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Extra Virginity: The Sublime and Scandalous World of Olive Oil

Tom Mueller

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The sacred history and profane present of a substance long seen as the essence of health and civilization.

For millennia, fresh olive oil has been one of life's necessities-not just as food but also as medicine, a beauty aid, and a vital element of religious ritual. Today's researchers are continuing to confirm the remarkable, life-giving properties of true extra-virgin, and "extra-virgin Italian" has become the highest standard of quality.

But what if this symbol of purity has become deeply corrupt? Starting with an explosive article in *The New Yorker*, Tom Mueller has become the world's expert on olive oil and olive oil fraud-a story of globalization, deception, and crime in the food industry from ancient times to the present, and a powerful indictment of today's lax protections against fake and even toxic food products in the United States. A rich and deliciously readable narrative, *Extra Virginity* is also an inspiring account of the artisanal producers, chemical analysts, chefs, and food activists who are defending the extraordinary oils that truly deserve the name "extra-virgin." 25 black-and-white illustrations

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