

# Mediterranean Diet

## What is the Mediterranean Diet?

The Mediterranean diet is a lifestyle that emphasizes eating fruits, veggies, whole grains, beans, nuts, legumes, olive oil, and flavorful herbs and spices; fish and seafood at least a couple of times a week; and poultry, eggs, cheese and yogurt in moderation, while saving sweets and red meat for special occasions. Top it off with a splash of red wine, and remembering to stay physically active.

For weight loss it is recommended to follow a 1500 calorie diet for a 1-2 pound weekly weight loss. This can be altered depending on how aggressively a person wants to lose weight.

## How to Eat:

- **Eat your veggies and fruits** — and switch to whole grains. An abundance and variety of plant foods should make up the majority of your meals. Strive for seven to 10 servings a day of veggies and fruits. Switch to whole-grain bread and cereal and begin to eat more whole-grain rice and pasta products.
- **Go nuts.** Keep almonds, cashews, pistachios and walnuts on hand for a quick snack. Choose natural peanut butter, rather than the kind with hydrogenated fat added. Try tahini (blended sesame seeds) as a dip or spread for bread.
- **Pass on the butter.** Try olive or canola oil as a healthy replacement for butter or margarine. Use it in cooking. Dip bread in flavored olive oil or lightly spread it on whole-grain bread for a tasty alternative to butter. Or try tahini as a dip or spread.
- **Spice it up.** Herbs and spices make food tasty and are also rich in health-promoting substances. Season your meals with herbs and spices rather than salt.
- **Go fish.** Eat fish once or twice a week. Fresh or water-packed tuna, salmon, trout, mackerel and herring are healthy choices. Grilled fish tastes good and requires little cleanup. Avoid fried fish, unless it's sautéed in a small amount of canola oil.
- **Rein in the red meat.** Substitute fish and poultry for red meat. When eaten, make sure it's lean and keep portions small (about the size of a deck of cards). Also avoid sausage, bacon and other high-fat meats.
- **Choose low-fat dairy.** Limit higher fat dairy products such as whole or 2 percent milk, cheese and ice cream. Switch to skim milk, fat-free yogurt and low-fat cheese.
- **Raise a glass to healthy eating.** If it's OK with your doctor, have a glass of wine at dinner. If you don't drink alcohol, you don't need to start. Drinking purple grape juice may be an alternative to wine. 5oz of wine daily for women and 10 oz daily for men under the age of 65.
- **Drink your water!** Drinking a minimum of 64oz of water daily will help to flush toxins and keep your body hydrated and healthy.

## Tips for Success:

It is always a good idea to shop at the perimeter of the store. That is usually where the whole, more natural foods are. Always try to choose the least-processed option.

There is need to eat more than 3 meals per day, but healthy snack options are listed below:

- A handful of nuts
- A piece of fruit
- Carrots or baby carrots
- Some berries or grapes
- Leftovers from the night before
- Greek yogurt
- Apple slices with almond butter



# Mediterranean Diet ... continued

## Exercise:

A typical exercise prescription can be written using the FITT mnemonic.

- **F – Frequency:** Number of days per week (ideally five or more)
- **I – Intensity:** Moderate or greater (moderate = too winded to sing but can talk with exercise) – brisk walk, run, stairs, bicycle, elliptical, swim at 60-80% maximum heart rate. Use a pedometer that tracks your steps and heart rate. To calculate your maximum heart rate by subtracting 220 – your age (40 y/o ex:  $220 - 40 = 180$ , your workout heart rate should be between 108 to 144).
- **T – Time:** Number of minutes per session (at least 30 minutes a day, 5-7 days a week)
- **T – Type:** Activities that involve major muscle groups