



Mediterranean diet

The Mediterranean-style diet has fewer meats and carbohydrates than a typical American diet. It also has more plant-based foods and [monounsaturated \(good\) fat](#). People who live in Italy, Spain, and other countries in the Mediterranean region have eaten this way for centuries. Following the Mediterranean diet may lead to more stable blood sugar, lower cholesterol and triglycerides, and a lower [risk for heart disease](#) and other health problems.

How to Follow the Diet

The Mediterranean diet is based on:

- Plant-based meals, with just small amounts of lean meat and chicken
- More servings of whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, and legumes
- Foods that naturally contain high amounts of fiber
- Plenty of fish and other seafood
- Olive oil as the main source of fat for preparing food. Olive oil is a healthy, monounsaturated fat
- Food that is prepared and seasoned simply, without sauces and gravies

Foods that are eaten in small amounts or not at all in the Mediterranean diet include:

- Red meats, Sweets and other desserts, Egg, Butter

Possible Health Concerns

There may be health concerns with this eating style for some people, including:

- You may gain weight from eating fats in olive oil and nuts.
- You may have lower levels of iron. If you choose to follow the Mediterranean diet, be sure to eat some foods rich in iron or vitamin C, which helps your body absorb iron.
- You may have calcium loss from eating fewer dairy products. Ask your health care provider if you should take a calcium supplement.
- Wine is a common part of a Mediterranean eating style, but some people should not drink alcohol. Avoid wine if you are prone to alcohol overuse, pregnant, at risk for breast cancer, or have other conditions that alcohol could make worse.