

Fats for Cooking & Eating

Fats for Cooking & Fats to Eat Uncooked-the fats listed often have “Pastured” or free range. These are animals that are not caged and injected with antibiotics or growth hormone. Use when possible or available.

Fats contribute a great deal to food and cooking, but not every fat is suitable for every purpose. Just as not every fat is suitable for cooking, neither is every oil available on your supermarket shelves suitable for a nutritious and healthy diet. Certain fats such as beef tallow and coconut oil have been used for a very long time, while other fats such as cottonseed oil are very new to the human diet.

As a general rule, saturated fats are suitable for cooking while monounsaturated fats are suitable for light cooking and polyunsaturated fats should not be cooked at all. Most cooking fats contain a combination of each saturated, mono- and poly-unsaturated fats.

Saturated Fats for Cooking

Saturated fats, thanks to their molecular structure, are heat stable. You can identify saturated fat readily because it stays solid at room temperature. Due to its molecular stability, saturated fat is not as subject to oxidation as the less stable mono- and polyunsaturated oils. Saturated fats are not chemically altered by cooking and so are suitable for high- and low-heat cooking. You can, and should, certainly eat them raw as well.

Beef Suet from Grass-finished Animals
Beef Tallow from Grass-finished Animals
Mutton Tallow from Grass-finished Animals
Unrefined Cocoa Butter
Unrefined Coconut Oil
Palm Kernel Oil
Ghee from Grass-fed Cows (clarified butter)
Avocado oil

Monounsaturated Fats to Cook Gently-lower heat

Some fats contain ample saturated fat which is heat-stable and suitable for cooking, but also contain large amounts of monounsaturated fatty acids which are less heat-stable and more likely to oxidize than saturated fats (but are less likely to oxidize compared to polyunsaturated fats). Alternatively, as in the case of butter, contain other compounds like milk solids which may necessitate cooking them gently. The following fats should be heated gently due to a high monounsaturated fat content, but are still good fats for cooking.

Lard from Pastured Hogs
Bacon Grease from Pastured Hogs

Goose Fat from Pastured Birds

Duck Fat from Pastured Birds

Schmaltz from Pastured Chickens

Butter (While it should be classified more as a saturated fat due to its fatty acid profile, butter also contains milk fats which lower its smoke point and therefore it should be eaten raw or gently cooked.)

Monounsaturated & Polyunsaturated Fats to Eat Fresh & Raw

Polyunsaturated fats, like the other fats, play a vital role in health and wellness; however, they are not stable fats like their saturated counterparts. Polyunsaturated fats go rancid easily and oxidize quickly when heated. These fats should be traditionally prepared through cold-pressing and should be left in their natural and unrefined state. US readers should take great care in purchasing cold-pressed oils as the term “cold pressing” is not regulated in the United States. Expeller pressed oils extract the oil from its source under great pressure, and pressure creates friction and friction creates heat – sometimes a great deal of heat, so unless you know for certain that the pressure created by the expeller during extraction did not heat the oil to excess, it’s best to avoid expeller pressed oils.

Traditional cold pressed oils offer a complex flavor not achieved through other means, so not only does your body benefit from cold pressing but your meals benefit as well. Polyunsaturated fats are delicate fats and should be treated accordingly: they’re not suitable for cooking, but can be used to dress salads and condiments.

Many polyunsaturated fats – particularly nut oils – are very high in Omega 6 fatty acids. While omega 6 fatty acids play an important role in health, they are too prevalent in the diet of most people, so I have excluded them from this list.

Extra Virgin Unrefined Olive Oil (Olive oil is comprised mostly of monounsaturated fats, and can be used for very light cooking; however, that destroys its vitamin E and I simply prefer to eat it uncooked.)
Flaxseed Oil

FATS TO AVOID

These are fats that are “industrial” and absolutely linked to disease. Often promoted as “health” because they are unsaturated fats. Now the scientific evidence clearly shows that we must eat saturated fat for health and maintaining lean bodies.

- **Canola Oil (rap seed)-in most processed foods**
- **All vegetable oils**
- **Safflower Oil**
- **All hydrolyzed oils**
- **All Hydrogenated oils-AKA Trans Fats**