



Pressing Report of The Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club

Spring 2020, Spanish and Portuguese Harvest

T. J. Robinson
The Olive Oil Hunter®

From the Iberian Peninsula to Your Table— Presenting Three Spectacular Extra Virgin Olive Oils from Spain and Portugal!

- ✦ Bursting with healthful polyphenols, all have been rushed to you by jet at their peak of flavor and nutritive value.
- ✦ All have been certified by an independent lab to be 100 percent extra virgin.
- ✦ Feature these dazzling EVOOs in regional recipes specially chosen to showcase their vibrant flavors.
- ✦ All are Club exclusives, hand-selected by the Olive Oil Hunter, including a blend of rare Portuguese varieties grown nowhere else on Earth.

Dear Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club Member,

As the Olive Oil Hunter, I identify with seekers in life and in literature. And when I'm in Spain, my quest is inspired by the figure of Don Quixote: the enduring knight errant who, accompanied by his trusty sidekick, Sancho Panza, journeys through the world, encountering real and imagined adversaries as well as forces beyond his control. Do I, like Cervantes' iconic hero, tilt at windmills, believing them to be monsters? Sure. There are certainly olive farms I could call "windmills"—those that taunt me with the promise of liquid gold yet leave me empty-handed. Through it all, my Merry Band of Tasters travel by my side, offering their plentiful wisdom, humor, excellent navigational skills, and discriminating palates.



The true object of Don Quixote's quest is never made known to the reader. With me, however, things are not quite so mysterious: as my Club members know,

(continued next page)

In This Issue

Spring Pressing Report.....	1
Tasting Notes of This Quarter's Three Oils.....	4
Olive Oil & Your Health	11
New Recipes.....	12
A Cordial Invitation.....	20
Hosting an Olive Oil Tasting Party	20

I'm searching for the finest, freshest olive oils on Earth.

From Antiquity to Ubiquity

Spain is the world's leading producer of olive oil. Carpeted with an estimated 215 million olive trees (more than a quarter of the world's olive acreage), Spain produces about 40 percent of the olive oil consumed on the planet. The majority of that production is from Andalusia—specifically, from the province of Jaén (an area about the size of the state of Connecticut), which by itself yields more olive oil than either Italy or Greece.



Cumprimentos de Portugal! Greetings from the terraced vineyards of the Madeira family, in the mountainous Alto Douro region. These gifted and motivated artisans produce internationally acclaimed wines and almonds alongside their exemplary extra virgin olive oil, pressed from rare, indigenous Portuguese cultivars.

Spain has been an olive oil powerhouse for thousands of years, assisted by Portugal to its west. (The two countries cleave to form the fist-shaped Iberian Peninsula.) On Caesar's orders, the city of Rome imported most of its olive oil from Iberia. Many thousands of clay amphorae full of olive oil were transported via boats from Iberian olive mills to the ports of ancient Rome.

Over the centuries, Arabic influences in southern Spain improved production techniques and introduced new olive varieties, as well as the modern terms for olive oil: *aceite* (Spanish) and *azeite* (Portuguese) come directly from the Arabic term for “olive juice,” *al-zayt*.

Quality, Not Quantity

Today, olive oil courses through every aspect of Spanish culture, shaping its landscape, cuisine, and economy. Portugal, for its part, is undergoing a 21st-century transformation, as super high-density olive groves (with trees planted very close together) and advanced milling techniques have dramatically increased the olive oil output, especially in the southern region of the country. Currently ninth in the world, Portugal could rise by 2030 to be the third largest olive oil producer, even edging out Greece.

These advances in Portuguese olive oil production are exciting, especially if they result in raising the bar across the board, but my relationships are with the artisanal farmers who prize

quality over quantity. In particular, I want to champion those growers working to preserve the unique, indigenous Portuguese olive varieties, which are at risk of being crowded out in favor of more prolific, popular Spanish cultivars.

Mother Nature's Wrath

Without Mother Nature's cooperation, though, none of this can happen. She was not kind to Iberia this harvest, hinting at a great season early on, with high yields and high quality, then dashing hopes with damaging weather patterns—a very hot autumn that gave way to rain. This combination left many producers with low yields and low quality, as the conditions were initially too hot to harvest, and then too wet. Jaén, the main producing region, was able to designate only 20 percent of its oil as extra virgin.

To find three superlative oils I knew I'd have to be strategic, drawing on the relationships I've cultivated over the years with savvy and conscientious producers whose crops would transcend the trials of this season. But first, some food!

Paella Pit Stop

Upon landing in Madrid, I headed for the central *mercado* to meet up with Arantxa Lamas, a Cordon Bleu-trained chef and internationally celebrated foodie. Mutual friends had connected us from afar, and we were excited to cook together before I set out on my quest. After selecting beautiful produce and seafood from her favorite local vendors (I also picked up the most delectable jamon ibérico, for later noshing), we repaired to her apartment to prepare traditional paella. I was happy to put my chef skills to the test, relieved that I can still prep vegetables like a pro. We shared a laugh over the recent outcry that greeted celebrity chef Jamie Oliver when he posted a photo of his paella containing chorizo: sausage is a big choriz-NO if you're looking to be authentic.

Arantxa was thrilled to hear me describe the Club and applauded our efforts to educate Americans about the extraordinary health benefits and tantalizing flavors of fresh-pressed olive oil. If you can believe it, she was almost as excited about polyphenols as I am.



In Madrid I prepared a delectable meal alongside Arantxa Lamas, a Cordon Bleu-trained chef. With gorgeous seasonal produce and fresh seafood from a local market, we whipped up a tapa of mushrooms in garlic and traditional paella, using plenty of ultra-flavorful fresh-pressed olive oil. Arantxa and I both agreed that olive oil is as essential to Spanish cuisine as water. I hope you'll try your harvest-fresh Club selections in these dishes and other tantalizing recipes, starting on page 12.

Don Quixote Strikes Gold

Fueled for the adventure ahead, my Merry Band of Tasters and I hit the trail. We started in the Guadalquivir River Valley in Jaén, at the lauded farm of Francisco "Paco" Vaño. A longtime friend of the Club and a perennial award-winning producer—Paco's oils just received an outstanding "perfect 100" from the olive oil bible *Flos Olei*—he took an ingenious route

around the stultifying heat: his team harvested at night in order to deliver cool fruit to the mill. (Heat degrades the fruit, destroying its aromas and flavors, if the olives are not pressed quickly after picking.)

Paco and I collaborated on a complex, robust blend to secure the bold selection for this season's trio.

Next, I was delighted to revisit the spirited collective of producers at Aroden, in the picturesque region of Priego de Córdoba. This dedicated, talented young team has won my heart with their earnest energy and my palate with their fantastic single-varietal Hojiblanco.

The final leg of our journey took us to northeastern Portugal, to the steep and gnarled forests of the Alto Douro region. Here, the Madeira family creates exquisite oils from rare and unique Portuguese olive varieties you'll encounter nowhere else on Earth.

Your humble knight lays these treasures at your feet.

Read on to learn more about the incredible artisans who created these beauties. You'll also find mouth-watering recipes to showcase this liquid gold on your dining table, starting on page 12. I can't wait for you to taste these spectacular oils!

Happy drizzling!



T. J. Robinson
The Olive Oil Hunter®

P. S. Cold weather may cause cloudiness in your bottles of olive oil. Pay it no heed, as this has no effect on quality or flavor. Simply bring your oils to room temperature and most of this cloudiness should disappear. For best results, always store your oil in a cool, dark place, preferably in a cabinet away from heat and light.

This Quarter's First Selection

Producer: Maria de Lourdes, Filipe de Albuquerque Madeira, Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Portugal

Olive Varieties: Negrinha, Madural, Verdeal, Cobrançosa

Flavor Profile: Mild

When I tell my Club members that I travel to the ends of the earth in my quest for the finest olive oils, it's no exaggeration. Ancient Romans believed that Portugal's southwestern-most point, at Sagres, was the end of the world, rocky cliffs that dropped down to a hissing ocean with

monsters in its depths, the place where the sun sank into the sea.

About 4 hours north and 50 miles inland lies the province of Trás-os-Montes, whose name means "beyond the mountains." Here, in the remote Alto Douro region, the Madeira family has defied expectations to become one of the finest olive oil producers in the world.

Two decades ago, Celso Madeira, an acclaimed engineer, announced to his children that in his retirement he aspired to produce premium olive oil on the family's land in the



Alto Douro countryside. At that point the ancient olive trees—some up to 900 years old—were untended, and nobody in the family knew the first thing about producing olive oil anymore. One of Celso’s sons, Filipe, put his university education on hold and returned home to immerse himself in the practices of producing premium EVOO.

A quick study and meticulous, caring manager, Filipe transformed the overgrown, mossy groves into a first-class olive farm, with technologically advanced and temperature-controlled pressing facilities. The Madeiras’ oils rose rapidly to dominate national olive oil contests, including a five-award sweep of Portugal’s OLIVOMOURA competition with their very first entry. Their trees represent rare, indigenous Portuguese olive varieties grown nowhere else on Earth.



Here I am, sandwiched between two generations of Portuguese pride. Over two decades Celso Madeira and his son Filipe have transformed what was an abandoned, ancient olive grove on their family’s land into a thriving, award-winning boutique farm. At age eighty-six, patriarch Celso continues to look toward the future—during my visit, he proclaimed excitedly that he’d recently purchased new parcels of land. He turned to a surprised Filipe and announced, “Your job is to plant the trees.”

I was thrilled when advance word from my scouts indicated that the Madeiras anticipated an excellent harvest. Over the years I have developed a warm friendship with 86-year-old Celso and Filipe, and a visit to their grove and gracious home is always on my itinerary. But Mother Nature calls the shots from year to year.

In Alto Douro the olives must be picked by hand, and the trees receive water from rainfall or not at all. The rugged, mountainous terrain is not rocky or sandy, like Mediterranean terroir; it is made of schist (*xixto*, in Portuguese), a flaky, metallic volcanic rock that traps water between its layers. A plant’s roots must burrow down and break through layers of schist in order to reach the moisture.

Because of these challenges, production costs in Alto Douro total about six times more than elsewhere. Thus the Madeiras focus solely on quality, not quantity. Their recent acquisition of an advanced Mori olive crusher (using knives rather than the more traditional hammer) has more than paid off—this year their oils were the best I’ve ever experienced from this grove.

Filipe and his team had to work strategically and quickly this season. Early predictions of “the best vintage ever” were defied when heavy rains in the middle of the spring disturbed the pollination process, reducing the number of blossoms (and, consequently, the volume of olives). Their production would only be about 40 percent of the expected harvest. The summer was very dry. (“We had no water,” Filipe reported, in an understatement.) Sometimes, though, as veteran Club members know, periods of water deprivation and stress to the olive trees can produce more intense flavors and aromas in the fruit, which works to your benefit.

Filipe and his team harvested early to avert the impending ripening of the fruit and ran the mill 24 hours a day for 25 days straight. The effort was worth it. Having savored the oils from this farm for several years, I can proclaim this a breakout season—one that takes their product from world-class to “out of this world.” Filipe, Celso, and their team are so excited for you to taste this oil—a beguiling and verdant blend of unique Portuguese cultivars. In honor of Filipe’s mother, we are presenting this Club exclusive with the label Maria de Lourdes, featuring the family crest.

Clearly, there shall be no resting on laurels for this family. During my visit Celso announced that he had just bought more land. “We must work for the future,” he insisted, inspiring me with his passion. “We must plant trees for the future.”

Impressions and Recommended Food Pairings:

Green, grassy, and alluring on the nose, presenting green tomato, basil, thyme, fennel, celery, and mixed salad greens punctuated by sweet hints of marzipan (almond paste), peppermint, and pear. In the mouth the flavor of green almonds blooms, along with nuances of tomato, basil, celery leaves, and mâche, The finish is deliciously long, revealing the palate-teasing pepperiness of arugula.

This oil complements a variety of foods: chicken, pork, turkey, and veal; codfish, halibut, swordfish, sea bass, lobster, mussels, and scallops; chicken, duck, or goose eggs; mild cheeses; breads; white beans; salads, especially those made with citrus or other fresh fruits, such as a spinach salad with pear, goat cheese, and walnuts or almonds; rice or simple pasta dishes; asparagus, green beans, fennel, okra, mushrooms, peas, and potatoes. Use it to make quick breads or drizzle it over yogurt, vanilla ice cream, pound cake with fruit, or chocolate mousse.



This part of Portugal looks like J. R. R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth—rugged and timeless. Some of these trees on the Madeira family’s farm, in the Trás-os-Montes province, are 900 years old, planted during the time of the Holy Roman Empire. They were producing olives when Magellan circumnavigated the globe. And now you can savor an exquisite extra virgin oil pressed from their fruit. These enchanting olive varieties are unique to Portugal—they are cultivated nowhere else on the planet.

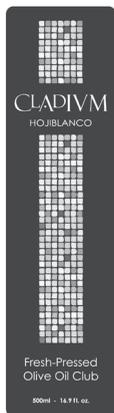
This Quarter’s Second Selection

Producer: Cladium, Finca Aroden España, Priego de Córdoba, Andalusia, Spain

Olive Varieties: Hojiblanca

Flavor Profile: Medium

Restaurante Rio’s main dining room in the whitewashed Andalusian town of Priego de Córdoba didn’t open for lunch for another 30 minutes, so our party—there to celebrate my selection this quarter of Aroden’s Hojiblanca as the Club’s medium olive oil—was directed to the lower bar-like level, an atmospheric room with, I was amused to note, a gumball-style vending machine stocked with roasted marcona almonds. Within minutes, we were served small glasses of cold beer, called cañas, and



appetizer portions of crisp zucchini batons fried in olive oil. We promptly ordered another round of beers to get seconds of that “you-can’t-eat-just-one” zucchini. (It’s a myth that you can’t use olive oil for frying. One of the town’s signature products is olive oil-fried potato chips. We always pick up a few bags for the road.)

While we noshed, a parade of elderly people filed in and seated themselves—men at one table, women at another. They, too, ordered the diminutive beers. It was a Tuesday, but they were dressed in their Sunday best. We surmised the convivial gathering was a well-established ritual, not a one-off special occasion. The group was still there when we reluctantly left the restaurant. I learned a new Spanish word that day: *sobremesa*. It has no English equivalent, but the term refers to the delightful time (minutes or hours) you spend at the table after you’ve finished eating, enjoying the afterglow of the meal and especially, the company. I love the concept.

The mood at our table, where we passed a bottle of Aroden’s aromatic just-pressed Hojiblanco, was festive, too. Not expecting to be selected for the Club for the second harvest year in a row, the small co-op’s general manager, Luis Torres, and business manager, Clara Isabel Parejas, were over the moon. The inclusion of their enticing single varietal in this quarter’s trio of olive oils is a testament to the team’s maturing skills and consistency. To underscore the point, Cladium was recently named one of the world’s top ten olive oils by *Evooleum*, a highly-respected guide published in Spanish and English by Mercacei.

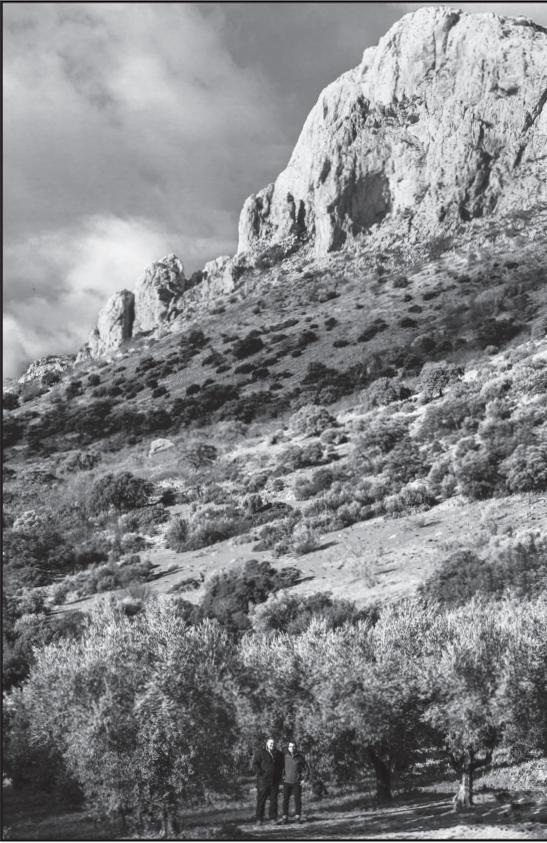


Cristobal Gámiz, right, president of the small co-op Aroden, can trace ownership of the family olive groves in Priego de Córdoba to the thirteenth century, when they were acquired by a Basque ancestor, Miguel Gámiz. Also pictured is Aroden general manager Luis Torres, who oversees the operation. He and Cristobal are thrilled that Club members will be able to enjoy fresh-pressed Cladium for the second year in a row.

Aroden’s home, the Sierras Subbéticas National Park, is breathtakingly beautiful, truly screenshot worthy. It covers over 73,000 magnificent acres. Thousands of olive trees cling tenaciously to the steep slopes of the Subbéticas mountain range. Some are hundreds of years old, their trunks as fissured as the limestone escarpments that loom above them. Eagles, falcons, and Griffon vultures nest on the craggy cliffs, their six-foot wingspans casting shadows on the landscape.

The rugged topography of the region has challenged generations of Iberian farmers going back to Neolithic times. One of Aroden’s five founding families, the Gámiz clan, can trace its land ownership in Priego de Córdoba to the thirteenth century, when their Basque ancestor, Miguel Gámiz, planted his first olive trees. I can picture him crushing his olives with millstones and pressing them between woven mats of native *esparto* grass.

How I wish Miguel could, through some miracle of time travel, taste the fabulous oils his



As you can imagine, harvesting olives on the steep and rugged slopes of the Sierras Subbéticas mountain range is challenging for both men and machines. (Tractors that transport the olives to the mill have to be fitted with special treads.) Aroden general manager Luis Torres routinely runs here, inspired by Mount Tiñosa, which he calls “the Magic Mountain.” Occasionally, he encounters Griffon vultures, peregrine falcons, and intimidating free-range bulls!

descendants and their partners in this small cooperative are producing today in their modern state-of-the-art mill. They built the facility—called an *almazara*—in 2002 to avoid dependence on the community mill. Initially, they pressed oil for their own use, selling any surplus to the bulk market. Then they realized their oil was exceptional—way too good to commingle with run-of-the-mill oils. In 2005, the co-op proudly introduced their premium bottled oil, Cladium.

This season’s harvest was trickier than the previous one, Luis said, requiring him and longtime mill supervisor Fernando Sánchez to be even more discerning than usual. Only three percent of the olives were worthy of Cladium’s stunning mosaic label. Most of olives were harvested from the foothills of Mt. Tiñosa, what Luis calls “the Magic Mountain.” At 5,740 feet, it’s the highest peak in the Sierras Subbéticas.

The mellifluous word Aroden is actually an acronym for *aromas de la naturaleza*, “scents of nature.” A very appropriate moniker given the enchanting olfactory profile of this extraordinary oil. (See my notes below.) CLADIVM—more precisely, *Cladium mariscus*—is the Latin name for a sawgrass-like plant that thrives on the site of the Aroden mill. The spelling (with a “V” replacing the “U”) pays graphic homage to the Romans, former occupiers of Córdoba. The region was, historians say, the empire’s favorite source of “liquid gold.” Perhaps it will be yours, too. Enjoy.

Impressions and Recommended Food Pairings: The hardy cultivar Hojiblanca, able to endure harsh winters and calcareous soils, was planted to satisfy Caesar’s writ demanding more Andalusian olive oil. Wheatgrass, fennel, celery, green apple, tropical fruit, citrus peel, vanilla, and Belgian endive consort with eucalyptus and green walnuts on the intoxicating nose. On the palate my tasters and I detected baby spinach, pear, celery leaf, and walnuts, with a bold and spicy finish, featuring notes of white pepper and arugula.

Reach for this lovely oil when these foods are on the menu or you need an uncomplicated sauce: lamb (chops or leg of lamb), game birds, chicken legs or thighs, veal shanks, rabbit; salmon, tuna, or whitefish; shrimp or fried anchovies; tomato bruschetta; gazpacho; aged cheeses like Manchego; country-style or whole grain breads; artichokes, broccoli, cauliflower, yams, and romanesco; chocolate; and sweet or savory baked goods.

This Quarter's Third Selection

Producer: Castillo de Canena, Selección Especial, Jaén, Andalucía, Spain

Olive Varieties: Picual

Flavor Profile: Bold

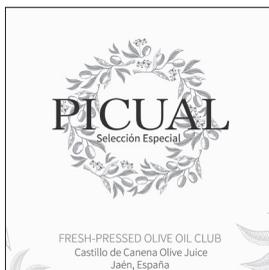
Francisco “Paco” Vañó recently shared some momentous news with me and my Merry Band of Tasters: the latest edition of *Flos Olei*, a guide to the world’s best olive oils, awarded his family-owned business, Castillo de Canena, 100 out of 100 points, one of only seven olive oil producers out of 500 worldwide to be named to the publication’s newly established Hall of Fame.

Olive oil expert and *Flos Olei* publisher Marco Oreggia says the perfect score—the equivalent of an Oscar in olive oil circles—is reserved for farms that have not only distinguished themselves in the various categories of the competition, but have achieved sustained growth and maintained “a stable goal of excellence.”

Castillo de Canena is very deserving of the recognition. I am so proud of Paco, my longtime friend, whom I consider to be one of the most capable, consistent, and well-respected ultra-premium olive oil producers I’ve met.

He has also proved himself to be an exemplary steward of the land that has been in the Vañó family since 1780. (The family home, an imposing fifteenth century castle overlooking the village of Canena, was named a National Monument in 1931.) Committed to biodiversity, the 3,700-acre farm hosts beehives, a large herd of sheep, and native wildlife. Five years ago, Castillo de Canena joined the Spanish Olive Groves Alive Project, and to date, has identified 114 species of birds on its property. (A color guide is in the works.) Last summer, two artificial vegetation-covered islands were floated in the farm’s large pond/water storage reservoir; they are expected to attract waterfowl and other nesting birds.

An important aside: perhaps you’ve heard that nighttime harvests were temporarily suspended in Andalusia and Portugal to protect migratory birds. The current ban applies *only* to groves that qualify as “super high-density.” SHD is the acronym used for olive groves laid out in compact trellis- or stake-supported rows. More common in the New World than the Old, they are harvested using special foliage-straddling equipment. Castillo de Canena is not subject to the restriction as their traditional groves are planted with several feet separating the canopies of the trees.



As usual, Paco Vañó and I had much to talk about during a celebratory lunch at Taberna El Pájaro (“the bird tavern”) in Baeza. He’s one of the most well-informed producers I know, and stays abreast of the latest news as it relates to olive oil. We also chat about the harvest’s specific challenges; planned improvements to the farm; family; and of course, food. If you someday find yourself at this restaurant, do not fail to order the peeled, crosshatch-cut tomato with oregano and finely diced onion in a pool of extra virgin olive oil. Anchovies optional.

We lunched, appropriately, at Taberna El Pájaro (“tavern of the bird”) in Baeza, one of Paco’s favorite local restaurants and a popular stop on Jaén’s official olive oil tour.

It was an excellent choice. My Merry Band of Tasters and I dined there on a previous visit and remembered well the kitchen’s tender pork *secreto* (a cut resembling skirt steak that we have encountered nowhere else), olive oil-soaked whole peeled tomato appetizer with finely diced onion and oregano, and luscious, velvety *crema Catalana* (brûléed custard).

Thrilled with the balanced and elegant Picual we custom-blended for Club members, I was surprised to hear Paco proclaim this season’s harvest “the toughest” of his life. My Merry Band and I exchanged knowing glances, because he almost always says that. Overall quality was very high, he affirmed, but yields were down about 10 percent. (Oils that don’t meet Paco’s unyielding standards are sold to the bulk market; he focuses his energies on ultra-premium oils.) An arid summer and unseasonably high temperatures accelerated the harvest, he said. To protect the olives’ flavors and aromas, he dispatched his skilled and experienced harvest teams between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. each day, recalling them around 1 p.m. The olives were pressed under strict temperature-controlled conditions.

Always open to innovation and new research, Castillo de Canena partnered this year with a Spanish company known for its expertise with table olives, each of which must be perfect when cured. Together, they developed a game-changing scanner that evaluates individual olives for ripeness and defects. Called EVOOolution, the prototype performed exceedingly well during tests and was used during the current harvest to vet olives used in the farm’s premium olive oils. In other planned improvements, the mill is undergoing a substantial renovation and expansion that will double its capacity. The addition of two milling lines featuring the state-of-the-art equipment will shave eight to ten days off the harvest period, minimizing the olives’ exposure to wind, rain, or frost. Paco looks forward to pressing four varieties at the same time, a real advantage when his test plots—recently planted with Italian and Syrian cultivars—mature.

The bold and beautiful Picual I’ve procured for you represents olive juice from three different plots. With 2,600 acres of Picual at varying altitudes, we could be incredibly choosy. Only the best fruit, harvested at its peak, was used to make this rare and exclusive blend.

Impressions and Recommended Food Pairings: Expect complex aromas when you open this assertive, vibrantly green blend of three Picuals. Rosemary, tomato leaf, parsley, wild fennel, kale, green banana, sage, cinnamon, and arugula rise from the tasting glass like a sassy culinary perfume. Unsurprisingly, it pulls no punches in the mouth, either, leading with intense flavors of green tomato and wheatgrass. Close behind, but in perfect harmonic step, are parsley, kale, arugula, green banana, and rosemary. You will notice the bitterness of Belgian endive and radicchio, along with a ginger-like spiciness.

Enjoy this oil with beef or game meats (especially grilled); oilier fish, such as mackerel or tuna; grilled octopus; tomato- or meat-sauced pasta dishes; herbed breads; paella and other savory rice dishes; fried eggs; cabbage, broccoli rabe, turnips, grilled fennel, rutabagas, Swiss chard, beets, grilled radicchio or Belgian endive; tomato salads, or salads featuring sturdy bitter greens; minestrone soup; Greek yogurt; and dark chocolate.



Study shows extra virgin olive oil staves off multiple forms of dementia in mice

Adapted from an article in *Science Codex* by the Temple University Health System, November 25, 2019
<https://www.sciencecodex.com/temple-study-shows-extra-virgin-olive-oil-staves-multiple-forms-dementia-mice-635541>

Boosting brain function is key to staving off the effects of aging. And if there was one thing every person should consider doing right now to keep their brain young, it is to add extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) to their diet, according to research by scientists at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University (LKSOM).

Previous LKSOM research on mice showed that EVOO preserves memory and protects the brain against Alzheimer's disease.

In a new study in mice published online in the journal *Aging Cell*, LKSOM scientists show that yet another group of aging-related diseases can be added to that list—tauopathies, which are characterized by the gradual buildup of an abnormal form of a protein called tau in the brain. This process leads to a decline in mental function, or dementia. The findings are the first to suggest that EVOO can defend against a specific type of mental decline linked to tauopathy known as frontotemporal dementia.

Alzheimer's disease is itself one form of dementia. It primarily affects the hippocampus—the memory storage center in the brain. Frontotemporal dementia affects the areas of the brain near the forehead and ears. Symptoms typically emerge between ages 40 and 65 and include changes in personality and behavior, difficulties with language and writing, and eventual deterioration of memory and ability to learn from prior experience.

Senior investigator Domenico Praticò, MD, describes the new work as supplying another piece in the story about EVOO's ability to ward off cognitive decline and to protect the junctions where neurons come together to exchange information, which are known as synapses.

“The realization that EVOO can protect the brain against different forms of dementia gives us an opportunity to learn more about the mechanisms through which it acts to support brain health,” he said.

In previous work using a mouse model, in which animals were destined to develop Alzheimer's disease, Dr. Praticò's team showed that EVOO supplied in the diet protected young mice from memory and learning impairment as they aged. Most notably, when the researchers looked at brain tissue from mice fed EVOO, they did not see features typical of cognitive decline, particularly amyloid plaques—sticky proteins that impair communication pathways between neurons in the brain. Rather, the animals' brains looked normal.

The team's new study shows that the same is true in the case of mice engineered to develop tauopathy. In these mice, normal tau protein turns defective and accumulates in the brain, forming harmful tau deposits, also called tangles. Tau deposits, similar to amyloid plaques in Alzheimer's disease, block neuron communication and thereby impair thinking and memory, resulting in frontotemporal dementia.

Tau mice were put on a diet supplemented with EVOO at a young age, comparable to about age 30 or 40 in humans. Six months later, when mice were the equivalent of age 60 in humans, tauopathy-prone animals experienced a 60 percent reduction in damaging tau deposits, compared to littermates that were not fed EVOO. Animals on the EVOO diet also performed better on memory and learning tests than animals deprived of EVOO.

Dr. Praticò and colleagues now plan to explore what happens when EVOO is fed to older animals that have begun to develop tau deposits and signs of cognitive decline, which more closely reflects the clinical scenario in humans.

Reference: Lauretti E, Nenov M, Dincer O, Iuliano L, Praticò D. Extra virgin olive oil improves synaptic activity, short-term elasticity, memory, and neuropathology in a tauopathy model. *Aging Cell*. 2020;19(1):e13076.

— RECIPES —

SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH ASPARAGUS (REVUELTO DE ESPÁRRAGOS)

This dish has long been a favorite of mine, good any time of day or night. In Spain, thin stalks of asparagus, called trigueros, are often used. Recently, I enjoyed a version that featured tender green beans instead of asparagus. Feel free to customize with your favorite egg-friendly ingredients.

2 garlic cloves, peeled and coarsely chopped
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
1 bunch asparagus, trimmed, stalks sliced into 1-inch lengths
1 teaspoon pimentón (Spanish smoked paprika),
or regular paprika
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
Sea salt
6 eggs, beaten
Freshly ground black pepper



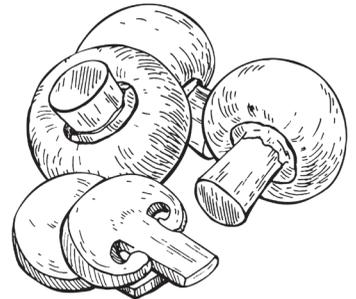
1. Heat the oil in a frying pan and sauté the asparagus over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add the garlic, pimentón, vinegar, and a pinch of salt; stir to combine. Cover and cook for 2 to 3 minutes more, or until the asparagus is tender.
2. Uncover the pan and pour in the eggs. Cook, stirring often, for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the eggs are almost cooked. Remove from the stovetop. (The perfect revuelto is creamy; do not let the eggs brown.) Season to taste with salt and pepper. Drizzle with additional olive oil and serve immediately.

Serves 2 to 3 — Recipe adapted from *The Food of Spain* (Bay Books, 2008)

MUSHROOMS IN GARLIC SAUCE

Madrid native and private cooking class instructor Arantxa Lamas, a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu, graciously shared with me her recipe for this much-loved dish. If you are interested in taking a class from Chef Lamas, you can contact her through her website, www.arantxalamas.com.

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 pound fresh mushrooms, trimmed, cleaned, and sliced
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
Pinch or two of cayenne pepper
Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper



Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and add the olive oil. When it's hot, add the mushrooms and sauté, stirring occasionally, until they begin to brown. Lower the heat to medium and add the garlic and half the parsley. Continue to cook until the mushrooms are tender and have released their liquid and the garlic has softened. Season with cayenne and salt and pepper. Sprinkle with the remaining parsley before serving.

Serves 2 — Recipe courtesy of chef Arantxa Lamas

FAVA BEAN SALAD WITH TOMATOES AND JAMÓN

The Iberian Peninsula treasures legumes of all varieties; they appear in some of Spain and Portugal's most popular dishes. Here, fava beans join red onion, garlic, and tomatoes in a colorful salad often served as a tapa. If you can't find fresh fava beans—which are admittedly a bit of a chore to shuck and peel—substitute edamame. All pair exquisitely well with fresh EVOO. For wine, I recommend a crisp Spanish white.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil | 1/2 teaspoon pimentón (smoked Spanish paprika) or regular paprika |
| 1 small onion, peeled and diced | 3 thin pieces of jamón serrano or prosciutto, torn into bite-size pieces |
| 4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced | Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper, to taste |
| 2 cups of shucked and peeled fresh fava beans | |
| 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice | |
| 1 medium heirloom tomato, diced | |

1. Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and sauté until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 to 2 minutes more, stirring frequently. Add the peeled fava beans, lemon juice, tomato, and smoked paprika. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes have broken down and the fava beans are tender.
2. Push the beans to one side of the pan to expose the bottom of the pan. Add the pieces of jamón to the bottom of the pan and fry for 1 minute, just long enough to crisp up. Mix the jamón into the beans and season to taste with salt and pepper.

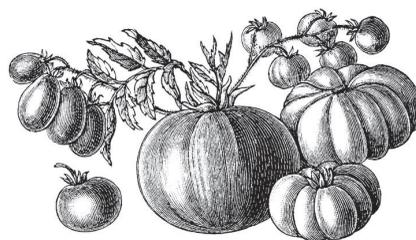


Serves 4 as a tapa — Recipe adapted from katieatthekitchendoor.com

GAZPACHO

Here's another great recipe I picked up from chef Arantxa Lamas during my time in Spain. It's keto-friendly, too—a plus in my book.

- 1 1/2 pounds ripe tomatoes, each cored and sliced into eighths
- 1 small onion, peeled and diced
- 1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded, and diced
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and diced
- 1 clove of garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons sherry vinegar, or more to taste
- Coarse salt (kosher or sea), to taste
- Optional garnishes: Finely diced red or green bell pepper, red or white onion, or cucumber



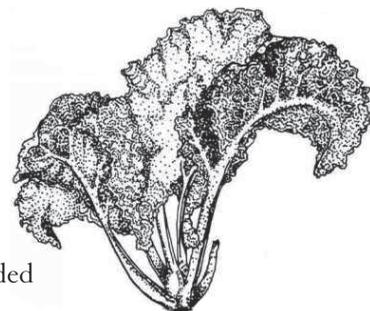
1. In a nonreactive mixing bowl, combine the tomatoes, onion, cucumber, bell pepper, garlic, olive oil, and vinegar. Stir to macerate the vegetables. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.
2. Use an immersion blender to puree the gazpacho. Strain through a food mill. Taste, adding more salt or vinegar, if needed. Cover and chill until serving time. Serve in chilled bowls with your choice of garnishes and a few drops of olive oil.

Serves 4 — Recipe courtesy of chef Arantxa Lamas

PORTUGUESE GREEN SOUP (CALDO VERDE)

I've eaten some of the best soups of my life in Portugal, where they are often served as a first course in homes and restaurants. Caldo verde is a classic. Substitute cauliflower florets or diced and peeled daikon radish for the potatoes if you are minimizing carbs. Be sure to anoint the soup with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil when you serve it.

- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 12 ounces smoked sausage such as kielbasa or chorizo, sliced into coins
- 2 to 4 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 large Spanish onion, peeled and diced
- 8 cups chicken or vegetable stock, water, or a combination
- 3 to 4 Yukon gold potatoes (about 1 pound), peeled and diced
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 pound kale or collard greens, stems discarded and leaves finely shredded



1. Heat the 3 tablespoons of olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven. Lightly brown the sausage over medium heat, turning as needed. Transfer to a platter and set aside. Add the garlic and onion and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion softens, about 8 minutes.
2. Add the broth, potatoes and a large pinch each of salt and pepper and bring to a boil. Simmer over medium-low heat until the potatoes are fall-apart tender, about 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Add the kale and simmer until it is wilted, about 3 minutes. Stir the reserved sausage and simmer for 10 minutes. Season the soup to taste with salt and pepper and serve in bowls. Provide extra olive oil for drizzling.

Serves 6 — Recipe courtesy of the Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club

PORTUGUESE BARBECUED CHICKEN (FRANGO NO CHURRASCO)

Centuries ago, the seafaring Portuguese established trade routes throughout the world, an endeavor that brought them into contact with many exotic foods. Among them was a potent little chile called piri-piri. Today, incendiary piri-piri sauce is a popular condiment in Portugal and on the African continent. If you can't find it in the international aisle of your local supermarket, it is available online.

- | | |
|---|--|
| One 3 1/2 to 4 pound chicken, preferably organic, giblets removed | 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil |
| 2 to 3 cloves garlic, peeled | 2 teaspoons piri-piri sauce or your favorite hot sauce, plus extra for serving |
| Sea salt | Freshly ground black pepper |
| 2 teaspoons paprika | Sprigs of parsley, for garnish |
| Juice of 1/2 lemon | Lemon wedges, for garnish |



1. Light a grill, set it up for indirect grilling, and preheat to medium-high. (Alternatively, the chicken can be roasted in a 400°F oven on a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet. Cooking time will be 45 to 50 minutes—the same as if the bird was grilled indirectly.)
2. Butterfly the chicken: Using a sharp knife or kitchen shears, remove the backbone from the bird. Turn the chicken skin side up and gently flatten it with the palm of your hand. Transfer to a rimmed sheet pan.

3. On a cutting board, smash the garlic cloves with the flat of a knife. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon of salt and mince the garlic to a paste. Add the garlic and salt to a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Add the paprika, lemon juice, extra virgin olive oil, and piri-piri sauce, cover, and shake vigorously. Pour about 2 tablespoons of the mixture over the chicken and use your hands to rub it on both sides. (You'll use the remainder as a baste after the chicken has cooked for 30 minutes.) Season the chicken with freshly ground black pepper.
4. Arrange the chicken skin-side up directly on the grill grate away from direct heat. Close the grill lid. After 30 minutes, baste the bird with the olive oil mixture. Replace the lid and continue to roast the chicken for 15 to 20 minutes more, basting once or twice, until the bird is golden brown and cooked through. (There is no need to flip the chicken as it's being grilled over indirect heat.) The internal temperature of the thickest part of the thigh should be 165°F when read on an instant-read thermometer.
5. Transfer the chicken to a clean sheet pan. Let it rest for 5 minutes before carving. Arrange on a platter or plates and garnish with parsley and lemon wedges. The dish is especially nice when served with rice and/or a green salad.

Serves 4 — Recipe adapted from bbcgoodfood.com

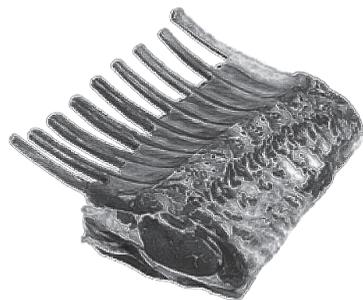
RACK OF LAMB WITH GARLIC AND ROSEMARY

The province of Aragon in northeastern Spain (between Barcelona and Madrid) is known for its lean and tender lamb. Lamb cooked in clay ovens is a specialty, in fact, of a Spanish restaurant chain called Asador de Aranda. In the meantime, satisfy your lamb cravings with this easy-to-prepare rack of lamb flavored with garlic, rosemary, and fresh extra virgin olive oil.

2 racks of lamb (each with 8 bones), frenched
 6 large cloves garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for serving
 1/4 cup fresh rosemary needles, plus extra sprigs for garnish
 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar or fresh lemon juice
 Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

1. Line a rimmed sheet pan or shallow roasting pan with foil.
2. In the bowl of a small food processor, combine the garlic, olive oil, rosemary, and balsamic vinegar. Pulse to finely chop the garlic and rosemary. Coat the lamb on all sides with the mixture. Season generously with salt and pepper.
3. Arrange the racks of lamb bone side down on the sheet pan or roasting pan. Allow the lamb to stand at room temperature for one hour.
4. Preheat the oven to 450°F and make sure the oven rack is in the middle. Roast the lamb for 20 to 25 minutes (for medium-rare), or until the internal temperature reads 125°F. (Roast the lamb longer if you prefer it more done.) Loosely cover the lamb with aluminum foil and allow it to rest for 15 minutes. Carve into individual chops before serving. Garnish with rosemary sprigs, if desired, and serve with additional olive oil.

Serves 6 — Recipe courtesy of the Fresh-Pressed Olive Oil Club

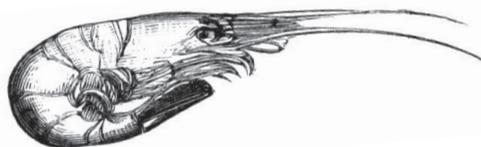
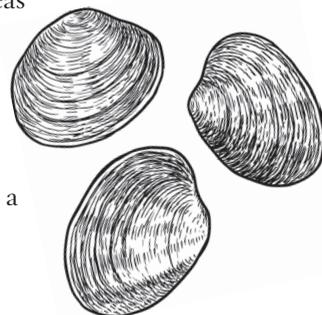


PAELLA

Food historians say that paella (literally, “pan”) first appeared near the coastal city of Valencia in the 18th century. It’s a festive meal, one I enjoyed preparing recently at a private cooking class in Madrid taught by chef Arantxa Lamas, a Le Cordon Bleu graduate. Though traditionally grilled, you can also cook it on your stovetop.

1/2 teaspoon saffron threads	4 to 5 cups chicken stock, preferably homemade, or more as needed
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil	Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper
1 medium Spanish onion, peeled and diced	8 skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs, about 1 1/2 pounds
1 red bell pepper, trimmed, cut into 2 by 1/4-inch strips	1/2 pound large, head-on shrimp or prawns
3 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley	12 mussels, scrubbed
1 ripe tomato, seeded and cut into 1/4 inch dice	1/4 cup cooked green peas
2 cups short grain rice, such as bomba, Calaspara, or arborio	
1/2 cup dry white wine, preferably Spanish	

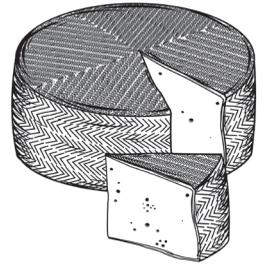
1. Place the saffron in a small bowl with 1 tablespoon warm water. Let it soak for 5 minutes.
2. Set up your grill for direct grilling and build a 3-zone fire. Ideally, you’d work on a large charcoal grill or gas grill. If working on a charcoal grill, toss a log or some wood chunks on the fire to generate smoke. If working on a gas grill, place wood chips (soaked in water for 30 minutes, then drained) in the smoker box or in a smoker pouch.
3. Place the paella pan over the hottest part of your fire and heat the olive oil. Add the onion and bell pepper and cook over high heat, stirring often, until the onions begin to brown, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic, parsley, and tomato halfway through (after 2 minutes). If the mixture starts to burn, slide the pan to a cooler part of the grill.
4. Stir in the rice and sauté until the grains look shiny and are coated with oil, 1 minute. Stir in the soaked saffron and wine and boil for 1 minute. Stir in 4 cups of stock and adjust the heat (by moving the paella pan closer or further away from hot part of the fire) to obtain a gentle simmer. Gently simmer the rice until soft, about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the remaining cup of stock if needed, and salt and pepper to taste. Season the chicken thighs and shrimp with salt and pepper.
5. Meanwhile, on another part of the fire, grill the chicken thighs, starting skin-side down. This will take 6 to 8 minutes per side, working over medium-high heat. Once the chicken thighs are browned and cooked through, add them to the paella. After about 12 minutes, place the mussels on the grate and grill until the shells pop open. Transfer the bivalves to the paella with tongs, taking care not to spill the juices. Brush and oil the grate and place the shrimp on the grate. Grill until firm, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Add the shrimp to the paella as well as the peas.
6. Taste the paella for seasoning, adding salt and pepper as needed. If you’ve cooked the paella properly, the rice will be tender just as all the stock is absorbed and the proteins are cooked. You may need to add more stock or you may need to cook the rice a little longer to absorb any excess stock. Don’t worry—your paella will only improve in the process. Serve at once, with a crisp dry Spanish wine such as an Albariño or Txakoli.



Serves 6 — Recipe adapted from *Project Fire with Steven Raichlen*, American Public Television

BIG-FLAVOR BROCCOLI WITH MANCHEGO

Reducing food waste is an objective we'd all do well to adopt. Part of the appeal of this recipe is its utilization of broccoli stems, which are often condemned to the trash or garbage disposal system. If you're not a fan of umami-rich anchovies or don't have them on hand, substitute 1/2 teaspoon of Worcestershire sauce.



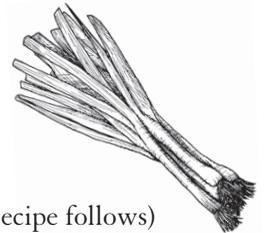
- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 pound broccoli (1 to 2 heads, with stems) | 4 cloves garlic, peeled |
| 6 to 7 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided use | and thinly sliced |
| Kosher salt | 2 oil-packed anchovy fillets |
| 1/2 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes (optional) | 1/2 cup (2 ounces) finely grated Manchego |
| 1 small red onion, peeled, cut into
1/2-inch-thick wedges | Lemon wedges, for serving |

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Trim only the very bottom of the broccoli stem (stems). Peel the tough outer layer, from the florets to the base of the stalk. Starting from the stem end, cut the broccoli stem(s) on a sharp diagonal until you reach the florets. Break the florets apart into bite-size pieces.
2. Heat 3 tablespoons of the oil in a large heatproof skillet (we prefer cast iron) over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the broccoli; season with salt and the hot red pepper flakes, if using. Cook, tossing occasionally, until the broccoli is bright green and lightly charred, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Wipe out the skillet.
3. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in the same skillet over medium heat. Cook the onion and garlic, stirring often, until the onion begins to soften, about 3 minutes. Add the anchovies and cook, breaking them apart with a spoon, until they are broken down and the garlic is beginning to turn golden, about 2 minutes. Return the broccoli to the skillet and toss to coat with the remaining oil (1 to 2 tablespoons). Transfer to the oven and roast, tossing once or twice, until the broccoli is browned and tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Carefully transfer the skillet (it will be screaming hot) to a heatproof surface.
4. Divide the broccoli among 4 plates. Sprinkle with the Manchego. Serve with lemon wedges.

Serves 4 — Recipe adapted from *Bon Appétit*, November 2019

GRILLED SPRING ONIONS WITH ROMESCO (CALÇOTS)

A specialty of Catalonia, these leek-like onions—traditionally grilled over olive wood fires and served with nutty, brick-red romesco—are messy but delightful!



- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 bunches large spring onions or scallions,
trimmed, or small leeks | Romesco Sauce, for serving (recipe follows) |
| Coarse salt (kosher or sea) to taste | Extra virgin olive oil, for serving |
| | Freshly ground black pepper, to taste, for serving |

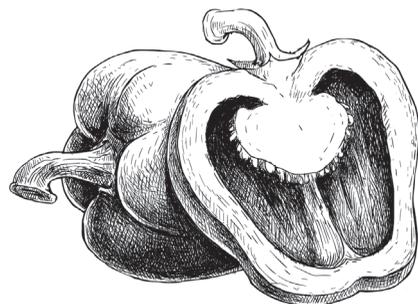
1. Preheat the grill or grill pan to high. (If desired, you can also use your oven's broiler.)
2. When ready to cook, arrange the scallions on the hot grate and grill, turning with tongs, until charred all over, 8 to 10 minutes (scallions will take less time than leeks). Season the onions with plenty of salt as they cook. Wrap the charred onions in a thick layer of paper towels (or use newspaper as they do in Spain). Let rest for 10 minutes.
3. Unwrap the onions and pick away the charred skin and root end with your fingers. Serve warm with Romesco Sauce and olive oil.

Serves 4 — Recipe adapted from *Planet Barbecue* by Steven Raichlen (Workman, 2010)

ROMESCO SAUCE

Romesco is one of Spain's iconic sauces, good not only with grilled onions or leeks but also asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, or brussels sprouts. You can even pair it with scrambled eggs or grilled meats, poultry, or seafood—it's that versatile.

- 3 dried anorra chiles or 1 ancho or pasilla chile
- 1 red bell pepper
- 2 large or 3 medium ripe tomatoes
- 5 cloves garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 3 tablespoons blanched whole almonds or slivers, toasted
- 1 small onion, peeled and quartered
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 or 2 slices country-style white bread
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar, or more to taste
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste



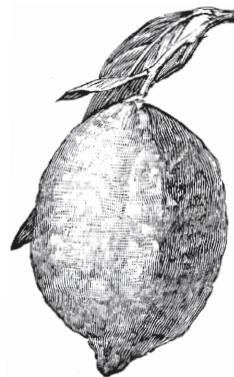
1. Preheat the grill to high. Quickly toast the chile on both sides (10 to 20 seconds in all). Transfer it to a bowl of warm water and let soak for several minutes while you grill the rest of the vegetables. Skewer the garlic on toothpicks. Skewer the onion quarters on bamboo skewers. Arrange the pepper, tomatoes, garlic, and onion on the grill grate and grill until the skin on the pepper is blackened and the other vegetables are nicely browned. As they are done, transfer them to a platter and let cool. Remove the toothpicks from the garlic and the skewers from the onions. Brush the bread on both sides with olive oil and grill until nicely browned, 1 to 2 minutes per side.
2. Drain the chile; reserve the liquid. Tear the chile into pieces and remove the stem and seeds. Remove any very charred skin from the tomatoes and pepper; core and seed the pepper. In the bowl of a food processor, combine the bell pepper, chile, onions, garlic, bread, and almonds. Puree to a smooth paste. Add the parsley, vinegar, the remaining olive oil, and salt and black pepper. Process until smooth, adding enough of the reserved chile soaking liquid to make a pourable sauce. Correct the seasoning, adding salt or vinegar as necessary.
3. Serve the sauce at room temperature; it will keep, tightly covered in the refrigerator, for up to 3 days.

Serves 4 — Recipe adapted from *Planet Barbecue* by Steven Raichlen (Workman, 2010)

SIX-MINUTE MEYER LEMON CUSTARD

Luscious with the sweet/tart notes of Meyer lemon (a cross between a lemon and a mandarin orange), this soft custard is the perfect ending to a Mediterranean meal. If you can't find Meyer lemons, substitute the juice and zest of regular lemons, blood oranges, or mandarin oranges.

- 3 whole eggs, room temperature
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup Meyer lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons Meyer lemon zest, preferably from a Meyer lemon
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil



1. Place all ingredients but the olive oil in a high-speed blender (capable of generating frictional heat above 160°F). If you don't have a high-speed blender, see the note in step 4.
2. Turn the blender on to its highest setting and process for 4 minutes.
3. While continuing to run on high speed, pour in the olive oil and blend for an additional 90 to 105 seconds until you can see the custard firming up on the sides.
4. Note: If you don't have a high-speed blender, simply blend until smooth and frothy in step 2, stream in the olive oil with the motor running, then pour into a double boiler or bowl set over gently simmering water on the stovetop, stirring until it thickens up (it should reach 160°F for fully cooked eggs, or hold at 140°F for 3 1/2 minutes).
5. The custard can be refrigerated for up to three days or frozen for longer storage. When defrosted, it will return to the same creamy consistency as when fresh.

Serves 6 — Recipe adapted from food52.com

MILK CHOCOLATE CREMOSA WITH ESPRESSO PARFAIT

Miami chef and restaurateur Michael Schwartz (a friend of a friend) reports that this is one of his best-sellers. “(The) olive oil reinforces the richness of the cremosa,” he says.

For the cremosa:

2 cups heavy cream
 1/3 cup granulated sugar
 5 large egg yolks
 1 pound good-quality milk chocolate,
 chopped

1 tablespoon strong-brewed espresso, cooled
 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
 5 thin slices of white sandwich bread, halved
 diagonally and crusts trimmed

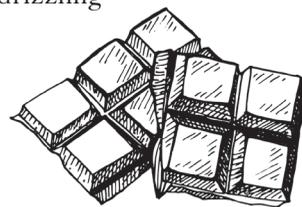
For the espresso parfait:

2 cups heavy cream
 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar

For serving:

1/2 cup roasted hazelnuts, chopped
 Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling

1. In a saucepan, heat the cream with the granulated sugar until hot to the touch. In a bowl, whisk the egg yolks. Gradually whisk in 1 cup of the hot cream. Scrape the mixture into the saucepan and cook over moderate heat, whisking, until slightly thickened, 3 minutes. Remove from the heat. Add the chocolate and let it stand until melted, 5 minutes. Whisk until smooth. Transfer to a shallow bowl and refrigerate until very cold, at least 4 hours.
2. In a bowl, beat the cream with the confectioners' sugar, espresso, and vanilla until firm. Spoon the cream into ten 1/2 cup ramekins and freeze until firm.
3. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter the bread on both sides. Toast on a baking sheet for about 8 minutes, or until golden.
4. Spoon the milk-chocolate cremosa onto plates, sprinkle with the hazelnuts, and drizzle with olive oil. Serve the espresso parfait and toast on the side.



Note: The cremosa can be refrigerated for up to 3 days; the espresso parfait can be frozen for up to 1 week.

Serves 10 — Recipe from *Food & Wine*, December 2008

A Cordial Invitation from T. J. Robinson to Meet, Mingle, and Have Some Fun in Our Members-Only Facebook Group!

We're having lots of fun over at our new Members Only page on Facebook. I and my Merry Band of Tasters invite you to join us! Your privileges include direct access to me, and I'd love to correspond with you and hear your opinions on the various food topics we like to chew on. You'll also enjoy lots of my favorite recipes I share exclusively with Club members, behind-the-scenes looks into my latest Olive Oil Hunter adventures, and much more. Drop in on our movable feast any time you feel like it. Just go to Facebook.com and enter "Members Only – Fresh Pressed Olive Oil" in the search bar. Then request to join the group. We'll quickly approve your access, and you can join in our lively (and delicious) conversation.

Recently I invited members of our group to answer this intriguing question: **"If you could use fresh-pressed olive oil in just one recipe for the rest of your life, which would it be?"** Here's a taste of their answers:

Sourdough Carrot Cake, In My Daily Yogurt, Sautéed Veggies, Dressing, As A Drizzle, Roasted Chicken, Baked Potato, On My Three-Minute Eggs on Toast, My Daily Salad, Roasted Vegetables, Marinara Sauce, Drizzled on Veggies, With Spices Added to Dip Bread In, Marinated Mozzarella Balls, Drizzle It On EVERYTHING, Hummus, Junk Pot: Kielbasa, Potatoes, Onions and Kale; On A Spoon, Mixed with Grated Home-grown Garlic, White Pizza, Steamed Veggies, Tabouli!, Broccoli Rabe, On My Eggs, Cacio e pepe, EVERYTHING!, On Bronze Cut Linguine, A Shot – Straight Up every day! Spaghetti aglio e olio....

There were scores more, inspiring us all to conclude that choosing only one way to use fresh-pressed EVOO just won't work!



HOSTING AN OLIVE OIL TASTING PARTY

You'll need tasting glasses for each guest, one for each oil. Wine glasses or shot glasses work well, though professional tasters use small, lidded, dark glasses to conceal the oils' color and concentrate their aromas. Offer water (sparkling and still) and, if desired, slices of green apple to clear the palate between tastes.

Pour a small amount of oil into a glass. Cover the top with one hand, and swirl the oil with the other to warm and aerate the oil. Next, remove your hand and immediately bring the oil right up to your nose. Inhale deeply. Record or articulate your impressions. Does the oil smell fruity? Vegetal? Herby or grassy? These are common descriptors.

Taste the oil. Does it have a pleasant viscosity, or is it heavy and mouth-coating? What flavors do you discern? Does the oil seem well-balanced, or is it bitter or astringent? Is a peppery pinch evident on the finish? Do the flavors linger in your mouth, or is the finish short? Most importantly, do you like the oil?

To continue the tasting, offer the oils again with a variety of foods such as bread, cheese, meat, potatoes, and vegetables to illustrate the effect they have on the oils, or incorporate the oils into your dinner menu.

