



# COOKING OILS & FATS

## A Culinary Nutrition Guide



The major factors to consider when choosing an oil or fat for cooking:

### FLAVOR

Match oil/fat flavor profile to what you are making. Ex: sesame oil for some Asian dishes, EVOO for Italian dishes, or a neutral tasting oil if no additional flavor is desired.

### HEALTH IMPACT

Oil/fat choice can be less or more healthful, especially when used habitually. High intake of saturated fat is linked with cardiovascular disease and inflammation. Poly- and monounsaturated fat intake is linked with better heart health and less inflammation.

### HEAT STABILITY

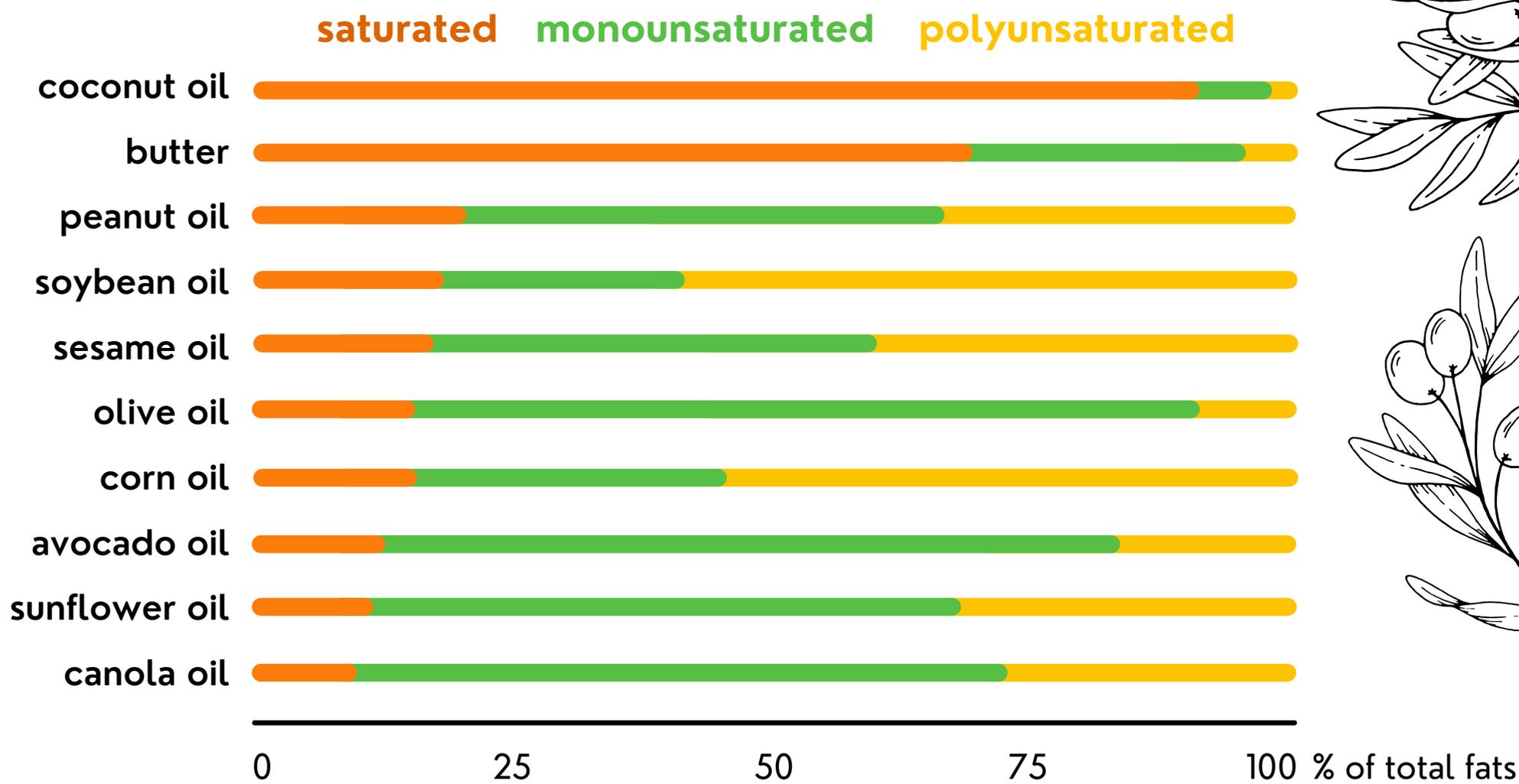
Higher heat and longer heat exposure cause oils/fats to degrade and produce harmful polar compounds and trans fats. More heat stable oils/fats produce less unhealthy byproducts when cooking. The main characteristics of better oil/fat heat stability are:

**Less polyunsaturated fats**  
**Less refinement**

### SMOKE POINT

Oils/fats with a high smoke point are commonly recommended for higher heat applications. However, a higher smoke point is actually associated with greater oil/fat degradation with heating. Therefore, **smoke point is not an accurate metric** to determine the best cooking applications for oil/fat.

# Fat composition of common fats & oils



## REFINEMENT OF OILS

Refinement includes processing like exposure to high heat and chemicals to increase smoke point and shelf life. The refining process minimizes polyphenol and antioxidant content of oils, making them less heat stable. To avoid consumption of unhealthy compounds, **don't cook at high temperatures with refined oils.**

**Extra virgin, virgin and cold pressed oils are the least refined.**

### Better for health

- Extra virgin olive oil
- Other cold pressed or virgin oils like avocado, canola, peanut, sesame, sunflower or soybean

### Use for high heat cooking

- Extra virgin olive oil
- Other cold pressed or virgin oils like avocado or coconut

### Use for low heat or no heat cooking

- Extra virgin olive oil
- Any other unrefined or refined oils

