

Caramelised Onion

A base ingredient made for a homegrown onion glut

DIFFICULTY Easy

COURSE Condiment

CUISINE French-inspired



PREP
10 min



COOK
45 min



TOTAL
55 min



SERVES
6



FREEZES WELL
Yes

01 Ingredients

- 1000g onions, thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp olive oil or butter
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp brown sugar (optional)
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar (optional)

02 Method

1. Heat oil in a large, heavy-based pan over medium-low heat. Add sliced onions and salt.
2. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 40-45 minutes until deeply golden and soft - resist the urge to rush this with higher heat.
3. If the pan gets dry or onions start to catch, add a splash of water and scrape up any browned bits.
4. Stir in brown sugar and balsamic vinegar if using, and cook a further 5 minutes.
5. Use immediately, or cool and store.

04 Common mistakes

- **Cooking too hot** — high heat browns the outside before the onion softens through, giving a burnt-but-raw result instead of caramelisation.
- **Not stirring enough** — onions at the bottom of the pan catch and burn if left too long between stirs, especially in the last 15 minutes.
- **Giving up too early** — proper caramelisation looks unpromising for the first 20 minutes before it suddenly turns; don't mistake this stage for it not working.

03 Notes & substitutions

- Red or brown onions both work well - red onions give a slightly sweeter, milder result.
- Butter gives a richer flavour than olive oil, though either works well.
- Add a sprig of fresh thyme in the last 10 minutes for a flavour lift.
- Vegetarian and vegan as written (without butter).

05 Storage & leftovers

FRIDGE	Airtight container, up to 1 week.
FREEZER	Freezes well in small portions, for up to 3 months.
SERVING	Stir through pasta, pile onto a sandwich, or use as a base for French onion soup.