



Laban Matboukh (Lebanese Yoghurt Sauce)

Cooked yoghurt sauces are popular in the Levant, Turkey and parts of Central Asia. This versatile yoghurt sauce is delicious with shish barak (meat dumplings) as well as over lamb shanks (laban immo). In fact the Lebanese serve almost anything in it, kibbeh balls, eggs, even stuffed zucchini. Use just coriander or just mint if you prefer one or the other, or replace the coriander with parsley. Depending on what I'm serving this sauce with, I often keep the herb mixture separate then either stir it into the sauce at the last minute or use it as a garnish. If it's been sitting for a while, you may need to warm it slightly to use as a garnish as the butter will solidify.

Makes about 3½ cups (900ml)

INGREDIENTS

- 25g butter (5 teaspoons)
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- ⅔ cup finely sliced coriander (about 60g/2oz whole)
- ⅓ cup finely sliced mint leaves (about 25g/1oz whole)
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 1kg plain natural yoghurt (about 4 cups/2lb 3oz)
- 1 egg, lightly beaten



METHOD

1. Melt butter in a small heavy-based saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add garlic and cook for a couple of minutes, until it sizzles.
3. Add coriander, mint and ½ teaspoon salt and stir for another couple of minutes until the leaves are thoroughly wilted. Remove from pan and set aside, setting the pan aside too.
4. Whisk yoghurt and egg together and transfer to the pan.
5. Stir constantly over medium to medium-high heat until it starts to steam.
6. Continue stirring for a further 3 minutes, adjusting the heat if necessary so that it just simmers.
7. Remove from heat, taste and add salt if necessary, and set aside.
8. To serve, stir in herb mixture and reheat if necessary over a medium heat just until hot.