

Sauces used in gastronomy, by Carlos Mirasierras



Sofrito

Technically speaking, the sofrito is a hot sauce that can be obtained by simmering a series of veggies, such as tomatoes, onions, garlic, shallots, etc. (grated, cut into small dice, chopped, etc.) in oil, butter, margarine, etc. The sofrito is a very important part of the Spanish cuisine, and some dare to say that it is the cornerstone of its recipe book; although it's not the leading character of any preparation, so to use too much tomato, or onions, or any other veggies will ruin the preparation, no matter how good or expensive the meats, fish, or other food stuffs might be.

A tomato sauce, for example, contains a large amount of tomato, onion, leek, etc; the aim is to "wrap" the meat or the fish in a sauce, so in this case we're not talking about sofritos. And going back to the subject, tough meats will gain in flavor during the stewing process because the sofrito will enrich the surrounding liquid/sauce/stock, and the aromas and other organoleptic properties will finally end up in the meat, above all, when the stew meat is eaten a day later. There are in fact variations of the sofrito and they include the addition of other elements, such as species (hot or sweet), alcoholic drinks (wine, brandy, flambé or not). A sirloin steak doesn't need a sofrito since it is broiled on an intense heat for a short time, so it is juicy and doesn't get overcooked in the process; then you can add a home-made sauce, and that is all about.

The arrival of tomatoes and other exotic products from the New World (Las Indias) changed the cooking rules, and made possible to detach from certain

Moorish cooking influences, which were not bad, although the advent of new veggies stirred the creativity of cooks (mostly women at that time), with the result that a new recipe book was beginning to emerge. Today it is unthinkable to cook many of the Spanish recipes without the use of a sofrito; there are many variations that do, or do not, include tomato, and use flour, together with other ingredients, to thicken and flavor the sofrito and turn it into a more elaborate sauce, which in turn could be used on that broiled sirloin that I mentioned before. The imagination is the limit, as long as it is guided by the common sense and the practical knowledge of a series of basic cooking rules.

Red Sauce (My recipe) Salsa roja

Ingredients: 5-6 piquillo peppers (or roasted red bell peppers; although canned ones are OK, too); 1 small onion finely chopped; 1 tbsp of flour; 1 tbsp of butter; 350 ml of veggies broth; salt and pepper to taste.

Preparation: Start by preparing a béchamel sauce with the onion, the flour, the butter, and the broth. Next, put the red peppers in a glass blender and process; once they're finely ground, add the béchamel, some salt and mix it all with the blender for a few seconds.

Cabrales Sauce (Salsa de Cabrales)

Cabrales ([queso de Cabrales](#), in Spanish) is a cheese in the artisan tradition by rural dairy farmers in Asturias in the north of Spain. This cheese can be made from pure, un-pasteurized cow's milk or blended in the traditional manner with goat and/or sheep milk, which lends the cheese a stronger, and more spicy flavor.

All of the milk used in the production of Cabrales must come exclusively from herds raised in a small zone of production in Asturias, in the mountains of the Picos de Europa. In fact this sauce is a copy developed by me from the French Roquefort sauce, since both cheeses share the same production system.

Ingredients: 1lb of Cabrales, softened with a fork; 3 tbsp of unsalted butter, softened with a fork (do not use salted butter as Cabrales is quite salty); 2 cups

dry white wine; 4-6 tsp dried green peppercorns; 2 cups of cream; 2 tbsp of fresh parsley leaves, finely chopped.

Preparation: *Mix the cheese and the butter in a bowl until both ingredients form a smooth mixture. Next, boil the wine and the peppercorns in a sauce pan until both things become reduced; add the cream and bring to a boil again until the mixture is reduced by half.*

Reduce the heat a moderately low level, whisk in the cheese mixture, a little at a time, and then whisk in the parsley. Remove the pan from the heat and keep the sauce warm.

Check for seasoning and add freshly ground black pepper to taste. Do not add any salt, since Cabrales cheese is quite salty on its own.

Vinaigrette Sauce (Salsa vinagreta)

Ingredients: *1 onion; ½ green pepper; 2 hardboiled eggs; 1 tsp of mustard; olive oil; vinegar; salt; black pepper*

Preparation: *Mix the onion with the pepper and eggs in a bowl, all previously chopped.*

Add the mustard and season all with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper.

Wine Sauce (Salsa de vino)

Ingredients: *50 grams butter; 50 g of wheat flour; 500 ml of broth; 1/2 cup of dry white wine.*

Preparation: *Cook the butter and the flour in a pan on a low heat for 10 minutes.*

Add the broth and increase the heat to a moderate level. Continue stirring until it begins to boil. At that time, add the wine, return to a low heat and cook a little longer. Turn off the heat, let it cool and skim off the fat on the surface. Strain and keep it in the fridge until needed.

Cheese Sauce (Salsa de queso)

Ingredients: *200 grams of white cheese; 2 tbsp of mustard; salt; black pepper; fine herbs.*

Preparation: Place the ingredients into a bowl and mix until it becomes an homogeneous preparation. Store in the refrigerator until serving time.

Walnut Sauce (salsa de nueces)

Ingredients: 1 tsp oregano; 1 sprig of rosemary; 1 sprig of thyme; ½ onion; 1 cup of beef or chicken broth; 1 cup water; black pepper; salt; 2 or 3 chopped walnuts.

Preparation: Make a broth with the herbs and the cup of water by cooking them for a few minutes. Strain the broth and set aside.

Sauté the onion and add the broth, the pepper, the salt, the nuts and cook another few minutes until the broth is reduced. It is an ideal accompaniment to grilled meats.

Meat marinade Sauce

Ingredients: Five garlic cloves, finely chopped; several parsley sprigs (to use only the leaves), finely chopped; 2 tsp paprika & 1 tsp of paprika; 2 tsp of salt; 1 tsp of black pepper; 3 tbsp olive oil; 4 tbsp vinegar; a cupful hot water.

Preparation: Mix the garlic, parsley, paprika, salt, and the black pepper in a glass with a screw cap, add the hot water and let sit the mixture until it cools down; then add the oil, and the vinegar. Give a good shake and keep this sauce in the fridge for at least a week. This sauce is ideal for marinating meats that will be barbequed or cooked on a griddle.

Béarnaise Sauce (Salsa bearnesa)

Recipe provided by the Cooking School, IES Escuela de Hosteleria de Leioa

Ingredients: 250 g of butter, melted; 4 eggs; tarragon vinegar; some tarragon, finely chopped; 3-4 shallots, cut into brunoise.

Preparation: Put the vinegar and the shallots in a saucepan and reduce the vinegar on a mild heat. Drain the reduced preparation, add the egg yolks and emulsify on a medium heat. Once this is achieved, add the melted butter (clarified or not). Complete the process of fusion of ingredients, add the chopped tarragon and mix it all.

Bilbao Sauce (raw preparation) (Salsa bilbaína cruda)

Recipe provided by the Cooking School, IES Escuela de Hostelería de Leioa

Ingredients: 200 ml of olive oil; 4 garlic cloves, sliced; a sprig of parsley, finely chopped; red chili; 6 tbsp of vinegar.

Preparation: Slowly simmer in olive oil the garlic slices until they are soft but not brown. Remove the saucepan from the heat, add the chilies, some finely chopped parsley, vinegar, and mix everything well.

Gazpacho Sauce (Salsa de gazpacho) Recipe provided by the Cooking School, IES Escuela de Hostelería de Leioa

Ingredients: 1 garlic clove, sliced; 1 green pepper, chunked; 4-5 tbsp of vinegar; 200 ml of water; a pinch of fine salt; 4-5 tomatoes, grated; 100 ml of olive oil.

Preparation: First of all put the ingredients (reserving a little water, the vinegar and all the oil) in a tall glass and mix them with a hand blender; next emulsify the sauce by slowly adding a fine drizzle of oil in the container while mixing it all well with the hand blender. Strain the mixture through a sieve, add a pinch of salt, vinegar, as well as some of the reserved water in case you want to thin the sauce.

Piquillo Sauce (Salsa de piquillo) Recipe provided by the Cooking School, IES Escuela de Hostelería de Leioa

Ingredients: 1 large onion, finely chopped; 10 piquillo peppers, chopped; 7-8 tbsp of flour; 1 l of fish stock.

Preparation: First simmer the onion, and when it is nearly cooked add the red peppers, continue to simmer a little on a low heat, add the flour, give a good stir, add the fish stock and bring the preparation to a boil. Finally, mix the sauce with a hand blender and sieve.

Parsley Sauce (Salsa de perejil) Recipe provided by the Cooking School, IES Escuela de Hostelería de Leioa

Ingredients: a small bunch of parsley; 100 ml of water; some salt; 1 garlic cloves, sliced; some vinegar to taste; 100 ml of olive oil.

Preparation: Put the parsley (only the leaves and fine stems) with the water, the salt, the vinegar, and the garlic in a mixer glass and grind it all. Sieve the preparation, place again in the mixer glass, and emulsify by adding the oil with a fine drizzle through the upper window of the cap, and finally add salt to taste.

Green Pepper Sauce (Salsa de pimiento verde) Recipe provided by the Cooking School, IES Escuela de Hostelería de Leioa

Ingredients: 1 large onion; 1 green pepper; 5-6 tbsp of flour; 1 l of fish stock.

Preparation: Sauté the onion, and when it is half cooked add the pepper, simmer for 3-5 minutes, add the flour, give a good stir to build the sauce, and add the fish stock. Bring the preparation to a boil, mix with a hand blender and sieve.

Mushroom Sauce (Salsa de champiñones)

Ingredients 4 persons: A small can of sliced mushroom (they can be replaced by fresh ones); 1 medium-sized onion, grated; 1tbsp of flour; a large cup of beef broth (warm); 1-2 tbsp of Worcestershire sauce; olive oil & salt.

Preparation: Sauté the mushrooms until they brown a bit, and set aside; add the onion, and simmer it until it crystallizes. Add the flour and stir with a whip to form the roux. Bit by bit add the warm broth and slowly stir it all until the sauce starts to thicken. Next add the mushrooms, give a good stir, and finally add the Worcestershire sauce. Let it simmer for some mins, check the salt taste, add some water if the sauce gets too thick, and process in the mixer to get an homogeneous sauce. This sauce can be used to top thick cuts of beef cooked to medium rare; or even immerse such cuts when the meat is undercooked.

Béchamel Sauce (also known as white sauce)

Ingredients: 1/4 cup butter; 1/4 cup all-purpose flour; 2 1/4 cup milk; pinch of freshly grated black pepper; nutmeg (optional); and salt.

Preparation: Melt the butter in a pan over medium heat. Add the flour when the melted butter is bubbling a bit. Pour in all the milk (better if it is warm), and start whisking the ingredients constantly to get an homogeneous mix and wait until it starts to boil. Season with salt, lower the heat, put a lid on and simmer gently, while stirring occasionally for at least 20 minutes to cook it thoroughly and so

avoid it takes a floury taste. During the cooking process check if it needs more salt, add some black pepper and some nutmeg. Add some more milk if the sauce is too thick, but when it is too runny, pour some corn flour (from 1 to 3 tsp) in a cup with some cold milk, whisk both ingredients thoroughly and pour them in the sauce. Next, return the sauce to the fire and check if the béchamel is at the point of thickness you were looking for.

A variation to this sauce is used when preparing croquettes, and it involves adding finely chopped onion (French cooks would use shallot, which is much better to my taste) once the butter is melted and starts to boil. It is also recommendable to initially add half tsp of olive oil to the butter so it doesn't get overheated.

Bolognese Sauce (Quick recipe)

Ingredients for 4 servings: 250 gm of beef ground meat; 150 gm of pork ground meat; 2 onions, finely chopped; 400 gm of tomato purée; half glass of white wine; 1 tsp of corn flour, salt, pepper.

Preparation: Heat some oil (2 tbsp) in a saucepan, add the meat, cook for 2 minutes, and next add the onion and the tomato purée straightaway, together with the wine, and the corn flour to thicken the resulting sauce and some salt to taste. Let simmer the sauce with no lid on for some 25 minutes on a small-to-low fire, and check the salt taste. In the event that the tomato sauce is too thick you can add some water, or cooked tomato sauce. It is better to use cooked tomato sauce (canned) to avoid simmering the preparation for a long time, as ground meat loses its taste properties during the cooking process; it also makes unnecessary to add sugar for lowering acidity.

Allioli (Garlic sauce)

This is a Catalan sauce used for accompanying meats, fish, legumes and some rice preparations. There are two versions: one (the original sauce) for very "brave and iron-mouthed men", and the light one, for current people. It is not a garlic mayonnaise as most people think

Ingredients for the original recipe: All the cloves of a garlic bulb, 1/2 tsp of salt, and olive oil (a mortar and a pestle).

Put the cloves, cut into small dices, in the mortar with the salt; Start pounding both elements to get a very fine paste. Then is the moment to start adding the

oil from an oil dispenser, but drop by drop for the first steps of the process. Next go on adding oil, but always with extreme care, that is, a fine drizzle of oil. You will see that the sauce starts to thicken and to get clung around the pestle and to form a single mass. At this point, don't add more or it will turn into a liquid oily sauce (*cortarse el allioli*).

As to the light version of this sauce, do as follows:

Pound two or three garlic cloves, cut into slices, with the salt to get a fine paste; next add an egg yolk and mix it all with the pestle. From that point on, proceed as explained before with regard to the addition of oil. Some people use a hand-blender, with all the ingredients put in a mixer vase and the blades right on the bottom of the vase, but, to me, a lot of practice is needed.

Biscay Sauce (*Salsa Viscaína*) Recipe provided by the Cooking School, IES Escuela de Hostelería de Leioa.

Ingredients for 1/2 liter of sauce: 3 large onions, finely chopped; 3 dried sweet chorizo peppers, previously soaked in warm water for a few hours so the pulp can be scraped off; 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped; 3 tsp of flour; 1 carrot; 1 l of chicken/veggies stock.

Preparation: Simmer the onion and the garlic until both changes their color and then add the pepper pulp. Next add the flour to build a roux-like paste, add the stock (fish or meat or veggies, depending on the future use of the sauce), and simmer for some mins until it thickens while stirring it all continuously to make an homogeneous sauce. Mix it all with a hand blender and strain through a china cap.

Romesco sauce ([Salsa Romesco](#))

Romesco is a sauce from Tarragona (in Northeastern Spain). It is said that the fishermen of the area used it with fish. It is also great with seafood, but it is mostly used with meats and to dress some salads. It also can be used as already-made sofrito to prepare some rice recipes.

Ingredients for around two cups of romesco: 12 skinned almonds; 10-12 hazelnuts; 1 garlic bulb, (rub the white flossy skin off) ; 1 slice of dried-out bread fried in some olive oil; 2 ripe medium size tomatoes, or 1 large tomato; 2 large roasted red peppers, well-drained; 1 cup of extra virgin olive oil; 1/2 cup of red wine or sherry vinegar.

Note: Add approximately 15 minutes to the preparation time if blanching almonds. This romesco sauce recipe makes about 2 cups of sauce.

Preparation: Place the garlic hub, the red peppers and the tomatoes in a roasting pan, drizzle some oil on them and roast in the oven for some 25 minutes at 160°C (320° F, this two-fold value is a coincidence, so do not take it as a rule of thumb). Next, peel the garlic cloves, the tomatoes and the peppers, remove seeds, remove some of the juices released by the peppers and the tomatoes (not all), and place in a food processor together with the almonds and hazelnuts(skinned), the bread, the oil and the vinegar, and grind all the elements to get a fine paste. Taste to correct salt.

Salsa Española

Ingredients for 1/2 litter of sauce: 1 kg. of fresh beef bones; 1 k of chicken bones (which can be replaced by more beef bones); 1/2 k of beef meat; 600 g of carrots; 2 medium-sized leeks; 2 onions; 5 garlic cloves; 1 tsp of peppercorns; 1 clove; 1 bay leave; 1 ripe tomato, 200 ml. of red wine.

Preparation: First of all, place the beef and chicken bones, and the meat in a roasting pan and in the oven at 200°C (390° F). Keep turning all the pieces so they can brown uniformly; 30 minutes later add the veggies, cut into coarse pieces, and let it all get a brown color. After this, put all these ingredients in a pressure cooker, add water to cover it all sufficiently, together with the pepper, bay leaves, and the clove.

In the meantime, place the roasting pan on the fire and pour some wine on the bottom; bring to a boil, deglaze the caramelized juices, and pour them into the pressure cooker. Lock the lid of the pressure cooker, place it on the fire and let it boil for an hour from the moment the valve starts to let out steam. After this time, strain the resulting broth, let it sit to allow the fat to rise to the top and skim it off. Finally, reduce the amount of broth to a half (around 1/2 liter), and there it is a beef extract of the best quality, also known in Spain as "[Caldo oscuro](#), or fondo oscuro.

Gravy Sauce (My recipe) Salsa Gravy

Ingredients: 1cupful of beef broth; 30 ml of olive oil; 2 tbsp of meat extract (Salsa española, Bovril, or similar); 2 tbsp of mustard sauce; and 1 tsp of cornstarch.

Preparation: First lightly heat the olive oil and add the mustard; then add the broth and the corn starch and simmer for 15 minutes, on a mild fire, while stirring with a wire whip. The final result must be an oily and slightly thick sauce.

Light Béchamel

Ingredients for 4 people: Three tablespoons of butter, a cup of cream, a lemon, two tablespoons flour, two glasses milk, some grated nutmeg, salt and pepper.

Preparation:

Melt the butter in saucepan and when melted sprinkle the flour on it. Start stirring until the mixture gets a brown color; add the milk, a bit warm, stir again, add the nutmeg, salt & pepper, continue stirring, add in the cream, the lemon juice and continue stirring until it all thickens to a smooth and different béchamel sauce.

Red Curry

Ingredients: Three red chilies, half a teaspoon of ground coriander seeds, half a teaspoon of ground cumin, half a teaspoon of black pepper, two garlic cloves, a tablespoon of chopped sorrel, a teaspoon of grated ginger, half a teaspoon salt and some olive oil, (the amount will depend on the thickness desired).

Preparation:

Mash the garlic, chopped chili, ground coriander, ground cumin, black pepper, chopped sorrel, ginger and salt in a mortar to get an homogeneous paste. Next, add in the olive oil.

Guirlache (a type of nougat)

Ingredients: One hundred grams of raw almonds, one hundred fifty grams of sugar, a glass of water, a tablespoon lemon juice.

Preparation:

Roast the almonds in the oven at 180°C-356°F, stirring them to prevent they get burned. Let them cool and reserve a third of them.

Put the water, sugar and lemon juice in a saucepan and bring to a boil until this syrup begins to take on a brown color; next, add in the almonds and let it caramelize. Then, pour this caramel on a greased surface, stretch it and let it to cool. Once it has set break it up with a wooden hammer.

White Butter

Ingredients: Half a glass of white wine, an onion, 50 g butter, half a cup of cream, salt and pepper.

Preparation:

Peel the onion, chop and cook it in a large saucepan with the wine over low heat until the wine has reduced.
Add in the butter, cut into dices; stir and then add the cream. Salt and pepper, stir with a whisk, and drain it into a sauce boat.

Olive and Anchovy Butter

Ingredients: 200 g butter four anchovy fillets (large pieces), 12 black pitted olives, six leaves of sage, half orange juice, the grated rind of half orange..

Preparation:

Chop the anchovy fillets, olives and sage leaves into a fine paste. Add in the juice of half orange, the butter (previously softened) and the grated orange rind. put it all in a bowl and store in the fridge.

Anchovy Mayonnaise

Ingredients: Three tablespoons of milk, a cup of oil, oil from a can of anchovies, some chopped anchovies, a few drops of lemon juice (or vinegar, or both) and salt.

Preparation:

Mix the ingredients in the mixer, and beat until thick.
This sauce is ideal for dressing salads, fish, eggs, and vegetables.

Dill Mayonnaise

Ingredients: ½ cup of mayonnaise, a tablespoon of French mustard, 1 tbsp vinegar, a tbsp sugar, half a cup of cream, a tbsp chopped dill.

Preparation:

Mix all the ingredients mentioned before together with the mayonnaise, and store it in the fridge for a later use.

Milk Mayonnaise

Ingredients: Three tbsp milk, a glass of oil, few drops of lemon juice (or vinegar) and salt.

Preparation:

Mix the ingredients in the mixer, and beat until it thickens. It's ideal for salads, fish, eggs, and vegetables.

Eggless Tomato Mayonnaise

Ingredients: One tablespoon of tomato purée, half a glass of cold milk, half a cup of oil, juice of half a lemon, ten raw almonds (crushed), salt and pepper.

Preparation:

Beat the tomato purée, milk, oil, lemon juice, crushed almonds, salt and pepper in a the blender to get an homogeneous thick sauce. Store it in the fridge before serving.

Green Mayonnaise

ingredients: A cup of mayonnaise, a tablespoon of parsley, two pickles, one tbsp mustard, two tbsp of capers, salt and pepper.

Preparation:

Mix the mayonnaise with the parsley, pickles, mustard and capers in the blender; salt & pepper and store it in the fridge before serving.

Canary Green Mojo (Mojo is a garlic sauce)

ingredients: Two tbsp parsley, half a pepper, two tbsp cilantro, two garlic cloves, 1 tsp cumin, 1 tsp vinegar, 3 tbsp oil, salt.

Preparation:

Mash the garlic in a mortar along with the parsley, pepper, coriander, cumin; then add in the vinegar, oil, salt and a glass of water; mix it all well and reserve in a sauce boat.

MOJO PICÓN

Ingredients: One tbsp cumin, 1 tbsp salt, four garlic cloves, half a tsp paprika, 4 tbsp oil, 1 tbsp vinegar.

Preparation:

Mash the garlic cloves together with the salt, cumin, paprika in a mortar. Next, add in the, olive oil and vinegar mash to get an homogeneous mixture. Add now a glass of water, stir well and serve.

Garlic Fine Sauce**Ingredients:**

Two garlic cloves of garlic, 1 egg, a glass of oil, 1 tbsp of whipped cream.

Preparation:

Fry the garlic cloves (previously chopped) in some olive and on a medium heat. Allow the garlic to cool down, put it in a mixer and process; add in the egg yolk, and slowly add the oil (the mixer blades must be close to the bottom of the glass and rotate at a slow speed). Next, add the whipped cream, but mix it in with a fork. The result is similar to a mayonnaise.

Pesto**Ingredients:**

Half a glass of oil, 2 tbsp of chopped basil, 2 garlic cloves, 2 tbsp of grated [Parmesan cheese](#), 2 tbsp pine nuts, salt and pepper to taste.

Preparation:

Put the chopped basil, minced garlic, pine nuts, cheese, oil, salt and pepper in a blender glass; process it all to get an homogeneous sauce. This sauce is ideal for hot pastry, pasta salads, baked potatoes, vegetables and seafood.

Salmorejo**Ingredients:**

A kilo of ripe red tomatoes, 2 garlic cloves, a pinch of salt, a cup of extra virgin olive oil and a bread bun.

Preparation:

First wash, peel, seed and chop the tomatoes. Process in the mixer together with the two garlic cloves, and the salt; Slowly drizzle in the oil while the mixture is being processed.

Next, add the amount of bread (continue processing) to the desired point of thickness.

Pass through the sieve and serve, or reserve in the fridge for a later use.

Sweet and Sour Sauce

Ingredients:

An onion, a tbsp of butter, 1 garlic clove, 100 g grams of [prunes](#), a glass of white wine , 1 orange, 1 tbsp honey, one teaspoon cornstarch, two drops of Tabasco, salt and pepper.

Preparation:

Soak the prunes in water the whole night; then, drain them, seed, chop and reserve.

Melt the butter in a pan with two drops of oil to then sauté the onion and garlic; when browned add in the chopped prunes, wine, orange juice and honey. Let it simmer for ten mins over low heat.

Next, add in the cornstarch dissolved in a little water, two drops of Tabasco and continue simmering for another two minutes.

This sauce is OK for chicken, pork and fatty fish

