

FEATURE: EASY WHITE WINE SAUCE

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Adding a complimentary sauce to a dish elevates it from plain to delightful in no time flat!



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Sauces have long played a critical role in cuisine and they are one aspect of culinary training that remains a strong focus. From French tradition, there are five basic sauces, called “mother sauces,” each of which can be developed further into numerous variations, called “small sauces”. As oftentimes depicted in contemporary movies and TV programs, culinary students are customarily required to memorize and perfect the production of the mother sauces and several small sauces.

While still used in many restaurants today, traditional mother and small sauces, which are somewhat time consuming, are not as often prepared in home kitchens. Instead, simpler, easily customizable versions fill the gap. With a few ingredients and a saute pan, a delicious sauce can be prepared to serve with poultry, fish and seafood, pork, pasta, grains, and vegetables.

A sauce is basically made up of:

- LIQUID (stock, pan-drippings, wine or juice)
- FLAVOR ENHANCING INGREDIENTS (herbs, spices, vegetables, fruit, other seasonings)
- THICKENING AGENT (roux / flour-butter mixture, cream, butter, cheese, cornstarch, another thickener)

One that offers a great deal of versatility is a **White Wine Sauce**, and the recipe below takes aspects of the traditional mother sauce process and eases it a bit for easier home kitchen use. Dry wines work very well, as do sweeter ones such as Riesling. The base ingredients are -

- LIQUID- white wine and stock
- FLAVOR ENHANCING INGREDIENTS - shallot, thyme, mustard, salt and pepper
- THICKENING AGENT - butter

BASIC WHITE WINE SAUCE

Makes 1/3 cup sauce

½ cup white wine (any dry or semi-dry)
½ cup chicken, vegetable or fish stock
1 tablespoon minced shallots
¼ teaspoon dried thyme or 1 teaspoon fresh thyme

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, cold
Salt and pepper - optional, as needed

In a large saute pan, heat the wine, stock, shallots, thyme and mustard over medium-high heat. Whisk to combine thoroughly. Bring to a steady simmer and cook until reduced to about 1/3 to ¼ cup, so that liquid lightly coats the back of a wooden spoon. Add the butter and swirl in to combine. Taste and add a small amount of salt and pepper, if desired.

For variations, try adding any of the following -

- minced onions instead of shallots
- 1 small clove minced garlic
- any variety of herbs - rosemary, tarragon, chives, other favorites
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice in addition to the wine and stock
- 1 tablespoon capers
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream or coconut milk instead of butter

PREP AHEAD

Even though this basic sauce is easy to prepare right before serving, it could be prepared ahead. Refrigerate it for up to three (3) days, or freeze it for up to one (1) month. If using cream in sauces, it is best to add it when reheating the sauce just before serving as it does not freeze well.

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