



## **Mediterranean diet can deter overeating, study finds**

**Following a long-term Mediterranean diet, which has extra virgin olive oil at its heart, could discourage people from overeating, according to a nine-year US study of primates that compared its health benefits with those of a traditional Western diet.**

Published in the May issue of *Obesity*, the official scientific journal of The Obesity Society, the long-term study of the two diets examined the humanlike effects on areas including caloric intake, obesity and metabolism, in 38 middle-aged adult female primates for 38 months.

Carol Shively, the study's principal investigator and a researcher at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, said that the animals fed a Mediterranean diet ate less of any other available food and lost weight, while those on a Western diet ate far more than they needed and gained weight.

The diets were formulated to closely reflect human diets, matched on macronutrient content, with protein and fat derived largely from animal sources in the Western diet, and plant sources in the Mediterranean diet. Key ingredients in the Mediterranean-like diet included English walnut powder and extra-virgin olive oil.

Food consumption, activity levels, energy expenditure, body composition and carbohydrate metabolism were measured during baseline and treatment phases. The study was also carried out according to the guidelines of American state and federal laws.

The results demonstrated that the Mediterranean diet protected against increases in consumption, obesity, prediabetes and hepatosteatorosis, a non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, despite containing similar proportions of fat, protein and carbohydrates in the Western diet.

The Mediterranean diet, which includes a high consumption of vegetables, nuts, fish and extra virgin olive oil, has regularly been praised by scientists in published studies. Unlike the Western diet, it avoids red and processed meats, dairy, trans and saturated fats, and refined sugars.

One of the key nutrients is oleic acid and it is found naturally in many food sources, most notably in extra virgin olive oil—boasting a range of 55-83% of this beneficial monosaturated fatty acid. Among all available olive oils, Italian varieties are said to contain the highest level of this beneficial acid.

The international TAICHI project is spreading the word about the health benefits of using extra virgin olive oil for cooking to Mainland China and Taiwan.

Co-funded by the EU and promoted by the two main consortia of Italian olive growers, Italia Olivicola and UNAPOL, the TAICHI project offers consumers all the information they need to understand olive oil through its website, various social media platforms and OurOliveOil APP – available in the App Store and Google Play.



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To find out more about the TAICHI project, visit [OurOliveOil.com](http://OurOliveOil.com)

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