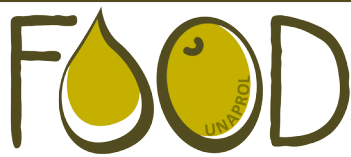


Looking for

THE PERFECT



NEWSLETTER

OCT2016

N001



mipAAF  
Ministero delle  
politiche agricole  
alimentari e forestali

CAMPAIGN CO-FINANCED  
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION  
AND ITALY



ENJOY  
IT'S FROM  
EUROPE



## OLIVE OIL, EUROPEAN HIGH QUALITY: THE PROJECT

Promoted by the European Union and MIPAAF, the project “Olive Oil, European High Quality” is being undertaken by Unaprol, the largest organisation of Italian olive producers. The project aims to increase the knowledge and awareness of the consumer and professional interlocutors on the extraordinary properties of controlled and guaranteed European olive products. The project’s mission is to shape the unique and recognisable identity of European products, providing the consumer and sector operators with valid instruments for checking and realising what is communicated to them.

The focal point of communication will be to create greater awareness among consumers on the issues of high quality olives and extra virgin olive oil. To counter phenomena such as counterfeiting and downward market standardisation, or possible barriers such as the complexity of the terms which appear on labelling which do not favour recognition of product quality, it is necessary to increase the knowledge made available to all targets.

Simultaneously, professional operators and consumers should be engaged on the importance of these products in diets, and in general on the need to adopt attentive and con-

scious consumption models. In this context, European high quality olives and extra virgin olive oil naturally emerge because, according to scientific studies validated at international level, they are not only excellent dressings but real, complete foods, and are an essential part of a healthy and balanced diet.

The project will aim at an operational involvement of various interlocutors from the bottom, to lead to greater sharing of the importance of European high quality olive products at the environmental, socio-economic, nutritional and gastronomic level.

An importance that already arises upstream, from the thousand “diversities” of the European olive. Biodiversity and the natural environment of Mediterranean Europe are in fact at the origin of the unique qualitative components of the products and this project is an opportunity to learn more about these riches, which express their potential through the European controlled olive sector. A matrix to love, preserve and enhance, to give new life to progress in the field of gastronomic culture, healthy eating and environmental protection, to the benefit of the community.

## WHAT IS EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL?

Extra virgin olive oil and table olives are products of excellence that nature has always made available to man. Extra virgin olive oil is obtained using only the mechanical process of pressing olives, and is consumed directly, without first being treated or exposed to procedures other than those that are strictly physical.

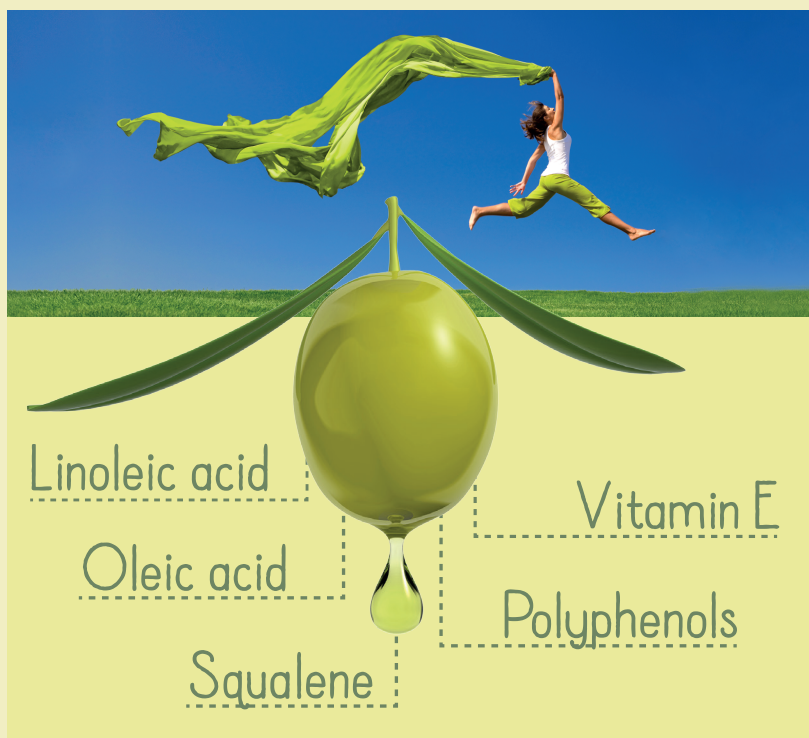
The aromatic notes of extra virgin olive oil contain about 200 volatile compounds that are combined during the mechanical extraction process. In particular, there are tocopherols and hydrophilic phenolic substances which originate during the extraction of the oil from substances already present in the olive (tyrosol and hydroxytyrosol). In addition to protecting the product itself from oxidative processes, these substances play a fundamental role in determining the nutritional and health qualities of extra virgin olive oil.

Thanks to its special composition, extra virgin olive oil is the plant oil most resistant to oxidation, and it presents major advantages compared with alternative products:

- it is rich in monounsaturated fats, and thus tends to oxidise less;
- it is rich in oleic acid, a monounsaturated fatty acid that does not tend to oxidise during storage or cooking, and therefore remains easily absorbed.

Oltre alle proprietà benefiche per In addition to beneficial health properties, the phenolic compounds also influence the sensory properties of extra virgin olive oil, expressing the components of bitter and spicy taste directly related to their molecular structure. Precisely for this reason, it is said that extra virgin olive oils with bitter and spicy accents “are good for health”.

Of course all aspects, from the sensory to the healthful, are always directly influenced by the quality of the raw material (namely the olive), by its agricultural conditions and by production processes, which are now managed and controlled according to stringent European standards, which guarantee the high quality of the products.



## THE QUALITIES OF OLIVE OIL

Olive oil is a food oil extracted from olive fruits. But how many types of olive oil exist? Which ones are comestible? And what are their characteristics?

The finest olive oil is extra virgin olive oil, which is obtained from the mechanical pressing of the fruit, without the use of chemical additives, usually no more than 24-48 hours from harvesting. To obtain the extra virgin olive oil, pressing must take place cold, that is, at a temperature lower than 27°C, in order not to alter the organoleptic qualities and physical-chemical properties of the product. To be considered extra virgin, an olive oil should not contain a percentage of oleic acid greater than 0.8%.

The same pressing process is used for the production of virgin olive oil, which differs from extra virgin oil because of lower quality and free acidity, that is a content of oleic acid not greater than 2%. Besides its use as food, this type of oil is used to refine olive and olive-residue oils.

Olive oil consists in the mixture of refined olive oils, which have then undergone an industrial pro-

cess that reduces acidity and eliminates oxidised substances. It includes a percentage (maximum 10%) of extra virgin or virgin olive oil, which partially reinstates the nutritional substances that refined olive oil does not contain, such as polyphenol. This type of oil can have a free acidity not greater than 1%.

Through the use of solvents from olive pomace, that is production waste, skins and kernels, olive-residue oil is then produced. Also in this case, to make the previously already refined olive-residue oil comestible, it is necessary to mix it with extra virgin or virgin olive oil in variable quantities, usually around 5%. Olive-residue oil can also have a maximum of 1% free acidity.

The characteristics and related production methods of these different variety of oils were included in [Regulation \(EC\) No 702/2007 of the European Commission of 21 June 2007](#) amending Regulation (EEC) No. 2568/91 concerning the characteristics of olive oils and olive-residue oils and on the relevant methods of analysis.





**mipaaf**  
Ministero delle  
politiche agricole  
alimentari e forestali

CAMPAIGN CO-FINANCED  
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION  
AND ITALY



ENJOY  
IT'S FROM  
EUROPE



## PDO & PGI

PDO and PGI recognition, created to protect the best European agri-food products, are the jewels in the crown of a production that has no equal in the world from a qualitative, nutritional and organoleptic point of view.

PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) quality labels, established by the European Community, protect the agricultural or food product whose qualitative characteristics depend essentially or exclusively on the geographical environment, that is the sum of all the natural and human factors that make it unique and inimitable.

The products in question thus represent the excellence of their production chains, being the result of the application of strict production rules laid down by specific Regulations, compliance with which is constantly monitored by independent bodies for the purposes of certification of standards.

Each step of the production chain is traced and the products are controlled from the outset, from verification of the raw material used to protection with respect to counterfeiting, for full guarantee of final quality.

For a particular product to be recognised as PDO, all phases of production, processing and preparation must take place in a specific geographical area, and there must be compliance with the strict production rules laid down by the production Regulations. It follows that the PDO product, which is guaranteed over the entire production cycle considering multiple natural and human factors, represents a truly inimitable “unicum” which is not reproducible outside the geographical area of designation. From olive cultivation

standards to the olive harvest and packaging of products, all rules of the production Regulations for the PDO olive product must be strictly observed in order to obtain European quality recognition. Even after packaging, including the marketing phase, further stringent controls are applied to ensure absolute compliance of the product with expected protection standards.

While PDO applies to products whose entire production cycle, from raw material to finished product, is certified within a defined geographical area (and, therefore, cannot be reproduced outside of it), PGI recognition is the European quality label attributed to agricultural or food products for which at least one phase of the production process has an indissoluble bond with the specific geographical area of reference.

For obtaining PGI recognition, it is also fundamental to abide by the rules of the Regulations, which are exactly the same as those of PDO, and producers are constantly subjected to controls by an independent body which monitors compliance with every aspect of the production chain.

For both PDO and PGI labels, protection by European and national institutions is thus provided for, together with strict compliance with the rules of production, giving consumers a guarantee of the quality of certified products with respect to the entire production and marketing cycle.

