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Can the Mediterranean be One and Plural?

The Mediterranean basin is a very rich and diverse area. It is a plurality of languages, religions, traditions and ethnicities, not only because of the different countries that can be found but also due to the innumerable regions within those countries and the infinite amount of people that live there. In this way then, the Mediterranean is in fact plural because each individual is unique. This diversity has survived globalization and so, depending on where you go, you will find varied ways of expressing feelings and naming things, different beliefs and gods and contrasting habits. This plurality is sometimes a burden though, because it makes the decision making difficult and when forces are opposed in the same territory this task becomes even more problematic. Examples of this can be seen from one coast to the opposite, from the incapability of the Spanish society to elect their representatives to the Palestine and Israel conflict.

But the Mediterranean is one as well, in more things that we might think. It is one in the soft climate, not too cold during winter and more and more warm in summer, due to climate change.



It is one in the warmth and coziness of the inhabitants of its coasts, that makes them different from the people living in the same country but away from the sea. And it is one in more subtle things, such as the gastronomy and the traditions involving it. We all share a common diet, the so called, Mediterranean diet. This nutrition pattern has been outlined among the healthiest diets on earth due to its high antioxidant content. It has been ranked first on the “Best Diets Overall” for 2019 by health experts at the US. The high intake of olive oil along with fruits and vegetables has been associated with a reduction in cardiovascular risk and more possible health benefits derived from this diet are being investigated. The last revision of the Mediterranean diet pyramid turned to be, not only a compendium on nutrient intake but also a full lifestyle recommendation. It summarizes the culinary techniques, recipes, typical products and human activities that are shared around the Mediterranean Sea. The healthy type of fat that is used, olive oil, fish and nuts; the proportions in the main nutrients that our recipes keep, cereals and vegetables as the basis of dishes; and also, the richness in micronutrient content as a result of the use of seasonal vegetables, aromatic herbs and condiments are some of the many beneficial properties of this food pattern.

This lifestyle is not only good for health but also environmentally friendly, as it disposes of fast food and takes into account culinary techniques that have been in the basis of our cuisine for centuries and so, are close to the zero-waste movement that has been growing in the last years. This is then, another trait in which the Mediterranean, and obviously the rest of the world should be one, we should aim for the caring of the environment, as if it is not preserved, none of the differences or the similarities will matter.



All in all, the Mediterranean Sea is not only a place where trade can be achieved but a common space which could be much more connected, where frontiers could be open to anyone in need and where our very different cultures could unite and merge into an intercultural space. A place where the environment and the human quality should be central in all political debates and where everyone, regardless of their origin, could sit around the same table.

