Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

Annual Lifestyle Conference of the Hellenic Center for Excellence in Health & Wellness 2026



SMITHA HANEEF
MANAGING DIRECTOR HARVARD UNIVERSITY DINING SERVICES AND CHIEF OF HOSPITALITY

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

Cretan Lifestyle: Mediterranean Tradition & Modern Applications

5th Edition

Celebrating CRETE as European Region of Gastronomy, 2026

Annual Lifestyle Conference of the Hellenic Center for Excellence in Health & Wellness in collaboration with GRECOTEL

GRECOTEL AMIRANDES, HERAKLION, CRETE, NOV 13-NOV 18, 2026

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

Under the Auspices of Region of Crete













THANK YOU TO SPONSORS, PARTNERS, SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Mediterranean Diet: Implications for Harvard University Dining Services

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

THANK YOU TO SPONSORS, PARTNERS, SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

Mediterranean Diet: Implications for Harvard University Dining Services

Smitha Haneef

Managing Director

November 16, 2026

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

Agenda

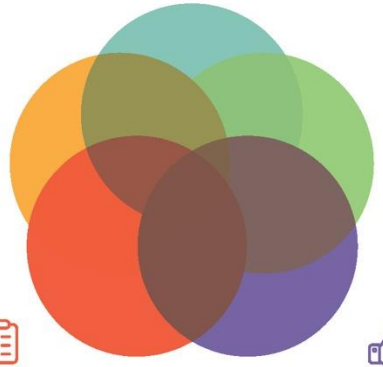
- Welcome
- HUDS Vision
- Hospitality and Dining at Harvard Overview
- Healthy and Sustainable Food Program
- Service Excellence and Awards
- Harvard Food Systems Initiative
- A Year of Partnership and Protoype for Greek and Mediterranean Menus
- Way forward to advance mediterranean menu



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

From 2020 to 2025...

VISION FRAMEWORK



STUDENT / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

Listen, learn, and act as a living lab developing solutions in partnership with our community

FOOD SYSTEMS, CLIMATE CHANGE, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Collaborate with leaders from Schools to drive change

FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Grow faculty and student interest in curricular and co-curricular partnerships

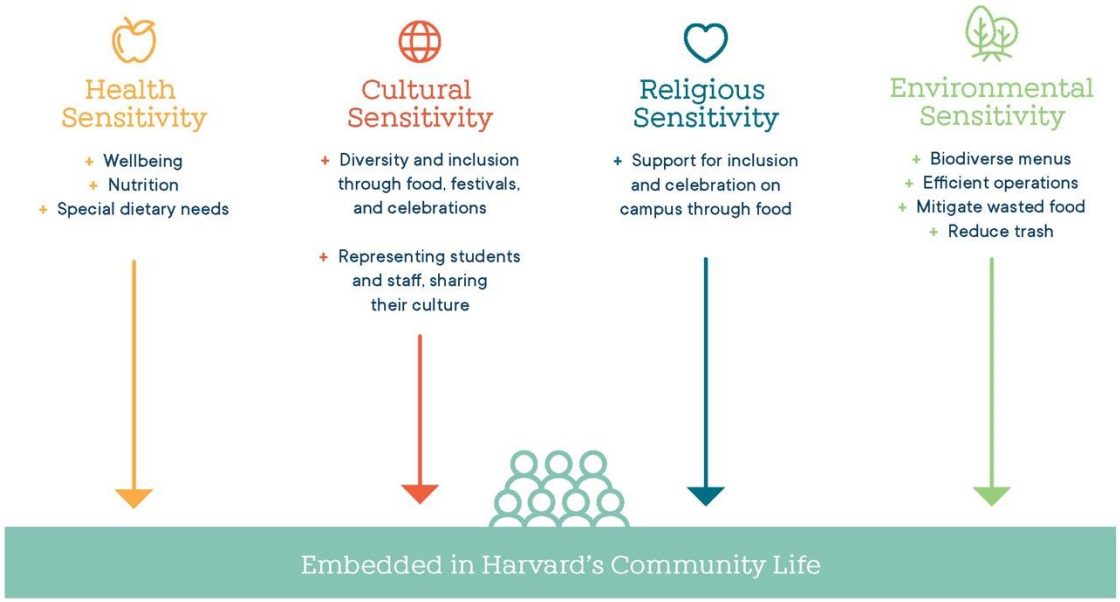
OPERATIONS STRATEGY, INNOVATION, QUALITY ASSURANCE & SAFETY

Lead with emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency of resources, and prioritize safety in all directions

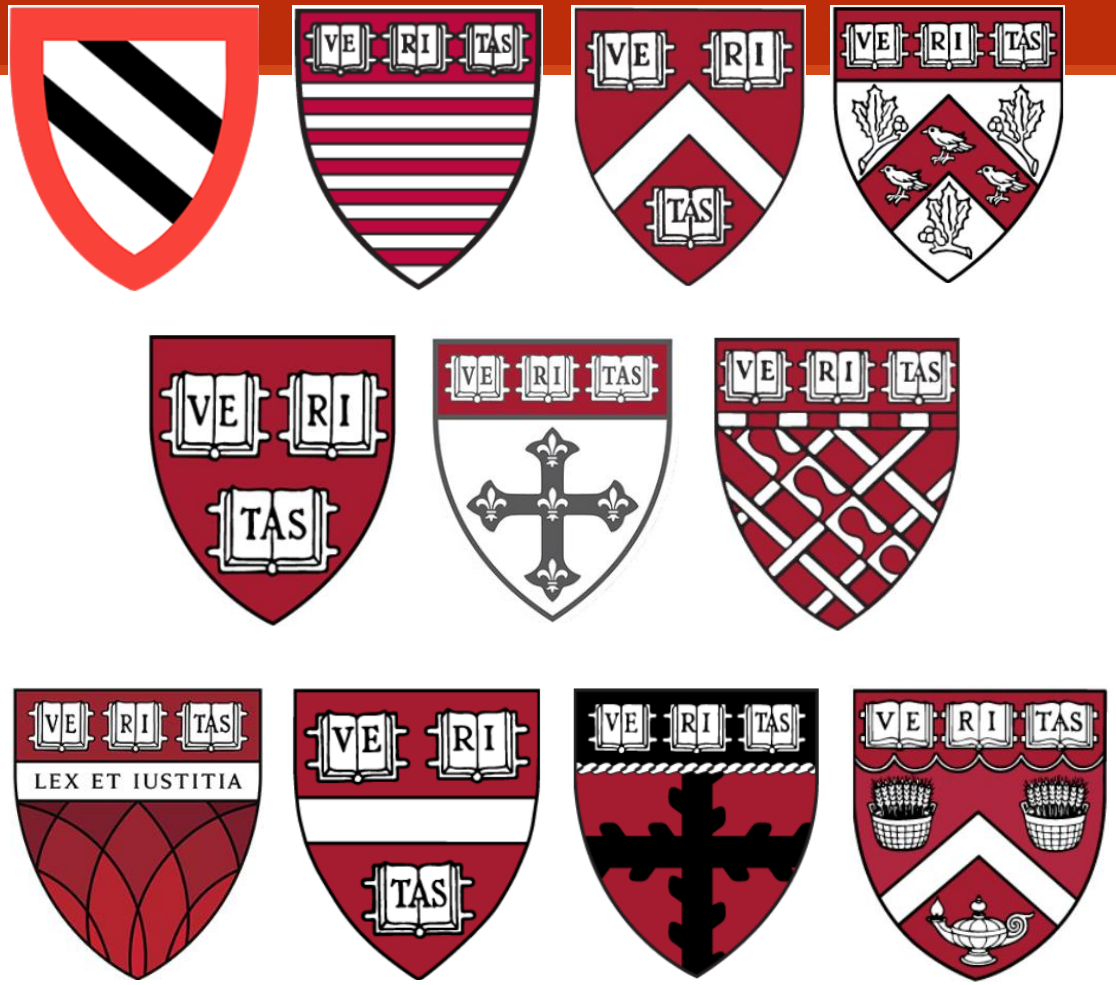
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Celebrate through food and culture, team, and people

A DINING PROGRAM THAT PRIORITIZES:



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services



Our Presence on Campus

- Harvard Radcliffe Institute
- Harvard Kennedy School
- Harvard College
- Harvard Divinity School

- Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- Harvard School of Public Health
- Harvard Graduate School of Design

- Harvard Law School
- Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
- Harvard Extension School

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

HUDS Overview

What we do:

- Hospitality and dining programs at HSPH, GSD, HLS, HKS, SEC, GSAS, DCE, FAS, Libraries, serving students, faculty, staff, and visiting guests through cafes, events, and catering
- Residential program focused on undergraduate students and House affiliates
- Campus catering and Campus events for the entire Harvard community and guests
- Design and lead flagship and custom-made celebrations for Harvard University: Commencement, Convocation, Celebration of Scholars, Heads of State, Alumni Events, and visiting dignitaries
- 30 locations on campus serving 23000 to 25000 meals daily
- Harvard Food Systems Initiative bringing programming about food systems to campus



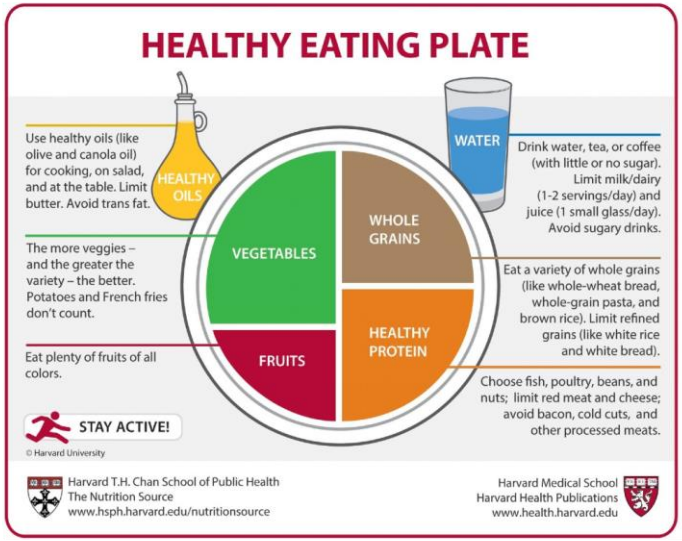
Who we are:

- We bring Hospitality and food systems expertise along the full breadth of the value chain: from sourcing to food waste

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

Longstanding partnership with Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Department of Nutrition



- Using research to model real-world applications, such as:
  - Elimination of trans fats
  - Reduction of sodium
  - Reduction of sugar-sweetend beverages
  - Increased plant-based proteins and decreased beef consumption
  - Whole grains as the default
  - And more

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

HUDS Longstanding Commitment to Sustainable Practices



- HUDS is committed to purchasing and operational practices and menu choices that sustain the health and well-being of the environment, communities, and the people producing and eating food. Ongoing education of ourselves and our customers is crucial to evolving sustainable practices and issues related to dining. This philosophy addresses three core areas:
  - ENVIRONMENTAL – support purchasing and operational practices that are not detrimental to the planet
  - ECONOMIC – encourage financial well-being for both producers and buyers
  - SOCIAL – influence fair treatment of workers; and support family farms and small businesses

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

HUDS' Food – The Local Menu

- Local = 250 mile radius from Cambridge, MA
- Produce from more than 250 farms (anywhere from 20-70% of our produce is local, depending on the season)
- Dairy products – milk, cheese, butter, etc.
- Made items – such as breads, pastas, peanut butter, sauces, salad dressings, etc



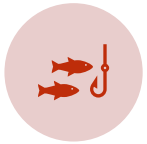
Commitment to Local & Nutritious



In New England, a commitment to both local and nutritious has to lead to seafood – a major economic industries of this region



New England waters are some of the most regulated in the world. High demand due to the quality and high standards.



The New England fishing economy has gone through several transformations in the last several decades, battling climate change, stock collapse, overfishing, regulation, and declining industry employment

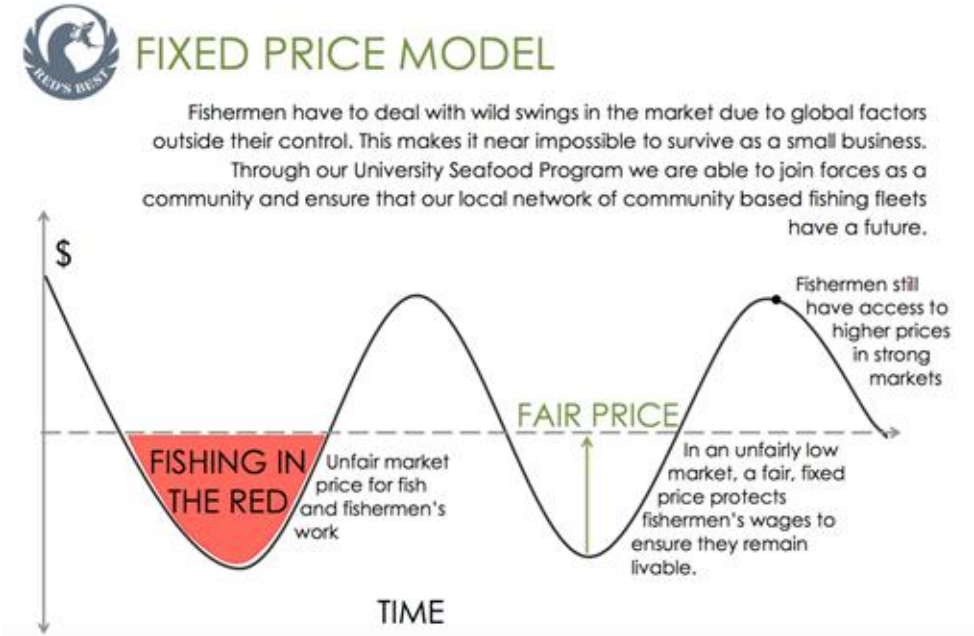
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

Fresh Catch at Harvard:

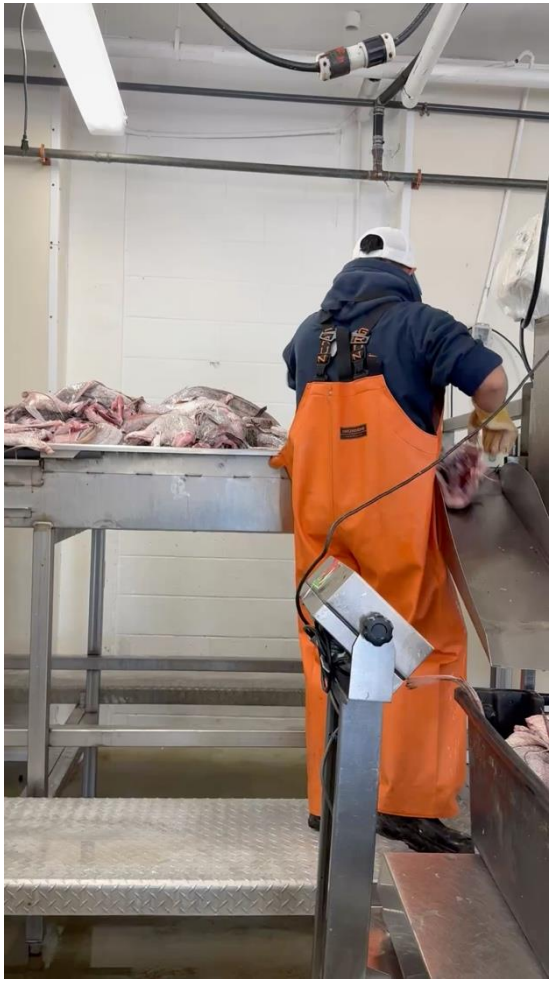
For over a decade Harvard University Dining Services & Red's Best Fresh Catch partnership, has been a model to have both nutritious fish and working fishermen now and in the future.

In 2025, HUDS sourced over 40,000 lbs through the Fresh Catch Partnership



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

Fresh Wild Caught Hake being processed at Red's Best Plant on Tuesday for HUDS for this week's menu.



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

Most Innovative Dining Program















ARD
RSITY
Dining Services

We are Green Restaurant Association's GREENEST UNIVERSITY!

3rd Year Running

15 Certified Green Restaurants

Taken more than 1,000 environmental steps to earn over 3,250 Green Points

dinegreen.com/harvard



Awards, Projects, and News Articles



“Harvard University named ‘Greenest University’ for 3rd consecutive year”

news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/newsplus/harvard-university-named-greenest-university-for-3rd-consecutive-year



“Harvard Dining Services honored with Gold Medal for Innovative Dining Program of the Year”

https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/newsplus/harvard-dining-services-honored-with-gold-medal-for-innovative-dining-program-of-the-year/



“Harvard University’s Adams House Renewal Earns Top Preservation Honors”

shawmut.com/news/harvard-universitys-adams-house-renewal-earns-top-preservation-honors



“Harvard’s Adams House Dining Renovation Sets a New Standard for Historic Campus Foodservice”

johnson-lancaster.com/harvards-adams-house-dining-renovation-sets-a-new-standard-for-historic-campus-foodservice

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

Harvard Food Systems Initiative



Hosting lectures and seminars at Harvard University

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

Harvard Food Systems Initiative



Food Systems Dialogues on campus with students, faculty, staff, and industry

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

Harvard Food Systems Initiative



Climate Friendly Dinners
that celebrate regional ingredients, growers, and promotes nutritionally healthful meals

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

Harvard Food Systems Initiative



Featuring Greek Salad, Cretan Style
GREEK SALAD… CRETAN STYLE
Tomato, cucumber, Greek "Feta" cheese, green peppers, onion, Kalamata olives, oregano , barley rusks and extra virgin olive oil

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

Harvard Food Systems Initiative



Harvard Faculty Lecture Series
Students and members attending in person and virtually

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

Harvard Food Systems Initiative









Community engagement and convening

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 4:30–7:00 p.m.
at the Science and Engineering Complex (SEC)

Brief lecture, discussion, and tasting reception of Greek and Cretan–inspired dishes

Scientific insights on the Mediterranean diet and health

Translation of research into practice, from menu design to operational strategies for dining programs

Efforts in the Region of Crete by Grecotel to preserve traditional gastronomy and food patterns

Presentations by:

Dr. Stefanos Kales: Harvard Medical School / HSPH

Smitha Haneef: Co-Chair of Harvard Food Systems Initiative and Managing Director of HUDS

Demetrios Kalaitzidakis : Operations Director, Grecotel

MEDITERRANEAN AND GREEK DIET: FROM RESEARCH TO PLATE


AGRECOFARMS




FROM RESEARCH TO PLATE




Lifestyle
Medicine




NICO LAZARIDI
Ρήγας Κούπα
King of Hearts
2024




OLIVE OIL


GREEN SALAD
BEETROOT SALAD
with XYGALO
TZATZIKI









HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

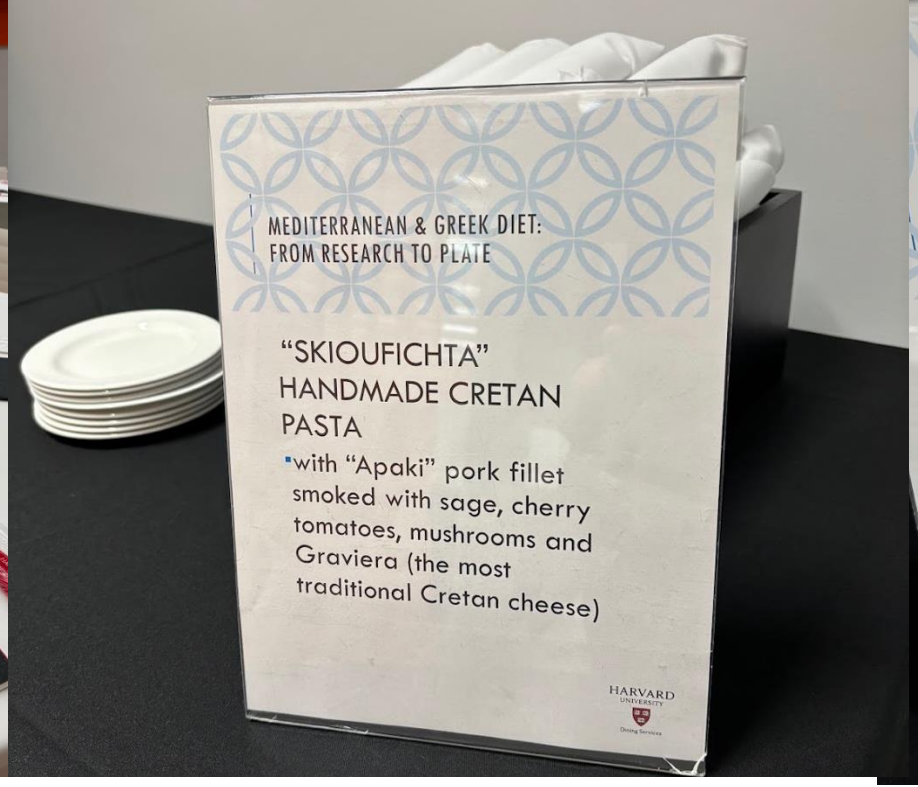
Lecture and Event Featured in the Harvard Gazette

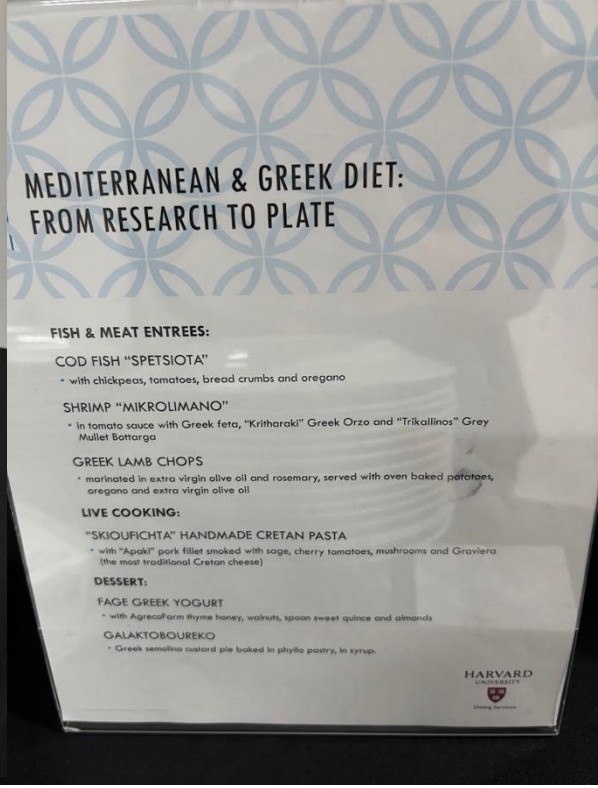


https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/newsplus/mediterranean-and-greek-diet-from-research-to-plate/

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services







Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

HARVARD FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

HARVARD FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE

Healthy Mediterranean and Greek Cretan Menu Tasting

Tuesday, March the 17th, 2026
Harvard University
Science and Engineering Complex
150 Western Avenue, Allston, MA

Prototype Concept Menu

Tuesday, March the 17th, 2026,
Healthy Cretan Diet

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

HEALTHY CRETAN DIET MEZE

A. CRETAN DAKOS
The most representative dish of the healthy Cretan Diet.
The #1 "Best Salad in the World" based on Tasteatlas.com Awards 2025/2026
Barley rusks, grated ripe tomatoes, Greek "Feta" Cheese, oregano and organic extra virgin AgrecoFarm olive oil.

B. B. HANDMADE PIES

with healthy greens and aromatic herbs

C. OCTAPUS with **FISH RAW EGG SALAD**
"TRIKALLINOS" GREY MULLET BOTTARGA

D. PORK FILLET, SMOKED with **SAGE,**
"ANTHOGALO", SOFT CHEESE SPREAD,
SPOON SWEET SOUR CHERRY

Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

HARVARD FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

SALADS

1. GREEK SALAD… CRETAN STYLE
Tomato, cucumber, Greek “Feta” cheese, green peppers, onion, Kalamata olives, oregano , barley rusks and organic extra virgin AgrecoFarm olive oil

2. PULSES or PALIKARIA (Brave men) ... An energy source
A variety of traditional pulses with extra virgin Cretan olive oil, cherry tomatoes ,
Cretan herbs , scallions ,white wine vinegar, pomegranate seeds and raisins.

3. GREEN SALAD
lettuce hearts, “Manouri” cheese, walnuts, cherry tomatoes and croutons,
vinaigrette sauce with organic extra virgin AgrecoFarm olive oil

4. BEETROOT SALAD with **GREEK YOGURT,**
oranges, pistachios and carob rusks bites

5. “TZATZIKI”
Greek Yogurt with cucumber, garlic and extra virgin olive oil
served with pita bread

Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

HARVARD FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

VEGETARIAN DISHES

6. OVEN VEGETABLES “BRIAM” – GREEK STYLE
“SYMPETHERIO THE IN-Laws”(Vegan’s Delight, The best Summer dish).

Selection of organic vegetables and potatoes, cooked in the oven with tomato sauce, garlic, with fresh parsley, bay leaves, extra virgin Cretan olive oil.

The name has been given because they ‘must’ come together just like the relatives “Ta ‘Soyia’”

7. “GEMISTA”
variety of vegetables stuffed with rice and aromatic herbs

8. GREEK “MOUSSAKA”
a non meat vegetable version with Greek Yogurt Bechamel sauce

Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

HARVARD FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

FISH ENTREES

9. COD FISH “SPETSIOTA”
with tomatoes, Chilli pepper & Oregano

10. SHRIMPS “MIKROLIMANO”
in tomato sauce with Greek “Feta” Cheese
served with “Kritharaki” Greek Orzo and “Trikallinos” Grey Mullet Bottarga

Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

HARVARD FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

MEAT ENTREE

11. GREEK LAMB CHOPS
marinated in extra virgin olive oil and rosemary
Served with oven baked potatoes, oregano and extra virgin olive oil

LIVE COOKING

12. “SKIOUFICHTA” HANDMADE CRETAN PASTA
with “Apaki” pork fillet smoked with sage, cherry tomatoes, mushrooms and “Graviera” PDO, the most traditional Cretan Cheese

Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

HARVARD FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services

DESSERT

13. “FAGE” GREEK YOGURT
with AgrecoFarm thyme honey, walnuts, spoon sweet quince and almonds

14. “GALAKTOBOUREKO”
Greek semolina custard pie baked in phyllo pastry, in syrup.

CRETAN INFUSION

“SARANTADENDRI”
Hand picked Cretan Mountain tea mix

Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health and Wellness

HARVARD FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services









Thank you

Smitha Haneef
Managing Director and Chief of Hospitality
Harvard University Hospitality and Dining Services
smitha_haneef@harvard.edu
617 780 6118

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Dining Services



This was a small snapshot of how HUDS teams are bringing Healthy Menus from sustainable food systems to life with every ingredient and every meal in service of our community at Harvard!

Thank you

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

Dining Services

Thank you and Wish you a great conference!



Smitha SH Haneef
Managing Director and Chief of Hospitality
Harvard University Hospitality and Dining Services

Contact:
Smitha_Haneef@Harvard.edu
www.linkedin.com/in/smithashari