

Fire Cider: A Family Kitchen Guide

A bold, refrigerated apple-cider-vinegar infusion made with roots, citrus, herbs and warming spices. This version is fully vegan and uses maple syrup.

THE FAMILY BATCH	Makes about 2 cups after straining
Base	2 cups commercially produced apple cider vinegar labeled 5% acidity
Roots + aromatics	1/2 cup sliced fresh ginger; 1/4 cup sliced fresh turmeric; 1/2 small red onion, sliced; 6 garlic cloves, lightly crushed; up to 1/4 cup grated horseradish (optional)
Citrus + herbs	Thin strips of colored peel from 1 small lemon and 1 small orange, with white pith removed; 1 cinnamon stick; 4 thyme sprigs; 2 rosemary sprigs
Heat + finish	1 small jalapeno, sliced (optional); 2 to 4 tablespoons pure maple syrup after straining

How to make it

- Wash the produce. Wash the 1-quart glass jar, then sterilize it in boiling water for 10 minutes and keep it warm until filling. Prepare a noncorrodible lid according to its manufacturer's directions.
- Pack the ginger, turmeric, onion, garlic, optional horseradish and jalapeno, citrus and herbs into the jar.
- Heat the vinegar to 190-195 F - just below boiling - and carefully pour it over the ingredients, leaving about 1/4 inch of headspace. Cap tightly with an acid-safe lid.
- Let the jar cool, then refrigerate for 2-4 weeks. Keep all ingredients below the vinegar and check the jar regularly.
- Strain through a fine sieve, pressing the solids. Stir in maple syrup to taste.
- Label, refrigerate and use within 4 weeks. Do not can or store this fresh preparation at room temperature.

Discard without tasting if you see mold or notice bubbling, new cloudiness, sliminess, a bulging lid or an off odor.

How to use fire cider

There is no established medical dose for fire cider, and it has not been proven to prevent or treat colds, flu or other infections. Treat it as a strongly flavored food, not a medicine or a replacement for vaccines or clinical care.

AGE / STAGE	FOOD-LEVEL USE	IMPORTANT
Babies under 12 months	Do not give fire cider.	Many versions use honey, which is unsafe before 12 months. The acidic, spicy mixture is also not an infant drink.
Ages 1-4	Do not serve it as a shot or daily supplement. Ask the child's pediatrician before offering it. Use the individual ingredients in ordinary family meals instead.	Children are not small adults; herbal mixtures are not well studied in this age group.
Ages 5-12	Only with pediatrician approval, use a few drops as flavor in a shared dressing, soup or bean dish. Do not serve it as a shot or daily drink.	There is no pediatric dose. Stop if it burns, upsets the stomach or causes a reaction.
Teens	Use it mainly as a culinary ingredient. If their clinician approves a beverage, dilute thoroughly, serve with a meal and never serve it straight.	Check first for medicines, reflux, ulcers, dental sensitivity or allergies.
Adults	Mix 1 teaspoon into at least 8 ounces of water, or use it in a dressing, marinade, soup or grain bowl.	Start small. More is not better. Use food-level amounts during pregnancy or breastfeeding unless a clinician advises otherwise.

Protect the teeth

Vinegar is acidic. Always dilute it, use it with a meal, do not swish it, rinse the mouth with plain water afterward and wait about an hour before brushing.

Easy food uses

- For a four-serving family dressing, whisk 1 tablespoon fire cider with 3 tablespoons olive oil and 2 teaspoons maple syrup. Get pediatrician approval before serving it to a child.
- Stir a small splash into soup, beans or a grain bowl after cooking.
- Use it as part of a vegetable or mushroom marinade rather than drinking it.

Benefits, evidence and safety

Traditional warming use	Fire cider is a folk preparation. Ginger, horseradish and chile create a warming sensory experience that some people find comforting in cool weather. Traditional use is not proof of disease treatment.
Ginger	Ginger has research for some types of nausea, mostly in supplement studies. It can also cause heartburn, diarrhea and mouth or throat irritation.
Garlic	Garlic supplements may have small effects on cholesterol or blood pressure in some adults, but research supporting immune-boosting claims is very limited.
Turmeric	Turmeric has a long history in Chinese, Indian, Islamic and Thai traditions. Current evidence is not strong enough to conclude that it benefits most health conditions; food use is different from concentrated curcumin products.
Whole-food ritual	The practical benefit is a flavorful way to use culinary plants. A small serving does not replace fruit, vegetables, sleep, hydration, movement, vaccines or medical treatment.

Who should check first

- Anyone taking insulin or diabetes medicine, diuretics, blood thinners, aspirin or other regular medicines.
- People with reflux, ulcers, sensitive teeth, swallowing problems, kidney disease, low potassium, allergies, or an upcoming surgery.
- Anyone pregnant or breastfeeding who wants to use more than ordinary food amounts.
- Any child. Pediatric safety data for herbal mixtures are limited, so the child's clinician should guide use.

Education, not treatment

This guide does not diagnose, treat, cure or prevent disease. Seek medical care for trouble breathing, dehydration, severe or persistent symptoms, or any concern about a child. Do not delay prescribed care.

Sources: NIH/NCCIH - Children and Complementary Health Approaches; Garlic; Ginger; Turmeric. American Academy of Pediatrics - Botulism and honey safety. American Dental Association - acidic beverages and enamel. Clemson Cooperative Extension - Flavored Vinegars. Full links and current references: gohealthysc.com/health-library/fire-cider-family-guide