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Basic Guide to Cooking Oils



CONSUMER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTRE, AHMEDABAD

EMAIL: cerc@cercindia.org, grahaksathi@cercindia.org

Cooking Oil is an essential ingredient in every kitchen. Whether you are frying, sautéing, or drizzling, choosing an appropriate cooking oil can be challenging. However, there are health concerns as well, especially with regard to the type of fats they contain.

To help consumers make informed choices, **Grahak Sathi** brings to you easy to use E-book on '**Basic Guide to Cooking Oils**' which discusses types of oils, their uses, cautions, myths and facts etc.



Types of Fats in Cooking Oils

Good Fat (Unsaturated Fat) - A Healthy Choice



Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) – Preferred Less

Polyunsaturated fats include essential fatty acids like omega-3 and omega-6. A balance of both the fatty acids is necessary, as excess of omega 6 can lead to inflammatory diseases. PUFA is high in Sunflower oil, Cottonseed oil.



Monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) – Preferred More

It is a beneficial dietary fat that can improve cholesterol levels. Sesame oil, Olive oil, Groundnut oil, Mustard oil are high in MUFA.



Bad Fat (Saturated Fat) - Use in moderation



This kind of fat is often considered 'unhealthy' as it can raise cholesterol levels in the blood. They are mostly found in dairy products like Butter, Ghee and tropical oils like Palm oil and Coconut oil.



Ugly Fat (Trans Fat) - Avoid



Oils which have partially hydrogenated ingredients and shortening includes trans fats. Heart attack risks are higher if consumed more. Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil, Margarine are high in trans fat.



Various Types of Cooking Oils

Refined Oil: It undergoes a process involving heat, chemical solvents, and filtration to remove impurities and neutralize strong flavours and odours, resulting in oils with a neutral taste and higher smoke points.

Filtered Oil: This type of oil that has only undergone a filtration process to remove solid particles or impurities, improving clarity and shelf stability. Some oils are filtered twice for better clarity and are referred to as Double Filtered Oil.

Cold pressed Oil: Cold-pressed oil is the oil extracted in its most natural form just by physically pressing oilseeds without application of heat and chemicals. Hence it retains all its natural properties and nutrients. Cold pressed oil is very healthy with its all-natural nutrients and flavour.

Kachi Ghani Oil: Kachi Ghani is the traditional Indian method of extracting cold pressed oil. Oilseeds are physically crushed to yield oil without any application of heat and chemicals. Kachi Ghani Oil is very healthy as it retains all the nutrients in their most natural form.

Hydrogenated Oil: It is made by the process of hydrogenating liquid oils, converting them into semi-solid or solid fats at room temperature. While hydrogenation increases the shelf life and stability, it also produces trans fats, which are unhealthy and have been largely phased out in many food products due to health concerns.

Virgin Oil: It is commonly used in the context of olive oil. It is made by pressing, centrifugation, or decantation, without heat or chemicals. It is generally of higher quality and has a better flavour profile. This category also includes extra virgin olive oil, which is oil obtained from first pressing and is of the finest quality and has the best flavour.

Blended Oils: They are combinations of vegetable oils or fats designed to offer specific properties such as high smoke points, balanced flavours or specific health benefits.

Infused Oils: They are vegetable oils infused with herbs, spices, or other ingredients, such as garlic-infused olive oil and chili-infused sesame oil. These are used as flavouring agents or as condiments.



Know Your Cooking Oils



Groundnut oil (Peanut oil): This oil is extracted by crushing dried groundnuts. It is high in monounsaturated "good" fat and low in saturated "bad" fat. It helps to prevent heart disease, lowers cholesterol and reduces fat build-up in blood vessels.



Cottonseed oil: It is extracted from the seeds of cotton plants. This oil is high in polyunsaturated fat which can help lower LDL ("bad" cholesterol) and increase HDL ("good" cholesterol).



Coconut oil: It is made by pressing fresh coconut or dried coconut. Coconut oil works as a quick source of energy and has antimicrobial effects. It also reduces hunger and seizures. Coconut oil is high in saturated fats.



Sunflower oil: It is extracted from sunflower seeds. Sunflower seeds contains zinc that boost immunity and fight against disease. This oil has anti-inflammatory properties that may help prevent chronic inflammatory diseases.



Mustard oil: It is produced by grinding or crushing mustard seeds. It has a strong, pungent flavour. It reduces inflammation, pain and also slows cancer cell growth.



Sesame (Til) oil: Sesame oil is obtained by pressing/crushing sesame seeds. This oil is relatively low in saturated fats and has a good mix of mono and polyunsaturated fats. It is a valuable source of vitamin E.



Olive oil: Olive oil is extracted from olives by mechanical or chemical means. Olive oil can decrease inflammation which is a key driver of heart disease. It reduces oxidation of LDL (bad) cholesterol and lowers blood pressure.



Rice bran oil: The oil is extracted from the hard outer layer of rice called chaff or rice husk. Rice bran oil is rich in Vitamin E which boosts your immunity and helps to fight against infection and other common diseases. It also helps to keep your weight under check.

It is advisable to consume different cooking oils in rotation to get each ones benefits.

How to Use Different Types of Cooking Oils

Different oils are suitable for different cooking methods like sautéing, deep frying, sweets and for salad dressings.



Groundnut oil (Peanut oil): Peanut oil is suitable for high-heat cooking like deep frying, sautéing, and tempering (tadka).

Cottonseed oil: It has a mild flavour and is quite stable in high heat cooking. It is popular for regular cooking, stir frying as well as deep frying.



Coconut oil: Coconut oil is suitable for high as well as medium heat cooking. With its distinct flavour and aroma, it is also used to enhance the taste of curries, chutneys, and sweets.

Sunflower oil: This is an all-purpose oil. It is suitable for frying and cooking curries. Given its mild flavour, it can also be used in salad dressings.



Mustard oil: It is ideal for high-heat cooking like deep frying, stir frying and tempering. Traditionally, it is also used to make pickles.

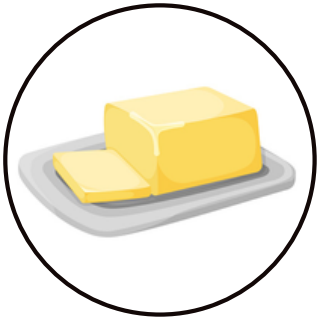
Sesame (Til) oil: This oil is suitable for medium to high-heat cooking. Toasted or dark sesame oil is used for marinades and salad dressings.



Olive oil: Light and extra light olive oil can be used for sautéing, shallow frying and deep frying. However, extra virgin olive oil is best used without heating for salads or to add flavour to dips and prepared dishes.

Rice bran oil: It is ideal for high-heat cooking like deep frying, sautéing and shallow frying. Rice bran oil is also used for salad dressing.

Myths & Facts about Oils & Fats



Myth: Margarine contains less fat than butter

Fact: Butter and margarine contain different types of fat but have equal calories. Unsalted butter is healthier, as margarine can contain trans fats. Butter contains fat-soluble vitamins easily absorbed by the body. Margarine is devoid of vitamins unless added during production.



Myth: Fat-free salad dressing is best

Fact: Salad veggies are rich in nutrients like lycopene and beta carotene, which are absorbed better when combined with fat. Instead of store bought ranch or blue-cheese dressing, use olive oil, other cold-pressed oils, cheese, nuts, seeds, or avocado as a fat source in salads.



Myth: The 'cholesterol free' label means a healthy food

Fact: Cholesterol free does not necessarily mean fat free. The food may be cholesterol free but it could be rich in saturated fatty acids or trans fatty acids, both of which raise blood cholesterol. 'Cholesterol free' is just a marketing strategy.



Myth: Fat-free is low-calorie

Fact: Fat free processed foods can contain more calories than regular versions as sugar or flour is added for taste and texture instead of fats. The higher sugar or carbohydrate content makes them high in calories. Avoid excessive fat-free foods, especially baked goods like cookies, cakes and crackers. Always check labels for serving size and calorie count.

Dangers from Reheating Used Cooking Oil

Increases blood pressure: The chemical composition of frying oil changes on repeated heating, releasing free fatty acids, leading to compound toxicity, oxidative stress, hypertension and other health issues.

Increases cholesterol levels: When used oil is reheated at high temperature it forms trans fatty acids, which increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases.



More acidity and indigestion: Consumption of reused oil may increase the risk of acidity, throat problems and burning sensation in stomach.

Increases risk of cancer: Reheating cooking oils not only generates free radicals but also increases the presence of carcinogenic substances such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) and aldehydes, which have been linked to an increased risk of cancer and inflammation in the body.

It is advisable to avoid buying deep fried food as it may have been fried in reheated oil

Use Cooking Oil Responsibly at Home



- Make sure the leftover oil from cooking or frying is cooled down and strained with fine mesh strainer to remove food particles.
- Store the strained oil in a clean, airtight container away from direct sunlight and heat.
- Used cooking oil should be consumed within a day or two.
- In case of reheating of the oil, use it maximum two times and avoid using it for frying.
- When reusing cooking oil, check its colour, odour, and taste. If it smells rancid, has a dark colour, or has off-flavours, discard it.
- If the oil begins to smoke too quickly while reheating it, discard it.

About CERC

Consumer Rights protection and justice for consumers have been the focus of Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC) right from its inception in 1978. CERC is India's only Consumer Rights Organisation that provides 360 degree service to the consumer in terms of Education, Empowerment and Protection.

A broad range of activities are undertaken in the organization – grievance redressal through mediation and litigation, consumer education and awareness building through various publications and outreach activities, testing and analysis of consumer products in our in-house product testing laboratories, advocacy for laws and regulations that better protect consumers, as well as a number of projects executed in various areas pertinent to consumer protection and empowerment. Promoting sustainable consumption too is a major area of activity in CERC

CERC Team

CEO and Executive Editor

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Associate Editors

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