



National Nutrition Month: Spotlight on the Mediterranean Diet



What is the Mediterranean Diet?

- ⇒ A pattern of eating that focuses on plants (fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes) and fish while limiting red meat and other sources of saturated fats
- ⇒ A flexible way of eating that looks at your overall eating habits instead of focusing on certain foods or nutrients
- ⇒ A meal pattern that has been shown to reduce risk of cardiovascular disease, slow cognitive decline, support digestive health and lower risk of certain cancers
- ⇒ Not only about *what* you are eating, but how and with whom: eating slowly, savoring your food, enjoying the company you're with, and having conversations are a big part of why the Mediterranean Diet is recommended so often

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How can I incorporate the Mediterranean Diet into my current eating pattern?

- ⇒ Use extra-virgin olive oil for whatever fat you currently use in cooking
- ⇒ Make your own salad dressings using olive oil as a base
- ⇒ Add some herbs, lemon zest, or balsamic vinegar to olive oil for dipping crusty bread



Expand your palate: trying different types of nuts, nut butters, vegetables and fruits can be a fun way to incorporate more of these foods

Experiment with whole grain choices: try foods like farro, couscous, bulgur or barley as a substitute for rice. They each have a different texture and flavor profile

Choose dark leafy greens when possible: spinach, kale, swiss chard, and other greens contain more vitamins & minerals than their lighter counterparts. Their heartier textures also mean more fiber which keeps you full longer



Swap out meat for legumes: lentils, beans, chickpeas and peas. Use hummus as a mayo alternative, make a black bean dip for veggies, use cooked lentils in place of meat in your favorite meatloaf or burger recipe. Doing so adds fiber and decreases saturated fat.



Variety is key - choosing different-colored fruits and veggies each day will ensure you consume lots of different vitamins and minerals:

- ⇒ red/orange: contain beta carotene (good for heart and eye health)
- ⇒ Yellow/white: contain quercetin, a powerful antioxidant
- ⇒ Green: contain vitamins A and K, needed for eye health and blood clotting
- ⇒ Blue/purple: contain anthocyanins, another necessary antioxidant



Moderate amounts of fish, cheese and yogurt

Little to no red meat, eating poultry instead



Moderate amounts of wine with meals (unless you abstain from alcohol)



Limit sweets and soda: try sparkling water or seltzer, or have some really good quality chocolate, like Lindt or Ghirardelli



Homemade Spicy Nuts in 20 Minutes

Prep Time: 5 mins

Cook Time: 15 mins

Servings: 16 (1/4-cup each)

Ingredients:

1 cup almonds 1 cup walnuts 1 cup cashews 1 cup hazelnuts
1.5 tsp chili powder 0.5 tsp garlic powder 0.5 tsp cumin
0.5 tsp black pepper 0.5 tsp sea salt 0.25 tsp cayenne 1 tbsp olive oil

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and line a sheet pan with parchment.
2. Add all of the nuts to a bowl. Prepare the spice mixture by combining all the seasonings in a small bowl and mixing.
3. Drizzle the nuts with the olive oil and toss to coat. Sprinkle the seasoning mixture over the nuts and toss to coat again.
4. Place the nuts in a single layer on the sheet pan. Roast for 15 minutes, stirring halfway through.
5. Remove nuts from oven and allow them to cool.
6. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Resources: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/16037-mediterranean-diet>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/a-practical-guide-to-the-mediterranean-diet-2019032116194>

<https://realsimplegood.com/spicy-nuts/>

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long-term care information,
referrals and assessments.
For information,
call 518-382-8481, #9, ext. 304**



Do you have questions or concerns about what to eat?

If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County's Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible for a free consultation with Debbie Griswold, Registered Dietitian.

Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 518-372-1622, ext. 269 to contact or leave a message.

Check out our website for nutrition resources: <http://ccschenectady.org/nutrition-for-seniors>

Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services denies no person services or access to service based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status and/or handicapping conditions. Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services is primarily funded with County tax dollars. Supplemental funding is through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B/D, III-C-1, III-C-2, III-F of the Federal Older Americans Act, and New York State Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP), Community Services for the Elderly Act (CSE), Congregate Services Initiative (CSI), and the Wellness In Nutrition (WIN).

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