

DIETITIAN'S DISH

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY:
YOUR MGH WEIGHT CENTER REGISTERED DIETITIANS



DEEP DIVE INTO THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET
RETHINK YOUR DRINK
TIPS TO START YOUR OWN OUTDOOR GARDEN
PRODUCE IN SEASON

What is the Mediterranean Diet?

In this article, we embark on a journey to explore the Mediterranean diet, a time-honored culinary tradition celebrated for its delicious flavors and profound health benefits.



Where it all Began

The Mediterranean Diet, rooted in the region surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, isn't just about food—it's a way of life with a rich history. Studies show it's great for your health, from supporting heart health to managing blood sugar levels. Embracing this lifestyle could be your ticket to a healthier, happier you!

Foundations of the Mediterranean Diet

- Abundance of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts and seeds
- Olive oil is the principal source of fat
- Low-fat to no-fat cheese and yogurt in moderate amounts
- Fish and lean poultry in moderate amounts
- Red meat is infrequently consumed
- No consumption of processed and ultra-processed foods
- Red wine in moderation (if you don't drink, don't start!)

Nutrition of the Mediterranean Diet

Carbohydrates in the Mediterranean Diet

Roughly 45-60% of the diet consists of carbohydrates, with approximately 80% of these being complex carbohydrates. These include whole grains like brown rice, whole wheat bread and pasta, quinoa, among others. These complex carbohydrates have loads of fiber, which help the digestive system stay regular, stabilize blood sugar levels, and are harder to digest, keeping you fuller for longer.

Protein in the Mediterranean Diet

Protein is one of the most important macronutrients for your body! Protein has amino acids that are the building blocks of muscle and help keep you strong to power through your day. Protein also helps keep you fuller for longer to prevent you from overeating. Approximately 10-25% of the Mediterranean diet is protein, 60% of it being lean meat and fish. Great sources of protein are cold-water fatty fish like salmon and mackerel (great source of omega 3!), and lean poultry like turkey and chicken.

Fat in the Mediterranean Diet

Fat adds tons of flavor and has many roles in your body. The Mediterranean Diet is approximately 25-35% fat, in the form of unsaturated fats. These are in foods like avocados and olive oil. Unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature, and have many beneficial effects such as easing inflammation, improving cholesterol levels, and stabilizing heart rhythms.

Practical Tips for Incorporating the Mediterranean Diet into Your Life

1. Load Up on your Plant-Based Foods

a. Since the Mediterranean Diet is abundant in fruits and vegetables, try to aim for at least 3-5 servings of vegetables per day. Ways to do this could be having legumes as your plant-based protein choice and including vegetables to meals!

2. Add Flavor Using Healthy Fats!

a. Try adding a teaspoon of olive oil to your morning egg or drizzle it on your salad for lunchtime! Add a quarter of an avocado or a handful of almonds to any meal to add a delicious source of oleic acid, a healthy fat that will help decrease inflammation.

3. Moderate Consumption of Low-fat to No-fat Dairy

a. Have a half cup of nonfat Greek yogurt or skim milk to a meal for an extra source of protein. Additionally, yogurt has many probiotics that will help maintain the balance of your gut bacteria.

4. Limit Red Meat to a Couple Times a Month

a. Replace your burgers with veggie or salmon/fish burgers! These have less saturated fat and lots of protein to help you feel fuller for longer.

5. Add More Flavor Using Herbs and Spices

a. Mediterranean cuisine is known for its use of herbs and spices like garlic, basil, oregano, rosemary, and thyme. These flavorful additions enhance the taste of dishes without the need for excess salt or unhealthy additives.

SNACKING WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

Vegetable & Hummus plate
Tzatziki and Cucumbers
Roasted Chickpeas
Sargento Balanced Breaks
Snack Pack of Pistachios
Greek Yogurt & Blueberries
Kale chips

Whole Grain Crackers & Sardines
Baked Falafel
Homemade Popcorn
Apple Slices & Almond Butter
Grape Tomato & Mozzarella Skewers
Homemade Museli & Red Berries
Pumpkin Seeds



Pumpkin Seeds



Apple Slices and Almond Butter

Mediterranean Chickpea Salad

Serves 6

Ingredients

Salad

2 (15-oz.) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
 1 medium cucumber, chopped
 1 bell pepper, chopped
 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
 1/2 c. chopped kalamata olives
 1/2 c. crumbled feta
 Kosher salt
 Freshly ground black pepper

Lemon-Parsley Vinaigrette

1/2 c. extra-virgin olive oil
 1/4 c. white wine vinegar
 1 tbsp. lemon juice
 1 tbsp. freshly chopped parsley
 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
 Kosher salt
 Freshly ground black pepper

Directions

1. In a large bowl, toss together chickpeas, cucumber, bell pepper, red onion, olives, and feta. Season with salt and pepper.
2. In a container with a lid, combine olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, parsley, and red pepper flakes. Close the container and shake until combined, then season with salt and pepper.
3. Dress salad with vinaigrette just before serving.

Meal prep tip: Make the salad ahead of time and store it in the fridge for a quick, high protein, high fiber meal or snack.

Recipe Adapted from: <https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a19885314/mediterranean-chickpea-salad-recipe/>



Baked Pears with Almonds

Serves 8

Ingredients

Baked Pears

4 pears, halved
1 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Almond Crumble

1 tablespoon olive oil
½ cup rolled oats
¼ cup sliced almonds
1 tablespoon Greek yogurt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
Non-fat Greek yogurt to cottage cheese, for serving

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Use a spoon to scoop the seeds out from the center of each pear half. Transfer the pears to a lined baking sheet.
2. Brush the pears with cinnamon and vanilla extract. Turn the pears so the cut sides are facing down.
3. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Almond crumble: In a small pot over medium heat, stir the oats and almonds with 1 tbsp of olive oil until they are slightly toasted.
5. Stir in the Greek yogurt, and cook until the mixture thickens slightly.
6. Stir in the cinnamon and salt. Transfer to a bowl and let cool.
7. Serve the pears warm, topped with Greek yogurt/cottage cheese and the crumble topping.

Recipe adapted from: <https://www.purewow.com/recipes/baked-pears>



RETHINK YOUR DRINK

What we sip on can have a big impact on our health, especially as it relates to our weight management goals. Some drinks can sneak in lots of added sugars. Here are some handy tips to stay hydrated, enjoy delicious flavors, and stay on track with your goals!

**High calorie
syrups
Lattes
Cold foam**



**Coffee with
unsweetened
creamer
Sugar free
sweeteners/
syrups**

**Juices
Smoothies
Sweetened
iced tea**



**Naturally
flavored water
with herbs,
fruits, etc.
Crystal Light
Other zero
calorie
flavored water**

Soda



**Seltzer
water**

Citrus Fizz

Serves 1



Ingredients:

- 16 oz plain seltzer water
- 2-3 slices of lime
- 2-3 slices of lemon
- Optional: 1 packet of low-calorie sweetener

Directions:

In a glass with ice, combine seltzer water, lime & lemon slices. Add in sweeter of choice until desired sweetness.

Recipe adapted from everdayhealth.com

Raspberry Lemonade

Serves 1

Ingredients:

- 16 oz plain water
- 1/2 cup fresh raspberries
- 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

Directions:

1. In a glass, add fresh raspberries and lemon juice.
2. Muddle to combine.
3. Strain lemon/raspberry mixture into a glass with ice.
4. Top with 16oz of plain water



Recipe adapted from tasty.co

Cinnamon Vanilla Coffee

Serves 1



Recipe adapted from food.com

Ingredients:

- 8 oz cup of black coffee
- 2 tbsp milk of choice
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 1-2 dashes of ground cinnamon

Directions:

In a cup of freshly brewed coffee, add milk, vanilla & cinnamon. Enjoy!

Gingery Green Tea

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

- 6 cups of plain water
- 1/4 cup ginger, peeled & sliced
- 6 green tea bags
- 1/2 cup mint leaves, plus extra to serve
- 1 lemon, sliced

Directions:

1. In a pot, over medium heat, combine water and ginger slices. Bring to a boil
2. Once the water boils, remove from heat, add tea bags and mint. Cover and steep for 15 minutes
3. Strain the brewed tea into a pitcher and allow to cool to room temperature before refrigerating. Add lemon slices and mint

leaves

prior to serving



Recipe adapted fromthekithn

Gardening 101

Tips to start your own outdoor garden this spring to bring home grown ingredients to your plate

1.) Create a vision based on your space

Before you get to work think about the space you have to work with. Is it a yard? A rooftop? A windowsill? A fire escape? How much light does your space get? Get an idea of what grows best in the area that you live. In Massachusetts, chive, spinach, basil, dill, parsley, kale, lettuce, zucchini and tomatoes grow best starting in the spring and throughout the summer.

2.) Make sure you're working with healthy soil

Set the stage with soil. Healthy soil is full of bacteria, fungi and other microbes. Plant roots are able to grow when there is the right texture and structure. First, **texture**. Soil texture depends on how much clay, sand and silt is in the ground. Depending on what you would like to grow you may need to look for soil with more sand or silt. For example, carrots and beets want sandier soil, so their roots can more easily penetrate. Tomatoes want more clay, for water retention. There's also **pH level** . To find the pH and other chemical properties (like if the soil has lead), you can send soil samples in zip-lock bags to a lab. The University of Massachusetts, Amherst charges \$20 for a soil fertility test.

3.) Plant seeds or get seedlings

Keep in mind the level of attention the herbs and vegetables that you are planting need. For example, chives, parsley and cilantro are not fussy so they are easier to plant and grow from seed. But, tomatoes and basil need more attention so might be best to plant them as seedlings (a seedling is a young plant that has sprouted).

4.) Make containers to grow your plants in

Just about anything can be a container for your plant: wooden wine boxes, milk crates, old pots or dresser drawers, so long as you drill holes in the bottom and don't let any paint touch the soil. Stay away from anything that's had a toxic use (such as oil drums) and avoid plastics, which can leach chemicals into the soil as they break down from ultraviolet light.

5.) Be mindful of how much sunlight your plants need

Not every plant needs the same amount of sun. A good rule of thumb to go by is, if you're picking the fruit or vegetable off of the plant it needs more sun (ex. tomatoes) but if you're just eating the leaves it needs less sun (ex. cilantro).

Your garden size is up to you!

Gardening is a fun way to learn about herbs, fruits, and veggies, whether you're alone, with family, or in your community. Use your garden's harvest to plan meals, enjoying fresh, homegrown flavors while making the most of your hard work!



WHAT'S IN SEASON?

Apples	Lemons
Apricots	Lettuce
Asparagus	Limes
Avocados	Mushrooms
Bananas	Onions
Broccoli	Peas
Cabbage	Pineapples
Carrots	Radishes
Celery	Rhubarb
Collard Greens	Spinach
Garlic	Strawberries
Herbs	Swiss Chard
Kale	Turnips
Kiwi	