



Halo Nourish



Introduction to Mediterranean Diet

Mediterranean Diet Programme

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INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome! I'm Aanya Jain, a dedicated dietitian with a passion for helping individuals achieve their health and wellness goals through personalized nutrition. With a Master's degree in Food and Nutrition (M.Sc. F&N) and a Bachelor's degree in Nutrition & Health (B.Sc. N&H), I've spent years studying the intricate relationship between food, nutrition, and overall well-being. My educational journey has equipped me with a deep understanding of how the right diet can positively impact not only our physical health but also our mental and emotional well-being.

Throughout my career, I have worked with a wide range of clients, from those looking to improve their energy levels to those managing chronic conditions. I firmly believe that nutrition should be practical, enjoyable, and tailored to each individual's unique needs. Whether you are looking to lose weight, boost your immune system, or simply make healthier food choices, my approach is rooted in science and designed to be sustainable for your lifestyle. In this e-book, I hope to share valuable insights that will guide you toward making informed, positive changes to your diet and ultimately, to your health.

Through this book I aim to educate people about "Mediterranean Approach" towards nutrition and how this pattern benefits different aspects of one's lifestyle. Mediterranean diet is not a new concept, but definitely something which sounds a little intimidating when an individual thinks to follow. Now you might think, why is that? Because it has too many rules? NO! Because it contains fancy foods? NO! , It's because it demands discipline and consistency. This is what I am trying to solve here, making short term goals for long term results. I am really excited for you to give this book a good read, and once when you are done with it, come back to me with your takeaways. Happy Reading!!

Basics of Mediterranean Diet

“Mediterranean diet” was a term coined by Ancel Benjamin Keys in 1960. He was an American physiologist, who studied the impact of diet on health.

He along with his colleague studied the dietary practices that underwent in the Mediterranean region, and he reached to a conclusion, that certain practices and goals were responsible for low rates of chronic conditions like cardiovascular diseases, obesity, diabetes, etc.



Med. diet was closely related to olive oil cultivation. Olive oil (especially Virgin & Extra Virgin Olive Oil) were found to be the main constituent of their dietary routine.

But, is that all?

Med diet OR Med-type diet is strongly related to the synergy of food combinations and inclusion of whole foods, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds. It is primarily plant based with high intake of Olive oil, high intake of nuts and seeds and low to moderate amount of red wine.

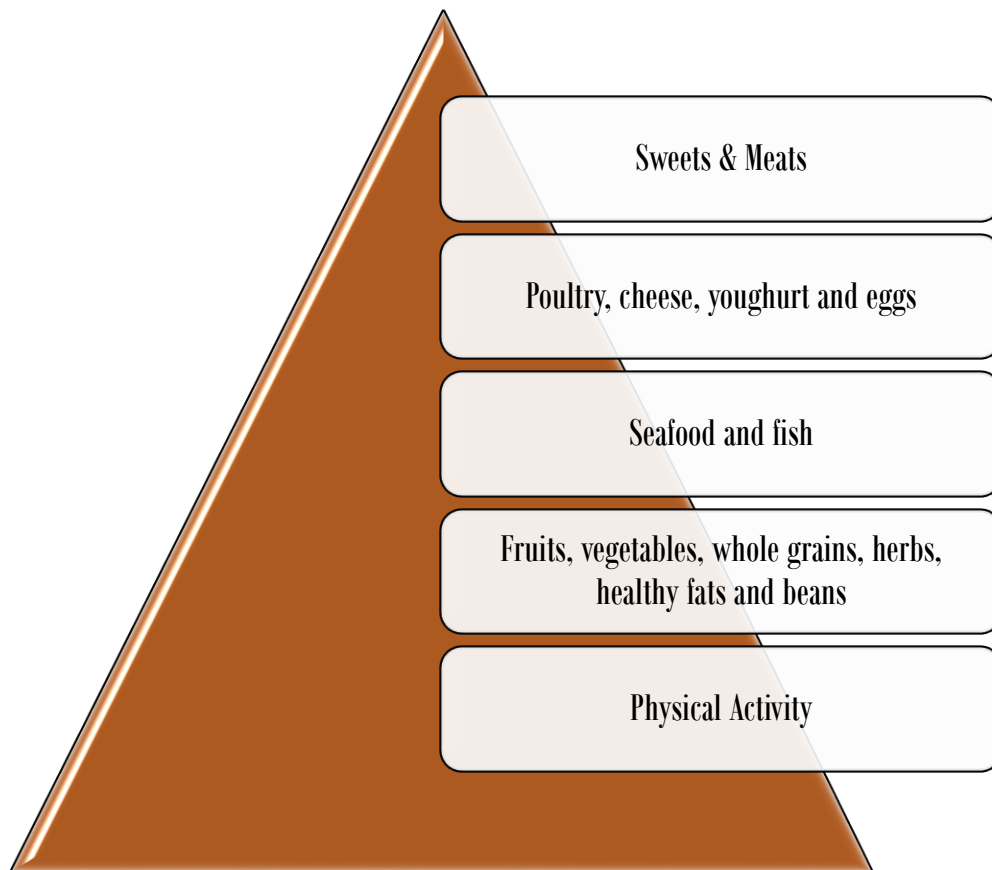
Basic principles of Mediterranean diet or Med-Type Diet:

1. Being physically active is the most important and large part of a Med-Type diet. It promotes overall wellness of an individual by keeping them physically, socially and mentally well.
2. Consuming plant based high fibre plant based foods, vegetables, fruits, legumes, with adequate amount of good fat, preferably olive oil.
3. Med type diet basically focuses on moderation and not restriction. So, if we say that sugars in moderation, can be included too in the diet, it won't be wrong.
4. The unique feature that Mediterranean diet offers is a glass of wine. Red wine has proven to promote good heart health and possess excellent anti-oxidant qualities. Now, this doesn't mean that we can exceed the frequency of it. Med-Type diet only offers 1-2 glasses of red wine.

The Med type diet can also be referred to as “Whole diet” as it fills your plate with whole foods and mostly with all kinds of food groups.

The Med-Type diet pyramid:

The sustainability of this diet, and the variety of foods that it offers enables the individuals to follow this routine for the long term, making it a wise choice for someone who stick to a very restrictive diet.



Since, we are following a plant based approach (**Why that? Because, I believe plant based approach is slightly a better option as it's better for heart health, anti-inflammatory properties, sustainability, rich in nutrients, lower in saturated fat, promotes weight management**) we will be focusing majorly on that:

1. **Sweets:** Sweets & Meats constitutes a very minor part in Med-Type diet. These needs to be eaten occasionally and in very small quantities.
2. **Poultry, cheese, yoghurt:** Integral components of Med-Type diet and need to be included in moderate amounts. Its portions can be consumed 3-4 times a week. Products like yoghurt can be consumed daily, considering its prebiotics and probiotics quality. (Better gut health)
3. **Seafood and fish:** We won't be including these sources here in the plan. But mentioning here for informational purposes. These can be consumed 2 times a week, considering they have good amount of omega 3 fats.
4. **Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, herbs, healthy fats, and beans:** Most integral part of the med-type diet. These food groups can also be referred to as heart of the diet, the major part of your food plate. Inclusion of healthy fats like Nuts and seeds, olive oil, etc., increases the absorption of food, along with enrichment of nutrients.
5. **Physical Activity:** Med type diet mainly encourages individuals to perform physical activities like walking, cardio training or strength training.

Drinking a lot of water is also a crucial part of this diet.

How to choose foods that are ideal for Med-Type diet?

Some key points to note while opting out food products for the Med-Type Diet:

1. **Eliminate processed foods:** Processed foods and sugary drinks available in the market are to be avoided completely. This also includes refined foods like breads, biscuits, and instant go to foods.
2. **Sugars:** Ideally sugars can be consumed occasionally as a treat for yourself. Preferably home cooked desserts are wholeheartedly welcomed.
3. **Dairy Products:** Curd, cottage cheese, milk can be included in moderation. For vegans, almond milk, soy milk is a good option to ensure adequate protein in your diet, while ensuring good amount of fats at the same time.
4. **Be creative with vegetables choices:** There are several of veggies, green leafy, starch based or tubers. Be creative I making a common blend of all 3, keeping green leafy and tubers in moderate amount and starch based in less amount.
5. **Nuts & Seeds:** Nuts contain healthy fats, and if balanced in correct portions, can contribute to a balanced diet effectively.
6. **Whole grains & Legumes:** Whole grains and legumes are major part of this diet, and provides majorly nutritive compounds. Grains like Beans, Quinoa, Ragi, millet, rice (brown or white), whole oats and Legumes like chickpeas, kidney beans, etc., are great options.

Embracing Healthy Fats

We have always been taught to avoid fats, fearing they would lead to weight gain or health problems. However, once we understand that fats are created equal, we will embrace the idea of healthy fats in my meals. The Mediterranean diet encourages healthy fats, particularly from sources like olive oil, avocados, and nuts. These fats are rich in monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) and omega-3 fatty acids, which are beneficial for heart health, brain function, and reducing inflammation.

1.1 Healthy Oils

Olive oil is at the heart of the Mediterranean diet, and we will quickly discover why. The extra virgin olive oil, in particular, is rich in antioxidants and polyphenols that help protect against oxidative stress. It's not just about flavour—though it certainly enhances the taste of food—olive oil provides health benefits that lower the risk of heart disease and promote longevity. Olive oil can be generously used in cooking, replacing butter or other oils. Whether it was drizzling it on a salad, sautéing vegetables, or using it in marinades, it becomes a cornerstone of meals.

1.2 Avocados and Nuts

Another essential source of healthy fats is avocados. Avocados are not only creamy and delicious but also packed with fiber, potassium, and heart-healthy fats. Add them to salads, spread them on toast, and blend them into smoothies. Similarly, nuts like almonds, walnuts, and pistachios can be consumed as go-to snacks. Nuts are an excellent source of healthy fats and also provide protein, fiber, and important vitamins and minerals like vitamin E. Make it a habit to snack on a handful of nuts in the afternoon, that would help you keep full and satisfied without causing blood sugar spikes.

The Power of Plant-Based Meals

One of the most transformative aspects of the Mediterranean diet is its focus on plant-based foods. Plant-based meals form the foundation of this way of eating. By increasing the intake of fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and nuts, one can quickly notice an improvement in energy levels, digestion, and overall well-being.

Incorporating more plant-based meals into the routine is not only good for health but also for the environment. Start making plant-based dishes the focal point meals, with smaller servings of protein on the side. Legumes like lentils, chickpeas, and beans are incredibly versatile. One can make hearty soups, stews, and salads filled with fiber-rich legumes. Vegetables are a mainstay in every meal—whether roasted, steamed, or eaten raw. Experiment with all kinds of seasonal vegetables—zucchini, eggplant, tomatoes, bell peppers—and learn to savour the flavours of fresh, in-season produce.

Mindful Eating

Embracing the Mediterranean diet means eating mindfully. The Mediterranean way of eating emphasizes savoring each bite, enjoying meals with family and friends, and eating slowly to fully appreciate the flavors. This can be a big shift for an individual, as people are accustomed to rushing through meals in a busy lifestyle.

Once you start taking time to truly enjoy your food, chew slowly, you can savour the tastes and textures. Mindful eating allows people to pay attention to the body's hunger and fullness signals. One would notice that by eating more slowly, helps avoid overeating and they are more satisfied with smaller portions. Not only this will help improve digestion, but it also makes meals feel more fulfilling, both physically and emotionally.

Mediterranean Snacks

Snacking is often seen as a temptation or something that can derail healthy eating habits, but in the Mediterranean diet, snacks are an important part of the day. Instead of reaching for chips or sugary treats, learn to embrace wholesome Mediterranean snacks that are both satisfying and nourishing.

One should snack on fresh fruits like apples, oranges, and grapes, which provides a natural sweetness without added sugars. Greek yogurt, especially when topped with honey, nuts, or berries becomes a high protein nutritious snack. Hummus and vegetables like cucumber, carrots, and bell peppers are also a go-to snack. These nutrient-dense snacks not only fills you up but also support your health goals without the guilt associated with processed snacks.

Hydration and Herbal Teas

Staying hydrated is one factor one should actively focus on, especially during transition to a healthier lifestyle. In the Mediterranean, water is the primary beverage, and herbal teas are enjoyed regularly. One should make it a habit to carry a water bottle throughout the day, aiming to drink at least eight cups of water. In addition, embrace the tradition of herbal teas, which offer a range of health benefits and are a soothing, caffeine-free alternative.

Mint tea is great for digestion, while chamomile is known for its calming properties. Herbal infusions of fresh herbs like rosemary and thyme offers great benefits and have good anti-oxidant properties. These teas helps one to stay hydrated and contribute to overall sense of well-being.

Goal Setting

One of the keys for maintaining a sustainable Mediterranean lifestyle is setting achievable, realistic goals. One should understand that in order to truly make the diet a long-term habit, one needs to set goals that would keep them motivated while being flexible enough to allow for balance.

Start by setting small, attainable goals—like incorporating one plant-based meal into the week or aim for five servings of vegetables per day. These small goals can allow you to gradually adjust to the Mediterranean way of eating without feeling overwhelmed. As you achieved these goals, set new ones, such as learning to prepare more Mediterranean dishes or trying a new recipe each month. The process of setting and achieving these goals will keep you motivated and excited about the journey.

Full Mediterranean Meal - Sample Plan

Breakfast: Greek yogurt with honey, walnuts, and fresh berries. This meal is rich in protein, healthy fats, and antioxidants, which provide lasting energy throughout the morning.

Lunch: Grilled paneer salad with mixed greens, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, olives, and a drizzle of olive oil. This meal is packed with protein, fiber, and healthy fats to keep me satisfied.

Dinner: Baked paneer with a side of quinoa and roasted vegetables. Quinoa offers a complete source of plant-based protein, while roasted vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals.

Snack: Sliced apple with almond butter. This snack is a perfect combination of fiber, healthy fats, and natural sweetness.

Herbal Tea: A cup of mint tea to wind down after dinner. This helps with digestion and promotes relaxation.

Building Sustainable Habits

One of the most important things one should know about the Mediterranean diet is that it's not about perfection—it's about building sustainable habits. Rather than focusing on short-term results, make small, sustainable changes that you can maintain over the long run. The Mediterranean diet isn't a restrictive plan; it's a way of living and eating that encourages balance and enjoyment.

Focus on making gradual adjustments to your routine, like swapping out processed foods for whole grains, reducing intake of sugary snacks, and incorporating more plant-based meals. Over time, these habits will become second nature, and you will see that you can enjoy meals while still feeling good and maintain health goals.

Conclusion:

So, now you have the basic idea of Mediterranean diet and how one should proceed through it. Now, you might understand, what all factors constitute to this sustainable diet, and how easily can this fit in our lifestyle. Med type diet is that perfect blend in that an individual looks for while adapting to a healthy lifestyle, which promotes mindful eating and does not restrict individuals from their favourite foods.

When you have the knowledge, you get curious, and when you get curious you try to find answers. I guess, the above information was enough to arouse questions in ones mind's eye. So now, I take this opportunity to inform you about other upcoming eBooks where one can understand more specific details about med-type diet. So, stay tuned, until next time!! Thankyou!!

