

Your Guide to the Mediterranean Diet

Tips, Recipes and More for Eating Mediterranean and Losing Weight!



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Welcome!

Congratulations on starting your journey to health and happiness! As a member of Club Advantage, you're now part of a community dedicated to supporting your goals.

No matter what your schedule is, no matter what your cravings are, no matter how much time you can spare, you can use Club Advantage to your advantage. It flexes to your taste and style, so it's totally, personally yours, with our full support.

Choosing the right diet is crucial for achieving sustainable weight loss and overall health improvement. A diet that fits your lifestyle and preferences increases the likelihood of long-term adherence and success. It should align with your health goals, whether it's weight management, muscle building or improving overall wellness.

This guide was created to help you understand and successfully implement the Mediterranean diet. Inside, you'll find valuable information on the benefits of following the Mediterranean diet, how to get started, essential tips for staying on track, and delicious recipes to keep you motivated.

Our goal is to provide you with all the tools and knowledge you need to be successful.

The best diet for you is one that you can consistently follow and enjoy. Club Advantage offers a variety of resources and meal options to make it easier for you to stick to your chosen diet and achieve your goals.

Nutrisystem products are designed to fit seamlessly into various diet plans, including the Mediterranean diet. They offer convenient, nutritionally balanced options to help you stay on track and achieve your goals.

Adopting the Mediterranean diet is a positive step towards better health and wellness. Remember, every small change you make brings you closer to your goals. Stay motivated, be patient with yourself, and celebrate your progress along the way.

You have the power to create a healthier, happier you, and Club Advantage is here to support you every step of the way.

What is the Mediterranean Diet?

The Mediterranean diet is a healthy eating pattern inspired by the traditional diets of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, such as Greece, Italy, and Spain.

It emphasizes whole, minimally processed foods, with a focus on fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds.

Healthy fats, particularly olive oil, play a central role, while lean proteins like fish and poultry are preferred over red meat.

The Mediterranean diet also encourages moderate consumption of dairy, mainly yogurt and cheese.

Known for its health promoting benefits, the Mediterranean diet is associated with lower risks of heart disease and diabetes, improved quality of life, and overall longevity.

How & Why it Works

The Mediterranean diet is an eating approach that supports overall health and wellness. While it was not designed solely for weight loss, it has been shown to help support weight loss. This is mainly because of the nutrient-rich foods that make up the majority of the Mediterranean diet. This includes foods high in fiber, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes. And, foods high in healthy fats, such as olive oil, olives, fatty fish, and avocados.



Fiber-Rich Diet: Diets high in fiber have been shown to help increase feelings of fullness, or satiety, which in turn can help to reduce overall calorie intake during the day. This reduction in calories can help support weight loss.



Healthy Fats: Like fiber, fats help to increase feelings of fullness, or satiety. This is because fats take longer for the body to digest compared to carbohydrates and proteins. Therefore, they are the last to leave the digestive track, keeping you fuller longer. The Mediterranean diet is rich in healthy fats, helping to create a feeling of fullness, which may lead to reduced overall calorie intake.

Health & Nutrition Benefits

A Mediterranean diet is often recognized as one of the top diets for improving health—and for good reason. By incorporating an abundance of nutrient-rich food choices, this type of diet can have numerous beneficial effects on the body, including:

- Reduced risk of heart disease
- Reduced risk of stroke
- May prevent dementia
- May prevent diabetes
- Likely reduces inflammation



Mediterranean Diet Myths Debunked

MYTH: You will need to drink wine daily on the Mediterranean diet.

FACT: While moderate wine consumption, especially red wine, is often associated with the Mediterranean diet, it's not required. The diet can be followed without alcohol, and the health benefits come mainly from the food choices.

MYTH: You can't eat red meat on the Mediterranean diet.

FACT: Red meat isn't completely off-limits, but it's eaten sparingly. The Mediterranean diet encourages more plant-based meals and lean proteins like fish or poultry, reserving red meat for occasional consumption.

MYTH: The Mediterranean diet is just about eating a lot of fish.

FACT: Fish is a great source of omega-3 fatty acids and is emphasized in the Mediterranean diet, but it's not the only protein. Other lean proteins like poultry, eggs, and plant-based options such as beans and lentils are also encouraged.

MYTH: The Mediterranean diet is a low-carb diet.

FACT: The Mediterranean diet is not low-carb; it includes a healthy balance of carbohydrates from whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes. Rather than eliminating carbs, it emphasizes nutrient-dense, fiber-rich sources like whole wheat, farro, and quinoa, which provide steady energy and support overall health.

MYTH: The Mediterranean diet is expensive.

FACT: While premium ingredients like olive oil and fresh fish may seem pricey, the Mediterranean diet emphasizes affordable staples like beans, lentils, whole grains, and seasonal vegetables. It can be budget-friendly with proper planning.

Getting Started

Prepare Yourself

Learn & Set Goals

- **Learn About Food Groups:** Understand the different types of food groups and their impact on your body. Familiarize yourself with the various nutrients each food group is helping to contribute to your diet. For example, fish and poultry provide muscle building proteins, beans and legumes provide fiber to help you stay full, and fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins & minerals to support optimal health!
- **Reading Labels:** Get accustomed to reading nutrition labels to identify different foods and understand their nutrient content per serving. Take note of the suggested serving size for the food item to get a better understanding of how much to serve for a typical portion sizes. This will help you make informed choices.
- **Goal Setting:** Establish clear, achievable goals for your low-carb diet. These could be specific (e.g., consuming less than 100 grams of carbs per day) or broader (e.g., losing weight, improving blood sugar control, or increasing energy levels).



Stay Hydrated & Maintain a Balanced Diet

- **Hydration:** As with any weight loss plan, it's important to drink water to stay hydrated and support overall health. Aim for at least 64 ounces of water a day.
- **Balanced Diet:** Aim to include a variety of proteins, healthy fats and vegetables. A well-rounded diet supports overall health and energy levels.
- **Mindset:** Adopting a new diet approach requires a shift in mindset. Embrace the change by focusing on the positive health benefits and how it aligns with your goals.
- **Support System:** Share your dietary goals with family and friends. Having a support system can provide encouragement.
- **Expert Guidance:** If needed, consult with a Nutrisystem coach to tailor your Mediterranean diet to your specific needs.

5 Essential Steps to Begin

01

ASSESS YOUR CURRENT HABITS

Begin by analyzing your current eating patterns to understand your typical food intake. Keep a food diary for a week to track what you eat and identify areas for improvement.

02

IDENTIFY FOODS YOU ENJOY

The Mediterranean diet includes many options for healthy, nutrient-rich foods. Make a list of foods you enjoy from the options in the next section. These can include non-starchy vegetables, fresh fruits, poultry, fish, eggs, low-fat dairy products, nuts and seeds. Research and explore new foods, as well as herbs and spices, to add variety and flavor to your diet.

03

GRADUALLY MAKE HEALTHIER SWAPS

Go slow and make one simple change at a time in your diet, rather than doing a complete overhaul overnight. For example, replace sugary snacks with nuts for a week or two, then after you have that new snack habit established try building on it with one more simple swap.

04

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Pay attention to how your body reacts to the changes you are making in your diet. Adjust portions and frequency based on your energy levels, digestive comfort and overall satisfaction.

05

PLAN MEALS AND SNACKS AHEAD

Take time each week to plan your meals, ensuring each one is balanced and includes a source of protein, healthy fats, complex carbs, and non-starchy vegetables. Prepare balanced snacks and meals in advance. Cook larger portions of protein (e.g., chicken, tofu) and store them for quick meal assembly during the week.



Kitchen & Pantry Essentials

Optimize your kitchen by stocking up on nutrient-rich Mediterranean-friendly foods and ingredients. This list of recommended grocery add-ins is curated based on ingredients commonly included in the Mediterranean diet. We also provide a list of foods from our menu that deliver the flavors of the Mediterranean diet. Stock up on them so you always have convenient options on hand!

Recommended Grocery Add-Ins

PowerFuels

PowerFuel grocery add-ins consist of healthy fats and high-quality, lean proteins.

POULTRY, FISH & SEAFOOD

- Chicken, 2 oz. cooked
- Turkey, 2 oz. cooked
- Canned or Pouched Fish (tuna or salmon), in water, 2 oz. or ½ cup
- Fatty Fish (tuna, salmon, mackerel, swordfish, trout), 2 oz. cooked
- Shellfish (shrimp, lobster, crab, scallops, mussels), 3 oz. cooked
- White Fish (bass, flounder, tilapia, cod, halibut), 3 oz. cooked

EGGS & DAIRY

- Cottage Cheese, low-fat, ½ cup
- Eggs, 1 large
- Greek Yogurt, low-fat or fat-free, 2/3 cup or 6 oz. single serving containers
- Semisoft Snack-Sized Cheese Pieces, light, 2 pieces or about 1 oz.
- Ricotta cheese, 1/4 cup

HEALTHY FATS & OILS

- Avocado, 1/3 fruit or 1/4 cup pureed
- Olives, 8 - 10 large
- Olive oil, 1 Tbsp.

PLANT-BASED PROTEINS

- Edamame, shelled, ½ cup
- Tempeh, low- or reduced-sodium, 3 oz. cooked or ½ cup
- Tofu, 1 cup

PROTEIN POWDERS & BARS

- Nutrisystem Protein Shakes, 1 serving
- Other Protein Shakes and Powders, 1 serving (80-140 calories with at least 10g protein and no more than 5g added sugar per serving)
- Protein Bars, 1 bar (80 -120 calories with at least 8g protein and no more than 5g added sugar per serving)

NUTS & SEEDS

- Almonds, unsalted, 2 Tbsp. or 12 nuts
- Cashews, unsalted, 2 Tbsp. or 9 nuts
- Peanut Butter, no added sugar, 1 Tbsp.
- Pistachios, unsalted, 2 Tbsp. or 24 nuts
- Pumpkin seeds, unsalted, 2 Tbsp.
- Sunflower seeds, unsalted, 2 Tbsp.
- Walnuts, unsalted, 2 Tbsp. or 7 halves

SmartCarbs

SmartCarb grocery add-ins are carbohydrates, which include foods rich in fiber to help support digestive health.

BREAD, PASTA & GRAINS

- Bread, 100% whole grain, 1 slice
- Chickpea Pasta, ½ cup cooked
- Lentil Pasta, ½ cup cooked
- Quinoa, cooked, ½ cup

BEANS & LEGUMES

- Black Beans, no-salt-added, ½ cup canned
- Chickpeas, no-salt-added, ½ cup canned
- Hummus, ¼ cup
- Kidney beans, no-salt-added, ½ cup canned
- Lentils, ½ cup cooked

FRUIT & STARCHY VEGETABLES

- Butternut squash, 1 cup
- Kiwi, 2 medium fruit
- Raspberries, 1 cup
- Blueberries, 1 cup
- Orange, 1 medium fruit
- Sweet Potatoes, 1/2 cup



Vegetables

Vegetable grocery add-ins are non-starchy veggie choices that are packed with nutrients essential for health. Choose a variety of veggies every day! One serving is 1 cup raw or 1/2 cup cooked.

- Asparagus
- Bell Peppers
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Cucumber
- Green Beans
- Mixed Leafy Greens
- Mushrooms
- Radish
- Sugar Snap Peas
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Yellow Summer Squash

My Grocery List

Use this space to write down your favorite Nutrisystem grocery add-ins. Take it with you the next time you head to the grocery store!

POWERFUELS

LEAN MEATS, POULTRY, FISH, SEAFOOD

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

EGGS & DAIRY

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

PLANT-BASED PROTEINS

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

PROTEIN BARS/SHAKES

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

NUTS, SEEDS & HEALTHY FATS

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

SMARTCARBS

BREAD, PASTA & GRAINS

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

BEANS & LEGUMES

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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FRUITS & STARCHY VEGETABLES

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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VEGETABLES

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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Nutrisystem Foods

that fit into a Mediterranean lifestyle!

Quick Breakfasts for Busy Days

- Biscotti Bites
- French Toast
- Honey Wheat Bagel

Pair with Greek yogurt for the perfect Protein + Fiber combo!

The perfect companion to your morning coffee or tea!



Easy Lunches for Work

- Chewy Trail Mix Bar
- Chicken Mozzarella Melt
- Sweet & Tangy Tuna Salad



Serve alongside a large garden salad!



Simple Weeknight Dinners

- Artichoke & Spinach Stuffed Chicken Breast
- Mediterranean Flatbread
- Grain-Crusted Pollock with Vegetables

Hearty Inspirations® meals contain up to 30 g of protein*!



*Hearty Inspirations dinners contain 20 - 30 g protein vs. standard dinners at 9 - 22 g protein.

Tips to Stay on Track

Strategies for Adherence & Motivation

Set Specific, Measurable & Achievable Goals

- **Goal Setting:** Define clear, specific goals such as "consume at least 4 servings of vegetables every day" or "prepare at least three meals at home each week." Make sure these goals are realistic and attainable within your lifestyle.
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Use quantifiable metrics like grams of carbs, meal frequency or weight changes to track progress.

Keep a Food Diary to Monitor Food Intake & Progress

- **Food Logging:** Consistently track your meals and snacks to monitor your food intake.
- **Review and Reflect:** Regularly review your food diary to identify patterns, successes and areas for improvement.

Experiment with New Recipes & Foods Options

- **Recipe Exploration:** Try new Mediterranean-inspired recipes to keep your meals exciting and diverse. Explore various ancient grains like quinoa or amaranth, or try out new fish options to add more healthy fats to your diet.
- **Variety of Sources:** Incorporate a wide range of food options like different types of vegetables, or meat and dairy alternatives to avoid monotony.

Lean on Club Advantage

- **Nutrisystem Meals:** Take advantage of Nutrisystem foods for added convenience. They'll keep you on track, even when life gets busy!
- **Guides & Resources:** Use the Club Advantage guides and resources to help you structure your day and ensure it aligns with your goals.



Overcoming Challenges & Setbacks

Plan & Prepare Meals in Advance

- **Meal Prep:** Dedicate a day each week to plan and prepare meals. Cook in bulk and portion out meals to ensure you stay on track with your healthy eating goals.
- **Freezing and Storing:** Freeze pre-cooked meals, cooked whole grains, or lean proteins to have convenient, ready-to-eat options on hand.

Keep Healthy Snacks on Hand for Busy Days

- **Snack Preparation:** Stock up on portable snacks like almonds or soy nuts. Have chopped veggies on hand with hummus or avocado for dipping.
- **Emergency Stash:** Keep snacks in your bag, car or office to avoid reaching for unhealthy options when you're on the go. Try popcorn or legume-based snacks like roasted chickpeas or lentil puffs.

How to Handle Dining Out & Social Events

- **Protein Tips:** Opt for grilled, baked or steamed fish or seafood dishes instead of fried or breaded options.
- **Veggie Sides:** Substitute veggies, like a garden salad or steamed broccoli, as your side dish instead of starchy options like French fries.
- **Sauces and Dressings:** Request sauces and dressings on the side to manage portion sizes. Choose healthier alternatives like olive oil and vinegar instead of sugary or creamy dressings.



Metrics to Track

WEIGHT & BODY MEASUREMENTS

The frequency that you weigh yourself is a personal preference. Just keep a few things in mind:

- Weigh at the same time of day and with the same amount of clothing.
- The scale can fluctuate drastically from day to day, sometimes even 5 pounds, so you must be conscious of that and not get frustrated.
- Chart your progress and look at the weight loss trend over the month, not just a few days.
- If you're not weighing at all, use other indicators of success, such as body circumferences (waist, hips, arms, etc.) to assess changes in body composition. Track the changes you see in these indicators from week to week.

ENERGY LEVELS & PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE

Track your daily energy levels, particularly how you feel before and after meals and workouts. Track improvements in physical activities, such as lifting heavier weights, running longer distances or increased endurance.

HUNGER & FULLNESS LEVELS

Track your hunger level before, during and after meals. Being mindful of this can help you see trends in how foods may impact your hunger and cravings. This will allow you to choose foods that help curb your hunger and cravings and minimize those that leave you feeling less satisfied.

SLEEP QUALITY & DURATION

Keep a log of your sleep patterns, noting the duration and quality of sleep each night. Use apps or devices that monitor sleep quality to gain insights into your sleep patterns.

Adjustments & Flexibility

Adapting to Individual Needs & Preferences

Adjust Portion Sizes and Food Sources

- Customize portion sizes to fit your hunger levels, activity levels, and weight loss or maintenance goals.
- Choose food sources that accommodate dietary preferences and restrictions, such as plant-based proteins for vegetarians or lactose-free options for those with dairy intolerance.

Consult a Nutrisystem Coach for Personalized Advice

- Seek advice from Nutrisystem coaches to help tailor the Mediterranean diet to your specific needs and goals.

Addressing Nutritional Gaps

Ensure a Balanced Intake of Vitamins & Minerals by Incorporating a Variety of Foods

- The great news is the Mediterranean diet includes a wide variety of nutrient dense foods options. Incorporate a variety of these foods to provide essential vitamins and minerals, such as leafy greens, nuts, seeds and starchy vegetables.
- Include superfoods that are rich in nutrients, like chia seeds, avocados and kale, to enhance your diet's nutritional profile.

Consider Supplements if Certain Nutrients Are Lacking

- If you find it challenging to meet all your nutritional needs through food alone, consider supplements like multivitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, and specific minerals such as calcium or magnesium.
- Consult with your healthcare provider before starting any supplementation to ensure it's appropriate for your individual needs.



Recipes & Hacks

The following pages have links to simple and quick recipes that fit into a healthy lifestyle. Plus, we share our top Nutrisystem food hacks to help you adopt the Mediterranean diet.

Simple & Delicious Recipes

Healthy & Satisfying!



16 Fresh and Filling Fish Dinners

CRISPY SALMON WITH POMEGRANATE SALSA, SPICY TERIYAKI TUNA STEAK, AIR FRYER CATFISH, BLACKENED FISH SANDWICH, AIR FRYER FISH STICKS AND MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)

Easy Eggplant Recipes You Need to Try

ROASTED RED PEPPER EGGPLANT PIZZAS, 3-INGREDIENT EGGPLANT FRIES, BALSAMIC EGGPLANT CHIPS, EASY EGGPLANT PARM, AIR FRIED EGGPLANT POPPERS, AND MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)



Healthy and Flavorful Chickpea Recipes

EASY CHICKPEA SALAD, VEGETARIAN CHICKPEA MEATBALLS, ROASTED GARLIC HUMMUS, RASPBERRY CHICKPEA BLONDIES, LIGHTENED-UP FALAFEL WITH TZATZIKI, AND MORE!

[GET INSPIRED!](#)



Mediterranean Slow Cooker Chicken Breast

FEATURING A BLEND OF SPICES, LEMON JUICE AND GREEK YOGURT, THIS SLOW COOKER CHICKEN IS PACKED WITH PROTEIN AND CAN BE PAIRED WITH ANY SIDE DISH.

[GET THE RECIPE](#)

Mediterranean Stuffed Peppers

SUCCULENT BELL PEPPERS ARE GENEROUSLY FILLED WITH A HEARTY MIX OF ORZO, CREAMY GOAT CHEESE, OLIVES, AND AN ARRAY OF COLORFUL VEGETABLES AND HERBS.

[GET THE RECIPE](#)



Mediterranean White Bean Salad

A MEDLEY OF PROTEIN-RICH BEANS, JUICY TOMATOES, CRISP CUCUMBERS AND TANGY DRESSING THAT WILL TRANSPORT YOU TO THE SUN-DRENCHED COASTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.

[GET THE RECIPE](#)



Club Advantage Meal Hacks

Eating a healthy, Mediterranean diet doesn't have to be hard or mean that you need to spend hours in the kitchen. These quick and easy meal hacks will make healthy eating a breeze.

- **Cook Once, Eat Twice:** When it comes to meal prep work smarter, not harder. Cook an extra serving of your protein and side dishes at dinner and set them aside to use for tomorrow's lunch. You can enjoy the same meal, or if you are craving more variety, try topping a salad with the protein or toss your leftover side dish with a new herb or spice to create a different flavor profile.
- **Produce Prep:** Don't let fresh veggies go to the refrigerator graveyard! Take a few minutes at the start of each week to wash and cut fresh produce like cucumbers, bell peppers, broccoli, cauliflower and lettuce. Store them in a dry, airtight container so they are ready to go when you need them for recipes or are looking for a quick snack to munch on.
- **Stock Your Freezer:** Meal prep some of your favorite meals and freeze them for later. And don't forget - Nutrisystem is here to help you stock your freezer too! Nutrisystem meals offer the convenience of portion and calorie-controlled meals that heat up in minutes. So, be sure to keep your favorite Nutrisystem meals on hand for those busy nights!
- **Flavor Enhancements:** Herbs and spices can make meals more enjoyable without adding extra calories. Skip chopping and grinding fresh herbs and spices. For added convenience, stock up on frozen varieties like garlic, ginger or basil. Keep a selection of your favorite dried herbs and spices in a cool, dark place in your pantry to easily add to your meals.