

## Robin's Hot and Spicy Chilli Sauce

This recipe is a mix of various recipes from other sources, including a spicy plum sauce-chutney-relish given to me by a woman from Bangladesh and a chilli jam recipe from a Queensland acquaintance.

Use your own judgment to fine-tune the flavours while the sauce cooks as there can be quite a lot of variation in ingredients, especially in the taste and hotness of chillies.

Your goal is a condiment that you can't get enough of!

Aim for a sauce that is a good balance of sweet (sugar), sour (vinegar) and hotness (chilli). Using your judgement, adjust the flavours of the sauce towards the end for more chilli or any flavour that you think might perk it up. Some of the other ingredients can be added later. The whole chopped lime does make the sauce somewhat bitter but you can adjust the flavours to balance that – use half a lime if concerned, but you can't add it later as it needs to cook.

There are two stages to making the sauce. First, is making the sauce proper. Second, is "tempering" the sauce with a mixture of oil and spices, stirred through at the end – very common in Indian and Sri Lankan cooking, to finish off a curry or other dish. Keep in mind that the tempering adds a lot of extra flavour and finesse to the sauce, so some of the fine-tuning can be done at the end.

This recipe makes about half a litre, which is quite a lot and could last you for many, many months – consider making half the quantity. Store in sterilised jars, or very clean ones that can be frozen. Keep in fridge or freeze. Or give small containers away to family and friends!

### Ingredients for the sauce

- 500g red capsicum, deseeded and diced
- 120g hot, small red chillies, deseeded and diced
- or 200g longer mild chillies or a mix of red chillis
- about 1 cup (250 ml) vinegar - white or red wine or cider
- ½ cup sugar (more if required later)
- ½ cup brown sugar or dark brown sugar (more if required later)
- 4 kaffir lime leaves (medium to large, with tough vein removed, roughly chopped)
- 1 small-medium lime chopped (seeds discarded)
- 1 bunch coriander roots (or one whole small bunch coriander)
- 3 medium cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 cm fresh ginger, chopped
- ½ cup red wine
- 1 dessert spoon Keens curry
- 2 tbsps tomato paste
- salt and pepper to taste (don't hold back)

## Ingredients for the tempering

- ¼ cup peanut or olive oil or a mix of each
- ¼ tsp dried red chilli, chopped
- ½ tsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp black cumin seeds
- ½ tsp fenugreek seeds
- ½ tsp fennel seeds
- ½ tsp black mustard seeds
- ½ tsp garam masala

## Method for the sauce and tempering

Place all the ingredients in a pan and simmer till soft – 30 to 45 minutes, but don't allow to boil over, or to catch, especially as the sugar content can cause it to burn. Taste test as you go and adjust flavours.

Use a stick blender to blend in the saucepan or use a normal blender. Return to the heat and continue to cook until it thickens and becomes a little sticky, 20 to 30 minutes. Taste test as you go and adjust flavours. While the sauce reaches an acceptable consistency, prepare the tempering ingredients.

In another saucepan or frying pan heat the oil, add the chilli and the seeds and cook briefly until just browned. Some of the seeds will pop so have a lid handy; do not allow to burn. When browned add the garam masala to the oil then quickly pour the oil through a fine sieve over the top of the chilli sauce. Stir the oil through the sauce. Remove the chilli and seeds from the sieve and crush or grind finely in a mortar and pestle. Add to the sauce mixture; combine thoroughly.

Finally, adjust the sauce with flavourings that don't need any extra-long cooking. Thus, adjust for salt and pepper, curry powder, etc but not wine or vinegar or chilli or lime.

Allow to cool.

When cool enough, stir through again as some of the oil will have come to the top. Spoon or ladle into jars or containers (sterilised). Label. Store, refrigerate or freeze. (If you are going to freeze, leave in the fridge for a few days to allow the flavours to develop.)

# Olive's Kitchen

