

# OLIVE OIL & BALSAMIC VINEGAR

## Fragrant, Flavorful and Bursting with Health Benefits

### Olive Oil

Olive oil is a hotter commodity than ever thanks to research linking it to good health and wellness. It is a **staple in the Mediterranean diet**, which has been recognized as a healthy dietary pattern by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Olive oil has been part of the Mediterranean diet since at least 3000 BC when people in present-day Syria brought the tree to Greece. From there, it arrived in Italy sometime before 1500 BC and was likely spread around the Mediterranean region by the Romans as they expanded their empire.

There is a large body of clinical data to show that consumption of olive oil can provide **favorable heart health effects** on cholesterol regulation and LDL cholesterol oxidation, which exert anti-inflammatory, anti-thrombotic, and anti-hypertensive effects.

For centuries people have been celebrating the **health benefits of olive oil**. It has been used to maintain the suppleness of skin and muscle, heal abrasions, give body and sheen to hair, and soothe the drying effects of sun and wind. Folk medicine deems olive oil as an aid in digestion, relieve aching muscles, strengthen weak nails, and lower blood pressure.

**It's Natural!** - Extra virgin olive oil is nothing but fruit juice extracted mechanically from olive fruit. There is no heat or chemicals used in the extraction process.

**Flavor** – Certain olive varieties are known for their mild flavor and olive oil pressed from these olives produces a smooth, mellow and buttery flavor, so it is also an ideal substitute for butter.

**Nutritional Value** - vitamins E, K, and A as well as polyphenols, *squalene* (shown to inhibit tumor development), *oleocanthal* (decreases inflammation), *triterpenes* and hundreds more micronutrients make olive oil a healthy choice.

**Oleic Acid** - oleic acid (omega 9) makes up 55 - 85 percent of the fatty acids in olive oil. Don't confuse this with the amount of free oleic acid, which is the main factor used to determine the grade of the olive oil and the lower the better. It's great for your skin too. Oleic acid aids in keeping our arteries supple and helps prevent cancer.

**Hydrogenated Oils** - olive oil is not hydrogenated oil. Hydrogenation creates dangerous *trans*-fats found in margarine and many other packaged foods.

**Heart Health and Cholesterol** - extra virgin olive oil is high in polyphenols (a powerful antioxidant) and monounsaturated fat which contributes to lowering bad cholesterol.

**Cancer** - researchers at the University of Oxford believe that olive oil may be just as effective in the prevention of colon cancer as fresh fruits and veggies. A diet rich in olive oil has been shown to reduce the incidence of colon, breast and skin cancers.

**Alzheimers** - this disease is associated with the clogging of arteries caused by cholesterol and saturated fat. Replacing other fats with olive oil will reduce the risk.

**Gallstones** - Olive oil promotes the secretion of bile and pancreatic hormones naturally and lowers the incidence of gallstones.

**Bioavailability** - Phytochemicals in vegetables are more bioavailable when prepared with dietary fat such as olive oil.



## BALSAMIC VINEGAR

Balsamic vinegar health benefits comprise reduced risks of heart diseases, cancer and other infectious diseases. Moreover, balsamic vinegar decelerates the aging process, controls diabetes, assists in digestion, etc.

Originating in Italy, this condiment is an aromatic, thick, dark, syrup-like aged type of vinegar, prepared by the reduction of cooked grapes.

**A CUT ABOVE THE REST!** The best balsamic vinegar is prepared in the hills of Modena, Italy, where unique and flavorful balsamic vinegar is formed. This vinegar is known to be a cut above the other types of vinegar. Unlike the sharp taste of vinegar, balsamic vinegar has a rich, sweet flavor. You need to taste it to believe it! **FYI**—Authentic balsamic vinegar would have been aged for a minimum period of 3 years to maximum period of 100 years; the longer the aging process, the finer the vinegar quality. The popularity surge of this dark, syrup-like condiment is not only because of its remarkable taste, but balsamic vinegar health benefits also play a major role in adding points to the popularity chart.

**NUTRITIONAL VALUE.** Balsamic vinegar retains most of the nutrients present in the parent grapes and is comprised of nutrients like iron, calcium, potassium, manganese, phosphorus and magnesium. Thus, incorporating balsamic oil in the daily diet will benefit one immensely.

**ANTIOXIDANT PROPERTIES** in balsamic vinegar destroy free radicals that can cause damage at the cellular level in the human body, manifested in premature aging, hardening of the arterial walls, and cancer.

**FIGHTS CANCER.** The bioflavonoid, *quercetin*, in the grapes from which balsamic vinegar is formed, has antioxidant properties. Along with vitamin C and polyphenols, this antioxidant strengthens the immune system to fight cancer and inflammation.

**REDUCES RISKS OF HEART ATTACKS.** Balsamic vinegar is low in saturated fat and is believed to reduce cholesterol. Moreover, since it is low in sodium, it enhances heart health and reduces high blood pressure.

**PARTNER IN DIABETES CONTROL.** Research reveals that consumption of at least 5 teaspoons of balsamic vinegar a day enhances insulin sensitivity. The greater the insulin sensitivity, the better the diabetes control.

**NATURAL PAIN RELIEVER.** In ancient times, folk healers used this vinegar to relieve people of their body pain. They also used it to treat wounds and infections as a result of its anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties.

**ASSISTS DIGESTION.** Polyphenols in balsamic vinegar stimulate the activity of the pepsin enzyme in the body. Pepsin is a digestive enzyme, which helps break proteins into smaller units (amino acids). And, these polyphenols assist the intestine in absorbing amino acids expeditiously. Efficient amino acid absorption enables the body to utilize it for cell building, repair, and other body maintenance work.

Besides these balsamic vinegar health benefits, this vinegar also reduces the frequency of headache inceptions, strengthens bones (calcium absorption), energizes the body, slows down the aging process, and prevents anemia. It also helps in weight loss by suppressing one's appetite.

