



# TIPS

## Tips from Dietitians: Eating Mediterranean-style at Home

- ▲ **Keep fruit in sight:** Keeping a bowl of fruit on the counter, in sight, makes it easier to choose fruit as a snack instead of less healthy alternatives. Stock the bowl with seasonal fruits, when possible, and notice how the colors and flavors change throughout the year.
- ▲ **Make a batch of soup each week:** Make one big pot of soup and divide it into single portions. Store the individual containers in the fridge and freezer so that you have healthy grab-and-go food ready when you need it during the week. Soup makes a great lunch at the office or light dinner on busy weeknights.
- ▲ **Eat vegetables at breakfast:** Breakfast plates in Mediterranean countries often include chopped fresh vegetables. Add some sliced cucumbers and tomatoes to the side of your breakfast plate, or try whatever is in season in your area. Including vegetables at breakfast adds freshness and texture to the meal, while providing an easy opportunity to consume more vegetables.
- ▲ **Add beans to your plate:** Beans are a great lean alternative to meat, and thanks to their high protein and fiber content, they help you feel full long after your meal ends. The [USDA's MyPlate program](#) counts beans in both the vegetable and protein food groups. In fact, beans are the only food that can do double duty. Try adding beans to salads, using creamy hummus as a sandwich spread and vegetable dip, and including beans in soups and stews.
- ▲ **Season with herbs and spices:** Each country in the Mediterranean has its own distinctive flavors. Italian dishes are rich in basil and oregano. In France *Herbes de Provence* (a blend of herbs including thyme, rosemary, savory, fennel, and lavender) is widely used. If you travel to Turkey, you'll find a generous use of cumin, paprika, mint, and allspice. Herbs and spices lend lots of flavor without added salt or fat.
- ▲ **Swap your fats:** Make olive oil your #1 fat. Not only can you cook with it, olive oil is great in salad dressings and drizzled over veggies. Dip bread in olive oil or finish your pasta dish with it.
- ▲ **Green up your grains:** It is difficult to identify the sparse amount of vegetables mixed into many American pasta salads, but Mediterranean salads are different. Consider the bold green color of tabbouleh, a traditional Mediterranean salad that has 4 cups of parsley to 1 cup of bulgur wheat. Add the bold colors of vegetables to your grain dishes to stretch your portions and add nutrition to your plate.
- ▲ **Slow down and eat together:** An unhurried eating environment reduces stress and allows our brain to catch up with our stomach—telling us when it's full and preventing overeating. Slow the pace of your meal by talking and telling stories at the dinner table. Laughter at the table has been shown to boost immune function and lower blood pressure. Eating together as a family is associated with a range of benefits for children and teens, from better nutrition to better school performance.



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