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General nutrition information only. This is not medical advice, not a diagnosis, and not a treatment. These pages do not treat, cure, prevent, reverse, or improve arthritis or any other condition. Talk with a qualified clinician before you change what you eat, especially if you have a health condition or take medication.

A Mediterranean-style eating pattern

A generally healthy way of eating that many people choose. Examples, a grocery list, and prep tips.

What people usually mean

A Mediterranean-style pattern is one way many people put together everyday meals. It is a pattern, not a script. The foods below show up often. Sweets, sugary drinks, and large portions of beef, pork, or lamb show up less often.

Cook foods you already know how to make. If you do not eat fish, or you do not eat dairy, leave those out and keep the vegetables, grains, and beans.

- Vegetables and fruit at most meals.
- Whole grains such as oats, brown rice, barley, bulgur, or whole-wheat bread.
- Beans, lentils, and chickpeas.
- Nuts and seeds.
- Olive oil as the usual cooking and salad oil.
- Fish or other seafood a couple of times in a week, if you eat it.
- Yogurt or cheese in modest amounts, if you eat dairy.
- Eggs and poultry more often than beef, pork, or lamb.
- Water as the everyday drink. Coffee or tea if you already drink them.
- Herbs, garlic, lemon, vinegar, and spices for flavor.

A day of example meals

Use these as pictures of the pattern, not as a menu you have to follow. Portions depend on your appetite, your budget, and what is in the kitchen.

- Breakfast: plain yogurt with oats, berries, and walnuts. Or whole-wheat toast with tomato, olive oil, and a sliced egg.
- Lunch: lentil soup, a cucumber and tomato salad with olive oil and lemon, and a piece of fruit.
- Dinner: baked fish or a pot of white beans with olive oil, roasted vegetables, and brown rice or whole-grain bread.
- If you want a snack: a piece of fruit, a small handful of almonds, or carrot sticks.

More meals in the same style

Any of these can stand in for the day above.

- Breakfast: oats cooked in water or milk, with sliced banana and a spoon of almond butter.
- Lunch: leftover brown rice, chickpeas, chopped parsley, tomato, olive oil, and lemon.
- Dinner: chicken thigh or a few eggs, a large tray of roasted peppers and zucchini, and crusty whole-grain bread.
- A sandwich: whole-wheat bread, canned fish or smashed beans, lettuce, onion, and olive oil.
- Soup night: minestrone-style vegetables and beans, with a little pasta and a sprinkle of cheese if you use it.

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A grocery list

Shop for about a week for one person, then scale it. Frozen and canned foods count. Rinse canned beans and vegetables if you want less salt.

- Produce: leafy greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, garlic, lemons, carrots, zucchini, apples or oranges. Berries if the price is fair.
- Grains: oats, brown rice or barley, whole-wheat bread or pita.
- Protein foods: dry or canned lentils and chickpeas, eggs, canned or frozen fish, plain yogurt.
- Fats and flavor: olive oil, walnuts or almonds, dried oregano, black pepper.
- Optional: a cheese you already buy, such as feta or parmesan.

Prep tips

A little work on one day makes the other days shorter.

- Cook a pot of grains and a pot of beans, then use them in bowls for a few days.
- Chop vegetables when you get home so a salad is the fast choice.
- Keep frozen vegetables and frozen fish for nights you do not want to cook from scratch.
- Dress cooked vegetables with olive oil, lemon, and a pinch of salt instead of a heavy sauce.
- If you do not eat fish, use beans, lentils, eggs, or tofu in the same spot on the plate.
- Change one meal at a time. Many people start by swapping a sugary drink for water, or by adding a vegetable to a plate they already make.

These examples are ideas for generally healthy meals. They are not a plan written for you.