

# Avocado Oil Health and Beauty Benefits

## QUICK FACTS

<b>Name</b>	Avocado
<b>Origin</b>	It is a native plant of Central America and the highland regions of south–central Mexico.
<b>Colors</b>	Green, yellow
<b>Taste</b>	Lingering
<b>Calories</b>	1927 Kcal./cup
<b>Major Nutrients</b>	Total Fat (622.86%)
<b>Health Benefits</b>	Neutralizes free radicals, Lowers cholesterol, Healthy fats, Eye health, Enhances absorption

The avocado is a tree originating in the Americas which is likely native to the highland regions of south–central Mexico to Guatemala. It is a member of the flowering plant family *Lauraceae*. The fruit of the plant, called an avocado, is a large berry containing a single large seed. Avocado trees are self–pollinating, and are propagated through grafting to maintain fruit quality and quantity.

*Persea americana* grows to 20 m (66 ft.), with alternately arranged leaves 12–25 cm (5–10 in.) long. Panicles of flowers arise from new growth of leaves. The flowers are green–yellow, about 5–10 mm ( $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{8}$  in.) wide. The species is variable due to human selection in order to produce larger, fleshier fruits with a thinner *exocarp* (skin). The pear–shaped fruit is usually 7–20 cm (3–8 in.) long, weighs between 100 and 1,000g ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  and  $35\frac{1}{2}$  oz.), and has a single large central seed, 5–6.4 cm (2–2½ in) long.

The fruit of domestic varieties has a buttery flesh when ripe. Depending on the variety when ripe, avocado skin can vary in color from green, brown, purple, to black, and may vary in shape from pear, oblong, to round. The high fat and smooth texture of avocados make it a diverse food in different cuisines, and is traditionally important in Mexican cuisine. The nutrient–dense value and concentration of healthy fats, make avocados a commonly used food in vegan and vegetarian foods and is thought to be very healthy.

## Properties of Cultivars

The Hass avocado has a dark green–colored, bumpy skin. It was first grown and sold in Southern California by Rudolph Hass, who gave it its name. Unrefined avocado oil from the “Hass” cultivar is high in *monounsaturated fatty acids*. “Hass” cold–pressed avocado oil is a brilliant emerald green when extracted; a color that is attributed to high levels of *chlorophylls* and *carotenoids*; it has been described as having grassy, butter–like and mushroom–like flavors. Other varieties can produce oils with different flavor profiles, such as “Fuerte”.

## Climate Change and Avocado Production

Avocados are cultivated in the tropical and Mediterranean climates of many countries. Mexico is the leading producer, supplying 32% of the world’s total in 2019. Avocado production is one of the most environmentally intensive, using 70 liters (18 US gallons) of water per avocado, and producing over 400g of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In major production regions like Chile, Mexico and California, water demands for avocados puts pressure on overall water resources. There are additional concerns with avocado production, including

environmental justice, human rights violations, deforestation and connections with organized crime. Climate change is expected to cause significant changes in the growing zones for avocados putting additional pressure on water resources and production.

## THE HISTORY OF THE AVOCADO

*Persea americana* is thought to have originated in the Tehuacan Valley in the state of Puebla, Mexico, although there is fossil evidence of similar species more widespread millions of years ago. Three separate domestications of the avocado could have resulted in the current Mexican (*aoacatl*), Guatemalan (*quiloacatl*), and West Indian (*tlacocolaocatl*) landraces.

The Mexican and Guatemalan landraces originated in the highlands of those countries, while the West Indian landrace is a lowland variety that ranges from Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador to Peru, being widespread by Indigenous peoples in pre-Columbian America. These three landraces were described in the *Florentine Codex*, a 16th-Century ethnographic research study of Mesoamerica by the Spanish Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún.

The earliest residents of northern coastal Peru were living in temporary camps in an ancient wetland and eating avocados, along with chilies, mollusks, sharks, birds, and sea lions. The oldest discovery of an avocado pit comes from the Mesoamerican archaeological site of Coxcatlan Cave, dating from about 9,000–10,000 years ago.

Other caves in the Tehuacan Valley from around the same time also show evidence of the presence and consumption of avocados. There is evidence of avocado use at Norte Chico civilization sites in Peru like the Caral-Supe—a complex pre-Columbian-era society that included as many as thirty major population centers—by at least 3,200 years ago and at the archaeological complex of Caballo Muerto in Peru, from about 3,800–4,500 years ago.

The native, undomesticated variety of avocado is known as a *criollo*. It is small with dark black skin, and contains a single large seed. It probably coevolved with extinct *megafauna*. Evolutionary biologist Daniel H. Janzen concluded, in 1982, that the avocado is an "evolutionary anachronism," adapted for ecological relationship with extinct large mammals.

Large fruits function by seed dispersal, which they accomplish because their mildly toxic pit is swallowed whole by large animals and excreted with their dung, ready to sprout. The avocado probably coevolved with *Pleistocene megafauna*, because no existing animal species is large enough to disperse the avocado seeds in this fashion.

The avocado tree also has a long history of cultivation in Central and South America, likely beginning as early as 5,000 BC. A water jar shaped like an avocado, dating to AD 900, was discovered in the pre-Incan (Empire) city of Chan Chan, now an archeological site.

The earliest known written account of the avocado in Europe is that of Martín Fernández de Enciso in his 1519 book, *Suma De Geographia Que Trata De Todas Las Partidas Y Provincias Del Mundo.* The first account unequivocally describing the avocado was given by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés in his 1526 work, *Sumario de la Natural Historia de las Indias.* The first English language written record of the use of the word "avocado" was in a 1696 index of Jamaican plants by Hans Sloane, who coined the term.

The plant was introduced to Spain in 1601, Indonesia around 1750, Mauritius in 1780, Brazil in 1809, South Africa and Australia in the late 19th Century, and the Ottoman Empire in 1908. In the U.S., the avocado was introduced to the mainland in 1825, to Florida and Hawaii in 1833 and California in 1856.

In California before 1915, the avocado was commonly referred to as *ahuacate* and in Florida as *alligator pear*. In 1915, the California Avocado Association, now the [California Avocado Society](#) (CAS) introduced the innovative term “avocado” to refer to both plant and fruit.

## THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF AVOCADO OIL

Avocado oil is one of few edible oils not derived from seeds; it is pressed from the fleshy pulp of the fruit. It is used as an edible oil both raw and for cooking, where it is noted for its high smoke point. It is also used for lubrication and in cosmetics. Avocado oil has a high smoke point (the temperature at which oil or fat begins to smoke and burn): 250°C (482°F) unrefined, and 271°C (520°F) refined. In refined form, the oil is yellow with a strong scent. Edible cold-pressed avocado oil is generally unrefined, like extra virgin olive oil, so it retains the rich and unctuous flavor and green color characteristics of the fruit flesh.

### Quality Control

A study performed at the [University of California, Davis](#) in 2020 determined that a majority of the domestic and imported avocado oil sold in the U.S. is rancid before its expiration date or is adulterated with other oils. In some cases, the researchers found that bottles labeled as “pure” or “extra virgin” avocado oil contained nearly 100% soybean oil.

Avocado is regarded as a superfood because it is so nutrient-dense. Avocado oil functions well as a carrier oil for other flavors. Avocado oil has a similar *monounsaturated fat* profile to olive oil and is naturally low acidic. If you’re looking for ideas on ways you can incorporate this beneficial fruit into your daily life, read our post [3 Uses for Avocados](#).

It is high in Vitamins A, D, E, antioxidants and magnesium, and enhances the absorption of *carotenoids* (also called *tetraterpenoids*, the yellow, orange, and red organic pigments produced by plants) and other nutrients. Each 30 mL of avocado oil contains 3.6 mg of Vitamin E and 146.1 mg of *beta-sitosterol*. Consumption of avocado and avocado oil improves skin and eye health, circulatory function and balances hormones.

Aside from its health and culinary applications, avocado oil has beauty benefits as well, which is why it has gained popularity of late. It is used in cosmetics for its moisturizing and regenerative properties. When used in hair and skin care products it is usually refined, and the color and scent are removed after extracting. For some DIY skin and hair beneficial homemade products incorporating this wonderful ingredient, read our post [5 Beauty Treatments Using Avocado Oil](#).

### 1. NEUTRALIZES FREE RADICALS

A [2012 research study](#) from the University of Michoacán de San Nicolás de Hidalgo in México showed the protective effects of avocado oil against free radicals in mitochondria. The oil allowed the continued use of nutrients for producing energy for cell functions even in cells attacked by free radicals. Free radicals are related with aging and various medical conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

### 2. LOWERS CHOLESTEROL

Avocado lowers the blood concentration of cholesterol and certain fats that are increased in diabetic patients and that may lead to stroke or heart attack. A diet with avocado oil could improve the health status of diabetic, overweight and obese patients through an additional mechanism to the improvement of total cholesterol, LDL and triglycerides.

### 3. CONTAINS HEALTHY FATS

The pulp of avocado has been reported to have beneficial cardiovascular health effects. The oil of avocado has heart healthy *oleic acid* which is a *monounsaturated* omega-9 fatty acid with many health benefits. About 12% of avocado oil is composed of saturated fat, and 13% of polyunsaturated fat.

### 4. EYE HEALTH

Avocado oil is a great source of *lutein* which is a carotenoid found naturally in the eyes. It has antioxidant properties, vital for maintaining eye health. This oil lowers the risk of macular degeneration, cataracts and other eye-related medical conditions. Lutein must be obtained from nutritional sources as the body does not produce it.

### 5. ENHANCES ABSORPTION

A [2005 study](#) showed that the addition of avocado or avocado oil enhanced carotenoid absorption by humans from salsa and salad containing carrots and lettuce.

### 6. TREATS SYMPTOMS OF ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is a common medical condition throughout the world. Osteoarthritis is a common form of arthritis that is caused by the breakdown of cartilage in the joints. A [2013 study](#) shows that the unsaponifiable portion (pit) of avocado is reported to have beneficial effects against the stiffness and pain related to osteoarthritis. Avocado seeds may be useful in the treatment of inflammatory conditions. Although the seed makes up a considerable percentage of the fruit, scientific research on the phytochemistry and biological effects of avocado seeds is still in the early stages.

### 7. MAINTAINS ORAL HEALTH

Avocado oil is used for dermatological applications. This oil can help lower the risk of periodontal disease, a disease of the soft tissues (gums) in the mouth. Periodontal disease exhibits symptoms such as bleeding of gums, breakdown of soft tissue around teeth, bone loss and bad breath. In advanced cases, it can result in tooth loss.

### 8. SKIN PROTECTION

The beta carotene, protein, lecithin, fatty acids, and Vitamins A, D, and E found in avocado oil help moisturize and [protect your skin from damaging UV rays](#) and also increase collagen metabolism. A [2015 study](#) found that a topical skin cream consisting of avocado, tea tree, emu, and jojoba oils had positive antimicrobial effects.

### 9. PROMOTES HEALING OF WOUNDS

A [2013 study](#) found that the linoleic acid, oleic acid, and other *monosaturated* fatty acids in avocado oil can speed up wound healing. The results come from animal studies, further research needs to be done to study these effects of avocado oil on people. Avocado seeds have also been found to possess insecticidal, fungicidal, and anti-microbial activities. Avocado seeds are rich in phenolic compounds, which play a role in their putative health effects.

### 10. AIDS IN DIGESTION

The addition of avocado oil to the diet can help get relief from poor digestion, gas and bloating. The presence of vitamins, minerals and *monounsaturated* fatty acids supports digestive function and nutrient absorption.

## 11. AIDS IN WEIGHT LOSS

Avocado oil is nutrient-dense and has a high concentration of oleic acid that can help with weight loss when combined with a healthy diet and regular exercise.

### THERAPEUTIC USES OF AVOCADO OIL

1. When applied topically, it can provide relief from gout and rheumatism.
2. It can resolve digestive issues, autoimmune conditions and lower inflammation.
3. When ingested, it can reduce the symptoms of IBS.
4. It moisturizes and nourishes skin deeply providing relief from dry skin. It prevents cracked and chapped skin. Add a few drops of avocado oil to hand creams and lotions for soft, healthy and hydrated skin.
5. It is used to prevent wrinkles, fine lines and stretch marks. A nightly avocado oil face application helps to prevent fine lines and wrinkles.
6. It makes a great makeup remover.
7. A homemade avocado facial cleanser can be made by mixing ½ cup milk, 1 egg yolk and ½ large avocado.
8. A mixture of egg whites, oats, and a dash of lemon juice and avocado oil makes a great skin exfoliator.
9. A moisturizing facial mask can be made by mixing aloe vera gel with mashed ripened avocado pulp.
10. A dry skin moisturizing oil blend can be made by mixing avocado and wheat germ oils.
11. When applied topically, it can lighten dark under eye circles.
12. Apply avocado oil to skin regularly to clear symptoms of psoriasis and eczema.
13. Avocado oil used topically can be used to treat acne.
14. It is used to promote healing of wounds.
15. Using avocado oil as sunscreen can protect skin from harmful UV rays.
16. Massage avocado oil to a sun burn for few days to promote skin healing and skin *desquamation*.
17. It is an effective treatment for hair loss, and promotes new healthy hair growth.
18. The use of a few drops of avocado oil mixed with water in a spray bottle helps to detangle hair by smoothing the hair shaft.
19. Add avocado oil to shampoo and conditioner to treat a dry and itchy scalp.
20. For a moisturizing hair mask, massage the oil on the scalp and cover with a shower cap.
21. Add a few drops avocado oil to mouthwash. Its antiseptic properties can eliminate bacteria and bad breath.
22. Apply avocado oil with a cotton ball to an infected tooth to relieve a toothache.
23. Daily intake of avocado can regulate the menstrual cycle.
24. A few drops of avocado oil can be added to smoothies to enhance their nutrition.
25. Make a nutritious and energizing smoothie by adding 1–2 oz. avocado.

### PRECAUTIONS

Avocado oil is mostly safe and has very few and rare negative side effects. It's always recommended to do a patch test before use. Pregnant or nursing women should consult their doctor before using avocado oil.

#### Common Side Effects

These are the rare side effects which have been listed:

- Itching, Rash, Hives

- Vomiting
- Allergic reaction
- Skin reddening
- Anaphylaxis
- Intestinal or Bronchospasm

If you do experience any one of these symptoms, stop using the oil immediately and consult a physician. These are possible negative symptoms related to allergic reactions to the avocado fruit. If you are allergic to legumes or similar types of fruits, be mindful when using avocado oil—particularly when ingesting avocado oil. People allergic to avocados should avoid ingesting and using its oil topically.

People with latex allergies (bananas, chestnuts, and passion and kiwi fruits) have a greater possibility of being allergic to avocados and their oil. People who take blood thinners should consult their physician before using since avocado oil could lower the effectiveness of Warfarin. People experiencing improper liver function should consult their physician before using avocado oil.

#### NUTRITIONAL VALUE OF AVOCADO OIL

<b>Proximity</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>% DV</b>
Serving Size	1 cup, 218 g	N/D
Calories	1927 Kcal.	N/D
Calories from Fat	1962 Kcal.	N/D
Energy	8064 kJ	N/D
Total Fat (lipid)	218 g	622.86%
<b>Lipids</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>% DV</b>
<b>Fatty acids, total saturated</b>	25.201 g	N/D
Palmitic acid 16:00 ( <i>hexadecanoic acid</i> )	23.762 g	N/D
Stearic acid 18:00 ( <i>octadecanoic acid</i> )	1.439 g	N/D
<b>Fatty acids, total monounsaturated</b>	153.808 g	N/D
Palmitoleic acid 16:1 ( <i>hexadecenoic acid</i> )	5.81 g	N/D
Oleic acid 18:1 ( <i>octadecenoic acid</i> )	147.998 g	N/D
<b>Fatty acids, total polyunsaturated</b>	29.399 g	N/D
Linoleic acid 18:2 ( <i>octadecadienoic acid</i> )	27.315 g	N/D

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Linolenic acid 18:3 ( <i>octadecatrienoic acid</i> )	2.086 g	N/D
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\*Above mentioned Percent Daily Values (%DVs) are based on 2,000 calorie diet intake. Mentioned values are recommended by a U.S. Department of Agriculture.