

Q. What does it take to follow the Mediterranean diet?

A. If you want to eat healthier, following the Mediterranean Diet is a good decision.¹

Research shows eating this way can:²

- Protect your heart³
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce stroke risk
- Prevent certain types of cancer
- Control blood sugar levels
- Reduce the risk for age-related memory loss

So what's the Mediterranean Diet?

It's a healthy way of eating that's been part of life for people living near the Mediterranean Sea for centuries. It's based on eating fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and fish, and some low-fat dairy products.

A true Mediterranean diet also includes ample olive oil used in cooking, and nuts and red wine in moderation.

Here are some easy ways to eat Mediterranean-style:

Pile on the vegetables. Eat more veggies served raw, baked, steamed or sautéed. If you're pressed for time, buy pre-packed salads and pre-cut vegetables.



Eat fruit every day. Enjoy fresh, frozen, dried, or cooked fruit every day. Add pear slices, oranges, dried cranberries, or apple chunks to garden salads. Mix berries into yogurt or oatmeal. Make a fruit smoothie. Eat cereal with sliced bananas.

Choose whole grains. Skip white bread, white rice, and cereal made from refined grain. Instead, eat whole-grain breads, oats, and brown rice. And give other whole grains a try like quinoa and amaranth.

Bring on the beans. Magic or not, beans are a great substitute for meat. They're also a great source of protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Add beans to soups, salads, stews, and casseroles.

Go a little nuts. Nuts are a good source of healthy fat. They're also high in calories, so limit yourself to a handful a day. Try snacking on pistachios and pecans. Add slivered almonds to vegetables. Or top off a salad with walnuts.

Use healthy fats. Avoid or limit using butter or margarine for cooking. Instead use oils with healthy fats like olive oil, canola oil, and soy oil.

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Healthy fats are also found in fish, avocados, nuts, and seeds.

Spice up your meals. Skip the salt and season your meals with generous amounts of spices. Try garlic, thyme, oregano, basil, cayenne, curry, and other herbs.

Eat slowly. Your food choices provide the primary health benefits of the Mediterranean diet. But it's not just about the food. Lifestyle matters, too. When it's time to eat, enjoy your meal, chew your food, and join the conversation at the table. You'll feel better and live longer.

References

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