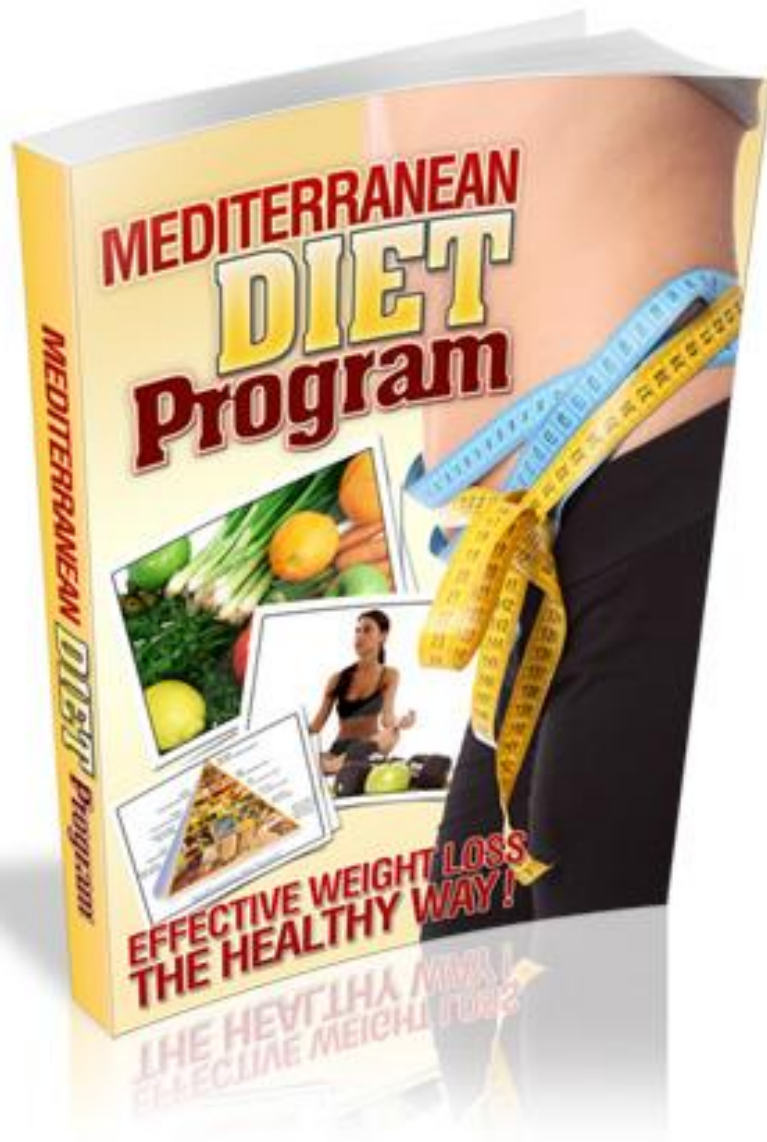




MEDITERRANEAN DIET PROGRAM



Special Edition





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Introduction

Everyone has their own take on the ideal meal. In most cases though, it consists of high fat, high salt and high sugar foods. Indeed this has been the notion of home cooking made by good old mom.

Who is not used to the smell of bacon and pancakes at the breakfast table anyway? Come dinner time, a huge slab of red meat with a side of mashed potatoes and buttered vegetables is ripe for the picking. This is how most people would picture the perfect meal.

The result is that this kind of eating habit and diet has gone down as a lifestyle. It takes root from the post-war victory that the Western World enjoyed and became one of the most visible evidence of their prosperity.

Sadly, the same eating habits have made America and other parts of the Western World a haven for heart attack and other heart disease-related deaths per year. Nowadays, most people struggle to regain their health and live a healthier lifestyle.

This sudden health consciousness has prompted scientists and nutritionist to look for healthier eating habits.





Over the years, they began to realize that the future of nutritious diets is actually in traditional cuisine. In the 1950s and 1960s, researchers noted of the relatively low budget but healthier diets enjoyed by people in the Mediterranean region.

While America and the rest of the Western World celebrated their post-war victory and prosperity, the Mediterranean region continued living the way they have been for centuries.

This is actually the very reason for the low number of cases of coronary heart disease and other such conditions. Researchers were stunned to find that plant-based diets are actually better than animal-based diets.

As the evidence points out, the Mediterranean diet is definitely a healthier way to eat. This diet is actually based on the diet of a region and not just once country.

The Mediterranean is the world's largest inland sea which borders Europe, Africa and Asia. Around fifteen countries including France, Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy among others call this region home.

The Mediterranean diet and way of life may take root from various countries but they do follow a similar pattern. All in all, this diet consists of whole grain, legumes, dried beans and a wide range of fruits and vegetables. Red meats are taken in small amounts and in

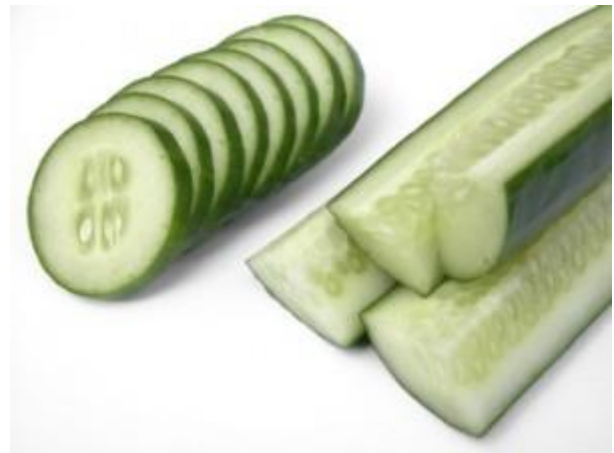




some cases not at all. It is this kind of diet that has helped people from this part of the world to stay healthy.

A healthier body and lifestyle is certainly within your grasp thanks to the Mediterranean diet. This eBook is meant to be your personal guide to exploring this healthy diet. It also teaches you valuable tips on improving your health.

You will soon learn of all the benefits of this diet in the long term. For your convenience, a few recipes and meal plans are included as well.



Say goodbye to your old unhealthy diet and be ready to set sail towards a healthier you.





Chapter I: What Is A Mediterranean Diet?

The Mediterranean is one of the world's premier tourist destinations. A lot of people dream of spending their vacation here someday. Its beauty and charm mostly comes from its rich history and culture.

The warm feeling of the sun on the skin and the calm sea breeze are things to look forward to as well. Yet these are not the only reasons for crowds of people flocking to this part of the world.

Apart from being exceptionally unique in taste, the Mediterranean cuisine has proven to be one of the worlds healthiest. Years' worth of research has helped shed light on the mysteries of this diet.

Specifically, how delicious and savory food can be good for the health at the same time. This healthy cuisine comes from a mixture of European, Asian and North African origin which produces truly unique dishes.

The Lay of the Land

The reason behind the Mediterranean diet's diversity lies in its geography itself. All territories around the Mediterranean Sea are





the origins of this diet. This region stretches from the Straits of Gibraltar all the way across the shores of the Middle East.

Parts of Southern Spain and the seaport of Tangier in Northern Morocco are included as well. This vast tract of territory plays host to some of the world's richest and diverse cultures.

The wide range of countries and cultures each has its unique contribution to the Mediterranean diet. Even with the distinct flavors of each culture, the diet has retained a few common characteristics.

Pasta may be known as ziti in Italy but the same variant exists in Morocco as couscous. Apart from food, Mediterranean people share a distinct attitude towards food and the manner it is eaten. This is the result of centuries of interactions which continues to evolve to this day.

Eating à la Mediterranean

Taking part in the traditional Mediterranean diet is mostly a seasonal and regional thing. In general, each country produces foods locally and is served soon after harvest with each country having its own customs.





Fresh vegetables harvested in the spring and are eaten usually within a few miles from the farm. The same thing happens during the summer with lots of tomatoes, cantaloupes, eggplants and watermelons among others.

When summer ends, wine pressing begins with harvests of olives following suit. Later on, you will learn how all these come together in the Mediterranean diet.

As such, outdoor markets are full of ripe and vibrantly-colored fruits and vegetables fresh from the farm. This is certainly not the same as the pale and bland produce you are used to from the supermarket.

Now who would want to eat that after sampling some Mediterranean produce?

Red meat is simply lacking in Mediterranean cuisine due to the lack of grazing land. In its place, lamb and veal are served although





sparingly and only for special occasions. You are more likely to encounter chicken or seafood in main courses.

Bread is a staple in this diet especially in Italy where it is consumed readily. This bread is dark, heavy and packed with whole grains unlike the one from the supermarket though.

Pasta and rice are famous as well. Legumes are a good source of protein and are more affordable than meat. Lentils, chickpeas, small red cranberry beans and fava beans remain popular choices today.

Of course you cannot talk about Mediterranean cuisine without talking about wine. The difference here is that this is consumed with meals and never for recreation.

Eating cheese is a common way to start and end a meal but never in the same way as Americanized Italian dishes.





The similar flavor shared by a lot of Mediterranean dishes is thanks in part to the flavorings used. More often than not, this includes onion, garlic, lemons, basil, oregano and of course olive oil.

Beyond the food itself, Mediterranean cuisine sets itself apart because of the way it sees food. It is a philosophy which regards food and eating as a way sustain the vitality of life.

It is a means by which life can be expressed in all its beauty. Friends and family gather around and eat together in genuine events and not inconvenient chores. In other words, food is a reflection of one's life.

Discovering the Diet

Beginning in the 1950s, the Mediterranean diet has received increasing attention over the years. Keep in mind that this was the time when Americans much on steak dinners and baked potatoes with a side of buttered bread rolls and a glass of whole milk.





This was thought to be the ideal nutritious diet of the day. Numerous studies have been conducted and all with the same astonishing conclusions.

Research has revealed that people taking the Mediterranean diet have a lesser tendency to develop cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

This is due to the homemade meals which use fresh ingredients and low servings of red meat. Because of this and the Mediterranean way of life, people from this region tend to live longer as well.

Among the most well-known studies into the Mediterranean diet is the Seven Countries Study by Ancel Keys in the 1950s and 1960s. This included a sample population from Greece, Italy, the former Yugoslavia, Finland, the Netherlands, Japan and the United States.

Specifically, the study explored the relationship between disease and diet. It involved over 12,000 men between the ages of 40 and





59. The study revealed that men taking the Mediterranean diet were less likely to contract coronary heart disease.

Later studies proved that a diet low in saturated fat reduces cholesterol levels and the risk of heart disease. The Mediterranean diet mainly consists of monounsaturated fat which is the good kind of fat that your body needs. This good fat is mainly from olive oil which is a mainstay in most Mediterranean dishes.

Research still continues to have a better understanding into the links between lower risk of heart disease and the Mediterranean diet. Apart from the diet, research now points towards increased activity as part of the lifestyle as another cause for this figure.

The lifestyle in the Mediterranean is more relaxed with strong support from friends and family.





Chapter II: The Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet

With dozens of studies supporting the same conclusion, there is no doubt that the Mediterranean diet is one of the world's healthiest eating habits. Of course this did not happen by a stroke of luck.

Researchers have identified four factors that determine a healthy lifestyle namely, a low-fat diet, moderate to no drinking at all, increased physical activity and non-smoking.

In terms of diet, traditional Mediterranean diet definitely has it all. Research has proven that the kinds of foods in this diet have a lot of benefits for your health.





People under this diet have less chances of contracting metabolic illnesses.

The same people also have less chances of getting inflamed cells which reduces the chance of getting disease as well.

Apart from less chances of coronary heart disease and other similar diseases, the Mediterranean diet also lowers the chances of getting other diseases. People in this diet can rest easy knowing that they have a smaller risk of getting cancer.





The same thing can be said about Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. Equally important is that people in this diet to live longer as well.

Good, Better, Best

When it comes to fats, people tend to think that these are all bad but this idea could not get any worse. Saturated fats come from animal products while polyunsaturated fats are produced from plants, seeds and vegetable oil among others.

Monounsaturated fats are considered the healthiest and ideally should be included in your diet in place of other kinds of fat.

The good news is that the Mediterranean diet revolves around this line of thinking. Of course it is by no coincidence that this is the reason for the health benefits you get from it. All this is thanks to the kind of staple foods included in all of Mediterranean cuisine.





Foods for Vitality

Mediterranean cuisine takes root from several countries each with its own distinct flavor. At the heart of these dishes though are certain foods that have been proven by research to be important for good health. These foods for vitality are responsible for all the benefits of the Mediterranean diet and making you feel better at the same time.



The following foods are more or less a staple in any Mediterranean dish. You will find them in most recipes no matter what country from the region they come from.





Vegetables

No healthy diet is complete without a serving of vegetables. The truth is that you never have too much vegetable in your diet. For better results, you want to make them part of your lunch and snacks as well. Apart from side dishes on your dinner plate, adding vegetables to your sandwiches can be very tasty as well. Essential vitamins and minerals can be found in vegetables which are important for good health.

Legumes

Legumes are pulses are an important part of any healthy diet. In botanical terms, legumes refer to a certain species of plant. However, it is also used to describe fruits that develop seeds in a pod. These are great sources of fiber and protein.





Fruits and Nuts

Instead of munching on sugary sweets and other junk foods, a much healthier alternative would be to include fruits in your snacks.

As such, it is important to stock up on apples, pears and oranges



to always have something healthy to eat. Drinking fresh juice is alright but eating an actual piece is a whole lot better.

Nuts on the other hand have calories and contain good monounsaturated fats at the same time. Still, these are better taken in moderation.

Cereals and Grains

Whole grains are good for the health but making the transition from white and processed starches may be difficult for some. For better results, start with whole wheat breads from the lighter variety.





Work your way up to whole grain breads once you get the hang of it. Using this kind of bread for your sandwiches paves the way for a healthy and delicious snack.

Other healthier alternatives include whole wheat pasta which goes with just about any kind of sauce you can think of. It is the same story with brown rice as well. This increases your fiber intake easily. Consider replacing potatoes with sweet potatoes or yams as well.

Cereals which are less processed should be your top choice with oatmeal as the best example. Less sugar and more fiber is the way to go here.

Fish

The Mediterranean diet calls for less servings of red meat and more fish in its place. With fish, you get a good source of protein without having to worry about getting bad fat like in beef and pork. In fact, you get the good kind of fat from fish with Omega-3 fats being the most important among them.





Studies have proven that Omega-3 fats help reduce the risk of heart disease. The progression of such a condition may also be prevented by eating fish or shellfish. Another thing is that fish is relatively more affordable and obviously a healthier source of protein than red meat.

Oils and Fats

When it comes to fats, olive oil is a mainstay in Mediterranean diet. It is a good source of monounsaturated fats which is the good kind of fat. This kind of fat does not increase blood cholesterol levels like saturated fats. Olive oil is also a good source of Vitamins A, B1, B2, C, D, E as well as K. Other healthy options include canola oil and grapeseed oil.





Olive oil is harvested from pressed ripe olives. The oil that comes from the first pressing is known as virgin. It is low in acid content with less than one percent concentration. This is regarded as the best of its kind with the fruitiest and best flavor.

Dairy

Traditional Mediterranean diet does not put a lot of emphasis on dairy products. In fact, people on this diet tend to reduce their



consumption of dairy products. Even then, small servings usually of yoghurt and cheese are made occasionally.

Meats

Like dairy, a Mediterranean diet calls for less meats. It is recommended to eat red meat just once a week with the average consumption of only four ounces per day. When choosing meats look for cuts that are leaner since these will have lesser amounts of saturated fats.





Alcohol

The same studies that explored the Mediterranean diet uncovered evidence that moderate consumption of alcohol is a good thing. Men who consumed half or two drinks per day had a lower risk of heart attack.

Drinking more than this amount also showed a lower risk of heart attack as well. This finding even holds up when researchers take into account other factors such as level of physical activity, age, medical history, body mass index and smoking.

The Bottom Line

The health benefits from the Mediterranean diet all boils down to one thing. All the foods mentioned earlier are rich in essential vitamins and minerals that the body needs for vitality. Consuming these foods can more or less guarantee that you are getting enough of these nutrients. Some of these are the following:





- ❖ Antioxidants – These help fight off free radicals which are chemical substances that roam around the body and cause damage to the cells.
- ❖ Carotenoids – This substance is found in red, orange and yellow plants, fruits and flowers. They help protect the body from damage caused by light and oxygen.
- ❖ Monounsaturated Fats – Also known as the good fat, this can help delay or reduce the risk of heart attack. Studies have also shown that cancer development is lowered as well.
- ❖ Phytochemicals – These substances can be found mostly in plants and are used for protection against bacteria, viruses and fungi.

Apart from reducing the risk of a wide range of chronic diseases, these are proven to promote longer and healthy living as well.





Chapter III: The Mediterranean Way of Life

Apart from the food you eat, the Mediterranean diet calls for certain changes in your lifestyle. All this is to live a healthier and longer life. Compared to the American way of life, the Mediterranean one seems harsh and very stressful with little to none of the conveniences you are used to.

In a twist of fate, the Mediterranean way of life is much healthier than the American one. The modern life it seems is responsible for much of the health problems of today.

Of course it is very much possible to live a healthier lifestyle. All it takes is a little planning and adjustments where needed.

Move More, Live More

Physical activity has always been part of the Mediterranean way of life. People have to exert a lot of effort just to grow, harvest and prepare food. This more than fulfills the exercise requirement for a healthier lifestyle.





It is not even seen as a requirement, just something that has to be done. This is in stark contrast to the American way of life and how exercise is seen as something expendable from the list of daily activities.

Numerous studies have shown that even the simplest forms of exercise can improve your overall health. In an issue of the New England Journal of Medicine published in 1999, it was



revealed that women who got regular exercise reduced their risk of a heart attack by as much as 40 percent. Walking for at least five hours a week cuts this risk in half as well. Even exercises lasting only ten minutes of three times a day can have a significant impact.

Exercise has other benefits as well. Old people who undergo an aerobic exercise program will have better mental fitness than those who do not. Studies have proven that old people who exercised





reacted 25 percent faster than people who do stretching and toning exercises.

The benefits of exercise to the body are no coincidence. Science has proven that inactivity can result in more risk to chronic diseases including heart disease, cancer diabetes and osteoporosis. The risk for obesity is reduced as well. Getting regular exercise also means better sleep, a more positive outlook and better overall health.

Moving more means preventing high blood pressure and even lowers already high levels of it. It strengthens the heart making it work more efficiently.

At the same time, exercise prevents the spread of chemicals that promote atherosclerosis. With exercise, the body is better able to metabolize carbohydrates and increases sensitivity to insulin. This in turn lowers the incidence of diabetes.

With all these benefits, it comes as no surprise that exercise promotes a longer life. Studies have proven that even the smallest amount of exercise drops mortality rate significantly. This is why an





increasing number of physicians prescribe exercise for avoiding chronic diseases.

A Herculean Effort

With the rigorous activity demanded by farming, most Mediterranean folk get their weight training exercise from this. It may not be the same as the weights at the gym but it does have the same effect of strengthening your body.

This includes lifting, hauling, pulling, pushing, loading, chopping and digging among others. Evidently, strength training can become part of daily life without having to go to the gym.

Strength training is somewhat different from other forms of exercises. For one thing, it needs less endurance and more short-term effort of increasing intensity. This builds both muscle and bone structures within the body.

Strong muscles do not just look better, they work better as well. Of course this does not mean huge and hulking muscles. It means muscles that are fit, well-nourished and active.





Bigger muscles are better at processing oxygen which takes some load of the heart. Strong muscles around the joints also help relieve pressure around them. This added strength can certainly make a difference in daily life.

No Time for the Gym?

"No time for the gym" is an excuse you will often hear from people with busy lives. But is this really the case? With so much benefit from exercise, why not spare a few minutes of your time to get up and get going? Even the smallest of things can have a significant impact on your health. Here are a few tips on fitting exercise into your busy schedule:

- ❖ Shorter but more frequent exercise sessions can be as effective as one entire session. The important thing here is to keep track of the total time and amount of effort exerted.
- ❖ Skip the elevator and climb up or down the stairs as often as possible. This is a great and simple way to get your heart pumping.





- ❖ To walk more, park your car as far as possible from your destination. This saves a lot of time and gas circling the parking lot for a convenient space.
- ❖ Do as much walking as possible. Surely going to the neighbor's house or the grocery does not need a car. When commuting, get off at least two stops earlier and continue the rest of the way on foot.
- ❖ In the office, get off your chair every fifteen minutes and stretch your muscles. A better idea would be to walk around the office for three minutes.
- ❖ If you keep missing exercising in the morning, try it in the afternoon instead. Some people are more energetic at that time of the day.
- ❖ Take your children or your dog to the park to play. How about a quick game of Frisbee while you are at it? This is definitely





one of the simplest ways to exercise while having fun with your loved ones.

- ❖ In the same manner, try to convince a friend to exercise with you. This creates a support system prominently featured in the Mediterranean lifestyle.
- ❖ Instead of hiring someone else, consider doing your own household chores. Apart from getting exercise, you save money at the same time.
- ❖ You can always buy an exercise DVD of your choice and do 20 mins every second day – preferably every day.

The point here is that you need to be creative and start prioritizing your health. You only have one body and it is your job to look after it.





Planning Your Exercises

The American College of Sports Medicine recommended exercise of at least thirty minutes a day most days of the week. This applies for everyone regardless of age and fitness level. For losing weight, aerobic activity of up to sixty minutes a day and strength training are needed.

It may sound too much but it is possible to fulfill this requirement with an exercise plan in place. This plan is quite simple and does not require any special skills, bulky gym equipment or special instruction.

Keep in mind that this is just a guide. The plan calls for exercise for three times a day but you can perform a version for everyday use. You have a free hand at adjusting the intensity level according to what suits you best. In terms of intensity though, be sure that you are working a sweat but not so hard to avoid straining your muscles.





Day One

- ❖ Perform gentle stretching of up to five minutes. To start your day, perform fifty jumping jacks or start with five first and work your way up to fifty.

- ❖ Get some fresh air and take a brisk walk for ten minutes during your coffee break.

- ❖ At lunch, take a brisk walk again for fifteen minutes.

- ❖ Climb up or down a flight of stairs before dinner.

- ❖ End the day with as many sit-ups and push-ups as you can add a few repetitions weekly. Finish off with some gentle stretching.

Remember to keep yourself hydrated.





Day Two

- ❖ This time, walk in place briskly for five minutes but not before some gentle stretching.
- ❖ Commute to work but get off one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way. This should give you at least ten minutes.
- ❖ Walk around for fifteen minutes and eat a light lunch.
- ❖ For your coffee break, stair climbing would be nice.
- ❖ Finally, ride your bike around before dinner or do something else with equal intensity.

Aim to complete 10,000 steps a day, it is easier than it sounds. Use a pedometer, Fitbit or get an app on your mobile device.





Day Three

- ❖ Start the day with gentle stretching and continue with five minutes of dancing.

- ❖ Take a brisk walk for twenty minutes with a few coworkers if possible.

- ❖ Instead of taking coffee, take two minutes to jog in place then perform ten jumping jacks and twenty wall push-ups. After this regimen, you will not need coffee anymore.

- ❖ More brisk walking for fifteen minutes wait once you get home after a light dinner. Why not take the whole family with you?

- ❖ If you have dumbbells or heavy cans of food, use this as weights against your chest while doing some sit-ups.





You and Stress

Modern living can be very complex, demanding and stressful; the need to balance finances, social relationships, careers and parenting are among the usual stress producing culprits. But there are other less obvious factors that impact stress levels such as nutrition, sleep, toxic overload and other environmental factors.

Typically, people think of “stress” as

“a natural reaction of the body...sometimes called the fight or flight response. Stress is a survival mechanism that helped ancient peoples survive because it prepares the body to react quickly and if necessary to get out of harm’s way.”

In modern society, we do not need to dodge saber-toothed tigers. Rather, modern living presents us with a whole new range of challenges and dangers that are not ‘life threatening’. Most of us act as though we are still fighting to survive.

Hans Selye, noted endocrinologist and recognized father of stress, actually coined the term stress back in 1936. Selye defined stress as “the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”. Selye subjected animals to a range of stressors E.G., blaring lights,





loud noise, extremes of heat and cold, and found that over time they all exhibited the same pathologic changes of stomach ulcerations, shrinkage of lymphoid tissue and enlargement of the adrenals. Hence the body is identifying and responding (or reacting) to changes: environmental, emotional or physical all of the time.

In modern society our nervous system is constantly bombarded and our bodies become taxed. Add in the pressures and demands of finances, social relationships, careers, parenting demands etc., and the body is required to perform over and over. Using Selye's definition, it is not surprising that we see a spike in conditions such as chronic fatigue or other illness.

Ironically, the medical establishment still does not fully understand the cause of, or in many cases even recognise "Chronic Fatigue" as a dis-ease. For example, the Mayo Clinic states "Chronic fatigue syndrome is a complicated disorder characterized by extreme fatigue that can't be explained by any underlying medical condition. The fatigue may worsen with physical or mental activity, but doesn't improve with rest. The cause of chronic fatigue syndrome is unknown, although there are many theories."





Our experience with the effects of chronic stress is that it often does lead to “Chronic Fatigue” and that many doctors do not recognise and/or treat it. From experience we know, chronic fatigue can be avoided, and is not a place you want to go. Please, do not ignore stress and “Soldier On”; take it seriously and make the most of your life.

Coping with Stress in the Mediterranean Way

The traditional Mediterranean lifestyle has plenty of ways to cope with stress built in. For one thing, social relationships with family and friends are kept strong and often prioritised. Even neighbours offer support to each other in times of need. Social support helps people cope better with stress.

Also, in the traditional Mediterranean lifestyle, people are closer to nature than most others; growing and harvesting their food from the land. In another example where science is catching up with common sense, there are an increasing number of studies indicating nature reduces stress levels.





According to scientists like public health researchers Stamatakis and Mitchell: being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, reduces anger, fear, and stress and increases pleasant feelings. Exposure to nature also contributes to physical wellbeing, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones. It may even reduce mortality. And to me this makes perfect sense, as a species, we are hard wired for nature not urban settings.

Living With (Out) Stress

Too much stress is bad for our health. So, we all need to make changes to our lifestyles stress to continuously weed out stress.

While moving to the sun-drenched Mediterranean sounds like a good idea, it is not really feasible for most of us. And yet, it is still possible to live better, with decreased unnecessary stressors in this fast-paced world.

Consider incorporating some or all of the following tips:

- ❖ Family/friends/social connections – Look for things to appreciate about your family and friends. Prioritise your social





connections; keep in touch. Make it a point to connect with family and friends and where appropriate show them how much you value them by asking their opinions and ideas – you don't have to follow their advice 😊 Joining organizations or other groups of like-minded people can also be a great way to expand your social networks.

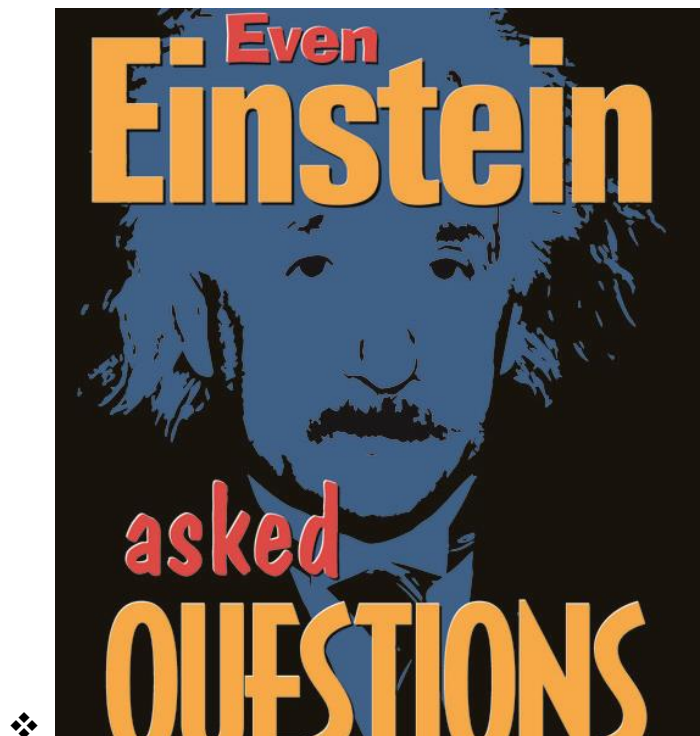
- ❖ Meditation is known to be a great stress reliever; simple techniques like single nostril breathing are a great way to calm the nervous system. The mind and body are linked – calm one and the other follows. Visualisation can help calm your mind, especially if a natural scene. Dedicate time each day to clear and calm your body/mind with meditation. How about imagining a relaxing stay at a traditional café on Southern France? Perhaps a stroll through the Greek coastline would do it? This is sure to recharge your mind and body and help you relax more. Get some pictures as visual prompts – enjoy***
- ❖ Sunshine - step outside and enjoy the sun, with the appropriate level of sun protection of course. Vitamin





deficiency is a known factor in depression. If you can, get out of the city on a regular basis.

- ❖ Consider things in context. Each stressful event, no matter what it is, is best handled when put into perspective. A great way to get clarity on an issue is to ask questions rather than assume you know the answer. By asking a question as open as 'what else is possible?' you can move into a place of creation rather than being a victim.





- ❖ Look after your body, after all stress is physical response and your body is working hard to process the effects of stress. Nourish your body with good food such as the meals presented here.
- ❖ Juices and Smoothies are a great way to quickly give your body nutrients without the body having to work very hard for it.
- ❖ Get some new skills from programs such as "[Living Calm](#)" – we all need new strategies to break vicious cycles.





Chapter IV: Living Well With the Mediterranean Diet

Making the switch from your routine diet to a healthier one is a lot easier than you think. In this chapter, you will learn more about how to plan meals in the Mediterranean diet.

Keep in mind that this is just a framework to work with. It is by no means a strict meal plan. You are better off following a meal plan that suits your needs so be sure to make one for yourself.

It is very much possible to lose weight under the Mediterranean diet. For better results though, you want to consult your dietician for the best meal plan for this purpose. Remember that this diet calls for increased physical activity as well. You will need time to lie down, rest and relax too.

You will notice that beverages such as alcohol or coffee are not included in this meal plan. These exclusions are based on the Mediterranean meal plan and are considered optional at best.





What you drink during meals is entirely up to you. Be sure to base this decision on your current overall health though.

As a healthier alternative, consider making Green Tea part of your diet. This drink has plenty of health benefits for you. Caffeine and alcoholic drinks should be taken in moderation. This is especially true if you are trying to lose weight.

Recipes for the dishes included in this meal plan can be found in the next chapter. When making a meal plan, keep these guidelines in mind:

- ❖ **Enjoy your food** - Remember that relishing every flavor of your food is part of the Mediterranean way of life. Beyond good nutrition, eating is a feast for the senses you must enjoy. It is not considered an inconvenient chore but an important part of life.
- ❖ **Watch the servings** - In any diet, it is important for your calorie intake and activity level to breakeven. For weight loss, you want to consume fewer calories and move around more.





Of course this is easier said than done in today's lifestyle. Again, it is important to ask for advice from a dietician or other nutrition expert. In this meal plan, it is up to you to adjust serving sizes to meet your needs.

- ❖ **Drink plenty of water** – As much as possible, try to drink at least six to eight glasses of water a day.
- ❖ **Exercise, rest and relax** – Apart from the diet itself, what you do in between meals is an important part of the Mediterranean diet. You should spend less time sitting down and more time moving and getting around. Go outdoors and find something to do to cover your exercise. Be sure to get enough rest and relaxation as well.





Planning Your Meals

This sample meal plan outlines the typical foods you eat under the Mediterranean diet. It covers the three main meals and one snack per day for a whole week. Keep in mind that this is just a rough guide to help you get started. Feel free to add and remove items to fit your individual needs.

Sunday

- Breakfast
- ❖ A serving of Frittata made of 1 egg, 2 egg whites and ½ cup of sliced portabella mushrooms, 1 teaspoon of dill and ¼ cup of skim milk or water then mixed together and cooked with olive oil
 - ❖ 1 to 2 slices of whole-grain toast
 - ❖ 1 cup of low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk
- Lunch
- ❖ A serving of Mediterranean Vegetables with Walnuts and Olive Vinaigrette
 - ❖ ½ cup of White Beans with Cumin
 - ❖ 1 small whole-grain roll





- Snacks
- ❖ A serving of Broiled Tomatoes
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of Chicken Raisin Stew
 - ❖ A serving of Green Salad and Olive Oil Vinaigrette
 - ❖ ½ piece of whole-grain pita pocket and 1 tablespoon of Tapenade

Monday

- Breakfast
- ❖ Eat 1 cup of oatmeal made of whole oats. Try this with fresh blueberry toppings and 1 tablespoon of raw walnuts.
 - ❖ Chow down this meal with 1 cup of low-fat soy milk. Drinking one that is calcium fortified is much better.
- Lunch
- ❖ Eat 1 pita pocket oh whole grain variety and filled with salad greens, 2 to 3 ounces of tuna and some mustard.
 - ❖ 1 cup of red grapes





- ❖ For dessert, try eating 1 cup of non-fat or low-fat yogurt of plain variety. Add 1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup.
- Snacks
 - ❖ 6 to 12 whole almonds and 1 to 2 whole wheat breadsticks
- Dinner
 - ❖ Eat 1 cup of Tuscan Bean Soup with half a cup of brown rice.
 - ❖ 2 cups of green salad and tomatoes with 1 tablespoon of Olive Oil Vinaigrette
 - ❖ 1 serving of Cinnamon Oranges

Tuesday

- Breakfast
 - ❖ 2 pieces of small Orange-Banana Muffins
 - ❖ 1 ½ cups of low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk
 - ❖ ½ to ¾ cup of berries
- Lunch
 - ❖ 1 serving of Sweet Corn and Toasted Walnut Risotto
 - ❖ 1 serving of Macedonian Salad





- Snacks
- ❖ A serving of baby carrots with 1 to 2 tablespoons of Hummus Tahini
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of Swordfish Steaks and Tomato-Caper Sauce
 - ❖ A serving of Greek Salad
 - ❖ A serving of Wine-Stewed Figs with Yogurt Cream

Wednesday

- Breakfast
- ❖ 1 egg and 2 egg whites scrambled with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of skimmed milk, black pepper and fresh herbs
 - ❖ 1 slice of whole-grain toast
 - ❖ $\frac{1}{2}$ grapefruit
- Lunch
- ❖ A serving of Gazpacho
 - ❖ A serving of Olive Oil Cheese Crisps
 - ❖ 1 apple
 - ❖ 1 cup of low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk
- Snacks
- ❖ Caponata served with $\frac{1}{4}$ whole-grain pita pocket





- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of Ginger Lamb Stew
 - ❖ A serving of steamed broccoli tossed with minced garlic, hot pepper flakes and olive oil
 - ❖ ½ cup of non-fat frozen vanilla yogurt with prune puree or berries for toppings

Thursday

- Breakfast
- ❖ 1 cup of whole-grain flaxseed cereal
 - ❖ 1 cup of low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk
 - ❖ 2 to 4 whole pitted dates or prunes sliced into cereal
- Lunch
- ❖ A serving of Tabbouleh Salad
 - ❖ A serving of Sauteed Shrimp with Chillies
 - ❖ ½ cup of pineapple chunks
- Snacks
- ❖ A serving of Broiled Tomatoes
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of Mediterranean Salad Sandwich with Harissa
 - ❖ Stuffed Peaches





Friday

- Breakfast
- ❖ $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of Almond Couscous
 - ❖ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of mandarin oranges
- Lunch
- ❖ A serving of Falafel with Tomato-Cucumber Relish
 - ❖ A serving of Green Salad with shredded carrots and olive oil vinaigrette
 - ❖ 1 pear
 - ❖ 1 cup of skimmed milk or low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk
- Snacks
- ❖ A serving of broccoli florets and dipped in 1 teaspoon of olive oil mixed with 1 tablespoon of lemon juice
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of Mediterranean Citrus Chicken
 - ❖ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of spinach sautéed with 1 teaspoon of olive oil, minced garlic and 1 tablespoon of balsamic vinegar
 - ❖ Slices of apple dipped in 1 tablespoon of almond butter





Saturday

- Breakfast
- ❖ 2 flaxseed or whole-grain waffles and sliced banana
 - ❖ 1 cup of low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk
- Lunch
- ❖ A serving of Moroccan-Spiced Cod
 - ❖ A serving of Beet Salad with Walnuts
 - ❖ 2 fresh apricots and 1 cup of non-fat plain or sweetened yogurt
- Snacks
- ❖ 1 sliced wheat bread with sprouts and 1 teaspoon olive oil
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of Tuna Steaks with Green Sauce
 - ❖ 1 cup of steamed green beans with minced fresh basil and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of crumbled feta cheese
 - ❖ 1 fresh nectarine





Keeping the Weight Off

Losing weight is one thing but keeping the weight off is another. The good news is that you can easily adjust your diet from a weight loss one to a maintenance one. This time, you can eat a wider range of foods. However, it is still best to focus on whole grains, plant foods, whole vegetables and fruits, fresh fish and shellfish, healthy fats and lean proteins.



Keep in mind that the Mediterranean diet is a commitment on your part. Hopefully, your kitchen does not play host to junk foods and other unhealthy snacks anymore. In its place are fresh stocks of food and bottles of olive oil ready to spring into action anytime.

You can always use other similar foods to replace the ones for each item. Feel free to add more fruits, vegetables and whole grains if you still feel hungry. Adjust your portions as necessary. Remember that this is only a guide meant to give you an idea on what to expect.





For best results, you want to tailor this meal plan according to your age, weight, height, gender, activity level and overall health.

This makes it very important to seek professional advice from a dietician and other qualified personnel. The goal here is to consume a wide variety of healthy foods as prescribed by the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid. Of course be sure that you enjoy and savor every bite.

The menu listed below is your guide for well-balanced eating. It is meant for neither weight gain nor weight loss. Instead, you will be able to maintain your current weight with this meal plan. This is possible because of the nature of the meal plan in giving you enough energy and making you feel better about yourself.

The serving portions have been intentionally left vague. This is to encourage you to adjust your servings and eating habits according to your own needs. In turn, it is up to you to make sure that you are not eating too much at any time. When this happens though, you can always fall back to the meal plan for weight loss presented earlier.





Sunday

- Breakfast
- ❖ Grapefruit broiled with a sprinkle of brown sugar
 - ❖ 1 scrambled egg with 1 ounce cheese topping
 - ❖ 2 slices of whole-grain toast
- Lunch
- ❖ A serving of Ratatouille
 - ❖ A serving of white bean tossed in olive oil, fresh or dried basil and fresh lemon juice
- Snacks
- ❖ 1 ounce of low-fat cheese and whole-grain crackers
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of French Cassoulet
 - ❖ A serving of Green salad with Olive Oil Vinaigrette
 - ❖ Homemade custard made using skim milk or low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk and berries for toppings





Monday

- Breakfast
- ❖ 1 to 2 cups of whole-grain cereal with a handful of dried fruit and ½ ounces of dried nuts for toppings
 - ❖ 1 cup of low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk
- Lunch
- ❖ 2 slices of whole-grain bread with 3 or more large leaves of Romaine lettuce, 1 ounce part-skim mozzarella cheese, 3 ounces of low-fat turkey breast, a dash of olive oil and a little bit of salt and pepper
 - ❖ 1 piece of fresh pear
- Snacks
- ❖ 6 to 12 pieces of whole almonds and whole-grain crackers
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of Moroccan Vegetable Stew
 - ❖ Couscous
 - ❖ A serving of Green Salad and shredded carrots drizzled with Olive Oil Vinaigrette
 - ❖ Fresh berries and ½ cup of soy ice cream in vanilla flavor





Tuesday

- Breakfast
- ❖ Banana bread baked with olive or canola oil and whole-grain flour
 - ❖ ½ ounce of nuts or seeds which can be mixed into the bread
 - ❖ 1 piece of fresh orange
 - ❖ 1 cup of low-fat, calcium-fortified soy milk with vanilla extract and a dash of cinnamon
- Lunch
- ❖ 1 cup of pasta mixed with olive oil and topped with ½ ounces of walnut pieces, fresh parsley and 1 tablespoon of grated Parmesan cheese
 - ❖ A serving of Green Salad with Olive Oil Vinaigrette
 - ❖ Stuffed Peaches
- Snacks
- ❖ A serving of baby carrots and Hummus Tahini
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of Tuscan Bean Soup
 - ❖ A serving of Macedonian Salad
 - ❖ 1 to 2 slices of whole-grain bread





- ❖ ½ ounces of low-fat cheese

Wednesday

Breakfast

- ❖ A serving of oatmeal or other hot cereal mixed with 1 to 2 cups of skim milk to cook and 1 to 2 spoonful's of pumpkin puree, a tablespoon each of snipped dried apricots, raisins, walnuts and a sprinkling of brown sugar

Lunch

- ❖ A serving of mashed white beans and whole-wheat pita bread
- ❖ A serving of Greek Salad
- ❖ A serving of Citrus Compote

Snacks

- ❖ 1 slice of whole-grain toast and 1 ½ tablespoons of peanut or almond butter

Dinner

- ❖ A serving of Paella Valencia
- ❖ A serving of steamed broccoli tossed in olive oil, hot pepper flakes and minced garlic
- ❖ ½ cup of non-fat frozen yogurt with prunes or berries for toppings





Thursday

- Breakfast
- ❖ 1 piece of wholegrain bagel and 2 tablespoons of almond or peanut butter
 - ❖ 6 pitted dates
 - ❖ 1 cup of low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk
- Lunch
- ❖ A serving of Mediterranean Vegetables and Walnuts and Olive Oil Vinaigrette
 - ❖ ½ cup of pineapple slices mixed with ½ cup of plain non-fat yogurt
- Snacks
- ❖ A serving of steamed and chilled green beans dipped in Olive Oil Vinaigrette
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of vegetable pizza with ½ ounces of part-skim mozzarella cheese
 - ❖ A serving of Stuffed Artichokes
 - ❖ A serving of Baked Apples and Pears





Friday

- Breakfast
- ❖ 1 to 2 cups of whole-grain cereal, ½ ounces of nuts, dried fruit mixed with 1 cup of plain non-fat yogurt
- Lunch
- ❖ Whole-grain sesame crackers with Tapenade
 - ❖ Green salad with tomatoes, ¼ ounces of sliced almonds and Olive Oil Vinaigrette
 - ❖ 1 tangerine
 - ❖ 1 cup of low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk
- Snacks
- ❖ Broccoli florets with a plain non-fat yogurt blended with low-fat cottage cheese as dip
- Dinner
- ❖ A serving of Seafood Risotto
 - ❖ ½ cup of spinach sautéed in olive oil and mince garlic
 - ❖ A serving of grilled bananas





Saturday

Breakfast

- ❖ Whole-grain pancakes made with olive oil and non-fat yogurt with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh fruit, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of non-fat yogurt and $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of nuts of your choice as toppings
- ❖ 1 cup of low-fat and calcium-fortified soy milk

Lunch

- ❖ A serving of Falafel with Tomato-Cucumber Relish
- ❖ Green salad served with Olive Oil Vinaigrette and fresh plum tomatoes
- ❖ 4 pieces of whole dried apricots

Snacks

- ❖ 1 slice of whole-grain toast with sunflower seeds and peanut butter as toppings

Dinner

- ❖ Eggplant parmesan
- ❖ 1 cup of Italian green beans and oregano
- ❖ Fruit salad made with fresh fruits





Chapter V: Recipes for Wellness

After learning what meals to eat, it is now time to learn how to prepare them. This chapter contains a few useful recipes for anyone who wants to get into the Mediterranean diet. There is no need to go to a fancy restaurant to get a taste of these foods. The following recipes can easily be prepared in the comfort of your own home.

Breakfast Recipes: Starting the Day Right

Ditch your coffee and donut routine with one of the following breakfast meals straight out of the Mediterranean.

Orange-Banana Muffins

Ingredients:

- ❖ 3 cups of rolled oats
- ❖ ½ cup of almonds
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of baking powder
- ❖ 1 egg





- ❖ 1 cup of mandarin orange slices (drain and mash them with forks)
- ❖ 1 ripe banana, mashed
- ❖ ½ cup of brown sugar
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of vanilla
- ❖ 1 cup of unsweetened applesauce
- ❖ ½ cup of non-fat plain yogurt
- ❖ ½ cup of canned pumpkin puree

Steps:

1. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees
2. Combine oats and almonds using a blender to grind to flour. Pour this in a large mixing bowl and stir in some baking powder. Beat the egg in another bowl and add the oranges, banana, applesauce sugar and pumpkin.
3. Stir vanilla into the yogurt in a glass measure
4. Add 1/3 of the oat mixture to the banana mixture and stir until combined. Add half of the yogurt stirring until combined. Continue with the rest of the oats, yogurt and banana mixture.
5. Use non-stick cooking spray on 12 muffin cups before filling with batter. Bake for 20 minutes or until the middle sets. Remove from oven and cool for 15 minutes then remove from the muffin tin.
6. Cool completely before serving.





Almond Couscous

Ingredients:

- ❖ 1 cup of dry whole-grain couscous
- ❖ 2 cups of water
- ❖ ½ cup of currants
- ❖ ½ cup of coarsely chopped almonds
- ❖ 1 teaspoon each of ginger, cinnamon and cumin
- ❖ A dash each of salt, black pepper and red pepper
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of fruity olive oil

Steps:

1. Put the couscous in a bowl and add boiling water and cover immediately with a lid.
2. Let it stand for 5 minutes or until all the liquid is soaked up.
3. Stir almonds, spices and currants in and then olive oil after it is thoroughly combined. Let it stand at room temperature for 2 hours for the flavors to blend in.
4. Serve on the next day for the best-tasting breakfast.





Snacks Recipes: Morning or Afternoon

In many Mediterranean regions, the general rule is to serve a hot appetizer before a light meal and a cold appetizer prior to a heavy meal. This strategy is a great health tip; avoiding eating heavy foods on top of heavy foods is one of the ways the people of the Mediterranean naturally balance their calorie and fat intake.

Italian Bruschetta

Ingredients:

- ❖ 1 French baguette
- ❖ 1/4 cup basil, chopped
- ❖ 6 Roma tomatoes, chopped
- ❖ 3 cloves garlic, chopped, plus 1 whole clove for rubbing
- ❖ 1/4 cup olive oil
- ❖ 1/2 teaspoon salt

Steps:

1. Cut the baguette into 1/2-inch-thick slices and place 6 inches under the broiler for 2 to 3 minutes until toasted.
2. Combine the basil, tomatoes, chopped garlic, olive oil, and salt.





3. Cut the ends off the whole garlic clove. After the bread is done broiling, rub each piece with the garlic. Evenly spread the topping mixture on each slice of bread.
4. Arrange the slices on a platter or individual plates and serve immediately.

Makes 14 to 16 servings





Panna Cotta

Ingredients:

- ❖ 1 teaspoon unflavored gelatin
- ❖ 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
- ❖ 3 tablespoons whole milk
- ❖ 2 tablespoons sugar
- ❖ 2 tablespoons honey
- ❖ 1 cup blackberries, strawberries, or raspberries

Steps:

1. In a small bowl, sprinkle the gelatin over 1/4 cup of the cream. Allow the mixture to stand for 1 minute to soften the gelatin.
2. In a heavy saucepan, combine the remaining cream, milk, and sugar. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat while continuously stirring. Remove the mixture from the heat and whisk in the gelatin mixture until the gelatin dissolves.
3. Pour the mixture into 4 small custard cups and chill for at least 4 hours.
4. To serve, unmold the panna cotta onto serving plates. Drizzle honey over each panna cotta and serve with the berries.





Lunch Recipes: Midday Munching

Instead of burger, fries and a large soda, try one of these deliciously healthy lunch recipes the next time you eat your lunch.

Gazpacho

Ingredients:

- ❖ 4 pieces of seeded, chopped and peeled ripe tomatoes
- ❖ 2 cloves of minced garlic
- ❖ ½ cup of chopped bell pepper
- ❖ ½ cup of chopped and peeled cucumber
- ❖ ½ cup of chopped red onion
- ❖ ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil
- ❖ ¼ teaspoon of ground cumin
- ❖ Juice of a freshly-squeezed lemon
- ❖ 1 cup of organic vegetable broth and enough ice cubes
- ❖ A dash of cayenne pepper

Steps:

5. Use a food processor with a metal blade to combine all ingredients until smooth.
6. Chill mixture for at least 2 hours or overnight.
7. Enough for 4 servings





Macedonian Salad

Ingredients:

- ❖ 1 piece of lemon at room temperature
- ❖ 1 cup of seedless grapes
- ❖ 1 cup of halved strawberries
- ❖ 1 cup of melon cubes or balls
- ❖ 1 cup of cubed peaches
- ❖ ½ cup of red wine
- ❖ ¼ cup of sugar

Steps:

1. Roll the lemon on the counter and cut into quarters then set aside.
2. Combine remaining fruits in a large bowl and squeeze the lemon quarters over them. Stir gently and avoid the fruit from breaking or getting mashed.
3. Sprinkle with a little sugar and drizzle with wine then toss gently.
4. Let it stand at room temperature for 10 to 15 minutes then serve.





Chicken Española

Ingredients:

- ❖ 1 cut-up chicken
- ❖ 3 cloves of minced garlic
- ❖ 2 tablespoons of chopped fresh parsley
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of dried oregano leaves
- ❖ ½ cup of pitted ripe olives
- ❖ ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil
- ❖ ¼ cup of dry white wine
- ❖ ¼ cup of packed brown sugar
- ❖ ¼ cup of red wine vinegar

Steps:

1. Mix in vinegar, oil, olives, garlic and oregano. Pour this mixture on the chicken in a Ziplock bag.
2. Let the chicken marinade in the refrigerator for 2 hours with occasional turning.
3. Put the chicken in a shallow baking dish and sprinkle with brown sugar.
4. Pour wine into the pan and cook at 350 degrees for an hour or until thoroughly cooked with basting every 20 minutes.
5. Sprinkle parsley before serving.

Makes 4 to 6 servings





Herb-Roasted Mediterranean Vegetables

Ingredients:

- ❖ 8 cups of assorted vegetables
- ❖ 2 cloves of minced garlic
- ❖ 2 teaspoons of dried rosemary leaves
- ❖ 1 teaspoon of salt
- ❖ ½ cup of shredded Parmesan cheese
- ❖ ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil

Steps:

1. Toss the vegetables together with garlic, oil, salt and rosemary and place in a large shallow pan.
2. Bake at 375 degrees in the oven for 40 minutes or until the vegetables become tender. Stir once or twice during cooking.
3. Sprinkle the cheese if desired.

Makes 6 to 8 servings





Spicy Vegetable Couscous

Ingredients:

- ❖ 1 cup of couscous
- ❖ 1 cup of chopped zucchini and red onion
- ❖ ½ cup of grated carrots
- ❖ 1 can of chicken broth
- ❖ 1 can of rinsed and drained garbanzo beans
- ❖ 1 clove of minced garlic
- ❖ 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- ❖ ½ teaspoon each of ground cumin, salt, curry powder and red pepper flakes

Steps:

1. Bring broth to a boil and stir in couscous. Remove this from the heat.
2. Let it stand covered for 5 minutes then heat in a large skillet.
3. Add in the zucchini, carrots, onion and garlic cooking for 5 minutes or until it becomes tender with occasional stirring.
4. Add in the seasonings, beans and couscous and cook until heated thoroughly for 2 minutes.

Makes 6 servings





Falafel with Tomato–Cucumber Relish

Ingredients:

- ❖ 15-ounce can of rinsed and drained garbanzo beans
- ❖ 2 cloves of minced garlic
- ❖ 1 coarsely-chopped medium-sized onion
- ❖ 1 large lightly beaten egg
- ❖ 1 cup of dry whole-wheat bread crumbs
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of fresh lemon juice
- ❖ 1 teaspoon of dried oregano
- ❖ ½ teaspoon of ground cumin
- ❖ Olive oil cooking spray
- ❖ Tomato-Cucumber relish
- ❖ Freshly-ground black pepper and salt to taste

Steps:

1. Process the garbanzo beans, parsley, garlic, onion, cumin and oregano in a food processor fitted with a metal blade.
2. Season with lemon juice, pepper and salt and stir in the bread crumbs and egg
3. Spread other bread crumbs on a plate. Use your hands to form 16 round balls out of the bean mixture and roll them on the bread crumbs for coating. Set these balls on wax paper.





4. Spray a large skillet with your cooking spray and use medium heat until hot. Add falafel balls to cook until browned for about 10 minutes.
5. Serve with Tomato-Cucumber relish or fresh greens and pita halves.

Makes 4 servings





Tomato-Cucumber Relish

Ingredients:

- ❖ ½ cup of chopped cucumber
- ❖ ½ cup of chopped tomato
- ❖ 1/3 cup of non-fat plain yogurt
- ❖ ¼ teaspoon of dried mint
- ❖ Freshly-ground black pepper and salt to taste

Steps:

1. Combine all ingredients in a small bowl.
2. Season with salt and pepper to taste

Makes 4 servings

Snacks: Taking A Break from It All

Junk foods are not the only things you can reach out to during your break time. For a healthier snack time, try one of the following recipes yourself.





Olive Oil Cheese Crisps

Ingredients:

- ❖ 6 slices of whole-grain bread of your choice
- ❖ 3 cloves of peeled and halved garlic
- ❖ ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil
- ❖ ¼ cup of grated Parmesan cheese
- ❖ A dash of sea salt

Steps:

1. Cut the slices of bread into strips around an inch wide. Brush these strips with olive oil on both sides and spread them on a cooking sheet.
2. Broil strips until crispy and golden brown. Remove the strips and brush the sides with garlic cloves.
3. Sprinkle with cheese and season with sea salt. Return these to the broiler and cook until cheese melts.
4. Remove from broiler and cool down before serving. Serve with dip or by itself.

Makes 6 servings





Caponata

Ingredients:

- ❖ 1 medium eggplant
- ❖ 1 chopped medium red bell pepper
- ❖ 1 chopped medium yellow bell pepper
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of sea salt
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of red wine vinegar
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of chopped fresh basil
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of chopped fresh Italian parsley
- ❖ 1 cup of pitted and coarsely chopped black olives
- ❖ ½ teaspoon of red pepper flakes
- ❖ ¼ cup of rinsed and drained capers
- ❖ 2 teaspoons of sugar
- ❖ 2 cloves of minced garlic
- ❖ 6 pieces of blanched and peeled tomatoes or 1 large can of tomatoes

Steps:

1. Cut the eggplant into cubes and put in colander and toss with sea salt. Place a paper towel over this and put colander on the sink. Top with a plate to weigh down the eggplant. Allow for 30 minutes to drain.
2. Spray olive oil cooking spray on skillet and heat over medium-high fire. Rinse and dry eggplant and cook in skillet.





3. Lower fire to medium-low and add onion, garlic and olive oil. Sauté for about 15 minutes until onion is soft.
4. Add tomatoes, bell peppers, red pepper flakes, sugar and vinegar and cook until the mixture thickens for about 30 minutes. Continue simmering for another 30 minutes.
5. Add olives, parsley, basil and capers and stir thoroughly. Remove caponata from heat and let it stand to cool down.
6. Serve right away or store in an airtight container.

Makes 6 servings





Broiled Tomatoes

Ingredients:

- ❖ ½ teaspoon of sea salt
- ❖ ¼ cup of hard and dry bread crumbs
- ❖ 2 tablespoons of chopped fresh basil or 2 teaspoons of dried basils
- ❖ 2 tablespoons of grated Parmesan cheese
- ❖ 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- ❖ 6 pieces of medium fresh tomatoes

Steps:

1. Core tomatoes and cut them in half going through the middle.
2. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over a medium-high fire until the aroma is released for about 5 minutes.
3. Put the tomatoes with the cut side down and cook until crispy for another 5 minutes. Scoop them up with a spatula and add a sprinkle of salt, cheese, basil and bread crumbs.
4. Broil tomatoes on a broiler pan until the cheese melts and the tomato is a crispy golden brown.

Makes 6 servings





Dinner: Ending the Day Right

Nothing beats a healthy, home-cooked meal after coming home from work. The following recipes make sure that you always come home to a healthy meal after a long day at the office.

Swordfish Steaks with Tomato-Caper Sauce

Ingredients:

- ❖ 4 pieces of grilled or broiled swordfish steaks around 6 ounces each
- ❖ 2 pieces of large seeded and chopped tomatoes
- ❖ 1 clove of minced garlic
- ❖ 1 teaspoon of dried tarragon
- ❖ 1 teaspoon of extra virgin olive oil
- ❖ ¼ cup of capers
- ❖ Black pepper and sea salt to taste

Steps:

1. Combine the capers, tarragon, garlic, pepper, salt, oil and tomatoes.
2. Serve at room temperature over the swordfish steaks or other kind of white meat.

Makes 4 servings





Greek Salad

Ingredients:

- ❖ 10 pieces of pitted kalamata or other Greek olives of high quality
- ❖ 2 cups of bite-sized Romaine lettuce pieces
- ❖ 2 pieces of medium tomatoes cut into wedges
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of minced fresh Italian parsley
- ❖ ½ cup of red onions sliced thinly
- ❖ ½ cup of cucumbers sliced thinly
- ❖ ½ cup of green bell peppers sliced thinly
- ❖ ½ cup of red bell peppers sliced thinly
- ❖ ½ cup of crumbled feta cheese of good quality

(Dressing)

- ❖ 1 small clove of minced garlic
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of fresh lemon juice
- ❖ ½ teaspoon of minced fresh oregano
- ❖ ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil

Steps:

1. Spread Romaine lettuce on a platter and arrange tomato wedges over them.
2. Combine the onions, peppers, parsley, half of the feta cheese and cucumbers in a bowl. Spread this over the tomato and lettuce and top with olives and the rest of the feta cheese.





3. Whisk the oil, lemon juice, garlic and oregano together to make the dressing. Drizzle this over the salad and toss before serving.

Makes 4 servings





Olive Oil Vinaigrette

Ingredients:

- ❖ 2 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar, red wine vinegar of good quality or fresh lemon juice
- ❖ 1 clove of minced garlic
- ❖ 1 teaspoon of salt
- ❖ ½ cup of extra virgin olive oil
- ❖ A dash of freshly-ground black pepper

Steps:

1. Combine vinegar or lemon juice, salt, garlic and pepper in a small bowl.
2. Whisk the olive oil in until it is well-blended and serve right away over your salad of choice.

Makes 8 tablespoons of salad dressing enough for 4 to 6 people





Mediterranean Citrus Chicken

Ingredients:

- ❖ 4 pieces of boneless chicken breast halves of 4 ounce each
- ❖ 2 cups of fresh greens
- ❖ 1 teaspoon of olive oil
- ❖ 1 teaspoon of cornstarch
- ❖ 1 teaspoon of water
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of honey
- ❖ ¼ cup of chicken broth
- ❖ Juice and zest from one of the following:
 - 1 large orange
 - 1 large lemon
 - 1 large lime
 - 1 small grapefruit
- ❖ 1 piece of lime with the ends cut off (for garnish)
- ❖ Sprigs of Italian parsley (for garnish)

Steps:

1. Combine all citrus juices in a measuring cup and the zests in a small bowl. Place a plastic bag in a small tray and pour half of the juice in.
2. Add the chicken and sprinkle half the zest. Seal the bag and lay it on the baking pan. Turn it over several times making sure that the chicken is covered well.





3. Place this on the refrigerator and marinate for at least 2 hours or overnight. Store the rest of the zest and juice in an airtight bowl.
4. Put chicken broth and olive oil in a non-stick skillet with a medium-high fire until it simmers. Add the chicken without the marinade and reduce heat to medium.
5. Cook the chicken until the pink disappears for about 20 to 25 minutes. Do not forget to turn halfway.
6. Combine the reserved zest and juice in a separate saucepan over a medium-low fire for 5 minutes. Make paste with the cornstarch and water. Whisk this with the juice mixture and stir constantly until the mixture thickens for about 15 minutes and remove from heat.
7. Cover your platter with fresh greens and place the chicken over these. Drizzle with a bit of sauce and add in the rest of the zest. Arrange the slices of lime and parsley sprigs for garnish.

Makes 4 servings





Conclusion

The healthier lifestyle in the Mediterranean proves one very important thing. Clearly, living and eating healthy is a choice anyone can make regardless of your current situation.

It is all a matter of taking the initiative to make the necessary changes to live healthy. With increased vitality, less risk from chronic diseases and a longer life, who would not want to?

This eBook has presented everything you need to know to become a healthier person through the Mediterranean diet. Now go out there and start applying everything you have learned here.

