

17 facts, views and tips on olive oil

Blog post 5.1/13

6. Which categories of olive oil are there in the EU?



The seven different categories of olive oil are graded according to quality parameters based on two different property clusters:

- physico-chemical properties such as acidity, peroxide number, fatty acid content and composition of sterols;
- organoleptic (sensory) characteristics that can be recognised by the senses, i.e. colour, smell or taste. These include, for example, the fruitiness of the oil and it is also important that there are no organoleptic defects.

Virgin olive oils

There are three different categories of virgin olive oils.

1) Extra virgin olive oil is the category with the highest quality. There must be no deterioration in organoleptic characteristics and the taste must be fruity. An acidity of 0.8% may not be exceeded.

2) Virgin olive oil may have slight sensory defects. Its acidity may not exceed 2%.

3) Olive lampante olive oil is a virgin olive oil of lesser quality with an acidity of more than 2%. It has no fruity characteristics and has significant sensory defects. Olive lampante olive oil is not authorised for retail sale. It must be refined and is used for industrial purposes.

Other categories of olive oil

The following categories of olive oil are used to classify non-native olive oils:

4) Refined olive oil is produced by refining a defective virgin olive oil, for example olive lampante olive oil. It is not intended for retail sale. Its acidity is at most 0.3% after refining.

5) Olive oil: Olive oil marketed under this abbreviation consists of both refined and virgin olive oil or extra virgin olive oil. It is thus obtained by blending olive oils of different categories and qualities. Its acidity is not more than 1%.

6) Crude olive pomace oil: olive pomace is the olive paste left after extraction of the oil, from which further oil can be obtained in a second extraction process. The resulting oil is called crude olive-pomace oil.

7) Refined olive-pomace oil: Crude olive-pomace oil can be refined and blended with virgin olive oils. This blend is called refined olive-pomace oil. Its acidity may be up to 1%.

(Source of information: https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/plants-and-plant-products/plant-products/olive-oil_de)

The two king categories for olive oils are not official EU classifications. Firstly, there is the "Early Harvest" classification for those oils obtained exclusively from olives harvested early. The "First Day of Harvest" category is even stricter: these olive oils may only be pressed from the fruit of the first day of the harvesting season. Both types of oil are very rare and sometimes difficult to get.

We will come back to storage later in the blog. The next section will first focus on the categories of the official olive oil and on olive varieties and their characteristics.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, ADVICE, MESSAGES, PROPOSALS?

PLEASE CONTACT US.

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