



DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

May / June

Tasty Mediterranean Diet Benefits Health

The Mediterranean diet is well-known as a healthy eating plan. It emphasizes eating whole grains, vegetables, fruits, cooked dry beans and peas, nuts, fish, low-fat dairy products and olive oil, with low to moderate amounts of other foods. A recent study found that those who ate a Mediterranean diet had 30% fewer heart attacks and strokes than those who ate a diet that was reduced in fat.



This issue of *Dining on a Dime* describes some of the healthful dietary habits confirmed by this study and recommended by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines 2010. You can easily adopt them, even on a tight budget. Be sure to check page 4 for the quick recipe for “Mediterranean Tuna Macaroni Medley.”

Eat a diet high in plant foods. Adults are encouraged to eat at least 4 ounces of whole grains, and at least 4 cups of vegetables and unsweetened fruits, every day. Try to fill half of your plate or bowl with fruits and vegetables at every meal and snack. Also, strive to eat 2 to 3 cups of cooked dry beans each week.

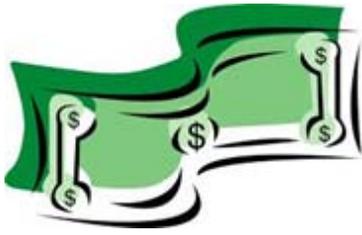
Go nuts. Eat 4 to 6 ounces of unsalted nuts and seeds each week. People in the study who ate this amount of nuts lowered their risk of heart disease significantly. You could eat nuts as a snack, or chop and sprinkle them on oatmeal, salads or yogurt. Also look for peanut butter that has peanuts as the only ingredient.

Eat more oil instead of solid fats. Olive oil is used daily by people following a Mediterranean diet. It is high in mono-unsaturated fats, which help lower blood cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease. Canola oil is also high in mono-unsaturated fats. Instead of just *adding* oils to your daily diet, use them *instead of* foods high in saturated and trans fats. You can use oil instead of solid fats when cooking. You can also mix oil with vinegar or lemon juice for use as a salad dressing. Let refrigerated oil come to room temperature before use.

Limit beverages and foods high in added sugars. Drink few sweetened beverages and eat only a couple of desserts each week.

Eat at a table. Each day, eat at least two meals that last 20 or more minutes at a dining table. Slow down for higher enjoyment of your meals ... and your health!

Money-Minded Mediterranean Meals



Is a Mediterranean diet an expensive way to eat? No, not with smart shopping and following some of the suggestions described on the previous page and below! A Mediterranean diet can be both healthful AND low in cost. You'll likely save over the long run by lowering your medical expenses if you eat this way, too. Read on for tips to keep sense of your food cents!

Seldom eat out. It's much less costly to prepare meals at home. In addition, fixing meals at home makes it easier to get the foods that are emphasized in a Mediterranean diet, including whole grains, vegetables, fruits, cooked dry beans and peas, nuts, fish, low-fat dairy and olive or canola oil.

Omit most bottled beverages and processed foods. People living in the U.S. spend hundreds of dollars each year on convenience foods. Decide how you could cut back. Stop buying sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, and bottled teas and water? Skip the snacks and desserts aisles? Reduce purchases of prepared foods, such as pizzas, frozen meals, boxed dishes and canned soups? Limit sugared cereals? These are all ways to improve your health AND reduce your food costs. Instead of convenience foods, buy basic ingredients to use when preparing meals.

Buy direct. For cost savings, find local farmer(s) to buy fresh fruits and vegetables from, such as at a farmers market. Or buy in bulk from a discount store, if the price is right for the foods you want (such as oats, dry beans or cooking oil).

Serve canned fish. Eat at least 8 ounces (cooked) of fish each week. Especially choose fatty fish for their healthful omega 3 fats, such as canned tuna, mackerel and salmon. Canned fish is convenient and easy to cook with. However, it often has a high sodium content. (The same is true for most canned vegetables.)

Serve meat and poultry in mixed dishes. Make most of your meals focused on plant foods (whole grains, vegetables and unsweetened fruits). One way to do this is to combine some meat or poultry with larger amounts of vegetables and whole grains, such as in a salad, stir-fry, casserole, pasta dish or stew. Use very budget-friendly cooked dry beans and peas often each week as a healthful protein food substitute. Each week, eat up to 12 cooked ounces of red meats (such as beef and pork) and up to 11 cooked ounces of poultry (such as skinless chicken and turkey).

Chill. Plain frozen vegetables, fruits, fish and meats can be very economical. Frozen vegetables and fruits are picked at their peak of ripeness. Another advantage is that typically there is little spoilage waste with frozen foods.

Sources (Accessed 4/10/13): 1. [Primary prevention of cardiovascular disease with a Mediterranean diet](#), N Engl J Med 2013;368:1279-90. 2. [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010](#), www.dietaryguidelines.gov

You may view previous newsletters at www.ksre.ksu.edu/HumanNutrition/p.aspx?tabid=184

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Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

Mediterranean Tuna Macaroni Medley (Makes 3 servings)

Ingredients

1/2 cup whole grain macaroni	3/4 cup canned, rinsed, drained chickpeas
5 ounces chunk light tuna, canned in oil, not drained	3 cups finely shredded cabbage or slaw mix
2 tablespoons lemon juice	1/2 cup finely chopped cucumber
1 teaspoon dried oregano or Italian seasoning	1/4 cup plain non-fat yogurt
1 teaspoon minced garlic	
1 teaspoon mustard	

Directions

1. Cook, then drain, macaroni. Set aside. **2.** Meanwhile, drain oil from tuna into a small bowl. Mix oil, lemon juice, oregano, garlic and mustard. Stir dressing well. Set aside. **3.** In a large bowl, stir together tuna, chickpeas, cabbage, cucumber and macaroni. **4.** Stir in yogurt and dressing. **5.** If desired, garnish with chopped tomato, black olives and crumbled feta cheese. **6.** Serve. **7.** Cover and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours. **Nutrition Facts per 1/3 recipe, about 1 1/2 cups**, without garnish: 260 calories, 7g fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 31g carbohydrates, 21g protein, 30mg cholesterol, 430mg sodium and 7g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 4% vitamin A, 50% vitamin C, 10% calcium, 15% iron.



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