Picking a high-quality product is important to make sure you’re getting all the wonderful health benefits and delicate taste of olive oil. Many factors such as heat, exposure to light, or how the olives are manufactured can destroy olive oil’s healthy compounds. Here are some tips to help you select a high-quality olive oil on your next trip to the store:

**The Bottle**

First, look for olive oil that’s in a dark green bottle or a tin container. Exposure to both light and heat will destroy the flavor and many of the health benefits of olive oil. At home make sure to store your olive oil in a cupboard away from the stove for the same reason.

**“Extra Virgin”**

Next, look for the words “extra virgin”. This means the olives underwent minimal processing, which helps preserve the compounds in olive oil that have health benefits and flavor. Other descriptive words, such as “pure” or “light” olive oil can be misleading and do not indicate the oil is extra virgin.

**Check the Date**

Notice if there is a “harvest date” or “best by date” somewhere on the bottle. This helps ensure freshness as olive oil spoils with age. Look for a product with a date within the last 2 years and use promptly upon opening.

**The Origin**

Don’t be fooled by “From Italy” on packaging. This can be very misleading and may only mean the olive oil was bottled in Italy but the olives came from somewhere else. Also, olives don’t have to be imported to be high quality! For example, California has very strict standards for olive oil production and sells many high-quality products.

**Seal of Approval**

Look for a seal of approval. Some olive oil companies send their product for quality and purity testing to independent organizations. Look on the bottle for a seal of approval from organizations such as the California Olive Oil Council (COOC), North American Olive Oil Association (NAOOA), or the International Olive Council (IOC) on any product you buy.

**Price**

Finally, high-quality olive oil does NOT have to be the most expensive one on the shelf! If you follow the above guidelines, you should walk home with a high quality product no matter the price.