

A new UC Davis study has found that EVOO could replace butter in a variety of food preparations while maintaining flavor intensity and diversifying the flavor profile. Led by Dr. Jean-Xavier Guinard, the study was conducted in cooperation with The Culinary Institute of America in Napa Valley and Villa Campestri Olive Oil Resort in Tuscany.

Four types of California olive oil (mild, medium, robust and defective) and two types of butter (mild and strong) were used in simple preparations of green beans, pasta, fish and cake. The COOC taste panel generated flavor profiles of the oil through descriptive analysis.

The UC Davis Olive Center is very grateful to the COOC, Villa Campestri, and the late Bill Briwa, chef-instructor for The Culinary Institute of America, a co-author of the study and a leading expert in the culinary applications of extra virgin olive oil.

Try the cake recipe used in the study!

Ciambellone (Italian Tea Cake)

2 cups (300 g) all-purpose flour

1 cup (180 g) sugar

4 large eggs

2/3 cup (130 g) extra virgin olive oil - try Gunrock or Wolfskill from UC Davis Olive Oil

2 oz (50 g) milk

4 tsp (16 g) baking powder

1 pinch salt

Zest of 1 orange

1. Preheat oven to 340° F.
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs with the sugar and salt. Mix well.
3. Add the orange zest, then the olive oil.
4. When the olive oil is absorbed, mix in the milk.
5. Whisk the flour and baking powder in a separate bowl. Then add the flour mixture to the wet ingredient mixture. Mix until homogeneous.
6. Grease and flour the cake pan (traditionally a tube pan but you can also use a standard loaf pan. Pour in the batter using a spatula.
7. Bake at 340° F for about 50 minutes (35-40 minutes for loaf pan) until risen and golden, and when a skewer comes out clean.
8. Remove the cake from the oven and let it cool before unmolding.

Yield: 1 loaf or ring cake