

Deglazing Sauce

There's nothing easier or quicker to make than a good little sauce. All you need is a pan to deglaze (the one you roasted or fried your meat in), and some liquid—wine or stock; even water will do in a pinch. The pan will still have all the tasty brown bits of meat and caramelized stuff clinging to it. Extra flavorings are nice — shallots, wine, stock, herbs — but you don't even really need them.

Here's how it works. You roast or fry some meat: turkey or chicken or duck or roast beef or veal or pork. Don't use a nonstick pan if you can avoid it because you actually want to encourage sticking. The browned bits are full of flavor that will wind up in your sauce. The meat comes out of the pan and while it's resting, you make a little deglazing sauce.

Pour most of the fat out of the cooking pan; leave just a tablespoon or so. Place the pan on the stove, over two burners if it's a big pan. Turn the heat on low, toss in some chopped shallots and "sweat" them — just let them cook until they're tender, about five minutes or so. Now turn the heat to high, and add liquid.

You can use wine (red or white) or stock (chicken, beef or vegetable). Pour the liquid into the pan and, using a wooden spoon, start scraping up all the wonderful browned bits and caramelized stuff from the bottom. Keep deglazing in this way, scraping and reducing, adding more wine if necessary, over high heat until the bottom of the pan is completely smooth. For the simplest sauce, if you've just roasted an everyday chicken or really any kind of meat, you can simply add salt and pepper to taste, and pour the sauce into a sauceboat (straining or not).

If you want to make the sauce a little fancier, swirl in a little cold butter and add some fresh chopped parsley.