



Transcript: #345 How to Choose an Artisan Produced Olive Oil and Using Olive Oil for Liver Flushing with TJ Robinson

Wendy Myers:

Hello. I'm Wendy Myers of myersdetox.com. Thank you so much for joining me for the Myers Detox podcast. Today, we have my colleague T.J Robinson on the show and he's the Olive Oil Hunter. He travels all over the world trying to find the best growers, best producers of olive oils, and he blends them and he just produces these amazing high quality olive oils. He's going to teach us all about olive oil and this is really important because so many of us use olive oil in our everyday cooking. A lot of you guys listening are using olive oil to do liver flushes, and there are some distinctions that you need to know so that you can choose the right type of olive oil. We're going to be talking about how to choose an artisan produced olive oil, what to look for, why you want to use high quality olive oil for liver flushing.

Wendy Myers:

He's going to give us his pro tips on what to look for and what are the characteristics of a low quality olive oil and also shockingly how 70% of olive oils on the market were found in reports and people investigating olive oils, that 70% of them were either not olive oil or not 100% olive oil. They could have rancid olive oils like canola oil or sunflower oil, or they're not extra virgin olive oil, which is the first press of all olive oil, most nutritious. This is kind of a scandal. We'll talk about that and we'll also talk about what to look for, we mentioned that already. There's a lot of boxes you want to check when it comes to olive oils and we also talk about an interesting fact about how the fat profile in the olive oil matches that of breast milk.

Wendy Myers:

Very, very interesting. We also discuss why you want to begin eating olive oil at least within six months of harvest, so a lot of olive oils just have the expiration date on them. They don't have the harvest date for a reason because a lot of them have been sitting around for a while. You want to make sure you're consuming it within six months because you want it to be fresh. It's going to have the highest nutrient profile, all these other benefits. We also kind of dispel

that myth that you cannot cook or do high heat cooking with olive oil. You absolutely can. This has been done for millennia, for thousands of years so that's definitely absurd. We'll talk about also how the high antioxidant in high quality fresh oils actually plays a role in an oil stability that keeps it from oxidizing going rancid when it's heated, when cooking, which is the concern a lot of people have when they're cooking with plant-based oils. They're concerned that it can turn pro inflammatory, but if you have a high quality olive oil, you don't have to worry about that issue.

Wendy Myers:

We'll also talk about the difference between artisan produced extra virgin olive oils versus mass produced grocery store olive oils. Lots of really interesting information and fun stories on the show today. I know you guys listening are concerned about heavy metal toxicity and rightly so. There's dozens of heavy metals and over 100,000 chemicals in our environment today and a lot of you are wondering, what level of toxins do I have in my body? I created a very simple, quick quiz that you can take at heavymetalsquiz.com. Take that you get your results based on some lifestyle habits that people have over the decades. You can find out your relative level of toxins and body burden of toxins and after you get your results, you get a free video series answering a lot of your frequently asked questions, the things I get all the time, people wondering about what's the best testing, what are the supplements I need to take?

Wendy Myers:

Where do I start with heavy metal detox? How do I go about this? I answer all those with a totally free video series following taking the quiz at heavymetalsquiz.com. Our guest today, T.J Robinson is one of the world's most respected authorities on olive oil, and he's known for his platinum palette. We did an olive oil tasting on the show today, and you'll see it, you'll discover his platinum pallet and he's one of the very few Americans invited to serve as a judge in the prestigious Italian olive oil tasting competitions. He is dedicated to importing rare, fresh pressed olive oil, the most flavorful and most healthful extra virgin olive oil on the planet. That until now was virtually impossible to obtain year round in the United States. All of his olive oils are independently lab tested and certified 100% for purity, as you'll find out, a lot of olive oils are not 100% olive oil. You can learn more about T.J and his olive oils at freshpressedoliveoil.com. T.J, thanks so much for coming on the show.

TJ Robinson:

Hey, happy to be here. Happy to be here. Thank you.

Wendy Myers:

You are an expert on all of oils and so how did you come to found the Fresh Pressed Olive Oil Club because this is something I've been a member of for about a year? I love your olive oils, because I'm very much a food snob. I am a cook and I cook a lot of my food at home and I love going on food safari, almost tasting olive oils from around the world. It's so amazing how different they taste, how much better quality they are than what you get at the store.

TJ Robinson:

Yes, there is an olive oil secret out there, and there's a few people in the know and people like you are helping me get the word out, but yeah, there's this ingredient. My backstory is I was a professional chef. I lived and worked in New

York city and I had the opportunity to visit Sicily. I happened to be there during harvest and I got to talking to some Sicilians and they invited me to an olive harvest party and being an American, I had never tasted fresh olive oil. Wasn't like apples. I had an Apple tree in my backyard here in Nashville, North Carolina, where I grew up, but not olives. I wasn't familiar with what fresh olive oil tastes like, and me being game for anything culinary, like you I'm like, sign me up. I want to go try that. We are at this beautiful village, right outside of Palermo, and I work with the family during the day.

TJ Robinson: It's very hot. We're harvesting olives by hand. These nets we put on the ground, we shake the trees with rakes and air. Little rakes and canes. The olives fall down. We take them to the mill in the afternoon or evening and we wait there with a lot of other Italian families and these Italian families have all their property, their fruit basically because olives are fruit. When they're treated really with a lot of integrity and care, they can be amazing. What happened is we weighed our turn. We get our slip of paper, they weigh our olives, they place them in a queue and then when they're finished pressing, it's a purely mechanical process, we walk over there and they hand me a small cup like this. There's a centrifuge that the fresh oil comes out of.

TJ Robinson: Liquid green bold just goes into my cup and I'm like, holy crap, I've never tasted or smelled anything like this. It's like wheat grass. The olive oil I'm used to in America is [crosstalk 00:08:31]it's flat, it's rancid, it's old. Like, why has this been kept from me? Honestly, I was very upset. Why didn't I know this was here. I tasted it. I smelled it. I had all the things we can talk about when we taste oil later in the segment. Yeah, it was just... I had my own epiphany that this was kept for me and this is an ingredient that's been used in the Mediterranean diet for health and healing and we have this magical tree, the olive tree that has all these great health properties that somehow through mass production, and this was about 2005, this epiphany and this trip to Sicily happened. Somehow between that tree and what I got in America was something completely different. It was just completely different.

TJ Robinson: Right then my mission just really got planted. My job was to share this amazing product with the world and I've been doing that since about 2005. Anyway, that's the short of it, but it's been a journey.

Wendy Myers: Yeah. I love olive oil because I kind of liken it to fine wine. There's such a depth and breadth of different flavors and aromas and tastes. When I went on a trip to Greece and Italy last summer, so fortunate I did, and there I went to some olive orchards, I guess you call them. There were like a hundred year old olive trees. They were so old and the food there with all of the olive oil and all the dishes, it was just spectacular and I bought a bunch of olive oils and brought them back. You don't have to go to Italy and Greece and go travel, you can have them delivered to your house. That's a lot easier.

TJ Robinson: That's right. That's right. We basically follow the global harvest because one of the things that happens and just backing up a little bit, there's a realm, let's say

2010, there was a great article that came out in the New Yorker called the slippery business of olive oil. That led to a book called Extra Virginity by a wonderful author, Tom Mueller. He follows the scandalous world of olive oil and how the agro mafia is involved and how in the US a lot of the olive oils were put... The UC Davis did a study where they bought up olive oil from different places in California, sent it to an independent lab and many of the oils, almost 70% came back as not extra-virgin. There was a lot of fraud and the industry has stepped up. Absolutely. They've done some things and we can talk about shopping tips and that sort of thing and what to look for in olive oil, but it's been going on forever since Roman times there's been fraud in olive oil.

TJ Robinson:

What I've tried to do is minimize any potential hands in the pie. I work directly with the farmer and I fly it in by jet, and that eliminates a lot of problems. All these olive varieties are like wine varieties. In Italy alone, they're 550 olive varieties. When you think about that, that's a lot of regions that have very specific varieties that grow in those regions in Italy and they get known for that flavor profile. Then the Tuscan's, they're known for having really great olive oil and Tuscans actually do have good olive oil. Great olive oil, but what they really started was a trend of very early harvest fruit, so what we've learned is if you pick the fruit, when it's really green, it has very low yield of oil inside, but a lot of flavor. Anyway, I don't know exactly where you traveled, but you probably tasted differences in olive oil, in different places. Whether it's in Greece or Italy. It's great that you cut out the middleman just like I do every quarter, and you brought it back in your suitcase. I like it.

Wendy Myers:

Yeah, I did. I really find it interesting though, that I belong to Europe, Fresh Pressed Olive Oil Club that I didn't really know that Chile had its own olive oils. You have olive oils, you're bringing from Spain, you have olive oils you're bringing from all over the country-

TJ Robinson:

Australia.

Wendy Myers:

Australia. A lot of places where wines are grown, olives grow really well too.

TJ Robinson:

Yeah, so what happened is, it's really a super cool story. Specifically olive oil has been used for ages for religious ceremonies. Specifically anointing with oil, recognizing all those sorts of things as rituals involved with oil. Many immigrants who left their country of origin to go to the new world, whether it was the missionaries that went to California or the missionaries that went to Chile and took cuttings of their vine or their trees. They actually stitched them in their clothing. In the hems of their suit, they would have many miniature olive trees when they would get on the boat. That was actually how they started. They wanted a part of their old life in the Mediterranean, because it's not indigenous to Chile, Australia and Argentina, New Zealand. Olive trees are from the European basin, not from the Southern hemisphere, but you have the opposite season. It's the complete opposite in the Southern hemisphere, the growing season than it is in the Northern hemisphere. That's why most of the time in our

grocery stores, you have apples, which are coming from Chile and great cherries and blueberries and those sorts of things.

TJ Robinson: What we do as a quarterly selection, I travel the globe. That's been a bit of a problem with COVID. I have a long standing relationship with the world's top farmers and we can go into that more, of course, but essentially we source harvest fresh oil and then we get it on a plane immediately, and we rush it to the US direct to the club members. Freshness is so important to the polyphenols and antioxidants in olive oil. You brought up the wine analogy and wine is a great analogy. The problem is a lot of people think that olive oil ages, the way wine does, and that's completely false. Olive oil is never better than the moment it is just off the press when it's just filled with antioxidants and polyphenols and aromas and great texture and flavor. Anyway, I could wax on about that for a long time.

Wendy Myers: Yeah. That makes so much sense and I think a lot of the olive oils people buy at the grocery store have been stored for a long time, sitting on the shelf for a long time. It can be heated, stored improperly. There's a lot of things that can go wrong like you mentioned in the whole production, processing, storage and namely one of those is not... Let's just check off all the boxes that you have to have. We have to have a dark bottle. We want it to be fresh, what are all the other boxes?

TJ Robinson: Yes. Definitely dark bottle glass is ideal. I like glass because plastic is leaking into the oil as it sits. I'm kind of concerned about that. I always use glass. I always use dark glass because light, time and temperature kill olive oil. Time because oxygen gets to the olive oil so you don't want to buy big canisters because oxygen gets to the oil and it starts to deteriorate the oil. Also you always want to look for a harvest date, and they very cleverly disguise that and don't include it and just give you an expiration date. That's actually normally placed on there when it's bottled and has no correlation to when it was actually harvested, so you really don't know.

TJ Robinson: Look for a harvest date, dark glass bottle, go to a place that has high turnover in olive oil, so you know that it's not dusty and three years old. Ideally it's a place where you could taste it first, because I'm going to teach you later in this chat about how to identify the key characteristics to tell you whether it's high in polyphenols and fresh and how to assess the olive oil. The best thing to do is educate your own palette. That's what we'll do later in our talk.

Wendy Myers: I don't like olive oil in stainless steel either. There's something about that, that just creeps me out. I don't know why. I just prefer glass.

TJ Robinson: Yes. I like glass too. I know about the glass, it works very well. One thing about the oil, because people get a trio. They get three bottles. They get this size of 250 ML, three bottles of this per quarter, which is a small household. Doesn't cook a lot and then we have the 500 ML. People get three bottles of that and they're always three different selections, mild to medium and bold. Typically, my

club member uses about a bottle a month, so every three months they get a new selection and start three fresh bottles. They're not sitting around oxidizing, our oils happen to be very high in antioxidants and polyphenols, which are really great for cooling and inflammation, gut health, brain health. There was a scientist who actually did another Sicily thing.

TJ Robinson: Basically there was a scientist who studied ibuprofen, who visited Sicily at harvest time. He tried fresh olive oil and it gave him this... He was a scientist from Philadelphia I believe and like I said, he worked in ibuprofen in the lab, and he tasted and felt this sensation in the back of his throat, just like he did when he was tasting, I don't know why he would do this, but tasted ibuprofen in the lab. He said, you know what? I think that I want to take this olive oil home. I think there's some property that's akin to ibuprofen in fresh olive oil and fresh because it deteriorates quite rapidly. You really want to get fresh pressed olive oil within six months of being pressed.

TJ Robinson: Basically he took it home and he identified this compound that is very much akin to ibuprofen, so without the side effects of... Well, you could talk about this for days probably. Ibuprofen on the liver, not a good idea, so you can get some of these anti-inflammatory cooling properties for inflammation, arthritis, that sort of stuff by consuming a high polyphenol olive oil.

Wendy Myers: Actually, I need to take some right now because I slept long, my back hurts. I want to do a little tasting right now, and I love this sound. I love the sound of the bottle opening.

TJ Robinson: That crack, I know.

Wendy Myers: That fresh bottle.

TJ Robinson: When you open it, it just transports you to... I talk a lot about the flavor of oil, but when you put this on warm food or warm plates, your kitchen just smells like you're in an olive grove. It's like fresh green juice. It's all a juice.

Wendy Myers: I used to go to my local farmer's market. I used to live in Malibu and I'd go there and there would always be a stand that had fresh olive oil, but there always would be something wrong. There always would be something wrong with it. They'd have them in clear bottles or just something was just up. The flavor of this, the smell of it and the look, it's this dark green-

TJ Robinson: You have a spoon, and before you taste that, I'm actually tasting out of a... I want you to focus on the smell. I want you to, gosh. I mean, wow, it's incredible. The color is so green and beautiful and vibrant. For me, I'm going to tell your folks while you're sipping that away as you should, because this is like a fine wine. She may or may not cough because this one's got a little power behind it.

Wendy Myers: This is a Chilean.

TJ Robinson: Yes, this is fresh from Chile.

Wendy Myers: This is El Favorito.

TJ Robinson: How to assess the oil? Let's go through that. As a professional olive oil taster, there's a process when you taste oil and there are olive oil sommelier courses. There are certifications throughout the world. They're big competitions like this guide book here that ranks the top producers in the world. It's a big deal once you get into it, right? We start by putting the olive oil in a cup. A lot of times, a blue cup, because color is not necessarily an indicator of quality, different olive varieties have different levels of chlorophyll that end up in the final product.

Wendy Myers: Interesting, because I thought a yellow, a pale yellow meant maybe it wasn't as rich or good quality.

TJ Robinson: It's funny, there's this olive variety that's really over... Okay, so olives when they hang on a tree, on the olive tree, if they're picked very green and very early, you will get about 10% yield and most people would not pay for that. We are crazy and we love really green, early harvest so we will. Most people, most farmers because they have mortgages and a lot of overhead and they don't know what mother nature is going to bring the next year. They leave the fruit hanging on the tree and this happens a lot in Spain, Southern Spain, which produces a ton of the vast majority of olive oil. Bulk olive oil. Anyway, this olive continues to hang on the tree for an extra month or so, and it could have up to 30% oil inside the fruit, so just no extra work. In fact, it's actually easier to harvest because it's riper.

TJ Robinson: They just leave the fruit hanging there and they get three times as much oil and you get a golden, buttery and sometimes you see oils that are fluorescent green or fluorescent yellow like you're talking about. I immediately know when I see it on the table, I'm like, Oh, that's a very ripe Picual from the South of Spain, which has a very particular smell. All professional olive oil tasters would refer to it as cat pee because we hate that smell. Actually Picual is in this blend, but sadly Picual fruit is mistreated. People will leave it on the tree to get those very high yields because the farmer gets three times as much oil to sell, so if they're selling the oil in bulk as a commodity product, why not for them? What you get is off flavors and those sorts of things.

TJ Robinson: This has Picual in it, the same olive variety. It's just a different product when you get it hyper green and you get all these wonderful aromas. What we do, we pour it in a cup, not a whole lot, probably about a tablespoon in here and then I actually use the Palm of my hand, like a professional olive taster would, olive oil taster. I swirl it around. I put my hand on top. I don't have any perfume or anything and basically what I'm doing, I'm warming the oil. I'm bringing out all those wonderful aromas and flavors. This is like wheat grass. You've taken basil and rubbed it in your hands and there's nothing in this, but two olive varieties. There's Picual and Koroneiki, and it's 90% Picual actually, grown in Chile.

TJ Robinson: The aromas are just incredible, like tomato leaf, like rub tomato vine. It's just wheat grass, fresh cut grass. All the aromas. That's step one. That's called assessing the fruitiness, so if an olive oil tastes flat, stale, rancid like crayons, waxy, cat pee or smell, if you assess any of those things on the nose, it's not fresh. It should smell like a garden. That's step one of how to assess a quality olive oil. You can do this with the oil in your pantry too, just grab a cup and try it.

Wendy Myers: Yeah. Your oil that's been sitting there for two years.

TJ Robinson: Or on a supermarket shelf where it's on a top shelf and where the heat's coming in and all that sort of thing. The next step is taste. So good. I just chew the oil a little bit, and this is the bold one in the trio. The next thing to look for is bitterness. Let's talk about bitterness. What does bitterness tell you? Most people aren't used to bitterness and I'd love to get your opinion on something on this. This olive oil, because it's such green fruit, has a high level of bitterness. More like-

Wendy Myers: Like acidity?

TJ Robinson: A radicchio or Belgian endive or watercress or rubella. My question for you, and we definitely want to get back to the tasting, but I think there's some correlation between bitterness and bile production or something.

Wendy Myers: Yes, absolutely. Yeah. I think-

TJ Robinson: Can you give me a quick lesson on that?

Wendy Myers: Yeah. I think in the US we don't eat enough bitter foods and it's important to get bitter foods in our palette, even if maybe you don't like them, it's good for you. The olive oil... Anytime you're tasting something bitter, your stomach starts producing hydrochloric acid, digestive enzymes and more bile because it's anticipating foods coming down the chute that need to be digested and so it's very important to have bitter foods. I love that strong flavor, sometimes just depending on the dish or if I'm having a salad, maybe a little bit of a lighter flavor, but unlike a meat dish or something like that, I want to have stronger, bolder flavors.

TJ Robinson: Absolutely. You totally get it. That's why there's a mild, medium and bold, in every trio because they are paired in different ways. You would think of, of course some people like red wine with fish and that's totally okay too, but with olive oil, there are the milder ones which are better with fish and chicken and that sort of thing and more light summer vegetables in there. There's the bolder ones which are better for like root vegetables and grilled steak and that sort of thing, lamb and duck. The thing that I did there a little bit. The third thing you're looking for, so fruitiness, bitterness, and then the third thing you're looking for is spiciness. When I say spiciness, you'll feel a tickle in the back of your throat and

depending on what you had to eat that day and that sort of thing, people can get different levels of it.

TJ Robinson:

Some people get choked up, but you should feel this spicy warming sensation and what this tells you is the oil is fresh. That bitterness tells you it is an early harvest fruit, the fruitiness tells you it's fresh and really wonderful and then that spiciness really tells you freshness. I was hanging out with some Tuscans and we were there standing at the press and they said, T.J, be careful. That's a two or three cough oil. I'm like, what? Two or three cough oil? What are you guys talking about? They're like, yeah. In Tuscany, it's a quality marker of fresh, really yummy, powerful olive oil that gives you that cough in the back of your throat. If you had a large enough portion of this, straight, you probably would cough, so don't be surprised if that happens. That is an amazing quality marker.

TJ Robinson:

Anyway, look for the cough. Your olive oils should make you cough. I will tell you that once you put these oils on food, they are great. They can definitely become the backbone of healthy cooking, for flavor. They're just like having fresh herbs. People say, T.J, what's the difference taste-wise? I always say store-bought olive oil is like dried herbs. If you had only consumed dry dried herbs, your entire life and I gave you fresh olive oil, and I said, this is fresher. The first time you tasted fresh herbs and of course, being in California, you've probably been having a lot of fresh herbs your entire life, but for a lot of Americans, they don't actually consume a lot of fresh herbs. That's kind of new in the last 20 years before that there were not a lot of rosemary and oregano and fresh time and all that sort of things in most people's gardens.

TJ Robinson:

Think of olive oil as a fresh herb, so you can use it to enhance a flavor, aroma, all that sort of thing. That bitterness and spiciness definitely goes down when you have it on food. We're assessing it in the tasting cup, like a professional taster and of course it should be harmonic. It needs to be calibrated as an overall impression. That's how a taster would assess a fresh olive oil and how you should train your palette, because we have a great option for educating your palate later in this video, because we have a very special deal for you guys, because making this my passion, the best thing I can do is get in people's hands. The proof is in the pudding and they get it in their home and they taste it and like I said, we have a fantastic option for you guys to do that. You can become cheerleaders for these small family farmers and for the real trust and authority in olive oil.

Wendy Myers:

Yeah, if you guys want to learn more about T.J's Fresh Pressed Olive Oil Club, just go to myersdetox.com/oliveoil and you'll find a ton of info about this. I love getting my olive oils every month. I've been a member for well, about a year or I probably longer. I use all of them. It's just I cook a lot at home and I'm just amazed at how I can go through the bottles. I use a lot of olive oil. It's super, super healthy, especially a high potency olive oil like this. You're getting a lot of nutrients and I always think of nutrient density. Anything I'm putting into my food, but this is the next one here. This is the-

TJ Robinson: This is the Denise Langevin and Denise is a dear friend of mine. She's an international taster and due to COVID, this is the first time I've not been able to be there at harvest. Denise, I deputized and I worked with her on Zoom and this was the mild oil and it's still green. It's very sweet. It's very fruity. It still has a little spice to it. It's still got a little kick to it, but it's beautiful. Every quarter my members come on the adventure with me, they get something called the pressing report and you get the whole story of the harvest and actually I'll show you a picture of Denise. Let's see, you guys can see that. Anyway, that's Denise, she's wonderful and amazing. I've known her... Oh, there's that cough.

Wendy Myers: Yeah, there's a cough, so one cough. It's amazing how much time you put into these letters. I know that you write them yourself and you write all these adventures and I'd love this backstory about the oils and because I like to know where my olive oil is coming from.

TJ Robinson: Exactly. You want to know where your food comes. You want to connect to the farmer. You want to know about their challenges, for example, this year in Chile, they had a drought and the drought actually increases the flavors and aromas in the olive oil, for us it's a great thing. We were really happy. For example, this one we just tasted, of course we go into the whole story, but I give an impression and recommended food pairings. I'll just take 20 seconds to read that on the Denise Langevin as I smell it myself. My merry band of tasters who joined me for a simultaneous tasting on Zoom, identified a number of aromas after we poured the mildest oil of our samples. Alluringly green in the glass, among them were almonds. I would entice you to maybe get a little of this on your spoon while I'm talking about this.

TJ Robinson: If you don't mind that Denise Langevin and let's see if you can identify any of these in your own nose and palate. Among them on the nose were almonds, green banana, kale, spinach, golden delicious apple, which I really get that as sweetness. Vanilla, white pepper and a whiff of oregano. On the palate, this beautiful well-balanced oil showed us a nutty side. Hazel nuts, the sweetness of Apple, hint of lemon with bitter notes of Belgian endive and the pepperiness of watercress. Try it with summer squash, sweet potatoes, mild fin fish, real tramp or lobster, pork, chicken, rice, eggs, carrots, bell peppers, sweet corn, Asian curries, and simple pasta dishes, including pasta salad. Yogurt, ice cream, fresh olive oil is really good on ice cream or mild cheeses. Including cottage cheese and any salad featuring fruit. You'll get those kinds of descriptions so you understand how to use them in your kitchen.

TJ Robinson: I'd love to hear about some of the ways you're using olive oil, but there's this myth out there that olive oil cannot be cooked with. I want to quell that, squelch that. That is not true. Actually in the Mediterranean when you were there, you probably noticed that olive oil is all they cook with. That's it. They marinate in it. They saute in it, they grill in it. They finish in it. They use olive oil for everything. It turns out that if an olive oil starts out as a high polyphenol, high antioxidant olive oil, that it's very, very stable when it's heated. I have some research

studies, you probably do some show notes. I'll send you that about the stability of olive oil when heated.

TJ Robinson: Now in general, I usually keep mine... I don't cook with olive oil above medium. For example, I fry my eggs. I fried my own eggs this morning with olive oil and I tasted the olive oil on my plate, on my eggs. It was still green and vibrant and beautiful and fresh. I can actually taste if oxidation was happening, but it wasn't. People talk about the smoke point of olive oil, which I don't even know exactly what that number is, but I will tell you that most of the cooking we do in our kitchen is well below the smoke point of olive oil and I will also tell you, one of my tricks is, I heat my pan, and you can do this with any oil because all oils will break down when heated in my experience or out of my knowledge. What I do is, I put my pan on the stove and I let my pan get warm, I pour my olive oil in and then I put my food in. In that order. I don't put the pan, add the oil, let it sit there and heat up and oxidize, no.

TJ Robinson: Hot pan, oil, food and then you don't have to worry so much about that happening either. That's just a little kitchen tip for you and how to preserve this oil once you get it.

Wendy Myers: Yeah, I do that too. I always make sure I heat my pan first, but not too hot and not like put it on the stove and then walk away, you don't even want... A pan can smoke too, just by itself. Yeah, I make sure the pan is hot and then when I'm ready to cook, then I put the olive oil and it helps make it nonstick also.

TJ Robinson: Yes.

Wendy Myers: You're not using those toxic nonstick pans, but yeah. I agree. I wholeheartedly agree. You can cook with olive oil. Absolutely.

TJ Robinson: Yeah. It's really a flavor hack. It's a kitchen hack and a kitchen tool. In my house, I had someone over for dinner that didn't like green beans. They're like, I'm not a big green bean fan and I'm like, okay, these are just French green beans we picked up at, I don't know, Trader Joe's or whatever. We lightly steam them and we place them in a small bowl. We drizzled them with fresh oil, with a little bit of salt on top. High quality salt and I served them and they're like, what did you do to these green beans? They're like, I don't even like green beans, but these are amazing. I'm like, look, it's just really three ingredients, the green bean, olive oil and salt. The olive oil becomes like the mother. It somehow brings everything together. If it is truly artisanal, fresh pressed, well loved, this oil happens well, not happens to be, it is third party certified independently certified to be extra virgin because there are a lot of fraud and scandals out there in olive oil lands. I've just been doing that since the beginning.

Wendy Myers: Can you explain that for anyone who maybe doesn't understand that. What is extra virgin olive oil compared to just extra virgin or even lower grades of olive oil?

TJ Robinson: Yes. I only focus on extra virgin because that's all I want to put in my body, basically all the others... There was this big trend of having light olive oil and people thought it was lowering calories, it has nothing to do with calories.

Wendy Myers: I saw that. I'm like, Oh my God!

TJ Robinson: People are like... Anyway, it's not lower in calories. It's the same, but it's actually olive oil that's been deodorized and chemically heated and stripped of all of the organoleptic properties. All the aromas and flavors and all that sort of thing, it's just very neutral. I don't recommend that because it was stripped using hexane gas and heat and you just don't want that stuff.

Wendy Myers: That's a whole no fat frenzy when in the 80s. That's so 80s, the no fat diet.

TJ Robinson: You'll still see light olive oil on store shelves. Then virgin is a quality marker. We talked about professional tasters and what happens when you have an oil, you send that oil to the people that are really quality obsessed, you send that oil to a panel. There are two things that happen. One is, there's a chemical analysis that happens, that looks at the quality of the fruit at the time of pressing. When an olive starts to deteriorate certain things happen on the chemistry panel, so most oils, even supermarket oils, they'll be sent to a lab and it will come back and they'll say, okay, it meets the quality markers of being to have the right peroxide level, the right delta K and all these other measurements that they use. Right acidity level and oleic acid, it meets the quality marker of having extra-virgin.

TJ Robinson: Well, that is true at the moment that the lab test was done. We don't know what happens two years after sitting on a store shelf. Well, we know what happens, actually it goes rancid. What happens is, if it doesn't meet... There are two things, one, it meets chemistry and then the second thing is it goes through a tasting panel and the tasting panel actually does exactly what we just did, but also one of the things that it looks for are what are called defects. An olive oil, and a professional taster when they smell an olive oil and they taste an olive oil, they can tell you the story. They will tell you the story behind this exact product that's in the cup. They're going to tell you when the fruit was harvested, because they're going to know if it's bitter or if it's buttery. They're going to tell you how quickly the fruit moved from the field into the mill.

TJ Robinson: Did something happen during that time? Was it sitting out in the sun for too long, in large crates and started to ferment? They're going to be able to tell by the smell, if the mill itself was clean, if the containers that the oil was held in just after pressing were clean, because these defects, like some of them are like winy and briny. If you smell an olive oil that smells like brine, like olive brine, that's a defect. A winy, briny, fusty, musty, these are all terms we learn as professional tasters. If an oil has these defects, then they would be considered Virgin, not extra-virgin. Most bulk olive oil I doubt actually goes through a tasting panel. They rely on the chemistry because honestly there's not a lot of oversight in olive oil. The FDA, they're very busy working on many things and really

protecting things that are super dangerous for you like shellfish and meat production and poultry, all that sort of stuff. They're not so focused on olive oil.

Wendy Myers: Yeah, there are just bigger fish to fry. I think that's why there's a lot of mislabeling and deception when it comes to labels on olive oil.

TJ Robinson: Reliable source, buy extra virgin. Educate your palate. That's really what you can do. Once you've had the real thing and you've tasted it, you're in the know then and it's really hard to go back. That's one reason why my club members, they just stay with me. The club, I have about 20,000 members, we're almost capped out. These small family farmers, I'm not lowering my quality standards and my farmers, I mentioned like the guide, for example, there's a guide called Flos Olei. Flos Olei ranks the top 400 producers of olive oil in the world. Artisanal olive oil. And every year they have this Flos Olei, top 20, you get this big blue olive tasting cup and it's an award. Every year they give 20 of these awards out for the top 20 in the world and if you look back at my trio, over the course of the year, because I have a new trio every quarter.

TJ Robinson: I was at Paleo f(X) last year, and I was looking at the table, because I had a few selections here on the table. Out of the six oils I was showing that were my current and previous selection, five of those oils were actually from Flos Olei top 20 winners. I've been cultivating relationships with these farmers to get access to the best fruit and then they have top quality milling equipment that really keeps the oxidation down during the milling process and that leads to all this great flavor and aroma. There's a whole world of olive oil out there to discover and be part of and it just becomes a new thing basically.

Wendy Myers: Yeah. Let's test the other one here. The Alonso. I've had this a few times.

TJ Robinson: The Alonso. Yes. Yeah. I've got the small one because I've already finished my big one, but this one actually has a lot of coratina, which is an olive variety from the Southern part of Italy from Puglia and this is beautiful. The aroma is so nice. It's like, man, I'm just in my garden right now. When I put my head in there, I'm just in a garden, it's crazy. Okay.

Wendy Myers: This one's a little lighter green than the other one. The Ell Favorito

TJ Robinson: Yep. This is the medium in the trio. It's really nice. I see what you're saying like that bitterness, it's kind of a late bloomer in the mouth. It kind of starts off a little softer and then starts to have this uptick, but these olive varieties, one thing that's really cool about the new world, which these olive oils being from Chile, we consider them new world and not European. One really cool thing in the new world is you have olive varieties that are planted there from many different countries. You have Spanish varieties, you have Italian, you have Greek varieties. This one, it's kind of like a blender, because for me, I have oils that are harvested at different times and in different ways and then I take each olive variety and then I create a blend. Custom exclusive blend just for my club members that fit the profile of the club.

TJ Robinson: For me to have the options of all these different olive varieties, even though you couldn't do that in the Mediterranean for example. Usually if you're in Southern Italy, you're not going to find a Spanish varietal and you're not going to find a Greek varietal. It's really-

Wendy Myers: That would be treason.

TJ Robinson: Yes, exactly. In Australia it's the same. There, it's also the same where they have all these varieties from all over the world and as a master ex chef and professional sauce maker, saucier, I look at olive oil as a sauce that mother nature made for me. I think of this oil as something you anoint your food with. It really brings things together. All these olive varieties, some are more bitter, some are more spicy, some are more fruity, but it's really cool as a chef to be able to match them and marry them all in one bottle to make something... It's almost like making music where you have all these notes and then you have harmony. Well, that's what I do. I try to create harmony in every bottle. That's really a fun part of it for me.

Wendy Myers: Oh, and I had another question about that extra virgin olive oil. Does that mean that's the first press where the olives can have one or two different presses or the first one seems like it had the most nutrients and had the best flavor.

TJ Robinson: Yeah. Extra virgin is the first pressing, because a second extraction, like if you take the waste that's left over. I think I told you these oils, for example, have a 10% yield, which means 90% goes away and that's water, the pit that's inside that and the other fleshy part, that's the 90%. The other 10% is the actual olive oil, so what happens in a lot of mills, especially in bulk production, this doesn't really happen on the farms I'm at, but in very large factories, they take the waste from that, the 90% waste, and it's still fine. It's been heated, it's fine. They send it through what is called a second extraction. That second extraction, will get a small amount of oil, maybe 1%, which they can do things with. There are uses for that. Not in my kitchen or in my oils, but yeah, there is this, when you say second pressing, gone are the days of the real... like where they use mat and they put a paste on there.

TJ Robinson: Now it's much more clean, it's much more controllable and everything happens in a very controlled environment, but yes, focus on extra virgin. I would not bother with virgin or light or anything else. Dark bottle, high turnover, look for your harvest date and then educate your palate.

Wendy Myers: Yeah. Some of the olive oils that are commercially available, some of the cheaper ones that you see at the grocery store, you had a report that came out that I thought was so fascinating that some of these they're not actually olive oil. That they have other oils in them and that's why their price point is so inexpensive.

TJ Robinson: Yeah. There's been so much fraud in this industry. It's really sad because honestly the farmers I work with, they're filled with heart and passion and love for this really amazing product. They have to sell their product for much more like their competition. Even in Italy, the Italian grocery stores, you can find really cheap olive oil that's maybe cut with sunflower oil or something like that. You don't know. Yes, there are independent research studies like I said, UC Davis has done them. They've been called out in pretty much every publication from the New York Times to Wall Street Journal. The industry is getting better as a whole, I've noticed they've transitioned to darker colored bottles, mostly plastic and they are trying to put a higher quality product in the bottle, but it's a bulk commodity product versus an artisanal product that's just filled with love and care and meticulous care from the minute it was plugged from the tree.

TJ Robinson: Even before that, the water was cut off to the tree in advance of that because they wanted to, and hopefully we didn't get a lot of rain just before the harvest, because we want the aromas in the fruit, in the final product to be really flavorful and very aromatic. That care goes all the way from the harvesting to the cleanliness of the mill, to how quickly it gets in the bottle and to your table. All those things, they make a difference. That's really what you're paying for, is the quality of the fruit and then the, I call myself an olive oil sommelier, or an olive oil concierge or some hybrid of the two. I get you access to the best stuff, and then I get it directly to your door.

TJ Robinson: Anyway, it's a lot of fun. It becomes a lot of fun for members. They read the Pressing Report, they get to know the producers, they invite their friends over. It becomes a family activity. Kids really love olive oil and you talk about nutrient density and you're more of a health expert than I am, but I'm a firm believer of when I add really healthy, high quality plant fats to other wonderful foods, whether it's salads or green beans or steam broccoli or whatever. I feel that this is like a God given delivery system that somehow gets the nutrients directly in my body. Olive oil in Italy, when kids are six months old, when they start to get off of breast milk and be weaned off of human breast milk at six months old, when they start eating fresh food, they actually put olive oil. A tablespoon or teaspoon of olive oil in the food.

TJ Robinson: The reason why is the fat profile in high quality olive oil is the same makeup as human breast milk. It's got the same ratios of fat, so the body is somehow tuned already for this amazing plant fat.

Wendy Myers: That's really interesting. I didn't know that.

TJ Robinson: Yeah, super cool. You have to check it out. When somebody told me that in Italy, I was like, what? Then I of course Google that. I'm like, what? No, really it is, it's crazy. It's like this linoleic acid and the fat ratios of the omega three and six, and anyway, you'll nerd out on that.

Wendy Myers: Yeah, it's got omega nine. Also what you need. There are so many nutrients and healthy fats in that.

TJ Robinson: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Wendy Myers: Why don't you just tell us, so I get bottles every three months. If guys join your club, just check it out at myersdetox.com/oliveoil and you'll learn more about it, but tell us what happens when you join the club?

TJ Robinson: Yes. Of course, you're welcome to use that link. I also have a really easy to remember link. If you happen to be listening in the car on a podcast or whatever, you can go to getfresh63.com, that's your dedicated page. Get fresh numbers six, number three, dot com. There, what we have is, we have the first bottle, again, proof is in the pudding. I want you to taste this stuff in your home and educate your palate. We send out about 4,000 sample bottles to customers in the US. A trial membership every quarter. That's our mission is to educate pallets. What happens is, you join the club for a dollar. Your first bottle is a dollar that gets shipped directly to your home and that's from the current harvest. Basically when I travel, I buy extra cases and I bring those home and I have certain people that helped me expand my mission, people that I support sponsored podcasts and have relationships with, like you.

TJ Robinson: Basically what happens for their group, because this is not available on freshpressedoliveoil.com, but for their group, I have a \$1 trial offer. Essentially you join the club, you get your first bottle for a buck. You get to try that in your home. You enjoy it for at least a month. Usually it's about a month. It depends on exactly when you join and how mother nature, I always say she owns 51% of the company, when she decides to give us the fruit that we can fly to America and get to the club members. Usually about a month and then you get your three bottles set. We kind of time our releases for folks like you, four times a year, based on the global harvest. You would get a month, if you do not love the olive oil, if you don't think it's a right fit for you and that's totally cool. Share it with friends and family.

TJ Robinson: People will sometimes be very surprised because they're not used to this, so they're like, what is this? I've gotten emails like this tastes like grass. What is this? Is there something wrong with this? I'm like, no, that's what real olive oil should taste like, but no, you'll start to use it in your kitchen and you'll fall in love. If you're not in love, you just simply email, call, you do it online. Let us know. There's no questions asked. We have 100% money back guarantee. We're a good guy company. We are very lenient and liberal people never have to return the oils, even if they receive them and ask for a refund. We want people to be in it because they love it and they're passionate about it the way we are.

Wendy Myers: I have a hard time believing anybody would want to return the oil, because they taste so good.

TJ Robinson: It doesn't happen. Actually, it's kind of scary. We have a great conversion from sample bottle to paying member and people stay with us because honestly, once you're spoiled, you cannot go back. [crosstalk 00:57:54] but fresh because you're like, what is this? When you get it in your house, pour it, get two cups like an espresso cup or a shot glass and do what we did. Pour a little of your store bought from your pantry and pour some fresh press and do your own tasting. If you have a friend with you or a spouse or whatever, put a blindfold on them and let them try, and hopefully you get a good cough out of them.

Wendy Myers: This is the one cough, the two cough, and the three coughs.

TJ Robinson: That's right. Even in California, you get olive oil once a year that's fresh. Even if you had your own olive trees outside, you're only getting fresh olive oil once a year to be a club member, you get it four times a year, very consistent, very reliable and it's an adventure, basically. You start the adventure for a buck and you can get that at getfresh63.com

Wendy Myers: Food Safari for a dollar. It's a bargain. Yeah. Well, T.J, thanks so much for coming on the show and educating us about olive oil because what to eat... I found that, so I wrote a book on nutrition and I haven't published it yet, but I researched every single food item extensively and it's amazing how much there is to know about every single little food that you're putting in your body and how to choose the right one, how to consume it, how to cook it and so I just love the work that you're doing because olive oil is such an integral part of a healthy diet and the Mediterranean diet. We need to be doing it right. Thanks for coming on.

TJ Robinson: Yes, yes. My pleasure. Thanks for getting the word out there about a fresh pressed olive oil and look forward to many more times being on your podcast and on your show. Thank you.

Wendy Myers: Yeah. Everyone, thanks so much for tuning in to the Myers Detox Podcast. I'm Wendy Myers. You can go check out the hundreds of articles and hundreds of podcasts on how to detox your body and diet is, of course, a part of that equation at myersdetox.com. Thanks for tuning in. If you like what you're heard, please leave a review on iTunes or go on Spotify. Thank you so much for tuning in. I'll talk to you soon.