The Israel Olive Tree Bond
Dear Lover of Israel,

Your decision to plant an olive tree in the Galilee is a very important part of restoring Israel and bridging the gap between Christians and Jews. You have provided work for Jewish men and women who will tend your tree and who will harvest its fruit for its precious olive oil.

Pure oil from olives is important to the Jewish people as it is has been pressed from olives for centuries to keep the lamps burning continually in the Tabernacle in front of the inner curtain that shielded the Ark of the Covenant. The command to tend the lamp’s light continually in the Lord’s presence is a permanent Jewish command observed from generation to generation. So much more significant is the fact that now, Jews have come home to Israel their eternal homeland to tend the olive trees and to produce olive oil to keep the lamps burning.

Your thank you gift arrives full of gratitude and with God’s Blessings for your decision to partner with Love Israel and Footsteps in planting an olive tree. It is because of Christians and Jews like you from around the world the seed of love is planted into the heart of the Holy Land and into the hearts of the Jewish people. Your olive tree grows and stands in the Holy Land, near the shores of the Galilee where Jesus walked and ministered, as an eternal living testimony of your love and commitment toward Israel. The olive tree reveals to us God’s plan for Israel including its past, present, and future. The olive tree is a natural reminder of how all people are to receive a relationship with God and how God’s Blessing flows through the covenant made with Abraham.

“The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

The olive tree an eternal symbol illustrating God’s ultimate plan to unite Christians and Jews together. His plan will never change and there will never be another Israel. God has chosen to use the olive tree as a living parable demonstrating His ability to graft broken branches and new branches into His olive tree where all branches receive their nourishment from His original root. Therefore, Christian and Jew, I pray that God richly blesses your “seed” of planting an olive tree in Israel.

Shalom Shalom,
Moshe Bar Zvi
Founder and President


## Contents

### 1. The Olive Tree

- The Olive Tree
- Local Species
- New Species Developed Locally
- Imported Species
- The History of the Olive Tree in Israel
- The Olive Tree in the Bible
- Olive Trees in the New Testament
- Olive Trees in Israel from Biblical Times to the Present
- Symbolism of the Olive Tree
- The Olive Tree Harvest
- Preparations for the Harvest
- Harvesting Methods
- Taking the Fruit to the Olive Press

### 2. Olive Oil

- Olive Oil in Biblical Times and Later
- Olive Oil in the New Testament
- Folklore, Tradition, and Symbolism of Olive Oil
- Offerings
- Oil for Anointing
- Olive Oil Candles in Jewish Tradition
- Tithes
- Production of Olive Oil
- The Olive Press
- The Modern Olive Press
- Quality and Properties of Olive Oil
- Standards of Olive Oil Quality
- The Israel Olive Council
- Components of Olive Oil
The Health Benefits of Olive Oil

Protection Against Chronic Degenerative Disease

Strong Protection Against Heart Disease

Key to Lowering Blood Pressure

Key to Reducing Breast Cancer

Better Blood Sugar Control

Anti-inflammatory Benefits

Olive Oil Phenols Help Prevent Bone Loss

Olive Oil Phenols Protect DNA from

Free Radical Damage

Potent Anti-inflammatory Compound Discovered

in Olive Oil

A Fat That Can Help You Lose Fat

What Is the Mediterranean Diet?

Olive Oil in Folk Medicine

Olive Oil in the Kitchen

Gourmet Delights with Olive Oil

A Few Quick Serving Ideas

Recommended Amounts of Olive Oil

Is Olive Oil Also Good for Frying?

Seasoning, Baking and Cooking

Keeping Olive Oil

The Global Olive Oil Market

Olive Oil Trends in the World

Market Responses

3. A Message from
Our Israeli Partners
The Olive Tree
The Olive Tree

The olive tree is the first tree mentioned by name in the Bible. Of course, other trees precede it, such as the tree of knowledge and the tree of life, but they belong to the period before the Flood and no longer exist in our world.

The first tree whose branches and leaves burst forth as the flood waters receded is the olive. This illustrates the tree’s great durability, which also makes it a symbol of eternal life.

The olive is an evergreen tree, which grows to a height of 10-40 feet (3-12 meters). Its leaves are long and chisel shaped. The upper side is dark green and glossy while the lower side is silvery gray, giving the tree its magical silvery light when the wind passes through its leaves.

The olive tree lives longer than other fruit trees, and its rare and wonderful ability to survive has made it a symbol of power for long life.

As long as we continue to tend the olive tree, it will not die of old age but will continue to bear fruit, but if we cease taking care of it, shoots will grow all round it and gradually destroy its trunk.

In Israel there are olive trees that are two thousand years old and more. Examples of these trees can be seen in Galilee and in the garden of the Church of Gethsemane in Jerusalem. In the Beit Hakerem Valley in Galilee there are many olive trees of over 1,000 years. All this is proof that the land of Israel was continuously settled for thousands of years.

As the olive tree continues to grow, its bark thickens. In Israel there are trees whose trunks have a circumference of over 9 feet (3 meters). To circle these trees, five grown men would need to join hands.

The olive tree trunk does not generally grow higher, but each year another thin layer of bark is added. These layers make a trunk that is strong and able to withstand extremes of climate. When we cut a branch from an old olive tree we can see all the layers of its life as rings, each with its own interesting shape and deformity.

The olive tree has amazing capacity for renewal. If any part of it is damaged, trunk or branches, it can quickly grow new branches. In the Second Lebanon War, when Israel was attacked by rockets fired from Lebanon, many olive trees around Galilee were damaged by direct hits. Not long afterwards, the damaged trees had renewed themselves by putting forth new branches. Even when an olive tree is cut down or burned, regrowth quickly starts from the roots.

The olive tree has a complex root system that is particularly strong and symbolizes a strong grip on the ground. These roots can find their way through cracks in rocks as they search for deep sources of water.

In Israel, olive trees flower in the late spring – April and May. They bear a large number of small white flowers that emerge from the midst of the leaves.

Say it in Hebrew

Olive tree

Etz-zayit

עֵץ זַיִת
This flowering season is short and immediately afterwards the olive fruit start to grow, and continue growing until the start of winter.

The olive fruit has a stone surrounded by a fleshy covering that represents 70-80% of its weight. Within this flesh small drops of oil are formed, which combine into large drops as the fruit ripens.

The olive fruit is green at first, but as it starts to ripen it gradually turns black.

The olive tree bears fruit in two-year cycles. A year of rich harvest is followed by a year of very little fruit.

**Local Species**

**Suri**

This species probably gets its name from its origin in the city of Tyre (Tsur) in Lebanon, and not from Syria, as the Hebrew name seems to indicate. The suri is an ancient species with fruit that is particularly rich in oil, about 20-35%. Differences in the quality of oil from different suri olive groves are due to differences in soil quality, rainfall, irrigation, and the quantity of fruit produced.

**Nabali**

This is the main species that grows in the mountains of Samaria. The name is a corruption of the Roman name of the city of Neapolis (present-day Nablus, or Shechem in Hebrew). The Nabali species is similar to the suri but ripens earlier. It can withstand severe climate conditions and drought, and the flesh of the fruit is softer than that of the suri.
New Species Developed Locally

Israel is a world leader in the physiological and biochemical research of new species. Israel is also a world pioneer in the development and improvement of olive groves, thanks to the development of the technology of growing olive trees in arid regions, using irrigation and intensive cultivation methods.

Barnea

After the Six Day War (1967), Professor Shimon Lavie of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem brought a number of olive tree shoots from Kadesh Barnea in the Sinai Peninsula, that had been planted there in the 1920s by the British governor of Sinai. After 20 years of research at the Hebrew University and the Volcani Institute, the barnea species was developed. It is characterized by rapid erect growth, allowing dense planting suitable for automatic harvesting.

The barnea gives excellent fruit in the third year after planting, with a 20% content of oil of a particularly high aromatic quality.
Maalot

Another species developed in Israel, with high resistance to pests, suitable for automatic harvesting, bearing small fruits containing 20% oil with a unique aroma, it is suitable for both seasoning and frying.

Imported Species

A number of imported olive species are also grown in Israel, mainly from Spain. The manzanillo (the name, which means “little apple” in Spanish, referring to the round shape of the fruit), grown mainly for pickling, the picual, which comes from Andalucia in Spain, the arbequina from Catalonia in Spain suitable for dense planting and automatic harvesting, the picholine from southern France also mainly grown for pickling, and the koroneiki, which originates from the island of Zakinthos, Greece, and which bears small fruit.

The History of the Olive Tree in Israel

The olive tree is one of the seven species blessed in the Holy Land.

From the dawn of creation, the people of Israel knew how to appreciate the special qualities of the olive tree. The olive fruit and the oil stored within it were more than food for the Children of Israel – they were the link between the people and its Land – used for food, lighting, medicinal purposes, cosmetic products, religious rituals, and anointing ceremonies.

The olive tree originated in the Holy Land. Three olive pips that were discovered in an archeological dig near the Bnot Ya’akov Bridge that crosses the Jordan River was estimated at 450,000 years old! Other findings from the Hula Valley, just north of the Sea of Galilee, indicate the presence of olive trees in the region 30,000 years ago.

Excavations on Mount Carmel have shown that the olive was used in Israel some 10,000 years ago. Other evidence from early periods has been found in archeological sites north of the Dead Sea and in the Samaria region.

The olive tree was cultivated in Israel as far back as the sixth century BCE and spread to Egypt. Phoenician traders brought olives from Israel to Greece, Rome, and Spain, and from there to other areas of the Mediterranean Basin. The Spanish spread the olive tree to the American continent.

Findings from the third century BCE from various places in the land of Israel give evidence of numerous olive groves planted all over the country.

The olive tree has been so important in the Holy Land for so long, throughout the history of the land of the Bible, that many place-names in Israel even today indicate the presence of olive groves, olive presses, or some connection with the oil.

The Olive Tree in the Bible

The olive tree is mentioned countless times in the Bible, conclusive proof of the connection between the...
people, the land, and the earth. Here are some examples.

The olive is first mentioned in the story of the Flood, when the dove that was sent by Noah from the Ark, returns with an olive leaf: “And the dove came in to him at eventide, and lo in her mouth an olive leaf freshly plucked” (Genesis 8:11).

Even before the conquest of the land by the Children of Israel, the olive tree is mentioned as their inheritance: “And it shall be when the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land which He swore unto they fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give thee – great and goodly cities, which thou didst not build, and houses full of all good things, which thou didst not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which thou didst not hew, vineyards and olive trees, which thou didst not plant, and thou shalt eat and be satisfied” (Deuteronomy 6:10-11).

And indeed, when they conquered the land, the Children of Israel did find there “vineyards and olive trees, which thou did not plant.”

When the tribes settled the land, the tribe of Asher received its inheritance in the Galilean mountains, which were blessed with an abundance of olive trees. When blessing the leaders of the tribes, Moses said to Asher: “Blessed be Asher above sons; let him be the favored of his brethren and let him dip his foot in oil” (Deuteronomy 33:24). We see that the flag of the tribe of Asher bears an olive tree, and the Galilee, where the tribe of Asher settled, is even today covered with high quality olive groves.

The olive is also mentioned in the parable of Yotam, and we can learn of its great importance from the fact that the olive was the first plant to which the trees turned when they sought to anoint a king over themselves: “And they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us.’ But the olive tree said to them, ‘Should I leave my fatness, with which by me they honor God and man, and go to wave back and forth over the trees?’” (Judges 9:8-9).

The olive tree was revered in the biblical period for its glory, the freshness of its evergreen leaves, and the strength of its roots that can even penetrate rocks. The prophet Jeremiah
described it thus: “The Lord called your name, A green olive tree, beautiful with goodly fruit” (Jeremiah 11:16).

The prophet Samuel also mentioned the olive tree: “He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive groves, even their best” (1 Samuel 8:14).

King David appointed special ministers over the olives and the treasures of oil: “And over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the lowland was Baal Hanan the Gederite” (1 Chronicles 27:28).

See also page 24 for olive oil in the Bible.

Olive Trees in the New Testament

The olive tree is mentioned three times in the New Testament.

Paul used the grafting of wild olive branches into the natural tree to describe the process of gentiles coming to faith.

“But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree” (Romans 11:17).

“For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?” (Romans 11:24).

Revelation draws upon Zechariah 4:3ff as a symbol for Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, as the divine appointment of these the two witnesses:

“These are the two olive trees and the two candelabra that stand before the Lord of the earth” (Revelation 11:4).

Though olive trees are not specifically mentioned, there are several references to the Mount called Olivet (Luke 19:29; 21:37; Acts 1:12), Mount of Olives (Matthew 21:2; 24:3; 26:30; Mark 11:1; 13:3; 14:26; Luke 19:37; 22:39: John
8:1), and Gethsemane, which is an olive grove (Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32).

Olive Trees in Israel from Biblical Times to the Present

In the time of the Second Temple, the olive tree was a central element in the economy of Israel. The methods of cultivating the trees in Israel were a model for growers all over the Mediterranean Basin, particularly in Rome, Greece, and North Africa.

In the days of the Bar Kochba rebellion (the second century CE), the Romans cut down most of the olive trees in Judea, to use the wood for their fortresses and ramparts. Hundreds of years later, the Romans realized the importance and the economic contribution of the olive tree, and began intensive planting of olive trees, which continued to the middle of the fourth century CE, in various parts of the land of Israel, mainly in the Galilee.

Olives and olive oil from the land of Israel are mentioned many times in Roman writings. For example, Aristias, an officer in the Roman army, wrote about the land of Israel, “A great deal of labor is invested in agriculture, the land is overflowing with olives, grain and many fruit trees,” while in other Roman writings we find that “the small olives in the towns of the Land of Israel, whose flesh is pleasant, yield a great amount of oil, and therefore olives from these towns are brought to Italy.”

And the dove came in to him at eventide, and lo in her mouth an olive leaf freshly plucked” (Genesis 8:11).

In the period of the Mishna and the Talmud (the later Roman period), the olive was the main source of income for the Jews of Galilee. Excavations show that most of the Jewish settlements in Galilee had olive presses, sometimes dozens of them, evidence of the huge areas covered with olive groves in Galilee. Olive presses were usually located near the source of the fruit.

The Jewish olive industry also flourished on the Golan in the Mishna and Talmud period, in the sixth and seventh centuries CE. So far, archeological digs
on the Golan have revealed over 70 olive presses in 28 locations of ancient Jewish settlement. Generations of Jewish olive growers on the Golan were the basis of the Jewish economy there, which made it possible for the Jewish settlements to flourish and to finance the construction of many splendid synagogues that served as centers for the settlements. Several of these synagogues have been discovered in recent excavations on the Golan Heights.

Starting in the seventh century CE and the Arab conquest, the olive industry in Galilee and the Golan collapsed, as many Jewish settlements were abandoned. The nomadic tribes that came from the Arabian Peninsula and conquered the land of Israel destroyed many olive groves, but after settling permanently and learning how to cultivate the land, they began to appreciate the fruits of the land and planted many olive trees.

In writings from the tenth century CE, we find that “in Acre and its surroundings there are large olive groves giving abundant fruit from which oil is produced.”

Around 1170, Benjamin of Tudela, who came to the Holy Land from the city of Tudela in northern Spain, wrote a book of his travels in the land of Israel, in which he wrote: “Samaria is a land of rivers and gardens and orchards and vineyards and olives.”

Obadiah of Bertinora (the town of Bertinoro in Italy), who lived in the second half of the fifteenth century, wrote about the road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem: “The whole way is full of vineyards and olives.”

The Swedish traveler Fredric Hasselquist, who visited the Holy Land, 1749-1752, wrote: “In Jaffa I ate olives that were the best I ate in all the countries of the East, these are the olives that the Land of Israel was renowned for.”

The explorer Tristram wrote in 1866 that the richest region for olive groves was the Ephraim region, where he rode for many hours in the shade of their trees: “This region is more cultivated than other parts of the country.” He also mentions the olive groves around Nablus, on the way to Jerusalem, in Hebron, Hittin, and others.

In the 400 years of Ottoman rule in the land of Israel (1517-1917), the Turks cut down many of the olive groves, but the second golden period for olive groves, after the first was when the people of Israel settled their land during the short rule of the British (1917-1948). During that time the British planted many olive groves and introduced important species for pickling and other olive products.
Today in Israel there are some 55,000 acres of olive groves which produce a harvest of olives that yield some six to ten thousand tons of olive oil each year.

For many years the olive industry in Israel was controlled by Israeli Arabs. During the last decade, particularly due to the growing involvement and proper management practices of the Israeli Olive Board, more and more Jewish Israeli farmers, kibbutzim and moshavim joined the olive industry. They have brought with them improved cultivation techniques, specially selected varieties, sophisticated automated irrigation methods, and more. This strong entry of the Jewish sector in Israel into the olive industry is bringing about significant changes. There has been a considerable increase of yield per acre planted, and an improvement in the quality of the oil obtained from the olives.

Planting methods have also been improved. The traditional method in Israel, from earliest times, was to plant 72-144 olive trees per acre. The modern methods plant up to 400 saplings per acre. Automated and efficient methods of harvesting the olives have been developed, reducing the cost of production, generally high in the olive industry because of the large number of workers required, mainly during the harvest. Mechanical methods of harvesting, such as a shaking device or an adapted grape harvester, and olive groves with a density of 400 saplings per acre are making the Israeli olive industry more profitable and attractive.

The development of a range of products associated with olive oil, and development of new markets overseas, have contributed to the rapid growth of the Israeli olive industry in recent years. There are
currently over 120 olive presses in Israel, some with the highest technological capabilities in the world. Innovative storage methods using stainless steel containers, introduced to more and more olive press factories in Israel in recent years, preserve the quality of the oil. Various new business arrangements in the olive industry in Israel will ensure that thousands of acres of new olive groves will be planted in the next few years, with expected yields of 2000-2500 pounds of oil on average for each acre. These business developments will more than double the present capacity for olive oil production in Israel, increasing Israeli olive oil exports as well as raising global awareness of the wonderful quality of olive oil from the land of the Bible.

Water is a problem facing the Israeli olive industry, as it is for all agriculture in Israel. Successive years of drought have reduced the country’s water reserves so dramatically that the government has been forced to make drastic cuts in the quotas of water available to Israeli farmers. As a result, some farmers are unable to work their land, and there are even severe cases where farmers have been forced to cut down their olive groves. At present, the government is making new arrangements to deal with the water shortage, and the results will be felt in the next few years. The government committee of experts is dedicated to solving the water crisis, and allocating budgets to develop sea water desalination facilities, using technology in which Israel is a world leader. Israel is also investing resources in the development of high level water purification plants designed to recycle waste water for use in irrigation.

All the estimates are that the Israeli olive oil industry has a bright and promising future, with the growing global demand for high quality olive oil.

Symbolism of the Olive Tree

The olive tree, which has been an important component
of Jewish and Israeli culture throughout history, has become a symbol of many values in Jewish life.

The olive is one of the seven species with which the land was blessed. It is mentioned frequently in the Bible in the context of blessings, fruitfulness, and health.

Eventually it became linked to the concept of putting down roots in the land, and therefore the olive branch appears in the State of Israel’s emblem, in the emblems of Israel Defense Forces, and is also a symbol of peace, referring to the story of Noah’s Ark and the dove.

It is obvious that the olive tree symbolizes stability and tranquility. Moreover, the olive symbolizes the eternal link between man and the earth.

In biblical times olive branches were used to make wreaths for the heads of young men and women on festivals and at their weddings.

The pilgrims bringing the first fruits to Jerusalem decorated the horns of the young bull who led the procession with olive branches.

The whole of the olive tree, its branches and fruit, have been used as symbols and decorative motifs in many works of art and in Jewish culture from historical times to the present. Olive oil is linked to expressions such as “A land of olive trees and honey” (Deuteronomy, 8:8 and also in 2 Kings, 18:32). Jeremiah likened the people of Israel to the olive: “The Lord called your name, a green olive tree, beautiful with goodly fruit.” (Jeremiah 11:16).

King David compared himself to an olive: “But I am like a thriving olive tree in God’s house; I trust in the faithfulness of God for ever and ever.” (Psalm 52:10).

The contrast between the green canopy of the olive tree and the sturdiness of its trunk with the signs of old age in the crevices of its hollow trunk forms the foundation of a legend told by the ancestor of the Jewish people, as follows:

When King Solomon died, the trees of the garden also mourned – the fig, the vine, the pomegranate. As a sign of grief they shed their green leaves. Only the olive tree did not shed its leaves and stood with the glory of its green canopy. The other trees asked the olive: “You, king of the trees, is it not most unbefitting for you not to mourn the death of our King?” The olive tree replied, “You have shed your leaves so that all might see your sorrow, but my sorrow is hidden in my heart and it is greater than yours, for behold, my heart is dry and the sap of my trunk has withered!”

A similar tale is told about the olive and the destruction of the Temple.

According to the writers of the Offerings tractate of the Talmud, the Children of Israel were compared to olives, because “the olive only gives its oil when pressed, and the Children of Israel are only brought back to the right path by travails” (Offerings, 23). And also “The leaves of the olive tree are not shed either in the heat or in the days of rain, nor do the Children of Israel have any rest, either in this world or in the world to come” (Offerings 53, 2).

The official emblem of the State of Israel is a seven-branched candelabra decorated on both sides with olive branches. The candelabra and the olive branches are taken from the vision of Zechariah: “And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I have seen, and behold, a lamp stand all of gold,
The Olive Tree Harvest

The harvest process has great influence on the quality of the oil obtained from the olives. The health of the olive grove, the correct time for harvesting, a careful and controlled harvest process that keeps the fruit whole, storing the fruit in suitable containers as it is transported to the olive press, removing any leaves that gather round the fruit are factors that affect the quality of the oil.

The date of the harvest is determined by the farmer after the first rains, and depends on the species and the amount of oil in the fruit. The farmer tests the concentration of oil in the fruit by pressing an olive between his fingers: if it is soft and yields a large quantity of oil, the harvest can begin. Another sign is when half the olive has changed color from green to black.

A late harvest can affect the quality and taste of the oil.

The harvest continues for a number of months.

Preparations for the Harvest

Large sheets of fabric or netting are spread on the ground around the trees with a cut from the edge of each piece of cloth to the center so that it can tightly surround the tree trunk.

Harvesting Methods

The “Milking” Method

This is the traditional method, using milking-type...
movements. The olive picker moves his hands up and down the olive branches, so that the fruit falls onto the cloth on the ground. The olive pickers use light ladders.

**The Comb Method**

A long-handled rake is used to “comb” the olive branches so that the fruit falls to the ground. Recently, farmers have started to use pneumatic combs operating on compressed air.

**The Knocking Method**

The traditional knocking method uses thin poles to knock the olive branches, mainly used on tall trees. In each method the olives fall from the branches onto the sheets of cloth on the ground under the trees. The sheets are then picked up from the edges so that the olives roll to the center, where they are gathered up and put into baskets, airy bags, or containers and taken to the olive press.

**Automatic Harvesting**

A shortage of workers and constantly increasing areas of olive plantations require mechanical means to harvest the olives. There are two main types of automatic harvesting.

**The Shaking Method**

A mechanical device has long arms that surround the olive tree and shake it, causing the olives to
fall onto sheets of cloth, from where they are conducted to a conveyor belt. A bellows separates the leaves from the fruit and the olives are poured into containers.

**The Harvester**
A mechanical device for picking grapes has been adapted to picking olives. Developed in Israel for the grape harvest, the Spanish adapted it for olives.

**Taking the Fruit to the Olive Press**
The fruit must be taken to the olive press immediately after harvesting to ensure top quality oil. The more the arrival of the olives at the olive press is delayed, the greater the level of acidity in the oil, which affects its quality.
Olive Oil in Biblical Times and Later

Throughout history, and to the present day, olive oil has been considered the most excellent type of oil. Olive oil played an important role in the material culture in the land of Israel and in ancient Hebrew culture.

Olive fruits provided the rich and poor alike with oil for cooking, lighting, cosmetics, and medicine, and for anointing prophets and kings (Judges 9:8-9). It was, with grain and wine, the third great product of the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 7:13).

Olive oil was used extensively in biblical times for cooking. It was an essential part of everyone's diet, as is shown in the Bible by the repetition of the oil (Hebrew, yitzhar), wine, and grain trio (e.g., Deuteronomy 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 18:4, etc.). Olive oil was mixed with flour for cakes, was used for frying meat, and eaten with bread and stews. It was also used for lighting: “Pure olive oil beaten for the light” (Exodus 27:20).

During the construction of the Temple, each year Solomon sent to Hiram of Tyre 20,000 cors (homers) of both wheat and barley, 20,000 baths of wine and the same of olive oil (2 Chronicles 2:10). To give some idea of the vast numbers of olive trees that must have been grown in the land at that period, 20,000 baths is equivalent (at about 23 quarts per bath) to almost 465,000 quarts, which would work out at just over 4 fluid ounces daily for each of the 10,000 workers. At an average yield of 62 fluid ounces per tree, we estimate that this would have been the annual output of 239,130 trees. A full orchard of olive trees properly spaced at that time would be expected to have 48 trees per acre. Solomon must, therefore, have dispatched the product of some 4,981 acres or 2,015 hectares of olive groves!

Olive oil was also used as a cosmetic. Anointing with olive oil gave the face a young and happy look:
“Wine that cheers the hearts of men and oil that makes the face shine” (Psalm 104:15), and “Let your clothes always be white and your head never lack anointing with oil” (Ecclesiastes 9:8).

In biblical times, olive oil was used to soothe and lubricate the body, to heal wounds and bruises: “From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it: wounds, welts, and open sores. They have not been closed, neither bandaged, neither soothed with oil” (Isaiah 1:6).

In Israel olive oil was used as currency, and farmers paid the owner of the olive press in oil. The Bible also tells us that olives and olive oil were exported from Israel to Egypt: “And oil is carried into Egypt” (Hosea 12:1).

Olive oil was considered to have special holy qualities and was used to anoint the kings of Israel and the kings of Judea.

See also Oil for Anointing, page 28.

To build the first Temple, King Solomon gave Hiram, king of Tyre, olive oil as payment for the cedar and cypress trees and the gold he purchased from him, as it is written: “And twenty measures of pure oil year by year” (1 Kings 5:11). Solomon not only gave Hiram oil, but also towns in Galilee that were engaged in the oil business: “Then King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee” (1 Kings 9:11).

When Rehoboam, king of Judea, was setting up his
kingdom, he built emergency storerooms, as we read: “He fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, and oil and wine” (2 Chronicles 11:11).

The calendar of the Dead Sea Scrolls, assumed to have been written by the Essenes, mentions three harvest holidays: “First fruits of the Hittite grains,” fifty days later, “First fruits of the vineyard” and after a further fifty days, “First fruits of the oil.”

In the heroic battle of the Jews against the Romans, the Jews used oil as a weapon. In the battle of Yodfat, Joseph, son of Matthias, commander of the revolt in Galilee, ordered boiling oil poured on the Romans as they attacked the walls of the city.

In the period of the Mishna and the Talmud, oil was the main export of Jewish farmers in Galilee. The economic activity of the oil industry was concentrated in the hands of a number of rich men, including Rabbi Judah Hanassi.

Olive oil is יתזר in Hebrew, and in many cases it is mentioned as a special blessing for Israel.

Olive Oil in the New Testament

Olive oil is mentioned once in the New Testament: “And cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives” (Revelation 18:13).

There are also several mentions of oil, which would mean olive oil. It is used in reference to the oil burned in lamps in the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:3; 4; 8). Oil is also associated with anointing in connection with healing (Mark 6:13; James 5:14). Oil is used by the Samaritan in the parable of the good Samaritan when he helps the man who was attacked by putting oil on his wounds (Luke 10:34). There are also several references to oil that show the importance of olive oil to commerce in the Second Temple Period (Luke 16:6; James 3:12; Revelation 6:6; 18:13). Oil is used for anointing with the emphasis on special recognition (Luke 7:46; Hebrews 1:9).

Folklore, Tradition, and Symbolism of Olive Oil

Many legends and proverbs have been written about olive oil: “Just as this oil does not mix with other liquids, so Israel does not mingle with the peoples of the world. Just as the oil brings light to the world, so Israel is a light unto the world. As it is said, let the nations walk in your light. Just as oil is the highest of the liquids, so Israel is the highest of the peoples” (Song of Songs 28).
“He who sees olive oil in a dream, shall see the light of the Torah” (Breshit Rabbah 27).

Olive oil, which was used in lamps set before the graves of holy men, became holy, and women drank it or spread it on their bodies as a cure for all kinds of diseases. This custom was known among the Jews of Morocco. Olive oil was sent to a barren woman in the Diaspora in the form of the memorial candles that are lit in memory of holy men, and she conceived and bore a son.
Offerings

Those who came to the Temple would sacrifice on the altar offerings of grain, new wine, and *yitshar* – pure oil.

Today there is still a symbolic representation of the harvest brought to the Temple as an offering in the Friday night (Sabbath evening) meal, when Jews place on the table two loaves (grain), wine, and candles (oil).

Oil for Anointing

Anointing with oil in ancient times symbolized a life of pleasure and happiness; a special form of anointing symbolized particular honor, purification, and holiness.

The patriarch Jacob blessed the stone that had been his pillow and set it up as a memorial by pouring oil over it (Genesis 28:18).

Later in the same place, God spoke to him and Jacob again poured oil on a stone pillar (Genesis 35:14). By this symbolic act he set aside that place, which he called Bethel, as holy. Anointing was presumably a well-established practice even at that early date.

Later, we see Moses being commanded by God to prepare holy oil with a specific composition for the anointing of the tent of meeting, the Tabernacle, and all its contents. The furniture and utensils were thereby consecrated “that they may be most holy; whatever touches them will become holy” (Exodus 30:29), and Aaron and his sons were also anointed “that they may serve me as priests” (Exodus 30:30). In Leviticus 8:10-11 we find Moses putting this into practice, with the altar itself being anointed seven times. Furthermore, Moses had to warn the people of Israel of its holiness: “It shall be for you most holy. And the incense which you shall make according to its composition, you shall not make for yourselves; it shall be for you holy to the Lord. Whoever makes any like it to use as perfume shall be cut off from his people” (Exodus 30:36-38).

From the anointing of the priest it was a simple step to the anointing of the king or of the king-designate.

“They anointed David king over the house of Judah” (2 Samuel 2:4; see also Judges 9:8-9; 1 Kings 1:34); and prophets, such as Elisha (1 Kings 19:16).

Anointing with holy oil symbolized that the king was the choice of the God of Israel: “He is the Lord’s anointed” (1 Samuel 24:6).

The Hebrew word for “anointed,” *mashiach*, is the origin of the word *Messiah*.

Olive Oil Candles in Jewish Tradition

Olive oil candles have been part of Jewish tradition throughout history. The lighted candle was the
sign of life in an ancient Jewish home. The first evidence of oil candles in Israel appeared 4,000 years ago. Nearly every archeological dig in Israel finds candle holders.

The people were especially strict about the Sabbath candles. From the dawn of Jewish culture it was the custom for Sabbath candles to be made only of olive oil. The holy atmosphere of the Sabbath as expressed in the family meal, characterized by pleasure, peace, tranquility, and pleasantness, was bathed in the light of olive oil candles.

“\textbf{The patriarch Jacob blessed the stone that had been his pillow and set it up as a memorial by pouring oil over it}” (Genesis 28:18).

Jewish tradition also found a parallel between the Sabbath candles and the eternal lamp in the Temple.

Lighting the candles on Hanukkah symbolizes the renewal of lighting the Temple lamp. Hanukkah occurs in the month of Kislev which is also the month of the olive harvest, a fact that illustrates the breadth of the symbolism linking the people, its land, and the Temple.

**Production of Olive Oil**

**The Olive Press**

The olive press is required to extract the oil from the olives with the best quality possible. Throughout history, oil production has been in three stages:

- Crushing the olives, to produce a pulp
- Squeezing the pulp, to separate the oil from the solid part
- Separating the three components of the pulp – water, solids, and oil

There is archeological evidence of olive presses in Israel from 3300 BCE at biblical sites such as Megiddo, Gezer, Lachish, and Beit Shean.

**Tithes**

\textit{This shall be the priests’ due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep, that they shall give to the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The first fruits of your grain, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him.} (Deuteronomy 18:3-4).

In the biblical era, the olives were crushed on stones, while in the period of the Kings of Judea and Israel, methods were more sophisticated, such as crushing the olives in a rectangular basin using rollers or pestle and mortar.

The pulp from crushing was put into flat bags, referred to in the Mishna as “akalim.”
Heavy stones were laid on top of the bags, or people trod on them to squeeze out the oil. The oil flowed through holes in the bags to a collecting cistern that was carved out of the rock and filled with water. The oil rose to the surface of the water and was collected and stored in pottery jars.

According to evidence from the biblical period, the methods of producing oil and wine were identical, and oil and wine are often mentioned together in the Bible: “And the vats will overflow with new wine and oil” (Joel 2:24).

The use of the presses and cisterns suits the order of agricultural work, according to the saying: “As the wine harvest ends, the olive harvest begins.”

The machinery of the olive press developed, although technical development was very slow, and old methods continued to be used almost to the present day. There were small improvements and new methods were occasionally introduced, but the basic process continued to be used from time immemorial.

The beam and weight method for squeezing the pulp was developed in early times. The beam was a large branch, which served as a lever. One end was anchored in a socket in the wall and weights were hung on the other end. The bags of olive pulp were laid in a tall pile with the weighted branch pressing down on top of them. The oil flowed out of the bags into the collection pit. The earliest collection pit was found in the Gezer dig. Not far from there, at Ekron, archeologists found no less than 114 such squeezing and collection installations. The earliest beam and weight press in Israel was discovered at the Tel Dan dig, and dates back to the eleventh century BCE.

In the Hellenist period, the fourth century BCE, another method for crushing olives was developed using a large round crushing basin with a lip to stop the pulp from falling out. The olives were
crushed by a stone roller, a wooden beam was inserted with the other end tied to a donkey, which walked round and round the basin, dragging the roller over the olives.

In the first century CE, screw technology was invented and used for the crushing installations. The screw was installed over the heavy beam, which pressed down on the olive pulp bags, with the circular action of the screw significantly increasing the pressure exerted by the beam.

When electricity first came to the Land of Israel in the 20th century, 5000 years of traditional production of olive oil came to an end, and a new era of modern olive presses began.
The Modern Olive Press

In a modern olive press, oil is produced on a conveyor belt system, from the entry of the olives into the automated system to the bottle-filling process. The olives are first poured from the container that brought them from the olive groves onto a conveyor belt. Bellows remove leaves and small stones. The olives are then washed and then crushed in a machine that turns them into pulp. The olive pulp is mixed and kneaded for half an hour then moved to the centrifuge that separates the water, solids, and oil – each into a separate pipe.

The oil then passes through a system of filters to where it is filled into bottles or other storage containers.

Quality and Properties of Olive Oil

Standards of Olive Oil Quality

Achieving high quality olive oil is a complex process involving many elements, from the olive grove to the bottle filling stage. The process includes improving the land, planting and cultivating the trees, protecting them from pests, harvesting the olives correctly and at the right time, and bringing them quickly and properly to good olive presses.

The aroma and flavor of fine olive oil have a special character. Both aroma and flavor are influenced by factors such as the species of olive, the growing region, the altitude of the olive groves, the quantity of precipitation, the climate, irrigation, spraying, and constant care of the trees by the grower.

The taste of high quality olive oil creates a sensory experience that combines aroma, color, and a wide range of flavors, depending on the species of olive, including fruity, bitter, strong, sweet, herbal, and other flavors.

Because of the special properties of olive oil, more accurate assessment is needed than for other edible oils. The International Olive Oil Council, with its headquarters in Spain, is responsible for determining international standards for defining the quality of olive oil.

Extra virgin olive oil comes from cold pressing the olives and contains no more than 0.8% acidity. It is judged to have a superior taste. Extra virgin and virgin olive oil may not contain refined oil.

Virgin olive oil has acidity less than 2% and is judged to have a good taste.

Pure olive oil and olive oil are usually a blend of refined and virgin or extra virgin oil.
Olive oil is a blend of virgin oil and refined oil, of no more than 1.5% acidity. It commonly lacks a strong flavor.

Olive-pomace oil is a blend of refined pomace olive oil and possibly some virgin oil. It is fit for consumption but may not be described simply as olive oil. Olive-pomace oil is rarely sold at retail, as it is often used for certain kinds of cooking in restaurants.

Lampante oil is olive oil that is not suitable for food. The word lampante comes from the long-standing use in oil-burning lamps. Lampante oil is mostly used in the industrial market.

A number of factors affect the taste, aroma, and stability of olive oil, as well as its nutrition and health value. The special quality of olive oil means that it can be consumed immediately after production from the fruit and requires no further processes. For that reason we can refer to it as “olive juice.”

The Israel Olive Council

The Israel Olive Council (IOC) is responsible for the olive industry in Israel on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture. The Council,
which is located on a farm in the heart of the olive groves in Galilee, determines the quality of olive oil in Israel, grants quality labels to oil, and develops the industry in Israel.

**Components of Olive Oil**

Olive oil contains a number of beneficial elements.

**Fatty acids:** the unique composition of fatty acids suitable for human consumption ensures a high smoking point of 356 degrees Fahrenheit in comparison with other cooking oils, which is why olive oil is recommended for frying and baking.

**Phospholipids:** a group of fats found in olive oil, that play an important role in improving memory, dissolving and digesting fats, and more.

**Tocopherols:** a group containing various types of vitamin E whose unique composition in olive oil provides several types of protection to the human body, such as delaying oxidation, protecting cells against cancer, preventing blood clots etc. They are also natural blood thinners, good for the skin, assist in healing wounds, increase fertility, and more.

**Carotenoids:** anti-oxidants which help to improve vision.

**Squalen:** a carbohydrate appearing in olive oil in large quantities. Squalen strengthens the immune system and helps with allergies, arthritis, sinusitis, and asthma. Squalen also increases energy and stimulates human metabolism, and strengthens and protects body cells.

**Polyphenolics:**

natural chemical compounds found in olive oil which protect and care for the skin, delay oxidation, help to heal sunburn and other skin problems, slow down the aging process.

**Chlorophyll:** a strong anti-oxidant which prevents the destruction of the cells that build our bodies.

**Sterols and Phytosterols:** a group of fats with anti-carcinogenic effect, particularly for stomach cancer. Phytosterols have also been found to help the body’s immune system, relieve enlarged prostate, and reduce blood cholesterol.

---

**The Health Benefits of Olive Oil**

Extra Virgin olive oil is not only a light and delicate addition to many wonderful dishes; it is one of the most health-promoting types of oils available.

**Protection Against Chronic Degenerative Disease**

In many parts of the world, a high fat intake is associated with degenerative diseases such as atherosclerosis, diabetes, asthma, colon cancer, and arthritis. But in some places a high fat intake is actually associated with lower rates of these conditions. Comparing these areas, such as the Mediterranean, where olive oil is the main fat used, to other regions, like the United States, where other fats such as animal fats, hydrogenated fats and vegetable oils like corn oil dominate, provides very interesting data. People who use olive oil regularly have much lower rates of heart disease, atherosclerosis, diabetes, colon cancer, and asthma.
Strong Protection Against Heart Disease

Relying only on olive oil may cut your risk of coronary heart disease almost in half, according to results from the CARDIO2000 case-control study, published in Clinical Cardiology (Kontogianni MD, Panagiotakos DB, et al).

The researchers concluded, “Exclusive use of olive oil during food preparation seems to offer significant protection against coronary heart disease, irrespective of various clinical, lifestyle and other characteristics of the participants.”

Studies examining olive oil use and atherosclerosis reveal that particles of LDL cholesterol (the potentially harmful cholesterol) that contain the monounsaturated fats of olive oil are less likely to become oxidized. Since only oxidized cholesterol sticks to artery walls eventually forming the plaques that can lead to a heart attack or stroke, preventing the oxidation of cholesterol is a good way to help prevent atherosclerosis. A recent in vitro study also showed that polyphenolic compounds present in olive oil, including oleuropein, inhibit the adhesion of monocyte cells to the blood vessel lining, a process that is involved in the development of atherosclerosis.

In addition, when people with high cholesterol levels removed the saturated fat from their diets and replaced it with olive oil, their total cholesterol levels dropped an average of 13.4%, and their LDL cholesterol levels dropped by 18%.

A study published in the Medical Science Monitor reported that two tablespoons a day of olive oil added to an otherwise unchanged diet in 28 outpatients, ranging in age from 64 to 71, resulted in significant drops in total and LDL cholesterol.
Theodora Psaltopoulou and colleagues from the University of Athens, Greece, investigated whether the Mediterranean diet as a whole, or just olive oil, is responsible for the reduction in blood pressure. They found that while the diet as a whole reduces blood pressure, olive oil, by itself, is largely responsible.

The Greek team examined the ability of the total diet and of olive oil alone to reduce arterial blood pressure. Their study included over 20,000 Greek participants who were free of hypertension (high blood pressure) when the study began. Food frequency questionnaires were completed and systolic and diastolic blood pressures were taken.

Data analysis confirmed that the Mediterranean diet as a whole was significantly associated with lower systolic and diastolic blood pressure, as were olive oil, vegetables, and fruit. On the other hand, consumption of cereals, meat and meat products, and alcohol was associated with higher blood pressure. When the effects of olive oil and vegetables were compared, olive oil was found to be responsible for the dominant beneficial effect on blood pressure.

**Key to Reducing Breast Cancer**

Olive oil may be the key reason that eating a Mediterranean diet reduces breast cancer risk, suggests a laboratory study published in the *Annals of Oncology*.

This human study adds to the evidence that olive oil is a key factor associated with a Mediterranean diet in lowering the risk of breast cancer. Results of the two-year study involving 755 women in the Canary Islands suggest that monounsaturated fat and, specifically, olive oil, exerts a protective effect against breast cancer.

**Better Blood Sugar Control**

Studies in diabetic patients have shown that healthy meals that contained some olive oil had better effects on blood sugar than healthy meals that were low in fat. When olive oil is used to enhance a low-saturated fat, high-carbohydrate diabetic diet, the diet still has beneficial effects on blood sugar control.

**Anti-inflammatory Benefits**

Regular use of olive oil has been associated with lower rates of asthma and rheumatoid arthritis. The monounsaturated fats in olive oil are used by the body to produce substances which are relatively anti-inflammatory. By reducing inflammation, these fats can help reduce the severity of arthritis symptoms, and may be able to prevent or reduce the severity of asthma.
Olive Oil Phenols Help Prevent Bone Loss

The bone-protective effects of olive polyphenols revealed in studies conducted by a special team at INRA (France’s National Institute for Agricultural Research) are so dramatic that a new Belgian firm, BioActor, has licensed INRA’s patents to use olive polyphenols in food, supplements, and herbal medicines for osteoporosis prevention.

INRA researchers, inspired by epidemiological evidence that people eating a traditional Mediterranean diet were less likely to develop osteoporosis, began investigating the effects of olive oil on bone metabolism.

Olive Oil Phenols Protect DNA from Free Radical Damage

Extra virgin olive oil, which, when properly cold pressed and stored in opaque containers, is naturally high in phenolic compounds with antioxidant properties, may be one of the key reasons for the lower incidence of cancer and cardiovascular disease in the Mediterranean region, suggests a study published in the British Journal of Nutrition.

Potent Anti-inflammatory Compound Discovered in Olive Oil

Could olive oil become the new anti-inflammatory standby? Someday soon, your doctor may recommend that you prevent aches and pains, and reduce your risk of cancer, by enjoying extra virgin olive oil with your meals throughout each day, suggests a study led by Pennsylvania biologist Dr. Gary Beauchamp and published in Nature.
A Fat That Can Help You Lose Fat

Substituting olive oil, a monounsaturated fat or MUFA, for saturated fat in your diet can translate into a small but significant loss of both body weight and fat mass without the need to change anything else about your diet or increase your physical activity, suggests a study published in the British Journal of Nutrition.

What Is the Mediterranean Diet?

The Mediterranean diet is a modern nutritional recommendation inspired by the traditional dietary patterns of some of the countries of the Mediterranean Basin.

The Mediterranean diet emphasizes abundant plant foods and fresh fruit in the typical daily meals, olive oil as the principal source of fat, dairy products (principally cheese and yogurt), and fish and poultry consumed in low to moderate amounts, zero to four eggs consumed weekly, red meat consumed in low amounts, and wine consumed in low to moderate amounts.

It is based on what from the point of view of mainstream nutrition is considered a paradox: that although the people living in Mediterranean countries tend to consume relatively high amounts of fat, they have far lower rates of cardiovascular disease than people in countries like the United States, where similar levels of fat consumption are found. One of the main explanations is thought to be the large amount of olive oil used in the Mediterranean diet.

Olive Oil in Folk Medicine

Olive oil has always been an inseparable element of folk medicine. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, recommended several uses for olive oil.

In nearly all Jewish communities we can find interesting medicinal uses for olive oil. Here are just a few examples:

Iraqi Jews recommend that people suffering from headaches, loss of appetite, insomnia and digestive problems should drink a spoonful of olive oil each day.

Syrian Jews maintain that drinking olive oil helps barren women to become pregnant.
Yemenite Jews use olive oil as a basis for various ointments and claim it is effective for colds and pains and cures dandruff. Ground olive leaves are used to heal wounds and cure jaundice. Eating olives improves the appetite. The juice of pickled olives is used as a mouthwash to strengthen teeth and gums. Incense made from olive pits is used against lung disorders.

Moroccan Jews had many uses for olive oil and found it effective against rheumatism and all kinds of body aches. Infants suffering from severe cough and respiratory problems were given olive oil mixed with honey. Olive oil compresses were used to cure chest pains. The Jews of Tunisia and Algeria had folk doctors who set fractures and cured back pains by massaging them with oil.

Treating with Olive Oil

Here are ways of treating health problems with the help of olive oil, taken from healing methods used for many years in Jewish communities and in countries of the Mediterranean Basin.

To strengthen nails:
Heat a little oil and pour into a small dish. Dip fingernails into the dish for five minutes, and then gently massage the base of the nails.

To prevent constipation:
A tablespoonful of oil in the morning on an empty stomach is helpful. It is also possible to add the juice of half a lemon.

To relieve dandruff:
Massage the scalp with olive oil for five minutes, then leave the oil on the scalp for fifteen minutes and shampoo as normal. The treatment should be repeated two or three times a week until the dandruff disappears.

For healthy, shiny hair:
Mix olive oil with an egg yolk and spread on the hair. Wrap the hair in a towel and leave for about an hour. Rinse with lemon juice then shampoo as normal.

For dry skin problems:
Apply olive oil to the skin after a shower, like body lotion.

To control acne:
Mix about 2.5 fl.oz. olive oil with three drops of lavender oil. Apply to clean skin.

Note: These treatments are recommendations only, and are not intended as a substitute for a visit to a physician or medical treatment as required.
Sweet Potatoes (Yams) in Olive Oil

**Ingredients**
- 1 pound yams (preferably small)
- 1/2 cup of olive oil
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 2 ounces grated sharp cheese (Kashkeval)
- Pinch of cinnamon
- Salt and pepper
- Chopped chives

**Method**
1. Peel the yams and slice them into 1/4 inch slices. Fry the slices in olive oil until slightly brown.
2. Put the slices into an ovenproof dish; add the remaining olive oil from the frying pan. Pour over the wine and season with salt, pepper, and cinnamon.
3. Bake in a preheated oven at 375˚F for 30 minutes or until yam slices are soft. Sprinkle with grated cheese and chives and serve.

Roast Whole Garlic Preserved in Olive Oil

**Ingredients**
- 6 heads of garlic
- 2 cups olive oil
- 1 stalk of fresh oregano
- 1 bay leaf

**Method**
1. Remove the outer skin of the garlic heads and slightly separate the cloves, but not completely. Spread the garlic with a little olive oil, wrap them in foil and roast in a preheated oven at 400˚F for 30 minutes or until the heads are soft. Remove the foil and cool the garlic.
2. Put the garlic heads into a clean glass jar and cover with olive oil. Add the bay leaf and oregano,
and seal. Keep in a cool, dark place for 10 days.

3. After opening, keep in the refrigerator. Serve garlic with some oil and coarse salt. The flavored oil can be used as a basis for sauces or marinades for meat and fish.

Dried Fruit in Olive Oil

Olive oil goes very well with dried fruit. An olive oil-based vinaigrette can be added to dried apricots cut into small cubes, or even thin slices of dried figs. One of the most successful combinations is raisins and olive oil.

**Ingredients**

1/2 pound small dark raisins
2 crushed cloves of garlic
1 tablespoon of chopped fresh thyme
1 1/2 cups of balsamic vinegar
1 1/2 cups olive oil

**Method**

Mix all the ingredients and leave for 24 hours. The raisins can be added to meats, rice, and salads.

Carpaccio of Snapper with Ginger and Olive Oil

**Ingredients**

1 pound fresh snapper fillet, free of skin and bones
Marinade
1 lemon
3 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
1 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped mint
3 crushed cloves of garlic
Salt and pepper
Method

1. Put the ginger in a frying pan and sprinkle with olive oil. Heat over a low flame until slightly browned. Remove from the flame, cool and strain.

2. Cut the lemon into thin slices, remove the pips, and cut into cubes. Slice the fish diagonally as thinly as possible and arrange on a serving dish.

3. About ten minutes before serving, sprinkle with the lemon, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Just before serving sprinkle with the chopped mint. The sauce can also be used for fried eggplant slices. In that case, mix all the marinade ingredients, leave for an hour and serve.

If you’re going to stir fry your broccoli in oil, better use extra virgin olive!

A Few Quick Serving Ideas

- Use extra virgin olive oil in your salad dressings.
- Purée roasted garlic, cooked potatoes and extra virgin olive oil together to make exceptionally delicious garlic mashed potatoes. Season to taste.
- Drizzle extra virgin olive oil over healthy sautéed vegetables before serving.
- Purée extra virgin olive oil, garlic and your favorite beans together in a food processor. Season to taste and serve as a dip.
- Instead of putting the butter dish out on the table, place a small cup of extra virgin olive oil to use on your bread or rolls.

Recommended Amounts of Olive Oil

For an average diet of 1500 calories the recommended amount of olive oil is two tablespoons a day.

Is Olive Oil Also Good for Frying?

Contrary to popular belief, olive oil is excellent for frying for several health reasons:

The burning point of olive oil is 428°F and its smoking point is 356°degrees. In regular frying it does not reach this temperature, so it does not break down, hardly oxidizes, and retains its healthy fatty acids and healthy properties.

Stir-frying methods that would best maintain broccoli’s rich array of nutrients were investigated by Spanish researchers. They discovered that only broccoli lightly stir-fried in extra virgin olive oil retained the same glucosinolate and vitamin C levels as uncooked broccoli (J Food Sci. 2007 Jan;72(1):S064-8).
When ordinary oils used for frying reach 428°F free radicals are created (strong oxidants which are very harmful) at a level of 18%. By contrast, when using olive oil, only 2% free radicals are created!

It has also been found that far less olive oil penetrates the fried food. In other words, the finished food contains less oil after frying than when other oils are used.

**Seasoning, Baking, and Cooking**

- For dressing salads, sauces, and mayonnaise, extra virgin olive oil is recommended to enrich the taste.
- Virgin olive oil can also be substituted for margarine, butter, or other fat when baking cakes and cookies. The vitamin E in olive oil creates a refined texture and preserves the freshness of the baked goods. We recommend filling a small bottle with olive oil for sprinkling when baking.
- Olive oil is also suitable for long slow-pot roasting.
- A little olive oil sprinkled on popcorn improves the flavor.

**Keeping Olive Oil**

If you want to preserve the qualities of olive oil for a long time, follow these tips:

- Keep the oil in its original dark glass bottle.
- Store the oil in a shady place, out of the sun.
- Replace the cap on the bottle firmly after use.
- Keep the bottle away from the stove. Any source of heat speeds up the breakdown process of the oil.
- If you buy a large quantity of oil in a metal container, keep the container in a cool, dark place, and from time to time as necessary pour a small quantity of oil into a dark glass bottle.
The Global Olive Oil Market

There are some 750 million olive trees in the world. Some yield olives for eating, and others for the manufacture of oil. The annual production of olive oil worldwide is about 2.5 million tons.

At present, the highest per capita consumption of olive oil is in Greece, whose inhabitants each consume 25 quarts of olive oil every year (!!!), followed by Spain with per capita consumption of 15 quarts per year, then Italy with 14 quarts, Tunisia with 11.5 quarts, and Portugal with 7 quarts. The inhabitants of Israel consume on average 2.5 quarts of olive oil each year, while in Morocco per capita consumption is 2 quarts per year, in France 1.3 quarts, in the USA 0.7 quart, and in Japan 0.1 quart.

Most olive trees in the world are concentrated around the Mediterranean. Some 90-95% of global olive oil production comes from the Mediterranean Basin. The largest producer of olive oil is Spain, with output of about one million tons of olive oil each year—about 40% of the total world production; followed by Tunisia, Italy, Greece, and Turkey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Annual per Capita Consumption (Quarts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest consumption of olive oil is also in the countries around the Mediterranean, where olive oil has been a basic component of the daily diet for centuries. People in the countries of the Mediterranean consume some 90% of global production. However, in recent years, as olive oil has become more popular, a change is discernible as people outside the Mediterranean area increase their consumption.

Olive Oil Trends in the World

While the traditional levels of consumption of olive oil among peoples of the Mediterranean Basin remain unchanged, in recent years demand for olive oil in other countries, such as those of Central Europe, the USA, etc., has been steadily rising.

The traditional markets are still the leaders in per capita consumption, but the market in other countries is enjoying significant levels of growth. There are several reasons for this growth.

Greater Awareness

Until not many years ago, consumers in countries outside the traditional Mediterranean area were satisfied to use vegetable oils, but recently there has been growing awareness of the healthful properties and other benefits of olive oil.

See also page 34 in the section on The Health Benefits of Olive Oil.
Marketing and Advertising

A recent trend is the increase in the means of marketing olive oil, in the digital, printed and broadcast media in Western countries. Campaigns, advertising and sales promotion efforts are found in more and more countries. The International Olive Oil Council (IOOC) together with local importers and marketers invests considerable sums of money in strengthening consumer awareness of olive oil, and the results are clear.

The Mediterranean Diet

The spread of the Mediterranean diet, of which olive oil is a basic component, is due to the recognition by more and more people throughout the Western world of its advantages. And thanks to this diet more and more people are being exposed to olive oil and falling in love with its aroma and taste.

For more on the Mediterranean diet, see page 38.

Decline in Consumption of Solid Oils

Recent years have also witnessed an increase in our knowledge about the damage to health resulting from the use of solid oils in the kitchen and in the food industry. Olive oil is the natural, healthy alternative to solid oils, boosted by the introduction of strict regulations governing the use of solid oils in food industries and restaurants.

Social and Cultural Changes

We are going through a period of far-reaching cultural changes – a return to the traditional values of family and religion, leading to a greater interest in the cradle of Western culture, the countries of the Mediterranean. Since olive oil is one of the main components of the dietary culture of those countries, it is continually being exposed to new consumers all over the world.
Development of Leisure Culture

The increase in free time and the impressive development over the last decade of leisure culture in the West is leading more and more people to take an interest in health, diet, cooking, and new, exotic flavors. That olive oil can be obtained with a whole range of tastes and aromas, as well as its other unique characteristics, is stimulating the palates of many new consumers. The growing interest in exotic cuisine is fertile ground for the entry of olive oil into both private and restaurant kitchens, as well as the food industry. The development of the leisure culture together with the rising awareness of olive oil create a broad range of communications media by which olive oil can reach a wider public: Internet sites, books, cookery magazines, reviews of different oils, contribute to the growing demand for this “golden liquid.” TV cooking programs using olive oil, boutiques specializing in olive oil, trade fairs, tasting competitions and more are some of the ways of expanding the market, as olive oil changes from a luxury product to a routine ingredient in more and more kitchens.

New recipes developed in the framework of leisure culture help new consumers to discover the multitude of ways of using olive oil for frying, baking, roasting, grilling, and so on. The exciting results increase the popularity of olive oil.

Market Responses

The increase in consumption of olive oil can be clearly seen in the results of market research and studies of consumer behavior in Western countries. The British company Mintel is one of Europe’s leading market research and consumer behavior organizations (www.mintel.com). The company recently did a comprehensive survey of the market for olive oil in Britain, and its main conclusion was that “in recent years the British market for olive oil has been sizzling!” The research discovered a growth in olive oil sales turnover in Britain of 39% over the past five years. Moreover, it also emerged that the total expenditure on olive oil in 2006 equaled 51% of all expenditure on oil and was expected to continue increasing at a steady rate.

Another example of the market trend can be seen in the USA, where sales of olive oil increased in the last decade by over 350% and according to all estimates, the growth in consumption of olive oil in the USA is still in the early stages! In a
recent study, Lebhar Friedman Inc. reported a major increase in demand for imported olive oil in US supermarkets.

Similar findings by market research and surveys in other Western countries confirm an accelerating trend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected for 2010</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Say it in Hebrew

Oil jar
Kad shemen
כד שמן
Dear Friend of Israel,

By participating in this program you enable us to plant a new olive tree sapling in Israel. We hope that once you have experienced the magical taste of the olive oil we have sent you, you will continue to consume olive oil from Israel, oil from the very same orchard where your olive tree is located.

What could be better than dressing your salad or dunking your bread in pure olive oil from an orchard in Israel.

About 250,000 believers from around the world who will each plant an olive tree in Israel and consume the oil it produces will contribute profoundly to our plan to strengthen the bond between the people of Israel and their land.

This program also helps to create a tie between supporters of Israel worldwide and the State of Israel. Soon we will plant, on your behalf, an olive tree sapling in the land of Israel. We will send you a personalized planting certificate and a map showing the exact location of your sapling in Israel. Soon there will be an unbreakable bond between you, your family, and the land and people of Israel.

We hope that one day you will come and visit us in Israel, and visit your personal olive tree here. On that day we will be waiting here for you!

We, the citizens of Israel, thank you from the bottom of our hearts, as you, by joining this program, are becoming a real friend of the State of Israel.

Shalom from Israel!