The Mediterranean Diet is one of the healthiest diets known to date. This diet originates from the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Some of these countries include Italy, Greece, and Spain. The countries surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea have been continuously studied due to the fact that their health is prospering compared to populations who regularly follow a Western diet. These countries continue to have lower numbers of cancer rates, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. All of which are very common here in the United States, with cardiovascular disease being the #1 killer.

The Mediterranean Diet focuses on an array of fresh, unprocessed foods. The food pyramid pertaining to this diet is made up of fruits, vegetables, and olive oil to be eaten at every meal. Per day, one typically consumes dairy, nuts and seeds, and herbs and spices. This leaves potatoes, red and white meat, eggs, legumes, seafood, and sweets to be eaten weekly. Water and herbal infusions are a necessity, with wine being consumed in moderation. Not to mention, physical activity is a huge priority and a normal part of everyday life.
AMERICA’S NUMBER ONE KILLER

Facts on Cardiovascular Disease:

Cardiovascular disease is the #1 killer in the United States.

♥ Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women.

♥ Approximately 630,000 Americans die each year as a result of cardiovascular disease.

♥ Every 40 seconds, someone experiences a heart attack.

♥ Every minute, more than one person dies from a cardiovascular disease related illness.

♥ In terms of cost, cardiovascular disease accounts for approximately $200 billion each year.
HOW DOES THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET AFFECT YOUR HEALTH?

**Cardiovascular Disease**

In a secondary prevention trial testing if the Mediterranean diet may reduce the reoccurrence of a myocardial infarction, participants participated in 27 months of follow-up while continuing either their Mediterranean diet or Western diet. In the end, it was concluded that the Mediterranean diet provides a protective effect up to 4 years after an initial myocardial infarction. (De Lorgeril, 1999, Circulation, 99; p.779). In a more recent study of 288 participants who were at high risk of cardiovascular disease, 96 were assigned to a Mediterranean diet supplemented with extra-virgin olive oil, 83 to the supplementation with nuts, and 109 remained in the low-fat control group. After 4.8 years, results were gathered. It was found that those who adhered to the extra-virgin olive oil and nut group had a much greater reduction in risk of cardiovascular disease than those who followed a low fat diet. (Estruch, 2018, N Engl J Med, 378; e34).

**Blood Pressure**

In a sample size of 7,158 participants who were at high risk of cardiovascular disease, were separated into a Mediterranean diet supplemented with extra-virgin olive oil, a Mediterranean diet supplemented with nuts, or a low-fat control group. After a 4-year follow-up, reductions in both systolic and diastolic blood pressure was observed. These results were not influenced by a change in physical activity or prescribed medication. (Toledo, 2013, BMC Med, 11; p. 207). More recently, these results were confirmed in a study made up of 164 participants, separated into Mediterranean diets supplemented with nuts or extra-virgin olive oil and a low-fat control group. After 1 year, compared to the low-fat control group, the remaining two groups showed a higher decrease in both systolic and diastolic blood pressure. (Casas, 2014, PLoS One, 9; e100084).

**Diabetes**

The incidence of type 2 diabetes, which increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, was reduced by 52% in Mediterranean diets supplemented with extra-virgin olive oil or nuts. These results stemmed from 418 nondiabetic subjects, who were at high risk of cardiovascular disease, and were randomly assigned to a low-fat diet or a Mediterranean diet supplemented with either extra-virgin olive oil or nuts. These findings occurred in the absence of physical activity or weight loss. (Salas-Salvado, 2010, Diabetes Care, 34; p. 9). In another 10-year study based out of Greece, 3,042 men and women were enrolled with no evidence of disease. After 10 years, those who had a medium or high adherence to the Mediterranean diet showed lower incidence of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Those with lower adherence showed a higher incidence of diabetes and cardiovascular disease (Filippatos, 2016, Rev Diabet Stud, 13; p. 226).

**Mortality**

In a study consisting of 7,216 participants whose age ranged from 55 to 80, participants were separated into two different Mediterranean diet categories; one supplemented with extra-virgin olive oil, one supplemented with nuts, and a low-fat diet control group. After 4.8 years, it was found that Mediterranean diets supplemented with a higher baseline of extra-virgin olive oil had a 48% reduction in cardiovascular mortality. For each 10 g/d of olive oil, a 10% and 7% decrease in mortality and cardiovascular disease was observed. (Guash-Ferre, 2014, BMC Med, 12; p.78). In another study correlating mortality and the Mediterranean diet, participants in the UK were evaluated based on their adherence to the Mediterranean diet. Using food frequency questionnaires, it was observed that the greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet resulted in lower cardiovascular disease incidence and mortality. (N. Tong, 2016, BMC Med, 14; p.135).
**The Mediterranean Diet and Health Program**

The Mediterranean Diet and Health program is a chance to gain hands-on experience while being immersed into true Italian culture! This 6-credit program is based around the Mediterranean Diet and its effect on many chronic diseases. As a participant of the program, students will get the chance to tour parts of beautiful Verona, local agricultural sites, participate in cooking classes with local Italian chefs, and participate in tours based around the history of Italy.

**Earn a minor in Nutrition**

The 6 units that are earned through this program can be used towards a minor in nutrition! For more information regarding this, please contact nscadvising@email.arizona.edu.

**Study Abroad Coordinator**

To learn more about the program, reach out to the program manager, Bailey Lee at baileydl@email.arizona.edu.
Close to Home

There is also the chance to experience the Mediterranean Diet much closer to home! Join the Mediterranean Diet club and gain an insight on all this lifestyle has to offer.

Meet the President

Kayla Osberg, an Ohio native, is a senior here at the University of Arizona majoring in Nutritional Sciences with an emphasis in dietetics. Kayla has been a part of the club from the beginning, following her involvement in the study abroad program two years ago. In fact, she has been president of the club since its creation. After graduation, she plans to become a registered dietitian. Keep up the great work, Kayla!

Involvement on Campus

As a club, members volunteered at the Alumni Breakfast that took place during homecoming week. The club served food related to the Mediterranean diet; crackers topped with fresh prosciutto and parmesan cheese along with Greek yogurt parfaits topped with raspberries and blueberries. Members had the opportunity to engage with alumni and share their passion and experience with the Mediterranean diet.
Louise and Dale Henderson are donors who believe in and financially support study abroad at the University of Arizona. They hold a strong belief that a university education must give students a global view and stress historical perspective. The couple are active supporters of both the University of Arizona in general and study abroad specifically. They have made grants for scholarships and have worked one-on-one with new students to help them access financial support and UA programs such as New Start and summer academic programs. The past two years they have visited study abroad locations and met with University of Arizona students on site. Their support and interest in study abroad blossomed when one of their daughters expressed an interest in studying abroad for a year at the Sorbonne in Paris. They witnessed a transformational change in their daughter’s life after being fully immersed into a different culture, language, and educational approach. The couple believes there are many aspects to the study abroad experience. These include the language and cultural experience, realization that “our way” is not the “only way”, increased attractiveness to employers, higher salary, and can be more affordable than staying at a school close to home in some instances. Due to all of these compelling and life-changing aspects, Dale and Louise believe that all university students should consider the decision to study aboard. Not only is it a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but the topics that are learned are carried throughout life and into future occupations. Both Dale and Louise have business backgrounds. Dale, a University of Arizona alumni, worked for an international investment banking firm. Louise, a Florida Southern College alumni, was an active investor in real estate in Florida, Texas, and Southern Arizona. After their time in these occupations, the couple moved back to Arizona in 2003 where they owned and ran a cattle ranch. With this experience, it has only solidified their belief that studying abroad offers many lessons that can be used well into the future and used in our daily lives. There are many different practices and standards that are used abroad. Experiencing these systems that are used outside of the U.S. helps students improve their own future practices.
SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Abbey Roberts is a senior majoring in Nutritional Sciences with an emphasis in dietetics. Upon graduation, her plans include pursuing a masters in kinesiology with an emphasis in sports nutrition during her dietetic internship at either Washington State University or Northern University of Colorado. Abbey has always had a passion for fitness and health, as she is a student fitness coordinator, personal trainer, and group fitness instructor at the recreational center on campus!

Marlon Freeman is a current Nutritional Sciences undergraduate student, set to graduate in the Spring of 2019. Marlon is the Elections Commissioner in the Associated Students of the University of Arizona (ASUA). As the Elections Commissioner, he takes part in coordinating and executing the student body government elections! After graduation, he is planning to travel part of the summer before starting graduate school for athletic training. In terms of long-term goals, he eventually wants to become a sports medicine doctor and work for a professional sports team!

Mickia Cenker is a Nutritional Sciences major with an emphasis in nutrition. She is currently completing her undergraduate honors thesis, focusing on how the Mediterranean diet can be beneficial in the prevention of breast cancer in comparison to other dietary patterns. Her plans for after graduation include taking a gap year and returning home to Fairbanks, Alaska. She will use this time to work at Fairbanks Native Association as a Certified Nursing Assistant while applying to physician assistant programs on the West Coast!

Jacob De La Cruz is a current senior majoring in Nutritional Sciences. On campus, Jacob is the current secretary of the Mediterranean Diet and Health Club, president of the newly found Food Science Club, and works to promote healthy eating through his work at Nrich. After graduation, Jacob hopes to use his knowledge from nutrition to enter the field of food science, where he has discovered a new passion after taking NSC 351R (The Fundamentals of Food Science). Through this field, he plans on combining his customer service and public speaking skills to teach and promote healthier eating habits!