



FOODMatch

the **OLIVE**
PRIMER





The Gift of the Olive

So much of Mediterranean culture can be traced back to the olive, a simple fruit that is not only the culinary foundation of antiquity, but has also become a symbol of peace and prosperity.

Legend has it that Zeus held a contest between Athena and Poseidon to see who could produce the most valuable gift to mankind. The winner would have a new city named after them. With great force, Poseidon threw his trident against the rock of the Acropolis. A spring shot forth but the water was salty. Then Athena, kneeling, put her staff into the ground and an olive tree sprang up, laden with fruit. Zeus ruled that the olive tree was the most valuable gift and the new city was named Athens in honor of Athena. To this day, a lone olive tree sits on top of the Acropolis to symbolize Athena's gift.

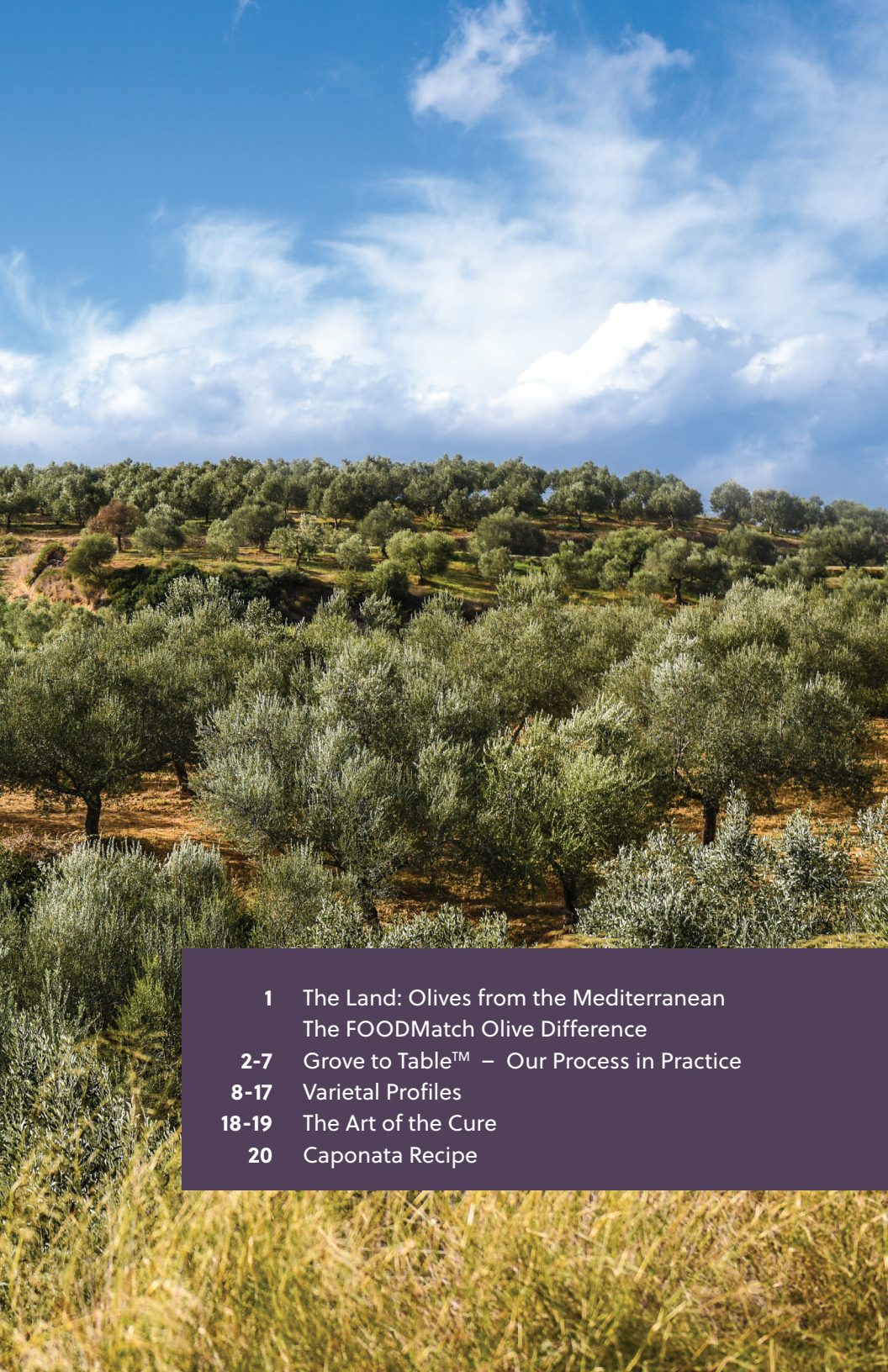
Nature confirms that the olive is truly a gift to mankind. Unlike many other fruit trees, the olive propagates through its roots. Its fruit, the olive, has no real biological value to the tree. Yet, for thousands of years, the olive has been a source of sustenance for mankind.

I founded FOODMatch in 1996 to share the culinary culture of the Mediterranean with America. To us, that rich heritage has no greater symbol than the humble olive.

A handwritten signature in dark purple ink, reading "Phil Melton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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Terroir

(French) The taste of a place; the complete natural environment in which a particular ingredient is produced, including factors such as the soil, topography, and climate.



THE LAND: OLIVES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN

So how does terroir impact the taste of an olive? And why is the Mediterranean the premier region for growing the ancient fruit? The olive, similar to the grape (wine) or bean (coffee, chocolate) develops its flavor and style from its surroundings. Soil, terrain and climate all harmonize to create a given olive varietal's unique characteristics.

Olive trees cannot thrive in any environment. They have a propensity for warm, subtropical climates, dry rocky limestone soil and salty sea breezes – all found in abundance along the Mediterranean.

THE FOODMATCH OLIVE DIFFERENCE

TRADITION

- Hand-harvested using traditional methods whenever possible
- Cured in brine to preserve true flavor and texture

RESPONSIBILITY

- Crafted with clean & simple ingredients
- Transparency and traceability from Grove to Table™
- Advocate of small-scale agriculture and biodiversity

TASTE

- Artfully cured to draw out the authentic flavor
- Expertly hand-stuffed and marinated to add bold, innovative flavor
- The true taste of the Mediterranean

FROM GROVE TO TABLE™

IN 5 ARTFUL STEPS

1 | HARVESTING

Traditionally, olives are picked by hand. As the olive matures on the vine, a grower will return to the tree several times over the course of weeks to pick each piece of fruit when it perfectly ripe. Time consuming? You bet. But well worth it in the end. Whenever possible (and that's most of the time), this is how our olives are picked.

Olives take 4-5 months to develop on the tree and over this time transition from green, to blonde, to purple/black. Olives truly are like any other piece of seasonal produce that has a growing season and a perfect moment when the fruit is at peak ripeness.

2 | SORTING

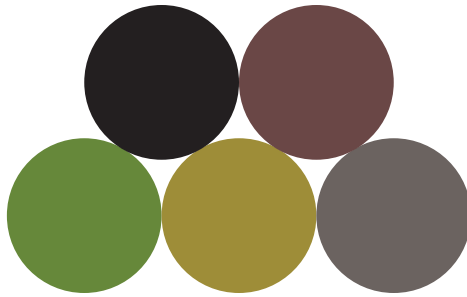
After picking, the raw olives are sorted for size, shape and defects. Smaller olives may be used for oil or tapenades. Olives with bruised skin or any defects will be discarded. The rest of the harvest is ready to be cured as table olives.



Divina Kalamata Harvest

FROM GROVE TO TABLE™

in 5 ARTFUL STEPS



3 | CURING

Off the tree, olives are inedible and exceptionally bitter. Curing, which can take up to 6 months depending on the varietal, is widely considered the “art form” of the olive craft.

Curing describes the process that reduces the level of oleuropein (a compound found in olive skin, flesh and seeds), softening the natural bitterness that is naturally present in olives. Yeast and other flora that are naturally present on the olives and in the air gradually consume the bitter compound and allow the olives to develop their signature brininess and individual flavor profiles.

● UNFERMENTED (GREEN)

Considered to be the most labor intensive of all curing styles (unfermented and refrigerated at each step of production and transport to maintain freshness), the results are well worth the effort. Unfermented olive varieties are renowned for their vibrant, bright, fresh and buttery profile. **Signature Varietals: Lucque, Picholine, Castelvetro, Frescatrano™.**

● OXIDIZED (BLACK)

Picked green and oxidized until black. This is the “childhood” olive that you may remember putting on your fingers or a take-out pizza. These olives are mild, fruity and slightly nutty. **Signature Varietals: Cerignola, Greek Ripe Black.**

● FERMENTED (GREEN)

Generally a longer cure (4-6 months) to reduce the natural bitterness and develop its optimal flavor, these classic green olives are often herbaceous, tangy and nutty. **Signature Varietals: Halkidiki (Mt. Athos), Cerignola, Ascolana, Beldi.**

● FERMENTED (MATURE)

These darker olives are considered “late harvest” and are left on the tree to turn blonde, pink, purple or deep brown. The olives are cured in salt water and typically taste fruity, sharp and smoky. **Signature Varietals: Kalamata, Niçoise, Itrana (Gaeta).**

● SALT CURED

A denser texture and less moist than a typical olive, these are cured outside, often in barrels of salt with a little bit of oil to draw out the water from the fruit. Oil or salt cured olives are deeply fruity and concentrated with notes of licorice, stone fruit and tobacco. **Signature Varietals: Thassos, Black Beldi.**

FROM GROVE TO TABLE™

IN 5 ARTFUL STEPS

4 | FINISHING

Once the olives are cured, they are ready to be finished. Some olives will remain whole, with pits. Others will simply be pitted and then packed for shipment. Many more will be stuffed or marinated.

The love is in the details. Divina stuffed olives are hand-stuffed with signature ingredients like Greek Feta and Florina peppers. Our Greek Olive Mix is mixed by hand to prevent bruising and marinated lightly with Greek herbs. Finally, a bay leaf or two is added by hand. These extra touches are important. It is a testament to tradition and a focus on quality above speed.

5 | PACKAGING

The final stop before the olives reach your table is when they are packed and shipped. Our olives go through a host of final safety checks before being packaged and marked with best-by dates and lot codes. The lot codes allow us to trace every shipment back to where it originated. It's peace of mind that we pay attention to every detail, small and large.



VARIETAL *profiles*

BELDI

Moroccan Beldi olives are most famously sold in “Souqs,” the large markets in towns like Marrakesh and Fez that line the streets with vast displays of olives, spices, preserved lemons and other specialties stacked in high pyramids, awaiting the daily rush of locals. Green Beldi are typically mild, meaty and firm while Black Beldi (oil cured) are glossy, wrinkly, fruity and dense.

CAILLETIER (Niçoise)

In France, the Cailletier varietal olive is certified under three geographic designations: AOC Huile d’Olive de Nice, AOC Olive de Nice, and AOC Pâte d’Olive de Nice. More simply, it is the varietal name of the authentic Niçoise. The Olive de Nice has been awarded PDO (protected designation of origin) status and stands out from similar Spanish varieties due to its color (tan/brown) and flavor (smoky, fruity).

CASSÉES DES BAUX

Cracked and cured with fennel, these buttery and aromatic olives were awarded France’s distinguished AOC designation to preserve its authenticity. Cassées des Baux are exclusively grown and harvested in Provence’s Vallée des Baux.

CASTELVETRANO

Are Castelvetroano naturally bright green? The short answer is yes. Native to the town of Castelvetroano, these vibrant olives are naturally brighter than most green olives directly off the tree. To lock in the vibrant color, the olives are cured without fermentation and only (if ever) leave refrigeration when packaged. Often referred to as a “starter olive” due to its fresh, mild, and sweet flavor profile, Castelvetroano olives are the perfect choice to serve with cocktails at a large gathering.



Beldi



Castelvetro

VARIETAL *profiles*

CERIGNOLA

Bella di Cerignola means “the beautiful one from Cerignola” in Italian. From the Puglia region, these large, vibrant and meaty olives are naturally found in two colors: green (mild and buttery) and black (nutty and fruity).

FRESCATRANO™

Exclusive to Divina, the Frescatrano™ is a Greek Halkidiki olive gently cured without fermentation. Sweet, fresh tasting, mild and vividly bright, the Frescatrano™ is the first-of-its kind in Greece to be offered in this challenging curing style.

GAETA (ITRANA)

South of Rome along the rolling hills of Central Italy is where Gaeta olives (Itrana varietal) are grown and harvested. One of Italy’s most popular olives for snacking and oil production, the Gaeta is known for a deeply smoky and earthy flavor. Gaeta olives are DOP certified in Italy, which ensures that artisan ingredients are locally grown and packaged.

GORDAL

Grown and harvested on the Peloponnese peninsula in Greece, the name Gordal translates to “the fat one,” which goes a long way to explain this varietal’s impressive size and flavor. We feature them as one of the five core varietals in our Greek Olive Mix.



VARIETAL *profiles*

HALKIDKI (MT. ATHOS)

The peninsula of Halkidiki is dotted with centuries-old Greek Orthodox monasteries. One-third of the peninsula is occupied by Mount Athos, a famous tenth-century monastery. These hills, descending to the Aegean Sea, are the ideal terroir for growing olives. Halkidiki olives are herbal, fruity and peppery. Their meaty texture and large size also make them ideal for stuffing with cheese, veggies, fruit or nuts.

KALAMATA

Arguably the most well-known olive varietal (certainly in Greece), authentic Kalamata olives are distinguished for their deep purple (eggplant/aubergine) color and pointed tip. Often imitated but never replicated, Kalamata are beloved for their fruity and smoky flavor profile often compared to a complex red wine. Divina Kalamata are primarily harvested either in the Western Peloponnese region (Sparta, Messenia, Laconia) or Central Greece (Livanata). The olives are harvested and cured in the winter and spring before making their way to the US each summer.

LUCQUE

Lovingly referred to as “Green Diamonds,” (the gem of Provence), these distinct, crescent-shaped French olives are widely loved for their buttery, sweet and nutty flavor profile and their crisp, meaty texture. The unmistakable bright green color of the Lucque is a result of being picked early in October when the weather is cool before being cured in small batches.

MANTEQUILLA DE MURCIA

Estate-grown in Southern Spain, these Ocal varietal olives truly live up to their namesake boasting a smooth, rich, warm, buttery taste.



Kalamata, Halkidiki, Gordal, Mt. Pelion & Nafplion

VARIETAL *profiles*

AMFISSA (MT. PELION)

Grown and harvested on the western slopes of Greece, an area renowned for its rich soil and natural springs, Mt. Pelion (Conservolea) olives are plump, juicy and flavorful with slight hints of minerality. Harvested at three stages of ripeness (green, blonde and black), we feature the blonde as one of the five core varieties in our Greek Olive Mix.

NAFLION

This variety comes from the Northeast coast of the Peloponnese Peninsula in Greece. Small in stature but big in flavor, the Nafplion is bright green with a nutty and aromatic flavor profile. We feature them as one of the 5 core varieties in our Greek Olive Mix.

NIÇOISE-COQUILLO

The close cousin of the Cailletier (authentic Niçoise), Coquillo olives from Spain are petit, smoky and fruity. While most of Spain's olives are used for olive oil, Coquillo's have remained a popular table olive. Coquillo trees mostly grow in the Murcia region of southern Spain, along the Mediterranean coast. Visually you can differentiate the Coquillo from the Cailletier due to its color – typically a deep eggplant purple and dark brown.



Niçoise-Coquillo

VARIETAL *profiles*

NYONS

The terroir around Nyons in France is the furthest north olives can be grown in the country. Oil-cured, Nyons are plump and wrinkled. They are meatier than the Niçoise, aromatic and fruity. While Niçoise are France's best-known olives, some consider those of Nyons to be the country's finest. As such, they have also been granted PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) status.

PICHOLINE

The "Picholine de Languedoc" from the region of Provence are a truly spectacular olive, distinguished for their oblong shape and crisp, floral flavor. It may be a challenge to hunt down a true Picholine as typical crop yields are small, but once you taste them, there's no going back. A true French Picholine is unmistakable—crescent-shaped, mossy green, firm and juicy.

THASSOS

Thassos are considered a national treasure in Greece and have been honored under the EU's Protection Designation de Origin (PDO) system. Rich and succulent, the olives are salt-cured in beds of nutrient-rich sea salt and named after the Greek island in the northern Aegean Sea where they are grown.



the **ART** OF THE CURE:



**Unfermented
Green**

Bright, vibrant,
emerald green

Unpasteurized and
refrigerated at each
step of production
and shipping to
maintain freshness

Castelvetrano,
Lucque, Picholine,
Frescatrano,
Mantequilla

Fresh, Buttery, Mild,
Sweet, Crisp

Brie, Burrata,
Manchego, Ricotta,
Goat, Comté



**Oxidized
Black**

Black

Picked green and
oxidized until
black. This is your
"childhood" olive.

Black Cerignola,
Greek "Ripe" Black

Mild, Fruity, Subtle

Fontina, Goat, Ricotta



**Fermented
Green**

Grassy green

Generally cured 4-6
months to reduce
the natural bitterness
and develop optimal
texture/flavor

Green Cerignola, Mt.
Athos Green, Green
Beldi, Ascolana,
Sevillano, Cassées des
Baux, Nafplion

Buttery, Herbal,
Tangy, Nutty

Jarlsberg, Cheddar,
Taleggio, Halloumi,
Bonne Bouche,
Monterrey Jack

HOW OLIVES DEVELOP THEIR FLAVOR



**Fermented Mature
(Blonde/Brine Cured)**

Blonde, tan, pink,
light brown

Darker, "late harvest"
olives that are cured
4-6 months in salted
water

Amfissa (Mt. Pelion),
Gordal

Fruity, Sharp, Nutty

Goat, Feta, Halloumi



**Fermented Mature
(Brine Cured)**

Deep eggplant/
purple, dark brown

Darker, "late harvest"
olives that are cured
4-6 months in salted
water

Kalamata, Niçoise,
Itrana (Gaeta),
Alfonso

Smoky, Fruity, Sharp,
Notes of red wine

Feta, Parmigiano-
Reggiano, Blue,
Pecorino



**Fermented Mature
(Dry/Salt Cured)**

Black

Denser texture and
less moist than typical
olives because the salt
cure draws out water
from the fruit

Black Beldi, Thassos,
Black Dry-Cured

Deeply fruity, Bold,
concentrated, Notes
of licorice, stone fruits
and tobacco

Blue, Gorgonzola,
Gruyère

CAPONATA RECIPE

(makes about 8 cups)

Make a generous batch of this chunky, olive-studded, Sicilian eggplant antipasto to have on hand—you'll be set for the week. It makes a wonderful lunch served with sliced prosciutto or any of the great Italian salami along with hard-boiled eggs, or spoon it over poached fish or chicken.

2 large eggplants, cut into 1-inch cubes
¼ cup kosher salt
½ cup red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon sugar
¼ cup dried currants or raisins
¾ cup olive oil
3 stalks celery, cut into large dice
1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
4 anchovy fillets, chopped
One 28-ounce can whole, peeled plum tomatoes, quartered
1 cup large green olives, pitted and halved
2 tablespoons capers, drained
1 bay leaf
Freshly ground black pepper

Toss the eggplant with the salt in a colander and let sit for about 1 hour to drain out the bitter liquid. Combine the vinegar and sugar in a small bowl. Add the currants and set aside to plump.

Pat the eggplant dry with paper towels. Heat ½ cup of the olive oil in a heavy, wide pot over medium-high heat. Working in batches, fry the eggplant until browned all over, about 10 minutes. Transfer the eggplant with a slotted spatula to a bowl.

Add the remaining ¼ cup olive oil, the celery, and the onions to the pot. Cook over medium heat until just soft, about 10 minutes. Stir in the anchovies. Add the tomatoes with their juices, the olives, capers, and bay leaf. Return the eggplant to the pot. Stir in the currants and vinegar. Simmer, stirring gently and often, until the juices thicken a bit, 10–15 minutes. Season with pepper. Refrigerate for at least one day and up to one week. Remove the bay leaf before serving.





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