

You Need to Eat More Lard And 5 Other Healthy Fats

BY EMILY MAIN

Olive oil is sooooo five minutes ago. People who are into [healthy cooking oils](#) and fats have moved on to duck fat, real lard, goose renderings, and coconut oil, according to a new report published by the market research firm Packaged Facts and the food trends potters at the Center for Culinary Development. Interest in these long-forgotten, more traditional fats is all part of the back-to-the-land movement that has triggered the [growth of farmer's markets](#) and reconnected people to whole fruits and vegetables, grass-fed dairy products, and pasture-raised meats, the report's author's note. It's no longer enough for top-line chefs and adventurous home cooks to eat grass-fed steaks; those steaks need to be finished with duck fat or real butter.

And it's not just the fact that these fats are traditional or come with a sense of nostalgia. Nutrition science is beginning to turn the idea that all fat is bad for you on its head, with high-profile nutritionists like Walter Willett, professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard School of Public Health and a professor of medicine at the Harvard Medical School, working to debunk the idea that low-fat diets are healthier. Many of the recommendations that we all follow regarding fat, he's found, are based on rather weak science that has been repeatedly questioned over the decades. That type of diet is also depriving people of a variety of nutrients found only in the animal fats and other cooking oils that have been demonized under the assumption that saturated fat is bad for you.

As a general rule, whatever kinds of fat you buy, keep your chemical exposures to a minimum by buying certified-organic plant oils and pastured or grass-fed animal fats.

Olive oil remains one of the healthiest oils you can drizzle over a plate of veggies, but if you're interested in branching out, here are 6 other healthy varieties of cooking oil now gaining traction in the culinary world:

- **Lard & schmaltz.** The prime example of fats we all thought were bad for us, lard and schmaltz (rendered chicken, pork, or goose fat) may have been wrongly demonized for years. The main fat in lard—oleic acid—is a monounsaturated fat linked to decreased [risk of depression](#), says Drew Ramsey, MD, coauthor of [The Happiness Diet](#) (Rodale, 2010).

Those same monounsaturated fats, which make up 45 percent of the fat in lard, are responsible for lowering LDL levels while leaving HDL ("good") cholesterol levels alone. Lard and schmaltz also tolerate high cooking temperatures—they're often recommended for frying—and have long shelf lives.