

Olives from the South of France

Olives from the south of France are a significant part of the local cuisine and culture. Here are some key points about olives in the south of France:

- **Varieties:** Over 100 varieties of olives are cultivated in France, with notable ones being the excellent **Picholine**, or **Lucques**, Negrette, Aglandau, and Bouteillan. Each variety has its unique taste and characteristics. For example, the Picholine is renowned for its firm, crunchy flesh and hazelnut flavor, while the Lucques is known for its crescent shape and buttery avocado taste.
- **Production Regions:** The primary regions for olive cultivation are Provence and Languedoc-Roussillon. These areas have the ideal climate for growing olive trees, with hot, dry summers and mild winters.
- **Harvesting:** Olives are typically harvested in autumn, with the exact timing depending on the desired ripeness. In Languedoc, harvesting usually occurs around September and October, while in Provence, it is in November and December.
- **Processing:** After harvesting, olives are processed in various ways. Some are brined to preserve them, while others are used for olive oil production. The olives used for oil are pressed as soon as possible to extract the highest quality oil.
- **AOC Recognition:** Some regions have received Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) recognition for their olive oil and table olives. For instance, the Gard region has been awarded AOC status for its olive oil and is currently seeking recognition for its table olives under the name "Olives de Nîmes."
- **Tourism:** Visitors to the south of France can experience olive harvesting and pressing firsthand, adding to the region's culinary tourism offerings.

These olives and olive oils are not only enjoyed locally but are also exported, contributing to France's reputation as a producer of high-quality olive products.

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