**Olive Oil Presentation**

**I. What is Olive Oil?**

1. Pure oil obtained from the fruit (olive) of olive trees native to the hillsides of Spain, Italy and Greece.
2. The name for the olive tree is Olea europea- “olea” meaning oil in Latin.
3. Made from crushing and then pressing olives. 90% of all Mediterranean olives are crushed for the production of olive oil. The other 10% are kept whole for eating.
4. Olives are 10-30% oil. Olive oil is available in a variety of grades which identifies the way the oil was processed.
   1. ***Extra Virgin Olive Oil***:

-Highest quality and most delicate flavor

-The olives are pressed once with no heat or chemicals

- less than 0.8% acidity (low percentage=high quality, less at risk for becoming rancid)

-strong flavor-use as a “finishing oil” to enhance the flavors of a dish or salad

* 1. ***Virgin Olive Oil***:

***-***The olives are pressed twice and lose some antioxidants through the second pressing

-maximum 2% acidity-higher chance of becoming rancid

-mild flavor-use for sautéing vegetables or meat

* 1. ***Olive Oil***:

***-***The processing involves using heat or chemicals to the virgin olive oil.

-maximum 1% acidity

-no flavor-use in place of butter in a baking recipe

**II. History of Olive Oil**

1. The pressing of olives dates back to 3,000 B.C.
2. Olive tree originated in Ancient Greece and spread throughout the Mediterranean territory as it was explored.
3. Cultivation may have first occurred around 6,000 years ago along the Mediterranean coasts in which the oil was extracted for skin moisturization and fuel for lighting.
4. It’s not clear how the olive tree arrived in the United States, but it was sometime between 1500 and 1700 brought by Spanish colonizers-possibly Christopher Columbus.

**III. Nutrition and Health Benefits of Olive Oil**

1. Fat is essential for the body to provide energy and to dissolve vitamins (A, D, E, K).

1. *Harmful fats*-solid at room temperature (beef/pork fat, shortening, stick margarine, butter)

-Saturated and Trans Fat-raises total and LDL cholesterol

2. *Healthy dietary fats*- Liquid at room temperature

a. Monounsaturated fat-**olive oil**, peanut oil, canola oil

-lowers total cholesterol and LDL (lousy) cholesterol; raises HDL (happy) cholesterol

b. Polyunsaturated fat-vegetable oil, corn oil

-Omega-3 fatty acids-fish

-lowers total, LDL and HDL cholesterol

\*High levels of LDL and total cholesterol and low levels of HDL cholesterol are risk factors for heart disease

1. The amount of fat and calories in one tablespoon of olive oil is about the same as one tablespoon of butter, lard, margarine, and other oils.
2. 10-35% of your calories should come from fat. Try to have at least 10-20% come from the “healthy fats”-polyunsaturated or monounsaturated.
3. The FDA claims that eating 2 T of olive oil a day may reduce the risk of heart disease due to the monounsaturated fat. Use this *in place of* saturated fat in your diet.
4. Olive oil is one of the few widely used culinary oils that contain about 75% monounsaturated fat. The closest commonly used culinary oil is canola oil that contains about 60% monounsaturated fat.
5. Contains antioxidants called polyphenols that may play a role in reducing inflammation in the body which is associated with disorders such as arthritis, heart disease and memory loss.
6. Some research shows that olive oil may produce similar effects to ibuprofen.
7. Olive Oil is a popular food associated with the Mediterranean Diet. This diet consists of eating primarily plant-based foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts, as well as limiting red meat to no more than a few times a month and eating fish or poultry at least twice a week.

**IV. Selection, Preparation and Storage of Olive Oil**

1. You can use olive oil just like any other cooking oil. Use it to make your own salad dressing, to grill, sauté, or stir-fry foods.
2. Use extra virgin olive oil in salads or to add in cooked foods because it smokes easily at high temperatures. Virgin or light olive oil may be better suited for these high temperatures.
3. Coats the food and helps seal in the natural moisture. Produces light, moist baked goods that keep fresh longer. The vitamin E and polyphenols cause the longer shelf life.
4. Olive oil can become rancid from exposure to light and heat, so you should look for the olive oil that comes in dark tinted bottles and store in cool, dark places-not near the oven.

-When refrigerated, the oil will become slightly solid and cloudy and will return to liquid at room temperature again. The oil is can still be used, but may have less flavor and aroma as with refrigerating wine after opening

**V. Fun Facts**

1. The olive tree provided food, fuel, timber, and medicine for many civilizations and has been regarded as a symbol or peace and wisdom-“olive branch”.
2. There is only one harvest and one pressing per year, usually takes place in late November and December.
3. Early harvest is in mid to late October. This produces greener oil due to the chlorophyll level resulting in high levels of antioxidants and polyphenols.
4. Olive trees can live several hundred years. One record notes an olive tree that lived to an age of 2,000 years.
5. To produce one quart (32 ounces) of olive oil, 11 pounds of olives need to be pressed.
6. Interesting uses for olive oil: remove acne; as a shaving cream; remove car grease or paint from hands/hair; furniture polish. Also used as a skin and nail moisturizer, eye makeup remover, and hair conditioner and dandruff controller.
7. Olive Oyl, the character in the Popeye comic strips, was named after olive oil.

**VI. Activity Ideas**

1. Make dipping oils using the three different types of olive oil. Have people try the different oils using bread.
2. Show the effects of storing olive oil in the refrigerator by bringing a refrigerated bottle of olive oil.

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