

Quick Guide to Carrier Oils

for skincare, herbalism & aromatherapy

Susan M Parker



Carrier Oils are Lipid Oils

This guide to carrier oils gives you a foundation for working with carrier oils for herbalism, skincare and aromatherapy.

All carrier oils belong to the class of oils we call lipids or lipid oils. These are the fatty oils like olive, avocado, argan and shea butter.

These oils are unrelated to essential oils which are aromatic compounds distilled from leaves, peels, bark, roots and petals.

What's in a Name?

These oils go by many names and are used broadly in skincare, herbalism, for food, aromatherapy, massage, personal care, and even in industry. Each group has their own way of describing these common raw materials.

- Carrier oil
- Lipid oil
- Base oil
- True oils
- Beauty oils
- Plant oils

They are also the food oils.

What are Fatty Acids?

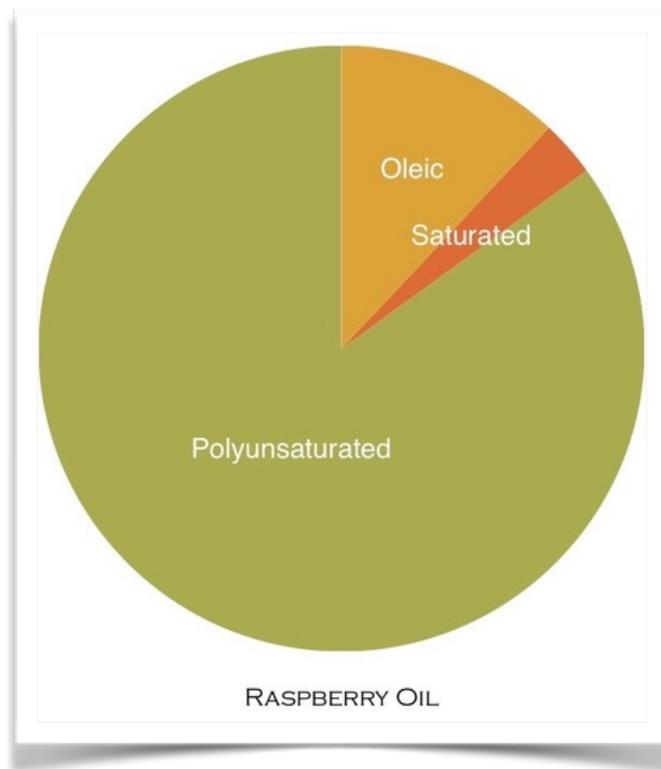
We have access to hundreds of carrier oils from around the world.

Some are liquid while others are solid at room temperature. But they are all ‘oils’ and are made up of the same chemical compounds, fatty acids.

There are a handful of common fatty acids that we find in most oils and butters in varying percentages.

And then there are the rare and exotic fatty acids that create nuance in the oils.

All carrier oils are made up of fatty acids and all carrier oils come from seeds, nuts and kernels.



Plant Oils from Seeds

So while we decide on what to call them we can describe them.

They are made up of 98 or 99% fatty acids, carbon chains with attached hydrogen that creates hundreds of these fatty acids.

Different combinations of fatty acids give us all the variety we find in the oils.

The percentage of each fatty acid in an oil determines the feel, texture (liquid or solid), shelf life, skincare application of the specific oil.



Oils for Infusing Herbs & Botanicals

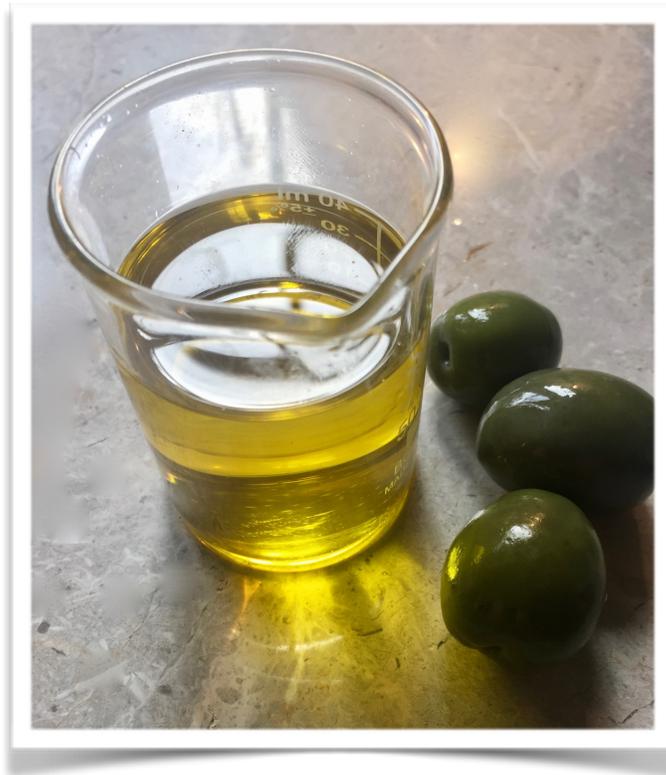
Olive is the traditional oil used for infusing plants and herbs into the lipid oils.

However other oils can be used that hold up equally well and bring different properties to the infusion.

Avocado, Camellia, Macadamia nut, Apricot, Almond, Marula, Moringa, Plum and Hazelnut.

The dominant fatty acid in these oils is monounsaturated. This makes them fairly stable to oxygen.

An example of a monounsaturated fatty acid is Oleic Acid.



High Value Oils

All oils contain plant compounds beyond the fatty acids, the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, terpenes and more.

This is called the healing fraction and polyunsaturated fatty acid oils often have an outsized portion of them.

Grape seed, Passion fruit seed, Cucumber seed, Watermelon seed, Sunflower seed, Blackberry seed, and Raspberry seed oil.

These oils are high in linoleic acid which is a common polyunsaturated fatty acid. This makes these oils sensitive to heat and light.

Use these oils to make facial oils and oil serums and in body oils, salves and other skincare recipes.



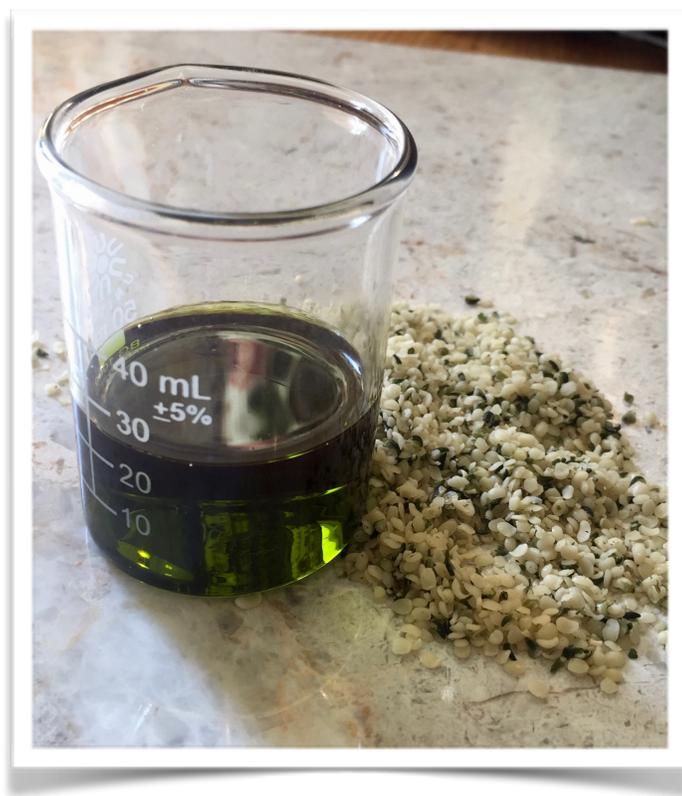
Highly Nourishing Oils

This group of oils is particularly nourishing to skin and body where we find many of the oils as supplements high in omega 3 fatty acids.

Oils in this group are prone to oxidation and need to be stored in a cool dark space to extend their shelf life.

Examples of high omega 3 oils, Chia seed, Camelina seed, Flax seed, Rose hip seed, Blueberry, Kiwi seed, Cranberry, Kukui nut, Sacha inchi, and Hemp.

Add these oils to facial oils and oil serums, body oils and salves to add skin nourishing compounds.



Butters, The Solid Oils

The butters have higher percentages of saturated fatty acids than liquid oils. All butters will turn liquid with enough heat. To work with these oils, it is often necessary to melt them on a heat source.

Saturated oils are wonderfully protective. Ideal for protective and healing salves, body butters and to create highly emollient creams.

Examples of highly saturated oils are: Shea butter, Mango butter, Cocoa butter, Coconut oil, and Cupuaçu butter.

With the right technique you can also infuse in saturated oils.



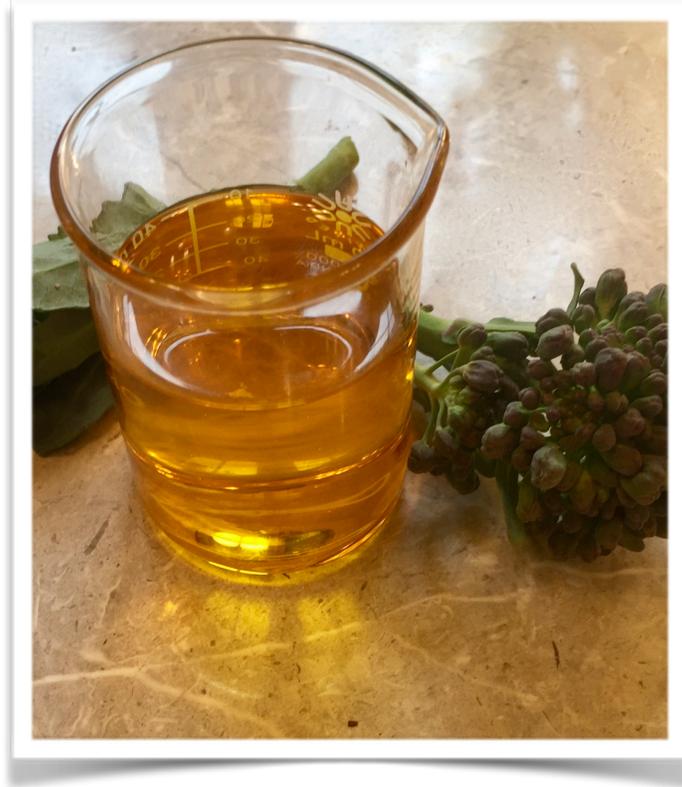
Extending shelf life

Some oils have unusual very-long chain fatty acids that extend their shelf life and protect them from oxidation.

These very-long chain fatty acid rich oils also help stabilize other oils in a formula protecting it from oxidation and rancidity.

Jojoba oil, Meadowfoam seed oil, Abyssinian seed, and Broccoli seed oils are common ones.

Using meadowfoam seed oil in a recipe at 25% improves the shelf life of the very delicate oils included in that recipe.



Continuing your studies

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/lipidlove>

Pick up a copy of *Power of the Seed: Your Guide to Oils For Health & Beauty*

Here is a list of worldwide distributors and a link to download an excerpt.

<https://susanmparker.com/book/>

And you can visit me over on my website susanmparker.com for more on the lipid oils, upcoming courses and programs and more.

~Susan M Parker

