Balsamic vinegar: what are the differences?



1 **Read the text and comment.**

Balsamic Vinegar - What are the Differences?

I think it's really important, when we're discussing balsamic vinegars, to realise that not all balsamic vinegars are created equally, and, for sure, a lot of what you buy in the supermarket or you see on the supermarket shelves is not true balsamic at all. There's an awfully lot of misleading information… just because a product says that it is a balsamic of Modena, it does not mean that it is actually an authentic balsamic vinegar.

It's a fascinating process how balsamic vinegars are made, and they weren't even really available commercially until about 40 years ago. These were something that were traditionally made in the Italian family and they were consumed by the family or given as gifts, and very special gifts they were!

Balsamic is not made in the same way other vinegars are made: first of all, it's not made from wine, it's made from cooked must. That is the juice that comes from the grapes and the seeds and the skins, which then is cooked down to a thick rich brown syrup, and added to barrels in which balsamic vinegars have already been made and removed to be placed in a smaller barrel. These barrels are typically made with a number of different aromatic wood. And as the first vinegar is taken out and continues to age, the new cooked must is put into that barrel. Only time can create authentic balsamic vinegars.

2 GROUP WORK **The history of vinegar dates back to the Middle Ages. Go online and find out information about ancient traditions.**

Follow the prompts:

- When and where balsamic vinegar was invented
- Why balsamic vinegar was invented and for what purpose
- The rivalry between the towns of Reggio and Modena
- The role of the Este family in the creation of balsamic vinegar
- The difference between cheap, imitation balsamic and 'Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale.



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