

Homemade Fruit Vinegar

Ingredients

- 2 cups organic apple or pear peels and cores/any type of berry/tomato skins and seeds/plum, peach, apricot or nectarine skins (any parts of these fruits will work)
- 4 cups water
- 1 teaspoon organic white or brown sugar (optional, for speeding up the fermentation process and will add extra flavor)

Method

1. Place fruit scraps into a large bucket (at least 1/2 gallon size), wide mouth mason or regular glass jar or a stone crock. Add the water and optional white or brown sugar. Cover the container with a muslin cloth to prevent dust, bugs or anything else falling into your vinegar solution. Place the container in a place where it can ferment undisturbed, preferably out of direct sunlight.
2. Let the fruit scraps and water sit for about 8 weeks, during which time a thick layer of goopy scum will form on the top. This scum, also known as the “mother” is cellulose produced by acetic acid bacteria which is ubiquitous in nature and present in all fermented, unpasteurized foods. The bacteria becomes present whenever ethanol is produced. Ethanol is made when wild, airborne yeasts are feeding on the sugar in your fruit scraps. Fruit flies carry acetic acid bacteria in their bodies and so are actually an effective way to expedite vinegar making. If you want to allow fruit flies to help ferment your fruit scraps, keep your vinegar solution uncovered for about a day after beginning the process, check to see if any flies have landed and cover the container with cloth.
3. After the 8 week period, strain the liquid into a glass bottle through several layers of cheesecloth, a mesh bag or a fine mesh strainer and cover with a metal cap or cork stopper. After another 4 weeks, strain the liquid again through a clean cloth about the thickness of muslin into the bottle in which you want to store the vinegar. Cap it, label it and you’ll have the fantastically fruity and tasty addition to your kitchen ingredients!

Notes



A mother may re-develop in your finished vinegar, which will look like a floating, gelatinous mass at the bottom of your bottle. Don't throw this away! Much like a sourdough bread starter, it will kick-start future vinegar-making processes, so save it in a small jar once you get to the end of your bottle.

(Yield: 2 to 2 1/2 cups)