

dl 3/19/2020



---

Home > Tips > Learn > Learn This Recipe and You'll Never Buy a Bottle of Salad Dressing Again

# LEARN THIS RECIPE AND YOU'LL NEVER BUY A BOTTLE OF SALAD DRESSING AGAIN

February 1, 2017



Once you start making your own salad dressings, you'll never go back. You can make a great vinaigrette with as few as three ingredients you probably already have in your pantry—and the result is superior to anything you'll find on a store shelf.

The right vinaigrette enhances the different ingredients in a salad; it can also brighten a dull salad or tame one with sharp flavors. For it to succeed, it needs to balance three basic elements.

## The 3 Basic Elements: Oil, Acid and Seasonings

Oils and other fats, like warm tendered bacon fat, balance the acid and add a soft sheen to the salad. Extra-virgin olive oil is the classic, but you should also experiment with nut oils like walnut and hazelnut or Asian sesame oil. It's a good idea to keep two olive oils in your pantry: one for cooking, and a high-quality one for dressings.

Acids, which add brightness, include vinegars (balsamic and wine-based white, champagne, red, verjus, sherry or rice) or citrus juice (lemon, lime, orange or grapefruit). Soy sauce and rice vinegar are often the right match for Asian-inspired salads.

Seasonings add depth to the acid-fat foundation. Salt and freshly ground black pepper are traditional additions, but there's no shortage of possibilities: a pinch of a fresh or dried herb, minced shallots, or a teaspoon or two of Dijon mustard for body, a hot spice like cayenne, or a touch of sweetness from honey or maple syrup. Try chopped capers or anchovies to build flavor, too.

## Ratio

The commonly accepted ratio for a vinaigrette is three parts oil to one part vinegar. We recommend starting with two parts oil to one part vinegar, then start tasting, because the perfect ratio really depends on the ingredients you're using. Some oils are more acidic, some more piquant; some vinegars are softer, and some are sweeter. But the real question is...

## Should You Whisk, Shake or Blend?

There's no right answer, and each emulsifying technique has its benefits. Whisking offers the most control, blending is the fastest method, and shaking is the most mess-free and requires the least amount of cleanup.

Whisk: Traditionally, professional cooks are taught to make dressing by adding the oil last in a slow, steady stream while whisking vigorously. First, combine all of your ingredients *except* the oil in a small bowl and whisk together. Then, gradually add the oil while whisking rapidly in a circular motion—as you whisk, the ingredients will emulsify and gradually thicken.

Shake: Alternatively, you can simply add all of your vinaigrette ingredients to a jar and shake (play some music for inspiration!)

Blend: A blender is a big time-saver (and arm-saver) for making big batches of vinaigrette. The blender’s blades break up the oil into smaller droplets than a whisk does, giving the dressing a smoother, thicker consistency. Just add all of the ingredients besides the oil, and process to combine. With the blender running, gradually add the oil in a steady stream through the hole in the lid.

### Basic Vinaigrette

3 Tbs. vinegar, such as red or white wine, cider or balsamic

1/4 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard, optional

3/4 cup (6 fl. oz./180 ml.) extra-virgin olive oil

1/8 tsp. freshly ground pepper

prefer some lemon juice and less oil.  
Try walnut or other oils.

Place a medium bowl on a folded damp kitchen towel to steady it. Whisk together the vinegar and salt until the salt begins to dissolve. If using, whisk the mustard into the vinegar-salt mixture.

Gradually add the oil while whisking rapidly in a circular motion. As you whisk, the ingredients will emulsify and thicken.

Whisk in the pepper. Taste the finished vinaigrette and add more salt and pepper, if desired. If using the vinaigrette to dress greens, dip a piece of the greens into the dressing to see how they taste together.

Use the vinaigrette right away, or store it for up to 5 days. Makes about 1 cup.

[BASIC VINAIGRETTE RECIPE](#)

[HOW TO MAKE VINAIGRETTE](#)

[VINAIGRETTE](#)

[VINAIGRETTE RATIOS](#)

[VINAIGRETTE RECIPE](#)

13 comments



## 13 COMMENTS

SUSAN

REPLY


 July 6, 2017 - 3:40 pm

Try red wine vinegar with jalapeños. It's a wonderful vinegar and not hot, just right!

 Loading...

SAULA J. SIEGEL

REPLY

 May 10, 2017 - 9:48 am

I love this recipe, it is very similar to what I make. Raspberry vinegar is also good to try.


Thanks,

Saula J. Siegel

 Loading...

RICHARD GORDON

REPLY

 April 17, 2017 - 2:33 pm

What's the best way to store the vinaigrette?

 Loading...

WILLIAMS-SONOMA EDITORS

REPLY


 April 18, 2017 - 10:10 am

Good question, Richard! It depends on the vinaigrette. If it has just the basics in it—oil, vinegar, seasonings or spices—you are fine to leave it at room temperature. However, if it contains other elements, like shallots, garlic, fresh herbs or an emulsifier like mayonnaise, then put it in the fridge. (The olive oil may solidify, but let it sit out for a bit and it'll go back to its normal state.) Or, you can do what we prefer to do, and make a small batch fresh every single time.

 Loading...

BILL BOSWELL

REPLY


 April 12, 2017 - 9:19 am

but certainly not the healthiest

 Loading...

CURRENTLY LOVING | PALMER &amp; BROWN

REPLY

 March 29, 2014 - 4:28 am