

Nine Fine Vinegar Fire Cider and Oxymel Recipes

RECIPES FROM A ROSTER OF HEALTH-CONSCIOUS COOKS AND RECIPE
DEVELOPERS



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About All Things Vinegar

I've always found vinegar fascinating, and why not? It improves the taste of practically every food and many beverages, helps people live healthier lives, and cleans, disinfects and even has properties to soothe fire ant, mosquito, and other insect bites.

In fact, my last name, Essick, is an Anglicized version of the German word Essig (or in High German Essaich) which means vinegar. So perhaps back in the day one of my ancestors was the vinegar guy in the village, and now I'm just carrying on their work in my own way.

All About Oxymels

Oxymels—the sweet-tart blend of honey and vinegar often infused with healing herbs—are capturing the attention of wellness seekers and culinary creatives alike. Their rise from ancient remedy to modern staple is a story of flavor, function, and tradition, inviting everyone to reclaim the art of home herbal medicine.

Once cherished as a medicinal remedy for a wide variety of digestive and air-borne ailments, oxymels now appeal to those seeking more natural, holistic alternatives to synthetic medicine, those interested in functional foods, and creative cooks.

A renewed interest in fermentation, microbiome health, and kitchen self-sufficiency places oxymels at the intersection of tradition and modern science. Recipes are endlessly adaptable—use what’s local, fresh, and seasonal, or what needs using up. The process is forgiving and open to creative flavor combinations, making oxymel crafting as much art as science, but what sets oxymels apart from other FYI creations is their remarkable approachability. Anyone can make one in minutes, with zero special equipment.

The Ancient Roots of Oxymels

The word “oxymel” comes from the Greek oxymel, meaning “acid and honey.” References date back over two millennia, with Hippocrates prescribing these blends to ease respiratory illnesses and digestive issues. They spread through the Roman Empire as both health elixir and culinary condiment, evolving into “serkangabin” in Persian medicine, where hundreds of unique formulas emerged.

Medieval households across Europe kept oxymels on hand for coughs, colds, and general vitality, and travelled with sailors and settlers to the New World and survived as staple folk remedies in colonial America. They were valued for their shelf-stability and accessibility for anyone who could source vinegar and honey as well as the adaptability to infuse and gain healing properties from whatever botanicals were at hand.

Why Oxymels Waned in Western Kitchen

Oxymels' popularity began to decline in the late 19th and 20th centuries, as industrial pharmaceuticals, processed food, and refrigeration changed how people ate and managed illness. Commercial cough syrups and pills replaced herbal formulas while mass-produced sweeteners pushed honey aside. The introduction and easy access to home refrigeration and other labor-saving appliances diminished the household need for vinegary preservation. Kitchen medicine faded from view, regarded as old-fashioned or “unscientific”, and many of the old practices faded into the realm of “folk” or “alternative” medicine.

The Renaissance: Rosemary Gladstar and Herbal Movements

The revival of oxymels is closely linked to the emergence of contemporary herbalism and the influence of Rosemary Gladstar, often called the “Godmother of American Herbalism.” Gladstar, influenced by the self-sufficiency and empowerment movements of the 1970s and 80s, encouraged “medicine-making as kitchen craft.” She coined and popularized “Fire Cider,” an invigorating oxymel featuring apple cider vinegar, honey, and pungent roots and spices.

Gladstar's recipes and her ethos of sharing, adaptability, and public domain herbal knowledge sparked a global herbal movement. Her advocacy ensured “Fire Cider” recipes remain open, not trademarked, reinforcing oxymels as a gift to be shared, adapted, and enjoyed by current and future generations. Today, oxymels have become part of the herbalist's toolkit and the curious home cook's pantry. Farmer's markets offer bottled blends inspired by Gladstar's work; blogs and Instagram accounts showcase dozens of creative combinations; and contemporary health trends place food-as-medicine and fermentation at the center of wellness.

The Benefits: Oxymel Science and Tradition Meet Flavor

Oxymels are celebrated not only for their history, but also for the real and potential health benefits conferred by their simple ingredients. While most medicinal claims stem from tradition and anecdotal use, scientific research supports many ingredient-specific benefits. Claims about overall synergy remain less studied, but the growing popularity of fermented foods and functional tonics means more inquiry and innovation each year.

Six Ways Oxymels Can be Good for the Body

- 1. Digestive support:** Vinegar stimulates gastric juices, helping with the breakdown and assimilation of food. Honey serves as a prebiotic, supporting beneficial gut bacteria.
- 2. Antimicrobial action:** Both vinegar and honey contain compounds that can inhibit harmful microbes, soothe sore throats, and act as gentle preservatives.
- 3. Blood sugar moderation:** Apple cider vinegar is studied for its capacity to help regulate post-meal blood sugar levels, supporting metabolic health.
- 4. Herbal enhancement:** Oxymels can be tailored with botanicals—ginger, thyme, fennel, garlic, nettle, rosehip, or elderberry—adding antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immune-supportive properties.
- 5. Gut health:** Acetic acid from vinegar modulates gut microbes, promoting beneficial strains. Herbs like ginger and fennel help reduce bloating and indigestion.
- 6. Flavor and versatility:** Oxymels deliver complexity: tangy, sweet, herbal, and fresh. They work as salad dressings, drink mixers, elixirs, and marinades.

The Blast From The Past That's Growing in Popularity Today

Many people enjoy sipping a diluted teaspoon in water, using it to brighten salads or cocktails, or adding it to tea for a wellness boost. For those new to herbal medicine, oxymels offer a low-risk, culinary-first gateway; for seasoned herbalists, a way to bring the benefits of wild plants and garden herbs into daily life.

The renaissance of oxymels is part of a broader home herbal mantra: take what nature offers, prepare it with intention, and reap the benefits for body, flavor, and family. Whether you choose a classic Fire Cider or a vibrant cranberry or healing rosehip creation, the heart of oxymel making is empowerment—bringing ancestral wisdom into the kitchen, one jar at a time.

Rosemary Gladstar's Original Fire Cider

Every oxymel guide must start with the recipe that stirred interest in the benefits of oxymels and vinegar ciders. I took this recipe from the book, *Fire Cider! 101 Zesty Recipes for Health-Boosting Remedies* by Rosemary Gladstar and Friends or visit her website: <https://scienceandartofherbalism.com/>

½ cup grated horseradish root
½ cup or more chopped onion
¼ cup or more chopped garlic
¼ cup or more grated ginger
2 - 3 slices of hot pepper of choice, (I used Serrano pepper)
Apple Cider Vinegar (preferably raw and organic)
Honey

Step 1

Place the herbs in a half-gallon mason jar and add enough vinegar to cover them by 3 to 4 inches. Seal the jar with a tight-fitting lid. Place the jar in a warm spot and let sit for 3 to 4 weeks. Shake jar every day to help in the maceration process.

Step 2

After 3 to 4 weeks, strain out the herbs, reserving the liquid. Warm the honey (so that it will mix in well) and add it to the vinegar, to taste."to taste" means your fire cider should be hot, spicy, and sweet. "A little bit of honey helps the medicine go down..." The honey also helps cool the heat, moistens, and balances all the fiery ingredients. Add to your taste preference.

Step 3

Bottle, label, and enjoy.



Cranberry Sage Oxymel

Cranberries offer antioxidant support and has traditional uses for urinary tract health, which pairs beautifully with the warming, aromatic notes of sage and ginger. Together they create a sweet–tart, herbaceous tonic that works well both as daily support and in focused, short-term use. I found the inspiration for this recipe at the website: <https://www.moonwiseherbs.com/post/cranberry-oxymel-healing-and-festive>

Enough cranberries to fill three-quarters of a jar
Quarter cup of fresh sage leaves
Five or six slices ginger
1 cup or enough organic apple cider vinegar to completely cover cranberries
Add 1 cup raw honey (local if you can find it)

Step 1

Fill a pint-size jar three-quarter full of whole cranberries and the sage leaves and ginger slices. Cover with completely with vinegar and add honey (I like to melt the honey a bit in the microwave so it blends easier).

Step 2

Shake until well mixed and store in a dark place, shaking every couple days. Let the oxymel ingredients infuse over the course of a 2-week period.

Step 3

Strain the mixture through a mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth, squeezing out as much liquid as possible, and pour the strained oxymel into a glass pint-size jar or bottle. Label it with date and description and store in a cool dark place for up to 6 months.





Garlic and Herb Oxymel

From: <https://www.endeavour.edu.au/about-us/blog/recipe-immune-boosting-oxymel-tonic>

16-12 cloves of garlic, roughly chopped
½ cup rosemary (fresh is best but can use dried)
½ cup sage (fresh is best but can use dried)
¼ cup of thyme (fresh is best but can use dried)
Apple cider vinegar

Step 1

Combine the garlic and herbs in a glass jar, pressing some of the herbs if using fresh and fill the jar with enough vinegar to fully cover the herbs,

Step 2

Cover tightly and let the mixture sit in a warm spot for roughly three weeks (stirring daily)

Step 3

At the end of three weeks: Strain out the herbs, rebottle the vinegar and add 1/2-1 cup, honey – Stir well and store in a cool dark place.

Take 1-2 tablespoons daily or you can take it more frequently (every 3-4 hours) if you feel yourself coming down with a cold. You can also use this as a marinade or flavouring agent in dressings.



Thyme Oxymel

A healing tonic for bloating and bronchitis Thyme Oxymel can be taken in small amounts (few teaspoons or a tablespoon) for a sore throat or congested cough, or used as a salad dressing with equal amount of olive oil. Inspiration provided by: <https://veggiefestchicago.org/recipe/thyme-oxymel/>

Fresh thyme leaves and stems, finely chopped or dried
thyme leaves

½ cup good quality honey, preferably raw, more to taste
Organic apple cider vinegar

Clean glass pint jar with plastic lid

Step 1

Fill the jar $\frac{3}{4}$ full with fresh thyme or $\frac{1}{3}$ full if using dried.

Step 2

Add honey and apple cider vinegar to almost fill the jar. Use a wooden or plastic spoon to mix well. Cover the jar with a plastic lid. Shake well.

Step 3

Keep the jar in a cool, dark place for 2 weeks, shake once daily. After 2 weeks, Using a mesh strainer, strain out the herbs, using the bottom of the jar to press out all the liquid. Transfer to clean jar with plastic lid.

Step 4

Store in a cool place or keep in the fridge.

Wild Berry Oxymel

Raspberries and blackberries bring a deeply fruity, sweet–tart base to this oxymel and are both rich in vitamin C, fiber, and protective plant compounds that support overall health. Together with ginger's gentle heat, this makes a bright, juicy tonic that feels both comforting and uplifting. I found inspiration for this oxymel at the website: <https://www.garturstitchfarm.com/blog/wild-berry-vinegar>.

Handful of fresh raspberries, blackberries and/or elderberries (around 120g)
A clean, glass jam jar
Organic apple cider vinegar or kombucha vinegar
Organic honey

Step 1

Combine the berries of your choice into the jar and cover completely with vinegar and add honey into the mix

Step 2

Cover tightly and let the mixture sit in a warm spot for roughly three weeks (shaking and inspecting daily)

Step 3

At the end of three weeks strain the liquid from the fruit and refrigerate for up to 3 months.



Lemon Ginger Oxymel



From: <https://www.crucialdetail.com/blogs/recipes/oxymel>

- ½ cup of Honey
- ½ cup of apple cider vinegar
- 3 lemons
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 ginger root, peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 2 cinnamon sticks

Step 1

Using a zester, remove long strips of zest from the lemons and juice lemons and strain juice.

Step 2

Combine zest strips with sugar. Muddle or rub the mixture together with your fingers until aromatic.

Step 3

Arrange ginger and cinnamon in a jar and transfer the lemon zest & sugar mixture into the jar.

Step 4

Let sit for 1 hour or more, occasionally shaking (with stopper inserted). You will see oils being expelled from the zest.

Step 5

Add the cider vinegar and honey to lemon juice, mixture and shake well until the sugar is well dissolved. Infuse at least 1 day and will last several weeks if refrigerated.

Rosehip Oxymel with Cinnamon

Rose hips, rich in vitamin C, lend this oxymel a bright, gently tangy profile while offering nutrient-dense support for immunity, joint, and skin health. Paired with light, neutral white vinegar and honey, they create a versatile, food-like tonic that fits easily into daily routines. Inspired by: <https://www.gruenesmoothies.eu/en/oxymel-recipe>

- 1 cup honey, local if available
- 1 cup White wine vinegar unfiltered and unheated
- 1 cup Rosehips
- 1 pinch of Ceylon cinnamon optional

Step 1

Wash rose hips, remove stems and brown caps.

Step 2

Put all ingredients in the blender jar and blend well on high speed and pour the mixture into a sterilized canning jar. Seal airtight

Step 3

Let sit for about 2-3 days

Step 4

Strain the rosehip mixture through a fine sieve and collect the finished oxymel in a sterilized jar. Refrigerate.





Self-Heal or Wound Healer Oxymel

Yarrow, also known as self-heal heal-all or soldier's woundwort, has been used for centuries to heal battlefield wounds by stopping bleeding and preventing infection. This oxymel with self-heal can be incorporated into a balanced diet as part of a winter wellness routine. Inspiration from <https://www.growforagecookferment.com/self-heal-oxymel>.

½ cup yarrow seeds, flowers, stems and seeds
1 cup organic apple cider vinegar
1 cup raw honey
Cinnamon stick

Step 1

Fill the jar $\frac{3}{4}$ full with fresh yarrow herb

Step 2

Add honey, apple cider vinegar and cinnamon stick to almost fill the jar. Use a wooden or plastic spoon to mix well. Cover the jar and shake well.

Step 3

Keep the jar in a cool, dark place for 2 weeks, shake once daily to mix well.

Step 4

Using a mesh strainer, strain out the herbs, and press out all the liquid. Transfer to clean jar.

Step 5

Store in a cool place or keep in the fridge.

Immune-Boosting Orange Peel, Vinegar and Honey Oxymel

From: <https://www.wishgardenherbs.com/blogs/wishgarden/orange-peel-oxymel-recipe>

Ingredients

1 cup dried organic orange peel
½ cup fresh ginger, sliced
1 cup raw apple cider vinegar
½ cup raw honey

Step 1

Add the dried orange peel and fresh ginger to a sterilized glass jar.

Step 2

Pour the raw apple cider vinegar over the ingredients, ensuring everything is fully submerged

Step 3

Seal the jar tightly and shake well. Store in a cool, dark place, shaking occasionally over the next 2-4 weeks.

Step 4

Strain out the solids and mix in raw honey to taste, stirring until fully combined

Step 5

Store in a cool place or keep in the fridge.



The Vinegar Chef's Pantry

Featured Ingredients

I always advocate for sourcing your honey and herbs from local beekeepers, growers, and farmer's markets whenever possible to support your regional ecosystem. However, I know that finding high-quality, organic staples can sometimes be a challenge depending on the season or where you live. To help you get started without delay, I've curated this list of the specific ingredients and tools I use in my own kitchen. Please note that some of the links below are affiliate links, meaning I may earn a small commission at no extra cost to you if you choose to purchase through them—this helps support the work we do here at All Things Vinegar .



[Raw Honey](#)



[Apple Cider Vinegar](#)



[White Wine Vinegar](#)



[Fresh Herbs, Fruit and Vegetables](#)

The Vinegar Chef's Pantry

Featured Equipment

While oxymel making is an ancient, low-tech art, using the right tools ensures your infusions remain pure and shelf-stable. I always suggest repurposing what you have in your kitchen first—a simple glass jar or a steady wooden spoon is often all you need. However, for those looking to refine their process or ensure they are using non-reactive materials that won't interfere with the acidity of the vinegar, I've highlighted the equipment I rely on most. As with the ingredients above, these links are part of my affiliate program, which helps me keep 'All Things Vinegar' running as a resource for our community.



[Glass Beverage and Mason Jars](#)



[Metal Strainer](#)



[Citrus Zester](#)



[High Speed Blender](#)

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