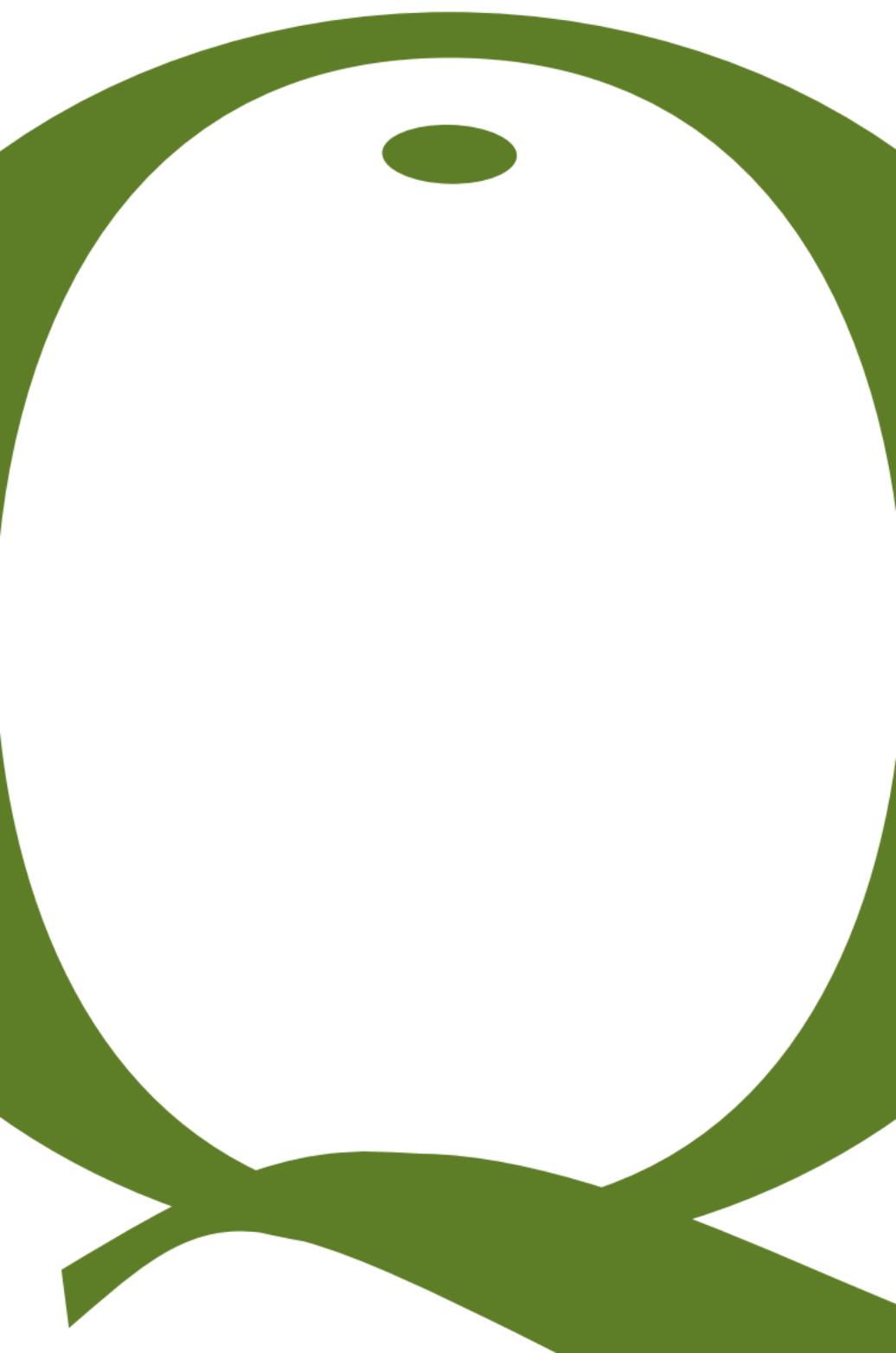


A Guide to
the conservation
and use of high
quality oils at home
and in restaurants



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The oil extracted from olives is a product which, by its very nature, communicates authenticity and purity; as a result it conveys a real sense naturalness, as it is effectively just the juice of olives. When the olives are crushed and ground in the oil mill, nothing is added, although at the same time every effort must be made not to impoverish the enormous wealth of antioxidants contained in the fruit of the olive tree.

However, it is not enough just to produce quality. Despite all the attention paid in the olive groves during cultivation, then in the mill when crushing the olives, the great skill of those who produce and manufacture oil will not alone be sufficient to maintain the original properties of an olive oil. It requires the active collaboration of consumers and restaurant owners. All fats require special attention: they are fragile substances.

So when a consumer takes possession of a bottle of oil, he or she is then called upon to play a part. The goal is to maintain the characteristics of this precious olive juice unaltered and, consequently, all tips for its proper use are to be observed with the utmost attention.

1

One price, one use

It is advisable to avoid deals below cost price. PDO or “premium” quality extra virgin olive oils are ideal used as they are, as a dressing or in simple dishes. Oils in the lower price ranges – provided that the price is acceptable, never below that of lower category oils – can be used when cooking for a longer time or at higher temperatures, for example slow-cooking sauces, stews or for frying.



2

It takes a good nose

When choosing an extra virgin, always start with a sensory evaluation. It would be a good idea to acquire the knowledge necessary to detect and recognise the various sensory profiles that can be perceived by the nose and by the palate. Just a generic “I like it, or “I don’t like it” is enough to begin with. It is an acquired culture that is a prerequisite for the discerning consumer, who does not limit the choice of an oil to the price. Selecting a good extra virgin olive oil starts here.



3

A word of advice to get you started: the intensity of the fruited notes

A self-respecting extra virgin must evoke the fruit it comes from, with its well-defined, clean, fresh and pleasant aromas. Dividing the oils into categories: light, medium or intensely fruited, lets you choose properly in the kitchen when using them.

Make no mistake: unpleasant aromas are banned, such as oils that give off a heated or oxidized odour. The slightest rancid note is a death sentence for an oil. For all the other descriptions there is a specific reference vocabulary.

The important thing is to understand the expressive identity of an oil and to use it accordingly.



4

An extra virgin must be interpreted

An extra virgin: use the right amount, without exceeding the required quantity. All extra virgin oils are versatile, they lend themselves to a variety of uses, both raw and in cooking.

While a generic seed oil is suitable for all uses, as it is odourless and tasteless, an extra virgin, due to its intrinsic qualities, expresses itself in many different ways and must therefore be interpreted each time it is used.

The skilful combination of the various sensory perceptions: aroma and taste, can make any food more enjoyable when matched with the right extra virgin olive oil, thanks to the way it enhances flavours.



5

A combination code

Not all extra virgins are the same.

Foods that have a delicate structure: lightly fruited oils, whose flavours and sensations tend to be delicate and smooth, with mild or only slightly perceptible bitter and spicy notes.

With foods that have an average structure: oils with clearer, more pronounced aromas, medium fruited, rounded and harmonious in their bitter and spicy sensations.

Foods that are more robust: oils with a sharper, more marked aroma, intensely fruited and persistent, pronounced bitter and spicy notes, though these should not be discordant.



6

There are no perfect rules

Given the variety of personal taste, any advice is an arbitrary indication. To help the less experienced, some approximate suggestions can be useful.

Appetizers and side dishes: all extra virgin olive oils.

Bakery products: medium to lightly fruited.

Soups: intensely fruited, bitter and spicy.

Pasta and risotto: medium fruited.

Crustaceans and molluscs: medium or intensely fruited.

Fish: lightly or medium/lightly fruited.

White meat: medium/lightly fruited.

Red meat and game: medium or intensely fruited.

Cheese and milk products: medium or intensely fruited.

Dessert: lightly fruited.



7

Don't be afraid of bitter flavours

In a good extra virgin olive oil, the bitter flavours are never discordant. In any case, even if the bitterness seems excessive, both the bitter and spicy notes of an oil are significantly reduced in cooking. Immersed in a liquid solution, the bitterness is lost. Due to a hydrolysis reaction the phenols that cause the bitter notes are divided into other, simpler molecules that are no longer bitter; particularly if the oil acts in a liquid solution, especially an acidic one such as tomato sauce. So don't worry, food products can be transformed and in some cases these changes are substantial.



8

Some confusion about frying

The belief that extra virgin olive oil is not suitable for frying is an error that has been perpetuated by ignorance and economic concerns related to the high cost of the raw materials. The false belief that seed oils are better suited arose in the '70s following advertising claims that promised it was healthier and more easily digested.

Extra virgin olive oils are the most suitable liquid for frying, both for health-related aspects and for the superior flavour. The high temperatures involved partially reduce the aromatic content of extra virgin oils, however for consumers who prefer a more neutral taste it would be better to use an alternative to olive oil.



9

General information

It may seem obvious to keep oil away from light and heat, and yet these are the most common mistakes that are committed by negligence or inattention. Humidity too is not conducive to the durability and stability of the oils. It would therefore be best to keep the oil in a dry, dark place, better still with temperatures around 13-15 ° C.

Closing the bottle immediately after use is another recommendation to be observed, as oxygen is the other great enemy of extra virgin olive oil.

Olive oil is a fragile substance, destined oxidize, even though it is the most durable of all the fats around, it's always best to preserve its qualities.



10

Useful rules for eating out

It is not easy to find good extra virgin olive oils in bars, taverns and restaurants. The problem of unmarked oil containers has not been fully resolved; there are still restaurants that use them on the tables although this practice is prohibited by law.

The traditional presence of cruet sets or anonymous reusable bottles on the table is a sign of low standards and this practice must be rejected, asking specifically an oil that is packed, labelled and if possible closed with a special stopper that doesn't allow it to be refilled.

This is not merely a whim, given the nature of fats, it is a bad habit that puts the quality of an extra virgin olive oil at risk; it will tend to oxidise in cruet sets.





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