



Around the World in 5 Saute's

By Chef Todd Mohr

Creative cooks use Basic Cooking Methods over recipes because recipes have many variables and limitations that make them inherently frustrating. Mastering a sauté cooking method is the best path toward quick and easy dinner inspirations.

As a demonstration, we'll apply the same procedure to chicken breast 5 times. By changing a few ingredients and seasonings, a basic sauté method can yield 5 dishes that then become your own recipes.

Basic Saute Procedure:

- 1) Heat a sauté pan until droplets of water immediately evaporate. Water evaporates at 212F/100C and protein products like chicken begin to cook (coagulate) at 165F/74C. So, our pan is hot enough.
- 2) Add barely enough fat to thinly coat the bottom of the pan. I prefer olive oil because of its flavor, high smoke point, and health benefits, but you can use any oil, butter, bacon fat, anything you'd like. This is usually only about 1-2 tablespoons. You are not deep frying!
- 3) Tilt and swirl the pan so that the oil covers the entire bottom of the pan.
- 4) Heat the oil until it begins a convection process. This is the indicator that the oil is just about to smoke. You can tell when convection begins because the oil goes from looking perfectly smooth to being "striated". The oil looks like "legs" running down the side of your wine glass.
- 5) Add your chicken breast to the pan. It should make a searing sound. The chicken breast will begin to turn white where proteins are coagulating. Cook the chicken until the white reaches 75% of the way up the side of the chicken. Turn the chicken breast over
- 6) Finish cooking the other side until a thermometer reads 155-165F/70-74C
- 7) Remove the chicken breast to a plate for carry-over cooking to 165F/74C.
- 8) Saute any vegetables or aromatics in the rendered brown bits ("Fond") on the bottom of the pan.
- 9) "Deglaze" the pan. Adding a cold liquid will drop the temperature of the pan quickly and dramatically and release any fond. Evaporate ½ of this liquid.
- 10) Add a thickening agent or flavored liquid for pan sauce
- 11) Mount with any seasonings or condiments
- 12) Return the chicken to the pan to heat through and combine with sauce.

That's a basic sauté method. Follow steps 1-7 for sautéing chicken breast, but now you can create from your own imagination:



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...continued

South of France Chicken

- 1) Add diced shallot to the pan, sauté in the fond
- 2) Deglaze the pan with white wine, reduce by 1/2
- 3) Add goat cheese, dill and whole grain mustard to pan sauce
- 4) Serve over wide egg noodles

South of Mexico Chicken

- 1) Add sliced jalapenos and onions to the pan, sauté in the fond
- 2) Deglaze the pan with tequila or margherita mix, reduce by 1/2
- 3) Season with cumin, coriander, cilantro, cayenne pepper
- 4) Serve with refried beans and rice

South of Rome Chicken

- 1) add diced onion and garlic to the pan, sauté in the fond
- 2) Deglaze the pan with red wine, reduce by 1/2
- 3) Thicken sauce with tomato paste, add basil and oregano
- 4) Serve over pasta

South of Honolulu Chicken

- 1) add diced ginger and shredded coconut to the pan, sauté in the fond
- 2) deglaze the pan with pineapple juice, reduce by 1/2
- 3) Thicken sauce with cornstarch slurry, add pineapple chunks
- 4) Serve over sticky sushi rice

South of Hong Kong Chicken

- 1) add julienne of onion, green and red pepper, ginger to the pan, sauté in fond
- 2) Deglaze the pan with plum wine or soy sauce, reduce by 1/2
- 3) Thicken sauce with cornstarch slurry, add sugar snap peas
- 4) Serve over brown rice

One method, 5 "recipes" that you've now created yourself. How about experimenting with : South of Greece Chicken with sliced olives, feta cheese, and sambuca; or South of Tailand Chicken with ginger, coconut milk and peanut butter, or create the first South of Germany, South of Spain, South of Bombay chicken that suits your desires.

Review the previous WebCookingClasses episodes from weeks 2-4 for basic sauté method and South of France Chicken.