



How To Taste Olive Oil

Quality Drivers – Before Milling

- Olive Variety
- Soil Composition
- Climate
- Weather
- Irrigation Practices
- Time of Harvesting (Maturity Index)
- Condition of Fruit (Olive Fly, etc.)
- Handling of Olives After Harvest and Before Transport
- Speed to Crush

Quality Drivers – After Milling

- Time
- Exposure to Oxygen
- Storage Temperature
- Exposure to Light
- Sediment in Storage Tank
- Exposure to Water
- Cleanliness of Tank, Piping, and Bottling Equipment

Sensory Requirement of Virgin Oils

- Extra Virgin Olive Oil Has no defects at all and is fruity
- Virgin Olive Oil Has slight defects and is fruity
- Ordinary Olive Oil Has clear perceivable defects
- Lampant Olive Oil Has clear perceivable defects

Grades of Olive Oil and Corresponding Chemistry Standards

Criteria	Importance	IOC Standard			Extra Virgin Olive Oil Only		
		Lampant Oil	Ordinary Virgin Oil	Virgin Oil	EVOO	COOC Standard**	CA Olive Ranch EVOO**
Free Fatty Acid	• Reflects stability of the oil, and its susceptibility to rancidity	More than 3.3%	Less than 3.3%	Less than 2.0%	Less than 0.8%	Less than 0.5%	Less than 0.3%
	• A pure EVOO will achieve these low values naturally and WITHOUT ANY refinement						
Oleic Acid	• A measure of monounsaturated fat in the oil	55-83%			55-83%		76-83%
	• This is the "good" fat proven to lower bad cholesterol						
	• EVOO contains the highest monounsaturates of all olive oils	The higher the value, the better!					
	• Can be maximized through short harvest-to-mill cycles, along with other factors						
Peroxide Value	• Direct measure of the oxidation and rancidity - the degree to which oil has been exposed to air.	No limit	Under 20 meq	Under 20 meq	Under 20 meq	Under 20 meq	1.40 meq
	• High values will give off rancid flavors						
UV	• Helps determine olive oil identity	270 nm: No Standard			270 nm: ≤ 0.22		270 nm: 0.11
		232 nm: No Standard			232 nm: ≤ 2.50		232 nm: 1.33
		Δ K: No Standard			Δ K: ≤ 0.01		Δ K: ≤ 0.01
Organoleptics	• Odor and flavor descriptors	More than 6 Defects	More than 6 Defects	3.5 - 6 Defects	NO Defects	NO Defects	NO Defects
	• Agreed-to industry standard terminology used to describe the aroma and flavor profile of the EVOO						
	• 72 unique terms						

** At time of testing

IOC International Olive Council
COOC California Olive Oil Council



Tasting Terms

Sensory Assessment of Olive Oils

Positive Attributes In EVOO

- **Fruity** – Set of olfactory sensations characteristic of good (unspoiled) fresh olive fruit, either ripe or unripe. This attribute is perceived by smell, either directly or retro-nasally.
- **Bitter** – Characteristic of oil obtained from unripe (green) olives, this is perceived on the back of the tongue. Note that bitterness is an important part of an oil's balance of flavors.
- **Pungent** – Peppery sensation perceived at back of the throat that is indicative of the oil's freshness. Also a characteristic of pressing unripe olives.

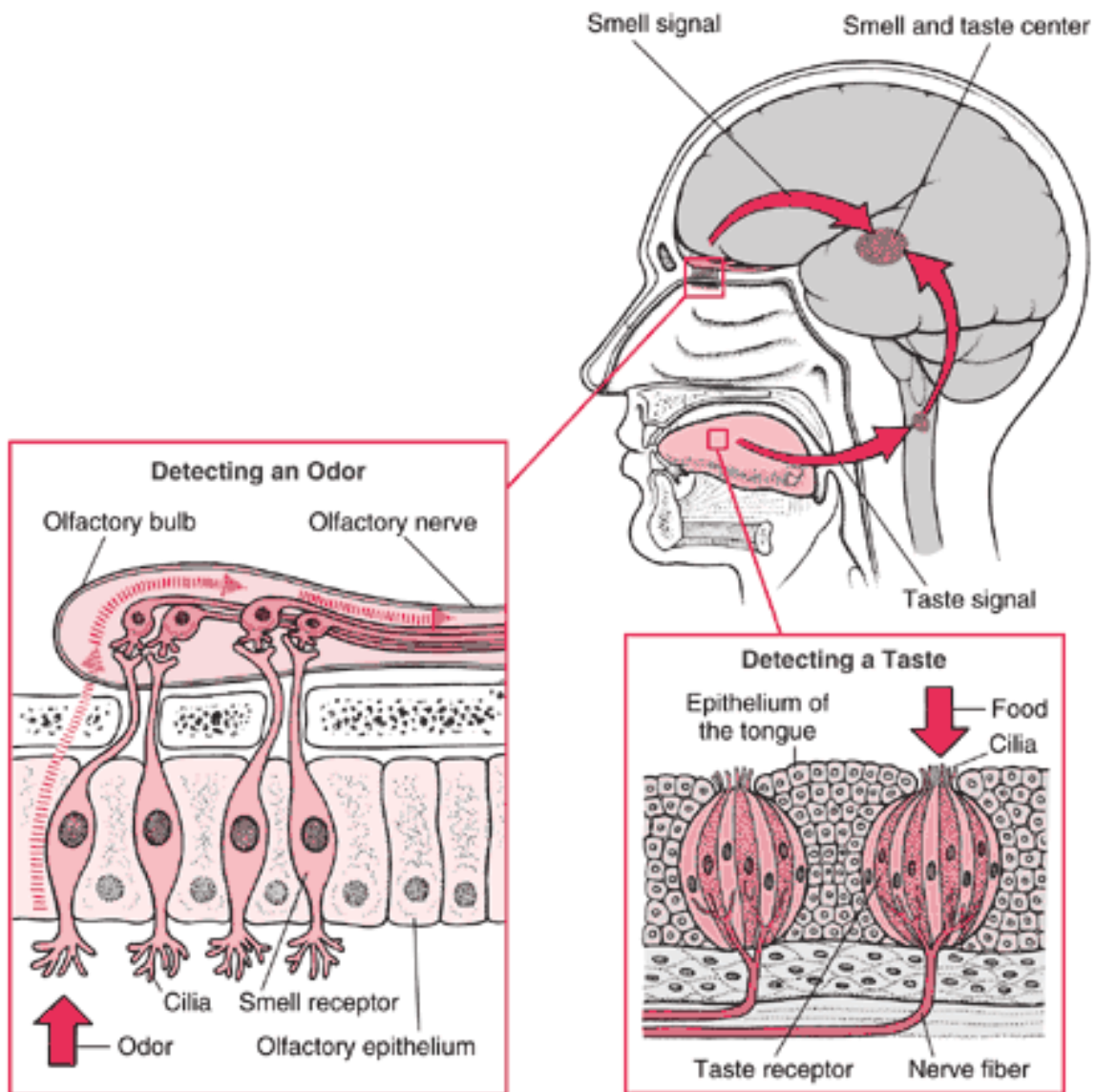
Negative Attributes or Defects in EVOO

- **Fusty** - Characteristic obtained from olives that were stored in piles prior to pressing, which causes an advanced stage of anaerobic (without oxygen) fermentation.
- **Musty** - Moldy flavor in oils obtained when a large quantity of the olive fruit has developed fungi and yeast as a result of its being stored in humid conditions for several days. This defect is detected retro-nasally (through the back of the nostrils after swallowing).
- **Winey-Vinegary** - Flavor that is reminiscent of wine or vinegar. This defect occurs due to aerobic (using oxygen) fermentation in olives which leads to the formation of acetic acid, ethylacetate and ethanol.
- **Muddy Sediment** - Characteristic of oil that has been left in contact with sediment in tanks and vats. This defect occurs from storage conditions after the oil is pressed.
- **Metallic** - Flavor that is reminiscent of metals. This occurs when the oil has been in prolonged contact with metallic surfaces during crushing. Nowadays it is unusual to find this defect because modern presses are made from stainless steel and do not react with the olives.
- **Rancid** - Flavor in oils which have undergone oxidation. This is the most common defect; it can occur either before or after bottling and if a bottle, either opened or unopened, has been exposed to light and heat.

Other Defects, Which Are Less Common:

- **Heated or burnt** – Occurs when oil is exposed to excessive and/or prolonged heat during processing.
- **Hay-wood** – Flavor of oil produced from olives that have dried out.
- **Greasy** – Flavor reminiscent of diesel oil, mineral oil, or mechanical grease.
- **Vegetable water** – Flavor acquired by prolonged contact with the vegetable water that is a by-product of pressing olives.
- **Brine** – Obtained from olives that were brined (such as table olives) before pressing.
- **Esparto** – Flavor obtained from using new mats made from esparto (a type of grass) when pressing olives.
- **Earthy** – Flavor obtained from olives with dirt or mud on them that have not been washed prior to pressing.
- **Grubby** – Flavor obtained from olives that have been attacked by the olive fly, which causes disintegration of the olives before they are harvested.
- **Frozen** – Flavor obtained from olives that experienced heavy frost or prolonged cold temperatures before being harvested and pressed.

How We Taste



Picture courtesy of Merck & Co. www.merck.com

How To Taste Olive Oil – The 4 S's

1. Pour olive oil (approximately one tablespoon) in a small container
2. **SWIRL** – Cover the container with one hand and swirl it delicately until the oil in the container is close to body temperature.
3. **SNIFF** – Lift the glass to your nose and sniff deeply. Olive oils have aromas just like wines.
4. **SLURP** – Take a sip and hold it in your mouth. DO NOT SWALLOW. Roll the oil around in your mouth so that the oil touches all the areas of the mouth. Note the various taste and sensations. **California Olive Ranch** EVOO will have subtle, light aromas and flavor of tropical fruits, green bananas, fresh artichoke, delicate herbal tones.
5. **SWALLOW** – An EVOO of high quality will leave your mouth clean with no aftertaste. There is a beginning taste, a mild-palate, and a finish. Any “pepper-ness” should not linger.