

The benefits of olive oil

The olive tree is widespread in the south of France but can acclimatize itself pretty much anywhere. Although it is not common in our gardens due to its large size, we all use olive oil. We often add it to our vegetables; whether it be on salad, in food preparation, cooking or even in cosmetics. But did you know that as well as tasting good, olive oil is also good for you? In this article you will discover the benefits of olive oil, but don't forget that – as with everything – you shouldn't go overboard with it.



Olive oil is good for our health

First of all, if you aren't sure which olive oil to pick, it is best to choose cold-pressed, bio, extra-virgin olive oil. Above all, avoid refined and heated oils which are cancerogenic and harmful to health.

Olive oil contains oleic acid (56-83%), an acid which can reduce the highest cause of death: cardio-vascular disease.

It also contains as much linoleic acid (Omega 6) as breast milk; so you could put a spoonful of olive oil in your children's soup. Omegas 3 and 6 are essential fatty acids that we can't produce ourselves and that we can only get from our food.

However, beware of taking too much, as Omega 6 must always be balanced with Omega 3, which we often get too little of. You can find Omega 3 in fatty fish and certain **fibres** (flax, walnut, rapeseed, soya etc.)

What's more, olive oil has anti-oxidant properties (vitamins E, C and polyphenols) that prevent cancer, as these properties prevent the ageing of cells.

If you heat the oil, beware that it becomes cancerogenic at temperatures of more than 210c; so if your oil smokes, you must discard it.

Olive oil vs cow's milk

When we are cooking and want to add fat, we generally use butter from cow's milk, or oil. Although they are not the same from a taste perspective, and their use varies by region and cooking habits, you should know that olive oil is better for your health than butter.

Olive oil only contains 14% saturated fat, which is a lot less than margarine, which is around 40%, and butter, which contains 55%.

Olive oil is the most easily digested fat: you can even use it instead of butter on your toast in the morning, if you place it in the freezer the night before.

In addition to being the most digestible, it has as much calcium as cow's milk, at 120mg per 100g; however, vegetable calcium is 75% absorbed by the digestive tract, as opposed to only 30% for animal calcium.



Olive tree flowers

Only one flower in 20 becomes an olive. Olive tree flowers can also be used for their energy: dried and in herbal tea. They are anti-cancerogenic, nourish the skin, can be used as a gentle laxative, for rheumatism and are good for the brain.

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