



Wojape (Sweet Berry Sauce)

Makes 2 to 2 1/2 cups

Ingredients

4 cups mixed berries (such as blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, or chokecherries)

1/2 cup maple syrup or

honey (adjust to taste)

1/2 cup water

1 tablespoon arrowroot powder or cornstarch (optional, for thickening)

If using chokecherries, remove the pits. Rinse the berries under cold water, and drain them.

Directions;

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, add the mixed berries, maple syrup, and water.

Bring the mixture to a gentle boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce the heat to low, and let the berries simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, or until they break down and the mixture thickens slightly.

Taste the sauce and adjust the sweetness by adding more maple syrup, if needed. Keep in mind that the sweetness of the wojape can vary depending on the natural sweetness of the berries.

If you prefer a thicker consistency, mix the arrowroot powder or cornstarch with a tablespoon

of cold water to create a slurry. Stir the slurry into the simmering berry mixture and continue to cook until the sauce thickens, 3 to 4 minutes.

Remove the saucepan from the heat, and let the wojape cool for a few minutes.

Serve the wojape warm over pancakes, waffles, or ice cream, or use it as a topping for traditional Native American fry bread.

Story from Rooted in Fire by Pyet DeSpain

The first time I saw wojape was while browsing the different dishes on the table of one of our potlucks in Kansas. I peered into a large slow cooker with a ladle and discovered a soup-like blue sauce that left me a little puzzled. My mom leaned over and whispered, "It's called wojape." But that meant nothing to me. "This is a traditional food from my tribe," said the woman who had brought the wojape. "We put it on grilled or braised meat or skewers." I watched as my mom ladled it onto her plate of wild rice, corn, and meat, and ever the curious one, I followed her lead, choosing to put it on my piece of fry bread. After one bite, I rushed back to the woman to ask her what was in it. She replied, "Blueberries." Wojape is the perfect balance of sweet and tart berries reduced to a luscious sauce that amplifies the fruit's natural flavors. Harvesting berries

and cooking them into this sauce is a nice remembrance of our ancestral way of life. If you use beautiful, ripe, in- season berries, you may even be able to do without the extra sweetener. Wojape is just another example of how the simplicity of Native American cuisine allows us to truly appreciate each ingredient to the fullest.

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