



WEIL™ *Your Trusted Health Advisor™*
Andrew Weil, M.D.

ASK DR WEIL: How to choose a high-quality olive oil?

Q: I keep hearing about the amazing health benefits of olive oil but when I go to the store there are so many different kinds to choose from. How can I make sure that I buy the right one?

A: This is a great question. One that I get asked often.

Olive oil use in the in the U.S. has gone mainstream. In 2007 alone, Americans consumed over 70 million gallons; a nearly ten-fold increase since 1982.

Olive oil's newfound fame is good news since it has the highest percentage of heart-healthy monounsaturated fat of any oil. It's also filled with antioxidants, natural substances shown to provide cardiovascular and anti-cancer benefits. This is why I recommend making extra virgin olive oil the principal source of fat in the diet.

Besides health reasons, this popularity surge is also due to its wonderful taste, which has probably helped many Americans realize that there's no need to sacrifice taste in pursuit of healthy eating.

However, this increased interest in olive oil brings more options to choose from than ever before. Here are my guidelines for choosing the right ones.

- ✓ **Choose only “extra virgin” varieties of olive oil.** The term "extra virgin," by definition, implies that an olive oil has an acidity content less than 1%. This is important to the oil's overall flavor and healthfulness.
- ✓ **Perform your own sensory test.** Look for the deep green color and deep olive flavor that indicates high quality products. Top quality extra-virgin olive oil (which I believe should be used for all cooking, not just bread-dipping and salad-drizzling) has a natural peppery finish and a deep, “green” aroma of grass and artichoke.
- ✓ **Buy small bottles of organic olive oil.** Look for the “ICEA” (Ethical and Environmental Certification Institute) logo and/or other organic certifications like the USDA's green-and-white ORGANIC logo. Certification as organic is usually a sign of quality and commitment to sustainability.
- ✓ **Look for official certifications on the label.** When it comes to choosing a high-quality extra virgin olive oil, I suggest choosing olive oils certified by the “IOOC” (International Olive Oil Council) or “COOC” (California Olive Oil Council, which adheres to IOOC

standards for California olive oils). If these are not available, I suggest seeking out organic extra virgin olive oils (see above).

- ✓ **Be wary of extremely low prices.** You are unlikely to find good one for less than \$9 for a 17-ounce bottle, although a higher price is no guarantee of quality.

Personally, I use, and have given my endorsement to, **Lucini Limited Reserve Extra Virgin Olive Oil** from Lucini Italia Organics.



Aided by sun, soil and the Italian climate, Lucini Italia extra virgin olive is produced from only 100% hand-picked Tuscan olives that are pressed within 24 hours. Only when the greatest care is taken to capture the freshness of the olive fruit is a highest-quality extra virgin olive produced. This oil exceeds all of my expectations for both taste and healthful properties, and I highly recommend it.

*The Lucini Italia Organics™ Limited Reserve
Premium Select™ Extra Virgin Olive Oil 100% Organic*