

# HOW SEED OILS ARE MADE (and why it matters)

Curious how everyday oils like soybean, canola, sunflower, and corn make it from seed to shelf? It might sound like a complicated journey, but each step is carefully designed to keep the oil safe, clean, and good for your health. Alongside other important components of a balanced diet, these oils can help support overall wellness.

Here's a quick look at how it all happens.



## Extracting the Oil from Seeds

To get the oil out of the seeds, manufacturers use either pressure or a safe solvent like hexane. Once the oil is extracted, it's heated so the hexane evaporates—way before it ever reaches your kitchen. **In fact, you'd have to consume 158 times more oil than the average person in the U.S. does in a day** (we're talking the equivalent of a gallon of vegetable oil daily!) **to reach even the most conservative safety limits for hexane.**

## Cleaning Things Up

The freshly extracted oil isn't quite ready yet—it needs a little polishing to remove things like plant gums, proteins, and trace metals. That's where steps like degumming, neutralizing, washing, and drying come in. These steps help make the oil safe, shelf-stable, and better-tasting.

## Deodorizing for a Neutral Taste

Lastly, the oil goes through a steam process called deodorization. This removes strong or off-putting smells and flavors, leaving behind a clean, neutral oil that works with just about any recipe.

## Removing Color and Cloudiness

Next up is bleaching (don't worry—it doesn't involve bleach!). This step uses natural clays and other substances to take out pigments like chlorophyll and leftover impurities, giving the oil a clear, golden color. Then comes dewaxing, which keeps the oil from looking cloudy in cooler temperatures.

After all these steps, the oil is ready to be bottled and shipped to stores. The result? **A clean, safe, and shelf-stable oil that's packed with essential fats**—like omega-3s (alpha-linolenic acid) and omega-6s (linoleic acid)—that may help support everything from brain function<sup>1</sup> to skin health.<sup>2</sup> Science shows that swapping out saturated fats (like those found in butter or coconut oil) for seed oils can also support heart health,<sup>3,4</sup> lower disease risk,<sup>5</sup> and help your body get the good fats it needs.

**The next time you drizzle oil on your salad or sauté veggies, know that a lot of care went into getting that oil from the seed to your skillet—and you can feel good about what you're eating.**

1 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4350958/#B5>

2 [https://lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/health-disease/skin-health/essential-fatty-acids#:~:text=Skin%20sensitivity,-A%20few%20intervention&text=In%20one%20placebo%20controlled%20trial,\)%20\(62%2C%2064\).](https://lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/health-disease/skin-health/essential-fatty-acids#:~:text=Skin%20sensitivity,-A%20few%20intervention&text=In%20one%20placebo%20controlled%20trial,)%20(62%2C%2064).)

3 <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/375034>.

4 <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-21/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-101#101.82>.

5 <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/cir.0000000000000510>.

