromatics to either bolster the flavor or give a unique flavor to the sauce. Options include mirepoix, cut into large dice, mushroom trimmings, herbs, garlic, or shallots.
- Thickeners are typically added for a good coating consistency. Prepare roux or slurries made with arrowroot, cornstarch, or potato starch.
- Finishing ingredients including fortified wine, whole or compound butters, and ther garnishes should be selected and prepared according to recipe instructions.

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MAKE THE BROWN SAUCE

1. Brown the trim and/or bones and mirepoix.

The flavor of the base stock can be fortified with well-browned meaty bones and lean trim meat and mirepoix. Browning these ingredients will enrich the finished sauce and help darken its color. Brown them by roasting in a little oil in a hot oven (425° to 450°F/220° to 230°C) or over medium to high heat on the stovetop in the same pot that will be used to simmer the sauce. Let the bones, trim, and mirepoix reach a deep goldenbrown color.

2. Add the tomato paste and cook out until rust-colored.

Allowing the tomato paste to "cook out" (pincé) reduces excessive sweetness, acidity, or bitterness, which might affect the finished sauce. It also encourages the development of the sauce's overall flavor and aroma. When browning the mirepoix in the oven, add the tomato paste to the roasting pan with the vegetables. If browning the mirepoix on the stovetop, add the paste when the vegetables are nearly browned. (Tomato paste cooks out very quickly on the stove-top. Do not let it burn.) Deglaze the pan and add the deglazing liquid to the sauce.

3. Add the brown stock to the bones and/or trim and mirepoix and simmer for 2 to 4 hours, skimming as necessary throughout the cooking time.

Let the sauce base simmer long enough for the richest possible flavor to develop. Simmering develops flavor in two ways: It extracts flavor from the bones, trim, and mirepoix; and it reduces the volume of liquid, concentrating flavor. (Optional: Add a prepared roux now, if desired, to prepare a sauce Espagnole.)

Skim the surface often throughout simmering time. Pulling the pot off center on the burner encourages impurities to collect on one side of the pot, where they are easier to remove.

Taste the sauce base frequently as it develops and adjust the seasoning as necessary by adding aromatics or seasonings. Remove the sauce from the heat once the desired flavor is achieved.

4. Strain the sauce and finish as desired and hold at 165°F/73°C for service.

Return the sauce to a simmer and make any necessary adjustment to its flavor or consistency. If the sauce requires thickening, either reduce it by simmering over high heat or add a starch slurry now. If the sauce has already been thickened, either with a roux or arrowroot or by reduction, no additional thickener may be necessary.

Brown sauces can be finished for service by adding reductions, fortified wines, garnishes, and/or whole butter.

Brown sauces sometimes develop a skin when they are held uncovered. To avoid this, the sauce can be topped with melted whole or clarified butter to make an airtight seal. Alternately, a fitted cover for the bain-marie can be put on top, or a piece of parchment paper or plastic wrap cut to fit the pan can be placed directly on the surface of the sauce.

5. Evaluate the quality of the finished brown sauce.

A brown sauce of excellent quality has a full, rich flavor. The initial roasting of bones, trimmings, and/or mirepoix gives the finished sauce a pleasant roasted or caramel aroma, readily discernible when the sauce is heated, and a predominant flavor of roasted meat or vegetables. The aromatics, mirepoix, and tomatoes should not overpower the main flavor. There should be no bitter or burnt flavors, which can be caused by over-reduction or burning the bones, mirepoix, or tomato paste.

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Good brown sauces have a deep brown color without any dark specks or debris. The color is affected by the color of the base stock, the amount of tomato paste or purée (too much will give a red cast to the sauce), the amount of browning on the trim and mirepoix, proper skimming, the length of simmering time, as well as any finishing or garnishing ingredients you may add later on.

The texture and, to some extent, the color of a brown sauce depends on the type of thickener used. A roux-thickened brown sauce (Espagnole) is slightly opaque with a thick body. A sauce thickened with puréed mirepoix is also thick and opaque but with a rougher, more rustic texture. A sauce thickened with both roux and reduction (demi glaçe) is translucent and highly glossy with a noticeable body, although it should never feel tacky in the mouth. A pure starch-thickened sauce (jus lié) has a greater degree of clarity than other brown sauces as well as a lighter texture and color.

FINISHING A BROWN SAUCE

A brown sauce can be served as is or used to prepare derivative brown sauces. The four basic ways to finishing a brown sauce to create special sauces are:

- Reductions
- Garnishes
- Fortified wines
- Finishing with butter

Reductions

For small amounts of sauce, wine or other flavorful liquids are used to deglaze the sauté pan or roasting pan. Then, they are typically simmered long enough to concentrate their flavor. To make larger batches, simmer the deglazing liquid, along with aromatics if desired, in a separate pan and then add the reduced liquid to a large batch of finished sauce, as you might do for banquet service.

Garnish Items

High-moisture items like mushrooms, shallots, or tomatoes are usually cooked before being added to a sauce. The sauce is then simmered again to return it to the correct consistency and to develop flavors fully. Then, the final seasoning adjustments are made.

Fortified Wines

Port, Madeira, Marsala, or sherry is often blended into the simmering sauce just before serving. Adding these wines at the last minute preserves their complex flavors.

Finishing With Butter (Monter Au Beurre)

This step can be employed to enrich any brown sauce. Cold or room temperature butter is swirled or whisked into the sauce just before serving. This final addition of butter gives the sauce a bit of body as well as a rich flavor and mouthfeel.

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WHITE SAUCES

The white sauce family includes the classic sauces velouté and béchamel, both produced by thickening a liquid with roux.

A classic velouté, which translates from French as "velvety, soft, and smooth to the palate," is prepared by thickening a white stock (veal, chicken, or fish) with blond roux. In Escoffier's time, a béchamel sauce was made by adding cream to a relatively thick velouté sauce. Today, it is made by thickening milk (sometimes infused with aromatics for flavor) with a white roux.

SELECT AND PREPARE THE EQUIPMENT AND INGREDIENTS

White sauces scorch easily if they are not tended and can take on a grayish cast if prepared in an aluminum pan.

- Choose a heavy-gauge non-aluminum pot with a perfectly flat bottom for the best results.
- Simmer white sauces on a flattop for gentle, even heat, or use a heat diffuser if available.
- Have skimmers, ladles, a strainer, wooden spoons, and tasting spoons
- Have containers to cool the sauce, if necessary
- Have containers to hold the sauce in storage or to keep it hot during service

White sauces are made by thickening a pale-colored or white liquid with a roux. There are a variety of other ingredients you can add to enhance the sauce's flavor.

- White stocks (veal, chicken, fish, or vegetable) for velouté or milk for béchamel are the base liquids for white sauces.
- Bring base liquids to a simmer separately and, if desired, infused with aromatics and flavorings to produce a special flavor and/or color in the finished sauce.
- A prepared roux or flour. Blond roux is the traditional thickener for veloutés; blond white roux is used for béchamel. The darker the roux, the more golden the sauce will be. Roux may be prepared in advance, or produced by cooking fat and flour together with the aromatics. The amount of roux you add determines the thickness of a finished white sauce.
- Additional mirepoix, mushroom trimmings, or members of the onion family to bolster the flavor of the sauce or to create a specific flavor profile. Cut them into small dice or slice them thin to encourage rapid flavor release into the sauce.

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MAKE THE WHITE SAUCE

1. Sweat the appropriate aromatics in fat.

Vegetables are occasionally allowed to sweat to make a flavor base for a white sauce. Any meat trimmings you want to include should be gently cooked with them until they stiffen; they should not turn a deep gold or brown.

2. (Optional) Add flour and cook, stirring frequently.

A roux may be cooked in the pot, as part of the sauce-making process, by adding flour to the oil and aromatics in the pot. Add more oil or butter if necessary in order to produce a roux. Let the roux cook for about 4 to 5 minutes or to a light blond color. If you have a prepared roux on hand, you can crumble it into the aromatics and let it cook until it softens.

3. Add the liquid to the roux gradually. Add a sachet d'épices or bouquet garni, if desired.

Many chefs add cool or room-temperature stock or milk to the roux. Others prefer to bring the liquid to a simmer separately, which allows them to adjust the liquid's seasoning with salt, pepper, or other aromatic ingredients. If the liquid is preheated, it should be removed from the heat so that its temperature drops slightly, making it cooler than the hot roux. Add the liquid in stages, whisking until very smooth between additions.

4. Add other seasoning or aromatics and simmer for 30 minutes to 1 hour, stirring frequently and tasting throughout cooking time.

Very rich and flavorful stocks may not require any additional aromatics. Taste the sauce and adjust the seasoning now. If your recipe calls for additional flavorings, they may be added while the sauce simmers. A simmering time of at least 30 minutes is long enough to cook away any raw flavor from the roux, but many chefs recommend simmering for 1 hour for the best flavor development.

Using a wooden spoon, stir the sauce occasionally while simmering. Make sure that the spoon scrapes the bottom and corners of the pot to prevent scorching. Scorching is of greater concern with béchamel than with velouté because the milk solids tend to settle, but any sauce thickened with a roux is susceptible to scorching. Use a flattop or heat diffuser, if available, to keep the heat gentle and even.

To test the texture of the sauce, hold a small amount on the tip of your tongue and press it against the roof of your mouth. If the sauce is properly cooked, there will be no tacky, gluey, or gritty sensation.

5. Strain the sauce.

As the sauce simmers, it can develop a thick skin on the surface as well as a heavy, gluey layer on the bottom and sides of the pot. Straining the sauce removes any lumps and develops a very smooth texture. The sauce is ready to use now, or it may be cooled and stored for later use.

6. Finish as desired and hold at 165°F (73°C) for service.

Return the sauce to a simmer over low heat, stirring frequently. Make any necessary adjustments to the consistency. If you want to thicken the sauce, simmer it a little longer or add a bit more roux or slurry. If you need to thin the sauce, add a bit more liquid--use stock for velouté and milk for béchamel. Add any finishing or garnishing ingredients called for in your recipe now.

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7. Evaluate the quality of the finished white sauce.

An excellent white sauce meets several criteria. The flavor reflects the liquid used in its preparation: white veal, chicken, or fish stock or milk. It has a pale color, with absolutely no hint of gray. Although a white sauce will never be transparent, it should be translucent, lustrous, and have a definite sheen. A good white sauce is perfectly smooth, with noticeable body and no hint of graininess. It is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon yet still easy to pour from a ladle.

FINISHING AND HOLDING WHITE SAUCES

For white sauce derivative sauces, the base sauce may be flavored with a reduction or essence and garnished. White sauces are also often finished with cream. White sauces may develop a skin if held uncovered. To avoid this, some chefs like to top the sauce with melted whole or clarified butter to make an airtight seal; others prefer to use a fitted cover on the bain-marie or place a piece of parchment paper or plastic wrap cut to fit directly on the surface of the sauce.

TOMATO SAUCES

Tomato sauces of all sorts, from simply seasoned fresh tomato sauces to complex and highly seasoned versions, are featured in cuisines around the world. Tomato sauces can be made several ways. They may be raw, or they may be cooked anywhere from ten minutes to several hours. In some versions, olive oil is used as the only cooking fat. For others, rendered salt pork or bacon is required. Some recipes call for roasted veal or pork bones; others are made strictly from tomatoes and the desired vegetables. Some tomato sauces are puréed until smooth; others are left chunky. (Escoffier's tomato sauce relied on roux as a thickener; this style of tomato sauce is rarely prepared in contemporary kitchens.)

SELECT AND PREPARE THE EQUIPMENT AND INGREDIENTS

Because of the high sugar content of some tomatoes, you will need to establish an even heat without hot spots so the sauce will not scorch. The pot you use has a role to play in the ultimate flavor of the sauce.

- Choose a heavy-gauge pot that is made of non-reactive materials such as stainless steel or anodized aluminum. The thickness (or gauge) of the pot is important.
- If the sauce is to be pureed, a food mill is typically used. For a very smooth texture, you may wish to use a blender, food processor, or immersion blender.

A good quality tomato sauce can be made from fresh or canned tomatoes. When fresh tomatoes are at their peak, use them exclusively. At other times of the year, good-quality canned tomatoes are a better choice.

- Plum tomatoes, sometimes referred to as Romas, are generally preferred for tomato sauces because they have a high ratio of flesh to skin and seeds.
- Fresh tomatoes may be skinned and seeded for sauce, or they may be simply rinsed, cored, and quartered or chopped.
- Canned tomatoes come peeled and whole, pureed, or a combination of the two.
- Tomato paste is sometimes added to the sauce as well.

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- There are dozens of choices for additional flavoring ingredients. Some recipes call for a standard mirepoix as the aromatic vegetable component. Others rely more simply on garlic and onions. Still others call for the inclusion of a ham bone or other smoked pork bones. Let your recipe or your palate be your guide.

MAKE THE TOMATO SAUCE

1. Sweat or sauté the aromatic vegetables.

The gentle release of flavor from the aromatic vegetables into the fat helps the flavor to permeate the sauce better. The way the vegetables are cooked influences the flavor of the finished sauce: The vegetables are usually sweated in a fat until they become tender, but for a more complex roasted flavor, they may be sautéed until lightly browned.

2. Add the tomatoes and any remaining ingredients and simmer until the flavor is fully developed, stirring frequently, skimming, and tasting throughout cooking time.

Cooking time varies, depending on the ingredients, but in general, the shorter the cooking time, the better for any sauce based upon tomatoes. Extended cooking diminishes their fresh flavor. Cook a tomato sauce just long enough for the flavors to meld together.

Stir tomato sauce frequently throughout preparation, and check the flavor occasionally. If it becomes necessary to correct a harsh or bitter flavor, sweat a small amount of chopped onions and carrot and add them to the sauce. If the flavor is weak, add a small amount of reduced tomato paste or purée. A sauce that is too sweet may be corrected by adding stock or water or more tomatoes.

3. Purée the sauce, if desired.

Use a food mill, food processor, blender, or immersion blender to purée the sauce. If using a food processor or blender, a small amount of oil added during puréeing will emulsify the sauce for a good coating consistency and a richer mouthfeel.

4. Finish as desired.

Check the balance and seasoning of the sauce and make any necessary adjustments to its flavor by adding salt, pepper, fresh herbs, or other ingredients as indicated by the recipe. At this point, the sauce is ready to be served, or it may be finished for service as desired (see recipes), or it may be cooled and stored.

5. Evaluate the quality of the finished tomato sauce.

Tomato sauces are opaque and slightly coarse, with a concentrated flavor of tomatoes. You should not be able to detect any trace of bitterness, excess acidity, or overpowering sweetness. Ingredients selected to flavor the sauce should provide only subtle underpinnings. Tomato sauces should pour easily.

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EMULSION SAUCES

Hollandaise

Hollandaise sauce is prepared by emulsifying melted or clarified butter and water (in the form of an acidic reduction and/or lemon juice) with partially cooked egg yolks. A number of similar sauces can be prepared by varying the ingredients in the reduction or by adding different finishing and garnishing ingredients. The group includes béarnaise, Choron, and mousseline sauces. Hollandaise can also be combined with whipped cream and/or velouté to prepare a glaçage, which is used to coat a dish that is then lightly browned just before service under a salamander or broiler.

SELECT AND PREPARE THE EQUIPMENT AND INGREDIENTS

The equipment used to prepare a hollandaise sauce and similar sauces lets you cook the sauce gently, without overcooking the yolks.

- A double boiler (may be a set of nested pots or a stainless steel bowl suspended over a pot of simmering water)
- A pot or container to hold the butter
- Ladles to add butter to the sauce and a whip
- A small pot to make the reduction (choose a non-reactive pan)
- A strainer
- Containers to hold the sauce warm for service
- Spoons

Since the largest part of a hollandaise is butter, the success or failure of the sauce depends not only on skillfully combining egg yolks, water, acid, and butter into a rich, smooth sauce, but also on the quality of the butter itself.

MAKE THE HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

1. Make the reduction.

A standard reduction for hollandaise consists of dry white wine, white wine vinegar, minced shallots, and cracked peppercorns, cooked over direct heat until nearly dry. Cool and moisten the reduction with a small amount of water, then strain it into a stainlesssteel bowl.

2. Add the egg yolks to the reduction and whisk over barely simmering water until thickened and warm (145°F/63°C).

Be sure that the water is just barely simmering with no visible signs of surface action. You do want to see plenty of steam rising from the surface. If the yolks seem to be getting too hot and coagulating slightly around the sides and bottom of the bowl, remove the bowl from the heat. Set it on a cool surface and whisk until the mixture has cooled slightly. Replace the bowl over the simmering water and continue cooking. When the yolks have tripled in volume and fall in ribbons into the bowl, remove the bowl from the simmering water. Do not overcook the yolks or they will lose their ability to emulsify the sauce.

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3. Gradually whisk in the warm butter.

Stabilize the bowl by setting it on a towel or in a pot that has been draped with a towel to keep the bowl from slipping.

Add the butter slowly in a thin stream, whisking constantly as it is incorporated. The sauce will begin to thicken as more butter is blended in. If the sauce becomes too thick, add a bit of water or lemon juice. This makes it possible to finish adding the correct amount of butter without breaking the sauce.

4. Season to taste.

Add seasonings such as lemon juice, salt, pepper, and cayenne when the sauce is nearly finished. Lemon juice will lighten the sauce's flavor and texture, but do not let it become a dominant taste. Add just enough to lift the flavor. If the sauce is too thick, add a little warm water to regain the desired light texture.

Certain ingredients may be added to produce a specific sauce at this point. Add meat glaze (glace de viande), tomato purée, essences or juices, or other semi-liquid or liquid ingredients to the sauce gradually to avoid thinning it too much. Once you add flavoring ingredients, check the seasoning of the sauce once more and make any necessary adjustments.

Some hollandaise-style sauces are finished with minced herbs. Herbs should be properly rinsed and dried, then cut into uniform mince or chiffonade with a very sharp knife to retain the most color and flavor. Fine-dice tomato or citrus suprêmes may also be added to certain hollandaise-style sauces; these garnishes should be properly cut and allowed to drain, so that excess moisture does not thin the sauce.

5. Evaluate the quality of the finished hollandaise.

The predominant flavor and aroma of a good hollandaise sauce is that of butter. The egg yolks contribute a great deal of flavor as well. The reduction ingredients give the sauce a balanced taste, as do the lemon juice and any additional seasonings. Hollandaise should be a lemon-yellow color with a satiny smooth texture. (A grainy texture indicates that the egg yolks have overcooked and begun to scramble.) The sauce should have a luster and not appear oily. The consistency should be light and pourable.

6. Serve immediately or hold at or near 145°F/63°C for no more than 2 hours.

Most kitchens have one or two spots that are the perfect temperature for holding hollandaise, usually above the stove or ovens or near (but not directly under) heat lamps. Holding hollandaise presents an unusual challenge, however. The sauce must be held below 150°F/65°C to keep the yolks from curdling, but at this temperature the sauce hovers just above the danger zone for bacterial growth. The acid from the reduction and/or lemon juice helps keep some bacteria at bay, but the sauce should still never be held longer than 2 hours.

Some kitchens prepare batches of hollandaise to be finished to order with the appropriate flavorings and garnishes. Be sure that the containers used to hold hollandaise and similar sauces are perfectly clean. Stainless-steel bain-maries, ceramic containers, or vacuum bottles with wide necks are good choices. Keep all spoons and ladles used to serve the sauce meticulously clean, and never reintroduce a tasting spoon, bare fingers, or other sources of cross-contamination into the sauce.

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Fixing a Broken Hollandaise

When a hollandaise has a curdled or scrambled appearance, it has broken. If your hollandaise does start to break, you may be able to rescue it. Try adding a small amount of water and whisking until the sauce is smooth before adding more butter. If that doesn't work, cook another egg yolk over simmering water until thickened, and then gradually whisk in the broken hollandaise. Note, however, that a sauce restored in this manner will not have the same volume as a sauce that did not have to be rescued, and it will not hold as well.

If the sauce becomes too hot, the egg yolks will begin to scramble. To correct this problem, remove the sauce from the heat and add a small amount of cool water. Whisk the sauce until it is smooth and, if necessary, strain it to remove any bits of overcooked yolk.

BEURRE BLANC

Traditionally, beurre blanc is an integral part of the shallow-poaching process with the cooking liquid (cuisson) used for the reduction. Another common practice is to prepare a reduction separately and make the beurre blanc in a larger batch so it can be used as a grand sauce to prepare derivative sauces or when you must serve large numbers quickly. As is true for hollandaise, beurre blanc derivatives are prepared by either varying the ingredients in the reduction or altering the garnish ingredients. Beurre rouge, for instance, is made by using red wine in the reduction.

Select and Prepare the Ingredients and Equipment

Unlike hollandaise, a warm butter sauce is prepared over direct heat.

- A wide, shallow pan of a non-reactive metal. Bi-metal pans, such as copper or anodized aluminum lined with stainless steel, are excellent choices for this sauce.
- A saucepan or saucepot to reduce the cream, if cream is being used
- A whisk to incorporate the butter into the sauce (Note, however, that some chefs prefer to swirl the pan over the burner or flattop as they incorporate the butter.)
- Straining is optional, but if you choose to strain either the reduction or the finished sauce, you will need a sieve.
- Containers to hold the prepared sauce and keep it warm during service.

The quality of the butter is critical to the success of a beurre blanc. Unsalted butter is best because salt can always be added to taste later on. Check the butter carefully for a rich, sweet, creamy texture and aroma.

A standard reduction for a beurre blanc is made from dry white wine and shallots. Other ingredients often used in the reduction include vinegar or citrus juice; chopped herbs including tarragon, basil, chives, or chervil, cracked peppercorns, and sometimes garlic or ginger, lemongrass, saffron, and other flavoring ingredients.

A small amount of reduced heavy cream is occasionally added to stabilize the emulsion. The more the cream is reduced, the greater its stabilizing effect. The more stable the sauce, the longer it will last during service. However, the flavor of cream can overwhelm the fresh taste of the butter, so you may prefer to make beurre blanc without it.

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- Butter, cut into cubes and cooled
- A reduction made from dry white wine, vinegar, shallots, and peppercorns
- Heavy cream, (optional). If cream is used, reduce it by half separately until it thickens and has a rich, ivory-yellow color.
- Salt
- Ground white pepper
- Lemon juice

MAKE THE BEURRE BLANC

1. Prepare the reduction.

This initial reduction of acid, shallots, and peppercorns (or other aromatics as required by recipe) gives the sauce much of its flavor. Combine the reduction ingredients and reduce over fairly brisk heat to a syrupy consistency (à sec). If preparing the sauce as an integral part of a shallow-poached dish, simply reduce the cuisson.

2. Gradually incorporate the chilled butter into the reduction.

Reduce the heat to low. Add the butter a little at a time and blend it in with a fork or a whisk or by keeping the pan in constant motion. The action is similar to that used in finishing a sauce with butter (monter au beurre).

If the sauce looks oily rather than creamy or if it appears to be separating, it has gotten too hot. Immediately pull the pan off the heat and set it on a cool surface. Continue to add the chilled butter a little at a time, whisking until the mixture regains the proper creamy
appearance. Then continue to incorporate the remainder of the butter over low heat.

3. Make the necessary final adjustments to flavor.

Adjust the seasoning. If you did not strain the reduction earlier, you have the option of straining the sauce now. If you do choose to strain, work quickly to keep the sauce warm.

4. Serve immediately or keep warm.

To prepare a large batch of beurre blanc and hold it through a service period, use the same holding techniques described for hollandaise. The sauce may deteriorate over time, however, and must be monitored for quality.

5. Evaluate the quality of the finished beurre blanc.

The flavor of beurre blanc is that of whole butter, with piquant accents from the reduction. The finishing and/or garnishing ingredients also influence the flavor. If cream is included, it should not have a dominant flavor. A good beurre blanc is creamy in color, although garnishes of herbs, purées, and other ingredients may change the color. The sauce should have a distinct sheen.

The body should be light. If the sauce is too thin, it probably does not contain enough butter. Conversely, a beurre blanc that is too thick includes too much butter or cream. The texture should be frothy, and the sauce should not leave an oily or greasy feeling in the mouth.

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GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING AND SERVING SAUCES

Sauces are one of the most challenging items to prepare. A sauce of excellent quality can concentrate and enhance the flavors of a dish by adding moisture, eye appeal, complementary or contrasting flavors or textures. Not only is it important to prepare the sauce itself properly, it is critical that the sauce make a good match with the food it accompanies. When choosing an appropriate sauce, consider the following:

MATCHING A SAUCE TO A DISH

Appropriate for the flavor of the food with which it is paired.

Brown sauces have deep rich colors and tastes that make them suitable to serve with most red meats (beef, lamb, and game) as well as with veal and pork. They can be served with deeply flavored poultry dishes, but are typically too intense for lighter meats or fish.

White sauces are subtly flavored and are good companions for fish dishes. They provide a good background flavor for seafood dishes, but aren't sufficiently flavorful for red meats. The garnishes and flavorings that you may add to the sauce should not overpower the main item.

Matched to the main ingredient's cooking technique

Pair a cooking technique that produces flavorful drippings (fond), such as roasting or sautéing, with a sauce that makes use of those drippings. Similarly, beurre blanc is suitable for foods that have been shallow-poached because the cooking liquid (cuisson) can become a part of the sauce.

Suitable for the style of service

In a banquet setting or in any situation where large quantities of food must be served rapidly and at the peak of flavor, choose a sauce that may be prepared in advance and held in large quantities at the correct temperature without affecting quality. In an à la carte kitchen, sauces prepared à la minute are more appropriate.

SERVING SAUCES

Keep hot sauces hot.

Check the temperature of the sauce, of the food being sauced, and of the plate. Be sure that hot sauces are extremely hot, warm emulsions sauces are as warm as possible without danger of breaking, and cold sauces remain cold until they come in contact with hot foods.

Add the sauce in a way that suits the texture of the food you are serving.

Pool the sauce beneath the food, spreading it in a layer directly on the plate if the food has a crisp or otherwise interesting texture. Spoon or ladle the sauce evenly over the top of the food if it could benefit from a little cover or if the sauce has visual appeal.

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Serve an appropriate portion of sauce.

There should be enough sauce for every bite of the sauced food but not so much that the dish looks swamped. Not only does this disturb the balance between the items on the plate, it makes it difficult for the waiter to carry the food from the kitchen to the guest's table without at least some of the sauce running onto the rim, or worse, over the edge of the plate.

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JUS DE VEUE LIÉ

Yield: 1 gallon

Ingredients	Amounts
Vegetable oil	2 fl oz
Veal trim, lean	4 lbs
Mirepoix, medium dice	1 lb
Tomato purée	4 fl oz
Brown veal stock	4 ½ quarts
Sachet d'épices	1 each
Arrowroot or cornstarch slurry	1 oz
Salt	1 tbs
Pepper	1 tsp

Method

1. Heat the oil in a rondeau over medium heat. Add the trim and mirepoix and sauté, stirring from time to time, until the veal, onions, and carrots have taken on a rich brown color, about 25-30 minutes.
2. Add the tomato puree and continue to cook over medium heat until it turns a rusty brown color and has a rich, sweet aroma, about 1 minute.
3. Add the stock and bring to a simmer. Continue to simmer, skimming as necessary, until a good flavor develops, 2 to 3 hours.
4. Add the sachet during the last hour of cooking time.
5. Strain the sauce base, it can now be finished or it may be rapidly cooled and stored for later use.
6. Return the sauce base to a simmer. Stir the slurry to recombine if necessary and gradually add to the sauce base, adding just enough to achieve a good coating consistency (nappé). The amount of slurry needed depends on the batch itself and its intended

Nutrition information per 2oz serving:

40 Calories; 6 grams Protein; 1 grams Carbohydrate (total); 2 grams Fat (total); 110 milligrams Sodium; 18 milligrams Cholesterol

Variations

Jus de Volaille Lié: Replace the Brown Veal Stock with a Brown Chicken Stock and replace the veal bones and trim with an equal weight of chicken bones and trim.

Jus de Canard Lié: Replace the Brown Veal Stock with a Brown Duck Stock and replace the veal bones and trim with an equal weight of duck bones and trim.

Jus d'Agneau Lié: Replace the Brown Veal Stock with Brown Lamb Stock and replace the veal bones and trim with an equal weight of lamb bones and trim.

Jus de Gibier Lié: Replace the Brown Veal Stock with Brown Game Stock and replace the veal bones and trim with an equal weight of venison bones and trim.

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ESPAGNOLE SAUCE

Yield: 1 gallon

Ingredients	Amounts
Vegetable oil	3 fl oz
Mirepoix, medium dice	1 lb
Tomato paste	2 fl oz
Brown veal stock, hot	6 qts
Brown roux	12 oz
Sachet d' épices	1 each

Method

1. Sauté the onions in the oil until they take on a brown color. Add the remainder of the mirepoix and continue to brown.
2. Add the tomato paste and cook for several minutes until it turns a rusty brown.
3. Add the stock and bring to a simmer.
4. Whip the roux into the stock. Return to a simmer and add the sachet. Simmer for about 1 hour, skimming the surface as necessary.
5. Strain through a double thickness of rinsed cheesecloth. The sauce is ready to use now, or it may be cooled and stored for later use.

Nutrition information per 2oz serving:

26.87 Calories; .81 grams Protein; 1.43 grams Carbohydrate (total); 1.97 grams Fat (total); 47.48 milligrams Sodium; 4.05 milligrams Cholesterol

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DEMI-GLACE

Yield: 1 Quart

Ingredients	Amounts
Brown veal stock	1 qt
Espagnole sauce	1 qt

Method

1. Combine the stock and the espagnole sauce in a heavy-gauge pot and simmer over low to moderate heat until reduced by half. Skim the sauce frequently as it simmers.
2. Strain the sauce. The sauce is ready to serve now, or it may be cooled and stored for later service

Nutrition information per 2oz serving:

15.35 Calories; .75 grams Protein; .69 grams Carbohydrate (total); 1.03 grams Fat (total); 50.21 milligrams Sodium; 2.55 milligrams Cholesterol

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RED WINE SAUCE

Yield: 1 Quart

Ingredients	Amounts
Shallots, minced	1 oz.
Thyme sprigs	2 each
Bay leaf	1 each
Black peppercorns, cracked	½ tsp
Dry red wine	16 fl oz
Jus de Veau Lié or Demi-glace	1 qt
Unsalted butter, diced	4 oz

Method

1. Combine the shallots, thyme, bay leaf, peppercorns, and red wine and reduce the mixture until syrupy.
2. Add the jus de veau lié or demi-glace and reduce until the sauce coats the back of a spoon. Strain the sauce.
3. Finish the sauce with butter.

Nutrition information per 2oz serving:

50 Calories; 1 grams Protein; 2 grams Carbohydrate (total); 3 grams Fat (total); 125 milligrams Sodium; 10 milligrams Cholesterol

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BÉCHAMEL SAUCE

Yield: 1 Gallon

Ingredients	Amounts
Oil or clarified butter	2 fl oz
Onions, minced	2 oz
White roux	1 lb
Milk	4 ½ qts
Salt	1 tsp
White pepper, freshly ground	½ tsp
Nutmeg, freshly grated (optional)	1/8 tsp

Method

1. Heat the oil or butter and add the onions. Sauté over low to moderate heat, stirring frequently until the onions are tender and translucent, about 6 to 8 minutes.
2. Add the roux to the onions and cook until the roux is very hot, about 2 minutes. Add the milk to the pan gradually, whisking or stirring to work out any lumps. Bring the sauce to a full boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until the sauce is smooth and thickened, about 30 minutes. Stir frequently and skim as necessary throughout cooking time.
3. Adjust the seasoning to taste with salt, pepper, and nutmeg.
4. Strain through a double thickness of rinsed cheesecloth. The sauce is ready to use now, or it may be cooled and stored for later use

Nutrition information per 2-oz serving

60 Calories; 3 grams Protein; 6 grams Carbohydrate (total); 2 grams Fat (total); 70 milligrams Sodium; 10 milligrams Cholesterol

Variation

Cheddar Sauce: Combine the finished béchamel with 1 pound/ 454 grams of grated sharp cheddar cheese.

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SUPRÊME SAUCE

Yield: 1 Quart

Ingredients	Amounts
Chicken Velouté	1 qt
Heavy cream	1 cup
White mushrooms, thinly sliced	8 ounces
Salt	1 tsp
White pepper, freshly ground	½ tsp
Butter, cut into cubes	2 ounces

Method

1. Combine the velouté, heavy cream, and mushrooms, if desired, in a small saucepan. Simmer for about 8 minutes, stirring and skimming the sauce frequently, until it coats the back of spoon.
2. Strain the sauce and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper.
3. Stir in the butter to finish.

Nutrition information per 2-oz serving

43 Calories; 1 grams Protein; 2 grams Carbohydrate (total); 4 grams Fat (total); 245 milligrams Sodium; 44 milligrams Cholesterol

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TOMATO SAUCE

Yield: 1 Gallon

Ingredients	Amounts
Olive oil	6 fl oz
Onions, small dice	8 oz
Garlic, minced or thinly sliced	2 oz
Plum tomatoes, cored & chopped	10 lb
Tomato purée	24 fl oz
Basil leaves, torn or chopped	3 oz
Salt	1 tsp
Black pepper, freshly ground	½ tsp

Method

1. Heat the olive oil in a rondeau or wide shallow pot over medium-low heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until they take on a light golden color, about 12 to 15 minutes.
2. Add the garlic and continue to sauté, stirring frequently, until garlic is soft and fragrant, about 1 minute.
3. Add the tomatoes and tomato purée. Bring the sauce to a simmer and cook over low heat, stirring from time to time for about 45 minutes (exact cooking time depends on the quality of the tomatoes and their natural moisture content) until a good sauce-like consistency develops.
4. Add the basil and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes more. Taste the sauce and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper if necessary.
5. The sauce may be puréed through a food mill fitted with a coarse disk, broken up with a whisk to make a rough purée, or left chunky.
6. The sauce is ready to serve, finished as desired, or cooled and stored.

Nutrition information per 2-oz serving

32 Calories; 1 grams Protein; 4 grams Carbohydrate (total); 2 grams Fat (total); 30 milligrams Sodium; 0 milligrams Cholesterol

Variation

9 pounds of canned whole plum tomatoes (2 No. 10 cans) may be substituted for the fresh tomatoes. With canned tomatoes, it may be necessary to drain off some of the liquid if there is too much. If desired, the whole canned tomatoes can be puréed in a food mill before preparing the sauce.

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RED PEPPER COULIS

Yield: 1 Quart

Ingredients	Amounts
Olive oil	1 fl oz
Shallots, minced	½ oz
Red peppers, peeled, seeded deribed, and chopped	1 lb 8 0z
Salt	2 tsp
Black pepper, freshly ground	½ tsp
Dry white wine	4 fl oz
Chicken stock	8 fl oz
Heavy cream (optional)	2-3 fl oz

Method

1. Sweat the shallots in the olive oil, stirring frequently until they are tender, about 2 minutes. Add the peppers and continue to sweat over medium heat until the peppers are very tender, about 12 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Deglaze the pan with the wine and let the wine reduce until nearly cooked away. Add thestock; simmer until reduced by half.
3. Purée the sauce in a food processor or blender until very smooth. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper to taste. If using heavy cream, add the cream to the puréed sauce and simmer 3 to 4 minutes more.

Nutrition information per 2-oz serving

37 Calories; 1 grams Protein; 3 grams Carbohydrate (total); 3 grams Fat (total); 235 milligrams Sodium; 5 milligrams Cholesterol

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HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

Yield: 1 Quart

Ingredients	Amounts
Shallots, chopped	1 ½ tbs
Black peppercorns, cracked	¾ tsp
Cider or white wine vinegar	3 fl oz
Water	3 fl oz
Egg yolks	6 fl oz
Unsalted butter, melted or clarified butter, warm	24 fl oz
Lemon juice	1 tbs
Salt	2 tsp
White pepper, freshly ground	¼ tsp
Cayenne (optional)	pinch

Method

1. Combine the shallots, peppercorns, and vinegar in a small pan and reduce over medium heat until nearly dry.
2. Add the water to the reduction and strain into a stainless-steel bowl.
3. Whip the egg yolks together with the reduction and place over simmering water. Cook, whisking constantly, until the eggs are thickened and form ribbons when they fall from the whisk.
4. Gradually add the butter in a thin stream, whipping constantly, until all of the butter is added and the sauce is thickened.
5. Taste the sauce and add lemon juice, salt, pepper, and cayenne, if desired, as needed. The sauce is ready to serve now. It may be held warm for up to 2 hours

Nutrition information per 2-oz serving

290 Calories; 2 grams Protein; 1 grams Carbohydrate (total); 31 grams Fat (total); 256 milligrams Sodium; 182 milligrams Cholesterol

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BÉARNAISE SAUCE

Yield: 1 Quart

Ingredients	Amounts
Shallots, chopped	1 ½ tbs
Black peppercorns, cracked	¾ tsp
Dried tarragon	1 ½ tbs
Tarragon stems, chopped	3 each
Tarragon vinegar	3 fl oz
Dry white wine	1 ½ fl oz
Water	3 fl oz
Egg yolks	6 fl oz
Butter, melted or clarified warm	24 fl oz
Tarragon, chopped	3 tbs
Chervil, chopped	1 ½ tbs
Salt	½ tsp

Method

1. Combine the shallots, peppercorns, dried tarragon, tarragon stems, and vinegar. Reduce untilnearly dry.
2. Add the wine and water to the reduction and strain into a stainless-steel bowl. Whip the egg yolks together with the reduction and place over simmering water. Cook, whisking constantly, until the eggs are thickened and form ribbons when they fall from the whisk.
3. Gradually add the butter in a thin stream, whipping constantly, until all of the butter is added and the sauce is thickened.
4. Add the chopped tarragon and chervil and adjust the seasoning to taste with salt. The sauce is ready to serve now. It may be held warm for up to 2 hours

Nutrition information per 2-oz serving

290 Calories; 2 grams Protein; 1 grams Carbohydrate (total); 31 grams Fat (total); 256 milligrams Sodium; 182 milligrams Cholesterol

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BEURRE BLANC

Yield: 1 Quart

Ingredients	Amounts
Shallots, minced	2 tbs
Black peppercorns	6-8 each
Dry white wine	8 fl oz
Lemon juice	2 fl oz
Cider of white wine vinegar	3 fl oz
Heavy cream, reduced by ½ (optional)	8 fl oz
Unsalted butter, chilled, cut into cubes	1 lb 8 oz
Salt	1 tbs
White pepper, freshly ground	¼ tsp
Lemon zest, grated (optional)	1 tbs

Method

1. Combine the shallots, peppercorns, wine, lemon juice, and vinegar in a saucepan. Reduce over medium-high heat until nearly dry.
2. Add the reduced heavy cream, if using, and simmer the sauce for 2 to 3 minutes to reduce slightly.
3. Add the butter a few pieces at a time, whisking constantly to blend the butter into the reduction. The heat should be quite low as you work. Continue adding butter until the full amount has been incorporated.
4. Taste the beurre blanc and adjust with salt and pepper. Finish the sauce by adding the lemon zest. Hold this sauce as you would a hollandaise.

Nutrition information per 2-oz serving

282 Calories; 2 grams Protein; 1 grams Carbohydrate (total); 30 grams Fat (total); 65 milligrams Sodium; 173 milligrams Cholesterol

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VELOUTÉ SAUCE

Yield: 1 Gallon

Ingredients	Amounts
Clarified butter or vegetable oil	6 fl oz
White mirepoix, small dice	8 oz
All-purpose flour	8 oz
Chicken stock	4 ½ qts
Sachet d'épices	1
White pepper, freshly ground	1 tsp

Method

1. Heat the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the white mirepoix and cook, stirring from time to time, until the onions are limp and have begun to release their juices into the pan, about 15 minutes. They may take on a light golden color but should not be allowed to brown.
2. Add the flour and stir well to combine. Cook over low to medium heat, stirring frequently, until a pale or blond roux forms, about 12 minutes.
3. Add the stock to the pan gradually, stirring or whisking to work out any lumps. Bring to a full boil, then lower the heat to establish a simmer.
4. Add the sachet and continue to simmer, skimming as necessary, until a good flavor and consistency develop and the starchy feel and taste of the flour have cooked away, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Nutrition information per 2-oz serving

30 Calories; 1 grams Protein; 2 grams Carbohydrate (total); 2 grams Fat (total); 126 milligrams Sodium; 6 milligrams Cholesterol

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