

10 things you should know about Spanish Olive Oil

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Spanish Tit-Bits



Olive Oil is a huge part of Spanish culture and cuisine, with a long 3000 year history. The Spanish use it in absolutely everything, from morning till night. Olive oil is always a key ingredient in Spanish food, whether drizzled over fresh bread, used in salad dressings or for cooking.

There are lots of interesting facts about Spanish Olive Oil and below is a list of the top 10 things you should know about this staple ingredient.

1. Spain produces the most Olive Oil in the world.

Many believe that Italy is the main producer of Olive Oil but Spain produces approximately 44% of the world's olive oil supply each year which amounts to over a million tonnes.

2. Italian oil may not actually be from Italy

Spain exports a large proportion of its olive oil and many countries bottle and label the oil in their own country, implying that it is local. One of the biggest culprits of this is Italy.

3. Most olive oil is produced in the province of Jaen

As you travel through Jaen all you see are endless olive groves covering the entire landscape. The climate is perfect for growing olive trees and olive oil production is centred in the province. In fact, about 70% of all Spanish olive oil comes from Jaen.

4. Spain is the 2nd largest olive oil consumer in the world

Despite Spain producing so much olive oil, Greece consumes more on an annual basis. The average consumption in Spain is approximately 10 litres per year.

5. The olive tree was introduced to Spain almost 3000 years ago

The Phoenicians brought the olive tree to Spain in around 1050 BC. The Romans then distributed olive groves throughout Spain and the Moors brought more advanced cultivation methods.

6. Greeks and Romans referred to olive oil as 'liquid gold'

Olive Oil was extremely valuable in both Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, hence the reference 'liquid gold', and they used it for cooking and as fuel. It is also thought that it was used to light the earliest Olympic torch.

7. Spain has over two hundred varieties of olives

Of the large number of varieties, only about 25 are used for oil, each with its own unique flavour and aroma.

8. The average lifespan if an olive tree is between 300-600 years.

Spain is home to some of the oldest olive trees in the world. Tarragona's Museo del Arión displays a tree that is said to be over 2,000 years old.

9. Spain is home to 300 million olive trees.

That is almost the same as the population of the entire USA!

10. Olive oil can be used for frying.

Although we are often told that olive oil burns, many varieties of olive oil are ideal for frying. Cooking with olive oil is considered the healthy option and some studies have shown that frying vegetables in extra virgin olive oil can actually be healthier than boiling them.

REF: [Brands&People](#)