



Vinaigrette System and Salads-As-A-Meal

Vinaigrette is essentially a mixture of an oil and a sour with lively seasonings and blending ingredients. Easy! It is fast and fun for adults and kids alike to play with flavours, asserting their food artistry. Think of composing easy salad meals as an ever-changing plate of mixed food groups celebrating sunshine and the earth's goodness. Crown your sunshine with a house-made vinaigrette dressing. A vinaigrette can be a grain and protein marinade too!

tree house tips

- **Tree House tips are systems for success.** These two pages contain flavour combinations and ideas for dozens of creative meals prepared in little time. [See cheat sheet on right side of page for a one paragraph explanation of this recipe.](#)
- **The basis of so many quick meals:** Pair vinaigrette with tasty salads and also drizzle it on sandwiches, snacks, appetizers, or use it as a marinade for meats and protein alternatives and all manner of grains.
- **Classically, in French cuisine, the ratio of oil to sour is 3:1 as a "pleasing to the palate" rule.** Depending on your ingredients and dietary needs - **you can play around with this ratio.**
- These days, grocery stores offer lots of readily available global cuisine ingredients - **so be curious**, taste more, trust your taste buds and anything goes to top those healthful dark, colourful leafy greens and goodness! Think about an **explore instead of chore** mindset when you are shopping. Be inspired and pick up a mixture of flavourings from the store. Specialty food stores or specialty food sections are especially good for quality vinaigrette ingredients. They often have staff available for your tasting questions. In Tree House Kitchen we **love being inspired by farmers and their seasonal, local, farm fresh, ingredients.**

- **Family cooking:** Creative kids and tentative beginners alike love making this - encourage them to balance flavours and ingredients by using all their taste senses, and trusting their instincts. Kids can take over this duty in the kitchen permanently!

a guideline for vinaigrette A + B + C

- This is truly make-your-own! **Add ingredients from A, B and C to make a "house vinaigrette."** We have given you very loose guidelines. Reduce these amounts or double, quadruple or make ten times the recipe depending on your serving needs. This keeps for at least one week (usually more) in the fridge, covered.
- **A - 3 tablespoons (or much less or much more) TO TASTE of your favourite oil:** Try and taste different olive oils from different countries. Try nut oils like roasted walnut oil, peanut oil, sesame oil. Look to hemp oil, flaxseed oil, avocado oil, sunflower oil, coconut oil, other vegetable oils for variety. Consider sustainable planting and processing in your selections.
- **B - 1 tablespoon (or much less or much more) TO TASTE of your favourite sour liquid** - Try rice vinegars (seasoned or unseasoned), wine vinegars (white, red, champagne, sherry), cider vinegars, balsamic vinegars and grain vinegars. *Vin egre* means

Serves: Varies

Yields: Varies

Equipment: Bowl, whisk, sharp chef knife for chopping ingredients

vinaigrette ingredients

A - 3 tablespoons (or less or more) TO TASTE of your favourite oil

B - 1 tablespoon (or less or more) TO TASTE of your favourite sour liquid

C - 1 teaspoon (or less or more) TO TASTE of your favourite flavourings - tasting as you go to get a sense memory of building flavours

See details in a guideline for vinaigrette A+ B+ C to create your shopping list



Cheat sheet • After individually tasting them, pick your favourite oil, sour and flavouring ingredients from A, B, C. Rely on your sense of taste and adventure to mix all ingredients. Serve on mixed leafy greens, topped with colourful vegetables, protein options, herbs, grains and other favourite salad ingredients! This system works as a marinade too. Try it!



Continues on next page

sour wine in French. Try fresh lemon, orange juice or any manner of pureed local sour fruit.


- **C - 1 teaspoon (or much less or much more) TO TASTE of your favourite flavourings - choices listed below. Taste as you go to get a sense memory of building flavours. Dozens of vinaigrette recipes can be created from one system:** Dijon mustard (plain) is a French ingredient (often made from Canadian mustard seeds as Canada is the #1 mustard seed producer) that is a useful addition to mix (emulsify) all ingredients together. Try fresh garlic (chopped or sliced) or finely chopped onion or finely chopped shallots; try nut and seed butters; anchovy paste or fish sauce; try soy sauce, mirin, miso paste; chili oil, hot sauce, hot peppers; fresh herbs like thyme, basil, oregano, rosemary, dill, lavender, chives, coriander/cilantro or homemade basil pesto. Try spice blends from different countries like India, Morocco, Italy, France, China or the islands of the Caribbean, to name a few. Add dollops of honey, maple syrup, agave syrup, sweeter or more exotic fruit juices. Drizzle leftover pan drippings or gravy from dinner the night before to make a delicious steak salad.

preparation of vinaigrette

- Before you begin mixing at home, **taste everything individually** to get a sense of what you are working with. **Then create! Taste taste taste and play around with your ingredients!**
- Throw everything you like together in a container and whisk to combine (remembering to add strongly flavoured ingredients a little at a time). Tree House Kitchen can help by sending in your Ask A Chef questions.
- Taste as you go and adjust your seasonings as you like. Simple is often best but complex can be wonderful! Add salt and pepper to taste at the end of your mixing process.
- Once your family has created a favourite house recipe, make a large amount to save prep time in the kitchen. Vinaigrette can be refrigerated for (usually) weeks.

playing with ingredients to create dinner salads-as-a-meal

- **Dozens of salads:** Wash and dry your multi-coloured raw leaves, then chop, tear and toss with your vinaigrette plus a combination of any of the following (based on your likes, dislikes and leftovers): various nuts or seeds (salted or not), seasonal fresh fruit slices, sliced tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, avocado slices, roasted vegetable slices, olives, fresh chopped herbs, edible flowers, any seasonal raw vegetables or sliced cheeses. Last night's leftovers are a gift to your creativity: try cooked meat, fresh fish, chicken, tofu, cooked legumes or pulses like chickpeas, beans and lentils, cooked grains, potatoes. Do you have leftover day-old bread? Slice bread into cubes, rub with fresh garlic, then use as is or toast until golden!
- **Avoid serving gritty, soggy or overly dressed salads. Always remember to spin-dry (or pat with paper towel) your clean salad as the vinaigrette adheres better to dry leaves.** Taste your leaves before serving to double check for grittiness. If there is grittiness from sand/dirt - rinse and dry again. Taste your salad after tossing with vinaigrette - so it is not under- or over-dressed.
- **For a fusion flavoured coleslaw:** Combine quantities of savoy cabbage (or green, white or purple cabbage), organic carrots, fresh mint leaves, fresh coriander leaves, whole salted peanuts or pecans, seasoned rice vinegar, fish sauce, sugar, fresh jalapeno peppers and fresh roasted ground cumin to taste. Alternatively, try tossing your cabbage and carrot mixture with lime juice, fresh ginger, chopped fresh garlic, mayonnaise, fresh parsley, fresh basil, fresh chives, whole celery seed and Dijon mustard. This keeps for a week in fridge!

 Connect to creative joy with your senses as you try new ingredients and combinations

chef secrets

french vinaigrette • With good, healthful oils - you can up the oil ratio from time to time. My favourite go-to French flavourings: La Tourangelle roasted walnut oil (Californian producer using French extraction methods); dijon mustard; my favourite sour flavour of the moment like citrus juice; aged sherry vinegar, apple cider vinegar or other artisan wine vinegar; a couple of drops of Canadian maple syrup; pinches of fresh flowering herbs from the garden/market, like thyme, rosemary, lavender or chives; a smattering of fine dice fresh shallots; a pinch of salt. Organic orange or lemon zest is also a very nice addition!

tropical-inspired • Another flavour route to try: A dollop of coconut oil (you might have to warm it slightly as it can be solid at room temperature) mixed with fresh squeezed orange and lemon juices, a pinch of salt, ground star anise and other seasonings of your choice like cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger. **Have fun and trust your instincts!**

bonus chef secrets

asian inspired dressing • This dressing can include: 4 tablespoons of water, 3 tablespoons of Tamari soy sauce, 4 tablespoons of fresh lime juice, 2 tablespoons of brown sugar (or a couple drops of agave syrup), 1 teaspoon freshly chopped garlic and 1/4 teaspoon red chilli flakes. I toss it with lots and lots of large dice bok choy, cucumbers, celery, carrots, assorted mushrooms and red/green peppers - delish! Add sesame oil to taste.

crunchy salad sprinkle • Add crunchy texture and a hit of protein to your already amazing salad! In a jar combine = parts of any of these: sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, hemp seeds, sliced raw almonds, sesame seeds, goji berries. Shake together and finish your salad with a small handful. Store in fridge to keep super-fresh and handy.