

Sauces are the next most important part of the French & continental cuisine. These sauces can be derived from stocks by using different thickening agents. Sauces are capable of adding variety to the dishes by imparting color, flavor, texture and even drama to a great extent. Sauces are of different types. They vary by way of the basic ingredient used, color and consistency. These sauces are integral for plate presentations and add to the overall improvement of the product.

A sauce is liquid, creamy or semi-solid food served on or used in preparing other foods. Sauces are not normally consumed alone; they add flavor, moisture, and visual appeal to the final dish. The sauce is a French word taken from the Latin *salsus*, meaning salted. Possibly the oldest sauce recorded is *garum*, the fish sauce used by the Ancient Romans. Sauces may be used for savory dishes or for desserts. They can be prepared and served cold, like mayonnaise, prepared cold but served lukewarm like pesto, or can be cooked like béchamel and served warm or again cooked and served cold like apple sauce. Some sauces are industrial inventions like Worcestershire sauce, HP sauce, or nowadays mostly bought ready-made like soy sauce or ketchup, other are still freshly prepared by the cook. Sauces for salads are called salad dressing. Sauces made by deglazing a pan are called pan sauces. A cook who specializes in making sauces is a *saucier*.

Definition

Sauces are liquid or semi-liquid mixtures. A keen sense of smell, delicate sense of taste, a light, strong hand for blending – all contribute to the perfect sauce. Long ago, Grimande de la Royere, philosopher and gastronomer wrote: “The sauce is to culinary art, what grammar is to language”. A perfect sauce has a colorful appearance, is glowing in its rich smoothness, its texture is that of velvet, and it has a definite taste. It has natural flavor and complements the food it accompanies, rather than mask its taste.

Importance of Sauces in Food Preparation

- Enhances flavor.
- Some sauces help in digestion, e.g. mint sauce, apple sauce with roast pork.
- It gives moistness to the food, e.g. white sauce adds creaminess to firm and dry food.
- Adds color to the food. Hollandaise sauce served on a vegetable adds

colour. Tomato sauce goes with Fish a l'orly.

- Served as an accompaniment, sometimes gives a contrasting taste to another food, e.g. cranberry sauce with roast turkey.
- Sometimes gives the name to the dish. E.g. Madeira wine when added to brown sauce it is called Sauce Madeira.
- Enhances the nutritional value of the dish.
- Dress and complements the food that needs some additional quality and makes the food more palatable.
- Gives tartness and contrast or balances a bland food.

Thickening Agents

These are different ingredients added to give the thick consistency to a sauce. The different agents make each sauce unique by way of its taste, color, consistency & flavor.

Roux

It is a fat and flour mixture, which are cooked together. It is cooked to various degrees, namely white, blond or brown. Equal quantities of flour and butter and margarine are taken to prepare the different colored roux. The colour acquired depends upon the degree of cooking of the flour and the color of the sauce depends upon the liquid and roux used. While preparing the sauce, the boiling liquid should never be added to a hot roux as it may become lumpy, a cold liquid to a hot roux or hot liquid to an old roux may be added to get a smooth texture.

Starch

Arrowroot, corn flour, fecule (potato starch), tapioca are used to thicken the sauce. A paste should be made of cold liquid and starch and then stirred into boiling liquid and allowed to boil, till the starch is cooked. It gelatinizes at 93°C.

Starch contains no gluten and gives a clear sauce and thickens more as it cools.

Beurre Maine

It is chiefly used for fish sauces. Equal quantities of flour and butter are kneaded, and very little quantity is added at a time to the boiling liquid and stirred well to form a smooth consistency.

Yolks of Eggs and Cream

It is a liaison, added as a finishing agent at the end of cooking. The product is never boiled when the liaison is added, or it would curdle. The liaison is added to thicken delicate cream or veloute sauces or cream soups. Yolks of eggs are used to prepare the mayonnaise by emulsifying with oil.

Blood

It is usually used for game cooking. It thickens the sauce and gives a particular flavor e.g. preparation of Jugged Hare.

Sauces could be grouped as follows:

- Basic sauces
- Cold Basic Sauces
- Butter Sauces
- Others sauces (miscellaneous)

Stocks are thin liquids flavored by soluble extracts of meat, poultry, fish, and vegetables. It is a liquid in which meat or meat bones, fish or fish bones and various vegetables have been cooked to extract flavor.

'Fonds de cuisine' is a

kitchen stock. Stocks are nutritious, strongly flavored liquids. They are important foundation liquids that they are used in the preparation of various dishes such as soups, sauces, gravies, stews, curries, braising, rice and cold dishes. The preparation of stocks, calls for understanding, care, and discerning taste. Long, slow simmering of food and cold water used for stock (except for fish stock) is required to draw out the flavor – and nutrients into the liquids. After cooking is properly stored for a day it ripens and gives a fuller flavor. To improve the taste of Indian curries, pulaos etc, it is important that stocks be used.

Preparation of Stock

As the stock is an important ingredient in various dishes, care should be taken in the preparation as follows:

- All fat should be removed from bones at the outset, as the stock becomes very greasy and becomes rancid soon.
- Marrow must be removed and put aside for use as a separate dish (marrow toast) or as garnish (petite marmite-Soup)
- The stock should only simmer. If allowed to boil, the agitation and particles of fat cause emulsification to become milky or cloudy.
- Bouquet garni should be tied to a handle of the stockpot. Cut large pieces of vegetables and add later on, as it flavors the stock. If allowed to remain in the pot too long, the vegetables will begin to disintegrate, discoloring the stock.
- The scum should be discarded.
- For storing, the stock should be strained and liquid should be cooled. No fat should be allowed to remain on the surface, as heat is prevented

from escaping and may cause the stock to turn or become sour.

- Stock could be stored in a refrigerator or cold room.
- Stocks turn cloudy, if boiled too rapidly and if a lid is used and not carefully strained and not skimmed properly.

Stocks form the foundation for

- | | |
|-------------------|------------|
| 1. Soups | 4. Sauces |
| 2. Stews | 5. Gravies |
| 3. Braised dishes | 6. Cold fo |

Few Basic Rules Commonly Prescribed for Preparing Stock

- The stock ingredients are simmered starting with cold water. This promotes the extraction of collagen, which may be sealed in by hot water.
- Stocks are simmered gently, with bubbles just breaking the surface, and not boiled. If a stock is boiled, it will be cloudy.
- Salt is usually not added to a stock, as this causes it to become too salty, since most stocks are reduced to make soups and sauces.
- Meat is added to stock before vegetables, and the “scum” that rises to the surface is skimmed off before further ingredients are added.
- The fat can be removed after the stock is finished and cooled, as it floats, separates, and solidifies into globs within the stock, and can be removed with ease.
- Stocks can be frozen and kept indefinitely but are better fresh.

Basic Ingredients in Stock Preparation

Stock is made by simmering various ingredients in water, including some or all of the following. Stocks can be made using pressure cookers, as cooking time is reduced.

Meat

- Leftover cooked meat, such as that remaining on poultry carcasses, is often used with the bones of the bird or joint.
- Fresh meat makes a superior stock and cuts rich in connective tissue such as shin or shoulder of beef or veal are commonly recommended. They can either be used alone or added in lower proportions to the remains of cooked poultry to provide a richer and fresher-tasting stock.
- Quantities recommended are in the ratio of 1 part fresh meat to 2 parts water.
- Pork is considered unsuitable for stock in European cooking due to its greasiness – but was used in earlier periods.

- Mutton was traditionally avoided due to the difficulty of avoiding the strong tallowy taint imparted from the fat.

Bones

- Veal, beef, and chicken bones are commonly used. The flavor comes from the cartilage and connective tissue in the bones. Connective tissue has collagen in it, which gets converted into gelatin that thickens the liquid.
- Stock made from bones needs to be simmered for longer than stock made from meat. Pressure cooking methods shorten the time necessary to extract the flavor from the bones.

Mirepoix

- A combination of onions, carrots, celery, and sometimes other vegetables are used.
- Often the less desirable parts of the vegetables (such as carrot skins and celery ends) are used since they will not be eaten.

Herbs and spices

- The herbs and spices used to depend on availability and local traditions.
- In classical cuisine, the use of a bouquet garni (or bundle of herbs) consisting of parsley, bay leaves, a sprig of thyme, and possibly other herbs, is common.
- This is placed in a sachet to make it easier to remove once the stock is cooked

Many chefs use ratios to help them remember the basic proportion of the ingredients used in stock making.

- Bones: 50%
- Mirepoix: 10%
- Water: 100%

However, given here is a more detailed ratio of the ingredients used.

INGREDIENT PROPORTIONS:

Ingredients White Brown Fish

For 4 liters of stock

Bones 2.5kg 2.5kgs 2kgs

Mirepoix 500g 500g 250g

Water 5lit 5lit 4lit

Sachet 1 no 1no 1no

Tomato product — 250g —

White Wine — — 250ml

PROCEDURES:

Making stock may seem to be a simple procedure. However, there are many steps involved. You must understand not only what to do, but also why you are doing it.

Blanching of the Bones:

We know that proteins coagulate when heated. Many proteins dissolve in cold water but solidify into small particles or into froth and scum when heated. It is these particles that make a stock cloudy. Much of the technique of stock making involves avoiding cloudiness to produce a clear stock. The purpose of blanching the bones is to rid them of the impurities, which cause cloudiness. The bones of young animals are highest in blood and other impurities that cloud and discolor stocks. Chefs tend to disagree on the importance of blanching. Some feel that the process causes flavor loss. Others feel it is necessary to produce a clear stock. Fishbones are not blanched because of their short cooking time. Blanching involves the following steps:

1. Cut bones into small pieces and rinse in cold water. This washes off the blood and some of the other impurities. This step is especially important if the bones are not absolutely fresh.
2. Place the bones in a stockpot and cover with cold water. Remember, impurities dissolve easily in cold water.
3. Bring the water to a boil. As the water heats, impurities solidify (coagulate) and rise to the surface as scum.
4. Drain the bones and rinse them well. The bones are now ready for the stockpot.
5. To make brown stock, one more step is involved: Browning of the bones in the oven. This will impart the required color to the stock.

Procedure for preparing stock:

1. Add the blanched bones to cold water.
2. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce to a simmer.
3. Skim the scum that rises to the surface, carefully.
4. Add the mirepoix and the sachet. (add tomato products if used)
5. Do not let the stock boil rapidly. Keep it at a low simmer. Boiling makes the stock cloudy.
6. Skim the surface as often as required.
7. Keep the water level above the bones. Cooking bones exposed to air will turn them dark and discolor the stock.
8. Simmer for the recommended time:

9. Brown stock: 6 to 8 hours

White stock: 3 to 4 hours

10. Skim the surface and strain the stock through a clean muslin/Tammy cloth.

11. Cool the stock as quickly as possible. Cooling the stock quickly and properly is important. Improperly cooled stock can spoil easily because it is a good breeding ground for bacteria. Do not refrigerate hot stock. It will damage the refrigerator and cause other foods to spoil as well.

Note: For Brown Stock, the mirepoix may be browned with the bones. When the bones are half browned, add the mirepoix. However, some chefs prefer to add the mirepoix directly to the stock.

FISH STOCK:

Fish stock is prepared from fish bones obtained after cleaning, cutting, trimming and filleting fish. These are thoroughly washed and then allowed to sweat in a little oil or butter in a covered pan over medium heat. Water is then poured into the pan and brought to a boil. The scum formed is skimmed off regularly and the mirepoix added before allowing the stock to simmer for 20 to 25 minutes. Because of the short cooking time involved, fish stock is often referred to as Court Bouillon (court meaning short in French).

REDUCTION & GLAZES

Stocks can be concentrated by boiling or simmering them to reduce them and evaporate part of the water. This is called reduction or reducing.

A glaze is a stock that is reduced till it coats the back of a spoon. It is so concentrated that is solid and rubbery when refrigerated. Glazes are used as flavorings in sauce making and in some meat, fish, poultry and even vegetable preparations. Only small amounts are needed, as they are very concentrated. There are three types of glazes:

1. Meat glaze or glaze de viande made from brown stock.
2. Chicken glaze or glaze de volaille made from chicken stock.
3. The fish glaze or glaze de Poisson made from fish stock (sometimes called Fumet).

The cost, both in terms of money, material and time of making stocks in the kitchen has led to the widespread use of concentrated convenience products known as bases. The maybe powders or pastes which are diluted with water to make a flavored liquid similar to stocks. Nestle,

Maggi, and Knorr are the leading international manufacturers of these bases.

Glazes can be considered to be bases, and in fact, they are the original bases, used long before the modern versions.

Bases vary greatly in quality. The best ones are composed mainly of meat extracts. These are perishable products and need to be refrigerated. However, a lot of bases are primarily salt (an expensive way of buying salt). Read the list of ingredients on the box or packet and avoid those, which list salt first!

USING BASES:

– Bases can be improved by simmering them with a little mirepoix, meat trimmings and bones. This improves the taste and gives a `fresher' and more natural flavor to the stock.

– Bases can be added to stocks to supplement their flavor and taste and reduce the cooking time.

– Bases are added to stocks to supplement them when only a little is on hand.

There is no substitute for a well-made stock. But it is also true that a good base may be better than a poorly made stock!!

Without stocks, there would be no French cuisine. It is called fonds de cuisine, which translates literally as “**Foundations of cooking**”. They are a crucial element in soups, sauces, braises, and stews. Good stocks are made by simmering raw meat or fish, and bones, with aromatic vegetables and herbs, peppercorns, water, and a little salt. Richly colored brown stocks, made with beef and veal, are made by first browning the meat and bones in the oven before simmering them with the remaining ingredients; brown stocks are used in brown sauces and with red meats and game. Light-colored white stocks, made with veal, poultry and fish require no browning and have a lighter flavor suitable for the delicate flavors of poultry, fish, and vegetables.

Stocks must be simmered long enough to extract the maximum flavor from the ingredients. For a veal stock, this means at least 3.5 hours, while a chicken stock requires only 2.5 hours and a fish stock just 20 minutes. The stock must be carefully skimmed after it is brought to a boil to remove any fat and gray scum that rise to the surface, but it must never be boiled during cooking, as this would make it cloudy.

Stocks may be refrigerated for several weeks provided they are brought to a boil every 2 to 3 days. Or they may be reduced to a thick, syrup

glaze, called a glace, that will set to a very firm consistency when chilled and may be refrigerated for several months (glaces are used as sauce bases or to intensify the flavor of and give body to sauces). Stocks may also be frozen for several months; it makes good sense to freeze them in small quantities so that you need thaw only the amount necessary.