



# How to Make Great Sauces

## A Guide to Mother Sauces and Beyond

It's no secret that a good sauce can elevate a routine dish to restaurant-level cuisine. In fact, the sauté chef (or saucier), who is responsible for all sautéed items and their sauces, is often considered the most demanding, responsible, and glamorous position in the restaurant kitchen. While we may not all aspire to work in a kitchen brigade, learning how to make great sauces is something every home cook can benefit from. Sauces can seem intimidating or fancy, but with our chefs' tips, videos and recipes, you'll be able to polish your cooking with the addition of some basic sauce knowledge. Whether you want to learn how to make a quick pan sauce to drizzle over steak, a simple tomato sauce for pasta or an easier-than-ever Hollandaise sauce, you'll master them all with the help of this guide.

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# 1: Introduction to Sauces

## How a Sauce can Transform a Dish



A sauce is always a compliment to a dish, never the main component. Some sauces can take a long time to develop flavor through reduction and straining, while others can be as simple as adding spices to yogurt and drizzling over lamb. Beyond flavor, the most important element of any sauce is its ability to cling to whatever food it is highlighting whether it is drizzled, dolloped or poured on.

Sauces are also not typically tied to one particular dish, but can be used in a variety of ways. Macaroni and cheese starts with a bechamel that is also essential to the Greek classic Moussaka. Pesto is great on pasta, pizza and even spread on sandwiches. You can't have Eggs Benedict without Hollandaise, but it's also the perfect choice to go with steamed asparagus. We won't even try to list all of the ways you can use a tomato sauce. Once you have a base knowledge of sauces and how they are made, you'll be free to experiment with different flavor combinations to improvise and get creative in your own kitchen!

## 2: Meet Chef Sam Goldbroch

Our Resident Sauce Expert



**Chef Sam Goldbroch's** mother was a prolific French cook so he started learning about sauces at a young age. However, he was a really picky eater, so it wasn't until he attended culinary school at Kendall College that he developed his true love of sauces during what would become his favorite class. At his first restaurant job after graduation, he was in charge of making stocks at North Pond. It's a typical job for a kitchen newbie, but Sam really enjoyed it because his stocks were the basis for most of the sauces served in the popular restaurant. He loved being able to fiddle around with ingredients to develop different flavors in sauces and learning that for some sauces, that can take five minutes while for others, it can take five days. Sam calls his time at North Pond his "master's degree in French food" and set him up for success at other local fine restaurants such as Blackbird, Elizabeth and The Radler before coming to The Chopping Block as a chef instructor. He loves to teach his students that they have a culinary arsenal of ingredients at their disposal for flavoring sauces and helped developed our intensive new Sauce Boot Camp class. Sam still has his mom's annotated classic French cookbooks, including Julia Child's, that he uses to reference today.

# 3: The Mother Sauces

## Escoffier's Legacy



You may have heard the term "mother sauce" come up on an episode of Iron Chef or in an interview with a famous chef. This term refers to one of the five classic French sauces, the building blocks for many other dishes, named by French Chef Auguste Escoffier in the early twentieth century. They include Béchamel, Espagnole, Velouté, Tomato and Hollandaise.

The first three are all sauces made with a roux, which is a cooked paste of equal parts starch and fat. Typically in sauce making, we use flour and butter. To make a roux, whisk together equal parts of butter and flour in a saucepan over medium heat for about 2 minutes, until the flour no longer smells raw, and then carefully add the liquid, whisking steadily to eliminate lumps. Return the sauce to a simmer and proceed as the recipe says. Roux-thickened sauces are very stable, and can be reduced to thicken even further.

Some schools of culinary thought argue that mayonnaise is also a mother sauce, so we'll consider it one for the purpose of this guide. The following chart is a comparative listing of the mother sauces, complete with their uses and variations. Note that carrots, celery, and onions are considered aromatic vegetables, otherwise known as mirepoix.

<b>Sauce</b>	<b>Thickener</b>	<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Uses</b>	<b>Variations</b>
Béchamel (White Sauce)	Roux	Milk	Casseroles, gratins, pastas	Cheese Sauce (e.g. Mornay or Alfredo); Cream Sauce
Espagnole (Brown Sauce)	Roux + Reduction	Brown Stock Aromatic vegetables Wine Herbs Tomatoes	Roasted, grilled or sautéed meats & poultry	Mushroom sauce; Bordelaise sauce; Madeira sauce; Port sauce
Velouté	Roux	Chicken or fish stock	Gravies, pot pies, chicken, eggs, fish, shellfish	Herb sauce; Mushroom sauce; Tomato cream
Tomato	Reduction	Tomatoes Aromatic vegetables Wine Herbs	Pastas, stews, meat, poultry, vegetables, eggs	Rose sauce; Tomato coulis; Tomato concasse
Mayonnaise	Emulsion (cold)	Egg yolk Mustard Lemon juice Oil	Salads, spreads, dips, dressings, fish, eggs, poultry	Aioli; Tartar sauce; Remoulade; Rouille
Hollandaise	Emulsion (hot)	Butter Lemon juice Egg yolk	Fish, poultry, eggs, vegetables	Béarnaise (tarragon); Maltaise (orange)



## How to Make a Pan Sauce



Before we delve into each of the Mother Sauces, there's a technique all home cooks should know that will help in your creation of sauces: how to make a pan sauce. Pan sauces are convenient because they are prepared in the pan which was used to sauté the main course. It is simple to create a sauce that is quick, flavorful and very impressive. Examples of dishes that involve pan sauces (often referred to as reduction sauces) include veal or chicken piccata, marsala, or saltimbocca, steak au poivre, and fish with an herb cream sauce. Because the sauce is made in a wide sauté pan with a large surface area, it will reduce and thicken quickly as the water evaporates.

Pan sauces are most often served over sautéed dishes to take advantage of the flavorful fond left in the pan when meat or fish is cooked. Fond is the French word for the brown bits and drippings that cling to the bottom of the pan, which are full of rich taste that should not be sent to the sink! Gravies made from roasting pan juices are in the same family of sauces.

The first step in creating the sauce is to deglaze the pan, in order to scrape up those flavorful brown bits. The most effective method of deglazing is to add an acidic ingredient like wine or vinegar to the pan while it is still warm, then gently scrape the bottom of the pan with a flat-edged tool to release the fond. Then allow the liquid to reduce to a syrupy consistency. Next, add liquid (stock, broth or heavy cream) and seasonings and simmer gently until the desired consistency has been reached.

**Tip:** The French word for the consistency of a perfect sauce is “nappé,” which means “coated.” A sauce should be thin enough that it doesn't sit on top of the food, but thick enough that it doesn't run all over the plate. To check your sauce, dip a spoon in it and see that the spoon is

coated. If it's too thin, you can reduce it by boiling to evaporate water; if too thick, add a little water, cream or stock to thin it.

There are many flavorful ingredients you can add to a pan sauce to add interest, color, and variety to your dish. Choose additions that don't need a long cooking time to release their flavor. Examples include capers, fresh herbs, citrus zest, roasted peppers, anchovies and tomatoes. Aromatics, such as minced shallots or garlic, should be sautéed in the hot pan after the meat is removed, before deglazing.

**Tip:** For added richness and body, swirl in a tablespoon or two of butter when the sauce is complete. Use the heat of the pan to gently melt the butter. Don't let it boil after this point, or the sauce will separate.

Our [Owner/Chef Shelley Young](#) demonstrates how to make two different types of pan sauces [in this video](#).

Now that you know how to make a pan sauce, let's dive into those Mother Sauces!

## **Béchamel**



Béchamel is a very traditional sauce that has been around since at least the 1600s, possibly earlier than that, that is basically milk thickened with roux. Chef Sam Goldbroch provides an easy ratio to keep in mind when making this sauce: "a pound thickens a gallon". That means 1 pound of roux made from 8 ounces of flour and 8 ounces of butter will thicken a gallon of milk. Use this ratio and pair it down to whatever quantity you need.

To make this sauce, Sam starts with a blonde roux, which is flour and butter toasted for just a minute or so. He whisks in cold milk until the sauce is smooth and reduces until the desired

thickness. All this sauce needs in its purest form is a little seasoning of salt, bay leaves and nutmeg. The most familiar example of a dish made with Béchamel that everyone will be familiar with is Macaroni and Cheese. It's also used in Lasagna, and makes a base for a nice cheese sauce for broccoli.

## **Macaroni and Cheese with Homemade Béchamel**

*Yield: 4 servings*

*Active time: 20 minutes*

*Start to finish: 1 hour*

1/2 pound short pasta

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

2 1/2 cups milk

Salt and pepper to taste

3/4 pound shredded cheese (American, cheddar or your other favorites!)

1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs mixed with 1 tablespoon grapeseed oil

1. Preheat the oven to 350°.
2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook pasta until al dente, about 7 minutes. Drain, toss with a splash of oil to prevent sticking and place in large bowl.
3. Heat an 8- or 9-inch cast iron skillet over medium heat, and add the butter.
4. Once the butter has melted, whisk in the flour to create a roux. Cook, stirring, for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the nutmeg and cook for an additional 30 seconds.
5. Gradually whisk in the milk. Bring to a boil and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook on low heat for about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
6. Remove from the heat and whisk in the cheese until melted.
7. Stir the cooked pasta into the sauce.
8. Top with the breadcrumbs or other crunchy things!
9. Bake until golden and bubbly, about 35 minutes.





Watch Shelley demonstrate how to make a basic Béchamel, commonly known as white sauce, [in this video](#).

## **Espagnole**



An Espagnole is a brown stock (usually beef or veal stock) that is thickened with a roux and flavored with other elements such as red wine and tomato paste. You can use it as a base for a soup or stew but in Sam's opinion, this sauce is a little outdated. He says you won't find it being made in many restaurants anymore. "Most people now use a reduction such as a demi-glace. The reason for that is that it produces a much clearer flavor. If you make a veal reduction, you get a focused veal flavor, whereas if you make an Espagnole, you get some competing flavors."

Reductions also look much better on a plate. That's why most chefs no longer use the traditional Espagnole," says Sam. He also adds that the gluten-free movement also plays a part in how sauces are made. So, if you don't need to add flour which contains gluten to a sauce, you don't have to worry about adjusting the dish for people who are gluten-free.

If you aren't familiar with the term "demi-glace", Sam defines it as a sauce that has multiple steps. First, you make a veal stock from bones which can be a 6 to 8 hour process to produce an intense amount of flavor. Then you strain the bones out of it and make a second stock with those bones. That second stock won't have a whole lot of flavor, but it will be very gelatinous. Then you mix the first stock with the second stock and reduce it for many hours up to days to get a concentrated demi-glace which you can make sauces from.

Shelley demonstrates a variety of an Espagnole, also known as brown sauce, [in this video](#).

Here's the recipe Shelley used.

## **Sauce Espagnole**

*Yield: 3 cups*

*Active time: 20 minutes*

*Start to finish: 30 minutes*

2 tablespoons butter

1 medium yellow onion, medium dice

1 stalk celery, medium dice

1 carrot, peeled and cut into medium dice

1 tablespoon tomato paste

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1/2 cup sherry wine

2 1/2 cups beef stock

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 bay leaf

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat a heavy saucepan over medium heat and add the butter.
2. Sauté the onion, celery, and carrot until caramelized, about 5-7 minutes.
3. Stir in the tomato paste and continue to cook an additional minute.
4. Add the flour, tossing to coat the vegetables, and cook for one minute more. Deglaze the pan with the wine, scraping any *fond* off the bottom of the pan.
5. Add the stock, thyme and bay leaf, and whisk to combine the ingredients. Bring the sauce to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the sauce is reduced slightly and the vegetables are soft.
6. Pass through a strainer into another pot. Reserve for making the bordelaise.

Now that you have an Espagnole, you can use it to make Bordelaise, which is a derivative of the Mother Sauce and one of Sam's all-time favorite sauces. You can also just start with a high quality beef stock or veal demi-glace, as we mentioned.

One of the most important things to remember when cooking with wine at any time is the rule, "If you won't drink it, don't cook with it." Sam says that's especially true in sauce-making because as you reduce the wine, you aren't just concentrating the good flavors, you are concentrating the sugars and tannins as well, so you need to make sure it's a good quality to start out with. Bordelaise results in a delicious, savory sauce that works well with all types of meat.

## **Sauce Bordelaise**

*Yield: 1 cup*

*Active time: 10 minutes*

*Start to finish: 20 to 45 minutes*

1 cup red wine

2 shallots, minced

2 sprigs fresh thyme

10 black peppercorns, cracked

3 cups beef stock or 3/4 cup demi-glace

1 tablespoon cold butter

Red wine vinegar to taste

Salt and pepper to taste

1. In a saucepan add measure together the red wine, minced shallot, thyme and peppercorns. Bring to a boil and reduce by 3/4 its original volume.
2. Add the beef stock and reduce until the sauce coats the back of the spoon. If using demi-glace warm through and simmer for 2 minutes.
3. Remove from the heat, and strain through a fine mesh strainer.
4. Swirl in the cold butter, and season with a few drops of red wine vinegar to taste. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve with any meat.

## **Chicken Chasseur**

Another derivative of Espagnole is Chasseur, which means "hunter". It's traditionally made with rabbit or chicken.

*Yield: 4 servings*

*Active time: 40 minutes*

*Start to finish: 40 minutes*

4 chicken breasts, boneless and skinless

Salt and pepper to taste

All-purpose flour for dredging

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon butter

1/2 pound assorted mushrooms, thinly sliced

1 large shallot, minced

1/4 cup Cognac or brandy

1/2 cup white wine

2 cups rich chicken stock

2 roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded and cut into small dice (see note, below)

1 tablespoon cold butter

1 teaspoon fresh tarragon, rough chopped

1 teaspoon fresh parsley, rough chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 200°.
2. Pound the chicken breasts between two sheets of parchment paper or plastic wrap until they are uniform in thickness.
3. Season each side with salt and pepper to taste and dredge through the flour, shaking off any excess.
4. Heat a sauté pan over medium-high heat, and add the olive oil and butter. Sauté the chicken until golden brown and crisp, 3 to 4 minutes. Flip and repeat.
5. Place the chicken on a platter and cover with foil. Set in the oven to keep warm.
6. In the same pan over medium-high heat, sauté the mushrooms until golden brown, 5 to 6 minutes.
7. Stir in the shallots and cook an additional minute. Reduce the heat to low and carefully deglaze the pan with the Cognac. Simmer until the pan is dry.
8. Pour in the white wine and simmer until the pan is dry again.
9. Add the rich chicken stock and diced tomatoes and simmer until the liquid has reduced by half of its original volume.
10. Once the sauce has reduced, remove it from the heat and swirl in the cold butter.
11. Stir in the tarragon and parsley and season with salt and pepper to taste. Place the sautéed chicken back into the pan to soak up the sauce.

**Note:**

To remove the skin from a tomato, bring a pot of water to a boil. Cut a shallow x on the bottom of the tomato and blanch it for 1 minute and then shock in a bowl of ice water. Peel the skin off where x marks the spot.



## Velouté



Velouté is a sauce that traditionally uses either chicken or fish stock and is thickened with a roux. It's a simple sauce, but isn't used a whole lot today. The most common dish you'll find it in is Chicken Pot Pie and because this dish is so beloved, Sam says it's a sauce that is worth learning how to make. You can use the same ratio that we used for Béchamel: a pound thickens a gallon, only use stock instead of milk.

Watch Shelley demonstrate how to make Velouté that has been slightly embellished [in this video](#). As she points out, using cold stock will help to reduce lumps in your sauce.

### Chicken Pot Pie with Sauce Velouté

*Yield: 4-6 servings*

*Active time: 45 minutes*

*Start to finish: 2 hours, 15 minutes*

2 chicken leg and thigh quarters

4 tablespoons butter

2 carrots, peeled and cut into small dice

2 stalks celery, small dice

1 medium-size onion, small dice

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

3 cups chicken stock

1/2 cup frozen peas

1 teaspoon fresh thyme, rough chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

1 sheet puff pastry, defrosted

1 egg yolk, gently beaten with 1 tablespoon cold water

1. Place the chicken quarters in a heavy shallow pan and cover with water. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook, covered, until the meat is tender and falling off the bone.
2. Remove the chicken from the water and allow to cool. Once cool to the touch, shred the meat, discarding the skin and bones, and set aside.
3. To prepare the velouté, heat a deep, heavy pot over medium heat and add the butter. Gently sauté the mire poix, stirring occasionally, until tender, 5 to 6 minutes.
4. Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and cook for 1 or 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the stock, whisking to incorporate.
5. Bring the sauce to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer. Cook, uncovered, for about 15 to 20 minutes to thicken the sauce and blend the flavors.
6. Fold in the shredded chicken, peas and thyme. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
7. Preheat the oven to 375°.
8. Spoon the filling into four to six individual heat-proof bowls (depending on the size) or one large baking dish.
9. Cut the puff pastry 1/2-inch larger than the baking dish(es), and cut three small slits in the dough as vents. Brush the rims of the bowls or baking dish with the egg wash, place the dough on top the filling, and press to adhere the dough to the edge. Brush the top of the pastry with egg wash.
10. Bake on a parchment-lined sheet tray until browned and bubbly, about 30 minutes.
11. Allow the pot pie(s) to cool for about 5 minutes before serving.

## Tomato Sauce



In our opinion, tomato sauce should always be simple. "You get out what you put in," says Sam. "I always tell my students to get the best possible quality tomatoes that you possibly can, and getting canned tomatoes is not cheating. It's just a different product."

To make a basic tomato sauce, heat extra virgin olive oil in a pan and sweat some chopped onions with a pinch of salt until they are very soft. Add minced garlic and cook for about a minute until you can really smell the garlic. Add the tomatoes, and that's it! Sam doesn't like to cook his tomato sauce for very long. "The longer you cook it, the more brightness and acidity you lose from the tomatoes. I'm not one of those people who makes five hour tomato sauce," said Sam. "Even an Italian grandmother would make a basic marinara sauce in five minutes. Now, if she's making a meat sauce or gravy, that could take more like five hours."

Sam's all-time favorite food scene in a movie is the prison tomato sauce scene from Goodfellas. [Check it out.](#)

Watch Shelley demonstrate how to make a basic tomato sauce [in this video.](#)

## Tomato Sauce

*Yield: 3 cups*

*Active time: 25 minutes*

*Start to finish: 55 minutes*

3 tablespoons butter

1/2 small yellow onion, small dice

1 carrot, peeled and cut into small dice

3 cloves garlic, minced

One 28-ounce can whole San Marzano tomatoes, lightly crushed

1/2 cup white or red wine

1 cup rich chicken stock

1 bay leaf

Salt and pepper to taste

Your favorite herbs

1. Heat a saucepan over medium heat, and add the butter.
2. Sauté the onion and carrots for about 3 to 5 minutes, or until lightly caramelized. Add the garlic and cook an additional minute.
3. Add the tomatoes, wine, chicken stock and bay leaf. Bring to a boil and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook over low heat for a minimum of 30 minutes, but up to two hours.
4. Pass sauce through a food mill, if desired, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the herbs of your choice and serve.

**Serving Suggestions:**

- Shirred eggs: Pour the tomato sauce into a shallow baking dish and crack 6 eggs into the sauce. Bake in a 350° oven until the eggs are just set. Serve with warm bread.
- Toss with your favorite cooked noodles and vegetables and top with grated cheese.
- Use as a sauce to accompany grilled, roasted or sautéed fish or chicken.

## Hollandaise



Sam remembers the day he learned how to make Hollandaise in culinary school as the most dreaded day for the chef instructor because he or she had to taste 20 students' broken sauces. That's because the traditional way of making Hollandaise is pretty labor intensive: you whisk egg yolks over a double boiler until they are just steaming, add lemon juice and then add ladles full of clarified butter while constantly whisking until the sauce thickened.

"I later found out that method was complete nonsense. You don't have to do any of that!" says Sam. "The way that we do it at The Chopping Block is the most easy, foolproof method for Hollandaise of all time. You can whip it up in about five minutes." Hollandaise is used for Eggs Benedict and its derivative, Bearnaise which is flavored with tarragon and vinegar goes perfectly with a grilled steak, lobster or shrimp. Hollandaise is one of the most versatile Mother Sauces.

Shelley demonstrates the method for making our Easier-than-Ever Hollandaise sauce [in this video](#).

### **Easier-than-Ever Hollandaise Sauce**

*Yield: 1 cup*

*Active time: 15 minutes*

*Start to finish: 15 minutes*



*The gentle heating of the eggs and butter together in conjunction with continuous whisking brings this silky, luxurious emulsified sauce together.*

*This simple technique is the closest to the classic original found in Escoffier's renowned cookbook Le Guide Culinaire. There is no evidence as to how, when or why clarified butter became the "classic" medium for this sauce. The original version was meant to showcase the unparalleled quality of whole butter from a specific region.*

2 egg yolks

2 tablespoons water

Juice from 1/2 lemon

1 stick butter, cut into 1 tablespoon-size pieces

Cayenne pepper, to taste

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Place the yolks, water, lemon juice and butter in a slope-sided saucier pan.
2. Place over medium-low heat and whisk until the butter melts. Continue to whisk until the sauce becomes thick and is steaming, about 5 minutes.
3. Remove the sauce from the heat and whisk in the cayenne pepper, salt and pepper to taste.
4. Serve warm.

Serving suggestions:

- Pair with asparagus, poached or sautéed fish, or eggs.

You can easily turn that Hollandaise into a Béarnaise sauce.

## **Easier-Than-Ever Béarnaise Sauce**

*Yield: 1 cup*

*Active time: 15 minutes*

*Start to finish: 15 minutes*

2 egg yolks

2 tablespoons water

2 tablespoons champagne vinegar

1 stick butter, cut into 1 tablespoon-size pieces

2 tablespoons fresh tarragon, rough chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Place the yolks, water, vinegar and butter in a slope-sided saucier pan.
2. Place over medium low heat and whisk until the butter melts. Continue to whisk until the sauce becomes thick and is steaming, about 5 minutes.
3. Remove the sauce from the heat, fold in the tarragon and season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Serve warm with steaks.

## Mayonnaise



When Sam was first learning about Mother Sauces, mayonnaise was not included. But he's glad that it is now considered one because there are literally a million different things you can add to this sauce to bring something else out of it. "Everyone should learn how to make mayonnaise," says Sam.

He makes mayonnaise in one of two ways, either by whisking by hand or with an immersion blender. The way he was taught to test to see if your mayonnaise is thick enough is to hold it

over your head. "If you get no mayonnaise on your head, then it's thick enough." Though Sam doesn't actually submit his students in class to this test, he does tell them that since he's learned to make mayonnaise, he's never bought the store-bought version again. He says the flavors just don't compare and since it's so easy to make, it's not a big deal to whip up a batch when you need it. A jar of homemade mayonnaise will keep for 2 to 3 days in the fridge as long as there is acid in it.

You've also probably heard the term "aioli" before which Sam defines very simply as "mayonnaise with stuff in it." That stuff is usually garlic, but you can also use fresh herbs or roasted red peppers. Consider it similar to a compound butter which you can flavor any way you like.

Shelley demonstrates how to make aioli using a food processor [in this video.](#)

Aioli, the garlicky cousin of mayonnaise, is a wonderful accompaniment for many things, from crudité or grilled vegetables, to croquettes, fried or roasted potatoes to meats and fish. Take your time adding the oil to achieve a nice thick, creamy sauce.

## **Aioli**

*Yield: 1 cup*

*Active time: 5 minutes*

*Start to finish: 5 minutes*

1 egg yolk

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1 clove garlic, minced

2 tablespoons sherry vinegar

3/4 cup grapeseed oil

1/4 cup Spanish olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Whisk together the yolk, mustard, garlic and vinegar in a bowl.
2. Slowly add the oils in a thin steady stream while whisking vigorously until the sauce is emulsified and thick.
3. Season with salt and pepper to taste. This sauce can alternatively be prepared in a food processor or a Vitamix blender.

**Note:** Add olives, roasted garlic, lemon zest, tarragon, blue cheese, oven-roasted tomatoes and/or capers to create multiple variations.

**Serving Suggestions:**

- Serve tarragon aioli with shrimp, crab or lobster fritters.
- Serve blue cheese aioli on your favorite burgers or sandwiches.
- Serve roasted garlic aioli with a side of frites.
- Serve lemon aioli with grilled or steamed asparagus or poached salmon.
- Use as a dressing for potato salad.

# 4: Modern Sauces

## Spinning the Classics



While the influence of the Mother Sauces on today's cuisine cannot be disputed, they are becoming more and more outdated. One of the reasons is their dependence on roux and as we mentioned earlier, chefs are moving away from sauces that contain gluten in order to appeal to a wider variety of diners. While most of the classic sauces are dependent on rich butter, newer versions rely more on brighter olive oil and vinegars. The newer sauces are also far less labor-intensive than some of the classic sauces. Some sauces featuring yogurt, peppers and herbs can be whipped up in just minutes.

## Vinaigrette





A pantry stocked with a wide variety of oils and vinegars makes it easy to create an array of delicious dressings. A basic assortment of vinegars includes red wine, cider, white wine or champagne, and sherry vinegars. For oils, you should have a fruity extra virgin olive oil as well as a lighter-flavored oil like a light olive oil, canola oil, or grapeseed oil. Other choices, to further expand your repertoire, might include fruit vinegars and nut oils. Always purchase good-quality vinegars and oils and store them in a cool, dark place.

The traditional ratio of oil to vinegar is 3:1. We recommend using this ratio as a rough guideline when preparing salad dressing, and adjusting it to your taste. Many Americans prefer a dressing that is slightly more acidic than this ratio.

**Tip:** Try using lemon juice in place of vinegar in your favorite dressing recipe. Lemon juice has a bright flavor that really enhances lettuce and other salad vegetables.

We all know that oil and water don't mix, and the same is true for oil and vinegar. Vinaigrettes can be "forced" to stay together by emulsifying; or they may be allowed to separate, in which case they should be whisked before serving. Either way, the vinegar and seasonings can be combined first, and then the oil should be whisked in slowly.

**Tip:** Combine the dressing ingredients in a small jar and shake before tossing in salads.

Egg yolks, honey, and mustard are emulsifying agents which help the droplets of oil remain suspended in emulsified dressings. A good strong Dijon mustard adds wonderful flavor to many salads as well.

**Tip:** Once tossed with dressing and served, a perfectly dressed salad leaves no extra dressing in the salad bowl. The leaves of lettuce should be lightly coated but not soaked in dressing. Add dressing to a salad a tablespoon or two at a time, to ensure that you don't drown the lettuce.

Beside mayonnaise, Sam feels the other sauce everyone should know how to make is a vinaigrette. That's because it's the most versatile of all sauces, and goes way beyond salads. Vinaigrettes can be used with steak, shellfish, vegetables, grains, even desserts.

What fat and acid you choose is completely up to you. The fat could be olive oil, peanut oil, or any other type of oil as well as bacon fat, duck fat or butter. Examples of acids for vinaigrettes would be any type of vinegar or citrus juice, buttermilk or yogurt.

A vinaigrette is one of the most useful foods to learn how to taste. When you are tasting a vinaigrette, you need to be able to taste when it is imbalanced, but understand that it still needs to be acidic. "A lot of people will add enough oil so that they don't pucker up anymore, but I have to remind them that they aren't going to drink the vinaigrette. They are using it to dress food. It's important that it's interesting to taste because it will make your other food interesting," said Sam.

## **Mustard Vinaigrette**

*Yield: 1/2 cup*

*Active time: 10 minutes*

*Start to finish: 10 minutes*

1 shallot, finely diced

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tablespoon champagne vinegar

2 teaspoons whole grain mustard

1 teaspoon granulated sugar

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons fresh tarragon, chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

1. In a small bowl whisk together the shallot, garlic, vinegar, mustard and sugar.
2. Slowly drizzle in olive oil while whisking to form an emulsion.
3. Stir in the tarragon, and season with salt and pepper to taste.

## Beurre Blanc



Sam describes Beurre Blanc as the "nightmare sauce" for both home cooks and chefs alike, because it is finicky. Beurre Blanc is an emulsified sauce made from a reduction of shallots and champagne vinegar. Cold cubed butter is added to the vinegar reduction as you constant whisk it. Since this is really just a butter sauce, the vinegar is needed to cut the fat in the butter. The tricky part is keeping it at the perfect temperature, so you must constantly monitor the heat by taking the sauce off and on the stove-top. It can definitely take some practice to get just right. This sauce also doesn't keep very well so it's best to serve it right away and goes great with fish or shellfish.

One trick we teach our students is that the addition of some heavy cream, though while not traditional, can help stabilize the sauce.

### Tabasco Beurre Blanc

1 small shallot, minced

1/2 cup dry white wine

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

1/4 cup heavy whipping cream

1/2 pound cold butter, diced in 1" cubes

Salt to taste

Tabasco sauce

1. Combine shallot, wine and vinegar in a heavy saucepan. Heat over a medium flame and reduce until all the liquid has evaporated.
2. Add heavy cream, reduce heat to low, and reduce the cream until thickened.
3. Add butter to the sauce base, one piece at a time, whisking constantly over low heat. Watch consistency: it should remain at a coating sauce consistency. Too thin (or begins separating)? Remove pan from heat and add butter to cool. Too thick? Slow down the addition of butter or turn up the heat slightly. Continue in this fashion until all butter has been incorporated.
4. Add the Tabasco sauce to your liking and season to taste with salt. Keep sauce in a warm, but not hot, space until needed.

## **Gastrique**

A gastrique is simply a caramel that is deglazed with vinegar. If you've ever heard of the classic French dish, Duck a l'Orange, Sauce Bigarad is the sauce for that dish. "Most people haven't heard of a gastrique, but once they learn about it, they are shocked because it is pretty simple to make, yet sounds so elegant," says Sam.

You simply cook the caramel until golden, deglaze with the acid and then add the stock and reduce until thick. The combination of the caramel and vinegar provides the perfect balance of sweet and sour.

## **Sauce Bigirade**

*Yield: 1 1/2 cups*

*Active time: 25 minutes*

*Start to finish: 25 minutes*

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1/4 cup water

1 orange, zested and juiced

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 teaspoon orange liquor

1 cup poultry stock

2 sprigs fresh thyme

10 black peppercorns, cracked

1 shallot, finely diced

1. In a saucepan bring the sugar and water to a boil. Cook to a light brown caramel.
2. Pull the caramel off the heat, and carefully stir in the orange juice, zest, balsamic vinegar, and orange liquor.
3. Heat the mixture to dissolve the caramel.
4. Whisk in the stock, thyme, peppercorns and shallots. Bring to a simmer, and reduce until nappe.
5. Strain through a fine mesh strainer, and serve with duck.

This gastrique goes well with sautéed pork, chicken or even foie gras.

## **Apple Cider Gastrique**

Yield: About 2 cups

Active time: 25 minutes

Start to finish: 25 minutes

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1/4 cup water

1/2 cup apple cider vinegar

1 shallot, minced

1/2 teaspoon ginger, freshly grated

1 cup apple cider

1 cup chicken stock

1 tart apple, peeled and cut into small dice

1 tablespoon fresh chives, thinly sliced

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Bring the sugar and water to a boil in a heavy saucepan, and cook over medium heat until the mixture is a golden caramel.
2. Remove from the heat and carefully pour in the vinegar. Add the shallot and ginger, and swirl the pan over low heat until the caramel is dissolved, about 1 minute.
3. Stir in the apple cider and chicken stock, and boil until reduced to a nappé consistency.

4. Whisk in the diced apples and chives. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve.

## Romesco



Romesco sauce originated in Spain where it is typically served with fire-roasted onions. However, it's a great complement to other grilled items like zucchini, chicken and fish. It couldn't be more simpler to make as you basically take bread, peppers and nuts and combine them all in the food processor. The bread acts as a thickener for the sauce.

## Romesco Sauce

*Yield: 4 servings; 1 cup*

*Active time: 10 minutes*

*Start to finish: 10 minutes*

1/4 cup almonds, toasted

1 clove garlic, peeled

1 slice day old bread

1/2 roasted red or yellow pepper (see note, below)

1/2 plum tomato, peeled and seeded (see note, below)



1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

1/4 teaspoon red chili flakes or paprika

2 tablespoons fresh parsley, rough chopped

1. Combine all of the sauce ingredients in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
2. Serve the sauce room temperature.

**Notes:**

- To roast a pepper, place it directly on your gas burner and cook, turning occasionally, until the skin is completely blackened on all sides. Place the pepper in a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and allow to steam for about 15 minutes. Remove the skin and seeds from the pepper, resisting the urge to rinse it, and cut as needed for your recipe.
- To remove the skin from a tomato, bring a pot of water to a boil. Cut a shallow x on the bottom of the tomato, and blanch it for 1 minute and then shock in a bowl of ice water. Peel the skin off where x marks the spot.
- This sauce will keep for several days in the refrigerator.

**Pesto**



Learning the technique of making pesto is useful because you can literally make it with any leafy green (think kale, parsley, even **carrot tops!**). "People with gardens often have an abundance of herbs that they don't know what to do with, and you can easily turn that bounty into a delicious pesto," says Sam. Pesto traditionally includes Parmesan cheese, olive oil, lemon juice, garlic and nuts. As long as you keep the pesto topped with oil, you can keep it for several weeks in the fridge. It works well to freeze it.

## **Pesto**

*Yield: 3/4 cup*

*Active time: 10 minutes*

*Start to finish: 10 minutes*

2 cloves garlic

3 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted

1/2 cup parmesan cheese, grated

2 tablespoons romano cheese, grated

2 cups fresh basil leaves, loosely packed

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Turn on a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Drop in garlic cloves through top opening, and process until finely minced.
2. Turn off the processor, add pine nuts and cheeses and process until finely minced.
3. Add the basil, and while the food processor is running, add the oil in a steady stream through the feed tube.
4. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Refrigerate until use, up to 4 days, or freeze up to 3 months.

## Tzatziki



Tzatziki is truly an ancient sauce as it originated in the Ottoman Empire. The word Tzatziki derives from the Persian "zhazh", meaning herb mixture. Recipes similar to Tzatziki are very popular in Middle Eastern countries, Greece, and Southern Balkans. It's typically made from yogurt, cucumbers, garlic, olive oil and lemon. One of Sam's tips for making Tzatziki is to salt the cucumbers and drain them before adding to the sauce to draw out the moisture so that your sauce doesn't end up watery. Tzatziki goes great with lamb, chicken or any dish with Middle Eastern flavors.

### Tzatziki Sauce

*Yield: 2 cups*

*Active time: 15 minutes*

*Start to finish: 15 minutes*

1 cup plain or Greek-style yogurt, regular or low-fat

1/2 seedless cucumber, coarsely grated

1 lemon, zested

1/2 lemon, juiced

1 tablespoon fresh dill, rough chopped

1 tablespoon fresh mint, rough chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Combine all ingredients and chill.

**Note:**

To keep the yogurt thick try salting your cucumbers. Place your grated cucumbers in a small sieve set over a bowl. Sprinkle the cucumbers with salt and mix well. Allow the salt to pull some of the water from the cucumbers for about 10 minutes. Using your hands, squeeze any excess water from the cucumbers and mix into the yogurt.

## 5: General Sauce Tips

### More Sauce Know How



While we've covered a lot of specific sauces in the guide thus far, Sam says there some general rules to be aware of when making sauces.

1. Read through your recipe. Some sauce recipes have a lot of steps and if you start before you've read through them all, or don't have your mise en place ready to go, you can skip steps or not have an ingredient ready at the right time.
2. Anytime you are working with a roux-based sauce, don't walk away from it, otherwise it will feel abandoned and it will burn. The same rule applies to any sauce with milk or cream in it. Don't walk away from it, unless you want to be scrubbing the stove-top later.
3. Always take the time to sweat or caramelize the vegetables properly, depending on what the recipe says. If the recipe includes the words "sweat," "translucent," or "soften," add some salt in the beginning to draw out the moisture. If the recipe includes the word "caramelize" do not add salt until the vegetables are already browning.
4. Season as you go.
5. If a recipe calls for a sauce to reduce until "nappe," it is referring to the consistency of the sauce. It's a French term for when a sauce coats the back of the spoon in a thin layer. This is what a cook should look for in a good sauce.
6. When butter is added as a finishing touch to sauces, it's called "monte au beurre," or mounting the sauce with butter. To monte au beurre, add chunks of unsalted cold butter to the sauce and whisk until the butter melts. This technique provides multiple value to the sauce:

- It mellows out the flavors in the sauce. When you are dealing with a sauce with a lot of assertive flavors (i.e. red wine, bay leaves, rich demi-glace) like a Bordelaise, the butter rounds everything out. It tames those flavors and melds them together.
- It adds body and fat to the sauce which in turn, coats your palate.
- It allows the sauce to hold up better on a plate.
- It gives shine to the sauce.



# 6: How to Make Stock

## The Basis of a Good Sauce



Stock (or broth) is a fundamental ingredient in many dishes, from sauces, soups and stews, to risotto. It is an extraction of flavors from bones, vegetables, herbs, and spices that adds flavor, texture (body), and richness to dishes, without adding fat.

To make stock all you need are bones, aromatic vegetables (onions, carrots, and celery), parsley (stems are fine), an herb bundle (bay leaf, thyme), a pinch of sea salt, and whole peppercorns.

### Tips

- Beef or chicken bones may be browned before you make stock for a deeper color and flavor. Place the bones in a roasting pan and brown in the oven at 450° to 500° for 1/2 hour; add the vegetables and brown 1/2 hour more.
- Do not allow the stock to boil. Boiling makes stock cloudy by breaking up the fat and "scum" (coagulated proteins) and allowing them to combine with the stock. Careful skimming and a gentle simmer will produce clear stock. Sam describes the perfect temperature as a "lazy bubble, when a bubble pops to the surface every few seconds."
- The fat may be skimmed off the warm stock with a large spoon, or it can be very easily removed once the stock has chilled in the refrigerator.
- Strain twice; first through a colander to remove the large ingredients, then through a fine strainer lined with dampened cheesecloth to produce a crystal clear result.
- To store stock, place it in conveniently sized containers and freeze for up to 6 months. Stock is very perishable; it only keeps refrigerated for up to 3 days.

One of Sam's biggest pet peeves is when people use garbage in making stock. "You get what you put into a stock, so if you are using just vegetable scraps, your stock will be weak." Sam suggests cutting your vegetables into the size that will match how long they will simmer, which is typically going to be big and chunky if they will be cooking for about four hours. If you cut them really small, the flavor will be gone by the time the stock is done. However, if you cut them larger, the flavor of the vegetables will last for the entire cooking process. Taste your stock as you go to see how the flavor is developing.

It's not necessarily traditional, but Sam's favorite way to make stock is by using a pressure cooker. "I'm a huge fan of pressure cooked stocks," he says. "The idea of making a stock is to turn collagen from the bones to gelatin for maximum flavor. You also want to keep the stock as clear as possible. Pressure cookers boil at 250 degrees so you get gelatin and maximum flavor extraction immediately. The pressure keeps it from boiling to reduce impurities. And the best part is they save time; a chicken stock that would typically take four hours to make can be done in just 30 minutes. The only downside is that they don't come in very large sizes and you can fill it up quickly. So, I recommend getting the biggest pressure cooker you can possibly afford and store in your kitchen."

## **Beef Stock**

*Yield: about 2 quarts*

*Active time: 15 minutes*

*Start to finish: 3 hours, 15 minutes*

5 pounds veal bones

1 large yellow onion, quartered

2 medium carrots, peeled and cut in 1-inch pieces

1 stalk celery

1 tablespoon tomato paste

2 cups red wine

1 herb bundle (parsley, thyme and bay leaf)

1 teaspoon sea salt

5 whole peppercorns

1. Preheat the oven to 450°.

2. Place the veal bones in a heavy roasting pan, and roast in the oven for 30 minutes.
3. Add the onions, carrots and celery, and continue roasting until the bones and mire poix are golden brown.
4. Stir the tomato paste to coat the bones and mire poix, and roast an additional 5 minutes to create a rich flavor.
5. Place the roasted bones and mire poix in a stockpot, and add enough cold water to cover by an inch.
6. Place the roasting pan over medium-low heat, and deglaze with the red wine, scraping free any bits of fond from the bottom of the pan. Reduce by half of its original volume.
7. Pour the reduced red wine into the stock pot, and add the herb bundle, salt and peppercorns.
8. On medium-high heat, bring the stock to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook for 3 to 4 hours. Skim occasionally with a large spoon to remove the whitish scum that collects on the surface.
9. Strain through a colander to remove the large ingredients. Then strain a second time through a fine strainer lined with dampened cheesecloth in order to make the stock crystal clear.
10. To store stock, cool completely and then pour it into conveniently sized containers and freeze for up to 6 months. Stock is very perishable; it only keeps refrigerated for up to 3 days.

Shelley demonstrates how to make beef stock [in this video.](#)

## Chicken Stock



*Yield: about 2 quarts*

*Active time: 15 minutes*

*Start to finish: 2 hours, 15 minutes*

1 chicken carcass

1 large yellow onion, quartered

2 medium carrots, peeled and cut in 1-inch pieces

1 stalk celery, leaves on

1 herb bundle (parsley, thyme and bay leaf)

1 teaspoon sea salt

5 whole peppercorns

1. Place all of the ingredients in a stockpot, and add enough cold water to cover by an inch. Heat until the liquid is just barely bubbling. Keep at a simmer until all the flavors are extracted, 2 to 4 hours. Skim occasionally with a large spoon to remove the whitish scum that collects on the surface.
2. Strain through a colander to remove the large ingredients. Then strain a second time through a fine strainer lined with dampened cheesecloth in order to make the stock crystal clear.
3. To store stock, cool completely and then pour it into conveniently sized containers and freeze for up to 6 months. Stock is very perishable; it only keeps refrigerated for up to 3 days.

Shelley demonstrates how to make chicken stock [in this video.](#)

## Seafood Stock



The beauty of a shellfish stock is that it doesn't take long to make, plus it allows you to extract every ounce of flavor possible from your seafood shells. You simply sweat some mirepoix (onions, carrots, celery), add seafood shells and toast, add water and bring to a light simmer. So how do you know when it's done? Sam's advice: "Once it stops tasting like water, it's done. That could take as short as 10 minutes with shrimp shells all the way up to an hour with larger lobsters."

If you are using lobster, you can make the stock right in the same pot you use to boil the lobsters therefore maintaining all of their juices into the stock.

## Lobster Stock

*Yield: 2 cups*

*Active time: 30 minutes*

*Start to finish: 1 hour*

2 whole lobsters, approximately 1 1/2 pounds each

1 carrot, diced

1 onion, diced

2 stalks celery, diced

2 tablespoons grapeseed oil

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1 tablespoon brandy

1/2 cup white wine

1 bay leaf

Cold water

1. Chill the lobsters in a freezer for 15 minutes.
2. Heat a large pasta pot, with the insert, with about 2 inches of water. Add the carrot, celery, onion and bay leaf. Bring to a boil.
3. Add the lobsters to the pot and cover. Steam for 12 to 15 minutes.
4. Remove the lobsters from the pot and allow to cool. Be sure to reserve the steaming liquid. Remove meat from the shells, reserving the shells.
5. To make the stock, break the shells into approximately 2-inch pieces. Heat a large, heavy pot over medium heat and add the grapeseed oil. Toast the shells until aromatic.
6. Add the tomato paste and cook for an additional minute.
7. Deglaze with the brandy, scraping free any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the white wine and reduce by half.
8. Add the reserved lobster steaming liquid, enough cold water to just cover the shells and the bay leaf. Bring to a boil, and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes, skimming the top as necessary.
9. Strain through a fine sieve or a fine china cap.

## Consommé





You may have seen the term consommé on a fancy French restaurant menu. It's a clear soup made from richly flavored stock that has been clarified, a process using egg whites, vegetables and raw meat to remove fat. While the technique isn't done commonly in restaurants today, it's worth trying at home at least once. As Shelley shows [in this video](#), there are a lot of steps and time involved, but the result is like nothing you've tasted before.

## **Chicken Consommé**

1.5 gallons of homemade chicken stock, completely cooled

2 carrots cut in julienne

2 stalks of celery cut in julienne

1 onion cut into julienne

2 pounds ground lean chicken

8 egg whites, slightly beaten

2 bay leaves

2 sprigs thyme

8 peppercorns

1. Put the cold chicken stock in a large stock pot.
2. Mix the rest of the ingredients in a large bowl. Add to the top of the chicken stock, trying to keep them together as much as possible.
3. Bring the stock to a simmer. As the stock heats, the eggs, meat and vegetables will form what's called a "raft" at the top of the stock. This raft acts as a filter to catch all of the fat and particles that bubble up through the raft.
4. Just as the stock starts to boil, skim the fat and impurities off the top around the edges of the raft with a slotted spoon being careful not to break apart the raft.
5. Stop skimming the stock then and let it simmer slowly for another 30-45 minutes.
6. Ladle the clear broth out of the pot and put through a fine mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth.
7. Season with salt and use as the base for any clear soup like Wonton or Tortilla.

## **Vegetable Stock**

*Yield: 8-10 cups stock*

*Active time: 20 minutes*

*Start to finish: 1 hour, 30 minutes*

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

3 medium-size onions, large dice

3 medium-size carrots, large dice

3 stalks celery, large dice

2 bulbs fennel, large dice

3 cups cremini mushrooms, rough chopped

1 cup white wine

12 cups water

3 roma tomatoes, cut into large pieces

1/2 bunch parsley stems

6 sprigs fresh thyme

10 to 15 black peppercorns

1. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. In a heavy bottom roasting pan, toss together the olive oil, onions, carrots, celery, fennel and mushrooms. Roast until lightly caramelized, 25 to 30 minutes. Transfer the roasted vegetables to a stock pot.
3. Deglaze the roasting pan with the white wine, scraping up any browned bits. Add the wine to the stock pot.
4. Add the water, tomatoes parsley, thyme and peppercorns to the pot, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for about 45 minutes.
5. Strain the stock through a fine sieve, chill to room temperature, and refrigerate for up to 5 days.

**Note:**

- We like roasting the vegetables, because it gives the stock a rich and deeply-developed flavor. For a lighter, more delicate stock skip the roasting and place all of the vegetables right into your stock pot. Omit the wine, but add all of the remaining ingredients.

## 7: More Resources

### Practice Your New Skills



If you want to become a sauce nerd like Sam, here are his favorite reading materials surrounding sauces:

- *Sauces* by James Peterson
- *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat* by Samin Nosrat (Sam describes this book as an expanded version of our [Flavor Dynamics demonstration class](#))
- anything by Auguste Escoffier
- anything by Julia Child

Now that you have a solid foundation in sauce-making, it's time to put your skills to the test. We recommend making the recipes in the guide, and supplementing with a hands-on cooking class to fine tune your knowledge. Sam helped develop our new and improved [Sauce Boot Camp](#) to give students a mix of the classical techniques with modern day twists. Sauces are also a big component of our week-long [Culinary Boot Camp](#) program, which mirrors the same techniques you would learn in professional culinary school. Whatever your sauce goals are, we are here to help!