Plant Based Mediterranean Diet Science Guide

This program was created with the following key nutrients in mind:

Monounsaturated Fats

Good quality fats are associated with a lower risk of both [heart disease](https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/CIRCRESAHA.118.313348) and [cancer](https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/11/9/2059/htm). This plan is rich in monounsaturated fat from olive oil, avocado, nuts, and seeds, and lower in saturated fat. [Olive oil](https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/11/12/2941/htm) is the main source of fat in a Mediterranean diet and contains tocopherols, polyphenols, and a balanced linoleic/alpha-linolenic acid profile, which is beneficial for the immune system and inflammatory responses.

Low Sodium

[Guidelines](https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000678) recommend restricting sodium to less than 2,000 milligrams per day to prevent or treat hypertension and reduce the risk of stroke and [cardiovascular disease](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10654-017-0354-8). This program meets the sodium limit and provides less than 1,700 milligrams daily.

Fiber

Adequate dietary fiber intake is associated with several health benefits including better [digestive health](https://academic.oup.com/cdn/article/2/3/nzy005/4828321) and reduced [inflammation](https://academic.oup.com/advances/article/9/3/193/4996113). This meal plan provides up to 50 grams of fiber daily from foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains. Soluble fiber found in lentils, hummus, and ground flaxseeds is incorporated into the program and has been shown to improve [glycemic control](https://diabetesjournals.org/care/article/42/5/755/40520/Should-Viscous-Fiber-Supplements-Be-Considered-in) and lower [blood cholesterol](https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/11/5/1155/htm).

Antioxidants

Essential fat-soluble [antioxidants](https://www.hindawi.com/journals/omcl/2016/5276130/) like [vitamin A](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/proceedings-of-the-nutrition-society/article/vitamin-a-as-an-antiinflammatory-agent/D34D3DA1E422A71291BD7440AC1A32A9) and [vitamin E](https://iubmb.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/iub.1976) support various cellular functions of our immune system, reduce oxidative stress in cells, and are useful in the treatment of inflammatory diseases. This meal plan has vitamin A sources like bell pepper, lettuce, fortified beverages and yogurt. It incorporates vitamin E through a daily dose of healthy oils, nuts, and seeds.