

Home and family

A little bit of oil goes a long way

by JUDY CREIGHTON
The Canadian Press
Everyone needs a little oil in their diet so it's best to pick one that's not harmful.

Enter one of Canada's best kept secrets — canola oil, from the Prairies.

Canola is lower in saturated fat than any other oil (at about six per cent). That, coupled with the fact it contains more cholesterol-balancing monounsaturated fat than any oil except olive oil, makes canola an extremely attractive alternative to more saturated oils such as peanut or palm.

Although nutritionists say Canadians would be healthier if they could get just 30 per cent of their calories from fat, it's also important to know that oils are essential to our well-being.

Oils help to distribute the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K within the body's system. Oils are also the main sources for fatty acids such as Omega-3. It's a remarkable polyunsaturated fat reputed to: a) lower both cholesterol and triglycerides and b) contribute to brain growth and development.

FOOD DOLLAR

However all oils, whether saturated or polyunsaturated contain about the same calorie count, 120 to 125 calories per 15 mL (1 tbsp.)

Canola, which stands for Canadian oil, had a bad rap from the beginning, says nutritionist Bruce McDonald of the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg.

That's because canola is the market name for rapeseed oil, which is pressed from rape seeds.

"Manufacturers were afraid to put the words 'derived from rapeseed' on the label, and all the while nutritious-conscious consumers were demanding the oil," he said in an interview.

McDonald says that canola "should never have succeeded considering the way it has been treated in Canada."

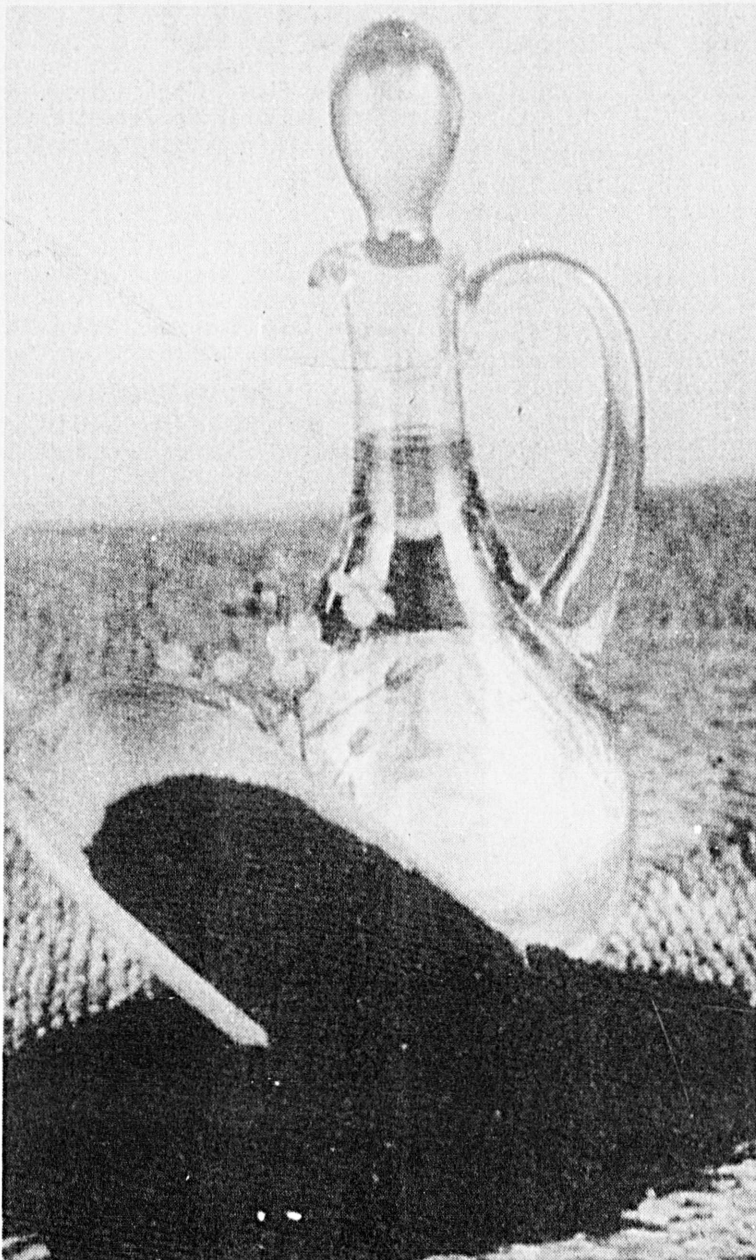
"Manufacturers sold it at a lower price and now they are trying to up that price."

Yvonne Catty, of Kraft General Foods in Toronto, which uses canola oil in its cooking oils, premium margarines and salad dressings, says that one of the problems with canola is that it's not a familiar term in consumer language.

"People do not understand it means Canadian oil," she says.

However, American and Canadian food manufacturers and processors know the healthy value of the oil, which has captured 63 per cent of the vegetable oil production market in Canada.

As well, many fast-food restaurants are using canola oil in their deep fryers to replace highly-saturated beef fat.



Canola oil is lower in saturated fat than any other cooking oil.

Ted Mag, research and development manager for Maple Leaf Foods Inc., (formerly Canada Packers), says canola oil has a "very favorable" fatty acid composition which is now found suitable for the many snack foods like potato chips on the market.

And Procter and Gamble has successfully used it in Duncan Hines brownies, says the company's Margaret Bawden.

To understand why canola has become the darling of the food industry, it's important to know the down and up sides of the fat debate.

Saturated fats, for the most part, are derived from animal fats. They are present in dairy products, bacon, organ meats and cheese and they are high in cholesterol.

There is a relationship between cholesterol and fat which shows that the more saturated fat in the diet, the more cholesterol in the body. Cholesterol has been implicated in heart disease.

Polyunsaturated fats come from vegetables and plants like peanuts, corn, sunflowers and oilseed (from which canola is derived). Most of these have no cholesterol at all.

That's why some food companies like McCain's Foods, which makes french fries and other convenience foods, can advertise that their product is cholesterol-free. They are probably using a vegetable oil like canola, says

McDonald.

Unfortunately, reading package labels at the grocery store isn't always helpful to find what products are using canola oil. Many manufacturers simply claim they are using vegetable oil which, depending on fluctuating oil prices, might or might not mean there is canola in the product.

But for home baking and salad dressings, consumers can buy pure canola oil off the supermarket shelf.

Coming events

Support groups

AL ANON: Al Anon meets Friday from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. at 777 Kinsmen Place. Does someone's drinking bother you? For more information phone 563-7305.

THRIFT SHOP: St. Michael's Thrift Shop is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fridays at 1505 Fifth Ave. There is a good supply of cleaning rags for sale.

Miscellaneous

TAI CHI: The Silk and Jade Tai Chi Group will hold classes for members of the Seniors Activity Centre at 12:30 p.m. every Friday at 425 Brunswick St. This Chinese art consists of a series of fluid movements which helps circulation. Come and join us and see what Tai Chi can do for you. For more information phone Diane or Ann at 564-3287.

FELLOWSHIP: Our Saviours Lutheran Church will hold a coffee fellowship Friday from 9:30 to 11 a.m. at 3590 Dufferin Ave. A representative from the SPCA will be guest speaker and Millie Krienke will be inspirational speaker. Refreshments will be served. Child minding provided.

TOASTMASTERS: Toastmasters will hold a dance Feb. 1 at 6:30 p.m. at the Inn of the North. Fabulous 50's is the theme. For more information phone 562-3179.

BRANCH 43: The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 43, will hold its installation of 1992 branch and ladies auxiliary executives Friday at 7 p.m. Social will follow ceremonies. Members and friends are invited to attend and meet our executives. For more information phone 562-1292 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Fine arts

WATERCOLOR: Artist Co-op will hold two watercolor sessions Feb. 7 from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. and Feb. 8 from 1-5 p.m. Instructor Ken Ferris, will share his techniques, to allow you to produce professional paintings. For more

information phone 962-5644.

Specials

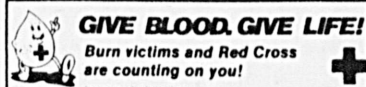
VALENTINE DANCE: Independent Order of Foresters will hold a Valentines dance Feb. 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Moose Hall, 663 Douglas. Lunch served. Cost \$8 each. Music by Chartrand. For more information phone 563-5470.

POTLUCK: Elder Citizens Recreation Association will hold a potluck dinner Feb. 5 at 6 p.m. at 1692 10th Ave. Followed by general meetings. For more information phone 561-9381.

Clubs

CANOE CLUB: The Northwest Brigade Canoe Club will hold indoor rolling and stroke practice sessions every Sunday commencing Feb. 2. Non club members are welcome. For more information phone Justin at 962-9020 or Peter at 962-5035.

CHESS: The Prince George Chess Association will add Sunday to its Tuesday club night. Sunday from 1-5 p.m. and Tuesday from 7-10 p.m. at CNC. Come and enjoy the fun. For more information phone David Adamson at 564-8025.



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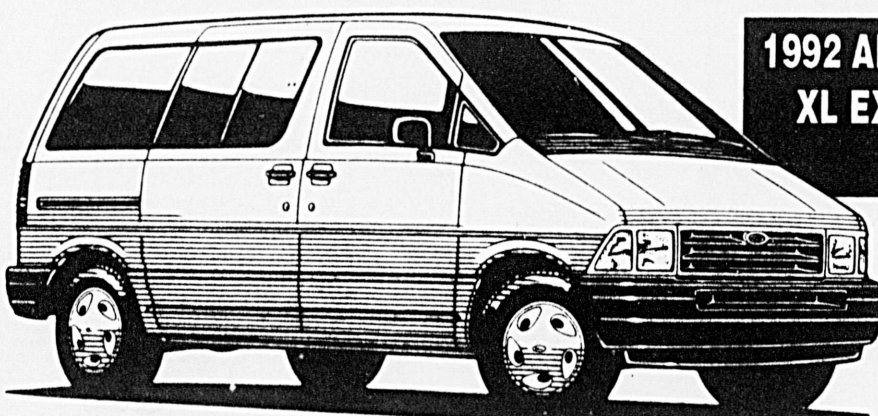
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