

Follow this guide to make sure you're using the right amount of olive oil when cooking fish, chicken, vegetables and more.



Are you too heavy-handed when cooking with olive oil? While it's a great source of heart-healthy monounsaturated fats (and a lower-calorie alternative to butter), it's still possible to overdo it. Using more olive oil than you need adds extra calories, makes food oily, and costs you money (that bottle of olive oil doesn't come cheap!).

"Some people assume that extra oil in the pan won't get absorbed into the food, but this isn't true for all foods – take eggplant, for example, which absorbs oil like a sponge," says **Franci Cohen, a New York-area nutritionist**. "There are several variables that determine the amount of oil needed: Type of food, how well done you want it, size of the pan and

how much food you're squeezing in the pan at once."

- **For cooking fish, lean meat, and poultry:** Pour enough olive oil into the pan to cover pan, usually 1-2 tbsp. (note that olive oil is typically not recommended for deep frying due to its low smoke point).
- **For cooking fattier meats:** "Because fatty meats have very little connective tissue and a high level of marbling, they get tender very easily, and do not need much oil during the cooking process," says Cohen. Lightly sear fatty meats in a hot pan with just a tiny bit of oil to give a crispy crust while letting the inside stay soft and tender.
- **For cooking sausage:** Since sausages have outer casing that acts as a barrier, oil will only crisp the casing – meaning it's generally better to cook sausage by boiling or barbecuing it. "But if you do choose to pan fry sausage before tossing into an egg scramble, for example, use just enough oil to coat the pan," says Cohen.
- **For sautéing vegetables:** Coat vegetables lightly in oil before cooking, then add another thin layer to the pan. Replenish as needed.
- **For cooking mushrooms:** "Mushrooms yield a lot of water during the initial cooking phase, which then gets reabsorbed along with any spices or flavors you have in the pan," says Cohen. Because of this, you might need slightly less olive oil than you would use to sauté other vegetables.
- **For making eggs and pancakes:** A light spray of cooking spray in the pan will suffice. "For these foods, the oil is not used to lend flavor to the food, only to keep the food from sticking to the pan," Cohen explains.
- **For roasting veggies in the oven:** Use the same rule of thumb as when you sauté vegetables: coat them lightly in oil, then spread another layer of oil onto the pan before roasting.
- **For sautéing tofu:** Press the tofu overnight to eliminate water. The next day, toss tofu lightly in oil, and spread another layer of oil onto the pan before cooking (this will let you maximize flavor).