

Sauces of the World – Part 1 (Green Sauces)

It is rare to find a meal that is not a little better with a sauce for marinating, drizzling, or dipping. Green sauce – there is no one single definition of a green sauce. Almost every cuisine around the world includes a version and usually many versions. These eight iconic green sauces are a great place to master the basics. Stock a batch in the fridge, and pretty much anything you cook will taste better.

Let us take a world tour together:

- **Argentina: Chimichurri**
- **Morocco: Chermoula**
- **Italy: Salsa Verde**
- **Mexico: Salsa Verde**

Argentina: Chimichurri

When sitting down to dine in Argentina, a small jar or vessel of oily, deep-green chimichurri is often the first thing to greet you at your table. A traditional condiment made of parsley and other herbs, sometimes speckled with dried red peppers, green onions, or garlic, chimichurri is the iconic sauce of the culture, delivering a welcome bolt of bright, sharp, herbaceous saltiness and acidity that takes fire-cooked foods to new heights. But do not think of it just as a finishing sauce. It can also double as a marinade for any protein might want to throw on the grill—you really cannot go wrong.

YIELD: Makes about 2 cups

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup minced yellow onion
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
- 1 teaspoon finely grated or minced garlic
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup red wine vinegar

INSTRUCTIONS

In a medium bowl or jar, combine the onion, parsley, oregano, garlic, salt, black pepper, and red pepper. Add the oil and vinegar and mix well. Store covered for a couple of days and use before the herbs start to turn brown.

Note: To get some of the prep work out of the way, make chimichurri up to 4 days in advance but do not add the vinegar; bring it to room temperature and add the vinegar a few hours before serving.

Morocco: Chermoula

This North African pureed green sauce is traditionally deployed as a marinade for all kinds of protein, but it can be used for so much more—from marinating to drizzling over roasted vegetables. Cilantro is the star here, with parsley and occasionally mint playing supporting roles. And a blend of toasty spices such as cumin, paprika, coriander, and red chile flakes add serious depth. Take note: It is thicker than some of the other sauces on this list, so you might want to thin it a bit with extra olive oil to serve it as a drizzling sauce.

Made with fresh herbs, garlic, lemon, and warm spices, this Moroccan sauce makes a great marinade or finishing sauce for protein and vegetables.

YIELD: Makes about 1 cup

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 3/4 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 2 garlic cloves
- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4–1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 cup (packed) cilantro leaves with tender stems
- 1 cup (packed) parsley leaves with tender stems
- 1/2 cup (packed) mint leaves

INSTRUCTIONS

Toast coriander and cumin seeds in a dry small skillet, tossing occasionally, until very fragrant, about 2 minutes. Let cool, then lightly crush with a heavy skillet.

Purée toasted seeds, garlic, oil, lemon zest, lemon juice, paprika, salt, and red pepper flakes in a blender until spices are ground and mixture is very smooth.

Add cilantro, parsley, and mint; process until well combined but slightly textured.

Notes: Sauce can be made 3 days ahead; chill in an airtight container.

Italy: Salsa Verde

It may look a lot like chimichurri, but the flavor of Italian salsa verde is surprisingly different, with chopped capers and sometimes anchovy fillets giving this version an irresistible salty-funky tang. Sometimes salsa verde will get zing from lemon juice and/or zest, too. Drizzle salsa verde over protein, toss it into pasta, top your eggs with it, or just drag your bread through it.

YIELD: Makes about 1 cup

INGREDIENTS

- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 3/4 teaspoon (or more) fine sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon (or more) black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon (packed) grated lemon peel
- 3 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3/4 cup (packed) chopped Italian parsley
- 1 tablespoon drained capers
- 2 anchovy fillets, minced

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix first 5 ingredients in small bowl. Using back of wooden spoon, mash to paste. Whisk in lemon juice, then olive oil in thin stream until blended. Stir in parsley, capers, and anchovies. Season with more salt and pepper, if desired.

Notes - Can be made 6 hours ahead. Cover; chill. Bring to room temperature and rewhisk before using.

Mexico: Salsa Verde

In Mexico salsa verde means something completely different than it does in Italy, but it still involves a lot of fresh herbs and garlic. Most classic versions involve fresh or roasted tomatillos, blended with fresh green chile, onion, and salt. Sometimes a bit of avocado gets blitzed in, too. It is a little bit spicy, and totally refreshing. It is exactly what you want to drizzle over tacos or dunk those crispy tortilla chips into. It is also great with any grilled protein.

YIELD: Makes about 2 cups

INGREDIENTS

- 1-pound quartered rinsed husked tomatillos
- 1/2 coarsely chopped medium onion
- 1 smashed garlic clove
- 1 coarsely chopped serrano chile (seeds removed if desired)
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves with tender stems
- 2 TBSP lime juice
- 2 teaspoons of lime zest
- Salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat oven to 400 degrees.

Remove husks from tomatillos and rinse well. Dry them and place in bowl. Toss with olive oil and salt. Place on parchment lined baking sheet and roast for 7 minutes. Turn each tomatillo to other side and roast for additional 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Purée tomatillos, 1/2 coarsely chopped medium onion, 1 smashed garlic clove, 1 coarsely chopped serrano chile (seeds removed if desired), and 1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves with tender stems, lime juice and zest in a blender, adding water as needed, until smooth; season with salt. That is it!

Notes:

When shopping for your tomatillos, choose fresh tomatillos that are firm, bright green, and bulging from their husks. Tomatillos milperos, which are smaller and have purple skin and a sweeter flavor, can be used interchangeably with green tomatillos.

Rinsing the tomatillos will make it easier to peel the sticky fruits away from their papery husks. Rinsing a second time after peeling ensures no papery bits end up in your salsa.

Cook your tomatillos. Although salsa verde can be made with raw tomatillos, cooking the tomatillos makes them easier to blend and yields a milder flavor. Boiling is the most straightforward cooking method but roasting, charring your tomatillos under a broiler or in a dry skillet will add more depth of flavor.

Cool your salsa verde for better texture. Tomatillos are high in pectin, so salsa verde will thicken as it cools. If it gets too thick, try thinning out with water, lime juice, or chicken broth.

Tomatillos are not just for salsa: they're also delicious raw, roasted, blended, and jammed.