



The Mediterranean Diet

Quick Start Guide

Created by The Mediterranean Movement

Hello and welcome~

We are so glad to be part of your journey!

Our Community:

We would love for you to be part of our community. Here you can get questions answered, share tips, and be in community with like-minded people.

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MediterraneanMovement/>
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/Mediterranean_Movement/

Next Steps:

Once you read the Guide, you will likely be ready to dive into this delicious, healthy way of eating.

Check out our [Meal Plans](#)! These 21-day plans include three meals and optional snacks, as well as a complete grocery list. Created by a Registered Dietitian, the meal plans have been optimized to follow the principles of the Mediterranean Diet, leading to balanced nutrition and optimal health.

<https://themedimove.com/meal-plans/>

Gluten-free, Dairy-free, Vegetarian, and other customizations available!

We also invite you to consider [Nutrition Coaching](#) or [Weight Loss Coaching](#) with our Registered Dietitians. They will hold your hand and provide expert support every step of your journey, virtually guaranteeing your success! <https://www.themedimove.com/nutrition-coach/>

For more help:

Visit www.TheMediMove.com and check out blogs on:

- [Common FAQs](#)
- [No-Cook Meal ideas](#)
- [Easy Ingredient Swaps](#)
- [Mediterranean Diet Cheat Sheet](#)

You'll find tons more resources and lots of recipes there as well!

Our goal is to provide tons of tips, recipes, and motivation to keep you looking and feeling your best! We can't wait to get to know you!

Happy eating :)

Ashley & Jamie

The Mediterranean Movement

Disclaimer:

The information provided in this Guide is intended for your general knowledge only and is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment for specific medical conditions. None of our services shall be used to diagnose or treat any health problem or disease, and the use of this Guide does not guarantee the prevention of any medical conditions. We cannot and do not provide medical advice. You should seek prompt medical care for any specific health issues and consult your physician before altering your diet. The information provided in this plan should not be used in place of a consultation with your physician or other health care provider. We do not recommend the self-management of health problems. Should you have any healthcare-related questions, please consult your physician or other health care provider promptly. You should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of the information provided in this Guide.

Quick Start Guide for the Mediterranean Diet



Introduction

This Quick Start Guide is all about the Mediterranean Diet. You will learn more about it, what makes it so unique, and why many experts recommend it and call it “The Healthiest Diet in the World”. We will explain its basis, and give you some guidelines that will simplify it, making it easy for you to apply it to your lifestyle right away. After all, the Mediterranean Diet is not just a diet, it is a lifestyle that will allow you to eat delicious, nutritious food, while meeting your weight goals and getting healthier in the process! Let's dig a bit deeper into the world of the Mediterranean Lifestyle!

Mediterranean Lifestyle—Much More Than a Diet

While many people say, “Mediterranean Diet”, it is much more precise to say, "Mediterranean Lifestyle" This is because diets generally refer to temporary nutritional changes that lead to short-term

results, usually inclined towards losing weight. Lifestyle, on the other hand, is a lifelong, moderate way of eating that will lead to steady, long-term health and weight benefits. Following the Mediterranean Lifestyle principles will allow you to slowly lose weight, until you reach a place of maintenance, and then easily maintain it forever. (No more yo-yo dieting!)

In addition, and for many people far more importantly, the Mediterranean Lifestyle is world-renowned for being the healthiest diet in the world: positively impacting cholesterol, inflammation, Alzheimer's, cancer, and many other health factors through eating real, whole food. The Mediterranean Lifestyle also promotes healthy stress reduction and an overall higher level of activity, both of which have been linked to good health. A quick note, we will use "Mediterranean Diet" and "Mediterranean Lifestyle" interchangeably throughout this article.

Why Choose a Mediterranean-inspired Lifestyle?



The Mediterranean Lifestyle is health-focused. To be more precise, the Mediterranean Lifestyle targets long-term health. There are not many other diets or lifestyle changes that show more promise than this one!

In fact, the Mediterranean Diet was ranked as the [BEST DIET OVERALL](#) by US News and World Report for the 3rd year in a row in 2020! This means that the Mediterranean Diet beat out other diets like the Keto, Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, Vegetarian, Vegan, Whole30, and 35 other diets to claim the top spot. From the US News website: “The Mediterranean Diet may offer a host of health benefits, including weight loss, heart and brain health, cancer prevention, and diabetes prevention and control. By following the Mediterranean Diet, you could also keep that weight off while avoiding chronic disease.”

But there’s more! The Mediterranean Diet also took the top ranking for several other important categories, including:

- #1 Best Diabetes Diet (coming ahead of the DASH Diet)

- #1 Best Plant-Based Diet (coming ahead of Vegetarian and Vegan)
- #1 Best Diet for Healthy Eating
- #1 in Easiest Diet to Follow

By now it's probably becoming evident that the experts agree that the Mediterranean Diet is one of the best options for many people looking to maintain or improve their health! Let's take a look at why a Mediterranean Lifestyle is so great.

Back in the 1960s, scientists and doctors started looking into statistics, trying to determine risk factors for cardiovascular diseases. As you probably know, [heart attack and stroke are the leading causes of death](#) on the planet. What they noticed was that people from Mediterranean countries such as Greece and Italy had fewer cases of deaths caused by heart disease than other places around the world. After further studying this phenomenon, the scientists and doctors concluded that people from these regions all eat a similar diet and live similarly. It seemed that the principles of this way of eating and living were protecting the people from risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease. This is what launched the Mediterranean Lifestyle phenomenon.

You can feel confident that the Mediterranean Lifestyle principles have been effective for hundreds of years, and the Mediterranean Diet has been recommended by experts for over 60 years. Even today, the official [2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends it as the diet of choice. Not only is the diet an excellent option for healthy people who are looking to [reduce the risk and prevent cardiovascular problems](#), but this diet also works for those who have already [suffered from heart attacks](#). (If you'd like more information, feel free to click on the embedded links.)

Some Other Benefits of a Mediterranean Lifestyle



The most researched benefit of the Mediterranean Diet is reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases, which can increase your lifespan by 20%. If a longer life is not motivation enough, let's explore some other benefits of this way of eating. Several additional benefits associated with this way of living are listed below:

Benefit: Good for The Brain

A Mediterranean Lifestyle is excellent for brain health. Research shows that it can help with [slowing down the development of Alzheimer's disease](#). In other words, not only will this kind of lifestyle help with increasing life expectancy, but it will also help you keep your full mental capacity as you age. There's still a lot to be learned and discovered about Alzheimer's, but this finding is simply remarkable!

Benefit: Cancer Prevention

Cancer is on the rise all over the world, and most cancers do not yet have a cure. All the plant foods found in Mediterranean dishes help enable your body to protect itself against cancer, by supplying the body with plenty of antioxidants, protecting DNA from free-radical damage, stopping cell mutation, and slowing down the growth of tumors. Mediterranean style diners are giving themselves the best nutrition on earth and, in turn, giving themselves the best chance of avoiding a run-in with cancer.

Benefit: Naturally Lose (And Maintain a Healthy) Weight

Obesity is becoming a [significant health concern all over the world](#). Unfortunately, being overweight by even just a couple pounds can lead to substantial health issues. But losing weight can be challenging, especially if you are used to “all or nothing” diet mentalities that unrealistically restrict what you are “allowed” to eat. The Mediterranean Lifestyle can help with this! Not only will it teach you how to make healthy food choices, but it will also help retrain your taste buds to crave real, whole, natural foods.

If you are obese or overweight, making healthy food choices and consuming in moderation are the keys to losing fat in a sustainable way and finally getting to a healthy weight for your body. For people who are looking to lose just a few pounds or maintain their current weight, the Mediterranean Diet is a great option for you too. A Mediterranean way of eating naturally reduces calories because instead of eating nutrient-poor foods that keep you reaching for more, you will be consuming whole foods full of filling fiber, healthy fats, and plenty of vitamins that help your body feel happy, healthy, and satiated. No counting calories or macros, and no feeling hungry or deprived all day!

Benefit: Additional Disease Prevention (Alzheimer’s, Cancer, Type 2 diabetes)

Those who follow the Mediterranean Diet have a decreased risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, and cancer. [Research](#) has also shown that this way of eating likely improves brain cognition, could prevent arthritis and may reduce depression.

Benefit: Your Wallet Might Thank you

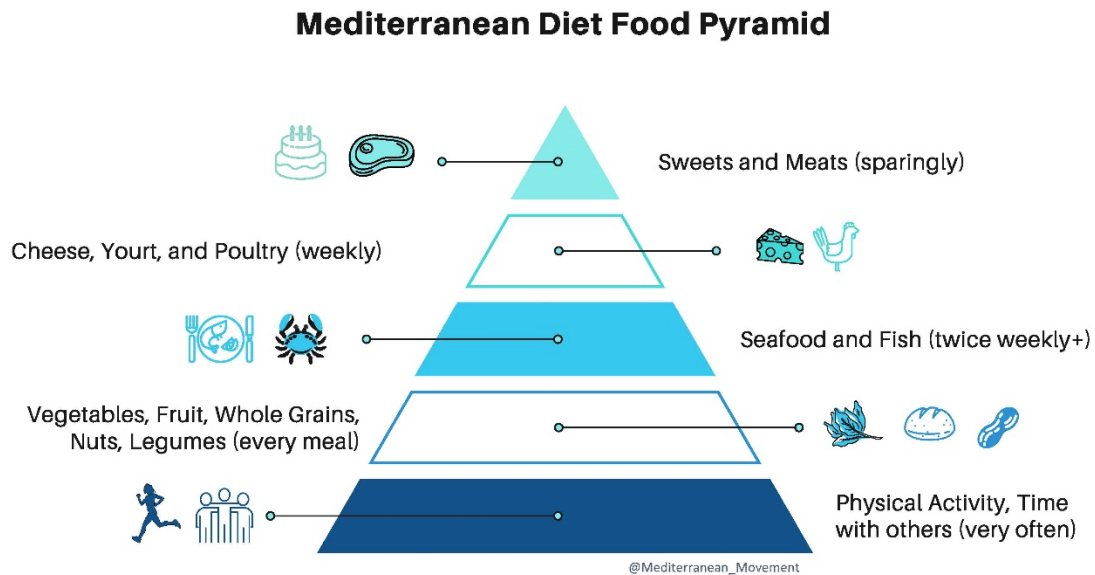
There's a common misconception that eating healthy is expensive. With an overall focus on produce, beans and healthy grains, this way of eating can be substantially cheaper than other methods of eating that are more meat-heavy or full of processed foods. If you normally order take-out 5 nights a week and switch to cooking at home, you will save money. If you normally grill burgers most evenings and you are now primarily eating beans and rice, your wallet will benefit. If you are used to buying convenience foods like chips and packaged sauces, switching to produce and making your own marinade will likely decrease your grocery bill. To maximize savings, we recommend buying frozen produce (which often have the same nutrients as fresh but cheaper), building your meals around beans and rice instead of meat, and shopping for things in season. Also, when you think about all those years that you add to your life, your decreased doctor bills, and your increased energy and positive mental state, you just may conclude that eating the healthy way is worth it.

Benefit: It's Extremely Flexible and Easy To Adhere To

Many diets today revolve around cutting out huge quantities of food groups (no carbs! No fruit! No dairy!) and an all-or-nothing approach (even one tiny bite will put you off the plan). The Mediterranean Diet, on the other hand, encourages you to eat a wide variety of real, wholesome foods, following the guiding principles of good health. Once you learn the principles, you will be amazed at how

easily you can adapt this healthy eating to your life. This is why the Mediterranean Diet was ranked the [#1 Easiest Diet to Follow](#) by U.S. News (in addition to being [the #1 Diet Overall](#))!

Mediterranean Lifestyle: The Breakdown



The Mediterranean Lifestyle has three components. We will explore each one in detail in the following paragraphs:

- Nutrition (diet)
- Physical activity
- Stress reduction

The Diet

The Mediterranean diet is very flexible. Several food groups form the foundation of the diet, which you are encouraged to seek out and enjoy. There are some foods that you are encouraged to avoid. And then, you get to choose the exact foods, ingredients, and dishes to eat!

The Ideal Plate

The ideal Mediterranean plate is:

- ½ vegetables
- ¼ healthy carbs (fruit or unprocessed grain)
- ¼ protein, either from plant sources (like beans or legumes), seafood/ fish (often), or other animal protein (occasionally)
- with a splash of healthy fats (such as olive oil)

The possibilities are endless with this eating blueprint! This could look like: 4 ounces of salmon with half a plate of steamed green beans and an apple. Or this could look like: a Thai bowl with ¼ the bowl of brown rice, a heaping serving of mixed veggies (for about ½ the bowl), ¼ the bowl of black beans, covered in a homemade peanut sauce. Or you could have Italian night: a moderate amount of chickpea pasta with tons of sautéed peppers and spinach, covered in marina sauce, a sprinkle of parmesan, and some berries for dessert.

Let's take a closer look at each food group now.

Food Group #1: Vegetables



The Mediterranean diet is plant-based. That doesn't mean animal products are forbidden; it only means that the majority of the foods that you will enjoy will be plant-based. The backbone of the diet is vegetables (and fruit).

You should try to include vegetables with every meal. Healthy options include an almost exhausting list of potential munchies: potatoes, tomatoes, broccoli, kale, beans, peas, spinach, cauliflower.... Pretty much, any veggie is a great option! Vegetables are rich in fiber which helps you feel full and stay full, vitamins which are critical for maintaining excellent health and preventing disease, protein (for example, [broccoli has more protein per calorie than meat!](#)) and they are low in calories which is good for your waistline.

Veggies are delicious served in many different ways, including raw, roasted, steamed, sautéed, covered in (healthy) sauces, or lightly spiced. They can also be incorporated (or “hidden”) in casseroles, pasta sauce, rice, smoothies, or loads of other foods. You may also find that there are certain ways you love certain vegetables, so we encourage you to try them all out! You might love raw broccoli but not roasted—but it could be the opposite for cauliflower. There are tons of ideas on our website, including

Sautéed Brussel Sprouts, Roasted Green Bean, All the Veggie Soup, and lots more! Experiment until you find some ways that you love!

Food Group #2: Fruits



Some popular diets restrict fruit, which for most people is a mistake. While fruits do contain naturally-occurring sugar (mostly fructose), it's far less than the amount of sugar you would find in some unhealthy foods like candy or brownies. Moreover, fruit is filled with important nutrients and antioxidants that benefit our health. Between the sweet taste of fruit and the satiating fiber found within, fruit can help you feel happy and satisfied without turning to more typical Western desserts (which aside from sugar are often loaded with artificial ingredients and other things that can sabotage our health). Try having a mango after dinner, and you may no longer crave the cookie that you typically eat. Get healthier without deprivation!

Bananas, apples, oranges, pears, grapes, peaches, eat any kind of fruit that you like: the list is endless! If you are not sure what to choose, The Mediterranean Diet encourages picking something from the current season, that grows locally. Not only will it taste great, but it will also be much cheaper if it is

not imported. (This goes both for fruits and vegetables.) Fruit can be eaten raw, spread with nut butter or sprinkled with cinnamon, roasted (pears and apples are great this way), blended into smoothies, or dried. (Make sure than any dried fruit that you eat do not include added sugar. Dried cranberries and trail mixes are notorious for including lots of added sugar.)

You should aim for seven to ten servings of vegetables and fruits every day. This is a lot more than most of us are currently eating! Aim for variety as much as possible. Eating fruit is not a requirement... you can probably get all the micronutrients you need through vegetables (and an otherwise healthy diet) alone. But fruit is delicious, satiating, and this way of life encourages it!

Food Group #3: Seafood



This diet carries the name of the Mediterranean Sea, so it's probably only natural that the diet contains seafood. It is recommended that you eat fish (or seafood) two to three times per week. (Keep in mind that this diet is plant-based, so you do not need to eat seafood every day). Salmon, tuna, herring, trout, or any type of fish you prefer are all great choices, as are other seafood like shrimp,

oysters, scallops, clams, crabs, and other seafood. Eating fish two or three times a week can help reduce the risk of heart disease and lower cholesterol. Seafood is an excellent source of many important minerals, including zinc, potassium, iodine, and phosphorus, and is a top-quality protein that is low in fat and low in calories. Oily fish like salmon are high in omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for brain health.

Fish can be prepared in the oven, on the grill, or in soups or stews. Canned tuna or salmon can be turned into a salad or stirred into pasta dishes or sauces. (Make sure to drain and rinse any canned meat or vegetables very well to remove any excess salt.) There are so many ways to eat this yummy protein!

For people who do not like, or cannot eat, seafood or fish, don't worry! This is a flexible diet, and you are free to choose your own foods. Chia seeds and flaxseed can provide omega-3 fatty acids in a vegetarian diet, and you can get loads of protein from legumes and vegetables.

Food Group #4: Dairy products



The Mediterranean lifestyle allows for small to moderate amounts of dairy products, preferably minimally processed. You can choose to eat cheese (preferably low fat or reduced fat), unsweetened yogurt (preferably Greek for added protein), cottage cheese, and other similar dairy products in small

amounts. Dairy products can be a good source of protein and calcium, and yogurt has beneficial probiotics that are good for gut health.

As for cow's milk, the Diet generally recommends finding an alternative type of milk, such as unsweetened almond milk, cashew milk, oat milk, or rice milk. Cow's milk includes hormones that can be problematic. The biggest irritant of the dairy food group is thought to be skim milk. Skim milk contains high quantities of whey protein, which is pro-inflammatory and may lead to acne, rosacea, and stomach issues in susceptible individuals. Some people find that all dairy products cause gastrointestinal distress (particularly those who are lactose intolerant) or [skin issues](#). If you suffer from GI issues or skin break-outs, it would be recommended that you try cutting dairy out of your diet for a period of time to see if these clear up. If you find that you do not tolerate dairy (or simply don't want to eat it), you can have an enjoyable and healthy Mediterranean Lifestyle without it!

Dairy products can be eaten many different ways. Unsweetened yogurt or cottage cheese can be sprinkled with fruit and nuts or drizzled with honey for a filling breakfast or snack. Cheese, especially feta, crumbled cheese, and parmesan can be added to vegetables, salads, or other meals for extra flavor.

Food Group #5: Poultry and eggs



The Mediterranean Diet recommends poultry (chicken and turkey) and whole eggs in moderation. It is perfectly fine to eat an omelet for breakfast or to have a chicken salad. Just remember that your focus is on eating a plant-based diet, so add some vegetables in every meal and make the protein size smaller so that it is more of a side dish. Remember that the ideal Mediterranean plate is about $\frac{1}{4}$ protein, rather than most of the plate. Poultry, although a good source of protein and other macronutrients, contain cholesterol and saturated fat and are best eaten occasionally in smaller quantities. Seafood could be a good option to replace some of the chicken or turkey in your current diet. Beans and legumes are great options as well. Chicken and turkey can be baked, grilled, stir-fried with veggies, crumbled into chili, and many other ways!

Whole eggs should be used in moderation (just a few times per week or less) because egg yolks are high in cholesterol. Egg whites, however, can be used much more freely because they provide lots of protein without the fat and cholesterol. An egg white omelet is a delicious choice. Some people who don't like the taste of egg whites find that an omelet made of half whites and half whole eggs can be a

yummy option. Egg whites can also be scrambled, hard-boiled (boil the whole eggs and just eat the white part), made into egg salad, or used in baking or casseroles.

Food Group #6: Healthy fats



Don't be afraid of eating fat! A moderate amount of healthy fat is an essential part of a balanced diet. In addition to making food taste great and helping you feel satiated, fat is a source of essential fatty acids, which the body cannot make itself. Fat helps the body absorb certain vitamins, such as A, D, and E, which are fat-soluble; they can only be absorbed with the help of fats.

The Mediterranean Diet recommended that you replace your consumption of butter, canola oil, vegetable cooking oils, and lard with olive oil. Olive oil is an excellent source of monosaturated fats and antioxidants. Add olive oil to your salads to make them more delicious. Other healthy fats include olives, avocados, avocado oil, and most nuts and seeds. Almonds, hazelnuts, pumpkin and sunflower seeds, walnuts, and cashews can be eaten by the (small) handful or sprinkled on salads. Olives, green or black, and avocados can be eaten plain or added to meals.

Food Group #7: Whole Grains



Your diet should contain whole, unprocessed grains, which contain tons of great fiber, protein, and nutrients. Switch from white rice (which is mostly devoid of good nutrition) to brown rice, quinoa, barley, amaranth, couscous, oats, and other unprocessed grains. Many of these can be prepared similarly to white rice, and eaten as a side dish, mixed with veggies and sauces in bowls and salads, or prepared and topped with fruit and nuts for breakfast.

Switch from white pasta to chickpea pasta, lentil pasta, or whole-grain pasta (check the ingredients!) and switch from white bread to whole wheat bread or Ezekiel bread. These options can all be used in place of your current “white” varieties. Try some of your standard white rice, white pasta, and white bread recipes by swapping them for the much healthier whole-grain versions. Many times, you will hardly notice a difference, but your body and your waistline will notice a big positive difference and will thank you! If you do find them less enjoyable at first, try mixing half and half, and know that your taste buds will adjust as you continue to eat these delicious grains. Check out the blog section on our website for information about Whole Grains.

A quick note, just because bread or pasta looks brown in color does not mean that it was prepared using whole wheat or whole grain. Make sure to check the ingredients list for real foods and whole wheat, and avoid things with added sugar as much as possible.

Food Group #8: Red Meat



The Mediterranean diet generally recommends reserving red meat for special occasions. Many red meats are high in saturated fat, which raises blood cholesterol; high levels of LDL cholesterol increase the risk of heart disease for many people. Recently, [a 10-year study](#) of more than half-million older adults concluded that people who ate the most red meat and processed meat were likely to die sooner than those who ate smaller amounts of the same foods. This doesn't mean that you can never have a steak again. It does mean that choosing other sources of protein most of the time, and saving red meat for special occasions, can be a winning strategy.

If you are concerned about getting enough iron, which is found in red meat, rest assured that iron can be found in a number of other foods, such as: sardines, mussels, oysters, beans, dried apricots, baked potatoes, wheat germ, seeds, and most leafy green vegetables such as spinach and kale. Eating

iron with Vitamin C can help with absorption. Trying a spinach salad with pumpkin seeds and sliced oranges to get an iron boost!

Foods To Avoid



The Mediterranean Diet is a moderate approach to eating. Food is an important part of many celebrations. Certainly, you will want to consider your food choices, and when possible, it's recommended that you follow the Mediterranean principles closely. However, even foods that are best avoided entirely are okay to eat on rare, special occasions. When following a Mediterranean Lifestyle, you can enjoy a piece of cake at a special party without any guilt, and then go right back to eating whole, real foods targeted towards optimal health. The name of the game is moderation. Here are the foods that are best avoided (or reserved for very special occasions):

- **Processed and Fake Foods:** The Mediterranean diet is all about eating whole, natural foods. That means you should read the labels and avoid heavily processed foods with added sugar, trans fats, and refined oils. Ideally, buy and eat items that have fewer than 5 ingredients on the label, or no label at all (which, in addition to being super healthy, will also help prevent waste in

landfills)! An apple with a handful of nuts is a great snack; no labels required. Avoid things that are clearly “fake foods”, with flavors or colors that you would not find in nature.

- **Artificial Sugars:** Artificial sugars are, by their definition, not naturally occurring. Many of these sweeteners have been on the market for such a short period of time that we do not know whether they will cause real harm long-term (remember people used to think smoking was not harmful and we now know the truth). Others, such as Saccharin (“Sweet n Low”), have been around longer but have a storied history with health, having been found to cause cancer in lab rats back in the 90s. Many of these products can cause short term discomfort such as headaches or stomach upset in susceptible people. For optimal health, take them out of your diet.
- **Added Sugars:** Added sugars (not including natural sugars in dairy and fruit) are best avoided. We’ve seen a [lot of research in recent years](#) looking at the impact of added sugars, such as white table sugar and corn syrup. This research concluded that eating a lot of added sugar puts you at risk for higher triglycerides, lower HDL (the good cholesterol) and higher LDL (the bad cholesterol). Together, these factors increase your risk of heart disease and your risk of high blood pressure. Added sugars also appear to promote inflammation: inflammation is extremely detrimental for your heart. Read food labels! You will find that sugar is added to everything, from salsa, to salad dressing, to soup, to cereal, to packaged chicken salad. Buy and eat only those packaged items that do NOT contain added sugar of any kind, and you will be saving yourself hundreds of grams of extra sugar that you were not even enjoying! Save your added sugar for special occasions—cake on your niece’s birthday or ice cream for a special date— and you will find that you can feel better, get healthier, lose weight, and still enjoy occasional treats. A quick aside: honey and maple syrup are real foods that are also sugar. They are not processed

the same way table sugar is. Most of us eat way too much sugar (research suggests that much of it comes from processed foods), so we do not recommend simply replacing all of your white sugar with honey, but adding some honey to your tea or oatmeal is permissible.

- **Red Meat:** While it is OK to eat red meat on special occasions (as discussed above), the Mediterranean Diet does not recommend processed meats like hot dogs and lunchmeat. These types of meats are generally full of additives and carcinogens. You have lots of other choices for protein, from beans and legumes to seafood and chicken.
- **White (processed) grains:** As we discussed in the “Grains” section, The Mediterranean Lifestyle recommends that you switch from white bread, white pasta, and cereal to healthier alternatives, like brown rice, whole grain bread, and unprocessed oats.

Ask yourself: "Is this healthy?" or “does this food promote optimal health?”. If the answer is a definite "NO!", then that food is probably not recommended by the Mediterranean Lifestyle.

What To Drink?



Water!

What's the absolute best choice to drink for great health? Water. It contains zero calories, flushes out toxins, helps curb hunger, and is essential for life. Water is vital for every single bodily function, and most of us don't drink enough of it. Drink water all the time: with every meal and in-between meals as well! Many people find that simply increasing the amount of water they drink will reduce bloat (especially in the stomach, making it look flatter) and help them lose weight with zero effort because water helps us feel full, so we naturally eat less. Seltzer (bubbly) water, without added sugar, is a great choice. You could also try mixing fruit or herbs into your water or mixing a big container of water with a little bit of 100% fruit juice.

Other Options

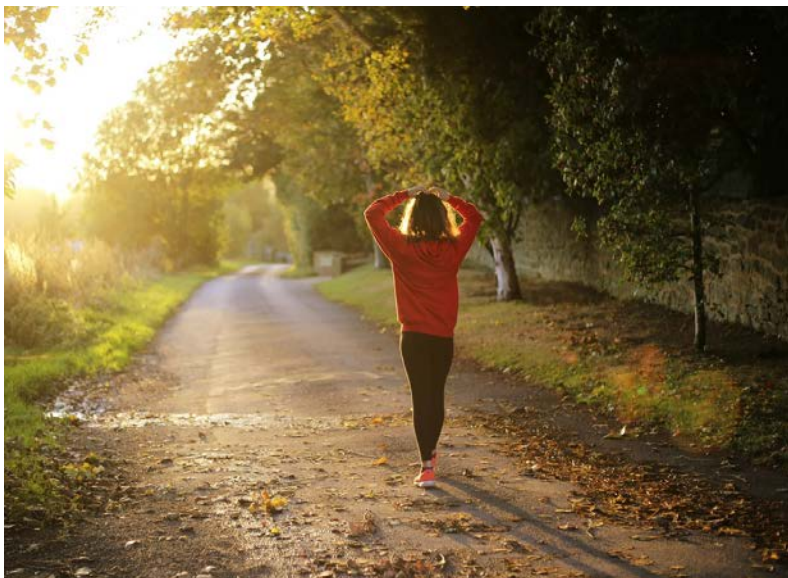
As for other drinks, coffee and tea are good choices. You will want to learn to drink them without added sugar. You may find it easiest if you reduce the sugar a little bit each day, as your taste buds adjust, rather than going "cold turkey". Lots of people happily get to the point of drinking coffee with unsweetened almond or oat milk or entirely black (without sugar or milk at all).

Red Wine

And of course, feel free to drink one glass of red wine per day (or two glasses for men)! After all, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, and other Mediterranean countries are known for their wines, and it is only natural that locals enjoy their own products. Research shows that one glass of red wine can be part of a healthy lifestyle. Packed with polyphenols-- powerful antioxidants-- red wine in moderation may help reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol and has been linked to reducing inflammation. Make sure to keep it to only one small glass a day, and only if you don't have a problem with moderation or alcoholism. There's no need to start drinking if you don't currently; you can get all the vitamins you need without wine.

Sodas, energy drinks, packaged coffee beverages (with sugar), and other sweetened or artificially sweetened drinks are not recommended when following a Mediterranean Lifestyle.

Regular Exercise



Regular exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle and [many studies show that](#). The Mediterranean Lifestyle encourages being active, but as with the nutrition part of the plan, it promotes

physical activity in a way that is natural and moderate. Many people who live in Mediterranean countries do not regularly go to a gym. They get all the physical activity they need simply by walking: to work, to the grocery store, to the post office, to their neighbor's house. For many of us in America, our communities are much more reliant on cars than on walking, so you will probably need to be deliberate about getting more physical activity in your life.

We recommend that you pick something you like and strive to engage in that activity 3 times per week (or more!). You don't have to go to the gym unless you like that kind of activity. You can cycle, jog, swim, walk, or play sports with your friends. You can go hiking, climbing, or take dance lessons. Anything that will get you moving is great. Many people find that it is most enjoyable to do something with a group, although this is absolutely not a requirement. See if you can slip a 15-minute walk after dinner into your schedule: your body will thank you!

Physical activity is great for our bodies and minds. Research suggests that exercise may help reduce your risk of a heart attack, manage your weight, have stronger bones and muscles and joints, feel better overall with more energy and a better mood, feel more relaxed, and sleep better.

Time for yourself, time with others, and stress reduction



The last piece of the Mediterranean Lifestyle to reduce stress through cultivating healthy relationships with others and taking time for yourself.

Sharing meals with others is a big part of this Lifestyle. When possible, seek out the company of others when dining. Rather than eating at your desk, take 15 minutes to eat with a colleague in the lunchroom. Wait for your spouse to come home from work to share a meal when possible. Try to make family dinners a priority in your house, at least a few times per week. Eating and socializing in the company of others helps to cultivate healthy relationships and often helps you enjoy your food even more. The Mediterranean Lifestyle promotes eating together as a way to reduce your stress levels and enjoy your life.

Many of us live busy, jam-packed lives, and the thought of trying to fit in one more thing is overwhelming. Often, we feel that to “destress” we need something big, like a massage or two hours to ourselves (or a vacation!). But this is not true. This Lifestyle encourages you to strive to have a bit of time for yourself each day: this could be as simple as 5 minutes of meditation, 2 minutes of deep breathing or prayer, a 15-minute walk, or an episode of a funny show with your spouse. Anything that

releases stress short-term adds up. If this idea is new to you, commit to writing down one small thing each day that you will look forward to doing (“I am looking forward to watching this 5-minute video, taking a walk after dinner, calling my sister, etc”) and then do it. Combined with the diet and healthy movement, it can potentially add years to your life.

Conclusion

As we detailed above, the Mediterranean lifestyle is a highly sustainable, moderate, enjoyable way to meet your health and weight goals. It’s a Lifestyle that has been shown to decrease the risk of certain lifestyle-related illnesses while allowing you to lose weight and keep it off in a maintainable and delicious way! it is recommended for anyone who is looking for better health and more energy, no matter the age.

With the information in this article, you have enough information to start your journey on a Mediterranean Diet right away. For many people, this would be a great opportunity to check out one of the meal plans on our site so you can start cooking, eating, and living The Best Diet.

One Step at a Time

However, if you find the idea of jumping right into the diet too overwhelming, we suggest that you take it one healthy choice at a time, progressing to the next step once you feel confident. Give yourself time to master one new habit and then progress to the next one.

1. Drink lots more plain, unflavored water
2. Reduce added sugar, such as soda and candy, as well as hidden sugar, such as in salad dressings, salsa, and packaged foods
3. Cut out processed foods, like Oreos, Doritos, Fruit Loops, and other fake foods
4. Eat more vegetables and fruits; ideally at every meal
5. Eat seafood 2 or 3 times per week

6. Reduce the amount of red meat in your diet

As you take charge of your health and implement these healthy changes, you should see significant positive impacts on your health and your life. You will have more energy, you will probably sleep more deeply, your skin may clear up, and your digestion may function better. Your pants may start to get looser. You may need new pants! Your health numbers (cholesterol, blood pressure, etc) may start trending in a positive direction. And you will know that each time you eat in accordance with Mediterranean Lifestyle principles, you are doing the greatest thing for your body and your mind. You are taking care of yourself and your health in the best way possible.

We are so happy to be with you along your journey! Check our website for the latest mouth-watering, health-optimizing recipes: www.themedimove.com

Join our community for answers to questions and to connect with likeminded individuals

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MediterraneanMovement/>
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/Mediterranean_Movement/

And check out our other resources, including

- 21-Day Meal Plans: <https://www.facebook.com/MediterraneanMovement/>
- Nutrition Coaching: <https://www.themedimove.com/nutrition-coach/>
- Weight Loss Coaching: <https://www.themedimove.com/nutrition-coach/weight-loss-coach/>
- Accountability Groups: <https://www.themedimove.com/nutrition-coach/accountability-groups/>
- Snack Recipes and Cookbooks: <https://www.themedimove.com/product-category/extra-resources/>