

OMOTOSO

— FAMILY MEDICINE —



LIFELONG HEALTH HUB

Mediterranean Eating Guide

A flexible, flavourful way of eating — rich in vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes, fish, and olive oil.



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🇨🇦 Based on Canadian nutrition guidance. General information only — not personal medical advice. Discuss changes with your physician.

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1 What is Mediterranean eating?

The Mediterranean pattern is a **style of eating** inspired by countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea — including Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Morocco. It is not a strict diet. It centres on **vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, lentils, nuts, fish, and olive oil**, with modest dairy and poultry and less red meat, processed foods, and added sugar.

This pattern can be adapted to many cultures and preferences — including diabetes-friendly choices — and is one of the best-studied eating styles for long-term health.

2 Why it may help you



Heart health — may lower risk of heart disease and stroke



Blood sugar — helpful for many people with diabetes or prediabetes



Blood pressure — high in potassium, fibre, and healthy fats



Sustainable — varied, flavourful, and flexible for real life

3 Daily pattern at a glance

Typical targets for an adult following a Mediterranean style. Your portions may vary — ask your doctor or dietitian what fits you.

Food group	How often	Key examples
Vegetables	5+ servings/day	Salads, cooked veg, tomato-based sauces; 2 raw/salad
Fruit	3+ servings/day	Whole fruit preferred over juice
Whole grains	5–6 servings/day	Whole wheat bread, oats, brown rice, quinoa, barley
Olive oil	4 tbsp (60 mL)+/day	Cooking and at the table; extra virgin when possible
Nuts, seeds, avocado	3+ servings/week	Unsalted nuts, nut butters, olives, avocado
Beans & lentils	3+ servings/week	Chickpeas, lentils, kidney beans, hummus
Fish & seafood	3+ servings/week	Salmon, sardines, trout, mackerel (omega-3 rich)
Milk & dairy	1–3 servings/day	Skim or 1–2% milk, low-fat yogurt, reduced-fat cheese
Lean poultry & meat	< 2 servings/day	Chicken, turkey; red meat occasionally and lean
Herbs & spices	As desired	Garlic, onion, basil, oregano — flavour without extra salt

Adapted from Alberta Health Services Mediterranean Style of Eating guidelines.



4 What counts as one serving?

Group	One serving
Vegetables	1 medium veg · ½ cup cooked or chopped · 1 cup raw leafy greens
Fruit	1 medium fruit · ½ cup fresh/frozen/canned · ¼ cup dried (no added sugar)
Whole grains	1 slice whole-grain bread · ½ cup cooked grains/pasta · ¾ cup hot cereal
Olive oil	1 tbsp (15 mL) — aim for 4+ tbsp daily total
Nuts & seeds	¼ cup nuts/seeds · 2 tbsp nut butter · ½ avocado · 10 olives
Legumes	¾ cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils
Fish	3½ oz (100 g) cooked fish or seafood
Dairy	1 cup skim/1–2% milk or yogurt · 1½ oz reduced-fat cheese
Lean meat	2½ oz (75 g) cooked poultry or lean meat

5 Build your plate

✓ Emphasize

- Colourful vegetables at most meals
- Whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds
- Fish and seafood several times a week
- Olive oil as your main added fat
- Herbs, garlic, and spices instead of salt

➤ Limit

- Processed meats (bacon, deli meats, sausage)
- Butter, cream, and high-fat cheese
- Sugary drinks, pastries, and sweets
- Deep-fried and heavily salted snacks
- Fatty cuts of red meat

Beyond food: Mediterranean living also means enjoying meals with family or friends, staying active daily (walking counts), and — if you drink alcohol — having wine only in moderation with meals. You do not need alcohol to follow this pattern.



Vegetables, legumes, whole grains, fish, and olive oil at the centre.

6 Quick self-check

How many of these habits do you already have? Each one is a step toward Mediterranean-style eating.

☐ 5+ vegetable servings daily

☐ 3+ fruit servings daily

☐ Whole grains every day

☐ Olive oil for cooking & table

☐ Nuts, seeds, or avocado 3×/week

☐ Beans or lentils 3×/week

☐ Fish 3×/week

☐ At least one shared meal daily





7 Sample days to inspire you

Ideas adapted from Diabetes Canada's 7-day Mediterranean meal plan (~1,500 calories/day). Swap ingredients to match your tastes. A full 7-day plan with recipes is at diabetes.ca.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
BREAKFAST Greek yogurt with berries & walnuts, whole-grain toast	BREAKFAST Shakshuka (eggs in spiced tomato sauce) with whole-wheat pita	BREAKFAST Steel-cut oats with apple, walnuts & cinnamon
LUNCH Baked lemon-herb salmon with leafy greens & brown rice	LUNCH Garden veggie & lentil bowl with tahini sauce; berries with yogurt	LUNCH Roasted Mediterranean vegetables & chickpeas; chilled cucumber-avocado soup
DINNER Chickpea & vegetable wrap with arugula, tomato, cucumber & salsa	DINNER Chicken gyro-style wrap with vegetables & a little feta	DINNER Shrimp & vegetable whole-wheat linguine with olive oil, lemon & garlic

Days 4–7 include options like falafel burgers, chicken kebabs, stuffed peppers, and power bowls — see diabetes.ca for the complete plan.

Getting started

- Change one habit at a time — small steps stick better
- Cook a tomato-garlic sauce (sofrito) for soups, grains & fish
- Choose whole fruit instead of juice
- Keep unsalted nuts and frozen vegetables on hand
- Read labels — pick whole grains as the first ingredient

Talk to your physician if...

- You have **diabetes** and need help balancing carbohydrates
- You have **kidney disease** — potassium or protein advice may differ
- You take **blood thinners** and eat large amounts of leafy greens
- You want a personalized calorie or portion plan

Disclaimer: This guide provides general information adapted from Canadian public nutrition resources. It is not medical advice. Sample meals are simplified ideas — not a prescribed meal plan. Always discuss dietary changes with your physician or a registered dietitian.

References

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Sample menus adapted and reworded from Diabetes Canada · © Omotoso Family Medicine

