

ENTERPRISE GREECE BRINGS DIVERSE PORTFOLIO OF F&B SOLUTIONS TO NORTH AMERICA

Greece is a story of transformation. The country has undergone a profound economic transformation over the past few years and has grown into a stable, resilient nation with an exciting future! Bold choices to re-make, digitize, and open the economy have created the environment for innovation to thrive, business to succeed, and for Greek exports to find new markets and grow further.

Within this context, Greece has quickly become a major player in the world's food and beverage industry. The small country that was once synonymous with hyper-local, inward-focused economics and food production is rapidly growing into a global distributor of goods and culture. Under the supervision of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Enterprise Greece, the national trade, and investment agency of the Greek state, helps both the country to diversify into global markets and the international consumer to have easier access to Greek products. The unification of the organizations Invest in Greece and Hellenic Export

Promotion Organization, Enterprise Greece has spurred the growth of Greek products to international restaurant and foodservice operators and consumers.

Enterprise Greece prioritizes foreign direct investment, and investors in the food and beverage industry make up a large part of this group. With an eye to promoting Greek trade with the rest of the world, Enterprise Greece is promoting healthy, high-quality products that Greece is known for available to a wider range of consumers than ever before. They accomplish this through a combination of networking (including attending trade shows and trade missions), information and consultation with both producers and distributors, and education. Importantly, Enterprise Greece emphasizes educating both ends of the production and distribution spectrum—for exporters, it's crucial to understand foreign markets, including how and where to distribute products; for buyers, understanding what makes Greek products unique is necessary for developing and maintaining interest in purchasing those products.

This emphasis on what makes Greek food products special is central to Enterprise Greece's mission—they want to tell the story of the products. Greece's temperate weather and fertile terrain allow for a wide range of fruits and vegetables to be grown on the peninsula, and their access to the coast provides ample fish and seafood. With the Mediterranean diet gaining popularity over the past decade, chefs and individual consumers alike have taken to purchasing more olive oils, whole grains, fish, and fresh fruits and vegetables, many of which are sourced from Greece. Considered one of the healthiest and most sustainable diets,

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access to products that make up the Mediterranean diet is in high demand and Greek foods are poised to make a big impact in international markets. With this obsession in healthier eating, Enterprise Greece puts importance on teaching the special characteristics including the unique flavor profiles of Greek products. With that comes a focus on how the North American chef can add a “Taste of Greece” and healthier fare to their restaurant and hospitality menus.

Primarily, this is accomplished by working directly with producers and distributors. “The country is small, and that's why it's so important for these small growers to have outside help in bringing those products to a wider market,” said Betty Alexandropoulou, Enterprise Greece's Executive Director. “That's where we come in at Enterprise Greece, to try to help these smaller businesses, often family businesses, to sell their products globally.” By connecting these small, local producers with distributors and buyers worldwide, Enterprise Greece is accelerating the transition from decades of small-scale production and local trade.

The world is changing quickly, and with it, the way that food is produced and distributed. “The way that these Greek food products all started is the distributors that came out of the Greek diaspora. We're talking about a

very different world now—people are traveling to Greece, and the American consumer is getting to know Greece, so we're not just talking about the diaspora anymore. So, distribution has changed greatly over the last few decades,” Alexandropoulou said. “There has been a huge increase in travel and tourism to Greece over the last few years, and many travelers are looking to bring the experience back to the US, from chefs who want to add more Greek recipes to their menu to individuals who appreciate the healthy, flavorful ingredients.”

This has led to greater diversity in Greek products as well, with more international interest in Greek wines and seafood than ever before. The importance of diversifying product lines for international distributors; “the past few years have been interesting. To survive as a business, to grow, we had to focus on bringing innovation to the world's menus,” Alexandropoulou concluded. “As consumers become both more demanding and more interested in trying new things, extending our offering beyond the basic products has become crucial.”

With that goal in focus, Enterprise Greece is currently building an Export Help Desk, which can also help food service professional buyers and the distributors that serve them. This and more information can be found at enterprisegreece.gov.gr



Betty Alexandropoulou