

# KNOW YOUR OILS



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# Notes

Below is a list of oils, each rated based on its nutritional benefits for children (NOT ADULTS).

Please note that this list is not ranked in any particular order of preference or benefit. It's important to consider that children between the ages of 6 months to 6 years require at least 25-40% of their daily energy needs from fats, primarily for brain function, energy expenditure, and adequate weight gain.

However, it's essential to limit deep-frying foods to a maximum of 2-3 meals per week, including stews or sauces that require extensive frying of ingredients. Deep-frying is considered the least healthy way of preparing food.

# Types of Healthy Oils

8/10

## Almond/ Walnut Oil

Heat: Medium-High

Type of oil: Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated

Smoke point: 430°F (Almond) 320°F (Walnut)

Flavor: Nutty

Good for: Sautéing, stir-frying, searing, baking, adding directly to already cooked meals

Health Benefits: High in omega-3 essential fatty acids

Caution: These oils are high in polyunsaturated fats, which can oxidize easily when exposed to heat, light, or air. They are best stored properly and used in moderation. People with nut allergies should avoid them.

10/10

## Avocado Oil

Heat: High

Type of oil: Monounsaturated

Smoke point: 510°F

Flavor: Mild, neutral

Good for: Sautéing, stews, stir-frying, searing, baking

Health benefits: High in vitamins A, B1, B2, D and E boosts immune system, improves skin health

Caution: Some avocado oils on the market may be adulterated or blended with lower quality oils. It is important to choose reputable brands and store properly to prevent oxidation.

7/10

## Coconut Oil

Heat: Medium-high

Type of oil: 90% saturated fat

Smoke point: 350 F

Flavor: Mild, distinct coconut smell and taste

Good for: Baking, sauteing and stir-frying

Health benefits: Antiviral and antibacterial properties, boosts immune system, improves skin health.

Caution: Coconut oil is high in saturated fat. While it can be part of a balanced diet, excessive intake may not be suitable for individuals with certain cardiovascular risk factors. Moderation is recommended.

# Types of Healthy Oils

7.5/10

## Butter or Clarified Butter (Ghee/Mashanu)

Heat: Medium-high

Type of oil: 90% Saturated Fat

Smoke point: 350°F

Flavor: Slight nutty flavor

Good for: All types of cooking

Health benefits: Enhances digestion, enhances flavour

Caution: Ghee is high in saturated fat and calories. Regular high intake may not be suitable for individuals managing cholesterol or heart health concerns. Portion control is important.

10/10

## Fish Oils (Cod Liver oil)

Heat: No

Type of oil: Polyunsaturated

Smoke point: N/A

Flavor: Fishy

Good for: Smoothies, taken directly

Health benefits: Reduces inflammation and High source of DHA boosts immune system, improves skin health

Caution: Excess intake may lead to high vitamin A and D levels, especially in children. It is important to follow recommended dosages and consult a professional when needed.

8/10

## Flaxseed or Hempseed Oil

Heat: Low/none

Type of oil: Polyunsaturated

Smoke point: 225F (Flaxseed), 330°F (

Flavor: Nutty

Good for: Salad dressing, smoothies, taken directly

Health benefits: High in omega-3s that the body converts to DHA and EPA, boosts immune system, improves skin health

Caution: These oils are sensitive to heat and can oxidize quickly. They should not be used for high heat cooking and should be stored in a cool, dark place to maintain quality.

# Types of Healthy Oils

7/10

## Peanut Oil

Heat: Medium

Type of oil: Monounsaturated, some polyunsaturated and saturated

Smoke point: unrefined 320°F

Flavor: Peanut

Good for: Any type of cooking

Health benefits: Resistant to rancidity

Caution: People with peanut allergies should avoid this oil. Highly refined versions may be better tolerated, but caution is still necessary. Some varieties may also be heavily processed.

7/10

## Refined/Pomace Olive oil

Heat: High

Type of oil: Mostly monounsaturated

Smoke point: High

Flavor: Mild

Good for: Any type of cooking

Health Benefits: Rich in monounsaturated fats, boosts immune system, improves skin and hair health

Caution: These oils are more processed and may contain fewer antioxidants compared to extra virgin olive oil. Quality and purity can vary depending on the source.

8/10

## Macademia Nut Oil

Heat: Medium-high

Type of oil: Monounsaturated

Smoke point: 390°F

Flavor: Mild, nutty

Good for: Salads

Health benefits: High in antioxidants and vitamin D

Caution: Although stable, it is calorie dense and should be used in moderation. Individuals with nut allergies should avoid it.

# Types of Healthy Oils

10/10

## Extra virgin/virgin Olive Oil

Heat: Low

Type of oil: Monounsaturated

Smoke point: Unrefined extra virgin: 320°F

Flavor: Neutral

Good for: Salads, quick sauteing, stir-fry, smoothies, adding directly to already cooked meals (do not use extra virgin for cooking. heat will create free radicals).

Health benefits: High in antioxidants, boosts immune system, improves skin health, great for heart health

Caution: This oil has a lower smoke point than refined oils and may degrade if exposed to high heat for long periods. It is best used for low to medium heat cooking or added after cooking.

7.5/10

## Unrefined Palm oil (Red)

Heat: Medium to High

Type of oil: Saturated

Smoke point: ~450°F (232°C)

Flavor: Mildly nutty and earthy

Good for what type of cooking: Suitable for frying, sautéing

Health Benefits: Rich in antioxidants like tocotrienols and carotenoids, vitamins A and E.

Caution: Quality varies widely depending on processing. Highly refined versions may lose beneficial nutrients. It is also high in saturated fat, so moderation is recommended.

8/10

## Sesame Seed Oil

Heat: Medium

Type of oil: Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated

Smoke point: unrefined 350°F

Flavor: Sesame

Good for: Stir-frying, Asian dishes like fried rice

Health benefits: High in vitamin E, detoxifying properties

Caution: This oil may trigger allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. It can also oxidize when exposed to heat and light, so proper storage is important.

# Types of Healthy Oils

10/10

## Tigernut oil

Type of Oil: Typically monounsaturated.

Smoke Point: Moderate.

Flavor: Nutty and slightly sweet.

Good for: Suitable for sautéing, salad dressing, making sauces, stews, adding to porridges, baking

Health Benefits: Rich in vitamin E, B, omega 3 and 9.

7.5/10

## Black seed oil

Heat: None

Type of oil: Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated

Smoke point: Not suitable for heating

Flavor: Strong, slightly bitter

Good for: Taken directly, added to smoothies, drizzled over already cooked meals

Health benefits: Anti inflammatory, antioxidant, supports immune, gut, respiratory, and metabolic health

Caution: This oil should not be heated because high temperatures can destroy its active compounds. It should be used in small amounts. Individuals who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or on medication should consult a professional before regular use.

8/10

## Moringa seed oil

Heat: None

Type of oil: Mostly monounsaturated

Smoke point: Not recommended for cooking

Flavor: Mild, slightly nutty

Good for: Taken directly, added to smoothies, drizzled over meals, therapeutic use

Health benefits: Rich in antioxidants, supports immune function, inflammation balance, skin and metabolic health

Caution: This oil is best used as a therapeutic or finishing oil and not for cooking. Quality and purity vary widely, so sourcing from reputable producers is important.

# Relatively Healthy Oils

5/10

## Canola Oil

Type of Oil: Typically monounsaturated.

Smoke Point: Moderate.

Flavor: Nutty and slightly sweet.

Good for: Suitable for sautéing, salad dressing, making sauces, stews, adding to porridges, baking

Health Benefits: Rich in vitamin E, B, omega 3 and 9.

Caution: Most canola oil available today comes from genetically modified crops and is highly processed. It is often refined using heat and chemical solvents, which may reduce nutrient quality. For those who prefer minimally processed options, it is best to look for organic, cold pressed, or expeller pressed varieties.

6.5/10

## Soya bean oil

Type of Oil: Primarily polyunsaturated.

Smoke Point: Moderate to high.

Flavor: Neutral.

Good for What Type of Cooking: All types of cooking

Health Benefits: Rich in omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, vitamin E and antioxidants.  
NOTE: Conflicting data on its effects on males with regards to increasing their estrogen levels

Caution: Most soybean oil available today comes from genetically modified crops and is highly processed. It is often refined using heat and chemical solvents, which may reduce nutrient quality and increase oxidation. For those who prefer minimally processed options, it is best to choose organic, cold pressed, or expeller pressed varieties when available.

6/10

## Sunflower seed Oil (High Oleic)

Heat: High heat

Type of oil: Monounsaturated, Polyunsaturated Smoke point: 440°F (227°C) F

Flavor: Mild, nutty

Good for: All types of cooking

Health Benefits: Rich in vitamin E, omega-6 fatty acids, antioxidants; supports heart health, boosts immune system, improves skin health

Caution: While high oleic sunflower oil is more stable, many sunflower oils on the market are highly refined and processed. Standard versions are high in omega 6 fatty acids and may contribute to inflammation if used excessively. Choosing minimally processed, high oleic, or cold pressed options is recommended.

# Avoid These

- Vegetable oil
- Corn Oil
- Refined Palm oil
- Cottonseed Oil
- Mayonaise made with hydrogenated/partially hydrogenated fats
- Margarine
- Any oil that contains hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats

# Tips on using oil

1

## Choose oils based on your family's health needs, not just trends

Not every family needs the same type of oil. If your family has conditions like diabetes, high cholesterol, inflammation, gut issues, or developmental concerns, investing in higher quality and more stable oils is important. If your family is generally healthy, you can use more affordable basic oils but still focus on moderation and balance.

2

## Rotate your oils instead of using only one

No single oil provides all nutrients. Using a variety such as olive oil, palm oil, coconut oil, and nut based oils helps your family access different fatty acids, antioxidants, and vitamins.

3

## Children need oil differently from adults

Children need more healthy fats for brain development, hormone balance, and growth. They benefit from a mix of oils, especially those rich in omega 3, antioxidants, and fat soluble vitamins. Adults may need to be more careful with portions depending on their health conditions.

# Tips on using oil

4

## Be mindful of how much oil you use in your family meals

Many traditional African meals use large amounts of oil. Even healthy oils can become harmful in excess. Reducing oil gradually can improve digestion, weight balance, and heart health.

5

## Use healthier cooking methods when possible

You can reduce oil by roasting, baking, grilling, air frying, or steaming. These methods still allow you to enjoy your traditional foods while improving overall health.

6

## Expensive doesn't always mean better

Even if you cannot afford premium oils, small changes still make a big difference. Using less oil, avoiding repeated frying, and choosing fresher oils will improve health outcomes.

7

## Pay attention to storage and freshness

Store oils in cool, dark places and avoid buying large quantities that sit for too long. Oxidized oils may contribute to inflammation and poor health over time.

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