

Tangy & Bold: How to Make the Best Vinegar-Based BBQ Sauce at Home

there's something special about a



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5 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups apple cider vinegar (white vinegar works too, but apple cider vinegar adds a smoother tang)
- 1/2 cup water (to slightly mellow the acidity)
- 1/4 cup ketchup (for a little body, optional for purists)
- 2 tbsp brown sugar (or honey for a natural sweetness)
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce (adds umami depth)
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (adjust for heat preference)
- 1 tsp smoked paprika (adds subtle smokiness)
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper (optional, for extra heat)
- 1 tsp hot sauce (Texas Pete or Frank's Red Hot work great)

How to Make Vinegar-Based BBQ Sauce:

1. Mix Everything Together:
2. Let It Sit:
3. Give It a Taste & Adjust:

If I want it sweeter, I add more brown sugar.

For more heat, I sprinkle in extra cayenne or hot sauce.

If the vinegar is too strong, I add a splash of water or a bit more ketchup.

4. Store It or Serve Immediately:

How to Use Vinegar-Based BBQ Sauce:

Pulled Pork - This is THE classic pairing. I drizzle it over slow-cooked pulled pork and toss it in the sauce before serving.

Smoked or Grilled Chicken - A light brushing towards the end of cooking adds a tangy, flavorful glaze.

BBQ Ribs - Instead of a thick, sticky sauce, this one seeps into the meat, keeping it juicy and flavorful.

Beef Brisket - A great way to balance out the rich, fatty meat.

Grilled Vegetables - A surprising but delicious option-especially with grilled zucchini or mushrooms.

Dipping Sauce - It works great as a table sauce for adding an extra burst of flavor to any meal.

Pro Tips for the Best Vinegar BBQ Sauce:

Shake or stir before using - Since the ingredients can settle, I always give the sauce a good shake or stir before serving.

Make it ahead of time - The flavors deepen as it sits, so I try to prepare it at least a day before I need it.

Customize it to your taste - Play around with the heat and sweetness levels to match your preference.

Use high-quality vinegar - Since vinegar is the star of the show, using a good apple cider vinegar makes a noticeable difference.

What to Serve with Vinegar-Based BBQ Sauce:

Classic coleslaw - The creamy texture balances out the acidity.

Cornbread or hush puppies - Perfect for sopping up extra sauce.

Mac and cheese - Because every barbecue meal needs some creamy, cheesy goodness.

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Mix Everything Together:** I grab a medium-sized bowl or a mason jar and whisk together the vinegar, water, ketchup (if using), brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce, salt, black pepper, red pepper flakes, paprika, cayenne (if using), and hot sauce.
- 2. Let It Sit:** This is the secret to a great vinegar-based BBQ sauce. While you can technically use it right away, I let it sit for at least an hour (or even overnight) to let the flavors meld together. The longer it rests, the deeper the flavor gets.
- 3. Give It a Taste & Adjust:** After it has rested, I give it a taste and adjust as needed:
- 4.** If I want it sweeter, I add more brown sugar.
- 5.** For more heat, I sprinkle in extra cayenne or hot sauce.
- 6.** If the vinegar is too strong, I add a splash of water or a bit more ketchup.
- 7. Store It or Serve Immediately:** I pour the sauce into a mason jar or airtight container and store it in the fridge for up to 2 weeks. The flavors actually improve over time, making it even better after a day or two.
- 8. How to Use Vinegar-Based BBQ Sauce:** This sauce is incredibly versatile and works on all kinds of barbecue dishes. Here's how I love to use it:
- 9. Pulled : Pork** - This is THE classic pairing. I drizzle it over slow-cooked pulled pork and toss it in the sauce before serving.
- 10. Smoked or : Grilled Chicken** - A light brushing towards the end of cooking adds a tangy, flavorful glaze.
- 11. BBQ : Ribs** - Instead of a thick, sticky sauce, this one seeps into the meat, keeping it juicy and

flavorful.

12. Beef : Brisket - A great way to balance out the rich, fatty meat.
13. Grilled : Vegetables - A surprising but delicious option-especially with grilled zucchini or mushrooms.
14. Dipping : Sauce - It works great as a table sauce for adding an extra burst of flavor to any meal.
15. Pro Tips for the Best Vinegar BBQ Sauce: Shake or stir before using - Since the ingredients can settle, I always give the sauce a good shake or stir before serving.
16. Make it ahead of time - The flavors deepen as it sits, so I try to prepare it at least a day before I need it.
17. Customize it to your taste - Play around with the heat and sweetness levels to match your preference.
18. Use high-quality vinegar - Since vinegar is the star of the show, using a good apple cider vinegar makes a noticeable difference.
19. What to Serve with Vinegar-Based BBQ Sauce: This sauce is an essential part of a Southern barbecue feast, and I love serving it alongside:
20. Classic coleslaw - The creamy texture balances out the acidity.
21. Cornbread or hush puppies - Perfect for sopping up extra sauce.
22. Mac and cheese - Because every barbecue meal needs some creamy, cheesy goodness.
23. Potato salad - A cool, tangy contrast to smoky, saucy meats.
24. Pickles or pickled onions - A great way to add even more bite to your meal.
25. FAQs (From My Kitchen to Yours): Q: Can I make this sauce less spicy?A: Absolutely! Just reduce or omit the cayenne and red pepper flakes for a milder version.

More recipes: ChefManiac.com

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/tangy-bold-how-to-make-the-best-vinegar-based-bbq-sauce-at-home/>