Sauces / France

Dry-Method Caramel Sauce

Sugar caramelised in a dry pan to deep amber — pushed past the point where sweetness fades into something nutty and complex — then arrested with cream and finished with butter and salt into a glossy, pourable sauce.

Time 30 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 200 g Caster sugar
- ☐ 150 ml Double cream (heavy cream), warm
- ☐ 50 g Cold unsalted butter, cubed
- ☐ 0.5 tsp Flaky sea salt (Fleur de sel)
- ☐ 0.5 tsp Vanilla extract (optional)

Let's make it.

01 Place the sugar in a wide, heavy-based saucepan (light interior colour is ideal so you can see the caramel). Set over medium heat — do not stir. As the sugar melts at the edges, gently swirl the pan to even out the heat, but never use a spoon. Allow the sugar to melt slowly and evenly, swirling occasionally, until the entire mass is molten and a deep amber colour — the colour of dark honey or old whisky. Watch it carefully from the moment it fully liquefies: it will go from perfect to burnt in 15–20 seconds. The target temperature is 175–180 C.

02 Remove the pan from the heat and immediately add the warm cream in a slow, steady pour — stand back, the mixture will bubble violently and steam dramatically as the cold cream hits the hot sugar. Stir or whisk continuously as you add it. The caramel will seize and harden around the cream at first — keep stirring. Return to low heat and stir until any hardened caramel lumps have dissolved and the mixture is smooth.

03 Remove the pan from the heat. Add the cold cubed butter, flaky salt, and vanilla extract. Stir or whisk until the butter is fully melted and incorporated — the sauce will turn from thin to glossy and slightly thickened as the butter emulsifies. Taste: it should be deeply sweet, properly bitter at the back of the throat, and finished with a definite hit of salt. Pour into a clean jar or bowl. The sauce thickens as it cools; reheat gently to serve.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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