

Mint sauce



Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons fresh mint
 - 1 tablespoon white sugar (or to taste)
- 140ml vinegar (white or malt)

Note

The perfect accompaniment to roast lamb – or indeed mutton – is mint sauce. This classic and simple sauce is from Mrs Beeton's Book of household management (1861 edition). It's incredibly easy, but have you actually ever made mint sauce, or do you usually reach for the supermarket shelf?

Mint sauce, to serve with roast lamb

Ingredients – 4 dessert spoon full of chopped mint, 2 dessert spoons full of pounded white sugar, ¼ pint of vinegar

Mode – wash the mint, which should be young and fresh-gathered, free from grit; pick the leaves from the stalks, mince them very fine, and put them into a tureen; add the sugar and vinegar, and stir till the former is dissolved. This sauce is better by being made two or three hours before wanted for table, as the vinegar then becomes impregnated with the flavour of the mint. By many persons, the above proportion of sugar would not be considered sufficient; but as tastes vary, we have given the quantity that we have found to suit the general palate.

Sufficient to serve a middling-sized joint of lamb.

Note: where green mint is scarce and not obtainable, mint vinegar may be substituted for it, and will be found very acceptable in early spring.

Directions

Wash the mint then finely chop the leaves, discarding the stalks. Put the chopped leaves into a jug.

Add the sugar and vinegar, and stir until the sugar has dissolved.

Leave for two to three hours before serving to allow the flavours to develop.

Cook's note: Although Mrs Beeton doesn't specify white or malt vinegar for this recipe, you can use either. White vinegar gives a slightly sweeter taste, while the darker brown 'malt' vinegar adds a greater depth of flavour. Both the Cook and the Curator note that, in their houses, it is always a malt vinegar that is used in mint sauce.

