

Mustard

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Mustard is made from the tiny round seeds of the mustard plant. To release the flavor locked within the seeds, they must be broken – coarsely cracked, crushed or finely ground – then mixed with liquid. Today’s mustard is thought to be similar to what the Romans made by mixing ground mustards seeds with *must*, which is reduced unfermented juice of wine grapes. Mustard’s name in Latin is *mustum ardens* meaning burning must. Combining and contracting the word gives us *moutarde* in French, *mostarda* in Italian, and mustard in English.

Different types of mustard seeds can be – and often are – blended to combine their different characteristics. Popular mustards are Dijon (containing wine or grape juice), Pommery (coarse), German (coarse and slightly sweet), American (bright yellow and slightly sweet), English (hot), and Chinese (spicy).

First thoughts of using mustard probably are as a condiment on hot dogs or hamburgers. But it can also be used as a key ingredient in cooking. Prepared mustard can be used in sauces, dressings, and marinades, highlighting its spicy flavor and creaminess.

Mustards can vary greatly in taste depending on the ingredients used, but all contain a few basic flavor characteristics. There is always an element of spiciness, from very mild to burning hot. Hot or not, there is also an underlying sweetness from the plant itself, and there is usually a subtle but persistent aroma of yellow mustard flowers.

Store unopened jars of mustard in a cool, dry, dark place. Keep open jars in the refrigerator, tightly sealed, up to a year for best quality. An open jar loses the flavor and aroma lessen over time, especially if it is opened and closed frequently, so don’t let it sit too long in the fridge.

Mustard is incredibly easy to make, takes only a few minutes of active time in the kitchen. Yet it is a versatile ingredient and a welcome gift. Here is a wonderful recipe that won a Blue Ribbon at the El Dorado County fair. It is easy to make and everyone seems to love it. It is not too spicy, can be used as a condiment, and is wonderful used to make vinaigrette.

Lemon Sage Wine Mustard

Yield: five 4-ounce jars

1 bunch of fresh sage
3/4 cup dry white wine
3/4 cup yellow mustard seeds
1 cup white wine vinegar
Grated zest and juice from 2 large lemons
1/2 cup liquid honey
1/4 tsp salt

1. Finely chop enough sage leaves to measure 1/3 cup and set aside.

2. Coarsely chop remaining sage leaves and stems to measure 1/2 cup and place in a small stainless steel saucepan with the white wine. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring and pressing sage to release flavor. Remove from heat. Cover tightly and let steep for 5 minutes.
3. Transfer sage infusion to a sieve placed over a glass or stainless-steel bowl and press leaves with the back of a spoon to extract all the liquid. Discard solids and return liquid to saucepan. Add mustard seeds. Cover and let stand at room temperature until the seeds have absorbed most of the moisture, about 2 hours.
4. Prepare canner, jars and lids.
5. In a blender or food processor fitted with a metal blade, combine marinated mustard seeds (with liquid) and vinegar. Process until blended and most seeds are well chopped (you want to retain a slightly grainy texture).
6. Transfer the mixture to a stainless-steel saucepan and add lemon zest, lemon juice, and honey, salt and reserved finely chopped sage. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low and boil gently, stirring frequently, until volume is reduced by a third, about 20 minutes.
7. Ladle hot mustard into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary, by adding hot mustard. Wipe rim. Center lid on jar. Screw band down until resistance is met, then increase to fingertip-tight.
8. Process in boiling water or atmospheric steam canner for 10 minutes at 0-1,000', 15 minutes at 1,001-3,000', 20 minutes at 3,001-6,000', 25 minutes at 6,001-8,000', and 30 minutes at 8,001'-10,000'.
9. Remove jars from canner. Let cool, undisturbed, 12-24 hours and check for seals. Clean and label jars. Store sealed jars in a cool, dry, dark location. For best flavor,

Source: Ball Complete Book of Home Food Preservation, 2012

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message at (530) 621-5506 or email us at edmf@ucanr.edu. For more information about our program and events, visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmf>. Sign up to receive our eNewsletter at <http://ucanr.edu/mfpcsenews>. Find us on Facebook, too (UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County)!