

## On the International Day of the Olive Tree: European Olive Oil from Spain is not only healthy, but also good for the climate

*Berlin, 26th November 2020 – When you see an olive tree, you probably immediately think of holidays, sunshine and delicious Mediterranean food. For this year's Olive Tree Day, Olive Oils from Spain reminds us of the "liquid gold" that is extracted from the fruit of the olive tree, European Olive Oil from Spain. It has long been regarded as superfood and our kitchens can no longer be imagined without it. Olive oil promotes health and the cultivation of the many gnarled trees in Spain is also good for the climate.*

Europe is the largest producer of olive oil in the world. Spain, where the trees have been cultivated for over 3,000 years, is therefore considered the world leader in olive oil it produces around half of all the oil on the planet. In order to keep the many olive groves with the partly very old trees productive, the country has been relying on innovations for decades. This involves not only increasing productivity and quality, but also a firm commitment to a more sustainable crop model.

Almost a third of the olive groves area in Spain is cultivated using environmentally friendly cultivation techniques. Some 201,000 hectares of this olive grove are organic, the first permanent organic crop in the country.

### **The large olive groves bind greenhouse gases and are therefore good for the climate**

Climate change, its effects and the role of olive growing are issues also addressed by "Olive Oils from Spain". As part of a European pilot project for olive oil, the association esteems the environmental footprint of olive oil. The result: the Spanish crop has a positive effect on our climate because it captures a large amount of greenhouse gases.

By the way, sustainability is also increasingly close to the hearts of consumers. This is shown by a survey among European consumers\*: 80 percent of them said they were careful to buy only environmentally friendly products. The decision to buy is only topped by quality and price.

### **Olive oil-containing cuisine is an intangible UNESCO World Heritage**

The positive health effect of olive oil on people has been known for a long time. The Mediterranean diet, whose basic ingredient is olive oil, has even been declared an intangible heritage of mankind by UNESCO. So, there is no doubt that olive oil is one of the healthiest foods in the world. But how beneficial the so-called liquid gold of Spain actually is for a healthy lifestyle is hardly emphasized in the trade.

### Olive oil works in three different ways to promote health in our body:

- Substituting saturated fats for unsaturated ones in the diet, such as the oleic acid in olive oil, reduces the level of cholesterol in the blood, a clear risk factor for cardiovascular disease. "Olive oil therefore lowers cholesterol levels enormously and thus prevents cardiovascular diseases", says Dr. José López Miranda, Professor at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Córdoba and Director of the Department of Clinical Management of Internal Medicine at the Reina Sofía University Hospital in Córdoba.
- The polyphenols in olive oil protect the blood lipids from oxidative damage. "The oil protects the LDL (low density lipoprotein) particles from oxidation, preventing them from depositing these cholesterol particles in our arteries", says Dr. López Miranda. So, with around 20 grams of virgin olive oil a day, you can prevent cardiovascular diseases. The most widespread type of olive oil, *Picual*, has 9 milligrams of polyphenols per 20 grams.
- The vitamin E in olive oil protects the cells. "We now know that the vitamin E contained in olive oil not only protects against 'bad' cholesterol, but also protects our vascular walls from decay," says Dr. López Miranda. "This effect also prevents the development of cardiovascular diseases."

\* Eurobarometer survey „ATTITUDES OF EUROPEANS TOWARDS BUILDING THE SINGLE MARKET FOR GREEN PRODUCTS“

[https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/flash/fl\\_367\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/flash/fl_367_en.pdf)

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Please also find corresponding image material under the following link: <https://we.tl/t-VrHpiIGE6p>

#### About Olive Oils from Spain and the Olive Oil World Tour

Olive Oils from Spain is the promotional brand of the Spanish Olive Oil Interprofessional, a non-profit organization formed by all representative associations of the Spanish olive oil sector. Its main objective is to promote and disseminate the healthy product olive oil at international level. With the campaign "Olive Oil World Tour", the organization aims to make the world a more tasteful place and encourages consumers worldwide to join the European way of life (Join the European Healthy Lifestyle with Olive Oils from Spain.) The campaign is supported by the European Union.

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