

## Braised Collard Greens or Kale

1 bunch chopped collards or kale  
(6-8 cups)  
1 teaspoon olive oil  
2 teaspoons soy sauce  
1 teaspoon apple cider or balsamic vinegar  
2-3 cloves garlic, minced  
¼ cup water

In large pot, heat olive oil, soy sauce, water, vinegar, and garlic on high heat for 1 minute. Reduce heat to med-high, add chopped greens and stir. Cover and steam about 8 minutes, stirring once in a while.

Makes 3 cups. For ¾ cup: 80 calories, 1.5 g fat (16% of calories), 4.5 g protein, 6 g fiber , 210 mg calcium and 200 mg sodium. Cut the sodium in half by using reduced-sodium soy sauce.

### Roasted Garlic:

If you're doing just a small amount, use your smallest or individual casserole, set your oven to 400 degrees and wash, remove husks and the bottom stem from the garlic head. Place in baking dish and drizzle with olive oil. Cover with lid or aluminium foil and bake for 40-60 min. If you're doing larger quantities, muffin tins work great as each head gets it's own space. When done, remove and cool. Each clove becomes a little tube for squeezing the delicious and healthful spread on bread or crackers. I also like to make a dipping sauce from olive oil and red peppers, basil and oregano. For heart healthy foods that lower cholesterol [click here](#).

Health Value: Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, a carotenoid with potent antioxidant and cancer-fighting properties. Lycopene protects cells from oxygen damage, fights colorectal, prostate, breast, endometrial, lung, and pancreatic cancers, and reduces your risk of heart disease. Studies have found that lycopene works synergistically with other phytonutrients in tomatoes to provide these benefits. Tomatoes are also an excellent source of vitamins C, A and K.

**Try the following healthy recipe as a great summer condiment that can be served at any meal. Keep some on hand for cooking also. You will need:**

6 medium tomatoes diced  
1 medium onion diced  
1/4 cup fresh chopped cilantro  
2-4 serrano or jalapeno peppers, minced  
pinch of garlic powder, pinch of salt  
Combine all ingredients and let stand, cover and refrigerate leftovers.  
\*optional additions- diced cucumber, squeeze of lime.

Breakfast on the Run

Everyone probably has their favorite smoothie recipe, especially banana, there's no way to try them all. But here is a simple one made from ingredients you may already have on hand.

You'll need a banana, 1 cup milk, 1 cup vanilla yogurt or strawberry banana if you prefer, and 4 large strawberries. Blend until creamy. The best fruits to add to your banana smoothies, are strawberries, oranges and peaches.



Be Creatively  
Healthier

## Herb Crusted Chicken



This is a smooth, sauceless dish, complemented by Chardonnay or Sangiovese di Romagna.

- 3/4 cup fresh bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon fresh minced thyme, rosemary or sage (or a combination of two)
- pinch crushed red pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 4 skinned and boned chicken breasts halves
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. On a plate, combine bread crumbs, herbs, crushed red pepper, salt and pepper to taste. Mix well. Brush smooth side of chicken breasts with egg white. Press crumb mixture onto coated side of chicken breasts (Refrigerate, if not cooking immediately). Heat olive oil over medium heat in an oven-proof, non-stick skillet. sauté chicken, crust side down, until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Gently turn chicken; cook 2 minutes longer. Place skillet in oven until chicken is cooked through, about 5 minutes. Remove from oven and season with salt and pepper to taste.

- Makes 4 serving
- Preparation Time: 20 minutes

## Tomato, Avocado and Toasted Almond Salad with Mint



Chardonnay, Soave or Sangiovese di Romagna are delicious wines to serve with this refreshing salad.

- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 8 sprigs mint, julienned
- 2 large beefsteak tomatoes
- 1 avocado
- 1/4 cup whole blanched almonds, toasted and seasoned with salt
- cracked black pepper to taste
- sprigs of mint for garnish

In a small bowl, mix together olive oil, 2 tablespoons lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste. Stir in scallions and julienned mint. Set aside. Cut tomatoes into 1/4-inch slices; divide evenly among 4 salad plates. Peel avocado, discard pit. Cut into 1/8-inch slices; sprinkle with remaining lemon juice. On each plate, fan some of the avocado slices across tomatoes; sprinkle with almonds. Drizzle dressing over salad; sprinkle with cracked pepper. Garnish with mint sprigs.

- Makes 4 servings
- Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Provided by Bolla Wines and Colavita Olive Oil

*with the Mediterranean Diet.* Here's what Parker suggests:

1. **Supplement olive oil for butter whenever you can.** It helps keep your heart healthy. "Anytime you're frying with butter you should be frying with olive oil," suggests Parker. He says not only does olive oil not clog your arteries, it also clears your arteries and keeps your heart healthy. If you really want the taste of butter, Parker suggests adding a little bit of butter to the olive oil once it's heated.
2. **Cook with fresh herbs.** "If you have the time or the space, get an herb-garden going." This could be done in the back yard, patio, or even kitchen window." Parker recommends staying away from dried herbs, because they don't have the health benefit of fresh ones. Herbs can also be used in place of salt. When using salt, Parker suggests using less than one teaspoon a day, and to substitute sea salt for table salt because it's more natural.
3. **Substitute beans for red meat two or three days a week.** "Beans are very high in phytonutrients and vitamins and minerals and fiber." If you crave the taste of meat, Parker suggests adding a small amount of meat while cooking beans, and the beans will take on the taste of the meat.

### ***Shrimp and Tunisian Fresh Tomato Relish***

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 pound shelled and deveined shrimp
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground red pepper, divided
- 2 large yellow or green sweet bell peppers, diced
- 1/2 cup sliced green onions (scallions)
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1-1/2 pounds fully ripened fresh Florida tomatoes, diced (about 3 3/4 cups)

**Directions:** In a bowl, toss shrimp with 1 tablespoon of the oil, 1/4 teaspoon each of salt and ground red pepper; set aside. In a large skillet, heat remaining tablespoon of oil over medium-high heat. Add bell peppers, green onions, garlic, cumin and remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1/4 teaspoon of ground red pepper. Cook and stir until vegetables are just tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes; cook just until tomatoes are hot, 3 to 5 minutes longer; transfer to a platter. Add marinated shrimp to skillet; cook and stir until pink, about 2 minutes. To serve; arrange shrimp on top on Tunisian Fresh Tomato Relish. Sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley, if desired. Serve hot or at room temperature.

**YIELD:** 4 portions

Per portion: 242 calories, 26 g protein, 10 g fat, 14 g carbohydrate

Courtesy of ARAcontent



## Mediterranean Fish Fillets

**USER RATING** ★★★★★ [ADD A COMMENT](#) | [PRINT THIS RECIPE](#) | [SEND TO A FRIEND](#) | [ADD TO MY EATINGWELL](#)

### NUTRITION PROFILE:

Low Calorie | Low Carb | Low Sodium | Low Cholesterol | Low Sat Fat | High Potassium | Heart Healthy | Healthy Weight

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This is “pan-Mediterranean” in its flavors and employs a method of cooking fish by keeping it moist in a zesty sauce. You can also add capers, roasted peppers or sun-dried tomatoes to the sauce.

Makes 2 servings

**ACTIVE TIME:** 30 minutes

**TOTAL TIME:** 45 minutes

**EASE OF PREPARATION:** Easy

**1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil**  
**1 small onion, thinly sliced**  
**2 tablespoons dry white wine**  
**1 clove garlic, finely chopped**  
**1 cup canned diced tomatoes (see Tips for Two)**  
**4 Kalamata olives, pitted (see Tip) and chopped**  
**1/8 teaspoon dried oregano**  
**1/8 teaspoon freshly grated orange zest**  
**1/4 teaspoon salt, divided**  
**1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, divided**  
**8 ounces thick-cut, firm-fleshed fish fillets, such as Pacific halibut or mahi-mahi**

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Heat oil in a medium nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook, stirring often, until lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes. Add wine and garlic and simmer for 30 seconds. Stir in tomatoes, olives, oregano and orange zest. Season with 1/8 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper.
3. Season fish with the remaining 1/8 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Arrange the fish in a single layer in a pie pan or baking dish. Spoon the tomato mixture over the fish. Bake, uncovered, until the fish is just cooked through, 10 to 20 minutes. Divide the fish into 2 portions and serve with sauce.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION:** Per serving: 222 calories; 7 g fat (1 g sat, 4 g mono); 36 mg cholesterol; 9 g carbohydrate; 25 g protein; 2 g fiber; 766 mg sodium; 579 mg potassium.

Nutrition bonus: Selenium (60% daily value), Vitamin C (30% dv), Magnesium (25% dv), Potassium (17% dv).

1/2 Carbohydrate Serving

**TIP:** Tips for Two: Leftover canned diced tomatoes can be refrigerated for up to 1 week or frozen for up to 3 months. Add to soups and salsa; use to bulk up marinara sauce; add to an omelet with sliced green onions and shredded pepper Jack cheese.

Tip: To pit olives: Press down on olives with the side of a heavy knife to split them open and make removing the pits easier.

## Parsley Tabbouleh

USER RATING ★★ ★

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### NUTRITION PROFILE:

Low Calorie | Low Carb | High Fiber | Low Sodium | Low Sat Fat | High Potassium | Heart Healthy | Healthy Weight

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This tart, parsley-dominated tabbouleh is built from fond memories of a favorite Lebanese restaurant.

Makes 4 servings, generous 1 cup each

**ACTIVE TIME:** 35 minutes

**TOTAL TIME:** 40 minutes

1 cup water  
1/2 cup bulgur  
1/4 cup lemon juice  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon minced garlic  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Freshly ground pepper to taste  
2 cups finely chopped flat-leaf parsley (about 2 bunches)  
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint  
2 tomatoes, diced  
1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced  
4 scallions, thinly sliced

1. Combine water and bulgur in a small saucepan. Bring to a full boil, remove from heat, cover and let stand until the water is absorbed and the bulgur is tender, 25 minutes or according to package directions. If any water remains, drain bulgur in a fine-mesh sieve. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool for 15 minutes.

2. Combine lemon juice, oil, garlic, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Add parsley, mint, tomatoes, cucumber and scallions to the bulgur. Add the dressing and toss. Serve at room temperature or chill for at least 1 hour to serve cold.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION:** Per serving: 165 calories; 8 g fat (1 g sat,

6 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 22 g carbohydrate; 4 g protein; 6 g fiber; 175 mg sodium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin C (100% daily value), Vitamin A (70% dv), Folate (21% dv), Iron (20% dv).

**MAKE AHEAD TIP:** Cover and refrigerate for up to 1 day.

**RELATED RECIPES:** [Mediterranean Chopped Salad](#) | [Carrot-Cumin](#)

[Salad](#) | [Tabbouleh with Grilled Vegetables](#) | [Lentil & Bulgur Pilaf with Green & Yellow Squash](#) | [Quinoa Salad with Dried Apricots & Baby Spinach](#)



# RECIPES

## Whole-Wheat Couscous Pilaf

USER RATING ★★

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### NUTRITION PROFILE:

High Fiber | Low Sodium | Low Cholesterol | Low Sat Fat | Heart Healthy

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Whole-wheat couscous is practically an instant side dish. Fresh herbs and hot sauce add flavor with few calories.

Makes 4 servings

ACTIVE TIME: 5 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 10 minutes

EASE OF PREPARATION: Easy

**1 1/4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth or water**  
**1 tablespoon olive oil**  
**1/2 teaspoon hot sauce**  
**1/4 teaspoon salt**  
**1 1/2 cups whole-wheat couscous**  
**1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley**  
**Freshly ground pepper to taste**

Combine broth or water, butter, hot sauce and salt in a small saucepan with a tight-fitting lid and bring to a boil. Stir in couscous and remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Uncover and fluff the grains with a fork to separate. Stir in parsley. Season with pepper.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: Per serving: 349 calories; 4 g fat; 9 mg cholesterol; 68 g carbohydrate; 13 g protein; 11 g fiber; 192 mg sodium; 5 mg potassium.



# RECIPES

## Warm Arugula Bread Salad

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### NUTRITION PROFILE:

Low Calorie | Low Carb | Low Sodium | Low Sat Fat | High Calcium | Heart Healthy

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This assertive panzanella has the most flavor when made with mature arugula, but baby arugula also works well. Serve with grilled steak or turkey sausage.

Makes 4 servings, 3/4 cup each

**ACTIVE TIME:** 20 minutes

**TOTAL TIME:** 20 minutes

**EASE OF PREPARATION:** Easy



**3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided**  
**2 slices crusty whole-wheat bread, cut into 1-inch cubes (2 cups)**  
**1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved**  
**8 cups arugula (7 ounces)**  
**1 tablespoon minced garlic**  
**1/8 teaspoon salt**  
**1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper**  
**2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**  
**3/4 ounce Parmesan cheese, shaved (1/4 cup) or grated (1/2 cup)**

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in bread; cook, stirring occasionally, until crisp and starting to brown, 5 to 6 minutes. Add tomatoes and arugula; cook, stirring, until arugula just wilts, about 1 minute. Push the mixture to one side. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil to the empty side and cook garlic, stirring constantly, until fragrant and sizzling, 15 seconds. Stir into the bread mixture. Remove from heat, season with salt and pepper, drizzle with vinegar and toss to combine. Serve warm, topped with Parmesan.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION:** Per serving: 196 calories; 13 g fat (2 g

sat, 8 g mono); 4 mg cholesterol; 15 g carbohydrate; 6 g protein; 2 g fiber; 287 mg sodium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin A (30% daily value), Vitamin C (25% dv).

## Middle Eastern Chickpea & Rice Stew

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### NUTRITION PROFILE:

Low Calorie | High Fiber | Low Sodium | Low Cholesterol | Low Sat Fat | Heart Healthy

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The nutty goodness of slowly browned onions, spices and sweet potato are offset by a burst of fresh cilantro. Serve this hearty potage with whole-wheat pita and a salad of sliced cucumbers tossed with yogurt and a pinch of salt.

Makes 6 servings, 1 1/2 cups each

**ACTIVE TIME:** 30 minutes

**TOTAL TIME:** 1 hour 25 minutes

**EASE OF PREPARATION:** Moderate



**1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**  
**3 medium onions, halved and thinly sliced (about 3 cups)**  
**2 teaspoons ground cumin**  
**2 teaspoons ground coriander**  
**1 cup orange juice**  
**4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth**  
**2 15-ounce cans chickpeas, rinsed**  
**3 cups peeled and diced sweet potato (about 1 pound)**  
**2/3 cup brown basmati rice**  
**1/4 teaspoon salt**  
**1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper**  
**1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro**

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat; add onions and cook, stirring often, until tender and well browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Add cumin and coriander and stir for about 15 seconds. Add orange juice and broth. Stir in chickpeas, sweet potato, rice and salt. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to a gentle simmer and cover. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the rice is tender and the sweet potatoes are breaking down to thicken the liquid, about 45 minutes. Season with pepper. (The stew will be thick and will thicken further upon standing. Add more chicken broth to thin, if desired, or when reheating.) Serve topped with cilantro.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION:** Per serving: 345 calories; 6 g fat (1 g sat, 2 g mono); 3 mg cholesterol; 63 g carbohydrate; 13 g protein; 10 g fiber; 389 mg sodium; 461 mg potassium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin A (220% daily value), Vitamin C (50% dv), Fiber (40% dv), Iron (20% dv).

3 1/2 Carbohydrate Servings

# RECIPES: from eating well

## Pomegranate Poached Pears

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### NUTRITION PROFILE:

High Fiber | Low Sodium | Low Cholesterol | Low Sat Fat | Heart Healthy

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A delicate pear painted with the deep, garnet hue of pomegranate juice provides a striking finale to a meal.

Makes 4 servings

**ACTIVE TIME:** 30 minutes

**TOTAL TIME:** 1 1/4 hours

**EASE OF PREPARATION:** Easy

**4 ripe, firm Bosc pears**  
**1 1/2 cups pomegranate juice**  
**1 cup sweet dessert wine, such as Muscatel or Riesling**  
**2 tablespoons sliced almonds**  
**1/2 cup pomegranate seeds (1/2 large fruit, see Tip)**  
**4 tablespoons reduced-fat sour cream or low-fat plain yogurt**  
**4 fresh or dried bay leaves for garnish**

1. Peel pears, leaving them whole and stems intact. Slice off the bases so the pears will stand upright. Use an apple corer to remove cores, if desired, working from the base up.
2. Place the pears on their sides in a large 3- or 4-quart saucepan or small Dutch oven. Pour pomegranate juice and wine over the pears. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Cover, reduce heat to low and simmer gently until the pears are tender when pierced with the tip of a sharp knife, 30 to 45 minutes. Turn very gently once or twice as they cook so they color evenly. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the pears to a shallow bowl and set aside.
3. Boil the poaching liquid over high heat until the sauce is reduced to 1/2 cup, 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, toast almonds in a small dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until light golden and fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl to cool.
5. To serve, spoon 1 tablespoon sauce onto each of 4 dessert plates. Place a pear upright on each plate. Drizzle remaining sauce over each pear. Sprinkle pomegranate seeds around the pears and top with the almonds. Garnish each serving with a dollop of sour cream (or yogurt) and a bay leaf.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION:** Per serving: 280 calories; 4 g total fat (1 g

sat, 2 g mono); 6 mg cholesterol; 46 g carbohydrate; 2 g protein; 4 g fiber; 16 mg sodium; 468 mg potassium.

3 Carbohydrate Servings

**TIP:** Ingredient Note: Pomegranate juice: The R.W. Knudsen brand is available in natural-foods stores ([www.knudsenjuices.com](http://www.knudsenjuices.com)). The distinctive bottles of Pom Wonderful juice will be available in the refrigerated section of many supermarkets this fall ([www.pomwonderful.com](http://www.pomwonderful.com)).



Tip: To avoid the enduring stains of pomegranate juice, work under water! Fill a large bowl with water. Hold the pomegranate in the water and slice off the crown. Lightly score the fruit into quarters, from crown to stem end. Keeping the fruit under water, break it apart, gently separating the plump arils from the outer skin and white pith. The seeds will drop to the bottom of the bowl and the pith will float to the surface. Discard the pith. Pour the seeds into a colander. Rinse and pat dry. The seeds can be frozen in an airtight container or sealable bag for up to 3 months.

**MAKE AHEAD TIP:** Prepare through Step 4. Cover and refrigerate pears in sauce for up to 2 days. Serve at room temperature.



## Grilled Tofu with a Mediterranean Chopped Salad

USER RATING ★★★

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### NUTRITION PROFILE:

Low Calorie | Low Carb | Low Sat Fat | High Calcium | Heart Healthy |  
Diabetes Appropriate

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Mild-flavored tofu benefits from this intensely flavored lemon juice-and-garlic-based marinade. If you have the time, marinate the tofu early in the day (up to 8 hours before serving) so it can absorb all the flavors.

Makes 4 servings

**ACTIVE TIME:** 30 minutes

**TOTAL TIME:** 45 minutes

**EASE OF PREPARATION:** Easy

**1/4 cup lemon juice**  
**1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**  
**3 cloves garlic, minced**  
**2 teaspoons dried oregano**  
**1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste**  
**Freshly ground pepper to taste**  
**14 ounces extra-firm tofu, preferably water-packed**  
**Mediterranean Chopped Salad (recipe follows)**

1. Preheat grill.
2. Whisk lemon juice, oil, garlic, oregano, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Reserve 2 tablespoons of this mixture for basting.
3. Drain and rinse tofu; pat dry. Cut the block crosswise into eight 1/2-inch-thick slices and place in a shallow glass dish. Add remaining marinade and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or for up to 8 hours.
4. Meanwhile, make Mediterranean Chopped Salad.
5. Lightly oil the grill rack (hold a piece of oil-soaked paper towel with tongs and rub it over the grate). Drain the tofu, discarding marinade. Grill the tofu over medium-high heat, basting occasionally with reserved lemon juice mixture, until lightly browned, 3 to 4 minutes per side (see Tip). Serve immediately, topped with the salad.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION:** Per serving: 209 calories; 16 g fat (2 g sat, 11 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 10 g carbohydrate; 9 g protein; 2 g fiber; 682 mg sodium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin C (50% daily value), Iron (15% dv).

1/2 Carbohydrate Serving

**TIP:** To make attractive grill marks on the tofu, rotate it 90° halfway through grilling for a cross-hatch pattern.

**RELATED RECIPES:** [Mediterranean Chopped Salad](#)



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British Dietetic Association:

## Mediterranean Eating in Five Easy Steps



Ahh...the Mediterranean! It conjures up thoughts of beautiful sunshine, great food, and siestas! Well, we may not be able to do much about our weather, or the siesta for that matter, but thankfully we *can* do something about the food we eat!

What is the traditional Mediterranean diet? This is the type of diet followed in Greece, Crete, southern France, and parts of Italy that emphasises fruits and vegetables, nuts, grains, olive oil (as opposed to butter), grilled, or steamed chicken, and seafood (as opposed to red meat).

The foods that are commonly eaten will vary significantly from one Mediterranean country to another, however, the shared features of what is usually spoken of as the ‘Mediterranean diet’ include:

- High consumption of fruits, vegetables, bread and other cereals, potatoes, beans, nuts and seeds.
- Olive oil is the key monounsaturated fat source.
- Dairy products, fish and poultry are consumed in low to moderate amounts.
- Little red meat is eaten.
- Eggs are eaten zero to four times a week.

Sue Baic, Registered Dietitian and Spokesperson for the [British Dietetic Association](#) (BDA), says: “Studies looking at the diets of thousands of people around Europe have confirmed the health advantages of the Mediterranean style diet. The good news is this research shows you don’t actually need to live near the Mediterranean to get the benefit. No matter where you come from, the closer your diet matches the typical Mediterranean style diet, the lower your likelihood of developing problems such as heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes.”

This is great news! So, how can we start following a Mediterranean style diet? Here are five easy steps:

### 1. Fill up on fruit and veg

Aim to eat a minimum of five portions of differing coloured fruits and vegetables each day. Please check out my my previous article, [Taste the Rainbow](#), for 10 tips on increasing your fruit and veg intake. Remember, fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables can all be counted. Beans, pulses, and 100% juice smoothies count as well, but only as one portion a day, no matter how much we have.

### 2. Feast on fish

We should try to include fish more regularly in our weekly diet. It is also important to make one of these portions oily. Check out [Understanding Omega-3s](#), for more tips on the benefits, and best sources of omega-3 oils. Again, fresh, smoked, frozen and canned varieties are all suitable options.

### **3. Choose your fats wisely**

Use olive oil as a dressing in salads. Switch to using the soft spreads made from olive oil on bread etc, if you are not doing so already, and look out for labeling terms such as “olive based spread,” when making your purchase. It is also important that we try to cut back on the “bad” fats in our diet. We can do this by reducing our intake of foods such as butter, cream, or fatty meat products like sausages, pies and streaky bacon. Trimming the visible fat from cuts of red meat, removing the skin from chicken, and limiting our intake of fried fast food to no more than once each week, will also help to reduce our intake of saturated fat.

### **4. Make your grains whole**

Try to replace refined cereal foods with wholegrain varieties wherever possible. We should aim to eat at least half of our starchy carbohydrates as wholegrains. This would be at least two to three servings each day. Look for labeling terms such as, wholegrain, wholewheat, oats, barley, rye. You may want to check out [part 2](#) of my series in the [Balance of Good Health](#), for more detailed information on choosing carbohydrate foods.

### **5. Snack on nuts**

Walnuts, almonds and hazelnuts are important ingredients in many popular Mediterranean recipes, they are also eaten as snacks or appetisers, accompanied by fruit or cheese. Try to include a variety of nuts each day, to benefit from those healthy fats. Remember, nuts are high in fat, so limit your intake to one handful daily.



# Mayo Clinic website: Mediterranean diet for heart health

**The Mediterranean diet is a heart-healthy eating plan combining elements of Mediterranean style cooking.**

If you're looking for a heart-healthy eating plan, the Mediterranean diet might be right for you. The Mediterranean diet incorporates the basics of healthy eating, plus a splash of flavorful olive oil and perhaps a glass of good red wine, among other components characterizing the traditional cooking style of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

Most healthy diets include fruits and vegetables, fish and whole grains, and limit unhealthy fats. While these fundamental parts of a healthy diet remain tried and true, subtle variations or differences in proportions of certain foods may make a difference in your risk of heart disease.

## Benefits of the Mediterranean diet

The Mediterranean eating style significantly reduces the risk of further heart disease in individuals who had already had a heart attack. Remarkably, this benefit was not related to any significant difference in cholesterol levels — rather other components of the diet seem to work in concert to protect the body.

Key components of the Mediterranean diet include:

- Eating a generous amount of fruits and vegetables
- Consuming healthy fats such as olive oil and canola oil
- Eating small portions of nuts
- Drinking red wine, in moderation, for some
- Consuming very little red meat
- Eating fish on a regular basis

## Fruits, vegetables and grains

The traditional diet among some Mediterranean countries includes fruits, vegetables, pasta and rice. For example, residents of Greece eat very little red meat and average nine servings a day of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables. This eating pattern has been associated with a lower level of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) oxidation — a change in LDL cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol) that makes it more likely to build up deposits in your arteries.

Grains in the Mediterranean region typically contain very few unhealthy trans fats, and bread is an important part of the diet there. However, throughout the Mediterranean region, bread is eaten without butter or margarine, which contain saturated fat or trans fats.

## Healthy fats

The Mediterranean diet doesn't view all fat as bad. The focus of the diet isn't to limit total fat consumption, but to make wise choices about the types of fat you eat.

The Mediterranean diet is similar to the American Heart Association's Step I diet, but it contains less cholesterol and has more fats that contain the beneficial linolenic acid (a type of omega-3 fatty acid). These fat sources include olive oil, canola oil and nuts, particularly walnuts. Fish — another source of omega-3 fatty acids — is eaten on a regular basis in the Mediterranean diet. Studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids lower triglycerides and may provide an anti-inflammatory effect helping to stabilize the blood vessel lining. The Mediterranean diet discourages saturated fats and hydrogenated oils (trans-fatty acids), both of which contribute to heart disease.