

Olive Oil – Real or Fake – Who Decides?

The evidence is overwhelming – Real extra virgin olive oil not only enhances the taste of food but is good for you, consider the following headlines:

Olive oil 'acts like painkiller' - BBC

Mediterranean Diet Adds Years to Your Life (high intake of ... olive oil) - MedicalNewsToday.com

Oleic Acid Key to Olive Oil's Anti-Cancer Effect - Reuters.com

However, there is a dark side – fraud in the olive oil marketplace:

Olive oil's slippery supply line - denverpost.com

Extra Virgin Olive Oil - Are You Getting What You Pay For? - ABC News 7Online

"A clear case of fraud almost all of the virgin and extra virgin olive oil produced by large commercial Italian olive oil plants" Italianfood.about.com

"of 73 olive oils ... in the U.S. Only 4 per cent were pure olive oil. The rest were adulterated" - New York Times

The health benefits of extra virgin olive oil only apply to real extra virgin olive oil and not to fraudulently mislabeled products.

As most olive oil consumers know, the price of real extra virgin olive oil has risen dramatically. At the same time the quality of the products being offered has deteriorated dramatically. Logic would dictate that a significant percentage of olive oil consumers would prefer real extra virgin olive oil instead of the over-priced, mislabeled and adulterated products that have flooded the market.

However the olive oil consumer's freedom to choose their product is limited to what is actually offered.

Food importers, distributors, brokers and retailers essentially decide between two types of products when it comes to the distribution of olive oil: A) A cheap mixed product or B) Real extra virgin olive oil:

A) Mixed products have no guarantee of quality, the paperwork may say 'extra virgin olive oil' but what is in the bottle is pomace, canola or some other cheap refined oil. Mixed products have no quality stated or implied, they are entirely price sensitive. So the distributor, broker, importer or retailer needs to constantly offer either the cheapest product or be very close to it for fear that at some point their supply will disappear and they will be undersold due to the market realities of working with this type of product.

This is where the consumer gets cheated – the labeling does not accurately reflect what is in the bottle. Take for example 'light olive oil' - what is 'light' olive oil? Olive oil made from 'light' olives? Light olive oil is 95% pomace, canola or some other cheap oil mixed in with 5% virgin olive oil. It stretches the imagination to think that olive oil consumers demand this type of product.

B) Real extra virgin olive oil obviously costs more to produce than the cheap, mixed products. But olive oil consumers benefit because they get what they pay for - the product. Real extra virgin olive oil is always that – real extra virgin olive oil - the product, the quality does not vary. Olive oil consumers always get what they want and what they pay for - the flavor enhancing attributes and all of the health benefits of real extra virgin olive oil.

It should be noted that due to current market factors, the price difference between real extra virgin olive oil and the cheap mixes has pretty much closed and in some cases is now inverted. Real extra virgin olive oil being less expensive than the cheap mixes.

So, who gets to decide what olive oil consumers consume?

We believe that this decision belongs to the consumer. Olive oil consumers should demand real extra virgin olive oil.

Kelly Martinez

Antonio Celentano Extra Virgin Olive Oil – <http://www.antoniocelestano.com>

Antonio Celentano Extra Virgin Olive Oil is extracted from locally grown olives, bottled on site in Córdoba, Spain and most importantly 100% real extra virgin olive oil. Please visit: <http://www.antoniocelestano.com> for product and contact details.