

Healthy Minute: Review of Different Oils + Heart Healthy Salad Dressing Recipes

Fat is one of the main macronutrients in our diets, alongside carbohydrates and protein. Fat is an abundant source of energy and it is part of a healthy diet. Fat is needed to help absorb certain vitamins and minerals, build cell membranes, and protect nerves. Fat also has a role in proper blood clotting, muscle movement, and the body's inflammatory response.

However, there are different compositions of fat in foods. Certain types of fat promote health while other forms of fat have been found to be detrimental. In order to build a balanced plate, it is important to be aware of the type of fat consumed – more so than the total amount of fat consumed.

Fats differ in composition of carbon chain length and shape.

Trans Fat – no longer allowed in US food supply; no known health benefits and no safe levels noted

- Plant oils that have undergone hydrogenation to make solid in order to prevent rancidity
- Increases inflammation linked to heart disease, stroke
- Adds to insulin resistance and increases risk of developing diabetes
- Previous sources: fast food, commercial baked goods, snack foods

Saturated Fat

- Increases LDL (“bad”) cholesterol
- Associated with increased risk of heart attack and stroke
- Shouldn't exceed 10% of total calories but many eating patterns such as the DASH diet recommend consuming no more than 7% of total calories from saturated fat
- Sources: red meat, lard, butter, full fat milk and dairy products including cheese, tropical oils (coconut, palm, palm kernel oils)

Monounsaturated Fat

- Reduces LDL cholesterol and triglycerides
- Raises HDL (“good”) cholesterol
- Sources: Avocado, olives, olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, nuts, safflower and sunflower oils

Polyunsaturated Fat

Omega 6 (linoleic acid)

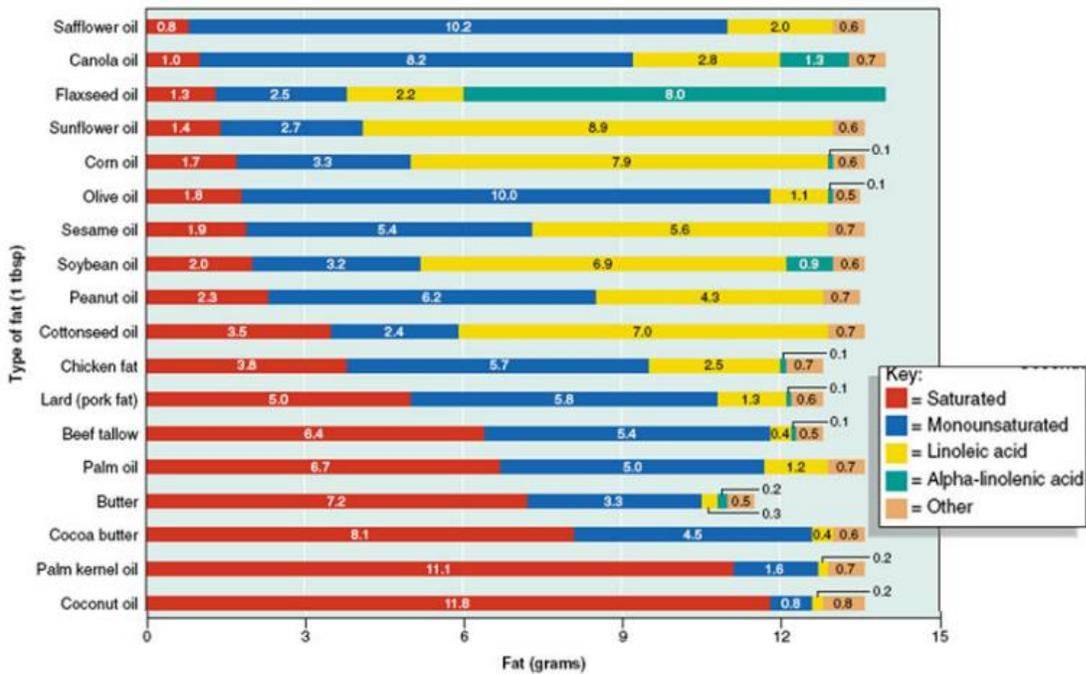
- Promotes insulin sensitivity
- Improves lipid profile
- Sources: safflower, grapeseed, sunflower, wheat germ, corn, walnut, cottonseed oils

Omega 3 (alpha-linolenic acid)

- Improves lipid profile
- Reduces vascular inflammation
- Reduces blood pressure in those with high cholesterol
- Sources: fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines), flax and walnut, canola oil

Low fat or fat free diets became misconstrued because fat was replaced with consumption of more carbohydrates – particularly, refined carbohydrates. Consuming refined carbohydrates in excess leads to weight gain and risk of chronic disease. The focus should be to reduce saturated fat and replace it with mono- and polyunsaturated fats; these fats contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Note that many plant sources of fat contain a blend of mono- and polyunsaturated fats.

A COMPARISON OF SATURATED AND UNSATURATED FATTY ACIDS IN DIETARY FATS AND OILS



Bottom figure from *Personal Nutrition*, 6th ed., Boyle & Anderson, Thomson/Wadsworth, 2007.

More resources to check out:

1. Today's Dietitian: "Heart-Healthy Oils: They're Not All Created Equal"
<https://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/021115p24.shtml>
2. Harvard Health Blog: No Need to Avoid Healthy Omega 6 Fats
https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/no-need-to-avoid-healthy-omega-6-fats
3. Harvard Health Blog: The Truth about Fats – The Good, The Bad, and the In Between
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-truth-about-fats-bad-and-good>
4. Nutrition Action: A Refresher on Fats
<https://www.nutritionaction.com/daily/heart-and-disease-cat/a-refresher-on-fats/>

Healthy Salad Dressings, featured from “Love and Lemons Every Day” Cookbook by Jeanine Donofrio and Jack Mathews

Name	Acid	Fat	Herb/spice	Extra
Lemon Thyme	2 Tbsp lemon juice	¼ cup olive oil	1 garlic clove, minced 2 tsp thyme leaves (sub with ½ tsp dried)	½ tsp Dijon mustard ¼ tsp sea salt
Mediterranean	1 Tbsp sherry or red wine vinegar	¼ cup olive oil	1 garlic clove, minced ½ tsp dried oregano	1 diced sundried tomato ¼ tsp sea salt
Lemon Tahini	2 Tbsp lemon juice	¼ cup tahini	1 garlic clove, minced	3 Tbsp water ½ tsp maple syrup ¼ tsp sea salt
Sesame Orange	¼ cup orange juice 2 Tbsp rice vinegar	1 tsp sesame oil		½ tsp sriracha 1 Tbsp tamari
Ginger Miso	3 Tbsp rice vinegar	2 Tbsp olive oil	1 tsp minced ginger	1 Tbsp tamari 2 Tbsp miso
Chickpea Goddess	1 Tbsp lemon juice	¼ cup hummus	1 Tbsp minced parsley 1 Tbsp minced chives 2 tsp minced tarragon	¼ cup water ¼ tsp sea salt
Pesto Vinaigrette	2 Tbsp lemon juice	¼ cup ground pine nuts ¼ cup olive oil	1 garlic clove minced 2 Tbsp minced basil	¼ tsp sea salt
Apple Cider Sage	2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar	¼ cup olive oil	½ tsp cinnamon 16 sage leaves, chopped	2 tsp maple syrup 1 Tbsp water ½ tsp sea salt
Curry Yogurt	1 Tbsp lemon juice	¼ cup Greek yogurt 1 Tbsp olive oil	1 tsp curry powder	1 Tbsp water ¼ tsp sea salt
Healthier Ranch – Blended	2 Tbsp lime juice	½ cup raw cashews	½ garlic clove	½ cup water ½ cup diced cucumber ½ tsp sea salt
Creamy Dill – Blended	3 Tbsp lemon juice	1 ripe avocado	¼ cup fresh dill ½ garlic clove	½ cup water ½ tsp sea salt
Red Pepper Mojo – Blended	2 Tbsp lime juice	¼ cup olive oil	1 tsp paprika 1 garlic clove	1 roasted red pepper ¼ tsp sea salt
Carrot Ginger – Blended	2 Tbsp rice vinegar	¼ cup olive oil	2 tsp minced ginger	½ cup roasted carrots ½ cup water ¼ tsp sea salt