



Fresh Plate Mediterranean Style

OLIVE OIL

Olive oil is juice from olives and the main fat used in the Mediterranean style of eating. Good olive oil is produced in many countries around the world including the United States.

How to Buy Olive Oil

Olive oil comes in different grades according to the how it is made, the amount of oleic acid it contains, and flavor. Despite all the bottles of olive oil you find on grocery shelves, there are three main grades used in cooking: 1) extra virgin olive oil (EVOO), 2) pure olive oil or olive oil, and 3) light olive oil.



What does cold-pressed mean?

International standards state that in order for an oil to be labeled virgin or extra virgin it cannot be extracted using heat or chemicals that alter the oil. Therefore, the term is no longer necessary—virgin or extra virgin is cold-pressed.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)

Olives are pressed or crushed and no heat or chemicals are used to extract the oil. It is more expensive than refined oils, but has the most flavor the greatest amount of antioxidants. EVOO is good for salad dressings, marinades, topping pastas, and for dipping bread but can be used for any foods cooked at moderately high temperatures.

Pure Olive Oil or Olive Oil

This grade of olive oil is typically a blend of lower-quality oil and EVOO. It is lighter in color and flavor and is considered all-purpose cooking oil that can be used for sautéing, grilling, roasting, baking, and pan frying. It can also be used in dressings and marinades.

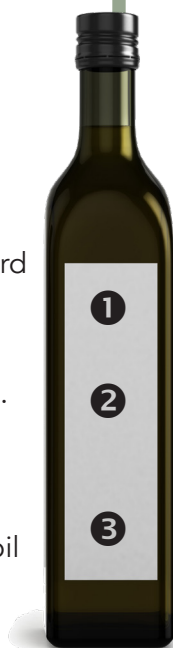
Light Olive Oil

This oil is similar to pure olive oil but is very light in color and flavor. It is NOT lighter in calories. It is good for any type of cooking when you do not want a strong olive flavor, such as baking.



How to Store Olive Oil

- ✓ Olive oil is not like wine—it does not get better with age.
- ✓ Check the bottle for a best-by-date and harvest date. Buy it as fresh as possible and use within a year.
- ✓ Store in a cool, dark place such as a cupboard or pantry—not by a stove or on top of a refrigerator.
- ✓ Keep the cap tightly closed when not in use.
- ✓ Use a small bottle or decanter for tabletop rather than a large bottle.
- ✓ Display pretty bottles for show. Store olive oil you use away from light and heat.



Olive Oil Labels

What should you look for on a bottle or package of extra virgin olive oil? The grade or quality of the olive oil should be prominently displayed on the front of the bottle. On the back of the bottle, look for:

Harvest Date - when the olives were harvested and milled to make the olive oil

Best by Date - usually one or two years from the time the oil was bottled. Use this date for best quality.

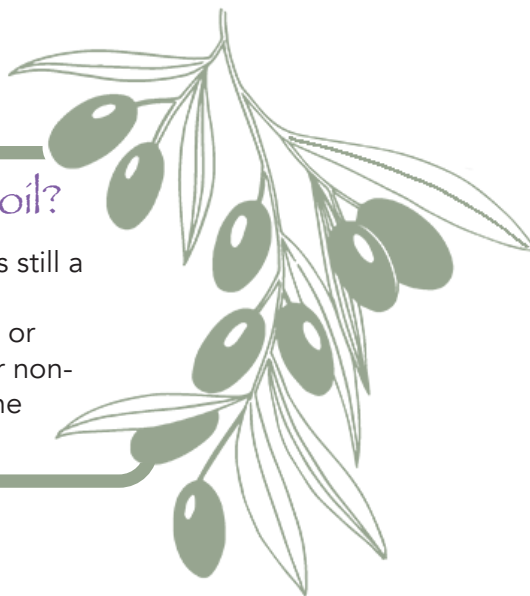
Where the Olives Were Grown - flavors and aromas of olive oil vary with the type of olives grown in different regions, states or countries.

The Health Benefits

Olive oils, especially EVOO, are high in compounds called “polyphenols.” These are antioxidants that protect cells of the body from the damaging effects of oxygen. They may protect the body from cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some age-related degenerative diseases.

Can you get too much olive oil?

Even though olive oil is a healthy oil, it is still a fat. A tablespoon of olive oil has about 120 calories no matter if it is extra virgin or light. It does not matter if it is organic or non-organic. All vegetable oils have about the same number of calories.



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