

How To Make A Gastrique

Course - Sauce

Cuisine - French

Keyword - Sweet and Sour Sauce

Cook Time - 30 minutes

Serving - 6 Servings

Skill level - Easy

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It's commonly said that the secret to restaurant-quality meals is to simply add more salt.

Though this is a huge tip that goes to improving almost anything from savory to even sweet dishes, I think there is a forgotten hero in the kitchen - *Acid*.

Acid, to me, is one of the most beautiful tools for most dishes. It will elevate the simplest sauces, amplify the flavor of stews and, when used in harmony with a sweet agent like sugar, will trick the tastebuds.

That feeling when you keep going back for more to figure out what's happening? Probably came from an acidic source.

We often forget to add enough acid in our dishes and my *favorite* way to elevate almost any dish is to create a *Gastrique* - or a French Sweet and Sour sauce.

The classical French *Gastrique* is what we'll be referring to with this recipe, but take the blueprint and apply it to any combination of flavors and you'll realize how powerful this sauce can be!

In broad strokes, a Sweet and Sour sauce is generally made from Equal Parts of a Sweetening agent, like Sugar or Honey, and an acid, like Rice Wine Vinegar or Lime Juice.

1:1 = Sweet and Sour!

So let's take this idea and elevate it a wee bit.

What is a *Gastrique*?

- In its simplest form, it's a sweet and sour sauce made from equal parts of sugar and acid, reduced to a syrupy consistency.

What kind of acid can I use?

- Pretty much anything works, depending on the flavor profile you're working with. For a light, sweet and crisp *gastrique*, I like to use Rice Wine Vinegar and White Sugar. For a variation with more complexity, I might add fresh blackberries, brown sugar and use Apple Cider Vinegar.

What can you put a *Gastrique* on?

- Commonly, you'd find meats are paired with a *Gastrique* in fine dining, but you can absolutely use a *gastrique* with a vegetable dish or with fish. It all depends on the balance of flavors you're using that best determine

where the sauce would end up.

INGREDIENTS

2 Tablespoons of Unsalted Butter
1 Shallot or small onion, brunoised.
2 cups of fruit, like Blackberries
1/4 cup of White Sugar
1/4 cup of White Wine Vinegar
2 tablespoons of brandy (optional)

METHOD

In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, melt your butter and gently cook your shallots until translucent.

Add your Berries, sugar, vinegar and optional brandy/wine to the saucepan and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to a low simmer.

Continue to simmer for 15 minutes, or until the fruit begins to break down.

Remove from heat and pass everything through a chinois to remove seeds.

Taste for seasoning to see if it needs a bit of salt to balance.

The gastrique should be able to coat the back of a spoon and have a tart and sweet flavor that is playful on the palette.

Now time to serve this with your favorite proteins, vegetables or fish!

NOTES:

- This can be kept in an airtight container in a refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.
- In its essence, a gastrique is equal parts of acid and sugar, so experiment from there to make fun flavor combinations!
- A berry gastrique is also tasty on sweet dishes like French Toast.
- For more complexity, change up your sugar to Brown Sugar and choose a robust acid like Red Wine Vinegar to go with a fruit!