



METADATA

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Abstract

The present textbook attempts an interdisciplinary approach that aims to examine the concept of the Mediterranean diet as both a biomedical entity and a cultural asset of the people residing in countries around the Mediterranean Sea. Mediterranean diet was introduced as a novel entity in the scientific literature by medical researchers and, eventually, was also adopted by the food service sector as a term that primarily denotes healthy qualities of the dishes. The first chapter provides an account of the discovery of the Mediterranean diet by scholars and its subsequent rise to a preventive dietary pattern; in addition, the chapter presents the current challenges with respect to understanding the mechanisms underlying the protective action and health benefits of the Mediterranean diet. Assuming a critical standpoint, the second

chapter presents an analysis of the diverging approaches for a functional description of the Mediterranean diet as either a dietary paradigm or as a monument of the world's intangible cultural heritage according to UNESCO. The third chapter provides a review of pertinent studies to highlight the significance of the Mediterranean diet as a strategy that could contribute to safeguarding the planet's natural resources. The fourth chapter discusses the use of the Mediterranean dietary pattern as a tool for assessing food consumption patterns and quality of dietary intake. Last, in the fifth chapter, an analysis of the food environment in modern Greece and in neighbouring countries is attempted, as the deep cultural crisis currently inflicting Mediterranean societies has eroded the living roots of the Mediterranean dietary pattern.

