



Pakistan produces 3,500 Tonnes of Olive Oil

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The country will harvest about 40,000 tonnes of olive (fruit) during current seasons (2019-20) to produce about 3,500 tonnes of extra-virgin olive oil that would help in tackling with the domestic edible oil requirements.

Pakistan is not a traditional olive-producing country but a wild subspecies of the olive tree called *olea cuspidata* does grow in different parts of the country.

Olive was introduced first time in Pakistan by PARC during 1986 under an Italian Project titled "Fruit, Vegetable and olive Project" funded by Government of Italy. After this project a general survey was conducted to estimate the number of naturally occurred wild olive specie "*Olea Cuspidata*" and found more than 80 million wild Olive plants in different district of Pakistan.

In Indo-Pak sub-continent a wild olive, *olea cuspidata* is found within the northwest Himalayas and other adjoining hills but cultivated olive *olea Europea* is not grown anywhere on commercial scale. This plant is locally known as Zytoon in Urdu, Showan in Pushtu, Khat in Brahavi and kow in Punjabi, Sindhi and Saraiki. The importance of olive oil has also been narrated several times in the Holy Quran. During the mid of last century; (around 1950s), a number of grafted olive plants of several varieties were imported and planted in Kashmir,

Simla and Kangra hills at Harnai, Fort Sandeman (Zhob) in Balochistan, Peshawar, Swat (NWFP), Rawalpindi, Sargodha, and Jhelum (Punjab) districts.

The secret of the olive tree is in two things: its fruit, the olive itself, and its massive underground root system that can extend over twenty feet. The roots are so extensive and strong that in times of drought, when other trees die, the *zaytuna* tree is still standing because it draws from deep within the earth when the heavens withhold their life-giving water. Another aspect of these roots is that they enable the tree to produce olives for hundreds of years: even after the tree looks as if there is no life left in it, it continues to produce olives.

According to Inamul Haq, an officer in Barani Agriculture Research Institute, the agriculture department of Punjab had launched the mega flagship programme to develop Potohar area into an olive valley in 2015-16.

Under another olive project of federal government 5.5 million olive plants were top worked but less than 1% plants survived in the result of top working because of management of top worked plants. Another government project to plant over 5 million olive plants was unsuccessful when only 1% of the saplings survived

The domestic production of olive oil would also help in fetching the handsome

Table 1: Olive Oil Production Major Countries

Rank	Country	Production (000 Tonnes)
1	Spain	1,256,200
2	Italy	557,574
3	Greece	344,615
4	Tunisia	280,000
5	Syria	140,466
6	Turkey	128,168
7	Morocco	77,145
8	Portugal	49,463
9	Algeria	37,404
10	Jordan	18,702

Source: FAOSTAT

amount of foreign exchange by exporting it, besides saving the precious foreign exchange reserves being spent on the import of the commodity.

While exploiting the abundant opportunities existing for the cultivation of olive across the country, olive had been cultivated over vast areas of Pothohar region of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Under the project about 1.2 million olive plants were planted in Pothohar region of Punjab that had immense potential of olive cultivation. Besides, over

one million olive plants were planted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 500,000 olive plants in Balochistan Province under olive cultivation on commercial scales project. More over 4 million hectares of marginal land had been identified for olive cultivation across the country. The country was spending Rs1.76 billion during the year 2018-19 on the import of olive oil to meet with the domestic consumptions.

By cultivating the olive on commercial scales, Pakistan would not only able to save its precious forex reserves, but it could fetch billions of dollars by exporting olive oil, its by-products including olive pickles, soap, tea and other cosmetics.

The Dr Tariq, Project Director said government had allocated an amount of Rs 2.3 billion in its Public Sector Development Program for the year 2019-20 on promotion and development of olive on commercial scale. On the other hand several other steps were being taken to encourage the small land holders to cultivate olive to alleviate poverty from the rural areas of the country.

In order to promote the exports of the domestic olive oil, the government would provide branding, labelling, packaging and marketing facilities to private sector.

Table 2: Import of Olive Oil

Quantity: Kg
Value: Rs. 000

Country	2018-19		2017-18	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
China	1,203	643	720	293
Italy	95,041	42,357	82,859	36,164
Spain	647,077	324,029	516,404	235,423
Tunisia	34,295	19,009	6	3
Turkey	6,490	3,777	26,982	12,172
All other	2,187	1,064	14,735	6,773
Total	786,293	390,879	641,706	290,828

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics.

Dr Tariq informed that in order to promote the exports as well as producing the extra virgin oil, the government was enforcing the standards of International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and International Olive Council.

He said that the locally produced olive oil was competing with the international standards as it was certified by Italy and Italy was also providing financial and technical assistance to government for olive promotion.

Importance of Olive

Olive is good source of edible oil and is also used for table purpose particularly for pickles. The olive has not only nutritional and medicinal value but its fat content is also free from cholesterol. It is also used in food preservation, textile industry and cosmetic preparation along with variety of other purposes. Olive oil is one of the few widely used culinary oils that contain about 75% of its fat in the form of oleic acid. Olive fruit due to its nutri-





tional and medicinal importance is a blessing of Almighty/Allah. Olive has been referred in noble way at many places in the Holy Quran and its importance has been certified by many saying of Holy Prophet.

Import of Olive oil

Import of Olive oil into Pakistan increased from 3,037 tonnes worth Rs. 1.24 billion in 2017-18 to 4,452 tonnes worth Rs. 1.76 billion in 2018-19, thus showing an increase of 380% in term of value. Country-wise imports of Olive oil into Pakistan are given in **Table-1** and **Table-2**.

World Production

Spain is still the world's largest producer of olive oil, with more than half of world production and far from the second producer which is Italy. In Europe, 78% of the world's olive oil is produced. Global

Table 3: Import of Other Olive Oil and its Fractions

Quantity: Kg
Value: Rs. 000

Country	2018-19		2017-18	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Italy	350,189	138,419	354,084	135,982
Spain	2,888,312	1,080,735	1,870,255	746,985
Turkey	277,355	100,374	96,427	38,698
Tunisia	75,284	28,558	533,991	21,085
European Union	71,832	25,731	13,623	4,815
United Kingdom	2137	837	3,160	1,083
All other	759	300	475,491	1,747
Total	3,665,868	1,374,954	2,396,049	950,395

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics.

olive oil production is forecast to rise by 28% for 2017-18 compared to the previous year, according to the International Olive Council (IOC). The IOC said global output was expected to 3,315,000 tonnes for the 2017-18 crop years, an increase of 723,500 tonnes compared with 2016-2017.

Tunisia experienced the largest increase, producing 280,000 tonnes, a 180% increase compared with last year; Italy also had a strong season, producing

428,900 tonnes, an increase of 135%. Portugal, Argentina and Greece also experienced large increases, producing an additional 94%, 81% and 77% respectively, compared with the previous 2017-18 year. Turkey and Morocco enjoyed more moderate increases, producing 48% and 27% more olive oil respectively than last year. However, Spain remains the world's single largest producer with an output of 1,256,200 tonnes, making up about 38% of the world total. The world

olive oil production in 2018/19 was expected to fall by 7.6% to 3,064,000 tonnes, with olive oil consumption expected to remain at a similar level. Major olive oil producing countries are given in **Table-3**.

Future Prospects

Pakistan had ambitious plans for increasing its olive production and it had the potential to take over Spain as the biggest producer of olives in the years to come. Under a project in Chakwal, the agriculture department of Punjab had almost planted more than one million trees on an area of 3200 hectares and 750 farmers of the district benefited from it.

The country had more land suitable for olive cultivation than Spain, currently the largest producer in the world. Pakistan wanted to increase its olive production as a way to help its cash strapped economy.

Every year Pakistan imports olive oil worth US\$ 2 billion, as country's economy depended on agriculture still more attention was needed to solve Pakistan's future crisis by coming out with new and revolutionary ideas.

In the last few years, a silent revolution had been underway and farmers in the Potohar region took to planting olive groves. This will help the farmers in the arid zone to come up with another source of revenue besides helping the country save billions of dollars spent on import of edible oil.

While Pakistan had an area of 3.5 million hectares suitable for tree plantation particularly olive grove. As the water resources of the country would shrink in the future, new cultivation methods were needed and the farmers in Chakwal had realized that growing olives would not only help boost their income but would also protect the environment.

References

1. Agricultural Statistics, of Pakistan.
2. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.
3. Trade Development Authority of Pakistan.
4. Various Press Releases. ♦



Seven health benefits of Olive oil

1. It prevents diabetes

According to many studies, olive oil is rich in healthy fats which can help in keeping your blood sugar under control.

Using olive oil for cooking instead of any other oils are known to be beneficial in preventing diabetes.

2. It prevents breast cancer

Previous studies have shown that women who consume olive oil have a lower risk of developing breast cancer as compared to others who don't. Olive oil has a natural compound called 'oleuropein', which has anti-cancer properties.

3. It strengthens bones

Olive oil can be used to get stronger bones. If you consume olive oil, you will have high amounts of osteocalcin in your body which can help in the formation of healthy bones.

4. It helps in weight loss

Losing weight is not easy but, if you replace your regular oil with olive oil for

cooking, you can actually lose weight faster! Cook your favourite foods in it or drizzle it over your salads to lose weight.

5. It can treat depression

Olive oil is one of those few foods that act as antidepressants. It can increase serotonin levels, which helps in treating depression.

6. It controls cholesterol

Consumption of olive oil reduces the bad cholesterol and increases the good cholesterol in the body, which can help in lowering the risks of heart diseases.

7. It acts as a pain reliever

Extra virgin olive oil is known as a pain reliever. It contains oleocanthal, which reduces the inflammation in the body that helps in curing any type of pain! ♦