

red wine vinegar

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Red Wine Vinegar

Red wine fermented a second time, by *Acetobacter*, into acetic acid. It is the default acid for European cold food — sharp, fruity, and robust enough to stand up to [olive oil](#) and a strong cheese where a gentler vinegar would vanish.

Why acid is the slot people skip

Cold suppresses the perception of both salt and aroma. A dressing balanced in a warm pan reads flat straight from the fridge, and the reflex is to add more oil or more mayonnaise when the answer is almost always acid and salt. Hence the ratio adjustment on [Cold Meals](#): a classic vinaigrette is **3 parts oil to 1 part acid**, but for a grain bowl go to **2 : 1**, because the grain absorbs and dulls it.

The vinaigrette

Whisk the vinegar with salt **first**, so the salt dissolves in the water phase, then the [dijon mustard](#), then the oil in a thin stream. The mustard is the emulsifier; without it the dressing separates within minutes.

Where each vinegar belongs

Vinegar	Acidity	Use
Red wine	6–7 %	Grain bowls, pasta salad, robust dressings
White wine	6–7 %	Delicate salads, pickling
Sherry	7–8 %	gazpacho , anything Spanish. Nutty, worth buying
Cider	5 %	Pickling, slaws
rice vinegar	4–5 %	East Asian dressings, sushi rice
Balsamic (aged)	—	A finishing syrup, not a vinaigrette acid

Supermarket "balsamic vinegar of Modena" is mostly wine vinegar with grape must and caramel; true aged *tradizionale* is a different and much more expensive product, used in drops.

Keeping

Indefinitely, cool and dark. A cloudy strand may form — that is a harmless "mother" of cellulose and bacteria. Strain it out or ignore it.

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