**TRAINING FICHE TEMPLATE**

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| **Module** | Module 1: General issues on healthy and low-impact food  |
| **Title** | Olive oil, the core of the Mediterranean diet  |
| **Keywords** | Olive oil, health, cardiovascular disorders |
| **Topic/Area** |

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| X | 1: General issues on healthy and low-impact food  |
|  | 2:  Typical local products and varieties (basic and advanced) |
|  | 3: Traditional food preservation/conservation techniques |
|  | 4: Food elaboration/consumption techniques / according to Food Pyramid |
|  | 5: Traditional, local and heritage related recipes  |

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| **Level** | Basic |
| **Description/Contents****(2000 characters max.)** | Olive oil can be defined as liquid fat at 20ºC directly obtained from the fruit of the olive tree. It shows a golden yellow colour and its appearance should be liquid, oily and translucent, with no sediments. Olive oil is considered the core of the Mediterranean diet having been cultivated and used since approximately 4000 b. C. According to the European regulation, the types of olive oil are the following:* **Extra virgin olive oil** is the one with the highest quality. It is obtained from the first pressing of the olive in its optimal state only by mechanical methods. It is mostly composed by oleic acid (78%), a monounsaturated acid.
* **Virgin olive oil** is also extracted by mechanical methods, but using olives at no so optimal condition, i.e., they may have some external damage.
* Although not consumed by humans, **lampante olive oil** is made with olives that show external damages and are subject to physical and chemical processes. It is highly acid and need to be refined for consumption.
* Once refined lampante olive il could be consumed but more often it is mixed with a percentage of virgin olive oil to obtain the category entitled ‘**olive oil’**, that is commercially presented under two labels, mild and intense olive oil.
* Lastly, **olive pomace oil** is made with the residual olive after undergoing mechanical processes. It is extracted with solvents and also mixed with virgin olive oil, and mainly used for frying.

Italy and Spain are the largest extra virgin olive oil consumers in the European Union. Also, European countries such as Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal, are by far the countries where olive oil is mostly consumed, for cooking, seasoning, sauteing, frying, braising and even preserving food.  |
| **Benefits/Advantages****(1000 characters max.)** | Extra virgin olive oil presents several advantages. It is rich in healthy monounsaturated fatty acids and contains large amounts of antioxidants with beneficial health properties. In addition, it has anti-inflammatory properties, and has been widely described as a healthy food for prevention of cardiovascular diseases, being used in clinical trials with very positive results. Olive oil should be our main source of lipids due to its high nutritional properties and could be also used for cosmetics. |
| **Representative Products** | Extra virgin olive oil in its main varieties, such as Arbequina, Picual, Hojiblanca (Spain), Carpallese, Canino, Biancolilla (Italy), Koroneiki and Conservolia (Greece), Branquita, Cobrançosa and Galega de Évora (Portugal) |
| **Risks management** | Not all types of olive oil have the same properties. For instance, pomace oil is extracted with solvents. Despite the fact that olive oil stands high temperatures due to its high smoke point, there is a risk on the formation of toxic compounds if we reuse the oil in frying.Olive oil should be stored at temperatures between 15 and 18 °C, protected from light and heat, and well-sealed to avoid oxidation and rancidification.  |
| **Language** | English |
| **Country** | Spain |
| **Providing Partner** | UMA |
| **References** | <https://www.ceqitalia.com/en/the-consortium/> <https://www.internationaloliveoil.org/olive-world/olive-oil-health/><http://www.oleumproject.eu/> |

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