

The 7 Wonders of Olive Oil

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The 7 Wonders of Olive Oil uses a conversational style to explore the virtues of olive oil, in particular extra virgin olive oil. The authors' enthusiasm for the flavours and health benefits of this natural juice is evident in every page.

The book is divided into three parts: the first gives a brief history of the use of olive oil in the Mediterranean Diet and an overview of the current state of the industry; the second presents an anthology of research into the health benefits; part 3 deals with the practicality of purchasing and using extra virgin olive oil.

Part 2 is the spine of the book describing the 7 wonderful ways in which olive oil has an impact on metabolism and consequently on some of the most common ailments experienced by humans. Research supporting the health benefits is well articulated and case studies personalise each disease. As a male I do note that the case studies are almost exclusively female and coverage of male ailments such as prostate cancer would provide some gender balance and broaden interest.

Part 2 is strong, gives a useful summary of research and alone justifies adding this book to your olive oil library.

Part one, while giving a broad view of the world olive oil industry, could give more insight by analysing the current status of olive oil compared to other vegetable oils. Realistic analysis would reveal that per capita consumption in almost all countries is declining. Perhaps less reliance on the view of the International Olive Council and more interviews with the commercial side of the industry would be more revealing. To enjoy the health benefits of olive oil, consumers must be able to access and afford it.

Part three describes how to taste and describe the flavours of extra virgin olive oil and gives hints on what to purchase. The use in the kitchen comprises mainly a series of recipes. Here, or in the chapter on health benefits, the interaction of olive oil with particular ingredients, such as tomatoes and fish, of the Mediterranean diet could be discussed in more detail.

The book ends with a quiz, a useful glossary and a comprehensive list of references.

The authors have taken on a formidable task in covering the 7 (Health) Wonders of olive oil and providing enough objective backgrounding. Their style is engaging and their enthusiasm evident in achieving this aim. The book will be a welcome addition to any library or collection of books on olive oil.

Simon Field
Extra Virgin Olive Oil Savantes
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