

THE BENEFITS OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Extra Virgin Olive Oil is a staple in the Mediterranean diet. In the last few years, it has spread all over the world and has become synonymous with flavor and health. Compared to other vegetable oils, Extra Virgin Olive Oil is certainly the tastiest. However, it is also the healthiest as it is the only one obtained simply by pressing, without the aid of chemical solvents or other industrial processes used, instead, for other vegetable oils and fats.

It is the simple "olive juice" that gives Extra Virgin Olive Oil all the natural substances contained in the olive itself. Extra Virgin Olive Oil contains a significant quantity of potent antioxidants, vitamin E and polyphenols. Low in saturated fats, which are most responsible for increased levels of "bad" cholesterol in the blood, Extra Virgin Olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fats, or oleic acid, and contains a balanced ratio of 6 and 3 essential polyunsaturated fats. The 6 and 3 polyunsaturated fats in most seed oils, in addition to not having an optimal ratio, are found in high quantities, causing the formation of free radicals. In other words, Extra Virgin Olive Oil is not only more stable but is also better protected by Vitamin E and polyphenols.

Misconceptions about extra virgin olive oil

If olive oil is Extra Virgin, that means it is good.

Not true. Like wines that go from common table wines up to Grand Crù, Extra Virgin Olive oils also have different levels of quality. It depends on the type and variety of olive, its degree of maturity, the type of extraction system and the preservation.

First press Extra Virgin oil is special*

Not true. The name Extra Virgin Olive Oil is given to all oils that come from the first and only pressing operation.

Every cold press Extra Virgin oil is excellent.

Not true. Cold pressing poor quality olives or using unsuitable olive presses produces poor quality oils.

The color indicates the quality of the oil.

Not true. The green color, with more or less intense yellow hues, depends exclusively on the type of olive, the degree of maturity and the extraction process.

An Extra Virgin Olive oil that tickles the throat is of poor quality.

Not true. The tickle is typical of fresh, young olives rich in healthy substances and natural antioxidants like polyphenols and vitamin E.

The acidity is perceived by the taste.

Not true. Acidity is a parameter that can only be measured by chemical analysis. And, in any case, it does not necessarily connote good flavor.

6 Steps to Tasting Olive Oil Like a Pro

Discover the oil tasting steps to better appreciate all the fragrances.



1 Pour the oil into a small glass and swirl it to release all of its aromas.



2 Smell the oil, alternately inhaling briefly and deeply, trying to capture the different sensations.



3 Now taste a small quantity of oil, trying to keep it between your lower lip and tightly clenched teeth.



4 At the same time, inhale gently at first, then more vigorously in order to vaporize the oil throughout your mouth and make contact with your taste buds.



5 Then, memorizing all the nuances of aroma and flavor, exhale from your nose so that the particles of emulsified oil hit the olfactory membrane, giving you an even more exact sensation.



6 If you have gotten enough information, spit out the oil.

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SENSORY VOCABULARY



DESIRABLE TRAITS

Bitter

Characteristic and intense in oils obtained from green olives.

Pungent

Spicy aftertaste, intense in oils that are especially rich in antioxidant substances.

Almond and bitter almond

Characteristic aftertaste reminiscent of the namesake nut.

Floral

Extremely pleasant sensation reminiscent of the penetrating scent of flowers.

Fruity

Perception of the typical taste of a fresh, healthy olive.

Grassy

Particular nuance of the fruity, reminiscent of the scent of freshly mown grass.

Green tomato

Aroma reminiscent of the namesake fruit, typical of oils from a particular origin (i.e. Sicily, Italy).

Woody

Sensation reminiscent of the smell of underbrush; typical in Umbrian oils (Italy).

Full bodied

Tactile sensation that reveals the typical compactness of a high quality oil.

Color from green to yellow

One or the other can dominate, depending on the area of origin, the extraction technology, the maturity of the fruit but with no influence on oil quality.

DEFECTS

Winey-vinegary

Odor perceived in oils obtained from poorly preserved olives, in which the sugars have fermented, forming alcohol or vinegar.

Musty

Odor found in oils obtained from olives stored in hot, humid conditions; reminiscent of the odors of bread mold or also hazelnut shells.

Muddy sediment

Typical odor of oils obtained from olives harvested from the ground; reminiscent of the smell in the air as soon as it starts raining.

Burnt-heated

Odor perceived in oils obtained from fermented olives; it is slightly reminiscent of cheese.

Phenic acid

Characteristic odor common in poor quality oils originating from Andalusia in Spain.

Rancid

Typical odor of any fat that has gone bad (i.e. yellowed prosciutto fat).

Greasy

Tactile aftertaste of an oil that feels "sticky" on the palate.

Reddish hues

Found in poorly preserved oils, particularly when not protected from light.