

All about the Mediterranean Diet

What is the Mediterranean diet?

An eating pattern and lifestyle based on the traditional diet and regular physical activity of Mediterranean countries like Greece, Spain and Italy.¹

This eating pattern is focused on eating mostly plant foods, along with an abundance of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO), which is the primary source of fat in the diet.^{1,2,3}

Research suggests that the Mediterranean diet may support heart health, mental well-being, and healthy weight management.^{1,4,5}

Sharing meals with others is an important part of the Mediterranean Diet. Research shows that eating together can boost your mood and help you enjoy a healthier, more positive relationship with food.^{6,7}

Including regular physical activity is also an important part of the Mediterranean diet. This can be through activities like walking, swimming, gardening, gym training, bike rides, as well as sports and games.

Foods to eat and limit when following a Mediterranean Diet

Eat Most

Plants

- Make plants the star of your plate. Aim to fill about three-quarters of your plate with plant foods like veggies, fruits, beans, or grains, and the rest with animal foods like fish, chicken, eggs, or dairy.⁸
- Mix it up. Choose a variety of colorful, seasonal fruits and vegetables, plus beans, lentils, whole grains, nuts, and seeds.^{1,9}
- Add flavor naturally. Use herbs and spices instead of relying on extra salt, sugar, or butter.^{1,10}



EVOO

- Use extra virgin olive oil as your main cooking oil.
- Aim for about 2–3 tablespoons each day (that's roughly the amount you'd drizzle on a salad or use for cooking).¹²
- You can cook with EVOO in lots of ways: use it for roasting veggies, baking, sautéing, grilling, or just drizzling over a salad.^{12,13}

EVOO adds healthy fats, antioxidants and biophenols to meals.^{12,13,14}



Eat Sometimes

Fish, white meat, eggs & dairy

- Eat fish or seafood about two times a week—great choices include salmon, tuna, shrimp, or sardines.
- Enjoy chicken, eggs, and dairy foods in moderation.^{8,10}
- When choosing dairy, try fermented options like yogurt, which can be good for your gut.^{8,10}



Eat Least

Red Meat

- If you include meat in your diet, try using smaller portions, no more than once per week.
- Consider it more as a flavoring or garnish rather than the centerpiece of your meal, or simply choose a reduced serving size for your main dish.⁸
- High intakes of red meat are associated with an increased risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer.¹



Highly Processed Foods

- Avoid confectionary, chips, soft drinks and processed meats.¹
- These foods are associated with an increased risk of chronic disease.¹⁵



The Mediterranean Diet: Good for Your Body and Mind

Type 2 Diabetes Research shows this way of eating can help prevent and manage Type 2 Diabetes.^{11,16}

- Lowers the risk of developing diabetes.^{17,18}
- Supports better blood sugar control.^{17,19}
- Improves insulin sensitivity.^{18,20}

Heart Health

Studies show people in Southern Europe have lower heart disease rates when following a traditional Mediterranean lifestyle.¹

Benefits may include:

- Lower “bad” LDL cholesterol.^{21,22}
- Higher “good” HDL cholesterol.^{21,22}
- Lower blood pressure and inflammation.^{21,22}

Mental Health

The Mediterranean diet may improve gut health and mood.⁴

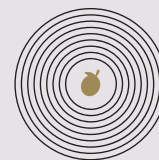
It's linked to:

- Lower risk of depression.²³
- Better brain health in older adults and lower risk of Alzheimer's.²⁴

Weight Management

High-fiber, high-protein, and low-glycemic foods help you feel full longer.⁵

Research shows this diet doubles the chances of keeping weight off over 2–5 years.⁵



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