Sauces / South Korea

Gochujang Glaze

A deeply red, sticky Korean glaze that balances gochujang's fermented heat against soy, sesame, and honey into something simultaneously sweet, salty, spicy, and earthy — a glaze that lacquers and caramelizes beautifully on anything it touches, from chicken wings to roasted cauliflower.

Time 10 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 3 parts Gochujang (Korean fermented chile paste)
- ☐ 2 parts Soy sauce (regular or low-sodium)
- ☐ 1 parts Toasted sesame oil
- ☐ 1 parts Rice vinegar
- ☐ 1.5 parts Honey or brown sugar
- ☐ 0.5 parts Garlic, finely grated or minced
- ☐ 0.3 parts Fresh ginger, finely grated
- ☐ 1 parts Water

Let's make it.

01 Combine all ingredients in a bowl or wide measuring cup. Whisk vigorously for 60-90 seconds until completely uniform — gochujang is thick and dense and does not dissolve easily, so sustained whisking is required. Work from the center outward, breaking up any pockets of paste as you go. The sesame oil will initially resist incorporation but will emulsify into the sauce as you whisk. The finished raw glaze should be smooth, uniform, and a deep brick-red throughout with no visible streaks of gochujang or unmixed paste.

02 Taste the glaze carefully and assess its four key axes: heat (from the gochujang and its fermented chile depth), sweetness (honey or sugar balancing the chile's aggression), saltiness (soy sauce carrying the savory base), and acid (rice vinegar cutting through the richness). The glaze should feel balanced but not timid — gochujang is an assertive ingredient and the glaze should announce its presence. Adjust incrementally: more gochujang for heat, more honey for sweetness, more soy for salt, more vinegar for brightness. The goal is a sauce where every note is present and none is harsh.

03 For use as a lacquering glaze (as opposed to a marinade or dipping sauce), pour the balanced glaze into a small saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring constantly. Reduce for 3-5 minutes until it thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon with an even, slightly sticky film. Watch carefully — the sugars in the honey and gochujang will cause it to bubble aggressively and can scorch in seconds if left unattended on high heat. Use the reduced glaze brushed onto proteins or vegetables in the last few minutes of cooking, applying in two coats with a minute between each coat for the deepest lacquer.

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