

Mastering homemade teriyaki sauce

By J.M. HIRSCH
AP Food Editor

If you're still using teriyaki sauce from a bottle, you're doing it all wrong. And you're depriving yourself of the awesomeness that is homemade teriyaki.

I didn't set out to master DIY teriyaki sauce, but my 11-year-old suddenly started craving the stuff. Not even sure where he ate it that it was so good to inspire almost nightly requests for it. But knowing how simple this potent sweet-savory sauce is to make, I refused to buy it. It took a few attempts, but eventually I nailed an incredibly versatile and delicious version.

And by versatile, I mean I slather it on whatever protein I have on hand — chicken, steak, pork or salmon. I've included the basic recipe for the sauce, as well as instructions for using it on each of those dishes. Then, just for fun, I added a slow cooker version of the chicken. Because the only thing better than a delicious chicken teriyaki is a delicious chicken teriyaki that practically cooks itself.



Slow cooker chicken teriyaki with carrots.

AP Photo/Matthew Mead

TERIYAKI SAUCE

Start to finish: 5 minutes
Makes 1 cup

- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/4 cup seasoned rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons Sriracha (or other hot sauce)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger

In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients and whisk until the sugar is dissolved.

Nutrition information per tablespoon: 20 calories; 10 calories from fat (50 percent of total calories); 1 g fat (0 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 210 mg sodium; 4 g carbohydrate; 0 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 0 g protein.

• **CHICKEN:** Slice boneless, skinless chicken breasts into thin strips. Add them to the sauce, then refrigerate up to 24 hours. When ready to cook, set a wire rack over a rimmed baking sheet. Coat the rack with cooking spray. Arrange the chicken strips in an even layer on the rack, then set under the broiler on the oven's middle shelf for 3 to 5 minutes, or until just starting to brown. Flip the chicken pieces, then cook for another 3 to 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, pour the marinade into a small saucepan over medium-high and boil for 3 minutes. When the



AP Photo/Matthew Mead

Some of the ingredients for teriyaki sauce, from back left, sesame oil, ground ginger, garlic powder, rice vinegar and Sriracha hot sauce.

chicken comes out of the oven, drizzle the boiled marinade over the pieces.

• **PORK:** Substitute pork tenderloin, similarly sliced, for the chicken breasts above and follow the same method.

• **STEAK:** Cut a 1 1/2-pound flank steak against the grain into thin strips. Add to the teriyaki sauce and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. When ready to cook, heat a large skillet over medium-high. Add a couple tablespoons of canola, vegetable or sesame oil. When the oil is hot, use tongs or a fork to remove the steak from the marinade and add to the skillet. Cook

for 2 to 4 minutes. You want it barely cooked.

Add the marinade to the pan and bring to a simmer. Cook for another 1 to 2 minutes. Serve the steak and sauce over rice or noodles.

• **SALMON:** Arrange 4 salmon fillets on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Brush each liberally with teriyaki sauce. Broil on the oven's middle shelf for 1 to 2 minutes, then brush with additional teriyaki. Repeat this process 3 to 4 times, or until the salmon is just cooked and well glazed, a total of about 6 to 8 minutes under the broiler. Garnish with chopped scallions, sesame seeds or both.

SLOW COOKER CHICKEN TERIYAKI

Start to finish: 4 hours 20 minutes (20 minutes active)

Servings: 6

- 3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 pound carrots, trimmed and cut into 2-inch chunks
- 1 large yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/4 cup seasoned rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons Sriracha (or other hot sauce)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- Cooked white or brown rice

One at a time, dredge the chicken breasts through the flour to lightly coat. Shake off any excess.

In a large skillet over medium-high, heat the oil and butter until hot. Working in batches, briefly sear the chicken breasts on both sides just until lightly browned, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer the chicken to a 4-quart or larger slow cooker. Add the carrots and onion. In a small bowl, mix together the water, soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, sesame oil, Sriracha, garlic powder and ginger. Pour over the chicken and carrots, then stir to coat. Cook on high for 4 hours or low for 6 hours.

Serve the chicken and carrots over rice.

Nutrition information per serving: 550 calories; 140 calories from fat (25 percent of total calories); 15 g fat (3.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 170 mg cholesterol; 710 mg sodium; 46 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 13 g sugar; 56 g protein.

Pasta can wear a variety of hats to fit any occasion

By JAN ROBERTS-DOMINGUEZ
Gazette-Times

What's truly inspiring about a meal of pasta is how easy it is to throw together an elegant topping: a few chopped up vegetables that would otherwise suffer an undignified death at the bottom of your produce bin, sauteed in a little olive oil with a clove of fresh garlic and herb of the day, splash of white wine, finely chopped sun-dried tomato and brief shaking of salt and white pepper. So in my kitchen, when time and ingredients are at a minimum.

There are endless variations — think of all the shapes to choose from. For instance, wide pappardelle swathed in Parmesan and butter to sooth the mood of a picky-eater youngster. Orecchiette — or little ears — that will cradle the goodness of tuna and capers. The general rule when pairing pasta to toppings is to consider the thickness of the sauce. Thinner sauces go perfectly with strands or ribbons, while shapes and tubes are designed to grab thicker, chunky sauces.

You've probably been constructing simple pasta sauces your entire cooking life, but I thought I'd provide you with a few more concepts. The following preparations should springboard your creativity into all sorts of new dinner options. Experiment with new pastas, substitute ingredients in the recipes for whatever is on hand, and make it work. And by all means, use freshly ground Parmesan cheese whenever possible for ultimate flavor.

PRIMAVERA

Heat 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil in a deep pan, saute 1 cup chopped carrots and a few finely minced cloves of garlic over medium heat. Add 2 cups cherry tomatoes and saute another 30 seconds. Add 1 cup chicken stock, bring to a boil, and add 1 cup of chopped broccolini or broccoli florets, a handful of frozen peas and cook just until the broccoli is barely tender, about 3 minutes. Add to a large bowl of cooked pasta and toss with 1 cup of grated Parmesan cheese and 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil.

SUN-DRIED TOMATO

Place 1/2 cup grated Parmesan in a food processor, along with about 3/4 cup undrained sun-dried tomatoes (packed in olive oil), 2 whole, peeled garlic cloves, about 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves, and 1/4 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper. Process to the texture you prefer, from coarse to creamy. Toss with freshly cooked hot pasta. You might want to add a little of the hot pasta water to the pasta and sauce as you are tossing.

LEMON-ARTICHOKE SAUCE

Place 1 cup pine nuts, 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, 1/4 cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, 4 large cloves garlic, and about 1/4 teaspoon each salt and cayenne pepper (or more, to taste) in a food processor and process to a smooth consistency. Add 1/2 cup of coarsely chopped marinated artichoke hearts and process briefly so the artichokes retain a bit of shape. Toss with cooked and drained pasta and 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese.

Consider Grand Bahama for a quiet island getaway

By GLENN ADAMS
Associated Press

GRAND BAHAMA, The Bahamas — Looking for a low-key winter getaway or quiet spring break destination? Grand Bahama may be your place.

It's one of the main islands of the Gulf Stream-warmed Bahamas archipelago of 700 islands, cays and inlets sprawling across the waters off southeastern Florida. Our February trip saw temperatures locked between 70 and 80 degrees, with an occasional spurt of rain at night.

At restaurants, it wasn't unusual for the three of us — my wife, brother-in-law and me — to be the only ones there, although some places buzzed with activity. With the exchange at 1:1 U.S. dollar to a Bahamian dollar, the prices all seemed reasonable, and the practice of factoring tips into the bill made transactions even simpler.

Beaches in many areas were quiet, with an occasional trickling of cruise ship passengers now and again making their way across the glistening sand, wading out to reefs and checking out ships dotting the horizon. This was the case at Gold Rock Beach at Lucayan National Park, which at \$5 per head is a don't-miss stop just a few miles east of Freeport along the Grand Bahama Highway.

Four companies and taxis make trips to the park, which features trails to an underwater cave system where pre-Columbian artifacts have been discovered. Another part of the park (be careful crossing the highway) offers trails whose meandering boardwalks lead through a mangrove ecosystem featuring saltwater fish, waterfowl and wading birds.

Four companies also offer activities including kayak trips through a mangrove forest, sightseeing by bike or Jeep, all-terrain vehicle rides, snorkeling and birding. For the more adventurous, there's parasailing and even (gasp!) shark feeding dives.

We spent a week in a rented house in Freeport's Xanadu Beach area, noted for the 13-story resort once owned and inhabited by Howard Hughes and haunted by Hollywood jet setters. Now the high-rise stands eerily silent, its once-vibrant surroundings looking desolate as we looked on from the quiet white-sand beach. Same at Freeport's



Betty Adams via AP

This February 2015 photo shows a man walking along Gold Rock Beach in Lucayan National Park on Grand Bahama island, part of the Bahamas in the Caribbean.

International Bazaar, a marketplace of shops and boutiques — now mostly abandoned, shuttered, silent. Under the shade of a palm tree near its main gate, a checkers board, pieces still set on squares, lay untouched as if waiting for the next move.

But we found our bliss at Albertha Cooper's restaurant. It's a bit out of the way, but worth the expedition.

At the far eastern end of the island in McLean's Town, a seaside village known for its annual conch-cracking contest, we happened upon Cooper's tidy little drive-up restaurant. There was no menu to be seen, but she gladly obliged us with her specials for the day. I chose the fried conch plate. Asked where the conch was caught, she pointed to the turquoise cove a few hundred yards to our backs.

"Right there," she said with a smile.

The conch came with a helping of rice-and-beans and coleslaw. My wife chose three lobster tails with sides, and her brother chose the ribs plate. Add a couple of beers and a rum and Coke for drinks, \$52 total for our feast for three.

On another outing, we drove to the west side for a day of snorkeling and relaxing at Paradise Cove, a friendly and informal resort near Dead Man's Reef, 15 miles from Freeport.

Getting around the island was easy, though driving itself is a bit of a challenge: You drive on the left side of the road, but many cars also have steering wheels on the left — different from both the U.S. and British systems.

Of course Grand Bahama is but one of the islands in the Bahamian chain. Nearby Paradise Island and Nassau (the Bahamian capital on New Providence island), offer more night life. Atlantis, with its more than 2,300 rooms, casino, water park and what it calls the world's largest open-air marine habitat, is also a major draw for visitors.

Eleuthera and Harbor Island offer quieter settings in an atmosphere that retains trappings of the British loyalists who settled there centuries ago. Eleuthera, where fishing and pineapple farming are king, boasts well-developed resorts, pink sand beaches, rocky bluffs and large coral reefs.