# Olives & Olive Trees: HOT COMMODITY'S



## "The tree that feeds the children"

Olive trees and Olive Oil are recognized constant of Mediterranean history and diet; however, these trees are an established farmed product of the Greek culture as it too is relative to their traditions from the days of Sophocles. It is an offering unto the Gods and deceased, as it is considered sacred. After the olives were beaten down with poles or shaking its tree boughs, as some drop naturally, they are shipped to a mill for production of the farmers specific product(s). It is used in the production of perfumes, diet, lighting, heating, and medicinal purposes. There are two types of Olive Oil, virgin olive oils and chemically refined oils that were exported onto surrounding islands and Greece.

The Cretan diet consist of dishes most of whom are prepared using olive oil. As meat dishes are for special times with guest or dining out with friends and family, olive oil sustains their diets for use with salads, vegetables, cheese, with bread. It has also become a prime commodity and staple for consumption globally. Olives have hence become a target, a crop of interest toting it's potential for annual profit.

Across the Mediterranean region, ears are burning with tales of stealing olives, branches and even cutting down olive trees to acquire prime product which has risen since Covid-19 upset our world economy's. Scams, oil tampering, break-ins and outright thievery has circumvented the land of Greece, Spain and Italy. Against higher production cost wrapped inside the expense of fertilizer, climate change, flooding and forest fires, it is devastating these farmers and impacting their financial resource of cash crop olives. Now, snatching their tractors and expensive equipment is on thieves' radar along with the olives. At times, the trees are cut and sold as firewood. Mafias are ID'd to have come under dark skies to take the farmers harvest leaving low yield and mangled trees. They've gotten away with it all.

In Athens, it is said, olive groves are an unbroken tradition on plains surrounding the city's international airport. Generations of growers inhabit local farmland businesses who've lived thru years of netting olives fallen from trees which are loaded into steel bins or wicker baskets for transport to local mills and processed. Knowing they've invested into their crops in time, energy, and use of expensive specialized fertilizer to kill off the olive fly and other hazards, they've chosen a new approach to

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farming. For harvesting this season, cannibalization techniques are being used by some, yielding early harvest in fear of befalling blatant robbery.

## How Olives, It's by Products and Pricing Lead to Theft

As the global demand for olive products rises, importers are willing to pay beyond the domestic rates and this means greater income as exports have doubled since 2023 amidst Turkey's suspension of exporting to protect its domestic market. Yet, there is still speculation that various country's Greek Islands, Switzerland and others are receiving stolen olive oil, olive oil blends and blended downgraded oil which is being sold are extremely low prices or for the higher than market cost. Either way, everyone that matters are losing.

A farmer reporting in January of olive theft from his land, lead to the arrest of sixteen people in Spain for a major olive heist. Stolen over 19 tons of olives according the Las Vegas local authorities which is outside of Madrid. They've also recovered documentation which reveals and further supports the farmers claim of a stolen 19 tons in exchange for currency. Five others are under investigation in connection to the heist.

He was one of many complaints to authorities which caused The Guardia Civil to arrest 21 others for a theft of 17,500 kilograms of olives. As economy's struggle high level thieves seeking products which offer the greatest reward in dollar value, such as olive, these heists continue. Most of the farmers are coming to a resolve that these were coordinated break-ins having insider aide to steal and then sale their stolen product, olives.

In 2019 it was believed that element smuggled olive oil out of Syrian territory as it also become trending. Stolen Syrian product has been reported traveled to Spain and shipments of olive oil have been blended with Turkish oil then exported to Europe to be sold in Spain. Typically, this item is sold at a higher rate than it is purchased, at times with a $10 increase. Most denied ever receiving shipments of Turkish olive oil in Spain and at a latter point, government official(s) suggested the imported items were confiscated. This similar happening occurred with the Island of Cyprus. Syrian oil blended with stolen oil was shipped to the island but located prior to its scheduled arrival. But in Cyprus authorities denied involvement stating their purchase of oil was not from Syria when questioned regarding the low cost at market. Instead, they suggest producers were paid market prices for their olives.

The income from cultivating olive trees varies have a wide range potential in profit which depends upon market conditions, tree maturity and farming expenses per acre. As market demand rises, so too do profits for raw olives, olive oil and any other products produced. Any trauma to potential crops such as flooding, pest invasion,

fertilizer cost or poor yield, can alter market pricing both local and internationally. A farmer can earn from $3000 to $30,000 or more per acre. It all depends!

## Bodies Fighting Against Olive Theft

Minister(s) of Agriculture Polygyros Olive Oil Cooperative

Regional Agriculture Association Greece's Olive Oil association EDOE

Olive Oil Times Spanish Senators Turkish Radio and Television Corp.

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights Afrin Chamber of Industry and Trade

European Commission

## Olive Tree & Olive Oil Criminal Behavior

A. Unbelievably, cemetery olive oil has become a target, house storage areas seeking oil and not the typical jewels. I guess it's become faster and more lucrative to sale oil than diamonds or gold these days?
B. Greece is 3rd largest olive oil producer following Spain and Italy. Chania, west Crete, has 17 companies responsive to olive oil product production. This high rate of theft is too following a bad 2023 harvest year. It caused the price of olive oil to excel, skyrocketing to about 200% due to the resulting 2024 low-yield. A short supply of olive oil is available for marketing.
C. In February, there were reports of five people carrying estimated 300 pounds of olives in daylight without ability to prove how they acquired them. It provoked a police raid of two olive presses in Toledo and Guadalajara regions whom where believed to be pressing the seasons crop into olive oil. The management were arrested and charged with fraud, theft, and receiving stolen goods, as more than 1,500 gallons of olive oil remained on the premises.
D. An inside job. This is what the Greek Olive Oil Cooperative enabled as thieves swiped almost $4million worth of product [1] from the Polygyros Olive Oil Cooperative. This consist of approximately 200 local producers.
E. The oil mill in Messinia lost 28 gallons of oil after these bandits accessed its warehouse through iron doors and disabling a high-tech security system. It's loss was also close to $400 thousand dollars.

[1]

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F. In 2018 news articles reported, Six Detained for Stealing 12,500 Kilos of Olives or Seized in Cordoba: More than 16 tons of Stolen Olives.

***The olive tree is surely the richest gift of Heaven. I can scarcely expect bread.***

*Thomas Jefferson*

## Modern Day Solutions

Farmers have begun to patrol their groves at least twice a day to ward off theft. This sense of blazing greed continues it is in fashion with the worlds constant look at high retail robberies and break-ins. No stone has been seemingly left unturned as the days promise business shutdowns, slower production, and reduced employment opportunities against global migration and our economic fluctuations. The damage is huge to farmers are they seek means by which to protect themselves.

Italian farmers have requested that the police form an agriculture division. It is sited as the return of the rural police units which were formally dismissed in 2010. Some utilized tire spikes to puncture thieves' vehicles and blockades on access roads to farmland. Others, held a greater awareness and association with technological bodies and brought the start-up of AgroSecurity. This business leader introduced its creation, "Senuelo" to persuade thieves not to steal from the groves. "Senuelo" is a decoy olive device hard to detect but easily used to help farmers and law enforcers locate and retrieve stolen crop and incarcerate looters. These devices are to be implanted prior to harvest and thus mixed with the tons of olives they've become accustomed to taking. Upon pressing, a signal is sent off using an identity laden radio-frequency module inside the decoy.

The AgroSecurity has invested in a GPS tracking system which sends notification once the olives move within its associated feet. Both inventions hold patents and blueprints but in 2018 lacked proper investors for production and distribution cost of a prototype.

***Senuelo, a peaceful resolution: "In war the olive branch of peace is of use."***

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