



Wildcrafted Vinegars: Making and Using Unique Acetic Acid Ferments for Quick Pickles, Hot Sauces, Soups, Salad Dressings, Pastes, Mustards, and More

Pascal Baudar

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Wildcrafted Vinegars completes Pascal Baudar's trilogy of primers on crafting fermented foods and beverages. With over 100 recipes, inviting photographs, and detailed information about sourcing and creating vinegars from foraged plants, including weeds and invasives, its recommendations are delicious and "beneficial ... for the environment."

The basics of making intense, flavorful vinegars from items ranging from fruit scraps and juices to alcoholic beverages are outlined in an encouraging way. Baudar recommends using vinegar mothers from a friend or commercial supplier to start the fermentation process. These jiggly blobs of cellulose and bacteria float atop homemade vinegars and interact with the wild yeasts and bacteria present in the air and on fruit, catalyzing fermentation. The book's information on plant- and seed-collection techniques, pasteurization, and large batch fermentation are valuable additions.

Recipes for tantalizing fermented and infused vinegars are included alongside encouragement toward culinary experimentation (within the limits of food safety guidelines). This freewheeling, playful style both demystifies a branch of food preservation and inspires the collection and use of local plants to create unique concoctions that reflect one's personal terroir. Baudar's own spectacular Mountains Vinegar is infused with juniper berries, white fir, and pinyon pine cones and branches that evoke his favorite southern California terrain, for example.

The book recommends ways of using homemade vinegars in vinaigrettes, sauces, quick pickles, mustards, and refreshing beverages, showcasing vinegar's versatility as a seasoning. Chili heads will also delight in the many recipes that pair hot peppers and vinegar, from Bottled Pain (vinegar infused with seven kinds of peppers) to a Tabasco-like fermented pepper mash.

Wildcrafted Vinegars is sure to appeal to adventurous cooks and the increasing legion of those expanding their plant-based and foraging menus. Baudar, a self-described "culinary alchemist," incorporates fun and knowledge in equal parts in his delightful, educational resource.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (September / October 2022)

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