

Olive Oil: Types and Usage

Three types of olive oil are available in North America:

- Extra virgin olive oil
- Olive oil
- Light-tasting olive oil

The main difference in the three types is how much flavor you need.

EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Extra virgin olive oil is the most flavorful olive oil, with an unlimited range of flavors spanning from smooth and subtle to peppery and pungent.

Uses: Drizzled straight out of the bottle to finish dishes, for dressings and marinades and for grilling. A finishing drizzle of extra virgin olive oil can enhance the texture, taste and aroma of food. To help select which extra virgin olive oil is best for a dish, consider complementary flavors. More intense tasting olive oils pair well with stronger ingredients, such as red meat and hearty grains; subtle, fruitier oils pair well with delicate foods, such as white fish and crisp vegetables.

OLIVE OIL

Olive oil, sometimes referred to as “classic” or “pure” olive oil, has a milder flavor with just a hint of fruitiness.

Uses: Olive oil is a perfect everyday cooking oil and easily adapts to a number of cooking methods such as grilling, sautéing, roasting, frying and baking. The subtle flavor of olive oil provides a good base for spice-infused dressings and hearty sauces and won’t alter the intended flavor of baked goods.

LIGHT-TASTING OLIVE OIL

Light-tasting olive oil is almost flavorless, bringing the benefits of olive oil to recipes without influencing the overall taste.

Uses: Just like olive oil, light-tasting olive oil can be used for a wide variety of cooking methods, from grilling to baking. It’s the perfect choice when looking for an oil that won’t alter the flavor of a dish.

When used in baking, either as an alternative to other oils or as a substitute for margarine or butter, olive oil produces light, moist baked goods that stay fresh longer.

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Helpful Information for Cooking With Olive Oil



Substituting Olive Oil for Butter and Margarine

To substitute olive oil for butter or margarine in any recipe, follow this handy conversion chart.

BUTTER/MARGARINE	OLIVE OIL
1 teaspoon	3/4 teaspoon
1 Tablespoon	2 1/4 teaspoons
2 Tablespoons	1 1/2 Tablespoons
1/4 cup	3 Tablespoons
1/3 cup	1/4 cup
1/2 cup	1/4 cup + 2 Tablespoons
2/3 cup	1/2 cup
3/4 cup	1/2 cup + 1 Tablespoon
1 cup	3/4 cup

Cooking Oil Production¹ and Smoke Points²

Olive oil is one of the few popular cooking oils produced through natural extraction vs. chemical extraction. When cooking with oils and fats, each reacts to heat differently. The hotter they get, the more they break down and start to smoke. Oils and fats have different smoke points. When referring to the chart below, keep in mind that the average stovetop cooking temperature is 350°F.

PRODUCT	SMOKE POINT	PRODUCTION METHOD
Extra Virgin Olive Oil	320–375°F	Naturally extracted with no heat or chemicals
Olive Oil	391–468°F	Blend of refined olive oil and virgin/extra virgin olive oil; no solvents used
Canola Oil	425–475°F	Refined; solvent extracted
Corn Oil	450°F	Refined; solvent extracted
Soybean Oil	460°F	Refined; solvent extracted
Butter	250–300°F	Churning of cream
Margarine	360°F	Oil is chemically treated and then hydrogenated before being combined with other ingredients and agitated

1. Harvard School of Public Health; The Culinary Institute of America (1996). *The New Professional Chef*, 6th edition, John Wiley & Sons; www.canolainfo.org; www.madehow.com.

2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smoke_point and <http://nutrition.about.com/od/healthykitchen/f/hexane.htm>.



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Olive Oil Health and Nutrition Information

The beneficial role of olive oil in a healthy diet has been proven time and again in studies around the globe and science related to olive oil's health benefits continues to evolve. The most important aspect of using olive oil for health purposes is to remember that it should replace sources of saturated fat in your diet. In addition, the acclaimed Mediterranean Diet, of which olive oil is a key component, is based on balanced proportions and relies heavily on consumption of vegetables and fruits, nuts, and lean proteins such as chicken and fish. Coincidentally, these all taste better when prepared with olive oil!

Olive oil is a more healthful choice than many other cooking fats due to the fact that it is a monounsaturated, or “good,” fat. Consuming monounsaturated fat in place of saturated fat has been shown to help lower the bad LDL cholesterol and raise the good HDL cholesterol. The FDA agrees and approved a qualified heart health claim for olive oil in 2004.

Extra virgin or virgin olive oils offer additional health benefits because they are naturally extracted and retain an abundance of vitamins and polyphenols that have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. A recent study from Spain found that participants with the highest olive oil consumption as a proportion of total calories had a 26-percent-lower mortality rate from all causes and were 44 percent less likely to die from heart disease.¹

A diet with olive oil as a main source of fat has been linked to health benefits related to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer and more. There is also evidence that olive oil helps the body better absorb beneficial nutrients from vegetables and other healthy ingredients in meals.²

1. Buckland G. Am J Clin Nutr, 2012. 96(1):142–9.

2. Mitrou PN. Arch Intern Med. 2007; 167(22):2461-2468.
Shellen R. Goltz, Wayne W. Campbell, Chureeporn Chitchumroonchokchai, Mark L. Failla, Mario G. Ferruzzi. Meal triacylglycerol profile modulates postprandial absorption of carotenoids in humans. *Molecular Nutrition & Food Research*, 2012; 56 (6): 866 DOI: 10.1002/mnfr.201100687.

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Selecting Olive Oil

Follow these simple tips to help guide you and ensure you're purchasing a quality olive oil that's right for your cooking needs.

- Knowing your intended **USE** will help narrow down which **TYPE** and/or **FLAVOR** best fits your need.
- Purchase bottle sizes you'll use within 8 to 12 weeks of opening.
- Learn to read and interpret olive oil labels. Olive oil from quality sources will contain key pieces of information on the package, including:

The distributing or packaging **company's name and contact information**.

An ingredient statement that only mentions grades of olive oil. *Note that extra virgin olive oil contains no other ingredients, so sometimes the statement is not repeated on the back label.*

A country of origin statement. This is required by federal labeling laws and is typically found on the back label near the nutritional information and ingredient statement. Oils from different countries are often blended in order to produce a specific flavor profile, so don't be alarmed if more than one country is listed here.

A best-by date. Look for one that is as far out as possible, though with proper handling, olive oil can keep in a sealed package for up to two years.

A lot code. This allows the bottler to trace the place, date and time the oil was bottled.

Global Quality/Authenticity Seals.

- NAOOA Quality Seal
 - Origin/Specialty Seals
 - PDO (Protected Designation of Origin)
 - PGI (Protected Geographical Indication)
 - USDA Organic
 - USDA Quality Monitoring Program or USDA Certified Quality Seal
- Dark bottles or tins are best at reducing potential damage from light, especially for extra virgin olive oil.
- Avoid packages that show signs of improper handling or storage. This includes:

Dust on the bottle.

Broken/loose seal on the cap or evidence of oil drips/leaks.

Orange tint to the oil — this would indicate overexposure to fluorescent lighting and/or that heat has damaged the oil.



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