



A WORD ON SAUCES

Sauce making is one of the most sought-after culinary skills. In fact, in the kitchen brigade, the saucier (sauce cook) is next in line after the head chef. The art of sauce preparation has been well crafted over the centuries. Around the world, sauces are highly regarded components and accompaniments to almost every regional dish.

Reductions

Reducing liquids by evaporation leads to both thickening of the liquid along with the concentration of flavors. They come in handy both on the savory as well as the sweet side of the kitchen. Not only can they be used as sauces on their own, but they can be added to other base components to add richness of flavor and thickening (i.e. demiglace). Examples include port wine reduction, balsamic vinegar reduction, glazes, demiglaces, and deglazed pan sauces.

Starch Thickened

The thickening power of starches is greatly utilized in sauce making techniques. If used properly, starches add a thick and velvety texture to sauces. *Roux* (equal portions of fat & flour cooked together) can be added in the beginning or end of the process. Cornstarch (or a multitude of other plant-based starches) diluted in cool liquid, called a *slurry*, can also be used to thicken a sauce. Examples include Béchamel (and derivatives), Velouté (and derivatives), gravies, and stir-fry sauces.

Pureed & Processed

Cooked or cold, pureed & processed sauces are found around the world. It is a relatively easy process of either cooking down ingredients until they naturally break down or using modern tools like emersion blenders, blenders, or food processors to achieve the desired amount of puree. These sauces are commonly composed of both liquids, produce and/or herbs. Examples include tomato sauce, coulis, chutneys, pesto, romesco, Sambol, Sriracha, hoisin, salsa verde and chimichurri.

Emulsified

Emulsified sauces are composed of liquids that do not naturally combine (fats and water-based liquids). They are chemically bonded together by an emulsifying agent. The most common emulsifying agents in the kitchen are egg yolks and mustards. Care must be taken to slowly incorporate the liquids to achieve a thick rich texture, and not to break the emulsification. Examples include hollandaise (and derivatives), aioli (and derivatives), beurre blanc (or rouge), and vinaigrette.

Infused Liquids

Infusing a base liquid or sauce with extra flavors is an easy way to make a quick sauce. The infusions are done both hot and cold using both fresh and pre-made components. Examples include Nouc Cham, brown butter, coconut curries, jus, broths, chili oils and herb oils.

Natural Fermentations

Fermentation concentrates and deepens flavors as well as increases the saltiness of sauces found in Asia. These sauces are used both as bases (or Mother) sauces as well as table condiments. Examples include fish sauce, soy sauce, oyster sauce and fermented bean sauce.