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# Lifestyles of the Mediterranean

# Rutgers University Study Abroad

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| **Credits** |  | **Term** | **Year** |  |  |
| 3 |  | Summer | 2025 |  |  |

**Course Description:**

The traditional Mediterranean lifestyle is a cluster of habits and practices that have been associated with various health benefits are the heritage of millennia of exchanges of people and cultures of all countries around the Mediterranean basin. With a view to spreading the core constituents of the traditional Mediterranean lifestyle and passing the knowledge regarding its beneficial effects on health, the

 paradigm of Lifestyles of the Mediterranean aims to introduce this traditional lifestyle pattern to students of the modern era, through observing traditional practices and undertaking experiential activities.   
  
The program will take place in Greece, in Athens and Leros Island, where the Mediterranean lifestyle has been implemented for thousands of years. Lectures, workshops, and other educational activities will cover the fundamental principles of the Mediterranean diet, a dietary pattern that has been recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage   
of Humanity and recently proposed as a health-promoting diet in the 2015-2020 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The program will also address other Mediterranean lifestyle practices:

* Consumption of fresh, minimally processed, local, seasonal, and eco-friendly foodstuffs,
* Frugality and moderation in relation to energy balance and body weight
* Use of herbs and spices to introduce a variety of flavors and palatability   
  to dishes and allow for a reduction in salt use
* Adequate hydration with emphasis on water and traditional   
  herbal infusions
* Adoption of a physically active lifestyle
* Conviviality about the social and cultural value of meals and physical activity
* Stress relief and adequate rest during the day

We will begin the program in Athens where we will meet and then continue to the Island of Leros. In Leros, we will study the production, nutritional properties, and health benefits of traditional Mediterranean foods and spirits, experience the concept of Greek breakfast, taste traditional Mediterranean recipes, visit traditional food markets and establishments.

and participate in several interactive educational group activities.  The program will return to Athens where we will familiarize ourselves with the history, evolution, and culinary aspects of the Mediterranean lifestyle, through visits to archaeological sites.

During the 2-week program, some days will be devoted to theoretical lectures, discussion sessions, or workshops on the scientific and cultural themes of the day, followed by studying in local establishments. Other days will be devoted entirely to field trips, excursions, and interactive educational activities, including visits to monumental sites and cultural places of natural beauty, demonstrations of Mediterranean lifestyle practices, as well as collective activities in nature.

Students will also have 2 full study days- one on Athens and one in Leros.

# Pre-Requisites:

1. Instructor’s consent
2. Minimum GPA 2.5

# Objectives:

1. Become familiar with the concept of the Mediterranean lifestyle as a holistic way of living, incorporating   
not only lifestyle habits and practices but also other social, cultural, and religious aspects of life.   
2. Become aware of the fundamental principles of the Mediterranean lifestyle, its history, and its evolution   
throughout time in the populations of the Mediterranean region.   
3. Be able to identify the unique characteristics of the Mediterranean diet and its differences compared to   
other dietary patterns adopted around the world (e.g., the Western-type diet).   
4. Obtain the skills to properly select foods according to their nutritional value, degree of processing, locality,   
seasonality, and eco-friendliness, per the principles of the Mediterranean diet.   
5. Gain competencies in Mediterranean lifestyle practices, such as the design of nutritionally balanced meals

and the application of traditional food production, preservation, and cooking techniques.   
6. Critically understand and interpret the available scientific data regarding the beneficial effects of the Mediterranean lifestyle on health and disease

**Course Materials:**

* Textbook *(****Optional****):* Sidossis LS, Kales SN. Textbook of Lifestyle Medicine; Wiley 2022 (https://www.amazon.com/Textbook-Lifestyle-Medicine-Labros-Sidossis/dp/1119704421)
* Lectures, notes, and other files relevant to the course’s learning objectives (printed and electronic material).
* Leaflets relevant to the course’s educational and cultural activities (e.g., Athens-Attica Guide and Gastronomy, Ministry of Tourism, Greek National Tourism Organization).
* Research papers relevant to the course’s learning objectives (e.g., Foscolou A, …., Sidossis **LS**, Panagiotakos D; MEDIS Study Group. Lifestyle determinants of healthy ageing in a Mediterranean population: The multinational MEDIS study. *Exp Gerontol.* 2018 Sep; 110:35-41; Diolintzi A, Panagiotakos DB, **Sidossis LS**. From Mediterranean diet to Mediterranean lifestyle: a narrative review. *Public Health Nutr.* 2019 Oct;22(14):2703-2713. PMID: 31156076)

# Instructors:

*Director:* Labros Sidossis, Ph.D., Department of Kinesiology and Health, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University

*Co-Director*: Joanne G Hunt, MA, Department of Kinesiology and Health, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University

*Co-Director*: Nancy Goldberg, MA, Department of Kinesiology and Health, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University

**Course Requirements:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Coursework** | **Due Date** | **Percentage** |
| Pre travel assignments (studying course materials)  On-line quiz | Prior to departure | 10% |
| Participation (attention and interest in the course’s activities) & Professionalism (professional behavior, teamwork, and communication) | Throughout the course | 30% |
| Module Quizzes | Throughout the course | 30% |
| Final Project | Last day In Leros | 30% |
| **Total** |  | **100%** |

* Individual presentation for all students plus individual written assignments only for graduate students.

**Final Project:**

Allstudents will be expected to prepare and present a 3-minute vlog presentation on an assigned topic related to the course’s learning objectives. Graduate studentsare also expected to complete an individual written assignment (2000 words) related to the course’s learning objectives. The presentation and written assignment topics will be assigned at the beginning of the course.

# Grading:

# 100% total for the course.

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| --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **%Percent** |
| A | 90-100 |
| B+ | 85-89.9 |
| B | 80-84.9 |
| C+ | 75-79.9 |
| C | 70-74.9 |
| D | 60-69.9 |
| F | Below 60 |

# \*Preliminary Schedule- A detailed schedule will be distributed daily

# \*(Subject to change)

# We will also hold an in-person orientation on March 30th to review important details and information.

# Upon your arrival in Athens, we will travel via overnight ferry to Leros Island

# Leros Island: Days 2 to Day 9 Course Topics

* Connecting ancient history with the present- tour of Leros (Castle – War Museum - Agios Isidoros – City of Lakki

# Introduction to healthy lifestyles and wellness

# Traditional Mediterranean cuisine & rural lifestyles

# Production, nutritional value and health effects of wine

* Mediterranean Cuisine- cooking lesson
* Role of herbs & medicinal plants on health

# Health benefits of physical activity (hiking, walking, swimming)

# The Importance of conviviality and social skills

* Local food tasting, discussion of ingredients and health benefits and the importance of seasonality
* Production & benefits of olive oil
* Forest Bathing”- fitness and mindfulness practice
* Production & benefits of seafood

# Student Project presentations & reflections

# We will travel via overnight ferry from Leros Island to Athens

# Athens, Greece: Days 10 to 13: Course Topics

# Connecting Ancient History with Contemporary Way of Living- Bus Tour of Athens- Visit to Olympic Stadium & Parliament

# Guided Tour of Acropolis Museum, Parthenon & Plaka district