

Peanut Blog

An ounce of information



Wood-Pressed Groundnut Oil Vs Refined Oil: Why More Home Cooks Are Going Back To Tradition

Discover how wood-pressed groundnut oil differs from refined oil, from extraction methods and flavour to nutritional value and everyday cooking.

For years, cooking oil was something most of us bought on autopilot. It sat quietly on supermarket shelves, marketed through promises of lighter meals, longer shelf life or heart-health claims. Few stopped to wonder how that bottle of oil actually made its way from seed to kitchen. Today, that conversation is changing.

As consumers become increasingly conscious of ingredient labels, food provenance and processing methods, the spotlight has shifted from simply what we eat to how it's made. Alongside the revival of sourdough, heritage grains and naturally fermented foods, wood-pressed oils have quietly re-entered modern kitchens, not as a wellness fad, but as part of a larger movement towards minimally processed food.

The Story Begins With Extraction :

The renewed interest isn't driven by nostalgia alone. It's rooted in a growing appreciation for ingredients that retain more of their natural identity before they arrive on the dining table. Arvind Patel, Managing Director, Bharat Vedica – A Patel Venture, believes the distinction begins with extraction itself. Traditional kachi ghani (wood-press) methods slowly extract the oil without external heat or chemical solvents, allowing it to retain its natural aroma, colour and much of its inherent nutritional profile.

Refined oils, by contrast, undergo multiple industrial processes, including high-heat treatment, bleaching and deodorisation to create a neutral flavour, consistent appearance and extended shelf life. While these qualities suit large-scale production and everyday convenience, Patel notes that extensive processing can reduce some of the oil's naturally occurring flavour and nutrients.

Why Flavour Is Making A Comeback :

The conversation around cooking oils has therefore become less about choosing between "good" and "bad" and more about understanding the journey an ingredient takes before it reaches our kitchens. That sentiment is echoed by Satyajit Hange, co-founder and Farmer, Two Brothers Organic Farms, who believes consumers are beginning to look beyond nutrition labels and towards production methods themselves.

"Groundnut oil naturally has a distinctive nutty aroma and flavour," explains Hange. In wood-pressed oil, these qualities remain largely intact because the extraction process is gentle. Without exposing the oil to excessive heat or chemical solvents, the process also helps preserve naturally occurring vitamin E, antioxidants and healthy fats.

The Rise Of Conscious Cooking :

Refined oils are intentionally processed to achieve a milder taste, greater consistency and a longer shelf life. While these qualities make them commercially viable on a large scale, they also create a cooking experience that is quite different from that of traditionally extracted oils. The result isn't simply a different bottle of oil, it is an entirely different relationship with food. One carries the unmistakable aroma of roasted groundnuts and a fuller flavour profile, while the other is designed to remain almost invisible in the dishes it cooks.

A Return To Ingredients With A Story :

Perhaps that's why wood-pressed oils are finding favour with a generation increasingly drawn to authenticity over convenience. Just as people are rediscovering artisanal bread, farm-to-table produce and seasonal ingredients, traditional oils are being appreciated not because they are new, but because they never lost their connection to the way food was originally prepared.

Hange points out that for generations, groundnut oil was a staple in Indian households precisely because it was local, seasonal and minimally processed. As people become more curious about what goes into everyday ingredients, understanding extraction methods is becoming just as important as knowing where those ingredients come from.

Patel sees this curiosity as part of a wider shift towards mindful consumption. As awareness around food processing continues to grow, he believes more consumers are seeking ingredients that preserve their authentic flavour, aroma and natural characteristics through gentler production methods. The renewed interest in wood-pressed oils isn't about looking backwards. It's about asking better questions of everyday food and recognising that sometimes, the simplest choices in the kitchen can have the richest stories behind them.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/coimbatore/steps-taken-to-boost-groundnut-cultivation-in-coimbatore-district/articleshow/132516656.cms>