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# Olive Growing Systems, Varieties and Olive Oil Production Systems

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The Olive Landscapes of the Mediterranean

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## Abstract

Portuguese olive groves suffered a great setback in the decades of 1950s–1960s of the twentieth century with the rural exodus. Portugal’s entry into the EEC/EU in 1986 created conditions to the reconversion of existing olive groves, enabling the plantation of new orchards with 200–300 trees per hectare and the use of varieties from other regions.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the construction of the Alqueva Dam in the Alentejo region led to an increase in the area of irrigated olives groves. The hedge olive grove concept with continuous mechanized harvesting and the availability of water for irrigation contributed to the increase of this new growing system, reaching about 50,000 ha in two decades.

Furthermore, olive oil production systems are also the focus of this section. Indeed, olive oil production encompasses, previously, the collection of olives and their washing followed by an extraction process. This step, comprising crushing/malaxing with or without water

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