

# TABASCO RED

Tabasco hot pepper sauce was created by Edward McIlhenny on Avery Island in Louisiana in 1868 and has been in the family ever since. The peppers are still grown on Avery Island (and some in Latin America, since the demand is so high). After the peppers are picked, they are mashed with salt and fermented in barrels for up to 3 years. The peppers are then mixed with distilled vinegar, strained, and bottled.

The hot sauce should not light your tongue on fire at first taste or it will render any seasonings and flavors imperceptible. Red Tabasco is the benchmark against which I measure all other hot sauces because it has just the right balance of spice and acidity. And a little goes a long way. The green (jalapeño) version of the sauce is slightly milder, for when you want an even gentler hit of heat.

## Tips

- Tabasco can be stored, tightly sealed, in the pantry and keeps almost indefinitely.
- Tabasco may separate if it is not used for a long period of time. Simply shake to reemulsify and use.



## BEEF TARTARE WITH CRISPY POTATOES AND TABASCO-BONITO DRESSING

Since it's hard to split an egg yolk for the dressing, this makes a little more than you need. The dressing is basically a spicy mayo, so use any extra as a sandwich spread or to dress cooked potatoes or vegetables. Bonito flakes are dried, fermented, and smoked skipjack tuna that is then shaved into flakes that are a staple Japanese seasoning. You can find them at Asian food stores or online. ■ **SERVES 6**

**1 large organic egg yolk**

**2 tablespoons capers, drained**

**1 tablespoon red Tabasco sauce**

**1 tablespoon white wine vinegar**

**1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**

**1 teaspoon bonito flakes**

**¼ cup canola oil, plus more for frying the potatoes**

**¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**

**Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**4 fingerling potatoes**

**12 ounces beef tenderloin, trimmed of all fat and very finely diced**

**2 tablespoons finely minced shallots**

**Zest of 1 small lemon**

**2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives**

**1** In a blender or mini food processor, combine the egg yolk, capers, Tabasco, vinegar, mustard, and bonito flakes. Blend to combine. With the machine running, add ¼ cup of the canola oil and the olive oil in a slow, steady stream to make a thick dressing. Season with salt and pepper and chill until thick, about 1 hour.

**2** Meanwhile, heat 2 inches of canola oil to 350°F. in a medium saucepan. Very thinly slice the potatoes lengthwise on a mandoline (if you have one) or by hand. Fry the potato slices in 2 batches until golden brown and crisp, 1 to 2 minutes per batch. Drain on paper towels and season with salt while still hot.

**3** When ready to serve, toss the beef with the shallots and lemon zest. Toss with enough dressing to coat well. Divide the beef onto serving plates with the potatoes and sprinkle with chives.

