

eWellness magazine

Cooking with olive oil. Learn first | Part 1

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“If you would like to say about olive oil briefly, olive oil is a “fruit juice” produced by the pressing of the olive fruit, and is top component of the Mediterranean diet. It is naturally high in beneficial monosaturated fats and low in dreadful saturated fat.” –said Brie Thompson owner Olivelle store in beautiful Bozeman, Montana. Olivelle is a gourmet store with a European touch, specializing in On Tap oils and vinegars, and fine foods imported from around the globe, with a beautiful kitchen where local chefs and foodies present and prepare delicious menus through Olivelle offering of cooking classes.



Cooking with olive oil is like cooking with wine. Never use a wine or olive oil that does not taste good to you. An inferior one will leave an aftertaste. If you do a taste test and compare the "pure" to the "extra-virgin" then you'll understand the difference.

"The taste of a dish for which you need olive oil will be as good or as ordinary as the oil you use. A

sublime one can lift even modest ingredients to eminent heights of flavor; dreary oil will pull the best ingredients down to its own level. Partial clues to the quality of the olive oil you are buying are supplied by the label and the price, but ultimately, the only way to determine which one, among those available is right for you, is to taste and compare." –said Marcella Hazan Italian cookery writer, author of “Marcella Cucina”, the James Beard Best Mediterranean Cookbook. Marcella was widely considered by chefs and fellow food writers to be one of the foremost authorities on Italian cuisine.

What should you know about olive oil?

Grades of Olive Oil According to the international olive oil council, olive oils are graded on 3 things by a panel of skilled grading experts including: one of the most important quality characteristics - the amount of free acidity, their smell (aroma), and their taste qualities.

What is Virgin Olive Oil? Virgin Olive Oil is merely a technical term of any olive oil that is produced purely from mechanical or other physical methods, under thermal conditions that do not cause any alteration of the oil. Virgin means – pure and free from impurities. Extra means –high grade and excellent quality



There are different grades of "virgin" olive oil, but the best type of olive oil is extra virgin olive oil.



- **Extra Virgin Olive Oil** is virgin olive oil of perfect aroma and flavor with a free acidity below 0.8%, and high level of healthy phenolic antioxidants. But keep in mind that many of these oils are "commercial" extra virgin olive oils, blended to a standard maintained year to year, and to a price. They may come from different regions and countries. Other "single-estate" oils are often un-blended, more expensive, and very pronounced in flavor. Just like grapes from wine making, the flavor of these olives can change from year to year and field to field depending on soil, humidity, moisture, and other natural factors.
- **Virgin Olive Oil Ordinary Olive Oil** is virgin olive oil with a lighter flavor and a free acidity of levels up to 3.3%.

Common Olive Oil Terms of Quality. The following terms are those of high quality oils that are often sought after by the discerning palette.

- **First-Cold Pressed** is exactly what it says: the very first pressing, with little or no heat applied. As a general rule, almost every extra virgin olive oil is first-cold pressed.
- **Single-Estate Oils** are top quality, premium-price oils generally produced from handpicked olives and cold pressed within hours of picking, generally from a single-family estate or farm.
- **Unfiltered** means one less process: it implies excellent olive oil and careful handling and is often murky but delicious, bold, and full in flavor.

How Should Olive Oil be Stored? Air, heat, light, and age will cause olive oil to turn rancid (rancid is the flavor which is imparted in an oil after it has undergone the process of oxidation. Since prolonged contact with oxygen is the root cause of oxidation, rancidity is a common defect, so it should be stored in a cool, dark place in an airtight container). If your oil has an oily taste, then it is probably rancid.

The ideal temperature for storing olive oil is 57°F, although a normal room temperature of 70°F works very well if the olive oil is stored in a dark area where the temperature remains fairly constant. A kitchen cabinet located away from the stove and away from direct sunlight will work quite well. Do not put olive oil in a container without a tight cap.

Refrigeration is not recommended for high quality extra virgin olive oil because condensation may develop in the bottle, affecting the flavor. When chilled, or in cold weather, the oil may turn cloudy and even solidify. Such oil will clear again as it warms, so cloudiness should not be taken as an indication that the oil is past its prime.

Olive Oil Health Benefits Olive oil is not just delicious; studies have also shown it to be healthy. Olive oils are loaded with powerful antioxidants. It is high in monounsaturated fats (73%) while low in saturated fats (13.8%.) Research suggests that olive oil can reduce the chance of heart disease, increase the level of good cholesterol (HDL), lower the levels of bad cholesterol (LDL), and contribute to lowering blood pressure. It also contains Omega 6, Omega 3, high levels of vitamins A, D, and E (72% of the RDA), Vitamin K (75% of the RDA)

GOOD TO KNOW! Real Extra Virgin Olive Oil is 100% natural and very high in antioxidant

Olive oil is a healthy, flavorful replacement for any other type of oil or butter when cooking. If you want to create a great tasting finished product, you have to start with quality ingredients! A few common and delicious uses are noted below:



- **Combine with vinegar for making salad dressings and marinades.**
- **Add to your sauté pan when cooking vegetables, meats, eggs, and potatoes.**
- **Use in baking when recipes call for vegetable oil.**
- **Mix with herbs, vinegar, or both for a tasty dipper with a crusty Italian baguette.**
- **Drizzle over meats and vegetables before grilling.**