



WELLNESS

PHYSICAL • MENTAL • SOCIAL

GEHA.



HEALTHY HUDDLE WITH GEHA.

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

The Mediterranean diet is listed the top-rated diet for 2021, based on a panel of health experts to identify all the health benefits and its positive effects for multiple groups. It is a plant-based diet which is easy to follow, and a top-ranked diet for heart health, diabetes, weight loss, cancer prevention, brain health, and overall healthy lifestyle. The recommendations to follow this diet don't eliminate any food group but instead, to limit certain types of foods, like red meats, processed foods, sugar, and alcohol. This "diet" is an eating pattern which makes it a lifestyle and obtainable long term.



The Mediterranean diet discusses to the dietary patterns of all the people living in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea predominantly Greece, Crete (Greek island) and a Southern Italy. The diet was first acknowledged in this region in the early 1960's. At that time the life expectancy of adults in those areas was amongst the longest in the world. The instance of heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers and other diseases was among the lowest compared with the typical American diet. Mediterranean cooking is plant forward as it's built on a solid base of vegetables, beans, fruits, grains, healthy fats (olives and olive oils), and an abundance of fish and is lower in foods from animal sources. This more healthful eating style automatically decreases the amount of saturated fat on the plate which can improve health.

The Mediterranean diet is affordable, and research shows people with limited financial resources had positive health outcomes the consuming cheaper foods like beans, legumes, whole grains and seasonally accessible vegetables which is a less expensive way to eat. To make this diet more affordable, use options like canned seafood and canned or dried beans as your primary protein sources and shop what's on sale at your local grocery store. Frozen and canned foods are always a great alternative, can give more flexibility as to when it's eaten and be more budget friendly.

1. EAT 1/2 PLATE OF VEGETABLES EACH MEAL

Enjoy tossed, roasted, grilled and or sauteed vegetables in salads, soups, and sides. Making for leftovers can help for easy meals and getting enough in throughout each day.

2. THINK ABOUT THE MEAT CHOICES:

Use leaner cuts and eat smaller portions.

3. INCLUDE SOME LOW FAT OR FAT FREE DAIRY PRODUCTS.

Greek yogurt can be a great option. Add berries on top for a great dessert after dinner.

4. EAT SEAFOOD AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK,

even canned tuna, hearing, salmon, and sardines are affordable heart healthy omega 3 powerhouses that you need with very little preparation. Thinking of how to incorporate this each week—maybe plan for salmon Sunday's with Teriyaki salmon with cauliflower rice.

5. COOK A VEGETARIAN MEAL AT LEAST ONE NIGHT PER WEEK.

Think of how to incorporate this into each week maybe consider a meatless Monday with a nutritious recipe like [Roasted rooted vegetables with tomatoes and kale](#).

6. USE GOOD FATS:

Olive oil, nuts, peanuts, sunflower seeds, olives, and avocados. These can add wonderful flavor to your dishes.

7. SWITCH TO WHOLE GRAINS:

Brown rice, barley and bulgur are inexpensive and hearty additions to a meal.

8. EAT FRUIT FOR DESSERT,

dried fruits such as apricots, figs and cherries are the perfect sweet ending to a Mediterranean meal or even top berries onto Greek yogurt for a nice dessert.

GETTING STARTED THE EASY WAY

Pre-prepare fresh produce in advance to make meal assembly easier during the week and consider cooking bigger batches on weekends so that you have leftovers to use during your busy week.

Other ways to ensure a healthy lifestyle: include exercise, getting better sleep, and reducing stress. You can take these simple steps to help get you on the right track for living your best life!

Sources:

US World Report - <https://health.usnews.com/best-diet/mediterranean-diet>

Today's Dietitian: [The Mediterranean Diet - Today's Dietitian Magazine \(todaysdietitian.com\)](https://www.todaysdietitian.com)

Explore more at the [Chiefs Wellness Program homepage](#) -->