



Menu du Jour

29 Apr 06

Béchamel Sauce

Béchamel Sauce

Béchamel sauce, also known as white sauce, is one of the “mother sauces” in French cuisine and is also the basis of many other sauces such as Mornay sauce, which is Béchamel and cheese, Sauce Albert, which has horseradish and shallots, Sauce Champignon with mushrooms and crème fraiche, and several others. It is also used in such classics as macaroni & cheese and Southern-style biscuits & gravy.

There are two methods for making béchamel: the traditional method with sautéed vegetables (mirepoix) over which flour is sprinkled to make a roux to which is scalded milk is added and the simpler method of making a butter-flour roux and stirring in cold milk.

As much as making a roux, making Béchamel sauce is a basic culinary skill that all cooks should perfect.

Traditional Béchamel

4 1/2 cups whole milk
1/3 cup diced yellow onion
1/3 cup diced carrot
1/3 cup diced celery
1/2 cup unsalted butter
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
Coarse kosher salt and ground white pepper
Freshly grated nutmeg

Scald the milk. Remove from heat and set aside.

Heat the butter in a small saucepan over medium low heat until it stops foaming; add the diced vegetables. Sauté until the onions are translucent. Stir in the flour. Put the pan back on the heat and cook about 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Be careful not to burn the flour.

Slowly whisk in the scalded milk and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove from the heat and strain the sauce.

(Chef's note: Béchamel sauce will keep refrigerated for up to 4 days or may be frozen for up to 2 months.)



Quick Béchamel

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 cups cold whole milk
1/2 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
1/8 teaspoon white pepper
Dash nutmeg

In a medium skillet over medium-low heat, melt the butter. When the butter stops foaming, stir in the flour and cook, stirring constantly, for 3 minutes. Do not let the roux brown. Whisk in the cold milk. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg.

Continuing stirring and bring the sauce to a simmer; cook about 5 minutes until thickened.

(Chef's note: As with any sauce thickened with a roux or cornstarch slurry, it won't develop it's full thickness until the sauce comes to a boil.)

Cooking & Presentation



Mirepoix For A Traditional Béchamel Sauce



For Quick Béchamel, An Equal Amount Of Flour Is Added To Melted Butter



Forming A Blonde Roux



Finished Béchamel Sauce