Compound Butters

Quick · Make-ahead · Makes ½ cup (1 stick)

Ken's note: TBD

Soft butter mixed with herbs, garlic, citrus, or spices, chilled, and sliced onto hot food. It melts into an instant sauce.

Ingredients

The basic method

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- Flavorings (see below)
- A pinch of salt, to taste

Method

1. Mash the butter with the flavorings and a pinch of salt in a bowl until evenly mixed. Spoon it onto a sheet of parchment or plastic wrap, roll it into a log about 1½ inches thick, twist the ends, and chill until firm. Slice off coins as you need them. Keeps 1 week in the fridge, or 3 months in the freezer.
2. See Chicken Breasts Three Ways and Steak Basics in Mains.

Notes

Variations (for each ½ cup butter)

- **Herb butter:** 3–4 Tbsp chopped fresh herbs (parsley, chives, thyme, rosemary, sage, or basil), 1–2 grated garlic cloves, and a little lemon zest. Melt a coin over hot chicken, steak, corn, or potatoes; or melt it with the herbs and brush it on dough, as in Herb Pull-Apart Bread Muffins.
- **Lemon-chive butter:** 2 Tbsp chopped chives, the zest of 1 lemon, and 1 tsp lemon juice. For fish, shrimp, asparagus, and green beans.
- **Honey-cinnamon butter:** 1–2 Tbsp honey and ½ tsp cinnamon. For biscuits, cornbread, pancakes, and sweet potatoes.

Melted butters (made in a pan or bowl, brushed on at the end)

- **Cowboy butter** (steak, burgers, shrimp, corn): melt ½ cup butter. Stir in 4 minced garlic cloves, 1 Tbsp Dijon, 1 Tbsp chopped parsley, 1 tsp lemon juice, ½ tsp smoked paprika, ½ tsp crushed red pepper flakes, and a pinch of salt. Brush on the meat as it comes off the grill, or chill and slice it.
- **Smoky Cajun honey butter** (shrimp, sausage, grilled chicken): melt 6 Tbsp butter over low heat, cook 2 minced garlic cloves 30 seconds without browning, then whisk in 1½ Tbsp honey, 1 Tbsp Worcestershire, 2 tsp lemon juice, 1 tsp smoked paprika, ½ tsp Cajun or Creole seasoning, ¼ tsp chipotle powder or cayenne, ¼ tsp black pepper, and ½ tsp Dijon. Simmer 1 minute. Taste before adding salt; sausage may supply plenty. Brush on skewers in the last minutes on the grill.