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## Food Product Development Paper

### Decision Process

I chose to create an ethnic simmer sauce that could be used as the base of a healthy vegetarian or vegan meal with the appropriate amount of spice. One of my favorite go-to meals is to sauté vegetables, add a store-bought sauce, and pour it over a bowl of quinoa or rice. Most simmer sauces are designed and targeted for meat dishes, so when used with only vegetables they sometimes come out bland. Also, most of these are \$4.00 or more per jar, and I aim to make one that is more affordable without sacrificing quality or flavor.

### Experimentation & Development Process

I chose a generic curry recipe for initial inspiration thinking I would then build on it through an experiment of using different spices, perhaps even mixing traditional spice blends from different cultures to create more of a cross-cultural sauce. For example, I might take an Indian flavored curry, but swap out gram masala for a traditional Moroccan or Thai spice.

#### RECIPE – TRIAL #1

1 large onion	1 piece (2 inches) fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated
4 garlic cloves	2 tbsp tomato paste
1 tbsp canola oil	3 cups plus 1 tbsp water
1 tsp mustard seeds	Course salt
1 tsp fennel seeds	¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
¼ tsp ground coriander	

Puree onion, garlic, and 1 tablespoon water in a blender until smooth. Heat oil in a pot over medium. Add the mustard and fennel seeds and the coriander; cook, stirring, until fragrant, 1-2 minutes. Stir in the onion paste and ginger. Cook, stirring often, until caramelized, 6-8 minutes. Add tomato paste, and cook 1 minute. Stir in remaining 3 cups of water, 2 tsp salt, and red pepper flakes.

This original sauce turned out extremely bitter and no amount of spice could fix the flavor. I determined that the bitterness came from the onion and garlic paste. Also, the onion and garlic paste was time consuming to make, so ultimately it was not an efficient way to make this product. Additionally, tomato paste and water as the liquid of this sauce did not provide enough flavor. The spices got lost in the bitter onion taste, and it was deemed a disaster.

I decided to start over from scratch, and rather than start generic, I aimed to be more specific. I was still searching for a sauce that would be rich in flavor, but was also fairly simple to prepare. I found a tikka masala recipe that looked like the perfect fit:

**RECIPE - TRIAL #2**

2 tablespoons ghee (clarified butter)	1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 onion, finely chopped	1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 cloves garlic, minced	1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 tablespoon ground cumin	1 (14 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 teaspoon salt	1 cup heavy whipping cream
1 teaspoon ground ginger	2 teaspoons paprika
	1 tablespoon white sugar

Heat ghee in a large skillet over medium heat and cook and stir onion until translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic; cook and stir just until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir cumin, 1 teaspoon salt, ginger, cayenne pepper, cinnamon, and turmeric into the onion mixture; fry until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Stir tomato sauce into the onion and spice mixture, bring to a boil, and reduce heat to low. Simmer sauce for 10 minutes, then mix in cream, paprika, and 1 tablespoon sugar. Bring sauce back to a simmer and cook, stirring often, until sauce is thickened, 10 to 15 minutes.

I tried the recipe mostly as is, however, I used smoked paprika instead of regular paprika because I heard it was an amazing spice for any dish. This recipe was much more successful! The flavor was rich and creamy, and it had the right amount of kick to it too. The smoked paprika was actually quite dominating, which I didn't care for. This recipe called for ghee and heavy whipping cream, which obviously makes for great flavor, but unfortunately, it also adds a lot of animal-based saturated fats. I wanted to try a dairy-free version of the recipe and swap out those ingredients with coconut oil and coconut milk, respectively. Making the product dairy-free was also a way to differentiate my sauce from others on the market. The added coconut flavor would also be a subtle change in flavor further adding

to its uniqueness. I also added slightly more of every spice to amp up the flavor. The final recipe ended up as follows:

#### **FINAL RECIPE**

1 tablespoon coconut oil	¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 onion, finely chopped	½ teaspoon ground turmeric
4 cloves garlic, minced	1 (14 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 ¼ tablespoon ground cumin	1 cup lite coconut milk
1 teaspoon salt	2 ¼ teaspoons paprika
1 ¼ teaspoon ground ginger	1 tablespoon white sugar
1 ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper	

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat and cook and stir onion until translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic; cook and stir just until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir cumin, 1 teaspoon salt, ginger, cayenne pepper, cinnamon, and turmeric into the onion mixture; fry until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Stir tomato sauce into the onion and spice mixture, bring to a boil, and reduce heat to low. Simmer sauce for 10 minutes, then mix in coconut milk, paprika, and 1 tablespoon sugar. Bring sauce back to a simmer and cook, stirring often, until sauce is thickened, 10 to 15 minutes.

The final version was perfect. It was the right amount of spice, rich in color, and a super creamy texture.

I was able to test this version on two different audiences when we had some guests in town. Everyone gave it rave reviews, so I felt like it would make a good final product.

#### **Branding/Marketing**

This tikka masala sauce would be part of a product line called Simmer Up! All products in the line would be dairy-free ethnic simmer sauces designed for vegetarian and vegan cooking. The other sauces in the line would represent a variety of other ethnicities, including Mexican, Moroccan, Thai, Korean, Colombian, Peruvian, and Mediterranean. The tagline would be “Dairy-free flavors from the world to your plate.” The target audience would be anyone that is trying to eat more vegetables, especially males and females ages 25-50. I would initially sell the product in Whole Foods, Trader Joe’s and Sprouts, because those stores attract vegetarians, vegans, and healthy eaters already. However, I also want to sell this product in Super Targets, King Soopers, and Safeway, because they do not offer as many choices when it comes to ethnic simmer sauces, especially ones that are vegetarian and dairy-free.

I want this sauce to make flavorful vegetarian cooking easy, affordable, and accessible to all people. I would sell the product at \$3.45 per jar, which is more affordable than most of the competition. I will also do an advertising campaign in magazines such as *Vegetarian Times*, *Clean Eating*, *Self*, *Men's Health*, *Outside*, *Whole Living*, and *EatingWell*. The campaign would include a coupon for \$1 off.

### Packaging and Labeling

I will package the sauce in a jar with a standard screw top lid. I would use a colorful label with an international flare. I would use witty copywriting to add personality to the brand. For example, this sauce's package might say, "We all need more spice in our lives. Let's start with our veggies. The cauliflower and mushrooms won't know what hit 'em, but they'll be belly dancing their way all the way to your mouth." I was able to compute the nutrition facts for this sauce on [www.nutritiondata.com](http://www.nutritiondata.com) to produce the Nutrition Facts label below.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1/6 of recipe 126g (98 g)	
Servings per container 6	
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b> 92	Calories from Fat 55
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 6g	10%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 348mg	14%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 9g	3%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 15% • Vitamin C 11%	
Calcium 3% • Iron 11%	
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
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