

Mediterranean Diet



The Mediterranean diet is an anti-inflammatory eating pattern that focuses on increasing the amount of plants and healthy fats in your diet. An eating pattern is how you eat and drink, day in and day out. It includes the type, amount, times, and balance of meals and snacks you eat.

This diet encourages eating more fruits, vegetables, beans, legumes, and whole grains, so it increases the fiber in your diet. A high fiber diet supports the health of your gastrointestinal (GI) tract to improve digestion, frequency of bowel movements, nutrient absorption, and diversity of the gut microbiome. This diet also reduces the risk of heart disease, improves blood glucose (blood sugar), promotes a healthy weight, and reduces the risk of some cancers.

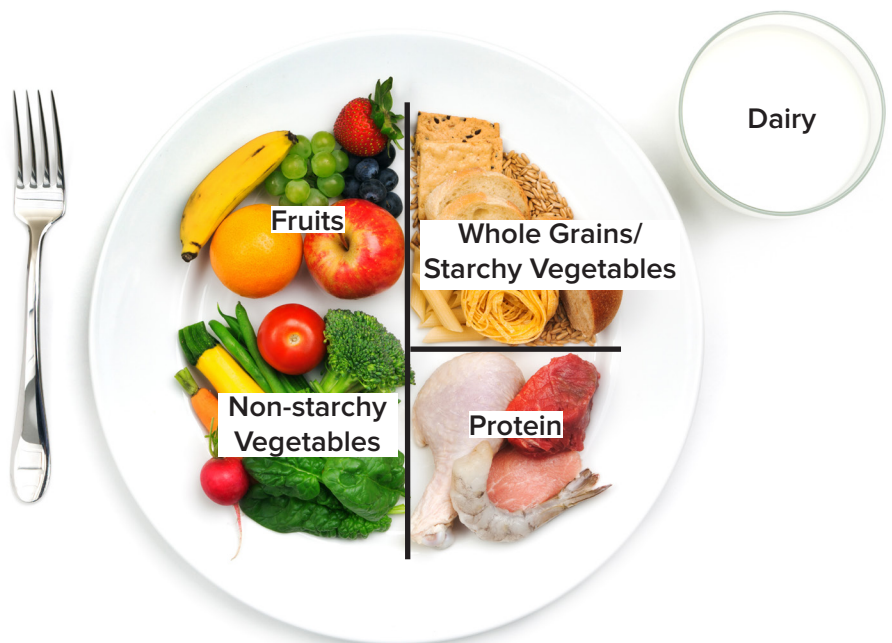
How to follow this diet

Eat at least 3 meals and 1 or 2 snacks a day.

Use the Plate Method to guide your eating choices at meals.

1. Fill ½ of the plate with fruits and/or non-starchy vegetables.

- “Eat a rainbow.” Choose a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables for better health.



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- Choose fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables based on convenience, prices, preferences, etc.
- If choosing canned fruits, look for ones canned in their own juices.
- If choosing canned vegetables, look for low or reduced sodium options and rinse them well.
- For better tolerance, consider peeling the skin, removing the seeds, cooking, or pureeing before eating or adding to recipes.

2. Fill ¼ of the plate with whole grains or starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, peas).

- Choose whole grains most often, such as brown rice, buckwheat, oatmeal, quinoa, whole grain cereal, whole wheat bread, whole wheat crackers, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, and multigrain tortilla chips. The first ingredient on food labels should say “whole grain” or “whole wheat,” not “enriched flour.”

3. Fill ¼ of the plate with protein.

- Choose a protein source like meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, seeds and nuts, and legumes like beans and lentils.
 - Eat more plant-based protein sources like beans and lentils. If choosing canned beans, look for low or reduced sodium options and rinse them well.
 - Eat seafood or fish at least twice a week.
 - Eat low fat dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese.
 - Eat moderate amounts of lean protein, such as eggs and skinless chicken and turkey.
 - Limit red meats, such as beef, pork, and lamb, and processed meats, such as lunch meat and bacon.

4. Choose healthy fats.

- Use mostly plant-based fats, such as olive oil, avocado, nuts, and seeds.
- Limit animal-based fats, such as butter and red meat (beef, pork, lamb).
- Avoid fried foods.

5. Drink 64 ounces of liquid daily to stay hydrated.

- Choose sugar free, caffeine free drinks.
- Choose water most often. Other options include flavored water, carbonated water, decaf tea, and decaf coffee.

When eating a snack, combine a source of fiber (fruits, vegetables, or whole grains) with a protein source.

Examples include an apple with peanut butter, berries with yogurt, or vegetables with hummus.



Buddha bowl with chicken breast, rice, spicy chickpeas, black quinoa, and vegetables



Vegetables with hummus

Sample menu

Breakfast	<p>Meal: Avocado Toast with an Egg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 slice of whole wheat toast with ½ smashed avocado and 1 fried egg on top; drizzle with hot sauce and a dash of salt and pepper 1 cup of sautéed spinach <p>Drink: 8 ounces fat free milk</p>
Lunch	<p>Meal: Vegan Mediterranean Bowl</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¼ cup soft tofu on a bed of ½ cup brown rice mixed with ¼ cup red onion, ¼ cup sliced cucumbers, ¼ cup shredded lettuce, and ½ cup hummus. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons feta cheese <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Snack	<p>Snack: Berries and Yogurt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¾ cup berries mixed with 1 container (6 ounces) plain nonfat Greek yogurt <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Dinner	<p>Meal: Asian Shrimp Bowl</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 ounces cooked shrimp mixed with ¼ cup cooked broccoli florets, ¼ cup steamed carrots, ¼ cup sliced mushrooms, cooked with 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil Sauce: ⅔ cup chicken broth, ⅓ cup coconut amino acids, 1 tablespoon rice vinegar, 2 tablespoons corn starch 1 cup brown rice <p>Drink: 8 ounces water</p>
Snack	<p>Snack: Apple and Peanut Butter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small apple (sliced) topped with 2 tablespoons peanut butter <p>Drink: 8 ounces fat free milk</p>

Resources for recipes

- EatingWell magazine at [eatingwell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com)
- Oldways at oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets/mediterranean-diet
- "The 30-Minute Mediterranean Diet Cookbook: 101 Easy, Flavorful Recipes for Lifelong Health" by Serena Ball, RD, and Deanna Segrave-Daly, RD
- "The Complete Mediterranean Cookbook: 500 Vibrant, Kitchen-Tested Recipes for Living and Eating Well Every Day" by America's Test Kitchen
- "Mediterranean Diet Cookbook for Beginners: 365 Days of Quick & Easy Mediterranean Recipes for Clean & Healthy Eating" by Debby Hayes

Note: Physical activity is a part of a healthy lifestyle and reduces the risk for chronic disease. Aim for at least:

- 150 minutes of aerobic workouts a week
- 2 days of muscle strengthening workouts a week

