

Dear Mediterranean Diet Conference attendees,

I and all my ISI Florence colleagues look forward to meeting you in a few weeks. Thank you for your interest in this event, which University of Connecticut and ISI Florence have been carefully planning for well over a year. As some of you may know, these two institutions have been working together since 2003. Among their main academic endeavors is the "Sustainable Food and Environmental Systems Program" (SFESP), a highly specialized Fall Semester track that UConn and the ISI have been offering since 2009. The upcoming Mediterranean Diet Conference, so passionately promoted by the UConn School of Pharmacy, further testifies to our interests and common efforts in this field of studies.

It will be a pleasure and an honor for me to welcome you to both Florence and this conference on Tuesday, November 8th. For reasons of space, most conference sessions will be held at Palazzo Bargagli, one of the two ISI Florence facilities in this beautiful city's historic district. Palazzo Bargagli is very close to the Ponte Vecchio, one of Florence's best-known attractions. The welcome ceremony, instead, will take place at Palazzo Rucellai, the ISI Florence headquarters on Via della Vigna Nuova (also within walking distance from the Ponte Vecchio and the city's other main monuments). Please see the attached map of Florence highlighting these two historic buildings marked #1 and #2.

A gem of Renaissance architecture -- designed by the famous humanist polymath Leon Battista Alberti in the 1450s -- Palazzo Rucellai will host the welcome ceremony on the evening of November 8th, from 5.00 to 7.00 pm. The first thirty minutes or so will be devoted to registration. Upon arrival at Palazzo Rucellai, conference attendees will have to sign their names at the reception desk and collect their welcome folders. After a brief welcome speech, a reception in your honor will follow.

Each folder will contain the following materials:

- attendee's name tag
- a map of downtown Florence
- a more specific map of the Florence historic district, highlighting our two institute buildings (Palazzo Rucellai and Palazzo Bargagli) as well as the places where some conference activities will be held (that is, the "San Lorenzo" food market, "Ospedale Santa Maria Nuova," and "Farmacia di Santa Maria Novella")
- the conference program
- SFESP brochures
- ISI Florence stationery to jot down notes during the conference sessions
- a copy of the ISI Florence Student Handbook

A word of explanation on this last item. The reason why we inserted the ISI Florence Student Handbook in the welcome folders is that it contains information that may be useful during your stay in Italy. This includes local phone numbers such as those of the nearest hospital, walk-in clinics with English-speaking doctors, the Italian police or the U.S. consulate in Florence. Also, the Student Handbook provides further information that may come in handy, such as suggestions on where to shop or eat out in Florence, and a basic Italian dictionary.

Speaking of which, I can't wait to greet you all in the frescoed rooms of Palazzo Rucellai with a warm "Benvenuti a Firenze!" ("Welcome to Florence!").

Kindest regards,

Prof. Stefano U. Baldassarri, Ph.D.
Director



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1. Palazzo Rucellai Via della Vigna Nuova, 18 — 2. Palazzo Bargagli Lungarno delle Grazie, 22