

# GI Hub

## **Mediterranean Diet**

### **What Is the Mediterranean Diet?**

The Mediterranean Diet is an eating pattern based on the traditional foods of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, including Greece, Italy, and Spain. It focuses on whole, minimally processed foods and healthy fats, and it has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, fatty liver disease, and certain cancers. It is also one of the best-studied diets for overall longevity and gut health.

### **Core Principals:**

#### **Eat More**

- Fruits & vegetables (aim for 5–9 servings/day)
- Whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, oats, whole wheat)
- Legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas)
- Nuts & seeds (almonds, pistachios, walnuts, chia, flax)
- Extra-virgin olive oil as the primary fat
- Fish & seafood at least 2 times/week
- Herbs & spices instead of salt
- Fermented foods (yogurt, kefir, olives)

#### **Eat in Moderation:**

- Poultry, eggs, low-fat dairy
- Red wine (optional; up to 1 glass/day with meals)

**Limit or Avoid:**

- Processed foods
- Red and processed meats
- Butter, margarine, shortening
- Sugary drinks and sweets
- White bread, pastries, highly refined grains

**Health Benefits:**

- Heart Health: Lower cholesterol, blood pressure, and inflammation
- Metabolic Health: Improves insulin resistance and reduces diabetes risk
- Weight Management: Encourages fullness with high-fiber foods
- Liver Health: Helps prevent or reduce NAFLD
- Gut Health: Promotes a diverse, healthy microbiome
- Longevity: Associated with reduced risk of early mortality

**Examples:****Breakfast Ideas:**

- Greek yogurt with berries and walnuts
- Whole-grain toast with avocado
- Oatmeal with fruit and chia seeds
- Vegetable omelet

**Lunch Ideas:**

- Large salad with chickpeas and olive-oil vinaigrette
- Whole-grain wrap with hummus and roasted vegetables

- Lentil soup

#### Dinner Ideas:

- Baked salmon with vegetables
- Whole-wheat pasta with olive oil, tomatoes, and shrimp
- Grilled chicken with quinoa

#### Snack Ideas:

- Nuts
- Fresh fruit
- Hummus with vegetables
- Whole-grain crackers with cheese

#### **Cooking Tips**

- Use olive oil instead of butter.
- Include vegetables at every meal.
- Choose whole fruit instead of juice.
- Swap red meat for fish, beans, or lentils.
- Cook with herbs for flavor without salt.

Keep healthy snacks visible and available