

This information about the different types of olive oil that we sell as the Olive Oil Ministry may be of general interest.

Most Palestinian olives are from the native tree, the *Baladi* or *Nabali*. There are also the *Rumi* (Roman), *Suri* (Syrian) and *Mallisi* trees. These four types give some of the highest quality olive oil in the world. There is a small percentage of what is called the *Nabali Muhassan*, or improved *Nabali*, which produces a better looking olive but a lower yield and a lower quality oil. Most farmers who tried this kind of tree are now cutting the trees and putting back the native *Baladi* (*Nabali*) on the trunk. Olive trees may also be described in terminology used to specify their relative age. *Rumi* trees are a variety whose age is among the oldest trees still producing olives in Palestine. Their name refers to the era of the Roman Empire when planting olive trees was popularized throughout its domain.

Different regions produce different varieties of olive oil. In the North, the Jenin area produces flavorful medium-bodied olive oil with a greenish color. The Nablus area has two main producing areas: Salfit and Asira el-Shamaliya. These villages and surrounding areas also produce a greenish, full-bodied olive oil. Asira has the highest level of production in Palestine for a single village, producing an average of 750 tons of olive oil a year. The Ramallah area has one region that produces a flavorful and aromatic high quality, lighter-bodied olive oil with low acidity, and an eastern region around Taybeh and the Turmus Ayyah area that produces a medium-bodied greenish oil. The southern areas around Hebron and Bethlehem area produce a darker, heavy-bodied olive oil with a strong flavor. The oil that the Olive Oil Ministry sells comes from the West Bank regions around Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and Salfit. *Nabali* oil comes from trees in the western region of the West Bank. *Rumi* oil comes from trees in the central region of the West Bank.

The majority of Palestinian farmers use traditional methods in caring for the olive tree and very few use chemical fertilizers or pesticides, in part due to their high cost. This has made it relatively easy for Palestinian olive oil to enter the high value organic market. The Palestinian economy is effectively part of the Israeli economy and has a similar cost structure. Physical obstacles and closures restricting the movement of farmers to their trees and transport of goods within and from the West Bank add to these costs. The willingness of the export market to pay a higher price for organic products helps Palestinian olive oil compensate for its higher production costs. The Palestine Fair Trade program supports and encourages the traditional cultivation methods that produce the highest quality oil with the best flavor. The program does not accept oil other than from indigenous trees grown using traditional, natural cultivation methods.

According to CFT's website, Jenin olive oil is a blend of early and late harvest olives from the *Suri* trees, which combines early harvest peppery oil with the late harvest's sweet, buttery oil. It has a fresh green flavor. Nabali olive oil is sweet and smooth without a dominant taste. It blends well. Rumi olive oil comes from Rumi trees. It is a robust and pungent oil with fruity tones and a peppery kick. All CFT olive oils are extra virgin and certified organic and fair trade.

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