



Mediterranean Diet 101

The Mediterranean diet is about *so much more* than weight loss. Get the basics on this proven diet — from its many health benefits to the secrets behind its success.



Go Mediterranean for a Healthy Heart

Learn just how good the Mediterranean diet is for your heart. Then discover some easy ways you can start incorporating this heart-healthy diet into your life today!



Preventing Breast Cancer with the Mediterranean Diet

Promising research shows that the Mediterranean diet may help reduce your risk of breast cancer. Get the facts — plus a helpful Mediterranean shopping list to take to the store with you!



Protect Against Alzheimer's the Mediterranean Way

Could the Mediterranean diet give us a way to avoid Alzheimer's? Find out what researchers are discovering — and learn how you can eat for optimal brain health!



#1

**Mediterranean
Diet 101**



QUICK START



Ready to Switch to the Mediterranean Diet?

Inside this book, we've included some practical tips to help you get started on this healthy diet. Look for the Quick Start symbol throughout to find ways you can easily incorporate the benefits of the Mediterranean diet into your life right now!

Mediterranean Diet 101

Perhaps you've heard that the Mediterranean diet is a healthy way to lose those extra pounds. Or maybe you've seen the cookbooks and articles promising that you'll lose weight and still feel satisfied with this particular way of eating.

And all of that is absolutely true! The Mediterranean diet — a well-balanced diet that includes healthy fats, complex carbohydrates, and a wide range of fresh, delicious, non-processed foods — does offer the best alternative if you're looking to lose weight without depriving yourself or sacrificing your health.

But it's not just about the waistline. There's another reason the Mediterranean diet has been so popular for thousands of years — and it has to do with its extraordinary range of life-changing health benefits.

By pairing this diet with increased exercise and lowered stress, you can lower your cholesterol, blood sugar, and blood pressure, and reduce the risk of heart disease, certain cancers, and brain disorders ... and that's just the beginning!

In this book, we're going to take a closer look at three of the Mediterranean diet's biggest health benefits: its protective effects against heart disease, breast cancer, and Alzheimer's disease.

The Power of Polyphenols

Based on the lifestyle and culture of many countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the Mediterranean diet features a wide array of tasty foods that are chock full of nutrients and antioxidants. It includes plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, fish (especially fatty fish) and seafood, beans and legumes, white meat, whole grains, seeds, olive oil, red wine, and tree nuts and peanuts.

But just what makes the Mediterranean diet so remarkably healthy? Recent studies have revealed that the high content of polyphenols found in the Mediterranean diet is the key factor in its ability to provide so many health benefits and to reduce the risk of dying.¹⁻³

Polyphenols — which is really just a fancy word for plant-based antioxidants — naturally occur in such foods as olives, artichokes, grapes, lentils, pomegranates, and walnuts, all of which are typically on the menu in the Mediterranean diet.

In addition to fighting and protecting against oxidative stress, polyphenols have a wide array of other benefits, including anti-inflammatory, anticarcinogenic, antidiabetic, antiobesity, and anti-allergic properties as well as liver and stomach protective effects.¹ There are numerous epidemiological studies that demonstrate the success of polyphenols in preventing cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases, as well as certain cancers.^{1,4-14}

Enhancing Your Diet with Polyphenols

While studies have shown the numerous health benefits of polyphenols, many of us in the United States do not eat enough fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, and olive oil — the key components of the polyphenol-rich Mediterranean diet — to get an adequate amount of polyphenols.

In fact, a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that 87% of Americans did not meet vegetable intake recommendations and 76% did not meet fruit intake recommendations.¹⁵ The CDC also reported that the intake of other Mediterranean diet favorites such as nuts and beans was also below the recommended amounts.^{16,17}

Even if you are following the Mediterranean diet, it can sometimes be difficult to adhere to it closely enough to get the polyphenols you need in your daily diet — and that's where supplements come in.

Using supplements with polyphenols to augment your food intake ensures that you are getting the optimal amounts of these essential nutrients — and reaping their many health benefits as well!



A report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that 87% of Americans did not meet vegetable intake recommendations and 76% did not meet fruit intake recommendations.



#2

**Go Mediterranean
for a Healthy Heart**

Go Mediterranean for a Healthy Heart

The Mediterranean diet has been successful at preventing and fighting heart disease for thousands of years.

Many recent studies reveal the relationship between the polyphenols common in the Mediterranean diet and a wide range of cardiovascular protective effects, including a reduction in blood pressure and inflammation.^{1–3,18–21}

In addition, many of the foods typical to the Mediterranean diet, such as artichokes, grapes, pecans, and pomegranates, have been found to help control the levels of oxidized low-density lipoprotein cholesterol — the “bad” cholesterol that’s more likely to build up deposits in your arteries.^{22–29}

But it was a large European study called PREDIMED that really showed us the power of the Mediterranean diet when it comes to heart health.

A Groundbreaking Cardiovascular Study

Published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the PREDIMED study revealed that following a Mediterranean diet helped reduce cardiovascular disease and death risks by 30% compared with a standard low-fat diet.³⁰

The study involved more than 7,400 men and women who were at a high cardiovascular risk when they enrolled in the study but did not yet have cardiovascular disease. Each of them was assigned to one of three groups: the Mediterranean diet plus 4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil each day, the Mediterranean diet plus about one ounce of nuts each day, and a control low-fat diet.

Both of the Mediterranean diet groups experienced a significant 30% reduction in the combined risk of acute heart attack, stroke, or cardiovascular death over a five-year period, compared with the control group.

Unlike the previous studies that only showed a correlation between diet and heart disease risk, this landmark study confirmed the Mediterranean diet as a true health intervention that can significantly lower cardiovascular disease risk.



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Simple Steps to Start *Your* Mediterranean Diet

You don't have to travel all the way to the Mediterranean to begin this diet — although that does sound nice!

The Mediterranean diet might be a whole new way of eating for you, and we know that drastically changing your diet can seem overwhelming. But there's no need to stress — we'll show you how to ease your way into the Mediterranean diet with just a few simple changes:

- **Put in the produce.** You can make your diet healthier just by adding some fruits and vegetables to your main meals. For example, start off your meal with a salad, try a veggie side dish, add some vegetables to your stir fry, or put some fresh fruit on your cereal or oatmeal. The possibilities are endless — and yummy!
- **Get an oil change.** Start using olive oil to sauté foods instead of vegetable or other oils.
- **Be prepared for the snack attack.** Don't keep those chips and cookies around to tempt you. Instead stock up on Mediterranean diet-friendly fruits, vegetables, and nuts. For a mid-afternoon pick-me-up, try carrots and celery dipped in hummus or an apple with a handful of nuts.
- **Go whole grain.** Replace refined breads, rice, and pasta with whole grain variations. Make that sandwich with a whole-wheat tortilla instead of white bread — or use quinoa or brown rice in place of white rice.
- **Catch of the day.** Try substituting one of your usual red meat dishes with a fish entrée.
- **Spice of life.** Instead of salt, use herbs and spices to season your food.
- **Uncork the wine.** While excess alcohol can be dangerous, wine grapes are full of healthy polyphenols. If you already drink alcohol, we recommend no more than 1 glass of red wine per day for women and 1 to 2 glasses for men.



Living Longer with the Mediterranean Diet

Given what we’ve already told you about polyphenols, it shouldn’t surprise you to learn that a high dietary intake of these vital nutrients may be associated with longevity.

A recent study examined the natural intakes of polyphenols in more than 800 men and women over a period of 12 years. Researchers discovered that the subjects with polyphenol-rich diets had a significant 30% reduction in the risk of dying compared to their counterparts with the lower polyphenol intakes.¹

With results like that, who wouldn’t want to be on Team Polyphenol? If you’d like to try a similar diet, here are some basic guidelines:

Recommended Foods	Goal for Consumption
Olive Oil	At least 4 tbsp/day
Tree nuts and peanuts	At least 3 servings/week
Fresh fruits	At least 3 servings/day
Vegetables	At least 2 servings/day
Fish (especially fatty fish) and seafood	At least 3 servings/week
Legumes (beans)	At least 3 servings/week
White meat	Instead of red meat
Wine with meals (optional)	At least seven glasses/week

Foods to Be Discouraged	Goal for Restriction
Soda drinks	Less than one/day
Commercial baked goods, sweets, pastries	Less than 3 servings/week
Spreadable fats (butter, etc.)	Less than one serving/day
Red and processed meats	Less than one serving a day





#3

**Preventing Breast
Cancer with the
Mediterranean Diet**



The Mediterranean Diet and Other Cancers

Based on various epidemiologic and observational studies, many scientists have long believed that the Mediterranean diet can offer protection against cancer.³²⁻³⁴

More recent research suggests that replacing the typical Western diet with the Mediterranean diet may help protect us against a variety of cancers, including:³⁵⁻³⁷

- Colorectal cancer
- Endometrial cancer
- Gastric cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Prostate cancer

Research on the Mediterranean Diet and Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women, with more than 40,000 women in the United States dying from it each year. It's estimated that more than 250,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women this year, and the chance that a woman will die from breast cancer is about 1 in 37.

These statistics are alarming, and it's hard not to be deeply concerned about this prevalent disease. A lot of money has gone into breast cancer research, and we've made some headway — but too many women are still dying.

But there is some hope on the horizon. As scientists search for ways to prevent and reduce the risk of breast cancer, they are discovering that what we put into our bodies can have a huge impact — and that the Mediterranean diet just might play a valuable role in our battle against breast cancer.

Source: American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org

Promising Research on the Mediterranean Diet and Breast Cancer

A major study recently found that following a Mediterranean diet rich in plant protein, fish, and olive oil can significantly reduce the risk of a deadly form of breast cancer.³¹

This 20-year study of more than 62,000 women examined how the women's breast cancer risk was affected by what they ate. What the researchers discovered was that those who adhered most closely to a Mediterranean diet were 40 percent less likely to develop estrogen receptor-negative breast cancer than the women who adopted the diet the least.

ER-negative breast cancer is a form of the disease that is not stimulated by the hormone estrogen. It's often harder to treat than hormone-sensitive cancer and is usually more deadly.

Mediterranean Diet Grocery List

Is it time to add the Mediterranean diet to your life? Start by stocking your kitchen with healthy Mediterranean diet-friendly foods. To make it easier for you, we've put together this handy shopping list that you can print out and take to the store with you!



Fruits & Vegetables

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apples | <input type="checkbox"/> Carrots | <input type="checkbox"/> Kiwi | <input type="checkbox"/> Peaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apricots | <input type="checkbox"/> Celery | <input type="checkbox"/> Leafy greens (e.g.,
lettuce, spinach, kale) | <input type="checkbox"/> Peas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artichokes | <input type="checkbox"/> Cherries | <input type="checkbox"/> Lemons | <input type="checkbox"/> Peppers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avocados | <input type="checkbox"/> Dates | <input type="checkbox"/> Melon | <input type="checkbox"/> Plums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bananas | <input type="checkbox"/> Eggplant | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Pomegranate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beets | <input type="checkbox"/> Figs | <input type="checkbox"/> Olives | <input type="checkbox"/> Raisins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Berries | <input type="checkbox"/> Grapefruit | <input type="checkbox"/> Onions | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet potatoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli | <input type="checkbox"/> Grapes | <input type="checkbox"/> Oranges | <input type="checkbox"/> Tomatoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cabbage | <input type="checkbox"/> Green Beans | | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Meat & Seafood

- ☐ Chicken
- ☐ Clams
- ☐ Cod
- ☐ Crab
- ☐ Halibut
- ☐ Lean Pork
- ☐ Salmon
- ☐ Scallops
- ☐ Shrimp
- ☐ Tilapia
- ☐ Tuna
- ☐ Turkey
- ☐ _____

Nuts

- ☐ Almonds
- ☐ Cashews
- ☐ Peanuts
- ☐ Pecans
- ☐ Pine nuts
- ☐ Sunflower seeds
- ☐ Walnuts
- ☐ _____

Grains

- ☐ Barley
- ☐ Brown Rice
- ☐ Bulgur
- ☐ Oatmeal
- ☐ Quinoa
- ☐ Whole grain breads,
pitas or wraps
- ☐ Whole grain pasta
- ☐ Whole wheat couscous
- ☐ _____

Herbs & Spices

- ☐ Basil
- ☐ Cinnamon
- ☐ Cayenne pepper
- ☐ Cumin
- ☐ Garlic
- ☐ Ginger
- ☐ Nutmeg
- ☐ Oregano
- ☐ Parsley
- ☐ Rosemary
- ☐ Sage
- ☐ Thyme
- ☐ _____

Dairy/Eggs

- ☐ Eggs
- ☐ Greek yogurt
- ☐ Low-fat milk
- ☐ Non-processed cheeses
(feta, mozzarella, goat
cheese, etc.)
- ☐ _____

Beans *(canned or dried)*

- ☐ Black beans
- ☐ Chick peas
- ☐ Kidney beans
- ☐ Lentils
- ☐ White beans
- ☐ _____

Cupboard Staples

- ☐ Olive oil, especially extra
virgin olive oil
- ☐ Vinegars, including
balsamic, red wine, and
white wine
- ☐ Wine, red and white
- ☐ _____

Snacks

- ☐ Edamame
- ☐ Hummus
- ☐ Salsa
- ☐ Whole grain crackers
- ☐ _____



#4

**Protect Against
Alzheimer's the
Mediterranean Way**

Protect Against Alzheimer's the Mediterranean Way

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. In fact, every 66 seconds someone in the United States develops the disease, and deaths from Alzheimer's have increased by 89% since 2000.

The facts and figures about this devastating disease are staggering. While there's been an extensive amount of research on Alzheimer's, there just hasn't been enough progress — and there's still no cure.

But could the Mediterranean diet — with its nutrients such as fish oil, monounsaturated fatty acids, vitamin B12, folate, and polyphenols offering possible protection against dementia — be the answer to lowering our risk of Alzheimer's?

Studies Reveal Diet's Potential Against Alzheimer's

In recent years, various studies have demonstrated that the Mediterranean diet may indeed reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and other dementia.

One such study measured cognitive impairment using the standard Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) questionnaire. Monitoring more than 1,400 adults over a five-year period, this study found that higher adherence to a Mediterranean diet was associated with fewer errors on the MMSE.³⁸

Another review found that the Mediterranean diet not only reduced the risk of Alzheimer's disease, but it also reduced the rate of the progression of dementia.³⁹

In yet another study, participants who most closely followed the Mediterranean diet showed 28% lower risk of developing cognitive impairment over a 4 ½-year period than those who were less adherent. And the Mediterranean diet followers who had some cognitive impairment at the start of the study experienced 48% lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease at follow-up.⁴⁰



Of course, much more research is needed, but all of these findings offer exciting hope for the Mediterranean diet as a potential tool in the fight against Alzheimer's!

Smart Eating for Your Brain

For optimal brain health, limit your intake of these five types of foods:

Foods:	Limit to:
Pastries and sweets	Under 5 servings per week
Red meat	Under 4 servings per week
Cheese	Under 1 serving per week
Butter or margarine	Under 1 tablespoon per day
Fried or fast foods	Under 1 serving per week



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Preventing Breast Cancer with the Mediterranean Diet



Protect Against Alzheimer's the Mediterranean Way



Dark Leafy Greens

Provide high amounts of polyphenols producing many health benefits

Salmon

Provides omega-3s, which may help lower your risk of heart disease

Tomatoes and Feta with Olive Oil

Provides antioxidants like lycopene, probiotics, and monounsaturated fats

Red Wine

Contains resveratrol, which supports a healthy inflammatory response

**Adopt a
Mediterranean diet
and enjoy a range
of life-changing
health benefits!**

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