

# olive oil

The flavour, colour and fragrance of olive oils can vary dramatically depending on distinctions such as growing region and the crop's condition. All olive oils are graded in accordance with the degree of acidity they contain. The best are **cold-pressed**, a chemical-free process that involves only pressure, which produces a natural level of low acidity.

**Extra virgin olive oil**, the cold-pressed result of the first pressing of the olives, is only 1 percent acid.

**Cold pressed extra Virgin Olive Oil** is the top grade of olive oil and is the most natural and flavoursome of all oils. The lower the acidity of the olive oil, the higher the quality and the more distinctive the flavours and aromas.



Extra virgin olive oil is more expensive than olive oil because it is produced in smaller quantities from select olives, and offers the widest range of tastes.

The extra virgin olive oil should be packaged in dark glass bottles or tins to protect it from the damaging effects of light. Avoid buying extra virgin olive oil that is stored in plastic containers as the extra virgin olive oil can absorb some of the compounds used in the plastic, such as cancer causing PVC's (polyvinyl chlorides).

Olive oil should be stored in a cool, dark place for up to 6 months. It can be refrigerated, in which case it will last up to a year. Chilled olive oil becomes cloudy and too thick to pour. However, it will clear and become liquid again when brought to room temperature.

**Tip** You should consume your olive oil in its raw form. Avoid using your olive oil when cooking as when the oil is heated its chemical structure is damaged and it no longer provides your body with the nutritional benefits needed for good health. Try using an extra virgin olive oil spray instead.

**Recipe** Infuse your cold pressed olive oil with chopped chilli and garlic to taste. Store it in an air tight container or jar and use as a dressing on your salads or vegetables. Remember, the longer you leave the infusion, the stronger the flavour! Yum!!

References: <http://web.foodnetwork.com/food/web/encyclopedia/termdetail/0,7770,4171,00.html>,  
<http://www.toscanaolives.com.au/Extravirginoliveoil.htm>

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