



The Mediterranean Diet

A healthy approach to an abundant way of life



Your life is our life's work.

The Mediterranean Diet

Truth be told, there's no one Mediterranean diet. However, the countries that border the Mediterranean Sea share similar ideas when it comes to food preparation and eating. So instead of being a typical "diet," the Mediterranean way of eating is actually a lifestyle that can be enjoyed forever. In the process, it may help you lose weight.

One more thing: the scientific community agrees that the Mediterranean diet is one of the world's healthiest ways to eat.

Research has shown that eating a Mediterranean style diet can:

- Lower your risk of heart attack and stroke.
- Reduce your chances of having a second stroke.
- Reduce total cholesterol levels.
- Lower LDL cholesterol (the bad kind).
- Raise HDL cholesterol (the good kind).
- Likely reduce the risk of dementia and memory problems.

The Mediterranean diet emphasizes:

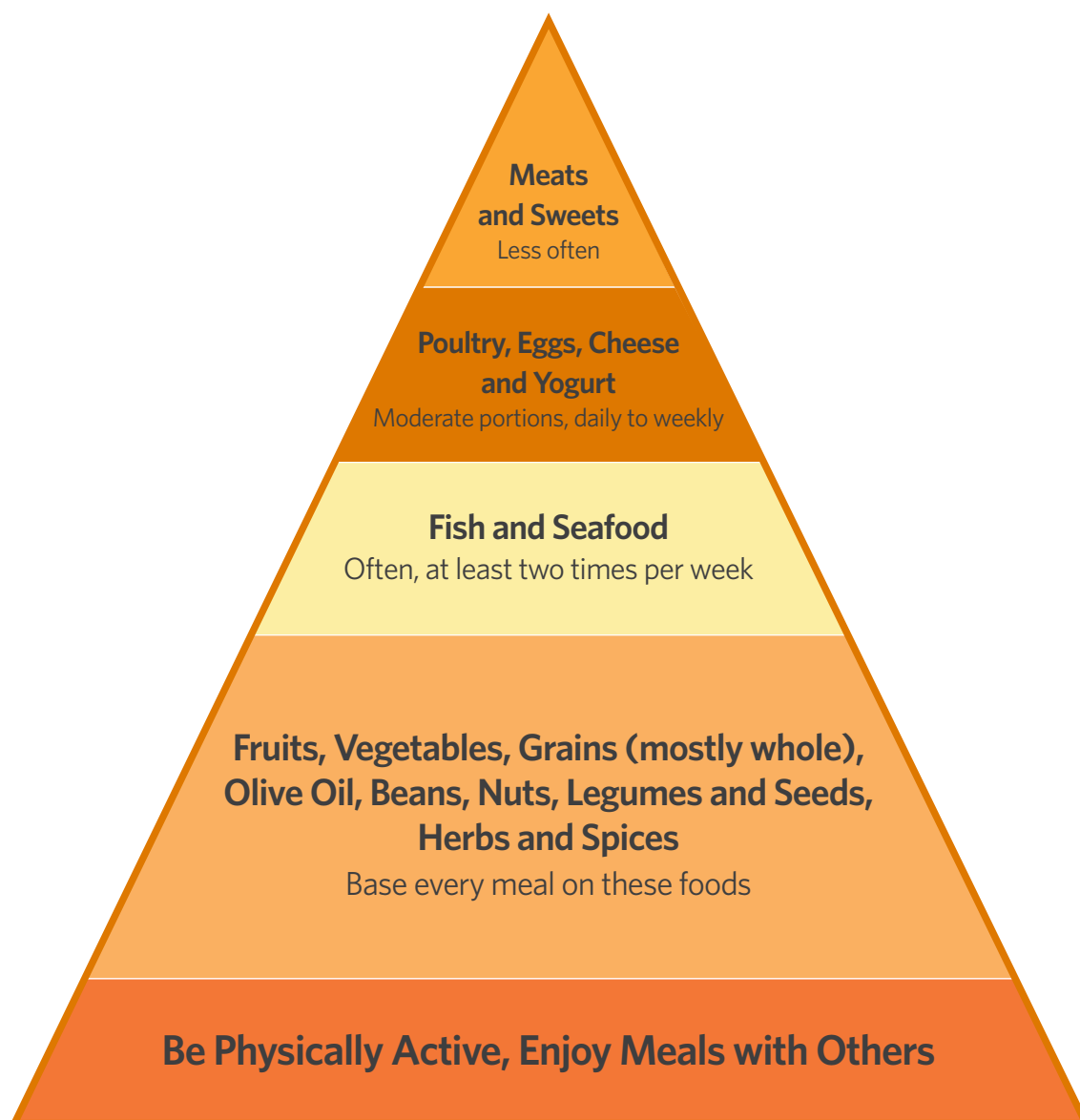
- Eating mostly plant-based foods such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, seeds, nuts and legumes.
- Olive oil as the main source of fat.
- Limited amounts of meats and sweets.
- Enjoying meals with family and friends.

The Mediterranean diet is a delicious and wholesome way to eat, especially when meals are shared around the table with friends and family.

Your New Food Pyramid

The Mediterranean diet can be split into foods you should eat often and those that call for moderation. Eat foods at the bottom of the pyramid several times a day. The higher you go up the pyramid, the less of these foods you should eat.

MEDITERRANEAN DIET PYRAMID



Source: © 2009 Oldways Preservation and Exchange Trust

Healthy and Tasty Food Choices

Fruits and vegetables: Fill your plate at every meal. Full of fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, fruits and vegetables are perhaps the best food you can possibly eat. Raw or steamed, fresh or frozen—colorful, nutrient-packed produce should play the main part of every meal.



Whole grains: A wholesome foundation. Foods like rice, whole grain pasta and bread provide fiber, B vitamins, phosphorus and magnesium—nutrients bodies need. Be sure to choose whole grain versions of bread and pasta and make sure they don't contain added sugar or trans fats.



Nuts and seeds: Grab a handful. Nuts and seeds are the rock stars of the Mediterranean diet. They provide heart-healthy fats, protein and fiber—quite the nutritional bang for your buck. Although all nuts are excellent, walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts and pecans provide the most benefits to the heart. Just be sure to choose salt-free or low sodium options and limit yourself to two tablespoons a day.





Legumes: A funny name for a super food. Legumes include peas, beans, chickpeas, lentils, soybeans and peanuts, for starters. They are easy to prepare and very affordable. So stock up and try some different recipes.

There's a whole world of reasons you should eat legumes. They are:

- High in fiber, to keep you feeling fuller and prevent constipation.
- Rich in insoluble fiber to help sweep bad cholesterol out of the body.
- An excellent source of protein when paired with whole grains.



Fish and shellfish: Swimming in benefits. Seafood contains unsaturated fats that can lower your cholesterol when you swap it for meat. Eating a minimum of one to two servings of fish a week appears to reduce the risk of heart disease.

Choose fatty fish with the highest omega-3 content, such as:

- Mackerel
- Lake trout
- Herring
- Sardines
- Salmon

The omega-3s found in fish are good for you in so many ways. They are considered anti-inflammatory because they reduce the swelling that causes damage to blood vessels. They can also help decrease triglycerides (stored fat), lower blood pressure, reduce blood clotting, decrease the risk for stroke and heart failure and reduce irregular heartbeats. If you want to get your omega-3s from supplements, check with your doctor first.

Good for Mind and Body

Olive oil: Good tasting, good for you.

Olive oil is one of the richest sources of monounsaturated fats found in nature. These fats are able to help lower your bad cholesterol (LDL) while keeping your body's level of good cholesterol (HDL) in check.

Stick to four tablespoons of olive oil throughout the day in your cooking and swap it for butter, margarine or salad dressing. Treat yourself to extra virgin olive oil for its high quality and delicious flavor.



Dairy: Enjoy in moderation.

When choosing dairy, make sure to pick fat free or low fat options. These contain less saturated fat, which can be hard on the heart. And remember that serving size matters.

A serving of dairy depends on the product:

- ½ cup milk
- 1 oz. cheese
- 6 oz. yogurt



Eggs: A little is a lot.

Enjoy your eggs, but limit them to no more than four per week. Try hard-boiled eggs instead of frying them.





Poultry: Keep it lean.

Choose this excellent protein source no more than once a day. A serving size is 3-4 ounces or about the size of a deck of cards.



Red meat: Make it a treat.

On the Mediterranean diet, red meat takes a backseat to other foods. Red meat is high in saturated fat that can increase your chance of suffering from heart-related problems. By limiting red meat to once or twice a month, you're doing your heart a favor. When you do choose to celebrate, choose leaner cuts and trim off all visible fat before eating.

Start eating healthier today...the Mediterranean way. And remember, you didn't create your eating habits in one day, so you aren't expected to change them overnight!

Mediterranean Diet – Three Day Sample Menu

| Day | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner | Snack |
|-----|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Yogurt Parfait: 6 oz Greek or fat free yogurt 1 cup fruit of choice ½ cup granola | Chicken Pesto Sandwich: 3 oz grilled chicken 1 whole wheat bun Lettuce, tomato pesto + fat free mayonnaise | Shrimp Stir-Fry: 3-4 oz shrimp 1 Tbsp olive oil 1 cup chopped vegetables 1 cup brown rice | 1 apple 2 Tbsp almond butter |
| 2 | Omelet: 1 whole egg + 2 egg whites 1 slice Swiss cheese ½ cup vegetables of choice | Salmon Salad: 2 cups spring mix ½ cup sweet corn 2 Tbsp shredded Italian cheese 3 oz grilled salmon 2 Tbsp vinaigrette dressing | Chicken Pasta: 1 cup whole wheat pasta 1 Tbsp olive oil 3 oz grilled chicken ½ cup red pasta sauce 1 cup vegetable of choice | 1 cup berries ½ cup yogurt (Greek or fat free) |
| 3 | Breakfast Waffle: 2 whole grain waffles or pancakes 2 Tbsp almond butter ½ cup strawberries | Fish Filet: 3 oz grilled or baked fish (salmon, tilapia) 1 medium sweet potato topped with sautéed vegetables and Greek yogurt | Chicken Kabob: 3 oz chicken, cubed ¼ cup pineapple 1 cup vegetables of choice 2 Tbsp olive oil + spices, skewered and grilled | ¼ cup hummus 1 cup vegetables of choice |



Mediterranean Diet – Sample Recipes

Hummus

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 can (15 oz or 425 g) garbanzo beans, drained with liquid reserved
½ cup (125 mL) tahini
¼ cup (60 mL) lemon juice
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 Tbsp (5 mL) cumin
½ cup (125 mL) olive oil
¼ Tbsp (1.25 mL) kosher or sea salt
¼ Tbsp (1.25 mL) ground black pepper

Directions

In food processor or blender, add all ingredients. Blend ingredients until smooth, adding reserved liquid as needed to make creamier.

Multigrain Pancakes or Waffles

Makes 4-5 waffles or 10-12 large pancakes.

Ingredients

2 cups (500 mL) whole wheat flour (use whole wheat pastry flour for lighter waffles)
1 cup (250 mL) old fashioned oats (rolled oats)
½ cup (125 mL) 10-, or 12-grain hot cereal (Bob's Red Mill is a commonly available brand)
½ cup (125 mL) wheat germ
1 Tbsp (30 mL) baking powder
½ Tbsp (2.5 mL) baking soda
½ Tbsp (2.5 mL) kosher or sea salt
1 cup (250 mL) chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)
½ cup (125 mL) applesauce
1 cup (250 mL) egg substitute or egg whites
¼ cup (60 mL) extra virgin olive oil
1 ½ cup (375 mL) skim, soy, or almond milk; if needed, may add extra milk 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
at a time to maintain batter consistency
½ Tbsp (2.5 mL) vanilla extract

Directions

Combine dry ingredients (flour, oats, cereal, wheat germ, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and nuts) in large bowl and blend together. Next, add egg, olive oil, applesauce and milk. Stir until batter reaches an even consistency and then gradually add any additional milk so it's easy to ladle. Ladle batter onto non-stick griddle or waffle iron.

Simple Fruit Crisp

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

10 oz (285 g) fresh or frozen blueberries
16 oz (450 g) fresh or frozen peaches, sliced
¼ (60 mL) Cup apple juice
½ cup (125 mL) almonds
½ cup (125 mL) oats
1 cup (250 mL) pitted dates
½ Tbsp (1.25 mL) cinnamon
2 Tbsp (30 mL) apple juice
¼ cup (60 mL) pecans

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Place blueberries in the bottom of an 8-in (20 cm) square baking dish. Place peaches on top of blueberries. Drizzle ¼ cup (60 mL) apple juice over fruit.
2. In a food processor, puree almonds, oats, date and cinnamon. After 1 minute add apple juice and continue to puree. Evenly spread mixture over fruit and top with pecans.
3. Bake uncovered.

COOKING BEANS 101

As eating enough beans is so crucial to following the Mediterranean diet, it is just as important to know how to prepare them. If you can't cook it, there's no way you will be able to enjoy it.

Fortunately, cooking beans can be as easy as 1-2-3.

- 1) Soak your beans overnight
- 2) Combine drained beans with water (use 2 cups of water for every cup of beans)
- 3) Simmer on low-medium heat for 45 minutes-2 hours

Note: Chickpeas need a little more water - use 3 cups water for every cup of beans



Your life is our life's work.