

Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

A contemporary approach to delicious, healthy eating

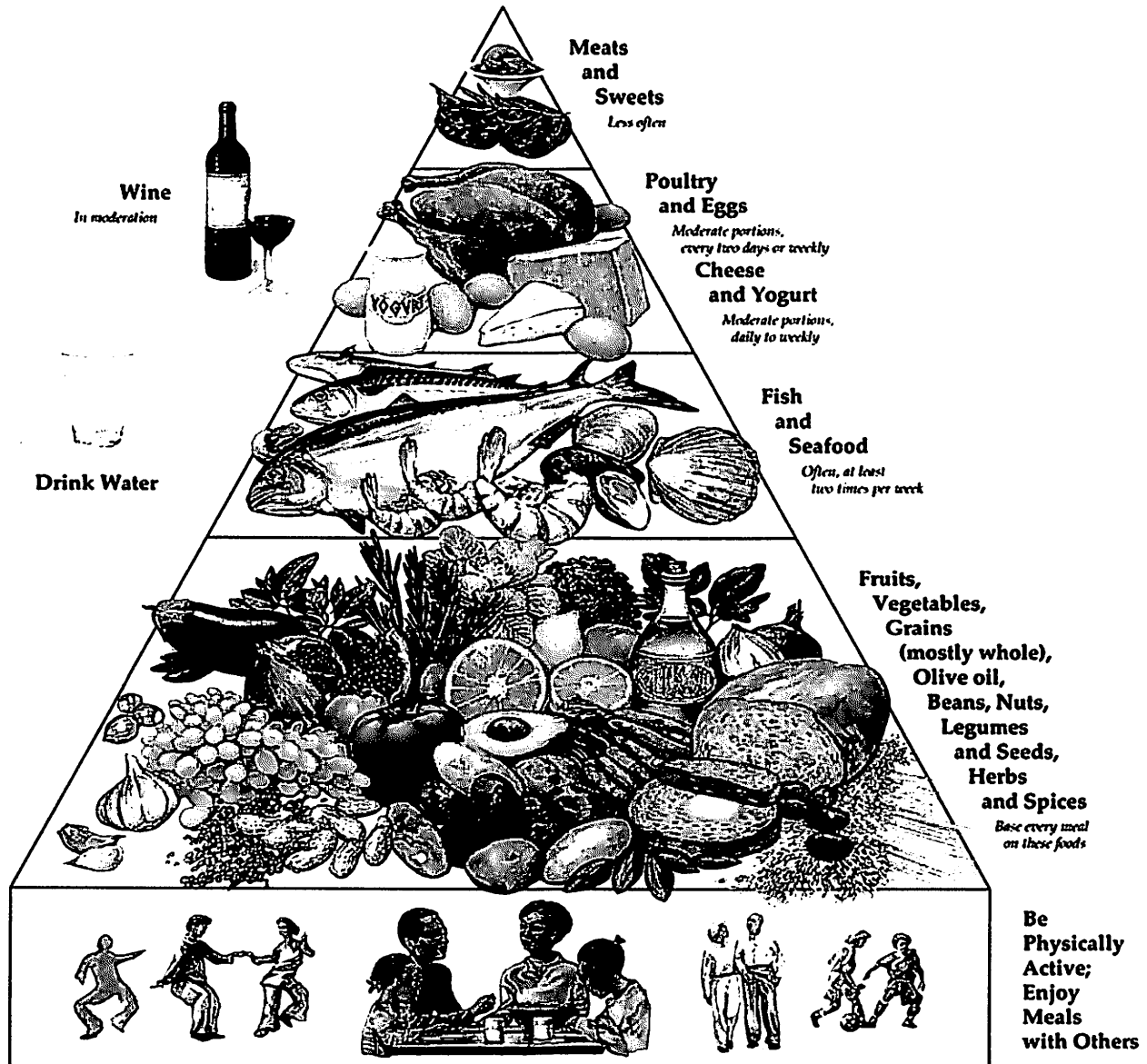
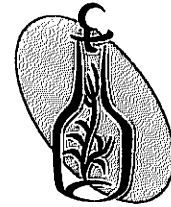


Illustration by George Middleton

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For more information and lists of common foods and flavours in the diet refer to www.oldwayspt.org/mediterraneandiet

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET



What is it?

The Mediterranean diet has long interested people studying nutrition because of its positive effects on health, but its popularity soared among the public in the 1990's. It is based on the dietary patterns of several areas around the Mediterranean Sea including Southern Italy, Greece, and Crete. It is often referred to as the Gold Standard of healthy eating.

A high fat diet is good?!

You may have heard of the French paradox? Well, the Mediterranean Diet paradox is pretty similar. People eat a high fat diet, yet are healthier. Rather than limiting fat, the diet makes wise choices about the types of fats. Fats from olive oil, nuts and seeds are the foundation of this diet.

Benefits beyond heart health

Eating a Mediterranean diet also reduces risk of other chronic diseases including some cancers, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, dementia, obesity, and mental health problems.



General Principles

- Include fresh, in season, healthy foods.
- Eat meals with family and friends.
- Eat small portions of high quality food.
- Include lots and lots of plant based foods.
- Cook from scratch ... avoid processed foods.
- Enjoy eating legumes often. Eat only very small amounts of meats, especially red meats.
- Drink red wine, in moderation, with meals.
- Eat fruit for dessert.
- Nuts, seeds and olive oil are the main fats and are included with each meal.

Mediterranean Diet versus Canada's Food Guide

The basics of healthy eating are well known and many diet plans have very similar ideas once you get past their different names. Indeed, these two are surprisingly alike in many ways.

Both emphasize vegetables and fruit, whole grains, and legumes. Slight differences do occur though; the Mediterranean diet is lower in dairy products, red meat and sugar, while higher in fish, legumes, nuts and olive oil than Canada's Food Guide.

A picture is worth 1000 words – turn over the page to see the Mediterranean diet pyramid. As you move up the pyramid, foods are eaten less often and in smaller amounts.