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A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul.

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SAVORY SAUCES AND GRAVIES:

Asian Black Plum Sauce

Creamy Lemon Sauce

French Onion *Soubise* Cream

Georgian Green Sauce

Japanese-Style Barbecue Sauce

Sicilian Herb Sauce

In the kingdoms and empires of history, chefs who could glorify the food of their patron and, in turn, their patron in the eyes of his guests, were treasured and rewarded. Sauces and garnishes reached glorious heights indeed as pure gold leaf and exotics such as live birds might grace each course as it was presented in the dining hall. These stars of the household were even part of the entourage with which kings and emperors traveled. Napoleon Bonaparte never missed a meal during his military campaigns. The records of foods prepared and their saucing reveal an extraordinarily talented and resourceful chef who didn't forget elegant sauces.

Just a touch of gilt, in the form of a sauce, can elevate the simplest food; it doesn't have to include blackbirds. Think what elegance and flavor a simple butter sauce or a spoonful of pan juices can add. I don't remember a single meal in the dining room as a child when the sauceboat was not passed. It was usually for the meat or fish course but often the sauce was for vegetables. What makes asparagus or a simple poached egg more glorious than Hollandaise sauce? Think of plain boiled potatoes. Then think of boiled potatoes with browned butter sauce.

Sauces are used today to add flavor, of course, and moisture, and as an invitation to the diner. The Romans used sauces to disguise spoiled meats and fish as attested to by Apicius who noted at the end of a recipe, "No one will know what he is eating." For decades, savory sauces were categorized by the French as four distinct Mother Sauces, so-named by Antonine Carême. This was redefined by Auguste Escoffier who dropped Carême's designation of *sauce allemande*, which Escoffier felt was simply a variation of the basic *sauce veloute*, and added *sauce tomate*. This concept has been further redefined by most chefs with the addition of the essential tastes of Asia and recognizing fruit sauces for savory dishes. And of course, salad dressings, which are sauces for salads, should be included here.

During the holidays our repertoire might not change but enhancing a menu with an unexpected sauce does seem to suggest that it is a special season. The sauce must compliment, not overwhelm. It is the understatement that is, in truth, the objective. Both cream sauces that I have included below, based on the primary Mother Sauce *bechamel*, are subtle so fear not.

We are very accustomed to sauces with Asian dishes when we visit restaurants but it takes some practice to make those sauces at home. For that reason, I have included a couple of my standbys. After making your own sauces a few times, familiarity with the ingredients will give you the confidence to look at the ingredients of a dish and know what can make it better; to taste it and know that it is better. Soon that sauce is no longer a garnish; it is part of the flavor matrix.

Simple sauces that employ herbs and the liquid from vegetable cooking can be the *sauce au jus* for vegetarian dishes. The Georgian green sauce, like the Italian classic *pesto*, and the Sicilian herb sauce, included here, just carry a vegetable dish one extra step further by subtly complimenting.

ASIAN BLACK PLUM SAUCE

TPT - 18 minutes

Plum sauces are popular sauces in China and Southeast Asia. Spicing becomes a very individual preference but this simple sauce does not overdo the spicing making it a perfect sauce for grilled vegetables, grilled or baked sweetpotatoes, as a condiment for eggrolls, or as an addition to a stir-fry. A very interesting salad dressing can be prepared by stirring a teaspoonful or so into a mayonnaise-yogurt mixture.

4 large, ripe Black Friar plums—well-washed, peeled, pitted, and chopped
3 scallions—trimmed, well-rinsed, and thinly sliced
1 tablespoon tamari soy sauce
2 tablespoons Thai sweet chili sauce
1/2 cup water

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine chopped plums, sliced scallions, Thai sweet *chili* sauce, and water. Allow to come to the boil. Reduce heat to *LOW-MEDIUM* and allow to gently simmer for about 10 minutes. Turn into a sterilized canning jar. Refrigerate until cooled. Cover tightly.

Serve chilled. Leftovers should be returned to the refrigerator and, again, tightly sealed.

Yields about 2 cupfuls

Note: This recipe can be halved or doubled, when required.

1/16 SERVING (i. e., 2 tablespoonfuls) –
PROTEIN = 0.2 g.; FAT = 0.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 3.7 g.;
CALORIES = 12; CALORIES FROM FAT = 8%



CREAMY LEMON SAUCE

TPT - 27 minutes

Hollandaise sauce is a classic sauce that can really frighten some people. Perhaps this fear of failure is justified because it is not always a sauce that obeys the cook and most people make it for special occasion dinners when failure is most damaging to the ego. I make a blender Hollandaise that is rarely disappointing which can be found on p. 522 of volume II of “A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America’s Immigrant Soul.” Several people have asked me for a Hollandaise sauce substitute that never disappoints. This sauce cuts the fat somewhat, adds a bit of protein to your menu, and, above all, adds grace and flavor to an asparagus, butter-steamed baby potato, “fishless fish”, or even a menu of linguine.

2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon unbleached white flour
Pinch salt
Dash ground red pepper (cayenne)
1/2 cup two percent milk

3 tablespoons fat-free pasteurized eggs
2 tablespoons butter—softened to room temperature

4 1/2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

In a saucepan set over *LOW* heat, melt butter. Remove from heat and, using a wire whisk, make a *roux* by beating in flour, salt, and ground red pepper (cayenne). Return to heat and, stirring constantly, cook for 2 minutes, *being careful not to burn or overbrown the roux*. Remove from heat and gradually beat in milk. Return saucepan to heat and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened. Remove from heat.

While whisking, add pasteurized eggs and butter. Return to heat. Whisk constantly until the butter has melted and is incorporated. While stirring frequently, allow the sauce to thicken.

Add lemon juice. Stir to mix well. Return to *LOW* heat. Cook for about 2 minutes more, stirring constantly. Turn into a heated sauceboat.

Serve at once.

Yields 15 tablespoonfuls

Note: This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/3 SERVING (i. e., 5 tablespoonfuls) –
PROTEIN = 3.1 g.; FAT = 15.5 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 5.0 g.;
CALORIES = 173; CALORIES FROM FAT = 81%



FRENCH ONION *SOUBISE* CREAM

Crème au Oignons

TPT - 54 minutes

A French onion and rice casserole known as soubise has been one of my favorite vegetarian entrees since the early, early days of this vegetarian adventure of ours. There is, however, a variation on that theme which I have only recently discovered. Soubise depends on very slow cooking to achieve a texture and flavor depth that is rich and a mouth feel that is very satisfying. Slowly simmering onion in cream creates a fragrant, rich sauce to garnish and elevate dishes as simple as boiled beets, riced potatoes, or even steamed rice. The infusion of onion into the cream is divine.

3/4 cup heavy whipping cream
1 cup chopped onion

1 small garlic clove
Pinch salt

1/4 teaspoon corn starch
1 tablespoon cold whipping cream

In the top half of a double boiler, set over simmering water, combine 3/4 cupful cream, chopped onion, garlic clove, and salt. Cook, stirring ingredients frequently, for 45 minutes.

Set a fine sieve over a clean saucepan. Pour the *soubise* through the sieve. Stir the flavored cream through the sieve. Discard onion and garlic left in the sieve.

In a small dish, combine the remaining 1 tablespoonful *cold* cream and corn starch. Stir until corn starch is in suspension. Add to cream base in saucepan. Using a wire whisk, stir constantly until thickened. Set the saucepan over *LOW* heat until ready to serve.

Refrigerate leftovers which can be reheated or served cold.

Yields 1/2 cupful

Note: This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/8 SERVING (i. e., per tablespoonful) –
PROTEIN = 1.2 g.; FAT = 15.3 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 4.1 g.;
CALORIES = 157; CALORIES FROM FAT = 88%

GEORGIAN GREEN SAUCE

Kindzis Satsehela

TPT - 8 hours and 10 minutes;
8 hours = flavor development period

Georgian sauces are wonderfully complex. A sauce is never an afterthought to a Georgian cook. The ingredients in this complex vinaigrette meld beautifully creating a sauce that shocks the taste buds to life making food all the more enjoyable and even more enjoyable when made with fresh dill and fresh coriander from your herb garden. We enjoy this over potatoes as a side, over chilled, cooked noodles or pasta as a very different salad, and with veggie burgers and meatballs.

1 tablespoon apricot preserves
1/4 cup coarsely chopped, additive-free walnuts
1 large garlic clove—chopped
1/4 cup chopped celery with leaves—chopped
1/4 cup chopped red bell pepper
1/4 cup fresh dill leaves and tender stems
1/4 cup firmly packed fresh coriander (*cilantro*)
1/4 cup fresh parsley leaves
1/4 cup fresh basil leaves
1/4 teaspoon salt
Several drops jalapeño green chili sauce
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil*
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar or distilled white, vinegar, if preferred



In the work bowl of the food processor, combine apricot preserves, chopped walnuts, chopped garlic clove, chopped celery, chopped red pepper, dill, fresh coriander (*cilantro*), parsley, basil, salt, *jalapeño* sauce, and black pepper. Process until uniformly chopped into a paste. Scrape down sides as needed.

Through the feeding tube of the processor, *gradually* add olive oil. Then, *gradually* add vinegar. Process until through emulsified. Turn into a small serving dish. Refrigerate overnight to allow for flavor development.

Refrigerate leftovers.

Yields about 1 cupful

Notes: *If you have walnut oil on hand, it is a lovely replacement for olive oil in this recipe and a very authentic choice.

This recipe is easily doubled, when required.

1/16 SERVING (about 1 tablespoon) –
PROTEIN = 0.6 g.; FAT = 2.3 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 1.6 g.;
CALORIES = 30; CALORIES FROM FAT = 69%

JAPANESE-STYLE BARBECUE SAUCE

Tonkatsu

TPT - 3 minutes

When I visit my college friend, we frequently go out to dinner rather than fussing. She lives in a part of the country where ethnic restaurants abound. It is a joy because the area in which we live in Pennsylvania is a culinary desert. Myrna and I have shared Northern Italian, Thai, Sichuan, Hunan, and Japanese dishes with enthusiasm and have a whole list of culinary adventures for future visits. A Japanese restaurant opened up locally so we joined friends to celebrate my birthday. The vegetarian options were tasteless except for the pervasive taste of sea salt. This restaurant seemed to think that sea salt was the ingredient that would translate Japanese fish recipes for vegan acceptance. Tonkatsu is a wonderfully flavored ketchup-based barbecue sauce that the Japanese generally serve with meat. It is a WOW as a dipping sauce for tempura and a good choice for sautéed or grilled soy meat strips or cutlets and fishless fish. Since it keeps well in the refrigerator for up to a month, there is usually some to serve with fried potatoes.



2 tablespoons tomato purée
2 tablespoons commercially-available chili sauce
2 tablespoons vegetarian Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons tamari soy sauce
1 tablespoon mirin
2 teaspoons brown sugar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard with wine
1/4 teaspoon granulated garlic

In a mini-food processor, combine tomato *purée*, chili sauce, Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, *mirin*, brown sugar, mustard, and granulated garlic. Process until smooth. Turn into a small serving bowl or cruet.

Transfer leftovers to a condiment bottle. Securely seal and refrigerate.

Yields 10 tablespoonfuls

1/10 SERVING (per tablespoonful) –

PROTEIN = 0.2 g.; FAT = 0.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 4.1 g.;
CALORIES = 18; CALORIES FROM FAT = 5%

SICILIAN HERB SAUCE FOR GRILLED VEGETABLES

Salmoriglio

TPT - 7 minutes

A sauce, similar to this, appeared on Ray's aunt's table; it was her choice whenever a standing rib roast or a steak was to be served. Ray's mother once asked me, "What in the world does she add to her gravy? The flavor is so nice." Granted, this sauce was used as an enhancement for meat juices but I found that it was very complimentary to grilled and oven-roasted vegetables. It has become a frequently selected gravy for those occasions, or those guests, where a gravy might be expected.

3 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
2 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves
1 medium garlic clove—chopped
3/4 teaspoon salt
3 drops liquid smoke

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

In the work bowl of the food processor fitted with a steel knife, combine thyme and oregano leaves, garlic, salt, and liquid smoke.* Process, scraping down the sides of the work bowl frequently, until *very finely* chopped.

With the food processor running, slowly add lemon juice and olive oil. Process for several minutes. Turn into a gravy boat or pitcher or cruet.

Serve within 15 minutes of preparation to preserve suspension. Refrigerate leftovers in a cruet. Shake vigorously to re-establish an emulsion.

Yields about 10 tablespoonfuls

Notes: *A mini-processor is especially useful in achieving a fine and uniform chopped leaf texture.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/20 SERVING (i. e. 1 1/2 teaspoonfuls) –
PROTEIN = 0.04 g.; FAT = 4.4 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 0.2 g.;
CALORIES = 41; CALORIES FROM FAT = 97%



*Soon we, conveyed by our blue planet,
will be circling back toward our host star.*

*There will undoubtedly be a few weather or health events along the way.
Planning for a period when you can't get to the grocery store might be rewarding.*

*Next month, let's pretend we're snowed in.
If you're not shoveling the walk, drop by.*

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.

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