

Salsa Besciamella/Béchamel Sauce

PREP TIME: 5 MIN

COOK TIME: 20 MIN

YIELD: 8 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- * 3/4 cup butter
- * 3 tablespoons flour
- * 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- * 4 cups whole milk, preferably fresh, local, organic
- * 1 teaspoon unrefined sea salt

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small saucepan, add the butter and melt it over low heat.
2. Add the flour and whisk it in with the butter to combine.
3. Allow to cook for 1 minute, or until slightly golden. Add the nutmeg and whisk again.
4. In another small saucepan, bring the milk to a boil over medium heat.
5. As soon as it boils, add it into the other saucepan and whisk well until you have a thick, creamy sauce. If the sauce needs to be thicker, continue to cook it over low heat for a few minutes until it thickens and set aside.

TIP:

Besciamella is a perfect sauce for winter dishes. For a fantastic baked pasta, mix this recipe with 1 pound of rigatoni that is cooked until very al dente (about 3 minutes less than if you were serving immediately). Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Stir in cooked vegetables such as squash or zucchini, if desired. Top pasta with freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and bake for 30 minutes, or until golden.

NOTE:

This recipe is often used to top filled savory Italian crepes (called *crespelle* in Italian) and in baked pasta dishes.

VARY IT!

In addition to this version, which is served in Italy, France, and the U.S., many cities around the world have their own variations. In Saudi Arabia, they add a few pieces of good-quality saffron to the Béchamel sauce and use it to top roasted fish. In Egypt, they often make the sauce with half the quantity of milk and the other half of chicken stock. It is then tossed into short pasta along with a meat sauce and baked. Eggs are stirred into the Besciamella sauce in Greece before it is used in the classic Pastitsio recipe.