



# THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET ACCORDING WIKIPEDIA

Giovanni Bittante

“Science and Culture of Gastronomy and Foodservice”

University of Padova - Italy

# WIKIPEDIA

## ❑ MEDITERRANEAN DIET:

“This article is about the dietary recommendation that became popular in the 1990s”

## ❑ MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE:

“This article is about the food of the areas around the Mediterranean Sea”



# WIKIPEDIA

## ❑ **MEDITERRANEAN DIET:**

“This article is about the dietary recommendation that became popular in the 1990s”

## ❑ **MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE:**

“This article is about the food of the areas around the Mediterranean Sea”



# DEFINITION

The **Mediterranean diet** is a modern nutritional recommendation inspired by the traditional dietary patterns of poor coastal regions of southern Italy as well as Crete and other parts of Greece in the 1960s.<sup>[1]</sup>

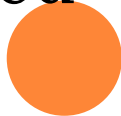


# REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Despite its name, this diet is not typical of all Mediterranean cuisine.

In Northern Italy, for instance, lard and butter are commonly used in cooking, and olive oil is reserved for dressing salads and cooked vegetables.<sup>[3]</sup>

In North Africa wine is traditionally avoided by Muslims. In both North Africa and the Levant, along with olive oil, sheep's tail fat and rendered butter (*samna*) are traditional staple fats.<sup>[4]</sup>




# ORIGIN

The most commonly-understood version of the Mediterranean diet was presented by Dr Walter Willett of Harvard University's School of Public Health in the mid-1990s.<sup>[5]</sup> Based on "food patterns typical of Crete, much of the rest of Greece, and southern Italy in the early 1960s",




# THE BASIC ELEMENTS

This diet, in addition to "regular physical activity," emphasizes "abundant plant foods, fresh fruit as the typical daily dessert, olive oil as the principal source of fat, dairy products (principally cheese and yogurt), and fish and poultry consumed in low to moderate amounts, zero to four eggs consumed weekly, red meat consumed in low amounts, and wine consumed in low to moderate amounts". Total fat in this diet is 25% to 35% of calories, with saturated fat at 8% or less of calories.<sup>[6]</sup>



## FOODS CONSUMED

The principal aspects of this diet include high olive oil consumption, high consumption of legumes, high consumption of unrefined cereals, high consumption of fruits, high consumption of vegetables, moderate consumption of dairy products (mostly as cheese and yogurt), moderate to high consumption of fish, low consumption of meat and meat products, and moderate wine consumption.<sup>[7]</sup>





# OLIVE OIL

Olive oil is particularly characteristic of the Mediterranean diet.


It contains a very high level of monounsaturated fats, most notably oleic acid, which epidemiological studies suggest may be linked to a reduction in coronary heart disease risk.<sup>[8]</sup>

There is also evidence that the antioxidants in olive oil improve cholesterol regulation and LDL cholesterol reduction, and that it has other anti-inflammatory and anti-hypertensive effects.<sup>[9]</sup>



# MEDITERRANEAN PARADOX

It is based on what from the point of view of mainstream nutrition is considered a paradox: that although the people living in Mediterranean countries tend to consume relatively high amounts of fat, they have far lower rates of cardiovascular disease than in countries like the United States, where similar levels of fat consumption are found. A parallel phenomenon is known as the French Paradox.<sup>[10]</sup>



# HISTORY

A diet rich in salads was promoted in England during the early Renaissance period by Giacomo Castelvetro in *A Brief Account of the Fruits, Herbs and Vegetables of Italy*.<sup>[11]</sup>

He attempted, without success, to convince the English to eat more fruits and vegetables.



# HISTORY

Although it was first publicized in 1945 by the American doctor Ancel Keys stationed in Salerno, Italy, the Mediterranean diet failed to gain widespread recognition until the 1990s.



# HEALTH EFFECTS

The diet is often cited as beneficial for being low in saturated fat and high in monounsaturated fat and dietary fiber. *[citation needed]*

One of the main explanations is thought to be the health effects of olive oil included in the Mediterranean diet.



# EARLY DEATH

A 10-year study published in the *Journal of American Medicine* found that adherence to a Mediterranean diet and healthful lifestyle was associated with more than a 50% lowering of early death rates.



# HEART DISEASE

The putative benefits of the Mediterranean diet for cardiovascular health are primarily correlative in nature; while they reflect a very real disparity in the geographic incidence of heart disease, identifying the causal determinant of this disparity has proven difficult.



# SALT

The Mediterranean diet  
is high in salt content.<sup>[12]</sup>

Foods such as olives, salt-cured cheeses,  
anchovies, capers, salted fish roe,  
and salads dressed with olive oil  
all contain high levels of salt.





# MONOUNSATURATED FATS

The most popular dietary candidate, olive oil, has been undermined by a body of experimental evidence that diets enriched in monounsaturated fats such as olive oil are not atheroprotective when compared to diets enriched in either polyunsaturated or even saturated fats.<sup>[16][17]</sup>



# DEPRESSION - ANTIOXIDANT

A study published in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* shows that people who followed the Mediterranean diet were less likely to develop depression.<sup>[13]</sup> In addition, the consumption of red wine is considered a possible factor, as it contains flavonoids with powerful antioxidant properties.<sup>[14]</sup>



# OTHER REASONS

Mireille Guiliano credits the health effects of the Mediterranean diet to factors such as small portions, daily exercise, and the emphasis on freshness, balance, and pleasure in food.<sup>[15]</sup>

Dietary factors may be only part of the reason for the health benefits enjoyed by these cultures. Genetics, lifestyle (notably heavy physical labor), and environment may also be involved.<sup>[citation]</sup>



# VITAMIN D

A recently emerging alternative hypothesis to the Mediterranean diet is that differential exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation accounts for the disparity in cardiovascular health between residents of Mediterranean and more northerly countries.

The proposed mechanism is solar UVB-induced synthesis of Vitamin D in the oils of the skin, which has been observed to reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease, and which rapidly with increasing latitude.<sup>[18]</sup>



# SKIN CANCER

Interestingly, residents of the Mediterranean are also observed to have very low rates of skin cancer (which is widely believed to be caused by over-exposure to solar UV radiation); incidence of melanomas in the Mediterranean countries is lower than in Northern Europe and significantly lower than in other hot countries such as Australia and New Zealand.

It's been hypothesized that some components of the Mediterranean diet may provide protection against skin cancer.



# WIKIPEDIA

## ❑ MEDITERRANEAN DIET:

“This article is about the dietary recommendation that became popular in the 1990s”

## ❑ MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE:

“This article is about the food of the areas around the Mediterranean Sea”



# WIKIPEDIA

## □ MEDITERRANEAN DIET:

“This article is about the dietary recommendation that became popular in the 1990s”

## □ MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE:

“This article is about the food of the areas around the Mediterranean Sea”



# MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE

## **Mediterranean cuisine**

is the food from the cultures  
adjacent to the Mediterranean Sea.

Whether this is a useful category is disputed:





# MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE

The idea of the ‘standard Mediterranean’ ...  
is a modern construction  
of food writers and publicists  
in Western Europe and North America  
earnestly preaching what is now thought  
to be a healthy diet to their audiences  
by invoking a stereotype of the healthy other  
on the shores of the Mediterranean.  
Their colleagues in Mediterranean countries  
are only too willing to perpetuate this myth.



# HISTORY

Around 1975, under the impulse of one of those new nutritional directives by which good cooking is too often influenced, the Americans discovered the so-called Mediterranean diet....

The name... even pleased Italian government officials, who made one modification:

changing from *diet*

—a word which has always seemed punitive and therefore unpleasant—

to Mediterranean *cuisine*.



# HISTORY

... these nation-states have influenced each other over time in both food and culture and the cooking evolved into sharing common principles.

Mediterranean cuisine is characterized by its flexibility, its range of ingredients and its many regional variations.



## BASIC ELEMENTS

The terrain has tended to favour the raising of goats and sheep. Fish dishes are also common, although today much of the fish is imported since the fisheries of the Mediterranean Sea are weak. Seafood is still prominent in many of the recipes. Olive oil and garlic are widely used in Mediterranean cuisine.

It is widely believed that Mediterranean cuisine is particularly healthful; see Mediterranean diet. Grilled meats, pita bread, hummus, and falafel are very popular forms of the eastern type of the cuisine.



# MEDITERRANEAN CUISINES

-  Albanian cuisine
-  Algerian cuisine
-  Armenian cuisine
-  Bosnian cuisine
-  Andorra cuisine
-  Croatian cuisine
-  Cypriot cuisine
-  Egyptian cuisine
-  French cuisine
-  Gibraltarian cuisine
-  Greek cuisine
-  Iraqi cuisine
-  Israeli cuisine
-  Italian cuisine
  -  Sardinian cuisine
  -  Sicilian cuisine
-  Jordanian cuisine
-  Lebanese cuisine
-  Libyan cuisine
-  Macedonian cuisine
-  Maltese cuisine
-  Montenegrin cuisine
-  Moroccan cuisine
-  Palestinian cuisine
-  Portuguese cuisine
-  Serbian cuisine
-  Slovenian cuisine
-  Spanish cuisine
-  Syrian cuisine
-  Tunisian cuisine
-  Turkish cuisine

# Similar cuisines



- Arab cuisine
- Balkan cuisine
- Levantine cuisine
- Middle Eastern cuisine
- Sephardic cuisine
-  Argentine cuisine
-  Uruguayan cuisine



# NORTH AND SOUTH

In northern Europe, wheat, rye, and fats of animal origin predominate, while in southern Europe olive oil is ubiquitous and rice becomes important.

In Italy the cuisine of the north, featuring butter and rice, stands in contrast to that of the south, with its wheat pasta and olive oil.

