

# 7 Things to Know about Extra Virgin Olive Oil

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You probably know that olive oil is good for you, but there is more to olive oil than meets the eye. Besides being truly delicious in recipes, olive oil is also really good for you and is produced not only in the Mediterranean, but also in America especially in California and increasingly in Texas. Here are 7 more things to know about olive oil.

## 1. Olive oil is eaten in large quantities by the healthiest people in the world.

In the parts of the Mediterranean where the healthiest people in the world live, they eat lots of olive oil every day. Traditionally, on the Island of Crete, they ate 40% of their calories from fat. 30% of their daily calories came from extra virgin olive oil. When they were eating this much fat, they also had the lowest rates of heart disease in the world.

## 2. Olive oil is not vegetable oil.

Many people think that olive oil is in the same category as canola oil or vegetable oil, but olives are actually a fruit. Olive oil is a fruit oil and has unique properties because it comes from fruit. Avocado oil is another healthy oil that comes from fruit.

## 3. Much of the olive oil in the U.S. is fraudulent.

It has been estimated that up to 70% of olive oil labeled “extra virgin olive oil” is fraudulent in one way or another. Some olive oils are not olive oil at all and is just vegetable oil that has additives added to look and taste like olive oil. The biggest fraud is claiming olive oil is extra virgin when it isn’t.

#### 4. Olive oil can be a potent anti-inflammatory.

A thousand years ago, people in the Mediterranean would take olive oil when they had a toothache or headache. Why would they do this? A very fresh extra virgin olive oil has a “bite” or a “burn” to it. When you eat fresh olive oil you will feel this “burn” in your throat. The chemical that causes that “burn” mimics the chemical in ibuprofen. In other words, very fresh olive oil is a very strong anti-inflammatory.

#### 5. Olive oil can help you lose and maintain your weight.

Most of us were brought up thinking that eating fat will make you fat. Low fat diets were all the rage in the 70's, 80's and 90's. But what happened when everyone went on low fat diets? We all gained weight! It turns out that eating fat can actually help you lose and maintain weight. The real culprit for weight gain is processed carbohydrates.

#### 6. Olive oil may help with heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, stroke and cancer.

A good, anti-inflammatory extra virgin olive oil has been shown to decrease the risk of many inflammatory diseases including heart disease. It has also been shown to potentially decrease Type 2 Diabetes risk as well as decreasing the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Olive oil has also been shown to help people suffering from rheumatoid arthritis.

#### 7. Don't skimp when buying olive oil.

All olive oil is not created equal. What you want when buying olive oil is fresh, high quality extra virgin oil. In the case of olive oil, quality equals healthier. Don't go for super cheap or old extra virgin olive oil. Go for oil that is known to be authentic. Here are a few brands that are known to be really good authentic extra virgin olive oils.

- Costco – the Kirkland brand
- Trader Joe's – the Trader Joe's Brand
- California Olive Ranch

All three of these oils are not super expensive but are brands that can be trusted.

This month's recipe Sizzling Lemon Garlic Shrimp uses a half cup of extra virgin olive oil. Super delicious with whole grain bread or rice. Enjoy!

