



TRADER JOE'S

GUIDE TO OLIVE OIL

Olive trees have been grown widely in the Mediterranean for centuries. In fact, references to olives, olive trees and olive oil are *drizzled* throughout the Bible and other ancient writings. At one point, olive oil was used as currency. Antiquated vessels used to carry the oil bearing official Roman and Cretan seals. Throughout history, olive oil's importance has moved from multipurpose heating and medicinal uses to a culinary staple. Today, it's considered one of the best all around oils for cooking and preparing foods. Olive oil continues to be highly prized for its flavor, versatility and health benefits.

The Mediterranean climate (warm, sunny days with cool, ocean mist-filled nights) produces ideal growing conditions for olive trees. Although these conditions can be found in other places in the world, like the South of France, Turkey, California, Arizona and New Mexico, the most sought after oils are from Italy, Spain and Greece.

TRADER JOE'S OLIVE OILS

Many high quality olive oils generally tend to be high in price. At Trader Joe's, we don't think you should have to pay a king's ransom for a regal olive oil. So, we buy direct from manufacturers, eliminate middlemen and marketing costs. We also buy our products in volume to keep prices down and pass the savings on to you.

VARIETIES OF OLIVE OIL

Olive oils are graded according to quality, the degree of acidity they contain and their production process. Here's a quick definition for each variety:

Extra Virgin: This oil is made from the first cold pressing of olives and contains no more than .5 to 1% acidity. Considered the finest and the fruitiest olive oil, it is also generally the most expensive due to its time consuming process and limited production. It offers the widest range of flavor and aroma and is often described as having a perfect, fruity taste and slightly green appearance.

Virgin: This oil is also a cold-pressed oil, except the acidity level is slightly higher than extra virgin olive oil. Generally between 1.5 to 2% acidity. Slightly less distinctive flavor than extra virgin olive oil.

Semi Fine: This oil is a blend of extra virgin and virgin oils and contains 3% acidity.

Pure: This oil falls well below extra virgin or virgin in style, color and flavor. This oil is generally used as an ingredient when you don't want the oil to dominate the flavor of the dish.



PROCESSING OLIVE OIL

Olive oil production has a certain mystique that producers are working to clarify. Origin of oil, processing techniques and oil blending are just a few issues retailers consider in order to justify the hefty prices many fine oils carry.

Olive oil processing is a multi-step technique:

1. Within 24 to 48 hours of picking, the olives are pressed into a paste.
2. Next, the oil is separated from the paste by centrifugation, which involves spinning the paste at high speeds to remove any naturally occurring water. This process is also called cold pressing. The first pressing extracts extra virgin and virgin oils.
3. The oil is then graded by acidity testing.
4. Once the first press oil has been extracted from the olive paste, second and third pressings are done to produce pure, light and pumace oils.
5. With each subsequent pressing, heat and solvents are added to extract as much of the oil as possible.
6. The next step in olive oil production is more complicated and a true art form. The oil maker blends different oils to reach the ideal of color and flavor.



COLD PRESSING

Fine extra virgin and virgin olive oils are processed through cold or mechanical pressing. It's a natural, chemical-free process involving only pressure, which produces a low level of acidity in the oil.

FILTERED VS. UNFILTERED OILS

Many olive oils are filtered using a cotton cloth to remove remaining particles of the olive, creating a transparent oil. Unfiltered olive oil appears cloudy because tiny particles of olive fruit settle to the bottom. Despite the obvious differences in appearance and consistency, the filtering process has little effect on an oil's true flavor.

TIPS FOR STORING OLIVE OIL

- Olive oil should be used within 12-18 months of purchase.
- Once opened, we recommend using the oil within 3 months for optimum flavor. *Note:* Olive oil will become rancid if not handled properly. Unlike fine wine, it does not improve with age. It is best not to purchase large amounts, unless it will be used quickly.
- If you need to decant it into a smaller container, use terra cotta, green or brown glass, stainless steel or tin for best results. These containers help to protect the oil from light. Never use a plastic container; it will impart the taste of plastic into the oil.
- Make sure your container has a very tight lid.
- The oil should be kept in a cool dark place, such as a pantry. Light and heat will make olive oil spoil quickly.



REGIONAL OLIVE OILS

Regional olive oils have become very popular in recent years. They can be domestic or imported and will vary in flavor, color and fragrance. The fine nuances in flavor, texture and scent among regional oils make them highly desirable to olive oil connoisseurs and food lovers alike.

Trader Joe's has a wide selection of olive oils from many growing regions in the world including Italy, Spain, Greece and California. Like all of our products, before we'll bring in an olive oil, our tasting panel samples it for taste, quality and value. If an olive oil doesn't meet our panel's discerning standards, we won't sell it in our stores.

We look for the following characteristics in the oils we select from these different regions:

When Harry Met Salad...



FROM ITALY:

- Robust flavor with deep color and a peppery finish
- Blended to stand up to ripe tomatoes, roasted vegetables, meat and al dente pasta dishes

FROM SPAIN:

- Subtle flavors with a sweet, but tery finish
- Ideal for salads, sauces and frying

FROM GREECE:

- Clear, fruity flavor with a peppery finish
- Works well with stews, soups and steamed vegetables

FROM CALIFORNIA:

- Green grass flavor with a mild pleasant finish
- Good for frying and sautéing.



TO REFRIGERATE OR NOT TO REFRIGERATE

There are two schools of thought on storage of olive oil: flavor vs. shelf life.

1. Do not refrigerate, store in

pantry - Refrigeration causes condensation to form on the inner lip of the container and the water will fall back into the oil and diminish the flavor. Many believe that oil should be stored in cool, dark place like a pantry. We recommend that very flavorful oils intended for dipping, drizzling and salad dressing should be purchased in small amounts and kept in the pantry.

2. Refrigerate - Oil containing a high amount of monounsaturated fat is highly perishable and, if kept for more than one month, needs to be refrigerated. Mild flavored, everyday oils used for sautéing, marinades or frying can be purchased in larger containers and refrigerated for best shelf life. *Note:* Refrigeration causes the oil to become cloudy and slightly solid. It will return to its liquid state once removed from the refrigerator and brought to room temperature.

BAKING AND FRYING WITH OLIVE OIL

• Olive oil naturally contains a variety of antioxidants and is high in monounsaturated fats (the good kind!). Combined with its popular flavor, it is a delicious and healthy alternative to other oils for baking and deep frying.

• Olive oil can reduce the amount of cholesterol and saturated fat in many breads. Many bakers use it for traditional breads such as pizza and focaccia.

• Try replacing butter in breads and other savory dishes. Since the conversion from butter to olive oil requires less fat, the calories from fat are reduced. Keep in mind that this substitution will affect the texture and flavor.

• Frying food at the correct temperature forms an immediate seal that helps retain the interior moisture and cooks the food by steam. Removing finished foods from the pan and draining on racks over paper towels allows excess fat to drip away for the lowest possible calories from fat.

TIPS FOR FRYING WITH OLIVE OIL:

- Deep fry at 350 to 365 degrees.
- To avoid lowering the temperature of the oil during frying, do not crowd the pan.
- For best coverage, use at least 2 1/2 inches of oil.
- To eliminate as much excess fat as possible, drain fried foods on wire racks.

BUTTER TO OLIVE OIL CONVERSION CHART

Butter/ Margarine	Olive Oil
1 teaspoon	3/4 teaspoon
1 tablespoon	2 1/4 teaspoon
2 tablespoons	1 1/2 tablespoon
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



TASTING OILS: IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS WITH OLIVE OIL LINGO

Olive oil tasting has become a regular event in food circles. Oil aficionados sip it straight from small cups, looking for distinct flavors and levels of complexity. Each of the flavors below are distinct tastes that should come through in extra virgin or virgin olive oils:

Fruity: A "fruity" and very distinct olive taste

Sweet: A pleasant, sweet olive taste, like ripe fruit

Peppery: Spicy, with a slightly prickly feeling to the taste buds

Green: Green in color with the taste of freshly cut grass, not sweet

OLIVE OIL RECIPES

A top quality, flavorful olive oil is multifaceted. It can be used as an ingredient for cooking or baking, as a topping when drizzled onto pastas, soups and stews and can be savored as a flavorful dipping sauce for a good crusty bread. Here are two simple recipe suggestions.

BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

This flavorful vinaigrette is wonderful when tossed with a salad of greens, a platter of asparagus or as dressing for pasta salad.

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
 3 tablespoon water
 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 1/8 teaspoon sugar or 1/4 tsp maple syrup
 salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and blend well. Adjust seasonings to your taste. Makes 1 cup of vinaigrette.

ROASTED GARLIC BREAD DIP

This rich, savory dip pairs nicely with crusty French, sourdough or Italian breads.

1 medium head of garlic
 4 teaspoon olive oil
 red chile pepper flakes (optional, to taste)
 1 small-medium loaf of crusty bread (e.g. French, Italian or sourdough)

Cut off pointed top portion of garlic head with a sharp knife, leaving bulb intact but exposing individual cloves of garlic. Place the head of garlic (cut side up) in a small, round baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil and bake uncovered in a 400 degree oven for approximately 25-35 minutes, until cloves have softened. Scoop cloves out onto a small serving platter and drizzle with 2 teaspoons olive oil. Sprinkle red pepper flakes to taste. Dip slices of crusty bread into dip, and spread garlic cloves onto bread with knife, if necessary.

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