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The Cretan Lifestyle Conference: Wellness, Food and Culture (/index.php/en/more/conferences-classes/484-the-cretan-lifestyle-conference-wellness-food-and-culture)

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An experiential conference titled Cretan Lifestyle: Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications assembled some of the world's top thought leaders in the fields of nutrition, epidemiology, public health, and Cretan culture at Grecotel Resorts in Rethymno, Crete November 7-11, attracting students, researchers, clinicians, and food sector professionals.

This scientific, cultural, and gastronomic extravaganza (<https://mediterraneanhealth.org/>)

featured presentations on the Mediterranean diet and lifestyle by experts from prestigious institutions in the USA, Greece, and Spain. The event also offered Cretan culinary and cultural experiences in two ways: through expeditions to locations evocative of a traditional Cretan lifestyle, and in artful arrays of healthy, flavorful food and drink, both at meals and in tasting sessions highlighting traditional products.

Co-organized by the Region of Crete, the World Olive Center for Health, and the new Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health & Wellness (/index.php/en/news/477-new-hellenic-center-for-excellence-in-health-and-wellness), the conference took advantage of the mild climate of Crete at Grecotel's Caramel and Creta Palace resorts. It focused on health, sustainability, and the way local Cretan products and communities support both.

More than 100 presenters and attendees from four continents and ten countries considered several related topics: olive oil, olives, wine, and eating habits in Crete from the past to the present; decades of scientific evidence for the wide-ranging health benefits of the Mediterranean diet; and the Cretan diet as the gold standard in the Mediterranean. One day's parallel sessions considered how to make Greek products successful in the US market, and the way the Mediterranean diet and lifestyle can benefit communities and enrich lifestyle medicine and medical tourism initiatives.

Like a journey back to the 19th century, an excursion to the picturesque historic monastery of Arkadi concluded with a nutritious, tasty multi-course Greek Orthodox fasting meal. Another field trip took the group to Agreco Farms, Grecotel's organic farm and re-creation of a 17th century village, with surprises around every turn in the path: fresh bread from a wood-burning oven, grape stomping and wine and cheese tasting, a visit to a stone olive mill and hydraulic press, Cretan dancing to live music, and a lavish meal at the taverna, overlooking olive groves and the sea.

The conference week ended with an all-day trip to olive-covered hills in the Chania area, with a guided olive oil tasting, food pairing, and mill tour at Terra Creta's olive oil factory; a visit to the ancient olive tree of Vouves, estimated to date back to 2000 BC; a tasting of seven wines at Karavitakis Winery; and traditional cuisine of Chania at a taverna overlooking Lake Kournas.

Bus rides, mealtimes, and coffee breaks provided ample time for rich discussions characterized by a friendliness and goodwill that culminated in a surprise birthday celebration at the final dinner. Participants were delighted by the conference's base at Grecotel's Caramel and Creta Palace Resorts, with their impeccable service, lovely ambience, and warm, cheerful hospitality.

During the week, awards were presented to promising young scientists and to several important individuals who had made great contributions to Cretan and Greek life, including Stavros Arnaoutakis, Governor of Crete; Dr. Antonia Trichopoulou, one of the creators of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid and a tireless researcher, advocate, and teacher; and Dr. Antonios Kafatos, a pioneering researcher from Crete regarding chronic disease and the Seven Countries Study.

The Cretan Lifestyle Conference was planned by Stefanos Kales, Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and a Professor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and Demetrios Kalaitzidakis, Director of Operations for Grecotel Hotels & Resorts, with assistance from Daniela Puglielli and Flavia Bonelli of the Mediterranean Diet Roundtable, as well as many others. Plans are already underway for the next edition of this unique experience.

Find out about the Cretan Lifestyle 2023: Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications 2nd Annual Experiential Conference here (<https://mediterraneanhealth.org/overall-conference-program-with-activities-excursions-and-symposia-2023/>).

This is a press release that may be republished without additional permission. Greek Liquid Gold was a Technical Partner of the Cretan Lifestyle: Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications conference. Thanks to the Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health & Wellness and Grecotel for access to the complete experience of the conference.