



## Oil, Olive, Extra Virgin

USDA  
**Foods**

### Nutrition Information

- Olive oil is made by crushing olives and refining the juices that are released.
- Olive oil is not part of a food group, but it provides nutrients such as unsaturated fat.
- The difference between olive oil and extra virgin olive oil is that extra virgin olive oil is made without heat.
- Olive oil flavor is mild and neutral, though it may have some fruity flavors and bitterness.
- If you want to eat less saturated fat, you can use unsaturated fats like olive oil in place of saturated fats like butter or lard when cooking.

### Uses and Tips

- Use olive oil to coat a skillet or pan when cooking to prevent food from sticking to the pan.
- The “smoke point” or “flash point” of an oil is the temperature at which it starts smoking, which can create an off, burned flavor. Olive oil has a smoke point between 325—400°F, so it works for many types of cooking, including sauteing, grilling, baking, and pan frying.
- If you don’t have enough olive oil for a recipe, you can use it with vegetable oil.

### Storing Foods at Home

- Store unopened olive oil in a cool, clean, dry place.
- After opening, store olive oil in its original container in a cool, dry place, away from heat and sunlight for the best taste and color. Keep the container closed when storing.
- If you live in a particularly hot climate, olive oil may be stored in the refrigerator; the oil may thicken, but if you let it stand at room temperature it will return to a liquid.

### MyPlate Facts

- Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature, like vegetable oils used in cooking. They come from many different plants and from fish.
- Choosing unsaturated fat in place of saturated fat can reduce your risk of heart disease and improve “good” (HDL) cholesterol levels.
- Most oils are high in unsaturated fats and low in saturated fats.
- Some commonly used oils include canola oil, corn oil, cottonseed oil, olive oil, safflower oil, soybean oil, and sunflower oil.
- Examples of foods that are high in unsaturated fats include nuts, seeds, avocado, and salmon. Oils from plant sources (vegetables and nuts) do not contain any cholesterol.
- The fat in some tropical plants, including coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil, are not included in the oils category because they are higher in saturated fat than other oils and are treated as solid fats.



## USDA Foods

### Olive Oil Vinaigrette

*Number of servings varies*

#### Ingredients:

Olive oil

Acid such as lemon or grapefruit juice, apple cider vinegar, white or red wine vinegar, or balsamic vinegar

Seasonings such as dried or finely minced herbs, black or white pepper, chili powder or finely minced dried chilies, and salt\*

**\*Note:** Use your favorite seasonings that you have on hand, add to taste.

**Directions:** Wash hands with soap and water.

1. Combine 3 parts oil to 1 part acid in a jar, cup, or small pitcher. For example, a batch of dressing for 2 people might use 3 tablespoons of olive oil to 1 tablespoon of lemon juice. Making dressing for a crowd? Mix  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup oil to  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup acid.
2. Add seasonings to taste. Close the jar securely and shake well or blend with a fork before use.
3. Serve on salad or use to marinate vegetables, meat, poultry, or fish.

#### Variations:

For a tangy Dijon dressing, add mustard to taste. Looking for something creamy? Try mixing in a small amount of mayonnaise.

*Recipe adapted from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*

### Vegetarian Stuffed Peppers

*Makes 8 servings*

#### Ingredients:

4 bell peppers (red or green)

2 cups cherry tomatoes

1 onion (medium)

1 cup basil leaves (fresh)

3 garlic cloves

2 teaspoons olive oil

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

**\*Note:** Green herbs like parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme work well. Try your favorites, too!

**Directions:** Wash hands with soap and water.

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Lightly oil a large shallow baking pan.
2. Cut peppers in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Arrange peppers cut sides up in baking pan and lightly oil cut edges of stems.
3. Halve cherry tomatoes and chop onion and basil. Finely chop garlic.
4. In a bowl toss tomatoes, onion, basil, garlic, olive oil, salt and pepper to taste
5. Spoon equal portions of mixture into peppers and roast in upper third of oven until peppers are tender, about 20 minutes.

*Adapted from US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*