

AUSTRALIAN OLIVE ASSOCIATION

The Australian Olive industry is made up of those that either grow olives for table fruit or grow olives for oil, or in some cases both. The table olive industry is relatively small in Australia due to the high cost of labour. The majority of olives grown are made into olive oil.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) is the most prized grade of olive oil. It is valued for its perfect balance of flavour, aroma, colour and fresh taste. EVOO is freshly squeezed from the olive and is full of vitamins and nutrients. The second grade is virgin olive oil then olive oil. Olive oil is a blend of extra virgin or virgin olive oil with chemically refined olive oil.

Health benefits

The health benefits of olive oil are extensive with new positive attributes discovered all the time. Here are just a few:

Heart health^{1-5, 8, 35}

For persons at high cardiovascular risk, a Mediterranean diet supplemented with EVOO or nuts reduced the incidence of major cardiovascular events³⁴.

Daily doses of olive oil that is rich in polyphenols may protect from atherosclerosis²⁴. In 2004, the Food and Drug Administration allowed the health claim that *two tablespoons of olive oil daily* may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

Spanish researchers from the Lipids and Atherosclerosis Research Unit of the *Reina Sofia University Hospital in Cordoba*, discovered that a diet rich in olive oil or other monounsaturated fats could improve the arterial function of elderly individuals.

Metabolic Syndrome

The Mediterranean diet includes olive oil and can serve as primary and secondary prevention of the Metabolic Syndrome and its individual components²³.

Stroke

Older individuals who consume olive oil daily as 'intensive' users of olive oil (those that used it for both cooking and dressings) have a 41% lower risk of stroke compared to those that do not use olive oil²⁵.

Type 2 diabetes^{6,7}

A *Mediterranean style diet rich in olive oil reduces the risk of type II diabetes* by almost 50 percent compared to a low fat diet. The diet helps lower 'bad' low-density lipoproteins (LDL) while improving blood sugar control and enhancing insulin sensitivity.

Cancer^{9, 18-22, 35}

The phytonutrient in olive oil, oleocanthal, mimics the effect of ibuprofen in reducing inflammation, which may help decrease the risk of breast cancer and its recurrence.

Another review of 25 epidemiological studies concluded that preferring olive oil to other added lipids, particularly those rich in saturated fats, can decrease the risk of upper digestive and respiratory tract neoplasm's, breast and possibly colorectal and other cancer sites.

Immune system²⁶⁻²⁷

Fresh EVOO contains polyphenols that furnish the immune system, protect from heart disease and display anticancer activity by acting as free radicals traps.

Osteoporosis¹⁰

A high consumption of *olive oil appears to improve bone mineralisation* and calcification. It helps improve calcium absorption, so plays an important role in preventing the onset of osteoporosis and aiding sufferers.

Blood pressure^{1, 28, 29, 30}

Several studies for different age groups, and with a large number of participants, have found that the consumption of olive oil is associated with a decrease in blood pressure.

Obesity¹²⁻¹⁵

A Spanish study that looked at the relationship between oil consumption and risk of obesity found that those who consumed olive oil or a mixture of oils including olive oil, were at significantly reduced risk of becoming obese compared to those consuming predominantly sunflower oil.

Rheumatoid Arthritis^{16-17, 31-33}

Studies have indicated that people with diets containing high levels of olive oil are less likely to develop Rheumatoid Arthritis.

It has been shown that the Mediterranean diet can reduce disease activity, pain and stiffness in patients with inflammatory arthritis and may constitute a valuable support for patients suffering from this disease.

Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases³⁵

Research has shown that the traditional Mediterranean is associated with a reduced incidence of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

Other industry research includes:

- Evaluation of key chemicals for pest management in the olive industry
- Development of a triacylglycerol database for authentication of EVOO
- Survey to determine compliance with new methodologies in International Standards
- Residue data for key chemicals in the Australian olive industry.

Seasonality

Olives are grown in many areas throughout Australia, particularly the southern and eastern states. Olive harvest begins in April and finishes in June but there are some regions that start earlier and finish later.

Storage

Sunlight and air can break down the chemical structure of all olive oils regardless of their grade. This harms delicate flavours and health properties. Therefore pick an oil that is in tinted glass, tin or cask. Store EVOO away from heat and light.

Links

- www.australianolives.com.au
www.australianextravirgin.com.au
www.oliveoiltimes.com/olive-oil-health-benefits

References

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Nutrient profile

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) do not have a specific category for EVOO. All oils are simply called olive oil.

Nutrient	Per 100mL
Energy (kJ)	3400
Fat (75% monounsaturated, 9% polyunsaturated, 16% saturated)	91.9g
Carbohydrate	0g
Protein	0g
Vitamin E	20mg
Alpha tocopherol	16mg
Beta tocopherol	9mg

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