

# **Greek traditional breakfast foods: nutritional value and environmental sustainability**

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Recent studies have shown that the type of breakfast offered by hotels is identified by travelers, as an important component of quality in the hospitality industry. In addition, recommendations for hotel management and policy-making are rapidly developed to reduce the energy and carbon intensity of the hotel industry.

Breakfast is identified as the most important meal of the day and breakfast skipping has been associated with poorer overall diet quality. There is evidence that skipping breakfast may lead to up-regulation of appetite, possibly leading to weight gain over time and deleterious changes in risk factors for chronic degenerative diseases. Regular breakfast consumption, on the other hand, is linked with improved cognitive function and an improved sense of wellbeing.

It is important to underline that identifying and promoting Greek traditional, local food products in the breakfast served in hotels, to the traveller, will offer him/her the opportunity to better understand the culture, history, philosophy, dietary habits and dietary perceptions of the local people.

The purpose of the current study is to evaluate the promotion of the Greek traditional food in the breakfasts offered by the hotel industry, as an alternative to the conventional breakfast models. This model, called “Greek traditional breakfast” by the industry was evaluated in terms of nutritional value, CO<sub>2</sub> and water footprint. More specifically, traditional foods were identified after a thorough review of the literature, in three different areas of Greece: Thessaly, Crete and Cyclades. These areas have been chosen due to their unique character in terms of physical environment and cultural heritage and because they offer the opportunity for special interest tourism to the traveller.

After identified the appropriate traditional foods promoted for hotel breakfast use in the above areas, three Greek breakfast models were created and they were evaluated and compared to the conventional continental breakfast in terms of nutritional value, CO<sub>2</sub> and water footprint (see Figure 1).

Among the three traditional Greek breakfasts, the one from Crete was healthier in terms of fatty acid composition and fiber content and has the lower carbon and water footprint. These results depend mainly on the composition of each breakfast model. While some breakfast components, such as milk, remain unchanged, others, such as fruit juice present great variance among its category. This component variance results in significant variance of the carbon and water footprint. Therefore, there is

room for improvement for the total environmental performance of the Greek breakfasts, provided that certain components are optimized within each breakfast.

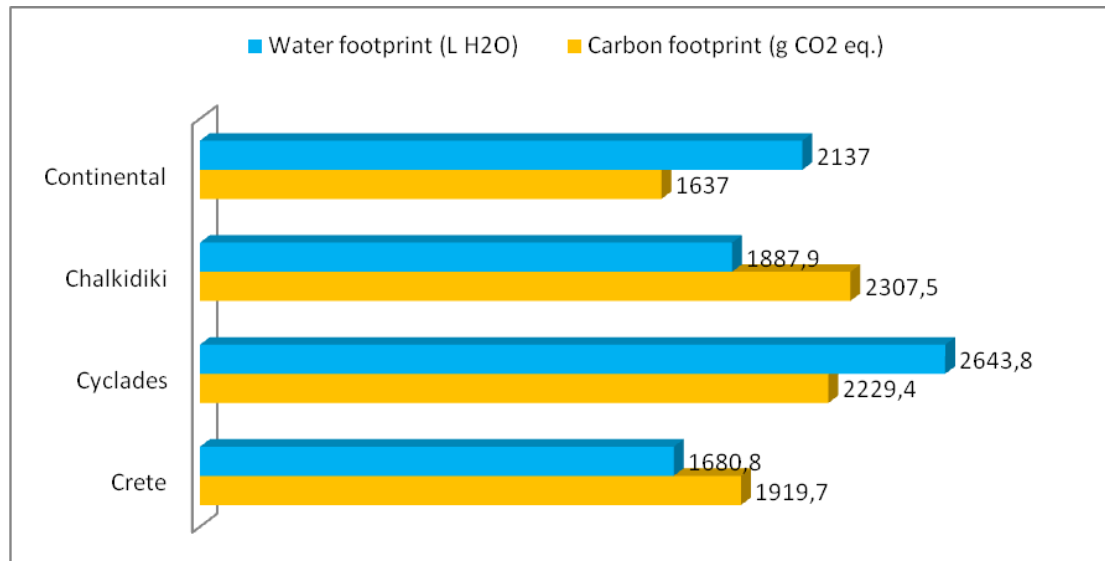


Figure 1: Water and carbon footprint of the examined breakfast models.