

Small Sauces

WHETHER YOU ARE a home cook or a budding chef, sauces make the dish. The five mother sauces have many “children” called small sauces. Each mother sauce has a huge sauce family. The rules are few, the flavors are heavenly, and the uses are only limited by your imagination. Exploring the world of small sauces can lead to many creative thoughts. Try inventing a small sauce of your own.



Objective:



Summarize the production and standard uses of small sauces.

Key Terms:



Allemande	español sauce	roux
Aurora (Aurore)	grand or mother sauces	sauce
béarnaise	hollandaise sauce	saucier
béchamel sauce	jus lié	small sauce
bercy	liaison	soubise
bordelaise	maltaise	Spanish
Creole	marinara	supreme
deglazing	mornay	tomato sauce
demi-glace	mousseline	velouté sauce
derivative sauce	Robert	

Understanding Small Sauces

A **sauce** is any liquid seasoning for food, a rich complement to food, or a liquid dressing for food. Sauce falls into two basic categories: warm and cold. Sauce enhances the flavor of the food it accompanies and often adds nutritional value to a dish. A **saucier** (pronounced saw-see-AY) chef prepares sauces, gravies, sautés, stews, hot hors d’oeuvres, and soups in large



ON THE JOB...

CAREER CONNECTION: Saucier

Career pathways for chefs are varied. One of the most specific is that of saucier—a chef who only prepares and/or creates new sauces. The saucier is the master of sauce creation and is far better educated, practiced, and skilled in making sauce than any other type of chef. Making sauces is the entire job description of the saucier. Mastering the mother and small sauces can make your career. The job is so specialized and the true saucier requires so much training and skill that only renowned restaurants, hotels, resorts, and cruise ships employ a true saucier. Some budding chefs decide early on to spend years mastering this skill, while others learn throughout their career and eventually decide to specialize in mastering sauce creation. Depending upon the company, the location, and the skill level of the saucier, the pay ranges from \$29,000 to the low \$90,000s.

foodservice kitchens. The saucier is usually the third highest-ranking chef in the kitchen behind the executive chef and the sous chef.

Small sauce and **derivative sauce** (children; compound sauces) are variations of the five grand or “mother” sauces. The **grand or mother sauces** (sauces mères) are béchamel, velouté, hollandaise, tomato, and espagnole. The warm mother sauces are the most basic and most essential sauces in a cook’s repertoire, ranging from easy to complex in preparation and technique. Following are the most commonly used derivative sauces based on the five grand sauces. Small sauce preparations may be as simple as adding one or two ingredients to the mother sauce, or they may be quite involved to prepare. Sauces, especially small sauces, have three main purposes: to enhance a food’s flavor, to disguise a bland flavor, and to act as a binder. Most sauces begin with a roux. A **roux** (pronounced roo) is a cooked paste made of equal weights of butter and flour; it is used to thicken sauces. When a liquid is gradually added to the roux, it is heated and stirred until it is the consistency of thick cream.

SAUCE PRODUCTION

Mastering the mother sauces is necessary before learning how to make small sauces.

Béchamel Sauce Derivatives

Béchamel sauce (pronounced BESH-a-mel) is a simple and thick creamy white sauce made from milk thickened with a white roux. In the United States, béchamel is commonly referred to as cream sauce. It is often flavored with onions, carrots, herbs, and other seasonings. It has many variations.

- ◆ **Soubise** (pronounced soo-BEEZ) sauce is minced onions sautéed in butter, puréed, and added to the béchamel mother sauce to simmer until fully cooked. When the onions are

not puréed, they are strained from the sauce. Soubise may be finished with additions of sugar, chunks of butter, and/or crème fraîche.

- ◆ **Mornay** (pronounced mawr-ney) sauce is a béchamel derivative mixed with butter, Gruyere and Parmesan cheeses, and extra cream.
- ◆ **Aurora (Aurore)**—French for sunrise—sauce is a béchamel derivative tinted with tomato paste or tomato purée and finished with extra butter to make a smooth sauce. (Suprême–Aurore is a derivative sometimes identified as a velouté variety and is finished by adding tomato paste to the suprême sauce.)

Velouté Sauce Derivatives

Velouté sauce (pronounced vel-OO-tay) is a simple, versatile, velvety grand sauce made from light-colored stock (rather than milk or cream) and roux. Chicken or veal stock is common, but any, including fish stock (fumet), can be used. The stock used to make the velouté directly affects the potential derivative sauces made from the base.

- ◆ **Suprême** sauce is a velouté small sauce into which heavy cream or crème fraîche, extra butter, and sometimes a bit of lemon juice is added.



FIGURE 1. Whether a simple cheese sauce or the more elaborate mornay sauce, all béchamel sauces pair well with pasta. The dish pictured is a variation of macaroni and cheese with diced ham, green peas, and bowtie pasta.



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Who Invented Béchamel Sauce?

One of the most famous chefs in culinary history, Georges Escoffier (1846 to 1935), known as the father of modern cuisine, is commonly credited for creating the “mother sauces” and many of the resulting small sauces. The real creator of béchamel, however, is debatable. Some believe it was an Italian chef working for Queen Catherine de Medici in the 1500s when she was queen of France. Others believe Duke Philippe de Mornay was the creator. Duke de Mornay is also credited with creating mornay sauce, among other béchamel derivatives. Another possibility is that Marquis Louis de Béchamel created the sauce in the 1600s when he was a steward of French King Louis XIV. Chef François Pierre de la Varenne may have created béchamel sauce in the 1600s when he was a court chef to King Louis XIV. The Marquis de Béchamel was at the court during the same time, and la Varenne published a cookbook during this period called *The True French Cook*, in which he recorded a recipe for béchamel sauce. The theory is that he dedicated the creation of this sauce to his friend Marquis Béchamel. We may never know which chef created béchamel sauce, but centuries later the sauce lives on.

- ◆ **Bercy** sauce is a velouté variety in which shallots and white wine are reduced and then stirred into the mother sauce. It is finished with lemon juice, chunks of butter, and minced parsley. Bercy may be flavored with fish fumet (stock). The mixture is slowly simmered until reduced by about half.
- ◆ **Allemande** (pronounced al-le-mande) sauce, or German sauce, is a veal velouté derivative made with the addition of a liaison. A **liaison** is any thickening agent used to give body to a liquid; Allemande uses a mixture of egg yolks and heavy cream as its liaison. A roux is a type of liaison. Heating heavy cream and slowly adding it to whisked egg yolks is the first step in preparing the Allemande sauce liaison. The slow heating of yolks is the technique used to thicken a sauce without cooking the eggs. The mixture is returned to the heat and is cooked until just thickened. Then veal or chicken velouté sauce is added. Versions of Allemande sauce are used specifically for fish and include a fish fumet.



FIGURE 2. This creamy mushroom velouté goes great with chicken and looks similar to rich Allemande sauce.

Hollandaise Sauce Derivatives

Hollandaise sauce is a thick, creamy yellow sauce made from egg yolks, clarified butter, and lemon juice. Sometimes peppercorns or cayenne pepper are added. It is a technically more challenging sauce to prepare than the other mother sauces, as it is based on an emulsion (a smooth mixture of two unmixable ingredients held in suspension) of egg yolks whipped over simmering water. Several variations of hollandaise are common: blender, mixer, softened butter, and hollandaise-sabayon. Salt may be added to taste. Hollandaise often accompanies fish, egg, and vegetable dishes.



FIGURE 3. This rich and creamy béarnaise is typical of all types of hollandaise small sauces. It works as well with fish—in this case salmon—as it does with beef and vegetables.

- ◆ **Béarnaise** (pronounced bay-ahr-nehz) sauce is a hollandaise variety to which a mixture of fresh shallots, peppercorns, and fresh tarragon are simmered in wine vinegar, reduced, and strained; stirred into the mother

sauce; and finished with fresh tarragon and chervil (or parsley and chives). Béarnaise is the most famous small sauce from a hollandaise base.

- ◆ **Maltaise** sauce is a simple and delicious version of hollandaise that simply adds the juice of blood oranges, and sometime a bit of the zest, to prepared hollandaise sauce.
- ◆ **Mousseline** sauce is a hollandaise (or mayonnaise) variety into which whipped cream is folded. It is an exceptionally rich sauce served with fish, asparagus, broccoli, and cauliflower.

Tomato Sauce Derivatives

Tomato sauce is a grand sauce that typically takes hours to prepare. Fresh tomatoes are blanched, and the skins are removed (or canned tomatoes may be used). The tomatoes are cut and seeded, with the remaining flesh and strained juice simmered for hours with white stock, bacon, herbs, spices, and sometimes with an aromatic vegetable mirepoix (onions, carrots, and celery). After hours of simmering, the mirepoix is removed (if used), and the sauce is thoroughly puréed. If the sauce is watery, it is simmered longer to reduce, at which point seasonings are corrected. Tomato sauce is a technique-heavy preparation.

- ◆ **Creole** sauce is a spicy tomato sauce that begins by sautéing onions, celery, and minced garlic. The sautéed mixture is added to a classic tomato sauce and is simmered with a bay leaf and a bit of thyme. Once the sauce has simmered, diced bell peppers are added, along with a generous dash of hot sauce. The sauce is simmered longer, and the bay leaf is removed. The sauce is not strained; it is served “chunky.” Creole sauce is one of the most famous tomato sauce varieties, with regional influences from Spain and France. In New Orleans, Creole sauce is the basis for many dishes and for other sauces, including sauce piquant (a very hot Creole sauce spiced with jalapeno peppers), shrimp Creole, Creole choron sauce (equal parts of Creole sauce and béarnaise sauce), grillades (pronounced GREE-yahds), and grits.
- ◆ **Spanish** sauce is a spicy tomato variety derived from Creole sauce. Sautéed onions, mushrooms, green peppers, and garlic are added to prepared Creole sauce, and it is simmered. Sliced green or black olives are added to finish the sauce.



FIGURE 4. More than just a sauce, Creole often describes a dish. Note the thick consistency and stew-like quality of this bowl of Creole Shrimp Gumbo.

- ◆ **Marinara** (pronounced ma-ri-na-ra) sauce is a derivative of tomato sauce with numerous recipe ingredients. Garlic is sautéed in olive oil. Next, peeled, seeded, and chopped tomatoes are added to the garlic. Then basil, oregano, and diced onions are added to the tomatoes. Additional herbs, spices, and diced vegetables may be added, but the final sauce ingredients are open to interpretation and desired use. The primary difference between tomato sauce and marinara sauce is that marinara is a quicker sauce to prepare and is usually left chunky rather than traditional strained or puréed tomato sauces.

Españole Sauce Derivatives

Españole sauce (pronounced ES-pan-yole) is the famous rich and hearty brown sauce made from brown stock (made from browned beef or veal bones), brown roux, tomato sauce or paste, a sachet of herbs, and a mirepoix of aromatic vegetables (diced carrots, onions, and celery). The ingredients are simmered until reduced and thickened. Then the sauce is strained and puréed.

- ◆ **Bordelaise** (pronounced bor-de-lay) is an espagnole derivative sauce made by combining sautéed shallots (or mirepoix) with red wine (Bordeaux, Madeira, or cognac). Then the mixture is reduced and is stirred into the mother sauce and simmered. Next, lemon juice and marrow are added, simmered, reduced, and strained. It is finished with chunks of butter and sometimes a bit of sugar and salt. Sometimes demi-glace is added to enrich the sauce. Bordelaise sauce is usually served with grilled food.
- ◆ **Demi-glace** (pronounced dė-mē-glas) sauce is a highly concentrated and reduced espagnole variety that is more process than ingredient driven. It begins with espagnole sauce. Additional brown stock is combined with herbs and is simmered to reduce in volume by at least half. Then it is strained. The result is an extremely rich beefy flavor that can be used as its own sauce or may be used to enrich others. Some chefs reduce demi-glace by up to 80 percent, leaving a thick gel that can be used in tiny amounts to add robust flavor without adding much volume to other sauces.



FIGURE 5. Thick, glossy, rich and brown, demi-glace is a crucially important small sauce to know, vital to many beef and game dishes. Look how sparingly it is used due to its richness.

- ◆ **Robert** (pronounced ro-BAIR) sauce is a rich and strongly flavored brown sauce made from onion sautéed in butter with additions of dry white wine, demi-glace, and Dijon mustard (or vinegar). The sauce is simmered to “almost nothing” and, if necessary, is strained. Then the mixture is added to the espagnole mother sauce and is allowed

to simmer. To finish the sauce, the chef combines dry mustard and confectioner's sugar and stirs the mixture into the sauce.

STAND-ALONE SAUCES

Stand-alone sauces and pan sauces are not considered small sauces. They are not derived from a mother sauce. Simple pan sauces are commonly made from drippings and the sediment stuck on pans after cooking a food. **Deglazing** is liquefying the sediment, called fond, with heated stock, wine, or water to enrich the pan sauce. This basic type of “sauce” can be reduced to thicken it, or a starch can be added.

Au jus (pronounced oh-zhu) is natural juices and pan drippings (as from a roast). In French, au jus is literally “with juice.” **Jus lié** (pronounced zhoo-lee-YAY) is a thickened form of au jus. Jus lie is often thickened with a roux or slurry (made from cornstarch or arrowroot).

Stand-alone sauces include pesto, beurre blanc (white butter), barbeque, salsa, fruit coulis, and dessert sauces, such as Crème Anglaise and Sabayon.

SMALL SAUCE USES AND PAIRINGS

Small sauces are rich and vibrantly colored. The level of a small sauce's intensity requires that it be used in quite small quantities and sometimes as a “garnish.” Macaroni may be slathered in cheese sauce, and shrimp may be enrobed in Creole sauce. However, it is more typical that small sauces are used “by the tablespoonful” at the base of an entrée or lightly drizzled on a plate. In certain cases, several small sauces may be used in minute amounts on the same plate to add a variety of colors and flavors. The powerful flavors and colors of small sauces are designed to accompany and garnish most dishes rather than to overpower them.

Béchamel Sauce Derivatives

Béchamel sauce derivatives are typically used with fish, seafood, poultry, pasta, vegetables, eggs, and potatoes. For example, soubise sauce pairs well with potatoes; mornay sauce with chicken and pasta; and Aurora (Aurore) sauce with eggs, seafood, fish, chicken, and vegetables.

Velouté Sauce Derivatives

Velouté sauce derivatives are flexible in their use because the mother sauce varies, depending on the type of stock used. Seafood, poultry, pork, beef, and pasta may be served with velouté derivatives. For instance, suprême sauce pairs well with chicken cordon bleu; berycy sauce with a fish presentation; and Allemande sauce with veal dishes.

Hollandaise Sauce Derivatives

Hollandaise sauce derivatives work well with seafood, vegetables, eggs, and some beef dishes. For example, béarnaise sauce pairs well with steaks or prime rib; maitaise sauce with

any fish (especially swordfish and flounder); and mousseline sauce with fish, asparagus, broccoli, and cauliflower.

Tomato Sauce Derivatives

Tomato sauce derivatives are pungent in flavor and have a smaller cluster of options, though again, no steadfast rules apply. For instance, Creole sauce pairs well with seafood and chicken dishes; Spanish sauce with mild meat (chicken and pork) and with meaty fish (tuna and shark); and marinara with pasta, chicken, or pork.

Españole Sauce Derivatives

Españole derivative sauces have a strong flavor and color and have a smaller cluster of food with which they work well. Beef, veal, lamb, and game meat are most commonly the centerpieces where these small sauces are used. For example, bordelaise sauce pairs well with sliced beef dishes (e.g., London broil); demi-glace sauce with rich meat dishes; and Robert sauce with filet mignon (pronounced fee-LAY min-YONE).

Summary:



Small sauces, also called derivative sauces, all begin with one of the five mother or grand sauces. Some are based on simple additions; others require elaborate re-cooking and special techniques. Either way, the mother sauce sets the primary tone for the types of small sauces: creamy, brown, red, rich, etc.

There are vast numbers of derivative sauces that can be made from mother sauces, and a chef called a *saucier* specializes in their creation and the pairing of sauce to food. The ability to pair sauces with foods and to determine appropriate portion sizes are essential parts of cooking. Small portions are typical with the richest sauces, and they are often used as a garnish as much as used for flavor. Béarnaise and demi-glace are considered “garnishes.” Others are integral parts of the meal and are served generously, such as marinara and Creole.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What is another name for a small sauce?
2. What type of sauce is jus lié?
3. List the ingredients in sauce Robert. Of which mother sauce is Robert sauce a derivative?
4. Name and describe two sauces that are technically challenging to prepare.
5. What is the difference between maitaise and béarnaise sauce?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



It is important to know which foods pair well with which sauces. It is as big a part of being a chef as making the sauces themselves. Review the small sauces in this lesson, and research others on your own. Pair the sauces with foods. Do some research to see if the “pros” agree with your pairings. Find out for yourself if you have a natural knack for pairing foods and sauces, or if you have some studying to do.

Web Links:



Cooking Sauces

<http://www.how-to-cook-gourmet.com/cookingsauces.html>

Marinara Sauce

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3FxxliC6sg>

Making Béarnaise Sauce

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVG0E-VICH4&feature=related>

Mother Sauces and Offspring

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20100414/COLUMNIST/4141016>