

Ketogenic Mediterranean Diet

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This is a very low carb diet—20 to 40 grams of digestible carbohydrate daily—designed for loss of excess body fat.

Here's what you'll eat:

- 1) Unlimited fish, meat, chicken, turkey, eggs, shrimp, lobster, pork skins
- 2) Fish, at least 4 oz (115 g) daily; ideally half of all animal protein
- 3) Olive oil, virgin or extra-virgin, at least 2–3 tbsp (30–45 ml) daily
- 4) Nuts and seeds, 1 oz (28 g) daily
- 5) Vegetables, up to 14 oz (400 g) daily
- 6) Wine, 6–12 fl oz (180–360 ml) daily (see alternatives in Miscellaneous Comments)
- 7) Cheese, up to 3 oz (85 g) daily, optional
- 8) Daily supplements:
 - 1 or 2 plain Centrum multivitamin/multimineral supplements (two if over 250 lb or 114 kg)
 - Magnesium oxide 250 mg
 - Calcium carbonate 500 mg elemental calcium (500 mg twice daily if over 250 lb or 114 kg)
 - Extra vitamin D to reach total of 1,000–1,200 IU (each Centrum has 400 IU)
 - Potassium gluconate 2,750 mg (450 mg elemental potassium) **or** Morton Salt Substitute (potassium chloride) ¼ tsp (1.2 g)
 - If prone to constipation: sugar-free Metamucil powder 1–2 rounded tsp (5.8–11.6 g) in water
 - At least three quarts or liters of water

What makes it **Mediterranean**? Natural whole foods, fish, olive oil, nuts, wine, cheese, spices. What's not Mediterranean? Unlimited meat and animal proteins, and absence of most fruits, high-carbohydrate vegetables, grains, legumes, pasta, honey, and yogurt. These come later.

Food Category Comments:

1. Protein Group (fish, meat, chicken, turkey, eggs, shrimp, lobster, fried pork skins)

Try to avoid overly processed protein products; aim for pure and simple. Processed meats may have added carbohydrates, nitrites, and other chemicals you don't need. Canned products are OK. Eat until full or satisfied, not stuffed.

2. Fish

Aim for half of your animal protein intake from fish; a third is OK. Canned fish may be more affordable. Cold-water fatty fish have more omega-3 fatty acids: trout, salmon, sardines, mackerel, albacore/white tuna, herring, swordfish, halibut, sea bass.

3. Olive oil

Use virgin or extra virgin oil in vinaigrette or other olive oil-based salad dressing. Sauté with it. Fry eggs and steak with it. Drink it straight if you want!

4. Nuts and seeds

Almonds, walnuts, pecans, Brazil nuts, hazelnuts (filberts), macadamia nuts, peanuts (a legume), Spanish peanuts, pistachios, pine nuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds in shells. These average 3 g of digestible carbohydrate per ounce (28 g). Sunflower seeds, peanuts, and pistachios are the highest-carb: 3.5 to 4 g per ounce (28 g). No cashews.

5. Vegetables and Fruits

A) Raw salad vegetables: lettuce, mushrooms, radishes, spinach, alfalfa sprouts, cucumber, tomato, scallions, parsley, jicama, arugula, endive, radicchio, chard, sweet peppers, avocado, olives (pickled green or ripe black), pickles (dill or sour, not sweet or "bread and butter"). Average digestible carbohydrate per 7 oz serving (200 g) is 5 g. The highest digestible carb counts are in scallions and jicama (8 g), and sweet peppers (7g).

B) Solid vegetables, often cooked: snow peas, broccoli, summer squash, tomato, onion, cauliflower, eggplant, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, okra, sauerkraut (canned), green beans. These average 8 g of digestible carbohydrate per 7 oz serving (200 g). Onion is highest at 14 g. Weigh these before cooking.

6. Wine

Red wine (e.g., Burgundy, Cabernet Sauvignon, or Merlot) may be healthier than white (e.g., Sauvignon blanc, Riesling, Pinot Grigio). One fl oz (30 ml) of wine has 1 g of carbohydrate.

7. Cheese

Real, regular cheese; not low-fat. Mozzarella, provolone, swiss, cheddar, blue, Monterey, Colby, brie, Parmesan, feta, gouda, ricotta, cottage. These have 1 g carbohydrate per oz (28 g).

Miscellaneous Comments:

Warning

Wine contains alcohol, which is dangerous. You should not drink wine if you have a history of alcohol abuse or alcoholism, have liver or pancreas disease, are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, may have the need to operate dangerous equipment or machinery—such as driving a car—while under the influence of alcohol, or have demonstrated inability to limit yourself to acceptable intake levels.

Alternatives to wine

1. Extra 200 g (7 oz) vegetables plus grape extract supplement daily, **or**
2. 20 g (0.7 oz) of dark chocolate (65-85% cacao) daily, **or**
3. Distilled spirits (whiskey, rum, vodka, gin), 80 proof, 1.5 fl oz (45 ml) daily, **or**
4. Beer, 12 fl oz (360 ml) *if under 10 g of carbohydrate*, daily

Additional daily optional oils, spices, and condiments (unlimited unless noted):

Butter, plant oils (strongly favor olive oil), vinegar (cider, red wine, or distilled), balsamic vinegar (2 tsp daily), salt, pepper, genuine mayonnaise, yellow mustard (1 tbsp daily), salad dressing with ≤ 3 g carbohydrate per 2 tbsp (2 tbsp daily), Worcestershire sauce (1 tbsp), A.1. Steak Sauce (1 tbsp)

Prominent Mediterranean spices: paprika, cumin, turmeric, cinnamon, ginger (10 g raw root or 2 tsp ground spice daily), coriander, anise, Spanish saffron, lemon or lime juice (2 tbsp daily), mint, parsley, garlic (3 cloves daily), dill pepper, and sumac

Need a sweet, crunchy treat?

Metamucil Fiber Wafers (12 g each), two per week

Don't just eat the same eight or 10 items—aim for great variety.

Tea and coffee in moderation are fine. Don't add milk; use cream or high-fat half-and-half.

You'll be eating lots of salad.

Very low-carb ketogenic diets have been associated with headaches, bad breath, easy bruising, nausea, fatigue, aching, muscle cramps, constipation, and dizziness, among other symptoms. "Induction flu" may occur around days two through five, consisting of achiness and fatigue.

Very low-carb ketogenic diets may have the potential to cause osteoporosis (thin, brittle bones), kidney stones, low blood pressure, constipation, gout, high uric acid in the blood, excessive loss of sodium and potassium in the urine, worsening of kidney disease, deficiency of calcium and vitamins A, B, C, and D, among other adverse effects.