

# 7-Day Mediterranean Starter Meal Plan

*A Beginner's Guide to Sun-Drenched, Heart-Healthy Eating*



Welcome to the Mediterranean way of life — one of the world's most celebrated and well-studied approaches to eating. Inspired by the traditional foodways of Greece, Italy, Spain, and southern France, this plan centers on **extra virgin olive oil, fresh vegetables and fruits, whole grains, legumes, fish and seafood, herbs, and convivial meals shared with family and friends.** It's less a "diet" and more a relaxed, joyful pattern of eating — abundant in flavor, color, and wholesome ingredients, with moderate wine and slow, mindful meals at its heart.

## Mediterranean Basics: What to Eat & What to Limit

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## Eat Abundantly

- Extra virgin olive oil (daily, primary fat)
- Fresh vegetables — tomatoes, leafy greens, peppers, eggplant, zucchini
- Fruits — citrus, berries, figs, grapes
- Whole grains — whole wheat, farro, bulgur, brown rice
- Legumes — chickpeas, lentils, white beans
- Fish & seafood — sardines, salmon, mackerel (2–3×/week)
- Nuts & seeds — walnuts, almonds, pine nuts
- Herbs & spices — basil, oregano, rosemary, garlic
- Greek yogurt & feta (in moderation)



## Enjoy in Moderation

- Poultry & eggs
- Red wine (optional, with meals)
- Aged cheeses — parmesan, pecorino, manchego
- Honey as a natural sweetener
- Potatoes & starchy vegetables
- Dark chocolate (70%+)



## Limit or Avoid

- Red & processed meats
- Refined sugar & sweets
- Refined grains & white bread
- Processed & packaged foods
- Butter (use olive oil instead)
- Sugary drinks & sodas
- Industrial seed oils

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## Your 7-Day Meal Plan

### Monday



#### Breakfast

Greek yogurt with honey, walnuts, and fresh berries



#### Lunch

Mediterranean grain bowl with farro, chickpeas, cucumber, tomato, feta, olives, and lemon–olive oil dressing



#### Dinner

Grilled salmon with roasted vegetables (zucchini, peppers, eggplant) and quinoa



#### Snack

Hummus with carrot and cucumber sticks

## Tuesday



### Breakfast

Whole-grain toast with avocado, sliced tomato, EVOO, and za'atar



### Lunch

Lentil & vegetable soup with crusty whole-grain bread and a side salad



### Dinner

Baked chicken thighs with lemon, oregano, olives, and roasted potatoes



### Snack

Handful of almonds and an orange

## Wednesday



### Breakfast

Shakshuka — eggs poached in spiced tomato-pepper sauce with whole-grain pita



### Lunch

Greek salad (tomato, cucumber, red onion, kalamata olives, feta, EVOO, oregano) with grilled chicken



### Dinner

Whole-grain spaghetti with sardines, garlic, lemon, parsley, and toasted pine nuts



### Snack

Fresh figs (or grapes) with a small piece of aged cheese

## Thursday



### Breakfast

Overnight oats with chia seeds, almond milk, walnuts, and sliced peaches



### Lunch

Tuna & white bean salad with arugula, red onion, capers, lemon, and EVOO



### Dinner

Vegetable moussaka or stuffed peppers with brown rice, herbs, and pine nuts



### Snack

Whole-grain crackers with tzatziki

## Friday



### Breakfast

Smoothie bowl — Greek yogurt, banana, berries, topped with granola, chia, and honey



### Lunch

Falafel wrap in whole-grain pita with tahini, lettuce, tomato, cucumber, and pickled onion



### Dinner

Grilled shrimp skewers with lemon-herb couscous and grilled asparagus



### Snack

Bruschetta — whole-grain toast with tomato, basil, garlic, and EVOO

## Saturday



### Breakfast

Spanish-style tortilla (egg, potato, onion) with fresh tomatoes drizzled with EVOO



### Lunch

Mezze plate — hummus, baba ganoush, olives, feta, cucumber, whole-grain pita, and dolmas



### Dinner

Slow-roasted lamb with rosemary, garlic, and lemon, served with bulgur pilaf and roasted vegetables



### Snack

Greek yogurt with honey and crushed pistachios

## Sunday



### Breakfast

Frittata with spinach, feta, sun-dried tomatoes, and fresh herbs



### Lunch

Niçoise-style salad with tuna, green beans, potatoes, olives, egg, and lemon-Dijon vinaigrette



### Dinner

Whole roasted branzino (or sea bass) with herbs and lemon, served with farro and sautéed greens



### Snack

Fresh fruit platter with a square of dark chocolate (70%+)



## Starter Grocery List

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### Pantry & Oils

- Extra virgin olive oil (high quality)
- Red wine vinegar
- Balsamic vinegar
- Kalamata olives
- Capers
- Tahini
- Honey
- Dried oregano
- Za'atar

### Whole Grains & Legumes

- Farro
- Bulgur
- Quinoa
- Brown rice
- Whole-grain pasta
- Whole-grain bread & pita
- Rolled oats
- Chickpeas
- Lentils
- Cannellini (white) beans

### Proteins

- Salmon
- Sardines
- Tuna (canned in olive oil)
- Shrimp
- Chicken thighs & breasts
- Eggs
- Lamb (optional)

### Vegetables

- Tomatoes
- Cucumbers
- Bell peppers
- Eggplant
- Zucchini
- Spinach & arugula
- Red onions & garlic
- Potatoes & carrots
- Asparagus & green beans

### Fruits

- Lemons
- Oranges
- Berries
- Figs
- Grapes
- Peaches
- Bananas
- Apples

### Herbs & Aromatics

- Fresh basil
- Fresh parsley
- Fresh mint
- Rosemary
- Oregano
- Dill

### Dairy & Eggs

- Greek yogurt (plain, full-fat)
- Feta cheese
- Eggs
- Aged cheese (parmesan/pecorino)

### Nuts & Seeds

- Walnuts
- Almonds
- Pine nuts
- Pistachios
- Chia seeds

### Optional Extras

- Red wine (moderation)
- Dark chocolate (70%+)
- Sun-dried tomatoes
- Sparkling water
- Herbal teas



## Beginner Success Tips

- 1 **Make olive oil your primary fat** — replace butter and seed oils with high-quality extra virgin olive oil for cooking, drizzling, and dressings.
- 2 **Eat fish 2–3 times per week** — especially fatty fish like salmon, sardines, and mackerel for heart-healthy omega-3s.
- 3 **Fill half your plate with vegetables** at lunch and dinner — variety, color, and seasonal produce are key.
- 4 **Embrace legumes** — beans, chickpeas, and lentils are protein-rich, fiber-packed, affordable staples.
- 5 **Choose whole grains over refined** — farro, bulgur, quinoa, and whole-wheat pasta keep you satisfied longer.
- 6 **Snack on nuts and fruit** instead of processed snacks — a handful of almonds and an orange is the Mediterranean default.
- 7 **Slow down and savor meals** — eat with family and friends when possible. Meals are meant to be enjoyed, not rushed.
- 8 **Stay hydrated with water** — herbal teas and sparkling water are great too; enjoy red wine in moderation with meals (optional).

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*This meal plan is for general informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Consult a qualified healthcare professional or registered dietitian before making significant dietary changes.*



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