

Is it true that you are not supposed to cook with extra virgin olive oil?

Can I cook with your olive oil?

This is a common misconception and one of the most frequently asked questions we receive. In fact, **HIGH QUALITY** EVOO is the most nutritional oil to cook with and new studies have shown that using an evoo high in phenols (antioxidants) for cooking & baking applications leads to a significant reduction in oxidation and the inhibition of harmful byproducts over other vegetable oils or olive oils lower in phenolic (antioxidant) content! The majority of the oils we offer are high in phenolic content, high in oleic acid (the healthful MUFA) and low in FFA (free fatty acid). There is a direct correlation between FFA and smoke point! **The lower the FFA, the more the oil can be heated before it reaches its smoke point.**

However, there is some truth to this misconception. Low grade and the vast majority of the olive oil available in the grocery store, is relatively unstable under high heat and we wouldn't advise cooking with it.

What is the most important thing I should know before purchasing an olive oil?

The single most important piece of information for the consumer to determine is the harvest date of an olive oil. Olive oil should be treated like fresh fruit juice, as it is highly perishable. It is always healthier and more flavorful when consumed close to its crush date. As an oil ages, it tends to lose a lot of the magnificent health and flavor properties that make it such an enjoyable product. It is common practice for grocery store oils to have a "best by date". This is an arbitrary date, determined by the producer/bottler and it really does not provide the consumer with the information they need. On a side note, never buy oil in clear glass or plastic, as olive oil is highly susceptible to UV degradation!

What is "first cold-press"?

This is an outdated and overused term in the industry. It often leads to more confusion on the side of the consumer. "Cold Pressing" is referring to the temperature at which the olive paste is malaxed, in order to extract oil. Like almost every other aspect of the industry, these claims are unregulated and loosely applied to almost every oil on the grocery store shelf. In order for an olive oil to be considered, "Cold Pressed", it must be processed below 86 degrees Fahrenheit. Many producers choose to process their oils at higher temperatures, in order to extract more oil from the olive paste. However, as the temperature of the paste is increased during the milling process, the quality and integrity of the oil is jeopardized. Our average production temperature is around 70 degrees Fahrenheit. As a result of processing at a cooler temperature, our yield goes down but our quality goes through the roof! In addition to heat, the amount of time the olive paste spends in the Malaxer, has a significant impact on the finished product. Over processing, yields more oil but also hurts the quality of the finished product.

***Is your EVOO certified organic?** We do carry many certified organic extra virgin olive oils and infused olive oils. The label will indicate if the oil is certified organic or not.

***Is your olive oil certified Kosher?** Almost all of our olive oils are Kosher U Certified. Unfortunately, none of our aged balsamic vinegar is Kosher. However, we are constantly striving to improve the quality and customer satisfaction with all of our products.

Do you make all of the oil yourselves?

We produce many of our own extra virgins, as well as, all of the infused oil and infused vinegar. Any oil that we do not produce ourselves, we make sure to personally source and assist in the production. We have strict standards and form close partnerships with independent farms all over the world. We often pay a premium to buy the fruit on the tree and have it pressed and processed to meet our strict quality standards.

Should I refrigerate my EVOO?

There is a great debate going on over refrigerating and freezing extra virgin olive oil. We recommend storing your oil in a cool dark place. Although, freezing an extra virgin has been known to extend its shelf life, constantly changing the temperature (for immediate consumption) can mess with the chemistry and create condensation on the inside of the bottle. Absolutely, never purchase or store olive oil in clear glass or plastic, unless you plan on using it within a week.

How long does EVOO last?

This question completely depends on the quality of the oil you are starting with, as well as the conditions in which it is being stored. We have seen well made, excellent oils, hold up over a year! However, we suggest using your oil within a year of the day it was crushed. We also urge customers to consume the bottle within 3-4 months from opening. Yet, in this industry, there are always exceptions to this rule. The good news is, we harvest from two hemispheres, giving our customers a unique opportunity to enjoy the freshest oil in the world, year around!

My throat burns after tasting some of your EVOO. Why does that happen?

All extra virgin olive oil should have at least a slight burning sensation on the end. In reality it is a “healthy burn”. One of the main health benefits associated with fresh extra virgin olive oil are polyphenols. The higher the phenol content, the more pepper and the more bitterness the oil will have. For most people, bitterness and pepper is an acquired taste. However, we see people gradually move up the intensity ladder and eventually begin to enjoy robust oils.

Which country makes the best extra virgin olive oil?

The truth is, you can make wonderful oil everywhere and you can make terrible oil everywhere and California is no exception! That is not to say that micro-climate conditions, soil quality & other agronomic factors do not have an impact on oil quality. However, country of origin should be towards the bottom, in terms of importance. Let your taste buds, the harvest date and your knowledge of oil chemistry guide you!

What is the difference between fused and infused oil?

We produce both fused and infused olive oils. When an oil is fused, this means the olives were crushed with the fruit or vegetable, simultaneously. Fused oils tend to have wonderfully true, rich flavors! Our blood orange, lemon and Chili pepper oils are fused! Another term for fused oil is Agrumato. Conversely, when an oil is infused, the all-natural, organic flavors, are added to the oil after the olives have been crushed. We use the infusion method when we have flavors that may be impossible or too difficult to crush with the olives, for one reason or another.