Eating the Mediterranean Way

Embracing the Mediterranean (Med) Diet is all about making some simple but profound changes in the way you eat today, tomorrow, and for the rest of your life.

1. **Eat lots of vegetables.** From a simple plate of sliced fresh tomatoes drizzled with olive oil and crumbled feta cheese to stunning salads, garlicky greens, fragrant soups and stews, healthy pizzas, or oven-roasted medleys, vegetables are vitally important to the fresh tastes and delicious flavors of the Med Diet.

2. **Change the way you think about meat.** If you eat meat, have smaller amounts – small strips of sirloin in a vegetable sauté, or a dish of pasta garnished with diced prosciutto.

3. **Enjoy some dairy products.** Eat Greek or plain yogurt, and try smaller amounts of a variety of cheeses.

4. **Eat seafood twice a week.** Fish such as tuna, herring, salmon, and sardines are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, and shellfish including mussels, oysters, and clams have similar benefits for brain and heart health.

5. **Cook a vegetarian meal one night a week.** Build meals around beans, whole grains, and vegetables, and heighten the flavor with fragrant herbs and spices. Down the road, try two nights per week.

6. **Use good fats.** Include sources of healthy fats in daily meals, especially extra-virgin olive oil, nuts, peanuts, sunflower seeds, olives, and avocados.

7. **Switch to whole grains.** Whole grains are naturally rich in many important nutrients; their fuller, nuttier taste and extra fiber keep you satisfied for hours. Cook traditional Mediterranean grains like bulgur, barley, farro and brown, black or red rice, and favor products made with whole grain flour.

8. **For dessert, eat fresh fruit.** Choose from a wide range of delicious fresh fruits — from fresh figs and oranges to pomegranates, grapes and apples. Instead of daily ice cream or cookies, save sweets for a special treat or celebration.

9. **Eat whole grains.** Choose grains you can see in the bowl, like rice or oatmeal. Avoid bread and cereal if you have diabetes, except for pumpernickel bread and all bran cereal.

SOURCE: Oldways-Inspiring good health through cultural traditions. www.oldwayspt.org