

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING SAUCES AND GRAVIES

Sauces and gravies are thickened liquids or stocks. They are served with meat, fish, poultry, vegetables, and desserts to add flavor and garnish.

A. INGREDIENTS USED IN PREPARATION OF SAUCES AND GRAVIES:

1. *Liquids*—Vegetable juice, fruit juice, milk, meat or poultry stock may be used. Liquid and browned particles from meat drippings should be added to stock for flavor and color.

In large quantity preparation, liquid should be just below boiling point when thickening agent is added because most starches thicken immediately in 180°F. to 190°F. liquids.

NOTE: It is important to keep the temperature of the reconstituted nonfat dry milk to just below the boiling point because the proteins in milk tend to coagulate at boiling temperature and give the sauce a rough texture.

2. *Thickening Agents*

a. Roux is a French word for a mixture of flour and fat, cooked to eliminate the raw, uncooked taste of flour.

(1) Light or Cold Roux—a smooth mixture of melted fat and flour. It may be cooked, but should not be browned.

(2) Brown Roux—a browned mixture of fat and flour. Flour is added to hot fat and cooked over low heat until a golden brown color is formed, about 10 minutes with continuous stirring to prevent scorching. Roux may also be browned in 350°F. to 375°F. oven (about 30 minutes).

b. Paste—a lump-free mixture made by whipping cornstarch or flour into cold water or other liquids.

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3. *Fats*—Fat gives flavor, body, and a finish to sauces and gravies. Fat is also valuable because it separates the starch granules and decreases the chance of lumping. Whenever possible, use fat from meat or poultry drippings. Separate clear fat from meat or poultry drippings to use in roux. Butter, margarine, or shortening may also be used. DO NOT use meat juice; it causes lumps.

B. METHODS USED IN PREPARATION OF SAUCES AND GRAVIES:

Sauces and gravies should be cooked in a heavy saucepan, double boiler, steam-jacketed kettle or stock pot.

1. *Combining Sauces and Gravies*

a. *Roux and Paste*—When sauces or gravies are prepared in more than 1/2 gallon volumes, it is preferable to add the near-boiling liquid slowly to the roux or paste while stirring with wire whip. Follow recipe directions, cook ingredients at low heat, stirring constantly until mixture is smooth, thickened, and no longer has a starchy taste.

2. *Prevention of skin on surface of sauce or gravy*—Cover with lid immediately, or spread a thin film of melted butter, margarine, or shortening over surface. Whip thoroughly before serving.

3. *Reheating Sauces or Gravies*—Cold sauces and gravies will scorch easily over direct heat. If possible, reheat in double boiler, steam-jacketed kettle, or over hot water, stirring occasionally.

4. *Adjustments*—If sauce or gravy is too thin, sprinkle a small amount of potato granules into hot mixture, stirring constantly. A mixture of cornstarch and cold water may also be added, stirring constantly until mixture no longer has a starchy taste. If sauce or gravy is too thick, thin with a small amount of hot liquid.