

Everyday Basics Cooking Series: Everyday Sauces

January/February 2011

Menu:

Scallion-Mint Salsa Verde
Best Ever Beef Bolognese
Creamy Gruyere-Dijon Sauce
Cabernet-Honey-Black Pepper Sauce

Scallion-Mint Salsa Verde

makes 2 cups

5 scallions, white and green parts

1/3 cup capers

1 garlic clove, peeled

1 cup parsley leaves

1/2 cup mint leaves

1 lemon, zested

olive oil

salt and pepper

***** Preparation ******

Chop the scallions and capers and put into a small bowl.

Smash the garlic with the back of a chef's knife and chop, along with the parsley and mint.

Mix all the ingredients together, adding just enough olive oil to moisten. Add the lemon zest. Season generously with salt and pepper.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS:

Dollop on a crostini topped with mozzarella or goat cheese.

Serve as a condiment on salmon, grilled chicken or steak.

Toss with warm pasta for a quick sauce.

Best Ever Beef Bolognese

serves 6

1 white onion, peeled and cut into big chunks
1 medium carrots, peeled and cut into big chunks
2 stalks celery, cut into big chunks
6 cloves garlic, peeled
olive oil
2 1/2 lbs ground beef
1 cup tomato paste
2 cups full-bodied red wine
2 tbl honey
5 sprigs fresh thyme
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon red chili flakes
2 cups beef stock, as needed (or water)
salt and pepper

***** Preparation ******

Combine the onions, carrots, celery and garlic in a food processor. Pulse until finely chopped.

Heat a large Dutch Oven or heavy-bottom pot over medium-high heat. Add olive oil to lightly coat the bottom of the pan. Add the veggies and let cook for 15 minutes, until browned. Add the beef, season with salt and pepper and cook for another 15-20 minutes, until browned.

Stir in the tomato paste, honey, chili flakes, red wine, bay leaves and thyme. Stir to combine. Add enough stock to just cover the meat. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and let simmer for 30 minutes. Taste and add salt and pepper as needed.



Creamy Gruyere Dijon Sauce

makes 2 1/2 cups

4 tablespoons butter

4 tablespoons flour

2 1/2 cups whole milk, at room temperature

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 cup grated gruyere cheese

pinch grated nutmeg

salt and pepper

***** Preparation ******

Melt the butter in a sauce pan over medium heat. Add the flour and cook, stirring, for about 5 minutes -- mixture should JUST be starting to turn golden. Whisk in milk and cook, stirring often, over medium heat, until mixture just begins to boil. Whisk in the dijon and cheese. Stir until cheese is melted and sauce is smooth.

Remove from heat, add nutmeg and salt and pepper as needed.

NOTE: Sauce thickens as it cools.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS:

Serve over roasted or blanched cauliflower or broccoli.

Toss with penne pasta for a simple, cheesy pasta dish.

Toss with blanched spinach for a new spin on creamed spinach

Cabernet-Honey-Black Pepper Sauce

makes about 1 1/2 cups

3 cups cabernet wine

1 teaspoon black peppercorn

1 orange, zest only -- taken off in big pieces

1/2 cup honey

pinch salt

***** Preparation ******

In a heavy-bottomed pot, whisk together all of the ingredients over high heat. Bring to a boil, reduce heat slightly so its still boiling softly. Cook, simmering, for about 10 minutes or until reduced by about half - the mixture should coat the back of a spoon. Remove from the heat, strain and let cool.

NOTE: Sauce will thicken as it cools.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS:

Drizzle over vanilla (or chocolate!) ice cream.

Use to dress-up store-bought chocolate cake or brownies.

For a dinner-party dessert, layer in glasses with vanilla ice cream, toasted almonds and top with fresh whipped cream.