



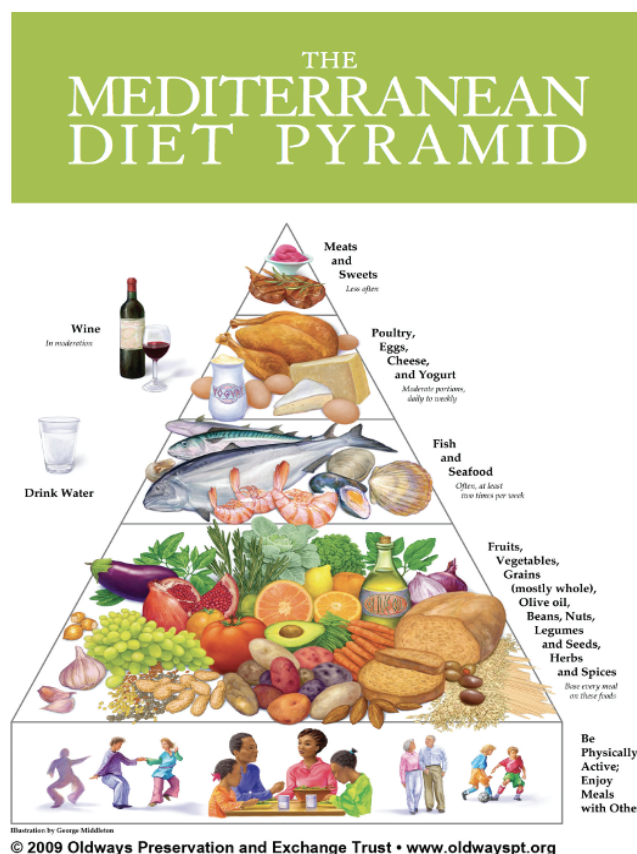
THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

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Once again, the Mediterranean Diet has been voted the “Best Diet Overall” by U.S. News & World Report! But, if you’re not familiar with this way of eating, you may be surprised to learn that it’s so much more than just a typical “diet”!

The Mediterranean diet is based on the traditional eating habits in the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. A few of these include Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Libya. The Mediterranean Diet is not a diet; there is no emphasis on weight loss or body image. Instead, the focus is on the type, quantity, and quality of food as well as on being physically active and enjoying meals with loved ones. It’s an overall dietary pattern.

Meals should be based around fruits, vegetables, legumes/beans, whole grains, nuts, and seeds. Olive oil is the primary source of fat. Fish and seafood should be consumed at least twice per week. Eat moderate portions of poultry, dairy, cheese, and eggs. Red meat, saturated fat, and added sugars should be consumed the least often. Red wine is included, but stick to 1 glass per day; however, if you don’t already drink alcohol, no need to start. Drinking alcohol may also not be the best idea if you have certain medical conditions or take certain medications. Always talk to your doctor or dietitian if you have questions.



You may be thinking, why should I follow this diet? Here are a few of the benefits of the Mediterranean diet:

- **Heart Health:** lowers the risk of heart disease and stroke, can help maintain healthy cholesterol levels, and can reduce the risk of high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.
- **Protection from disease:** research suggests that this diet reduces risk of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, and cancer.
- **Diabetes:** fiber is digested slowly and prevents huge fluctuations in blood sugar.
- **Weight loss:** a dietary pattern containing healthy whole foods can help you maintain or lose weight.

In addition to these benefits, the foods included in the Mediterranean diet are packed with essential vitamins and minerals, such as iron, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12, folic acid, choline, and omega-3 fatty acids.

Here are some foods found in the Mediterranean Diet that contain good amounts of the nutrients just mentioned:

Iron

- Shellfish
- Spinach
- Legumes
- Pumpkin seeds
- Quinoa
- Turkey
- Broccoli

Vitamin D

- Salmon
- Herring and sardines
- Canned tuna
- Egg yolks
- Fortified milk, soy milk, orange juice, and cereal

Vitamin B12

- Clams
- Sardines
- Fortified cereal & nondairy milk
- Fortified milk, soy milk, orange juice, and cereal

Calcium

- Seeds (poppy, sesame, chia seeds)
- Cheese
- Yogurt
- Milk
- Sardines and canned salmon
- Beans and lentils
- Almonds
- Edamame
- Broccoli and leafy greens
- Tuna
- Nutritional yeast
- Dairy products
- Egg yolks
- Salmon and trout

Choline

- Chicken
- Salmon
- Egg yolks
- Shrimp
- Navy beans
- Broccoli
- Green peas

Omega-3 fatty acids

- Mackerel
- Salmon
- Cod liver oil
- Herring
- Oysters
- Sardines
- Soybeans
- Chia seeds
- Walnuts

Folic Acid

- Beans, chickpeas, lentils, dried peas
- Asparagus
- Leafy greens
- Beets
- Citrus fruits
- Brussel sprouts and broccoli