

In focus – Preserves

Oil and **VINEGAR**



Mmm! Flavoured vinegars are ideal for pickles, chutneys, dressings and general cooking.

Whether infused with spices, fruit, herbs or horseradish, they are easy to prepare and make great gifts that are sure to be gratefully received by all who appreciate fine ingredients and dressings.

Not only that, but their long shelf life guarantees a quick way to provide some variety for dishes year-round. Honey vinegar is one of our favourites – it's perfect for a yummy salad dressing.

Olive oil plays an important role in the kitchen and by making your own, you're sure of its excellent quality that enhances the texture and taste of delicate veggies like asparagus and mushrooms.

And while you're at it, why not try including cabbage, lemon, garlic, chilli, limes, lemongrass and ginger as well?

Think of the exotic flavours you can create for delicious antipasto platters. It could be a meal on its own or simply a few morsels to whet your guests' appetites.



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Either way, artful arranging is the key – and as they're so versatile, oils and vinegars certainly lend themselves to beautiful compositions. It's a good idea to label the bottles with the date and contents, to avoid confusion later. You might like to save unusual display bottles through the year or buy some eye-catching ones as you come across them – and by varying the height, thickness and shape of them, you get the best visual appeal. If they are to be stored rather than used soon, be sure to observe the sterilising and sealing guidelines.

There are a number of preserving spices that you might like to include, such as cardamom, cinnamon, lemon rind, star anise, lemon thyme and lime.

So let your inner chef make a masterpiece out of sun-dried tomatoes and pesto sauce, small savouries like olives, red chillies, fresh vegies and marinated dishes such as baby artichokes or even carrots in lemon vinegar. Roasted asparagus is a great option, too. Consult your cookbooks or just give your imagination free rein! Arrange your selection of gourmet vegies beside freshly baked bread and mature cheeses on simple, elegant platters that allow the food's sensuality to show.

Now's the time to enjoy drizzling your homemade, subtly flavoured oils and vinegars on top – or let them stand in clear presentation jars and give your guests a real treat!

