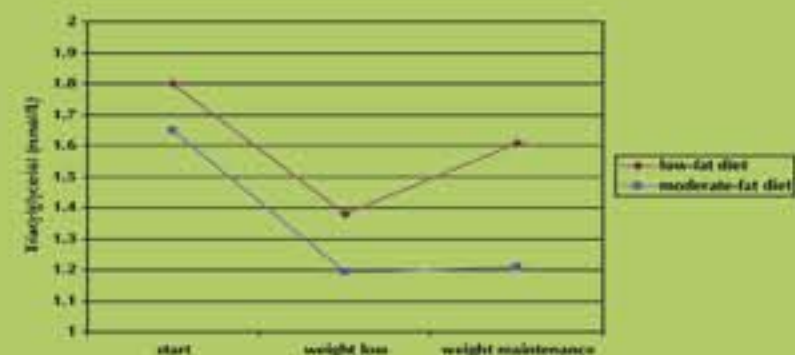


### “Peanut and Peanut Butter Weight-Loss Diet” Lowers Heart Disease Risk

A new controlled clinical trial shows that a higher unsaturated-fat, lower carb, “peanut and peanut butter diet” for weight loss reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease by 14% compared to baseline. This ground-breaking study proves that the way you lose weight is important for long-term health. Much like a Mediterranean-style diet, the peanut and peanut butter diet contributed 33% of total calories from fat. This group lowered their triglyceride levels and maintained their “good” high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. More importantly, as displayed in the graph, these beneficial effects on triglycerides lasted even after participants went off the weight-loss diet.

In contrast, the low-fat diet group participants, who consumed 18% of total calories from fat, had a rebound in triglycerides after going off the diet. Therefore, the people in the low-fat group did not lower their heart disease risk as much as people in the peanut and peanut butter diet group. In fact, this is the first study to show that, even with weight-loss, a low-fat diet did not favorably affect triglyceride levels for the long-term. Thus, it may be more beneficial to choose a balanced, “Mediterranean-style” diet that includes peanuts and peanut butter to improve heart health while losing and maintaining weight (13).

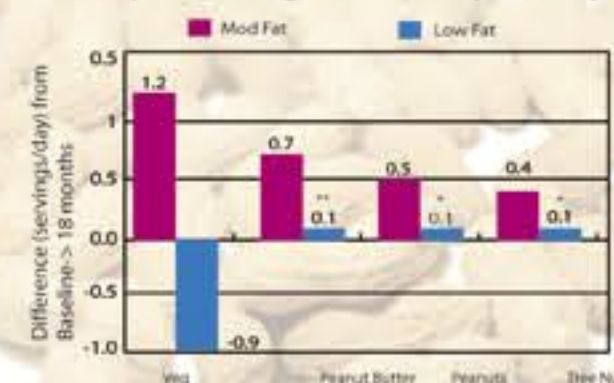


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did not. Further, when the moderate-fat group weighed in after 2 1/2 years, they had kept a significant amount of weight off. Many of the low-fat dieters gained all of the lost weight back, plus a bit more (11).

### Food Analysis of Weight-Loss Study Participants



Dieters in the moderate-fat group ate an additional serving of vegetables each day, compared to baseline, and added “good” fat foods like peanuts and peanut butter back into their diets (11).

### Nutrition Guidelines Reflect Benefits of Mediterranean-Style Diet Pattern

Moderate-fat diets (e.g., Mediterranean-style diets) that may include peanuts and nuts are considered important to the prevention of chronic disease. Therefore, many organizations around the world have issued new dietary guidelines in support of this type of diet containing mostly “good” unsaturated fat.

Recommendations from the National Academies’ Institute of Medicine allow for up to 35% fat in the diet, provided most of it is “good” unsaturated fat found in foods like peanuts, peanut butter, olive oil, and avocados (12).

The Joint World Health Organization and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization report to prevent chronic disease globally points specifically to unsalted nuts as containing nutrients for which there is “probable evidence” for reducing cardiovascular disease risks. The report also recommends limiting “bad” saturated fat to less than 10% of energy (7).

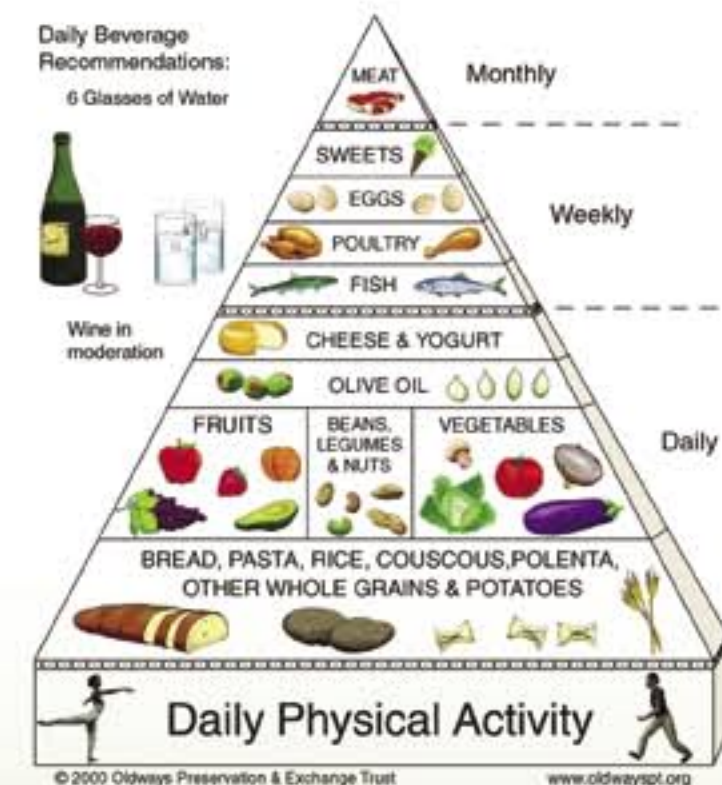
*“Governments could make it easier for consumers to exercise healthier choices...by...promoting the wider availability of food which is less processed and low in trans fatty acids, encouraging the use of vegetable oil for domestic consumers, and ensuring an adequate and sustainable supply of fish, fruits, vegetables and nuts in domestic markets.”*

*—Report of a Joint World Health Organization and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Expert Consultation, 2003 (8)*

### A Mediterranean-Style Diet—Eating For Life

Choosing unsaturated fats more often and eating an abundance of plant foods such as peanuts and peanut butter are simple ways to gain great health benefits from the Mediterranean-style diet. A Mediterranean-style diet that includes healthy unsaturated fat, protein, and fiber can also be more satisfying, promoting better weight control for life.

### The Traditional Healthy Mediterranean Diet Pyramid



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### Mediterranean-Style Eating Tips:

- Replace cheese or croutons in a salad with chopped peanuts.
- Snack on a handful of peanuts to satisfy hunger.
- Drizzle peanut oil on steamed vegetables in place of melted butter.
- Use peanut oil for quick frying instead of butter or solid margarine.
- Spread peanut butter on a banana for a quick snack or breakfast.



## A MEDITERRANEAN-STYLE DIET

# m e d i t e r r a n e a n

# diet

## A MEDITERRANEAN–STYLE DIET

### Dietary Fat, the Mediterranean Diet, and Lifelong Good Health

*“There is increasing scientific evidence of positive health effects from diets which are high in fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains, and which include fish, nuts and low-fat dairy products. Such diets need not be restricted in total fat as long as there is not an excess of calories, and they emphasize predominantly vegetable oils that are low in saturated fats and free of partially hydrogenated oils. The traditional Mediterranean Diet, whose principal source of fat is olive oil, encompasses these dietary characteristics.”*

—American Journal of Medicine, 2002 (1)

You may have heard that the Mediterranean diet has made its way to America. This is good news, since not everyone has the luxury of making it to the Mediterranean region. It is possible for people in the US and all over the world to alter their diets in small ways to gain the many health benefits of a Mediterranean-style eating pattern while living in their native countries.

### The Traditional Mediterranean Diet: A Healthy History

The Mediterranean region has attracted much attention due to the area’s especially low rates of chronic diseases and high life expectancy during the 1960s compared to other areas in the world (2). One of the first studies to look at dietary fat intake in this region was The Seven-Countries Study (3). During this study, researchers found that some Mediterranean regions, such as Crete, had especially low rates of death from heart disease despite high

consumption of dietary fat. These findings prompted more research on the effects of different types of dietary patterns on heart disease.

The term “traditional Mediterranean diet” has a specific definition. It refers to food patterns typical of some Mediterranean regions in the early 1960s, including Crete, other parts of Greece, and southern Italy. It has been said the Mediterranean diet is a “centuries-old tradition that contributes to excellent health, provides a sense of pleasure and well-being, and forms a vital part of the world’s collective cultural heritage (1).”

A large body of evidence now supports the view that a traditional Mediterranean diet and lifestyle may play a large role in the prevention of chronic diseases such as heart disease. Furthermore, this type of diet may even help people who already have heart disease.

The Lyon Diet Heart Study, a randomized secondary prevention trial, showed that a Mediterranean-style diet was effective in preventing a second heart attack (4). Since heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States (5), altering dietary habits to include more Americanized, “Mediterranean-style” dietary habits may help to prevent this chronic disease.

### Traditional Eating Patterns of the Mediterranean Region

The traditional Mediterranean diet is primarily a plant-based eating pattern that includes the following characteristics:

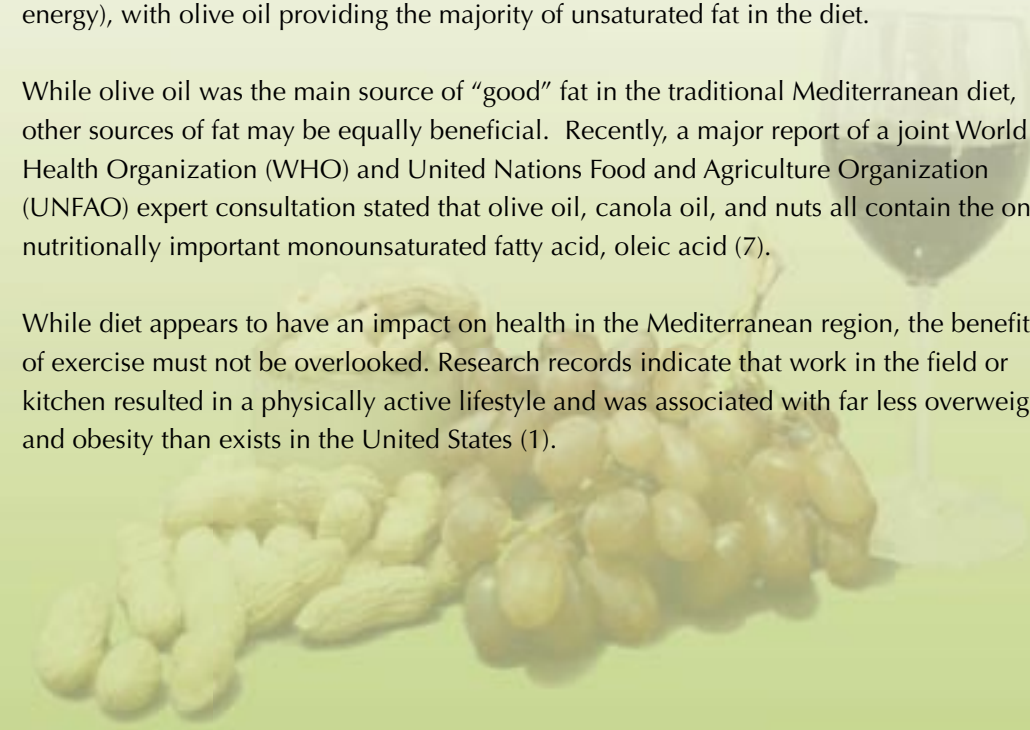
- High intake of vegetables, legumes such as beans, fruits, nuts, and cereals (largely unrefined);
- High intake of olive oil and other monounsaturated fats, but low intake of saturated fats;
- Moderately high intake of fish (depending on proximity to the sea);
- Low to moderate intake of dairy products (mostly cheese or yogurt);
- Low intake of meat and poultry;
- Regular, moderate intake of alcohol, primarily wine with dinner (6).

Through dietary records, researchers determined that within the Mediterranean region, people in different areas traditionally consumed widely varying amounts of total fat. Some regions consumed diets with less than 25% of total calories from fat, while others consumed up to 43%.

Regardless of the amount of total fat, the traditional Mediterranean diet consumed in the various regions was consistently low in saturated fat (less than or equal to 7 to 8% of energy), with olive oil providing the majority of unsaturated fat in the diet.

While olive oil was the main source of “good” fat in the traditional Mediterranean diet, other sources of fat may be equally beneficial. Recently, a major report of a joint World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) expert consultation stated that olive oil, canola oil, and nuts all contain the only nutritionally important monounsaturated fatty acid, oleic acid (7).

While diet appears to have an impact on health in the Mediterranean region, the benefits of exercise must not be overlooked. Research records indicate that work in the field or kitchen resulted in a physically active lifestyle and was associated with far less overweight and obesity than exists in the United States (1).



### Peanuts Have A Place in a Mediterranean-Style Diet

A key distinction the Mediterranean-style diet makes is in identifying type of fat. Including a moderate amount of the “good” unsaturated fats in place of carbohydrates or saturated fats provides health benefits.

Similar to olive oil, peanuts are a good source of plant-based, unsaturated fat that can be included in a modern Mediterranean-style diet. Most of the fats in peanuts are mono- and polyunsaturated fats that lower the “bad” low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.

Data from the Nurses’ Health Study suggests that the “good” unsaturated fat in one ounce of nuts, when substituted in place of carbohydrate in an average diet was associated with a 30% reduction in cardiovascular disease risk. An even greater reduction in cardiovascular disease risk—45%—was seen when the unsaturated fat in nuts replaced the “bad” saturated fat (8). In the US, 68% of the “nuts” eaten are peanuts and peanut butter (9).

Substituting good fats for bad fats is critical to creating an individual Mediterranean-style diet. One easy way to consume much of the “good” unsaturated fat is by substituting peanuts, peanut butter, and healthy oils in place of foods high in saturated fat such as many processed or fast foods.

### A Mediterranean-Style Diet Prevents Disease

Beyond the “good” unsaturated fat in a Mediterranean diet, researchers believe it is an overall dietary pattern that is responsible for the positive health benefits seen in the Mediterranean population. In fact, people who closely follow a Mediterranean-style diet pattern can reduce the risk of death due to coronary heart disease by 33% and death due to cancer by 24%, according to researchers from the University of Athens Medical School and Harvard School of Public Health (10).

This study was the first large trial to show that a higher-fat diet containing mainly unsaturated fat and including vegetables, legumes and nuts, fruits, whole grains, and fish, can significantly reduce death from heart disease and cancer.

In the study, more than 22,000 participants were given a “diet score,” which depended on how closely they adhered to the traditional Mediterranean diet. For example, fruits and nuts were combined in a food category and those who ate them regularly had a higher diet score. As the individuals’ diet score increased, the risk of dying from chronic disease decreased.

The authors emphasize that it is the overall eating pattern—not a single food or nutrient—that provides the health benefits. In addition to unsaturated fat, vegetables, plant protein, and fiber contribute to the health benefits of a Mediterranean-style diet.



### Mediterranean-Style Recipe: Peanut Hummus

3 cups garbanzos, soaked overnight or canned, drained  
1/2 cup lemon juice  
olive oil, to taste  
salt and pepper, to taste  
water, as needed  
2/3 cup creamy peanut butter  
1 bunch Italian parsley, finely chopped  
1 Jalapeno, finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
extra virgin olive oil, to taste  
salt and pepper, to taste

1. Cook garbanzos slowly in water until very soft. They should be very mushy when one is taken and smashed between the fingers. Drain.

2. In food processor, place all the garbanzos and process with some of the lemon juice, olive oil, salt, pepper, and water.

3. Process until smooth. Scoop the mixture into a bowl. Add peanut butter. Stir well and adjust with oil and water for texture, and salt and pepper for taste.

4. Make topping by combining parsley, jalapeno, and garlic in a small bowl. Cover with extra virgin olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

### Mediterranean-Style Diet Promotes Weight Loss

A Mediterranean-style dietary pattern—including fat, protein, and fiber—also contributes to satiety and feelings of fullness, which appears to help with weight loss and maintenance. Researchers at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and the Harvard School of Public Health found that people following a Mediterranean-style, moderate-fat, weight-loss diet were able to keep weight off for a longer period of time than people following the traditionally recommended low-fat diet (11).

In the study of 101 overweight men and women, half were instructed to eat a low-fat diet (20% calories from fat) and half to eat a moderate-fat diet (35% calories from fat, mostly monounsaturated from peanut butter, peanuts, nuts, olive and canola oils). All participants were given guidelines to eat a diet of approximately 1,200 to 1,500 calories a day that was low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

While they were given dietary guidance, participants in the study were allowed to make their own food choices. The chart below shows that the moderate-fat diet resulted in higher consumption of vegetables, peanut butter, peanuts, and tree nuts than the low-fat diet.

People following the moderate-fat diet increased their vegetable consumption by one serving per day and their peanut butter consumption by almost a serving (32 grams or 2 tablespoons) each day. As a result, people on the moderate-fat diet consumed greater amounts of fiber, protein, and “good” unsaturated fat compared to people on the lower-fat diet. Therefore, the moderate-fat diet proved to be a better quality diet overall (11).

The researchers found that only one in five study participants could stick to the low-fat diet, while more than half stuck to the moderate-fat diet. Both groups lost an average of 11 pounds in the first year. However, the moderate-fat group kept a significant amount of weight off for 18 months, whereas the low-fat group

A Mediterranean-style diet has been shown to:

- Reduce risk of heart disease
- Reduce mortality from heart disease and cancer
- Promote weight loss and weight maintenance