

Basic vinaigrette Dressing with 8 variations

Bottled salad dressing can be convenient but it is expensive and often full of salt, sugar and chemical additives. Making your own is simple and allows you to customize the seasonings to suit whatever meal you are preparing. The amounts make about ¼ cup and can be expanded infinitely for larger salads. It can be made days ahead and kept in the fridge.

Directions: Shake all ingredients in a tightly lidded container or whisk in a small bowl. Allow to stand 10 minutes to rehydrate dried herbs and blend flavors before using. Dress your salad greens no more than 15 minutes before you plan to serve to make sure flavors are blended and the greens are not soggy.

Basic Vinaigrette

- 3 Tbsp oil, extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp vinegar (white, cider, wine, not balsamic)
- Salt
- Fresh ground black pepper

Lighter Bacon Dressing

Make basic recipe (use canola oil and cider vinegar)

- Add: 1 Tbsp crumbled bacon
- ½ Tbsp finely minced onion
- 1 pinch celery seed (optional)
- ¼ tsp prepared mustard (optional)
- 1-3 tsp brown sugar or 1-3 tsp of another sweetener, to taste

Italian Vinaigrette

Make basic recipe (use EVOO and red wine vinegar)

- Add: ½ tsp minced garlic
- ½ tsp dried Italian seasoning
- 1 pinch crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

Honey Mustard Dressing

Make Italian Vinaigrette above

- Add: ½ tsp prepared (suggest Dijon or spicy brown)
- 1-3 tsp honey or 1-3 tsp any other sweetener, to taste

Basic Creamy Vinaigrette Dressing

Make Basic Vinaigrette recipe above

- Add: 2-3 Tbsp mayonnaise or 2-3 Tbsp sour cream or 2-3 Tbsp plain yogurt

Parmesan-Pepper Dressing

Make Basic Creamy Vinaigrette dressing

- Add: 1 Tbsp grated parmesan cheese
- 1/8 tsp fresh ground black pepper, to taste

Creamy Garlic Dressing

Make basic creamy vinaigrette dressing:

- Add: 1 garlic clove, crushed, put through press
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 1 pinch Italian seasoning (optional)

Lemon Dressing

- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 3 Tbsp lemon juice
- ½ tsp oregano
- ½ teaspoon minced or crushed garlic

Balsamic Vinaigrette

- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ½ tsp minced or crushed garlic
- 1 pinch Italian seasoning (optional)

Salad pairings

1. Recommend the lemon dressing on spinach.
2. Bacon Dressing, Mustard Dressing and Balsamic Vinaigrettes on strong greens such as escarole, curly endive and dandelion greens.
3. The sweeter version of the mustard dressing is great for a vinegar coleslaw if you discover you have those occasional cabbages that are a touch on the bitter side.
4. Feel free to play with other seasonings, more complex herbs, flavored oils and flavored vinegars. Once you've learned the technique you can customize your salad dressing to suit just about any meal.

Reprinted from www.food.com by 3KillerBs on February 26, 2007

Note from instructor:

If you want to make a cup of the basic recipe, for instance, Measure 4.5 oz. of oil of your choice in a 1 cup liquid measuring cup. Add 3 oz. of vinegar. Pour oil and vinegar into bowl or tightly sealed container with other ingredients. Whisk or shake as need to emulsify. Let stand 10 minutes to rehydrate and blend flavors. Shake well before dressing greens. Store in pint jar in refrigerator. Enjoy!