

International Olive Council:

The *International Olive Council* is the world's only international and intergovernmental organization in the field of olive oil and table olives.

The IOC is based in Madrid, and it was established in 1959 under the auspices of the United Nations. It used to be known as *International Olive Oil Council* until 2006, when the name changed.

This organization promotes international cooperation on research, production development and trade of olive oil. It also monitors authenticity and defines quality standards for *olive oils* and *olive-pomace oils* objects of international trade.

According to the IOC: "Olive Oil is the oil obtained solely from the fruit of the olive tree, to the exclusion of the oils obtained using solvents and of any mixture with oils of other kinds".

Inside the *Olive Oil* grade, the IOC includes *Virgin Oils*, and classifies them as: "Oils obtained from the fruit of the olive tree solely by mechanical or other physical means under conditions, particularly thermal conditions, that do not lead to alteration in the oil, and which have not undergone any treatment other than washing, decantation, centrifugation and filtration".

Inside the *Virgin Oils* grade, the IOC includes *Virgin Oils Fit for Consumption* and *Virgin Oils Not Fit for Consumption*.

Virgin Oils Fit for Consumption are:

- * *Extra Virgin Olive Oil*: Oil produced by using only olives, extracted without excess heat (not more than 86° F/30° C), or solvents (or any chemical treatments), and not refined or treated so as to neutralize defects.

After production, the olive oil is not mixed with any other type of oil. When chemically analyzed, it has a free fatty acidity of no more than 0.8 grams per 100 grams of oil (0.8%). When analyzed by a tasting panel, it has no organoleptic defects and some fruitiness.

- * *Virgin Olive Oil*: Oil produced by using only olives, extracted without excess heat (not more than 86° F/30° C) or solvents (or chemical treatments), and not refined or treated to neutralize defects.

After production, when chemically analyzed, it has a free fatty acidity of no more than 2 grams per 100 grams of oil (2%). When analyzed by a tasting panel, it has slight organoleptic defects as well as some good flavor.

Virgin Oils Not Fit for Consumption are:

- * *Refined Olive Oil*: Oil obtained from virgin olive oils by refining methods to remove defective flavors. When chemically analyzed, it has a free fatty acidity of no more than 0.3 grams per 100 grams (0.03%). Because the oil is refined, it does not qualify as extra virgin.
- * *Olive Oil*: Oil obtained by blending virgin olive oil and refined olive oil. When chemically analyzed, it has a free fatty acidity of not more than 1 gram per 100 grams (0.1%). Because this oil is blended with refined oils, it does not qualify as extra virgin.

- * *Lampante*¹ *Virgin Olive Oil*: Oil produced with bad fruit or careless processing. When chemically analyzed, it has a free fatty acidity of more than 3.3 grams per 100 grams (3.3%). This oil is intended for refining or technical use only, and it is not for consumption.

The IOC also classifies *Olive-Pomace Oils* as: “Oils obtained by treating olive pomace with solvents or other physical treatments, to the exclusion of the oils obtained by re-esterification process and of any mixture with oils of other kind”.

Olive-Pomace Oils grade include *Olive-Pomace*, *Crude Olive-Pomace* and *Refined Olive-Pomace*.

USDA:

In 1948, the USDA published in the Federal Register a first issue of *voluntary* standards for olive oil grades. In 2010, they published a second issue suppressing the first.

Comparably to the IOC (*International Olive Council*), the USDA divides *Virgin Olive Oils* into two subcategories:

- * Fit for Consumption (*Extra Virgin* and *Virgin Olive Oil*); and
- * Not Fit for Consumption (*Refined Olive Oil* and *Olive Oil*).

According to the USDA:

¹ The word *Lampante* comes for the Italian word *lampada* (lamp), and it refers to the use of olive oil as fuel for oil-burning lamps.

- * “*Extra Virgin Olive Oil* is virgin oil which has excellent flavor² and odor (median of defects equal to zero and median of fruitiness greater than zero) and a free fatty acid content, expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 0.8 grams per 100 grams”;

- * “*Virgin Olive Oil* is virgin olive oil which has reasonably good flavor³ and odor (median of defects between zero and 2.5 and median of fruitiness greater than zero) and a free fatty acid content of not more than 2 grams per 100 grams”.

Comparably to the IOC, the *USDA* has a category for *Olive-Pomace Oils*, divided in:

- * Olive-Pomace Oil;
- * Crude Olive-Pomace Oil; and
- * Refined Olive-Pomace Oil.

Some additional regulations may take place in states with a high olive oil production.

² The *USDA* classifies *excellent flavors* as: “no defective flavor and having positive flavor attributes, such as, but not limited to olive, apple, green, sweet, grass, nutty, tomato and no negative flavor attributes”.

³ The *USDA* classifies *reasonably good flavors* as: “some or no positive flavor attributes and some barely perceptible negative flavor attributes”.