

The Mediterranean Diet

A healthy diet for a healthy body

Why should I follow the Mediterranean diet?

It might sound like another fad diet, but the truth is that the foods that make up the Mediterranean diet are naturally healthy. Plus, this plan helps to balance your diet, provides fiber, and can help manage your weight. These last two benefits can also have a positive impact on your gastrointestinal health!

What makes this diet special?

There's really nothing special about this diet, except when following these guidelines you will be cutting out the typical "junk" foods. And while we can't recreate the Mediterranean lifestyle here in the US, increasing your physical activity and taking some time to reduce stress will help you get closer to that way of life. This diet encourages a high intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein sources.

Following a Mediterranean diet plan has been shown to reduce the risks of developing certain diseases, as well as helping to manage them. This includes heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

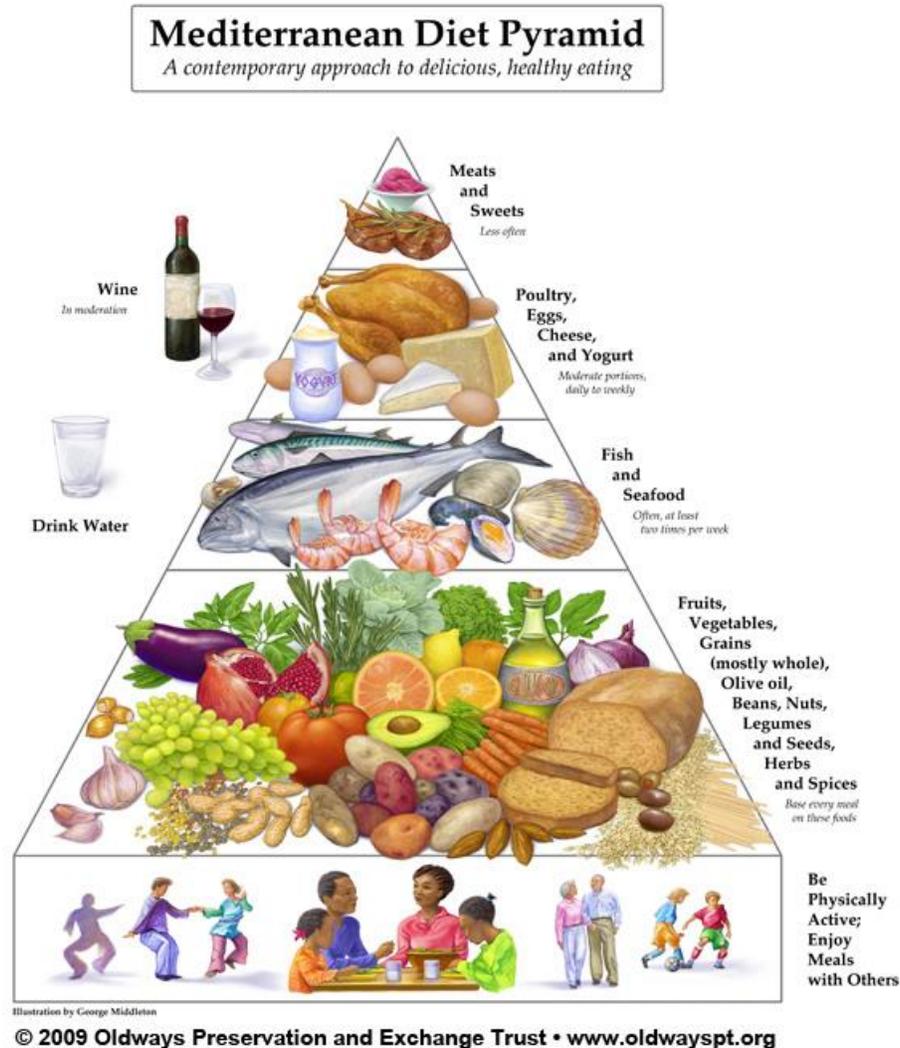
What does the Mediterranean diet look like?

This diet doesn't follow the typical American food groups and portions. Instead, it's a meal plan based on traditional Mediterranean food practices. Since some of the foods we have in the US are different from what you might find in a country bordering the Mediterranean, but you may be surprised to find many of these in your regular grocery store.

- Fruits- Contain potassium, which helps control blood pressure. Also a good source of fiber. Eat at every meal.
- Vegetables- These are packed with fiber, which helps with GI health. Eat a variety of colors at every meal.
- Grains- Choose whole grains most often. Eat at every meal.
- Dairy- Milk isn't consumed with this diet. Instead try Greek yogurt (or regular if you prefer) and cheese. A portion of cheese is 1 ounce. About the size of 2 dice. Eat moderately during the week.
- Protein- Beans and lentils are eaten daily. These provide a good source of fiber, which is good for GI health. Fish and seafood should be eaten at least twice a week. This provides omega-3 fatty acids, which are good for heart health. Poultry and eggs are

consumed moderately through the week. Red meat is consumed less frequently (12-16 ounces per month).

- Fats- Olive oil is the primary fat used with the Mediterranean diet. Heart healthy fats are also found in nuts, seeds, avocado, and olives. Just be mindful of the sodium content of nuts, seeds, and olives. Go with unsalted whenever possible.



What are some healthy traditional Mediterranean foods I can try?

- Grains: bulgur, oats, buckwheat, rice, farro, millet, barley
- Vegetables: eggplant, broccoli, carrots, mushrooms, peppers, beets, artichokes, cucumbers, peas, potatoes, spinach, pumpkin, zucchini
 - Cooked vegetables are often prepared drizzled with olive oil. Either baked in the oven or prepared on a grill.
- Fruits: dates, figs, pomegranates, olives, avocado, oranges, apricots

- Legumes (a fancy word for beans and lentils): chickpeas, cannellini beans, fava beans, kidney beans, lentils, sesame seeds, walnuts, pine nuts, almonds
- Olive Oil: extra virgin olive oil
- Dairy- feta, haloumi, goat cheese, brie, ricotta, Greek yogurt
- Fish and Seafood: sardines, octopus, oysters, shrimp, mackerel

For more information check out Oldways (the creator of the Mediterranean Pyramid) at <http://oldwayspt.org> and for more on this diet, recipes, and ingredient swaps, check out OliveTomato at <http://www.olivetomato.com>