

The Mediterranean Diet

Many doctors recommend the Mediterranean Diet. A Mediterranean diet is based on foods eaten traditionally by cultures from around the Mediterranean Sea like Greece, Turkey, Italy. It takes aspects from many of these cultures and combines them into a "diet" that has an emphasis on home cooked food that focuses on significant quantities of fresh vegetables and fruit, nuts and seeds, olive oil and moderate amounts of wild caught fish, legumes, whole grains, lean meats and dairy and minimal amounts of red meat with the occasional glass of red wine at meal times. It is a diet that is recommended by the World Health Organization as being healthy, anti-inflammatory and reducing the risk of serious diseases such as heart disease. Here's how you can incorporate a Mediterranean based diet into your life:

Basic Principles and Serving Sizes

- **Eat more fruits and vegetables** – 7-10 servings per day – ½-1 cup is a serving
- **Choose whole grains** – ½ cup per serving – one at each meal
- **Use healthy fats** – 1 tbsp per serving – one at each meal
- **Eat more seafood** – 4 oz per serving, 3-4 times per week
- **Reduce red meat** – eat lean portions, 2-3 oz per serving no more than once a week
- **Enjoy some dairy** – low fat Greek yoghurt, or plain yogurts, small amounts of cheese, kefir
- **Use herbs and spices** – 1 tsp – 1 tbsp per serving, fresh and dried with all meals
- **Nuts and seeds** – 2 tbsp per serving
- **Beans and legumes** – ½ cup per serving

Specific Foods to Focus on

Vegetables – leafy, crunchy, starchy, raw, cooked, fermented – seasonal: artichokes, arugula, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, kale, mushrooms, peppers, tomatoes, squash, fennel, zucchini.

Fruits – fresh whole fruits and berries, focus on berries that are low glycemic for anti-cancer support, apples, apricots, grapefruit, grapes, melon, pears, plums.

Whole grains – oats, brown rice, amaranth, buckwheat, quinoa (avoid gluten for cancer diagnosis – inflammatory).

Healthy Fats – olive oil (don't over-heat as damages it), whole olives, avocado, coconut, ghee, small amount of butter from grass-fed cattle.

Seafood – cold-water fish, high in omega-3, salmon, mackerel, sardines, anchovies, herring, shrimp, crab, lobster, sole, octopus, oysters, seabass, trout. Grill it or lightly sauté - avoid deep frying.

Beverages - focus on water, broth, herbal teas, one glass of red wine with dinner not necessarily every night.

References:

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Red Meat – substitute fish, poultry, eggs (free-range) or beans or ensure you have lean cuts of meat and small quantities. Lamb, duck, goat, pork, beef, all pastured or grass-fed, organ meats – liver, heart, kidney, bone marrow.

Dairy - eat small quantities, Greek yoghurt, plain yoghurt, ricotta, feta, parmesan, pecorino, brie, - remember for many cancers a diet low in saturated fat is recommended.

Herbs and Spices - basil, clove, cumin, chives, cardamom, garlic, mint, oregano, parsley, paprika, rosemary, thyme, sage, saffron, savory, tarragon, turmeric

Nuts and Seeds – almonds, cashews, hazelnut, pine nuts, pistachios, walnuts, chestnuts, sesame seeds, pumpkin, sunflower, hemp. Also, chia and ground flax seeds for Omega 3 fatty acids and fiber.

Beans and Legumes – cannellini beans, chickpeas, fava beans, green beans, kidney beans, lentils, split peas.