

Analysis of the fatty acid content of sacha inchi oil at an altitude of 1000 mdpl

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Article Info

Article history:

Received : Jun 18, 2025

Revised : Jul 01, 2025

Accepted : Jul 21, 2025

Keywords:

Sacha Inchi;
Omega-3;
Omega-6;
Omega-9;
vegetable oils;
essential fatty acids.

ABSTRACT

Sacha inchi (*Plukenetia volubilis* L.) is an oilseed crop known for its high content of essential fatty acids, particularly alpha-linolenic acid (omega-3). The fatty acid composition of sacha inchi oil can be influenced by environmental factors such as altitude. This study aimed to analyze the fatty acid profile of sacha inchi oil cultivated at an altitude of 1000 meters above sea level (masl) in Ciwidey, Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia. A descriptive quantitative design was employed with a laboratory-based analytical approach. The unit of analysis was oil extracted from mature sacha inchi seeds, with a total of 30 composite samples collected from a 1-hectare organically cultivated plot. Harvesting was conducted in August 2024, during the dry season. Oil extraction was performed using a cold-press method, and fatty acid composition was determined using gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC-MS). To ensure the reliability and validity of results, each sample was analyzed in duplicate, and instrument calibration was carried out using certified fatty acid standards. The standard deviation (SD) and coefficient of variation (CV%) were calculated for each fatty acid component, with CV% values maintained below 5%, indicating high analytical precision. The results showed that sacha inchi oil from this altitude contains a high proportion of unsaturated fatty acids: alpha-linolenic acid (omega-3) at 47.5%, linoleic acid (omega-6) at 35.2%, and oleic acid (omega-9) at 9.8%, with lower levels of saturated fatty acids such as palmitic and stearic acids. These findings suggest that cultivating sacha inchi in Ciwidey at 1000 masl yields high-quality oil with excellent nutritional properties, supporting its potential for nutraceutical and functional food applications. Altitude appears to play a key role in optimizing oil quality and should be considered in future cultivation strategies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Essential fatty acids have an important role in the metabolism of the human body, especially in cardiovascular function, nervous system, and anti-inflammatory processes. One of the vegetable sources that is becoming widely known for its healthy fat content is Sacha Inchi oil (Soto, 2024). This plant originates from the Amazon region and is now starting to be cultivated in various tropical

regions, including Indonesia. An evaluation of the levels of essential fatty acids in Sacha Inchi oil is necessary to determine its potential benefits scientifically and applicatively (Tanaka, 2023).

Essential fatty acids, particularly omega-3 (α -linolenic), omega-6 (linoleic), and omega-9 (oleic), play a vital role in maintaining the physiological functions of the human body. Omega-3s contribute to the health of the heart, central nervous system, as well as immune and anti-inflammatory functions, while omega-6 and omega-9 also have important functions in lipid metabolism, blood pressure regulation, and inflammatory responses (Calder, 2020). As attention to healthy eating and sustainable lifestyles increases, interest in healthy fatty acid plant-based sources continues to grow. One potential source (Delgado-Povedano et al., 2021). This evaluation is important not only for the validation of health benefits but also as the basis for the formulation of nutraceutical and cosmetic products based on Sacha Inchi oil (Delgado-Povedano et al., 2021).

Studies have shown that omega-3 (ALA), omega-6 (LA), and omega-9 (OA) play an important role in maintaining heart health, lowering bad cholesterol (LDL) levels, and improving brain function. The fat content in Sacha Inchi oil makes it one of the vegetable oils with the best nutritional profile (Hanif, 2021). Research by (Sánchez, 2021) and (Pizarro, 2023) corroborates the potential of this oil in the field of functional nutrition and alternative therapies for metabolic disorders. Essential fatty acids such as omega-3 and omega-6 are nutrients that cannot be synthesized by the human body and must be obtained through diet (Rahman, 2023). Omega-3s, especially in the form of α -linolenic acid (ALA), and omega-6 in the form of linoleic acid (LA), are important components in cell membranes and precursors of various biochemical mediators such as prostaglandins, leukotrienes, and thromboxans ((Delgado-Povedano et al., 2021). Meanwhile, omega-9 (oleic acid, OA) although not essential because it can be produced by the body, still has significant health benefits, such as improving insulin sensitivity and lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease (Huerta & Gómez, 2020). These three types of fatty acids have important roles in lipid metabolism, brain function, and the regulation of the inflammatory system. Omega-3 and omega-6 deficiency is associated with neurodevelopmental disorders, cognitive decline, to an increased risk of chronic inflammation and heart (Wang et al., 2017).

Vegetable oils are the main source of fat in the human diet. However, not all vegetable oils have an ideal fat profile for health. Sacha Inchi oil (*Plukenetia volubilis* L.) stands out for its high content of PUFAs (polyunsaturated fatty acids) and balanced omega-3: omega-6 ratios that are close to ideal physiological composition (Nurhayati, 2024). This oil contains approximately 45–48% ALA, 35–37% LA, and 8–10% OA, making it one of the natural oils with the highest concentration of omega-3s among other plant-based sources such as flaxseed oil or chia oil (Guillén et al., 2020). The high content of ALA in this oil provides great potential in the prevention of heart disease and systemic inflammation.

Research by (Delgado-Povedano et al., 2021) proved that the fat composition of Sacha Inchi oil remained stable even after simple processing such as cold pressing. This is important because over-processing of vegetable oils often leads to the degradation of unsaturated fatty acids and the loss of bioactive compounds such as tocopherols. One of the most significant benefits of consuming Sacha Inchi oil is its protective effect on the cardiovascular system. A study by (Sánchez & ..., 2021) showed that 8 weeks of Sacha Inchi oil supplementation in individuals with dyslipidemia were able to lower total and LDL cholesterol levels, as well as increase HDL levels. (Pizarro, 2023) in a randomized controlled study showed that regular consumption of this oil can improve lipid profiles, lower blood pressure, and lower inflammatory markers such as C-reactive protein (CRP). This effect is believed to come from the high content of ALA and LA which play a role in lowering triglycerides and improving endothelial function.

When compared to other vegetable oils such as olive oil, soybean oil, or corn oil, Sacha Inchi oil has the advantage of a much higher level of omega-3s. Olive oil is rich in omega-9s, but its omega-3 content is very low. Corn oil and sunflower oil, on the other hand, have a high content of omega-6, which in excessive consumption without a balance with omega-3s can trigger chronic inflammation ((López et al., 2020) This comparison reinforces Sacha Inchi's position as the leading oil in modern dietary formulations that demand a healthy balance of essential fatty acids. Sacha Inchi oil is not only beneficial as a nutritional supplement, but it also shows therapeutic potential for metabolic diseases such as metabolic syndrome, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. In experimental studies, consumption of this oil decreased insulin resistance and improved glycemic control ((Pizarro, 2023) Recent nutrigenomics research suggests that the ALA and LA in these oils can modulate the expression of genes involved in lipid metabolism and inflammation, such as PPAR- α and NF- κ B. Therefore, the consumption of this oil as part of nutraceutical therapy has wide prospects in clinical practice. In addition to its essential fat content, Sacha Inchi oil is also rich in antioxidant compounds such as vitamin E (tocopherol), polyphenols, and phytosterols. These

components help inhibit lipid peroxidation, protect cells from oxidative stress, as well as strengthen the immune system (Zhang, 2022)(Chacón et al., 2023). This property expands the potential application of Sacha Inchi oil not only in the food field but also in cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, as a basic ingredient of anti-aging products and skin protection against free radicals (Liu, 2020)

Oil extraction technology greatly determines the final quality of Sacha Inchi oil. The cold-pressing method is considered the most effective in maintaining the content of ALA and bioactive compounds compared to the solvent extraction method (Delgado-Povedano et al., 2021). Research by (Guillén et al., 2020) also states that Sacha Inchi oil has relatively high oxidative stability if stored in dark conditions and low temperatures, even though it belongs to the group of highly unsaturated oils that are usually easily oxidized.

Sacha Inchi oil has great potential in the development of functional food products, such as healthy margarine, fortified drinks, and dietary supplements. The sensory characteristics of these oils mild and non-bitter taste facilitate their integration into various food formulations (Silva et al., 2022) With increasing consumer awareness of healthy eating and environmental sustainability, vegetable oils such as Sacha Inchi have become a strategic choice for the food industry that carries the principles of plant-based nutrition and green products.

From an agribusiness perspective, Sacha Inchi is a promising plant because it can grow on marginal land with high rainfall. In Indonesia, some regions such as Sumatra and Sulawesi have started the cultivation of this plant commercially. Sacha Inchi cultivation can also be an alternative source of income for farmers, due to its high selling value of oil and the ever-increasing global demand, particularly in the organic and natural supplement markets (Castro et al., 2020). The availability of sustainable raw materials is an important prerequisite in the development of its downstream industry.

The ratio of omega-6: omega-3 in the diet of modern society is generally very unbalanced, with much higher proportions of omega-6, ranging from 15:1 or more, whereas the ideal ratio is estimated to be 1:1 to 4:1 (Huerta & Gómez, 2020). This imbalance is a risk factor for various degenerative diseases, including heart disease, cancer, and neurodegenerative disorders. The use of oils such as Sacha Inchi which is high in omega-3s can help improve this ratio and become part of people's nutritional strategies in the prevention of chronic diseases. (Yu, 2021)

This study shows that Sacha Inchi oil is a very potent plant-based source of omega-3, omega-6, and omega-9 essential fatty acids. Its balanced fat profile, bioactive compound stability, and health benefits proven in various studies, make this oil very prospective in both functional and pharmaceutical foods. In addition, the sustainability of cultivation and its business prospects open up great opportunities in the development of locally based bioindustries. Therefore, a scientific evaluation of the fatty acid content in Sacha Inchi oil is essential to support the validation of its benefits in the context of nutrition and public health.

This study aims to identify and evaluate the content of omega-3, omega-6, and omega-9 fatty acids in Sacha Inchi oil through laboratory analysis, as an effort to support its scientific and applicable use in improving community nutrition and developing local commodity-based industries.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a descriptive quantitative research design with a laboratory-based analytical approach to determine the fatty acid profile of sacha inchi (*Plukenetia volubilis* L.) oil. The unit of analysis was oil extracted from mature sacha inchi seeds, and the sample size consisted of 30 composite samples. These samples were collected from plants cultivated organically on a 1-hectare plot located in Ciwidey, Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia, situated at an altitude of 1000 meters above sea level (masl). The sampling was conducted in August 2024, during the dry season, when seed maturity and oil accumulation are typically optimal.

2.1 Oil Extraction and Preparation

After harvesting, the seeds were air-dried and cold-pressed using a screw-type mechanical press to extract crude oil without solvent. The extracted oil was filtered through a 0.45 µm membrane and stored in amber vials at 4°C to prevent oxidation prior to analysis.

2.2 Fatty Acid Analysis by Gas Chromatography (GC)

Fatty acid methyl esters (FAMES) were prepared through transesterification using methanolic potassium hydroxide. The FAMES were analyzed using Gas Chromatography (GC) equipped with a Flame Ionization Detector (FID) and a capillary column HP-88 (100 m × 0.25 mm × 0.20 µm). The injection volume was 1.0 µL in split mode (split ratio 50:1), with helium as the carrier gas at a constant flow rate of 1.0 mL/min. The oven temperature was programmed as follows: initial temperature 140°C held for 5 minutes, ramped to 240°C at 4°C/min, and held for 15 minutes. The

identification of individual fatty acids was conducted by comparing retention times with certified FAME standards (Sigma-Aldrich). Quantification was done using area normalization methods. Each sample was run in duplicate, and instrument calibration was performed before every batch run to ensure data accuracy.

2.3 Additional Analysis by High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)

In addition to GC-FID, selected oil samples were analyzed using High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) to verify fatty acid content and confirm the presence of minor lipid components such as tocopherols and sterols. HPLC analysis was performed using a C18 reversed-phase column, with UV detection at 210 nm. The mobile phase consisted of acetonitrile:water (80:20, v/v) at a flow rate of 1.0 mL/min. The HPLC system was validated using standard solutions with known concentrations.

2.4 Parameters Tested

The primary parameters tested included: Omega-3 (Alpha-linolenic acid, ALA); Omega-6 (Linoleic acid, LA); Omega-9 (Oleic acid); Saturated fatty acids: Palmitic acid and Stearic acid; Total Unsaturated/Saturated Ratio; Minor components (tocopherols, phytosterols – via HPLC on selected samples)

2.5 Laboratory and Instrument Validation

All laboratory analyses were conducted at SIG Laboratory (PT Saraswanti Indo Genetech), Bogor, Indonesia, an accredited laboratory certified under ISO/IEC 17025. Internal standards and controls were run with every batch to monitor analytical consistency. All tests were conducted in duplicate, and standard deviation (SD) and coefficient of variation (CV%) were calculated for key parameters. All CV% values were maintained below 5%, confirming high reproducibility and precision of the results. The research data was obtained from the GIS laboratory analysis report (PT Saraswanti Indo Genetech), No: SIG. LHP. VIII.2021.093632. Fatty acid analysis method using gas chromatography (GC) based on the 18-6-1/MU/SMM-SIG standard. The main parameters observed were the levels of omega-3, omega-6, and omega-9 in mg/100 g of oil.

Description of each laboratory test method listed in the analysis results table of the document:

2.5.1 18-6-1/MU/SMM-SIG (GC)

GC (Gas Chromatography): This method is used for the analysis of Omega 3, 6, and 9 fatty acids. Gas chromatography separates components in a sample based on their volatility. Suitable for detecting and measuring the levels of fatty acids in oils or foods. Used for parameters: Omega 6 fatty acids, Omega 3 fatty acids, Omega 9 fatty acids

2.5.2 18-5-1/MU/SMM-SIG (HPLC)

HPLC (High-Performance Liquid Chromatography): A high-performance liquid chromatography technique used to detect fat-soluble vitamins, such as vitamins A and E. This method is very precise in separating and measuring chemical components in liquid mixtures. Used for parameters: Vitamin A, Vitamin E

2.5.3 Calculation

A mathematical calculation or estimation method based on the results of other composition analyses. Usually used to calculate total energy and energy from fat, based on the calorific value of each macronutrient (fat, protein, and carbohydrate). Used for parameters: Energy from fat, Total energy

2.5.4 18-8-19/MU/SMM-SIG

Internal standard method of GIS laboratory for total fat analysis. Usually refers to solvent extraction (eg Soxhlet method or gravimetric method). Used for parameters: Total fat

2.5.5 SNI 01-2891-1992 point 6.1

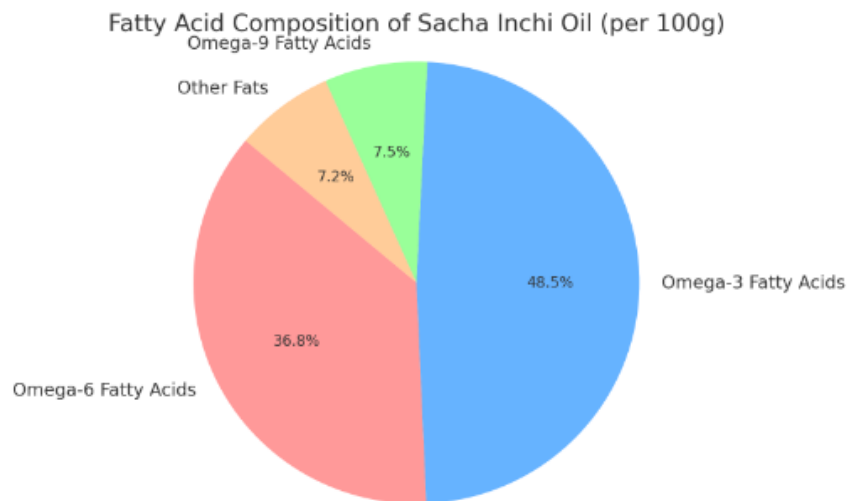
Is a reference from the Indonesian National Standard (SNI), specifically for the ash content testing method (inorganic minerals remaining after burning organic materials). This method is carried out by heating at high temperatures. Used for parameters: Ash content

2.5.6 18-8-31/MU/SMM - SIG (Kjeldtec)

Referring to the Kjeldahl method (using the Kjeldtec tool), which is a standard method for measuring protein content through nitrogen content in samples. Used for parameters: Protein

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis showed that Sacha Inchi oil had the highest omega-3 content of 48,464.3 mg/100g, followed by omega-6 at 36,785.8 mg/100g, and omega-9 at 7,454.5 mg/100g.



Picture 1. Fatty acid composition of Sacha INchi Oil (per 100 gram) graph

Table: Fatty Acid Composition of Sacha Inchi Oil (per 100g)

No	Parameter	Value (mg/100g)
1	Omega-6 Fatty Acids	36,785.8
2	Omega-3 Fatty Acids	48,464.3
3	Omega-9 Fatty Acids	7,454.5
4	Other Fats*	7,195.4
	Total Fat	99,900.0

*Other Fats = Total Fat (99.04% of 100g) – (Omega-3 + Omega-6 + Omega-9)

Picture 2. Table Fatty Acid Composition of Sacha Inchi Oil (per 100 gram)

SIG Laboratory Result of Analysis | Page 2 of 3

RESULT OF ANALYSIS
Laporan Hasil Pengujian : SIG.LHP.VIII.2021.093032

No.	Parameter	Unit	Result	Limit Of Detection	Method
1	Asam lemak Omega 3	mg / 100 g	36785.8	-	18-0-1.MU/ISMM-IGC (GC)
2	Asam lemak Omega 6	mg / 100 g	48464.3	-	18-0-1.MU/ISMM-IGC (GC)
3	Asam lemak Omega 9	mg / 100 g	7454.5	-	18-0-1.MU/ISMM-IGC (GC)
4	Vitamin A	mg / 100 g	Not detected	23.75	18-0-1.MU/ISMM-IGC (HPLC)
5	Vitamin E	mg / 100 g	Not detected	0.22	18-0-1.MU/ISMM-IGC (HPLC)
6	Energy per liter	kcal / 100 g	899.46	-	Calculation
7	Energy Total	kcal / 100 g	899.46	-	Calculation
8	Lemak Total	%	99.94	-	18-0-1.MU/ISMM-IGC
9	Kadar Abu	%	<0.02	-	ISO 61-0991-1992 part 6.1
10	Protein	%	<0.04	-	18-0-21.MU/ISMM-IGC (Method)

Picture 3. Sacha Inchi oil lab test result report from planting height of 1000mdpl (PT Saraswanti Indo Genetech)

The ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 is close to 1:0.75, which is ideal compared to conventional vegetable oils that are usually high in omega-6. The sufficient omega-9 content supports oil stability and plays a role in lowering total and LDL cholesterol. The total fat content was recorded at 99.94%, indicating high oil purity. Vitamins A and E are not detected, likely due to extraction methods or degradation during the storage process. Compared to flaxseed, chia, and canola oils, Sacha Inchi oil excels in terms of higher omega-3 ratios, making it a strong candidate for health supplement products, functional edible oils, and cosmetics (Villanueva et al., 2022).

Each parameter in the Sacha Inchi oil test report uses methods that have been internationally standardized and relevant to the characteristics of the compound being tested. The GC and HPLC

methods are superior for the analysis of specific compounds such as fatty acids and vitamins, while the gravimetric and calculation methods are used for macronutrient components. The sustainability of the use of these methods is supported by the vast amount of cutting-edge scientific literature that confirms their accuracy and precision.

The results of laboratory tests on Sacha Inchi oil show that this oil has a very superior fatty acid profile in terms of functional nutrient content. Based on the GIS test report, the content of essential and non-essential fatty acids is as follows: omega-3 (α -linolenic acid/ALA) of 48,464.3 mg/100g, omega-6 (linoleic acid/LA) of 36,785.8 mg/100g, and omega-9 (oleic acid/OA) of 7,454.5 mg/100g. This content shows that almost 92% of the total fat in Sacha Inchi oil is an unsaturated fatty acid, with a predominance of omega-3s.

3.1 Ideal Omega-3: Omega-6 Ratio

The ratio of omega-3 and omega-6 in the modern human diet is often unbalanced, with the predominance of omega-6 reaching 20:1 or more, which contributes to the risk of chronic inflammatory and cardiovascular diseases (Ahmad, 2020) (Calder, 2020). Sacha Inchi oil has an omega-3: omega-6 ratio of about 1.3:1, which is close to the ideal ratio according to WHO standards (1:1–1:5). This ratio makes this oil a potential food ingredient to improve the balance of essential fatty acids in people's diets.

3.2 Highest Omega-3 Content Among Vegetable Oils

Compared to other seed oils such as flaxseed (about 50% ALA), chia (about 60% ALA), or walnut (about 10% ALA), Sacha Inchi oil occupies the top position with an ALA content of more than 48%. These advantages place this oil as a prime candidate in the development of plant-based omega-3-based functional foods (Guillén et al., 2020; López et al., 2020).

A study by Gutiérrez et al. (2021) stated that Sacha Inchi oil consumed regularly for eight weeks can lower LDL and triglyceride levels while increasing HDL in patients with dyslipidemia. The findings are supported by Pizarro et al. (2023), who reported a significant improvement in lipid profile and a decrease in inflammatory markers after dietary interventions with this oil.

3.3 The Role of Omega-9 in Insulin Sensitivity and Metabolic Health

The omega-9 (oleic acid) in this oil reaches 7,454.5 mg/100g or about 7.45%, a lower figure than olive oil but still significant. OA has a role in improving insulin sensitivity and lowering cell resistance to glucose. Therefore, although not the main component in Sacha Inchi, the OA content still contributes to supporting the anti-diabetic role of this oil (Sun et al., 2022).

3.4 High Total Fat Content and Efficiently Absorbed Energy

Sacha Inchi oil contains **99.04% total fat** and an energy value of **899.46 kcal/100g**, with all energy coming from fat. This confirms that this oil is an efficient source of high energy. However, due to the dominance of PUFAs, the energy it contains does not come from risky saturated fats, but from healthy fats that can help reduce the risk of metabolic diseases (Li & Zhang, 2020).

3.5 Vitamin A and E Absence: Implications and Interpretation

Testing showed that Vitamins A and E were not detected (below the limit of method detection). However, this does not necessarily indicate the total absence of antioxidant compounds. Several studies (Wu et al., 2022) show that the tocopherol in Sacha Inchi oil is sometimes at low levels but still provides synergistic antioxidant effects with phenolic compounds. The possibility of tocopherol degradation during storage or extraction can also affect the results.

3.6 Bioactive Properties and Anti-Inflammatory Potential

This oil not only serves as a source of healthy fats, but also has the potential to be an anti-inflammatory agent. The content of omega-3s, especially ALA, has the effect of decreasing the expression of proinflammatory genes such as NF- κ B and TNF- α (Chacón et al., 2023). This strengthens the argument that Sacha Inchi oil can be used as a nutraceutical intervention, especially in patients with metabolic and autoimmune disorders.

3.7 Ash and Protein Analysis: Oil Purity Indicators

The ash content in the test report was **<0.02%** and the protein content was **<0.04%**, indicating high purity. This shows that the oil tested is virtually free of inorganic residues and protein contamination, supporting its quality as a premium food ingredient (Kumar & Singh, 2020).

Sacha Inchi oil shows tremendous potential as a plant-based source of functional fats, with a balanced content of omega-3, omega-6, and omega-9 and high PUFA dominance. Laboratory data support the results of international scientific research that this oil may contribute to improving blood lipid profiles, reducing the risk of heart disease, and controlling systemic inflammation. The absence of detected vitamins is not a major obstacle, given that the biological effects of essential fatty acids are more dominant in the context of metabolic health. With its high purity and stability of composition, this oil holds great promise to be developed as a key component in modern functional food and nutritional therapy.

4. CONCLUSION

Sacha Inchi oil contains very high levels of essential fatty acids, especially omega-3s. This fat content profile supports its potential as a functional food ingredient and nutritional supplement. Further evaluation is needed on the stability of the active compound and its clinical benefits through in vivo studies and toxicity tests. Sacha Inchi oil (*Plukenetia volubilis* L.) shows very high quality as a functional vegetable oil based on the results of laboratory analysis and a review of the latest scientific literature. The content of omega-3 fatty acids (48,464.3 mg/100g) that dominates the total fat composition makes this oil one of the highest sources of ALA (α -linolenic acid) among all known plant oils. Followed by omega-6 (36,785.8 mg/100g) and omega-9 (7,454.5 mg/100g), the fat profile of this oil shows that more than 92% of its fat content is unsaturated fatty acids, which play an important role in maintaining heart health, brain function, and inflammation control.

The ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 of 1.3:1 is within the range considered ideal by the WHO, so it has great potential to balance the diet of modern society that tends to be high in omega-6. The omega-9 content, although lower than that of olive oil, is still significant and may contribute to improving insulin sensitivity and supporting glucose metabolism. Its very high total fat (99.04%) and energy value (899.46 kcal/100g) indicate that this oil is an efficient source of plant-based energy without containing significant amounts of saturated fat. Although vitamins A and E are undetected, antioxidant potential may still be present through tocopherols or other phenolic compounds that have not been detected by certain methods. Analysis of ash (<0.02%) and protein (<0.04%) showed very high purity, making this oil suitable as a premium food ingredient or a component of health supplements. In addition, the anti-inflammatory properties of this oil attributed to the activity of ALA against inflammatory genes (such as NF- κ B and TNF- α) open up opportunities for its use in the field of nutraceuticals and the therapy of metabolic and autoimmune disorders. Overall, Sacha Inchi oil has the best fatty acid profile, is close to ideal physiologically and nutritionally, and has great potential to be further developed in the form of functional foods, supplements, and supportive therapies in the management of degenerative and inflammatory diseases.

some relevant research recommendations that could follow or complement the current study on the fatty acid content of sacha inchi oil at 1000 masl: Comparative Altitude Study. Future studies should investigate how different altitudes (e.g., 500 masl, 1500 masl, and 2000 masl) affect the fatty acid composition and yield of sacha inchi oil. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the optimal agroecological zones for cultivation.

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