



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Globally Important
**AGRICULTURAL
HERITAGE**
Systems



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Rome

26 MAY 2022
10:30-12:30 (CET)

MEDITERRANEAN DIET'S PRINCIPLES FOR AGENDA 2030

Mediterranean Diet

& Agricultural Heritage: As smooth as oil.

Discovering traditions, properties and benefits of Olive oil and other traditional vegetable oils

REGISTER HERE: https://fao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wk4YG1y-Tfqh8u6z7ieE4g

LANGUAGE: 6 FAO official languages + Italian

Background Information

The Italian Permanent Representation to the UN Agencies in Rome and the Secretariat of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) are pleased to announce the webinar “*As smooth as oil. Discovering traditions, properties and benefits of Olive oil and other traditional vegetable oils*”.

This online event is part of the initiative “Mediterranean Diet’s Principles for Agenda 2030”, a series of thematic sessions promoted by the Italian Permanent Representation that aim to raise awareness on how the Mediterranean Diet and other traditional diets can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The initiative aims at highlighting the positive interactions between agricultural production and traditional diets, agrobiodiversity, and culture and at exploring cutting-edge strategies to foster sustainable rural development.

Olive (*Olea europaea* L.) is one of the most emblematic and abundant trees of the Mediterranean basin. Although its origins trace back to tens of thousands of years ago, well before the appearance of the first human settlements on earth, several studies suggest that its domestication in Europe might have occurred between the second and the first millennium B.C.

The capacity of olive trees to adapt to marginal soils and sloping lands, and to endure periods of drought, has indeed allowed farmers to grow them under very harsh conditions and to spread their cultivation throughout the Mediterranean area earlier, compared to other crops. The socio-economic, cultural, nutritional, and environmental role olives have played to date within this region is of paramount importance. It forms the basis of the Mediterranean Diet, it is a central ingredient in popular dishes as well as in the *haute cuisine*, and it has come to represent a symbol of peace, health, and wisdom.

In 2011, the International Olive Oil Council reported that roughly 95% of the world's olive oil cultivation takes place in Mediterranean countries. It is one of the most certified agricultural products in Europe; Italy boasts 49 PDO/PGI olive oil brands, while Spain, Greece, France, and Portugal had registered 32, 31, 7, and 6, respectively. Moreover, Spain is the first producer and exporter of olive oil and table olives on a global scale. These data shed light on its outstanding quality and socio-economic relevance.

Olive oil tourism, which includes activities such as visits to old olive presses and mills, has also been thriving in recent years due to the strong association of this product with traditional landscapes and cultures.

From a nutritional perspective, vast scientific literature has demonstrated that the Mediterranean Diet has significantly contributed to improving health and longevity by reducing the incidence of chronic diseases and by lowering their risk factors. Extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO) must be regarded as one of the key nutritional components responsible for the benefits of the Mediterranean Diet. It contains monounsaturated fatty acids and it is rich in antioxidants. These properties positively contribute to preventing cardiovascular diseases, fighting cancer, and alleviating inflammation.

Traditional olive plantations in the Mediterranean basin are complex socio-ecological systems in which biological and cultural elements have harmoniously coevolved over a long period of time. The traditional olive groves located in the slopes between Assisi and Spoleto (Italy) and in Territorio Sénia (Spain) are interesting case studies which have been designated as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems by FAO. These systems distinguish themselves for their resilience, endemic biodiversity, and capacity to provide numerous provisioning, regulating, and cultural ecosystem services.

The webinar will include presentations of other traditional vegetable oils used in different GIAHS and non-GIAHS areas of the world, highlighting their importance and showcasing different contexts and cultures.

Objectives

- Highlight the relevant role of olive oil and other traditional vegetable oils in culture, gastronomy, healthy diets, local economies and traditional knowledge.
- Enhance cooperation and information exchange between farmers and stakeholders engaged in the production of traditional vegetable oils across the world.
- Examine how to incentivize small-scale traditional oil production systems, and in general fruits and vegetable production, especially of local varieties, including through international recognitions such as the FAO GIAHS Programme.
- Raise awareness regarding the wide range of ecosystems services provided by oil production systems and their relevance in the context of global challenges.

Draft Agenda

Session 1: Opening session and welcome remarks		
10:30-10:40	H.E. Ambassador Vincenza LOMONACO, Permanent Representative of Italy to the U.N. Agencies in Rome Introduction and moderation	
10:40-10:50	S.G. Ettore SEQUI, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy Opening speech	
10:50-11:00	Eduardo MANSUR, Director, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment FAO Welcome remarks	
Session 2: Analysing Olive oils from a cultural, scientific and economic viewpoint Moderator: Prof. Mauro AGNOLETTI, Director of the School of Agriculture, University of Florence		
11:00- 11:05 Overview of the session by moderator		
11:05-11:12	Gastronomic and cultural uses of olive oil in Mediterranean countries	Elisabetta MORO , Professor of Cultural Anthropology, University Suor Orsola Benincasa, Naples
11:12-11:19	Combining innovation with tradition: the sustainable transformation process	Anna CANE , President of Oil Sector, Assitol
11:19-11:26	History and innovation in the Italian GIAHS site of Assisi-Spoleto	Andrea GAUDENZI , Gaudenzi Oil Mill
11:26-11:33	Progress towards Sustainable Control of <i>Xylella fastidiosa</i> in Olive Groves of Salento (Apulia, Italy)	Marco SCORTICHINI , Research Director, CREA - Research Center for Olive, Fruit and Citrus Growing
11:33-11:40	Importance of the use of oils and other lipids in sustainable diets	Fatima HACHEM , Senior Nutrition Officer, FAO ESN
Session 3: Traditional vegetable oils world tour: a curious observer's guide Moderator: Federica ROMANO, FAO GIAHS Programme Secretariat		
11:40-11:45 Introduction and overview of the session by moderator		
GIAHS Introduction Video (30s)		
11:45-11:50	The use of rice oil in traditional Japanese cuisine	Dr. Mayu AIZAWA , Director, Rice Bran Oil at Tsuno Foods
11:50-11:55	Torreyia oil produced in Kuaijishan, Shaoxing GIAHS Site in China	Jinchang LI , expert from the Museum of Torreyia
11:55-12:00	Sustainable palm oil production: Virtuous examples from the world	Pietro PAGANINI , Adjunct Assistant Professor of Business Administration at Rome's John Cabot University and the co-founder of the think-tank "Competere - Policies for Sustainable Development"
12:00-12:05	The Millenary olive trees of Taula del Sènia, Spain: a unique GIAHS landscape (Virtual tour + short presentation)	Teresa Adell PONS , GIAHS Site manager, Gerencia Taula del Sènia
12:05-12:10	Chemical Properties and Health Benefits of Edible Argan Oil, Morocco	Saïd Gharby , Associate Professor, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco
12:10-12:15 Closing remarks, Lynnette NEUFELD, ESN Director, FAO		

Format

Online event

Languages

6 FAO Official Languages + Italian

Participants

- Permanent Representations
- GIAHS Global Community
- Universities, research institutions
- Stakeholders and organizations operating in rural areas.