

Go ahead, add some **OLIVE** oil to your diet

Nutritionists say olive oil is healthier than other types. Chefs say olive oil complements Chinese cuisine and you don't have to worry about sacrificing great taste. Zhang Qian asks, what's not to like?



Chinese cuisine is known for its appetizing appearance, attractive smell, great taste, and various cooking methods. Yet the heavy use of oil and high calorie counts over time can lead to high blood sugar, inefficient metabolism and weight gain.

Nutritionists suggest substituting olive oil, which is much healthier, in those recipes that call for lots of oil.

Olive oil has been commonly used in cooking, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and soaps in Mediterranean countries for hundreds of years. It has gained in popularity in China in recent years due to its health benefits. Most Chinese families only use it for cold dishes, but Tian Qiuming, executive chef of the Great Wall Hotel in Beijing, says olive oil is perfect for Chinese food. The best part is that it adds less calories than other oils.

"Apart from use in cold dishes, olive oil is especially suitable for stewing, braising, and earthen pot cooking," Tian says.

"The ingredients don't absorb large amounts of olive oil as they do with other types, which will help reduce calories." Though frying is considered

unhealthy, it is still a popular cooking method to many due to its good taste and convenience. Tian says olive oil can also be a better choice in frying as it doesn't break down in high temperatures, thus forming a protective layer around ingredients. And since it has a much higher smoke point — 240-270 degrees Celsius — than other oils, it is less likely to produce carcinogens, especially during deep frying.

Apart from adding fewer calories, using olive oil can also help improve metabolism, reduce cholesterol and lower the risk of cardiovascular disease because it is rich in monounsaturated fat and antioxidants like chlorophyll, carotenoids and vitamin E, which is an anti-aging weapon, according to nutritionist Fan Zhihong.

Olive oil also contains vitamins D and K. Vitamin D helps improve calcium absorption while vitamin K can help accelerate blood circulation and thus rid the body of subcutaneous fat.

Despite the benefits of olive oil, it is not advised to use only one type of oil. Different oils can usually provide different nutrients.

Nutritionist Mai Haiyan of The First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University says different oils are recommended for different people. Oil with monounsaturated fatty acid, like olive oil and tea seed oil, is recommended for people with high blood sugar and cardiovascular disease. Oil with linoleic acid and α -linolenic acid is recommended for children, teenagers, pregnant women and the weak.

Mai recommends that most adults use different oils in their diet.

Tuina massage offers much more than just a feel-good experience

TRADITIONAL Chinese medicine differs from Western medicine in a number of ways. This includes how a diagnosis is made as well as the curative methods.

Most people are now familiar with acupuncture as it has become more common in the West. Herbal medicine is also becoming more popular.

Tuina is the name for the massage therapy used in TCM. It is not as well known even though it has existed just as long as Chinese medicine.

The first records of *tuina* date back to the Shang Dynasty (1700 BC), where oracle bones show it was used to treat children's diseases and digestive complaints in adults.

Tuina uses the TCM theory of channels and collaterals sometimes known as meridians or pathways through which *qi*, or energy, flows. These channels are the basic therapeutic focus of *tuina*. By massaging these meridians, *tuina* helps the *qi* flow through the system of channels and collaterals.

Clinical practice shows that *tuina* brings changes in the body through stimulation, induced by manipulation and movement of various parts of the body, without using drugs or other invasive options. Experiments indicate that the nutrients in the body can be adjusted and harmful agents eliminated with *tuina* by strengthening phagocyte cells, which are capable of absorbing bacteria.

Tuina methods include a range of techniques such as soft tissue massage (muscles and tendons), acupressure to directly influence the flow of *qi* and manipulation techniques to realign the musculo-skeletal system (bone setting).

These techniques can be divided into two categories — reinforcing manipulation and reducing manipulation. Massage along the meridians with slow, light and short strokes is known as a reinforcing manipulation. A massage with quick,

heavy and long strokes is a reducing manipulation.

It was believed that Bodhidharma from ancient India contributed greatly to the development of *tuina*.

Bodhidharma came to China to study massage in AD 507. He served as a monk in the Shaolin Monastery with a veteran monk as his teacher.

He learned the manipulations of pressing, rubbing, pushing and pulling. Based on this knowledge he developed 10 techniques and invented the flicking manipulation.

These techniques are still used today. They include pushing, stroking, grasping, pressing, pinching, rubbing, rolling, shaking, rotating and pulling.

Tuina focuses on a specific problem rather than a generalized treatment. *Tuina* can be used to treat a variety of medical conditions. The doctor will focus on specific pain sites, acupressure points, energy meridians, muscles and joints.

During your treatment, you may feel comfortable or experience some discomfort when your therapist uses different manipulations.

In order to get the best effect, your therapist will stimulate the aching areas and use special manipulations if necessary.

If you tell your therapist you are experiencing discomfort, he/she will decrease the movements.

Tuina differs substantially from Western physiotherapy and relaxing massages.

Even though similar manipulations are employed in other types of massage, you should be aware that *tuina* is a therapeutic TCM intervention.

Also *tuina* should not be used when the patient has fractures or open wounds, internal bleeding or other serious medical conditions.

Your doctor should be made aware of medical conditions before beginning *tuina* treatment.

(Doris Rathgeber, founder of Body & Soul Medical Clinics)

