

# From the Mediterranean with love

As the CEO of food manufacturer Mediterranean Delicacies, Costas Vayanos's role sees him visiting Europe three times a year to sample the gastronomic delights on offer from the different countries of the region.



“Europe is inspiring from a food perspective – so many cultures and food traditions in a relatively small geographical area. You cross a border from one country to the next, or one region to the next, and the food offering changes,” says Vayanos.

“I personally love the Mediterranean countries and the foods they offer, so I tend to travel in that part of Europe most often, both for vacations so I can enjoy good food, and for professional reasons.”

By "professional reasons" he means looking for new concepts and trends in Europe that can be translated into the South African market through the MediDeli brand, known for its dips and specialized deli products.

“We sometimes have to re-engineer products to suit the South African taste, but more often it's dictated by the raw materials available in South Africa versus in Europe,” explains Vayanos. He adds that that South Africans are well travelled and recognise good international foods, meaning that Mediterranean Delicacies seldom has to change MediDeli creations significantly to suit the South African market.

## Penchant for the south

With a particular passion for the southern Mediterranean countries, the CEO can be found most often in Spain, Italy, France and Greece.

"Southern Mediterranean food is fresh, it's outdoor, it's flavoursome. I love Greek and Middle Eastern food for its simplicity and spicy recipes – a simple meal at a Greek taverna on the Greek islands is hard to beat. No fancy dining needed. Simple décor. but great flavour and variety, using fresh ingredients from the area," states Vayanos. "And freshly baked bread," he adds. "There's nothing better than village baked bread."

And as for his particular favourite places, Vayanos says: "My most memorable experience gets repeated every time I visit Greece – a visit to a Greek taverna for pita bread, souvlaki, chips, Greek salad (tomato, cucumber and feta) and fresh xorta (or boiled greens) served with olive oil and lemon. A very simple meal enjoyed with family and friends – never disappoints!

"Spain, on the other hand, offers great seafood and tapas – my favourites for casual eating options. Then it's on to Italy – pasta, pizza; need I say more?"

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