

USU Nutrition Students Visit Greece, Learn Healthy Lifestyles Practices

Shelby Ruud

08/03/2017

The Mediterranean diet is one of the healthiest in the world, and a group of Utah State University dietetics students recently visited the Greek island of Crete to learn the more about this healthy way of living.

Janet Anderson and Tamara Steinitz, professors in the dietetics program, led six students on a 10-day educational trip that included visits to archaeological and historic sites, nature reserves, organic farms, vineyards, fishing docks, organic farmers' markets and artisan food production facilities.

"My favorite part of the trip was watching students absorb their experiences," Anderson said. "They were able to think about the experiences critically and how they could apply these Mediterranean diet and lifestyle principles in their lives and share the practices with others."

Steinitz added that students appreciated the simplicity and flavors of the traditional foods, particularly the liberal use of olive oil and abundant, local produce. Favorite meals were incredibly simple to make, so students stocked up on ingredients to re-create the dishes at home.

The students participated in hands-on cooking demonstrations and classes from a number of resident specialists. In addition to learning from experts including botanists, herbalists, farmers, and historians, students had the opportunity to share several meals with them, which Jaylen Hinckley found especially rewarding.

"I learned how close you can grow to people in just a short while over the dinner table and a home-cooked meal," Hinckley said. "It inspired me to help others have a healthy relationship with food, and to be kinder and share a meal with someone more often."

Zoe Biggs, another student who participated in the trip, believes it's important for students to have opportunities for international travel and study.

"The things I learned on this trip could not have been learned any other way but to be there and experience it," she said. "I really enjoyed just spending time with native Cretans and hearing their views on life, food and living. There's just nothing like immersing yourself in another culture."

For more information about the NDFS department, visit ndfs.usu.edu. Follow the path the students took in Crete with the interactive map below.

Writer: Shelby Ruud shelby.ruud@usu.edu

Contact: Tamara Steinitz tamara.steinitz@usu.edu