



COOC Statement of Mission

The COOC is a trade association with the mission of encouraging the consumption of certified California extra virgin olive oil through education, outreach and communications.

The COOC is committed to upholding the highest standards within the olive oil industry through its Seal Certification Program.

About the COOC

- o The California Olive Oil Council (COOC) was established in 1992 by a group of olive oil growers and enthusiasts, led by founder and olive oil pioneer, Lila Jaeger. March 2022 will mark the COOC's 30th year.
- o The COOC has over 300 members including olive producers, industry service providers, retailers and e-commerce vendors, and other supporters of the California extra virgin olive oil industry. Growers and producers make up the greatest number of members.
- o The COOC represents over 90% of all olive oil producers in California.
- o The COOC Taste Panel, which certifies California olive oils for "extra virgin" grade status, awards the Seal of authenticity to approximately 400 oils every year.
- o The COOC Taste Panel was the first sensory panel established for olive oil in the Western Hemisphere. Founded in 1998, the panel celebrated its 22nd year in 2020.

Industry Facts

- o There are more than 37,000 acres planted in California for the production of extra virgin olive oil.
- o There are over 400 growers/producers of olive oil in California.
- o Over 75 olive varieties are grown in California for olive oil production, resulting in blends that are unique to California.
- o The California olive oil industry produces between 2 to 4 million gallons per harvest.
- o There are over 45 olive oil mills in California and growing.

What does “Extra Virgin” mean?

International standards require that olive oil meets both chemical and sensory standards to be sold as extra virgin.

Extra virgin is the highest grade an olive oil can receive. The oil’s chemistry, tested in a laboratory, meets or exceeds specific parameters that indicate the careful handling and storage of the olives and oil. No chemicals or extreme heat may be used during the extraction process.

Extra virgin also denotes that the oil is free of defects of flavor or odor. This is evaluated by a trained sensory panel and cannot be detected by laboratory tests.

COOC Certification Seal for Extra Virgin Grade Oil



Using stricter standards than international requirements, only the best California olive oils qualify for COOC certification. Every year, within a few months of harvest, the COOC Taste Panel, established in 1998, assesses every oil to ensure that it is free of defects.

Flavor defects indicate the use of poor quality olives, or that problems occurred during milling or storage. If olives are damaged (poor handling, moldy, frost), or they are not milled within 24 hours of being harvested, the oil will not be top quality. Milling at a high temperature (over 86°F) can also negatively impact flavor and quality. Only fresh olive fruit, harvested and milled with care, will yield oil that qualifies as Certified Extra Virgin.

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