
TRUHUE · COLOR REFERENCE

The Olive Guide

*Understanding olive undertones, the great debate,
and the products that actually work on your skin.*



WARM OLIVE

NEUTRAL OLIVE

COOL OLIVE

Discover the Hue for You

truhue.app

What Is Olive?

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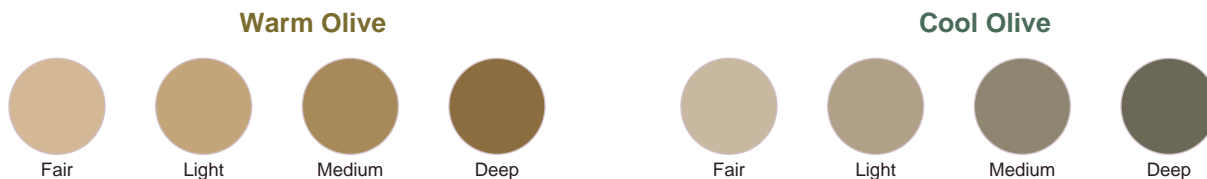
If you've ever struggled to find a foundation that doesn't look too yellow, too pink, or just somehow *off* — olive might be the missing piece of your color puzzle.

Olive is a green-ish or grey-green cast in the skin that sits alongside your undertone. Roughly 15–20% of the population has it, across every skin depth from very fair to very deep. It's why standard "warm or cool?" tests feel inconclusive for so many people — your skin is doing something those two categories weren't designed to capture.

How to Spot It

Look at the inside of your wrist or the side of your neck in natural daylight. If you see a greenish or grey-green hue alongside the usual blue or green veins, that's olive. Other signs: gold jewelry looks good on you but so does silver (neither is perfect), you tan easily but don't look distinctly warm or cool, and "nude" lipsticks tend to pull pink or orange on you.

Olive shows up across the full depth spectrum. Fair olive skin often looks grey-ish or "sallow" in winter. Medium olive skin is what most people picture when they hear "olive" — that classic Mediterranean warmth with a green undertow. Deep olive skin can appear ashy or grey-cool without the right products.



The Olive Spectrum

Olive isn't a single thing — it's a spectrum. On one end, **warm olive** leans golden-green (think Soft Autumn in the 12-season system). On the other, **cool olive** leans grey-green or blue-green (think Soft Summer). Most olive-skinned people land somewhere between the two, but understanding which direction you lean is the key to finding products that look right.

The Great Debate

Is Olive an Undertone or an Overtone?

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Ask ten color analysts whether olive is an undertone or an overtone, and you'll get ten different answers. This isn't because anyone is wrong — it's because the traditional warm/cool framework wasn't built to handle olive, and different systems classify it differently.

The Undertone Camp

Many color analysts and dermatologists classify olive as a **third undertone** alongside warm and cool. Their argument: the green pigment in olive skin (a combination of melanin, carotene, and hemoglobin) is baked into the skin itself, not layered on top. It affects how every color reflects off your skin, which is exactly what an undertone does. In this view, the undertone spectrum has three poles — warm, cool, and olive — not two.

The Overtone Camp

Others — particularly practitioners of the Sci/ART 12-season system — argue that olive is an **overtone**: a surface-level modifier that sits on top of a warm or cool undertone. In this view, every olive person is fundamentally warm-undertoned or cool-undertoned, with olive as a filter that shifts how those undertones present. That's why you can have a warm olive (golden-green undertone) and a cool olive (grey-green undertone) — the olive modifies the warmth or coolness, but doesn't replace it.

What TruHue Does

TruHue treats olive as a **modifier on the undertone axis**. When you take the color quiz, the AI analyzes your skin for warm, cool, neutral, olive-warm, or olive-cool. This means you get the specificity you need: the scoring engine knows you're not just "warm" or just "cool" — it knows you're *olive-warm* or *olive-cool*, and it adjusts product matches accordingly.

The practical takeaway: regardless of which camp you agree with, the colors that work on your skin are the same. The debate is about classification, not about what you should wear.

Warm Olive vs. Cool Olive

Finding Your Side of the Spectrum

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	WARM OLIVE	COOL OLIVE
Closest season	Soft Autumn / True Autumn	Soft Summer / True Summer
Skin cast	Golden-green, yellowish-green	Grey-green, blue-green, ashy
Veins	Green-dominant, some teal	Blue-green, grey-blue
Tanning	Tans golden-olive easily	Tans grey-olive or stays cool
Best metals	Gold, brass, warm bronze	Silver, pewter, white gold
Worst shades	Blue-pink, icy pastels	Bright orange, warm yellow
Best neutrals	Camel, olive green, warm taupe	Grey, slate, cool taupe
In the sun	Skin looks warmly bronzed	Skin looks grey or muted

The Quick Test

Hold a piece of pure white paper next to your bare face in natural daylight. If your skin looks yellowish-green against the paper, you lean warm olive. If it looks greyish-green or ashy, you lean cool olive. If you genuinely can't tell, you're likely neutral olive — right in the middle of the spectrum.

Another test: try a warm coral blush on one cheek and a cool mauve blush on the other. The one that disappears into your skin (looks natural) rather than sitting on top (looks painted on) points to your olive direction.


Still not sure? Take the free color quiz at truhue.app — the AI specifically detects olive undertones and tells you whether you lean warm or cool.

Warm Olive Picks







Products scored YAY for warm-olive palettes (Soft Autumn)

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Lip Color

UNDER \$15		WET N WILD	MegaLast Liquid Catsuit High-Shine	Caught You Bare-Naked
		NYX	Lip Primer	Deep Nude
\$15 – \$35		CLINIQUE	Pop Matte Lip Colour + Primer	Avant Garde Pop
		CLINIQUE	Pop Lip Colour + Primer	Bare Pop
\$35+		PAT MCGRATH LABS	LiquiLUST Legendary Wear Lipstick	Nude Venus
		PAT MCGRATH LABS	Lip Sculpt + Shade Contour Duo	Naked Blush







Blush

UNDER \$15		COLOURPOP	Pressed Powder Blush	Coyote
		COLOURPOP	Pressed Powder Blush	Oat
\$15 – \$35		MAC	Glow Play Cushiony Blush	Totally Synced
		RARE BEAUTY	Soft Pinch Liquid Blush	Hope
\$35+		PAT MCGRATH LABS	Skin Fetish: Divine Blush	Fleurtatious
		DIOR	Rosy Glow Blush Stick	012 Rosewood

Bronzer

UNDER \$15		E.L.F.	<i>Primer-Infused Matte Bronzer</i>	Forever Sunkissed
		NYX	<i>Buttermelt Bronzer</i>	All Butta'd
\$15 – \$35		BAREMINERALS	<i>All-Over Face Color Loose Bronzer</i>	Warmth
		FENTY BEAUTY	<i>Sun Stalk'r Cream Bronzer</i>	Coffee Toffee
\$35+		HOURGLASS	<i>Ambient Lighting Bronzer</i>	Nude Bronze Light
		BOBBI BROWN	<i>Matte Bronzing Powder</i>	Golden Natural

Eyeshadow

UNDER \$15		MAYBELLINE	<i>Color Tattoo 24HR Cream Shadow</i>	Bad to the Bronze
		MAYBELLINE	<i>Color Tattoo 24HR Cream Shadow</i>	Vintage Plum
\$15 – \$35		CLINIQUE	<i>Touch Base for Eyes</i>	Canvas
		CLINIQUE	<i>Lid Smoothie Eye Colour</i>	Cute-cumber
\$35+		LAURA MERCIER	<i>Caviar Stick Cream Eyeshadow</i>	Cafe Noir
		HOURGLASS	<i>Curator Eyeshadow Palette</i>	Modernist

Search any product at truhue.app/app to see your personal YAY / OKAY / NAY score.

Cool Olive Picks

Products scored YAY for cool-olive palettes (Soft Summer)

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Lip Color

UNDER \$15		WET N WILD	<i>Megalast Lock 'N' Shine</i>	Affogato Dreams
		WET N WILD	<i>Color Icon Lip Gloss</i>	Gemini
\$15 – \$35		FENTY BEAUTY	<i>Gloss Bomb Lip Luminizer</i>	Risky Rulin
		CLINIQUE	<i>Pop Matte Lip Colour + Primer</i>	Avant Garde Pop
\$35+		BOBBI BROWN	<i>Crushed Lip Color</i>	Bare
		CHANEL	<i>Le Crayon Levres Lip Pencil</i>	Pivoine 164

Blush

UNDER \$15		E.L.F.	<i>Primer-Infused Matte Blush</i>	Always Rosy
		MAYBELLINE	<i>Cheek Heat Gel-Cream Blush</i>	Pink Scorch
\$15 – \$35		MAC	<i>Skinfinish Colorstruck Blush</i>	Lalalavender
		CLINIQUE	<i>Soft-Pressed Powder Blusher</i>	Plum Gorgeous
\$35+		CHARLOTTE TILBURY	<i>Hollywood Blush & Glow Glide</i>	Light to Medium
		PAT MCGRATH LABS	<i>Stellar Glow Blush</i>	Hyper Bloom

Bronzer

UNDER \$15		E.L.F.	<i>Primer-Infused Matte Bronzer</i>	Forever Sunkissed
		E.L.F.	<i>Camo Liquid Bronzer & Contour</i>	Rich
\$15 – \$35		BAREMINERALS	<i>All-Over Face Color Loose Bronzer</i>	Faux Tan
		MAC	<i>Skinfinish Sunstruck Matte Bronzer</i>	Matte Light Rosy
\$35+		BOBBI BROWN	<i>Matte Bronzing Powder</i>	Golden Natural
		HOURLASS	<i>Ambient Lighting Bronzer</i>	Nude

Eyeshadow

UNDER \$15		MAYBELLINE	<i>Color Tattoo Concentrated Crayon</i>	Charcoal Chrome
		MAYBELLINE	<i>Color Tattoo 24HR Cream Shadow</i>	Silver Strike
\$15 – \$35		CLINIQUE	<i>Chubby Stick Shadow Tint</i>	Lavish Lilac
		CLINIQUE	<i>All About Shadow Single</i>	Rock Violet
\$35+		DIOR	<i>Diorshow Mono</i>	Gravity 094
		DIOR	<i>5 Couleurs Designer</i>	Navy Design 208

Search any product at truhue.app/app to see your personal YAY / OKAY / NAY score.

Shopping with Olive Skin

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Colors That Work on Almost Every Olive

Muted earth tones — taupe, mushroom, olive green, warm grey, soft terracotta. These share the muted, slightly green quality of olive skin, so they blend naturally instead of clashing. If a color looks like it could be found in a forest or on a riverbank, it probably works.

Soft warm pinks and mauves — not bubblegum, not neon. Dusty rose, soft berry, muted plum. These add warmth without fighting the green in your skin.

Rich neutrals — chocolate brown, burgundy, warm navy. Deep enough to complement olive's natural depth, neutral enough to avoid the warm/cool tug-of-war.

Colors to Approach with Caution

Pastels — especially baby pink, lavender, and pale peach. On olive skin, these can look chalky or make the green cast more pronounced (not in a good way). If you love pastels, go for the dusty versions instead of the icy ones.

Pure orange — orange blush and orange-toned bronzers can turn muddy on olive skin because orange + green = brown. If you want warmth, go for terracotta or peach-brown instead.

Stark white-based shades — foundations with a pink-white base, concealer that's too light and pink, white-based eyeshadow. These emphasize the green by contrast.

Not sure if a product is a YAY for you? Search it at truhue.app/app — the scoring engine knows your season and gives you a straight answer. Know before you buy.

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truhue.app

— *Liv & Claudia*

Honest makeup matching. Made by a mom and her daughter, in Oklahoma.