

Mediterranean diet set for place on world heritage list

Italian minister hails 'big success for our culture' as Unesco considers adding menu to list of 'intangible' cultural heritage



A chef in Naples preparing a salad of tomato and mozzarella. Photograph: Roberto Salomone/AFP/Getty Images

The Unesco world heritage list is normally associated with towering religious monuments and ancient Greek temples, crumbling castles and areas of outstanding natural beauty. It recognises the cultural value of the Hindu complex at Angkor Wat and the Acropolis in Athens, alongside the Great Pyramid of Giza and the Banaue rice terraces in the Philippines.

Now Italian officials are certain the UN will add a salad of tomato and mozzarella, topped off by a splash of olive oil to its list of global patrimony worth protecting.

The Mediterranean diet, with its mix of fresh fruit and vegetables, grilled fish and olive oil faces a final vote in November for ranking on Unesco's list of "intangible" cultural heritage, launched in 2003 to complement the collection of monuments and natural wonders, and covers oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festivals.

A plate of pasta washed down with a glass of wine could join the list of 178 cultural experiences including the tango, the polyphonic singing of the Aka Pygmies of central Africa and Croatian lacemaking.

"This is a big success for our country, our dietary traditions and our culture," said the Italian agriculture minister, Giancarlo Galan.

Rolando Manfredini of the Italian farmers' lobby group, Coldiretti, said: "It is a bit strange putting a diet on the list, and the first time they

would do it, but it makes perfect sense. Not only is this culture, but it also makes you live longer and better."

While trying not to dampen Italy's enthusiasm, a spokeswoman for Unesco warned that no decision would be made before a meeting in November. "The committee is free to make up its mind and there is no indication on what it will approve," said Sue Williams.

Galan said the proposal was first made by Italy, Greece, Spain and Morocco four years ago, and was turned down. The countries resubmitted it, stressing the cultural content of the diet, and this time he was convinced it would get the nod.

"A positive recommendation made by Unesco will now be ratified," he said. The diet would join Sicilian puppet theatres and Sardinian pastoral songs, which already represent Italy on the list.

The diet took off in the rest of the world in the late 20th century, with postwar cookery writer Elizabeth

David helping to promote it among English speakers. Today, said Williams, protecting a plate of tortellini was no different to stopping people scratching their initials in the Great Wall of China: "Being on the intangible list means the host country must promote and protect it exactly as it would a monument like Stonehenge," she said.

Recent activities sponsored by Unesco include the revival of the inter-generational transmission of Georgian traditional polyphony and the "safeguarding" of Somali board games.

While the Mediterranean diet has found favour with chefs around the world, Coldiretti said it was in desperate need of protection in its native countries.

"In Italy today parents are still in good shape, but their children are increasingly suffering from obesity," said Manfredini. "There has been a complete break in eating habits from one generation to another."

Article from The Guardian



'Greek Diet' For A Healthy You

A beautifully shaped body is generally referred to as 'Greek Goddess'. The Greek Goddess look is not only the gift of the divine power alone. A lot needs to be attributed to their diet. Mediterranean diet has always been famous for their health benefits but Greek diet tops them all. Greek diet consists of a lot of fresh vegetables and fruits. They emphasis on intake of fresh food. The mantra to good health in Greek diet is the use of honey and olive oil. Olive oil, is a great source of mono-saturated fat, which protects the heart from diseases and is a rich source of antioxidants and Vitamin E.

Greek diet boasts a good distribution of food through out the day. This checks weight gain.

Breakfast - A Greek breakfast always starts with fresh seasonal fruits. They prefer citrus fruits, as they have the ability to curb extra fat. Along with the fruits there will be some freshly baked bread with natural honey and traditional Greek coffee. Don't miss on Greek cheese like Kasseri, or some local graveria.

Lunch - The traditional Greek diet includes very less of meat But as it is a well known fact that meat is a source of fat, people looking forward to look weight, don't include meat in your Greek diet. You can have spanakorizo (cooked spinach with rice) or kokinsto (a Greek-type of goulash), but without potato. You may end the meal with a dessert of fruit and cheese. No bread is allowed in meals.

Dinner - Meat is allowed in dinner. It is suggested to team up the meat with vegetables but not with protein. Your dinner may include, the legendary Greek paidakia (or lamb chops). Team it up with boiled greens, fresh tomatoes, feta cheese and red wine.

The biggest advantage of Greek diet is that they don't use any artificial preservatives. This saves your body from all the side effects.

Article from Oneindia

RECIPE

Achinosalata (Sea urchin salad)

The sea urchin, achinos, is an echinoderm, small, black and spiky, found in all the world's oceans. The edible meat is the roe from the female sea urchin. Traditionally, in Greece, the achinos is eaten freshly opened with just a squeeze of lemon. Achinosalata has recently been appearing as a trendy "new" item on restaurant menus. The following recipe adds a little extra to this wonderfully fresh sea-flavoured delicacy.

Ingredients

- Roe from 10-15 sea urchins
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil - Juice from 1 lemon

1 pinch of sea salt - 3-4 coriander seeds, crushed

Method

To remove the roe from the inside of the sea urchin, using rubber gloves and scissors, cut around the base (the soft opening) in a circular direction. Remove the liquid and viscera. Carefully remove the roe that is lightly attached to the shell. In a medium-sized plate lay out the roe in one layer, ensuring they don't overlap each other. Drizzle the roe with oil, lemon juice, salt and crushed coriander. Serve.



Recipe from Athens News