



Pressing Report of The Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club *Chilean Harvest*

T. J. Robinson
The Olive Oil Hunter®

For Your Dining Pleasure, Three Exquisite Fresh-Pressed Extra Virgin Olive Oils from Chile!

- ★ Rushed to your table from “the ends of the Earth” by jet at their peak of flavor, these beauties are all from award-winning New World producers.
- ★ All have been certified by an independent lab to be 100 percent extra virgin.
- ★ You will be among the few lucky Americans to enjoy fresh-pressed olive oil with your favorite foods.
- ★ All three were pressed exclusively for Club members and are available nowhere else!

Dear Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club Member,

Sandwiched between the Andes Mountains and the Pacific Ocean is Chile, a slender, sinuous country that for me, has become an invaluable hunting ground for premium extra virgin olive oil. The colorful fall harvest is just winding down there, and once again, my relationships with Chile’s best producers ensure you will have only the freshest, finest olive oils on your table to splash on sun-ripened tomatoes and other delights when they appear in gardens and markets.



Chile is a horticultural wunderkind, one of the New World’s largest alternate-season suppliers of apples, blueberries, stone fruits, and grapes, the latter often exported as wine.

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Growing olives, which are also fruits, was an easy next step.

Realized Dreams, Despite Prolonged Drought

About 15 years ago, I envisioned a unique club that would put fresh, amazing olive oils in the hands of North Americans. Meanwhile, farmers in central Chile were formulating plans to grow olive trees, inspired by the region's Mediterranean climate, rocky, well-drained soil, and ready access to an agriculturally gifted workforce—you can't throw an avocado here without hitting an agronomist. A decade later, these rookie growers were pocketing golds, silvers, and "best in class" awards in prestigious olive oil competitions. (The producers of your oils have all been named in the top 20 of the best in the world by the olive oil bible, *Flos Olei*.) Many Old World producers, sensing they were being bested at their own game, were

stunned by this upstart on the other side of the globe. There were even whispers about "the Chilean threat."

Chile actually produces less than 1 percent of the world's olive oil, a drop in the bucket. Which explains why its oils are rarely spotted on US shelves. Also, few growers have the resources to promote their own brands, meaning the majority of Chile's oils end up in the bulk market. They are either consumed domestically or exported to Brazil, Asia, or Italy, which is currently experiencing a serious olive oil shortage due to a string of disappointing harvests.

Natural barriers protect Chile from many of the scourges that have bedeviled olive growers in other countries, including pathogens and pests. However, Chile's been battling a severe drought for several years. As

ChileOliva, an olive grower's association and a tireless champion of Chilean olive oils, introduced me in 2005 to Chile's top olive farmers. Its small team has done much since then to improve quality, sustainability, and yields while fostering a sense of community. During my recent visit, I met with ChileOliva agronomist and professional taster, Pamela González. We discussed the impact of Chile's drought, up-and-coming producers, the fascinating agronomy research being done at the University of Chile, and local chefs who are doing creative things with Chile's premium extra virgin olive oils.

my plane cleared the Andean peaks upon descent (whew!), I noticed they were capped with even less snow than last year. (Many farmers rely on run-off to irrigate their trees, so lack of snow is a problem.) The landscape looked more parched than I remembered, populated with cacti and thorny *espiña* bushes. Water levels were visibly down in rivers, lakes, and reservoirs.

Controlled water deprivation can actually enhance an olive oil's

Chile

Santiago

Pacific
Ocean

Argentina

Bolivia



In less than two decades, Chile has become a trusted New World source of premium extra virgin olive oil, more than 90 percent of it extra virgin. Located at the 34th parallel south, Central Chile is especially well suited to olive trees, thanks to its Mediterranean climate, well-drained volcanic soil, and agriculturally experienced workforce.

complexity even as it depresses yields. Quality-conscious producers sometimes stop irrigating prior to the harvest to concentrate oils' aromas and flavors.

The farmers I worked with this quarter—as always, Chile's most passionate and consistent producers—assured me they kept a close eye on their trees' needs, even monitoring soil moisture levels with high-tech probes. Yes, rainfall had been less than average, but the olives were healthy. I toured the groves myself, of course, accompanied by olive expert and master miller Duccio Morozzo della Rocca. We wasted no time in selecting the fruit we wanted in our blends, knowing unexpected frosts are a devastating side effect of dry weather. By the way, Chilean olive growers tend to focus on a handful of olive varieties, including Arbequina, Arbosana, Picual, Coratina, Leccino, Koroneiki, and Frantoio. Blending them is like working with a palette of bright primary colors: a pleasing exercise that yields clean, elegant, vibrant results.



Having enjoyed empanadas on previous visits to olive oil producers' homes, I was determined to learn how to make them myself. The Alonso family's cook, María, was happy to oblige. As you can see, the language barrier didn't prevent us from sharing a laugh over my pastry fail. (Her circles are perfect!) Later, the dough was stuffed with a traditional filling called pino—cooked ground beef, onions, olives, and hard-cooked egg—then baked. Do try them with a glass of Chilean red wine, using the recipe on page 15.

From the “Ends of the Earth,” Oils for Your Table

When in an olive-producing country, I like to consult with university affiliates, trade organizations, professional tasters, etc. These meetings are mutually beneficial as we share knowledge, insight, and perspective. This time, I met with Pamela González, an agronomist at ChileOliva, an organization I've worked closely with since 2005. She explained that scientists at the University of Chile are analyzing 25 years' worth of satellite images to better understand and predict patterns in Chile's agricultural life. She's hoping practical strategies will emerge to help olive farmers improve quality and production. Intrigued, I did a little reading on my own and learned that large experimental screens have been erected near Chile's coastline to capture and condense fog, an untapped water resource for farmers. Genius!

On the long plane ride home, I reflected on how my long-ago dream dovetailed with the dreams of a few fearless farmers 5,000 miles and a continent away. Because of that

fortuitous coincidence, you'll soon have a wonderful taste experience, one I hope you'll share with family and friends. (Do try one or several of the recipes I've sent! See page 12.) I truly wish you could witness for yourself the farmers' obvious pleasure and pride when their olive oils—the oils they've put their everything into—are selected for our Club. In a perfect world, you'd meet them personally and learn how thrilled they are to share their oils with discriminating palates. Please enjoy these lovely extra virgin olive oils in good health.

Happy drizzling!



T. J. Robinson
The Olive Oil Hunter®

You're Invited!

Please join me and your fellow Club members on Facebook and Instagram!

We share recipes, the latest olive oil health news, photos and stories from the road, tastings, culinary adventures in my home kitchen, and more. We'd love to hear from you as well—your thoughts, requests, and favorite ways you enjoy cooking with EVOO. Join the fun!

Like our Facebook page, **Fresh Pressed Olive Oil**. Follow **Fresh Pressed Olive Oil Club** on Instagram. I can't wait to see you there!

This Quarter's First Selection



Producer: Duccio Morozzo Selección Exclusiva, Colchagua Valley, O'Higgins Region, Chile 2019

Olive Varieties: Arbequina, Coratina

Flavor Profile: Mild

I feel a frisson of anticipation each time my Merry Band of Tasters and I escape Santiago's urban sprawl for the rural Colchagua Valley. The landscape during the harvest season is stunningly beautiful—reminiscent of a Cézanne painting, splashed with cobalt blue, burnt sienna, chrome yellow, viridian, and deep burgundy.

I'm not only eager to taste just-pressed olive oils from Chile's most masterful producers, but my travel companions and I also have a reservation at Fuegos de Apalta (Fires of Apalta), a highly regarded restaurant owned by Patagonian celebrity chef Francis Mallmann. (He was featured on *Chef's Table*, an original series by Netflix.) Mallmann endeared himself to me when he named the ingredients he couldn't live without: "Very good salt, very good olive oil, very good red wine vinegar. With that you can do anything." (See a Mallmann recipe I have adapted for your enjoyment on page 13.)

The Colchagua Valley, about the size of Delaware and well endowed with natural resources, was carved by Pacific-bound runoff from the Andean peaks, particularly the Tinguirrica volcano. Colchagua means "valley of lakes" in the language of Chile's indigenous people, the Mapuche. (Some 2 million Mapuche still live in South America, three-quarters of them in Chile.) In the late 1400s, the valley was invaded by the Incas, who introduced irrigation and farming to the region. But the Incas were really there for the gold. Not the maize or beans.

It's ironic that I am also there for the gold—"liquid gold," that is, the ancient world's

term for olive oil.

Olive trees are fairly new to Chile; most are less than 20 years old. One of the country's olive pioneers was Alfonso Swett. A former berry farmer, Alfonso was vacationing in Spain in 2001 when inspiration struck: he realized the Colchagua Valley, with its fertile, volcanic soil and temperate Mediterranean climate, could provide olive trees with conditions similar to those found in Spain. Swett promptly enlisted the help of agricultural consultants before planting thousands of olive trees. He bottled his first extra virgin olive oil in 2006 and has been winning awards ever since.

For years, my friend, olive oil expert and master miller Duccio Morozzo della Rocca, has been advising the Swett family. When possible, he and I meet at the farm during the harvest. The team Alfonso assembled, including agricultural and operations manager, Ismael Heiremans, has dedicated itself to producing the finest olive oil possible.

Duccio arrived a day ahead of me, and thanks to a preliminary tour of the farm's vast acreage and many microclimates, tentatively identified groves with promise. The farm had half of its normal rainfall for the second year in a row—less water than the Sahara—but its irrigation system (fed by a large lake) provided the olive trees with sufficient moisture, Duccio assured me. He was especially captivated by two pockets of the varietal Arbequina—one on a sunny hillside and the other in a more shaded area.



My longtime friend and collaborator Duccio Morozzo della Rocca is one of the world's most respected olive oil experts. How lucky Club members and I are to have the knowledge and counsel of this master miller at our disposal. Here, on the Swett family farm, Duccio and I are discussing the merits of blending two Arbequinas that had been exposed to different amounts of sunlight during the growing season—a strategy that turned out to be brilliant. The final blend, we excitedly discovered, was optimized by adding a small amount of Coratina for structure and balance. We can't wait for you to taste it!

Duccio is always compelled to touch the olives, to roll them between his fingers, even to take a bite. Ripeness, he says, cannot be determined by visual cues alone.

The Arbequinas Duccio and I selected were harvested and pressed within a day of each other at very cool temperatures. (All the olives harvested here are pressed within two hours of being picked.) We loved our first taste of the blend, the way the more aromatic oil from the sunnier slopes complemented the greener flavors of the other Arbequina. We could have left well enough alone. But no. A tiny amount of a powerful just-pressed Coratina, we

discovered, completed the blend. So exciting! We couldn't stop dipping Chilean bread in it—"Like a drug," Duccio deadpanned. The combination is addictive.

Impressions and Recommended Food Pairings: Delicate and clean on the nose, a connoisseur's olive oil. Expect whiffs of green tomato, butter lettuce, celery, green apple, chervil, fennel, green almond, citrus zest, and cinnamon. Very nutty (walnuts, almonds) and sweet in the mouth—think lemon meringue pie—with the subtle spiciness of white pepper and celery leaves, and grace notes of tender greens and white chocolate. Mild with a pleasant, lingering finish.

This elegant, well-balanced oil would complement shrimp, lobster, cod, sea bass, sole, fruit salads, chicken, rice, mashed potatoes, eggs, cauliflower, fresh peas and green beans, and raw vegetables. Try it with dairy, too, like mild cheeses, yogurt, or ice cream. Salad dressings or baked goods are other fantastic uses.

This Quarter's Second Selection



Producer: "El Favorito," Miguel Ángel Molina Selección Exclusiva, Agrícola Pobeña, Comuna de La Estrella, O'Higgins Region, Chile 2019
Olive Varieties: Frantoio, Leccino, Koroneiki, Arbequina
Flavor Profile: Medium

What a pleasure it was to return to the groves of the esteemed Miguel Ángel Molina, master miller and bonafide "olive whisperer." Miguel and I met five years ago, and he continues to astound me with his ingenuity, technical skill, tireless devotion, and the consistent

excellence of his olive oils.

In a parched season such as this one (continuing several years of severe aridity, initially called "mega-drought," now seemingly the "new normal"), the Chilean olive growers who succeed despite the lack of moisture are those who have mastered the art of optimizing their scarce water resources.

As Miguel and I toured the groves by dirt bike and 4-wheel-drive ATV, he described the electronic sensors that his team has embedded in the earth to measure the moisture in the soil. Sensors are buried at 20cm (8-inch) intervals beneath the surface, with the deepest at 60cm (about 2 feet), in a network strategically distributed among the olive trees. This enables Miguel and his team to know when the trees have received adequate water—merely measuring the water administered above ground wouldn't indicate how much reached the root system. With the high-tech accuracy of the sensors, just the right amount of water can be delivered to the trees.

Miguel was excited to show me the gorgeous fruit on the branches, eager to set aside the very best olives for my Club. (You can see us transferring a basket of just-picked olives to the bin on the back of his ATV in the photo on opposite page.) He oversees a dedicated team—numbering as many as 80 people during the harvest's peak—that runs as smoothly

and precisely as a Swiss watch. It's no coincidence that Miguel manages time as efficiently as he manages water (both scarce, both precious), as he's always on the move. On Mondays he commutes almost 3 hours to the farm, and on Friday afternoons he makes the return trip to spend the weekend with his wife and children in the town of Talca, in the south of Chile.

Miguel's affinity for fruit developed during his earlier years of work in the agricultural industry, as a packer of apples and pears. I've noted that most of the best Chilean harvest teams include former fruit packers—they know, via experience and intuition, how to handle perishable produce. You can see it in the way Miguel moves through his groves, the way he picks and ever so gently squeezes an olive to test its maturity—as if it were a miniature avocado.

Miguel turned his focus to olives in 2004 when he set out to learn the fundamentals of olive horticulture, expert milling, and blending from the famed Don Willy of the TerraMater groves, one of the pioneer artisans of the Chilean premium olive oil industry. (TerraMater, Latin for “motherland,” is the oldest producing olive grove in Chile, dating



I love to traverse the groves with Miguel Ángel Molina, cruising the terrain on the ATV and dirt bike and stopping in specific sectors to sample the olives he's identified as the best of this season. A skillful master miller and estate manager, Miguel has one of the finest, most discerning palates I've ever encountered, and I trust his judgment implicitly. The name we've given the dazzling oil from his groves, El Favorito, comes from the question I found myself asking, year after year: "Miguel, what's your favorite?"

to the 1940s.) Miguel is on a constant mission of continuing self-education to optimize the olive's journey from tree to table. Since 2014, he's been the estate manager of the Alonso farm, located in Chile's central O'Higgins region.

One sector of the groves is home to thousands of Frantoio and Leccino trees, planted together as cross-pollinators. These two Tuscan olive varieties are then harvested and pressed together, commingling their flavors from the start, which in my estimation creates more than just a blend—it's a magical synergy of their qualities.

To this beguiling blend we added a bit of Greek Koroneiki, its flavors especially intense this harvest, to enhance the oil's dimension, and a finishing touch of Spanish Arbequina, for its piquant spiciness and herbal notes. As the name “El Favorito” makes plain, this spectacular oil is an all-star roster of Miguel's favorite olives this season. (Like a doting

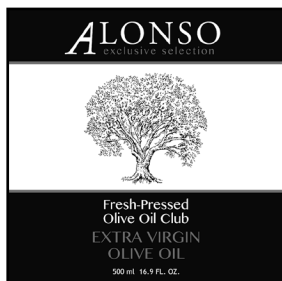
grandparent reassuring his clamoring grandchildren, though, I must insist that there is no “favorite” oil among the three I select for my Club members.)

Appetites whetted, we debuted this extremely food-friendly blend at a local workers’ joint, Don Achilles, a midday meal destination for the staff of several olive groves and fruit farms. The restaurant serves delicious home-style cuisine, the Chilean equivalent of “comfort food,” perfect for generous splashes of just-pressed olive oil. The staff at Don Achilles knows me and my Merry Band of Tasters by now (one of the many perks of this job, after years of cultivating relationships around the world), so when we requested extra *pebre*, the zesty Chilean version of salsa, they knew to bring us an entire plateful!

Impressions and Recommended Food Pairings: Several super-hero varieties from the Mediterranean meet on Chilean soil. This is truly an international oil! In the tasting glass, it’s both sweet and green (but very complex) evocative of vanilla, almonds, dark leafy greens, wheatgrass, and white pepper with hints of green banana, arugula, and wild mint. Intensely green in the mouth with bitterness lent by the flavors of radicchio, arugula, parsley, and dark chocolate.

A protracted and spicy finish makes this oil a natural with red meats (especially grilled meats), lamb, veal, white beans, tuna or swordfish, pasta salads, herbed potatoes, grilled sweet corn, vegetable soups, roasted carrots or broccoli, kale or spinach salads, avocados, sweet potatoes, or chocolate desserts. We’d even splash it in fruit smoothies!

This Quarter’s Third Selection



Producer: Alonso, Agricola Pobena, Comuna de La Estrella, O’Higgins Region, Chile 2019

Olive Varieties: Picual, Koroneiki, Frantoio

Flavor Profile: Bold

Nothing makes me happier, as the Olive Oil Hunter, than witnessing the ongoing successes of people I met when they were starting out. In less than a decade of production, the Alonso groves—run by brothers Juan Jose and Ignacio Alonso, founded by their father,

Abel—have achieved an astounding degree of quality and consistency in their award-winning olive oils.

Their farm comprises about 960 acres of rugged terrain in central Chile’s O’Higgins Region, about an hour south of Santiago. None of the Alonsos had a background in olive oil production or even in horticulture: Abel, a self-made man whose family fled Franco’s regime in Spain when Abel was a teenager, had worked tirelessly to become Chile’s top shoe manufacturer. Upon announcing his retirement from the business, he set his sons to the task of helping build a family legacy of olive groves, which would remind him of his boyhood home in Spain’s Basque country.

As New World olive growers, they were able to construct and refine their practices

from the ground up, with “no bad habits,” as I like to observe. Juan Jose explained, with characteristic enthusiasm, that as Chilean producers they have to be “quality actors.” In other words, because they cannot compete with global bulk producers such as Spain or Greece, artisanal farms such as Alonso must make their mark via excellence. Juan Jose laughed as he recounted that, in their first harvest season, they brought in a consultant from Italy. The Italian expert sized up these ambitious newcomers and recommended they dilute their oils during the pressing process to make them milder, which would also wash away the healthful polyphenols. “We waited until he left,” Juan Jose confided, “and then were, like, ‘Noooooo!’ That year, we won medals.”

Their streak of excellence is unbroken, with regular appearances on *Flos Olei*’s list of “Top 20 Farms in the World.” To give it personal context, consider that when I arrived at the mill this harvest, Juan Jose set before me an array of 10 just-pressed samples. Eight of the 10 blew me away—they were all contenders, and I knew we could make an extraordinary blend. Usually, even with top-tier farms, I’ll find only 1 or 2 oils out of 10 that make an impression on me.

Great oil depends on great equipment, and I’ve never seen such well-maintained machinery as the Alonsos’ state-of-the-art Alfa Laval olive mill. Juan Jose agreed, “It’s perfect—allows no air in.” This protects the olive paste from oxidation and preserves the



Ignacio Alonso and I toast another brilliant collaboration over lunch at the family farm, enhanced by generous splashes of our glorious Pical blend. The Alonsos are passionate about introducing the marvels of premium fresh-pressed olive oil to a wider public, and they enthusiastically embrace the mission of our Club. Says Ignacio, “It’s wonderful there are people like you, doing what you’re doing, to show the benefits of great olive oil to the world.”

perfume and flavor in the resulting oil. In the several years I’ve been visiting their farm, there’s never been a breakdown; the mill staff are as quick and savvy as an Indy 500 pit crew.

The Alonsos and I are perfectly aligned in our passion for educating the public about the wonders of fresh-pressed olive oil. Here, you’re reading my *Pressing Report*. Down in Chile, the Alonsos are running two thriving retail stores, with plans for

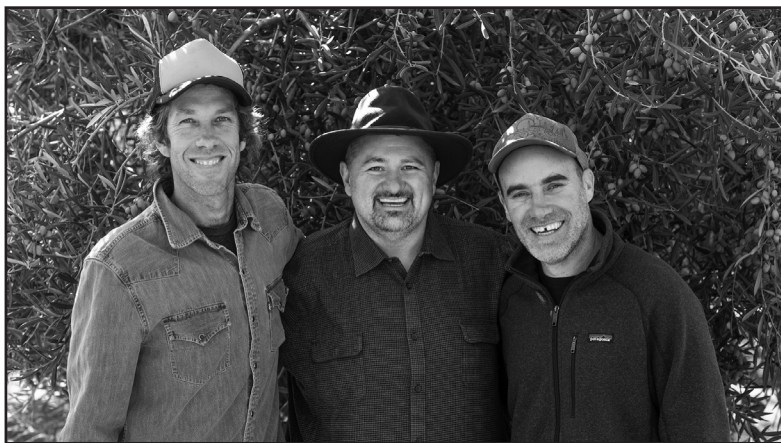
a third (and dreams of someday having even more). Cozy, ground-floor storefronts—one in downtown Santiago, the other in a more upscale neighborhood—sell monocultivars (oils pressed from a single variety) as well as delectable blends, reflecting the season’s harvest,

with trained and knowledgeable clerks to offer insight and answer questions. The Alonsos sell about one-fifth to one-quarter of their olive oil in their retail stores.

“Because people are used to lousy oil,” explained Juan Jose, “at the beginning they were freaked out by quality olive oil.” But quickly, once they taste the difference of excellent fresh-pressed oil, customers can never go back to the inferior stuff. It’s very much a brick-and-mortar parallel to the mission of my Club!

Juan Jose and his family are so proud to know my Club members will be enjoying the oil from their farm. “To think some person in Vermont, for example, will be tasting my fresh oil—that makes me so proud!” he said.

This robust blend is powerful and exciting, and I predict it’ll knock your socks off. In homage to the family’s Spanish heritage, it’s predominantly Picual, at its most intense, super-green and spicy. The addition of Koroneiki and Frantoio, just a touch, makes it “jump out of the glass,” Juan Jose notes. (He likes to call bold oils like this “medicine,” which, given the health benefits of olive oil and its millennia of history as a medicament, is entirely accurate.) We can’t wait for you to try it!



The Alonso brothers, Juan Jose (left) and Ignacio (right) were stunned, close to 20 years ago now, when their father announced that his retirement dream was for the family to mill premium extra virgin olive oil. In the decade since its groves began producing, the Alonso farm has won dozens of major awards, in Chile and also on the world stage. Juan Jose, left, oversees the milling and production while Ignacio, right, handles the business end. Their father, Abel, spry and ambitious at eighty-four, is so proud to share the fruits of the family’s legacy with you.

Impressions and Recommended Food Pairings: The most robust olive oil in this trio, an excellent example of an early harvest Picual, is intensely aromatic. We’re assailed with the scents of microgreens, tomato leaves, celery leaves, green apple, kiwi, and chopped fresh culinary herbs like sage, rosemary, parsley, and mint. It’s a juicy symphony in the mouth, teasing the tongue with healthful phenolic compounds and flavor harmonies. Green and grassy, incorporating the spiciness of celery leaves and the bitterness of green walnuts and Belgian endive. Chopped herbs, artichokes, kale, hazelnuts, and lime zest chime in. Expect an exciting, peppery finish.

A powerful oil such as this is the one to reach for when sun-ripened tomatoes are on the menu—bruschetta, caprese salad, gazpacho. Splash it on pizza, artichokes, hearts of palm, pasta, hummus, salmon, sardines, game meats, pork, duck, grilled chicken, potatoes, rice, aged cheeses, or salads made with dark leafy greens (spinach or kale) and fruit.



Diet including olive oil may reduce blood-clotting risk in healthy obese adults

Adapted from an article by the American Heart Association, March, 7, 2019
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-03-olive-oil-week-blood-clot.html>

In a group of healthy obese adults, eating olive oil at least once a week was associated with less platelet activity in the blood, which may reduce the tendency of blood to clot and block blood flow. These findings are according to preliminary research presented at the American Heart Association's Epidemiology and Prevention/Lifestyle and Cardiometabolic Health Scientific Sessions 2019, a premier global exchange of the latest advances in population-based cardiovascular science for researchers and clinicians.

Platelets are blood cell fragments that stick together and form clumps and clots when they are activated. They contribute to the buildup of artery-clogging plaque, known as atherosclerosis, the condition that underlies most heart attacks and strokes, according to lead study author Sean P. Heffron, MD, MS, MSc, assistant professor at NYU School of Medicine and the NYU Center for the Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in New York, New York.

Using food frequency surveys, researchers determined how often 63 obese, nonsmoking, nondiabetic study participants ate olive oil. The participants' average age was 32.2 years and their average body mass index (BMI) was 44.1. Obesity is defined as having a body mass index (BMI)—a ratio of body weight to height—over 30.

Researchers found that those who ate olive oil at least once a week had lower platelet activation than participants who ate olive oil less often, and that the lowest levels of platelet aggregation were observed among those who ate olive oil more frequently.

"People who are obese are at increased risk of having a heart attack, stroke, or other cardiovascular event, even if they don't have diabetes or other obesity-associated conditions. Our study suggests that choosing to eat olive oil may have the potential to help modify that risk, potentially lowering an obese person's threat of having a heart attack or stroke," Heffron said. "To our knowledge, this is the first study to assess the effects of dietary composition, olive oil specifically, on platelet function in obese patients," said co-author Ruina Zhang, BS, an NYU medical student.

Some limitations of the study are that it relied on questionnaires completed by the participants; it measured how often they ate olive oil, but not how much olive oil they ate; and because it was observational, the study could not prove that eating olive oil will reduce platelet activation in obese adults.

— RECIPES —

CHICKPEA FLATBREADS WITH BURST TOMATO SAUCE

Chilean merquén, one of our favorite seasonings, is made from sun-dried chiles that are smoked and ground, then blended with other ingredients such as toasted cumin and salt. Professional chefs are just beginning to discover it! Find merquén at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

1 cup chickpea flour
10 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil,
divided use, plus more for serving
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
2 pints cherry tomatoes, halved if large
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
One 15-ounce can chickpeas, drained
(see Note below), rinsed
1 tablespoon dried oregano

1 teaspoon sherry or red wine vinegar
1/4 teaspoon merquén or smoked paprika (optional)
2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces
1 cup coarsely grated queso fresco or crumbled
feta (about 5 oz.)
Baby greens, such as arugula,
kale, or spinach, and lemon
wedges, for serving



1. Place a rack in the top third of the oven; preheat to 450°F. Whisk the chickpea flour, 2 tablespoons of olive oil, 1 teaspoon of salt, and 1 cup water in a medium bowl or large measuring cup until combined. Let sit at least 10 minutes and up to 1 hour to let the flour hydrate.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Pour in exactly half (3/4 cup) of the chickpea batter and tilt to evenly coat the skillet. Transfer to the oven and bake the flatbread until the edges are golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Using a large spatula, transfer the flatbread to a wire rack. Repeat with the remaining batter.
3. Meanwhile, cook the tomatoes, garlic, 1/4 cup of olive oil, and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt in a large skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until the whole tomatoes begin to burst, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in the chickpeas, oregano, vinegar, and merquén (if using). Reduce the heat to medium and continue to cook, stirring often, until the tomatoes have formed a fully chunky sauce, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter.
4. Slice the flatbreads in half. Serve with the tomato-chickpea mixture, cheese, greens, and lemon wedges alongside for squeezing and olive oil for drizzling.

Note: The liquid from drained chickpeas is called *aquafaba*, and is used by many vegans and vegetarians to lighten baked goods or make egg-free meringues.

Serves 4 — Recipe adapted from [epicurious.com](https://www.epicurious.com), March 2019

BLACK BEAN HUMMUS

Unexpected company? You likely have everything you need in your pantry to quickly put together this twist on conventional hummus.

1 cup black beans, cooked and drained, some juice reserved (canned okay)
2 tablespoons tahini
3 cloves garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
1/4 cup coarsely chopped cilantro
1/4 jalapeño, deveined and seeded, or a few
pickled jalapeño rings



1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Coarse sea salt, to taste

Put all the ingredients in a food processor. Process until the ingredients form a creamy purée. If the hummus is too thick, blend in a tablespoon of water or reserved bean juice. Serve with baked tortilla wedges, pita bread, raw vegetables, or tortilla chips.

Serves 4 — Recipe adapted from healthyseasonalrecipes.com

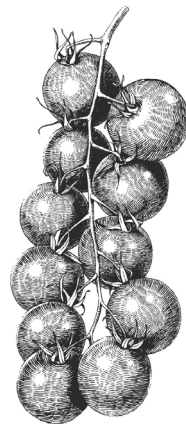
CHILLED TOMATO SOUP WITH CRÈME FRAICHE

Like a refined version of gazpacho, this soup is refreshing and can be served as a starter or light main course. Make the soup and the herbed crème fraîche a day ahead of time, if desired, and refrigerate. (Let the crème fraîche come to room temperature before serving.)

4 pounds tomatoes, quartered and seeded	2 teaspoons sugar
2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth	Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil	1/2 cup crème fraîche
1/4 cup tomato paste	1 1/2 tablespoons chopped tarragon,
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar	plus tarragon leaves for garnish

1. Working in a blender in 2 batches, puree the tomatoes with the vegetable broth, olive oil, tomato paste, red wine vinegar, and sugar until very smooth. Transfer to a bowl, season with salt and pepper and refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours.
2. In a small bowl, mix the crème fraîche with the chopped tarragon and season with pepper. Ladle the soup into bowls. Top with a dollop of the crème fraîche, garnish with the tarragon leaves, and serve.

Serves 6 — Recipe from foodandwine.com



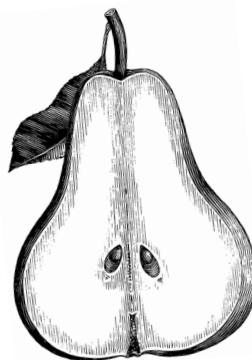
PEAR SALAD WITH BLUE CHEESE, OLIVE OIL, AND MINT

One of our favorite restaurants in Chile is Fuegos de Apalta (Fires of Apalta) in the Colchagua Valley. It was opened by celebrity chef Francis Mallmann in 2017. Here is one of his recipes.

2 large ripe red Bartlett pears, halved, cored, and cut into thick wedges
Sea salt, to taste
8 ounces blue cheese (such as Saint Agur), brought to room temperature and cut into wedges
12 dates, pitted
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling
1/4 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves
1 teaspoon pink peppercorns, toasted and lightly crushed
Eight 1/2-inch-thick slices country-style white bread

Divide the pears among 4 salad plates and season with salt. Arrange a wedge of cheese and 3 dates on each plate. Drizzle with the olive oil and garnish with the mint and peppercorns. Serve with the sliced country bread for dipping in the olive oil.

Serves 4 — Recipe adapted from *Mallmann on Fire* by Francis Mallmann (Artisan 2014)



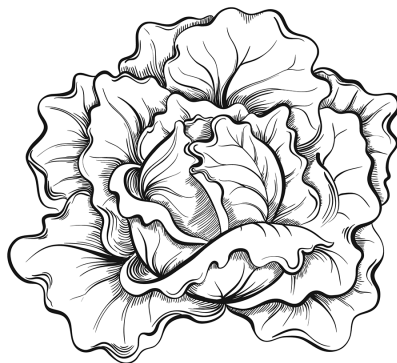
CHILEAN SALAD

This refreshing salad is ubiquitous throughout Chile and is routinely served in homes and restaurants alike.

2 heads Boston lettuce, leaves separated, washed, and dried
3 ripe tomatoes, sliced
1 large sweet onion, peeled, halved, and thinly sliced
1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice, or more to taste
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 small bunch fresh cilantro, leaves only

Optional ingredients:

Canned or jarred hearts of palm, drained and sliced
Sliced ripe avocado
Sliced cucumbers
Sliced fresh mushrooms
Canned or jarred artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
Fresh green beans or haricots verts, trimmed, steamed until tender-crisp



1. Arrange the lettuce leaves, tomatoes, onions, and any of the optional ingredients, if desired, on a large plate or platter. Top with the cilantro leaves.
2. Make the vinaigrette: Combine the lemon juice and salt and pepper in a small bowl and whisk to mix. Whisk in the olive oil and adjust the seasonings, adding more lemon juice or salt or pepper if needed. Drizzle the vinaigrette over the salad just before serving.

Serves 6 — Recipe courtesy of the Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club

CHILEAN SALSA

(PEBRE)

Lilly, the talented cook/housekeeper at the Don Rafael farm in Chile's Lontue Valley, shared her recipe for Chile's favorite condiment during one of our many visits to the farm. Serve it with bread, meat, or seafood. It's best, she says, when made less than 2 hours ahead.

8 scallions, trimmed, white and green parts thinly sliced
4 fresh aji or serrano peppers, stemmed, seeded, and finely diced
1 medium bunch fresh cilantro, leaves and tender stems chopped
1/2 clove garlic, finely minced
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, or more to taste
1 tablespoon water
Coarse salt (kosher or sea) to taste

In a medium bowl, combine the scallions, peppers, cilantro, garlic, olive oil, water, and lemon juice. Season to taste with salt. Cover and refrigerate if not using immediately.

Makes about 1 1/4 cups — Recipe courtesy of the Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club



CHILEAN EMPANADAS DE PINO

These are made the traditional Chilean way, filled with beef, onions, spices, and stuffed with hard-cooked egg quarters and brined green olives.

For the dough:

3 3/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter,
chilled, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1 1/4 cups ice water

To finish the empanadas:

12 brined green olives, pitted
3 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and cut
lengthwise into 12 quarters
An egg wash made by beating 1 egg
in a small cup or bowl

For the filling:

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3 cloves of garlic, finely minced
3/4 pound of ground beef, preferably chuck
1 large onion, peeled and finely diced
1 teaspoon cumin
2 teaspoons paprika
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon hot sauce, or more to taste
Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Make the dough: In the bowl of a food processor, pulse the flour, sugar, and salt about 6 to 8 times until combined. Add the butter and pulse again (about 16 times) until the butter bits are about the size of peas.
2. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl, then add the water in 1/4-cup increments, stirring it in with a rubber spatula. Press the mixture against the sides of the bowl to form a cohesive dough (you may not need all of the water).
3. Turn the dough out onto a clean, lightly floured work surface and divide in half. Form each portion into a ball, then flatten to a 6-inch disk. Wrap each disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours (or up to 2 days) before using.
4. Prepare the filling: Sauté over medium-high heat the olive oil, garlic, beef, and onion until the onions are translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the spices, hot sauce, and salt and pepper and continue to cook for another 3 to 4 minutes. Set aside until cool. The filling can be made a day ahead of time.
5. Assemble the empanadas: Roll out one of the refrigerated disks of dough on a well-floured surface into an 18-inch circle about 1/8-inch thick. Cut out circles 6-inches in diameter with a knife (I used an overturned bowl as a guide) and transfer them to two large foil-lined baking sheets. I got about six 6-inch rounds from each disk. Make sure you cut the rounds carefully since you won't be able to re-roll the scraps. (They toughen if overhandled.) Repeat with the remaining disk of dough.
6. Add about 2 heaping tablespoons of the meat mixture to the center of each dough round, as well as the olives and egg quarters (1 per empanada), then fold one edge of the dough over to create a half-moon. Crimp the edges with the tines of a fork. A tight seal will keep the empanadas from bursting. The empanadas can be refrigerated up to 3 hours before baking.
7. Bake the empanadas: Preheat your oven to 425°F. Brush the tops of the empanadas with the egg wash and bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes, rotating the pans for even browning. (If using a convection oven, as I did, bake for 21 minutes at 400°F.)



Makes 12 — Recipe courtesy of the Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club

CHIMICHURRI SHRIMP

The bright flavors of freshly made chimichurri (one of South America's most popular sauces) complement shrimp beautifully. Try it with other kinds of seafood, too, like grilled salmon, sea bass, or lobster. We have also enjoyed it with eggs and chicken.

For the chimichurri sauce:

1/4 cup coarsely chopped sweet onion
2 garlic cloves, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 bunch cilantro, washed and dried
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, washed and dried
1/4 cup fresh lime juice (1 to 2 limes)
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, or more to taste

For the shrimp:

1 1/2 pounds large shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil



1. Make the chimichurri sauce: Place the onion and garlic in the bowl of a food processor and pulse several times until chopped. Add the cilantro and parsley; pulse again until chopped. Add the lime juice. Slowly add the olive oil through the feed tube with the machine running. Season with salt.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the shrimp and sauté for 4 to 5 minutes. Turn the heat down to medium-low. Toss with half the chimichurri, then transfer the remainder of the sauce to a lidded jar and refrigerate for up to 3 days. (See suggested uses above.)
3. Serve the shrimp with rice, pasta, or cauliflower “rice.”

Serves 4 — Recipe adapted from feastingathome.com

GRILLED SALMON WITH WATERCRESS AND CHERRY TOMATOES

With nearly 3,000 miles of coastline, you can imagine how wonderful Chile's seafood is. We prefer to grill salmon with the skin on, as it protects the fish from the high heat of the grill.

4 skin-on salmon fillets, about 6 ounces each, preferably wild-caught
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons merquén, chili powder, or smoked paprika
Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper
4 cups watercress, rinsed, drained, and dried
1 cup cherry tomatoes, preferably a colorful heirloom mix, halved
1 1/2 tablespoons white or red wine vinegar, or more to taste
1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard



1. Rinse the salmon fillets under cold running water and dry on paper towels. Run your fingers over the flesh side and remove any pin bones with kitchen tweezers or pliers. Using a pastry brush, brush 2 tablespoons of the olive oil on both sides of the salmon fillets. Season evenly with the merquén as well as salt and pepper.
2. Make the vinaigrette: In a small jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the remaining 3 tablespoons of olive oil, the vinegar, mustard, and salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.
3. Combine the watercress and tomatoes in a mixing bowl and set aside until ready to serve.

4. Set up your grill for direct grilling and preheat to medium-high. Arrange the salmon, skin side down, directly on the grill grate. Cook for 12 to 15 minutes, or until the salmon is opaque and flakes easily when pressed with a fork. Using a thin spatula, carefully transfer the salmon fillets to a plate or platter.
5. Shake the jar with the vinaigrette ingredients vigorously until the dressing is emulsified. Immediately pour over the watercress and tomatoes, and toss gently. Divide among four dinner plates and top with the salmon fillets.

Serves 4 — Recipe courtesy of the Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club

PERFECT ROAST CHICKEN WITH SALSA VERDE

Perhaps you have brined poultry in heavily salted water to season and tenderize it. But dry-brining accomplishes the same thing without taking up as much space in your refrigerator. A hot oven promotes crisp, golden-brown skin. The salsa verde (green sauce) is a piquant and colorful accompaniment.

For the chicken:

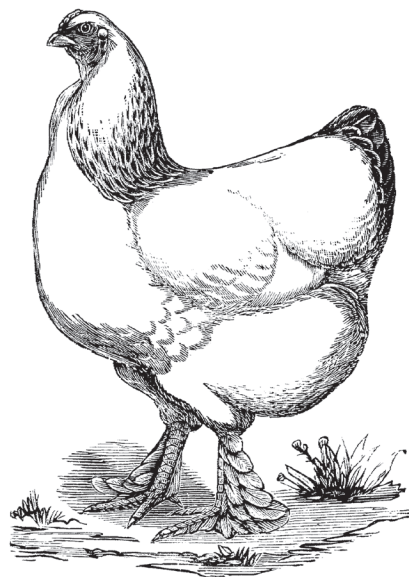
- 1 roasting chicken, about 4 pounds
- 2 teaspoons sea salt, or more as needed
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper, or more as needed
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

For the salsa verde:

- 1 bunch scallions, trimmed, white and light green parts thinly sliced
- 2 cups loosely packed herbs (mint, dill, chives, etc.), finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Zest and juice from a medium lemon
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon yellow mustard seeds

1. Remove any giblets from the main cavity of the chicken as well as any large pieces of fat around the opening.
2. Dry-brine the chicken: Place the chicken on a rimmed baking sheet. Season it generously, inside and out, with salt and black pepper. Refrigerate, uncovered, for 12 to 24 hours. Transfer to a rack in a shallow roasting pan. (Line the roasting pan with foil for easier cleanup.) Tie the legs together with butcher's string.
3. When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 450°F for at least 30 minutes. Place the chicken in the roasting pan on the middle shelf of the oven and roast for 50 to 60 minutes, or until an instant-read meat thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the thigh registers 165°F. Let the chicken rest for 20 minutes (uncovered).
4. In the meantime, in a bowl combine the scallions, herbs, garlic, lemon (zest and juice), olive oil, salt, pepper, and mustard seeds. Taste, adding more salt, pepper, lemon juice, etc., to the mixture. It should be highly seasoned. Carve the chicken and serve with the salsa verde.

Serves 2 to 3 — Recipe adapted from notwithoutsalt.com



DRY-BRINED PEPPERED FILETS MIGNONS WITH CUTTING BOARD SAUCE

Feel free to substitute rib-eyes, T-bones, Porterhouses, pork chops, or even skirt steaks for filets mignons. (Cooking times may change, however.) You will love the way the olive oil-enhanced sauce complements the meat.

For the meat:

4 filet mignon steaks (each 6 to 8 ounces and at least 1 1/2 to 2 inches thick)
Coarse salt (sea or kosher)
1/2 cup cracked black peppercorns, spread out in a shallow bowl

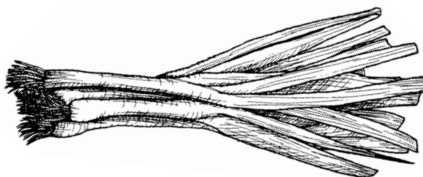
For the cutting board sauce:

1 clove garlic, peeled
1/2 cup stemmed flat-leaf parsley or other fresh herbs
2 scallions, trimmed
1 red jalapeño or serrano pepper
Coarse salt (sea or kosher) and freshly ground black pepper
1/3 cup best-quality extra virgin olive oil, in a small bowl



1. Arrange the filets mignons in a baking dish. Generously salt each on both sides. Dry-brine the steaks in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour, uncovered, turning them once.
2. Set up your grill for direct grilling and heat to medium-high. (Or use a stove-top grill pan.) Brush or scrape the grill grate clean and oil it well.
3. Dip each filet mignon in cracked black pepper to crust the top and bottom. Arrange the steaks on the grill grate. Grill for 1 1/2 minutes, then give each steak a quarter turn, to lay on a crosshatch of grill marks. When the bottom is sizzling and browned (you may see beads of blood start to form on the top), turn the steaks and grill the other side the same way. Grill the steaks on the sides, too, to expose all surfaces to the heat.
4. You'll need about 3 minutes per side for rare (120° to 125°F); 4 minutes per side for medium-rare (130° to 135°F); 5 minutes per side for medium (140° to 145°F). Use an instant-read thermometer inserted through the side of the steak to check for doneness.
5. In the meantime, make the cutting board sauce: Working on a large cutting board with a well (a juice-catching groove usually around the periphery), finely chop the garlic and parsley. Thinly slice the scallions (both white and green parts) and the pepper crosswise. Season generously with salt and pepper and pour half the olive oil on top. Mix with the blade of the knife.
6. Remove the hot filets mignons from the grill and lay them directly on top of the ingredients on the cutting board. Cut each steak with downward strokes of the knife into 1/4-inch-thick slices. (There is no need to let the meat rest.) Pour the remaining olive oil over the sliced steaks and toss on the board with a spoon and the blade of the knife: The idea is to coat the steak slices with herbs and oil and mix them with the meat juices. Add salt and pepper to taste. The whole process should take less than a minute. Transfer to a platter or plates and serve at once.

Serves 4 — Recipe adapted from *Project Fire* by Steven Raichlen (Workman, 2018)



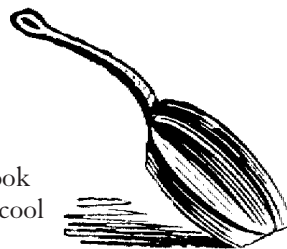
BROCCOLI RABE WITH CHILE AND GARLIC

Blanching in salted water before sautéing takes some of the bitterness out of broccoli rabe.

- Kosher salt
- 1 bunch broccoli rabe
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, or more to taste

1. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil. Working in 2 batches, cook the broccoli rabe just until bright green, about 10 seconds. Drain and let cool slightly. Squeeze excess liquid from the broccoli rabe and coarsely chop.
2. Cook the garlic and 1/4 cup olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat, swirling the skillet occasionally, until the garlic is just beginning to brown around the edges, about 3 minutes. Add the broccoli rabe and red pepper flakes and cook, tossing occasionally, until tender, 6 to 8 minutes; season with salt. Serve broccoli rabe drizzled with more olive oil.

Serves 4 — Recipe from bonappetit.com



OLIVE OIL CHOCOLATE CAKE WITH CHOCOLATE GANACHE

This moist cake proves chocolate and olive oil have an affinity for each other. On its own, the cake itself is vegan, as it contains no eggs or dairy. You can leave off the ganache and simply serve the cake with a dusting of powdered sugar and a few raspberries.

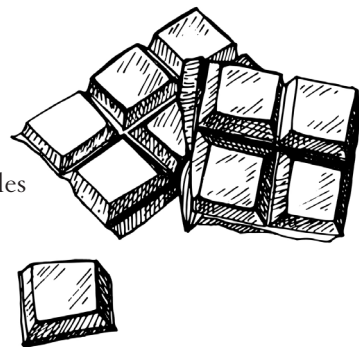
For the cake:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon espresso powder
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

- 2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cups cold water

For the ganache:

- 12 ounces good semisweet chocolate chips
- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee granules
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla



1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9 x 13 inch baking pan lightly with cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Make the cake: In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, salt, and espresso powder.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the vinegar, vanilla, olive oil and water. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and whisk until fully combined. Pour into the prepared pan.
4. Bake for about 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few moist crumbs. Set aside on a rack to cool.
5. Make the ganache: In a small saucepan, combine the chocolate, heavy cream, and instant coffee granules in the top of a double boiler. Heat over simmering water, stirring until smooth and glossy. Remove from the heat and add the vanilla. Pour the ganache over the cake and spread evenly.

Serves 12 — Recipe adapted from themerchantbaker.com

Kudos from Club Members

Hello! I just got my first bottle within the past week or so, and my wife immediately set up a double-blind taste test for me (using numbers hidden under each plate to identify which was which). She bakes fresh artisanal breads whenever she has a snow day (she's a teacher), and we wanted to see how four different olive oils might compete against one another by dipping the fresh-baked bread in each of the four oils. These oils were all labeled as EVOO, and all were well within their "consume by" dates. The four were a big ol' jug from Costco, Bragg (Greece), Thrive (Italy), and the Pruneti (Tuscan blend), from the Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club. I was actually blindfolded, so I couldn't even see what difference there might be in color, consistency, etc. We added nothing, not even salt, to the oils or the bread before tasting.

I expected to not really be able to tell much difference, as I'm no connoisseur, and also because I've heard that even experts perform miserably on double-blind taste tests, rarely able to distinguish super-gourmet from run-of-the-mill, whether for wine, olive oil, or anything else. The first one I tried was very good, the second was a bit more bland but still good, and the third indistinguishable from the second. Then the fourth one blew my mind with how much better it was than all of the others, and in fact better than any I've ever tasted—and I've lived in Spain and traveled extensively in olive-growing regions in Italy. We had basically expected a 3-way tie for first between Bragg, Thrive, and the Fresh-Pressed oil, with the Costco far behind, but instead we had one oil far ahead, with the other three far behind.

Well, it turned out that the stellar one was in fact the Pruneti, the Bragg placed a distant second, and quite surprisingly, Thrive was indistinguishable from the Costco. So, very nicely done—we're excited to be new club members, and look forward to the next shipment!

—Mike H., Bethesda, MD

NOTE: If you'd like to share your comments about our fresh-pressed olive oils, we'd love to hear from you! Please email your comments to MemberServices@FreshPressedOliveOil.com.



HOSTING AN OLIVE OIL TASTING PARTY

You'll need tasting glasses for each guest, one for each oil. Wine glasses or shot glasses work well, though professional tasters use small, lidded, dark glasses to conceal the oils' color and concentrate their aromas. Offer water (sparkling and still) and, if desired, slices of green apple to clear the palate between tastes.

Pour a small amount of oil into a glass. Cover the top with one hand, and swirl the oil with the other to warm and aerate the oil. Next, remove your hand and immediately bring the oil right up to your nose. Inhale deeply. Record or articulate your impressions. Does the oil smell fruity? Vegetal? Herby or grassy? These are common descriptors.

Taste the oil. Does it have a pleasant viscosity, or is it heavy and mouth-coating? What flavors do you discern? Does the oil seem well-balanced, or is it bitter or astringent? Is a peppery pinch evident on the finish? Do the flavors linger in your mouth, or is the finish short? Most importantly, do you like the oil?

To continue the tasting, offer the oils again with a variety of foods such as bread, cheese, meat, potatoes, and vegetables to illustrate the effect they have on the oils, or incorporate the oils into your dinner menu.

