



# Health Benefits of Olive Oil

In good conscience and with the best medical opinion available today, we can state that olive oil is positively good for you. Olive oil's full benefits are as yet unknown, but every day it seems, there is a new study done that extols the potential of some specific health benefit.

## What we do know:

Investigations of the health properties of olive oil began following the growth in the 1970's of the so-called Mediterranean diet, of which olive oil is a significant feature. Everyday use of alcohol and fatty foods such as oil resulted in much healthier individuals in the Mediterranean; so American and European scientists analysed and explained it.

The fat in olive oil is the so-called "good fat". All fats are composed of saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids and we probably need all of these in a healthy diet.

Saturated fatty acids are those that are responsible for the high incidence of coronary disease while mono and polyunsaturated fatty acids actively protect against heart disease by diminishing cholesterol levels in the blood. Olive oil is 70% monounsaturated fatty acid. In the overall composition of fatty acids, we can state that olive oil among all edible oils is the one most similar to the human fatty composition, and can be believed therefore to be the one that allows the highest degree of digestibility.

## What is overall low acidity?

Tuscan olive oil, if harvested correctly should not have more than 0.3% of overall acidity. Any other acidity value makes us suspect the worst! We are proud of the fact that our oil possesses a truly low percentage of overall fatty acids. The lower the acidity, the lighter the food you cook or dress with, is to digest.

Further, there are two types of blood cholesterol: LDL and HDL. HDL is beneficial while LDL is not. Monounsaturated fatty acids has the twin benefits of reducing LDL levels while leaving HDL levels untouched.

In summary olive oil has beneficial fat that is actually good for the cholesterol level, helping prevent hardened arteries and heart diseases.

The high flame point, compared to other oils, makes olive oil also a favourable oil for sautéing, avoiding undesirable flavours and carcinogenic fatty acids that form in any oil exposed to temperatures above the flame point. Yes it is an expensive way of frying, but surely the best and healthiest.

Some of the studies mentioned above have concluded that olive oil is high in Vitamin E and F. It aids digestion by protecting the mucous membranes and stimulating the gall bladder. It actively prevents gallstones and aids the assimilation of vitamins and minerals. One study has demonstrated that monounsaturated fatty acid is helpful to people suffering from non-insulin dependent diabetes.

Other studies document a high interferon level in Olive oil, suggesting it to be an excellent prevention against cancer.

## Olive oil properties

Sun, stone, drought, silence and solitude: these are the five ingredients that, according to Italian folk traditions, create the ideal habitat for the olive tree.

We treasure extra-virgin olive oil for its nutritional and salutary virtues. La cucina Italiana reports that extra-virgin olive oil is the most digestible of the edible fats: it helps to assimilate vitamin A, D and K; it contains so-called essential acids that can not be produced by our own bodies; it slows down the aging process; and it helps bile, liver and intestinal functions. It is also valued for its culinary virtues and organoleptic properties as well: flavour (sapore), bouquet (aroma), and colour (colore).

*Villa Pileggi Olive Oil*

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