

Combining the Mediterranean Diet and the Gluten-Free Diet

What are the major principles of the Mediterranean Diet?

The Mediterranean Diet (Med. Diet) is a commonly recommended diet that is based on the eating pattern of people in the Mediterranean region. It suggests the high intake of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, healthy fats, and water; a moderate consumption of seafood, poultry, and dairy; and a low intake of sweets and processed or red meat. The Med. Diet is associated with many positive health benefits. For patients with celiac disease, the Med Diet can help provide important nutrients that a typical gluten-free diet may lack—without the significant risk of undesired weight gain that can lead to overweight or obesity^{1,2}. And the diet can easily be made gluten-free.

Health Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet

Research has shown that the Med. Diet offers a wide range of health benefits.

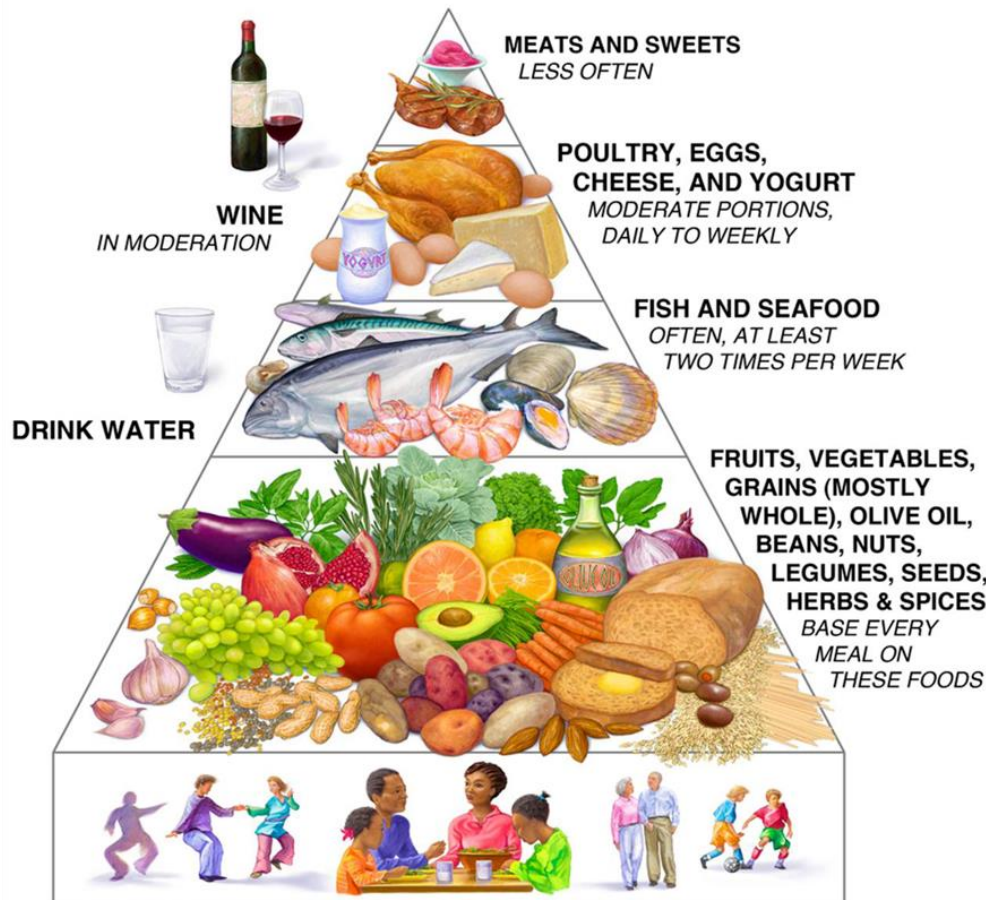
- Lowers blood pressure³
- Reduces the number of pre-cancerous colorectal polyps⁴
- Lowers risk of early menopause⁵
- Decreases risk for developing Alzheimer's disease^{6,7} and other forms of dementia.
- May improve cognitive performance⁸
- Decreases obesity risk⁹
- Reduces risk for chronic diseases¹⁰
- Increases life expectancy¹¹
- Increases chances of healthy aging¹²
- Reduces risk of cholecystectomy (removal of gall bladder)¹³
- Decreases risk of developing breast cancer¹⁴
- Reduces risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes¹⁵
- For more information on the health benefits of the Med. Diet, check out:

<https://oldwayspt.org/health-studies> or <http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/adopt-a-mediterranean-diet-now-for-better-health-later-201311066846>

The Med. Diet first became popular following the creation of the Med. Diet Pyramid by Oldways in conjunction with the Harvard School of Public Health and the World Health Organization in 1993. The Med. Diet has continued to grow in popularity, and the 2015 U.S. Dietary guidelines recommend a Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern.¹⁶ The Med. Diet Pyramid, shown on the next page, outlines the basic principles of the diet.

Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

A contemporary approach to delicious, healthy eating



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- **Base of pyramid:** physical activity and social interaction (dancing, sports, sharing meals)
- **Next level of pyramid:** foods that should be eaten *every day* (wholes grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes (lentils, dried peas, and beans), seeds, herbs, nuts, spices, and healthy fats such as olive oil and avocado)
- **Third level:** Fish and seafood should be eaten *twice a week*
- **Fourth level:** Dairy, (particularly fermented dairy including yogurt or kefir), eggs, and poultry should be eaten in moderate servings *daily to weekly*
- **Fifth level:** Red meat and sweets should only be eaten on *rare occasions*
- **Drinking water is encouraged**
- Wine, in moderation, is also part of the Med. Diet* (no more than one 5 oz. glass of wine per day for women, and 2 per day for men)

* You should not start drinking alcohol if you do not already do so. Alcohol is not recommended with some medications and conditions, such as pregnancy, breast feeding, liver disease, and kidney disease, among others. Please consult your physician and dietitian before adding alcohol to your diet.

<https://oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets/mediterranean-diet>

How does the Mediterranean Diet differ for those on a gluten-free diet?

Those on a gluten-free diet, such as those with celiac disease, will only need to make some minor modifications to maintain their dietary needs. The most significant change is **substituting gluten-free whole grains** for any gluten-containing grains, such as whole wheat, typically included in the Med. Diet¹. Some suitable gluten-free whole grain substitutes can be found in the chart below.

<u>AVOID</u> Gluten-Containing Whole Grains	<u>CHOOSE</u> Some Gluten-Free Whole Grains, Nut Flours
❖ Wheat flour	❖ Millet
❖ Bulgur	❖ Brown Rice
❖ Couscous	❖ Quinoa
❖ Barley	❖ Buckwheat
❖ Farro	❖ Whole Grain Cornmeal
❖ Commercial Oats	❖ Nut flours (almond, hazelnut)

- Make sure that all gluten-free grain and flour substitutes are **labeled gluten-free**. Remember to check other foods you eat while on the Med. Diet, such as nuts, seeds, and spices for gluten. Contact the manufacturer when necessary to ensure that they are gluten-free.
- Remember to make these dietary changes **slowly** and start with small steps. It is important to add fiber slowly, and increase water intake with added fiber, to help the gut adjust to these changes in diet.
- Iron deficient anemia is common in celiac disease. Since iron can be challenging to obtain from the Med. Diet, women, in particular, should pay close attention to choosing iron-rich foods, such as lentils, spinach, almonds, lean red meat and dark meat poultry.
- Visit with a registered dietitian skilled in celiac disease/gluten-free diet to ensure that you are getting all of your vitamins and minerals, in particular, calcium, vitamin D, iron, B vitamins, and zinc.

**Sample Menu: Gluten-Free Mediterranean Diet
(~2000 Calories) GF = gluten-free**

Breakfast	-1 cup cooked GF whole grain (*quinoa, amaranth, and/or buckwheat) with 1 cup mixed berries and 8 almonds or cashews -5 oz. plain low-fat Greek yogurt -12 oz. water or tea
Lunch	-1 cup baby spinach leaves -1/4 medium avocado -8 cherry tomatoes -1/2 cup sliced cucumber -1/4 cup feta cheese -1 hard-boiled egg -1/3 cup chickpeas -2 tbsp. dressing for salad (olive oil, balsamic vinegar or lemon juice, and herbs of choice)
Snack	-1 baked sweet potato with tbsp. olive oil and salt and pepper to taste -8 oz. water
Dinner	-3 oz. grilled salmon -1/2 cooked brown rice -1 cup broccoli sautéed in 2 tsp. olive oil -12 oz. water
Snack	-1 medium banana -1 tbsp. natural peanut butter -8 oz. water or tea

**Gluten-free grains must be labeled gluten-free.*

• **Gluten-Free/Med. Diet Recipe Ideas**

<i>Sorghum Pasta Salad with Oregano, Feta Cheese, and Cucumbers</i>	https://www.glutenfreeliving.com/gluten-free-foods/diet/follow-mediterranean-example/
<i>Spicy Yogurt Chicken</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/spicy-yogurt-chicken
<i>Spinach Pasta Chickpea Salad with Salmon</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/spinach-pasta-chickpea-salad-salmon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember to use gluten-free pasta.
<i>Baked Snapper with Tomatoes and Olives</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/baked-snapper-tomatoes-and-olives
<i>Split Pea and Melted Eggplant Soup</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/split-pea-and-melted-eggplant-soup?utm_source=Fresh+Friday%3A+How+Mediterranean+is+Your+Diet%3F_LB&utm_campaign=FF-4-29-16&utm_medium=email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use labeled gluten-free chicken or vegetable broth.
<i>Mediterranean Diet-Friendly Snacks</i>	http://www.clevelandclinicwellness.com/food/mediterranean-diet/Pages/mediterranean-diet-friendly-snacks.aspx
<i>Spicy Salmon</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/spicy-salmon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve with a side of buckwheat or lentils.
<i>Vegetable Frittata</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/vegetable-frittata
<i>Israeli Cucumber and Tomato Salad</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/israeli-salad
<i>Lemon-Garlic Shrimp and Vegetables</i>	https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/238783/lemon-garlic-shrimp-vegetables/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve with a side of gluten-free quinoa or brown rice.
<i>Apple-Cinnamon Oatmeal with an Egg Boost</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/apple-cinnamon-oatmeal-egg-boost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember to use uncontaminated, labeled gluten-free oats.
<i>Walnut and Cucumber Gazpacho</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/walnut-and-cucumber-gazpacho
<i>Quinoa Stuffed Bell Peppers</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/quinoa-stuffed-bell-peppers-mediterranean

<i>Maple Candied Walnuts</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/maple-candied-walnuts
<i>Chocolate Walnut Macaroons</i>	https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/chocolate-walnut-macaroons

- **Remember to check recipes for gluten-containing ingredients and make the necessary gluten-free substitutions.**
- More Gluten-Free Mediterranean Diet Recipes can be found at this link:
https://oldwayspt.org/recipes/search?keys=&diet%5B%5D=96&course%5B%5D=main-dishes&meal%5B%5D=dinner&dietary%5B%5D=gluten-free&tag%5B%5D=quick-and-easy&items_per_page=12

Gluten-Free “Have on Hand” Items for the Mediterranean Diet	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit – any and all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lemons, Limes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuts and Peanuts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almonds, Walnuts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Fats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Olive oil ○ Olives ○ Avocado 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veggies – any and all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sundried tomatoes ○ Garlic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yogurt and cheese (feta, goat) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sunflower seeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eggs and Poultry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice, Gluten-free grains listed above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat (in small amounts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chick peas, Lentils, Dried Beans <p>If dried or canned chick peas, lentils, or dried beans are not labeled gluten-free, pour them onto a cookie sheet and sort through them for rocks or gluten-containing grains. Rinse and drain well.</p>	

- ***Additional Resources:***
 - “Oil Change” – A conversion chart from butter to olive oil:
<https://www.glutenfreeliving.com/gluten-free-foods/diet/follow-mediterranean-example/>

- “Fresh Fridays” – Subscribe to a bi-weekly e-newsletter with recipe ideas and Med. Diet research: https://oldwayspt.org/programs/mediterranean-foods-alliance/fresh-fridays-archive?utm_source=Fresh+Fridays%3A+Mediterranean+Bean+Basics_6%2F26%2F15LB&utm_campaign=FF-6-26-15&utm_medium=email
- “Mediterranean Bean Basics” – Health benefits of eating beans and bean recipe ideas: <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs104/1101804031038/archive/1121442648499.html>

Authors: Emma M. Clerx and Melinda Dennis, MS, RDN

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