

The Environmentally Friendly Diet

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The Mediterranean diet emphasizes eating primarily plant based foods; such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, fish and low meat consumption. It is based on the foods that were typically eaten in Greece and Italy in the 1960s. Many people have adopted the Mediterranean diet not only for personal health, but for sustainability reasons as well (Serra-Majem, Andrellucchi, Rodriguez, Villegas, Almudena, 2016). Sustainability is defined as meeting our own current needs without compromising the ability of of future generations to meet their own needs. This diet meets the definition of sustainability. The Mediterranean diet is one of the most sustainable diets, but not the most sustainable diet.

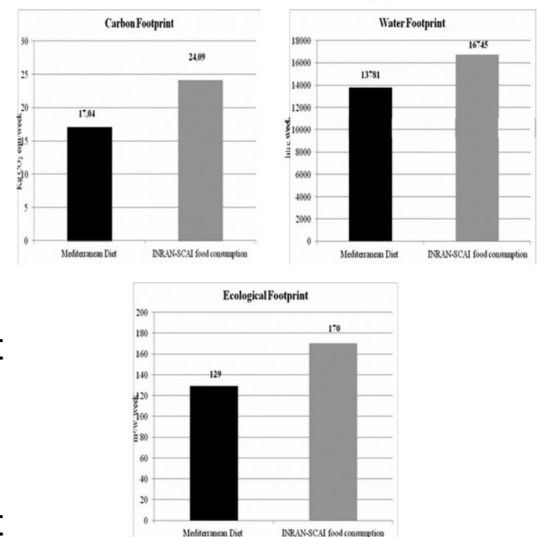
The Sustainable Mediterranean Diet

Current food preferences puts pressure on the environment and human health (Secundra, Baudry, Allès, Hamza, Boizot-Szantai, Soler, Galan, Hercberg, Lairon, Kesse-Guyot, 2017). However, the Mediterranean diet does the opposite because it is healthy for the body and cuts out certain products that are not environmentally sustainable. The increase demand for animal proteins is a major issue because large-scale livestock production impacts the environment tremendously - this is where there is the biggest impact on sustainability of the environment with the Mediterranean diet.

The Mediterranean diet can be compared to a vegan, vegetarian, or pescatarian diet as the main goal is to reduce meat consumption. However, those diets may be difficult for some individuals to adopt because meat consumption is completely eliminated. This is why the Mediterranean diet is a great option for those who want to help keep a sustainable environment by reducing meat intake, but not completely cutting it out.

Sustainable Connections

As shown in the graphs, the mediterranean diet reduces things such as carbon, water and ecological footprint compared to a normal diet. This is due to reducing meat consumption. With a plant based diet, there aren't as many emissions into the atmosphere because the energy stays concentrated within the primary consumers. The extremely high intake of vegetables promotes better use of energy, reducing losses throughout the food chain (Lopes). To make the Mediterranean diet even more sustainable, using locally grown foods can decrease the amount of distribution needed to obtain the foods for this diet



The differences between the Mediterranean Diet and other food consumption of Italy for Carbon, Water and Ecological Footprints (Germani, Vitiello, Giusti, Pinto, 2014)



The Mediterranean diet

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