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## Get Sauced!

by Lisa Turner

Try these savory selections to transform any dish

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March 20 marks the vernal equinox, technically the first day of spring. But in many parts of the country, it doesn't feel like warm weather's coming. It's often chilly, frequently blustery—the kind of weather that cries out for warm, filling meals. This is the time to turn to the sauce.

The right sauce can transform a bowl of beans and a handful of spinach into an exotic Indian dish or elevate a simple white fish to a culinary masterpiece. If you're looking for an easy shortcut, a high-quality bottled sauce can enliven most any dish. When March winds blow, whip out one of these selections, and get completely sauced.

**Barbecue sauces.** These include many variations, from whiskey-spiked renditions to chipotle-raspberry versions to pungent mustard sauces. The two most basic types are Carolina-style sauces that have a vinegar and mustard base, and Texas-style sauces that use ketchup or tomato paste and molasses. Though they're typically used for ham, chicken, and beef, a good barbecue sauce transforms tempeh and makes even tofu worth eating.

Shortcut solution: Crumble 1 package of tempeh into a medium mixing bowl; add 1 cup Annie's or other barbecue sauce and let stand. While tempeh is marinating, sauté 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper, 1/2 cup chopped onion, and 1 minced clove of garlic. Add tempeh and sauce, cook to heat through, and season with white pepper. Serve on whole-grain or gluten-free rolls, with a side of red cabbage, carrot, and green apple slaw.

**Saucy selections.** Annie's Naturals Organic Smokey Maple BBQ sauce; Austin's Own BBQ Sauce; Bronco Bob's Tangy Apricot Chipotle Sauce; Fischer & Wieser Original Raspberry and Chipotle Sauce.

**Indian sauces.** Flavors in Indian cuisine vary widely from region to region, though they share common spices, such as cumin, coriander, turmeric, and garlic. Favorite sauces include fiery vindaloos, creamy kormas, madras sauces, and thick jalfrezi pastes. Use them to simmer chickpeas, seafood, or vegetables for a fast, warming Indian meal.

Shortcut solution: dice 1 small onion and sauté in coconut oil; mix in 2 tablespoons vindaloo paste; whisk in 1 cup coconut milk and 1 diced tomato, and cook 10 minutes. Add 2 cups of sea scallops and cook 2 to 5 minutes, until scallops are just done. Stir in 2 cups baby spinach leaves, and serve with basmati rice and a salad of cucumbers, shredded carrots, and yogurt-cumin dressing.

**Saucy selections.** Patak's Vindaloo Curry Paste, Patak's Tikka Masala Curry Paste; Ethnic Gourmet Calcutta Masala Simmer Sauce; Seeds of Change Korma Simmer Sauce; Sharwood's Jalfrezi sauce; Stonehouse 27 Cashews & Cream Gourmet Indian Cooking Sauce.

**Asian sauces.** Asian cuisine is usually broken down into several regional styles, including Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Thai, and Indonesian. Ingredients common to all include chile peppers, soy sauce, ginger, cumin, and sesame. Favorites include peanut sauces for dipping spring rolls, sweet and tangy red chile sauces—ideal for grilling tofu—and hoisin sauces, perfect for a simple glazed salmon.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Many Indian sauces contain turmeric, a pungent yellow spice whose most active ingredient (curcumin) provides antioxidant and cardiovascular support.

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Simple shortcut: Sauté 1 bunch sliced green onions, 3 minced cloves garlic, and 1 cup each red bell pepper strips, chopped broccoli, and julienned carrots in olive oil. Add 1/2 cup Szechuan sauce, and stir to coat. Add 1 cup shrimp and 1 cup snow peas, and cook until shrimp are just done, 3 to 7 minutes. Garnish with 1/2 cup chopped cilantro; serve over brown rice.

*Saucy selections:* East/West Sweet Ginger Teriyaki Sauce; Sister's Pantry Spicy Peanut Sauce; San-J Szechuan sauce; Thai Kitchen Sweet Red Chili sauce; Lee Kum Kee Hoisin Sauce.

**Southwestern sauces.** The Southwest is a fairly ambiguous region, but the key ingredients are quite distinct: tomatoes, onions, chiles, green bell peppers, cilantro, lime, and avocado. Favorite sauces include green chile sauce, red enchilada sauce, ranchero sauce, chipotle sauce, and a staggering variety of salsas, many of which include fruits, such as mango, pineapple, or peach.

Simple shortcut: Sauté 1/2 red onion, 2 minced cloves garlic, and 1 head of chopped chard in olive oil until chard is just bright green. Stir in 2 cans black beans, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, and 1/2 cup red chile sauce. Cover, and cook 5 minutes, until chard is tender. Serve on warm corn tortillas, and garnish with chopped cilantro, avocado cubes, and salsa.

*Saucy selections:* 505 Green Chile Sauce; Frontera Red Chile & Roasted Garlic Cooking Sauce; Juanitas Red Enchilada Sauce; Seeds of Change Chilli with Jalapeno Peppers sauce; Walnut Acres Organic Sweet Southwestern Peach Salsa; Organicville Pineapple Salsa.

**Mediterranean.** This cuisine is most commonly associated with Greece, Italy, and Spain. Characteristic flavors include basil, rosemary, oregano, garlic, tomato, eggplant, bell peppers, olives, and olive oil.

Simple shortcut: Cut 1 large eggplant into 1/2-inch cubes. Combine with 2 zucchini, cut into cubes; 1 large red onion, chopped; 6 cloves garlic, chopped; and 3 tablespoons olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, and roast at 400°F for 20 to 30 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. Remove from oven and stir in 2 cups pasta sauce. Serve over hot whole wheat pasta with warm sourdough bread and a green salad.

*Saucy selections:* Cucina Antica Spicy Arrabiata sauce; Middle Earth Organic Tomato & Grilled Eggplant Sauce; Monte Bene Spicy Marinara Pasta Sauce; Meditalia Sundried Tomato Tapenade; Fischer & Wieser Mom's Martini Pasta Sauce; Lucini Italia Sicilian Olive and Wild Caper Sauce; Gia Russa Alla Vodka Sauce.

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