

Espagnole Sauce

Learn to make classic Espagnole sauce, one of the five French mother sauces. Perfect brown sauce base for gravies, demi-glace, and meat dishes.

5 min

PREP

20 min

COOK

25 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Espagnole Sauce

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 oz onion
- 0.5 oz flour
- 1 cup bone broth
- 0.5 oz tomato
- 1 bay leaf

Instructions

1 Prepare the roux base

Heat 1 tablespoon of butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat until melted and foaming. Add 2 oz flour and whisk constantly to form a smooth paste (this is called a roux). Cook for 8-10 minutes, stirring continuously, until the roux turns golden brown and smells nutty.

2 Add aromatics

Add 0.5 oz diced onions to the roux and cook for 3-4 minutes, stirring frequently, until the onions are soft and translucent.

3 Incorporate the stock

Gradually whisk in 1 cup of brown stock, adding it slowly in small amounts while whisking constantly to prevent lumps from forming. The mixture should be smooth after each addition.

4 Add tomato paste and seasonings

Stir in 0.5 oz tomato paste and 1 bay leaf, whisking until the tomato paste is fully incorporated and no streaks remain.

5 Simmer and reduce

Bring the sauce to a gentle boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce has thickened enough to coat the back of a spoon and reduced by about one-third.

6 Strain and finish

Remove the bay leaf and strain the sauce through a fine-mesh sieve into a clean bowl, pressing the solids with the back of a spoon to extract maximum flavor. Use immediately or cover with plastic wrap pressed directly onto the surface to prevent a skin from forming.

Tips

Toast your flour in a dry pan before making the roux to develop deeper, nuttier flavors that will enhance the final sauce complexity.

Use homemade brown stock when possible, as store-bought versions often lack the gelatin and depth needed for a proper Espagnole sauce.

Skim the sauce frequently during simmering to remove impurities and achieve a clear, refined final product.

Strain the finished sauce through fine mesh or cheesecloth for the smoothest possible texture, pressing the solids to extract maximum flavor.

Keep the sauce warm in a bain-marie or double boiler if not using immediately, as it can develop a skin when cooling.

Don't rush the browning process for the mirepoix—proper caramelization adds essential depth to the finished sauce.

Test consistency by coating a spoon with the sauce; it should cling without being gluey and leave a clear trail when you draw your finger across it.

Season the sauce lightly during cooking, as reduction will concentrate flavors and saltiness significantly.