

Olive oil is graded according to factors of pressing and quality of the oil. Extra Virgin Olive Oil is the finest grade, and the grade is given to oil from the first pressing. In Italian, the method used is cold pressing (in which no heat is used above about 60 degrees Fahrenheit). Heat destroys antioxidants, so cold pressed oils are the healthiest.

Virgin Olive Oil is for all purposes the same as Extra Virgin Olive Oil but has a higher acidity. Virgin Olive Oil must have acidity below 4%. Fine Virgin Oil, Superfine Oil, Olive Oil, and Pure Olive Oil are all lesser grade oils, and while you might want to know about them, we only sell Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO).

The Trouble with Definitions.

There are many governing bodies which attempt to define olive oil. The European Communities has a different definition than the International Olive Oil Council (IOOC). Most countries use the IOOC standards. The Countries which has not adopted the IOOC definitions, uses terms such as "fancy" and "choice".

Virgin Olive Oils

This oil is obtained only from the olive, the fruit of the olive tree, using solely mechanical or other physical means in conditions, particularly thermal conditions, which do not alter the oil in any way. It has not undergone any treatment other than washing, decanting, centrifuging and filtering. It excludes oils obtained by the use of solvents or re-esterification methods, and those mixed with oils from other sources. It can be qualified as a natural product, and virgin olive oil can have a designation of origin when it meets the specific characteristics associated with a particular region. Virgin olive oils can have the following designations and classifications depending on their organoleptic (taste and aroma) and analytic characteristics (the degree of acidity refers to the proportion of free fatty acids, not to the taste)

Extra Virgin olive oil

Virgin olive oil which has a free acidity, expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 0.8 grams per 100 grams (0.8%), and the other characteristics of which correspond to those fixed for this category. Extra Virgin olive oil accounts for less than 10% of oil in many producing countries. Used on salads, added at the table to soups and stews and for dipping.

Virgin olive oil

Virgin olive oil which has a free acidity, expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 2 grams per 100 grams (2.0%) and the other characteristics of which correspond to those fixed for this category in this standard.

Ordinary Virgin Olive Oil

Virgin olive oil which has a free acidity, expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 3.3 grams per 100 grams and the other characteristics of which correspond to those fixed for this category in this standard. Ordinary oil may still be fine for frying or where flavor is not wanted or needed.

Lampante Virgin Olive oil

Virgin olive oil not fit for consumption as it is, designated lampante virgin olive oil, is virgin olive oil which has a free acidity, expressed as oleic acid, of more than 3.3 grams per 100 grams and/or the organoleptic characteristics and other characteristics of which correspond to those fixed for this category in this standard. It is intended for refining or for technical use.

Refined Olive oil

Refined olive oil is the olive oil obtained from virgin olive oils by refining methods which do not lead to alterations in the initial glyceridic structure. It has a free acidity, expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 0.3 grams per 100 grams (0.3%) and its other characteristics correspond to those fixed for this category in this standard. This is obtained by refining virgin olive oils which have a high acidity level and/or organoleptic defects which are eliminated after refining. Over 50% of the oil produced in the Mediterranean area is of such poor quality that it must be refined to produce an edible product. Note that no solvents have been used to extract the oil but it has been refined with the use of charcoal and other chemical and physical filters. An obsolete equivalent is "pure olive oil"

Olive Oil

Olive oil is the oil consisting of a blend of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils fit for consumption as they are. It has a free acidity, expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 1 gram per 100 grams (1.0%). The cheap refined oil is mixed with a flavorful virgin oil