Sauces / United Kingdom

Worcestershire Sauce

The Victorian umami bomb — tamarind, anchovies, onions, molasses, and a dozen spices fermented together for weeks into a dark, complex, deeply savory condiment that defies any single flavor category.

Time 20160 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 240 ml Malt vinegar
- ☐ 120 ml Water
- ☐ 60 g Molasses or dark brown sugar
- ☐ 60 ml Soy sauce
- ☐ 60 g Tamarind paste (seedless block, wetted)
- ☐ 40 g Anchovy fillets in oil
- ☐ 150 g White onion, finely diced
- ☐ 4 cloves Garlic cloves, smashed
- ☐ 20 g Fresh ginger, roughly sliced
- ☐ 1 tsp Black peppercorns
- ☐ 4 whole Cloves
- ☐ 1 stick Cinnamon stick
- ☐ 4 pods Green cardamom pods, bruised
- ☐ 1 tsp Coriander seeds, lightly crushed
- ☐ 0.5 tsp Cayenne pepper
- ☐ 6 g Fine sea salt

Let's make it.

01 Combine all ingredients in a medium non-reactive saucepan (stainless steel or enamel — not aluminium). Bring to a full boil over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the molasses and break up the anchovy fillets. Once boiling, reduce heat to a bare simmer — just a few lazy bubbles breaking the surface. Simmer uncovered for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce has reduced by about 15% and smells deeply savory and spiced.

02 Remove the saucepan from the heat and allow the sauce to cool completely to room temperature — at least 60 minutes. Do not rush this with an ice bath; a rapid temperature change can drive off aromatic volatiles. While cooling, the sauce will thicken slightly as it approaches room temperature and any fat from the anchovies may form a thin skin on the surface.

03 Transfer the cooled sauce with all its whole spices and solids into a clean, wide-mouth glass jar. Cover with a piece of cheesecloth secured with a rubber band — you want air circulation, not a sealed lid, during fermentation. Store at cool room temperature (18–22°C), away from direct sunlight. Stir once daily with a clean spoon. Ferment for a minimum of 1 week, ideally 2 weeks — the flavors will knit together and mellow dramatically. The sauce will smell progressively less sharp and more complex.

04 Line a fine-mesh sieve with a double layer of damp cheesecloth and set it over a deep bowl. Pour the fermented sauce through in batches, pressing firmly on the solids with the back of a ladle to extract every drop of liquid. Discard the spent solids. The strained sauce should be smooth, completely clear of particulate, and deeply dark. Yield is approximately 200–220ml from this recipe.

05 Pour the strained sauce into a small saucepan and bring to a very gentle simmer. Reduce by 20–25% to concentrate the flavors and achieve the characteristic Worcester consistency — thin enough to shake from a bottle, thick enough to cling briefly to a spoon. This step is optional but highly recommended: it eliminates residual rawness from the fermentation and sets the final flavor. Cool completely before bottling. Refrigerated, keeps for 6 months.

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