

Trending Substitutes for Olive Oil

Ben Caffrey



Navigating the Global Olive Oil Shortage: Tips on Making Soap With Olive Oil Alternatives

You may have noticed a slightly higher price when purchasing olive oil recently. From food to cosmetics and soaps, the popularity of olive oil continues to grow as the world grapples with an ongoing shortage.

It started last spring. Spain was hit with extreme heat and ongoing wildfires, coupled with a long-running drought. As a result, much of the harvest was destroyed, which forced the country to report a 48 percent loss in olive oil production. It was a huge setback for the country that supplies much of the world's olive oil.

Italy, another large olive oil producer, also faced crop damage from severe storms. Turkey suspended bulk olive oil exports, further impacting the supply. With the United States producing a relatively small amount of olive oil compared to its consumption, the shortage created a surge in demand and a spike in prices.

By summer, the cost of olive oil had soared, with prices 130 percent higher than the previous year.

Europe clocked its hottest summer on record in 2023; the long-term impact on future olive oil crops is unknown. When it is too hot, olive trees drop their fruit to save moisture. Very high temperatures are particularly dangerous in spring, during flowering, and can have lasting effects. Farmers are already warning that this year's harvest may be down as much as 40 percent from normal.

The ongoing shortage is having a ripple effect across industries, from global enterprises to mid-sized corporations to small businesses as they navigate the limited availability and rising costs of this popular product.

As a family-owned and woman-owned company, Soaper's Choice is aware of the pressures involved in managing a business. A slight decrease in product availability or increase in price can have a dramatic impact on a small business owner. With nearly 25 years as a supplier to the soap making industry, Soaper's Choice has explored and tested a variety of olive oil alternatives.

We also understand that substituting ingredients in a formula can be confusing and overwhelming, so outlined below is an easy-to-use guide on alternatives that soap makers can use as the world waits out the olive oil shortage.

Rice Bran Oil

One of the most popular substitutes for olive oil

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because of its rich, moisturizing and creamy lather

Known to treat dry, flaky skin. It absorbs quickly on the skin without greasiness or residue

It functions well at high temperatures and contains natural tocopherols that can be used in a variety of cosmetic and soap making applications.

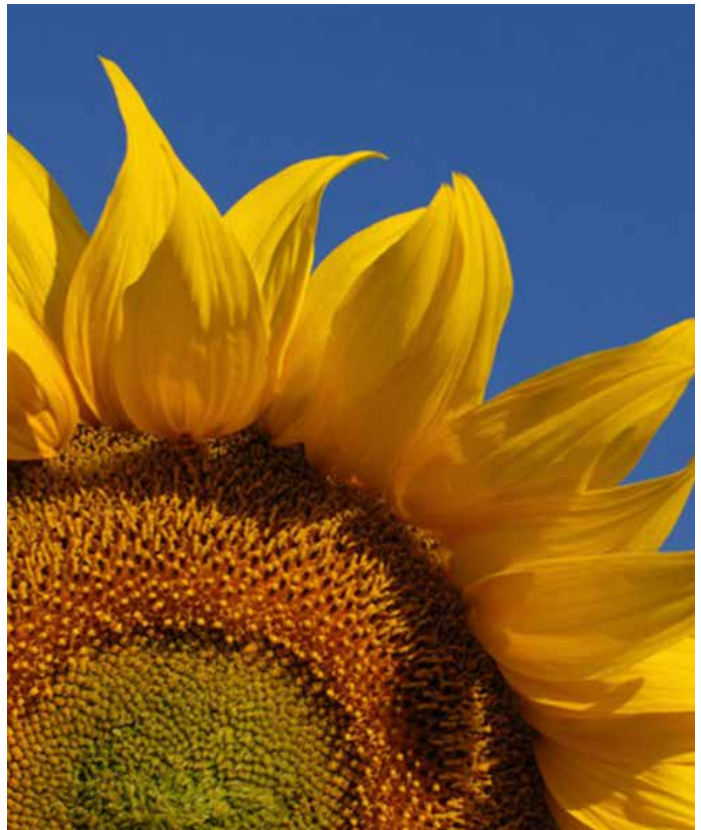
Non-comedogenic

Typically has a golden yellow to orange or amber color

We recommend 10 to 50 percent of the total fats in soap making recipes.

Best if used within nine months of the manufacture date.

High Oleic Sunflower Oil



A common substitute for olive oil due to its similar texture

Ideal for dry, delicate skin since it is moisturizing and does not absorb too quickly

It has a high level of monounsaturated fat, making it shelf stable and heat resistant.

Color is typically a light to medium yellow

Recommend 10 to 15 percent of the total fats in soap making recipes

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Best if used within 12 months of the manufacture date

High Oleic Safflower Oil



A go-to choice since it is easy to work with and creates a creamy lather.

Known for its moisturizing and cleansing properties

It is highly conditioning, so it doesn't dry out skin.

Neutral in odor, resistant to rancidity and remains clear even at low temperatures

Color is typically light to medium yellow.

Recommend 5 to 10 percent of the total fats in

soap making recipes and works well combined with harder oils such as coconut or palm.

Best if used within 12 months of the manufacture date

A fun decorative tip is to sprinkle dried safflower petals on top as a colorful finish.

Canola Oil



Another popular substitute for olive oil because of its similar creamy lather.

It is packed with essential fatty acids and rich in vitamin E antioxidants.

Great for all skin types, it is an easily absorbed oil that helps prevent moisture loss and softens skin.

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It has the lowest level of saturated fats (~6%) compared to other vegetable oils.

It is a thick consistency that is slow to trace, giving you plenty of time to perfect techniques like swirling.

Light in color and will produce a white soap

Recommend up to 40 percent of the total fats in soap making recipes

Best if used within nine months of the manufacture date.

It is also worth noting that the above oils are vegan, lactose free, gluten free, glutamate free, BSE free, non-hydrogenated and preservative free.

Experimenting with new recipes can be tricky and even frustrating. Here are a few tips to set up yourself for success.

SAP Values. Check the saponification (SAP) values for any new oil in your recipe

Lye. Remember to calculate your lye to ensure not only proper formulation but also safety

Expiration Date. Be sure to check out the “best if used by” date to determine shelf life and formulation timing

Storage. Store oils in a cool, dark, dry place away from direct sunlight and heat

Testing. Conduct test batches to determine which oil works best for your new recipe. It saves time, materials and money so you don't have to scrap full batches in the event of a problem.

According to global analysts, we will be feeling the effects of the olive oil shortage throughout 2024. Take the time now to experiment with alternative oils to perfect new recipes and hone those soap making skills.



Ben is a fourth-generation family member of Soaper's Choice by Columbus Vegetable Oils, a privately held company supplying quality oils for over 80 years. Soaper's Choice provides quality products, competitive prices, fast service and expert support, www.soaperschoice.com or 1-833-257-6627.