

NYC Olive Oil Coop Newsletter #001

To my Olive Oil Connoisseur friends:

The NYC Olive Oil Coop presents its' first EVOO newsletter. We hope that you'll find this informative. As we're in the initial stages of programming more newsletters; with recipes, health tips and factoids please let us know what else interests you for future newsletters. Our goal is to publish one newsletter per month. If you wish to contribute some of your ideas, recipes and expertise, please feel free to contact us. (Please feel free to forward this newsletter to your friends and family). If you wish to co-sponsor future newsletters, we'd love to hear from you.

Cheers,

micheal CASTALDO

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Stylish Villa Rental in Calabria, Italy

1- The Mediterranean Diet

Nutritionist SONIA MICHAELS explains why a Mediterranean diet is good for you and how to get started.

The web site of the American Heart Association claims that "Cardiovascular disease claims one life every 33 seconds." Almost all of us know someone who has had a heart attack--sadly, most of us know someone who has died from one. Fortunately, the Mediterranean Diet is one of the world's healthiest ways of eating--but what exactly IS this way of eating, and how can a diet that includes so much oil and fat, and even moderate amounts of alcohol, actually be good for our cardiac health?

The true Mediterranean diet is not quite the same as the "French Paradox" that has been so much in the news for the past few years. The term "French Paradox" refers to the relationship between wine (especially red wine) and cardiac health, whereas the phrase "Mediterranean Diet" refers to a more holistic approach to eating--one which includes wine, but also includes healthy fats, whole foods, and less red meat than the average North American diet contains.

British cardiologist Laura Corr claims that "the low-fat/low cholesterol diet is ineffective." Her 1997 study clarifies the relationship between diet and cardiac health, and refers to the Lyon trial (1994), which discovered that subjects eating a Mediterranean style diet had "little change in cholesterol or body weight, but the trial was stopped early following a 70% reduction in myocardial infarction, coronary mortality and total mortality after 2 years." The diet used in this trial contained "a modest reduction in total and saturated fat, a decrease in polyunsaturated fat and an increase in omega-3 fatty acids from vegetables and fish."

The Mediterranean approach to food is practically the polar opposite of the North American approach. One of the secrets of the Mediterranean diet seems to be moderation and balance--moderate quantities of red meat and wine, frequent servings of fish and seafood in many different forms, a wide variety of vegetables, grains and legumes, and lots of really good olive oil. Mediterranean desserts tend to be small (much smaller than North American portions), but are often quite rich. Throughout most of the region, the main meal of the day is usually lunch; this meal is made up of a number of different courses (only one or two of which will contain red meat), and ideally takes a couple of hours to eat.

The most important difference between the Mediterranean and North American approaches to food, though, seems to involve portion sizes and the relative proportions of food. In his 1995 article in *Wine Spectator* magazine, Harvey Steiman writes "Visualize two roast beef sandwiches. The one on the left is from an American delicatessen, mostly meat between two thin slices of rye bread. The one on the right is from an Italian *caffè*, a thin slice of meat and a slice of tomato wedged in the middle of a thick roll. Picture a glass of wine next to the Italian sandwich, and you have the Mediterranean diet in a nutshell. The key is to eat familiar foods but rearrange the proportions. And oh, by the way, have some wine." Essentially, the same ingredients might be combined very differently in Athens, Georgia than they would be in Athens, Greece.

The place of wine in the Mediterranean Diet is problematic, especially for women, since even moderate alcohol intake may increase the risk of breast cancer. However, in view of the fact that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in American women, and that "Currently, it is estimated that one in two women will eventually die of heart disease or stroke, compared with one in 27 who will eventually die of breast cancer" (American Heart Association), many women still choose to add a little wine to their diets in the hopes that it may help to protect them from heart disease.

One of the greatest difficulties for North Americans, of course, may be figuring out how to incorporate the Mediterranean diet into family lives that are overwhelmed by fast food, drive-through dining, and super-huge-sized versions of just about everything. Juvenile obesity is on the rise in North America--kids who lead sedentary lives and eat too much junk food are setting themselves up to get heart disease by the time they hit their late 20's. Of course, we can't just turn off the dietary influence of our environment and pretend we live on a secluded Greek Island or in an Umbrian hill town; what we can do, though, is try to incorporate some Mediterranean essentials into our daily lives.

Some ways to start:

Cooking with olive oil. (EVOO)

Cutting down meat portions, and increasing portions of grains and legumes proportionately.

Eating more fish, preferably cooked from fresh, rather than frozen and breaded.

Eating more leafy green vegetables and salads.

Sitting down for family meals whenever possible, rather than eating on the run.

Staying physically active--people living in the Mediterranean region may be healthier because of the food they eat, but they're also healthier thanks to a generally higher level of daily physical activity than the average North American!

So, pour yourself a glass of wine, sit down with a good Mediterranean cookbook, and remember that you can eat wonderful food without feeling guilty! Enjoy. Mangia!

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2- Cooking with Olive Oil

Extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO) is one of the most appropriate fats for use in frying. It resists high temperatures, reaching its "smoking point" at a higher temperature than many other fats. The smoking point is the temperature at which a fat burns, which can cause the food not only to taste bad, but possibly be harmful to the liver, sometimes to the point of toxicity. Extra-virgin olive oil reaches its smoking point well-above 250° C. In frying, temperatures can often exceed 200° C, but never go beyond 250° C. One can therefore use, without worry, extra-virgin olive oil when frying. The ideal frying temperatures for extra-virgin olive oil are as follows: moderate (130-145° C) for vegetables and large pieces of food; medium (160-170° C), for food coated in egg and covered with breadcrumbs; high (above 170° C) for small pieces. We recommend using black-bottomed or iron frying pans, and suggest that rather than washing with soap after use, the pans be rinsed and dried with absorbent paper. For more thorough temperature control a gas cooker is preferable to an electric cooker or hot plate.

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3- Calabrian Recipe #1 - Spaghetti Garlic and Hot Red Peppers

Ingredients: 400 grams of spaghetti, 2 cloves of garlic, EVOO, salt, 2 hot red peppers. (serves 4)



Procedure: cook spaghetti in enough salted water; brown the cloves of garlic in a pan, and hot red peppers and extra virgin olive oil. Strain the spaghetti and pour it in a large pasta bowl adding the tasty hot olive oil from the pan on top. If you like, you may add minced roasted bread. Mangia!

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Founded in 1920's by Michelangelo Pellegrino & Maria Antonia Frisina. The Pellegrino's produce Organic Olive Oils in Italy along the Tyrrhenian coast of Calabria in the foothills of Aspromonte. Proprietors of a vast amount of olive trees some from 20 to over 300 years old. Pellegrino farming methods comply with European certification bodies. Pellegrino Certified Organic Oil has a brilliant dark green hue, scent of green olive, a wonderful buttery texture and subtle peppery finish. Through traditional farming methods the Pellegrino's maintain a special relationship with: Mother Earth and her resources.



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New York City Olive Oil Coop Research & Editor: micheal CASTALDO (Ideas?
mcastaldo@nyc.rr.com)