

The global consumption of table olives increased 182% during the last 26 years

The global consumption of table olives in recent years has multiplied by 2,7, increasing by 182.0% over the period 1990/91–2016/17, according to data from the International Olive Council (IOC).

Where the largest increase in consumption is seen in the main IOC member producers. Production in some of these countries has increased markedly, as a result of consumption. Egypt is one such case, and which has gone from consuming 11,000 t in 1990/91 to 400,000 t. in 2016/17. In this same period went from consuming 14,000 to 244,000 t. and Turkey from 110,000 to 350,000 t. The other countries have also seen increases, although these have been proportionally lower.

The annual consumption of table olives per inhabitant in IOC member countries in 2015, with Albania in the lead with a consumption of 10,7 kg/inhabitant/year.

It should be noted that Albania has a total consumption of 31,000 t., and it has a population of less 2,889,000 inhabitants. It is followed by Algeria with 6,1 kg, Turkey and Lebanon oscillate between 4,2 and 4,0 kg; Egypt and Jordan report 3,7 kg and 3,3 kg respectively; Israel and Libya 2,6 kg and 2,3 kg and Tunisia 1,8 kg. Consumption is shared out among the other countries within a scale of 0,9 kg to 0,6 kg of table olives a year (in decreasing order: Uruguay, Morocco, Argentina, Iran and Iraq).

Consumption in the countries of the European Union has increased over this period by 78,4%, going from 346,500 t. in 1990/91 to 618,000 t. in 2016/17. About the consumption of table olives per inhabitant and year, identifies Spain, which is the main producer, as the main consumer with 4,1 kg., followed by Cyprus with 3,1 kg., Malta with 1,9kg, Greece and Luxembourg with 1,8 kg each, Bulgaria and Italy both post 1,7 kg. and Romania 1,1 kg. In decreasing order, consumption in France, Sweden Belgium, Slovakia, Austria, the United Kingdom and Denmark lies between 0,9 and 0,5 kg. Consumption in other countries of the

European Union (Slovenia, Lithuania, Finland, Czech Republic, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Estonia, Hungary, Croatia and Latvia) stands between 0,4 and 0,2 kg.

Looking at the consumption of table olives per inhabitant and year in the group of countries that are not members of the IOC, Syria is the first consumer in this group of countries with 5kg/inhabitant/year, followed by Palestine and Chile, which oscillate between 2,5 kg. and 2,1 kg. Peru and Saudi Arabia report between 1,3 kg. and 1,1 kg.; they are followed by Australia, Canada and Switzerland with 0,8 kg. each; the United States and Brazil have consumptions of 0,6 kg. and 0,5 kg. respectively, and Russia and Mexico each report a consumption of 0,2 kg.

Healthy product

Research on table olives has shown that the consumption of this product can strengthen consumers' natural immune systems. Table olives could be the main fermented probiotic vegetable product sold in the future. The latest data provided by researchers from the Probiolives Project shows that some of the lactic acid bacteria (LAB) generated in the fermentation of table olives have better results than other forms of bacteria that have been recognised as probiotic microorganisms and that are currently used in many milk products.

From a nutritional perspective, a normal daily intake of olives, which would be of 25–28 g (approximately seven olives), has an energetic value of 37 Kcal. Those calories mainly come from the olives' fat contents, 82% of which is monosaturated - the same healthy fat as is found in olive oil. The regular consumption of olives also helps provide the daily recommended fibre intake; they are a source of oleic acid and they provide carbohydrates and protein. Olives also contain minerals such as sodium, iron, calcium and magnesium, which are particularly important for those who practice sports given their action on muscle contractions and nerve impulses. One of the main nutrients in table olives are polyphenols and provitamins A and E, the antioxidant properties of which act against oxidative processes that occur in the practice of sport, affecting both performance during exercise and during the recovery period.

As part of the activities provided for in the International Agreement and its standardisation mandate, the IOC is responsible for drawing up and revising trade standards. In the case of the trade standard applying to table olives, it lays down definitions and provisions relating to the different commercial categories of table olives. Its work also includes revising the Codex

Alimentarius standard for this product, with a view to regulating the quality criteria in international trade.

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