



Ontario Home Economics Association

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Ask a Professional Home Economist

For Immediate Release

Flavoured Oils

by Ellie Topp, P.H.Ec.

Create a Superb Oil Safely

Flavoured oils enjoy a special place on our tables as a great way to enhance the taste of many foods. And a little goes a long way. Just a few drops of these delectable condiments will liven up a marinade, enhance the dressing for a salad, or make a low-fat topping for veggies.

These versatile oils are not at all difficult to make, but it is important to take care in their preparation. Oils made with fresh ingredients such as garlic or herbs must be prepared and stored properly to ensure that there is no risk of botulism. The organism responsible, *Clostridium botulinum*, is found in the soil and can find its way into many foods. But it is seldom a concern as there are few conditions in which it can grow. However, whenever a fresh food is immersed in oil and kept at room temperature, the food provides enough moisture to enable the organism to grow and produce a potentially fatal toxin.

The safest and easiest way to transfer the flavour found in such foods as herbs, garlic cloves or chili peppers is to heat the oil with the ingredient at a low oven temperature for a specified time. This allows the flavour of the food to be infused with the oil and the water to be evaporated off. Be wary of instructions for making flavoured oils using fresh produce where the oil is not heated. It is essential that the water be driven out of the vegetable in the oil to ensure a safe product.

Either canola or olive oil can be used, although canola has the advantage of staying liquid when refrigerated and has a milder taste than does olive oil. A two-cup (500 mL) glass measuring cup works well for heating the oil. The handle is convenient for removing the cup from the oven and the spout allows for easy pouring. Alternatively, a 28 oz (796 mL) tin can, the size commonly used for canned tomatoes, works well. After heating, the finished oil should be clear and the vegetables well browned. A cloudy appearance after the oil is strained or a separate layer at the bottom of the bottle indicates that moisture is still present in the oil. Either heat the oil until it becomes clear, or refrigerate it and use within a week. When the oil has cooled, it is important to

keep it refrigerated at all times and to use it within one month. Then enjoy the flavour the oil can bring to your table with no concerns about its safety.

Basil Oil with Lemon provides an easy appetizer when served with small pieces of crusty French bread for dipping. And the Oil de Provence adds exquisite taste to a simple vinaigrette.

Basil Oil with Lemon

1 cup	canola or extra virgin olive oil	250 mL
8	leaves fresh basil	8
2	strips lemon rind, about 1/2 x 3 inches (1 x 7.5 cm)	2
2	cloves garlic, peeled	2

1. Place oil, basil, lemon rind, and garlic in a 2 cup (500 mL) glass measuring cup or a 28 oz (796 mL) tin can that has been washed, dried and the label removed. Set container on a pie plate. Bake in a 300°F (150°C) oven for 90 minutes or until the basil is blackened and crisp. Remove to a rack to cool for 30 minutes.

2. Line a small strainer with a coffee filter or several layers of cheesecloth. Strain oil into a clean glass jar, cover and store in the refrigerator at all times. Use within a month.

Makes about 1 cup (250 mL).

Oil de Provence

1 cup	canola or extra virgin olive oil	250 mL
2	strips fresh orange rind	2
2	thinly sliced shallots	2
1	bay leaf	1
1 tbsp	chopped fresh thyme leaves or 1 tsp (5 mL) dried	15 mL
1 tsp	fennel seeds	5 mL

1. Place oil, orange rind, shallots, bay leaf, thyme and fennel seeds in a 2 cup (500 mL) glass measuring cup or a 28 oz (796 mL) tin can that has been washed, dried and the label removed. Set container on a pie plate. Bake in a 300° F (150° C) oven for 90 minutes or until the shallots are blackened and crisp. Remove to a rack to cool for 30 minutes.

2. Line a small strainer with a coffee filter or several layers of cheesecloth. Strain oil into a clean glass jar, cover and store in the refrigerator at all times. Use within a month.

Makes about 1 cup (250 mL).

Ellie Topp is a Professional Home Economist and certified culinary professional with a graduate degree in experimental foods. She is the author of several cookbooks including *Healthy Home Cooking* and *The Complete Book of Year-Round Small-Batch Preserving*, co-authored with Margaret Howard, RD, P.H.Ec. Ellie co-authored *Savoury Wisdom, Delicious Healthy Recipes for Two* with Suzanne Hendricks, RD. Look for Ellie's regular column in *Forever Young*.

The Ontario Home Economics Association, a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life.

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