

Follow Me Down The Butter Rabbit Hole

I will freely admit that butter is one of my guilty pleasures. Up until a few years ago I was sort of indifferent to butter because the ones that I used lacked something that I couldn't put my finger on. One evening we were invited to a friend's house for dinner and I couldn't believe how wonderful the



butter was that they served. Our host told me that it was Kerrygold butter from Ireland, which I learned was generally available in most supermarkets. Then I decided to learn more about where different butters come from and why they seem to be richer and more flavorful than the domestic butter available here in the United States. So I jumped down the butter rabbit hole and after a lot of trial and error I found the diamond of butters – Les Pres Sales with Camargue Sea Salt.



Les Pres Sales is produced in Belgium using fresh cream from cows on the plateau of the Belgian Ardennes. The butter is churned and then big salt crystals from Camargue, a region in the French Rhone delta renowned for its high quality sea salt is added to the churned butter. Long prized by gourmets, Camargue sea salt is hand raked and harvested in France. The salt crystals remain intact in the butter, allowing for delicious savory bites as they dissolve on the tongue. Many say the reason it is so good is related to the quality of the cream, or what the cows eat. It's also due to the fact that the butter is made from slightly-soured or cultured cream, which gives it a nutty, mellow tang. Les Pres Sales can be more difficult to

find, but it is usually in specialty markets like Bristol Farms or Gelson's or can be found on-line as well.

If you are going to invest in a good butter like Les Pre Sales, one needs to have a butter dish worthy to hold your tasty treasure. There are many out there, but I prefer the



Convivio White Butter Dish by Match Pewter.

Match Pewter is handmade by artisans in the North of Italy. Each piece is crafted of an alloy that is food safe and lead free. It is a little pricy, but it holds a modest portion and is a beautiful addition to your table.

The next trip down the butter rabbit hole for me was exploring the world of compound butter. Compound butters are so versatile and are the perfect little extra "something" to kick up a weeknight meal or impress your guests while entertaining! Compound butters are only limited to your imagination and sense of adventure. I've made many compound butters and am always on the look out for some new inspiration even venturing into compound butters for many ethnic cuisines.

There are a couple of words of advice. First, I usually use Kerrygold salted butter in the tub because it has already been whipped and it combines with your other ingredients very easily. Second, make butters that will accentuate what is fresh and in season. Third, you can store your compound butter back in the Kerrygold tub if you like or you can roll into a log in plastic wrap and tightly tie the ends with kitchen twine and store in freezer bags in the freezer until you are ready to use them. Lastly, while it takes just a little time to make a compound butter, I would suggest making several and freezing them so that when you are inspired to give your dish

that little something extra it is already there waiting for you. Also, wrapped up, labeled and pretty... they make a wonderful hostess gift, too!



Here are a few compound butter recipes to get you started... but let your imagination soar... the combinations of ingredients are endless!

Chipotle-Cilantro Butter

1 tub Kerrygold butter at room temperature or 2 sticks butter at room temperature
2 to 4 chipotle chiles in adobo, pureed, 2 tbsp total
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1/4 cup freshly chopped cilantro
Salt, if using unsalted butter
Freshly ground black pepper
Honey, to taste

Combine the butter chipotle, garlic, cilantro, salt (if using unsalted butter), pepper and honey in a food processor until smooth. Can use a smaller 3 cup mini-prep food processor as well. Taste and adjust salt, pepper & honey to your liking. Great on corn on the cob and grilled steaks.

Lemon-Red Fresno Chile Butter

1 1/2 cups freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 tsp honey
1 tub Kerrygold butter at room temperature or 2 sticks unsalted butter at room temperature
2 tsp finely grated lemon zest
3 red Fresno chiles, grilled, seeded and finely diced

Salt, if using unsalted butter

Freshly ground black pepper

Put the lemon juice in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook until reduced to 1/4 cup. Stir in honey and let cool.

Add the butter and zest to the reduced lemon juice and mix in the food processor until smooth. Put in the chiles and pulse a few times just to combine and season with salt (if using unsalted butter) and pepper. Taste and adjust salt and pepper to your liking. Great on grilled lobster, shrimp or on steamed vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower or green beans.

Garlic Butter – and yes, that is Howie, my husband, talking on the phone in the background ☐

1 large head of garlic or two small heads

1 tub Kerrygold butter at room temperature or 2 sticks unsalted butter at room temperature

1/4 cup chopped italian parsley

Salt, if using unsalted butter

Freshly ground black pepper

Cut the top off of the head of garlic to expose the garlic cloves. Take a piece of foil and place the garlic head on the foil, drizzle it with 1 tbsp olive oil and a little salt. Close up the foil into a little package and roast in a preheated 400 degree oven for about 20 – 25 minutes, remove and let cool. Once cooled, squeeze out the roasted garlic cloves into a small bowl and set aside.

Add the butter, roasted garlic and chopped italian parsley in the food processor until smooth. Add salt if using unsalted butter and freshly ground pepper. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking. Great for slathering on warm french or sourdough bread and anything else that you love with garlic.

Add the butter, roast

Harissa Butter

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature

1/4 cup chopped fresh mint

3 tablespoons harissa paste

1 teaspoon kosher salt or to taste

Process all ingredients in food processor or mini-prep food processor until smooth.



Harissa paste is a spicy North African red chile paste and is available at Middle Eastern markets and some specialty foods stores, and online at [The Spice House](#). Delicious as replacement to butter for a roast chicken for a taste of Morocco.