

COOKING SKILLS

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2

8 Chapters

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COOKING SKILLS: SAUCES 2

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Cooking Skills: Sauces 2

Chapter 1 · Brown Sauces and Jus

SKILL GOAL

Build a deep, glossy brown sauce from browned ingredients and good stock, without wine.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A **brown sauce** gets its colour and depth from browning: onions, bones and flour are cooked until they turn deep golden or brown, and every bit of browning becomes flavour. A **jus** (French for juice) is the lighter cousin: no flour at all, just roasted bones and stock reduced until it is glossy and intense. Restaurants often use wine, but browned vegetables, tomato purée and a splash of vinegar give the same depth with no alcohol.

Brown sauces are built on stock, which is why a good one matters. Stock itself is the planned Soups and Stocks 1; until then, use ready-made low-salt stock and taste before salting. The simple gravy and pan sauce methods are in Cooking Skills: Sauces 1, chapters 4 and 6, and steak sauces are in Cooking Skills: Beef and Steak 1, chapter 3. This course starts where those finish: with time.

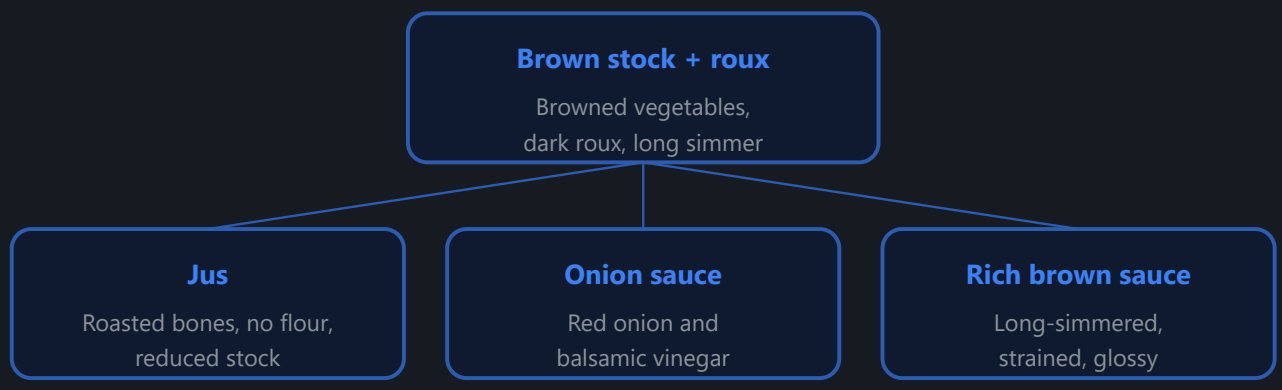


Figure 1. Three sauces from the same idea: browning, stock and reduction.

The method

- **Brown first:** cook onions, carrots and bones until deep golden, because pale ingredients make a pale sauce.
- **Add tomato purée** and cook it for a minute until it darkens; it adds depth and a little acidity.
- **Use hot stock** and add it gradually, scraping up everything stuck to the pan.
- **Simmer gently and skim** off the foam and fat that rise to the top, so the sauce stays clear.
- **Strain, then reduce** to the thickness you want, tasting for salt only at the end.

SAUCE	THICKENED WITH	TIME (APPROXIMATE)	GOES WITH
Quick brown sauce	Browned flour	30 minutes	Sausages, pies, burgers
Chicken jus	Reduction only	50 minutes	Roast chicken, vegetables
Red onion and balsamic	Reduction	35 minutes	Steak, pork, cheese on toast
Rich brown sauce	Dark roux	1 hour 30 minutes	Beef, game, pies

HOT SAUCE, HOT PANS AND STOCK

Hot sauce: a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

Hot pan and cooked-on bits: the pan is very hot after frying and the crusty bits spit when liquid hits them. Take the pan off the heat for a moment, pour in the liquid slowly with your face back, and use a long spoon.

Stock and salt: shop stock cubes and granules are very salty. Use low-salt stock, make it up weaker than the pack says, and taste before adding any salt, especially if you plan to reduce the sauce.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A quick brown sauce

30 minutes | 4 portions | browning onions and flour

A fast everyday brown sauce: onion, browned flour and stock, with tomato purée and Worcestershire sauce for depth. It is good with sausages, mash, pies and burgers.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 tbsp	sunflower or rapeseed oil
1	onion, finely chopped
2 tbsp	plain flour
1 tbsp	tomato purée
400 ml	hot low-salt beef stock
1 tbsp	Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp	soy sauce
1 tsp	brown sugar

1. Cook the onion in the oil over a medium heat for **10 minutes** until deep golden. Stir in the flour and purée and cook for 2 minutes until the flour turns light brown.
2. Add the hot stock a little at a time, stirring, then the Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce and sugar.
3. Simmer for **12 to 15 minutes** until it coats a spoon. Strain if you like a smooth sauce, then taste and season.

> **HOT SAUCE AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot sauce:** a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.
>
> **Allergens:** contains gluten, soy, and fish (Worcestershire sauce); stock may contain celery.

LEVEL 2 · JUS

A roast chicken jus

1 hour | 4 portions | roasting bones and reducing without flour

A jus is thin but intensely savoury. Roasted chicken wings give the flavour and natural gelatine, which gives the sauce a gloss without any flour. It transforms a plain roast chicken.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

500 g	chicken wings, chopped in half
1 tbsp	sunflower or rapeseed oil
1	onion, roughly chopped
1	carrot, roughly chopped
1 tbsp	tomato purée
500 ml	hot low-salt chicken stock
2	sprigs of thyme
1 tsp	lemon juice

1. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Roast the wings with the oil in a tin for **30 minutes** until dark golden, adding the onion and carrot for the last 15 minutes.
2. Move everything to a saucepan, stir in the purée and pour a little hot stock into the tin to loosen the brown bits; add this and the rest of the stock to the pan with the thyme.
3. Simmer for **25 to 30 minutes,** skimming. Strain through a fine sieve and boil the liquid hard until reduced to about 250 ml. Add the lemon juice, taste and season.

HOT OVEN, HOT TIN AND SAUCE

Hot pot and hot steam: a heavy casserole dish or pan of hot liquid is heavy and scalding. Use oven gloves, lift the lid away from your face so the steam doesn't burn you, keep the handles turned in and never carry a full pot across a busy kitchen.

Hot sauce: a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

Stock and salt: shop stock cubes and granules are very salty. Use low-salt stock, make it up

> weaker than the pack says, and taste before adding any salt, especially if you plan to reduce the sauce.

LEVEL 2 · SWEET-SHARP

A red onion and balsamic sauce

40 minutes | 4 portions | slowly caramelising onions into a sauce

Red onions cooked very slowly turn sweet and jammy, and balsamic vinegar adds a rich acidity. It is lovely with steak, pork chops, sausages or a cheese sandwich.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2 tbsp	olive oil
3	red onions, thinly sliced
1 tbsp	brown sugar
3 tbsp	balsamic vinegar
200 ml	hot low-salt beef or vegetable stock
1 tsp	plain flour
1	sprig of thyme

1. Cook the onions in the oil over a low heat for **25 minutes,** stirring now and then, until very soft and golden. Add the sugar for the last 5 minutes.
2. Stir in the flour for 1 minute, then add the vinegar and stir until it has almost gone.
3. Add the stock and thyme and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes until syrupy. Remove the thyme, taste and season.

> **HOT SUGAR AND BURNING**
>
> **Hot sugar:** boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.
>
> **Hot pan and cooked-on bits:** the pan is very hot after frying and the crusty bits spit when liquid hits them. Take the pan off the heat for a moment, pour in the liquid slowly with your face back, and use a long spoon.
>
> **Allergens:** contains gluten; balsamic vinegar contains sulphites.

LEVEL 3 · CLASSIC

A rich brown sauce (espagnole-style)

1 hour 45 minutes | 8 portions (about 500 ml) | a dark roux and a long, gentle simmer

The classic French brown sauce, without wine. Chop the vegetables small so they give up flavour quickly. It takes time but little attention, and a batch freezes well in portions, so it is worth making a full one.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

30 g	butter
1	onion, finely chopped
1	carrot, finely chopped
1	celery stick, finely chopped
30 g	plain flour
2 tbsp	tomato purée
1 litre	hot low-salt beef stock
1	bay leaf
4	black peppercorns
1	sprig of thyme

1. Melt the butter and cook the onion, carrot and celery over a medium heat for **12 to 15 minutes** until dark golden. Stir in the flour and cook for 5 to 6 minutes, stirring, until the roux is the colour of milk chocolate.
2. Stir in the purée and cook for 2 minutes, then add the stock a ladle at a time, whisking. Add the bay leaf, peppercorns and thyme.
3. Simmer very gently, partly covered, for **1 hour,** skimming now and then, until reduced by half. Strain through a fine sieve, taste, and cool any you will freeze.

> **LONG SIMMER, HOT SAUCE AND FREEZING**
>
> **Hot sauce:** a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

> **Stock and salt:** shop stock cubes and granules are very salty. Use low-salt stock, make it up weaker than the pack says, and taste before adding any salt, especially if you plan to reduce the sauce.
>
> **Keeping sauces:** cool a sauce quickly in a shallow container within 1 to 2 hours, press cling film onto the surface to stop a skin forming, chill and use within about 2 days. Reheat until steaming hot, stirring. Milk and cream sauces can split when frozen, so freeze other sauces instead.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Pale or dark roux

Flavour against thickening.

1. Make two small brown sauces, cooking the roux for 2 minutes in one and 6 minutes in the other.

Look for: The dark roux gives a deeper, nuttier flavour but thickens less. A medium roux is a good balance.

EXPERIMENT

Browned or plain onions

Colour and flavour.

1. Cook onion for 4 minutes in one pan and 15 minutes in another, and use each in a quick brown sauce.

Look for: The browned onion makes a darker, sweeter sauce; the pale one tastes thin. Browning is where the flavour comes from.

EXPERIMENT

Reduce by half or by two thirds

Concentration.

1. Reduce a jus to half its volume, then take some out and reduce the rest to a third.

Look for: The more reduced jus is stronger, glossier and saltier. Stop when it tastes right, not when a number says so.

EXPERIMENT

Strained or rustic

Silky and textured.

1. Strain half of a brown sauce through a fine sieve and leave half unstrained.

Look for: The strained sauce is silky and glossy; the rustic one has more texture. Restaurants strain; home cooks often don't.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Quick brown sauce				
Chicken jus				
Red onion and balsamic sauce				
Rich brown sauce				
Pale or dark roux				
Browned or plain onions				
Reduce by half or by two thirds				
Strained or rustic				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Pale and bland	Not enough browning	Brown the onions and flour longer; add soy sauce or tomato purée
Bitter	Burnt flour or onions	Start again; burnt roux cannot be fixed
Greasy	Fat not skimmed	Skim with a spoon, or chill and lift the fat off the top
Too thin	Not reduced enough	Boil it down, or add a little cornflour mixed with cold water
Lumpy	Cold stock or added too fast	Whisk hard or strain through a sieve
Too salty	Salty stock, or over-reduced	Add water or unsalted stock, a pinch of sugar or a squeeze of lemon

HOT SAUCE, HOT PAN AND LEFTOVERS

Hot sauce: a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

Hot pan and cooked-on bits: the pan is very hot after frying and the crusty bits spit when liquid hits them. Take the pan off the heat for a moment, pour in the liquid slowly with your face back, and use a long spoon.

Keeping sauces: cool a sauce quickly in a shallow container within 1 to 2 hours, press cling film onto the surface to stop a skin forming, chill and use within about 2 days. Reheat until steaming hot, stirring. Milk and cream sauces can split when frozen, so freeze other sauces instead.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can brown onions and flour until deep golden.
- ☐ I can make a jus from roasted bones.
- ☐ I can skim and strain a sauce.
- ☐ I can make a brown sauce without wine.
- ☐ I can fix a pale, bitter or greasy sauce.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 2 is Mornay and Cheese Sauces: melting cheese into a sauce without splitting it.

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2

Chapter 2 · Mornay and Cheese Sauces

SKILL GOAL

Melt cheese into a smooth sauce that does not turn stringy or greasy.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A **mornay** sauce is a white sauce with cheese stirred in. The white sauce itself is in Cooking Skills: Sauces 1, chapter 2, and a plain cheese sauce is already one of its recipes; this chapter is about making cheese sauces **better and more reliable**. Cheese is mostly fat and protein. Too much heat makes the protein clump into strings and squeezes the fat out as grease. So the rule is simple: **take the sauce off the heat first,** and add the cheese a little at a time.

Choose the cheese for flavour and melting. A mature Cheddar has more flavour; Gruyère and Emmental melt smoothly and taste nutty; a small amount of Parmesan adds saltiness and depth. Pre-grated cheese is coated to stop sticking and can melt less well, so grate your own if you can. Mustard and nutmeg sharpen and warm the flavour.



Figure 2. The mornay method: make the sauce, take it off the heat, then add the cheese.

The method

- **Make a smooth white sauce** and simmer it for 8 minutes so the flour is cooked.
- **Take the pan off the heat** and wait a minute, so the sauce is hot but no longer bubbling.

- **Grate the cheese finely** and stir it in a handful at a time, letting each melt before the next.
- **Add mustard and nutmeg** for flavour, and salt last because cheese is already salty.
- **Never boil it after the cheese goes in.** If you need to reheat it, do so gently.

CHEESE	FLAVOUR	MELTS	BEST FOR
Mature Cheddar	Sharp and strong	Well, can be greasy	Cauliflower cheese, rarebit
Mild Cheddar	Gentle	Very well	Children's pasta, soft sauces
Gruyère or Emmental	Nutty, sweet	Very smoothly	Mornay, fondue, croque monsieur
Parmesan	Salty, savoury	Poorly alone	A little, mixed with other cheeses

HOT SAUCE, ALLERGENS AND MUSTARD

Hot sauce: a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

Allergens in cheese sauces: contains milk, gluten (flour) and often mustard. Cheese can contain traces of animal rennet, so check the label for vegetarians. Use a plant cheese and cornflour for a dairy-free, gluten-free version (it will melt differently).

Lumps: lumps are flour that met liquid too fast. Add the liquid a little at a time while whisking, and if lumps still form, whisk hard off the heat or strain the sauce through a sieve.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A mornay sauce

25 minutes | 4 portions (about 450 ml) | adding cheese off the heat

The classic cheese sauce. Using two cheeses gives flavour and smoothness. It is good over fish, ham, eggs, vegetables and pasta, and is the base for macaroni cheese and lasagne.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

30 g	butter
30 g	plain flour
450 ml	whole milk, warmed
60 g	mature Cheddar, finely grated
30 g	Gruyère, finely grated
1 tsp	Dijon mustard
1 pinch	nutmeg
1 pinch	white pepper

1. Melt the butter, stir in the flour and cook for **1 to 2 minutes.** Add the milk a little at a time, whisking, and simmer for 8 minutes until it coats a spoon.
2. Take the pan **off the heat** for 1 minute, then stir in the cheese a handful at a time until smooth.
3. Stir in the mustard, nutmeg and pepper, taste, and add salt only if needed. Use straight away.

> **HOT SAUCE AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot sauce:** a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.
>
> **Allergens in cheese sauces:** contains milk, gluten (flour) and often mustard. Cheese can contain traces of animal rennet, so check the label for vegetarians. Use a plant cheese and cornflour for a dairy-free, gluten-free version (it will melt differently).

LEVEL 2 · BAKE

A cauliflower cheese sauce

45 minutes | 4 portions | a thicker sauce that survives the oven

A sauce that goes in the oven needs to be a little thicker and a little more strongly flavoured, because the cauliflower releases water and dilutes it. Drain the cauliflower very well. Pre-cooking it for only 5 minutes keeps it from going soggy.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	medium cauliflower, cut into florets
40 g	butter
40 g	plain flour
500 ml	whole milk, warmed
100 g	mature Cheddar, grated
1 tsp	English mustard
2 tbsp	Parmesan, grated
1 pinch	nutmeg

1. Boil the cauliflower for **5 minutes,** drain very well and leave to steam dry in the colander. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6).
2. Make the sauce with the butter, flour and milk, simmer for 8 minutes, then take it off the heat and stir in the Cheddar, mustard and nutmeg.
3. Put the cauliflower in a baking dish, pour over the sauce, sprinkle with the Parmesan and bake for **20 to 25 minutes** until golden and bubbling.

HOT OVEN AND DISH, AND ALLERGENS

Hot pot and hot steam: a heavy casserole dish or pan of hot liquid is heavy and scalding. Use oven gloves, lift the lid away from your face so the steam doesn't burn you, keep the handles turned in and never carry a full pot across a busy kitchen.

Allergens in cheese sauces: contains milk, gluten (flour) and often mustard. Cheese can contain

> traces of animal rennet, so check the label for vegetarians. Use a plant cheese and cornflour for a dairy-free, gluten-free version (it will melt differently).

LEVEL 2 · ON TOAST

A Welsh rarebit sauce

20 minutes | 4 portions (on toast) | a thick, sharp sauce spread and grilled

Rarebit is cheese sauce taken to the extreme: a thick, mustardy paste spread on toast and grilled until bubbling. Traditionally it contains beer; here the Worcestershire sauce and mustard provide the depth, with no alcohol.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

20 g	butter
20 g	plain flour
100 ml	whole milk
200 g	mature Cheddar, grated
1 tsp	English mustard
2 tsp	Worcestershire sauce
1	egg yolk (optional, for richness)
4	slices of bread, toasted on one side

1. Make a very thick sauce from the butter, flour and milk, simmering for 3 minutes. Take it off the heat and stir in the cheese, mustard and Worcestershire sauce until smooth. Beat in the egg yolk if using.
2. Cool for 5 minutes, then spread thickly over the untoasted side of the bread, right to the edges.
3. Grill under a medium-high heat for **3 to 4 minutes** until golden and bubbling, watching it closely.

> **HOT GRILL AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot grill:** the grill pan and toast are very hot. Use oven gloves and don't leave the grill unattended; cheese can catch fire.
>
> **Allergens in cheese sauces:** contains milk, gluten (flour) and often mustard. Cheese can contain traces of animal rennet, so check the label for vegetarians. Use a plant cheese and cornflour for a dairy-free, gluten-free version (it will melt differently).

Allergens: contains egg and fish (Worcestershire sauce).

LEVEL 3 · FONDUE

An alcohol-free cheese fondue

25 minutes | 4 portions | keeping a cheese sauce smooth over a gentle heat

Traditional fondue uses white wine, whose acidity helps keep the cheese smooth. Here, lemon juice and stock do the same job. Cornflour stops the fat from separating. Serve with cubes of bread, boiled new potatoes and crunchy vegetables.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	garlic clove, halved
150 ml	low-salt vegetable stock
1 tbsp	lemon juice
200 g	Gruyère, grated
200 g	Emmental, grated
1 tbsp	cornflour
1 pinch	nutmeg
1 pinch	white pepper

1. Rub the inside of a saucepan with the cut garlic and discard it. Add the stock and lemon juice and warm over a low heat until it just steams.
2. Toss the cheese with the cornflour. Add it a handful at a time, stirring in a figure of eight, and don't let it boil.
3. When smooth and creamy after **10 minutes,** add the nutmeg and pepper. Move to a fondue pot over a low flame and serve with dippers.

FONDUE POT AND ALLERGENS

Fondue pot: a fondue pot is a table-top heat source with hot liquid. Set it on a stable, heatproof mat away from the table edge, keep children and loose sleeves well back, and never move it while it is lit or full of hot cheese.

Allergens in cheese sauces: contains milk, gluten (flour) and often mustard. Cheese can contain

> traces of animal rennet, so check the label for vegetarians. Use a plant cheese and cornflour for a dairy-free, gluten-free version (it will melt differently).

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Cheese on or off the heat

Smooth and stringy.

1. Divide a white sauce in two. Stir cheese into one off the heat and into the other while it is bubbling.

Look for: The off-heat sauce is smooth; the bubbling one turns stringy and greasy. This is the main rule of cheese sauces.

EXPERIMENT

Grated fine or coarse

Melting speed.

1. Stir finely grated cheese into one sauce and coarse shreds into another.

Look for: The fine cheese melts quickly and evenly; the coarse takes longer and needs more stirring. Finer is better.

EXPERIMENT

Mature or mild cheese

Flavour.

1. Make two small sauces, one with mature Cheddar and one with mild Cheddar.

Look for: The mature sauce has much more flavour and may be slightly greasier. Mixing a mature and a smooth cheese gives both.

EXPERIMENT

Adding mustard

A small change.

1. Taste a cheese sauce with and without a teaspoon of mustard.

Look for: The mustard sharpens and lifts the cheese without tasting of mustard. A small amount makes the sauce taste more cheesy.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Mornay sauce				
Cauliflower cheese sauce				
Welsh rarebit sauce				
Cheese fondue				
Cheese on or off the heat				
Grated fine or coarse				
Mature or mild cheese				
Adding mustard				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Stringy sauce	Cheese added over heat, or sauce boiled	Take it off the heat; whisk in a splash of warm milk or a little lemon juice

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Greasy, split sauce	Overheated or cheese too fatty	Off the heat, whisk in a spoonful of cornflour mixed with milk
Grainy sauce	Cheese not melted or too cold	Warm gently, stirring
Bland sauce	Cheese too mild	Add mustard, Parmesan or a pinch of nutmeg
Sauce too thick	Over-reduced or cooled	Whisk in warm milk
Watery cauliflower cheese	Cauliflower not drained	Drain and steam-dry well; make the sauce thicker

HOT SAUCE, ALLERGENS AND LEFTOVERS

Hot sauce: a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

Allergens in cheese sauces: contains milk, gluten (flour) and often mustard. Cheese can contain traces of animal rennet, so check the label for vegetarians. Use a plant cheese and cornflour for a dairy-free, gluten-free version (it will melt differently).

Keeping sauces: cool a sauce quickly in a shallow container within 1 to 2 hours, press cling film onto the surface to stop a skin forming, chill and use within about 2 days. Reheat until steaming hot, stirring. Milk and cream sauces can split when frozen, so freeze other sauces instead.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a smooth white sauce base.
- ☐ I know to take the sauce off the heat before adding cheese.
- ☐ I can choose cheeses that melt well.
- ☐ I can make a cheese sauce that survives baking.
- ☐ I can make a fondue without alcohol.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 3 is Curry Sauces: building a curry from a spiced onion base.

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2

Chapter 3 · Curry Sauces

SKILL GOAL

Make a spiced base once and turn it into several different curry sauces.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A curry sauce is a **base plus a character.** The base is onion cooked until soft and golden, garlic and ginger, ground spices fried briefly in the oil, and tomato. Once you can make it, the rest is the difference between a creamy mild sauce, a nutty one, a tomato-rich one or a fresh, hot, peppery one. Cooking Skills: Vegetables 2, chapter 1, covers toasting spices and flavour bases, and chapter 2 covers vegetable curries; this chapter is about the sauce itself, so it will serve any meat, fish, egg or vegetable.

Three things matter most: **cook the onions properly** (10 to 15 minutes, until golden), **fry the spices for only a minute** (so they bloom without burning), and **simmer until the oil separates** and shows at the edge (a sign the water has cooked off). Serve with rice (see Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 3) or bread.

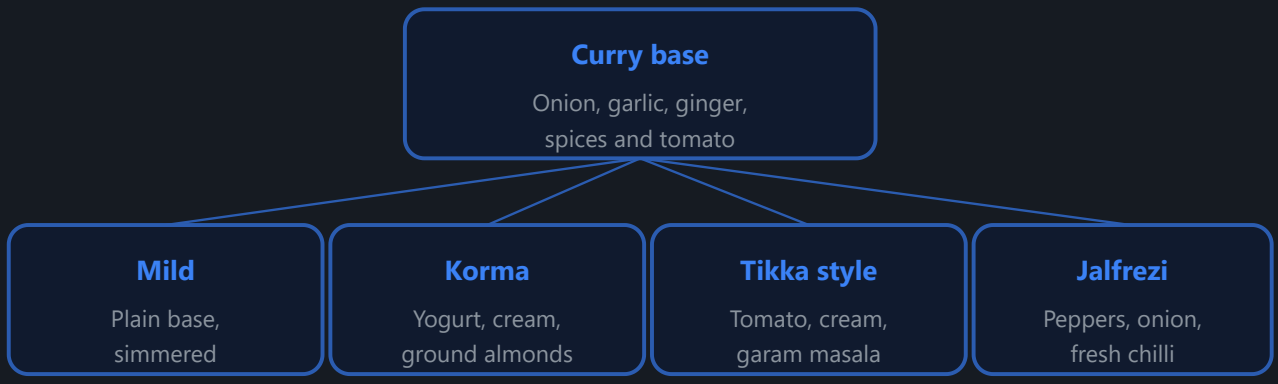


Figure 3. One base, four curry sauces: the character comes from what you add at the end.

The method

- **Cook the onions until golden,** 10 to 15 minutes. Pale onions make a harsh, raw-tasting sauce.
- **Add garlic and ginger** and cook for a minute, then the ground spices for about a minute only.
- **Add tomato** and simmer until the oil starts to separate at the edges.
- **Blend or leave chunky,** then add water or stock to loosen it to the thickness you want.
- **Add the finishing ingredients** (yogurt, cream, ground almonds, peppers) and simmer gently; taste for salt, heat and sourness.

SAUCE	CHARACTER	HEAT	GOES WITH
Mild curry	Savoury and gentle	Mild	Chicken, vegetables, eggs
Korma style	Creamy, nutty and sweet	Very mild	Chicken, paneer, vegetables
Tikka style	Tomato, cream and smoke	Medium	Chicken, fish, paneer
Jalfrezi style	Fresh, peppery and sharp	Hot	Chicken, prawns, vegetables

SPICES, HOT OIL, CHILLI AND BLENDING

Burning spices: ground spices burn in seconds in a hot pan and turn bitter. Lower the heat before adding them, stir constantly and add a splash of water or the next ingredient if they start to catch.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

Blending hot liquids: hot liquid expands in a sealed blender and can blow the lid off and scald you. Let it cool for a few minutes, fill the jug no more than half, hold a folded cloth over the lid, and start on low. A stick blender in a deep pan avoids the problem.

Allergens: korma contains nuts (almonds), milk and cream. Spice blends may contain mustard or celery. Check labels.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A mild curry base

35 minutes | 4 portions (about 600 ml)

softening onions, blooming spices and simmering until the oil shows

Make this first and use it as a sauce on its own, or as the base for the three sauces that follow. Add cooked chicken, hard-boiled eggs or vegetables for a quick curry. Make a double batch and freeze half.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	sunflower or rapeseed oil
2	onions, finely chopped
3	garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
2 tsp	ground cumin
2 tsp	ground coriander
1 tsp	turmeric
1 tsp	mild chilli powder
400 g	tin chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp	tomato purée
250 ml	water
1 tsp	flaked sea salt

1. Cook the onions in the oil over a medium-low heat for **12 to 15 minutes** until golden, stirring. Add the garlic and ginger for 1 minute.
2. Add the spices and cook for **1 minute,** stirring constantly, adding a splash of water if they start to catch. Stir in the tomatoes, purée and water.
3. Simmer for **15 to 20 minutes** until thick and the oil separates at the edges. Blend for a smooth sauce, add the salt, and taste.

BURNING SPICES, HOT SAUCE AND BLENDING

Burning spices: ground spices burn in seconds in a hot pan and turn bitter. Lower the heat before adding them, stir constantly and add a splash of water or the next ingredient if they start to catch.

Hot sauce: a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

Blending hot liquids: hot liquid expands in a sealed blender and can blow the lid off and scald you. Let it cool for a few minutes, fill the jug no more than half, hold a folded cloth over the lid, and start on low. A stick blender in a deep pan avoids the problem.

LEVEL 2 · CREAMY

A korma-style sauce

15 minutes plus the base | 4 portions | finishing a base with yogurt, cream and nuts

A mild, sweet, creamy sauce. Ground almonds give body and a gentle nutty taste. Stir yogurt in off the heat and a spoonful at a time, because hot, acidic yogurt curdles. For a nut-free version use a little coconut milk instead.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	batch of mild curry base (above)
3 tbsp	ground almonds
100 ml	natural yogurt
75 ml	double cream
1 tsp	sugar
1 tsp	lemon juice

1. Warm the base with 100 ml water and the ground almonds, and simmer gently for 5 minutes.
2. Take the pan off the heat. Stir in the yogurt a spoonful at a time, then the cream and sugar.
3. Heat very gently for 3 minutes without boiling. Add the lemon juice, taste, and add salt if needed.

> **HOT SAUCE AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot sauce:** a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.
>
> **Allergens:** contains almonds (nuts), milk and cream.

LEVEL 2 · TOMATO-CREAM

A tikka masala-style sauce

15 minutes plus the base | 4 portions | building a smoky, creamy tomato sauce

Britain's favourite curry sauce: orange, rich and mild. Paprika gives the colour, garam masala the warmth, and cream the roundness. It suits grilled chicken (see Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 7 for the marinade), paneer or fish.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	batch of mild curry base (above)
2 tsp	paprika
1 tsp	garam masala
1 tbsp	tomato purée
100 ml	double cream
1 tsp	sugar
1 tbsp	butter

1. Warm the base with 100 ml water, the paprika, garam masala and tomato purée, and simmer for **8 minutes.**
2. Add the sugar and butter and stir until the butter melts.
3. Stir in the cream, heat gently for 3 minutes without boiling, and taste for salt and sugar.

> **HOT SAUCE AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot sauce:** a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.
>
> **Allergens:** contains milk, butter and cream.

LEVEL 3 · HOT

A jalfrezi-style sauce

25 minutes plus the base | 4 portions | fresh peppers and chilli on a base

A drier, sharper, hotter sauce full of fried peppers and onion. The vegetables stay slightly crunchy. Cook them in a hot pan for a short time. Control the heat by deseeding the chillies, or leave them out for a mild version.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	batch of mild curry base (above)
1 tbsp	sunflower or rapeseed oil
1	onion, cut in chunks
1	red pepper, cut in chunks
1	green pepper, cut in chunks
2	green chillies, sliced (deseeded for milder)
1 tsp	garam masala
1 tbsp	chopped coriander
1 tsp	lemon juice

1. Fry the onion and peppers in the oil over a high heat for **5 minutes** until browned at the edges but still firm. Add the chillies for the last minute.
2. Add the base, 100 ml water and the garam masala, and simmer for 8 minutes.
3. Stir in the coriander and lemon juice, taste, and add salt and more chilli to suit.

> **CHILLI AND HOT OIL**
>
> **Chilli and spices:** chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.
>
> **Hot pan and hot oil:** searing and stir-frying use very high heat and spitting oil. Dry the beef first, keep everything ready before you start, use a long spoon and keep children away from the hob.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Whole or ground spices

Texture and aroma.

1. Fry 1 teaspoon of whole cumin seeds in oil for 30 seconds in one pan, and 1 teaspoon of ground cumin in another, then make a small sauce with each.

Look for: Whole seeds give pops of flavour and a toasty aroma; ground gives an even background. Whole spices need to be fried first.

EXPERIMENT

Browned or pale onions

Depth.

1. Cook onions for 5 minutes in one batch and 15 in another, then make the base with each.

Look for: The browned onions give a sweeter, deeper sauce; the pale ones taste raw and sharp. Time is the main ingredient.

EXPERIMENT

Yogurt or cream

Tang and richness.

1. Finish half a batch with yogurt and half with cream.

Look for: The yogurt sauce is tangy and lighter; the cream sauce is rounder and richer. Both must go in off the heat.

EXPERIMENT

Blended or chunky

Texture.

1. Blend half the base and leave half chunky.

Look for: The blended sauce is smooth and restaurant-like. The chunky one is more rustic with a stronger onion flavour.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Mild curry base				
Korma-style sauce				
Tikka masala-style sauce				
Jalfrezi-style sauce				
Whole or ground spices				
Browned or pale onions				
Yogurt or cream				
Blended or chunky				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Bitter or burnt taste	Spices burnt	Start again; fry spices for under a minute, with a splash of water

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Raw or gritty spice taste	Spices undercooked	Simmer the sauce for longer
Sauce split or curdled	Yogurt or cream added over heat	Add off the heat and warm gently; whisk a spoon of cold water in
Too thin or watery	Not reduced enough	Simmer uncovered until the oil separates
Too hot	Too much chilli	Add yogurt, cream or a pinch of sugar, or extra base
Flat taste	Not enough salt or acid	Add salt and a squeeze of lemon juice

HOT SAUCE, CHILLI AND LEFTOVERS

Hot sauce: a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

Keeping sauces: cool a sauce quickly in a shallow container within 1 to 2 hours, press cling film onto the surface to stop a skin forming, chill and use within about 2 days. Reheat until steaming hot, stirring. Milk and cream sauces can split when frozen, so freeze other sauces instead.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can cook onions until golden.
- ☐ I can bloom ground spices without burning them.
- ☐ I can tell when a curry base is cooked (oil at the edges).
- ☐ I can finish a base with yogurt and cream without curdling.
- ☐ I can adjust heat and balance a curry sauce.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 4 is Asian Sauces and Glazes: balancing sweet, salty, sour and hot.

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2

Chapter 4 · Asian Sauces and Glazes

SKILL GOAL

Balance salty, sweet, sour and hot flavours in a sauce, and thicken it with cornflour so it clings.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Asian sauces are built on **balance.** Most use four tastes: **salty** (soy sauce), **sweet** (sugar or honey), **sour** (rice vinegar or lime) and **hot** (chilli, ginger or pepper), plus savoury aromatics such as garlic and spring onion. If a sauce tastes flat, it usually needs more of one of the four; if it tastes harsh, it needs more of the opposite. Taste, adjust a little, and taste again.

Most are thickened with **cornflour** mixed with cold water, which turns the sauce glossy and makes it cling to food (see Cooking Skills: Sauces 1, chapter 1). Sesame, peanut and chilli noodle sauces are in Cooking Skills: Noodles 1, chapter 5, and stir-fried noodles in chapter 2 of that course; here we make the sauces on their own, to use with any meat, fish, tofu or vegetables.



Figure 4. Taste for four things: salty, sweet, sour and hot, then add savoury depth.

The method

- **Mix the sauce before you start cooking,** because stir-fries and glazes move fast.
- **Start with the salty and sweet,** then add acid and heat a little at a time.

- **Mix cornflour with cold water** first (never straight into hot liquid) and add it to a simmering sauce.
- **Simmer for 1 to 2 minutes** until glossy and thick; the sauce thickens more as it cools.
- **Add toasted sesame oil and fresh herbs at the end,** off the heat, so the aroma stays.

SAUCE	MAIN TASTES	THICKENED WITH	GOES WITH
Teriyaki-style glaze	Salty and sweet	Reduction or cornflour	Salmon, chicken, tofu
Sweet chilli sauce	Sweet, sour and hot	Cornflour	Spring rolls, chicken, prawns
Stir-fry sauce	Salty, savoury	Cornflour	Vegetables, beef, noodles
Black bean sauce	Salty, earthy, savoury	Cornflour	Beef, fish, peppers

HOT SUGAR, CHILLI AND ALLERGENS

Hot sugar: boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

Allergens: soy and wheat (soy sauce), shellfish (oyster sauce), sesame, and fish (fish sauce) are allergens, and many Asian sauces contain several. Tamari or coconut aminos can replace soy sauce for a gluten-free version; check labels.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A teriyaki-style glaze

10 minutes | 4 portions | a salty-sweet reduction

Real teriyaki uses mirin, a sweet rice wine; here rice vinegar and honey give a similar flavour with no alcohol. Brush it on salmon, chicken or tofu near the end of cooking, or simmer food in it.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

4 tbsp	soy sauce
2 tbsp	honey
1 tbsp	rice vinegar
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
1	garlic clove, grated
100 ml	water
2 tsp	cornflour
1 tbsp	cold water

1. Put the soy sauce, honey, vinegar, ginger, garlic and 100 ml water in a small pan and heat until the honey dissolves.
2. Mix the cornflour with the cold water, stir it in and simmer for **1 to 2 minutes** until glossy.
3. Taste: add a splash of vinegar if too sweet, or honey if too salty. Brush on food in the last minutes of cooking.

> **HOT SUGAR, BURNING AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot sugar:** boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.
>
> **Burning:** honey and soy burn quickly under a grill or in a hot pan, so brush the glaze on late.

Allergens: contains soy and wheat.

LEVEL 2 · SWEET-SHARP

Sweet chilli sauce

25 minutes | 8 portions (about 250 ml) | cooking chilli, sugar and vinegar into a syrup

A glossy red dipping sauce that is easy to make and far fresher than the shop-bought kind. Deseed the chillies for a milder sauce. Be careful when handling the hot syrup.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

3	large red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
3	garlic cloves, grated
150 ml	rice vinegar
100 g	caster sugar
100 ml	water
1 tsp	salt
1 tbsp	cornflour
2 tbsp	cold water

1. Put the chillies, garlic, vinegar, sugar, 100 ml water and salt in a pan, stir over a low heat until the sugar dissolves, then simmer for **10 minutes.**
2. Mix the cornflour with the cold water and stir it in. Simmer for 2 minutes until it turns clear and glossy.
3. Cool completely; it thickens as it cools. Store in a clean jar in the fridge for up to about 2 weeks.

HOT SUGAR, CHILLI AND STORING

Hot sugar: boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

Jars and storing: wash jars and lids in hot soapy water, rinse and dry them, then fill while the

> sauce is hot and cool before chilling. Keep in the fridge, label with the date and use within the time given. If a sauce smells off, looks fizzy or has mould, throw it away.

LEVEL 2 · STIR-FRY

An all-purpose stir-fry sauce

5 minutes | 4 portions | mixing a sauce before cooking

Mix this before you start, and pour it into the hot wok in the last minute. It works with beef and peppers, chicken and broccoli, tofu or just vegetables. Taste and adjust, but do not add salt until you taste the cooked dish.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	soy sauce
1 tbsp	oyster sauce (or extra soy sauce)
1 tbsp	rice vinegar
1 tsp	sugar
1 tsp	cornflour
100 ml	low-salt chicken or vegetable stock
1 tsp	toasted sesame oil

1. Stir everything except the sesame oil in a jug until the cornflour is dissolved.
2. Stir-fry your meat and vegetables, then pour in the sauce and cook for **1 to 2 minutes** until glossy.
3. Take off the heat, stir in the sesame oil, and taste.

> **HOT WOK AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot pan and hot oil:** searing and stir-frying use very high heat and spitting oil. Dry the beef first, keep everything ready before you start, use a long spoon and keep children away from the hob.
>
> **Allergens:** contains soy and wheat, shellfish (oyster sauce) and sesame.

LEVEL 3 · FERMENTED

A black bean sauce

15 minutes | 4 portions | building a sauce on a fermented ingredient

Black bean sauce has a deep, salty, earthy taste that comes from fermented soy beans. Jarred black bean sauce is the easy route; rinsed fermented black beans are stronger and fresher. Because both are salty, go carefully with extra soy sauce.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 tbsp	sunflower or rapeseed oil
2	garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
2 tbsp	jarred black bean sauce, or fermented black beans rinsed and chopped
150 ml	low-salt stock
1 tsp	sugar
2 tsp	cornflour
1 tbsp	cold water
2	spring onions, sliced

1. Heat the oil, then fry the garlic, ginger and black bean for **30 seconds,** stirring, without burning.
2. Add the stock and sugar and simmer for 3 minutes.
3. Stir in the cornflour mixed with the water and simmer for 1 minute. Add the spring onions, taste, and add soy sauce only if needed.

> **HOT OIL AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot pan and hot oil:** searing and stir-frying use very high heat and spitting oil. Dry the beef first, keep everything ready before you start, use a long spoon and keep children away from the hob.
>
> **Allergens:** contains soy and often wheat; fermented black beans are very salty.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Honey or sugar

Flavour of the sweetener.

1. Make two small batches of teriyaki glaze, one with honey and one with the same amount of sugar.

Look for: Honey is floral and slightly thicker and burns faster. Sugar is cleaner. Both work.

EXPERIMENT

Cornflour or reduction

Gloss and body.

1. Thicken one glaze with cornflour and reduce another by simmering for 8 minutes.

Look for: The cornflour sauce is glossy and clear; the reduced sauce is darker and more intense but less thick.

EXPERIMENT

Rice or cider vinegar

Gentle and fruity.

1. Make two stir-fry sauces, one with rice vinegar and one with cider vinegar, and taste.

Look for: Rice vinegar is milder and slightly sweet; cider vinegar is sharper and fruitier. Either works, but taste and adjust.

EXPERIMENT

Fresh or dried ginger

Fragrance.

1. Make two glazes, one with fresh grated ginger and one with a quarter of the amount of ground ginger.

Look for: Fresh ginger is bright and zingy; ground ginger is warmer and duller. Fresh is better in these sauces.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Teriyaki-style glaze				
Sweet chilli sauce				
Stir-fry sauce				
Black bean sauce				
Honey or sugar				
Cornflour or reduction				
Rice or cider vinegar				
Fresh or dried ginger				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Too salty	Too much soy sauce	Add water, a little sugar or rice vinegar
Too sweet	Too much sugar or honey	Add vinegar or lime juice

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Lumpy sauce	Cornflour added without mixing, or into boiling liquid	Always mix with cold water first; whisk, or strain
Sauce too thin	Not simmered long enough	Simmer for a further minute, or add a little more cornflour mixed with water
Bitter garlic or ginger	Burnt	Fry for only 30 seconds, and start again
Flat or dull	Missing acid	Add a squeeze of lime or a splash of rice vinegar

HOT SUGAR, HOT OIL AND LEFTOVERS

Hot sugar: boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.

Hot pan and hot oil: searing and stir-frying use very high heat and spitting oil. Dry the beef first, keep everything ready before you start, use a long spoon and keep children away from the hob.

Keeping sauces: cool a sauce quickly in a shallow container within 1 to 2 hours, press cling film onto the surface to stop a skin forming, chill and use within about 2 days. Reheat until steaming hot, stirring. Milk and cream sauces can split when frozen, so freeze other sauces instead.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can balance salty, sweet, sour and hot.
- ☐ I can thicken a sauce with cornflour without lumps.
- ☐ I can make a glaze and brush it on at the right time.
- ☐ I can mix a stir-fry sauce before I start cooking.
- ☐ I can work with salty fermented ingredients.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 5 is Salsas and Fresh Sauces: chopping and dressing raw ingredients.

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2

Chapter 5 · Salsas and Fresh Sauces

SKILL GOAL

Chop and dress raw ingredients into bright sauces that need no cooking.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A **salsa** (Spanish for sauce) is usually raw: finely chopped vegetables or fruit, an acid such as lime juice, salt, herbs and chilli. Because nothing is cooked, the sauce is only as good as its ingredients and its balance. Ripe tomatoes, fresh herbs and a sharp knife do most of the work.

Salt draws water out of chopped vegetables, which becomes the sauce, so salt **just before resting** the salsa and let it stand for 20 to 30 minutes. Acid (lime or vinegar) brightens everything and keeps colours fresh. Raw onion can be harsh; rinse it in cold water to soften the bite. Cooked tomato sauce is in Cooking Skills: Sauces 1, chapter 5, and dips and purées are in Cooking Skills: Vegetables 2, chapter 7.

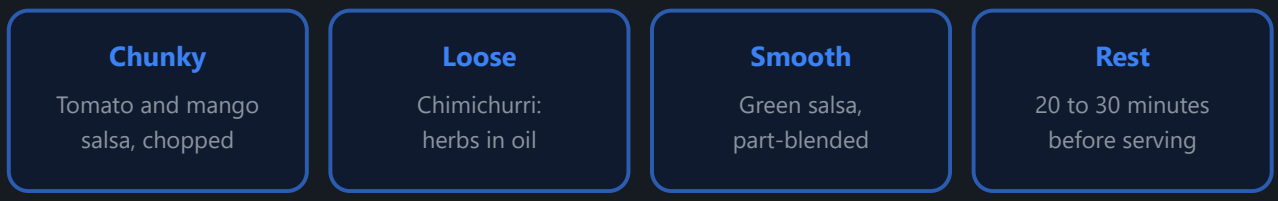


Figure 5. Texture is the choice: chunky, loose or smooth. All improve with a short rest.

The method

- **Use a sharp knife** and cut everything to a similar small size, about 5 mm, so each spoonful has a bit of everything.
- **Rinse raw onion** in cold water for a minute and drain it well, to take away the harshness.

- **Add acid and salt,** then stir and rest for 20 to 30 minutes so the juices run and the flavours join.
- **Taste on a tortilla chip, a piece of bread or the food you will serve it with,** not off the spoon.
- **Finish with fresh herbs at the last minute,** because they darken and wilt in acid.

SAUCE	TEXTURE	BASE	GOES WITH
Tomato salsa	Chunky	Tomato, onion, lime	Chips, tacos, eggs
Mango salsa	Chunky and sweet	Mango, red onion, chilli	Fish, chicken, prawns
Chimichurri	Loose, oily	Parsley, garlic, vinegar, oil	Steak, chicken, potatoes
Green salsa	Part-blended	Coriander, lime, cucumber	Fish, tacos, rice

SHARP KNIVES, CHILLI AND RAW GARLIC

Sharp knives: a sharp knife is safer than a blunt one because it needs less force. Cut away from your body, steady the board with a damp cloth under it, curl your fingertips on the meat, and never try to catch a falling knife. Wash knives by hand, one at a time, and never leave one in the washing-up water.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

Raw garlic in oil: keep sauces with raw garlic in oil in the fridge and use within 1 to 2 days (general guidance).

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A tomato salsa

15 minutes plus resting | 4 portions | chopping evenly and salting at the right time

The classic fresh salsa. Use the ripest tomatoes you can find; in winter, cherry tomatoes usually have more flavour. The rest turns separate ingredients into a sauce.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

4	ripe tomatoes, deseeded and finely chopped
½	small red onion, finely chopped
1	red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
2 tbsp	chopped fresh coriander
1	lime, juiced
1 pinch	flaked sea salt

1. Rinse the chopped onion in cold water for 1 minute and drain it well.
2. Mix the tomatoes, onion, chilli and lime juice, then add the salt.
3. Rest for **20 to 30 minutes,** stir in the coriander, then taste and add more lime, salt or chilli.

> **SHARP KNIVES AND CHILLI**
>
> **Sharp knives:** a sharp knife is safer than a blunt one because it needs less force. Cut away from your body, steady the board with a damp cloth under it, curl your fingertips on the meat, and never try to catch a falling knife. Wash knives by hand, one at a time, and never leave one in the washing-up water.
>
> **Chilli and spices:** chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

LEVEL 2 · FRUIT

A mango salsa

15 minutes | 4 portions | balancing sweet fruit with acid and heat

A sweet, sharp, fresh salsa that lifts grilled fish, chicken and prawns. Use a ripe but firm mango, so it holds its shape when chopped.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	ripe but firm mango, peeled and diced
½	small red onion, finely chopped
1	red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
1	lime, juiced
2 tbsp	chopped fresh coriander or mint
1 pinch	flaked sea salt

1. Rinse the onion in cold water and drain it. Cut the mango into 5 mm dice.
2. Stir the mango, onion, chilli and lime juice together with the salt.
3. Rest for **15 minutes,** add the herbs, then taste and add lime or salt to balance the sweetness.

> **SHARP KNIVES, SLIPPERY FRUIT AND CHILLI**
>
> **Ripe fruit and cutting:** slippery mango and tomatoes slide under the knife. Cut a flat edge to make a stable base, keep your fingers curled and use a sharp knife.
>
> **Chilli and spices:** chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

LEVEL 2 · HERB OIL

Chimichurri

15 minutes plus resting | 4 portions | a loose herb-and-oil sauce

Argentina's green sauce for grilled steak. It is not blended: parsley, garlic and oregano are chopped by hand, so the sauce stays textured, then loosened with oil and vinegar. It is also good on chicken, potatoes and vegetables.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	large bunch of flat-leaf parsley (about 40 g), finely chopped
2	garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 tsp	dried oregano
½ tsp	chilli flakes
3 tbsp	red wine vinegar or cider vinegar
6 tbsp	olive oil
1 pinch	flaked sea salt

1. Mix the parsley, garlic, oregano and chilli flakes in a bowl.
2. Stir in the vinegar and salt, then the oil.
3. Rest for **30 minutes** at room temperature, taste, and adjust the vinegar and salt. Keep in the fridge and use within 2 days.

> **SHARP KNIVES AND GARLIC**
>
> **Sharp knives:** a sharp knife is safer than a blunt one because it needs less force. Cut away from your body, steady the board with a damp cloth under it, curl your fingertips on the meat, and never try to catch a falling knife. Wash knives by hand, one at a time, and never leave one in the washing-up water.
>
> **Raw garlic in oil:** use within 1 to 2 days and keep in the fridge.

LEVEL 3 · PART-BLENDED

A green herb and lime salsa

15 minutes | 4 portions | blending partly for a creamy texture

A smooth green salsa with cucumber, coriander and lime. Pulse it briefly in a blender and leave some texture. Add a little water if it is too thick; it pours more like a sauce than a dip.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

½	cucumber, roughly chopped
1	large bunch of coriander (about 30 g)
2	spring onions, chopped
1	green chilli, deseeded
1	lime, juiced
2 tbsp	olive oil
1 pinch	flaked sea salt

1. Put everything in a blender or food processor.
2. Pulse in short bursts for about **10 seconds** until chopped but still textured.
3. Taste, adjust the lime, salt and chilli, and add a splash of water if too thick. Serve the same day.

> BLENDING AND CHILLI
>
> **Blending:** wash the blades carefully; they are very sharp. Unplug the machine before taking the jug apart.
>
> **Chilli and spices:** chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Chopped or blended

Texture.

1. Make half a batch of tomato salsa by hand and blend the other half briefly.

Look for: The chopped salsa is bright and chunky; the blended is smoother, more like a sauce, and slightly duller in colour.

EXPERIMENT

Salt before or after

Juice.

1. Salt tomatoes and leave them for 20 minutes; leave another batch unsalted and salt it at the end.

Look for: The early-salted tomatoes release juice and taste more of tomato. The late-salted one is drier and the flavour sits on top.

EXPERIMENT

Resting time

Flavour joining.

1. Taste a salsa immediately, after 20 minutes and after 2 hours.

Look for: At the start it tastes sharp and separate. After 20 minutes it is balanced; after 2 hours it is mellower and may be watery.

EXPERIMENT

Lime or lemon

Which acid.

1. Make two small mango salsas, one with lime and one with lemon.

Look for: Lime is more aromatic and typical; lemon is cleaner and sharper. Both work. Taste and decide which you prefer.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Tomato salsa				
Mango salsa				
Chimichurri				
Green salsa				
Chopped or blended				
Salt before or after				
Resting time				
Lime or lemon				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Watery salsa	Wet tomatoes, or rested too long	Deseed the tomatoes; drain off excess liquid before serving
Flat, bland salsa	Not enough salt or acid	Add a pinch of salt and more lime juice
Harsh onion	Raw onion not rinsed	Rinse in cold water, or soak in lime juice for 10 minutes
Too hot	Too much chilli or seeds	Add more tomato, mango or cucumber; serve with yogurt
Brown, wilted herbs	Herbs added too early	Add herbs at the last minute
Sauce too thin	Too much liquid	Strain through a sieve and add more chopped ingredients

SHARP KNIVES, RAW INGREDIENTS AND LEFTOVERS

Sharp knives: a sharp knife is safer than a blunt one because it needs less force. Cut away from your body, steady the board with a damp cloth under it, curl your fingertips on the meat, and never try to catch a falling knife. Wash knives by hand, one at a time, and never leave one in the washing-up water.

Keeping sauces: cool a sauce quickly in a shallow container within 1 to 2 hours, press cling film onto the surface to stop a skin forming, chill and use within about 2 days. Reheat until steaming hot, stirring. Milk and cream sauces can split when frozen, so freeze other sauces instead.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can chop evenly to a small size.
- ☐ I can salt and rest a salsa so the juices run.
- ☐ I can balance acid, salt and heat.
- ☐ I can make a loose herb sauce like chimichurri.
- ☐ I can fix a watery or bland salsa.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 6 is Chutneys and Pickled Sauces: cooking fruit and vegetables down with vinegar and sugar.

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2

Chapter 6 · Chutneys and Pickled Sauces

SKILL GOAL

Cook fruit and vegetables slowly with vinegar and sugar into a thick, sweet-sharp sauce that keeps.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A **chutney** is fruit or vegetables cooked slowly with vinegar and sugar until thick and jammy. The vinegar and sugar do two jobs: they give the sweet-sharp taste and they **preserve** the sauce. Chutneys are made to be stored and are better after a few days, when the sharp vinegar smell mellows.

The cook's skill is knowing when it is done: not by time but by the **trail test.** Drag a spoon across the bottom of the pan; when the trail stays open for a second and does not fill with liquid, the chutney is thick enough. Pickling vegetables in brine and vinegar is in Cooking Skills: Vegetables 2, chapter 6. The recipes here are small-batch **refrigerator** chutneys, which is the safest approach for a beginner.



Figure 6. From chopping to jar: the trail test tells you when a chutney is done.

The method

- **Chop small and evenly,** so everything cooks down at the same rate.

- **Soften the onion and spices first,** to take away the raw taste.
- **Add vinegar and sugar and simmer gently,** uncovered, stirring more often towards the end.
- **Do the trail test:** drag a spoon across the pan; it should leave a clear line that does not flood.
- **Pour into hot, clean jars,** cool, then store in the fridge. Let it mature for a few days before eating.

CHUTNEY	MAIN FRUIT OR VEGETABLE	COOKING TIME (APPROXIMATE)	FRIDGE LIFE
Quick tomato chutney	Tomato	40 minutes	About 4 weeks
Mango chutney	Firm mango	45 minutes	About 4 weeks
Apple and onion chutney	Apple, onion	50 minutes	About 4 weeks
Spiced plum sauce	Plum	35 minutes	About 3 weeks

HOT SUGAR, VINEGAR FUMES AND JARS

Hot sugar: boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.

Vinegar fumes: boiling vinegar gives off sharp fumes that sting eyes and throat. Open a window, switch on the extractor, and keep your face back when you stir.

Jars and storing: wash jars and lids in hot soapy water, rinse and dry them, then fill while the sauce is hot and cool before chilling. Keep in the fridge, label with the date and use within the time given. If a sauce smells off, looks fizzy or has mould, throw it away.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A quick tomato chutney

55 minutes | about 400 ml | reducing a tomato mixture until thick

The simplest chutney: tomatoes, onion, spices, vinegar and sugar. Serve it with cheese, cold meat, eggs and curry. It is rich, tangy and sweet.

INGREDIENTS (ABOUT 400 ML)

500 g	ripe tomatoes, chopped
1	onion, finely chopped
2	garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
100 g	brown sugar
100 ml	cider vinegar
1 tsp	mustard seeds
½ tsp	chilli flakes
1 tsp	flaked sea salt

1. Put everything in a heavy-based pan and heat gently, stirring, until the sugar dissolves.
2. Simmer uncovered for **35 to 40 minutes,** stirring more often towards the end, until thick and glossy.
3. Do the trail test, then spoon into a hot, clean jar, cool, label and chill. Eat after 2 days; use within about 4 weeks.

HOT SUGAR, VINEGAR FUMES, ALLERGENS AND JARS

Hot sugar: boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.

Allergens: contains mustard and sulphites (vinegar).

Jars and storing: wash jars and lids in hot soapy water, rinse and dry them, then fill while the

> sauce is hot and cool before chilling. Keep in the fridge, label with the date and use within the time given. If a sauce smells off, looks fizzy or has mould, throw it away.

LEVEL 2 · FRUIT

Mango chutney

1 hour | about 500 ml | a firm fruit that holds its shape

Use firm, slightly underripe mangoes, which keep their pieces. Fully ripe mango turns to mush. It is the classic curry accompaniment and also good with cheese and cold chicken.

INGREDIENTS (ABOUT 500 ML)

2	firm mangoes, peeled and chopped
1	onion, finely chopped
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
2	garlic cloves, crushed
150 g	sugar
150 ml	cider vinegar
1 tsp	chilli flakes
1 tsp	flaked sea salt

1. Put everything in a heavy pan and stir over a low heat until the sugar dissolves.
2. Simmer for **40 to 45 minutes,** stirring now and then, until thick and sticky.
3. Trail test, jar while hot, cool and chill. Eat after 3 days; use within about 4 weeks.

> **HOT SUGAR, VINEGAR FUMES AND JARS**
>
> **Hot sugar:** boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.
>
> **Jars and storing:** wash jars and lids in hot soapy water, rinse and dry them, then fill while the sauce is hot and cool before chilling. Keep in the fridge, label with the date and use within the time given. If a sauce smells off, looks fizzy or has mould, throw it away.

LEVEL 2 · AUTUMN

Apple and onion chutney

1 hour 10 minutes | about 600 ml | balancing sweet fruit and savoury onion

A good all-rounder for cheese sandwiches and ploughman's lunches. Cooking apples collapse; eating apples keep some shape, so a mix gives both. Raisins add sweetness and body.

INGREDIENTS (ABOUT 600 ML)

500 g	apples, peeled and chopped
3	onions, finely chopped
100 g	raisins
150 g	brown sugar
200 ml	malt or cider vinegar
1 tsp	mixed spice
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
1 tsp	flaked sea salt

1. Put everything in a heavy pan and stir over a low heat until the sugar dissolves.
2. Simmer for **45 to 50 minutes,** stirring regularly, until thick.
3. Trail test, jar while hot, cool and chill. It tastes best after a week; use within about 4 weeks.

> **HOT SUGAR, VINEGAR FUMES AND JARS**
>
> **Hot sugar:** boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.
>
> **Jars and storing:** wash jars and lids in hot soapy water, rinse and dry them, then fill while the sauce is hot and cool before chilling. Keep in the fridge, label with the date and use within the time given. If a sauce smells off, looks fizzy or has mould, throw it away.

LEVEL 3 · SMOOTH

A spiced plum sauce

50 minutes | about 400 ml | sieving a fruit sauce for a smooth finish

A smooth, glossy sweet-sour sauce, like the one served with crispy duck. It is cooked, blended and sieved for a silky texture. Try it with roast pork, spring rolls and chicken.

INGREDIENTS (ABOUT 400 ML)

500 g	ripe plums, stoned and chopped
1	small onion, chopped
2	garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
100 g	brown sugar
100 ml	cider vinegar
2 tbsp	soy sauce
1 tsp	Chinese five-spice

1. Put everything in a pan, stir over a low heat until the sugar dissolves, and simmer for **25 to 30 minutes** until the plums are very soft.
2. Let it cool for 10 minutes, then blend until smooth and push it through a sieve.
3. Return to the pan and simmer for 5 to 8 minutes until it coats a spoon. Cool, jar and chill; use within about 3 weeks.

HOT SUGAR, BLENDING, ALLERGENS AND JARS

Hot sugar: boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.

Blending hot liquids: hot liquid expands in a sealed blender and can blow the lid off and scald you. Let it cool for a few minutes, fill the jug no more than half, hold a folded cloth over the lid, and start on low. A stick blender in a deep pan avoids the problem.

Allergens: contains soy and wheat (soy sauce) and sulphites.

> **Jars and storing:** wash jars and lids in hot soapy water, rinse and dry them, then fill while the sauce is hot and cool before chilling. Keep in the fridge, label with the date and use within the time given. If a sauce smells off, looks fizzy or has mould, throw it away.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Simmer time

Thick and thin.

1. Take a spoonful of tomato chutney at 20, 30 and 40 minutes and cool each on a saucer.

Look for: The early spoonfuls are runny; the last one is jammy. Chutney thickens a lot as it cools, so stop when the trail test passes.

EXPERIMENT

Brown or white sugar

Flavour and colour.

1. Make two small batches, one with brown sugar and one with white.

Look for: Brown sugar gives a darker colour and toffee note. White is cleaner and lighter. Brown suits tomato and apple chutneys.

EXPERIMENT

Spices whole or ground

Texture.

1. Make half a batch with whole mustard seeds and half with ground mustard.

Look for: Whole seeds soften and pop in the mouth; ground spice blends in and gives more heat. Whole seeds are more traditional.

EXPERIMENT

Day 1 and week 1

Maturing.

1. Taste a chutney the day it is made and again after a week in the fridge.

Look for: After a week the vinegar bite has softened and the flavours have joined. Chutneys are made ahead for a reason.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Tomato chutney				
Mango chutney				
Apple and onion chutney				
Spiced plum sauce				
Simmer time				
Brown or white sugar				
Spices whole or ground				
Day 1 and week 1				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Too runny	Not simmered long enough	Simmer for longer, stirring, until the trail test passes
Too sharp	Too much vinegar	Add a little sugar and let it mature for a few days

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Burnt on the bottom	Heat too high, not stirred	Do not scrape; pour into a clean pan and taste. If it is bitter, start again
Too sweet	Too much sugar	Add a splash of vinegar and some salt
Mould on top	Dirty jar or kept too long	Throw it away; sterilise jars next time and keep in the fridge
Too thick or hard	Over-cooked	Stir in a little water or vinegar when reheating

HOT SUGAR, JARS AND STORING

Hot sugar: boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.

Jars and storing: wash jars and lids in hot soapy water, rinse and dry them, then fill while the sauce is hot and cool before chilling. Keep in the fridge, label with the date and use within the time given. If a sauce smells off, looks fizzy or has mould, throw it away.

Keeping sauces: cool a sauce quickly in a shallow container within 1 to 2 hours, press cling film onto the surface to stop a skin forming, chill and use within about 2 days. Reheat until steaming hot, stirring. Milk and cream sauces can split when frozen, so freeze other sauces instead.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can cook a chutney until it passes the trail test.
- ☐ I can balance sweet and sharp.
- ☐ I can jar chutney cleanly and store it in the fridge.
- ☐ I know chutney improves after a few days.
- ☐ I can fix a runny or over-sharp chutney.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 7 is Marinades, Rubs and Glazes: how acid, salt, oil and time change meat.

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2

Chapter 7 · Marinades, Rubs and Glazes

SKILL GOAL

Flavour meat and fish before cooking, and know how long to leave it and when to add a glaze.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A **marinade** is a flavoured liquid that food sits in before cooking. Its parts each do a job: **acid** (lemon, vinegar, yogurt) softens the surface, **salt** seasons deeper than anything else, **oil** carries fat-soluble flavours and helps browning, and **spices and herbs** add flavour. A marinade only reaches a few millimetres into the meat, so its main effect is on the outside, which is where grilling and roasting make the most flavour.

A **dry rub** is a blend of salt, sugar and spices rubbed on the surface, and a **glaze** is a sticky sauce brushed on near the end. Rubs are best on meat that cooks slowly; glazes with sugar must go on late because sugar burns. For barbecue technique see Cooking Skills: Beef and Steak 2, chapter 6, and for the tomato-cream sauce to serve with a tikka-style chicken see Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 3.



Figure 7. A marinade works with four things: acid, salt, oil and time.

The method

- **Mix the marinade first** and taste it; it should taste slightly too strong, because meat dilutes it.
- **Marinate in the fridge,** in a covered dish or a sealed bag, turning once.
- **Keep to the time:** 30 minutes to 4 hours for lemon or vinegar, up to 24 hours for yogurt, and a few minutes to an hour for fish.
- **Wipe off excess,** especially sugar and garlic, before searing, so the surface can brown instead of steam.
- **Glaze late,** in the last 5 to 10 minutes, and never reuse marinade that touched raw meat unless you boil it first.

METHOD	MAIN JOB	BEST TIME	GOES WITH
Yogurt and spice marinade	Tenderises gently, flavours	2 to 24 hours	Chicken, lamb, paneer
Lemon and herb marinade	Brightens, flavours	30 minutes to 4 hours	Chicken, fish, prawns
Dry spice rub	Crust and flavour	30 minutes to overnight	Pork, ribs, chicken, beef
Sticky glaze	Gloss and sweetness	Brushed on the last 5 to 10 minutes	Sausages, ribs, chicken

RAW MEAT, ACID AND BURNING SUGAR

Raw chicken and marinades: keep raw chicken and meat on the bottom shelf of the fridge, on its own plate, and wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water afterwards. Marinate in the fridge, never on the worktop. Used marinade has had raw meat in it: throw it away, or boil it hard for at least 2 minutes before using it as a sauce.

Acid and time: acid (lemon, vinegar) 'cooks' the surface of meat and fish and turns it mushy if left too long. Keep lemon and vinegar marinades to a few hours for chicken, pork and fish; yogurt marinades are gentler and can go overnight.

Hot sugar: boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A yogurt and spice marinade

10 minutes plus marinating | 4 portions | a gentle tenderising marinade

Yogurt's mild acidity and calcium tenderise the meat without making it mushy, and the spices stick to the surface and char into a tasty crust. Use for tikka-style chicken, lamb pieces or paneer.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

150 g	natural yogurt
1 tbsp	lemon juice
2	garlic cloves, grated
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
2 tsp	paprika
1 tsp	ground cumin
1 tsp	garam masala
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
600 g	chicken thighs, cut in chunks

1. Mix the yogurt, lemon juice, garlic, ginger, spices and salt in a bowl.
2. Stir in the chicken, cover and marinate in the fridge for **at least 2 hours,** or up to 24.
3. Lift the chicken out, wipe off the excess, and grill, roast or barbecue until cooked through, with no pink and juices running clear.

> **RAW CHICKEN AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Raw chicken and marinades:** keep raw chicken and meat on the bottom shelf of the fridge, on its own plate, and wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water afterwards. Marinate in the fridge, never on the worktop. Used marinade has had raw meat in it: throw it away, or boil it hard for at least 2 minutes before using it as a sauce.
>
> **Allergens:** contains milk; spices may contain mustard or celery.

LEVEL 2 · FRESH

A lemon and herb marinade

10 minutes plus marinating | 4 portions | a short, bright marinade

Lemon, garlic and herbs brighten chicken, white fish and prawns. Keep the time short: the acid starts to 'cook' the surface and turns it mushy or chalky if left too long.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	olive oil
1	lemon, zest and juice
2	garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp	chopped fresh thyme or rosemary
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
1 pinch	black pepper
600 g	chicken breasts or fish fillets

1. Mix the oil, lemon zest and juice, garlic, herbs, salt and pepper.
2. Coat the chicken or fish, cover and chill for **30 minutes to 2 hours** (30 minutes only for fish or prawns).
3. Wipe off the garlic and herbs, and pan-fry, grill or roast until cooked through.

> **RAW MEAT AND ACID**
>
> **Raw chicken and marinades:** keep raw chicken and meat on the bottom shelf of the fridge, on its own plate, and wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water afterwards. Marinate in the fridge, never on the worktop. Used marinade has had raw meat in it: throw it away, or boil it hard for at least 2 minutes before using it as a sauce.
>
> **Acid and time:** acid (lemon, vinegar) 'cooks' the surface of meat and fish and turns it mushy if left too long. Keep lemon and vinegar marinades to a few hours for chicken, pork and fish; yogurt marinades are gentler and can go overnight.

LEVEL 2 · DRY

A dry spice rub

10 minutes plus resting | enough for 4 portions of pork or chicken | seasoning the surface for a crust

A rub is the simplest 'marinade' of all: salt, sugar and spices. The salt seasons the meat, the sugar caramelises into a dark crust. It is good on pork shoulder or ribs, chicken wings and thighs.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 tbsp	smoked paprika
1 tbsp	brown sugar
1 tsp	garlic powder
1 tsp	ground cumin
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
½ tsp	black pepper
½ tsp	mild chilli powder
800 g	pork ribs, chicken wings or thighs

1. Mix the spices, sugar and salt in a small bowl.
2. Pat the meat dry and rub the mix all over. Leave it for **at least 30 minutes,** or overnight, covered in the fridge.
3. Cook slowly at 150°C (130°C fan, gas 2) for ribs until tender, or at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for chicken until cooked through, with no pink.

RAW MEAT, BURNING SUGAR AND ALLERGENS

Raw chicken and marinades: keep raw chicken and meat on the bottom shelf of the fridge, on its own plate, and wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water afterwards. Marinate in the fridge, never on the worktop. Used marinade has had raw meat in it: throw it away, or boil it hard for at least 2 minutes before using it as a sauce.

Burning sugar: sugar in a rub burns at a high heat. Cook slowly, or add the rub late when grilling.

> **Allergens:** spice blends may contain celery or mustard.

LEVEL 3 · GLAZE

A sticky glaze

10 minutes | enough for 4 portions | glazing late so the sugar does not burn

Honey, soy sauce and mustard make a dark, shiny coat on sausages, chicken thighs and ribs. Brush it on in two or three coats in the last 10 minutes of cooking, turning the food each time.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	honey
2 tbsp	soy sauce
1 tbsp	Dijon mustard
1 tbsp	lemon juice
1	garlic clove, grated
1 tsp	smoked paprika

1. Stir everything together in a small pan and warm for 2 minutes until the honey loosens.
2. Cook the meat nearly through, then brush with the glaze for the last **10 minutes,** turning and brushing every few minutes.
3. Brush the last coat on, and let it set for 2 minutes before serving. Keep any unused glaze that has not touched raw meat.

> HOT SUGAR, BURNING AND ALLERGENS
>
> **Hot sugar:** boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.
>
> **Allergens:** contains soy, wheat and mustard.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

30 minutes or 8 hours

Time.

1. Marinate two pieces of chicken in the yogurt marinade, one for 30 minutes and one overnight, and cook them the same way.

Look for: The longer one has deeper flavour and is more tender; the short one is milder. The difference is less than people expect.

EXPERIMENT

With and without salt

Seasoning.

1. Marinate one chicken thigh with salt and one without, then cook both.

Look for: The salted one tastes seasoned all the way through and is juicier. Without salt the flavour stays on the surface.

EXPERIMENT

Acidic or yogurt based

Texture.

1. Marinate two pieces of chicken for 4 hours, one in lemon juice and oil, one in yogurt.

Look for: The lemon one can be firmer and drier at the surface; the yogurt one stays softer and juicier.

EXPERIMENT

Brushing early or late

Burning.

1. Glaze one sausage at the start of cooking and one in the last 5 minutes.

Look for: The early glaze burns black and bitter before the sausage is cooked. The late glaze is shiny and sweet.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Yogurt and spice marinade				
Lemon and herb marinade				
Dry spice rub				
Sticky glaze				
30 minutes or 8 hours				
With and without salt				
Acidic or yogurt based				
Brushing early or late				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Meat mushy	Marinated too long in acid	Shorten the time next time; use yogurt for long marinades
Burnt outside, raw inside	Sugar or honey on too early, heat too high	Cook slowly, glaze in the last 10 minutes
No flavour	Too short, no salt or marinade too weak	Add salt, marinate longer, and score thick meat
Steamed, grey meat	Excess marinade left on	Wipe off or pat dry before searing
Bitter crust	Burnt garlic or spices	Wipe off garlic before cooking at high heat
Dry meat	Overcooked	Cook to temperature (chicken 75°C in the thickest part, general guidance) and rest

RAW MEAT, HOT SUGAR AND LEFTOVERS

Raw chicken and marinades: keep raw chicken and meat on the bottom shelf of the fridge, on its own plate, and wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water afterwards. Marinate in the fridge, never on the worktop. Used marinade has had raw meat in it: throw it away, or boil it hard for at least 2 minutes before using it as a sauce.

Hot sugar: boiling sugar and fruit are much hotter than boiling water and stick to skin like glue. Use a deep pan, a long spoon and oven gloves, stand back when stirring, and never taste straight from the spoon until it has cooled.

Keeping sauces: cool a sauce quickly in a shallow container within 1 to 2 hours, press cling film onto the surface to stop a skin forming, chill and use within about 2 days. Reheat until steaming hot, stirring. Milk and cream sauces can split when frozen, so freeze other sauces instead.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I know what acid, salt and oil each do in a marinade.
- ☐ I can marinate safely in the fridge.
- ☐ I can choose a marinade time that does not ruin the meat.
- ☐ I can make a dry rub.
- ☐ I can glaze late so the sugar does not burn.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 8 is World Sauces and a Sauce Menu: sauces from Peru, North Africa and Thailand, and planning a menu.

Cooking Skills: Sauces 2

Chapter 8 · World Sauces and a Sauce Menu

SKILL GOAL

Make three sauces from other cuisines, and plan a meal around a choice of sauces.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Every cuisine has its own sauces, built from the same few ideas you have used all course: a **base** (herbs, yogurt, chilli), an **acid** (lime, lemon, vinegar), **salt** and **heat**. In Peru, a green sauce of fresh chilli and coriander goes on grilled chicken and potatoes. In North Africa, a chilli-and-spice paste (harissa) stirs into yogurt and everything. In Thailand, a dipping sauce balances lime, salt, sugar and chilli in a few spoonfuls.

This chapter ends the course with three of these, and then asks you to plan a meal around sauces. Romesco and other nut-and-pepper sauces are in Cooking Skills: Vegetables 2, chapter 7, and sesame and peanut sauces are in Cooking Skills: Noodles 1, chapter 5. Fish sauce is very salty and strongly smelling in the bottle, but in a sauce it tastes savoury rather than fishy.



Figure 8. Three sauces from three kitchens, and a table where you choose.

The method

- **Start with the strongest flavour,** such as chilli or fish sauce, in a small amount, and build up.
- **Taste for balance:** sour, salty, sweet and hot should each be there, with none shouting.

- **Make sauces just before the meal** if they are fresh, and the day before if they are yogurt-based.
- **Offer a choice at the table,** two or three small bowls, so everyone adds what they like.
- **Match each sauce to a role:** a creamy cooling one, a sharp one, and a hot one.

SAUCE	ORIGIN	HEAT	GOES WITH
Green chilli and lime sauce	Peru	Medium	Grilled chicken, potatoes, eggs
Harissa-style yogurt	North Africa	Mild to medium	Lamb, chicken, flatbread, vegetables
Thai-style dipping sauce	Thailand	Hot	Grilled meat, fish, rice, salads

CHILLI, FISH SAUCE AND ALLERGENS

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

Allergens: fish sauce contains fish; mayonnaise contains egg; harissa may contain sesame or nuts; yogurt contains milk. Always label each sauce.

Blending hot liquids: hot liquid expands in a sealed blender and can blow the lid off and scald you. Let it cool for a few minutes, fill the jug no more than half, hold a folded cloth over the lid, and start on low. A stick blender in a deep pan avoids the problem.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A Peruvian-style green sauce

10 minutes | 6 portions | blending herbs and chilli into a creamy sauce

Peru's green sauce is spicy and creamy at once. Traditionally it has mayonnaise; here yogurt gives a lighter, tangier sauce. Remove the chilli seeds to make it milder.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

1	large bunch of coriander (about 40 g)
2	green chillies, deseeded
2	spring onions
1	garlic clove
3 tbsp	natural yogurt
2 tbsp	lime juice
2 tbsp	olive oil
1 pinch	flaked sea salt

1. Put everything in a small blender or food processor.
2. Blend for **20 to 30 seconds** until smooth and pale green, scraping down once.
3. Taste, adjust the lime, salt and chilli, and chill for 15 minutes. Keep in the fridge and use within about 2 days.

BLENDING, CHILLI AND ALLERGENS

Blending hot liquids: hot liquid expands in a sealed blender and can blow the lid off and scald you. Let it cool for a few minutes, fill the jug no more than half, hold a folded cloth over the lid, and start on low. A stick blender in a deep pan avoids the problem.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

Allergens: contains milk.

LEVEL 2 · COOLING

A harissa-style yogurt sauce

10 minutes | 6 portions | balancing heat with yogurt

A creamy, red-streaked sauce with warmth and smokiness. Yogurt calms the chilli, so you can be bold. If you have no harissa paste, use chilli paste, or a pinch of chilli flakes with the paprika and cumin.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

200 g	natural yogurt (thick Greek-style is good)
1 tbsp	rose harissa paste, or chilli paste
1 tsp	smoked paprika
½ tsp	ground cumin
1	small garlic clove, grated
1 tbsp	lemon juice
1 tbsp	olive oil
1 pinch	flaked sea salt

1. Stir the harissa, paprika, cumin, garlic and lemon juice into the yogurt.
2. Add the oil and salt, and stir until smooth.
3. Taste, and add more harissa for heat, lemon for sharpness or salt. Chill for 30 minutes and use within 2 days.

> **ALLERGENS AND CHILLI**
>
> **Allergens:** contains milk; harissa may contain sesame or other spices.
>
> **Chilli and spices:** chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

LEVEL 2 · SHARP

A Thai-style dipping sauce

10 minutes | 6 portions | balancing lime, fish sauce, sugar and chilli

A fast, uncooked sauce with four tastes in a spoonful. Taste it, then add small pinches of sugar or drops of lime until nothing shouts. Dissolving the sugar fully matters. Great with grilled chicken or beef, fish, rice and cold noodles.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	lime juice
2 tbsp	fish sauce
1 tbsp	caster sugar
1	garlic clove, finely chopped
1	red chilli, finely chopped
2 tbsp	warm water
1 tbsp	chopped coriander

1. Stir the sugar into the warm water, lime juice and fish sauce until it fully dissolves.
2. Add the garlic and chilli and let it stand for **10 minutes.**
3. Taste: add lime if too salty, sugar if too sharp, chilli if too mild. Stir in the coriander just before serving.

> **CHILLI, STRONG FISH SAUCE AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Chilli and spices:** chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.
>
> **Allergens:** contains fish (fish sauce).

LEVEL 3 · MENU

A sauce tasting board

35 minutes plus the sauces | 4 portions | planning a meal around a choice of sauces

Cook one simple thing and serve it with three sauces from this course, so everyone builds their own plate. Roast chicken thighs, flatbreads and rice suit all three sauces above. Choose one creamy, one fresh and one sharp, and add the chutney from chapter 6 as a fourth.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

8	chicken thighs, bone in
2 tbsp	olive oil
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
1 tsp	smoked paprika
4	flatbreads
300 g	rice, cooked
1	batch each of the three sauces above
1	cucumber and tomato salad

1. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6). Toss the chicken with the oil, salt and paprika and roast for **35 to 40 minutes** until golden and cooked through, with no pink and juices running clear.
2. Warm the flatbreads and rice, and put each sauce in its own small bowl with its own spoon.
3. Serve everything in the middle of the table and taste each sauce on the chicken, then mix and match.

> **HOT OVEN, RAW CHICKEN AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot pot and hot steam:** a heavy casserole dish or pan of hot liquid is heavy and scalding. Use oven gloves, lift the lid away from your face so the steam doesn't burn you, keep the handles turned in and never carry a full pot across a busy kitchen.
>
> **Raw chicken and marinades:** keep raw chicken and meat on the bottom shelf of the fridge, on

its own plate, and wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water afterwards. Marinate in the fridge, never on the worktop. Used marinade has had raw meat in it: throw it away, or boil it hard for at least 2 minutes before using it as a sauce.

Allergens: label every sauce for milk, fish, sesame, egg and nuts.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Toasted or raw spices

Aroma.

1. Toast the cumin in a dry pan for 30 seconds, then use it in half the yogurt sauce; use raw in the other half.

Look for: Toasted cumin has a deeper, nuttier aroma. Raw is sharper and flatter. A short toast improves most spices.

EXPERIMENT

Spice level

Heat.

1. Make the green sauce with 1, 2 and 3 chillies, tasting each with a mouthful of rice.

Look for: Heat builds in the mouth after a few seconds. Make the sauce a little milder than you want, because you can add more but not take it out.

EXPERIMENT

Fresh or dried chilli

Flavour.

1. Make two dipping sauces, one with fresh chilli and one with chilli flakes.

Look for: Fresh chilli is bright and sharp; flakes are duller, slower and warmer. Fresh is better for a raw sauce.

EXPERIMENT

Your own menu

Planning.

1. Plan a meal for friends around three sauces from this course, write down the order and the timing, and cook it.

Look for: Write what worked and what did not. A menu is a skill, and planning is the biggest part of it.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Green chilli and lime sauce				
Harissa-style yogurt sauce				
Thai-style dipping sauce				
Sauce tasting board				
Toasted or raw spices				
Spice level				
Fresh or dried chilli				

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Your own menu				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Too hot	Too much chilli	Add yogurt, lime juice or more herbs; serve with bread or rice
Too salty (fish sauce)	Too much fish sauce	Add lime juice, sugar and water
Yogurt sauce thin or watery	Thin yogurt	Use thick Greek-style yogurt, or drain it through a sieve for 30 minutes
Green sauce brown	Left too long, or blended too long	Make it fresh; add acid and blend briefly
Bitter sauce	Too much coriander stem or raw garlic	Use leaves, less garlic and a pinch of sugar
Sauces clash	Too many on one plate	Choose two or three with different roles

CHILLI, ALLERGENS AND LEFTOVERS

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps, and keep portions for children mild.

Allergens: label each sauce for the people eating it.

Keeping sauces: cool a sauce quickly in a shallow container within 1 to 2 hours, press cling film onto the surface to stop a skin forming, chill and use within about 2 days. Reheat until steaming hot, stirring. Milk and cream sauces can split when frozen, so freeze other sauces instead.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a fresh chilli and herb sauce.
- ☐ I can use yogurt to calm heat.
- ☐ I can balance lime, salt, sugar and chilli.
- ☐ I can plan a meal around a choice of sauces.
- ☐ I can say which sauce suits which food.

NEXT CHAPTER

Congratulations: you have finished Cooking Skills: Sauces 2. Soups and Stocks 1 will cover making your own stock, the base of brown sauces and jus.