

# What is a Mediterranean diet? Should you try it?

The Mediterranean diet plays an important role in cultural spaces, celebrations and bringing together people of all ages and backgrounds. It is also so much more than a way of eating; following a Mediterranean diet means creating a balanced and healthy lifestyle. It includes regular movement, stress management, social gatherings around food and focuses on using local and seasonal produce. The approach also values hospitality and creativity.

There is no strict definition for what makes the perfect Mediterranean diet but there are guidelines for what to eat, and at what frequency.



## The guidelines:

- Each main meal should contain 1-2 servings of a wholegrain carbohydrate (e.g.bread/pasta/ rice/couscous). Wholegrains are important as some nutrients and fibre can be lost during processing.
- Every main meal should contain 2 or more servings of vegetables and 1-2 portions of fruit.
- Use olive oil as your main source of added fat. It is rich in vitamin E and monounsaturated fats
- that can help to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Red and processed meat should be consumed in small amounts, up to a maximum of 2 servings a week.
- Oily fish like salmon, mackerel or pilchards are recommended to be eaten at least once or twice a week.
- Choose fruit as a great healthy dessert or snack. Fruit is full of beneficial antioxidants and fibre.
- Be physically active every day!

[Click here](#) to view The Mediterranean Food Pyramid which illustrates these guidelines. At the base are foods that should feature most often. At the top are foods that are eaten occasionally and in moderate amounts.

Practicing the principles of the Mediterranean diet allows for a flexible, sustainable and delicious approach to healthy eating and living. If this captured your interest, why not try and make these guidelines part of your everyday?

## Author:

Hi, I’m Liza, registered nutritionist and a personal trainer. I have been working for the Healthier You: NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme for over two years. I have a particular interest in eating behaviours, questioning why and how we make certain decisions around food. I am also really fascinated by gut health, the trillions of microbes that live in our gut and help us to live a healthy and happy life.

## References:

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