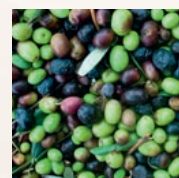


All these oils are calorifically similar, but have different fat compositions and micronutrients

THE GOOD OIL GUIDE

Olive, avocado or coconut? Sizzling or drizzling? With more cooking oils available than ever, here's what you need to know to choose well for your diet – and your dishes

There's such a variety of oils available nowadays, it can feel overwhelming. The good news is that all oils – whether they're made from fruits, nuts or seeds – can contribute to a healthy lifestyle within a balanced diet. They each offer unique nutritional benefits, and those with a high unsaturated fat content can help you maintain healthier cholesterol levels and protect your heart. Here's the lowdown on how best to use them.



OLIVE OIL

Central to the Mediterranean diet, olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids, which

experts consider a healthy fat. These fats can lower your 'bad' (LDL) cholesterol level and help maintain levels of 'good' (HDL) cholesterol. Extra virgin olive oil

is made from pure, cold-pressed olives and contains higher levels of polyphenols (a type of antioxidant), which may explain the greater benefits shown for cardiovascular health.

DO use an affordable blended olive oil for everyday cooking, including baking, frying and roasting.

DON'T cook with more expensive extra virgin olive oil. While it's a misconception that it can't be used in cooking, the subtle peppery or grassy flavours in extra virgin olive oil will show itself to best advantage in salad dressings or just drizzled over dishes.



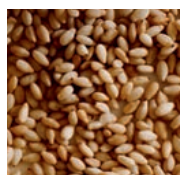
RAPESEED OIL

Made from the seeds of oilseed rape, this is one of the few cooking oils produced in the UK so is low in food miles.

Like olive oil, it's high in monounsaturated fats but has even higher levels of vitamin E. It also boasts the lowest level of saturated fat (7%) of all cooking oils. Extra virgin or cold-pressed rapeseed oil has a particularly delicate, nutty flavour.

DO cook with rapeseed oil as it doesn't smoke or burn at high temperatures. It's also great in dressings and marinades.

DON'T use the extra virgin type if you are after a neutral oil.



SESAME OIL

Popular in Asian cooking, oil made from sesame seeds comes in both pure and toasted form.

It is rich in both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, but also low in saturated fat, making it a heart-healthy option. Sesame oil contains sesamol and sesamin, which are powerful antioxidants. Regular sesame oil from raw seeds has a delicate neutral flavour. Toasted sesame oil is made from roasted seeds, and has a thicker consistency, darker colour and stronger flavour.

DO drizzle toasted sesame oil over stir fries, noodles or roasted vegetables just before serving, or use regular sesame oil in salad dressings or marinades.

DON'T cook delicately flavoured foods in sesame oil as it will overpower them.



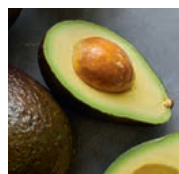
SUNFLOWER OIL

This contains higher levels of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats than other oils.

These unsaturated fats can help reduce cholesterol levels in the blood, especially when substituted for saturated fats.

DO use in all your everyday cooking, baking and deep frying.

DON'T reuse your sunflower (or indeed any) oil after deep-frying food. Reheating oil to high temperatures not only turns the flavour rancid, it also causes the formation of potentially harmful chemicals.



AVOCADO OIL

The green, fleshy part of the fruit is pressed for mild-flavoured avocado oil. About 70% of it comprises

monounsaturated fatty acids, making it a heart-healthy option. It's a good source of vitamin E and very versatile.

DO use in dressings and for drizzling, frying, roasting and baking. Its smoke point is the highest of any cooking oil.

DON'T use with strong ingredients as its mild flavour can get lost.



WALNUT OIL

This nut oil is rich in the essential omega-3 fatty acid alpha-linolenic acid, which is converted in the

body into long-chain omega-3s called EPA and DHA. These contribute to healthy cholesterol levels and normal



functioning of the heart. Once opened, it's best stored in the fridge to preserve the flavour and stop it going rancid.

DO enjoy its delicate walnut flavour in salad dressings or as a dip for bread.

DON'T use this oil for frying or roasting – high temperatures can cause it to break down and turn bitter.



GROUNDNUT OIL

Groundnut (also known as peanut) oil has a gentle, subtly nutty flavour. Almost half of it is comprised

of monounsaturated fats, which may help lower 'bad' LDL cholesterol. It also contains high levels of vitamin E.

DO use for roasting and stir-frying, as it has a high smoke point.

DON'T forget that oils made from nuts (including walnut and groundnut) are unsuitable for those with nut allergies.



COCONUT OIL

This is solid at room temperature, so can be good for vegan bakes. However, coconut oil is also nearly 90%

saturated fat. Claims that coconut oil can aid weight loss or treat conditions such as diabetes and irritable bowel disease are not backed by scientific evidence.

DO use for dairy-free baking.

DON'T choose this if you're watching your saturated fat intake. Also, that coconut flavour won't suit all dishes! »



As part of a balanced diet, olive oil can help to reduce levels of 'bad' cholesterol

COD & GREEN BEAN TRAYBAKE WITH CRISPY CAPERS

Tender cod loins roasted in low-in-saturated-fat olive oil meet with a satisfyingly salty sprinkling of fried capers.

Serves 4

Prepare 15 minutes

Cook 1 hour

- 500g new potatoes, thinly sliced
- 6 cloves garlic, unpeeled
- 3½ tbsp olive oil
- 200g fine green beans, trimmed
- 270g cherry vine tomatoes
- 5 rosemary sprigs, leaves stripped from 1 sprig
- 4 cod loins (about 125g each)
- 3 tbsp nonpareille capers, rinsed and dried
- ½ lemon, juice

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C, gas mark 7. Toss the potatoes and garlic with 2 tbsp oil and season. Spread out in a large, lipped baking tray (about 38cm x 25cm). Roast for 30 minutes, stirring gently halfway through.

2 Add the green beans, tomatoes and whole rosemary sprigs to the dish, gently toss to coat, then roast for 10 minutes. Create 4 rough indents in the vegetables. Coat the cod loins with ½ tbsp oil, season and carefully nestle into the indents in the tray. Return to the oven for 10-15 minutes until the cod is cooked through and opaque.

3 Meanwhile, put the capers, reserved rosemary leaves and remaining 1 tbsp oil in a small frying pan set over a medium heat. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the capers begin to sizzle. They should be crisp after a further 20-30 seconds.

4 Spoon the crisp capers over the cod with the lemon juice. Remove the tomato vines and squeeze the garlic out of its skins. A crisp, green salad makes a lovely side.



Low in saturated fat

Per serving 1408kJ/336kcal/13g fat/2g saturated fat/24g carbs/5.7g sugars/5.2g fibre/27g protein/0.89g salt/gluten free »

SESAME, PEACH & HONEY LOAF CAKE

This is a pleasingly dense tea cake, gently scented with sesame oil, lemon zest and fresh peaches. Coating the still-warm cake with orange blossom honey creates an instant glaze.

Serves 10

Prepare 30 minutes

Cook 1 hour

20 minutes

- 125ml sunflower oil, plus extra for greasing
- 20ml toasted sesame oil
- 175g light muscovado sugar
- 3 tbsp orange blossom honey
- 3 large eggs
- 2 unwaxed lemons, zest plus 2 tbsp juice
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 225g self-raising flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 25g ground almonds
- 2 ripe peaches, 1 finely chopped and 1 thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds

1 Preheat the oven to 170°C, gas mark 3. Grease and line a 900g loaf tin. Use electric beaters to beat the sunflower and sesame oils with the sugar and 1 tbsp honey until combined. Add the eggs and beat for 4 minutes until the mixture has thickened and increased in volume by about $\frac{1}{3}$. Briefly beat in the lemon zest, juice and vanilla, then use a spatula to fold in the flour, baking powder and almonds to form a thick batter with a dropping consistency. Fold in the chopped peaches. Tip the batter into the tin, smooth the top and sprinkle evenly with the sesame seeds. Arrange the thinly sliced peaches in a fan shape on top of the batter.

2 Bake for 1 hour-1 hour 20 minutes, turning the tin around halfway, until a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean. Check the cake after 50 minutes and if the top is browning too fast, cover loosely with foil. Drizzle the remaining 2 tbsp honey over the entire surface of the cake, then leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes. Remove from the tin, peeling the paper away and leave on a wire rack to cool completely before slicing. The loaf will keep in an airtight container in a cool place for 5 days.



High in vitamin E

✓ **Per serving**

1468kJ/351kcal/

18g fat/2.5g saturated fat/41g carbs/24g sugars/
1.9g fibre/5.5g protein/0.38g salt/6.9mg vitamin E

Oils can be a healthier substitute for butter in baking

