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The Fresh Market Launches ‘Meet The Curators’ Series To Help Educate Guests On This Specialty Grocer’s Signature Categories

GREENSBORO, NC, March 5, 2019 – Specialty grocer The Fresh Market is known for their curated assortment of signature items. Many of the products brought in are highly allocated because they are from smaller producers or single estates, and may not be as recognizable as some national brands.

The Fresh Market’s merchandisers need to become experts in their categories in order to be able to identify what makes these products exceptional and standouts among the competition in taste and quality.

To help educate shoppers on these products, The Fresh Market has created a new series called “Meet the Curators” that features category experts who share their insider secrets on what to look for when buying these specialty items.

The series launches with Emily Reass, a Category Manager in Grocery. Emily is a certified olive oil expert from the [International Olive Oil Education](#) center in Spain where she learned and experienced firsthand from the masters on what goes into producing a high-quality olive oil, how to taste it, and practical tips for buying, storing and using in food.

Meet the Curators: [Olive Oil](#)

EMILY’S TOP TIPS FOR BUYING HIGH-QUALITY OLIVE OIL

- **Know Where the Olives Are Grown:**
 - 75% of the olive oils you find at a typical grocery store are sold by only six companies or industrial packers.
 - Olives are stone fruits, grown on trees. There are more than 1500 varieties of olives, primarily grown in Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey, as well as Australia and California. It is important to know where the olives have been grown, as they should only be sourced from one country. While it is fine to blend different varieties of olives together, it is not good practice to blend olives sourced from multiple countries together.
 - Avoid olive oils that are labeled as “packed in” or “bottled in” a certain country, which does not mean the olives have been grown in that country.
 - Ideally, there should be information on the package with the name of the estate the olives were grown in, or in lieu of that, some Protected Designation of Origin seal (PDO or DOP if from Italy). If you don’t see this, it typically means that the olives could have been brought in from multiple countries and just blended together.

- **Extra Virgin Olive Oil = Highest Quality**
 - This is the highest designation an olive oil can receive, and it refers to how it was extracted, using only traditional pressing, crushing and spinning methods, without being manipulated by chemicals or heat.
 - Avoid olive oils that are labeled as “extra light,” or “pure,” or even 100% olive oil, which is a good indication is refined and stripped of its natural health benefits.
- **Only Buy Olive Oils in Dark Glass Bottles or Tins**
 - Olive oil is susceptible to light which will cause it to deteriorate quicker. Avoid plastic or clear bottles and only buy olive oils in dark glass or metal tins.
- **Check the Harvest Date**
 - Look on the package for the harvest date (different from a best before date). The closer the harvest date to the date of purchase, the better (preferably harvested in the current year).
- **Taste Trumps Color**
 - The color of an olive is an indication of how ripe it was when picked. The color of an olive oil is based on the type of olives used, when they were harvested and pressed.
 - Green olives are picked at the start of the harvest season and tend to have a more pronounced peppery flavor with bitter notes – attributed to their higher polyphenol content (the antioxidant that give olives their health attributes). As olives ripen, depending on the variety, they turn from green to light brown to reddish or purple, to dark black. Riper olives tend to produce a less intense, milder olive oil with more fruit flavors versus grassy flavors.
- **\$20.00/Bottle is a Good Entry Price Point**
 - Much like wine, making a high-quality extra virgin olive oil is an expensive process. While the priciest olive oil may not necessarily be the best, be wary of inexpensive olive oils which is a clear indication that they are refined or are not 100% extra virgin olive oil.
 - A good entry price point is around \$20/bottle. Not only are you getting the best flavor from a high-quality olive oil, but you will also be reaping the natural health benefits of a high antioxidant profile, which is what ultimately lead to olive oil’s popularity in the first place.
- **Use Within Three Months**
 - Buy as small a bottle as possible and use within three months after opening for the freshest possible taste.
- **Store Away from the Stove**
 - Olive oil is not only susceptible to light, but also air and heat.
 - Make sure you keep your olive oil in a cool, dark place in the pantry
 - Don’t keep it next to the stove or refrigerate it.
- **How to Taste Olive Oil**
 - Extra virgin olive oils have such a wide array of flavors and aromas – they can range from smooth to nutty to fruity, peppery, bitter and even fiery. Good EVOO will leave your mouth feeling clean—never oily or greasy.
 - **Pour and warm.** Pour a small amount in a shot glass or tulip-shaped wine glass. Cradle the glass in the palm of your hand and cover the opening with your other hand. Swirl it gently to release the aromas.
 - **Sniff and sip.** Lift your hand and smell the oil. What does it smell like? Grass? Fruit? Pepper? Take a sip—enough to coat the inside of your mouth.

- **Aerate and taste.** Before you swallow, aerate the oil by opening your mouth and sucking in air through the oil to further release the aromas. You should feel the oil spritz the back of your throat. Then, close your mouth and breathe through your nose. Swallow the oil and notice its pungency.
- **How to Use Olive Oil on Food**
 - Use an early harvest, more pungent, peppery olive oil with bigger foods and flavors -- such as steaks, pan con tomate (tomato bread), stronger vegetables like arugula and asparagus; to finish cream soups or even drizzled over vanilla ice cream.
 - Late harvest oils that have a milder flavor are perfect for delicate fish, chicken or starchy vegetables.

EMILY'S TOP PICKS

Here are some of Emily's favorite brands of olive oils she selected at The Fresh Market

- **Lucero Extra Virgin Olive Oils**
 - This is an award-winning California estate, and their olive oils are exclusively sold at The Fresh Market. Each bottle of olive oil has color-coded labels (green=robust, early harvest oils, yellow-green=medium intensity and purple=more delicate and made with ripe olives).
 - Lucero's diverse line of oils has something for everyone, whether you prefer your olive oil grassy and peppery, fruity, or pungent.
- **Bariani Extra Virgin Olive Oil**
 - Bariani's extra virgin olive oil is entirely made on Bariani's own estate in Zamora, California. Not only do they own their olive orchards, but they do the picking, crushing and pressing themselves, into first cold pressed, unfiltered olive oil.
 - Bariani's oils are versatile, but they're especially revered by raw foodists and health care professionals because its raw nature preserves its high nutrient content. Their oils contain 989 mg of polyphenols (one of the highest in the field). Bariani is also heavily committed to sustainability and operating a waste management system.
- **Castillo De Canena Arbequina Olive Oil**
 - This family-owned business operates in Andalusia, Spain, has won over 100 international awards for quality and was name one of the world's greatest olive oil producers four years in a row.
 - This award-winning oil has flavors of apple, banana, quince and herbs, with an almond finish. It's a beautiful way to elevate grilled or fresh veggies and meats, cheeses, fresh fruits and pizza, and it is also a great butter substitute in baked goods.
 - The company also employs practices that are environmentally-friendly, including using solar energy to run their olive orchards.
- **Mis Raices Extra Virgin Olive Oil**
 - This olive oil is produced from an exclusive, unique Empeltre variety of olive from Bajo Aragón in Spain. It's the first Empeltre Olive Oil entering the U.S.

market, and it's a limited edition, with just 20,000 bottles. The Fresh Market has been fortunate to claim 8,000 of them!

- This oil is fruity, ripe, delicate, sweet and low intensity. This oil is best enjoyed raw and uncooked. Drizzle over fresh cheeses, crusty breads or use to elevate the flavor of a creamy soup.
- **Cobram Extra Virgin Olive Oils - Australia and California Select**
 - Specializes in tree-to-table oils with two perfect harvest seasons a year for the freshest olive oil possible. One in the Spring from their Australian estate and Fall from their California estate.
 - The olives are hand-picked and cold-pressed as quickly as possible after harvest to preserve the natural antioxidants and oleocanthal, a compound unique to olive oil that has anti-inflammatory properties.
 - Cobram Estate California Mission Extra Virgin Olive Oil was named the *World's Healthiest Extra Virgin Olive Oil* at the 2017 Health & Food Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards Competition in Málaga Costa Del Sol, Spain for their high total

For more information, visit <https://www.thefreshmarket.com/oilsandvinegar> for some other great tips and recipes featuring olive oil.

Future series of “Meet the Curators” will delve into The Fresh Markets signature categories such as specialty coffee, prime meat, specialty produce, cheese and dairy.

About The Fresh Market, Inc.

Since 1982, The Fresh Market, Inc. has helped guests make every day eating extraordinary with time-saving meal solutions, unique ingredients and delicious food for any occasion. From fresh produce and exceptional meat and seafood, to signature baked goods and thousands of organic options, this specialty grocery retailer has something to please every palate. The Fresh Market currently operates 161 stores in 22 states across the U.S., inspiring guests to discover new flavors and cook with confidence. For more information, please visit www.thefreshmarket.com or follow the company on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest.

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