

Paella, Pintxos & Protein

Part 2

While I was enjoying my break I read in a paper (well it was translated for me 😊) that the Basque people are the least sedentary out of the whole of Spain. They walk everywhere and it's impossible to get parking in the suburbs because, while there are a lot of cars, nobody uses them.

I couldn't believe how few cars there were in Bilbao city centre. I mean you can't even start to compare it to Dublin. One day I was driving with Anna and her sister in the car and her sister mentioned that it was rush hour – I tried to look for the traffic but everything was moving at a steady 60ks per hour, compare that with the M50!

I found that they are very active and every day before dinner we would go somewhere or do some sort of activity, not necessarily specific exercise, but we were constantly moving.

The next and probably healthiest habit that I observed was the fact that they shop every day and buy fresh meat, fish etc from the local shop and not a multi-national supermarket like we do.

The mothers cook a lot. But it is part of their culture and everyday for lunch the whole family will come home from work, school or wherever they were and enjoy a big meal together. Lunch is usually the main meal of the day in Spain which has huge benefits for keeping in shape.

You need most of your energy during the day so it makes sense to consume most of your energy during the day, doesn't it! I find with a lot of Irish people that they eat very little during the day and live off coffee and sugary snacks until they get home and have a massive meal where they eat most of their daily calories in one go. That's a recipe for gaining fat.

Even if all calories are equal someone eating 6 small meals a day will burn more fat compared to someone who only eats 2 large meals. Why? Because eating and digestion burn calories. Look at it like this:

If you light a fire what happens to it if you don't put fuel on it? It goes out, right?

Now look at your metabolism as a fire. What happens if you don't add fuel to your body?

It starts to slow down and burn fewer calories to conserve energy.

Your body is a machine, while it may be made up of bones and flesh, it still requires sufficient fuel (nutrients) to run optimally.

- Eat protein every 3-4 hours
- Eat a variety of vegetables and fruit
- Avoid sugar and processed foods
- Drink at the very minimum 2 litres of water a day
- Exercise (weights and cardio) often and with intensity

It really is as simple as that

Health, Success and Happiness,

John O'Connell