

# World Olive Day 2024

DIET

PYRAMID



## PRESS RELEASE

### The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid Turns 30: A Global Health Benchmark

*In today's context, marked by challenges such as climate change and the need for more sustainable production systems, Spanish and international scientists have gathered in Madrid to deepen discussions on the scientific achievements and future prospects of the Mediterranean Diet as a model for human and planetary health.*

**Madrid, 21 November 2024**

As part of World Olive Day, the **International Olive Council (IOC)**, the **Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)**, and the **International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM)** commemorated the 30th anniversary of the official publication of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid.

This event, aimed at honouring the pioneers and organisations that promoted this initiative three decades ago, brought together leading public health experts such as **Walter Willett**, Antonia Trichopoulou, **Frank Hu**, **Miguel Ángel Martínez-González**, **Greg Drescher**, and **Enrique Martínez Force**.

The event was also inaugurated by Spain's Secretary of State for Agriculture and Food, **María Begoña García Bernal**, and Iran's Deputy Minister of Horticulture, **Mohammad Mehdi Boroumandi**, alongside representatives from the organising institutions.

*"The publication of this pyramid 30 years ago significantly impacted the global recognition of the Mediterranean Diet as a healthy dietary model. It demonstrated how traditional natural foods can play a crucial role in public health strategies worldwide. Today, the Mediterranean Diet, with olive oil and table olives at its core, remains the model that best combines human health and planetary well-being,"* noted **Jaime Lillo**, Executive Director of the IOC.

*"The Mediterranean Diet is more than just a healthy eating pattern; it is a tool for promoting sustainable food production and consumption, as well as a culture and lifestyle that*

*strengthens the connection between producers and consumers through its emphasis on harmony, social interaction, moderation, and locally sourced ingredients,”* stated **Teodoro Miano**, Secretary General of CIHEAM.

*“In a world facing challenges such as climate change and the urgent need for more sustainable production systems, the Mediterranean Diet stands out as a model to follow. The CSIC is conducting cutting-edge research that contributes to sustainability and food security,”* highlighted **Ana Castro**, Vice President for Knowledge Transfer at CSIC.

## Over Three Decades of Research and Recognition

Although its roots are ancient, international recognition of the Mediterranean Diet did not come until the 1960s, when renowned experts in nutrition, public health, and culture began studying its traditional patterns. These efforts, inspired by Professor **Ancel Keys**' pioneering Seven Countries Study and led by institutions like the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the World Health Organization, and Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust, resulted in key conferences and publications that established the "Traditional Healthy Mediterranean Diet Pyramid," now globally recognised.

In 1993, experts presented the International Conference on Mediterranean Diets, followed by another in 1994, and seminal articles published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in 1995 and 1997. These works sparked global interest in this plant-based, culturally rooted dietary pattern, transforming nutrition research and public health policies.

In 2013, UNESCO declared the Mediterranean Diet an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity to preserve a cultural and gastronomic legacy that defines and identifies Mediterranean territories. This recognition has further contributed to its global expansion.

## About the Organisers

**The International Olive Council (IOC)** is the only intergovernmental organisation dedicated to olive oil and table olives. Established in 1959 under the auspices of the United Nations, its mission is to decisively contribute to the sustainable and responsible development of the olive sector.

**The Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)** is a public research organisation under the Ministry of Science and Innovation. It is part of the Spanish Science, Technology, and Innovation System (SECTI) and conducts basic and applied research across all areas of human knowledge.

Founded in 1962, the **International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM)** is an intergovernmental Mediterranean organisation with 13 member states, including Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Turkey.

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