

The Ugly Truth: Vegetable Oils Are Bad

 thankyourbody.com/vegetable-oils

by Robin Konie

February 18, 2015



In case you didn't know: Vegetable oils are bad. Bad news. Bad for your health. Bad for the environment.

Just bad.

I get a lot of questions about what fats and oils I use for cooking. It makes sense; after all there is a lot of confusion about fat in general. And with the increasing hype over “heart healthy” vegetable oils and their sky-rocketed consumption level, it's no wonder people have questions about these highly over-recommended products. It's hard to eat healthy. It's hard to eat the right foods that help your body thrive.

In This Article

In this article, I'm going to give you the vegetable oil facts that you need to know, including why you should be avoiding these oils altogether. I'm going to outline the manufacturing process, and what goes into these oils that makes them so bad. Then, I'll go over some alternatives to vegetable oil, so you don't have to sacrifice your culinary skills on behalf of your diet.

Ready? Let's do this.

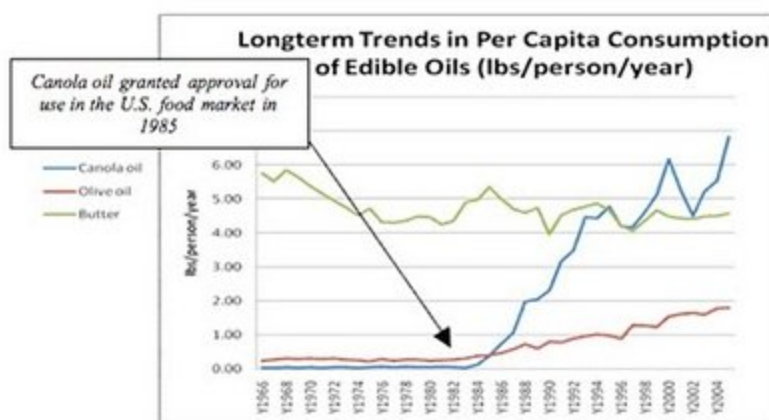
Vegetable Oils: What are they really?

Vegetable oils are oils that have been extracted from various seeds. The most common include rapeseed (canola oil), soybean, corn, sunflower, safflower, peanut, etc. Unlike coconut oil or olive oil that can be extracted by pressing, these new-fangled oils have to be extracted in very unnatural ways.

A non-traditional food with a questionable short history

Unlike traditional fats (butter, tallow, lard, olive oil, etc.) our industrial vegetable oils are a very new addition to the “food” world. In fact, they were practically non-existent until the early 1900s. But with the invention of certain chemical processes and a need for “cheap” fat substitutions, the world of fat hasn’t been the same since.

Consider that at the turn of the 20th century that amount of vegetable oils consumed was practically zero. **Today, the average consumption is 70 lbs a year per person.** (And since I know plenty of people who took it out of their diet entirely, that means lots of people are consuming even more!)



Of course that number jumped dramatically once the campaign against saturated fats and cholesterol took its public rampage. (Hint: Cholesterol and Saturated Fat are essential to good health.)

Even today, despite the fact that cardiovascular disease and cancer continue to rise at an alarming rate while butter consumption is down (and vegetable oil consumption is at an all-time high), people are still believing the hype and buying this very non-traditional, non-healthy food-like product.

So perhaps the name would lead you to believe that these oils are good for you. But they are definitely far from it.

.)

Vegetable Oils are Bad: an unnatural process from the start.

Before we talk about the process by which vegetable oils are made, let's first look at one of my favorite traditional fats: Butter.

Butter is a simple process that comes when cream separates from milk. This is a natural process that only takes a little patience. Once the cream and milk have separated, all you need to do is skim off the cream and shake it until it becomes butter. (And it really is as easy as it sounds, I've made butter lots of times. Takes about 5 minutes.)

Now let's compare that to the production of canola oil. Here's an overly simplified version of the process:

Step 1: Find some "canola seeds." Oh wait, they don't exist. Canola oil is actually made from a hybrid version of the rapeseed... most likely genetically modified and heavily treated with pesticides.

Step 2: Heat the rapeseeds at unnaturally high temperatures so that they oxidize and are rancid before you ever buy them.

Step 3: Process with a petroleum solvent to extract the oils.

Step 4: Heat some more and add some acid to remove any nasty wax solids that formed during the first processing.

Step 5: Treat the oil with more chemicals to improve the color.

Step 6: Deodorize the oil to mask the horrific smell from the chemical processing.

Of course, if you want to take your vegetable oils one step further, just hydrogenated it until it becomes a solid. Now you have margarine and all its trans-fatty wonder.

They say about a lot of foods that you wouldn't want to eat them if you knew how they were made, and it seems vegetable oil is a perfect example. Often, a highly unnatural process results in a highly unnatural food, and that is definitely the case here. Perhaps if more people knew this process, then it wouldn't be such a staple of the American diet.

So why are vegetable oils bad?

Hopefully at this point you can see how NOT real these oils are. And in my book, "not real" is reason enough to avoid them. So how can they continue to be marketed as "heart healthy"?

Along with the continued myth about saturated fats and cholesterol, these oils are promoted as healthy because they contain monounsaturated fats and Omega 3 fatty acids. And that's what advertisers focus on to draw you into the fake health claims. But it definitely doesn't paint the whole picture.

Without going into extreme detail (although I'll link up to more reading if you want all the gruesome details), here are the many problems with vegetable oils:

The polyunsaturated fat issue

Vegetable oils are bad because they contain very high levels of polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs). But did you know that the fat content of the human body is about 97% saturated and monounsaturated fat? Our body **needs** fat for rebuilding cells and hormone production. And it can only use what we give it.

Polyunsaturated fats are highly unstable. These types of fats oxidize easily. These oxidized fats cause inflammation and mutation in cells. That oxidation is linked to all sorts of issues from cancer, heart disease, endometriosis, PCOS, etc. **PUFAs are bad news.**

Read more about PUFAS [here](#).

Omega 6 issue

There's a lot of hype about Omega-3's and how healthy they are. But what often gets neglected is the fact that it's more about the **ratio** of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fats that are critical to good health.

Vegetable oils contain a very high concentration of Omega 6 fatty acids. These fatty acids oxidize easily. Omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to reduce inflammation and protect against cancer. Unbalanced levels of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fats have been linked to many types of cancers and a host of other problems. And, as you've probably guessed, most Americans are high in Omega-6 fatty acids and low in Omega-3's. But people keep buying into labels on vegetable oils that say "a good source of Omega-3s" without realizing that they are really just making the imbalance even worse.

So be wary of deceptive marketing like this, just because something is high in Omega-3s does not mean it doesn't also contain harmful ingredients. Having a "big picture" of the ingredients in the foods you are eating is crucial for a healthy diet.

Read more about Omega-3/Omega-6 imbalances [here](#) and [here](#).

All the other bad "stuff"

Beyond the unnatural levels of polyunsaturated fats and Omega-6 fatty acids, there are all the additives, pesticides, and chemicals involved in processing. Many vegetable oils contain BHA and BHT (Butylated Hydroxyanisole and Butylated Hydroxytoluene). These artificial antioxidants keep the food from spoiling too quickly, but they have also been shown to produce potential cancer compounds in the body. And they have been linked to things like immune system issues, infertility, behavioral problems, and liver and kidney damage.

Oh yeah, and many vegetable oils come from genetically modified sources. Not sure why that's bad? [Check this out.](#)

Vegetable Oils: The Bottom Line

In a nutshell, these oils are extremely unhealthy. They've been linked to reproductive problems, low birth rate, hormonal issues, obesity, mental decline, liver problems, and the big problems of our day: cancer and heart disease.

I know, this has all been pretty negative news, especially if you like to use vegetable oil as cooking oil or in other parts of your diet. But don't worry, I'm here to help with that as well!

Read on for some healthy alternatives to vegetable oil that you can swap into your diet today.

So what is safe to use?

In a world that seems overrun with these highly unnatural and toxic fats, it can seem overwhelming when you are looking for better solutions. And if you try to keep up on the latest "scientific" findings you may be even more confused. Luckily, you don't have to be a nutritionist to know the best fats to use. Look to your ancestors. Look to what food was before the chemical and industrial age came in and made a mega-mart of imposters.

Basically, sometimes the best way to find all-natural foods is to look at what people were eating before these foods existed.

To help you, here are some guidelines when it comes to fats and oil.

Good fats for cooking

When it comes to any food, keep in mind that where it comes from and how you store it can matter greatly. Traditional oils should be *cold-pressed*. They should also be organic when possible (especially when dealing with animal fats as the fat is where toxins/pesticides are stored). Do the best you can, and don't get overwhelmed by all the choices.

Here are some great alternatives that you can use in your cooking, and you won't find yourself missing vegetable oil at all:

Coconut Oil: Coconut oil is the oil that is extracted from the "meat" of a coconut. It is a natural oil that is made by "pressing" a coconut to remove the oil. A simple process, unlike the highly unnatural process used to make vegetable oil.

One tip with coconut oil is to look for “expeller pressed” coconut oil. This is a method of pressing the coconut to remove the oil. With expeller pressed oil, there is no strong coconut flavor that might overwhelm your dishes.

To use for cooking, simply use the same amount that you would have used if you were using vegetable oil. This makes the transition quick and easy!



Avocado Oil: Avocado oil is made by pressing avocado pulp. Once again, a much more natural process than vegetable oil. Avocado oil is high in oleic acid, which is a monounsaturated fat that is healthy (depending on how much you consume of course). Avocado oil is also great for fending off free radicals.

Avocado oil is great for dishes that you don’t have to heat-up as well, as it tastes pretty great on its own. All these features make avocado oil another great alternative to vegetable oil.

Extra-Virgin Olive Oil: A classic option. Extra-virgin olive oil is a healthy alternative to vegetable oil. It is also affordable and easy-to-find. It is made by pressing whole olives. It is one of the healthiest oils you can find, as it contains mostly monounsaturated fats.

Of course, olive oil is also one of the most flexible ingredients out there. It’s awesome for many dishes that don’t need to be heated – like in salad dressing, mayo, hummus, and more. You can also use it for cooking at low temperatures in all sorts of recipes.

Other Alternatives: While coconuts, avocado, and olive oil are three of the most popular alternatives to vegetable oil, it doesn’t stop there. Here are even more oils and fats you can use that will help you kick vegetable oil to the curb for good:

- Lard
- Tallow
- Butter
- Palm Oil (Although, please find from a sustainable source as so much palm oil today is being harvested in horrific ways. When in doubt just stick with coconut oil.)
- Other fats (not necessarily for cooking, but essential to good health) include meats, eggs, dairy, and fish (nuts are also good in moderation as they have a high level of polyunsaturated fats).

Oils to be used sparingly

The following oils are okay in moderation. Most contain high levels of Omega-6 fatty acids, so they shouldn’t be consumed freely. However, they are considered natural fats, and do have health benefits. They are not great for high heat cooking, but acceptable in dressings, mayos, and other non-heat foods.

- Walnut Oil
- Flaxseed Oil
- Macadamia Nut Oil

Oils to avoid completely

Here's the big list I avoid as much as possible. They are simply not natural, and many are made with a similar process to vegetable oil. Skip these:

- Canola Oil
- Corn Oil
- Soybean Oil
- "Vegetable" oil
- Peanut Oil
- Sunflower Oil
- Safflower Oil
- Cottonseed Oil
- Grapeseed Oil
- Margarine
- Shortening
- Any fake butter substitutes

Simply passing by these oils in the grocery store isn't too hard. But keep in mind that most processed foods contain these oils, too. Salad dressing, condiments, crackers, chips... check your ingredients. **Don't buy them. In fact, just skip processed foods and you'll save yourself a lot of trouble.**

Make it a Habit

I know, It's hard to avoid rancid vegetable oils completely if you are eating out, and I personally try not to stress about the occasional night at a restaurant. By keeping these bad boys out of my house, I feel okay consuming these oils when out with family or friends. But if I find a restaurant that uses quality fats, you better believe they'll be getting my business!

The most important part is being informed and knowing which ingredients you should and shouldn't be eating. While this does require a lot of research at first, once you have completed your first few grocery shops it will just become part of your routine. Think of it like a little bit of work now for a lifetime of benefits to your body.

**Want to eat healthier, but confused by all the information out there?
You're not alone!**

It took me years to figure out this whole “healthy” eating thing, and that’s because the world is full of confusing information. Every “expert” is telling us something different, and it seems our lists of “shoulds” and “should not” eats are changing faster than we can keep up with.

If you’re like me and wish there was a simple, stress-free way approach to healthy living then you’re in the right place. My guide *Processed Free* will help you easily navigate real food no matter where you are on your path to healthier living. [Click here to check it out.](#)

Conclusion

This article has provided a comprehensive outline of why you should be avoiding vegetable oils. We sometimes have to face some hard truths about our diet in order to make positive changes.