

WHAT SHOULD YOU EAT LESS:

- Eggs are safe to eat, but limited because they are high in saturated fats, albeit rich in protein and some brain-healthy fats too. Keep them on your plate but do not make them a staple.
- Red meat: Definitely save for once a week, preferably once in two weeks.
- Poultry is high in protein and relatively lean. Should not be your main source of protein though.
- Cheese can be had in limited portions. Opt for low fat versions of cheddar and cottage; which are easily available.
- Milk is a good source of calcium but so is soy. If choosing dairy-based milk, buy the skimmed ones. If choosing nut milk or soymilk, go for the sugar-free version. Butters and spreads are not particularly healthy and are high in saturated fats. Go for peanut butter and almond butter recipes, which are all over the internet. Experiment!



THE PROS AND CONS:

A con of the Mediterranean diet is that there are not designated portions sizes and this is not a diet specifically for weight loss but rather one that encourages heart and brain health. However, it can easily be modified to suit one's preferences. Just count your calories and plan your meals, choose low fat versions and be cautious of your portion sizes. Remember to get at least 150 minutes of cardio per week.

There are countless benefits to the Mediterranean diet. People living in countries where this diet is followed have healthier heart function due to a lower risk of developing diabetes and high blood cholesterol. The foods that are a staple to this diet have a generally low glycaemic index. Not only that, the fact that it is high in antioxidant rich fruits, vegetables and olive oil, along with nuts and fish it is likely to reduce the risk of age related cognitive decline and according to some studies, can even boost memory.

It even lowers the risk of certain cancers, specially breast cancer, colon cancer, prostate cancer and some head and neck cancers, because it is high antioxidants which fight free radicals (cancer causing agents).

So, stock up on pasta, brown rice, olive oil and nuts. Buy fresh fruits and vegetables every week. If you are too busy to go to the market that often, you can even divide them into portions and freeze them. Contradictory to a common myth, frozen fruits and vegetables do not lose their nutritional value. Happy shopping and bon appetite!

