

Cultural Landscapes of the Mediterranean Diet

Language

English

The Mediterranean landscapes are sculptures of human work carried out along millennia. They are a heritage of high historical but also economic value, associated with agriculture production and the leisure and tourist appeal.

Cultural landscapes are “combined works of nature and humankind” as UNESCO refers to them.

In the 1972 Convention UNESCO further explains that “cultural landscapes illustrate the evolution of societies and the human settlements throughout the years”.

Erratic rainfall which characterizes the Mediterranean region climate forced the human communities to develop storage systems, ducts for soil irrigation and many hydraulic structures both in mountainous areas and on the coast line.

The “*canadas*,” (lanes) paths for seasonal transhumance of the herds, the ledge vineyards, the large olive groves and orchards, the oak groves and the meadows, are elements which define the wealth and diversity of the Portuguese landscape.

The property division, smallholding to the North of Tejo river and large estate (*latifundium*) to the south are important territorial and visual inscriptions established by the characteristics of the relief and the soils, as they lead to different sorts of settlement and construction types. The “house of the south” has also a huge cultural and scenic value.

The legal protection and the improvement of the “Mediterranean diet” productive itineraries enable keeping and enhancing the cultural landscapes as an economic and tourism appeal resource, protecting, at the same time, the biodiversity, the wealth of the food variety and Portuguese gastronomy.

In Portugal, Cultural Landscape of Sintra (1995), Alto Douro Wine Region (2001) and the Landscape of Pico Island Vineyard Culture (2004) have been included as Cultural Landscapes on the World Heritage List.

Source URL (modified on 09/12/2015 - 14:18): <http://www.dietamediterranea.pt/?q=en/node/247>