

Olive oil from Provence

The contrasts could hardly be greater. In the Var department of Provence, we visit state-of-the-art processing plants, more laboratory than mill and traditional companies that have been processing the olive harvest of smallholders for generations. Opinions differ on methods and taste. The traditionalists turn up their noses a little at their high-tech peers. These, in turn, smile at the old and sluggish methods. Luckily for all olive oil fans, both worlds exist.



Gentle harvest

The harvest season begins in November in the Var region. Small trees are harvested by hand. Bigger trees with the help of motorized shakers. A gripping arm is carefully placed around the trunk and the tree is made to vibrate so that the olives fall onto a tarpaulin laid out on the ground. To further speed up the harvesting process, the tarpaulin with the olives is immediately pulled into the trailer. The aim is to process the olives as quickly and with as little damage as possible. At Chateau de Taurenne, manager Yann Fernandez emphasizes, it takes less than eight hours from harvesting to crushing the olives. The specification for an olive oil of the highest quality, the extra virgine, is a maximum of 24 hours. It's always a race against time



tradition and modernity



Black olives - taste of childhood

Provence looks back on a millennium-old history of the olive tree and oil production. If one thinks of the traditional processing of olives, romantic ideas of stone mills for the pre-crushing of the olives and hydraulic presses for the extraction of the oil quickly come to mind. You can still find these traditional oil mills in Provence today. Family-owned for many generations and with a history documented over many centuries,

they practice the craft of olive oil production using ancient methods and create the old, authentic taste that is still very much appreciated by the locals today. The familiar smell and taste of the olive oil based on historical models are reminiscent of pickled black olives or tarpenade.

Further aspects: portrait of a modern oil mill / portrait of a traditional oil mill / description of the processing steps modern and traditional / harvesting methods / olives and fermentation / aroma spectrum, taste and laboratory values / why malaxation is important / health aspects of olive oil



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