

# The Mediterranean Diet

## The Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet is an eating pattern based upon the foods grown around the Mediterranean Sea.

### Common Foods Included in the Mediterranean Diet

- **Vegetables:**  
artichokes, arugula, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, celery, celeriac, chicory, collard greens, cucumbers, dandelion greens, eggplant, fennel, kale, leeks, lettuce, mache, mushrooms, mustard greens, nettles, okra, onions (red, sweet, white), peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkin, purslane, radishes, rutabaga, scallions, shallots, spinach, sweet potatoes, turnips, zucchini
- **Fruits (no fruit juice):**  
apples, apricots, avocados, cherries, clementines, dates, figs, grapefruits, grapes, melons, nectarines, olives, oranges, peaches, pears, pomegranates, strawberries, tangerines, tomatoes
- **Grains (mostly whole grains):**  
wheat, oats, rice, rye, barley, corn
- **Olives and olive oil**
- **Nuts, beans, legumes and seeds:**  
almonds, cannellini beans, chickpeas, cashews, fava beans, green beans, hazelnuts, kidney beans, lentils, pine nuts, pistachios, sesame seeds, split peas, tahini sauce, walnuts

- **Herbs and spices:**  
anise, basil, bay leaf, chiles, cloves, cumin, fennel, garlic, lavender, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, pepper, pul biber, rosemary, sage, savory, sumac, tarragon, thyme, za'atar
- **Cheese and yogurt:**  
brie, chevre, corvo, feta, haloumi, manchego, Parmigiano-Reggiano, pecorino, ricotta, yogurt (including Greek yogurt)
- **Fish and shellfish:**  
abalone, clams, cockles, crab, eel, flounder, lobster mackerel, mussels, octopus, oysters, salmon, sardines, sea bass, shrimp, squid, tilapia, tuna, whelk, yellowtail
- **Eggs:**  
chicken, duck and quail eggs
- **Meat:**  
beef, chicken, duck, goat, guinea fowl, lamb, mutton, pork
- **Water**
- **Wine (in moderation)**

## How to Follow the Mediterranean Diet

### 1. Eat mostly plants.

Try to eat an even amount of vegetables and fruits each day — they're packed with nutrition. Eat them steamed, raw, roasted or grilled.

### 2. Use herbs and spices to season your foods.

Herbs and spices add flavor to your foods without adding many (if any) calories. Try an Italian herb blend on chicken or a sprinkle of cinnamon on yogurt.

*(over)*

### 3. Choose whole grains and legumes.

Look for “100% whole grain” in the ingredients list and avoid any products containing “enriched flour.” Whole grains and legumes are packed with minerals, vitamins and fiber.

### 4. Skip low-nutrient foods.

Heavily processed foods such as chips, candy and ice cream add a lot of calories without providing much nutrition. Avoid these foods as much as possible.

### 5. Choose healthful fats.

Good sources of healthful fats include olive oil, nuts and fatty fish (salmon, tuna, halibut, herring, sardines). Avoid products that list “hydrogenated oils” (trans fats) in the ingredients list.

### 6. Choose lean proteins.

Good sources of lean protein include skinless chicken and turkey, eggs, and lean beef and pork (loins or chuck). Include fish in 2 to 3 of your meals each week. Limit beef to less than 3 ounces each week.

### 7. Chew each bite thoroughly.

Eat slowly and savor your food. It takes time for your brain to realize your stomach is full. Try doing the following to slow down your pace:

- Don't multitask. Set the table, turn off the TV and focus on your food.
- Use smaller utensils. This will force you to take smaller bites.
- Put your utensils down between bites.
- Pay attention to the different tastes and textures of your food as you chew.

### 8. Drink plenty of water.

If you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated. Keep a refillable water bottle with you throughout the day to make sure you're drinking enough. You're well hydrated when your urine is pale yellow to clear in color.

### 9. Drink alcohol in moderation.

Women may drink up to one 5-ounce glass of wine each day. Men may drink up to two 5-ounces glasses of wine each day.

## Sample 1-day Meal Plan

This is only a sample meal plan. Talk with your primary care provider or dietitian for more specific recommendations.

#### ■ Breakfast:

- Yogurt parfait: 1 cup fat-free vanilla Greek yogurt with blueberries or strawberries
- 1 cup water, coffee or unsweetened green tea

#### ■ Midmorning snack:

- 1 piece whole fruit such as an apple or orange

#### ■ Lunch:

- Salad: spinach, kale, colorful vegetables, 3 ounces grilled chicken, 1 tablespoon balsamic vinaigrette, and 1 tablespoon walnuts or feta cheese
- 1 slice of 100% whole-grain bread

#### ■ Afternoon snack:

- 2 ounces almonds

#### ■ Dinner:

- 4 ounces grilled wild-caught salmon
- ¼ cup whole-wheat couscous or quinoa
- 2 cups roasted broccoli and carrots drizzled with 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup fresh fruit

This sample meal plan provides: 1,500 calories, 56 grams fat (mostly heart healthy), 153 grams carbohydrate, 29 grams fiber, 98 grams protein, 120 milligrams (mg) cholesterol, 700 mg calcium and 2,300 mg sodium.

**Information adapted from  
Oldways Preservation Trust.**