

# A GUIDE TO COOKING OILS



SoyConnection  
By U.S. Soy

## Choosing the Right Oils for Health and Flavor

Whether you're sautéing veggies or deep-frying chicken, what's the go-to ingredient you always grab? Cooking oil! Not only does this versatile ingredient make food taste great, it can also enhance the nutrition of our meals. Knowing about the different types of cooking oils available will help you pick the right one, so you can cook tasty food and make the right choices for a healthy diet.



### Fast Fat Facts

When it comes to cooking oils, **it's important to understand the types of fat in them.**

#### LIQUID OILS

Liquid oils, like vegetable oil, largely contain unsaturated fats. These include monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

#### SOLID FATS

Solid fats, like butter or ghee, contain a higher proportion of saturated fats.

If you're trying to keep yourself and your heart healthy, **it's better to prioritize more unsaturated fats.**<sup>1</sup> Knowing this helps you make smarter choices when you're cooking.



### Try Different Oils

Using a variety of oils is an easy way to get more nutrients and make your food taste more interesting. For example, if you typically sauté with butter, try using vegetable oil next time. You'll still get the buttery flavor you love, but you'll also sneak in some healthy unsaturated fats.

Cooking Oil/Fat	Primary Fat	Smoke Point <sup>2,3</sup>	Best Uses
Avocado Oil	Monounsaturated	High (~520°F)	Grilling, baking, frying, sautéing, roasting, dressings and where neutral flavor is desired
Ghee	Saturated	High (~485°F)	
Vegetable Oil (Soybean Oil)	Polyunsaturated	High (~450°F)	
Peanut Oil	Monounsaturated	High (~450°F)	
Canola Oil	Monounsaturated	Medium-High (~400°F)	Sautéing, baking, roasting, dressings and where some added flavor is desired
Extra Virgin Olive Oil	Monounsaturated	Medium (~375°F)	
Coconut Oil	Saturated	Medium (~350°F)	
Sesame Oil	Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated	Medium (~350°F)	
Butter	Saturated	Medium (~350°F)	

### A VERSATILE, SUBTLE COOKING OIL

Vegetable oil, also known as soybean oil, is great because of its versatility. You can use it for a variety of recipes—from salad dressing to baking cakes to frying up fish. With a smoke point of 450°F, it helps make food crispy but won't smoke up your kitchen while frying. It also doesn't have a super strong taste, so it lets the other flavors in your food really pop. It's perfect when you want your dish to taste like your dish, and not like the oil you cooked it in.



## Health Benefits of Cooking Oils with Unsaturated Fats

Cooking oils rich in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, such as vegetable oil, play an important role in our health. They include health benefits like:

**Heart Health:** Support heart health by helping reduce LDL cholesterol levels.<sup>1</sup>

**Chronic Disease:** Decreased risk of heart disease, diabetes and overall mortality.<sup>4</sup>

**Inflammation:** Unsaturated fats, including omega-6 polyunsaturated fats, are not associated with inflammation and can decrease inflammation.<sup>5</sup>

**Omega-3s:** Select oils, like vegetable and canola oil, contain the omega-3 alpha-linolenic acid (ALA).<sup>6</sup>

**Fat-Soluble Vitamin Absorption:** Fat is needed for the body to absorb fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K.<sup>7</sup>

**Satiety and Satisfaction:** Fat helps keep you full and adds a rich, satisfying texture to your food.<sup>8</sup>

### THE TRUTH ABOUT SEED OILS

Many cooking oils, such as vegetable oil and sesame oil, are seed oils. Seed oils are a valuable source of essential unsaturated fats that can contribute to a healthy diet. Adding these oils helps provide important nutrients, but with all food groups, moderation and variety are key to a balanced diet.

Step 1:

#### Your Oil Choices

List the oils and fats you currently use in your kitchen.

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Step 2:

#### Oils and fats I cook with:

Identify opportunities to add variety:

What types of fat (saturated, monounsaturated, polyunsaturated) are in the oils you use?

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What cooking methods do you use most? (Circle one or more)

Sautéing      Baking  
Roasting      Frying  
Dressings / Sauces

Step 3:

#### Choose a new oil to try:

Identify opportunities to add variety:

What's one new oil you'd like to try?

Oil I want to try: \_\_\_\_\_

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Step 4:

#### How you'll use this new oil in your cooking:

List meal / cooking ideas.

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1. Messina M, Shearer G, Petersen K. Soybean oil lowers circulating cholesterol levels and coronary heart disease risk, and has no effect on markers of inflammation and oxidation. *Nutrition*. 2021 Sep;89:111343. doi: 10.1016/j.nut.2021.111343. 2. Brone, Lindsey. "Smoking Points of Fats and Oils." *The Spruce Eats*, July 26, 2023. 3. "Cooking Oil Smoke Points: Complete List and FAQ." *Webstaurant Store*, December 30, 2024. 4. Petersen KS, Maki KC, Calder PC, et al. Perspective on the health effects of unsaturated fatty acids and commonly consumed plant oils high in unsaturated fat. *British Journal of Nutrition*. 2024;132(8):1039-1050. doi:10.1017/S0007114524002459. 5. Innes JK, Calder PC. Omega-6 fatty acids and inflammation. *Prostaglandins Leukot Essent Fatty Acids*. 2018 May;132:41-48. doi: 10.1016/j.plefa.2018.03.004. 6. "Omega-3 Fatty Acids - Consumer." *NIH Office of Dietary Supplements*, July 18, 2022. 7. Andrés E, Lorenzo-Villalba N, Terrade JE, Méndez-Bailon M. Fat-Soluble Vitamins A, D, E, and K: Review of the Literature and Points of Interest for the Clinician. *J Clin Med*. 2024 Jun 21; 13(13):3641. doi: 10.3390/jcm13133641. 8. Drewnowski A, Almiron-Roig E. Human Perceptions and Preferences for Fat-Rich Foods. In: Montmayeur JP, le Coutre J, editors. *Fat Detection: Taste, Texture, and Post Ingestive Effects*. Boca Raton (FL): CRC Press/Taylor & Francis; 2010. Chapter 11.