

# HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN VINEGAR

*“Above Average” Joe Marshall*

What would you do if you run out on store bought vinegar, and buying more is no longer an option?

The answer is simple; you make your own.

I have not done this yet myself but this is the most detailed information that I have gathered so far.

I have seen other versions that use brewer’s yeast, apple cider, and a myriad of other items. If you have a different recipe leave it in the comments; I would definitely like to see it and I’m sure that others would as well.

The first thing you need to do is to create your Mother of Vinegar. If you have ever purchased organic vinegar, odds are you have seen this clumpy whitish mass at the bottom of the bottle.

Never throw this out! This is an already thriving Mother of vinegar. If you have some of that on hand, you completely cut out this first step or at least get a huge head start.

If you are starting fresh, begin with the first step below.

## INGREDIENTS:

- Old wine still in the bottle with a cork,



16oz or so for the Mother, and more when you make your vinegar

- Red wine or apple cider vinegar, a few tablespoons should be enough
- Iodine, for sterilization
- Storage container, ceramic or glass is preferred but NEVER use metal
- Sterilized containers, for bottling your vinegar
- Cheesecloth & rubber band
- Ripe fruit, to feed your Mother
- Optional: fine sieve, funnel, fruit juice

## MAKE THE MOTHER:

To make a Mother, take your leftover wine and add a splash (tablespoon) of red wine or apple cider vinegar. Re-cork the bottle and put it somewhere dark and warm to encourage the bacteria to attack residual sugar in the wine and start the fermentation process.



Temperature is not entirely crucial, but a stable and warm temperature around 70 degrees will usually yield better results. It takes about 2 months to fully grow your mother. No matter how much you want to take it out and look at it, be sure to leave the bottle alone otherwise your mother could fail.

Note: If for some reason it doesn't work, or if you just don't want to wait 2 months for maturity, you can buy Mother of vinegar premade, in a tub from a wine supply store. After 2 months has passed, slowly pour the contents of the bottle into bowl. Mother,

when ready, is not very pretty and looks a bit like something you might cough up after a bad cold...

There will also be some vinegar that has already started to form.

You can filter out with a fine sieve or coffee filter into another bowl to transfer to bottle. Don't throw any sludge away, this is your starter.

While not appetizing, it is not harmful; and can be used again and again to create more vinegar.

## FEEDING YOUR MOTHER:

After you have created your Mother, you'll need to feed so that it will produce a regular supply of vinegar. Transfer your culture to a storable container with a wide mouth, like a crock. Another good vessel to use is a glass beverage container with a spigot, like for iced tea.

In the container, combine your Mother with any left over fruits that are starting to go bad or have become over ripened—berries, apples, pears and pit fruits are all good choices, even tomatoes.

Just be mindful that whatever you add will contribute to the overall flavor,

Now add enough liquid (an inexpensive bottle of wine, or the dregs of the half-finished glasses of wine you've been saving in your refrigerator) to cover the fruit you've

given the Mother. You can also use fresh fruit juices in addition to the wine. Store bought bottle juice is not a good idea as it has preservatives that inhibit fermentation.

The container needs to be covered to keep dirt and insects out but make sure that it can breathe. One of the easiest ways to do this is to lay a piece of cheesecloth over the mouth of the container and secure it with a rubber band.

Then put the mix in a warm dark place once again, checking on it every week. Continue to add liquid as needed.

A bit of scum will form on top as the process continues.

This just needs to be scraped off before you add more to the mix.

This, like the mother, is not harmful; it's just the bacteria creating its own perfect environment.

Note: When you add liquid, your vinegar will be diluted until the bacteria can catch up, so if you're in the mood for sharp vinegar, you'll need to give the mix some time. I recommend tasting at 6 weeks and going from there.

## **VOILA! VINEGAR**

Once the vinegar has a taste that is to your liking it is time to bottle it.

This is where the iced tea container comes in very handy.

Pour from the spigot and bottle it in small, sterilized, airtight vessels.

If your container does not have a spigot, just ladle the vinegar out and strain it through cheese cloth before you bottle it.

If you don't want the sediment, filter again with a fine sieve or coffee filter.

If you want to store your vinegar for long periods you will need to pasteurize it.

This is a simple process and all you need to do is heat it to 150°F for a half hour in a clean pot — then you don't have to worry about an airtight container.

You can also add fresh herbs to the bottles if you like. This will not only make your vinegar look nice, but infuse it with delicious herb flavors that make it perfect for marinating meats.

Your Mother will continue to work and grow as you add to it. At some point you'll have more mother than room for vinegar.

You can scrape the extra Mother off of your container and start a new batch of vinegar or you can share it with your friends.

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