

FATS AND OILS

Fats and oils are nutritionally useful and in some form, economical sources of energy and give a satiety value to the dish. They also contribute characteristic palatability, qualities of flavour and texture. They are popularly used as the medium of cooking.

Fats are solid at ordinary temperature and melt when heated. Oils are liquids at ordinary temperature. Only coconut oil solidifies at low temperature.

Various fats used in cooking are—lard (pig's fat), suet (fat around kidneys), dripping (Tallow: beef fat), butter, margarine, ghee, hydrogenated fat, cocoa butter (for confectionery).

Oils are extracted from coconut, palm, sesame, cotton seed, olive, peanut, mustard, corn and sunflower. Salad oil is a deodorised vegetable oil and is used for salad dressings, etc., as olive oil—the best for the purpose—is very expensive and scarce.

Fats and oils are used for various purposes, the major culinary part played by them are as—(1) spreads, (2) shortenings, (3) salad dressings, (4) frying media, (5) tempering.

Spreads: Butter and margarines are used for spreads, and their function is to add to the flavour, nutritional value and satiety value of breads.

Shortening: These are fats which shorten the gluten strands, surround them and make them more easily broken (short). When added to bread, it gives a bit of tenderness, richness and a sheen to the crumb.

Tempering: Dals, curries, rice dishes, etc., are tempered. The fat or oil is heated to which cumin seeds or mustard, or fenugreek seeds, etc., are added and poured over the dals.