

Oil Drill

Oil oil is among the most popular pantry staples, but myths still abound. Here's the real skinny on one of America's favorite fats.

MYTH # 1

Extra virgin olive oil loses its healthy properties when you cook with it.

Cook with confidence: Most olive oils do not begin to break down until heated to more than 450°F- hotter than even typical deep frying temperatures. Heat does diminish the oil's flavor and aroma, so if you've invested in a fancy bottle of extra virgin, you may want to reserve it for uncooked uses such as salad dressing.

MYTH # 2

Light olive oil is less fattening than other olive oils.

Manufacturers have created the illusion that certain olive oils contain fewer calories or fat grams by labeling them light. The term actually refers to the oil's less intense flavor and aroma. You'd still get a dose of monosaturated fat, but these oils won't contain the same levels of antioxidants as extra virgin. And they are no less fattening than other cooking oils.

MYTH # 3

Oil from the "first cold pressing" is healthier than other extra virgin olive oil.

Any true extra virgin olive oil will be from the first, unheated pressing. A better indication of the oil's nutritional profile is its harvest date, which you will find printed on some bottles. Fresher oil is always richer in antioxidants and other beneficial substances. Look for oil sold in an opaque container- not clear glass. Light degrades the oil.

-Joy Manning



PMS?

PASS THE MUSHROOMS

Women whose diets are rich in riboflavin (vitamin B2) cut their chances of experiencing PMS symptoms by 35%, according to a recent study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Cremini mushrooms are a great source of riboflavin. Five ounces of the flavorful fungi deliver 64% of your daily requirement and only 31 calories. Other foods rich in the feel-better nutrient include spinach, milk, and venison. —JM

A Natural Tooth Whitener

A purple dress can be stunning, but a purple smile is never in fashion. Ramin Tabib, DDS, says that enjoying cheese with your wine changes your mouth's pH, reducing acidity and making it hard for stains to stick. Want more whitening? Reach for celery after your drink—its texture scours away stains like a toothbrush, according to Dr. Tabib. —Molly Raisch

