

Vinegar can be tasty — and healthy



White vinegar has a number of household uses. Some people use it for cleaning, laundry and flushing out the coffee maker. It's also been used for centuries to preserve food, especially vegetables.

But don't let the strong vinegar odor turn you off from all vinegars. In fact, there are many different types that are both healthful and delicious. Many of them have a mild, pleasing taste that pairs well with a variety of foods. Some are even naturally sweet enough to dress up fruits and healthy desserts.

Vinegar is made when a liquid that contains starch and sugar is fermented. It comes from the French words "vin" and "aigre" which mean "sour wine." The liquid ferments into alcohol, then ferments again into vinegar. It is believed that vinegar was made by chance thousands of years ago when some wine was left too long in its cask.

The right vinegar can add flavor without adding sodium, calories, fat or unhealthy additives. It can add acidity to soups and stews, or works well for marinating meat and vegetables.

Go beyond the standard vinegar and oil combination and check out these delicious vinegars in your next cooking experiment. There are dozens of types of vinegars, and some can be difficult to find except in specialty stores. The following types are generally easy to find in most stores.



DISTILLED WHITE VINEGAR

The most common type seen in stores, it is made from fermented alcohol. White vinegar has a strong taste and odor and is great for making pickles, poached eggs and buttermilk.



BALSAMIC

Made from fermented grapes, balsamic becomes sweeter and almost like syrup the longer it ages. It adds flavor to pasta and vegetarian dishes and pairs well with fruit.



APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Made from fermented apples, apple cider vinegar is very versatile. It adds zest and subtle sweetness to salad dressings and slaws, as well as meat marinades.



MALT VINEGAR

This light brown vinegar, made from barley, is commonly used on french fries and fish and chips. Use it on healthier choices like baked potatoes and grilled chicken for a kick that's not too overwhelming.

RED WINE VINEGAR

This lively, strong tasting vinegar is ideal for meat marinades and dark sauces.



WHITE WINE VINEGAR

Don't confuse this with distilled white vinegar. It is also much milder than red wine vinegar. White wine vinegar is great for those who want a subtle taste or who don't want to change the color of their food.



RICE VINEGAR

Plain rice vinegar is mild and clean-tasting. It works well with most recipes that require vinegar without a strong taste, especially stir-fries and salad dressings.