



The Mediterranean Diet

It's More Than a Diet, It's a Way of Living



The Mediterranean Diet is a lifestyle for many. While the diet emphasizes the consumption of whole foods, the focus is equally on living a balanced and healthy life that also prioritizes social eating and physical activity. Key features of this diet include eating and shopping locally, having regular meal times with friends and family,

incorporating casual to strenuous exercise daily like biking or walking to the local market, and taking time out of the day to nap and enjoy life. The food is colorful and includes a variety of textures and cooking methods (both cooked and raw fruits and vegetables are encouraged). Whole grains are emphasized and olives, nuts, seeds, and low fat dairy are consumed every day and olive oil, herbs, spices, and garlic provide flavor to this diet while using less added salt. Red meats, sugar, and processed foods are eaten very rarely while seasonality and local food systems are highlighted.

How to Get Started Today

Start choosing healthy foods by basing every meal around vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, and flavorful herbs and spices. Choose healthy fats like olive oil, nuts, avocados, and fish. Look for lean protein sources like seafood, chicken, and beans while limiting red meat and sweets and avoiding processed food. Dairy such as yogurt and low fat cheese can be consumed in small portions daily and wine can be enjoyed in moderation. And don't forget to increase physical and social activities!

Why Go Mediterranean?

The Mediterranean Diet May Reduce the Risk Of:

- Cardiovascular Disease¹
- Diabetes²
- Metabolic Syndrome¹
- Neuro-degenerative Diseases¹

Also May Lower:

- Blood Pressure^{1,3}
- Reduce Inflammation⁴
- Body Weight¹
- LDL Cholesterol



The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

Red Meats and Sweets These are considered “sometimes foods” and should be eaten rarely. When eaten, select lean meats and enjoy sweets on special occasions or for an occasional treat.

Yogurt, Cheese, Poultry, and Eggs This food group can be eaten several times per week in moderation. Cheese, for example, can be eaten several times per week in small portions.

Fish and Seafood provide an important source of protein for the diet. Tuna, herring, salmon, and sardines are a healthy source of omega-3 fatty acids which are essential for optimal health.

Whole Grains, Fruits, Vegetables, Beans, Herbs, and Healthy Fats This section is the largest component of the diet and every meal should consist mostly of these foods. Olive oil is another example of an omega-3 containing healthy fat and is used in cooking and for flavoring vegetables and salads as a dressing.

Physical Activity This is the foundation of The Mediterranean diet. Daily exercise is emphasized and should include strenuous activities such as running or aerobics, casual activities like walking or yard work, or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Physical activity and socialization with friends and family is a key component in the Mediterranean lifestyle and important for overall good health.

Water and Wine Water intake should be 6 or more glasses per day. Adequate hydration is important for proper health, well-being, and energy levels. Wine can be consumed in moderation. The diet guidelines allow for one small glass per day for women and two small glasses per day for men.

Serving Recommendations Eat 3-4 servings of a variety of fruits and vegetables, and 1-2 servings of whole grains and olive oil with every meal. Eat 1-2 servings of low fat dairy, olives, nuts, and seeds as well as herbs and spices every day. Have 2 servings of fish and seafood, 2 servings of white meat, and 2-4 servings of eggs and legumes per week. Limit red meat, processed meat, and sweets to 1 serving or less per week. Lastly, drink plenty of water throughout the day.

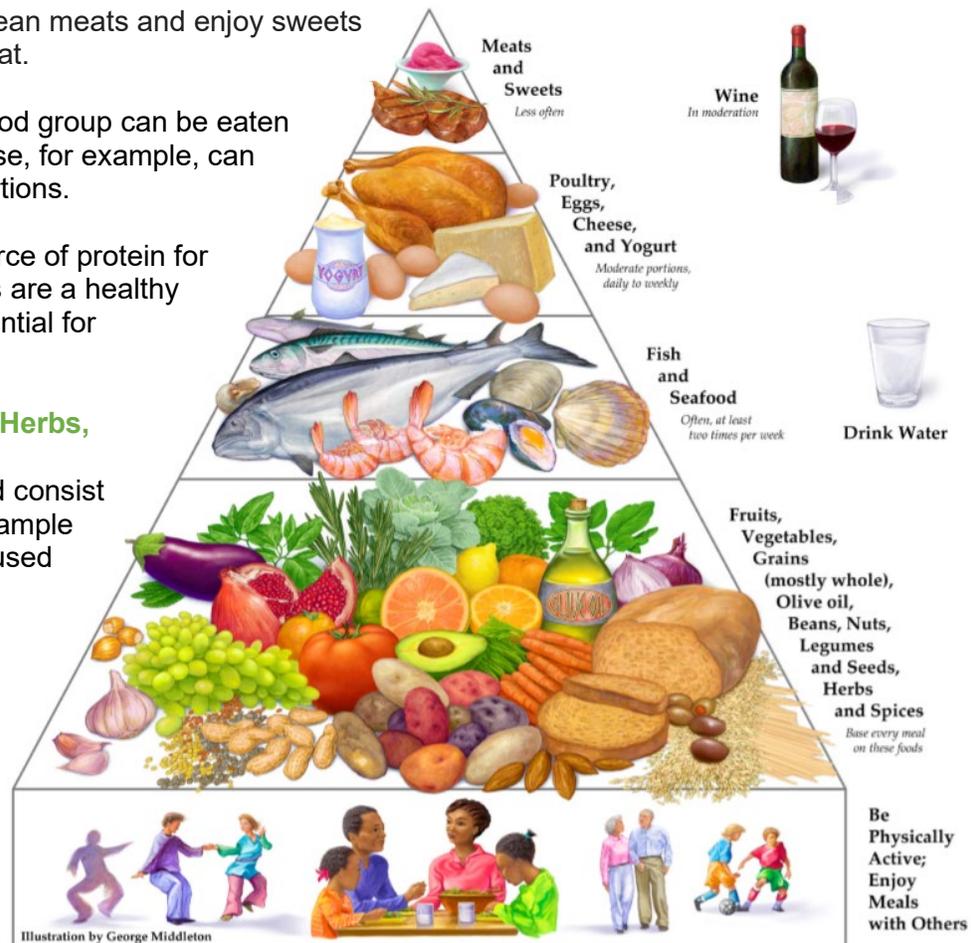


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www.oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets/mediterranean-diet

References

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