



MAGIC OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

Western diets are making us sick, but certain traditional eating patterns can deliver both health and flavor on one plate.

the Mediterranean benefit

In the 1960s, the Seven Countries study, which looked at 16 different population groups including several from the Mediterranean, found that Cretan Greeks had the best health and the lowest rates of cancer and heart disease. Their diet was shown to be the main factor influencing this favorable report.

Research shows that a Mediterranean diet also protects against metabolic syndrome, controls diabetes better, can reverse fatty liver disease, and slashes the risk of Alzheimer's disease. The more closely you adhere to this diet, the stronger your protection will be.

ways to imitate the Cretan diet

- ▶ **Olive oil daily.** Ditch the margarine and vegetable oils. Enjoy extra virgin oil on your salads and in cooking. It enhances the absorption of antioxidants into the body and makes eating lots of vegetables possible!
- ▶ **Legumes at least twice weekly.** You should get a good serving of beans such as garbanzos or fava beans to

supply large amounts of fiber and almost no fat. Legumes replace meat, which if eaten at all, should be limited to small amounts monthly.

- ▶ **Vegetables every day.** Include a half cup of tomatoes and a half cup of leafy greens, plus at least 2 cups of other colored vegetables. Try bitter greens such as endive.
- ▶ **Go whole grain.** Whole-grain and wheat-germ breads are traditional with the Cretans.
- ▶ **No day without fresh fruit.** Fruit is the perfect snack. Nuts and dried fruit add variety. Use only very small amounts of other sweets and sugary drinks.
- ▶ **Cheese in moderation.** Yogurt was the major source of calcium for the Cretans in the study.

other dietary practices

Cretan meals are also mostly cooked slowly with olive oil, garlic, herbs, and tomatoes, so they are low in advanced glycation end products (AGEs), formed in the browning process common to such modern cooking methods as toasting.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and coauthor of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.