



Rice Vinegars for Flavor—and Less Sodium

Mizkan Americas, a manufacturer and marketer of specialty vinegars, denatured spirits, wine reductions and cooking wines, is rooted in more than 200 years of rich Japanese tradition. The company began in 1804 in Tokyo when Matazaemon Nakano began producing rice vinegar using byproducts from the production of sake. Little did he know that as he sold his vinegar on the streets of Tokyo he was laying the groundwork for a company that would become one of the world's largest producers of vinegar.

While the process of creating Mizkan vinegars is on a much larger scale than Nakano's in 1804, the flavorful tradition remains. For instance, products in the company's Asian line of all-natural rice vinegars contain less than 0.5% alcohol by volume and are available in seasoned and unseasoned varieties, including 45-grain seasoned, 85-grain seasoned, 45-grain unseasoned and 100-grain unseasoned.

Rice vinegars add authentic Asian flavor to foods while helping formulators cut out some of the salt. "Cutting back on sodium doesn't have to equate with eating boring food," says Barb Zatto, executive chef and sales manager, west region. "Rice vinegars are a great way to bring heightened

flavors to foods without adding any sodium, and they are less expensive than other sodium-replacement alternatives."

According to 2009 research from Japan, adding low concentrations of vinegar to foods may enhance the perception of saltiness and allow food manufacturers to cut salt without affecting taste (*Journal of Food Science*, 2009; 74(4):147-153).

Mizkan's extensive array of vinegars allows manufacturers to experiment as they work to reduce sodium in their formulations, notes Zatto. "Vinegars and spice blends without salt can really enhance flavor," she says.

The company's Food Ingredients division offers culinary specialty vinegars, along with reductions and denatured spirits. The division is a full-service supplier and works closely with research, development, procurement and logistic departments in striving to meet all food-ingredient and foodservice needs. 

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