

The Mediterranean diet

There's a reason the Mediterranean diet continues to be popular. It's a delicious way to help with heart health, diabetes prevention, and more.

Those who live in countries along the Mediterranean Sea consistently have longer life expectancies. The people of North Africa, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Southern France don't all share a single "diet," but what they have in common is eating an abundance of fresh produce, plant-based protein, fish, healthy fats,

and whole grains while limiting red meats, alcohol, and refined, processed foods.

Experts consistently rank the Mediterranean diet as the No. 1 healthiest diet. But think of it less as a diet and more as a flexible way to eat. It showcases whole foods in their simplest, tastiest form. Go ahead and dig into the world's healthiest diet.



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EXPLAINED

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NOT FOR 5 REASONS

to eat the Mediterranean way

There's a raft of reasons to try this eating style—here are the top 5.

1 REDUCE RISK OF HEART DISEASE.

Whole grains and produce are at the centre of the Mediterranean diet.

People who eat whole grains every day lower their chance of dying from heart disease by 9 per cent, according to a study published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*. And a Harvard study found that people who eat 5 cups of produce a day lower their risk of heart disease by nearly 30 percent.

2 PROTECT AGAINST CANCER.

Eating the Mediterranean way means that red meat is considered a treat. Eating less red meat can reduce the risk for certain cancers. The American Institute for Cancer Research recommends eating no more than 540g of red meat per week. And replacing red meat with plants, such as legumes, is an excellent way to get more fibre and antioxidants, which protect against cancer, says registered dietitian Kelly Toups of the nutrition nonprofit Oldways.

3 PREVENT AND MANAGE DIABETES.

The Mediterranean diet is associated with a 20 per cent reduced risk of developing type 2 diabetes, according to an article published in *Endocrine: International Journal of Basic and Clinical Endocrinology*. Other research has found the Mediterranean diet can reduce insulin resistance and improve blood glucose control. Researchers believe the diet's moderate consumption of alcohol, high consumption of fruits, nuts, and olive oil, and reduced intake of dairy and meat products are major contributors to preventing and managing diabetes.

4 REDUCE INFLAMMATION.

Eating more high-fibre foods while limiting saturated fats is a hallmark of the Mediterranean diet. Both of these nutrients impact inflammation in the body. Research shows that eating fibre-rich diets can boost both your gut health and your body's anti-inflammatory response. On the other hand, studies find a diet high in saturated fat can trigger your body's pro-inflammatory response. A diet high in quality foods and low in saturated fats, such as the Mediterranean diet, can help keep inflammation to a minimum.

5 SAVE THE PLANET.

The Mediterranean eating pattern emphasises replacing meat with plants for protein. Plant-based foods emit fewer greenhouse gases, use less water, and require less land than livestock, according to the World Resources Institute. This diet also emphasises eating the grains and fresh produce locally available to you, helping to reduce the environmental footprint.

STARTING THE Mediterranean diet



HEALTHY FATS
such as those from olive oil and avocados

NUTS AND SEEDS
such as almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, and pumpkin seeds

FATTY FISH
such as salmon and mackerel

LEAN PROTEIN
such as chickpeas, cannellini beans, chicken breast, and eggs

FRESH PRODUCE
such as tomatoes, cucumbers, capsicums, carrots, zucchini, pears, citrus, apples, berries, and melons

Stock up on the following foods to build up your healthy kitchen.

HERBS AND SEASONINGS
such as fresh parsley, mint, basil, and rosemary, as well as garlic, cinnamon, and saffron

WHOLE GRAINS
such as quinoa, bulgur, and farro, as well as wholemeal pastas and flatbreads

EASY SWAPS TO GO MEDITERRANEAN

The average Australian consumes up to 35 per cent of their daily energy from foods high in salt, added sugars and unhealthy fats. Research from the University of South Australia in 2023 found that the Mediterranean diet is not only good for health but also for your budget, saving a family of four \$28 per week (or \$1456 per year) when compared with a typical Western diet. Try these easy substitutions.

INSTEAD OF WHITE RICE



SERVE UP WHOLE GRAIN QUINOA OR FARRO

INSTEAD OF SAUTÉING VEGETABLES IN BUTTER



COOK WITH OLIVE OIL

INSTEAD OF A SOUR CREAM-BASED DIP



TRY GREEK YOGHURT-BASED TZATZIKI

INSTEAD OF A BEEF BURGER



TRY A SALMON PATTY

INSTEAD OF SNACKING ON POTATO CHIPS



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REACH FOR MIXED UNSALTED NUTS