

Seasonal Eating
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Enhance Holiday Vegetables with a Sauce
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The holidays are upon us. Now that Halloween is past, the stores ring out unabashedly with Christmas music, the holiday movies have started airing and minds are turning to thoughts of turkey and dressing and pie. Vegetables, especially for southerners, have always played a big role on the holiday tables at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Of course we have the standard casserole type dishes of green beans with soup and fried onions, corn pudding and sweet potato soufflé. But plain cooked vegetables can be dressed up with a sauce for a holiday worthy special side as well.

Velouté sauce is one of the five French mother sauces that make up the basis of many other sauces. You start with a roux of butter and flour, cooking it for just a minute to get the floury raw taste out but keeping it light in color. Then a light stock (usually chicken or fish – anything where the bones are not roasted before making the stock) is added and it is cooked until thickened. You can make it thicker by using less liquid or thinner with more. Velouté is actually a French word for velvety and that is exactly what this sauce is – velvety. The sauce can be flavored with whatever you want from here – wine, mustard, spices, herbs, shallots, mushrooms, cream and lemon juice are some common ones. The difference between a velouté sauce and gravy is that a blond roux and light stock are used for a velouté while a darker roux and brown stock made from roasted bones are used for gravy.

Velouté can dress up a sautéed boneless chicken breast or fish fillet or it works really well with vegetables, like asparagus or green beans. In the recipe below, microwaved green beans are drizzled with a velouté sauce seasoned with whole grain mustard, Worcestershire sauce and fresh herbs. For a little crunch, toasted pine nuts are sprinkled over the top for a special holiday touch. The sauce would also work well over asparagus spears – whatever your family prefers. This recipe comes together really quickly and doesn't use the oven so it's great for a holiday meal where you are usually roasting a turkey, ham or beef roast in the oven.

This season, dress up your vegetables in a regal French sauce for a holiday worthy side dish. Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Green Beans with Mustard Velouté Sauce

- 1 pound fresh green beans
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 teaspoons flour
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 tablespoon whole grain mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts



Snap the ends off of the green beans. Place in a casserole dish with a little water in the bottom and microwave the beans until crisp tender, about 8 minutes (or to desired doneness). Meanwhile for the sauce, melt the butter in a saucepan and whisk in flour. Cook for a minute and then add the chicken broth, whisking well. Bring to a boil and cook until thickened. Whisk in the mustard, Worcestershire sauce, pepper, chives and parsley. Drain the green beans and place on serving platter. Pour the sauce over the top and sprinkle with pine nuts.