

Mediterranean-Inspired Diet

A flexible, culturally inclusive approach to healthy eating

Mediterranean-inspired eating is an approach to food that emphasizes vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, healthy fats, and minimally processed foods. Research has linked this eating pattern with benefits for heart health and overall well-being.

Mediterranean-inspired eating is about the principles, not the cuisine.

You do not need to eat traditional Mediterranean foods to follow this approach. The principles can be adapted to fit any culture, food traditions, budget, and personal preferences. Whether you enjoy South Asian, Caribbean, East Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Latin American, Indigenous, or European foods, you can apply these principles to the foods you already enjoy.

Benefits of Eating the Mediterranean Way



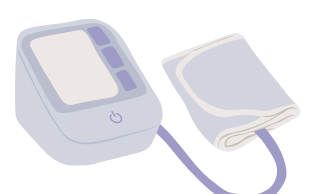
It can help you lower your risk for heart disease

Rich in fibre, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and other plant-based nutrients.



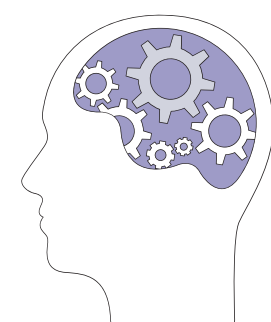
It can help you manage diabetes

Helps with blood sugar management as well as prevention of diabetes



It can help you manage your blood pressure

Along with a low sodium and adequate calcium intake



It is linked to cognitive health

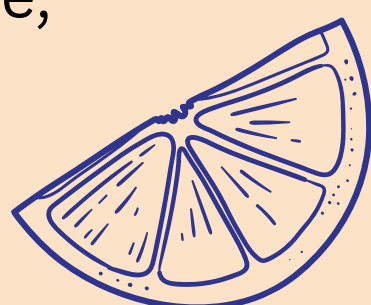
May reduce the risk of mild cognitive decline with aging as well as Alzheimers Disease

Key Principles of Mediterranean-Inspired Eating

Fill your plate with vegetables and fruit

Aim to include vegetables and fruit regularly throughout the day.

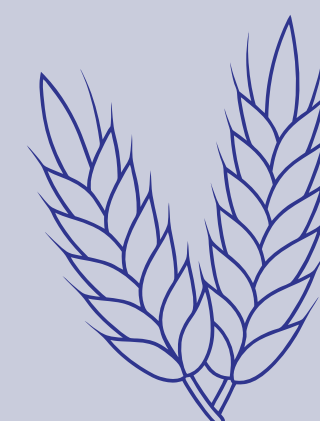
Choose a variety of colours and enjoy them fresh, frozen, or canned. Vegetables and fruit provide fibre, vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial nutrients.



Choose whole grains more often

Include whole grain foods such as:

- oats
- barley
- quinoa
- brown rice
- whole grain bread
- whole grain pasta



Whole grains provide fibre and important nutrients.

Limit red meat

Choose fish, beans, lentils, tofu, and poultry more often than beef, pork, and lamb.

When you do eat red meat, choose lean cuts and enjoy smaller portions.

Limit processed meats such as bacon, sausage, deli meats, and hot dogs.



Enjoy more plant-based proteins

Enjoy plant proteins regularly, including:

- beans, lentils, chickpeas
- tofu
- edamame
- nuts and seeds

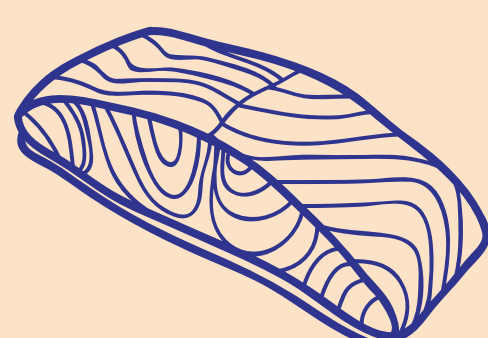


These foods provide fibre, protein, vitamins, minerals, and healthy fats.

Choose fish regularly

Aim to include fish about 2–3 times per week, especially fatty fish such as:

- salmon
- trout
- sardines
- herring
- mackerel



Choose healthy fats

Replace saturated fats with unsaturated fats when possible.

Healthy fat choices include:

- extra virgin olive oil
- canola oil
- nuts
- seeds
- avocado



Include dairy and/or other calcium-rich foods

Calcium supports bone health, muscle function, and plays a role in maintaining healthy blood pressure.

Examples include:

- milk
- yogurt
- cheese
- fortified soy beverages



Flavour foods with herbs and spices

Enhance flavour with:

- herbs and spices
- garlic
- onions
- lemon
- vinegar



This can help reduce the need for added salt while making meals enjoyable.

Enjoy Your Meals Mindfully

Mediterranean-inspired eating is about more than individual foods. When possible:

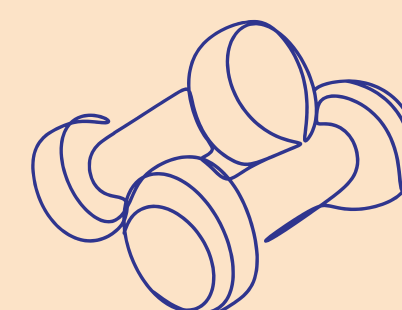
- cook and prepare meals at home
- enjoy meals with others
- take time to savour food
- create a positive relationship with eating



Include Physical Activity Regularly

Choose activities that you enjoy and can include regularly, such as:

- walking
- strength training
- cycling
- swimming
- gardening
- recreational activities



The Big Picture

- There is no single way to eat Mediterranean-inspired. A bowl of dal with vegetables, a tofu stir-fry, bean chili, salmon with roasted vegetables, or a whole grain turkey sandwich can all fit within this eating pattern.
- Focus on the overall pattern: more plant foods, healthy fats, whole grains, legumes, fish, and minimally processed foods – while enjoying a variety of foods that fit your culture and lifestyle.

Sample Day of Mediterranean-Inspired Eating

Menu

Breakfast

Cooked oatmeal topped with berries, chopped walnuts, and cinnamon
Plain Greek yogurt
Coffee or tea, if desired

Morning Snack (if hungry)

Apple with a handful of unsalted almonds

Lunch

Whole grain turkey sandwich with lettuce, tomato, cucumber, and mustard
Side salad with olive oil and vinegar dressing
Orange

Afternoon Snack (if hungry)

Raw vegetables with hummus

Dinner

Baked salmon
Roasted potatoes
Steamed broccoli and carrots
Mixed green salad with olive oil and vinegar dressing

Evening Snack (if hungry)

Plain yogurt with berries

Need personalized support? Everyone's nutrition needs are different.

This handout provides general nutrition information and is not a substitute for individualized medical or nutrition advice. Speak with a **Registered Dietitian** for recommendations tailored to your health needs.