

Vive le Vinaigre!

You may not realize it, but vinegar has been a special flavor secret for centuries. This common kitchen staple was actually discovered by accident over 10,000 years ago, probably when some wine left in a cask turned sour. But it was certainly no accident that cooks in ancient civilizations from Babylon to Rome to the Orient immediately began using this delicious new discovery as a seasoning, condiment and preservative. Over the years that followed, vinegar appeared as a vital ingredient in some of the world's most popular cuisines—from the highly seasoned sauces of French haute cuisine to the piquant sweet and sour dishes of Chinese cooking.

Today, thanks to a renewed interest in gourmet foods and international cooking styles, vinegar is being "rediscovered" in American kitchens. Creative stateside cooks are taking a cue from the ancients and taking vinegar out of the pickle jar and beyond the salad bowl!

They're finding that just a touch of vinegar is the perfect seasoning addition to almost any dish. In everything from savory soups to dazzling desserts, vinegar's unique natural tang actually enlivens, enhances and freshens the flavors of other foods without overpowering them. Vinegar is also an ideal, economical tenderizer. Whether it's used as a marinade or simmered in a stew, it turns less tender budget cuts of meat into more succulent, juicy fare. And let's not forget that vinegar is great straight as a quick and tasty condiment for seafood, poultry, cooked vegetables and, yes, even salads.

So, if you want to learn the true secret of vinegar's versatility, try these exciting new recipes in your own kitchen. You'll discover for yourself why cooks the world over have been saying "vive le vinaigre"—long live vinegar—for centuries.

FRESH VEGETABLE VINAIGRETTE

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| 2 medium tomatoes, sliced | 2 teaspoons oregano |
| 1/4 lb. mushrooms, sliced | 1 teaspoon sugar |
| 1 cup broccoli florets | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 1 cup cauliflower florets | 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes |
| 1/2 cup celery, diced | 1/2 teaspoon pepper |
| 2 green onions, sliced | 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard |
| 1 cup vegetable oil | 1/4 teaspoon dry garlic or 2 cloves fresh garlic, crushed |
| 1/3 cup cider vinegar | |

Cut all vegetables and place in glass casserole dish. Combine remaining ingredients and pour over vegetables. Cover and chill 2 to 3 hours, basting occasionally. Before serving, top with diced green onions. Makes approximately 4 servings.

SALMON SAUTÉ

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| 2 medium onions, thinly sliced | 4 fresh salmon steaks (about 1 lb.) |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil or cooking oil | 1/4 cup wine vinegar |

In a skillet cook onions in oil till tender but not brown. Remove from skillet; set aside. Drain skillet; add salmon steaks.

Cook salmon, uncovered, over medium heat for 3 minutes per side. Add onions and vinegar. Cover; simmer 2 minutes or until heated through. Makes approximately 4 servings.

FRUIT COOLER

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| 1/2 medium honeydew melon | 2 tablespoons strawberry vinegar |
| 2 oranges | 1 cup sour cream |
| 2 Red Delicious apples | Spinach greens |
| 2 avocados | 1 cup dry-roasted cashew nuts, coarsely chopped |
| 2 bananas | |
| 1 tablespoon lemon juice | |

Cut melon into 12 slices and remove rind. Peel oranges and cut into thin round slices. Core and slice apples. Do not peel. Peel and slice avocados. Peel bananas and cut into chunks. Sprinkle lemon juice over apples, avocados and bananas to prevent browning.

Arrange alternate layers of fruit on a bed of crisp spinach greens on individual plates. Garnish generously with cashews. Stir strawberry vinegar into sour cream; drizzle over fruits and serve. Makes approximately 6 servings.

STRAWBERRY VINEGAR

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| 1 pint fresh strawberries | 2 cups cider vinegar |
| 1/2 cup sugar | |

Remove stems from strawberries; halve strawberries; set 1/4 cup aside. In a large bowl, place remaining strawberries. Pour vinegar over strawberries. Cover and set aside for 1 hour. Transfer vinegar and strawberries to a large sauce pot. Add sugar, bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Strain out strawberry mixture, pressing out as much liquid as possible. Pour vinegar into 1-1/2 quart jar. Add reserved strawberries. Cover tightly. Makes approximately 3 cups.

Know Your Vinegars

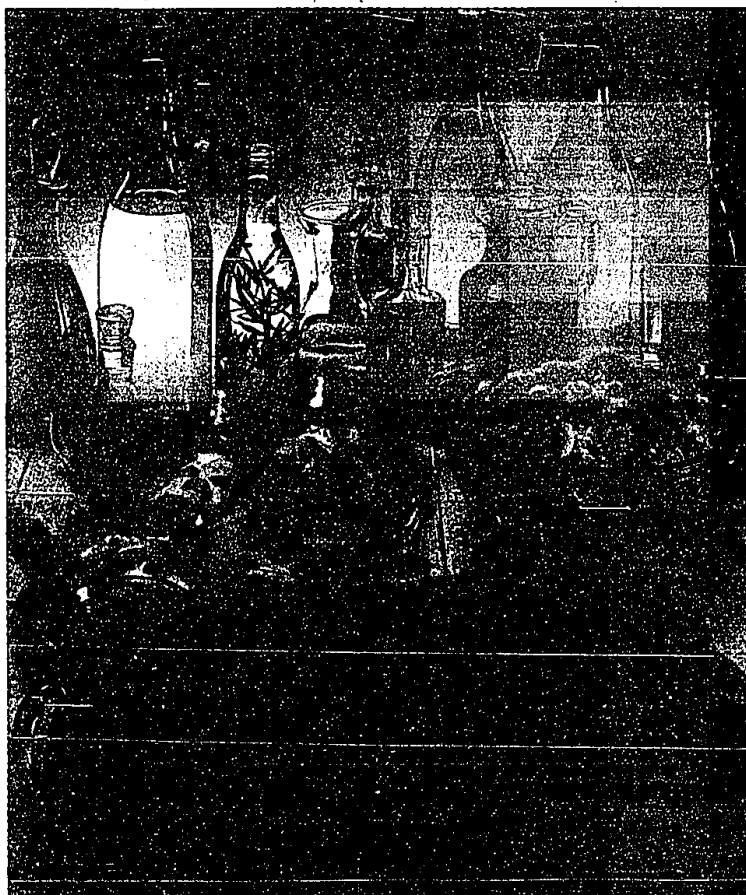
White Distilled Vinegar... The strongest and sharpest flavored vinegar, distilled vinegar is fermented naturally from ethyl alcohol. It is recommended for pickling or when clarity is most important.

Apple Cider Vinegar... This popular vinegar has a sharp taste with a hint of fruity flavor which comes from its apple base. Widely used in cooking and pickling.

Wine Vinegars... The flavor and color of wine vinegars will vary depending on the type of grapes used. Red wine vinegars are full-bodied while the white wine vinegar is more subtle in both flavor and aroma.

Specialty Vinegars... Herbs, spices and fruits are often added to vinegar—to create specialty vinegars such as tarragon, basil, dill, thyme, strawberry, peach or pear.

Malt Vinegar... Used primarily in English cuisine, malt vinegar has a distinctive flavor and aroma similar to beer.



SAVORY SKILLET CHICKEN

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| 2-1/2-3 lbs. chicken pieces | 2 tablespoons butter (or margarine) |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | 1/4 teaspoon pepper |
| 1 medium clove garlic, minced | 1/2 cup red wine vinegar |
| 1/2 cup water | 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms |
| 1/2 cup heavy cream | |

In a large skillet, brown chicken in butter. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and garlic. Add vinegar and water. Simmer, covered, 45 minutes or until chicken is tender. Remove chicken to heated platter. Keep warm. Reduce liquid by one-half. Stir in mushrooms and cream. Continue simmering until mushrooms are cooked and sauce is slightly thickened. Spoon sauce over chicken. Makes approximately 4 servings.

SWEET SOUR PORK

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| 1 can (15-1/4 oz.) pineapple chunks in its own juice |
| 3/4 cup onion |
| 3/4 cup green pepper |
| 1/2 cup celery |
| 1 lb. pork butt |
| 2 tablespoons cornstarch |
| 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar |
| 1/2 cup water |
| 1/3 cup vinegar |
| 2 tablespoons soy sauce |
| 1 teaspoon instant beef bouillon |
| 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger |
| 2 tablespoons peanut or salad oil |

Drain pineapple, reserving juice. Thinly slice the onion, green pepper, celery and pork. Set aside. Dissolve corn starch in pineapple juice. Add the sugar, water, vinegar, soy sauce, bouillon and ginger. Mix well.

Heat 2T salad oil in skillet or wok. Sauté pork, stirring constantly until tender. Remove pork and set aside. Sauté vegetables, stirring constantly until crisp-tender.

Add pineapple chunks, pork, and cornstarch mixture. Cook, stirring constantly, until sauce thickens and is translucent. Serve over hot rice. Makes four servings.

CONTINENTAL SALAD

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| 1/4 cup olive oil |
| 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar |
| 1 egg, lightly beaten |
| 1/4 teaspoon salt |
| 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard |
| Dash of Tabasco |
| 2 oz. Roquefort (or Bleu Cheese), crumbled |
| 4-5 spears Belgian endive (approximately 1 lb.) |
| 1/4 lb. Genoa Salsami, sliced |
| 1/2 cup chopped apple |
| 1/2 cup chopped pecans |
| 1/2 cup sliced ripe olives |
| 1/4 cup chopped onion |
| 1/4 cup chopped celery |

Combine first seven ingredients in a covered jar. Shake vigorously and refrigerate.

Clean and cut endive into 1" lengths. Place in a salad bowl with remaining ingredients. Chill. Add dressing and toss just before serving. Makes approximately 4 servings.

Make Your Own Herbed Vinegar

Herbed vinegars are easily prepared by adding fresh or dried herbs—as well as other seasonings—to already bottled vinegar from your supermarket. Simply crush one teaspoon dried herbs (e.g., basil, tarragon, rosemary, mint, oregano) or one clove garlic in a jar with a tight fitting lid. Heat one cup of wine, cider or white vinegar to the boiling point and pour into the jar. Cover tightly and let stand at room temperature for 10 days, shaking the jar once a day. Then strain the vinegar, bottle it, and cover. For an attractive finish, add a large fresh sprig of the herb to the vinegar.



VINEGAR PIE

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| 4 eggs |
| 1-1/2 cups sugar |
| 1/4 cup butter or margarine, melted |
| 1-1/2 tablespoons cider or white vinegar |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 9-inch frozen pie shell, defrosted |

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large mixing bowl combine eggs, sugar, butter, vinegar and vanilla; mix well. Pour into pie shell. Bake until firm, about 50 minutes. Cool on a rack. Serve garnished with chopped nuts or whipped cream, if desired.

Quick Vinegar Recipe Secrets

Puffy Rice
For white, fluffy rice, add a teaspoon of vinegar to the water.

Freshen Vegetables
Freshen up slightly wilted vegetables by soaking them in cold water and vinegar. Add a little vinegar to the water in which you cook vegetables to help them retain their bright color.

Remove Grease from Fat
Boil "suet" in water with one teaspoon of white vinegar to each cup of suet. Boil for 10 minutes to remove the grease.

Whipped Potatoes
A teaspoon of white or cider vinegar added to the water in which you boil potatoes will help them retain their natural texture. Add a little vinegar to the water in which you boil potatoes to help them retain their natural texture.

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