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| **A Spoonful of Olive Oil Makes the Vegetables Go Down: The Health Benefits of Cooking with EVOO** |
| **Topics/Questions About Olive Oil in General** |
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| **TOPIC: WHAT DEFECTS ARE CONSIDERED IN GRADING OLIVE OILS** |
| Question: What is considered a defect? |
| JRP: Most of the flavor defects identify flaws in the condition of the fruit from which the oil was extracted (e.g., overripe, bruised, damage by frost or insects) or lack of care in the milling process. One flavor defect is an indication of rancidity, which can mean the oil was exposed to excessive heat or light after production. This is the only defect that can arise after production. As for defects in the chemical composition of the oil, these parameters set by the IOC are also meant to be sure the oil was produced with best manufacturing practices. For instance, for an oil to be qualified as extra virgin, its free fatty acid content must be less than 0.8% under the IOC standard. This is a measurement that indicates that the fruit used in the production was sufficiently good quality. |
| **TOPIC: THE MEANING OF FIRST COLD PRESSED** |
| Question: Are you going to talk about what 'cold pressed' means and does it produce a superior oil? |
| JRP: This is one of my favorite topics. "First cold pressed" is a descriptor that applies to all EVOO…and none. Let me explain. To qualify as EVOO, the oil must come from the first pressing. Any oils from a second pressing (which does not always happen), is going to have defects that disqualify it from EVOO on both taste and chemical parameters. As for "cold," all EVOO must be produced under strict temperature controls with heat below 80F degrees. But of course, while 80 degrees is not a high temperature, it may be a stretch to call it "cold." And finally, while the term pressed indicates that the oil was produced by mechanical means only (i.e. no high heat or chemical solvents), that is true of ALL olive oils (even non-EVOO). But as my presentation indicated, modern technology has replaced the traditional screw presses with centrifugal force, so hardly any oil is "pressed" anymore. Bottom line, while the presence of this phrase on the bottle provides information about the ways that EVOO is superior to other oils, it is just a marketing term and has no value in distinguishing between one bottle of EVOO that bears the phrase, and another that doesn't. |

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| **TOPIC: STORING OLIVE OIL** |
| Questions: Is storing olive oil in the refrigerator a good idea - I live in Florida.; what is the best way to store olive oil? |
| JRP: Storing olive oil in cool dark place is best...in a cupboard, for example. If the olive oil is in an opaque bottle, the dark place is less important. A refrigerator is not a good idea unless you live in a warm climate and will be gone for an extended period of time without keeping the AC running. Otherwise, keeping it in the fridge is going to cause the oil to at least partially solidify, and then have to thaw before use. Repeating that process can stress the oil and can result in condensation in the bottle which will hasten the degradation of the oil. If you happen to have a wine cooler, storing the olive oil at the temperature you would keep red wine is ideal (assuming the unit isn't constantly lit). That's where I keep my bottles of specialty extra virgin olive oil. |
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| **TOPIC: WHAT ABOUT FAKE OLIVE OIL?** |  |
| Question: How can you tell if the olive oil you purchase is true olive oil or fake, as some has been found to be. |  |
| JRP: The idea that a substantial amount of olive oil available on the market is fake is a canard. If you have not heard the canard before, you can disregard this. But if you have heard it, you would know that It was addressed very well in a recent article for which I was interviewed. https://www.lifesavvy.com/144450/is-that-bottle-of-olive-oil-in-your-cupboard-the-real-deal/ Typically, these claims either originate or are propagated by companies or individuals that seek to profit from the misleading and false statements--so the adage, "consider the source" was never more apt. In fact, the inaccurate and defamatory information about olive oil does real harm: it erodes consumer confidence in one of the healthiest foods they can eat. For this reason, our organization spends considerable time working to correct irresponsible false statements like this because when people don’t feel like they can trust the olive oil they’re buying, they turn to other, less healthful alternatives. We’ve even had to go so far as to take legal action against Dr. Oz, <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/518490/ozsuitpressrelease11.29.16.pdf?t=1532100702162>, which was settled in 2017, <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/518490/170525JointStatementNAOOAOz.pdf?t=1532635764986>. We also more recently initiated a proceeding before the National Advertising Division (NAD) of the Better Business Bureau challenging claims by the company Brightland that most olive oil sold in the U.S. is "rotten, rancid or adulterated." During the proceeding, Brightland voluntarily, permanently discontinued the claim, and you can read more about the NAD’s full decision here. <https://bbbprograms.org/media-center/newsroom/november-fast-track-swift-cases>. |  |

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| **TOPIC: High Polyphenolic Olive Oils** |  |
| Question: Growing conditions and the quality care standards used appear to be extremely important in the final EVOO product. There has been evidence that EVOO products grown using sustainable farming practices in California contain the most polyphenols when compared to other olive growing regions. Can you comment on this? |  |
| JRP: There is an abundance of excellent olive oils being made in California, but to suggest that they are superior to oils being made elsewhere in terms of polyphenol content is not accurate. |  |
| **TOPIC: How to Choose Olive Oils?** |  |
| Questions: How do we help our clients choose the best quality (no budget issues) EVO in the store. What about the best value (best quality for a price point) if clients have a limited budget, and still get health benefits.; EVOO prices vary widely; is there a difference in benefit or components of the oil if you buy less expensive EVOO? ; What do you look for on extra virgin olive oil labels to help ensure product quality. |  |
| JRP: As I mentioned in my presentation, there are "good, better and best" levels of EVOO quality. Deciding what is best for each consumer requires balancing priorities: taste preferences, budget and health benefits. As a general rule, the more flavor an oil has (much of which comes from the minor factors like polyphenols), the more potential health benefits, and the more flavor, the more cost. So my best advice to a consumer is as a first step, make the commitment to use olive oil in place of less healthy fats and oils. We need cooking oil to eat, and even the "good" quality EVOO is healthier than alternatives. Then learn to taste and determine what you like. With EVOO, I recommend opening the bottle as soon as you get it home (or in the car) and taking a swig. And if you don't like it, bring it back. The other thing I would say in response to this question is that a consumer may want to have both a value-oriented olive oil as well as a better and/or best quality oil on hand. Since the latter cost considerably more, you might want to reserve them for raw use like for dipping or as a condiment (or taking shots!). Just buy quantities that are appropriate for your level of cooking. An olive oil bottle once opened should be used within 3-4 months. So for any "better/best" oils that are opened that long, you may consider using them for cooking. As for specifics for what to look for on the label, as mentioned in the presentation, if you are looking for a specialty oil to use for raw use and/or want to maximize polyphenol content, I would recommend you pay attention to the harvest date. One thing that you can ignore, however, is whether or not the label states "first cold pressed;" as addressed in response to another question, the phrase does not distinguish one EVOO from another. |  |
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| **TOPIC: Cooking with Olive Oil** |  |
| Questions: I would like to know if the olive oil shouldn’t be cooked above certain temperatures ? I understand that olive oil will lose some of the polyphenols while heating but is it dangerous to heat it up to certain level? ; What are your recommendations for high heat cooking such as 350-450 degrees F (176-232 degrees C)? Is any form of olive oil ever appropriate? |  |
| JRP: There’s a lot of confusion around the topic of cooking with olive oil, but what’s important to know is that all grades of olive oil are safe and effective to cook with at any temperature, even high heat. Aside from the fact that extra virgin olive oil has been used in high-heat cooking for millennia throughout the Mediterranean region, more recent research, which was published in the journal ACTA Scientific Nutritional Health, found that olive oil is not only safe to cook with at high temperatures, it’s one of the most stable and safest cooking oils available.  In fact, the study’s conclusion states that “EVOO (extra virgin olive oil) has demonstrated to be the most stable oil when heated.”  <https://actascientific.com/ASNH/pdf/ASNH-02-0083.pdf> . These findings were confirmed and further explained in this hot-off-the-press study published in Trends in Food Science and Technology, which found that “EVOO has several advantages over other vegetable oils used in cooking.” <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0924224422000693?via%3Dihub> . As far as frying goes, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) includes olive oil among its list of recommended oils to safely fry with. (Read more here: <https://bit.ly/3QBcICO> ). Dr. Lamuela-Ravento's research shows that some but not all of the olive polyphenols may be lost in the cooking process, but however many polyphenols remain, it is 100% more than you will get in cooking oils that have none to begin with. |  |
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| **TOPIC: Canola-Olive Oil Blends** |  |
| Questions: What's your opinion regarding blends like canola oil + olive oil (also widely available in the US) |  |
| JRP: As discussed during the webinar, the product known simply as "olive oil" or "light tasting olive oil" is a combination of virgin olive oil and refined olive oil. The canola-olive oil blend is a similar product in taste and color, in which cheaper canola oil replaces the refined olive oil. But there are reasons why canola is cheaper. Canola oil's fatty acid profile is not a good as olive oil's, and it's higher in trans fats because the oil is extracted at high heat unlike olive oil. In addition, unless it is expeller pressed, the canola oil was extracted from the plant matter with chemical solvents (hexane) and likely has trace residues. See: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2015/04/13/ask-the-expert-concerns-about-canola-oil/> . Restaurants will often make that substitution because they are trying to save pennies per serving to add to the their bottom line. When the health of your family is the bottom line, the few pennies more per serving it may cost to buy olive oil may be worth it. |  |
| **TOPIC: Butter-Olive Oil Blends** |  |
| Question: Any thoughts about products with butter and olive oil? |  |
| JRP: Of course, anything that promotes more use of olive oil is a good thing from my perspective, and to the extent a butter-olive oil spread can help a person reduce their saturated fat intake, it is a good thing. However, be wary of products that tout their olive content. It's often a marketing scam, with scant amounts of olive oil of indeterminant quality added. |  |