

**THE**   
**Mediterranean**  
**DIET**

# 30-DAY CHALLENGE

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**INTRODUCTION, BASIC CONCEPTS  
AND PRINCIPLES**



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Before beginning this or any other nutritional or exercise regimen, consult your physician to ensure it is appropriate for you.

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### **The Mediterranean Diet 30-Day Challenge**

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# CHAPTER 1

## What is the History of The Mediterranean Diet?

So where did this diet come from? Actually, the clue is in the name! **The Mediterranean Diet** is very much based around the natural diet that is enjoyed in the warmer parts of Europe, particularly in Greece, Southern France and, Italy.

For a long time, the diet was considered a **'poor man's diet.'** The locals lived off the land, having cleared much of it for farming. Rearing animals didn't really begin until the Bronze Age, so the primary form of nourishment would be fruits, vegetables and, wheat.

Plants, including olive trees and grapevines, also grow very well in these regions, which is reflected in the diet. Olive oil is a staple of many Mediterranean dishes – though perhaps not as much as wine!

But how did this **'poor man's diet'** evolve to become a **'health diet'** recommended by doctors?



# The Surprising Benefits of The Mediterranean Diet

No one expected **The Mediterranean Diet** to be healthy at first. On its face, consuming lots of olive oil (which is a fat), some cheese and wine sounds like it would be nothing but bad for your heart, weight and health in general!

But then came the surprise: studies began to find that people who eat a Mediterranean diet actually had longer lifespans and were generally healthier with a lower incidence of heart disease and stroke. A more recent 2013 study found that those who live on this diet have a 30% lower risk!

What's more, looking at data regarding lifespans around the world, it's evident that people who eat this diet live considerably longer on average. This, of course, leads to a lot of researchers becoming very interested in why it is so.

It has been studied extensively for the last 50 years, during which time the diet was also found to reduce the incidence of a wide range of other diseases. Those eating a Mediterranean diet are less likely to suffer from:

- Vision problems
- Certain cancers
- Heart disease
- Alzheimer's disease
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol

And as you can imagine, this led to more and more people starting to adopt the diet for its benefits. Word spread that this was a delicious, affordable, and convenient diet that was also incredibly healthy.

So what's going on? How can a seemingly indulgent and oily diet be good for you?

Well, we'll get into all that later on! But suffice to say that our opinions of what makes this diet so healthy have evolved over the years. We've known for sure for the last 50 years that this is a healthy way to live!





# CHAPTER 2

## The Mediterranean Diet: Facts and Myths

One of the challenges with **The Mediterranean Diet** has always been knowing exactly how it works and why it's so good for us.

And over the years, the theories have changed an awful lot – resulting in a lot of misinformation, myths, and rumors. In this chapter, we're going to address some of those and, in doing so, we'll also find out how **The Mediterranean Diet** might work.



# Fact or Myth: Red Wine is Good for You

One of the things you might hear a lot of when researching **The Mediterranean Diet** is that red wine is 'good for you' and can actually increase your lifespan.

This might come as something of a surprise, seeing as alcohol is generally considered bad for us as it hurts the liver and can lead to us gaining weight (it contains 7 calories per gram!)

So what's going on? Is this a myth or a fact?

As is so often the case, the answer is that it's a bit of both.

You see, one of the early theories as to why people eating **The Mediterranean Diet** lived so long was that they were getting a substance called resveratrol from the high quantities of red wine they drank.

Resveratrol is found in red grapes and is a very powerful antioxidant, meaning that it can combat the free radicals and oxidation that leads to cell damage and, in some cases, cancer and aging.

At the same time, though, resveratrol also has the ability to improve the function of mitochondria – the tiny 'energy plants' found in the cells that allow the body to use ATP. ATP is a high-energy molecule found in every cell, whose job is to store and supply the cell with the needed energy for power movements and crucial bodily functions. This actually makes the cells more efficient, which in turn reduces the damage caused by oxidants even further.

Studies found that mice given resveratrol in studies enjoy longer lifespans and are less likely to suffer from cancer and a range of other conditions.

So should you start drinking a lot of wine?

This is still up for debate. Unfortunately, the amount of resveratrol given to those mice in studies is much higher (relative to their body size) than we could safely get from wine alone. Therefore, there's no evidence that drinking red wine in normal quantities would have significant effects on lifespan in humans.

But then again, you actually need a lower ratio of active ingredients as you scale up body size in order to see the same effects in humans – so this is still open for debate.

Alcohol itself is still not very good for you – but it can potentially have some benefit. For example, research shows that around the world centenarians (people who have lived to over 100) include a statistically high proportion of people who drank a small amount of alcohol every day.

The current theory is that alcohol can help to relax the heart (it is a depressant) and that this can thereby help to reduce the likelihood of heart disease or stroke.

So a small glass of red wine with dinner on a semi-regular basis will likely do some good. But don't overindulge! As mentioned, alcohol is high in calories, which can quickly add up and prevent weight loss if not considered.



## Fact or Myth: Saturated Fat is Good for You

Initially, it was thought that all fats are bad. Now we know that we get different kinds of fat and that some are better than others. Saturated fats are a type of fat that is typically solid at room temperature; this makes it easier to identify them. Think solid butter vs. liquid olive oil. They are called saturated because of their chemical structure as they are saturated with hydrogen molecules. Eating foods high in saturated fats increases the bad cholesterol in your blood, which increases your risk of heart disease.

What originally stood out to researchers when they looked at the effects of **The Mediterranean Diet** was that it was supportive of good heart health. This came from the abundance of high fiber foods such as vegetables and legumes, but also the source of fat.

Saturated fats are mostly found in animal foods such as cream, butter, cheese, fatty red meat, and chicken skin. Replacing foods high in saturated fats with unsaturated fats, such as nuts, olive oil and seeds can lower the amount of bad cholesterol in your blood.



Fats help to keep you feeling full after a meal. They are also essential for the absorption of nutrients and also happen to be very nutritious. For this reason we do not want to remove fats from our diet completely; we want to be selective about which fats we include.

**The Mediterranean Diet** focuses on including heart-healthy fats such as plant oils (olive oil, avocado oil, and canola oil), nuts and seeds, and fatty omega-3 rich fish (salmon and sardines).

Because red meat and chicken skin are high in saturated fats, those following a Mediterranean diet are encouraged to limit their consumption and cut fat or chicken skin off before cooking.

Dairy such as whole-cream yogurt, milk, cream, and butter are also high in saturated fats, so **The Mediterranean Diet** includes small amounts of low-fat or fat-free dairy instead.

Fats are digested more slowly than carbohydrates, so including fat or two in your meal will help you feel fuller. It also means that the sugar (from the carbs) is released at a more steady rate into the bloodstream.

So it is a myth that saturated fats are good for you, but that does not mean you have to cut them out entirely! The American Heart Association says that people can have between 5 and 6% of their calories coming from saturated fats, so red meat or low-fat dairy once in a while is totally fine. Just remember to include an abundance of nuts, seeds, plant oils, and fatty fish to counteract their possible harmful effects.

## Fact or Myth: You Can Eat as Much Cheese as You Want

If you understood the section before, then you would realize that this is a myth. Cheese is a dairy product, which means it is generally higher in saturated fats than what we would like in Mediterranean diet food. However, knowing the countries found in the Mediterranean region, such as France, we know that they like their cheese.

So how, you may ask, do we incorporate cheese in a Mediterranean-friendly way?

Choose strong flavored cheese (so that you want to use less) such as Parmesan or choose low-fat or fat-free versions. Always skip the more processed, bright yellow variety!

Cheese is high in calcium and other important nutrients, so it can be part of a balanced, nutritious, Mediterranean- friendly eating style.

Calorie counting is not necessarily a requirement of a diet if you are eating healthily and sensibly. But nevertheless, you still need to make sure you aren't over-indulging and that your overall calorie intake is less than what you are burning if possible. Cheese can be high in calories, so this is something to be aware of.

## Fact or Myth: The Mediterranean Diet Prevents a Huge Number of Illnesses

What's certainly true though, is that **The Mediterranean Diet** can prevent heart disease as well as a broad range of other health problems. It can improve your energy, your mood, and your overall health and is generally just an incredibly healthy diet to stick to.

So why is all this the case? Simple: because **The Mediterranean Diet** is packed with nutrients from an abundance of natural and unprocessed whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole-grains. This is where the real power of this diet comes in.





# CHAPTER 3

## Is The Mediterranean Diet Lifestyle for Me?

So with all that said, the next question is simple: should you try **The Mediterranean Diet?**

At this point, we know what a lot of the benefits are, what evidence there is to support those benefits, and a little bit of the history behind this diet.

But now the next question is whether or not it's right for you. Because ultimately, this is just as important and something that you always need to consider before starting a diet. Just because the diet is generally healthy and has a lot of positives, that doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to be for you.

So who is this diet for?

**This diet is for you if you are someone who:**

- Enjoys food and doesn't want to cut out entire food groups
- Loves eating out and doesn't want to put an end to that in order to lose weight!
- Believes that overall good health is the most important aim of any diet
- Doesn't mind spending time cooking tasty, home-cooked meals
- Has no allergies or unusual eating requirements
- Has enjoyed Mediterranean- style food in the past!



Who isn't this diet for? Well, there are a couple of people who might find this one is less up to their street.

First, if your main priority is to lose weight very quickly, this diet might not be the very best suited to your requirements. Rather, you might have more luck with a calorie-restricted diet. However, there is nothing stopping you from counting calories while you follow this way of eating.

Second, if you're someone who doesn't really like Mediterranean foods, then this one might be tricky. Ultimately, it's very important to make sure the diet is one you can and want to stick to.

And likewise, if you can't commit to cooking or hate spending time in the kitchen. Later in this book, we look at how to make **The Mediterranean Diet** easier to stick to, but it is still going to involve more cooking than you might be used to!

In the next chapter, we'll see exactly why you might choose a Mediterranean diet and why you might not. When you see the pros and cons laid out, you should have a better idea of whether it's really for you or not...





# CHAPTER 4

## What are the Pros and Cons of a Mediterranean Diet?

### Pros of The Mediterranean Diet

The main pro of **The Mediterranean Diet** is, of course, that it is great for your body and health.

As though that wasn't enough, this is also a delicious diet that's very easy to follow! Forget counting calories, forget eliminating entire food groups, and say goodbye to bland 'diet foods.'

Instead, say hello to delicious continental eating that is incredibly enjoyable and healthy at the same time!

This isn't a fad diet at all – it's a diet that a large portion of the world has been enjoying for centuries. It does contain everything that the body needs, and actually, it contains *more* of that than most American diets. It is also meant to be a lifestyle, one you continue to follow for years to come and not just a quick fix.

Eating out? That's not a problem seeing as there are countless restaurants that focus on this cuisine. We suggest having a look at our Mediterranean diet fast food guide to see how to stick to a Mediterranean way of eating when visiting your favorite fast food joint!

It even happens to be very affordable, thanks to the relatively low proportion of meats and the high quantity of leafy vegetables that you could even grow yourself.

# Cons of The Mediterranean Diet

It would not be fair to only list the pros of the diet and to ignore the cons.

Here are some of the drawbacks that you will have to try to mitigate.

- Losing weight is a little slower on this diet than some others. You can lose weight, but counting calories while you follow it will be faster.
- This diet does require a little more cooking. The benefit largely comes from the fact that you're eating fresh, nutritious food, so you can't just go for a processed, ready-made meal.
- This diet does contain carbs. If you're keen on losing weight by avoiding carbs, then you might need to have a rethink- or get our low- carb Mediterranean meal plan.
- This diet isn't as 'strict' as some other diets. Many people would consider this a positive thing, but the problem is that it means it's easier to cheat or to bend the rules.
- If you're someone who likes to have very clear and set instructions to prevent yourself from cheating at all – then perhaps another diet would be better for you!







# CHAPTER 5

## Should I Make My Entire Family Have This Diet?

One of the big questions when starting any new diet is whether or not you should get your family involved.

And in this case, the answer is once again, yes!

If you were to try a more extreme 'fad' diet, then involving your family would be a very bad idea. Juice fasts are actually dangerous for everyone and are based on zero science. Especially for young children, this can be dangerous!

But **The Mediterranean Diet** is not like that (see below). This is a diet that children eat all over the world (well, mainly around the Mediterranean! and that you can very safely serve at your own family table.

What's more, is that this is a diet that teaches you to love and appreciate food. This is a great lesson for your kids and a great way to help them lose weight and stay healthy.

All those nutrients will do wonders for them while they're growing. And as for you and your partner? This diet is excellent for spending romantic evenings and eating delicious food.

But what's more, is that getting your family to go on this diet will help you as well by sticking with it. Dieting is actually something that is very 'social.'

What we eat is often defined by the company we keep and it's when our partner or friend wants to 'cheat' and eat McDonalds that we find ourselves slipping. We can't help ourselves and join in.

Get the whole family on board, and you'll find it's much easier to stick to this healthy diet!



# CHAPTER 6

## Is The Mediterranean Diet Dangerous?

**The Mediterranean Diet** is 100% safe and healthy. We know this because those countries that eat this food as their main diet are not only 'fine' but actually healthier than us!

Still, it's good to question any new diet, and of course, you may have some concerns if you have never heard about a particular diet—Mediterranean diet included.

### Fats Are Fine

We already touched on this, but the idea is to include a variety of different heart-healthy unsaturated fats (such as plant oils, nuts, seeds, olives, avocado, and fatty fish) and to avoid saturated fats from fatty red meat, processed and oily foods.

Unsaturated fats raise the good kind of cholesterol known as high- density lipoproteins, while simultaneously lowering the bad kind- low- density lipoproteins.

What's more, is that unsaturated fats actually provide a ton of very healthy benefits throughout the body. Fats play an important role in the absorption of key nutrients and this means you can get a lot more health benefits from the fruits and vegetables you consume.

So eating fats is not only safe – it's also a very good idea.

## So Are Dairy and Wheat.

Some diets suggest that eating wheat and dairy is a mistake – such as some versions of the Paleo diet. But there is no such objection in **The Mediterranean Diet**. So is this really okay?

The answer here is a resounding yes. Wheat is only bad for you if you have wheat intolerance or Celiac's disease, and there is no evidence to suggest those normal members of the public need to avoid it.

Meanwhile, the same is also true for milk. The idea that milk might be bad for us comes from the fact that over half the population is lactose intolerant.

But that's a global statistic. In the US and the UK, most people continue producing lactase (the enzyme responsible for digesting lactose in dairy) throughout their lives, which means they can enjoy milk with no problem!





## It's the Rest You Need to Look Out For

But you are right to worry that a diet can be dangerous – as many actually are! If you are trying to lose weight using any kind of fast, dramatic diet, which makes you cut a food group out entirely, thereby drastically (and dangerously) reducing calories, then can actually put your health at risk.

Did you know that science doesn't recognize the word 'detox'? There is nothing scientific about this word at all, and when a diet promises to help you detox, it is never clear about what that means. Your kidneys and liver work hard every day to help 'detox' your body, and all a diet can do is help to provide you with nutrients that can keep your body functioning well.

These are the dangerous diets – the fads and the 'detoxes'. **The Mediterranean Diet**, though? This is how people eat in Europe. And they've been enjoying great health for centuries! This is one of the safest diets out there.





# CHAPTER 7

## Will I lose weight Being on The Mediterranean Diet?

The big question for many people when starting a new diet is simple: will they lose weight? So let's play along. If you're starting **The Mediterranean Diet**, can you expect to shift some weight and start looking leaner and slimmer?

The answer is a big YES. But there are caveats.

The first thing to know is that this diet isn't primarily about losing weight. This diet began when people started to notice the impressive health benefits it could bring in terms of heart health and longevity. In other words, the diet didn't become popular because the fat was falling off of people.

And in fact, this diet does contain a lot of calories that come from olive oil and nuts or seeds.

As we mentioned before, this is all very nutritious and will actually make you less likely to crave snacks between meals. What's more, is that you'll eat more slowly, enjoy it more and feel more energetic so you can be more active.

Because you're avoiding processed and sugary foods, you should find that you start to lose weight. But if you overindulge, it's still possible to gain weight on this diet. If you eat huge bowls of pasta with pizza and garlic bread every night, then you will likely pile on the pounds.

And if you wanted to lose weight even faster, you could do so by restricting your calories. That's your choice.

The better solution, though? Reign in your calories just a little, and with the suggested foods, you will see the pounds start to drop off.



# CHAPTER 8

## Is it Hard to Switch Over to Change Over to The Mediterranean Diet?

One of the biggest advantages of a Mediterranean diet by far is just how easy it is to switch to it. The point is that this is already a very popular cuisine that is enjoyed all around the world.

In fact, it's very easy to come across a lot of restaurants in most countries that focus on Italian, Greek, and French food!

Likewise, the ingredients involved in making Mediterranean foods are actually very affordable in most cases. Salad leaves, tomatoes, and olive oil are all affordable, and because there's not that much meat, you'll save a lot of money!

The only expensive parts are the nuts and the fish. Fish is a very important part of **The Mediterranean Diet** as it provides amino acids, omega-3 fats, and other goodness – but it's not cheap.

But this isn't the biggest obstacle you'll face when making the transition...

The first big problem you'll face is that it's hard to move away from your current diet. The great thing about Mediterranean food is that it's not processed, and it's not covered in excess sugar. If you're currently used to drinking large amounts of Coca-Cola and eating lots of burgers and fries, you will most likely struggle to make the necessary changes.

This is particularly difficult as some of the ingredients used in processed foods are actually quite addictive! Coca-Cola, for instance, is very high in sugar and caffeine.



If you're going to be successful, then you need to be a bit strict with yourself. This probably means not buying these foods for the house in the first place! Out of sight, out of mind.

## The Biggest Challenge

The most difficult thing about this diet by far is simply sticking to it because it takes a while to prepare your food. These meals only work if you make them fresh – a ready-made lasagna from the supermarket is not the same as the one you make at home!

This means you're going to have to spend a fair bit of time in the kitchen chopping, cooking and mixing. But before that, you need to go to the supermarket and shop for all these fresh ingredients. Drudgery (if you don't like grocery shopping), but you will thank yourself in the end.

There are a lot of diet books out there to help you with this, and some of them focus on '10 minute meals' or other ways you can make wholesome food quickly and cheaply.

However, almost all of these are also somewhat misguided and certainly overly optimistic. Very often, for example, you will read that you need to 'take your chopped onion' – the recipe conveniently forgets that the onion needs to be chopped by someone first (i.e., you). It also fails to point out how long it will take you to dish up the food or how long it takes to wash up afterward,

Don't get discouraged. Once you start your routine, it will become faster and easier as you go along.

At the end of this book, we provide some recipes that genuinely are a lot easier and simpler to make. And learning these is going to be one of the best ways to ensure that you don't fall into the traps that prevent diet 'adherence'.

What's more is that you'll find another chapter in this book on how to buy and prepare Mediterranean foods, which has plenty of tips on how to save yourself time and make it that much easier to cook these delicious meals!



# CHAPTER 9

## **Benefits of The Mediterranean Diet – What to Expect?**

So now you're starting to get the concepts of **The Mediterranean Diet**, and hopefully, you've learned how to begin integrating it into your lifestyle a little more.

What can you expect to happen? We've discussed the pros and cons of the diet already and looked at how it scientifically works within the body. So now, the question is what you should actually expect the benefits to feeling like when you first start eating this way.

The first thing you'll likely notice is that your energy levels will significantly improve over time. This is something that happens right away when you start eating more nutrient-dense foods.

Things like the vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants will all help you to feel much more energetic by increasing your energy efficiency, strengthening your immune system, and helping your brain to produce more of the most important neurotransmitters.

What this does, in turn, is help to improve your mood and make you feel more energetic and focused.

This is a great start because you'll likely want to work out and exercise, leading to more weight loss!

What's more, is that you'll start to find you crave snacks less often and that your tastes generally start to change. No longer will you crave junk food!

And this, combined with the exercise and the improved metabolism, is where you start to lose weight.

Then all the other benefits start to kick in too – things like improved sleep, better skin, hair and nails, and better focus!

You'll be ill less often and, you'll even be more youthful-looking. The visible signs of aging can slow down and, you might even find your lifespan increases.

*Those are some pretty good benefits!*





# CHAPTER 10

## What is the Role of Exercise on The Mediterranean Diet?

We've already discussed the many benefits of **The Mediterranean Diet**, how to stick to it and whether or not it is suitable for you and, your family in the long run.

However, losing weight and staying healthy is not only about your diet. There are many more factors to consider if you want to enjoy the very best health possible.

What's also important is exercise and on top of that, you need to think about your lifestyle and routines.

Let's take a look at those components here. If you're on a diet, how should you be exercising?



# The Best Workout for The Mediterranean Diet

Unfortunately, there is no 'set' exercise regime for **The Mediterranean Diet**. After all, this was not a diet that was dreamed up in order to sell ebooks but is rather based on the natural way that people in those countries eat. And as you might imagine, the exercise regimes and lifestyles of those people vary greatly!

But with that being said, it is definitely a good idea to exercise and eat well if you want to enjoy the very best health. By sticking to this diet, you will be supplying your body with a lot of very good nutrition and, hopefully, consuming fewer calories as a by-product of eating such filling and satisfying meals.

If you exercise on top of this, you will be able to burn more calories and, at the same time, make use of those nutrients in strengthening your muscles and improving your energy efficiency.

We've already seen that this diet is rich in foods that strengthen the mitochondria and thereby enhance energy efficiency in the cells. At the same time, you can enhance this efficiency further by using the right types of exercise, which train the mitochondria to burn through more calories and release fewer harmful by-products.

As an added bonus, you should find that this diet helps to supply you with the energy and mood or frame of mind that you need in order to maintain this kind of regime.

So what kind of exercise should you be doing? There are plenty of ebooks on this topic that can help you, but a good tip is to start with something relatively small and light, to begin with.

If you can fit 10 minutes of training into your day in the mornings, then you'll find this helps to support your overall health and give you more energy. Once you get into this easy routine, then you can build on that starting point and start training for longer periods of time.

Don't think you can get a good workout in 10 minutes? You would be wrong! In fact, it's possible to get a very good workout in just 4 minutes! All you need to do is to use high intensity interval training, which involves alternating between periods of high-intensity (around 90% of your maximum heart rate) and then short periods of active recovery.

The Tabata protocol is one such routine that involves sprinting or doing kettlebell swings for 20 seconds, followed by a ten-second break for a total of eight rounds.

In this short period, you can actually burn a lot of calories and significantly increase your VO2 max and mitochondrial efficiency!

Even if you do a lighter circuit, or just start with Tabata a few times a week, this is a great way to start introducing a healthier lifestyle to go along with your new nutritious diet.

Once you pair good nutrition with an active lifestyle you start to feel the best you've ever felt.





# The Mediterranean Lifestyle

But this is only one part of the process. Equally important is the way you're spending the rest of your time.

Remember: **The Mediterranean Diet** first became popular when data started to show that people in those countries we named earlier live longer and have fewer cases of heart disease. But actually, the diet was only a small part of that.

What is equally as important is the fact that these countries have relatively laid back lifestyles. We look at our continental neighbors and often feel envious that they start their day with croissants and coffee while watching the world go by.

After work, they'll often go and dine out at nice restaurants and eat delicious food while relaxing with a glass of wine and candlelight. Perhaps they can hear the waves lap against the shore or watch the mountains in the distance.

Of course, this is a very romanticized version of what the Mediterranean lifestyle is really like. Many people who live in these countries are just as stressed and hurried as we are!

But statistically? It is true that they live life more and takes things a little slower than in the US and the UK.

And this makes all the difference when it comes to their health – especially heart health! If you currently work 9-5 and stay late until 7 pm many days, then chances are that you constantly feel stressed and on-edge.

What's worse is that you may come home only to deal with debt, relationship issues, and demanding children.

Either way, this means that you're constantly in the 'fight or flight' state, which means the body is primed for action by certain hormones and neurotransmitters (adrenaline, noradrenaline, cortisol).

This is what is known as 'chronic stress' and because it's designed for fighting, it means that the blood, oxygen, and nutrients in your body are being sent to your muscles and your brain and away from your immune system and digestive system.

This makes you more likely to become ill and more likely to experience adrenal fatigue, leading to depression or a nervous breakdown. What's more, is that stress causes the blood to thicken (so that it clots more quickly if you get injured) and the heart rate to increase.

Over a long period of time, this drastically increases your chances of getting heart disease.

So when you're eating a Mediterranean diet, you should also try and take a bit more of a Mediterranean attitude toward it. That means that you need to take the time to relax and enjoy your meal.

Focus on the flavors, focus on your partner across the table from you, and watch the candle flame.

Listen to some good music and smell the wine. Take a moment away from your phone, and let the pace of slow living settle in. This will make a massive difference to your health!



# CHAPTER 11

## What Can I Eat on The Mediterranean Diet?

At this point in the book, you've hopefully got a pretty good idea of how **The Mediterranean Diet** works and what you need to do. You're eating as though you live in France, Greece and/or Italy. That means lots of olive oil and salads with plenty of greens, lots of fish, and a small number of meats as well.

You'll also have some nice strong-flavored cheese, tasty whole- grains, and all your favorite fresh fruit and vegetables. And all the while, you'll have to pinch yourself to remember that all this is good for you as long as you're eating it in moderation!

But in case you wanted some harder and faster rules, here are the basics of what you can and can't eat.

A good way to work this out is to separate what you'll be eating into a few different categories based on how much you should be eating of it and how regularly.





# Foods You Can Eat-- All you Want

The great thing about **The Mediterranean Diet** is just how much fruit and vegetables you'll end up eating. A look at a Mediterranean diet plate immediately reveals the huge number of different colors of food.

This is a sign that you're getting a ton of healthy nutrition! By adding in some fats, you'll absorb that better too.

So you can eat lots of:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Legumes
- Grains
- Whole- wheat bread
- Spices
- Seafood/Fish
- Olive oil

# Things You Can Eat-- In Moderation

What you'll want to eat a little less of but will still make up a good amount of your diet is:

- Yogurt, ricotta or cream cheese (low- fat or fat- free)
- Red meat (fat cut off) or chicken (without the skin)
- Eggs

A great way to portion your foods is to use the MyPlate model. This divides your plate into sections. Each type of food gets its section so you know how much of it you should be eating.

The MyPlate model says that half of your plate at each meal should be different vegetables (leafy greens, tomatoes, mushrooms, etc. go here), a quarter should be starch (butternut, sweet potatoes, legumes and whole- grains go here), while the remaining quarter is made up of lean proteins (this is for fish, chicken without skin, or occasionally red meat). Fats make up the smallest part of the diet in the center of the plate (because they are so calorie- dense).

This should give you a nice visual of what each plate of food can look like. It is especially good if you are trying to lose weight.

## Thing you Shouldn't Eat

The great thing about **The Mediterranean Diet** (we've started a lot of sentences like this... which tells you that this is a great diet!) is that it doesn't rule anything out at all.

The only rule when eating a Mediterranean diet is to try and eat a little more like someone from a sunny part of Europe! That's a pretty good rule as they go and it's also highly flexible.

After all, people from the Mediterranean are just like us and they will eat a large variety of things depending on their mood, their tastes, and more.

But there are certain things that you need to try and eat less of and that you need to try and avoid. And the most important among these are processed foods and 'empty calories'. To make life easier, these often happen to be the same!

The thing that makes **The Mediterranean Diet** so good is the fact that it is comprised of freshly cooked vegetables and fruits, along with fish, nuts, and some meats.

All of this is the highly nutritious meaning you're getting tons of crucial vitamins, minerals, healthy fats, and more!

And this lies in contrast with a lot of American foods. If you're used to eating microwave meals, fast food, burgers, fries, chocolate bars, and the like – then you're used to getting hits of sugar, calories, and salt that contain barely any nutrients at all.

The same goes for something like sausage. Most sausages have been so processed that barely anything of nutritional value is left in them. Even most of our bread is just white and couldn't be further from whole wheat or whole grain!

All this means is that we're taking in calories without adding any goodness. Diet foods only make this worse by removing all the fats so that we don't absorb the nutrients that are there for our benefit as well.

Meanwhile, the sugar is getting absorbed into our bloodstreams much too quickly, resulting in a sudden spike followed by a trough. This latter point is one of the big causes of diabetes and weight gain.

This is what you really need to change if you're going to start improving your health as much as possible. Once you start getting nutrition from real food, that's when you'll find you start feeling fuller and having more energy, better skin, and better health.

When you remember the way we're meant to eat and when you start to enjoy cooking and eating – that's when you'll find that your food starts to love you back!

Are we saying that you can't eat chocolate or burgers ever again? No – because that's becoming too strict and inflexible. But we are saying is that this isn't part of your Mediterranean diet and it's what you're slowly trying to get away from!





# CHAPTER 12

## **Purchasing, Preparing and Eating Mediterranean Diet Foods**

Here's one mistake that might be ruining your ability to stick to a diet:

Not planning your meals in advance!

This might sound like a small point but in fact, a lack of pre-planning is one of the biggest issues with a lot of people's diet attempts and it can lead to massive problems and inconveniences that ultimately might make you more likely to quit your diet plan.

### **Why Lack of Planning is a Big Deal**

So what's the problem? Why does planning matter so much and what can you do to prevent it from ruining your good intentions?

Well, let's assume you're getting home from work and you're tired, stressed, and pushed for time. Now you need to quickly decide what you're going to eat and that probably means using what you have in the fridge/cupboards.

If you're like most people, then this may well mean slim pickings which in turn can make it very tempting to just cheat on your diet and have a ready-made meal.

A Mediterranean diet generally involves a fair amount of cooking and preparation time. It really does pay to plan in advance and therefore know what you're going to eat.



And all the while, the leftover eggplant from the moussaka you made yesterday is still sitting open in the fridge spoiling. Not only does a lack of planning make you more likely to skip on your diet but it also means you end up wasting food and therefore wasting money.

If you know what you're going to eat in advance, then you can make sure that you only buy what you need next time you go shopping.

Even if you do decide quickly what to eat and manage to rustle something up, you may still find that this means you're now cooking for much longer. This in turn causes you to have less time available to spend down at the gym, with the family, or whatever other plans you have for that evening.

### **How to Plan Your Meals**

Of course, you need to have a little flexibility in your diet in order to be able to live life spontaneously. You don't want to turn down an invitation to eat out because you have chicken defrosting in the fridge!

Instead, plan your meals in advance but also leave some room for flexibility.



A great strategy is to cook one big meal over the weekend in a large pot and then freeze some portions. This could be something like a stew or a bolognaise that can be reheated quickly when you get back late or when you don't have the energy for cooking.

Invest in some Tupperware and keep a few meals prepared in the fridge. There are also food saver machines that allows you to seal food tightly and put it in the fridge or freezer. The food stays as fresh as the day you prepared it (be sure to not let air get into the bag when sealing).

This also means finding a good day to shop and cook – but you only need one day out of the week if you do this well!

Meanwhile, buy a couple of ingredients that you know several recipes call for and that you can thereby turn into several different meals. Think of this like your 'capsule wardrobe' – the aim is to be able to make lots of different combinations from the few items of food you have available to you.

This is particularly easy to do for **The Mediterranean Diet** as a number of different foods and ingredients crop up a lot. For example, try keeping on hand:

- Chopped tomatoes
- Herbs
- Tomato puree
- Eggs
- Onions
- Garlic
- Pasta
- Salad
- Tuna cans
- Whole grains
- Legumes
- Whole- wheat bread

With these few ingredients, there are a lot of different things you can make! This is enough to make: tuna salad, tuna pasta, carbonara, eggs on toast, omelet, tomato pasta, and more!

This will also help you to avoid wasting food because the ingredients you're using in one meal will then be used time and again rather than going to waste. This is especially useful if you're living alone and not in a large family.





# CHAPTER 13

## Healthy Mediterranean Breakfasts

Here are some excellent Mediterranean breakfasts that represent great ways to start your day!

**Americano:** In Italy, the best way to start the day is with a Cappuccino. In fact, ordering one of these after mid-day is considered somewhat strange!

However, Cappuccinos are also packed with unhealthy creams and milk so how about swapping it out for an Americano instead. It's actually a great way to start the day because it will increase your metabolism and help you to burn more calories!

**Grapefruit:** One of the most popular 'Paleo' breakfasts also happens to be a good breakfast if you're on [The Mediterranean Diet](#). Grapefruit is incredibly low in calories and also very healthy food. Note: Don't pile on the sugar!

**Watermelon:** Or how about going with another low-calorie fruit and having some watermelon for breakfast instead? Other types of melon, such as cantaloupe or honeydew also work great!

**Toast:** Toast with pate is popular in France and several other areas. Or you can try it with a little olive oil! It also goes well drizzled with a little honey or served with a dollop of hummus.

Choose a whole grain bread for your toast and that way you'll get a much slower release of energy throughout the day.



# CHAPTER 14

## Healthy Mediterranean Lunches

Here are some delicious and healthy Mediterranean lunches you can make quickly and easily.

**Pita Bread and Falafel:** You can make falafel yourself (its base is chickpeas) but actually this is one time that it is perfectly fine to buy ready-made. This can then be stuffed into some whole- wheat pita bread (again, you can make it yourself but it's fine as it is) along with some salad and a little hummus.

**Greek Salad:** One of the simplest and tastiest salad recipes out there! Simply chop up some tomato, cucumber, and peppers, and stir in a big bowl. Add low-fat feta cheese, olives, and olive oil, and you're good to go! This can also work well with celery.

**Tuna Salad:** Or how about making a tuna salad? Just take the salad of your choice and throw in a little tuna with some olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

**Toasty/Panini:** One of my favorite parts of going on holiday to sunny countries in Europe as a kid was always getting to sit outside of sandwich shops with a delicious panini or toasted sandwich. Just be sure to choose whole- wheat!

A great choice is a tuna with tomato or other salad ingredients.

**Avocado and Chicken Baguette:** Take your baguette, add some sliced chicken, avocado, and flakes of Parmesan with a little reduced-fat mayonnaise!

Pro Tip: If you're out and about at lunch and don't have time to prepare your own, then look for a salad bar! You can get some excellent value this way and eat a very healthy lunch easily too.

# The Mediterranean Diet Snacks

Looking for something you can enjoy between meals that will stay in line with your diet?

Here are a few things you can munch on to fight hunger pangs that still fit within a Mediterranean diet and also happen to be very good for you.

## Raisins

Raisins are high in carbohydrates and make an amazing low-fat snack. They can also make a pudding sweeter without adding icing or sugar. Have these to munch on and you may not crave chocolate in quite the same way. As an added bonus, some raisins and sultanas have similar health benefits to red wine!

## Apples and Oranges

Apples and oranges are high in vitamin C. Vitamin C is vital for the immune system as well as aiding the formation and maintenance of collagen, essential for the connective tissue in skin, bones, and ligaments.

Although you can drink these fruit as juice, this can often lead to consuming more fruit than you would if you were eating them whole. That is because juicing removes the fiber. Rather opt to eat the fruit than juicing them if you're looking to lose weight.

## Carrots

If you're struggling to fulfill your fruit and veggie quota, munching on a raw carrot is a quick way to check another one-off. They're also tasty, useful in a lot of recipes, and supply the body with vitamins A, B, C, D, and E.

The Greeks love to enjoy 'crudite' (vegetable tray) this way and it's especially tasty when dipped into a bowl of hummus! This also works very well with celery and the great thing about celery is that it's almost completely free of calories.

## Tomatoes

Tomatoes are also one of your five-a-day and are high in antioxidants. This leads to a longer life and less chance of developing cancer!

Tomatoes are very popular on [The Mediterranean Diet](#) and the plums variety is very easy to munch on in between meals (they're also deliciously sweet!) You can dip these in hummus or have with low-fat cream cheese.



## Sunflower Seeds

Sunflower seeds are a great solution to hunger pangs and one bag will last a very long time without costing the earth. They are a great source of linoleic acid which is an essential fatty acid that helps with healing.

They're also good for your prostate by strengthening it and fighting off cancer. They are an additional source of protein, iron, and fiber.





# CHAPTER 15

## Healthy Mediterranean Dinners

Here are just a few delicious meals you can enjoy for dinner as part of your Mediterranean diet...

**Carbonara:** Carbonara is one of the most well-known European recipes originating from Italy. The original recipe was simply to crack an egg onto hot pasta, a more tasty version can include sauteed garlic and onions.

Add onion and garlic to a frying pan with olive oil. Saute at a medium temperature allowing it to soften. Once the whole- wheat pasta is cooked, put it in the frying pan and continue to fry. Adding some grated Parmesan cheese.

Next, crack an egg into a cup and beat it (one large egg for two people is sufficient. Once that looks ready, turn off the burner altogether and simply add the egg and stir. The heat from the pan and the pasta will be enough to cook it. Add some black pepper on top and serve!

**Bolognese:** Bolognese is another classic Italian recipe and it's actually incredibly easy to make. Again, you need to make some whole- wheat pasta. You can start by frying chopped onion with some olive oil in a separate pan.

Add the minced meat and allow it to brown, before throwing in some chopped tomatoes, grated carrot and, minced garlic. Add tomato puree (the more you add, the tastier!) and then mix with the pasta once cooked.

Finally, sprinkle some Parmesan cheese over the top and you're done!

**Lasagne:** Lasagne is essentially the same meal as bolognese. Create your bolognese, then add it between sheets of whole- wheat pasta with white sauce! You can also throw in vegetables instead of the meat in order to make a vegetable lasagne.

**Moussaka:** And if you use eggplant, you can turn it into a delicious moussaka.

**Garlic Prawns:** Simply cook some prawns and then drizzle on some lemon along with olive oil and crushed (cooked) garlic. Have with a side of salad!

**Tomato Pasta:** There are a number of different tomato pasta meals you can make. A really great one is to add sauteed red peppers and mini chicken fillets to cooked whole- wheat pasta with some chopped tomatoes and puree. A very easy meal but also very delicious!

**Tuna Pasta:** There are various kinds of tuna pasta you can make, many of which are essentially similar to other pasta dishes but with added tuna! A technical term for one of these is 'penne al Tonno'.

**Chicken Caesar Salad:** This is super easy to make! Just take a salad of your choice and add some chicken breast on the side. Then cover in delicious reduced- oil Caesar dressing!

**Stuffed Pepper:** Hollow out a red pepper and stuff it with rice, tomato puree, and some vegetables. Drizzle with olive oil and bake in the oven!

**Snails:** Snails make a great French starter and are easy to make if you can find them near you. They tend to taste as whatever they're fried in, so make something creamy (using low- fat ricotta) with lots of garlic and they'll be delicious!



**Mussels With Tomatoes and Chilli:** This is exactly what it sounds like! Prepare some mussels and then add to a mixture of tomatoes, shallots, and garlic. Add some chopped (and deseeded) green chili and mix with olive oil.

**Fish of Your Choice + Salad:** An incredibly simple meal: just take the fish of your choice (tuna steak, salmon, or mackerel) and then have it with a side salad.

**Mediterranean Potato Salad:** Mayonnaise is usually very high in fat so opt for this potato salad recipe instead. Simmer chopped onions, garlic, fresh oregano, chopped tomatoes, and bell peppers for 10 minutes. Boil potatoes until soft. Mix the boiled potatoes with the tomato sauce and serve warm with olives and fresh basil.

**Caponata:** Cook chopped aubergines in olive oil with chopped shallots, chopped tomatoes, raisins, capers, celery, and red wine vinegar. Leave to cool slightly then served over toasted whole- wheat bread with toasted pine nuts and fresh basil.

**Seafood Paella:** Make a delicious Mediterranean paella with brown rice and an assortment of omega-3 rich seafood. Serve with fresh herbs.

**Chicken Souvlaki:** Prepare a marinade of fresh herbs, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. Marinate chicken pieces in it overnight then thread them onto skewers. Grill until cooked through and slightly charred. Serve with whole- wheat pitas, a low- fat yogurt dip, and an assortment of fresh, chopped vegetables such as peppers and cucumber.

**Pizza:** It might not sound healthy but that's the beauty of this Mediterranean diet version.

Use a whole- wheat wrap as a base and spread with a rich, homemade tomato sauce. Then top with grated low- fat mozzarella, olives, peppers, and fresh basil.

Grill in the oven under the broiler until the cheese has melted. Top with slices of avocado, and season with salt and pepper to taste.



# BONUS CHAPTER:

## *How To See Better (and Faster) Results On The Mediterranean Diet*

Several years ago, I noticed there was one single thing the most successful people do to see better (and even faster) results on **The Mediterranean Diet**.

I'd like you to try it as well — and I've found a way to make it super easy. In fact, it will take just 29 seconds a day.

What am I talking about?

Well, the folks that lose the most weight, feel the most energy, and see the biggest improvements on their blood markers...

**MAKE**  
**100% SURE** TO EAT  
**6-12 SERVINGS** OF  
**FRUITS** AND  
**VEGGIES**  
**EVERY SINGLE DAY.**





You see, eating pasta, chicken alfredo, and pizza is the EASY part. And yes, those foods are important to your overall health.

But, vegetables are the “secret” behind the healing power of the Mediterranean Diet.

Simply because they are chock-full of healthy antioxidants, flavonoids and phytochemicals that rejuvenate every cell in your body.

Ever wonder why Europeans are so much thinner and healthier than Americans? Well, that’s because vegetables like broccoli, arugula, asparagus, and kale are staples at Sunday lunches in Italy and France.

However, it’s easy for the Europeans to make sure they always eat their “greens.” Entire families often live under the same roof, which means Grandma will often cook while the adult children work.

But American culture is different. We don’t usually live with our elderly parents or in-laws. So, we don’t have anyone to do the cooking.

In fact, you probably do it all.

You cook dinner, clean the house, and pay the bills.

You juggle everyone’s needs, and try to make sure your family is happy and healthy.

So after a stressful day at work, you **deserve** to kickback and relax — not wash, chop and prepare vegetables. Trust me, I’ve been in your shoes!

Luckily, I found a way for you to get every single fruit and veggie your body needs in just 29 seconds a day — no juicing, blending, or chopping veggies required.

How? With a ready-mix superfood drink called **Daily Energy**.



Each scoop of Daily Energy contains a whopping 60 fruits, veggies, enzymes, spices, herbs, and superfoods. One glass helps you cover all of your nutritional bases, so no more feeling guilty or seeing lackluster results.

Plus, it's so easy to make that even a 5-year-old could prepare a glass.

Just stir one scoop into a glass of water.

**Sip it down.**

*And Voilà*

you'll give your body every nutrient it needs to stay healthy, energized and trim.



Daily Energy it's so healthy and pure, I bet even Italian grandmothers would give it their stamp of approval.

Just take a look at what you're getting with every scoop:

**Supergreens for heart, lung and immune health**

Spirulina, chlorella, wheatgrass, organic alfalfa, organic spinach, broccoli, and barley grass.

## **Citrus and tropical fruits for vision, joint and heart health.**

Organic apples, cherries, rose hip berries, pineapples, and papayas.

## **Stress-busting adaptogens to feel that laid-back Mediterranean vibe without flying to Greece.**

Rhodiola rosea, ashwagandha, astragalus, and sunflower extract to help maintain healthy cortisol levels.

## **Digestive enzymes, prebiotics and probiotics for better digestion, nutrient absorption and easy weight loss.**

### **Plus, a few extra “supernutrients” for good measure:**

- ▶ CoQ10, which quite literally recharges every cell in your body.
- ▶ ECGC, a tea extract that helps boost your metabolism so fat burns off faster.
- ▶ Beets for better blood pressure, blood sugar, and overall energy.
- ▶ Ginger for soothing stiff, achy joints
- ▶ And dozens many more.

Plus, it's certified organic and made in an FDA-approved facility. That means no GMOs, no artificial colors, no artificial flavors, no heavy metals, and no other junk.

Every ingredient comes from real farms where the focus is on the quality of the ingredient - not the quantity. Drinking Daily Energy is almost as natural as eating fruit right off the vine at a farm in France.

## **But what about taste?**

Most other “greens” products taste like grass. But Daily Energy has a fruity, tangy taste. Even my kids look forward to drinking it.

## **Okay, how much will this set me back?**

I reached out to Phil at Spring of Life (the company that makes Daily Energy). I told him about our mission to help people improve their health through the Mediterranean diet and lifestyle.



Well, he got so excited, he said:

**“ You know what... I’ll send you a link that will give all of your readers 40% off Daily Energy. It’s the least I can do. ”**

I was blown away. Because a 40% discount brings Daily Energy down a measly \$2.30 per day. And when you consider one tiny tin of cherries costs \$8 bucks at Whole Foods, \$2.30 for over 60 superfoods is an absolute steal.

Plus, you get a 60-day guarantee. Just try it for a month. If you’re unsatisfied for any reason, let us know and you’ll receive a speedy and courteous refund. You’ve got nothing to lose by giving it a shot.

Look, I don’t recommend many supplements. But I promise you — Daily Energy will make your health journey just a little bit easier, so you’ll see results just a little bit faster.

So, I’d like you to pick this up. Just make sure you use the link below to receive your 40% discount.



***Click to get 40% off Daily Energy and see better (and faster) results on The Mediterranean Diet.***

**CLICK HERE NOW!**