



Culinary Institute
of America

The Mediterranean

The Building Blocks of Mediterranean Cuisines

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Day 4





The Trilogy of Ingredients: Wheat



The Trilogy of Ingredients: Olives



The Trilogy of Ingredients: Grapes



Characteristics of Mediterranean Cuisine

- Tied to nature, seasons, ripeness
 - Reflection the environment
 - Sun
 - Earth
 - Sea
 - Best of fresh ingredients
- Simple food
- Simple preparations
 - Not overly refined by too much analysis
 - Not made frivolous by fussiness of presentation
- Regional cuisine



Mediterranean Flavor Profiles

- **Olive Oil + Tomato**

- Combination found throughout the Mediterranean

- **Spain**

- Olive oil + tomato + saffron

- **All Mediterranean** (especially Italy and France)

- Olive oil + tomato + mixed herbs (i.e., thyme, basil, oregano, garlic)

- **Middle East, Greece, and Balkans**

- Olive oil + tomato + cinnamon +/- lemon

Mediterranean Flavor Profiles

Lemon + Parsley

- Found throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East
- May be used as sauce for meat or fish, as dip or spread, or seasoning for salad

Examples: tabbouleh and hummus

Seen in Italian cuisine as well - i.e. gremolata

Lemon + Oregano

- Classic combination found in Greek cuisine

Mediterranean Flavor Profiles

- **Olive Oil + Garlic**

- Fundamental flavor combination of the Mediterranean
- Several important Mediterranean sauces begin or build on simply pounded garlic, olive oil and salt

Sauce	Country	Ingredients
Alioli	Spain	Garlic, Olive Oil & Salt (sometimes with eggs)
Aïoli	France	Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt & eggs
Rouille	France	Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Red Peppers & Fish Entrails
Salsa Verde	Italy	Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Anchovies, Capers & Herbs
Pesto	Italy	Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Basil, Nuts & Cheese
Skordalia	Greece	Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Potatoes, Soaked Bread or Nuts
Tarator	Turkey	Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt & Nuts (usually walnuts or hazelnuts)
Harissa	Tunisia	Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Hot Peppers & Caraway
Charmoula	Morocco	Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Cumin, Paprika, Fresh Coriander & Parsley

Mediterranean Staple Ingredients

- Wheat
 - Bread, pasta, and couscous
- Grains
- Rice
- Legumes
 - Fava, lentil, chickpeas
- Fresh herbs and herb pastes
- Herbs and spices
 - Spice rubs and spices as condiments
- Sheep & goat dairy products
- Meat, fish, and poultry
- Fruit
 - Seasonal
 - Fresh and dried
 - Citrus
- Seafood
- Yogurt and cheese
- Vegetables
 - Seasonal
 - Tomatoes, potatoes, leafy greens, eggplant, artichokes
- Preserved foods
- Wine

Cooking Techniques of The Mediterranean

- Traditionally relied on wood-fired hearths, spits, and hardwood grills for main means of cooking
- Braising, stewing, roasting, and grilling are common
- One-pot cooking in tagines, couscoussières, and pealleras popular in North Africa, Morocco, and Spain, respectively
- Skewered meat, poultry, fish, and vegetables are common in Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, and Syria
- The area also utilizes various food preservation techniques
 - Salting and drying being the most prevalent

Cooking Equipment of The Mediterranean

Tagine

- Earthenware cooking vessel with a large, round base and conical lid used to make a stew of the same name

Skewers

- Metal or wooden and flat or round skewers used for grilling and roasting meat, poultry, fish, and vegetables

Couscoussière

- A type of ceramic, iron, or copper double boiler; stew cooks in the bottom pot while couscous steams on top

Mediterranean Sauces



Garlic Sauces



- **Aioli** : Spain, France, Italy, Garlic, Olive Oil & Salt with Eggs or Fish Entrails)
- **Skordalia**: Greece (Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Potatoes, Soaked Bread or Nuts)
- **Tarator** : Turkey (Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt & Nuts (usually walnuts or hazelnuts)

Olive Sauces

- Tapanade



Spanish Base Sauces



- **Sofregit/Sofrito** (Peppers, Onion and Tomato product)
- **Picada** (Fried bread, Nuts, Garlic Catalan style)
- **Samfaina** (Eggplant, Zucchini Sofrito)

Eastern Mediterranean (Greece and Turkey)

- **Avgolemono**
- **Yogurt Sauces**
- Sauces and Soups made with egg yolk and lemon juice mixed with broth, heated until they thicken.



Northern Africa



- **Charmoula: “The Mother of All North African Sauces”** Garlic, Olive Oil, Salt, Cumin, Paprika, Fresh Coriander & Parsley
- **Harissa-Tunisia’s “Catsup”** spicy, smoky, peppery red chili paste originally hails from Tunisia, and it is common in Middle Eastern and north African cooking



Wheat As Bread



- All bread is made from the same four ingredients: flour, water, leavening, and salt.

Wheat As Bread

- More rarely leavening is left out to make a genuine flatbread-like piadine and other types of griddle-baked breads.



Wheat As Bread



Paximadii

- The flour is usually some kind of wheat, whether hard or soft, bolted to leave more of the bran.
- Barley flour is used in some parts of the Mediterranean (North Africa, Crete, and southern Puglia)

Wheat As Bread



- The leaven is the most variable part of the formula. Some bakers use commercial yeast, but others still use a spontaneous leaven that grows up naturally when wheat flour and water are combined under the right circumstances.

Wheat As Bread



This long, slow fermentation contributes a good deal of character to the finished bread.

Olives and Olive Oil

- Olive oil has become one of the hottest commodities to have arrived at the ever-shifting world of gourmet food preferences in the last 20 years.



Olives and Olive oil

- The olive tree is a symbol of the Mediterranean landscape, and nothing symbolizes Mediterranean culture and cuisine quite like olive oil.



Categories of Olive Oil

There are four categories of olive oil:

- Extra Virgin olive oil
- Virgin olive oil
- Ordinary olive oil
- Pomace or Sansa oil

Categories of Olive Oil

- Virgin Olive Oil
- This category of olive oil has been obtained from olives using mechanical or physical that do not treat or alter the oil in any way.



Grading Olive Oil



- There are three types of virgin olive oil, which are classified, and grading is based on how much free acidity the oils contain (acid that does not form part of the chemical but exists on its own in its natural state).

Grading Olive Oil

- Acidity is a measure of quality and freshness (it increases as the oil ages) but is not discernible by the human palate until it reaches about 6%.



Categories of Virgin Olive Oil

- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Oleic acid of no more than 0.8 grams per 100 grams, and other characteristics of which correspond to those fixed for this category in this standard (fruitiness, bitterness, pungency).



Categories of Virgin Olive Oil

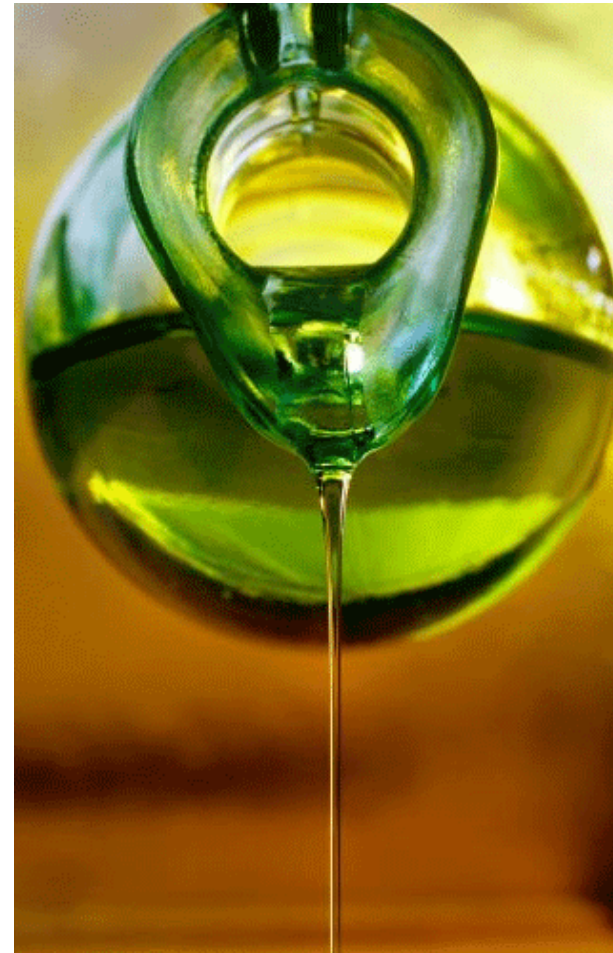


- Virgin Olive Oil
- Virgin olive oil has a free acidity, expressed as oleic of not more than 2 grams per 100 grams.

Categories of Virgin Olive Oil

Ordinary Virgin Olive Oil

- Virgin olive oil that has a free acidity of not more than 3.3 grams per 100 grams.



Lampante Oil



- Lampante oil is not fit for human consumption as is and has an oleic acid content of more than 3.3 grams per 100 grams and /or the organoplectic characteristics associated with this category (fusty, musty, muddy, etc...)

Grapes

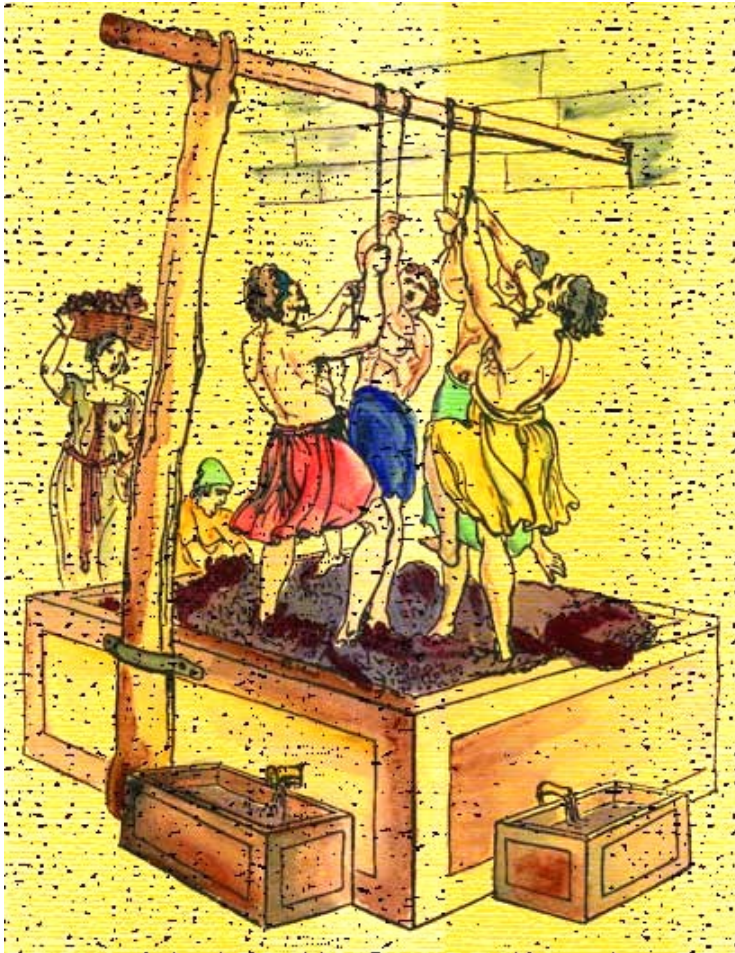


Vitis Vinifera

- By 4000 B.C.E. forms of the wild grapevine were already selected and in cultivation in ancient Greece and the Middle East.



Vitis Vinifera



- The Old Testament references to wine this early origin and the significance of the wine industry in the Middle East.

Vitis Vinifera

- The familiarity of grape vines can be seen in both physical and metaphorical references to the "vine".
- The Greeks had an active wine trade and planted grapes in their colonies throughout the Mediterranean.



Vitis Vinefera



- The Romans brought grape growing to the valleys of France and Germany.

Vitis Vinifera

- After the fall of the Roman Empire, monastic orders preserved and developed many of the highly regarded wine-producing regions of France and Germany.



Vitis Vinifera

- With Columbus, grape culture and wine making were transported to the New World.
- Missionaries from Spain took viticulture to Chile and Argentina in the mid-16th century and to lower California in the 18th.



Vitis Vinifera



- In California, viticulture shifted from the southern missions to the Central Valley, and the northern counties of Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino.

Vitis Vinifera

- It is estimated that there are over 8,000 cultivars, most of them having been selected for a specific and purpose.
- In any of the Mediterranean climate regions, there are heirloom varieties for wine-making or eating.



