

A wooden cutting board is the central focus, featuring a variety of fresh ingredients. On the left, a glass bottle of golden olive oil sits on the board. In the foreground, there is a pile of finely chopped green basil leaves and a small pile of minced garlic. A sharp knife with a wooden handle lies across the board. To the right, several ripe red and yellow tomatoes are scattered, along with a few whole garlic bulbs. In the background, a loaf of braided bread is visible, and the scene is set against a blurred background of green foliage and yellow flowers, suggesting an outdoor or rustic setting.

FIRST EDITION

& The Mediterranean Diet Maintenance Plan

The Basics Explained with 28 Days
of Meal Planning and Maintenance

To be used in conjunction with The Mediterranean Diet

By Ray Darken

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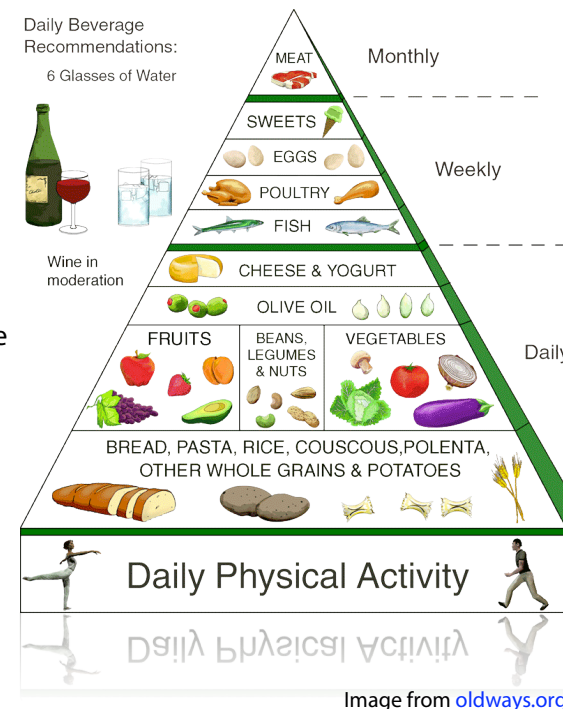
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WHAT IS THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET?

The Mediterranean Diet is based on what people traditionally eat in the Mediterranean countries like Greece and Italy. Initially theorized in the 50s as a way to eat well and reduce cholesterol levels by the Seven Countries Study, interest in the diet and its benefits heightened in the 90s when formal studies were taken to determine its efficacy.

It has since been determined that not all Mediterranean diets are healthy²⁻⁸, but the foods most readily eaten and available in each country are similar in nature. The Mediterranean Diet we are discussing here and that has been heavily researched and debated in the popular media is distinguished by the following foods: cereals (50%), legumes and nuts (5%), fish (1.6-2%), extra virgin olive oil (15%), fresh fruit (2%), vegetables (5- 7%), red wine (5%) and generous amounts of antioxidant herbs and spices. Coupled with moderate physical activity, the Mediterranean Diet is nutritious and is plentiful in dietary components that reduce the risk of a heart attack.



KEY FACTORS TO REMEMBER

Every day on this diet should see you eating vegetables, fruit, whole grain brown bread and fruit with both your meals and snacks with some skim milk and low-fat yogurt periodically throughout the day. Add as much garlic, parsley, onions, wild plants, basil and oregano as you like, and if you consume wine, choose red, but don't have more than 1-2 glasses a day. Four to six meals a day are optimum.

SUGGESTED 28-DAY EATING PLAN

Please note that all foods listed with an asterisk (*) have a corresponding recipe listed at the end of this report.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Breakfast	Cereal with Skim Milk Orange	Oatmeal with Skim Milk and Raisins	Apple Cinnamon French Toast*	Apple Cinnamon French Toast* (Leftovers)	Yogurt, granola and blueberries	Oatmeal with Dried Apples and Cinnamon	Mediterranean Breakfast*
Snack	Hummus* and Pita Bread	Cheese Spread* and Crackers	Sun Dried Tomato and Spinach Dip with Pitas	Hummus* and Pita Bread	Raw vegetables and dressing	Cheese Spread* and Crackers	Tskaski (store bought) and Pita Bread
Lunch	Zucchini, tomatoes and Italian dressing with walnuts	(Leftovers)	(Leftovers)	Greek Bean Pita Sandwich* (heat at work in microwave)	Chicken BLT with Brown Bread	Mediterranean Sandwich* with Greek Salad and Feta Cheese*	Hummus* and Pita Bread with Cauliflower Salad*
Dinner	Vegetable and Bean Soup* and Brown Bread	Pasta with Shrimp* and Greek Salad with Feta Cheese*	Mediterranean Tuna* with French Bread and a Green Salad	Chicken with Almonds* with Mediterranean Salad*	Cheese Foldovers* and a Green Salad	Mediterranean Fish (Tilapia)* with French Bread and a Green Salad	Onion and Garlic Linguine* with Greek Salad

	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Breakfast	Frittata*	Yogurt and granola with fresh fruit	Mediterranean Eggs*	North African Breakfast Buns (Mlaoui)*	Cereal and skim milk with fresh fruit	Omelet with lots of your choice of vegetables	Apple Cinnamon French Toast*
Snack	Hummus* and Pita Bread	Cheese Spread* and Crackers	Sun Dried Tomato and Spinach Dip with Pitas	Hummus* and Pita Bread	Raw vegetables and dressing	Cheese Spread* and Crackers	Sun Dried Tomato and Spinach Dip with Pitas
Lunch	Veggie Wrap*	(Leftovers)	Mediterranean Sandwich*	(Leftovers) with Brown Bread	Greek Salad with Feta Cheese*	(Leftovers)	Greek Bean Pita Sandwich*
Dinner	Mediterranean Pie* and Green Salad	Your choice of pasta with store-bought sauce and added vegetables	Italian Wedding Soup* with a Green Salad and Brown Bread	Eggplant Cakes* with Store-bought pasta and sauce	Mediterranean Style Orange Roughy* with Cauliflower Salad*	Pasta with Shrimp* with Greek Salad and Feta Cheese*	Frittata* with a Green Salad

	Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20	Day 21
Breakfast	Apple Cinnamon French Toast* (Leftovers)	Cereal with skim milk and your choice of fruit	North African Breakfast Buns*	North African Breakfast Buns* (Leftovers)	Yogurt with granola and your choice of fruit	Frittata*	Omelet with your choice of vegetables
Snack	Cheesy Sun Dried Tomato and Spinach Dip* with Pita	Hummus* and Pita Bread	Cheese Spread* and Crackers	Tsasisiki (store bought) with Pita	Raw vegetables with dip	Handful of walnuts or almonds	Hummus* and Pita Bread
Lunch	Mediterranean Salad*	Veggie Wrap*	(Leftovers)	(Leftovers)	Zucchini, tomatoes and Italian dressing with walnuts	Soup (Leftovers)	Mediterranean Pie*
Dinner	Onion and Garlic Linguine* with Green Salad	Chicken with Almonds* and Greek Salad with Feta Cheese*	Italian Wedding Soup* with Cauliflower Salad*	Pasta with Shrimp*	Minestrone Soup (store bought) with Bread and Salad	Store- bought Gnocchi and Sauce with a Green Salad	Mediterranean Fish (Tilapia)* with a Greek Salad (store bought)

	Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25	Day 26	Day 27	Day 28
Breakfast	Apple Cinnamon French Toast*	Mediterranean Breakfast*	Boiled Eggs with Toast and your choice of fresh fruit	Yogurt Granola and your choice of fresh fruit	Oatmeal, cinnamon, brown sugar, raisins and apples	Omelet with your choice of vegetables	Frittata*
Snack	Your choice of fresh fruit	Cheese Foldovers*	Hummus* with Pita	Your choice of fresh vegetables and dip	Tsaskiki and Pita	Your choice of fresh fruit	Your choice of fresh vegetables and dip
Lunch	Chicken BLT on Brown Bread with Leftover Soup	(Leftovers)	Veggie Wrap*	Donair or Schwarma (restaurant bought)	Mediterranean Sandwich*	Greek Salad with Feta Cheese*	Ham and Swiss Sandwich with Soup
Dinner	Mediterranean Tuna* with a Green Salad and Brown Bread	Store bought pasta with tomato sauce and added vegetables	Vegetable and Bean Soup* with Bread	Eggplant Cakes* and Chicken with Almonds*	Mediterranean Orange Roughy* with crusty bread and green salad	Mediterranean Pie* with Green Salad	Turkey Lasagna with Green Salad

SUGGESTED MAINTENANCE EATING PLAN

The Mediterranean Diet is supposed to be a life-long endeavor that requires few changes throughout.

If you are not losing the weight you would like to, look at how many vegetables you are eating on a daily basis. Increase the amount if you'd like. Also, remember only to use extra virgin olive oil when cooking, exercise moderately every day, and focus on the Mediterranean Diet food pyramid if you are lost. Soon enough the weight will come off and you'll be able to move into maintenance.

If you'd like to eat something that isn't mentioned in the Mediterranean Diet and you've hit your goal weight, re introduce it slowly. Try having one small portion of it a day, or as often as you are comfortable. Monitor your weight, how you feel, and see how your body reacts to the food. If all is well after a couple of weeks, you can continue eating it in moderation. Do this with any foods you are concerned about or that aren't listed in the diet and you'll soon create your own best case scenario way of keeping the weight off forever.

APPLE CINNAMON FRENCH TOAST

Serves 10

1 lb French bread
Nonstick cooking spray
8 large eggs, slightly beaten
3 1/2 cup skim milk
1 cup of sugar, divided
1 tablespoon vanilla
6 medium apples, peeled, cored and sliced thinly
3 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground nutmeg
1 tbs butter



- Step 1.** Slice bread into 1 1/2-inch slices. Coat a 9-by-13-inch pan with nonstick cooking spray and tightly pack bread into pan.
- Step 2.** In a large bowl, stir together eggs, milk, 1/2 cup sugar and the vanilla. Pour half of the egg mixture over the bread slices.
- Step 3.** Evenly distribute apple slices over bread. Top with remaining egg mixture.
- Step 4.** In a small bowl combine remaining 1/2-cup sugar, the cinnamon and nutmeg. Sprinkle over apples. Dot with butter. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
- Step 5.** The next day, uncover pan and bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 1 hour. Remove from oven and let stand for 10 to 15 minutes. Cut into squares and serve warm.

CAULIFLOWER SALAD

1 head [cauliflower](#), cut into florets
1/4 cup [red bell peppers](#), chopped
2 tablespoons [fresh parsley](#), chopped
1/4 cup Greek olives
1 tablespoon [capers](#)
1 tablespoon wine vinegar
3 tablespoons [olive oil](#)
1/2 teaspoon [dried oregano](#) salt and pepper, to taste

- Step 1.** Steam cauliflower florets until just tender.
Step 2. Refresh under cold water to stop the cooking process.
Step 3. In a bowl, combine cauliflower, pepper, parsley, olives and capers, toss lightly.
Step 4. Whisk together the vinegar, oil and oregano and pour over vegetables.
Step 5. Marinate in the refrigerator for 2 hours or even overnight.



CHEESE FOLDOVER

Serves 4-6

FOLDOVERS

- 1 (6 oz) container crumbled feta cheese with garlic and herbs (1 ¼ cups)
- 2 ounces finely shredded [Romano cheese](#)
- ¼ cup finely chopped [green onions](#) (4 medium)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped [ripe olives](#)
- 1 [egg](#)

- 1 [egg](#), separated
- 1 (16 1/3 oz) can refrigerated buttermilk biscuits
- 1 teaspoon [water](#)
- 2 teaspoons [sesame seeds](#)

GARNISH

- 1 sprig [fresh parsley](#)
- 1 whole [ripe olives](#)

- Step 1.** Heat oven to 350°F.
- Step 2.** Lightly grease large cookie sheet with shortening or spray with cooking spray. In medium bowl, mix cheeses, onions and olives. Mash with fork to break up any large chunks of cheese. Stir in 1 egg and 1 egg white with fork until well combined.
- Step 3.** Separate dough into 8 biscuits; separate each evenly into 2 layers, making 16 biscuit rounds. Press each into 3 1/2-inch dough round. Spoon about 1 rounded tablespoon cheese mixture onto center of each dough round. Fold dough in half over filling; press edges to seal. Place on greased cookie sheet.
- Step 4.** In small bowl, beat egg yolk and water with fork until well blended; brush over dough foldovers. Sprinkle sesame seed over each.
- Step 5.** Bake at 350°F for 16 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 5 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet; place on serving platter. Garnish platter with parsley and several olives. Serve warm.



CHEESE SPREAD

Serves 4

ounces [cream cheese](#), softened
1/2 cup [feta cheese](#), crumbled (about 2 oz)
3 tablespoons chopped [Kalamata olives](#)
2 tablespoons chopped [sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil](#)
1-2 clove [garlic](#), minced
3 tablespoons chopped [fresh basil](#)

Combine all ingredients, cover and chill at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.



CHEESY SUN DRIED TOMATO & SPINACH DIP

Serves 4

1/4 cup cream cheese
1/4 cup sour cream
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1/2 cup shredded Monterey jack cheese
1/8 cup parmesan cheese
10 ounces frozen spinach
4 ounces julienne sun-dried tomatoes (drained)
1 crushed garlic clove
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon pepper and salt, to taste
1/2 chopped bell pepper

- Step 1.** Thaw the spinach and squeeze out the excess water.
Step 2. Drain and pat dry the tomatoes.
Step 3. In a medium sauce pan put all cheeses, sourcream, spinach, Worcestershire sauce, and crushed garlic.
Step 4. Melt on a medium low setting.
Step 5. Stir mixture until everything is incorporated.
Step 6. Add some onion powder, salt, and pepper until it tastes good to you.
Step 7. Add the sun dried tomatoes and stir.
Step 8. Put in to a serving bowl and top with the tiny pieces of green pepper.



CHICKEN WITH ALMONDS

Serves 4

1 chicken, cut into 8 pieces (3 to 3 1/2 pounds)
6 Tbs olive oil
1 Tb tomato paste
4 Tbs white or red wine vinegar
2 Tbs sugar
1 t salt
1/2 t pepper
3/4 cup blanched almonds, crushed
1/4 cup blanched whole almonds, toasted

- Step 1.** Brown the chicken in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over low heat. This will take about 15 minutes. Drain the chicken and set aside.
- Step 2.** Pour the remaining olive oil into the pan with the tomato paste dissolved in 1-cup warm water. When the sauce begins to boil, add the vinegar, sugar, salt, pepper, and crushed almonds. When the sauce returns to a boil, add the chicken pieces, lower the heat, and cook, uncovered, for 45 to 50 minutes, adding a little water if the sauce starts to get too thick. Turn the pieces of chicken over at least once.
- Step 3.** Arrange the chicken on a platter covered with some sauce. Sprinkle the toasted almonds on top. Serve warm in winter and at room temperature in summer.

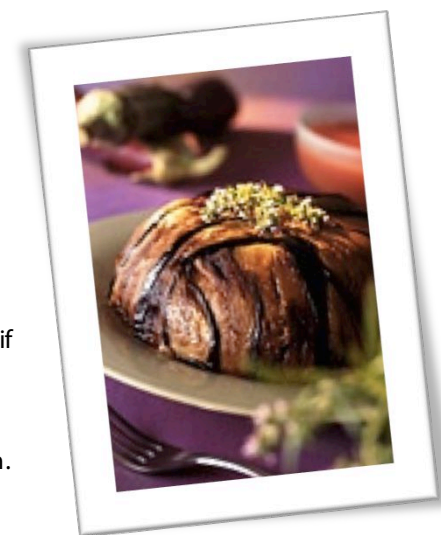


EGGPLANT CAKES

Serves 4

- 1 eggplant, sliced in 1/2 " slices
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 egg white, beaten (you may need more if you have a large eggplant)
- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs (prefer white)
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 4 ounces parmesan cheese
- 4 ounces feta cheese (can omit, to make healthier)
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil
- 2 green onions
- salt
- fresh ground black pepper
- 4 tablespoons olive oil

- Step 1.** Preheat oven to 375°F.
- Step 2.** Brush eggplant slices evenly with olive oil.
- Step 3.** Bake for 20 minutes until golden brown and tender.
- Step 4.** Remove from oven, and finely dice the eggplant slices.
- Step 5.** In a medium bowl, combine the chopped eggplant pieces with the garlic, egg whites, Parmesan, feta, breadcrumbs, basil and parsley and green onions.
- Step 6.** Add the salt and pepper in quantities at your discretion.
- Step 7.** Mix everything well and place in the refrigerator 20min to firm up.
- Step 8.** (Note: add this stage you may adjust the mixture by adding more breadcrumbs if it does not hold well together).
- Step 9.** Divide the mixture into 6-8 equal portions, and shape into a flattened ball.
- Step 10.** Coat with flour.
- Step 11.** Fry the fritters in shallow oil for 2 minutes on either side, till they are golden brown.
- Step 12.** Serve with a salad, lemon wedges and a yoghurt sauce to dip into, if preferred.



FRITTATA

Serves 1

3 **eggs**, lightly beaten
1 1/2 teaspoons **olive oil**
1/4 cup **mushrooms**, sliced
1/4 cup **zucchini**, halved and sliced
2 tablespoons **asparagus spears**
2 tablespoons **tomatoes**, diced
2 teaspoons **basil**, chopped
1 tablespoon **parmesan cheese**, grated

Step 1. Heat the oil in a small non-stick skillet.

Step 2. Add the mushrooms, zucchini and asparagus.

Step 3. Cook until just soft.

Step 4. Add the basil and tomatoes and cook for 1-minute longer.

Step 5. Pour the eggs over the vegetables.

Step 6. When set, turn the frittata over, sprinkle with cheese and place under the broiler for 45-seconds (or until the cheese has melted).

Step 7. Serve with grilled garlic bread.



GREEK BEAN PITA SANDWICH

Serves 6

1 1/2 cups cooked [white beans](#), rinsed and drained at room temperature
1 1/2 cups [cucumbers](#), diced
1 cup [tomatoes](#), seeded and diced
1/2 cup [green bell peppers](#), diced
1/2 cup [feta cheese](#), crumbled
1/4 cup [red onions](#), diced
1/4 cup chopped [black olives](#)
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 1/2 teaspoons [dried oregano](#)
1/4 teaspoon [pepper](#)
6 whole whole-wheat pita bread
6 leaves [red leaf lettuce](#)



- Step 1.** Combine all ingredients except pitas and lettuce in a medium bowl and mix well.
Step 2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours to blend flavors.
Step 3. Place a lettuce leaf on each pita and spoon filling on top of the lettuce in the center of each pita.
Step 4. Fold pitas in half and serve.

GREEK SALAD & FETA CHEESE

Serves 4, Doubles and Triples well

4 cups mixed salad greens
1 cup chopped [plum tomatoes](#)
1 cup coarsely chopped [Kalamata olives](#)
1 cup peeled pitted and chopped [avocados](#)
3/4 cup crumbled [feta cheese](#)
3/4 cup [garbanzo beans](#), drained and rinsed
1/4 cup thin [red onions](#), sliced
1/2 cup balsamic vinaigrette salad dressing

Step 1. Toss all ingredients except vinaigrette in a large bowl and cover.

Step 2. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Step 3. Add vinaigrette and toss to coat.



HUMMUS

Serves 6, Keep well in the fridge

- 4-5 cloves [garlic](#)
- 1 can [chickpeas](#)
- 1/4 cup tahini paste (sesame paste)
- 3-4 tablespoons [extra-virgin olive oil](#)
- 3-4 tablespoons lemons, juice of (start with 3 tbs first, if you like it a little more tart, add another spoon)
- 3/4 teaspoon [soy sauce](#)
- 3/4 teaspoon [salt](#)
- 1 tablespoon [ground cumin](#)
- 3 teaspoons [ground coriander](#)
- 1/2 teaspoon [cayenne pepper](#) (or less to suit taste buds)
- 1/4 cup [water](#)

- Step 1.** Blend garlic first.
- Step 2.** Add chickpeas; pulse for a few times at first, then puree, adding tahini paste through the feeder.
- Step 3.** Add in olive oil, lemon juice, soyasauce.
- Step 4.** Scrape down the sides of the bowl, then add salt, cumin, coriander, cayenne, lemon juice and water.
- Step 5.** Blend to a smooth paste.



ITALIAN WEDDING SOUP

Serves 6

8 cups chicken broth
¾ lb ground beef
¾ lb ground pork
8 eggs, divided
1 cup dry breadcrumbs
2 teaspoons basil
1 teaspoon parsley
½ cup grated parmesan cheese
1 cup grated parmesan cheese
2 heads escarole, cleaned and chopped

- Step 1.** In soup pot on med heat, bring broth to a boil.
Step 2. In bowl mix beef, pork, 3 eggs, crumbs, basil, parsley, and 1/2 cup Parmesan.
Step 3. Mix well and form into tiny bite size balls.
Step 4. Drop the balls into the broth.
Step 5. Add escarole.
Step 6. When meatballs rise to the top, they are cooked, (7-8 minutes).
Step 7. When escarole is wilted it is done.
Step 8. In another bowl, mix the remaining eggs with the remaining Parmesan.
Step 9. Add to soup, stirring continuously, until cooked through.



MEDITERRANEAN BREAKFAST

Serves 4

1/2 cup water packed [artichoke hearts](#)
1/2 cup chopped ripe [plum tomatoes](#)
4-6 tablespoons torn [fresh basil leaves](#)
1/4 cup crumbled [feta cheese](#)
1 teaspoon [lemon juice](#)
6 [eggs](#)
2 whole pita pocket bread rounds

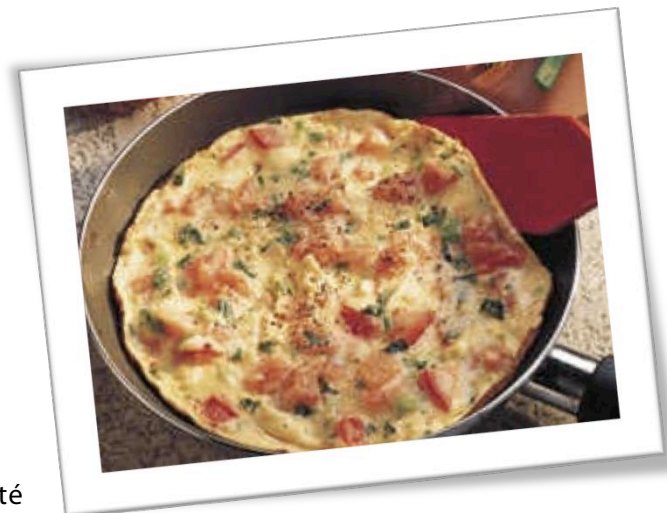
- Step 1.** Mix the first five items in a bowl.
- Step 2.** In a separate bowl beat the eggs until they are pale yellow in color.
- Step 3.** Mix eggs and prior items together.
- Step 4.** Scramble mixture over medium heat.
- Step 5.** Place egg mixture in pita halves.
- Step 6.** Add any spices you'd like to try (pepper is a good choice).



MEDITERRANEAN EGGS

Serves 2

1 teaspoon [unsalted butter](#)
1 tablespoon [olive oil](#)
300 g [cherry tomatoes](#), quartered
200 g [button mushrooms](#), roughly chopped
6 [eggs](#)
6 [basil leaves](#), finely sliced
1/4 cup cream, low fat is fine [salt](#), to taste [fresh ground black pepper](#), to taste
1 tablespoon freshly grated [parmesan cheese](#)
2 slices country bread (thick slices)
4 slices [prosciutto](#)



- Step 1.** Heat the butter and oil in a large non-stick pan and sauté the tomatoes and mushrooms, until they begin to soften (about 2-3 minutes).
- Step 2.** At the same time, beat together the eggs, basil, cream, seasonings and Parmesan with a fork; then add them to the tomatoes and mushrooms and scramble.
- Step 3.** Grill or toast the bread and pan fry the prosciutto in a little olive oil (preferably in a non-stick pan) until crisp.
- Step 4.** To serve, place a piece of bread on each plate and top with the scrambled eggs and then the prosciutto. Garnish with a sprig of basil.

MEDITERRANEAN FISH (TILAPIA)

Serves 4

4 medium [zucchini](#), sliced about 1/2 inch thick
2 teaspoons [garlic](#), minced
4 Tilapia fish fillets
1 (14 ½ oz) can [diced tomatoes](#) (may use diced tomatoes with onions and green pepper)
1 teaspoon [fresh lemon juice](#)
1 teaspoon [sugar](#) or [Splenda sugar substitute](#)
1 teaspoon [capers](#), drained and rinsed
1 (2 ¼ oz) can sliced [black olives](#)
¾ cup [parmesan cheese](#), grated

- Step 1.** Sauté the zucchini and garlic in a skillet that has been sprayed with cooking spray.
- Step 2.** Sauté until the zucchini is crisp-tender.
- Step 3.** In a 9x13 baking dish place the zucchini and garlic evenly in the bottom.
- Step 4.** Place the fish evenly on top.
- Step 5.** In a small bowl mix the next five ingredients and pour over the fish, covering well.
- Step 6.** Place in a preheated 400 degree oven and bake for 30 minutes or until the fish flakes easily.
- Step 7.** Sprinkle the cheese over the whole dish and return to the oven for 5 more minutes.



MEDITERRANEAN PIE

Serves 10

2 tablespoons [butter](#) or [margarine](#)
2 sweet red peppers, diced
2 small [onions](#), chopped
2 [garlic cloves](#), minced
2 (10 oz) packages [frozen spinach](#), thawed & squeezed dry

2 (14 oz) packages [frozen puff pastry](#), thawed
12 ounces black forest ham, sliced
1 lb mozzarella cheese, grated
8 [eggs](#), beaten & seasoned with salt & pepper
1 [egg](#), beaten (for glaze)

- Step 1.** Melt butter in skillet over medium heat; cook peppers, onions & garlic for about 12 minutes or until all liquid evaporates.
- Step 2.** Remove from heat & stir in spinach; set aside.
- Step 3.** Roll each piece of pastry to 1/8 inch thickness; use 1 piece to line a 10 inch spring form pan, leaving excess draped over sides.
- Step 4.** Layer half the ham slices in the bottom, sprinkle half the cheese, and spread half the veggies followed by the eggs.
- Step 5.** Repeat these layers.
- Step 6.** Cover with remaining pastry, trim off edges & pinch layers together; cut steam vents in the top & brush with egg glaze.
- Step 7.** Place pan on a rimmed baking sheet in the centre of a preheated 400F oven for 15 minutes.
- Step 8.** Reduce heat to 350F and bake for an additional 45 to 60 minutes or until top is golden & knife inserted in centre is hot when pulled out.
- Step 9.** Let cool for 15 minutes; remove pan sides & cut in to wedges.



MEDITERRANEAN SALAD

Serves 2-4

4 tablespoons [olive oil](#)
1 red pepper, thinly sliced
1 green pepper, thinly sliced
1 yellow pepper, thinly sliced
1 (400 g) can [chickpeas](#), drained
1 (400 g) can [artichoke hearts](#), drained

1 small [avocado](#), peeled and sliced
6 [sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil](#),
drained and chopped
2 tablespoons [za'atar spice mix](#)
4 tablespoons chopped [parsley](#)
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar salt and
pepper, to taste



- Step 1.** Put half the olive oil in a frying pan and sauté the sliced peppers for 3-5 minutes until the skins start to blister and the peppers soften.
- Step 2.** Take off the heat and leave to cool slightly for a few minutes.
- Step 3.** Meanwhile, put the chickpeas, artichoke hearts, avocado and tomatoes in a large bowl.
- Step 4.** When the peppers have cooled slightly, add them to the other ingredients in the bowl.
- Step 5.** Sprinkle over the Za'atar seasoning, or make a reasonable substitute by combining thyme, marjoram, and sesame seeds with a bit of salt.
- Step 6.** Make the dressing by mixing up the other half of the olive oil and balsamic vinegar.
- Step 7.** Pour the dressing over the salad and mix well.
- Step 8.** Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle with the parsley.
- Step 9.** Serve either at room temperature or chilled.
- Step 10.** If you are making this ahead of time, leave out the avocados until just before serving or they will discolor.
- Step 11.** You can also spice up this salad by using a chili-infused olive oil.

MEDITERRANEAN SANDWICH

Serves 1

2 pieces of sliced sourdough bread
2-3 tablespoons hummus (store bought or homemade)
1-2 tablespoon [sun-dried tomatoes](#) (oil packed)
2 slices part-skim mozzarella cheese

- Step 1.** Toast bread.
- Step 2.** Spread hummus on both pieces of bread.
- Step 3.** Spread sun dried tomatoes on one piece of bread.
- Step 4.** Put cheese on the other piece of bread.
- Step 5.** Put together and microwave until cheese melts.



MEDITERRANEAN STYLE ORANGE ROUGHY

Serves 4

4 (6 oz) orange roughy fillets, 1/2 inch thick	2 small plum tomatoes, seeded, and finely chopped
4 ounces feta cheese with dried basil and tomato or plain feta cheese	2 teaspoons grated lemons, rind of
¼ cup low-fat sour cream	1 teaspoon dried oregano
¼ cup finely chopped red onions	½ teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
1 clove garlic, minced finely	½ teaspoon kosher salt
3 tablespoons capers, drained and rinsed	1-2 teaspoon white wine (optional)

Step 1. Preheat oven to 400°F Line baking sheet with foil.

Step 2. Lightly spray foil with non-stick spray.

Step 3. Season fish on both sides with kosher salt and fresh ground pepper.

Step 4. In a medium bowl combine feta, sour cream, red onion, garlic, capers, tomatoes, lemon peel and oregano and stir until thoroughly combined.

Step 5. Add wine to feta cheese mixture if desired.

Step 6. Arrange fish on prepared baking sheet.

Step 7. Spread cheese topping over fish.

Step 8. Bake until fish is just cooked through, approximately 10-12 minutes.



NORTH AFRICAN BREAKFAST BUNS (MLAOUI)

Makes about 24 small buns

This recipe, from "The Essential Mediterranean" (Harper Collins) by Nancy Harmon Jenkins is a feature of [The Radio Kitchen](#).

1/8 tsp active dry yeast	1 tb extra virgin olive oil, plus a bit more to work the dough
1 cup warm water	1 large egg sea salt
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour	1/2 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature honey for serving
1 3/4 cups semoli	

- Step 1.** Mix the yeast in 1/2 cup of the warm water and set aside to dissolve.
- Step 2.** Combine the all-purpose flour and semolina in a bowl and stir in the dissolved yeast. Add the olive oil and egg and combine to mix well. The mixture should be about the consistency of mashed potatoes at first. If it seems too dry, add a little bit more warm water, in increments of 1/4 cup in order to avoid adding too much all at once. (If you do add too much, stir in a little more semolina.)
- Step 3.** Add the salt and knead the dough on a lightly greased board for about 5 minutes, or until you feel the yeast and gluten start to come together and make springy dough. Transfer the dough to a lightly greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and set aside for a couple of hours or overnight.
- Step 4.** When you are ready to make the buns, punch the dough down and divide in half. Oil your hands with olive oil. Take one of the dough halves in your left hand (assuming your right-handed) and squeezed out between your thumb and index finger a lump about the size of a ping-pong ball, and pull it off with your right hand. Roll it in your oiled palms and set aside. Continue until you've formed all the dough into balls.
- Step 5.** Take a ping-pong ball of dough and roll it into a snake between your palms. Using a rolling pin, roll the snake on a lightly greased board into a long, thin strip of dough, about 1 inch wide and 4 to 5 inches long. Using your fingers, spread a small dab of butter in a thin smear over the dough. Then roll the dough up in a tight cylinder. Continue until all the dough balls have been rolled.
- Step 6.** Midway through this process set a cast-iron griddle on the stove over medium heat and let it heat up while you continue to shape the buns. When all the buns are formed, that the first cylinder and pat it between your oiled palms into a disk. You can use the rolling pin to help with this, but it should not be rolled too flat -- about 1/8 to 1/4 inch is plenty. Set the disk on the hot griddle and let it bake for about 2 minutes to a side, or until the sides are toasted brown and the inside is cooked through. It will look like a small squat English muffin and the inside should be rather flaky because of the layers of butter. Check the first bun to be sure the temperatures are correct and adjust accordingly. Continue cooking until they're all done, keeping the finished ones in the oven until you're ready to serve.

ONION & GARLIC LINGUINE

Serves 6-8

2 large [Spanish onions](#), thinly sliced
3 cloves [garlic](#), minced
1/3 cup [olive oil](#)
1/4 cup [butter](#)
1 teaspoon [basil](#)
1 cup [chicken broth](#)
1/8 teaspoon [black pepper](#)
1 lb cooked [linguine](#)
1/4 cup [parmesan cheese](#) (grated)

- Step 1.** In a large skillet, brown onions in olive oil and butter.
- Step 2.** Add garlic, cook for 2 more minutes.
- Step 3.** Add basil, pepper, and chicken stock and continue cooking for 10 minutes.
- Step 4.** Add onion garlic mixture to linguini and heat through.
- Step 5.** Add Parmesan cheese, toss and serve.



PASTA WITH SHRIMP

Serves 4-6

1 lb shrimp , peeled and de-veined	1 (7 oz) jar roasted sweet red peppers, drained and sliced
1 cup sun-dried tomatoes , chopped (not oil packed)	1 cup pitted kalamata olives , chopped
1 cup boiling water	1 teaspoon sea salt
¼ cup olive oil	½ teaspoon black pepper
4-6 cloves garlic , minced	¼ cup dry white wine
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)	4 ounces crumbled feta cheese
1 tablespoon fresh oregano , minced (may use 1/3 amount dried)	¼ cup chopped Italian parsley
1 (14 oz) can artichoke hearts	1 lemon
	16 ounces spaghetti or penne pasta, cooked until al dente extra-virgin olive oil (as needed) (optional)

- Step 1.** Peel shrimp and de-vein; keep chilled until needed.
- Step 2.** Chop sun-dried tomatoes into small pieces; place in a heat-proof bowl and cover with boiling water; allow to rest until softened, 15-30 minutes.
- Step 3.** Cook pasta until al dente, 8-10 minutes, or according to package directions; start to prepare vegetables and shrimp just as pasta cooks.
- Step 4.** Drain softened sun-dried tomatoes from water and reserve the soaking liquid (you may need this later).
- Step 5.** In a large deep skillet, heat olive oil on medium heat, and add garlic, pepper flakes (if using), and oregano, just until fragrant.
- Step 6.** Add the artichokes, sliced red peppers, chopped olives, and softened tomatoes; season with salt and pepper.
- Step 7.** Add the wine, reduce heat to low, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 3-5 minutes.
- Step 8.** Check your pasta, taste it to see if it is al dente; drain when ready,
- Step 9.** and toss with a little extra virgin olive oil if desired.
- Step 10.** Add the shrimp and the feta to the pan, and cook over moderate heat until the shrimp curl and turn pink, several minutes.
- Step 11.** Sprinkle the dish with parsley and add the juice of the lemon, being careful not to add the seeds.
- Step 12.** Fold in the cooked pasta, tossing to mix, until everything is evenly blended.
- Step 13.** Add some of the reserved cooking liquid from the sun-dried tomatoes if the pasta seems too dry, use your own judgment as to how much you like to add.
- Step 14.** Serve hot.

VEGETABLE & BEAN SOUP

Serves 6-8

1/2 cup dry fava beans
1/2 cup dry haricots or other white beans Salt
2 medium onions, cut into eighths and separated
1 carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 celery stalk, coarsely chopped
1 bay leaf
1 bulb fennel, coarsely chopped

1 bunch dill chopped (about 2 pounds)
3 cabbage leaves
1 bunch beet or Swiss chard leaves or 1 pound spinach leaves
3 Belgian endive leaves Pepper
1 cup Arborio rice, washed Extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling
Grated parmesan cheese, for serving (optional)

- Step 1.** Soak the dry beans for 1 hour in cold water; drain. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the beans, onions, carrot, celery, and bay leaf.
- Step 2.** After the water returns to a boil, reduce the heat so that the soup slowly simmers. Check the beans after 45 minutes, and if they are still hard, continue cooking until they are almost soft.
- Step 3.** Add the bulb fennel and dill, cabbage, beet leaves, and endive leaves. Taste for salt and pepper. Simmer for 25 minutes, uncovered.
- Step 4.** Add the rice, Cover and cook for 15 minutes. Serve with a generous amount of extra-virgin olive oil drizzled on each serving. You can also sprinkle some Parmesan cheese on top.



VEGGIE WRAP

Serves 1

1 soft cracker bread, halved or 1 large [flour tortilla](#)
4 ounces hummus
1/4 cup [fresh parsley](#), chopped
8 [ripe olives](#), sliced
1 small [cucumber](#), thinly sliced
1 small [tomato](#), seeded and chopped
1 ounce [feta cheese](#), crumbled

Step 1. Spread hummus on the bread to within 1/2 inch of the edge.

Step 2. Add parsley, cucumber, olives, tomato, and cheese on top of hummus.

Step 3. Roll up and serve.



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