



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

QuickBites Tip

Can we eat healthy and enjoy our food at the same time?

The **Mediterranean Diet Pyramid** can help provide us with some answers to this question. The Mediterranean diet is a set of guidelines based on the dietary and lifestyle traditions of Crete, Greece and Southern Italy around the 1960s. During this time, chronic disease was low and life expectancy was high among this population, despite the limited availability of medical services.

In general, the Mediterranean diet includes the following:

- Lots of fresh vegetables and fruits.
- Whole grains.
- Avoidance of processed foods.
- Preference for seasonal produce.
- Tomatoes and tomato products were used as a staple item.
- Spiced food with garlic, onions and aromatic herbs.
- Preference for seafood and poultry over red meat, which was included only occasionally.
- Limited butter or margarine with most of their fat coming from olive oil.
- Use of cheese, yogurt and eggs sparingly.
- Wine in moderation (1 glass per day).

But the Mediterranean diet is not only about food, it is about lifestyle. **Food enjoyment is not just about taste.** Mediterranean cuisine is certainly delicious because it is made with fresh foods prepared with spices and aromatic herbs. And, pairing a little wine with the food can enhance the flavors. However, the base of the Mediterranean Pyramid deals with activity and mealtime experience. This population, at that time, walked or biked to get to where they needed to be throughout the day. And, their mealtimes were not rushed. They ate together, relaxed at the table, and shared food and conversation with family and friends. This reduces stress and helps the body to digest food, absorb nutrients and boost metabolism. A relaxed lifestyle with relaxed mealtimes is important for our health.

The Mediterranean diet has a lot to offer as dietary guidance. But, one of the most important aspects that we, in our often overscheduled culture, can take away from their lifestyle, is taking some time to enjoy healthy foods with our family and friends.

Want to learn more?

**Sign up for Personal Nutrition Training with Curwin Gett, MA RDN LD
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