Beneficial Bites

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1. **What is Vinegar**
   1. The first process is called alcoholic fermentation and occurs when yeasts change natural sugars to alcohol under controlled conditions. In the second process, a group of bacteria (called “Acetobacter”) converts the alcohol portion to acid. This is the acetic, or acid fermentation that forms vinegar.
   2. Vinegar is a sour tasting liquid containing 5-20% acetic acid, obtained by fermenting ethanol, alcoholic liquids, typically wine, cider, and beer.
   3. Vinegar is used in condiments (mustard and salad dressings), baking/ cooking and pickling/ canning.
      1. Vinegar is common in baked goods because it is an acid, it is added to cake batters to react with baking soda to start the chemical reaction needed to produce carbon dioxide and give the batter a lift as the cake starts to bake.
   4. Vinegar is also used for Cleaning.
      1. The acid level in vinegar is what makes it such a great cleaner. It counteracts some buildups like dirt, grease, soap scum, brines from hard water, and glue from stickers.
      2. A baking Soda and vinegar paste can remove a red wine stain safely.
2. **History of Vinegar**
   1. Around 500 BC the Babylonians were using the fruit of the date palm to make wine and vinegar to be used as food and a preservative or pickling agent. Vinegar residues were found in urns from ancient Egypt and have been traced to 3000 BC. The first written history of vinegar in China dates back to 1200 BC.
   2. A legend states that an advisor of the king and queen in Babylonia 5000 BC “discovered” wine formed from unattended grape juice, leading to the eventual discovery of vinegar and its use as a food preservative.
   3. Hippocrates in 420 BC used vinegar medicinally to manage wounds.
3. **Health Benefits**
   1. Some medical research shows that ingesting apple cider vinegar can help acid reflux, lower blood pressure, improve diabetes and support some or small weight loss due to its ingredients: acetic acid, potassium, magnesium, probiotics, and enzymes.
   2. There is some evidence that the acetic acid can interact with starch-digesting enzymes, which will help keep blood sugar down [after a meal] in the short term.
   3. Research found that when people with Type 2 diabetes consumed 30 milliliters (roughly 1 fluid ounce of) vinegar mixed with 20 milliliters water before a meal, their blood glucose, insulin and triglyceride levels were lower for up to five hours after the meal than when they consumed a placebo; what's more, the vinegar-drinkers' forearm muscles had a greater uptake of glucose from the blood, which also helps with blood sugar regulation.
   4. It is said to help inhibit tumor growth and possibly prevent cancer however, the research and evidence to support this claim is lacking and insufficient at this time.
   5. Low in calories, vinegar can range from thin and sharp to very sweet and syrupy. It takes on the flavor profile if the foods from which it is fermented, so you can add a lot of flavor to foods.
4. **Selection, Storage, Preparation**
   1. Tips for selecting Vinegar is to purchase one that best suits your needs.
      1. Look for vinegars with as few additives as possible
      2. Choose malt or white distilled vinegars (this still depends what use of the vinegar is for).
      3. If buying a Balsamic vinegar, choose one that has been aged for more than four years to receive the best taste.
   2. The most ideal storage container for vinegar is glass and certain plastic containers (vinegar purchased in a plastic container from the store is safe).
      1. Store in a cool dark place (refrigerator)
      2. Some vinegars can go bad after a long period of time (6 months – 1 year) and lose its flavor after it has been opened.
5. **Serving Ideas**
   1. Vinegar is used to enhance a dish
      1. By adding a splash of vinegar can brighten flavors of almost any dish.
   2. White Vinegar
      1. Used with pickling, ketchup, salad, dressings.
   3. White wine Vinegar
      1. It is great for pickling and punching up a lighter vinaigrettes for salads without changing the color of the product.
   4. Rice Vinegar
      1. Made from fermented rice wine, it has a sweet less acidic taste than most wine vinegars and lacks the harshness found in distilled or white vinegar.
      2. Primarily used in dipping sauces and grill marinades.
   5. Champagne Vinegar
      1. Made from champagne
      2. Light mellow taste, not used with cooking but it is great for making condiments and dressings because it won’t over power the taste of the produce.
   6. Red Wine Vinegar
      1. The most popular in the U.S.
      2. Great for making vinaigrettes and dressings, coleslaws and meat marinades
6. **Fun Facts**
   1. Vinegar was discovered over 10,000 years ago.
   2. Like wine, vinegars each have a distinct personality from mildly sour rice wine vinegar to boldly sweet Italian balsamic.
   3. The name vinegar comes from the French “vin aigre” which means sour wine
   4. November 1st is National Vinegar day
   5. White vinegar is said to help treat sunburn by placing a tissue over the sunburned skin and lightly spraying the vinegar over the burned area. The vinegar is said to help restore the skin to the correct acidity and give a cooling effect.