



Unilever Food Solutions

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3 QUICK TRENDS ON WESTERN CUISINE

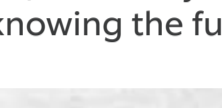
Should you keep soups on the menu? Is Scandinavian food changing Western cuisine? Find out now.

As chefs, we know that all cuisines including Western cuisine are influenced by many factors such as the ever-evolving diners' tastebuds, local cultures and food trends.

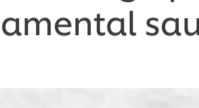
So what are the 3 trends that are shaping the world of Western cuisine now?

1. The mother sauces

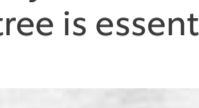
Most of Western cuisine is derived from classic French fare. Auguste Escoffier's modernisation of classical French cooking techniques serves as the base of the culinary world today, in particular, his popularisation of the 5 mother sauces:



Béchamel or white sauce



Espagnole



Velouté



Hollandaise

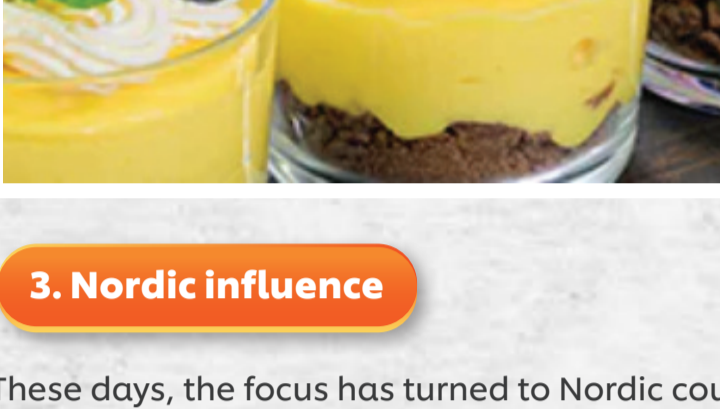


Tomato

Even with more sauces being created for Western dishes these days, it's not hard to see that the mother sauces are the bases of those creations. E.g. white wine sauce and mushroom sauce are derived from velouté.

So, whether you're serving up hearty Italian dishes or Western fusion delights, knowing the fundamental sauce tree is essential.

2. Plating and courses



Despite its ever-evolving definition, Western cuisine does have certain rules that stay true to the classics. Plating, for example, hasn't changed too drastically. It is still common to see a plate of protein (either meat, fish or poultry) in combination with a starchy side (potatoes, rice or pasta) and some vegetables for a main course. Soups and salads are still served as starters, and the meal still closes with a dessert at the end.

3. Nordic influence

These days, the focus has turned to Nordic countries such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland, for their focus on region-specific ingredients and cuisine. With people getting more involved and interested in where their food comes from, this Nordic trend is impacting Western cuisine all around the world with its culinary ideologies and cooking techniques.



From fermenting and pickling produce to curing fish, the definition of Western cuisine is once more undergoing a makeover and emerging with a wider range of ingredients, styles and techniques than it had before.

Staying updated on food trends doesn't just help you serve up more delicious meals; it keeps your restaurant top of mind among diners and those in the food business.

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW HOW TO SAUCE?

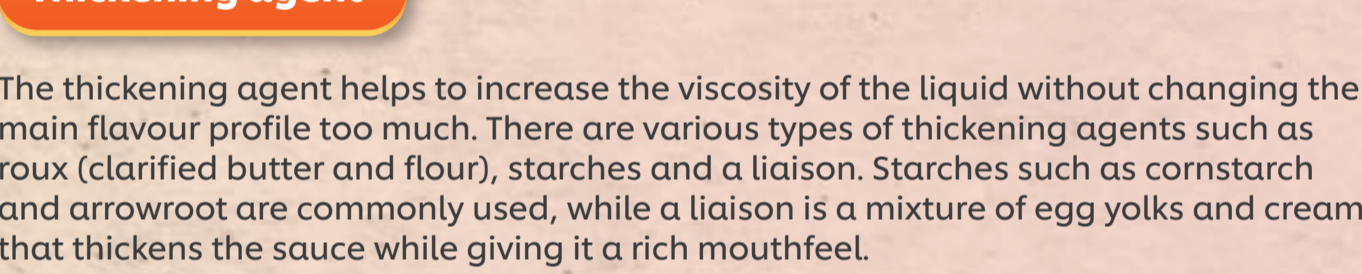
There are an endless number of sauces you can create and discover on your own.

We're not going to lie. Making sauces is a long and tedious process; they need to be flavourful and concentrated yet not overpowering, all while balancing a very precise consistency and temperature. Otherwise, they're probably no good and should be headed straight to the bin. However, the beauty of creating sauces also lies in the process. There are an endless number of sauces you can create and discover on your own. All you need is some imagination.

Here's a rundown on what actually goes into making a sauce, and how to create new ones by layering it with different flavours.

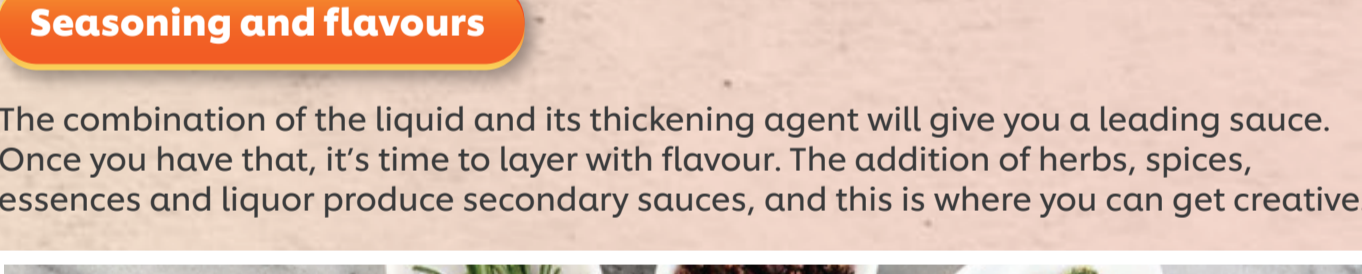
Liquid

The main component of a sauce is its liquid base. This is usually some type of stock, dairy product (milk, cream or butter) or tomatoes mashed up into a liquid consistency.



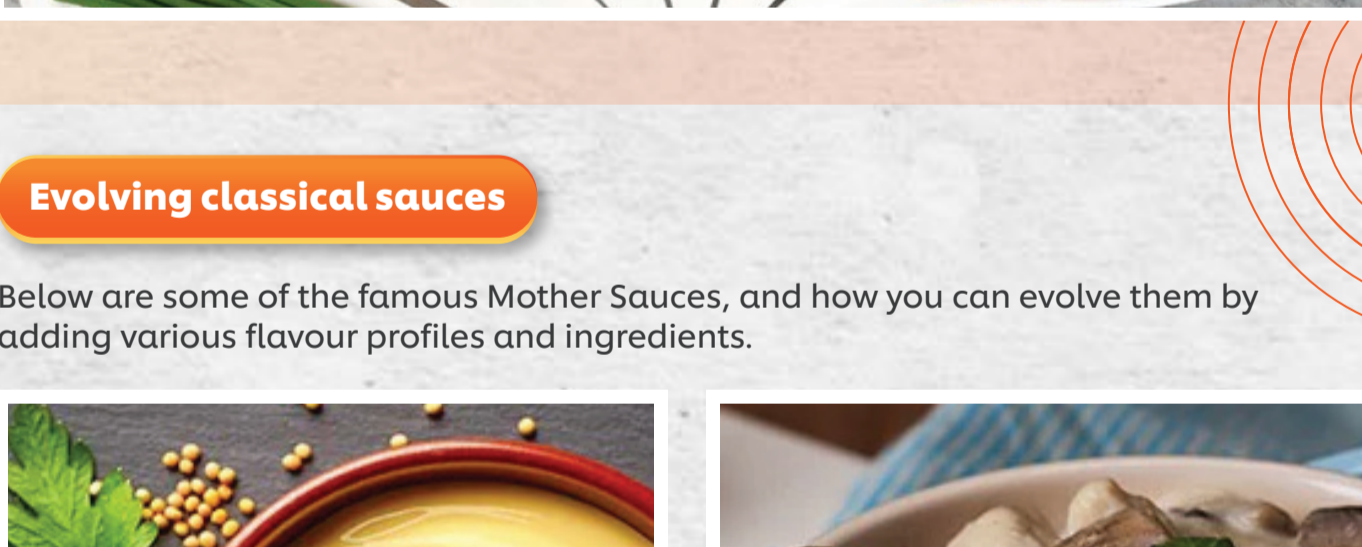
Thickening agent

The thickening agent helps to increase the viscosity of the liquid without changing the main flavour profile too much. There are various types of thickening agents such as roux (clarified butter and flour), starches and a liaison. Starches such as cornstarch and arrowroot are commonly used, while a liaison is a mixture of egg yolks and cream that thickens the sauce while giving it a rich mouthfeel.



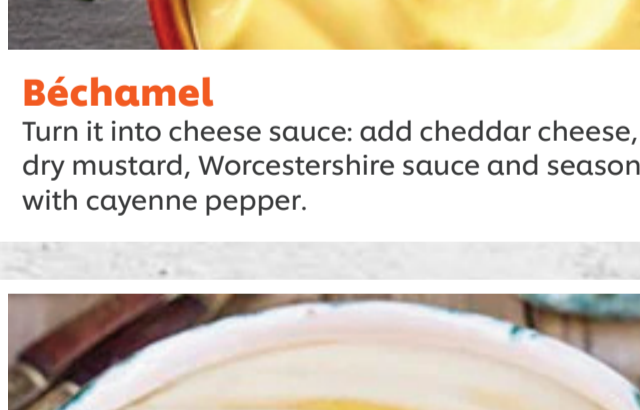
Seasoning and flavours

The combination of the liquid and its thickening agent will give you a leading sauce. Once you have that, it's time to layer with flavour. The addition of herbs, spices, essences and liquor produce secondary sauces, and this is where you can get creative.

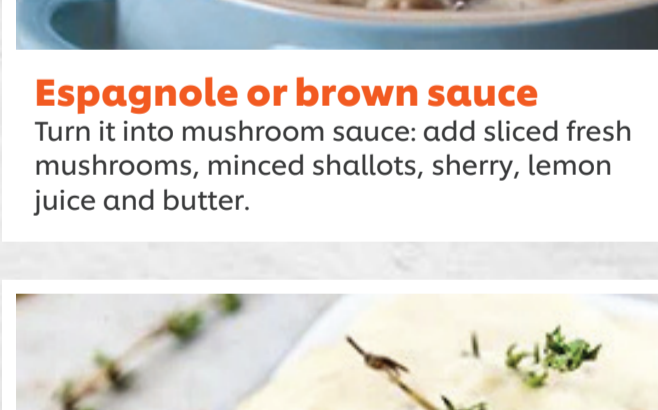


Evolving classical sauces

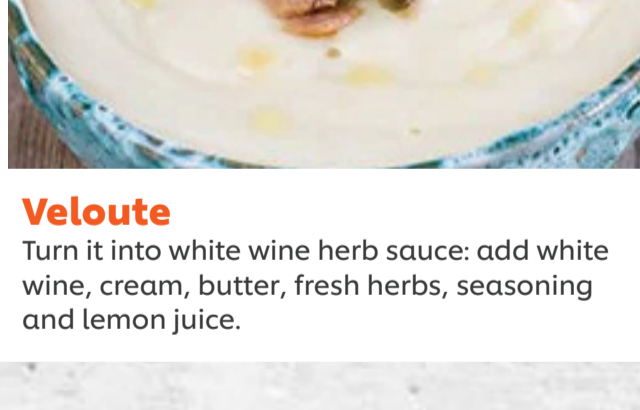
Below are some of the famous Mother Sauces, and how you can evolve them by adding various flavour profiles and ingredients.



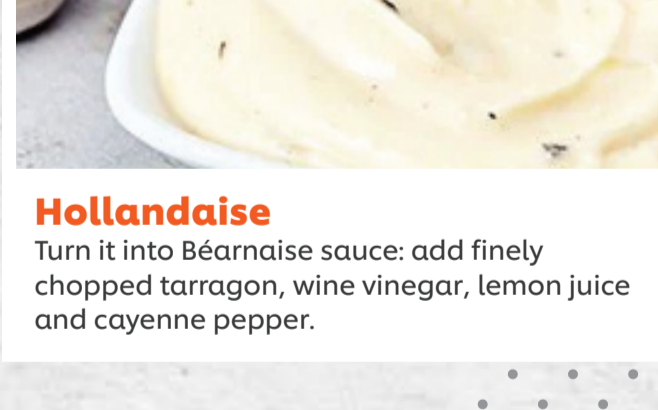
Béchamel
Turn it into cheese sauce: add cheddar cheese, dry mustard, Worcestershire sauce and season with cayenne pepper.



Espagnole or brown sauce
Turn it into mushroom sauce: add sliced fresh mushrooms, minced shallots, sherry, lemon juice and butter.



Veloute
Turn it into white wine herb sauce: add white wine, cream, butter, fresh herbs, seasoning and lemon juice.

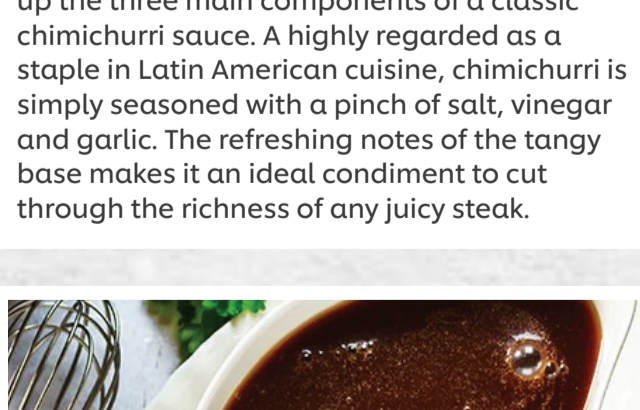


Hollandaise
Turn it into Béarnaise: add finely chopped tarragon, wine vinegar, lemon juice and cayenne pepper.

BEST SAUCES FOR STEAK

Draw culinary inspiration from these classic favourites all around the world.

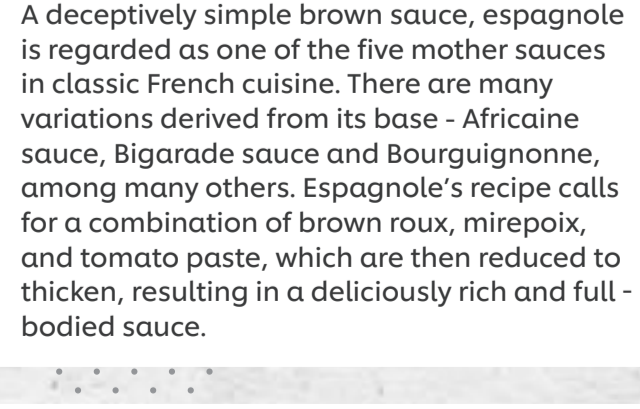
From the classic porterhouse to the ribeye, steaks are undoubtedly a staple protein in Western cuisine. Selecting the perfect sauce to serve alongside your cut of steak may be a complicated affair at times but it's worth the extra effort. The right sauce adds buckets of extraordinary flavour and creates a dining experience your customers won't soon forget.



Chimichurri
Cilantro, parsley and oregano together make up the three main components of a classic chimichurri sauce. A highly regarded as a staple in Latin American cuisine, chimichurri is simply seasoned with a pinch of salt, vinegar and garlic. The refreshing notes of the tangy base makes it an ideal condiment to cut through the richness of any juicy steak.



Peppercorn
One of the more popular choices to accompany steak, the traditional peppercorn sauce is made with beef stock, peppercorn and double cream. Reduce the stock and cream over a small flame, then season according to taste, and you'll have a deliciously rich, creamy and versatile sauce that goes with your steak – and many other dishes.



Espagnole
A deceptively simple brown sauce, espagnole is regarded as one of the five mother sauces in classic French cuisine. There are many variations derived from its base - African sauce, Bigarade sauce and Bourguignonne, among many others. Espagnole's recipe calls for a combination of brown roux, mirepoix, and tomato paste, which are then reduced to thicken, resulting in a deliciously rich and full-bodied sauce.



Herb butter
Opt for something with a touch of traditional when you whip up a herb butter recipe. This age-old favourite makes an ideal companion to meat dishes for those with little time to spare. Blend a flavourful fusion of butter, garlic, basil and parsley, add a dash of salt to taste and voila! A fuss-free condiment that delivers a fragrant finish. The best part about herb butter? It's so easy to customise – just add your favourite herbs and spices, and you're good to go.



Mustard-shallot
To Asian audiences, mustard may seem like an unlikely condiment but its strong flavours stand up well to a robust steak, making this sauce a fantastic alternative to béarnaise. Combine Dijon mustard with shallots, butter, and balsamic vinegar to create an irresistibly creamy mixture that'll go very well with your meat. Depending on taste, this recipe allows cream to be added to achieve a desired consistency.



Mushroom sauce
A homely, comforting combination of mushrooms, butter, cream, pepper, and salt will certainly impress just about any steak connoisseur. Simply bring the ingredients to a boil and simmer until it reaches a golden caramel brown. Packed with dense flavours from the mushroom's umami and the richness of the butter cream base, this versatile condiment also pairs well with roasted potatoes.



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