



Olive Oil: Myths vs. Facts

Presented by the North American Olive Oil Association (NAOOA)

MYTH

Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) is only for salads and dipping. Never heat it! It diminishes the health benefits.



Olive oil isn't ideal for cooking because of its lower smoke point.



As much as 70-80% of supermarket olive oil in the U.S. is "fake" and adulterated with other oils.



If olive oil gets cloudy or solidifies in the refrigerator, it is 100% authentic and high-quality.



A very green color indicates high-quality olive oil.



"Lite" or "Extra Lite" olive oil is lower in calories.



Extra virgin olive oil is the only "healthy" type of olive oil.



Like wine, olive oil gets better with age.



FACT

Cooking with olive oil actually makes your food healthier. A study in the journal *Food Chemistry* found that phenols and antioxidants from EVOO are transferred to vegetables cooked in it, thereby increasing the nutrition content of the vegetables.

Smoke point is not an issue. When you're cooking food in olive oil, your oil will rarely, if ever, reach the smoke point. Researchers have also found **EVOO is the most stable cooking oil when heated**, according to a recent study published in the journal *ACTA Scientific Nutritional Health*. This is true even for long periods of time and compared to oils like sunflower and canola.

You'll be pleased to know this is "fake news." Peer-reviewed research conducted by the FDA found **no confirmed adulteration** in any of the 88 random samples tested in Washington, D.C.-area retail stores. The FDA's findings mirror the results of the NAOOA's two decades of robust monitoring efforts, which have found that 98% of olive oil sold in U.S. retail outlets is authentic.

There is no home test to check for olive oil. Some oils get cloudy in the refrigerator, and some don't. Quality is best checked through taste and smell, and authenticity is best tested in a properly equipped lab.

Color is not an indicator of olive oil quality. Quality olive oils range in color from pale yellow to dark green, depending on variables like the olive variety, where it's grown, climate and harvest timing.

All olive oils have the same calories per serving. "Lite" or "Extra Lite" indicates a lighter color, aroma or flavor.

All olive oils are high in heart-healthy monounsaturated fat — the "good" fat. While extra virgin olive oil retains antioxidants, offering added benefits, all olive oils have more of the good fat than other common cooking oils.

Olive oil, like all cooking oils, has a limited shelf life. It should be used no more than two years from bottling. To maintain quality, store your olive oil in a cool, dark place and use the oil within a few months once the bottle is opened.