

Homemade Sweet and Sour Sauce

Quick 5-minute homemade sweet and sour sauce with just 6 ingredients. Perfect for stir-fries, dipping, and Chinese dishes. Vegan and gluten-free options.

3 min

PREP

5 min

COOK

8 min

TOTAL

8

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Homemade Sweet and Sour Sauce

Ingredients

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup rice vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 cup ketchup
- 4 tbsp corn starch
- 1 clove garlic

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the cornstarch slurry**

Whisk 1 teaspoon cornstarch with 1 cup cold water in a small bowl until completely smooth with no lumps.
- 2 Combine the sauce ingredients**

Add 1 cup sugar, 1 cup white vinegar, and 1 cup ketchup to a medium saucepan. Mince 1 clove garlic and add to the pan.
- 3 Heat and dissolve**

Place the saucepan over medium heat and stir constantly until the sugar completely dissolves and the mixture begins to simmer, about 3-4 minutes.
- 4 Add the thickener**

Pour the cornstarch slurry into the simmering sauce while whisking constantly to prevent lumps from forming.
- 5 Thicken the sauce**

Continue cooking while stirring constantly until the sauce thickens and coats the back of a spoon, about 2-3 minutes. The sauce should be glossy and smooth.
- 6 Finish and cool**

Remove from heat and stir in 4 tablespoons pineapple juice. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving or storing covered in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Tips

Strain the cornstarch through a fine-mesh sieve before mixing with water to prevent any lumps from forming in your smooth sauce.

Add the cornstarch slurry slowly while whisking constantly to ensure even incorporation and prevent the sauce from becoming lumpy or uneven in texture.

Taste and adjust the sweet-sour balance to your preference - add more sugar for sweetness or more vinegar for tanginess before the sauce finishes cooking.

Use brown sugar instead of white sugar for a deeper, more complex sweetness with subtle caramel notes that enhance the overall flavor profile.

Fresh ginger adds an authentic Asian flavor - grate about 1 teaspoon and add it with the other ingredients for a warming, aromatic note.

If using pineapple juice, opt for canned juice rather than fresh, as fresh pineapple contains enzymes that can affect the sauce's texture and flavor.

Cook the sauce until it's glossy and coats the back of a spoon - this indicates the cornstarch has fully activated and the sauce has reached proper consistency.

Make a double batch and freeze portions in ice cube trays for quick access to homemade sauce whenever you need it for stir-fries or dipping.