

Summer School

Food and the Mediterranean Diet

22 June – 4 July 2026, Athens, Greece

The Mediterranean diet holds a central place in current food systems and global sustainability discussions, as it represents a model that integrates cultural heritage, environmental responsibility, and public health. In contemporary contexts marked by industrialized food production, increasing consumption of ultra-processed foods, and rising rates of diet-related chronic diseases, the Mediterranean diet offers a balanced and adaptable framework grounded in plant-based foods, seasonal and local products, moderate animal-source consumption, and strong connections to regional food traditions. Its emphasis on biodiversity, short supply chains, and community-based food practices aligns with modern efforts to create resilient and sustainable food systems that support both human and planetary health.

Via a combination of lectures and field activities, students in this Master's-level course will gain an in-depth knowledge on:

- Identifying the historical, cultural, and culinary aspects of food consumption within the Mediterranean region.
- The Mediterranean Diet model and its health and environmental implications.
- Assessing and critically analyzing adherence to the Mediterranean Diet model.
- Analyzing the ways in which local food systems can better support the production and distribution of food resources in accordance with a Mediterranean lifestyle.
- Formulating strategies to promote a Mediterranean lifestyle in both Greece and the United States.

Key topics

- Defining the Mediterranean diet.
- An overview of the environmental and cultural impacts of food consumption in the Mediterranean region.
- Adherence to the Mediterranean dietary pattern.
- Food Systems, cultural exchange and culinary evolution in Greece.
- Key players of the Mediterranean diet: Bread and grains, , greens and herbs, olive oil, seafood wine.
- Bioactive compounds in typical Mediterranean foods.
- Strategies and Initiatives against Food Waste
- Field work: exploring local food systems.

Organized by

- Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, School of Health Sciences & Education, Harokopio University of Athens, GR

- School of Public Health, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, USA

Participants

The summer school will attend a number of 20-30 students at post-graduate level. Each university will select 10-12 of the candidates to attend. Accordingly, there will be 2-3 faculty members from each University that will escort the students and coordinate the course.

Teaching staff

Academic staff from each university, that is specialized on the key topics, is invited to provide lectures or coordinate group works and activities.

Certification and accreditation

Upon successful completion, students will obtain a certificate signed by the deans of both faculties and formal accreditation equivalent for 3 US credits or 4.5 ECTS.

Information

Prof. Meropi Kontogianni, Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, School of Health Sciences & Education, Harokopio University of Athens, Greece

E-mail: mkont@hua.gr, tel. +302109549359

Eleni Sofou, Secretary of Postgraduate Program, Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, School of Health Sciences & Education, Harokopio University of Athens, Greece

E-mail: esofou@hua.gr, tel. +302109549158