

Healthy & Natural Journal  
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GRAPESEED OIL: THE CHAMPAGNE OF COOKING OILS  
BY VALENTIN HUMER  
Page 1 of 2



Grapeseed oil, “another oil which most of us have never heard of”, is being touted as the next oat bran of the nineties. Dating as far back as the first testament, grapeseed oil is a tradition. European women have been using it in their kitchens, preparing loving meals for their family gatherings, for centuries. Emperor Maximilian II of Italy thought grapeseed oil was so important he granted a monopoly for the pressing of the oil in 1569. More recently, grapeseed oil became a necessity in Europe during this century's war times, due to the shortage of available cooking oils.

And today, renowned chefs, like Jean Louis Palladin in Washington, DC, have been creating culinary delights with grapeseed oil that have had people coming back for over 25 years. Jean George Vongerichten in NYC even wrote a cook-book exclusively specifying grapeseed oil, but had to switch his recommendation to canola oil due to the lack of availability of this rediscovered miracle oil, grapeseed oil.

Intrigued by the shortage and lack of awareness about grapeseed oil, my interest sparked a vision caused me to jump into this quest, putting my career as a European trained hotelier and chef on hold (and on the line!) to travel wherever necessary to research and locate this wonder oil and make it available to everyone.

#### GRAPESEED'S ORGINS & INGREDIENTS

Today the leading producing countries of grapeseed oil are Italy and France. Not surprising” because they are the natural source for wine production, which produces the by-product, pomace, from which the grapeseed oil is made. Pomace, consisting mainly of grapeseeds, stems and skins, is an organic matter, mostly used as compost, which is generally thrown back onto the vineyards. This makes grapeseed oil an ecologically sound product, which requires no new farmland, crops or water to produce.

The grapeseed itself is very hard and contains only 8-12% of oil. This makes it very difficult to produce and unfortunately it cannot be cold pressed like other oil seeds containing 22-55% oil. Nevertheless, after much research, I found a manufacturer in Italy who is now exclusively producing grapeseed oil with a very carefully engineered, low temperature refining process in an oxygen and a light free environment, which protects the valuable nutrients of the oil.

The oil itself has a very high level of antioxidant vitamin E (60-120 mg/100 g), which makes it very stable. Most importantly, grapeseed oil is one of the lowest in saturated and one of the highest in the essential fatty acid, linoleic acid, also known as omega 6. Linoleic acid is one of the essential fatty acids which the human body cannot manufacture and must be eaten in order to acquire it. Studies indicate that linoleic acid is sadly deficient in most people's diets, which makes grapeseed oil stand out, containing approximately 76% linoleic acid!

#### BEST OF ALL - IT'S REAL GOOD FOR COOKING!

The beauty of this oil is how it tastes and what you can do with it to incorporate it into your diet. As a professional chef, I see grapeseed oil and olive oil as important in the kitchen as salt and pepper. I also use natural butter for taste where necessary. I would recommend extra virgin olive oil only as a finishing touch for all Mediterranean recipes for taste and would avoid any high heat which would break down olive oil and leave a bitter taste.



This is where grapeseed oil enters as the perfect all purpose cooking oil because of its unique and versatile cooking attributes. Our taste buds recognize most tastes through the fat used as a taste carrier. This is why most non-fat foods have virtually no taste. Grapeseed oil has a light nutty taste that brings out the flavor of food. This mild flavor allows you to use it for any range of cooking, rather than being limited by the taste of the oil. It makes delicious salad dressings that will not cloud when chilled, so you can use them right out of the refrigerator. It can be heated to over 485<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>F with no smoking, spattering or burnt taste when sauteing, frying or baking. When used for deep frying, it will last twice as long as common frying fats. It performs well with high moisture, high sodium products, producing crisp food without a greasy aftertaste. It makes delicious flavored oils, combining beautifully with herbs and seasonings. It is ideal as a dip for bread in place of butter or margarine, eliminating another source of saturated fats.

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Page 2 of 2



THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER PACKAGING

Now let's talk a little about how a valuable oil should be packaged. Most manufacturers will opt for the least expensive clear plastic or glass bottle, which serves only their bottom line and does not protect the oil from the harmful effects of light. These packaged oils, after having gone through manufacturing, distribution, and then however long on the store shelves, are exposed to the harmful rays of ultraviolet light the whole time, and are possibly on the verge of being rancid by the time they make it to your kitchen.

This is why we developed our special product called Salute Sante©!, which means "saluting your health" or "to your health." This grapeseed oil is packaged in a special dark glass bottle which has a 97% ultraviolet light filter, which protects the oil from the harmful effects of light.



Even after opening this special dark glass bottle, the oil will be protected and does not need to be refrigerated. Refrigeration can actually produce droplets of moisture build-up due to condensation that forms on the shoulders of the bottle due to the temperature changes that occur each time the bottle is taken in and out of the refrigerator.

Also, Salute Sante©! Grapeseed Oil contains no preservatives such as TBHQ or BHT, is not hydrogenated, contains no trans fatty acids, no cholesterol and no sodium. This is why I highly recommend it to whoever loves to cook chefs, caterers and food manufacturers to start using high quality grapeseed oil instead of watching only the bottom line (price). Don't jeopardize your health by using mostly mass manufactured oils which are made for quantity and not for quality. For those who do not enjoy cooking you can even look for grapeseed oil capsules which will soon be available.

Grapeseed oil is not only an edible oil, it has also been used for many other reasons. Because of the high vitamin E level and the richness of essential fatty acids, grapeseed oil has been used in the cosmetic industry as a carrier oil for a long time.

Massage therapists will know how beautifully it absorbs into the skin because of its light, fluid water-like consistency which will not leave a sticky film or any unpleasant odor. Grapeseed oil was also used by European craftsmen to preserve the wood for high-end violins and other musical instruments

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

H&N received a letter written by Dr. David T. Nash M.D. F.A.C.C., Clinical Professor of Medicine at the SUNY Health Science Center at Syracuse. He is also a Fellow on the Council on Arteriosclerosis, American Heart Association; Fellow at the American College of Nutrition; and Fellow on the Council on Epidemiology, American Heart Association. In part the letter stated:

We studied the effect of grapeseed oil on 56 men and women all of whom had an HDL percentage below 40 mg after 3 months of a three-month lipid-lowering diet. Results were interesting in that while weight did not change and total cholesterol did not vary significantly there was a statistically significant drop in LDL (bad cholesterol) from 146 to 136 mg (-7%).

Even more important was a rise in high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL) from 31.6 to 36.5 mg This 13% increase is a statistically significant result. The Helsinki, Finland heart trial demonstrated that for every 1% increase in HDL there was a 3% reduction in cardiac events like acute heart attacks.

Additionally, the total cholesterol/HDL ratio was reduced by 15.6%. The use of grapeseed oil in a daily diet appears to improve both HDL and LDL levels in weight-stable subjects with initially low HDL levels.

This letter was signed by Doctor Nash. Abstracts from Dr. Nash's study also appeared in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology (318A, 925-116), and in Arteriosclerosis: An Official Journal of the American Heart Association.

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Valentin F. Humer has an extensive background in all aspects of the food and beverage industry. He is experienced in hotel and catering management, and is a European trained chef. He worked throughout Europe for twelve years, finally coming to the U.S. at the invitation of Marriott International. For the past four years, Humer has dedicated himself full time to conducting comprehensive research into the health properties and attributes of grapeseed oil. He is one of the foremost authorities on the subject.