

# The Food Lists

## A Quick Look

We are all familiar with the concept of a food pyramid. The Oldwayspt.org created a food pyramid for the Mediterranean diet along with other legacy diets such as the Latin, Asian, African and vegetarian diets. Let's explore the Mediterranean diet by looking at this food pyramid.



### Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

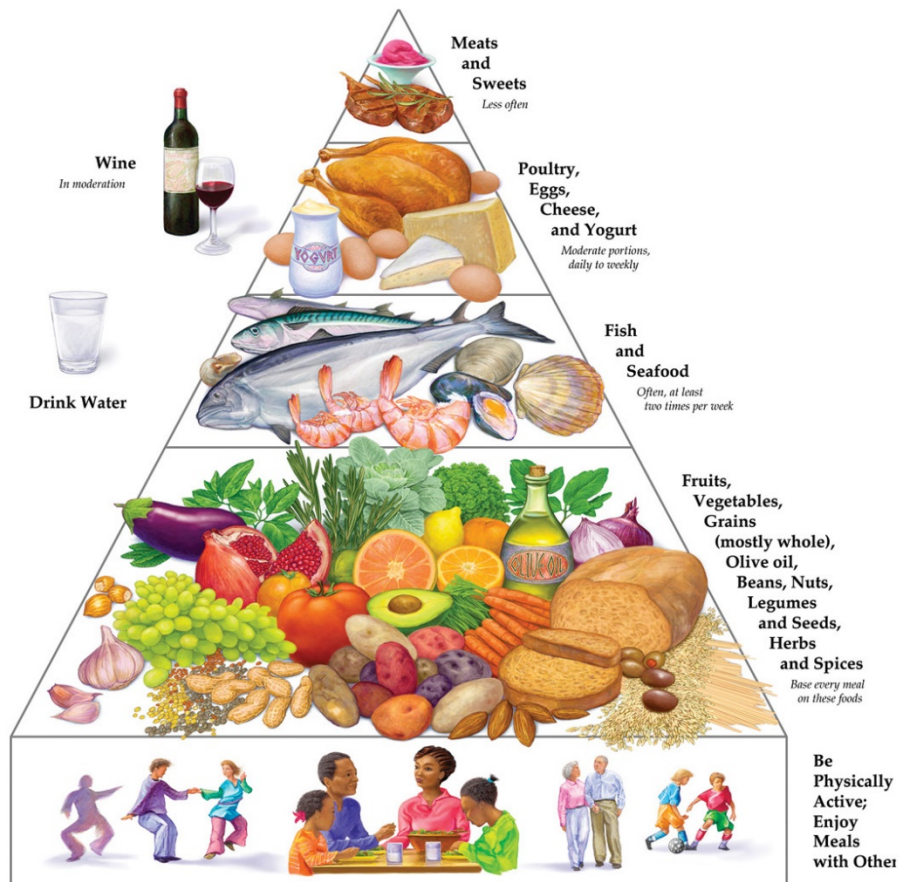


Illustration by George Middleton

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This Pyramid was introduced in 1993 after the 1993 International Conference on the *Diets of the Mediterranean*. This conference was a world-class group of nutrition scientists, public policy experts, chefs and food writers.

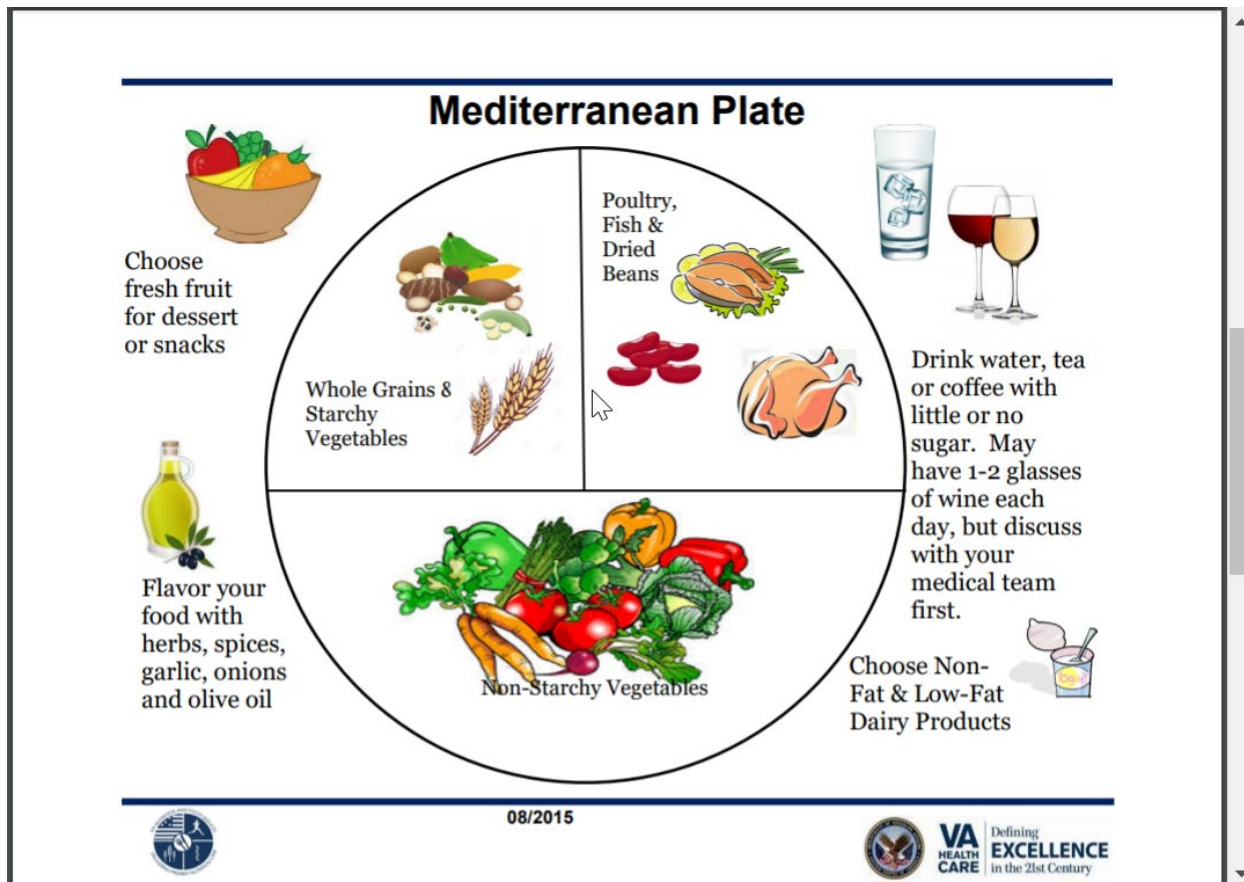
The very top of the pyramid is lean meat which must be limited to no more than once a week. Next, poultry, eggs, cheese and yogurt are combined as a healthy protein source to be consumed 1-3 times a week.

Fish and seafood are the next largest step and should be consumed at least twice a week or more. The base and foundation of the food pyramid are healthiest foods: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, olive oil, nuts, legumes and seeds, herbs and spices. You want this every day.

At the very core of the Mediterranean lifestyle is physical activity and exercise.

Now, let's explore this another way, your plate.

muesli



At least half of your plate should consist of *non-starchy vegetables*. A quarter of the plate should be whole grains and starchy vegetables with the other quarter of the plate consisting of protein. Fruit is your dessert.

The Mediterranean Diet consists of the following core principles:

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1. **Vegetables** (non-starchy): 4-8 servings/day. **2-3 cups raw leafy greens plus 1 cruciferous vegetable daily.** Add 2-6 one-cup servings of any other raw vegetable (1/2 cup cooked).
2. **Fruits:** 2-4 servings per day of 1 medium or 1 cup fresh, ½ cup canned. **Berries daily.**
3. **Nuts/seeds:** 3 or more servings per week. Serving is one ounce, ¼ cup or 2 tbsp nut butter. Counts as a fat. **Walnuts daily.**
4. **Legumes/beans:** Counts as a protein serving. At least two legume meals per week, or 3 or more servings per week. A serving is one-ounce dry or ½ cup cooked legumes or beans.
5. **Grains/Starch:** Whole grains and starchy vegetables. 3-8 servings per day. One-ounce equivalent servings of dry cereals/grains or ½ cup cooked. Oats, barley, brown rice, quinoa and red skin or sweet potatoes. One slice of 100% whole grain bread.
6. **Fats:** 1 tbsp olive oil (4 tbsp/day) serving size; 5 olives; 1/8 medium avocado.
7. **Fish:** 3-4 ounce serving; 4 servings per week.
  1. We prefer fatty fish, >2% fat by weight, for good omega-3s
  2. Read my Fish & Shellfish guide notes about mercury and portions.
8. **Chicken:** 3-ounce serving, 1-2 times per week. If in doubt, use fish.
9. **Alcohol:** 1-2 glasses red wine/day
10. **Exercise:** daily

The above ten items are the core of a health, Mediterranean lifestyle. The next two items are optional and should always be limited.

11. **Dairy/eggs:** Three or less servings a week. Dairy – 1 cup skim or low-fat milk, yogurt or cottage cheese. 1-ounce serving of low- nonfat Cheese – brie, goat, or other nonfat spreadable cheese. Eggs – up to 4 per week.
12. **Red meats (beef, lamb, pork):** 3-ounce serving, once a week or less. Lean meat – flank, sirloin or tenderloin.

#### NOTES:

**PROTEIN CONTENT:** Protein needs to be kept at a constant level even if you are on a weight loss plan. You need protein to maintain muscle mass (along with resistance exercise). Approximately 1-1.2 grams per kilogram of ideal body weight. That's 70 to 90 grams of protein.

**WHEN TO EAT:** You should eat a 16:8 or 18:6 fasting diet — meaning no food for 16-18 hours with a 6-8 hour eating window each day. Try to have the bulk of your calories no later than 3pm and no food after sunset.

**HOW OFTEN TO EAT:** Only eat one or two meals daily during that time window with ½ your total protein (25-35 grams of protein) at each meal. Two amino acids are important: Leucine and Methionine. We want 2.2 grams of leucine (no more required) to maintain muscle mass at each meal. Limit methionine (toxic) to no more than 1.7 grams daily, the less the better.

**CARBOHYDRATES:** Use only low glycemic index foods, GI <55.

**CALORIE LEVEL:** If you are trying to lose weight, reduce your calories by 30% from your ideal caloric level. Approximately 1800 to 1900 calories for men, 1200 to 1300 calories for women. OR, use an

alternating fasting diet (ADF). That means your normal calorie level (2500 cal/men; 1900 cal/women) on feast days and 25-35% of your calories (600-700 cal/men; 500 cal/women) on fasting days.

**SPECIAL FOOD ITEMS:** At least 2 cups of green leafy vegetables every day. Consume berries at least 3-5 times a week. Walnuts should be consumed daily along with any other nut.

Everyday doesn't have to be perfect. Some days you will get more or less of some food categories. That's OK. The diet is something to strive towards, not demand to perfection. Over the course of a month you will average out. With time you will get the idea and everything will be second nature. The other point is to *try new foods*. Experiment and play with ingredients and recipes. The recipes I give you are just a starting point. They're a new way to look at meals. Make it your own.

Breakfast does not have to be the traditional eggs, potatoes, and meat. That is not the case for much of the world. You can have soup, salad, lentils, beans, whatever you want. Yesterday's leftovers are perfect.

For your first meal, pick out a whole grain, a fruit and a protein source. This could be whole grain toast/bagel/pita or muffin with a small apple. For protein consider an egg, yogurt or nuts and seeds.

Keep your second meal simple. A salad, soup, or use your wok for stir-fry. Keep fruit, nuts and seeds for dessert or a snack.

### **Summary Recommendations:**

- Replace butter and margarine with healthful oils such as olive or canola oil. Use these oils for cooking, dip bread in flavored olive oil, or lightly spread olive oil on whole-grain breads.
- Eat protein foods such as skinless chicken and turkey, fish, beans, nuts, and other plant-based protein sources. Eat fish at least twice each week. Fresh or water-packed tuna, salmon, trout, mackerel, and herring are good choices. Substitute fish and poultry for red meat. When red meats are eaten, choose lean cuts and keep portions small (about the size of a deck of cards).
- Aim for six to twelve servings of whole plant foods such as vegetables and fruit per day. Include green leafy vegetables and berries.
- Choose 100% whole-grain, high-fiber breads, cereals, whole-grain pasta and brown rice products.
- Frequent servings of peas, beans, legumes, and nuts.
- Season meals with herbs and spices rather than salt.
- Snack on nuts or seeds instead of snack foods. Keep almonds, cashews, pistachios, and walnuts on hand for quick snacks. Choose natural peanut butter rather than the kind with added hydrogenated fat and sugar. Try *tahini* (sesame seed paste) as a dip or spread for bread.
- Enjoy fruit for dessert.
- Eat small portions of nonfat dairy products such as cheese or yogurt.

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- If you drink alcohol, limit it to moderate consumption with a meal (no more than one glass for women or two glasses for men).

AVOID: added sugar and refined grains. No processed meats. NOTHING fried!!!

### SERVINGS FOR CALORIE LEVELS

Here is what you have been waiting for, the number of servings of each category allowed for different caloric intake levels. These are what you should get on *average*. Some days will be more of one item and less of another. This is just an average. For example, you may have legumes 3 days a week, not a ½ serving *every day*. Or milk. You will probably have a cereal with skim milk (1 cup = 1 serving) 2-3 times a week, not ¼ or 1/3 of a cup every day.

Another note is protein. We are keeping the animal protein at 3-4 ounces daily. If you want vegetarian, swap the meat for a serving of legumes or nuts. I also only have fish listed. Poultry and lean meat are similar in calories. Remember, lean meat is once a week or less.

	1000 cal	1200 cal	1500 cal	1800 cal	2000 cal	2500 cal	3000 cal
Vegetables	5	5	5	5	6	8	8
Fruit	1	2	2	2	2	3	5
Grains	2	2	3	4	4	7	9
Nuts & seeds	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Legumes	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1	3
Fats	1	1	2	2	3	4	4
Fish	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Eggs							
Dairy, nonfat (milk/yogurt)		0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1
Calories	1020	1226	1493	1804	1964	2502	2998
Protein/g	57	77	84	95	97	112	132
Carbs/g	114	125	155	182	191	284	382
Fats/g	43	48	64	81	95	112	118
Fiber/g	28	31	37	44	46	67	89
P:C:F %	21:42:36	25:40:35	22:40:38	21:40:40	19:38:43	17:44:39	17:49:34
Animal protein%	56%	62%	57%	50%	49%	43%	36%