

Vinaigrette Dressings

Learn about the correct ingredient ratios for salad dressings with this article by **Yvonne Maffei**.

I've been making salad dressing at home for more years than I can remember buying them in stores. It all started when I left home for college and really wanted to taste the same kind of dressing my mom made that went with our greens for all of our Italian dinners. She used to buy a packet of seasoning that came with a nice glass shaker with indented markers on the glass that instructed how much oil, vinegar and water to add to the bottle. In an effort to save every penny I could while in college, I decided I would attempt to make the dressing myself by figuring out the right flavour profile and the ratio of oil to vinegar that was necessary to recapture that very same salad dressing I loved so much.

Although a relative ratio of oil to vinegar is important to know, don't be afraid to try making your own recipes just because you don't have exact amounts. The best way to tell if a dressing is right is by taste! You can shake it up and taste as you go, then adjust accordingly.

Here are a few more tips before you embark on making your own dressings, which I highly recommend. It's healthier, more economical than most quality store-bought dressings and so easy to make.

Vinaigrette is a classic type of dressing in which the ratio of oil to vinegar is 3 to 1. As the name indicates, there is typically a certain type of vinegar in the recipe or at least an acidic ingredient (i.e. lemon, lime or orange juice) to offset the oil. Experiment with different flavours of vinegar such as date, raspberry, balsamic, white balsamic and apple cider vinegar. Some are stronger than others, so it's best to jot down how each type works in your homemade recipe so you don't have to keep wondering what you did to make that perfect dressing.

To thicken a dressing, add honey, egg yolk (only from the freshest eggs) and mustard. This does affect the 3:1 ration slightly, so remember to take note.

Bring all ingredients to room temperature before starting, as oil

is difficult to work with when it's cold and can also throw off the measurement since it is more fluid when warmer. Avoid using aluminum bowls when making vinaigrette, as the acid in the vinegar can react with it.

Go ahead and add herbs and spices to your dressing, but just make sure that when using fresh herbs you'll also use up that dressing quickly as they can deteriorate quickly; if you plan to keep your dressing for a while, use dried herbs and spices.

Use high quality oils for all dressings as they tend to add flavour instead of an 'oiliness' you don't want on all of your greens.

When making creamy dressings, be sure to use full fat cream or dairy products, as they tend to separate less than the low fat and fat free versions.

Now you can try one of my favourite homemade salad dressings at home with this recipe for a classic Italian vinaigrette.

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp honey
- Pinch of sea salt
- Dash of freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp dried parsley

Method

In a small but deep bowl, add the vinegar then whisk in the oil gently. Add the honey and continue to whisk. Add the salt, pepper and parsley. Pour the mixture into a bottle for serving the vinaigrette and let sit for 1-2 hours for the flavours to settle in together nicely. Shake well before serving atop your favourite salad greens.

For questions regarding the use of vinegar in halal cooking, please visit [The Vinegar Page](#) on [MyHalalKitchen.com](#)

