

contain only a minimum of sugar. Too much Chinese food prepared in the United States is overly sweet. A little sugar is authentic (and delicious) in many recipes; a lot of sugar is not.

## Hot-and-Sour Sauce

MAKES ENOUGH FOR  
1 STIR-FRY RECIPE

TIME: 5 MINUTES

*For a spicier sauce, increase the chili paste to 2 tablespoons.*

- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons dry sherry
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 4 teaspoons Asian chili paste
- 1 teaspoon Asian sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.

## INGREDIENTS: Asian Sesame Oil

Also known as dark or toasted sesame oil, this aromatic brown oil is used as a seasoning in sauces. Because of its low smoke point, it is not used for cooking. Do not substitute regular sesame oil, which is pressed from untoasted seeds and meant for salad dressings and cooking. Japanese brands of sesame oil are commonly sold in American supermarkets and are generally quite good. Sesame oil tends to go rancid quickly, so store it in a cool cabinet or refrigerate an opened bottle if you will not use it up within a couple of months.

## INGREDIENTS: Sichuan Peppercorns

Sichuan peppercorns have a mildly peppery, herbal flavor and aroma. If possible, smell peppercorns before buying them to gauge freshness and intensity. Twigs and tiny leaves will be mixed in with the peppercorns (just pick them out of the amount you are using), but there should be a minimum of black seeds. To bring out their flavor, toast peppercorns in a dry skillet until fragrant and then grind them in a coffee mill set aside for spices.

## Garlic Sauce

MAKES ENOUGH FOR  
1 STIR-FRY RECIPE

TIME: 5 MINUTES

*This sauce adds a rich garlic flavor to beef and seafood but does not overpower other ingredients. Adjust the heat as desired by adding more hot red pepper flakes to the stir-fry.*

- 3 tablespoons dry sherry
- 3 tablespoons canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon Asian sesame oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes

1. Combine all the ingredients except the pepper flakes in a small bowl and set aside.

2. Add the pepper flakes to the garlic mixture in step 1 of the stir-fry recipe.

**INGREDIENTS: Chili Paste**

Sometimes labeled *chili sauce*, chili paste is a spicy seasoning made with crushed chile peppers, vinegar, and, usually, garlic. The texture is thick and smooth, and the color is bright red. Brands vary from mild to incendiary, so taste before using and adjust the amount as needed. Opened jars can be refrigerated for many months.



### Sweet-and-Sour Sauce

MAKES ENOUGH FOR  
1 STIR-FRY RECIPE

TIME: 5 MINUTES

*Pineapple juice can be used in this recipe instead of orange juice, if desired. This is especially appropriate when pineapple is in the stir-fry. The flavors in this sauce are good with chicken, pork, and seafood. Due to the thick consistency of the ketchup, less cornstarch than usual is needed in this sauce.*

- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons orange juice
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1½ tablespoons ketchup
- ½ teaspoon cornstarch
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.



### Black Bean Sauce


MAKES ENOUGH FOR  
1 STIR-FRY RECIPE

TIME: 5 MINUTES

*Chinese fermented black beans are available in Asian food shops. They should be moist and soft to the touch. Don't buy beans that are dried out or shriveled. High-quality fermented beans should not be overly salty.*

- 3 tablespoons dry sherry
- 3 tablespoons canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon Asian sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon Chinese fermented black beans, chopped

1. Combine all the ingredients except the beans in a small bowl and set aside.
2. Add the black beans to the garlic mixture in step 1 of the stir-fry recipe.



### Oyster Sauce

MAKES ENOUGH FOR  
1 STIR-FRY RECIPE

TIME: 5 MINUTES

*As the name suggests, jarred oyster sauce is made from fermented oysters, along with salt and spices (see page 143 for more information and our tasting of leading brands). The flavor is not overly fishy, but it is quite salty, so a little goes a long way. This sauce works well with beef and seafood. Due to the thick consistency of the oyster sauce, less cornstarch than usual is needed in this sauce.*

- 3 tablespoons dry sherry
- 3 tablespoons jarred oyster sauce
- 1 tablespoon Asian sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon cornstarch
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.

## Coconut Curry Sauce

MAKES ENOUGH FOR  
1 STIR-FRY RECIPE

TIME: 5 MINUTES

*Use canned unsweetened coconut milk in this recipe, not sweetened coconut cream. This velvety sauce coats food especially well and doesn't require any cornstarch.*

- 1/3 cup unsweetened coconut milk
- 3 tablespoons canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 1/2 teaspoons yellow curry powder
- 1/4 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes

1. Combine all the ingredients except the pepper flakes in a small bowl and set aside.

2. Add the pepper flakes to the garlic mixture in step 1 of the stir-fry recipe.

## Lemon Sauce

MAKES ENOUGH FOR  
1 STIR-FRY RECIPE

TIME: 5 MINUTES

*The flavors in this sauce are mild and work especially well with seafood.*

- 1/2 teaspoon minced zest and 3 tablespoons juice from 1 large lemon
- 2 tablespoons canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons dry sherry
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.

## Sichuan Chile Sauce

MAKES ENOUGH FOR  
1 STIR-FRY RECIPE

TIME: 5 MINUTES

*This sauce gets its heat from chili paste, and Sichuan peppercorns give it an herbal, floral quality.*

- 3 tablespoons dry sherry
- 2 tablespoons canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon Asian sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon Asian chili paste
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon toasted and ground Sichuan peppercorns
- 1/4 teaspoon sugar

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.

## Spicy Orange Sauce

MAKES ENOUGH FOR  
1 STIR-FRY RECIPE

TIME: 5 MINUTES

*The citrus flavors in this sauce are especially good with chicken and seafood.*

- 1/2 teaspoon minced zest and 1/4 cup juice from 1 large orange
- 2 tablespoons dry sherry
- 1 tablespoon Asian sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons Asian chili paste
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.