



Dear <<First Name>>,

Sun and smiles, as well as extra virgin olive oil, were all waiting to greet the winner of our five-day trip to Italy and Greece in November. Accompanied by journalists, buyers, restaurant owners and chefs, the tour introduced everybody to the delights of the Mediterranean.

At the forefront of the trip was the region's celebrated diet, which was also being discussed during September in Rome at a dietary promotional event organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in cooperation with the Government of Italy.

The health benefits of the Mediterranean diet were given a further boost in the autumn after a Spanish study determined that cooking vegetables in extra virgin olive oil can help beneficial nutrients be more easily absorbed by the body.

Read on to learn more.

Winner heads to Italy and Greece



One lucky OurOliveOil fan from Mainland China won last month's competition to visit the beautiful Mediterranean landscapes of Italy and Greece. Chosen via Weibo's 'raffle' function, the winner was joined by nine guests from mainland China and four from Taiwan.

Together, they began with a two-day visit to Italy that included eating in several Western-style restaurants and being warmly welcomed to Olio Montalbano olive oil farm in Vinci—the charming Tuscan town in which Leonardo da Vinci was born and spent his childhood.

After sightseeing in Rome and Florence, the group headed to Greece for three days that included touring an olive oil farm in the ancient city of Corinth, located on the Peloponnese peninsula. Our winner was left in no doubt in regard to the beauty of the Mediterranean and the vast history connected to extra virgin olive oil.

Protect and promote the Mediterranean diet, says FAO

The first in a series of Mediterranean diet-related events was launched at the FAO's headquarters in Rome during September. At the launch, FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu noted that the diet not only promotes local food production but also has a low environmental footprint.

Qu, who is the first Chinese to head the UN food agency, cautioned that the Mediterranean diet, like many other traditional diets around the world, is being lost to modern eating habits. He pointed to an increasing reliance on "easy eating" options provided by fast-food outlets and supermarkets.

Research published this year by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) revealed that unhealthy diets are now responsible for 11 million preventable deaths globally per year. In fact, the figure is higher than deaths from smoking tobacco, making it the world's number one cause of death and disability.

Cook vegetables in extra virgin olive oil for greater health gains



Cooking vegetables with extra virgin olive oil can increase the release of polyphenols, a natural compound with proven health benefits, and other beneficial nutrients into the oil allowing them to be more easily absorbed by the body, according to a study by researchers in Spain.

The study explored the effect of olive oil on the bioactive components in tomato, onion and garlic when cooking Spanish 'sofrito' sauce. The dish, which is representative of Mediterranean cuisine, differs across the region with Italian 'soffritto' made from chopped onions, carrots and celery.

A common way to prepare 'sofrito' is to lightly fry the ingredients, which researchers found plays a key role in passing polyphenols and carotenoids, an antioxidant with strong cancer-fighting properties, from the vegetables to the oil. In fact, the tomato-based sauce contained 40 different phenolic compounds and a high content of carotenoids.

Finally, many extra virgin olive oil cooking classes and events in restaurants will be held in several cities across Mainland China and Taiwan over the next months, continuing to prove how olive oil is a perfect match for all Chinese cuisines. Please check out our website and follow our social media channels to be up to date with all the TAICHI project activities near you!

Follow our social media to receive free recipes, healthy lifestyle tips, cool photos and more! Remember to support us with your likes, comments, shares and, of course, emoji:))



For more information about the TAICHI project, visit OurOliveOil.com.

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