



# The Mediterranean Diet

# Defining Characteristics

- Intake of primarily plant-based foods (i.e. fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts)
- Olive oil is the primary source of fat
- Use of herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods
- Limit intake of red meat and focus more on the consumption of fish and poultry
- Acknowledges the importance of physical activity and enjoying meals with others



# Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

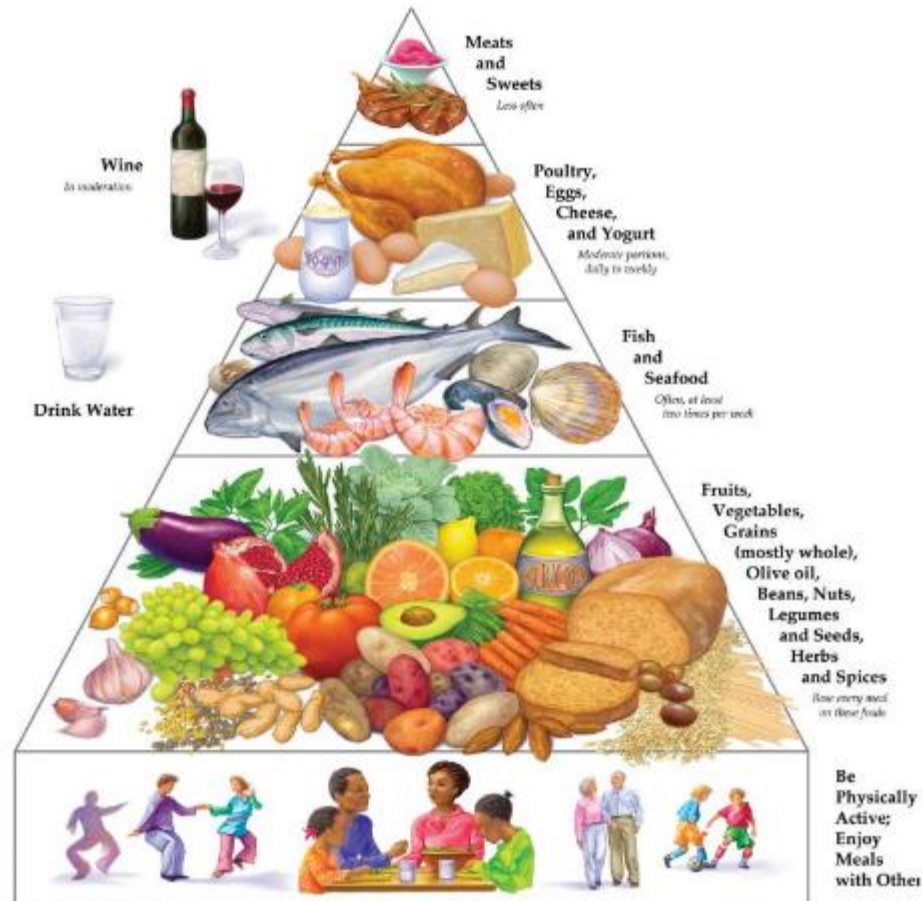


Illustration by George Middleton

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# Brief History

- Inspired by the dietary patterns of numerous countries that outline the Mediterranean sea
- A long standing traditional diet that can be dated back to the Ancient Greeks
- Has evolved and undergone many changes from its inception
- Generally agreed upon that there is no one MedDiet – cultural differences, climate and geography, socio-economic factors, history
- Ancel Keys coins the term “Mediterranean Diet” in 1950
- Today it is generally referred to as the “traditional MedDiet”
- The diet was first publicized in 1975 by Ancel Keys, but didn’t gain widespread recognition until the 1990s
  - “Seven Countries Study”

# Key Health Points

- Rich source of macronutrients and micronutrients
- Good source of MUFAs, PUFAs, phytochemicals, and many vitamins and minerals
- Low saturated fat and trans fat content
- Heart healthy
- Can reduce the incidence of obesity, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome
- Protective value of the MedDiet:
  - Overall mortality reduced by 9%
  - Mortality from CVD reduced by 9%
  - Incidence of or mortality from cancers reduced by 6%
  - Incidence of Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease by 13%

# Noteworthy Moments for the MedDiet

- In 2010, UNESCO adopted the MedDiet to its Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
- 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends the Mediterranean diet as one of the top healthful diets for Americans to follow
- Endorsed by the American Heart Association, British Heart Foundation, British Dietetic Association, and many more

- Current widespread interest in the MedDiet has encouraged the development of a 'modern MedDiet' – one widely-used definition consists of the following nine key food groups:
  1. High consumption of olive oil and low consumption of saturated fats
  2. High consumption of vegetables
  3. High consumptions of fruit
  4. High consumption of legumes
  5. High consumption of cereals (including bread)
  6. Moderate to high consumption of fish
  7. Low to moderate consumption of milk and dairy products (mainly cheese and yogurt from goats and sheep milk)
  8. Low consumption of meat and meat products
  9. Moderate consumption of wine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Aoj4awQb9g&feature=youtu.be>



# Sources

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