

A collage of seven photographs showing various Italian dishes. The top left shows a bowl of tomato and potato soup with a slice of bread. The top right shows a plate of seafood, including mussels and shrimp, with vegetables. The middle left shows a plate of pasta with a tomato sauce and cheese. The middle right shows a pizza. The bottom left shows a dish of meat and vegetables. The bottom center shows a dish of meat and vegetables. The bottom right shows a dish of meat and vegetables.

A collage of six food-related images. The top row features a whole pizza on a white plate, a cup of coffee with a latte art design, and a close-up of a pizza slice with toppings. The bottom row shows a hand holding an ice cream cone, a plate of spaghetti with tomato sauce and basil, and a close-up of a pizza slice.



The Mediterranean Diet is a Lifestyle.

Local Fresh
Biodynamics

"You are what you eat"

Balance Color Enjoyment

For me, it involves:

1) Balance and Back to Basics

2) Travel

3) Friends

4) Food

Relaxation Conviviality Sustainable

Health Awareness Food



In this **Blog** I discuss
-Facets of Med. Lifestyle,
including

- Mediterranean Food
- Mediterranean Sea
- Mediterranean Way of Life

-How they Relate to Me

-What I will Take Home

Heritage
Identity
Religion
Natural
Seasonality
Biodiversity

Frugality
Active
Culture

Intro. Isabel In Italy

Often I like to ask myself what my life is teaching me at the **present**. At points during my semester at college, my job, or even times with family I like to ponder what I'm doing, why, how it feels, and what I'm learning. I consider myself an extremely contemplative and thoughtful person.

In this sense, I have done much contemplation upon my study abroad experience and what it means to me. Of all the lessons professor Quatromoni has instilled into us, her understanding of **moderation** and what it really means to be **balanced** has truly hit home for me. While it might seem elementary to some, I have a hard time with balance and mediation in many areas of my everyday life due to obsessive-compulsive qualities and perfectionism.

I *have* been moderate in these areas for the past month. Whether due to Italy, the Mediterranean diet, summer, the change of environment or a combination of the factors – I have never felt this in-balance. I credit this to the many mesmerizing aspects of the **Mediterranean Diet/Lifestyle**, notably basic environmental awareness, good food, conviviality, and healthy habits. In this blog I will describe how the Mediterranean Diet has materialized in my experience and how its facets have imprinted upon my life.

I am grateful for the lessons (regarding school and life), experiences (travel), relationships (homestay and friends), and food (new and familiar) study abroad has brought me. Thanks to Professor Quatromoni and this program, I have been inspired to **commit** to incorporating the lessons into my life to live well, stay healthy, reduce my ecological footprint, enjoy the wonders of the world and avoid being stressed.



1) Balance and Back to Basics



This BU study abroad Padova Italy program has been incredibly grounding and revitalizing. Among the many lessons I have learned in this amazing place, the most important involves returning to the **basics of life**: namely – **real food**, **natural** ingredients, local products, composting & recycling of waste, social connectivity, and organic **connection** to the earth around us.

This return to natural and clean living yields a healthier life course and feelings of connection to our food. In such a modern and industrialized society it becomes easy to lose track of our **environmental ‘footprints’** – that is, the mark we leave on the earth through our **daily decisions**, food purchases, **waste** creations, and general actions of living.

a. At the market level

NaturaSì is an Italian supermarket company that specializes in **organic** products and agricultural practices that aren't harmful for the earth. The company commits to paying their farmer and food producers fairly, and supporting environmental awareness in all realms possible.

NaturaSì has taught me to think about food ecology a bit more. From our fieldtrip to the NaturaSì headquarters, I have gathered an understanding of what it means to be a **conscious consumer**. It means investing money in '**slow food**': natural, organic, and locally produced items rather than highly processed or unnatural products. This includes not over-buying foods or wasting them, not over-consuming meat (which takes much more agricultural resources than vegetables to get to the supermarket), making the agriculture-biodynamics-production-consumption connection, considering the season and availability of produce, and varying purchases as to protect biodiversity.



b. At Home

Paola and **Bruno** have taught me so much history of Padova, but even more importantly have given me a real and understanding of the importance a person's **home** has to them. Padova and its environment, community, churches, markets, piazzas and culture are all so deeply ingrained into their understanding of the world. They are strongly connected to and aware of the world around them: they shop locally, seasonally, they conserve water and power, they eat fresh and diversify their meals. They compost and recycle everything and use bike transportation. They are grounded in the **basics** of the **nature** they inhabit.

This is really inspiring, especially because I've been so distanced from my environment living in modern cities like Boston and New Haven. In my busy life, I often fail to consider where my food is coming from, never mind what seasonal produce is available or where my food waste is ending up. From P & B I've been so inspired to be a more **conscious** food consumer and waste producer. I plan to try buying more **locally** and **composting** in my daily life when I return home to America.



c. On a Personal level

In a Photovoice assignment, I wrote upon the importance of **individual enjoyment**, de-stressing and mental health – especially with regard to food, and in specific: **gelato**. I remarked on the widened sense of relaxation in Italian daily life which 'allows individuals following the Mediterranean lifestyle – especially adults – to take time during the day to do pleasing things for themselves' (IK 2018).

It reigns true that the element of enjoyment and indulgence in life should ideally be a universal mindset, rather than a “treat”. In this photo, I am taking a page out of their book and non-apologetically spending time during my busy day to eat gelato and **relax**. I not only felt grounded by this part of my afternoon but also energized for the rest of my day. This speaks to the power of returning back to the **basics** in life – good food – and insomuch achieving feelings of calmness and **balance**.



2) Travel/New Experiences

BUON VIAGGIO



a. Venice



While not exactly a *food source* of the Mediterranean diet, the **Mediterranean Sea** (photographed at the Venetian beach *Lido*) is an important part of the Mediterranean Lifestyle and plays a large role in the healing powers of the land. The sea salt not only flavors the food, but also exfoliates and soothes skin and cuts.

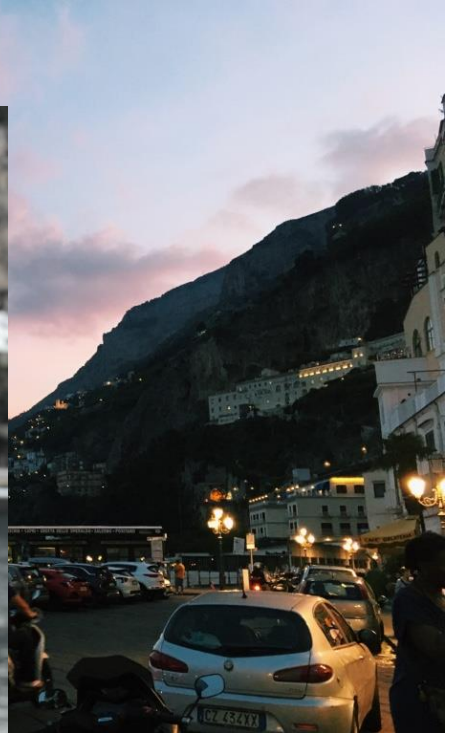
I had slits on my feet from walking a ways to get to the beach, but after spending a day in the water, they began to heal quickly!

Venice was a beautiful place with vibrant colors and picturesque landscapes. I believe our trip there the first weekend contributed largely to the connectedness of our friends and the ocean served as a facilitator of the **enjoyment/relaxation** component of Mediterranean living.

b. Lake Como/Milan



c. Napoli/Amalfi Coast/Positano



Napoli pizza so good!!



3) Friends and Conviviality

The friends I've made in this program are awesome people. They laugh at my stupid jokes, we've experienced beautiful places and enjoyed adventures together, and we've made great memories. I'm grateful for them and their company.

One particular aspect of my friendships has been **sharing meals** together, and the element of **conviviality**. Almost every day I have shared a meal with at least one good friend and experienced food in good company. Eating together might be overlooked in America as an important facet of the Mediterranean Diet. It is what makes eating wonderful, enjoyable, and worthwhile.

I am especially grateful to my friends on those occasions where we **cooked together**/they cooked dinner for me! Not only was it delicious, but it heightened the sense of togetherness and trust among us.



4. Food



I am used to eating healthfully, and was brought up with healthy habits, but my modern diet in the U.S. does not match what I'm eating here! Here, I eat pasta everyday. I eat sugar-sweetened yogurt every morning. I eat gelato at least twice per week. I eat out for lunch and meals on the weekends.

At one time, these would all have seemed to be extreme indulgences on my part, but I find that they haven't felt irrational or excessive. In fact, these things have felt **good**.

It is really that simple; here my days are spread out with wonderful things, and spent doing things I love. I think that, complimented by my lax and enjoyable eating habits, have left me feeling overall more balanced, satiated, and healthy. I work out only once or twice per week and don't feel badly. Padova has become so comfortable and comforting as I associate it increasingly with the good and important things in life: **good food, being green, and conviviality**.

Not to mention, I tried new foods!! Tuna, cheeses, Kalamata olives, prosciutto, trout, calamari, flattened peaches, dried kiwi, and chocolate soybeans!

Non mi piace il formaggio !



What this Means

I think this gets at the very heart of the Mediterranean Diet. If you incorporate it into your *lifestyle*, you are embracing the **health**, the **salve** from stress, the **balance** and the **consciousness** that it embodies.



Conclusion



Our Mediterranean Diet: Food, Culture, and Health class has been incredibly compelling, with wonderful trips to places about food culture, food economics, food health and all other aspects of the Mediterranean Diet. Our lessons have been an absolute treat. I am very grateful for what I have learned.



Fine

