

## GET YOUR FINANCES IN THE GREEN THIS NEW YEAR



### Start Budgeting.

Budgeting is arguably the most important part of getting healthy financially. Without a budget, it's nearly impossible to track what you're actually spending. Setting up a budget might sound overwhelming at first, but once you get the hang of sticking to your budget, it can move mountains.

#### Budgeting Tips:

- Set up a monthly budget that works for you and stick to it.
- Budget with your partner (or other responsible family members) so you're in agreement.
- Reduce your spending in targeted categories each month, such as clothing, home décor or dining out.
- Track everything you spend. Using an Excel worksheet can be really helpful!

### Get out of Debt.

Another key to financial success—paying off debt—will allow you to take full control of your money. No one wants debt looming overhead forever, so instead of ignoring it or just paying the minimum balance and accumulating interest, get serious about becoming debt-free. Paying off debt may feel uncomfortable in the short-term, but in the long-term you will have greater financial freedom and flexibility.

#### Tips for Becoming Debt-Free:

- Set up a debt-payment plan that works for you.
- Reduce spending to pay off debt.
- Stick to a strict budget.
- Prioritize future goals over instant gratification.
- Don't add more debt.

### Start Saving Money.

The rule of thumb is to save 10% of your monthly income (e.g., if you make \$2,500 per month, that's \$250 that needs to go to your savings). Saving this extra money will add up quickly and make a huge impact overtime. If you can afford it, saving this 10% in addition to your retirement contributions is ideal.

If you are struggling to find ways to save, consider cutting back on your expenses. Sacrificing a few carryout orders or a couple bottles of wine per month is a small ask for attaining financial stability. By establishing healthy savings habits now, you'll open doors for yourself in the future.

#### Tips to Help You Save:

- Start with smaller short-term financial goals and work toward larger goals.
- Reduce your grocery bill.
- Limit carryout.
- Reduce utility costs.
- Stick to your monthly savings goal, even if that means tracking every penny spent.

"Five Financial Goals for the New Year," Miriam Caldwell, [thebalance.com](https://www.thebalance.com), May 15, 2020."



# COOKING OILS: HEALTHY CHOICES AND CORRECT USES

Do you get confused when it comes to cooking oils? With a plethora of options, knowing what type of oil to use for a specific recipe or cooking style can be overwhelming. However, it's important to know that there is quite the difference between oils, especially pertaining to their nutritional value and appropriate uses.

Oils all have some combination of saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, and are high in calories, however, the type of fat in individual oils varies dramatically.

Another difference among oils is their smoke point. The smoke point is the temperature in which the oil starts to break down. If an oil starts smoking, discard the oil since it loses some nutritional value and can result in an unpleasant bitter taste.

Review the following oils to learn how to choose the appropriate oil the next time you want to sauté, bake or stir fry.

## EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

- Olive oils are graded by quality with extra virgin olive oil being the highest quality and containing beta carotene, vitamins A, E, D and K. Other versions are processed, such as "light" olive oil, which means light in flavor, not calories, and does not have the same nutritional value as extra virgin olive oil.

- Uses: sautéing, dips and salad dressings

## CANOLA OIL

- Uses: It's good for sautéing, stir frying and baking.

## VEGETABLE OIL

- It's often soybean or a blend of soybean with other oils, and contains mostly polyunsaturated fats.
- Uses: It's all purpose since it has a neutral flavor and a high smoke point, and is good for baking and sautéing.

## AVOCADO OIL

- It is high in monosaturated fat and has a nutty and buttery flavor.
- Uses: It has a high smoke point, so it's ideal for sautéing or frying (always use in moderation).

## PEANUT OIL

- Uses: It has a high smoke point, so it's good for stir frying or frying (always use in moderation).

## SESAME OIL

- Uses: It has a high smoke point, can be used in a variety of cooking methods and has a nutty flavor.

## FLAXSEED OIL

- It's high in omega-3 fats.
- Uses: It has a low smoke point, so is best used to make salad dressing, but please note that it spoils very quickly (within five weeks of harvest).

When it comes to fat found in food, the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines* for Americans recommend limiting saturated fat intake to less than 10 percent of your total calorie intake and rather choosing foods with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

Regardless of the type of oil you choose, be mindful that all oils are calorie dense, therefore, you should use them in moderation along with a well-balanced diet.



Total Time: 1 hour and 50+ minutes

Ingredients .....

- ¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 cup non-dairy milk
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon zest
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Cooking spray

Optional Toppings: fresh berries, fresh mint

Instructions .....

1. Preheat your oven to 350 F. Line the bottom of your 9-inch springform cake pan (recommended) with parchment paper and spray the pan with cooking spray.
2. Whisk together the olive oil, applesauce, milk, lemon juice, lemon zest and sugar.
3. In a separate mixing bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
4. Fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until the batter is smooth.
5. Bake for 45 to 60 minutes.
6. Allow your cake to cool for 30 minutes, then flip it out onto a cooling rack to cool fully.

Adapted from mydarlingvegan.com



"Healthy Cooking Oils," heart.org, accessed Dec. 8, 2020.  
"Which type of oil should I use for cooking with high heat?" mayoclinic.org, accessed Dec. 8, 2020.  
"All About Oils," foodandnutrition.org, accessed Dec. 8, 2020.  
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