



Orange-Cranberry Sauce

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

We cure our pork rib roast overnight with a salt and sugar rub, which seasons it well and gives it a mahogany appearance. We then cook it slowly, to help keep it as moist and juicy as possible. To dress it up for a holiday feast, we pair it with an elegant and concentrated orange and cranberry beurre rouge sauce.

Makes about 1 3/4 cups

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups white wine
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest plus 1/2 cup juice
- 4 leaves fresh sage, plus 2 teaspoons minced
- 2 shallots, minced
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 16 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces and chilled
- 1 tablespoon Grand Marnier
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine wine and cranberries in bowl and microwave until steaming, 1 to 2 minutes. Cover and let stand until plump, about 10 minutes. Strain wine through fine-mesh strainer into medium saucepan, reserving cranberries.
2. Add orange juice, sage leaves, and shallots to wine and bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-high and reduce mixture until it measures 3/4 cup, 14 to 16 minutes. Add cream and reduce again to 3/4 cup, about 5 minutes. Discard sage leaves. Off heat, whisk in butter, few pieces at a time, until fully incorporated. Stir in cranberries, orange zest, minced sage, Grand Marnier, salt, and pepper. Cover pan and hold, off heat, until serving. Alternatively, let sauce cool completely and refrigerate for up to 2 days. Reheat in small saucepan over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until warm.

TECHNIQUE

WHY ADD CREAM TO A BUTTER SAUCE?

To dress up our pork, we turned to a classic French preparation: beurre rouge. The beauty of this sauce, which translates as "red butter," is that at its most basic it requires just two components: butter and an acidic liquid. (Red wine and red vinegar for beurre rouge and white for beurre blanc are traditional.) The preparation is equally simple:

Just whisk cold butter into the reduced acidic liquid.

The problem is that butter sauces, like any mixture of fat and water, don't always stay emulsified. That's because the butter is highly temperature sensitive: If the sauce gets too hot (above 135 degrees), the butter—itsself an emulsion of fat and water—will “break” and the butterfat will leak out. If it gets too cold (below 85 degrees), the butterfat solidifies and forms crystals that clump together and separate when the sauce is reheated.

The key to foolproofing a butter sauce is thus stabilizing the butterfat so that it doesn't separate. We do this by whisking in the butter a little bit at a time, which keeps the temperature of the sauce relatively stable. Even more important, we also add cream. Cream contains a relatively high proportion of casein proteins that surround and stabilize the butterfat droplets so that they don't separate from the emulsion. Cream is such an effective stabilizer that our sauce can be made ahead, chilled, and gently reheated before serving.