

How to Make Caramel Sauce That You'll Want to Put on Everything

This smooth, salty caramel sauce will make your holidays extra sweet.

By [Claire Saffitz](#)

1. Stir **1 cup sugar**, **1/8 tsp. cream of tartar**, and **3 Tbsp. water** in a medium heavy saucepan (this is a must) to combine. A flimsy pan will have hot spots, causing the caramel to burn in places.
2. Bring sugar mixture to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally and scraping around sides to dissolve sugar. Normally, stirring can lead to a grainy caramel, but the cream of tartar prevents crystallization.
3. Once the sugar mixture is at a rapid boil, reduce heat to medium-low and cook, swirling the pan occasionally. After about 4 minutes, the syrup around the edges will start to turn golden.
4. Keep cooking, swirling as the edges darken to equalize the color and distribute the heat throughout the pan, until caramel is amber, another 2–3 minutes. Pay close attention, as the caramel darkens quickly.
5. Continue to cook, swirling, until caramel is dark amber and a wisp of smoke appears, 1–2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in **4 Tbsp. unsalted butter** a tablespoonful at a time until smooth (mixture will sputter).
6. Stirring constantly, gradually add **1/2 cup room-temperature heavy cream**. Stir until caramel is silky smooth and thick. If caramel hardens in spots, set back over medium heat and stir until solids dissolve.
7. Stir **1 tsp. kosher salt** into caramel sauce and let cool (it will continue to thicken as it cools). Transfer to an airtight container. It will keep in the refrigerator 1 month. Reheat gently to liquefy before using.