

Savoury sauces made with butter

Three famous butter sauces. Two are served warm – Hollandaise with poached, steamed or boiled fish, eggs or vegetables; Béarnaise with grilled meat or fish (particularly salmon). The third, Beurre blanc, is a speciality of Nantes in Brittany. Use it for grilled meat or fish, on crusty bread or hot jacket potatoes. Freezing is not recommended for any of the sauces

Hollandaise

Overall timing 15 minutes

Equipment Small saucepan, bowl and saucepan or double saucepan

INGREDIENTS

7oz	Unsalted butter	200g
3	Egg yolks	3
2 tbsp	Water	2×15ml
	Salt	
	White pepper	
	Lemon juice	

METHOD

- 1 Melt butter in small saucepan, but don't let it colour. Remove from heat.
- 2 Put yolks and water in bowl or top of a double saucepan. Place over a pan (or bottom of double saucepan) of lightly simmering water and whisk until yolks are thick, foamy and stick to whisk. Don't allow the bowl or saucepan to touch the water or the mixture will set.
- 3 Remove from heat and whisk in small spoonfuls of lukewarm butter. Place pan back over hot water if sauce starts to thicken too quickly.
- 4 Continue to add butter and season with salt, pepper and a few drops of lemon juice. Place over hot water for about 1 minute until lukewarm, whisking continuously.

VARIATIONS

Caper sauce Stir 2 tbsp (2×15ml) of drained capers into finished sauce. Serve with poached or steamed fish.

Mousseline or whipped cream sauce Stir 2 tbsp (2×15ml) of whipped cream into finished sauce. Serve with poached or steamed fish, poultry or asparagus.

Mustard sauce Stir in 2 tbsp (2×15ml) of Dijon mustard. Serve with grilled fish.



Above: Beurre blanc – deliciously creamy speciality of the Nantes area of Brittany

Béarnaise

Overall timing 20 minutes

Equipment Double and small saucepans

INGREDIENTS

3	Shallots	3
3 tbsp	Chopped fresh tarragon or	3×15ml
1 tbsp	Dried tarragon	15ml
4 tbsp	Tarragon vinegar	4×15ml

METHOD

- 1 Peel and finely chop shallots. Put in top of saucepan with tarragon and vinegar. Simmer till reduced by two thirds (this gives the sauce its flavour). Leave till lukewarm.
- 2 Now make Hollandaise as recipe, left, mixing yolks and tarragon/vinegar mixture at Step 2, and adding cayenne pepper to taste at Step 4 instead of white pepper and lemon juice.

VARIATIONS

Choron sauce Mix in 2 teasps (2×5ml) of both tomato paste and double cream.

Paloise Use mint instead of tarragon.

Beurre blanc

Overall timing 15 minutes

Equipment Small heavy-based saucepan

Storage 1 week, covered, in fridge

INGREDIENTS

3	Shallots or	3
1	Small onion	1
2 tbsp	White wine vinegar	2×15ml
1 tbsp	Muscadet (optional)	15ml
8oz	Unsalted butter	225g
	Salt and pepper	

METHOD

- 1 Put finely chopped shallots or onion into saucepan with vinegar and Muscadet if using. Bring to the boil, then simmer to reduce most of the liquid (don't let shallots colour). Remove from heat and cool slightly.
- 2 Cut butter into small pieces and add half to pan. Beat till smooth over very low heat. Stand pan in iced water. Add rest of butter, a little at a time, beating constantly with whisk (not electric) till mixture is creamy. Add salt and pepper to taste.