



International Olive Oil Network Launches Three-Level 360° Olive Oil Sommelier Education and Certification Programs

Innovative CPD-accredited programs aim to build trusted olive oil expertise across quality, sensory expertise, health, gastronomy, sustainability, experience design, and market communication.

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Zurich, Switzerland — June 1, 2026 — The **International Olive Oil Network (IOON)** has launched new, holistic three-level **360° Olive Oil Sommelier education and certification programs** for professionals and organisations working across olive oil, gastronomy, retail, hospitality, wellness, education, import, distribution, tourism, and food systems.

The educational pathway is designed as an incremental journey, with each level building on the previous one, while helping define a broader professional standard for the olive oil sommelier. IOON's **360° approach** gives the role a clearer and more practical meaning: not only a trained taster, but a trusted olive oil professional who combines sensory expertise with health literacy, gastronomy, sustainability, production understanding, oleotourism, cultural storytelling, experience design, and responsible market communication.

“In a world looking for healthier fats and better everyday food choices, olive oil education cannot stop at tasting,” said **Spyros Tsevas, Founder of the International Olive Oil Network**. “Our goal is to help professionals turn sensory understanding into better decisions, stronger products, richer culinary and guest experiences, and more trusted consumer relationships. A 360° Olive Oil Sommelier should connect quality, health, gastronomy, culture, and market value in a way people can understand and trust.”

In 2026, the international program series will begin with **Level 1 in Seoul, South Korea**, delivered as a **KIOOC x IOON Olive Oil Sommelier Masterclass** in collaboration with the **Korean International Olive Oil Competition (KIOOC)**. The program will bring together specialists from Greece, Japan, and Korea, connecting foundational olive oil education with competition entries, sensory learning, and junior taster opportunities.

The series will continue with **Level 2 in Hong Kong**, developed with selected local and regional partners across culinary education, hospitality, retail, and market development,

and culminate with the **360° Advanced Olive Oil Sommelier Certificate Program – Level 3 – in Athens, Greece**. The Athens program, IOON's flagship, brings together international faculty and experts from Greece, the United States, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea.



The **Future of Olive Oil Summit** will also take place in several key destinations, including Zurich, Athens, and Hong Kong, connecting local and global perspectives on olive oil, health, gastronomy, sustainability, culture, and market trust.

The three-level program provides a consistent educational and certification framework while remaining adaptable to local markets, audience needs, culinary cultures, and strategic opportunities. Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all model, IOON tailors each program to the maturity and context of each market. The Seoul masterclass embodies this approach, showing how independent education and local competitions can work together to strengthen olive oil culture in evolving markets.

Level 1 – 360° Olive Oil Foundations

is an entry-level program for consumers, culinary professionals, producers, wellness practitioners, retailers, hospitality teams, and food enthusiasts. Participants learn the basics of olive oil tasting, quality recognition, positive and negative sensory attributes, freshness, storage, culinary use, and responsible health communication.

Level 2 – 360° Olive Oil Sommelier Certificate

is a professional certificate for people who want to use olive oil confidently in retail, hospitality, gastronomy, education, import, distribution, or advisory roles. Participants develop practical capability in sensory assessment, quality indicators, styles and origins, product selection, food pairing, range development, and communication with customers, guests, chefs, and buyers.

Level 3 – 360° Advanced Olive Oil Sommelier Certificate

is IOON's flagship advanced program for producers, entrepreneurs, importers, distributors, educators, hospitality leaders, regional actors, and professionals who want to shape olive oil strategy, positioning, and market development. The program combines advanced sensory education with gastronomy, health, sustainability, quality communication, oleotourism, experience design, and business development.

The IOON programs are designed not only as an educational journey, but as a **practical capability accelerator**. They help new entrants understand the olive oil category and engage with it professionally, while supporting actors across the olive oil value chain to strengthen market capability, improve sensory literacy, sharpen positioning, build premium experiences, and communicate quality, origin, health, sustainability, and trust credibly.

A central part of this work is educating professionals to communicate and use olive oil as a **high-quality healthy fat** that can be integrated meaningfully into everyday nutrition and local food cultures. The programs help participants explain olive oil's nutritional relevance responsibly, preserve its quality in storage and use, and show how it can support healthier and more expressive cooking – connecting nutrition with flavour, technique, local cuisines, and gastronomy without disconnecting from local rituals and taste preferences.

The result is a practical education structure that helps people, companies, and regions move from general interest in olive oil to credible expertise, clearer communication, healthier culinary choices, stronger experiences, and greater market value.



IOON operates as an independent and neutral education and knowledge organisation, not as a representative of one producer, one country, or one commercial agenda. Its model connects sensory science, gastronomy, health, sustainability, culture, education, oleotourism, experience design, and market development.

IOON collaborates with the **Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW)**, olive oil sensory panels recognised by the **International Olive Council (IOC)**, universities, culinary academies, academic experts, local partners, and international industry professionals. Its **Council of Experts** brings together specialists from different countries and disciplines. This model supports education that is practical, credible, locally relevant, and grounded in sensory rigour, scientific evidence, professional integrity, and responsible communication.

“The future of olive oil depends on strong professional skills and well-trained people who can connect producers with the market,” said **Manolis Karpadakis, Member of IOON’s Council of Experts**. “IOON’s goal is to support that progress with credibility, independence, and strong international collaboration — helping translate tradition, culture, and scientific evidence into consumer experience and appreciation.

Enrollment and Partnership Opportunities

IOON is now welcoming expressions of interest for its 2026 international programs across Korea, Hong Kong, and Athens.

Professionals and companies interested in enrollment, corporate training, or group participation can contact programs@oliveoilnetwork.org or visit www.futureofoliveoil.org.

Institutions, regional partners, universities, culinary schools, industry organisations, and companies interested in strategic partnerships, summit collaborations, or carefully aligned sponsorship opportunities are invited to contact partnerships@oliveoilnetwork.org.

About the International Olive Oil Network

The **International Olive Oil Network** is a Swiss-based education and knowledge organisation dedicated to advancing olive oil literacy, sensory understanding, professional skills, and consumer trust across the olive oil value chain, contributing to healthier and more transparent food systems.

Through CPD-accredited education programs, summits, working groups, and international collaborations, IOON connects experts, educators, IOC-recognised sensory panels, universities, institutions, producers, chefs,

local partners, and market professionals to support a more informed, transparent, culturally rich, and connected olive oil ecosystem.

For more information, visit: www.futureofoliveoil.org



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