



## Greek olive oil losing to Tunisian in Canada

The insufficient promotion of Greek olive oil abroad, combined with the absence of a comprehensive policy to contain the cost of exports to far-flung countries like Canada, have resulted in a drop in Greece's olive oil exports to the world's second largest country.

Worse, the Greek product is not only under threat from that of Italy or Spain, which have long held a dominant position in international market – even though most of the Italian exports originate from Greece – but also from emerging forces such as Tunisia and California in the United States.

According to a recent report by the Greek Consulate in Toronto on the Canadian olive oil market, virgin olive oil imports in Canada rose 17.16% in 2020 from 2019 in value and 34.89% in volume. The main supplier was Italy, accounting for 40% of imports, followed by Tunisia, Spain and then Greece.

Greek olive oil exports declined 4% in value last year on an annual basis but expanded 8% in quantity, which means that to a considerable extent it is not exported as a commodity of high added value. The report also revealed there is an olive oil brand in Canada that is supposed to be produced by a Greek-Canadian importer, either from a self-owned olive grove or through cooperation with a Greek producer, and bottled and sold in Canada under the firm's brand.

There also appear to be olive oil imports in bulk, often in tin cans, with the option of free delivery at home. The phenomenon of bulk olive oil sales in tin cans was also highlighted by a consulate report in 2019, explaining the significantly lower price of the Greek product compared to the Italian.



So what are the Italians doing and now the Tunisians as well? For years the Italians have invested in standardizing olive oil, mixing Italian product with Greek, and using Italian restaurants as ambassadors.

The Tunisians, as the latest report reveals, have followed an aggressive marketing policy in recent years, based on promoting their olive producing regions, the Mediterranean diet and the use of olive oil in ancient times.

They have also pursued a far more efficient pricing policy, which has helped bolster demand.

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