



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
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**FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY ISSUES IN THE REGION**

Prepared by Spain

According to the 2010 FAO definition, sustainable healthy diets are patterns of food consumption that promote all dimensions of people's health and well-being. Such diets have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and are culturally acceptable.

The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations makes it clear that a profound change in the way food is produced and consumed must be implemented to increase productivity and sustainability, while improving human health.

Dietary recommendations for the population should be developed based on the best available scientific evidence on the effect of nutrients and foods on health. In addition, they should consider the dietary habits, uses and customs of the target population; they should take into account that the effect of different types of food depends not only on their nutritional content, but also on the matrix in which they are ingested, the alterations that occur in the culinary process, the presence of substances that are not nutrients, and the synergies that occur in food combinations that can increase absorption. In addition to being healthy, dietary recommendations must also be environmentally sustainable to generate a reduced environmental impact.

Therefore, for the preparation of the Healthy and Sustainable Dietary Recommendations for the Spanish population approved in 2022, a report was prepared by the Scientific Committee of the Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN). This report carried out a review of the most recent scientific evidence on the relationship between the consumption of different food groups and health, also considering the environmental impact of food. On this matter, the Committee was assisted by an expert in food sustainability.

The Scientific Committee report concludes that the adoption by the Spanish population of a varied and balanced dietary pattern can be both healthy and environmentally sustainable. The diet recommended would lead to both an increase in health and well-being while also reducing the environmental impact in comparison to current dietary habits. The report has facilitated the development of a series of specific recommendations on the frequency of consumption of different types of food, prioritizing the consumption of foods of plant origin over foods of animal origin as the main sources of protein in the diet. This is in line with the Mediterranean dietary pattern, which promotes a greater consumption of fresh foods of plant origin and fish, together with a moderate intake of meat and dairy products and the use of olive oil as the fat of choice.

The recommendations and the report are available in the FAO repository, which we encourage to consult.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/spain/es/>