



STRICTLY OLIVE OIL™
marketing for producers & education for all!

ABOUT POLYPHENOLS

The hallmarks of extra virgin flavor in olive oil are its olive fruit aroma, bitterness and pungency, all of which reflect the flavor of olives freshly picked from the tree. All extra virgin olive oils contain these three attributes; the best oils display a harmony of balance among these characteristics.

Bitterness and pungency (often described as pepperiness) are indicative of the concentration of phenolic compounds (polyphenols) that are naturally found in extra virgin olive oil. Polyphenols act as antioxidants that inhibit the degradation or oxidation of olive oil. *(Note that exposure to light and heat increase the rate that oils will oxidize.)*

Some olive varieties are naturally higher in polyphenols than others. The timing of the harvest is also an influence as unripe (green) olives result in a higher concentration of polyphenols than ripe olives.

The polyphenol levels in all olive oils decrease over time; this is related to what many describe as the “softening” of an oil’s flavor over time.

Extra virgin olive oil is primarily unsaturated fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated), which promote heart health. Increased levels of polyphenols in extra virgin olive oils make the oil even more beneficial.

Always look for the harvest date when making your olive oil selection; the closer it is to the harvest date, the higher the level of polyphenols/antioxidants will be.