The Power of Flavored Olive Oils and Vinegars

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Making a Basic Vinaigrette

- Why make your own?
  - Less sugar
  - Less salt
  - Ingredients you can pronounce
  - Exercise your creativity

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Making a Basic Vinaigrette

- The Basics:
  - 3 parts oil, 1 part vinegar, but not set in stone… depends on the strength/mildness of your vinegar, as well as whether you are using flavored oils
  - Add vinegar to a bowl along with any additional flavorings (salt, pepper, shallot, etc.), whisk in oil. You can also shake in a jar or use a blender.
  - Adjust with a little salt and pepper
  - Voila!

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Get Fancy (the Easy Way!)

- *Mix Up Your Vinegars*: from mild (i.e, white wine vinegar and apple cider vinegar) to bold (i.e., tropical spice vinegar)
- *Mix Up Your Oils*: convention is to use a neutral oil like extra virgin olive oil; but play with this… include pumpkin seed or walnut or avocado oil to get different flavors
- *Use Other Acids*: go beyond vinegar… use citrus juices or a combo of juices (i.e., add pomegranate, etc.), or mix vinegar and juice
- *Don't Forget the Seasoning*: mustard (stone ground, Dijon), garlic, onion, shallot, herbs (fresh or dried), spices (celery seed is one of my favs… and you need less salt), touch of honey or agave or maple syrup (to balance the acid), zest, olives, etc.

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Go Beyond Salad

- Use flavored oils and vinegars in:
  - Grains: couscous, quinoa, pasta
  - Marinades for veggies or tofu or bean salads, etc.
  - Reductions/sauces
  - Popcorn (orange oil and cinnamon is one of my favs!)
  - Pestos
  - Salsas
  - Cocktails/Spritzers
  - Baked Goods (Orange Olive Oil Muffins on the Blog)
  - Finishing (drizzle at the very end): smoked oil on my black eyed peas and kale

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Photo Credit: http://www.brookhavenmarket.com/Content/Images/uploaded/Blog/2013/07-31/vinegar.jpg

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The Power of Flavored Oils and Vinegars in Veg-centric Cooking

- Vinegar, like salt, is a *flavor enhancer*. Using flavored vinegars adds flavor without adding salt, sugar, or fat to your foods. There's no preservatives. Just flavor!
- Similarly, although olive oil does have fat, it's monounsaturated fat, has a lot of antioxidants, and has been linked to quite a bit of health benefits. By using flavored olive oil, you get the best of both worlds—*a source of "good" fat and flavor*!
- Allows you to extract maximal flavor with minimal salt, sugar, and bad fat.
- (Some of) My FAVS:
  - Smoked Olive Oil, Orange Olive Oil, Basil Olive Oil
  - Tropical Spice Vinegar, Lemongrass Vinegar, Dark Chocolate Vinegar