

Unique Aroma of Olive Oil

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Olive oil is among the most precious food materials nature presents to humankind and contributing to our health status in many ways from early to later years of life. Olive oil is green yellowish liquid oil consumable in its liquid form at room temperature and it can be extracted directly from the fruits of olive trees without using any chemical treatments and additives. Olive oil has a complex structure composed of oil acids, vitamins, essential components, water soluble components and microscopic olive particles. Consistently increasing interest in olive oil comes from not only its benefits to human health but also its organoleptic properties. Aroma of natural extra virgin olive oil is affected by carbonyl components and essential components such as alcohols, esters and hydrocarbons. Formation of these essential substances giving aroma to oil continues beginning from olive fruit until its consumption. Agricultural treatments affecting especially the formation of these essential components; origin, maturity and storing conditions of olive fruits and technologies used in processing olive fruits to obtain oil can also affect the sensual quality of olive oil. Essential components do not form in considerable amount during fruit development period, however; they can be seen in a certain critical period of maturity. During this critical period, fruits can produce ethylene and therefore, increase some protein and enzymatic activities causing physical, chemical, and biochemical alterations in fruit structure. High quality oil rich in essential aromatic components can be obtained from olive fruits if it is extracted in a convenient period with critical development time. Aroma is an important determinant in oil quality in addition to a series of criteria. Positive sensual properties provided by essential components transferred from quality and healthy olive fruits can ensure the persistence of high quality olive oil. In this respect, understanding and asserting the formation of essential components will be important breakthroughs to obtain a quality product.