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FOOD & DRINK

Four Unique Olive Oils

Whether you're dipping or drizzling, these oils from the Middle East and Africa will hit the spot



Olive oils from the Middle East and Africa are giving traditional Mediterranean producers a run for their money.

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IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that extra virgin olive oil makes the perfect dressing. Drizzled over tossed salad leaves with a pinch of salt, it's the delicious epitome of simplicity. With their smooth, fruity tones, Mediterranean olive oils have traditionally commanded the biggest market share in Europe and the U.S. But lately, those in the know are starting to experiment with the distinct, fresh flavors of oils from the Middle East and North Africa.

Countries like Turkey, Morocco, Syria and Egypt have long histories of olive-oil

production. And as they begin to reinvent their bulk-export businesses as emerging niche brands, they're giving traditional Mediterranean producers a run for their money.

At the second annual New York International Olive Oil Competition in April, 15 judges from 10 countries gave Nar Gourmet and Ottoman Gourmet gold awards, and Tunisia's Safaraya and Cartago silver for their "exceptional harmony, a high complexity and a high persistence." Here, a look at four that get our gold star.

CHATEAU CARMAN, Turkey // Grown in Köycegiz in southwest Turkey, this nutty extra virgin olive oil is creamy with a slight peppery kick—making it the perfect companion for fish dishes. £6.50 for 500 mL; +44 (0)20 7251 4721

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- [Artisanal Olive Oil](#) (/articles/SB10001424052702303404)
- [Olive Oil: For Those Who Want To Buy](#) (/articles/SB100014240527023039369)
- [Best Olive Oils Made in the U.S.](#) (/articles/SB1000142405270230338200)

LES TERROIRS DE MARRAKESH, Morocco // Cultivated in the foothills of Morocco's Atlas Mountains, this extra virgin olive oil is 100% organic. Made from the fruit of high-density olive groves grown over 600 hectares, the fresh, zesty oil has low acidity levels, which means it's especially good for making dips such as hummus. £10 for 250 mL; atlasoliveoils.com

OTTOMAN GOURMET, Turkey // Winner of a gold medal at this year's New York International Olive Oil Competition, this oil has hints of fresh grass and artichoke. With a maximum acidity of 0.5%, it's best for dipping your favorite bread. £4 for 250 mL; ottomangourmet.com

RIVIERE D'OR, Tunisia // Available as both organic and nonorganic, this cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil is laden with fruity notes. Great for cooking rice dishes or dressing a salad. £2.49 for 500 mL; huilerie-loued.com

—Neena Rai