



## Characteristics of an excellent organic extra virgin olive oil

Extra virgin olive oil is the only oil obtained by squeezing a fruit and therefore it is a pure juice with a defined character and identity. In the world there are about 1,600 varieties of olives each with unique aromas and flavours that must always remember fresh fruit and vegetables.

### Bitter + spicy = health

They are in fact sensations due to the natural antioxidants present only in extra virgin olive oil.

The colour of an extra virgin does not mean quality: a great oil can be yellow or green, only the percentage of chlorophyll present changes.

The acidity is not felt in the mouth or throat: it is measured chemically. Spicy sensations instead depend on the presence of antioxidants and are therefore a positive factor because they help our body stay healthy.

### Eating properly is an act of love for oneself, let know the oil better.

#### 1. Fruity

This is a very important characteristic because an oil defined as fruity is obtained from healthy, fresh fruits harvested at the right point of ripeness.

This means that the fruity characteristic is an indicator of the health of the drupe, that is, of the olive, even before it is processed. It is obvious that if the olive is already compromised or is not in an optimal state, the success of the oil is compromised.

The type of fruity sensation and the level depends on the cultivar and that is on the olive variety. It can recall green or ripe fruit, freshly cut grass, tomato, artichoke, almond, aromatic herbs, etc ...

It is good that the package always shows the sensory evaluation of fruity as for an inexperienced or untrained consumer, it is very complex to trace the sensation of fruity.



## 2. Bitter

Bitter is a sensation perceived above all by the papillae located in the central area of the tongue. The perception of bitterness is linked to the presence of **complex phenolic compounds**, important for:

- the organoleptic and nutritional quality of the oil
- the preservation of the product over time

One of the most important hydrophilic polyphenolic compounds in oil is **oleuropein**, with a bitter taste.

The preservation of the precious **phenolic and volatile substances** related to bitterness depends on countless factors such as the cultivar, the agronomic practices, **the oil production process** and the production area.

Unfortunately, there is little communication on the importance of "bitter" oil. For this reason, the consumer, not knowing its importance, associates the bitterness with a negative component that he tries to avoid.

The advice is to prefer oils that carry the word bitter as it not only indicates a healthier oil but also an oil that will keep better.

## 3. Spicy

Not only is bitterness perceived as a negative component, many consumers mistakenly associate that pinch in the throat, which is the typical spicy sensation present in different intensities in all quality extra virgin olive oils, with acidity, confusing the latter with one of the most important and valuable organoleptic characteristics of extra virgin olive oil which is precisely **the spicy**.

Both of these characteristics are precious because they indicate oils with a **high content of polyphenols**, which are very important for both prolongation the shelf life of the product, both for its health properties. One of the most important hydrophilic polyphenolic compounds is **oleocanthal**, with a spicy taste. Spicy is a sensation that the consumer can perceive more easily than fruity. For this reason, by tasting it, you can verify **the quality of the oil** you are going to buy.

#### 4. High content of Polyphenols

**Polyphenols** are natural molecules found in some foods. Are very important for human health and product quality.

**Extra virgin olive oil** is the only vegetable fats **rich in polyphenols**, the most important are hydroxytyrosol, oleuropein and oleocanthal.

**Among the health properties of polyphenols** we find the following:

- **antioxidant**
- **antiallergic**
- **antiviral**
- **anti-inflammatory • antibacterial**

Among the qualitative properties of polyphenols we find the increase in shelf life. These components of the oil defend it from oxidative damage to ensure that the oil does not become rancid. But beware, polyphenols are sensitive to light and temperature. For this reason, it is not enough to buy an oil with a high polyphenol value but you also need to know how to store it properly.

The polyphenol content varies according to the variety of the cultivar, in fact there are varieties of olives that are naturally rich in them. But be careful, if for example the climatic conditions, the area, the agronomic techniques and the production process are not the right ones, the quantity of polyphenols risks to be compromised.

Many studies show **the correlation between high polyphenol value and bitter and spicy oil**. We reiterate once again that the indication of bitter and spicy, are some of the factors that can guide the consumer to choose a good extra virgin olive oil.



## 5. Low number of peroxides

As mentioned previously, **peroxides** are generated when the oil comes into contact with oxygen, in fact **the peroxides represent the degree of oxidation of the oil**. This indicator is very important for **the quality of extra virgin olive oil**.

In a high-quality extra virgin, obtained from healthy and pressed olives within a few hours of harvesting with adequate extraction techniques, this value can be contained within 4/6 meq active O<sub>2</sub> / kg. The lower this value, the better the product will be preserved over time and the possibility of the appearance of rancidity will be delayed.

When choosing, it is necessary to prefer oils with a lower number of peroxides even if this value, which is not mandatory by law, is not generally indicated on the label. In conclusion, since it is not always possible to know the value of peroxides, it is good to prevent by properly storing the extra virgin olive oil.

## 6. Low Acidity

98% extra virgin olive oil is made up of fats, in turn made up of fatty acids, including **oleic acid**. During the oil production process, fats can break down and release some fatty acids. It is precisely the amount of free oleic acid that is measured to determine the acidity. In fact, a high acidity compromises the quality of the oil.

It must be pointed out that a **high acidity value** is not bad for health but compromises all the beneficial properties that the precious oleic acid would bring. By law, an oil, to be defined extra virgin, must have an acidity not exceeding 0.8g per 100g of product, but a **very high-quality oil normally values are between 0.1 and 0.2 acidity**.

Very low acidity (0.1 - 0.2 gr in 100 gr. Oil) means oil obtained from healthy olives that are harvested at the right degree of ripeness trying not to cause damage or injury to the fruit, which are stored in the best way and for the shortest possible time (maximum 8 hours for organic) before being processed in the mill so that the cellular integrity of the drupe (fruit) is safeguarded.

Unfortunately, as with peroxides, acidity is not perceptible on the palate or smell but can only be measured by chemical analysis



Oleic acid makes up most of the fats contained in extra virgin olive oil. In fact, extra virgin olive oil is, among all vegetable oils, **the one most rich in oleic acid**. This good fat has the following characteristics:

- if taken in the right quantities it has many properties that are precious for health
- preserves the conservation of the oil
- in the kitchen it makes it more stable at high temperatures

## 7. Cold Extraction

A consumer should always **buy cold pressed oil**, as this feature is one of the oil quality indicators. An extra virgin olive oil is cold **extracted** if the extraction process takes place **at temperatures below 27 ° C**.

If the oil is extracted hot, that is, with temperatures above 28 ° C, the organoleptic and nutritional qualities can even halve. The phenolic content and the aromatic components are altered with increasing temperature. Bioactive compounds, polyphenols, tocopherols and aromatic components, representing the quality of the product, would be lost.

The question arises spontaneously: why are there oils that are not extracted at the right temperatures? The answer is simple, as the temperature increases, the yield of the product increases.

Unfortunately, even the indication "**Cold Extracted**" can only be affixed on a voluntary basis on the label and is not mandatory. The advice is therefore to prefer products that have "first cold pressing" or "cold extracted" on the label.

### How to store Terre Apollineus Organic EVO oil

Extra virgin olive oil is very sensitive to **light**: choose oils in dark bottles to protect it from photo-oxidation.

Keep the oil cool: 14 to 21 degrees is the perfect **temperature**. When cooking, do not keep the oil near the stove.

The oil is very sensitive to **oxygen**: it is good practice to close the bottle, after each use because oxygen destroys the quality.

Always check the year of production.



## Olive oil as an ideal condiment

Raw or fully cooked and enriches every recipe, an ally of taste and health. Let's see how to use it in our dishes.

### RAW OLIVE OIL

Enhance and complete your recipes with a drizzle of oil to give unique aromas and flavours to your dishes

### COOKING OLIVE OIL

Using olive oil preserves the nutritional properties of food cooked even at high temperatures and facilitates the absorption into our body of the good substances contained in them.

**Frying in olive oil:** thanks to its resistance to high temperatures, it is one of the most suitable vegetable fats for frying. Its smoke point (temperature around which carcinogenic compounds are created) is around 220 ° while for most of the seed oils it generally ranges from 160 ° to 190 °. A good olive oil gives crunchiness and lightness to your fried food while protecting your health.