

# The European market potential for olive oil

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In the long term, the European olive oil market is expected to show a stable growth of 3%–5%. This growth is mostly driven by a rising interest in healthier cooking and the Mediterranean diet. Most imported olive oil from developing countries is used as an ingredient for blending or for refining by leading European olive processors. However, better price opportunities can be found in offering high quality olive oil to non-producing countries such as France, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden.

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## 1. Product description

Olive oil is a vegetable oil obtained from the fruit of the olive tree (*Olea europaea*). It can be produced by physical and mechanical means, or by chemical means. Most olive oils are produced by physical and mechanical means through operations such as grinding, pressing, centrifugation and physical filtration. Olive oil can also be produced by chemical means, with the use of solvents, although those methods affect quality negatively.

Olive oil can be classified in several quality categories, depending on production method, the composition and sensory characteristics. According to [European standards](#), olive oil is classified in 8 categories:

Olive oil that can be sold directly to consumers:

- Extra virgin olive oil – obtained solely by mechanical means with acidity below 0.8%. Sensory testing must confirm that it has no defects and that it is fruity;
- Virgin olive oil – obtained solely by mechanical means with acidity below 2%. Sensory testing must confirm that it is fruity, although slight sensory defects are allowed;
- Olive oil composed of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils – with acidity below 1%; and
- Olive pomace oil – a mixture of refined olive-pomace oil and virgin olive oils with acidity below 1%.

Olive oil that cannot be sold directly to consumers:

- Lampante olive oil – acidity above 2% and sensory defects. It must be refined to remove said defects;
- Refined olive oil – obtained by refining lampante olive oil. It has low acidity (below 0.3%) and it is without aroma, flavour, or colour;
- Crude pomace oil – obtained from the extraction of residual olive paste; and
- Refined pomace oil – obtained by treating olive pomace with solvents or other treatments. After refining, it can be mixed with virgin oils and sold to consumers as olive pomace oil.

The above listed categorisation is based on [European marketing standards for olive oil](#). The International Olive Council (IOC) standard is slightly different in defining chemical content. Also, the [IOC standard](#) (PDF) recognises

the category of “ordinary virgin olive oil”. Ordinary virgin olive oil has acidity of below 3.3% and higher sensory defects compared to virgin olive oil.

The countries in the Mediterranean basin, where olive trees grow naturally, produce the largest volumes of olive oil. More than 60% of the world’s olive oil is produced in Europe. Spain is the world’s largest producer of olive oil, accounting for more than 40% of the global share on average. The second-largest producer is Italy with an average share of 8.8%, followed by Greece (7.4%), Tunisia (7.4%), Turkey (6.6%) and Portugal (4.2%). Important producers from the Mediterranean basin include Argentina, Australia, California, Chile, Peru and South Africa.

Aside from the primary processing countries, olive oil is blended and bottled in many countries around the world. Quality olive oil is produced by using healthy olives through [mechanical crushing](#) in safe conditions. Time and temperature are critical quality factors in the process from harvesting to bottling. The perception that unfiltered oil is healthier than filtered [is unfounded](#).

Producing 1 litre of olive oil requires 4 to 5 kilos of olives on average. Specific varieties, such as Taggiasca, require using more olives per kilo of produced oil. Processing methods also significantly affect olive oil yield.

This study covers general information regarding the olive oil market in Europe that is of interest to producers in developing countries. When the study refers to ‘Europe,’ it includes the 27 member states of the European Union (EU), plus the United Kingdom (UK), Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Developing countries are defined as the countries that are listed as [official development assistance recipients](#).

For statistical analysis, the following combined nomenclature codes are used:

Table 1: Products in the olive oil product group

Combined Nomenclature Number	Product
15092000	Extra virgin olive oil (EU category 1)
15093000	Virgin olive oil (EU category 2)
15094000	Other virgin olive oils (EU category 3 - Lampante olive oil)
15099000	Other olive oils that are not chemically modified
15101000	Crude pomace oil (EU category 6)
15109000	Other oils (EU categories 7 and 8 - Refined olive pomace oil and olive pomace oil)

As a reference for the remainder of this report, 1 kg of olive oil is equivalent to approximately 1.12 L in volume. Also, statistics are presented for calendar years, not marketing years. Normally the harvesting and processing season in Europe starts in October, which is considered to be the start of the marketing year.

## 2. What makes Europe an interesting market for olive oil?

Europe is the largest producer, consumer, importer and exporter of olive oil in the world. European trade of olive oil accounts for more than half of the global trade. European imports of olive oil increased at a stable rate in the 2018–2020 period. Although most of the traded olive oil is produced in Europe, almost all imports from outside of Europe come from developing countries.

Demand for olive oil in Europe is stable, but import quantities fluctuate due to variable production in the main supplying countries. Production in the 2022/2023 season is 35% lower than average. Therefore, increased import from outside Europe is expected to satisfy the European demand. In the short-term, consumption is expected to decrease temporarily due to price inflation and the energy crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. Olive oil is more expensive compared to sunflower or palm oil, which negatively affects consumption during times of inflation.

Regular fluctuations in imports will continue to be influenced by olive crops and the price situation, rather than changes in demand. In the long-term, the demand is expected to increase.



Source: Global Trade Atlas

### Import characteristics

Between 2018 and 2022, European imports of olive oil increased by an average annual growth rate of 3%. During this period, import from European countries increased by 5%, but import from developing countries decreased by 3%. However, the first data for the 2022/2023 season also show a decrease of intra-European imports. In 2022, import volumes surpassed 1.5 million tonnes at a value of €5.5 billion, including intra-European trade. The imported value in 2022 is significantly higher than in 2021 as a result of price increases.

Extra virgin olive oil made up 65% of all imported volumes in 2022, refined and blended oil made up 13%, lampante oil made up 7%, crude pomace oil made up 6% and other oils made up 3% (refined olive pomace oil and olive pomace oil). During the last 5 years, extra virgin olive oil experienced the strongest annual growth in imported volumes.

European countries import most of their olive oil from other European countries. In 2022, only 12% of Europe's imports came from developing countries. The biggest share of intra-European trade consists of bulk olive oil blended by the largest olive oil companies before bottling. Significant volumes of bulk olive oil are not really sold but only moved across borders by the same companies for processing. For example, the leading European olive oil producer has facilities in both Italy and Spain, which exchange the company's olive oil amongst themselves during processing.

Source: Eurostat and ITC TradeMap

The import of lampante olive oil from developing countries is significant and accounts for almost 40% of the total lampante olive oil imports. On the other hand, only around 10% of EVOO is imported from developing countries. Lampante olive oil has substantial sensory defects (taste and/or smell) and is cheaper compared to EVOO. As such, this oil cannot be sold directly to consumers and must be refined to remove its defects. Therefore, developing countries should focus on quality to get better prices in Europe.

Source: ITC TradeMap and Eurostat

Although EVOO is the most popular and most sold type of olive oil in the European retail segment, an

insignificant share is imported from developing countries. The leading importers of EVOO from developing countries are Italy and Spain. Both countries use this oil mostly for blending with their own oils.

## Consumption characteristics

European olive oil consumption in 2022 was estimated at more than 1.55 million tonnes, which is approximately half of the total world consumption. Industry accounts for a large share of total consumption, as the leading producing and processing countries consume more than 90% of the total volume. In terms of retail sales, the largest volumes sold in Europe are in Italy and Spain, followed by France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Switzerland and Greece.

In the short term, the European market for olive oil is likely to experience a temporary decrease. A reason for the expected low consumption is a very slow production due to hot and dry weather. Another reason is the ongoing price inflation due to the energy crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. In Spain, the largest European producer, the average price of extra virgin olive oil is currently 85% above the last 5-year average. European consumption in 2023 is forecast to decrease by 15%.

However, in the long term, the European market for olive oil is likely to increase at an annual growth rate of 3-5%. The highest consumption growth rate is expected in Eastern Europe (5-6% per year), while moderate growth is expected in Western Europe (1-3% per year). Consumption of extra virgin olive oil is forecast to grow the most, due to EVOO's positive image regarding health benefits. Per capita consumption of refined and olive pomace oils will most likely decrease.



Source: International Olive Council

The figure above represents the apparent consumption, meaning the difference between production and imports minus the exports. The data also includes industrial consumption, which contributes to a significant share of imports. Production volumes vary per year, creating the wrong perception that the demand constantly fluctuates.

### Tips :

Read more about the [impact of the war in Ukraine on exports of vegetable oils](#) to Europe to get updated about recent market developments.

## 3. Which European countries offer the most opportunities for olive oil exporters?

Exporters of high-quality olive oil from developing countries may find opportunities in large European consumer markets, such as Germany and the United Kingdom. Those countries are not olive producers and consumption fully depends on imports. Also, there is an opportunity to offer premium olive oil. Italy, Spain and Portugal also offer opportunities for exporting bulk olive oil. Imported bulk oil is often refined or blended with domestically produced olive oil before bottling.



Source: International Olive Council and calculations based on TradeMap data

Note: France is listed as a non-producing country for convenience. In fact, France produces and processes olives, but not enough to meet its own internal market demand.

## France: A large consumption and a small local production

France is the fourth-largest importer of olive oil in Europe, after Italy, Spain and Portugal. French imports of all types of olive oil reached 137 thousand tonnes in 2022. The French olive oil import value reached the historically highest figure of €608 million in 2022. This high value is the result of increased prices, not a higher demand. EVOO makes up 70.6% of French olive oil imports, followed by virgin olive oil (22.4%) and other types of olive oils (32%). French imports of pomace oils are insignificant, around 0.6%.

In 2022, France imported 66% of its olive oil from Spain, followed by Italy (19%) and Tunisia (9%). Tunisia is by far the leading developing country supplying to France, with a strong offer of organic olive oil. Morocco is also gaining share in the French market. Over the last 5 years, French imports from Morocco were increasing by the annual rate of 29% and reached 862 tonnes in 2022. Other emerging olive oil suppliers to France include Algeria, Palestine, Turkey and Lebanon, but their combined market share is only 0.2%.

Most of the olive oil imported by France is transported in bulk packaging, then blended and bottled by the leading olive oil companies. However, some of the leading brands are imported as bottled, mainly from Italy (such as Carapelli, Bertolli and Monini). The share of premium olive oil brands imported as bottled in France is small but increasing.

France also produces olive oil in its southern regions, namely in Provence, Occitanie, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and Corsica. Consumption of domestic olive oil accounts for less than 5% of France's total consumption and is mostly purchased directly from producers. Retail sales of local premium brands are smaller than 0.5%. Currently, 13 French olive oils have a [protected designation of origin](#). A special category of olive oil in France is black fruity oil produced from matured and fermented olives.

Approximately 60% of the olive oil in France is sold to retail channels, and 40% to industry and food service companies. The leading retail brand of olive oil in France is [Puget](#) (owned by [Lesieur](#), part of the [Avril Group](#)). The Avril Group also has a subsidiary in Morocco: Lesieur Cristal. Other brands with significant market share in France include [Carapelli](#), [Tramier](#) and [Monini](#). Large volumes of olive oil are also sold as private labels (house brands of retail chains), such as [Carrefour](#), [Leclerc](#) and [Auchan](#).

Olive oil consumption in France is driven by the popularity of the Mediterranean diet and the healthy living trend. The retail share of organic olive oil sales in France is estimated at more than 10% and showing an increase. Several private labels are sold as organic (mostly of Tunisian origin) and the price gap between organic and conventional oil is narrowing. All French main retail chains use nutritional labelling ([Nutri-Score](#)) for food products, including olive oil. A new trend is environmental labelling (such as [Eco-score](#), [Eco+](#) and [Planet-Score](#)).

Figure 6: Puget olive oil (France's leading brand)



Source: Photo by [kiliweb](#) per Open Food Facts, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license](#)

Figure 7: Black fruity (Le fruité noir) olive oil



Source: Photo by [kiliweb](#) per Open Food Facts, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license

### Tip:

To learn more about the French olive oil industry and market, visit the website of [France Olive, the French olive interprofessional association](#) (formerly AFIDOL, in French).

## Germany: Leading market for organic olive oil in Europe

Germany is a net importer of olive oil. Total imports of olive oil to Germany increased noticeably from 68.2 thousand tonnes in 2017 to 85.3 thousand tonnes in 2021. In 2021, Germany reported a 2% decrease in olive oil import volume and a 5% increase in import value, bringing its market demand to €345 million (up from €330 million in the previous year).

The structure of German olive oil imports is changing. The share of EVOO imports to the German market increased from 75% in 2017 to 82% in 2021, while the share of virgin olive oil and other oils has decreased. This means German consumption of high-quality olive oils is increasing. Of all olive oil imported to Germany, an 82% share was EVOO, followed by ordinary olive oil (9%), other virgin olive oil (5%) and other oils (4%).

Italy is the leading supplier of olive oil to Germany (53% share in 2021), followed by Spain (25%) and Greece (14%). Among the leading olive oil suppliers to Germany, Greece has grown fastest, almost doubling its exports of olive oil from 6.4 thousand tonnes to almost 12 thousand tonnes since 2017. Developing countries account for only 1% of Germany's olive oil imports, with Turkey as the leading supplier, followed by Syria and Palestine. Imports from Syria are increasing at the fastest rate, from 28 tonnes in 2017 to 116 tonnes in 2021.

Most of the olive oil sold in Germany is sold under a private label, such as Primadonna (by discounter chain [Lidl](#)), El Cantinelle and Cucina (by [Aldi Süd](#)), Casa Morando (by [Aldi Nord](#)), Aro (by [Metro Cash & Carry](#)), REWE Feine Welt and ja! (by [REWE](#)), and Edeka and Gut&Günstig (by [Edeka](#)). Most private label oils are blends from different origins. Independent brands include [Bertolli](#) and [Carapelli](#) (Italian), [Mazola](#) (Spanish origin by [Peter Kölln](#)), [Minerva](#), [Minos](#) and [Jordan](#) (Greek), [Ybarra](#) (Spanish) and [La Española](#) (by [Feinkost Dittmann](#)).

As the largest market in Europe for organic products, Germany provides opportunities for suppliers of organic olive oil. A large share of organic olive oils in Germany are sold under private label brands of specialised organic retailers, such as [Bio Markt](#), [Alnatura](#), [Basic](#), [Bio Company](#), [ebl-Naturkost](#) and [Super Biomarkt](#). Leading retail chains also have their own organic private labels. New suppliers should be aware that Germany is a very price-competitive market and many organic brands do not have significantly higher prices compared to brands of conventional olive oil.

Figure 8: Primadonna extra olive oil (private label of discounter Lidl)





Source: Photo by [kiliweb](#) with additional modifications by [sevenlives](#) per Open Food Facts, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license

Figure 9: 'Bio ZENTRALE' organic olive oil



Source: Photo by [kakao](#) per Open Food Facts, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license

### Tip:

To find more information about the German olive oil market, contact the [Information Office Olive Oil in Germany](#).

## The United Kingdom: The domination of private labels

Olive oil is an established commodity in the United Kingdom. Although consumption is temporarily decreasing, industry experts believe the market will continue to grow in the long term. Olive oil prices have increased over the last few years, affected by Brexit (the UK's exiting the EU), the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

In 2022, UK imports of olive oil reached 85 thousand tonnes at a value of €358 million. Although the UK imports significantly less olive oil compared to Germany, the import value is almost the same. This is an indication of the strong increase of import prices. Most imported olive oil in the United Kingdom is consumed within the country, without any significant re-exports. Imports from developing countries are rather small but can provide opportunities, as traders are interested in sourcing from new destinations.

In 2022, the UK imported 55% of EVOO, followed by refined and blended olive oils (37%) and olive pomace oils (7%). The share of EVOO in the UK is smaller compared to other main markets. The reason for this is the marketing of bottling companies wishing to offer lower quality cooking olive oil for affordable prices. Nearly 44% of the total UK olive oil market consists of olive-pomace oils and blends of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils. Those oils are often promoted as suitable for cooking while EVOO is promoted as an oil suitable for fresh consumption.

The British olive oil market overall is quite concentrated and mainly dependent on imports from Spain and Italy. In 2022, the United Kingdom imported 61% of all its olive oil from Spain, followed by Italy (33%). Before Brexit, significant volumes were also imported from trading countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland and Germany. However, after Brexit, most imported oil comes directly from producing countries that provide opportunities for suppliers from developing countries.

Imports of olive oil from developing countries to the United Kingdom are rather small, although an increase is noticeable. In 2022, imports from developing countries reached 479 tonnes. Tunisia (with 189 tonnes) was the leading developing country supplier, followed by Morocco (80 tonnes), Turkey (66 tonnes), Palestine (46 tonnes) and South Africa (35 tonnes). The United Kingdom provides opportunities for fair-trade certified olive oil. Several brands from Palestine and Syria bearing fair-trade certification are present on the British market.

Most of the olive oil in the UK is sold under private label brands such as Tesco, Sainsbury's, ASDA and Morrisons. The leading independent brand is [Filippo Berio](#) (by the [Salov](#) group). Filippo Berio is sold as several different blends of olive oil from Italy, Spain, Greece and Tunisia, although there is also 1 product with 100% Italian origin. The brand sells EVOO as well as blends of refined olive oils and virgin olive oils (named "Classico"). Other independent brands include [Napolina](#) and [Olivio](#) ([Princes Group](#)) and [Il Casolare](#) ([Farchioni Olii S.p.A.](#)).

### Tip:

Find information about the edible oil sector in the United Kingdom on the website of the [National Edible Oil Distributors' Association \(NEODA\)](#).

Figure 10: Filippo Berio "Classico" olive oil blend (leading brand in the United Kingdom)



Source: Photo by [kiliweb](#) per Open Food Facts, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license](#)

Figure 11: Pomace oil bland, packed in the UK



Source: [kiliweb](#) per Open Food Facts, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license](#)

## The Netherlands: a stable market and price-sensitive consumers

Dutch imports of olive oil have fluctuated very slightly over the last 5 years, reaching 25 thousand tonnes and €107 million in 2022. More than 6 thousand tonnes were re-exported to other destinations, primarily to Belgium and the United States of America. In 2022, EVOO accounted for 45% of all imported olive oil in the Netherlands,

followed by refined olive oil and blends (43%), virgin olive oil (6%), pomace oils (3%) and other oils (3%).

In 2022, the Netherlands imported 62% of its olive oil from Spain, followed by Italy (21%), Germany (5%) and Greece (3%). Imports from developing countries to the Netherlands amount to 4% of the total olive oil imports, with Morocco as the leading supplier (511 tonnes in 2022), followed by Palestine (312 tonnes). Other emerging suppliers include China, Turkey, Lebanon, Ghana and Syria, albeit with very small volumes.

Dutch consumers are traditionally heavy users of butter and sunflower oil. However, this consumption pattern is changing, and consumption of fats is decreasing at an annual rate of -9%. Also, due to the shortage of sunflower oil caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine, the price gap between sunflower oil and olive oils is shrinking. However, sunflower oil is still cheaper and more consumed than olive oil. In spite of Dutch consumers being price sensitive, the consumption of high-priced oils, such as premium, infused and organic, is growing.

More than 60% of all olive oil sold in the Netherlands is retailed under private labels. The leading retail chains that sell olive oil under their own private labels in the Netherlands include [Albert Heijn](#) (AH), [ALDI](#) (LaVilla), [Jumbo](#) (Jumbo) and [Lidl](#) (Primadonna). Sales of independent brands of olive oil in the Netherlands are mainly dominated by Italian names, such as [Bertolli](#), [Monini](#) and [Carapelli](#).

### Tip:

To learn more about the Dutch olive oil market, contact the [Netherlands Oils and Fats Industry](#) (MVO).

## Switzerland: A market dominated by Italian supplies

Switzerland's olive oil imports have been growing at an annual rate of 4%, reaching 17 thousand tonnes valued at €103 million in 2022. Approximately half of these imports are imported in retail packaging and the remaining half in bulk packaging. The Swiss market is focused on high-quality oils and 86% of the imports in 2022 were EVOO. Half of the imported EVOO was imported already packed in retail bottles and ready for sale while the other half was imported as bulk packaging used for bottling, blending or for the food service segment.

The leading supplier of olive oil to Switzerland is Italy with a 50% share, followed by Spain (29%) and Greece (10%). Less than 5% of Switzerland's olive oil imports come from developing countries. The leading developing-country supplier is Tunisia with a 4.2% share, closely followed by Turkey with a 4% share. Other developing-country suppliers include Palestine, Lebanon, Albania and Morocco, albeit with small market shares.

A large share of the olive oil sold in Switzerland is retailed under the private labels of leading retail chains, such as [Coop](#) (Coop) and [Migros](#) (Migros and Alexis). Other leading brands in the Swiss market include [Monini](#), [Bertolli](#), [Filippo Berio](#) and [Carapelli](#). Most of the olive oil sold in Switzerland is made of blends of oils from different origins. However, retail chains have started to increasingly sell single-origin olive oils, such as [Picual Premium](#) and [Almazaras De La Subbética](#).

Sales of organic olive oil in Switzerland are growing, currently making up approximately 10% of the total retail sales. Organic olive oil is mostly sold under the private labels of supermarkets, such as [Coop](#) (naturaplan) and [Migros](#) (Migros bio). Leading independent organic olive oil brands include [Rapunzel](#), [Alnatura](#) and [Morga](#).

### Tip:

Contact the [International Olive Foundation](#) (IOF) to learn more about olive oil quality in Switzerland. IOF certifies olive oils for quality with the IOF seal.

## Sweden: An importer of high-quality oils

Over the past 5 years, Sweden's olive oil imports were relatively stable, reaching 11.7 thousand tonnes in 2022, valued at €45.3 million. Most Swedish imports consist of high-quality olive oils needing no further refining or blending. In fact, there are very few companies in Sweden that engage in blending olive oils and a high share of imports consists of retail-ready oils. In 2022, EVOO accounted for 84% of all olive oil imported to Sweden, followed by refined and blended oils (10%), virgin olive oil (5%) and other oils (1%).

In 2022, Sweden imported 54% of its olive oil from Italy, followed by Spain (28%) and Greece (13%). Imports from developing countries are very small and account for 1.4% of its total olive oil imports. Morocco is the leading developing-country supplier with 46 tonnes in 2022, followed by Turkey (40 tonnes), Lebanon (38 tonnes) and Syria (34 tonnes). Other emerging suppliers include Palestine, Tunisia and Jordan, albeit with very small volumes.

The largest quantity of olive oil in Sweden is sold as private labels. The [ICA](#) retail chain is the leading retailer (ICA brand and I love Eco labels), followed by [Coop](#) (Coop and Änglamark labels) and [Axfood](#) (Eldorado and Garant labels). The leading independent olive oil brand in Sweden is [Zeta](#), owned by the company Di Luca & Di Luca AB, which is a specialised supplier of Italian Mediterranean Food. Di Luca & Di Luca is also an authorised distributor of the Italian olive oil brand Monini.

Due to price inflation over the last 2 years, there is an increased consumption of blends of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils. These blends are usually labelled as "Mild oils" with retail prices around 30% cheaper compared to EVOO.

### Tip:

Contact [Open Trade Gate Sweden](#) to get advice on exporting olive oil to the Swedish market.

## 4. Which trends offer opportunities on the European olive oil market?

The growing consumer interest in olive oil in Europe has 3 main combined driving forces: the growing popularity of the Mediterranean diet, the increasing awareness of olive oil's health benefits and the quality of certain types of olive oil. The promotion of single-origin premium olive oil, as well as sustainable and ethical production methods, are favourable aspects for emerging suppliers. On the other hand, the declining price of both conventional and organic olive oils is the main threat for suppliers who want to position their products in the mainstream segment.

### Increasing consumption of cheaper types of olive oil

The price of olive oil in Europe increased in 2022 and 2023. The energy crisis, caused by the war in Ukraine, increased production costs for olive farmers. In addition to price inflation, the European Commission has confirmed a [record low olive harvest](#) in the 2022/2023 season. The crop is 40% lower compared to the previous year, so a further increase of prices is expected. Over the last year, the bulk olive oil price in Europe increased from 4-5 €/kg to 8-9 €/kg. Along supply chains, this has led to an increase of retail olive oil prices by nearly 50%.

In order to fight price increases, processors and bottlers are increasingly offering olive oils to consumers at more affordable prices. Those olive oils are different blends of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils. The category

of the blended oils is the only one in Europe that shows a growth in imports. Imports of blended oils have increased from 1.4 million tonnes in 2021 to 2 million tonnes in 2022.



Source: International Olive Oil Council and ITC TradeMap

In European supermarkets, blends of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils are usually promoted as “Light”, “Mild” or “Pure”. They are also promoted as oils suitable for cooking, baking and frying. These olive blends have a less intense flavour and have no effect on the taste of the meal. EVOO is used more in cold dishes, such as salads, or for drizzling over the finished meal.

Most leading brands in Europe have introduced blended oils over the last few years. Examples include [Mild & Light and Classico](#) (by Fillipo Berio), [Tesco Light in Colour](#) (private label), [Extra Light](#) and [Bratolivenöl](#) (by Bertolli), [REWE Beste Wahl Olivenöl raffiniert](#) (private label) and [Anfora](#) (by Monini). Also, there is an increase of launches of olive oils mixed with other oils, such as the [U:ME oil blend](#).

## A healthier eating trend and the popularity of Mediterranean food

Olive oil, especially EVOO, enjoys a good reputation amongst consumers in Europe. Olive oil is an integral part of the Mediterranean diet. Several [studies](#) indicate that a Mediterranean diet can help lower the risk of cardiovascular diseases, overall cancer incidence, neurodegenerative diseases, diabetes and early death. According to a [World Health Organization report](#), several European countries have already included the Mediterranean diet as a part of their official national dietary guidelines.

In addition to the perceived health benefits of consuming olive oil, the rising popularity of food dishes that use olive oil also help drive consumption. These dishes often come from southern European cuisines, such as the Italian, Spanish and French ones, but also from the emerging popularity of the [Middle Eastern and North African cuisines](#). Mediterranean dishes and olive oil use are also promoted by many celebrity chefs, as well as TV cooking and travel shows across Europe. The most famous celebrity chef in Europe has recently published a book called [5 Ingredients Mediterranean](#).

The International Olive Council has recently launched the [Olive Health Information System](#) to provide an up-to-date database of all scientific reports related to the health effects of olives and olive oil. Several European Commission projects also promote the Mediterranean diet and olive oil consumption, including [SWITCHtoHEALTHY](#), the [Mediterranean Diet Virtual Museum](#) and [MedEat Research](#). Other organisations promoting Mediterranean food include the [Mediterranean Diet Foundation](#) and the [International Foundation of Mediterranean Diet](#).

Several national olive oil trade associations constantly invest in the promotion of olive oil in Europe and abroad, such as the [Spanish Olive Oil Interprofessional](#), which launched the [Olive Oil World Tour campaign](#). Similarly, the [Italian Consortium of Olive Oil Producers](#) (UNAPROL) launched [The Perfect Food](#) project to promote consumption of European olive oil. In addition, the European Union officially promotes the export of European food products including olive oil through the campaign and logo “[Enjoy, it’s from Europe](#)”.

According to the EU’s [2022–2033 agricultural outlook report](#), olive oil is expected to increasingly replace vegetable oils, driven by the healthy image of olive oil and the increasing popularity of various Mediterranean cuisines.

### Tips:

Promote the various applications and nutritional properties of olive oil. However, avoid health and nutritional claims not backed by scientific evidence. Nevertheless, a good idea is to test your olive oil

for its content of polyphenols, which are specifically connected to health benefits.

## New Olive Oil Flavours

The popularity of olive oils infused with aromatic ingredients, such as chilli and garlic, is on the rise. Some consumers make flavoured olive oils at home, but due to convenience, olive oil companies have expanded their product ranges with flavoured olive oils. According to MINTEL, garlic and chillies are now established flavours, but new ones are also appearing on the market, such as lime, truffle, pesto, curry, rosemary, basil and smoked oil.

To support innovation and the quality of infused olive oils, many major competitions, such as [London International Olive Oil Competitions](#), [EVO International Olive Oil Contest](#), [Monte Carlo Masters International Competition](#) and [Berlin GOOA](#), have introduced a new category award for the best infused olive oils. Depending on flavour types, infused olive oils are segmented into 3 categories: herbs and spices flavoured, fruit flavoured, and others.

Examples of recent competition winners for the category of infused oils include [Lesvos Gold](#) (white truffle/Greece), [Terra Creta](#) (garlic/Greece), [Oleoastron](#) (fennel, bay leaves, rosemary, oregano/Greece), [Corto](#) (yuzu citrus/USA), [Verde Louro Azeites](#) (Balsamic, Basil, Eucalyptus, Aromatic Herbs/Brazil), [Racemy](#) (bitter almond, artichoke, green banana, chicory/Italy) and [Azeite Porca De Murça](#) (cocoa/Portugal).

### Tips:

Check the websites of European trade shows and exhibitions to discover the newest trends. The most important trade fairs in Europe for olive oil trends and trade are [SIAL](#), [Anuga](#), [Alimentaria](#), [TUTTOFOOD](#) and [BIOFACH](#). By visiting those events, you can also learn about trending flavours sometimes reported by the international trend companies such as [Innova Market Insights](#).

## The consumption of organic olive oil is on the increase

According to several industry sources, the sales of organic olive oils in Europe are constantly growing. France and Germany are the largest markets for organic olive oil, accounting for approximately half of the total European consumption. Retail sales of organic olive oil in Europe are roughly estimated to be more than €300 million. Organic olive oil production is likely to increase in the short term, as the area planted in European producing countries grows as well. Olives cover 1/3 of the permanent organic crop area in Europe.

The growing production and offer of organic olive oil, especially from Tunisia, has forced organic olive oil prices to go down. The price difference between conventional and organic olive oils has shrunk over the last years. In the first half of 2023, it is estimated that Tunisia exported over 40 thousand tonnes of organic olive oil to Europe. Many European retail chains now sell organic olive oil for lower prices than some premium conventional olive oils, often under private labels.

Independent organic olive oil producers are increasingly exhibiting at leading European trade fairs. The world's leading trade fair for organic food, [BIOFACH](#), has introduced a competition for organic olive oil – the BIOFACH Olive Oil Award. In general, the number of organic food events in Europe is growing. Other organic food events with increasing participation of organic olive oil producers include [Natural & Organic Products Europe](#), [Organic Food Iberia](#), [Free From Food Expo](#) and [Natexpo](#) and [Nordic Organic Food Fair](#).



## Tips:

Consider participating in specific organic food and olive oil events and competitions if you produce organic olive oil. Good exhibitions to consider are [Biol](#) (Italy), [BIOFACH](#) (Germany), [Natural & Organic Products Europe](#) (United Kingdom), [Organic Food Iberia](#) (Spain), [Sana](#) (Italy), [Natexpo](#) (France) and [Nordic Organic Food Fair](#) (Sweden). It is also important to have a distributor. Promoting olive oil without being able to distribute it in the target market may harm sales.

## Higher quality olive oils are entering the market

The current market share of premium quality organic olive oils in Europe is small but rising. Many independent brands of premium olive oil are coming up on the market. Until recently, premium olive oils were mainly sold in specialised shops or directly from producers. At present, some leading retailers are also introducing high-quality olive oil. In bigger European cities, retail chains have special booths with special or fine foods, where premium olive oils of independent brands are sold.

The number of single-origin olive oil introductions by retail chains is growing. An increasing number of wholesalers are also distributing oils connected to specific production regions, or even from single estates. Another indication of market 'premiumisation' is the appearance of [monovarietal oils](#) such as Monini, Nocellara, Frantoio and Coratina.

Celebrity chefs and olive oil experts influence consumers to select better quality olive oils. Olive oil tasting courses are relatively new, although they are becoming increasingly popular amongst European consumers. Specialised olive oil shops also inform consumers about the different types and qualities of olive oil through in-house tasting and information about production and origins. Specialised olive oil retailers are constantly looking out for new origins in Europe, such as Croatia, Slovenia and Malta, but also in Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan.

A [protected designation of origin](#) (PDO) provides a further promotion of higher quality olive oils. In the European Union, nearly 140 different olive oils have a PDO and 20 others have pending applications. Italy has the largest number of registered PDO olive oils (50), followed by Spain (34) and Greece (32).

## Tips:

Participate in international competitions if you aim to place your olive oil in the premium segment. You can find a list of award-winning olive oils from international competitions above.

When choosing your competition, select the companies that have respected, reliable and independent judges.

Consider placing a label on your olive oil showing where it was tested and by what panel. This may provide a strong competitive advantage.

[Autentika Global](#) carried out this study on behalf of CBI.

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