

# Why Italian extra virgin olive oil is so special?

**Different areas with their diversified soils, climates and olive varieties. Italy is the only country in the world with such a rich heritage of olive biodiversity. Always a leader, Italian olive oil has been top for 2000 years**

by Luigi Caricato

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Olive trees grow everywhere Italy, from the plains of the south and the hills of central Italy to the prealpine belt in the north. Italian oil production areas have a thousand faces, all unique, like the many expressions of its plants.

Italy is the only country in the world with such a rich heritage of olive biodiversity, boasting at least 538 varieties, listed by the Institute for the Promotion of Woody Species at Sesto Fiorentino. Certain plants produce oils with unique sensory traits. If this autochthonous heritage can be conserved and maintained, Italian olive oil will always have a unique footprint. Its taste is accompanied by an almost physical sensation of the olive groves that adorn the Italian countryside. The act of pouring a bright thread of oil, that falls slowly releasing a range of fragrances, is exciting for beginners, especially if the extravirgin olive oil is freshly pressed.

Italians are highly professional when it comes to olive trees and oil. When choosing a bottle of oil from the shelf, one entrusts oneself to the image of Italian oil and its long history.

The choice of edible oil is an important choice. The best edible oil is that pressed from olives, preferably “extravirgin” olive oil. However, the choice does not finish here. Making extravirgin olive oil a protagonist of one’s table is a mark of distinction, of belonging to the world of those who care about their health and are at ease with themselves: a world of persons who love nature, because olive oil is obtained from a fruit. It is a fruit juice in the true sense. Those who choose extravirgin olive oil are true to the image of nature they have in their minds, even in the act of seasoning a dish

with oil. Extravirgin olive oils are also satisfying because each one has its own personality of flavour and aroma, and much more.



*Photo by Giovanni Aloia*

For oil obtained from the simple pressing of olives, consumers throughout the world prefer the Italian product. This may not be a rational choice, but it's a fact. Italy has a long tradition of research into the maximum expression of taste, in all its shades and tones. The past is in Italy's favour: oil tradition is a winner. There is a risk of rigidity, of resting on one's laurels, however the challenge for the future still sees Italy in prime position.



What is so special about authentic Italian olive oil? Besides being an intimate expression of the different areas with their diversified soils, climates and olive varieties, Italian olive oil is also fruit of the fundamental role of the human factor in creating blends. The best oil is always the one that best interprets what nature provided, and extravirgin olive oil, the only "fruit oil", is uncontested king of edible oils. So not all extravirgin oils are the same: there are differences between the products on the shelf. Without denying other olive producing countries, Italy, with its millennial

tradition, has so far been a reliable point of reference. This is why not just any extravirgin olive oil will do!

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