

# Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems: The Mediterranean Diet

**Stefanos N. Kales MD, MPH, FACP, FACOEM**



**Professor, Harvard Medical School &  
Harvard Chan School of Public Health**



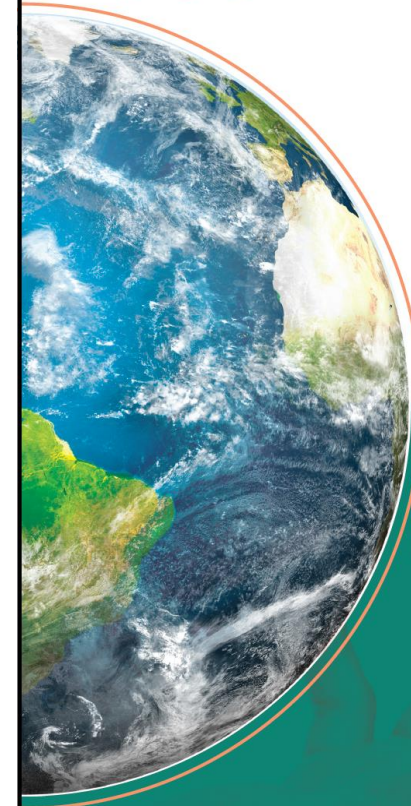
**HARVARD  
T.H. CHAN**

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



# SUSTAINABILITY

## Masterclass



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**National and Kapodistrian  
University of Athens**

EST. 1837



**RUTGERS**

School of Public Health

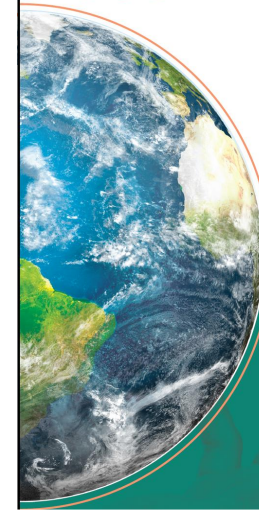


**Massachusetts  
Institute of  
Technology**

# Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems: The Mediterranean Diet

1. **OUTLINE- OVERVIEW**
2. Sustainable Diet: Challenges/ Definition
3. Mediterranean Diet as Sustainable
4. Mediterranean Diet & Health
5. Hellenic Center for Health & Wellness

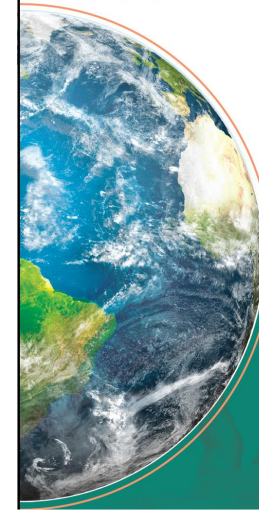
## SUSTAINABILITY Masterclass



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## SUSTAINABILITY Masterclass



# Sustainable Diet: Challenges/ Definition

## The Lancet Commissions

Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems

*Lancet* 2019; 393: 447–92

**World Population ~8 Billion, by 2050 expected ~10 Billion**

**Over 800 million people have insufficient food – roughly 10% of world population**

**“Many more consume low-quality diets that ... contribute to a substantial rise in the incidence of diet-related obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases...”**



**“Sustainable food systems...reduce environmental degradation caused by food production...”**

*Lancet 2019; 393: 447-92*

**“Therefore, sustainable food production for about 10 billion people should:**

- **“use no additional land, safeguard existing biodiversity”**
- **reduce and manage water use,**
- **“substantially reduce nitrogen/phosphorus pollution”**
- **“produce zero carbon dioxide emissions”**
- **“cause no further increase in methane and nitrous oxide emissions.”**



# Sustainable Diet: Challenges/ Definition

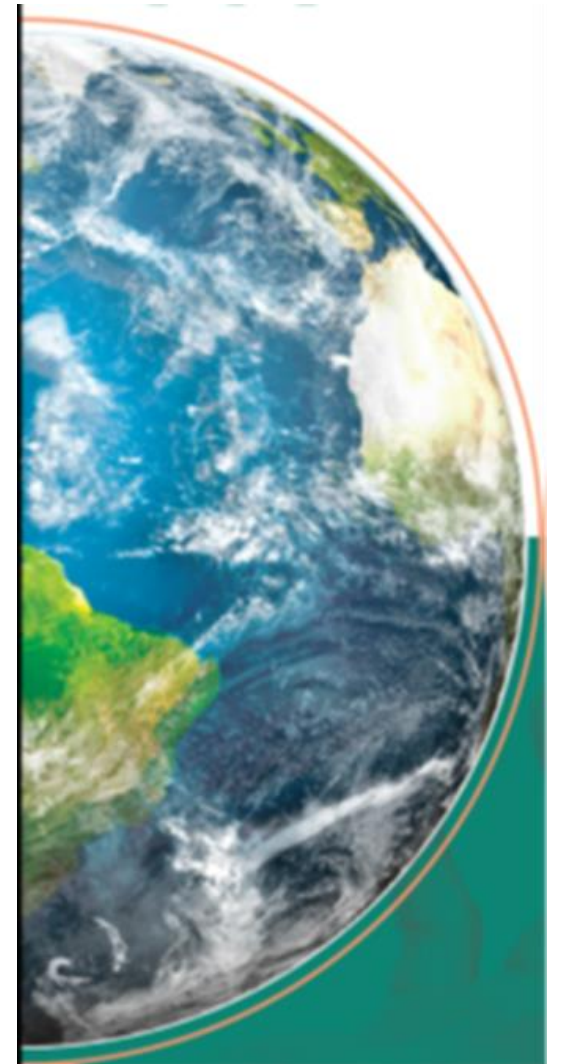
The Lancet Commissions

“Sustainable food systems”

*Lancet* 2019; 393: 447-92

“Achieving healthy diets from sustainable food systems”

- “substantial shifts towards healthy dietary patterns”
- “large reductions in food losses and waste”
- “major improvements in food production practices”



# Sustainable Diet: Challenges/ Definition

# The Lancet Commissions

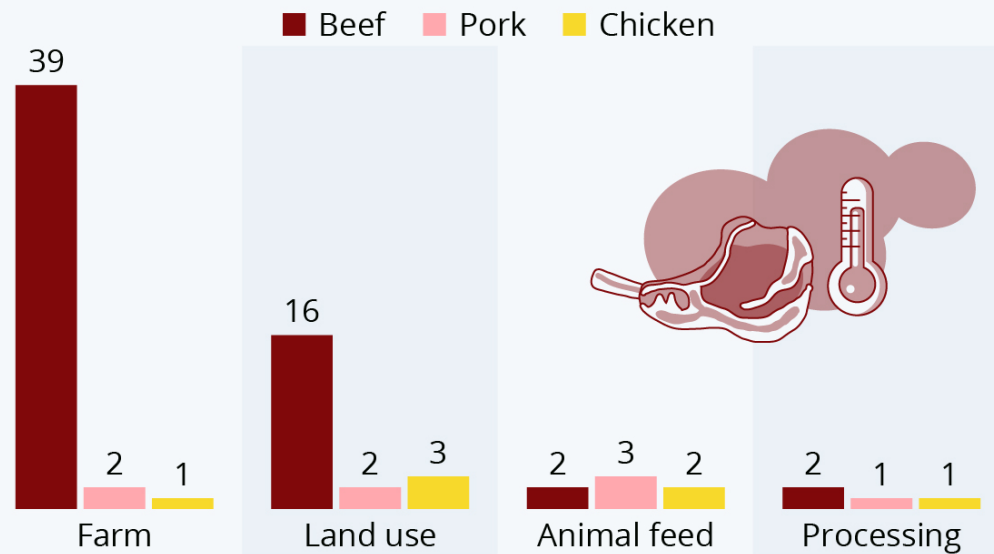
Lancet 2019; 393: 447-92

“increasing consumption of plant-based foods and substantially reducing consumption of animal source foods.”



## Beef: It's What's Contributing to Climate Change

Greenhouse gas emissions from meat production (kilograms CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per kilogram of product)



Data collected in 2018

Sources: Poore and Nemecek, Bloomberg



# Sustainable Diet: Challenges/ Definition

The Lancet Commissions

*Lancet* 2019; 393: 447-92

**“increasing consumption of plant-based foods and substantially reducing consumption of animal source foods.”**

## Greek Diet: “Lamb, Lemoni and Baklava”





# Sustainable Diet: Challenges/ Definition

The Lancet Commissions

*Lancet 2019; 393: 447-92*

**“increasing consumption of plant-based foods and substantially reducing consumption of animal source foods.”**

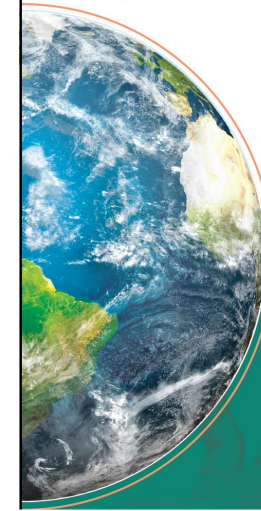
**Greek Diet: “Χόρτα, Όσπρια και Μπόλικο Λάδι”**



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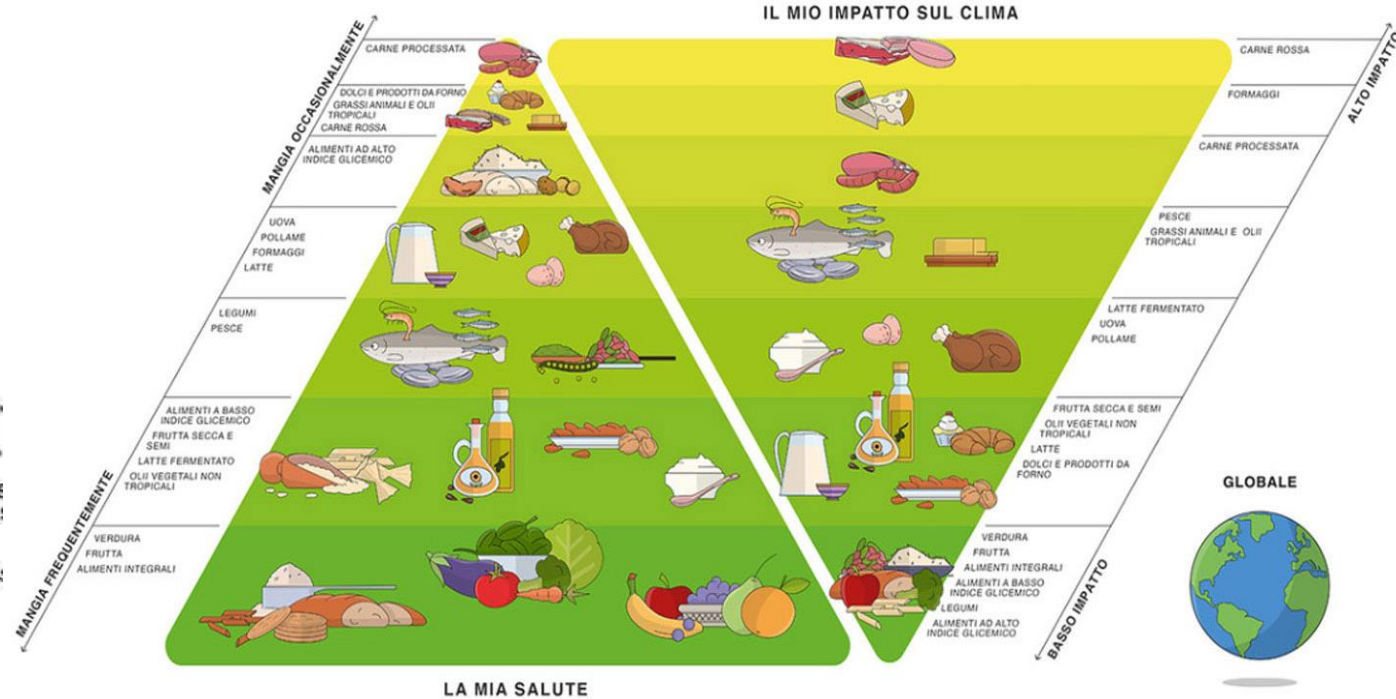
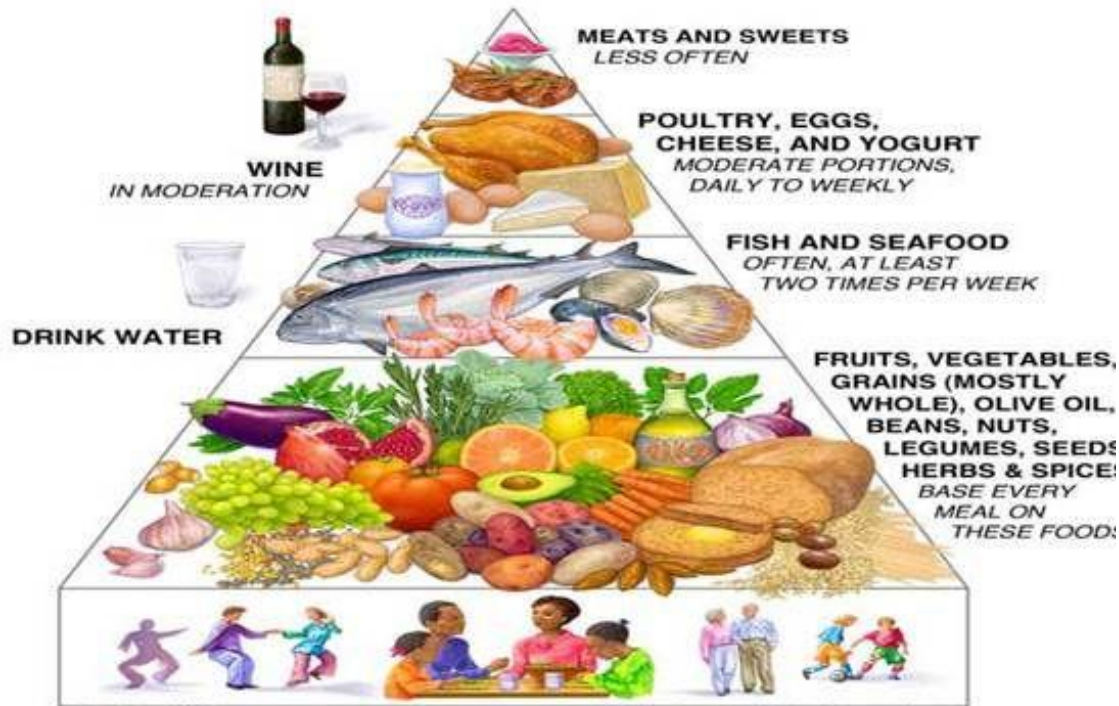
**“Healthy reference diet largely consists”**

- **“vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and unsaturated oils”**
- **“low to moderate amount of seafood and poultry”**
- **“no or a low quantity of red meat, processed meat, added sugar, refined grains, and starchy vegetables”**

# Mediterranean Diet as Sustainable

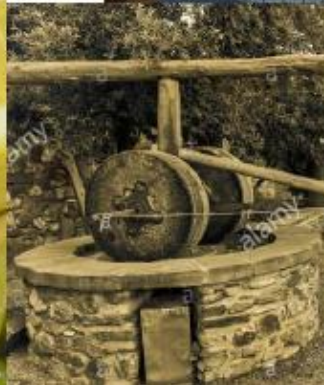
## Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

*A contemporary approach to delicious, healthy eating*



CONSUMO GIORNALIERO: ACQUA: ALMENO 2 LITRI | CAFFÈ O TÈ: MAX 3 TAZZE | VINO: MAX 1-2 BICCHIERI | BIRRA: MAX 1 LATTINA | SALE: MAX 1 CUCCHIAINO.  
 BEVANDE ZUCCHERATE: OCCASIONALMENTE.  
 SVOLGERE UNA REGOLARE ATTIVITÀ FISICA E VIVERE LA QUOTIDIANITÀ CON CONSAPEVOLEZZA.

# Greek Diet: “Χόρτα, Όσπρια και Μπόλικο Λάδι”



# Cretans were the first to cultivate the Olive Tree for Olive Oil

During the Minoan Civilization cultivated the olive tree around 3500 BC.

Minoans on Crete perfected the process of olive production

The first to export olive oil to both Africa and the Middle East.





CIUTAT GREGA  
NEAPOLIS

**Acropolis**

Part alta de la ciutat  
Parte alta de la ciudad  
Higher part of the Town

**Εμπύριες**  
**Ἐμπόριον**

Vino  
Aceite de Oliva  
Pescado







TYPE Opinion

PUBLISHED 23 November 2022

DOI 10.3389/fnut.2022.1058402

# Olive oil, Greek Mediterranean diet heritage and honoring the past to secure our future: Priorities for research and education

Antonia Trichopoulou<sup>1,2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hellenic Health Foundation, Athens, Greece, <sup>2</sup>Academy of Athens, Athens, Greece

**The Nobel prize winning Greek poet Odysseas Elytis wrote, “If Greece is completely destroyed, what will remain is an olive tree, a vine and a boat; this is enough to begin again” (1). Indeed, some plants, like the olive tree, and the grapevines, have evidently been in Greece forever.**



**WWII October 1940- 1944**

**Greek Civil War 1944-1949**





# The Rockefeller Report

".....olives, cereal grains, pulses, fruit, wild greens and herbs... and fish consist the basic Cretan foods ... **Olives and olive oil contributed heavily to the energy intake ... food seemed literally to be 'swimming' in oil**".

*Allbaugh LG. Crete: a case study of an underdeveloped area. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953*

[ slide credit Prof. Antonia Trichopoulou HHF ]



# Ancel Keys: Seven Countries Study



## The 7 countries

The cohorts in the Seven Countries were chosen as cultures apparently contrasting in lifestyle, eating habits and risk factor levels.

» Learn about the selection process.



# Ancel Keys: Seven Countries Study

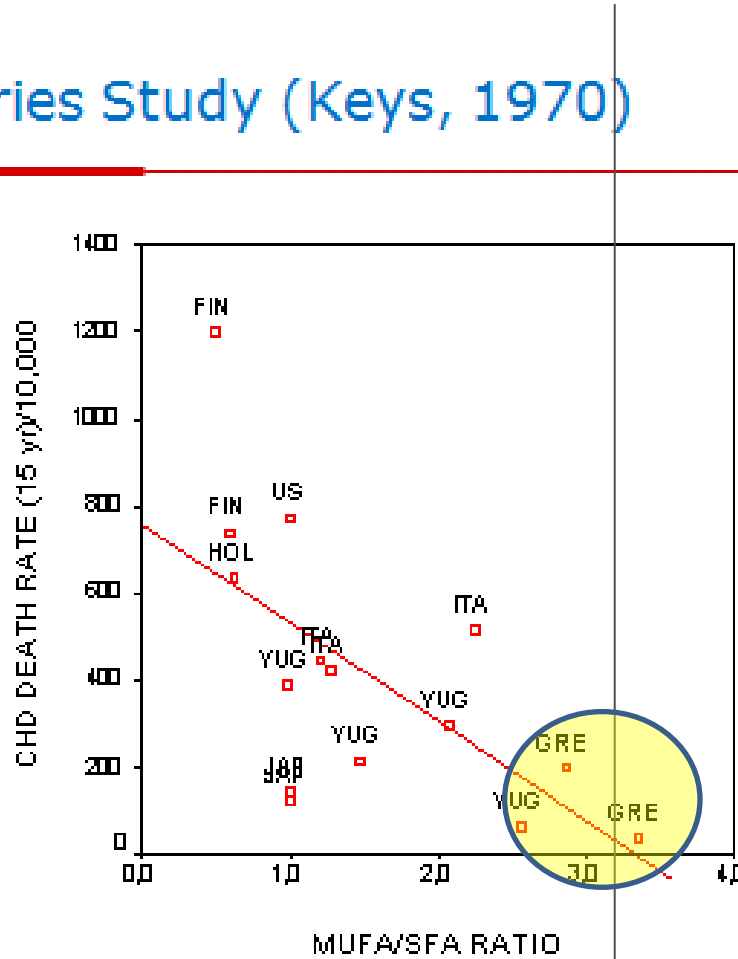
1957: Field surveys begin in southern Italy & Crete

1958: Dalmatian coast of Croatia (former Yugoslavia).



# The Seven Countries Study (Keys, 1970)

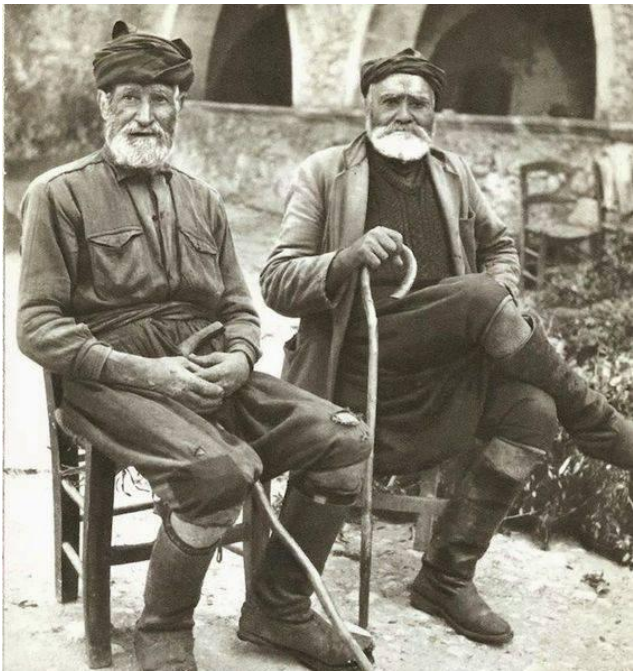
Keys et al  
Am J Epidemiol 1986;124:903



## Life expectancy / Disease Rates in U.S.A, Greece and Japan, In 1960's

		U.S.	Greece	Japan
Life expectancy at age 45 in years	(M)	27	31	27
	(F)	33	34	32
Coronary Heart Disease	(M)	189	33	34
	(F)	54	14	21
Cerebrovascular Diseases	(M)	30	26	102
	(F)	24	23	57
Breast Cancer	(F)	22	8	4
Stomach Cancer	(M)	6	10	48
	(F)	3	6	26
Colon, Rectal Cancer	(M)	11	3	5
	(F)	10	3	5
Total Cancer	(M)	102	83	98
	(F)	87	61	77

Willet W. Science 1994



## Review Article

# Mediterranean diet and health

Ancel Keys: “Seven Countries Study”

“The concept of the Mediterranean diet dates back to the 1960s’, when Ancel Keys coined the term following the results of an epidemiological study, which demonstrated that the populations (Italy and Greece) that overlooked the Mediterranean Sea had a reduced incidence of cardiovascular disease and cancer in comparison to the other populations.”

Sofi et al. BioFactors, 39(4):335–342, 2013



**UNESCO: “First publicized in 1975 by the American biologist Ancel Keys and his wife, chemist Margaret Keys, the Mediterranean Diet as a unique lifestyle, determined by the climate and by the Mediterranean area, is also manifested through related festivals and celebrations.”**

## Letter to the Editor

The Seven Countries Study in Crete: olive oil, Mediterranean diet or fasting?

**“Professor Christos Aravanis... responsible for...the Seven Countries Study in Greece... confirmed that, in the 1960s, 60% of the study participants were fasting during the 40 days of Lent, and strictly followed all fasting periods of the church...”**

**Sarri and Kafatos, 2005**





# ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FASTING

Abstain from Meat & Dairy/ Allow Plants, Shellfish, Snails

>/=180 days per year

Most Wednesdays and Fridays + Four Fast Periods:

**Nativity: Nov. 15 - Dec. 24**

**Great Lent & Holy Week (Lead to Easter (Pascha))**

**Apostles' (Peter & Paul): June 11 – 28**

**Dormition of the Theotokos or Virgin: Aug. 1 -14**

<http://orthodoxinfo.com/praxis/father-seraphim-rose-fasting-rules.aspx>

[Liturgics - Fasting & Fast-Free Seasons of the Church - Orthodox Church in America \(oca.org\)](http://oca.org)



# Olive oil, Greek Mediterranean diet heritage and honoring the past to secure our future: Priorities for research and education

Antonia Trichopoulou<sup>1,2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hellenic Health Foundation, Athens, Greece, <sup>2</sup>Academy of Athens, Athens, Greece



**“The cooking term ladera, originates from the word ladi, Greek for oil, and generally describes vegetables cooked in plenty of olive oil, onions, garlic, tomatoes and various herbs.... the cooking practice of Greek cuisine called tsigarisma (sautéing)—basically to “sauté.” Onions and garlic would first be wilted...in a frying pan with a few tablespoons of hot olive oil... Subsequently, vegetables, grated tomatoes, various aromatic herbs, and a small amount of water is then added and the food is essentially left to cook on its own, traditionally over a low flame.”**



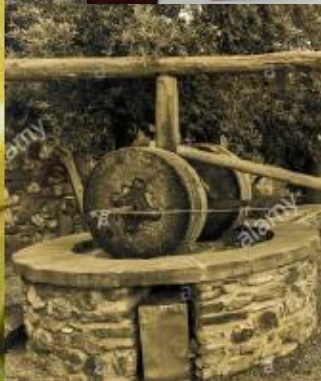
**LADERA - ΛΑΔΕΡΑ** *Ladi - λάδι - olive oil*  
**Olive oil, Vegetables, Onions, Garlic, Parsley, Tomato**

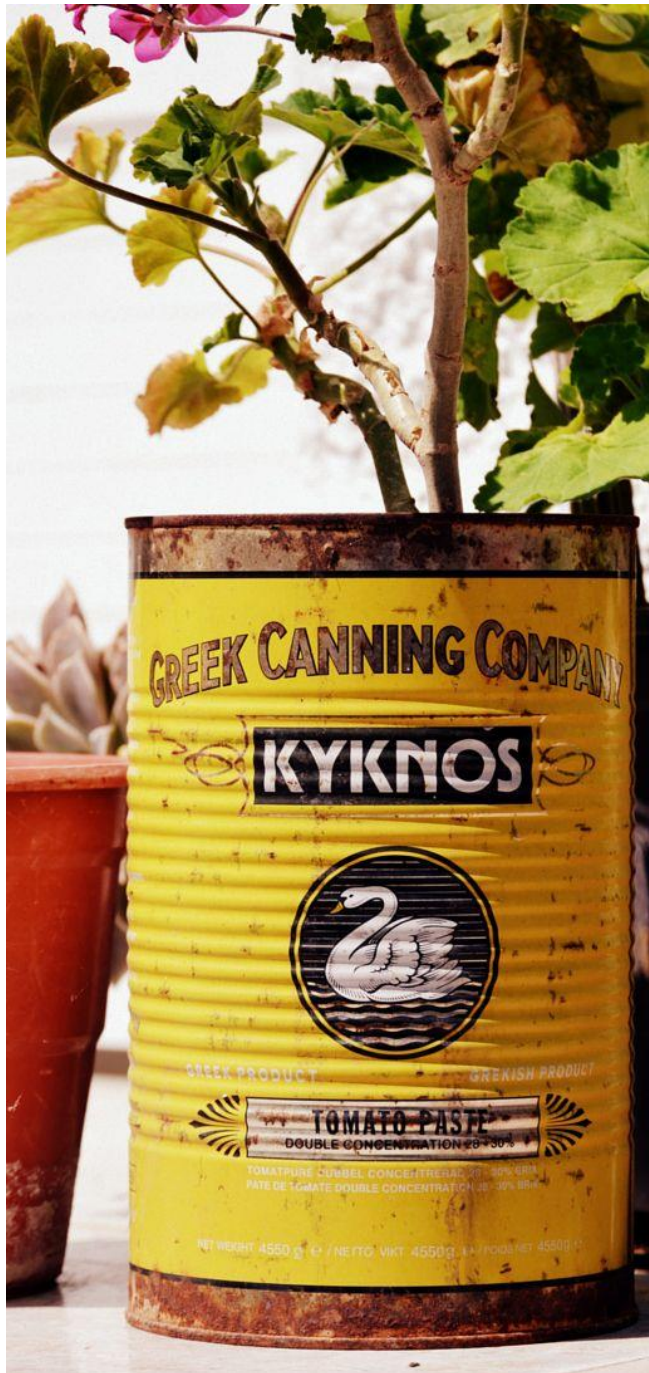






# Sustainability = Βιωσιμότητα/Αειφορία ή «Δεν πετάμε τα πράγματα, είναι αμαρτία»







**Physical activity- an essential practice through chores and walking many kilometers daily**

**They drank local wine at most meals in moderation, and they socialized with friends**

**An afternoon siesta was the norm**





**Mt. Athos: the Monks Eat NO Meat**

**Plant-based foods and Shellfish, Wine**

**Feast Days- eat Fish and Vegetables**

**Tahini when Olive Oil restricted**

**Eat twice a day in silence**

**“the only sound is a monk reading from sacred texts.”**



<https://www.greece-is.com/mt-athos-monastic-diet-food-soul/>



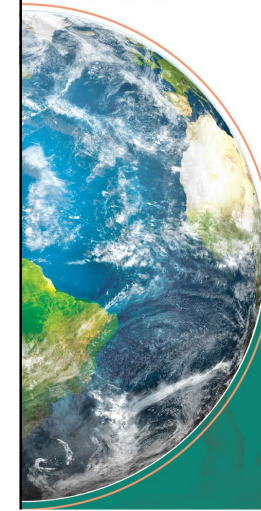


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## SUSTAINABILITY Masterclass



# “Mediterranean diet”

- 1. Eating habits historically followed to varying degrees in all countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea (Olive Trees)**
- 2. Most closely associated with the traditional diet and essential foods of Greece and Southern Italy during 1950-1960s. (Crete = Prototype)**
- 3. High intake of extra virgin olive oil, fruits, vegetables, other plant proteins and fibers (nuts and legumes), unrefined whole grains, and fish;**
- 4. Moderate intake of dairy, eggs and lean meats; moderate alcohol intake with meals (usually wine);**
- 5. Low red meat and sweet consumption.**

# Today's #1 Diet is based on Greek Philosophic & Cultural Traditions: Rich in Olive Oil, fruits, vegetables, fish, wine and “all things in moderation” (Μέτρον ἄριστον)

Cardiovascular Disease Reduced by 20-45%

Cancer Reduced by 20-30%

Depression Reduced by 15-30%

Decreased risk of:

- Metabolic syndrome
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Cognitive Decline

Improved Sleep & Sexual Function

Increased longevity







Dietary  
Guidelines  
for Americans

## Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

Advisory Report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services  
and the Secretary of Agriculture

# 2020 - 2025

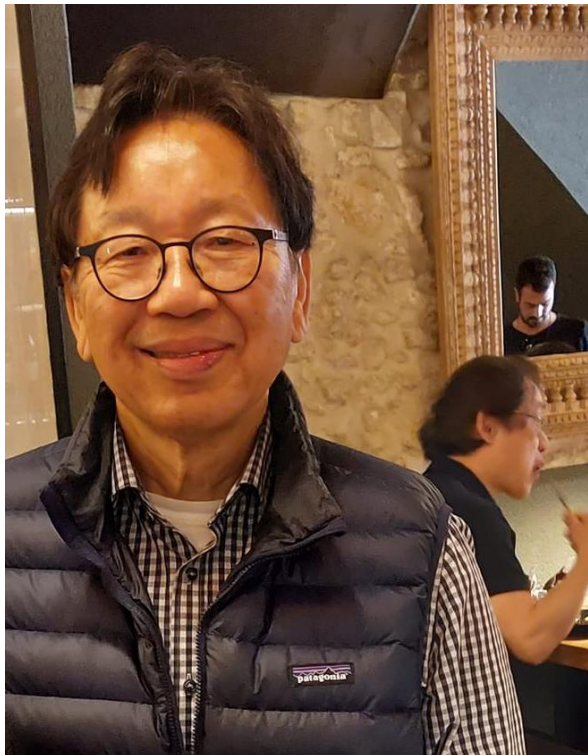
**Recognize and Recommend the  
Mediterranean Diet as a healthy option  
for Americans**

# University of Massachusetts Dining: Led by Ken Toong – a major Olive Oil & Greek Diet Proponent

## Princeton Review named UMASS # 1 best campus food for five consecutive years (2017-2022)

**Ο κ. Ken Toong ΕΧΕΙ ΤΗΝ ΕΥΘΥΝΗ ΓΙΑ 50.000 ΓΕΥΜΑΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΗΜΕΡΑ !**

**" Χρησιμοποιεί Ελληνικό λάδι, όσπρια AGRINO, Λαβράκι Κεφαλλονίας, και πολλά άλλα**

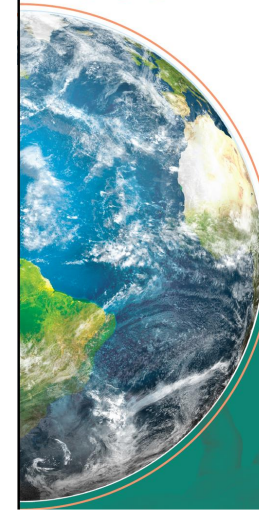


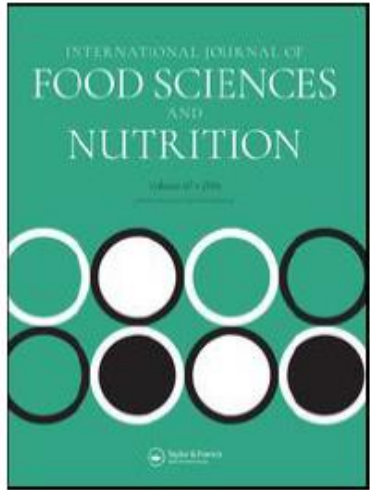


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## SUSTAINABILITY Masterclass





## Mediterranean diet – promotion and dissemination of healthy eating: proceedings of an exploratory seminar at the Radcliffe institute for advanced study

Mercedes Sotos-Prieto, Daniele Del Rio, Greg Drescher, Ramon Estruch, Chavanne Hanson, Timothy Harlan, Frank B. Hu, Maria Loi, James P. McClung, Angelo Mojica, Daniela Puglielli, Ken Toong, Fania Yangarber & Stefanos N. Kales

**September 2019, convened thought leaders at an exploratory seminar entitled: “Mediterranean Diet: Promotion and Dissemination of Healthy Eating”.**

**Hosted by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard University.**

**The multi-disciplinary faculty discussed best practices for translating traditional Mediterranean lifestyle principles to modern society.**

# THE ART & SCIENCE OF OLIVE OIL: NUTRITION, MEDICINE AND PLANETARY HEALTH

*Securing the Future of a World Cultural Heritage,  
Casina Pio IV, The Vatican, May 3-4, 2022*



THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

## The Hellenic Center for Excellence in Health & Wellness in Collaboration with GRECOTEL announces its goals and first steps





## **The Hellenic Center of Excellence in Health & Wellness**

**- overall goal of preventing chronic disease and promoting environmental sustainability by promoting healthier diets and lifestyles.**

**-promotes activities inspired by the traditional Greek Diet and Lifestyle**

ATTICA  
CAPE SOUNIO, SOUNIO  
*Boutique Resort*

PALLAS ATHENA, ATHENS

VOULIAGMENI SUITES

NEW: GRECOTEL ACROPOLIS  
*Boutique Resort*

CORFU

World of Kommeno  
CORFU IMPERIAL, KOMMENO  
*Luxury Beach Resort*

THE VILLAS OF KOMMENO  
PENINSULA

LUX ME DAPHNILA BAY, DASSIA  
*Lux Me Resort*

EVA PALACE, KOMMENO  
*Luxury Beach Resort*

DANILIA VILLAGE

NEW: COSTA BOTANICA, ACHARAVI  
THE COUNTRY HOUSE  
THE SUMMER HOUSES

RHODES

LUX ME DAMA DAMA, FALIRAKI  
*Lux Me Resort*

MYKONOS  
MYKONOS BLU, PSAROU  
*Boutique Resort*

MYKONOS BLU VILLAS, PSAROU  
*Boutique Resort*

MYKONOS LOLITA, AG. SOSTIS  
*Boutique Resort*

HALKIDIKI  
MARGO BAY & CLUB TURQUOISE  
*Luxury Beach Resort*

ALEXANDROUPOLIS  
ASTIR\*EGNATIA

LARISSA  
LARISSA IMPERIAL

KOS  
LUX ME KOS IMPERIAL, PSALIDI KOS  
TOWN  
*Lux Me Resort*

NEW: CASA PARADISO, MARMARI  
*All In Lifestyle Resort*

PELOPONNESE  
RIVIERA OLYMPIA, KYLLINI  
MANDOLA ROSA  
*Boutique Resort*

LA RIVIERA  
*Luxury Beach Resort*

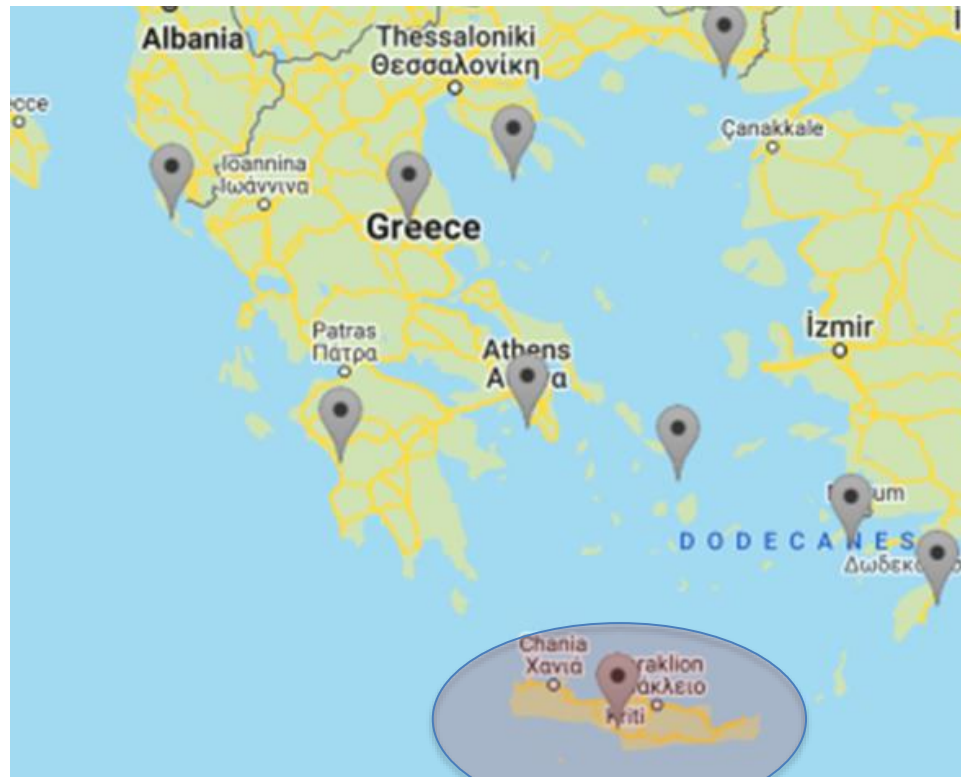
OLYMPIA OASIS  
*Lux Me Resort*

ILIA PALMS  
*All In Lifestyle Resort*

CASA MARRON

FILOXENIA KALAMATA

# Non-Profit USA & Strategic Partnership with Grecotel



CRETE  
AMIRANDES, HERAKLION  
*Boutique Resort*

CRETA PALACE, RETHYMNO  
*Luxury Beach Resort*

LUX ME WHITE PALACE, RETHYMNO  
*Luxury Beach Resort*

CAMEL, RETHYMNO  
*Boutique Resort*

MARINE PALACE & AQUA PARK,  
PANORMO  
*All In Lifestyle Resort*

NEW: CASA MARINA & AQUA PARK  
*All In Lifestyle Resort*

MELI PALACE, SISSI LASSITHI  
*All In Lifestyle Resort*

PLAZA BEACH HOUSE, RETHYMNO

GRAND LEONIKI RESIDENCE,  
RETHYMNO

VILLA OLIVA, RETHYMNO

**Nikos Daskalantonakis (founder of GRECOTEL) realized “that blue skies and sparkling seas were only enough to attract visitors’ interest.”**





## "The Real Cretan Experience"

In collaboration with the Hellenic Center of  
Excellence for Health & Wellness

**May 5-9, 2022**



ΜΙΑ ΜΟΝΑΔΙΚΗ ΕΜΠΕΙΡΙΑ ΖΩΗΣ –  
" A ONCE IN A LIFE TIME EXPERIENCE "  
Prof. Frank Hu, Chair of Nutrition,  
Harvard Chan School of Public Health



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ  
ΟΡΓΑΝΙΣΜΟΣ  
ΤΟΥΡΙΣΜΟΥ

[www.visitgreece.gr](http://www.visitgreece.gr)



GREEK  
NATIONAL  
TOURISM  
ORGANISATION

[www.visitgreece.gr](http://www.visitgreece.gr)



ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ  
REGION OF CRETE

**ACTTA**  
ASSOCIATION of CRETAN TOURISM & TRAVEL AGENCIES



# Οι Κρητικοί ξέρουν από καλή ζωή

Ανακαλύπτοντας την ουσία του κρητικού ευ ζην με αφορμή την ίδρυση του Κέντρου Αριστείας για την Υγεία και την Ευεξία, που εγκαινίασε τη δράση του στο Ρέθυμνο.

Κείμενο: Ισαβέλλα Ζαμπετάκη  
Φωτογραφίες: Γιάννης Χατζηγιάννου

Από το Χάρβαρντ στην Κρήτη!



Από ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ ΠΑΤΡΙΣ — Τελευταία Ενημέρωση Μάιος 17, 2022



ΔΙΑΤΡΟΦΗ

# όταν ο δρ Γουίλετ δοκίμασε κρητικά χόρτα

Ο ΔΡ ΓΟΥΛΤΕΡ ΓΟΥΙΛΕΤ ΕΙΝΑΙ Ο ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΑΣ ΔΙΑΤΡΟΦΟΛΟΓΟΣ που πριν από 30 χρόνια τόλμισε να αμφισβητήσει την επίσημη διατροφική περαμίδα του Υπουργείου Γεωργίας των Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών και ο πιο συχνά αναφερόμενος επιστήμονας υγείας παγκοσμίως. Μετά από τέσσερις δεκαετίες έρευνας, είναι ένθερμος υποστηρικτής της μεσογειακής διατροφής - το «Κ» τον συνόνησε στην Κρήτη, όπου συμμετείχε στην ίδρυση του Κέντρου Αριστείας για την Υγεία και την Ευεξία. Το αγαπημένο φαγητό του δρα Γουίλετ κατά την παραμονή του στο νησί ήταν τα άγρια χόρτα, τα οποία και τον εντυπώσαν με την ποικιλία και τη γευστικότητά τους. «Σε κάθε γέυμα σας υπάρχει τουλάχιστον ένα -αν όχι περισσότερα- χορταρικά», μας είπε. «Αυτό δεν είναι κάτι που βλέπουμε στις ΗΠΑ. Ας μην ξεχνάμε ότι το παραδοσιακό γέυμα σε κάποιες πολιτείες της Αμερικής είναι ο πορρές πατάτας με το ροστ μπιφ».

GREECE IS CRETE

## Cretans Know a Thing or Two About Good Living

Discovering the essence of Cretan well-being, in the context of the establishment of the Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness in Rethymno.

By Isabella Zambetaki | June 28th, 2022

## Ο ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΗΣ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗΣ - ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑΣ ΥΓΕΙΑΣ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟΥ ΧΑΡΒΑΝΤ ΑΠΟΚΛΕΙΣΤΙΚΑ ΣΤΑ «Ρ.Ν.» ΡΕΘΥΜΝΟ

### Στέφανος Κάλης: Η Κρήτη και η διατροφή της αποτελούν το ιδανικό περιβάλλον και το μυστικό για υγεία και μακροζωία



Ο δρ Γουίλετ πιστεύει ότι η μεσογειακή διατροφή έχει μεγάλη δυνατότητα να γίνει «πολύ-προσιτό» ως μια εύκολη επιλογή για την υγεία μας και το περιβάλλον.



# Hellenic Center for Excellence in Health & Wellness

Continuing Professional Education

Wellness/Medical Tourism

“Farm Store”



Olives & Olive Oil Education & Research

Sustainability Education & Research



# Cretan Lifestyle

## Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications

Experiential Conference  
November 7-11, 2022, Rethymno, Crete



Co-Organized by the [Region of Crete](#) with the [World Olive Center for Health \(WOC\)](#),  
in collaboration with the [Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health & Wellness](#)



[www.mediterraneanhealth.org](http://www.mediterraneanhealth.org)

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Cretan Lifestyle: Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications

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Stefanos Kales

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Cretan Lifestyle: Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications

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# Cretan Lifestyle: Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications





Lisa Radinovsky • 1st

Freelance Writer, Editor, and Online Advertiser Sp...

3w • 



Congratulations to the winners of the Young Investigators & Professionals presentation competition, pictured here (3 in the center) with the distinguished judges and organizers, at the Cretan Lifestyle: Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications conference at Grecotel in Rethymno, Crete last week! The winners were 1st: Dr. Clemens Wittenbecher, 2nd: Ms. Ioanna Yiannakou, and 3rd: Dr. Maria Soledad Hershey.

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## Cretan Lifestyle Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications



**Stefanos N. Kales  
MD, MPH**

Professor, Harvard Medical  
School & Harvard Chan  
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November 13-18, 2023, Rethymno, Crete

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