



## KNOW YOUR COOKING OILS



Consumers are learning the importance of having fat in their diets, especially from healthy fat sources that provide omega fatty acids. The days of low-fat fad dieting are long gone! However, not all fats are created equal and it is important to realize which ones are beneficial to your health and which ones can be detrimental. The USDA states that 20-35% of your daily caloric intake should come from fat sources.

There are three primary groups of fats: saturated, trans-fats, and unsaturated.

**Saturated fats** are found in animal products and include items such as butter and lard. A saturated fat can be identified easily if it becomes solid at room temperature. These are fats that should be consumed occasionally because of their effect on LDL cholesterol levels, which is only of concern if you eat a typical Western diet. The foods that contain the most saturated fats are butter, lard (rendered animal fat), ghee (clarified butter), fatty meats, factory-raised (CAFO) meats, sausages, full-fat milk and cream products such as ice cream, sour cream, dairy creamer, and cheese (particularly hard cheeses), potato chips, coconut oil, palm oil, biscuits, pastries, cakes and chocolates. Saturated fats are necessary for

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hormone regulation, liver health, the integrity of cell membranes and bone health. The USDA recommends that less than ten percent of your calories should come from saturated fat sources.

**Trans-fats** are “man-made” fats and by far the worst fat source to consume. They offer no nutritional value and eating them increases your risk for heart disease and other preventable illnesses. Look for trans-fats in baked goods and in fast foods. Avoid all butter substitutes, pre-packaged foods, baked goods (desserts, crackers, chips, cold breakfast cereals) containing butter substitutes and shortening, ramen noodles, some canned soups, most fast foods, restaurant pancakes, and frozen processed meals such as fruit pies, grab-n-go snacks, and pot pies. The more convenient it is to eat on the run, and when you cannot find an expiration date on the package, it’s likely to be loaded with trans-fats. The body does not have any need for trans fats and they are detrimental to your health. Try to minimize consumption as much as possible.

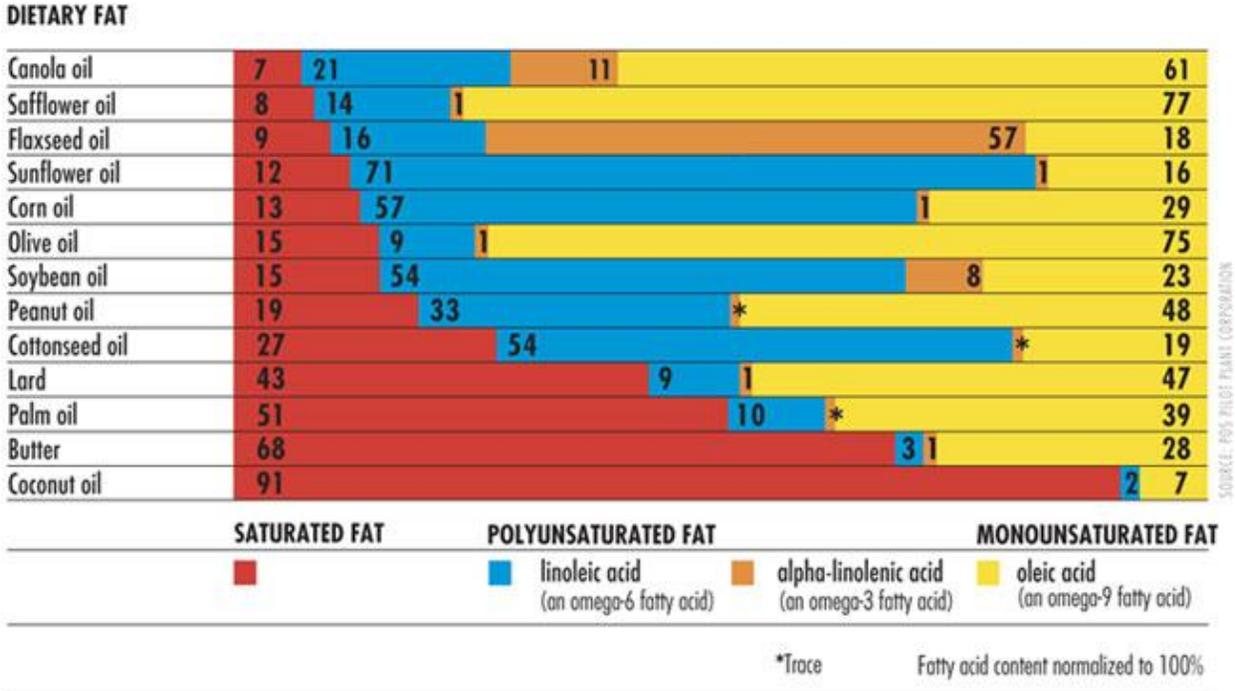
**Unsaturated fats** include mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated fats which come from natural plant sources including nuts and nut butters, seeds, olives, some fish sources, soy beans, and the oils of corn, olive, peanut and canola. These fats offer a wide variety of benefits by providing Omega–3 fatty acids.

Omeegas support brain health, aid in the prevention of disease, fight inflammation within the body, lower blood pressure, and promote healthy hair, skin, and nails. Omega-3 fatty acids are the most beneficial while Omega’s -6 and -9 have been shown to have ill effects on the body in high amounts. You do need Omega -6 and -9, but in better balance (less) than the standard Western diet. It is advised to cut back on oils of corn, sunflower, soybean, and canola while increasing or maintaining consumption of walnuts, flaxseed, green leafy vegetables, wild-caught salmon, mackerel, anchovies, or supplementation with fish or flax seed oil.

Most restaurants and fast-food chains use corn-based oil which are considered the worst for human health (and ruinous to the environment when grown in now-

typical monoculture environments). The average American gets 1/3 of their total calories from restaurants, so this is a concern. The daily recommended intake of fats will be dependent on your medical history, current health status, activity level, and individual caloric needs. However, the USDA claims that less than 10% of your daily food consumption should be from saturated fats. The Harvard School of Public Health recommends a goal for monounsaturated fats of between 10 to 25 percent of your calories each day and 8 to 10 percent of your calories per day from polyunsaturated. The amount in grams for these recommendations will depend on your overall caloric needs and consumption.

### Comparison of Dietary Fats



**Grape Seed Oil** is a plant oil that can be used for baking, sautéing, stir-frying or as a base for salad dressings. It offers many benefits and is a much healthier choice than other types of cooking oils. It has a high smoke point, is light and has a neutral taste so it is an ideal oil for cooking. Grape seed oil is very rich in vitamins and healthy omega-3, 6 and 9 fatty acids and vitamins E, C, and A. These [www.SustainableLivingProject.net](http://www.SustainableLivingProject.net)

particular **vitamins** are known as “anti-oxidants” which means they fight free radical damage in the body that is caused by oxidative stress. In addition, its polyunsaturated fat content can help improve cholesterol levels. Comparatively, grape seed oil is similar to olive oil in its nutritional make up but because it can withstand higher cooking temperatures, it may be more suitable for cooking.

## **Benefits and Concerns of Raw versus Heated Oils**

The nutritional value of cooked oils depends on their raw nutritional value and their resistance to high heats. Some oils have a higher heating point than others which protects them from oxidative damage resulting from the cooking process. It is always the most nutritious to consume oils in their raw state to take advantage of their healthy fats. The longer time and higher heats you cook your oils at, the more those healthy fats are broken down and no longer can be utilized within your body. Oils with a low heating point such as olive oil are best to be used in salad dressing or as a garnish to your food after it has been cooked to consume as many healthy fats as possible. Oils containing more saturated fats will have higher heating points making them optimal for cooking however they do not offer the same nutritional benefits as unsaturated oils. One oil that has a high heat and is filled with healthy fats is grape seed oil. If using oils with low heating points to cook with, try to cook them as quickly as possible to reduce the loss of their nutrients.

# The Cooking Oil Comparison Chart

Learn the science behind this chart: <http://bit.ly/oilchart>

