

A Healthy Night Out in Nashville: A Deep Dive into the Fats and Oils Used at Your Local Restaurants and How to Make Better Choices

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“In the 1950s, we were told we couldn’t have saturated fats... We stopped eating butter and natural fats, but still craved fatty foods, so we turned to vegetable oil. And then restaurants started using them because they’re dirt cheap.”

-Dr. Cate Shanahan

Author of Deep Nutrition: Why Your Genes Need Traditional Food

<http://nypost.com/2017/01/31/eating-vegetable-oils-could-lead-to-fatigue-migraines-and-dementia/>

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT COOKING OILS?

As an increasingly health-conscious society, we have recently demanded full transparency from food companies both in grocery stores and restaurants about the use of ingredients like gluten and dairy as well as the sourcing of meat and produce. Now, I think we should demand the same transparency when it comes to the oils used in restaurant kitchens. **Why?** There is brand new science emerging about saturated fat, cholesterol, heart disease, and obesity. It is very clear now that fats alone may not be the main culprit behind heart disease, but specifically *oxidized unsaturated fats* may actually be leading players in inflammation and cancer (Kresser 2019). Cooking oil is something that touches almost everything we consume at restaurants, and we deserve to know what we’re putting into our bodies.

I would argue this is an even MORE important issue than meat sourcing or gluten contamination, because our cells are made up of the fats we take in! More on that later.

SO WHAT ARE OXIDIZED UNSATURATED FATS?

Canola, Cottonseed, Corn, Soybean, Sunflower, and more (see list below). These have for so long been touted as some of the healthiest oils to cook with, but they can actually be incredibly damaging to your health. When these oils are exposed to enough heat, they break down. We call that the **smoke point***, but it’s also the point at which the oil **oxidizes** or becomes rancid and starts to cause DNA damage. When our cells are unable to heal this damage, this can lead to cancer. **Even inhaling fumes from peanut oil and canola oil has been shown to cause lung cancer (Champ 2012).**

WHERE DO THESE UNSATURATED FATS COME FROM?

You can’t just take a cotton seed, squeeze it, and get oil out of it. It takes highly toxic solvents like hexane, high pressure, and high heat to get the oils out. And this is being done to a fat that is already highly susceptible to oxidation. It’s so toxic after it’s extracted that it has to be *deodorized* or it would smell rancid (Kresser 2019). And these oxidized oils get thrown in clear plastic bottles and make their way to YOUR kitchen and the kitchens at your local restaurants where they are then exposed to further oxidation in cooking.

ARE ALL FATS SUSCEPTIBLE TO DAMAGE?

Yes, but saturated fats can handle heat much better than unsaturated fats, making them a much better choice for cooking.

“Saturated fats are much more stable than unsaturated fats, which is why they are solid at room temperature... Saturated fats, like all fats, have a long carbon backbone. The difference between saturated fats and unsaturated fats is the saturated fat is ‘saturated’ with hydrogen atoms bound to the carbon backbone, while unsaturated fats have less hydrogen, leaving many unbound carbon atoms on its backbone (the carbon bonds are unsaturated). All of these hydrogen atoms attached to the backbone keep saturated fats intact, but also help protect it against oxidation and the binding of free radicals. A simple way to think about it is: free radicals attack the unbound carbons of an unsaturated fat. Saturated fats have no unbound carbons.” (Champ 2012)

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT ME?

Let’s say we were consuming canola or sunflower oil (these are all over our Nashville restaurant kitchens and are currently deemed some of the least offensive among chefs.) As Chris Kresser explains, the “heating of industrial seed oils depletes vitamin E, a natural antioxidant, while inducing the formation of free radicals that cause oxidative stress and damage DNA, proteins, and lipids throughout the body. These harmful effects explain why repeatedly heated industrial seed oils are associated with high blood pressure, heart disease, and intestinal and liver damage” (2019). Your cell membranes are made of fat, so your body will use the damaged fats you take in to rebuild your cell membranes. It will store the fats as linoleic acid which causes inflammation and has a half life of two years. **So, one night out at a restaurant can actually end up causing us long-term damage that can last years!**

*Refer to the chart below for different fats/oils and their smoke points.

LIST OF OILS* AND THEIR SMOKE POINTS

*In bold are my recommended healthiest choices

Oil/Fat	Smoke Point
Avocado Oil	485°F
Ghee	485°F
Safflower Oil	465°F
Grapeseed Oil	460°F
Palm Oil	450°F
Refined Sunflower Oil	450°F
Refined Soybean Oil	450°F
Refined Sesame Oil	450°F
Refined Safflower Oil	450°F
Refined Peanut Oil	450°F
Refined Corn Oil	440°F
Canola Oil	440°F
Peanut Oil	440°F
Sunflower Oil	440°F
Virgin Olive Oil	420°F
Almond Oil	420°F
Hazelnut Oil	420°F
Macadamia Oil	410°F
Cottonseed Oil	410°F
Semi-Refined Walnut Oil	400°F
Sesame Oil	400°F
Extra Virgin Olive Oil	375°F
Refined Canola Oil	375°F
Lard	356-370°F
Coconut Oil	350°F
Semi-Refined Canola Oil	350°F

Unrefined Sesame Oil	350°F
Semi-Refined Soybean Oil	350°F
Unrefined Corn Oil	350°F
Vegetable Shortening	350°F
Butter	330°F
Hemp Seed Oil	325°F
Unrefined Olive Oil	320°F
Unrefined, High-Oleic Sunflower Oil	320°F
Unrefined Peanut Oil	320°F
Semi-Refined Safflower Oil	320°F
Unrefined Soybean Oil	320°F
Unrefined Walnut Oil	320°F
Unrefined Canola Oil	225°F
Unrefined Flaxseed Oil	225°F
Unrefined Safflower Oil	225°F
Unrefined Sunflower Oil	225°F

CHEAT SHEET

MOST IDEAL:

Grass-Fed Butter
 Grass-Fed Ghee
 Coconut Oil
 Palm Oil
 Avocado Oil
 Macadamia Nut Oil
 Olive Oil

MOST HARMFUL:

Canola Oil
 Corn Oil
 Soybean Oil
 Peanut Oil
 Grapeseed Oil
 Sunflower Oil
 Safflower Oil
 Cottonseed Oil
 Sesame Oil

A DEEPER LOOK

When cooking, use fats that are stable and will not oxidize easily. When oils undergo oxidation, they form free radicals and compounds which are harmful to your health. Saturated fats and monounsaturated fats are pretty resistant to heating, but oils that are high in polyunsaturated fats should be avoided for cooking.



Coconut Oil

Over 90% of the fatty acids in coconut oil are saturated, which makes it resistant to heat. Because it is saturated, even when it's heated it is still a safe source of energy and can boost metabolism.

Butter and Ghee

Butter contains Vitamins A, E, K2, and Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA) which can lower body fat percentage. It also contains butyrate which fights inflammation and improves gut health! Check the smoke points, though. Ghee can be heated to a much higher temperature without oxidation than butter.

Palm Oil

Palm oil consists of saturated, monounsaturated fats and small amounts of polyunsaturated fats. It can be a great choice all around, financially and health-wise. There are many considerations with the sourcing of Palm Oil, though, so please be careful when sourcing!

Olive Oil

My favorite! Olive oil is well known for benefiting heart health! Try keeping this as an unheated ingredient. Great for sauces and dressings.



Vegetable and Seed Oils

These are highly processed, refined products that are way too rich in Omega-6 fatty acids. Not only should you not cook with them, you should probably avoid them altogether because they are linked to many diseases, including heart disease and cancer. They include; Soybean, Corn, Cottonseed, Canola, Rapeseed, Sunflower, Sesame, Grapeseed and Safflower.

YOUR NASHVILLE RESTAURANTS

RESTAURANT	DEEP FRYER	COOKING OILS	SAUCES AND DRESSINGS
Farm Burger	Soybean Oil	Soybean Oil ★*Can request burger to be cooked in olive oil	No Answer
True Food Kitchen	★ No Deep Fryer!	Cold-Pressed Grapeseed Oil	★ Extra Virgin Olive Oil ★ Coconut Oil
Vui's Kitchen	★ No Deep Fryer!	Canola Oil ★ Olive Oil	Canola Oil ★ Olive Oil
Turnip Truck	Non-GMO Canola Oil	★ Non-GMO Extra Virgin Olive Oil for all hot bar sides and predominantly in entrees Occasionally Non-GMO Sesame Oil Non-GMO Canola Oil to spray pans for paninis.	★ Usually Non-GMO Extra Virgin Olive Oil, but check hot bar labels
The Wild Cow	★ No Deep Fryer!	Canola Oil	★ Olive Oil
Butcher & Bee	Non-GMO Canola Oil	Non-GMO Canola Oil	★ Olive Oil (most)
The Farm House	Soybean Oil	Ask per dish, but SOME use: ★ Pork and Beef Fat	Canola
Margot Cafe	Vegetable Shortening	★ Olive Oil ★ Butter Corn/Canola Oil Blend - different instances	No Answer
The Treehouse	No Answer	Ask per dish: Canola Oil ★ Olive Oil Sesame Oil ★ Pork, Beef, Lamb, and Duck Fat	No Answer
City House	Peanut Oil	★ Extra Virgin Olive Oil "Blend Oil" aka Vegetable Oil	No Answer

RESTAURANT	DEEP FRYER	COOKING OILS	SAUCES AND DRESSINGS
Nicky's Coal Fired	Canola Oil	★Olive Oil and occasionally Hazelnut Oil Sunflower Oil	No Answer
Hattie B's	Soybean Oil	Soybean Oil	No Answer
Healthy Body Bakery	★ No Deep Fryer!	★Pure Olive Oil ★Butter	N/A
Burger Up	Refined Peanut Oil	Olive/Soy Blend *Olive Oil in separate pan available	No Answer
Whole Foods	No Answer	Check ingredients and these vary per location but are typically listed at the hot bar: ★Olive Oil Non-GMO Canola Oil Sesame Oil Soybean Oil	No Answer but usually listed.

PROTECT YOURSELF

If you're going to eat out, here are some practical tips to protect yourself against the damage of these harmful oils:

1. Choose Healthy/Transparent Restaurants:

- True Food Kitchen*
- Turnip Truck
- Nicky's Coal Fired
- Butcher & Bee
- Farm Burger
- Burger Up
- The Treehouse
- Healthy Body Bakery
- Whole Foods

2. Order Meals Using Little to No Oil:

- Salad Dressing on the side (I often bring my own dressing or olive oil)
- Avoid Anything Fried!
- Choose Steamed or Raw Items

3. ASK For What You Want:

Most restaurants have olive oil or butter in the kitchen, so it's always worth asking if they will cook your food using one of those. Avoid anything deep fried, because MOST restaurants keep the same oil in their fryers for WEEKS at a time, reheating it (read: damaging it further) every night. Re-used oil is a center for free radicals.

4. Supplement:

- Glycine 5g
- Spirulina 6g
- Astaxanthin (Krill Oil)
- Activated Charcoal

*See next page for my personal recommendations for **True Food Kitchen!**

TRUE FOOD KITCHEN Recommendations:

3996 Hillsboro Pike | Nashville, Tennessee 37215

REFRESHERS & TEAS

Sparkling Antioxidant Tea organic iced green tea, pomegranate, lemon (80 cal)

CRAFT COCKTAILS

Citrus Skinny Margarita organic blanco tequila, muddled citrus, cucumber, mint (170 cal)

WINE

Rosé of Grenache M. Chapoutier "Belleruche" (Rhône Valley, France) (150 cal)

Cava Mercat (Penedès, Spain) (150 cal)

STARTERS

Green Asparagus lemon almond ricotta, pickled strawberry, arugula, radish (200 cal) V GF

Charred Cauliflower harissa tahini, medjool date, dill, mint, pistachio (410 cal) V GF

Seared Chicken Satay achiote, pumpkin seed salsa, cucumber, cilantro (370 cal) GF

BOWLS

Cauliflower Polenta asparagus, snow pea, edamame, snap pea, yellow squash, watermelon radish, chili thread (350 cal) V GF **+grass-fed steak** (adds 240-260 cal)

ENTREES

Pan-seared Chicken Breast crushed organic DiNapoli tomato, olive, caper, broccolini, edamame, spinach (630 cal) GF

Mauritius Island Redfish kale tabbouleh, fonio, salsa verde, roasted organic potato (570 cal) GF

Grilled Fish Tacos Mauritius Island redfish, tomatillo avocado salsa, pickled jicama, dried sweet corn, coconut lime yogurt, anasazi bean (570 cal) GF

Grass-fed Steak Tacos tomatillo avocado salsa, pickled jicama, dried sweet corn, coconut lime yogurt, anasazi bean (680 cal) GF

DESSERTS

Vanilla Ice Cream (220 cal) V GF

*I'm also a big fan of ordering their **grass-fed hamburger** without a bun along with their **sweet potato hash** which is great quality without any allergens, so those are a few other things I would try, while asking very nicely if they will cook everything in olive oil for me. Smiling helps.



“In high temperature cooking, select cooking oils with a high smoke point. For low temperature cooking, or adding to dishes and salad dressings, choose oils with a higher Omega-3 fatty acids since they promote healthy cells and decrease stroke and heart attack risk. They are also known for their anti-inflammatory action. Although you need Omega-6 fatty acids to maintain cell wall integrity and provide energy for the heart, too much Omega-6 fatty acids can increase inflammation in the body.”

-Colin Champ, M.D.

<http://www.cavemandoctor.com/2012/05/27/checking-your-oil-the-definitive-guide-to-cooking-with-fat/>

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“Canola oil is one of the worst oils you can cook with. It causes a ton of oxidation products, because they’re so susceptible to heat due to the double bonds. They put these omega-6 seed oils in bread and in condiments, cereals, pastries and desserts. It’s really everywhere ... [and] it’s literally transforming you from the inside-out, because these long-chain omegas get integrated in the cell membrane. The oxidation products oxidize those fatty acid tails. When you damage those tails in the lipid bilayer, they start to curl upwards. That actually creates a more permeable membrane. You get more things that aren’t supposed to get into the cell and damage the mitochondria, damage the DNA. The fluidity of the cell membrane also goes down.

The fluidity of the cell membrane is extremely important, because you have all these hormone transporters that sit in the cell membrane. When you don’t get enough omega-3s, especially docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), the membranes become very rigid... Instead of being able to come in and out very easily, because the membrane isn’t fluid, it starts... affecting how things flow into and out of the cell. Your metabolic rate goes down, and you have damage in the cell.”

-Dr. James J. DiNicolantonio

Author of [Superfuel: Ketogenic Keys to Unlock the Secrets of Good Fats, Bad Fats, and Great Health](#)