



Creamy Caramel Sauce for One

By Jacy Shoener

Prep Time 3 / Cook Time 1 / Serves 1 - 1

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

melt: to heat a solid food so it becomes liquid, like butter or chocolate.

microwave: to heat or cook food or liquid quickly in a microwave oven, which uses high-frequency electromagnetic waves to generate heat in the food's water molecules.

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

Equipment

- Microwave
- Microwave-safe measuring cup
- Paper towel
- Potheader
- Measuring spoons
- Small whisk or spoon for mixing

Ingredients

Creamy Caramel Sauce for One

- 1 tsp butter ******(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance)******
- 1 T heavy cream ******(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free heavy cream or dairy-free/nut-free full-fat plain yogurt)******
- 1 T brown sugar

☐ 1 pinch salt

☐ 1 drop pure vanilla extract ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)******

Food Allergen Substitutions

Creamy Caramel Sauce for One

Dairy: For butter, substitute dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance. For heavy cream, substitute dairy-free/nut-free heavy cream or dairy-free/nut-free full-fat plain yogurt.

Gluten/Wheat: Use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor.

Instructions

Creamy Caramel Sauce for One

measure + melt

Measure and add **1 teaspoon butter** to a microwave-safe measuring cup. Cover with a paper towel and heat on high in the microwave for about 20 seconds to melt the butter. Carefully remove using a potholder.

measure + whisk

Measure and add **1 tablespoon heavy cream, 1 tablespoon brown sugar, 1 pinch of salt,** and **1 drop of vanilla extract**. Whisk ingredients until there are no lumps.

microwave + whisk

Cover with a damp paper towel and microwave on high for 1 minute. Carefully remove using a potholder and whisk again.

Featured Ingredient: Sugar!

Hi! I'm Sugar!

"I'm very sweet and can sweeten lots of foods, especially candy and desserts. I also provide a lot of energy! You can find me in powdered, granular, and liquid form, and I am either white or brown. You don't want too much of me—well, you may, but too much wouldn't be healthy!"

The New Oxford American Dictionary defines sugar as "a sweet crystalline substance obtained from various plants, especially sugar cane and sugar beet, consisting essentially of sucrose, and used as a sweetener in food and drink."

Sugar cane has grown in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia since 4,000 BCE. People initially

extracted its juicy sweetness by chewing on the raw sugar cane. India learned how to get sugar crystals from the juice and refine the sugar, and eventually, those methods spread to other countries, like China. Before and during that time, honey had been used around the world as a natural sweetener.

Today, Brazil produces the most sugar worldwide, followed by India and China.

Sugar cane comes from the genus *Saccharum* and is considered a species of giant grasses! The plants grow from 6 to 20 feet tall. Their fibrous stalks are rich in sucrose, a sugar composed of glucose and fructose.

Sugar is made in plants by photosynthesis, the process that turns sunlight into energy.

The plants are grown primarily in tropical climates. The first sugar cane to be planted in the United States was in 1751 by French Jesuit priests in New Orleans, Louisiana. Today, sugar cane is grown in the US states of Florida, Louisiana, and Texas.

Sugar cane was introduced to Hawaii in about 600 CE. It was produced there commercially from 1802 until the last sugar mill closed in 2016.

Sugar cane is harvested by chopping down the stalks but leaving the roots so that they regrow in time for the next harvest. At the sugar mill, they wash, shred, and press the stalks to extract the juice. The juice is boiled until it thickens and then crystallizes. The crystals are then spun in a centrifuge to remove the liquid, producing raw sugar.

The raw sugar is sent to a refinery to be melted into sugar syrup and purified, which also produces molasses. The sugar is crystallized again from the syrup, and the crystals are dried and packaged.

Sugar beets were first identified as a source of sugar in the 16th century by French author and scientist Olivier de Serres, who found that boiling a red beet produced sugar syrup. Since cane sugar was readily available and tasted better, his process did not become widespread.

Later, in 1747, a German science professor from Berlin, Andreas Sigismund Marggraf, used a white beet to make sugar similar to cane sugar; however, his method was never commercially produced.

Marggraf's student, Franz Karl Achard, experimented with different beet varieties and selected a strain that would become the precursor of the modern sugar beet. Achard opened the first sugar beet factory in 1801 in what is now Poland.

The beets are harvested in the fall and early winter by digging them out of the ground. They are sliced and boiled to extract the sugar.

The white sugars include granulated, powdered (or confectioners'), fruit (or fructose), superfine (or caster), baker's special (superfine and quick-dissolving), coarse, and sanding.

The brown sugars include light and dark brown, granulated brown, turbinado or raw, and muscovado (or Barbados). The sugars are brown due to their molasses content. The amount of molasses in commercial brown sugar based on volume is three and a half percent for light brown sugar and six and a half percent for dark brown sugar.

Liquid sugar is white granulated sugar dissolved in water or sugar syrup. However, molasses, corn syrup, maple syrup, and honey are also liquid and considered sugar.

Sugar adds sweetness to foods but can also aid in browning, rising, and tenderizing dough and other foods. Although sugar is added to desserts, it can also be added to savory dishes to enhance flavor and balance the acid and salt in a dish.

When heated, sugar is caramelized, creating a brown and sweet nutty flavor for making candy and a delicious sauce for ice cream and other desserts. Cooking fruit and vegetables long enough for the sugars in them to caramelize helps them to develop a rich, nutty flavor.

Sugar by itself is a source of carbohydrates and energy; however, its calories are considered empty calories, as it has no other nutrients or health benefits. None of the sugar varieties are more nutritious than others.

Not only can too much sugar make you way too active and keep you awake at night, but excessive consumption of sugar in any form contributes to the possibility of damaging health effects, such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and tooth decay.