



Olive Oil - Q & A

What is 'Olive Oil'?

- A. Olives are a fruit - olive oil is olive juice, plain and simple.

What is 'Virgin'?

- A. Virgin means mechanical extraction with no heat or chemicals used in the process.

What is 'Extra'?

- A. 'Extra' is considered the highest quality of olive oil. 'Extra' virgin olive oil has a smoke point between 350° - 400° and will enhance the flavor of all dishes, hot or cold.
- Olive oil quality is rated by 2 tests: 1 – A chemical analysis performed by an certified lab and 2 – An culinary analysis performed by a board of certified olive oil masters.
- Therefore, 'extra virgin' means: mechanically extracted olive juice, that passes laboratory and taste analytical testing - with no defects.
- Other olive oil ratings in descending order are - 'fine', 'ordinary' and 'lampante' (lamp oil).

What is 'refined' oil?

- A. Olive oil that is refined by a heat and chemical process.
- Chemically refined oil is totally insipid (0% acidity) which means it is flavorless with no quality standards stated or implied. Refined oil is mixed with ordinary or lampante for color and flavor.

What is 'pomace' oil?

- A. 'Pomace' oil is 'compost oil'. After the virgin olive oil is extracted pomace is a residue produced from the waste. It is also insipid (0% acidity) with no flavor and no quality standards stated or implied.
- Pomace is used as a cheap alternative to 'refined' oil in order to lower the product cost of the packers who mix it with virgin and refined oils.

What is 'pure'? 'light'? 'blends'?

- A. 'Pure', 'Light', 'Extra Light', etc. are not olive oil classifications. They are mixes of refined, pomace and/or other oils with small quantities 'ordinary' or 'lampante' oil.
- Pure = olive oil that has been refined. Pure= impure.
- 'First pressing' and 'cold pressed' are outdated terms. Presses were replaced by modern centrifuge equipment decades ago.
- Blends are mixes of different oils. Usually 5-10% virgin oil with seed, soybean, hazelnut and other non-olive oils. Mixes are called 'blends' because 'blend' sounds better than 'mix'.

Is there a difference between real extra virgin olive oil and the mixes?

- A. Yes. They are two entirely different products. - similar to the difference between orange juice & orange soda – one product grows on a tree, the other is chemically produced.
- Real extra virgin olive has all of the well documented health benefits and all of the flavor enhancing properties associated with olive oil.
- Olive oil shipped from the mill in bulk is almost always adulterated. Olive oil bottled at the mill is not adulterated.