

# Press and Mortar Blog

## [Before Version]

### Balsamic

Balsamic vinegar is considered "the usual" when you buy vinegar; at least, it was in my household. If it wasn't balsamic, it was red wine vinegar, apple cider, or malt in the cupboard. Either way, somehow, vinegar finds its way into our kitchens and is incorporated into our daily lives. If you see distilled vinegar under the sink or with cleaning supplies, it is not wise to eat it since the acidity is very strong. Also, some vinegars are not ingestible. Also, just to be safe, do not ingest anything near or for the sole purpose of cleaning since these materials can harm you. If it is under the sink? Please do not attempt! We will go into talking about them, but just for information's sake on what they are used for specifically.

But let's start with balsamic vinegar since they have grades for this vinegar. There are four types of grades: artisan, condiment, commercial, and imitation. Artisan must follow the Italian law of DOP to be put in this category, aged beyond 12 years. Condiment doesn't have to follow Italian law, but they do have a requirement of being aged less than 12 years. It is the closest to being traditional but progresses elsewhere and still carries an I.G.P. label on the bottle. Commercial and imitation are the lowest grades that are economically reasonable. Still, the quality is very different than a D.O.P. Usually, you would see these in the professional kitchen, as 5-star chefs use them for infusing flavors into decadent appetizers like foie gras seared and served with balsamic onions. They take a gallon of this cheap vinegar and reduce it to a caramel sweet glaze to use as a bit of sweet acid to cut fat or brighten up a dish to bring some life.

*Chef, what is white balsamic? And what do you use it for?*

White balsamic is made with Trebbiano grapes, which are golden and have a mild taste. They use this vinegar just for salads and marinades since the flavor is slightly sweet but has a crisp-cut taste, leaving the palette clean.

I had this one vinegar that brought me to my knees. It was infused with such syrupy and sweet peaches that all that came to mind was a flaky pastry with an infused peach-infused marmalade. Then, I started thinking about duck; there's a lot you can do with this type of vinegar.

For travelers, do you want to visit the balsamic vinegar capital? Modena, Italy, is where barrels of vinegar are treated just like wine, but they are stowed in an attic or barn that is temperature-controlled during the summer and winter months.

Modena has a lot of potential and is a massive contributor to the culinary industry, and to top it, Luciano Pavarotti was from Modena. But try it out with some good cheese and charcuterie, or drizzle some on your tomatoes or strawberries for a snack. Do you want to make your

balsamic glaze? You can use an industrial grade, add a few cups in a pot, and put it on low heat. Watch it since it can overboil and create a mess, but the longer and the most reduced turns into a glaze.

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