Oilseed Facts

Oilseed	Growth (Where)	Growth (How)	Harvest
Canola 	The canola plant thrives in temperate climates with well-drained soil and is adaptable to different growing conditions.	The canola plant is grown from seeds planted in well-drained soil in the spring. Once mature, canola plants produce yellow flowers that eventually develop into pods containing seeds.	In late summer when the canola seeds are mature, they are harvested using combine harvesters equipped with headers designed for small-seed crops. The combine cuts and gathers the plants, separating the seeds from the rest of the plant.
Cottonseed 	Cotton is a warm season crop that requires a frost-free period for optimal growth. The crop requires ample sunlight and well-drained soil.	Cotton is grown from seeds planted in rows. The plant develops into a bushy shrub. It produces showy flowers that develop into bolls after they are fertilized. Inside the boll, cotton fibers develop around the seed.	Once the cotton bolls reach maturity, they split open revealing the cotton fibers. To harvest, cotton is either picked by hand or by using mechanical harvesters that strip the entire plant of its cotton bolls.
Peanut 	Peanuts are grown in warm climates with well-drained, sandy loam soil. The crop requires a frost-free growing season and sufficient warmth to mature properly.	The peanut plant produces yellow flowers that develop into pegs after pollination. The pegs penetrate the soil and swell to form peanuts. The peanuts develop underground growing on the tips of the pegs.	Peanuts are harvested by diggers that pull up the plant, shake off excess soil, rotate the plant so that the peanuts are up, and lay it back down in a windrow to dry for 2-3 days. A combine separates the peanuts and places them into a hopper.
Soybean 	Soybeans are grown in well-drained, fertile soil with a neutral pH. The crop thrives in temperate climates.	Soybean seeds are planted in the spring once the risk of frost has passed. The plants produce small, white flowers that self-pollinate, leading to the formation of pods containing seeds.	Soybeans are typically ready to harvest in the fall when the leaves have dropped and the moisture content of the beans is suitable for storage. Mature soybean plants are mechanically harvested using combines.
Sunflower 	Sunflower seeds are planted in well-drained, slightly acidic to neutral soil with full sun exposure.	Sunflowers start to bloom in mid to late summer. The flower heads follow the sun, a behavior known as heliotropism.	Sunflowers are ready to harvest when the petals have dried and fallen off, and the seeds in the center are plump. The flower heads are cut and allowed to dry further before the seeds are extracted.

From Farm to You

Geography	Transport & Processing	Distributor	Store
Canada, China, India, Germany, and France are the top canola-producing countries. North Dakota, Montana, Washington, Idaho, and Oklahoma produce the most canola in the United States.	After harvesting, oil is extracted from the canola seeds through a process called crushing. The seeds are cleaned and then heated to facilitate oil extraction. They are then pressed to release the oil. The remaining oil is extracted using solvents or by expeller pressing. The extracted oil undergoes refining, which involves removing impurities.	 Fresh and processed products are sold in bulk quantities to a buyer who will distribute it to a retail store.	 Retail product is sold to consumers.
China, India, the United States, and Brazil are the top cottonseed-producing countries. Texas, California, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Georgia produce the most cottonseed in the United States.	After harvesting, the cotton is taken to a gin for processing, which involves separating the cotton fibers from the seeds and other plant material. The separated cotton fibers are cleaned to remove impurities. Cottonseeds are the byproduct of ginning. After being cleaned and heated, the seeds are crushed either mechanically or through a solvent extraction process to separate the oil.		
China, India, Nigeria, and Myanmar are the top peanut oil-producing countries. Georgia, Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, and Texas produce the most peanuts in the United States.	The harvested peanuts are cleaned and graded before processing, which may include shelling, roasting, blanching, or oil extraction. Peanut oil is extracted through mechanical pressing or solvent extraction.		
China, the United States, Brazil, and Argentina are the top soybean oil-producing countries. Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Indiana, and Ohio produce the most soybeans in the United States.	After harvest, soybeans are cleaned, dried, and dehulled to remove the outer covering. To extract the oil, the soybeans are mechanically pressed or treated with a solvent.		
Ukraine, Russia, Argentina, and Turkey are the top sunflower oil-producing countries. North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota produce the most sunflowers in the United States.	After harvest, the sunflower seeds are cleaned. The outer husk or hull is removed, leaving the kernel or meat. Heat is applied to the seeds to facilitate oil extraction. The seeds are then mechanically pressed or solvents are used to extract the oil. The extracted oil undergoes refining and filtering processes to remove impurities. The refined and filtered sunflower oil is packaged for distribution and consumption.		

Products Made from Oilseeds

Products	Nutrition
Canola oil can be found in a variety of products, including cooking oil, snacks, salad dressings, margarine, mayonnaise, cakes, cookies, breads, livestock and poultry feed, cosmetics, soaps, and lotions.   	Canola oil is low in saturated fat and high in monounsaturated fats, which may contribute to heart health by lowering LDL cholesterol levels. It contains alpha-linolenic acid, an essential omega-3 fatty acid that is beneficial to heart health and may have anti-inflammatory properties. Canola oil is a good source of vitamin E, an antioxidant that helps protect cells from damage.
Cottonseed oil is used as a cooking oil or to make salad dressings, mayonnaise, margarine, shortening, snacks, baked goods, cosmetics, soaps, lotions, creams, candles, pharmaceuticals, industrial products, and livestock feed.   	Cottonseed oil contains vitamin E, antioxidants, and unsaturated fats, which can contribute to heart health. It's also a good source of omega-3 fatty acids and may have anti-inflammatory properties. It's important to use it in moderation due to its high omega-6 fatty acid content.
Peanut oil is used as a cooking oil or to make salad dressings, mayonnaise, cakes, cookies, pastries, potato chips, snack bars, peanut butter, condiments, sauces, moisturizers, and hair care items.   	Peanut oil is high in monounsaturated fats and phytosterols, which promote heart health and may have anti-inflammatory effects. It also contains vitamin E, an antioxidant that helps protect cells from damage. The fats in peanut oil may aid in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins like A, D, and E.
Soybean oil is used as a cooking oil or to make salad dressings, marinades, mayonnaise, dips, margarine, sauces, cakes, cookies, animal feed, biodiesel, industrial lubricants, paints, and plastics.   	Soybean oil contains polyunsaturated fats, like omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, which are associated with heart health. It is a good source of vitamin E, an antioxidant that helps protect cells from damage, and vitamin K, which aids in bone health.
Sunflower oil is used as a cooking oil or to make cakes, muffins, cookies, salad dressings, marinades, mayonnaise, creams, lotions, and cosmetics.   	Sunflower oil is composed of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats that can support heart health by helping to lower LDL cholesterol levels. It is a good source of vitamin E, an antioxidant that helps protect cells from damage caused by free radicals. Vitamin E is also beneficial for skin health and may have anti-inflammatory effects.