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Espagnole (Brown Sauce)

Makes about 2 cups

Translated as the 'Spanish' sauce, espagnole is a rich-bodied brown sauce. The sauce is the base of many other sauces, but perhaps most popularly, the demi-glace. Demi-glace is a time-consuming super-concentrated sauce popular in restaurant dishes. Using a less-traditional, quicker recipe, we served this espagnole sauce directly on a seared steak for an enhanced savory flavor in each bite!

Ingredients:

1/2 stick butter
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 celery rib, chopped
1/4 cup flour
4 cups beef stock
1/4 cup tomato puree
10 whole black peppercorns
1 bay leaf
2 sprigs fresh parsley
2 sprigs fresh thyme

Directions:

1. In a saucier or saucepan, melt the butter and sauté the onion, carrot, and celery until the onion is translucent.
2. Sprinkle the sautéed vegetables with flour, and stir to form a roux. Let the roux become browned, but monitor carefully to avoid scorching or burning.
3. Once the roux has a nutty smell and is a darker brown, add the beef stock, tomato puree, peppercorns, bay leaf, parsley, and thyme.
4. Simmer the sauce for about 20-30 minutes or until it has thickened and reduced by about one-third.
5. Skim off any excess fats or oils that have risen to the surface.
6. Strain the sauce using a fine mesh strainer to remove the solids.
7. Serve the brown sauce as is, or refine it further into a demi-glace or red wine sauce. Freeze any excess espagnole sauce in an airtight container, and use within one month. fine mesh strainer to remove any solids.