

What is the Mediterranean Diet?

It is a life-long way of healthy eating instead of a strict diet plan. Scientists have found that people who lived around the Mediterranean Sea had some of the lowest rates of heart disease in the world and also tend to live longer. The people in this part of the world eat mostly plant-based foods, limit red meats, eat more fish and poultry, eat lower fat dairy products, and use healthy fats from oils.



Would it be a good eating plan for me to follow?

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend the Mediterranean Diet Plan for good health and disease prevention. Research shows that following the Mediterranean Diet Plan reduces your risk of heart disease. The plan may also prevent cancer, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

What foods should I eat?

Some of the food groups have recommended amounts.



Include these foods **Daily**

Food group	Amount recommended	Choose	Reason to eat the food
Fruits and vegetables 	Total of 7-10 servings [1 cup raw or ½ cup cooked]	A variety of fresh fruits and vegetables Minimally processed Bright colored are best	Antioxidants that reduce inflammation and lower risk of diseases. Fiber Vitamins and minerals
Grains (mainly whole-grain breads and cereals)		Bread, cereals, rice, pasta, grains (quinoa, barley, couscous)	Fiber Vitamins and minerals
Legumes/beans		Dried beans, lentils and peas	Protein Fiber
Nuts and seeds	Limit to a handful a day	Unsalted nuts and seeds	Heart healthy fats
Healthier fat		Extra virgin olive oil	Healthier fat to replace saturated fats which can increase the risk for heart disease.
Lower fat dairy	Moderate amount	Fat-free milk, fat-free yogurt and low-fat cheese	Protein Calcium and Vitamin D
Herbs and spices 		All herbs and spices	Use herbs and spices to flavor foods to reduce the use of salt/sodium. A high sodium diet can lead to high blood pressure.

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Include throughout the Week

Food group	Amount recommended	Choose	Reason to eat the food
Fish and Poultry 	Daily to several times a week Try to eat fish at least 6 ounces or the size of 2 decks of cards or 2 checkbooks per week	Fatty fish (salmon, tuna, sardines, mackerel and trout) Skinless chicken or turkey breast Mostly fresh or frozen without breading	Fish contains Omega-3 fatty acids which can help reduce risk for heart disease. Skinless poultry is lower in saturated fat than red meat. Protein
Eggs	Limit to 4 whole eggs per week.	Unlimited egg whites	Protein
Red wine	If you don't drink alcohol don't start drinking Men over 65 and women are advised to <u>limit</u> red wine to 1 drink a day (5 ounces total) Healthy men 65 and younger <u>limit</u> red wine to 2 (5 ounce) drinks a day	Red wine 	Red wine contains antioxidants which may limit or prevent build-up of plaque in arteries.

Limit these Foods

Food items	Amount recommended	Choose	Reason to limit
Red meat-beef and pork Processed meats (bacon, cold cuts, sausage, and canned meat)	Small amount several times per month	Lean meat and cuts. <u>Beef</u> -lean ground beef 90% or more, and top sirloin, top round, and bottom round roasts and steaks <u>Pork</u> -loin and sirloin chop, tenderloin, and cured ham	Red meats contain more saturated fat which increases risk for heart disease. Processed meats are high in sodium. A high sodium diet can lead to high blood pressure.

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Limit these Foods

Food items	Amount recommended	Choose	Reason to limit
Foods with added sugars (candy, cakes, cookies, pies, dairy desserts, regular soda, fruit drinks and refined processed grain products like snack bars)		Eat fresh fruit instead of sweets Drink water or diet soda instead of regular soda, fruit juice and sport drinks	Added sugars, if eaten in large amounts, add extra calories which can lead to weight gain. Higher body weight increases risk for diseases.

Sample Menu

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch	Snack	Dinner	Snack
Oatmeal Strawberries, fresh Skim milk 	Fresh fruit	Large salad with mixed greens and vegetables Olive oil dressing 2 ounces of low fat cheese Whole grain roll Water 	Fresh fruit Peanuts, small handful 	3 ounces salmon, baked Brown rice Broccoli Tomato, onion, cucumber salad seasoned with herbs and olive oil Small glass of red wine	Low-fat yogurt and fresh fruit 

Baked Salmon

Ingredients:

- 4 (4 ounce) salmon fillets
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup white wine or low sodium chicken broth
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried tarragon

Yield: 4 servings

Recipe modified from: www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/baked-salmon

Directions:

- 1) Place salmon fillets in a 9x9 baking dish. Brush with olive oil.
- 2) Combine remaining ingredients; pour over salmon. Put in refrigerator for an hour to marinate fish.
- 3) Pre-heat oven to 425°. Bake fish, uncovered for 20-25 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork.

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The Mediterranean style of eating can be a very simple way of eating. To add variety to your meals and snacks here are some websites and a book that might be helpful:

<http://www.diabetes.org/mfa-recipes/meal-plans/mediterranean>

www.oldwayspt.org

<http://webmd.com/heart-disease/ss/slideshow-12-reasons-to-love-the-mediterranean-diet>

Mediterranean Diet Cookbook for Dummies by Meri Raffetto, RD and Wendy Jo Peterson, MS, RD

Eating Behaviors and Activity are other things to consider:

Beside the specific foods eaten the people who live in the Mediterranean cultures have a style of eating as well. They tend to do the following:

- Take time eating with family and friends and savor the food
- Eat moderate not large portions
- Be more aware of hunger level and don't overeat

People in Mediterranean cultures also tend to be more active and watch less television.

The Mediterranean diet is a healthy style of eating and is worth considering as a way to help reduce your risk of various diseases.

References

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- “Heart Disease Health Center Mediterranean Diet-Topic Overview.” WebMD. 14 Nov. 2014.
<<http://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/tc/mediterranean-diet-topic-overview>>.
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- Ohlson, Melissa. “Mediterranean Diet.” Cleveland Clinic. Dec. 2013. Web. 2 June.2016.
<<http://my.clevelandclinic.org/services/heart/prevention/nutrition/healthy-diet/mediterranean-diet>>.

For more nutrition information or to speak with a Registered Dietitian, call

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