



KOREAN ORIGIN · UNIVERSAL MODERNIST · FERMENT · PANTRY STAPLE · FLAVOR MULTIPLIER

# Black Garlic — Three-Week Rice-Cooker Ferment

Whole garlic heads held at 60–70 °C on the 'keep warm' setting for three weeks. Maillard reactions run slow and continuous: the cloves transform from sharp and white to soft, black, and shockingly sweet — balsamic, molasses, and garlic in one glove. The cheapest and highest-impact three-week project in the kitchen.

Protein None (pure umami vehicle)

Serves Makes 10–12 whole heads (enough for 6–12 months of regular use)

Difficulty Beginner (set-and-forget)

Active 10 min day 1 + 2 min per week check = ~15 min total active

Total 21–28 days (3 weeks typical, 4 weeks for deeper flavor)

## THE STORY

### Three Weeks of Maillard

Black garlic is not burned, not fermented in the bacterial sense, not cooked in any conventional way. It is *Maillard-aged*: whole heads of garlic held at precisely 60 to 70 degrees Celsius for twenty-one to twenty-eight days, during which the non-enzymatic browning reaction that normally happens in seconds on a seared steak runs slowly and continuously for three weeks. Sugars and amino acids in the garlic combine into melanoidins (the brown pigment) and new aromatic compounds that taste like nothing else in the kitchen: balsamic-sweet, molasses-dark, slightly fruity, profoundly umami, and still unmistakably garlic. The sharp-fresh bite of raw garlic is entirely gone; what remains is depth.

The technique comes from Korea, where black garlic has been used for centuries for both cooking and folk medicine. Its modern Western adoption came through Japanese kitchens in the 2000s and then through modernist restaurants in the 2010s. Today it is available pre-made from specialty suppliers (Regalis Foods, The Black Garlic Co), and this is the ● everyday path — buy the finished product, use liberally. But making it at home requires only a rice cooker and three weeks of patience, and the home version tastes distinctly different — slightly fresher, with more tangible individual-clove character. The ● tier is the DIY project.

Once a batch is made, black garlic becomes an ingredient multiplier. Whole heads in the sous vide bag infuse beef and pork with umami depth. Mashed cloves into compound butter create a single of the most universal finishing fats in the kitchen (already filed as a ● card across the corpus). Puréed and spread under a coca's escalivada, it adds a sweet-umami undercurrent guests can taste but not identify. Blended into a vinaigrette, it becomes dressing with the flavor of a long-reduced jus. One three-week project yields 10 to 12 heads — six months of regular use, one year of occasional use. The math is in favor of making it.

AT A GLANCE

# Specs

<b>METHOD</b> Maillard aging at 60–70 °C for 21–28 days	<b>VESSEL</b> Rice cooker on 'keep warm' OR dehydrator OR proofing oven	<b>YIELD</b> 10–12 whole heads (depending on rice cooker size)	<b>TEMPERATURE</b> 60–70 °C steady (lower = slower + sweeter)
<b>DIFFICULTY</b> Beginner ●○○○○	<b>ACTIVE TIME</b> 15 min total over 3 weeks	<b>STORAGE</b> 6+ months in airtight jar at room temp · 1 year refrigerated	<b>CUISINE</b> Korean origin · universal modernist
<b>UNLOCKS</b> Alioli negro, compound butter, coca bridge, SV bag umami, vinaigrettes	<b>COST</b> ~\$15 ingredient cost for 10 heads vs. \$4–6 per head retail		

UMAMI ADAPTATION

## What Changed & Why

There is no classical adaptation here — black garlic at home is the modernist technique, and the traditional Korean method uses either an industrial black-garlic chamber or a low-wattage clay pot over constant low heat for a month. The adaptation uses a rice cooker on 'keep warm' (60 to 70 degrees Celsius, within spec) as the accessible home instrument. The ● tier upgrades the garlic source (Las Pedroñeras purple Spanish garlic produces a noticeably more refined black garlic) and extends the aging to a full 4 weeks for deeper Maillard development.

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
TECH	Industrial black-garlic chamber (Korean/Japanese producers) OR 4-week low clay pot	Rice cooker on 'keep warm' for 3 weeks	Most modern rice cookers hold 60 to 70 °C on 'keep warm' — exactly the target temperature window. No special equipment required; the rice cooker is a modern black-garlic chamber in disguise.
ADD	—	Individual foil-wrapping of each head	Foil-wrapping each head separately serves two functions: (1) contains the strong smell that fills any kitchen with black-garlic-aging aroma for 3 weeks, (2) prevents the heads from drying out as they slowly transform. Without wrapping, heads dry into mummified cloves.
ELEV	3-week timeline	Extended 4-week aging for deeper flavor	Weeks 3 to 4 deepen the molasses-balsamic notes significantly. Weeks 4+ move into slightly fermented-funky territory (not bad, different). 3 weeks is the sweet spot; 4 weeks is the ● dinner-party tier.
SUB	Commodity grocery garlic	● firm grocery garlic, any variety · ● Las Pedroñeras purple garlic from Spain (Pablo has the supplier: La Tienda) + 4-week aging timeline	The base garlic's terroir shows through after aging. Spanish purple garlic produces a cleaner, more floral, less sharp black garlic than standard grocery — worth the sourcing for the flagship batch.

## What You Need

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### Everyday

#### The Garlic

- 10–12 whole heads of garlic (as many as fit in a single layer in the rice cooker) — firm, unblemished, heavy for their size. Avoid sprouted or soft heads.
- *Per rice cooker capacity:* a 3-cup (small) cooker holds ~6 heads; a 6-cup (medium) holds ~10; a 10-cup holds ~16. Do not stack; single layer only.

#### Equipment

- Rice cooker with a 'keep warm' function that holds 60 to 70 °C (most modern Japanese rice cookers — Zojirushi, Tiger — do this natively)
- Heavy-duty aluminum foil (enough to wrap each head individually)
- Sticky label for the jar / batch (date started, date ready, garlic source)

#### Substitution Notes

- *No rice cooker?* A dehydrator on its lowest setting (usually 55 to 70 °C) works identically — 3 weeks same timeline. A proofing oven or a bread proofer also works. A sous vide bath would work but is impractical for 3 weeks continuous.
- *Grocery garlic variety?* Any firm grocery garlic works. California-grown, Italian-imported, or Chinese commodity all produce acceptable black garlic. Differences between varieties are real but small.
- *Running out of time?* Pre-made black garlic is widely available (Regalis Foods, Whole Foods specialty section, specialty grocers). A single head costs \$4–6 retail vs. \$0.50 per head DIY; convenience premium.

## No Limits

### The Garlic — Spanish Source

- 10–12 whole heads of **Las Pedroñeras purple garlic** (Ajo Morado de Las Pedroñeras, DO from La Mancha, Spain) — source: La Tienda (latienda.com) or Despaña Brand Foods
- Purple garlic has a higher sugar content and a more complex sulfur profile than commodity garlic — the black-garlic transformation is noticeably more refined

### Equipment — Precision Aging

- **Zojirushi 6-cup rice cooker** (NP-HCC10 or similar) — verified 'keep warm' holds at 68 °C steady
- Heavy-duty foil for individual wrapping
- **Digital probe thermometer with wireless alert** to verify temperature stability during the 3-week aging — place probe in the rice cooker well
- Clean jar for storage (Weck or Le Parfait)

## EQUIPMENT

### Your Kit

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- Rice cooker with 'keep warm' setting (verify holds 60–70 °C with a probe)

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- Heavy-duty aluminum foil

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- Digital probe thermometer (recommended — verify cooker temperature before committing 3 weeks)

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- Jars or airtight containers for storage

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- Sharp paring knife (for testing at week checkpoints)

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- Sticky label for batch

## MISE EN PLACE

# Before You Start

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- Test the rice cooker's 'keep warm' temperature BEFORE starting. Place a probe thermometer in an empty bowl inside the cooker, set to 'keep warm', monitor for 2 hours. Temperature should stabilize at 60 to 70 °C. Below 55 °C the aging stalls; above 75 °C the garlic cooks rather than ages.

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- Select 10–12 firm, unblemished heads of garlic. Do NOT peel — aging happens with skin and wrapping intact.

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- Wrap each head individually in a single layer of heavy-duty aluminum foil. The wrap must be snug but not compressing the head — protect from drying, allow gentle expansion.

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- Place wrapped heads in the rice cooker in a single layer. Do not overcrowd.

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- Label the exterior of the cooker with start date and expected ready date (day 21 is standard; day 28 for ● extended).

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- Place the rice cooker in a well-ventilated area OR the garage OR a utility room — the smell during weeks 1 and 2 is intense. By week 3 it mellows significantly.

## MAKE-AHEAD

# Timeline

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- **Day 0 – Build + start**

Wrap heads, place in cooker single layer, start 'keep warm'. Temperature verify to 60–70 °C. Walk away.
- **Week 1 (day 1–7) – Sulfur phase**

Intense sulfur/garlic smell fills the surrounding area. Place cooker in ventilated space. Do NOT open. Cloves are transforming but still look white inside.
- **Week 2 (day 8–14) – Browning phase**

Smell shifts from sharp-sulfur to sweet-caramelized-garlic. Open one head at day 10 to check: cloves should be golden-brown, soft, and fragrant. Return to cooker.

● **Week 3 (day 15–21) – Black phase**

Cloves transition from brown to deep mahogany and finally black. Smell is now sweet–balsamic–dark. Open one head at day 21: a fully aged clove is black–brown, soft as a ripe date, and tastes intensely sweet–umami.

● **Week 4 (day 22–28, ● optional)**

Deepens further into almost–fermented territory – more molasses, more balsamic, slight funk. Showpiece tier. Stop here at day 28.

● **Done – Unwrap + store**

Unwrap all heads. Heads should be soft, black, and aromatic. Store whole heads in an airtight jar at room temp (6 months) or refrigerated (1 year).

## METHOD

# The Cook

### 1 Test the Rice Cooker's 'Keep Warm' Temperature

1. **This is the critical first step.** Not all rice cookers hold the same temperature on 'keep warm', and a 3-week project on the wrong temperature is wasted.
2. Place a digital probe thermometer in an empty ceramic or glass bowl inside the rice cooker.
3. Set the cooker to 'keep warm' and close the lid. Let it run for at least 2 hours.
4. Target steady-state temperature: **60 to 70 degrees Celsius**. This is the Maillard-aging sweet spot.
5. **If temperature reads below 55 °C:** aging will stall. The cooker is not suitable; try a dehydrator or proofing oven instead.
6. **If temperature reads above 75 °C:** the garlic will cook rather than age (sugars will caramelize too fast, textures will go to paste). Not usable.
7. **If temperature reads 60 to 70 °C:** proceed. The cooker is the right instrument.
8. Most modern Japanese rice cookers (Zojirushi, Tiger, Panasonic) natively hold in this range. Many cheap rice cookers run hotter (75 to 85 °C) and are not suitable.

#### WHY THIS WORKS

The Maillard reaction is a non-enzymatic browning pathway where reducing sugars (glucose, fructose) and amino acids combine through a series of steps into melanoidins (brown pigments) and a wide array of aromatic compounds. The reaction rate is temperature-dependent: doubles roughly every 10 Celsius, and accelerates dramatically above 140 Celsius (the seared-steak regime). At 60 to 70 Celsius, the reaction is present but running 1 to 2 percent of its seared-steak rate — which means weeks of continuous activity produce the deep browning that seconds produce on a steak surface. Below 55 Celsius the reaction slows to negligible; above 75 Celsius it enters a different regime that damages the garlic's structural integrity. The narrow window is the defining constraint. Reference: Food Science Core §Maillard Reaction Kinetics; Temperatures §Maillard Threshold.

## 2 Wrap + Load the Cooker

1. Select 10 to 12 firm, unblemished heads of garlic. Do NOT peel — aging happens through the intact skin.
2. Tear heavy-duty aluminum foil into squares, one per head, about 20 cm × 20 cm.
3. Place each head in the center of a foil square. Pull the corners up around the head and twist the top to close, forming a sealed foil packet. The wrap should be snug but not compressing the garlic.
4. Arrange wrapped heads in the rice cooker in a **single layer**. Do NOT stack. Stacking creates uneven heat distribution and the top heads age slower than the bottom.
5. Place the cooker in a well-ventilated area. Weeks 1 to 2 produce intense garlic-sulfur aromas — the garage, a utility room, or a well-ventilated pantry are good locations. The primary kitchen is not.
6. Set the cooker to 'keep warm'. Close the lid. Start the clock.

### WHY THIS WORKS

Foil-wrapping each head serves three functions: (1) contains the intense smell (not perfectly, but substantially), (2) prevents moisture loss — the garlic needs to retain its natural water content for the transformation, and unwrapped heads dry into mummified cloves that don't achieve the soft-sweet endpoint, (3) evens the heat contact between the head and the cooker's heating element. The single-layer requirement is about even aging; any stacked heads on top will be cooler than the bottom heads and will lag the transformation. Reference: Fermentation ŞKoji Products (analogous long-slow transformation requirements).

## 3 Weeks 1–2 — Sulfur and Browning Phases

1. Do NOT open the rice cooker during the first 10 days. Every opening releases heat and disrupts the steady-state temperature — a 5 to 10 minute open costs 30 min of recovery.
2. Week 1 (days 1–7): intense sulfur and garlic aromas fill the area. This is the aging starting up — harmless, just smelly.
3. Week 2 (days 8–14): the smell shifts from sharp-sulfur to sweet-caramelized-garlic. This is the visible transition point.
4. At day 10: optional checkpoint. Open the cooker, remove one foil packet, unwrap, slice through a clove. It should be pale golden-brown, soft, and fragrant. If still white-raw: the temperature is running cold; check cooker. If already deep brown: the temperature is running hot; consider pulling all heads at day 14 instead of day 21. Rewrap the checkpoint head and return.
5. Close the cooker. Continue aging.

#### 4 Week 3 — The Black Phase

1. Days 15 to 21: the garlic transitions from brown to deep mahogany and finally to black. This is the Maillard endpoint.
2. At day 21: primary checkpoint. Open the cooker, remove one foil packet, unwrap.
3. **Ready state:** cloves should be deep black-brown, soft as a ripe date, fragrant with sweet-balsamic-dark notes. Sliced, the interior should be uniformly black, sticky, almost jammy.
4. **Flavor test:** eat a small piece of one clove. Target: intensely sweet, unmistakably garlic but without the sharp bite, with balsamic and molasses notes that evoke aged vinegar. If the flavor is still garlic-sharp or the texture is still firm: not done, continue 2 to 3 more days.
5. If fully aged: pull all heads from the cooker. Do NOT unwrap yet — store wrapped for the initial cool-down (about 2 hours at room temp).

#### 5 Week 4 — Extended Aging (Optional)

1. Days 22 to 28: for the dinner-party-register version, continue aging through week 4.
2. Changes in this phase: the black deepens further to near-true-black; the flavor develops additional molasses, balsamic, and slightly funky-fermented notes; the texture softens further toward jam consistency.
3. At day 28: pull all heads. This is the absolute stopping point — beyond 28 days the flavor develops off-notes that some palates find unpleasant.
4. The difference between 3 weeks and 4 weeks is real but subtle. Worth doing at least once to calibrate personal preference.

#### 6 Unwrap, Store, Deploy

1. After the 2-hour cool-down: unwrap each head. The skin should be dry and papery; the cloves inside should be black, soft, and aromatic.
2. Transfer whole heads to an airtight jar. Label with date, source, aging duration.
3. Storage: **airtight jar at room temperature keeps 6 months** of good quality (longer, but flavor peaks in the first 3 months). Refrigerated, keeps 12+ months. Freezing also works but slightly degrades texture.
4. Deployment pattern: one head every 1 to 2 weeks of regular cooking. The 10 to 12 head batch yields 6 to 9 months of supply.

## QUICK REFERENCE

# Timing Cheat Sheet

STEP	TIME	CUE
Test cooker temperature (2 h empty run)	T-2 h · 2 min active	Probe reads steady 60–70 °C
Wrap heads + load cooker	T=0 · 10 min	Foil snug, single layer in cooker
Week 1 — Sulfur phase	Day 1–7 · 0 active	Intense garlic smell; do not open
Day 10 checkpoint (optional)	Day 10 · 2 min	Cloves pale golden, soft
Week 2 — Browning phase	Day 8–14 · 0 active	Smell sweetens; cloves deepen brown
Day 21 — Primary checkpoint	Day 21 · 5 min	Cloves deep black, soft as date, sweet-balsamic
 Extended aging (optional)	Day 22–28 · 0 active	Deepens to near-true-black, slight funk
Cool down + unwrap + jar	End · 15 min	Skin papery; cloves black + soft

## TROUBLESHOOTING

# Emergency Protocols

### TEMPERATURE RAN TOO COLD DURING THE 3 WEEKS – CLOVES STILL BROWN AT DAY 21 (NOT BLACK)

Continue aging another 7 to 10 days. Add a folded towel over the cooker to improve insulation. Check daily from day 25 onward. The aging will complete but over a longer timeline than intended.

 **TEMPERATURE RAN TOO HOT – CLOVES ARE DRY AND LEATHERY AT DAY 14**

This batch is not recoverable to the classic soft-sweet endpoint. Alternative use: grind the over-aged cloves in a spice grinder with flaky salt to produce a black-garlic salt (3:1 ratio) – still a useful pantry product. Next batch: verify rice cooker temperature with a probe thermometer before starting.

 **SOME HEADS AGED FASTER THAN OTHERS – UNEVENNESS AT DAY 21**

Single-layer requirement wasn't met, or the cooker has hot/cold zones. Pull the fully-aged heads at day 21; return the laggards to the cooker for 3 to 5 more days. Next batch: single layer and ideally rotate positions midway through (day 10 – a moment when you're already checking).

 **KITCHEN SMELLS TERRIBLE**

Expected in weeks 1 to 2. Move the rice cooker to the garage, a utility room, or any well-ventilated space away from the primary living areas. Open windows if in an urban apartment. A small portable fan on the side helps. By week 3 the smell mellows dramatically.

 **SOME HEADS HAVE A MOLDY-LOOKING FILM ON THE OUTSIDE**

Check: white-fuzzy film is likely saprophytic surface mold – not dangerous but indicates moisture got in. Wipe off carefully; the head inside is likely fine. Pink, green, or black fuzzy film: discard the head (not the whole batch). Generally rare if foil-wrapping was done properly.

 **BLACK GARLIC TASTES FINE BUT NOT AS DRAMATIC AS EXPECTED**

Two possibilities: aging ran cool (the batch is under-Maillarded) or the garlic variety was bland to start. Either way, the product is still usable – compensate by using more per application (2 cloves instead of 1). Next batch: verify temperature and upgrade to a better garlic variety (Spanish purple, Italian garlic).

## Technique Notes

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### ● Slow Maillard — Low Temperature × Long Time

FOOD SCIENCE · UNIVERSAL · APPLIES TO ALL SLOW-BROWNEED FOODS

The Maillard reaction is temperature-dependent and time-dependent, and the two variables trade off. At 170 degrees Celsius (a seared steak), the reaction runs fast enough to produce full browning in 60 to 90 seconds. At 60 to 70 degrees Celsius (black garlic's window), the same degree of browning requires 21 to 28 days. Below 55 Celsius the reaction stalls. This time-temperature trade-off explains a wide category of cooked foods: dulce de leche (milk + sugar reduced slowly over hours), confit onion jams (onions cooked low for hours), oven-roasted tomatoes at 100 Celsius for 4 hours, and black garlic. In every case, the flavor that emerges from slow Maillard is distinctly different from fast Maillard — sweeter, deeper, less aggressive, more complex. Knowing which register to target is a core cooking decision. Reference: Food Science Core §Maillard Reaction Kinetics; Temperatures §Maillard Threshold.

### ● Foil Wrap for Moisture Retention in Long Slow Cooks

COOKING CONTAINER · UNIVERSAL · APPLIES TO LOW-SLOW-COOK PROJECTS

Long, slow cooking at low temperatures (below 100 Celsius) loses moisture through evaporation even when the cooking happens in a sealed vessel — because 'sealed' is rarely fully airtight, and over 3 weeks even a small leak rate dehydrates ingredients substantially. Individual foil-wrapping creates a second moisture barrier around each item, trapping the ingredient's own moisture near the surface and preserving texture. This applies beyond black garlic: confit garlic (oil + slow heat, foil wrap helps even without submersion), slow-roasted tomatoes, long-braised whole heads of garlic for the serving dish, and any dehydrator-adjacent slow cook where textural integrity matters. The foil also contains aromas — a benefit for black garlic in weeks 1 to 2. Reference: Cooking Container Physics §Moisture Barrier; Food Science Core §Water Activity.

## ● The Rice Cooker's Hidden Capability — 'Keep Warm' as Aging Chamber

KITCHEN INFRASTRUCTURE · UNIVERSAL · APPLIES TO ANY MODERN JAPANESE RICE COOKER

Most modern Japanese rice cookers (Zojirushi, Tiger, Panasonic, and many Chinese and Korean brands) hold 60 to 70 degrees Celsius on 'keep warm' — a temperature range with multiple culinary applications beyond keeping rice warm. At this temperature: black garlic ages over 3 weeks; low-temperature sous vide can run for shorter windows; shio koji and rice koji can be fermented (slightly warmer than optimal but workable); proofing bread dough in cold weather; yogurt-making holds at 45 Celsius so a separate low setting matters — but many cookers have this. Verifying the cooker's 'keep warm' temperature with a probe is a one-time 2-hour test that unlocks several long-form projects. Cheap cookers (under \$50) often run hotter and are not suitable; mid-range Japanese cookers (\$150+) are consistently in the right range. Reference: Thermomix TM6 Mastery §Fermentation (analogous precision-temperature capability); Fermentation §Koji.

## ● No Limits: Las Pedroñeras Purple Garlic Base (Substitutes Garlic)

INGREDIENT TERROIR · SUBSTITUTES BASE GARLIC

Commodity grocery garlic produces perfectly good black garlic. Spanish purple garlic — specifically Ajo Morado de Las Pedroñeras (DO from La Mancha) — produces noticeably more refined black garlic. The reasons: higher sugar content in the raw clove (more Maillard substrate), more complex sulfur profile (richer flavor post-transformation), less sharp note in the raw state (cleaner endpoint). The difference in the raw clove is small but tastable; the difference after 3 weeks of aging is substantial — the Spanish purple version has a cleaner, more floral, less funky character than commodity-based black garlic. For a flagship batch intended to be the pantry's working black garlic for 6 months, the upgrade is worth the sourcing cost (\$15 to \$20 for 10 to 12 heads vs. \$6 to \$8 for commodity). Pablo has Las Pedroñeras already referenced in multiple recipes (Sofrito TM6, Alioli TM6, Sobrasada Honey Butter); the jump to black garlic is a natural extension. Reference: Pantry and Staples §Spanish Produce; Produce and Vegetables §Garlic Varieties.

## ● No Limits: Four-Week Extended Aging (Extends Week 3)

FLAVOR DEPTH • EXTENDS AGING PHASE

Three weeks is the standard endpoint and produces excellent black garlic. Four weeks produces something measurably deeper: the molasses and balsamic notes intensify, a subtle fermented-funky bass note emerges, and the texture softens toward true jam consistency. The tradeoff: weeks 4+ begin to develop off-notes in some palates, and the funk some taste testers love is actively disliked by others. For a flagship batch for Pablo's formal register, 28 days is the correct call — the guests who appreciate the depth will notice, and the guests who don't care will simply register the black garlic as exceptional. Beyond day 28, quality drops. Plan to stop at 28 days precisely, not 'sometime in week 4 or 5'. Reference: Fermentation §Extended Aging; Food Science Core §Maillard Endpoints.

## ● No Limits: Black Garlic Salt — The Over-Aged Recovery

PANTRY EXTENSION • RESCUE + EXTEND PRODUCT LINE

If a batch of black garlic runs too dry or too leathery (the over-Maillard result), do not discard it. Grind the dried cloves in a spice grinder with flaky Maldon salt at a 3:1 ratio (salt:garlic) to produce a black-garlic salt. The salt keeps indefinitely in an airtight jar, reads as a finishing seasoning unique to few other pantries, and is functionally a usable product rather than a loss. Applications: sprinkle on a finished steak, dust onto a crispy fried egg, rim a Bloody Mary glass, finish a tomato salad. Even from a perfect batch, setting aside 1 or 2 heads for black-garlic salt is a worthwhile move — the salt is shelf-stable where the whole cloves eventually lose some punch, and the salt's deployment pattern (a pinch per dish) is broader than the whole clove's (a whole clove per dish). Reference: Pantry and Staples §Finishing Salts; Sauces and Condiments §Compound Salts.

### PAIRING

## What to Drink

### 🍷 Wine — Not Applicable

Black garlic is a base ingredient, not a course

*Pairings apply to dishes finished with black garlic — see Menu Context below for specific downstream deployments.*

### Tasting Ritual

A small plate of unadorned black-garlic cloves + aged sherry (Oloroso Amontillado) as a tasting flight

*Post-batch ritual: when a batch finishes, Pablo opens one head, separates a few cloves, and tastes them alongside a 30 ml pour of aged Oloroso. The sherry's dried-fruit and oxidative notes mirror the black garlic's aged profile; the tasting calibrates the batch and rewards the 3 weeks of patience.*

## CONTEXT

# Menu Ideas

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### Downstream #1 — Alioli Negro

The canonical Spanish application. Classic mortar alioli (UMAMI-5 #3 or UMAMI-9 True Alioli when filed) with 4 cloves black garlic mashed in at the start. Deep, sweet, jammy aioli that reads as nothing else on any mesa de tapas. Serve with grilled octopus, kamado-charred bread, or roasted potatoes.

### Downstream #2 — Black Garlic Compound Butter

125 g butter + 4 cloves black garlic mashed + 1/2 tsp flaky salt, whisked smooth and rolled into a log (following the Sobrasada Honey Butter template from UMAMI-9 #4). Sliced coins on kamado-grilled steak, lamb, or roasted vegetables. The universal umami finisher. Reference: UMAMI-9 #4 methodology.

### Downstream #3 — Coca de Recapte Bridge

Per UMAMI-10 #4 Coca de Recapte ● tier: purée 4 cloves black garlic with 1 tsp EVOO to a smearable paste. Spread under the escalivada on the coca before baking. Invisible to guests, profoundly deepening. Reference: UMAMI-10 #4.

### Downstream #4 — SV Bag Companion

Per Sous Vide Mastery §Black Garlic in the Bag: add 3 to 4 cloves to any SV bag with beef or pork. The cloves infuse melanoidins, residual sugars, and free amino acids into the protein over a long cook. Especially transformative on 48-hour short ribs (UMAMI-3 #3) and duck confit. Reference: Sous Vide Mastery §Black Garlic.

### Downstream #5 — Vinaigrette Infusion

Blend 2 cloves black garlic with 3 tbsp sherry vinegar + 1 tsp Dijon + 1 tsp honey + pinch of salt + 6 tbsp EVOO in a blender. 20 seconds smooth. Produces a dressing with the depth of a long-reduced jus — use on bitter greens (escarole, frisée, endive) as a main-course side or on grilled radicchio with Manchego shavings as a standalone first course.

#### YOUR NOTES

## Cook Log

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### Session Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ · Serves: \_\_\_\_ · Rating: \_\_ / 5

*Use this space to record what you changed, what worked, and what you'd do differently next time. Your future self will thank you.*



Stop following recipes. Start understanding food.

