

## Discover Italy while eating

A.B. (January 13, 2011)



ENIT organized in New York a meeting with experts of the Mediterranean diet, not only a healthy culinary regime, but an intelligent way to travel around the Bel Paese

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}p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal { margin: 0in 0in 0.0001pt; font-size: 12pt; font-family: "DejaVu Sans"; }div.Section1 { page: Section1; }Midtown, Luna Piena restaurant. The Ente Nazionale per il Turismo brought to New York a panel of experts about the Mediterranean diet. The director of ENIT North America, Riccardo Strano, told us about the Mediterranean diet from a touristic and



gastronomic point of view. "It isn't just a healthy culinary regime, but it can be the starting point for a new way of traveling, intelligent, researching those typical products that are difficult to export".

This was an important event for New York, especially since on November 16 the Mediterranean diet became part of the [UNESCO](#) [2] non-material heritage of humanity. "It is a project coordinated for intervention in the United States, financed by the [Minister of Agriculture](#) [3] and by [Federsanità Anci](#) [4]", said Guglielmo Trovato of the [Istituto di Medicina Interna e Terapia Medica](#) [5] of the [University of Catania](#) [6], "it gives value to pre-existing research and informs the studies already in progress, both Italian and American".

And the United States have a lot to do with the nutritional model inspired by the culinary traditions of European countries of the Mediterranean area. Behind the term "Mediterranean diet" are researchers from the States. Back in 1948 a study of the [Rockefeller Foundation](#) [7] determined that the culinary customs of certain European countries were effective in preventing cardiovascular diseases. These studies spotted a positive relation between Mediterranean diet and diminishing of certain chronic diseases. "A balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle means less diabetes, less obesity and fewer neurodegenerative diseases, in other words a much better life quality" continues Enzo Chilelli, General Director of Federsanità Anci.

And of course the Italian-American immigrants in the States played an important role in the promotion of the Mediterranean diet around the world. Vito Teti, in *Il colore del cibo: geografica, mito e realta' dell'alimentazione mediterranea* says that "during the Fifties we went from a refusal and loathing of the cuisine of immigrants, considered lacking and insufficient, to an appreciation of Italian cuisine". Teti explains that this change of consideration is strongly linked to a general improvement of the image of Italian-Americans in America.

But what is the Mediterranean diet, exactly? It means products mainly of vegetable origin, very little red meat, some white meat, a little more fish, a few milk-product, and some good wine. Guglielmo Trovato explained the importance of the "quality of the food products being certified by reliable regulations, conservation, production and marketing quality". The European regulations, and in particular the Italian ones regarding gastronomy are the most elevated in regard to the products, said Chilelli.

Therefore Mediterranean diet is a culinary, cultural and touristic paradigm. This was confirmed when the evening turned into an eno-gastronomic excursus through typical products and dishes of the peninsula. The menu included scialatielli with fava beans, orecchiette with beat heads, Palermitan chicken breasts, Aeolian sole, accompanied by Prosecco di Zagara di Mandarino Aglianico del Vulture, and Apulian Chardonnay.

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