

Grapefruit Oil: An Essential Oil with Antioxidant Benefits

Grapefruits are delicious— they are a treat on their own and are a wonderful addition to any salad. They are packed with nutrients, too. Like other citrus fruits, grapefruit can also be converted into an essential oil, which is packed with antioxidants and provides numerous practical uses and benefits.

What Is Grapefruit Oil?

Grapefruit is known by its scientific names *Citrus Racemosa* and *Citrus Maxima*. The latter was given to larger varieties to emphasize their size.¹

The history and origin of grapefruit is shrouded in mystery. However, some accounts show that the fruit was first bred in Jamaica. It was later on given the name "grapefruit" because it looked like clusters of grapes hanging on trees.²

Grapefruit oil is commonly used in aromatherapy. It is extracted from the peel of the grapefruit (*Citrus paradisi*), not its pulp or flesh.³ Like other citrus oils, grapefruit essential oil is obtained through compression and possesses similar therapeutic properties.⁴

Uses of Grapefruit Oil

Grapefruit oil is popularly known as a detoxification agent, as it helps activate your lymphatic system. It is often used to clear toxins, remove excess fluids, and help burn fat.⁵ Others specific uses of this citrus essential oil include:^{6 7 8}

- **Aromatherapy oil** – When inhaled, grapefruit oil can help curb hangovers, headaches, mental fatigue, and depression.
- **Ingredient in skin and hair care products** – Grapefruit oil is often added to creams and lotions to help treat [acne](#) and prevent oily skin. It is also known to help reduce the appearance of cellulite. In hair products, this oil also helps address oily hair.
- **Appetite suppressant** – Grapefruit oil can suppress your appetite. The effects can be intensified when it's mixed with patchouli essential oil.
- **Air freshener and deodorizer** – Its fragrance is similar to citrus fruits like [oranges](#) and lemons. It can eliminate unpleasant odors in kitchens and bathrooms.
- **Massage oil** – When used as a massage oil, it can help relieve muscle and joint pain, menstrual cramps, and headaches.

Composition of Grapefruit Oil

The most abundant constituent in grapefruit essential oil is limonene, which ranges from 88 to 95 percent. Limonene, found in grapefruit peels where the oil is extracted

from, has been found to possess anti-cancer properties. It can also be found in other citrus fruits such as oranges and [lemons](#).⁹

Other major components of the essential oil of grapefruit are linalool, thujene, myrcene, terpinene, pinene, citronellol, capraldehyde, decyl acetate, and neryl acetate.¹⁰ ¹¹

Grapefruit essential oil, like the fruit itself, is rich in antioxidants, especially vitamin C.¹² Other antioxidants that are present in grapefruit (in low concentrations) are vitamin A and lycopene.¹³

Benefits of Grapefruit Oil

One of the most recognized benefits of grapefruit essential oil and other citrus oils is their positive effect on the lymphatic system, which plays a role in your body's detoxification mechanism. Using these oils can help boost the activity of lymph glands.¹⁴ This can prevent problems like poor circulation, allergies, cellulite, and fluid retention.

Grapefruit essential oil is also known for its antimicrobial effects. One study¹⁵ reports that this oil is effective against strains of bacteria like *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Staphylococcus epidermidis*, *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella thyphimurium*, *Serratia marcescens*, and *Proteus vulgaris*.

Another study¹⁶ shows the same result, and renders the citrus oil also effective against other bacterial strains like *Klebsellia pneumonia*, *Pseudococcus* species, *Shigella flexneri*, as well as fungal strains like *Aspergillus niger*, *Candida albican*, and *Penicillum chrysogenum*.

With vitamin C and its antioxidants, grapefruit essential oil can support your immune system and helps fight free radicals.¹⁷ As a result, this essential oil can help prevent oxidation-related damage, such as premature aging, vision problems like macular degeneration, poor hearing, nervous system problems, and many others.

Here are other benefits linked to use of oil of grapefruit:¹⁸

- Because of its antimicrobial properties, grapefruit oil can help treat and prevent infections in wounds and cuts. It may also help eliminate microbes that develop in your gut, kidneys, and excretory system.
- It supports your endocrine function, particularly the proper secretion of hormones and enzymes.
- It promotes the production of gastric juices and bile, which assists your digestive function.
- Like other citrus oils, grapefruit oil has antidepressant properties that provide a relaxing and uplifting feeling. It also has stimulating effects on your brain, making you more alert.

How to Make Grapefruit Oil

The most effective way to extract oils from citrus fruits is by cold-pressing.¹⁹ This preserves the beneficial compounds of the oil. This method produces a clear, yellow-orange colored oil with the scent of freshly peeled fruits.

Others methods are (1) steam distillation, which can affect the quality of the product, and (2) solvent extraction, which contaminates the oil with chemicals and may harm your skin.²⁰

Grapefruit essential oil is highly sensitive to heat and oxidation because of its limonene content.²¹ It should be stored in a sealed container and kept in a cool, dark place. It should be placed away from direct sunlight and heat.

However, creating homemade grapefruit oil is possible. Several guides are available online. If you're interested in making one, here's an easy-to-follow guide:²²

What You Need:

- Grapefruits with moderately thick rind
- Spoon
- Kitchen grater
- Carrier oil, like almond oil and [olive oil](#)
- Small crock pot or mason jar (see Procedure)
- Cheesecloth
- Dark glass container

Procedure:

1. Wash the grapefruit thoroughly, as it may contain wax and other synthetic preservatives.
2. Peel the grapefruit. Using the spoon, scrape the white pith from inside the rind, and discard the pith. Another option would be to use the kitchen grater with a zesting or small grating option. This is helpful when removing the rind.
3. Spread out the rind on a plate and leave it in a warm area for a couple of days to dry. Smaller pieces are preferable as they will dry out faster. Make sure that it's completely dry so your oil will have very little moisture.
4. From here, you may choose one of two methods. Using the crock pot will produce the oil in a few hours, while using the Mason jar, which does not require power, can take longer.
 - a. Crock pot method – Place the rind in the crock pot and add the carrier oil on the top level of the rind. Don't add too much as this can affect the quality of the oil. Switch the crock pot on low and cover it. It can take at least eight hours for the mixture inside to heat and mix.
 - b. Mason jar method – Place the rind in the Mason jar and add the carrier oil. Similar to the crock pot method, don't add too much. Seal the mason jar and expose it to direct sunlight for about two weeks.

5. Transfer the mixture into a bowl lined with four or five layers of cheesecloth. Squeeze as much oil as you can into the bowl.
6. Store the oil into the dark-colored containers and seal tightly. Store in a cool and dry place.

Notes:

- To make a stronger grapefruit oil, press the rind within the cheesecloth between two plates. Place the cheesecloth between two plates and heavy items, like books, on top of the plate. The weight will press the remaining oils from the grapefruit. Leave for a day or two.
- Only use the rind, not the pulp, when making essential oil.

How Does Grapefruit Oil Work?

Grapefruit oil can be inhaled through a diffuser, applied topically, or used as a massage oil. It can also be added to your drinking water or smoothies. It is approved as a food additive by the US Food and Drug Administration and has a "generally regarded as safe" (GRAS) rating.²³

Below are some ways to experience the benefits of this essential citrus oil:²⁴

- Use two to three drops as a massage oil to relieve menstrual cramps. This can also work in relieving headache, muscle pain, and arthritis.
- Relieve symptoms of depression by using two to three drops in a diffuser. You may also apply two to three drops on a cloth and inhale.
- Mix one to two drops with carrier oil and massage unto [cellulite](#) in a kneading pattern.
- Stimulate lymph nodes by applying a few drops onto your skin.
- Add a few drops to your water or smoothies to support liver and kidney health.

Is Grapefruit Oil Safe?

Grapefruit oil is very concentrated and should be diluted before use. Carrier oils like almond oil, jojoba oil, coconut oil, and olive oil are effective choices.²⁵

While grapefruit oil has a GRAS status, it should not be taken internally without the advice or supervision of an experienced practitioner or health professional. The citrus oil may also cause allergic reaction when applied topically. To be sure, have a skin patch test before use – apply a drop to a small area and observe if a reaction appears.

Grapefruit oil, as well as other citrus essential oils, should be used with great caution as they may increase your photosensitivity or sensitivity to ultraviolet rays.²⁶ This may make you more prone to skin problems like skin discolorations, brown spots, and freckles. Avoid using this oil before sun exposure.

Pregnant and nursing women should first consult their physician before use. Children of all ages should avoid the use of essential oils because of their sensitive skin. Using this essential oil is safe around pets, except for cats. Grapefru