

Types of Cooking Fats and Oils - Smoking Points of Fats and Oils

Not all fats are the same. Following are some basics on the various types of fats to help you make sense of what is best for your own body.

Saturated Fats:

Saturated fats are mainly animal fats and are solid at room temperature. These fats include butter, cheese, whole milk, ice cream, egg yolks, lard and fatty meats. Some plants fats are also high in saturated fats such as coconut oil and palm oils. Saturated fats raise blood cholesterol more than any other food you eat. By using the right oils and fats for the right reasons, you can preserve the healthful benefits. Your foods will not only taste their best, but also be healthy.

Unsaturated Fats:

These fats can come from both animal and plant products. There are three (3) types:

1. **Monounsaturated Fats** - Usually come from seeds or nuts such as avocado, olive, peanut, and canola oils. These fats are liquid at room temperature.
2. **Polyunsaturated Fats** - Usually come from vegetables, seeds, or nuts such as corn, safflower, sunflower, soybean, cotton seed, and sesame seeds oils. These fats are liquid at room temperature.
3. **Trans Fatty Acids** - Trans fats are produced when liquid oil is made into a solid fat, such as shortening or margarine. This process is called hydrogenation. Trans fats act like saturated fats and can raise your cholesterol level.

Based on the above classification, the ideal cooking oil should contain higher amounts of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, with a minimal or no saturated fats and trans fats.

Different fats and oils have different uses. Each performs best within a certain range of temperature. Some are made for high heat cooking, while others have intense flavors that are best enjoyed by drizzling directly on food.

The **smoke point** of an oil or fat is the temperature at which it gives off smoke. The smoke point of oil depends to a very large extent on its purity and age at the time of measurement.

Fats or Oils	Description	Cooking Uses	Type of Fat	Smoke Point °F	Smoke Point °C
Almond Oil	Has a subtle toasted almond aroma and flavor.	Used in sauté and stir fry of Oriental foods.	Monounsaturated	420°F	216°C
Avocado Oil	Vibrant green in color with a soft nutty taste and a mild avocado	Stir frying, searing	Monounsaturated	520°F	271°C

	<p>aroma. This is a very healthy oil with a profile similar to olive oil. This oil can be used for very high temperature applications.</p>				
Butter	<p>Whole butter is a mix of fats, milk solids, and moisture derived by churning cream until the oil droplets stick together and can be separated out.</p>	<p>Baking, cooking</p>	<p>Saturated</p>	<p>350°F</p>	<p>177°C</p>
Butter (Ghee), clarified	<p>Ghee has a higher smoke point than butter since clarification eliminates the milk solids (which burn at lower temps).</p>	<p>Frying, sautéing</p>	<p>Saturated</p>	<p>375-485°F (depending on purity)</p>	<p>190-250°C (depending on purity),</p>
Canola Oil (Rapeseed oil)	<p>A light, golden-colored oil.</p>	<p>Good all-purpose oil. Used in salads and cooking.</p>	<p>Monounsaturated</p>	<p>400°F</p>	<p>204°C</p>
Coconut Oil	<p>A heavy nearly colorless oil extracted from fresh coconuts.</p>	<p>coatings, confectionary, shortening</p>	<p>Saturated</p>	<p>350°F</p>	<p>177°C</p>

Corn Oil	A mild, medium-yellow color refined oil. Made from the germ of the corn kernel.	Frying, salad dressings, shortening	Polyunsaturated	450°F	232°C
Cottonseed Oil	Pale-yellow oil that is extracted from the seed of the cotton plant.	Margarine, salad dressings, shortening. Also used for frying.	Polyunsaturated	420°F	216°C
Grapeseed Oil	Light, medium-yellow oil that is a by-product of wine making.	Excellent choice of cooking oil for sautéing or frying. Also used in salad dressings.	Polyunsaturated	392°F	200°C
Hazelnut Oil	The nuts are ground and roasted and then pressed in a hydraulic press to extract the delicate oil.	Salad dressings, marinades and baked goods.	Monounsaturated	430°F	221°C
Lard	The white solid or semi-solid rendered fat of a hog. This was once the most popular cooking and baking fat, but has been replaced by vegetable shortenings.	Baking and frying	Saturated	370°F	182 °C

Macadamia Nut Oil	This oil is cold pressed from the decadent macadamia nut, extracting a light oil similar in quality to the finest extra virgin olive oil.	Saute, pan fry, sear, deep fry, stir fry, grill, broil, baking.	Monounsaturated	390°F	199 °C
Olive Oil	Oils vary in weight and may be pale yellow to deep green depending on fruit used and processing.	cooking, salad dressings, saute, pan fry, sear, deep fry, stir fry, grill, broil, baking	Monounsaturated	Extra Virgin - 320°F Virgin - 420°F Pomace - 460°F Extra Light - 468°F	160°C 216°C 238°C 242°C
Palm Oil	A yellowish-orange fatty oil obtained especially from the crushed nuts of an African palm.	Cooking, flavoring	Saturated	446°F	230°C
Peanut Oil	Pale yellow refined oil with a very subtle scent and flavor. Made from pressed steam-cooked peanuts. Used primarily in Asian cooking.	Frying, cooking, salad dressings	Monounsaturated	450°F	232°C
Rice Bran Oil	Rice bran oil is produced from the rice	Frying, sauté, salad dressings, baking,	Monounsaturated	490°F	254°C

	bran, which is removed from the grain of rice as it is processed.	dipping oils			
Safflower Oil	A golden color with a light texture. Made from the seeds of safflowers.	Margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressings	Polyunsaturated	450°F	232°C
Sesame Oil	Comes in two types - a light, very mild Middle Eastern type and a darker Asian type pressed from toasted sesame seeds.	Cooking, salad dressings	Polyunsaturated	410°F	232°C
Shortening, Vegetable	Blended oil solidified using various processes, including whipping in air and hydrogenation . May have real or artificial butter flavor added.	Baking, frying	Saturated	360°F	182 °C
Soybean Oil	A fairly heavy oil with a pronounced flavor and aroma.	Margarine, salad dressings, shortening	Polyunsaturated	450°F	232°C
Sunflower Oil	A light odorless and	Cooking, margarine, salad	Polyunsaturated	450°F	232°C

	nearly flavorless oil pressed from sunflower seeds. Pale yellow.	dressings, shortening			
Vegetable Oil	Made by blending several different refined oils. Designed to have a mild flavor and a high smoke point.	Cooking, salad dressings	Polyunsaturated		
Walnut Oil	Medium-yellow oil with a nutty flavor and aroma. More perishable than most other oils.	Saute, pan fry, sear, deep fry, stir fry, grill, broil	Monounsaturated	400°F	204°C