

Easy Mediterranean Diet Recipes for a Healthy Start

Discover simple, flavorful Mediterranean diet recipes designed for beginners and everyday life. From easy breakfasts and satisfying mains to wholesome snacks and light desserts, these recipes make healthy eating approachable, enjoyable, and sustainable all year long.

Avocado Toast

When nothing else is going right, this super simple, yummy and satisfying avocado toast never fails.

Serves 2 | Prep. time 5 minutes | Cooking time 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 slices hearty sandwich bread, such as peasant bread, sourdough, whole-wheat or multi-grain
- 1 medium avocado, halved and pitted
- 8 grape tomatoes, halved
- 2 ounces (about 12) fresh ciliegine or bite-sized mozzarella balls
- 4 large fresh basil leaves, torn
- 2 tablespoons balsamic glaze

Directions

1. Toast the bread.
2. Mash the avocado in a bowl.
3. Spread the avocado on the toast.
4. Top with the remaining ingredients and serve.

Nutrition (per serving)

Calories 649, fat 25 g, carbs 86 g, protein 24 g, sodium 1028 mg

Chicken Shawarma

These small chicken shawarmas are an ideal way to invigorate your relationship. Cooked on a rotisserie and sliced off thinly, this traditional Middle Eastern dish is simple and quick to make at home.

Serves 8 | Prep. time 1 hour 10 minutes | Cooking time 30 minutes

Ingredients

Chicken

- 1 pound chicken tenders
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¾ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon pepper

Sauce

- 1¼ cups Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- Salt and pepper
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- 4 leaves romaine lettuce, shredded
- ½ English cucumber, thinly sliced
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 16 mini pita bread

Directions

1. Put the chicken tenders in a resealable plastic bag. Mix the olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, oregano, garlic powder, cumin, paprika and pepper in a bowl. Put this mixture into the bag with the chicken and marinate the chicken for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
2. Mix the Greek yogurt, garlic and lemon juice in another bowl. Add the dill, parsley, salt, and pepper. Cover and refrigerate.
3. Cook the marinated chicken in a skillet for 4 minutes on both sides. Cool the chicken and cut it into small pieces.
4. To make the shawarma, divide the chicken, cucumber, lettuce, tomato, and onion among the pitas.

Nutrition (per serving)

Calories 422, fat 21 g, carbs 36 g, protein 22 g, sodium 307 mg

Fried Mushrooms with Herbs and Garlic

Light and simple to prepare, these Mediterranean-inspired mushrooms with thyme and garlic make a wonderful and super-quick side dish for any season.

Serves 4 | Cooking time 4 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound white baby mushrooms
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 bunch fresh thyme
- ½ teaspoon fennel seeds (optional)
- Salt and pepper

Directions

1. Wash the mushrooms under cold water and detach the stems. Pat dry with paper towels.
2. Add the olive oil to a skillet and warm over medium heat. Add the mushrooms, garlic, thyme, and fennel seeds, if using. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. Sauté for 4-6 minutes, or until the mushrooms start to get colored and serve.

Nutrition (per serving)

Calories 110, fat 7 g, carbs 8 g, protein 4 g, sodium 220 mg

Baked Falafel

This is an extremely easy, delicious way to make traditional falafel. Serve with pita bread and tzatziki to make a true Mediterranean dinner full of flavor and energy.

Serves 2 | Prep. time 20 minutes | Cooking time 20 minutes

Ingredients

- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 teaspoons olive oil

Directions

1. Squeeze the onion in cheesecloth to remove as much moisture as possible. Set aside.
2. Blend the garbanzos, parsley, garlic, salt, coriander, cumin and baking soda in a blender.
3. Transfer the blended mixture to a bowl and mix in the onion. Add the egg and flour.
4. Make 4 patties and set aside for 15 minutes.
5. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
6. Heat the olive oil in a skillet and fry the patties for 3 minutes on each side.
7. Put the skillet in the oven and bake for 10 minutes. Serve with hummus, if desired.

Nutrition (per serving)

Calories 281, fat 9.3 g, carbs 39.3 g, protein 11.4 g, sodium 909 mg

Sicilian-Style Broccoli Rabe

This is the way broccoli rabe should be cooked. This goes well with a nice fish or meat dish. Serve with crispy whole-wheat Italian bread.

Serves 4 | Prep. time 10 minutes | Cooking time 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 bunch broccoli rabe, ends trimmed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (divided)
- 1 clove garlic, very thinly sliced
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 3 tablespoons water
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Italian whole-wheat bread for serving (optional)

Directions

1. Cut the thick lower stems of the broccoli rabe. Peel and reserve the leaves and florets.
2. Heat the olive oil in a skillet and sauté the red pepper and garlic for 45 seconds.
3. Add the stems and cook for 45 seconds. Add water and cook for 4 minutes.
4. Add the leaves, florets, and salt. Cover and cook for 5 more minutes.
5. Place broccoli rabe on serving plates with its juices. Top with olive oil and serve with crusty whole wheat bread if desired.

Nutrition (per serving)

Calories 78, fat 7 g, carbs 3 g, protein 2 g, sodium 137 mg

Baked Kale Chips with Garlic

Crispy and crunchy, these kale chips are a healthy alternative to greasy processed potato chips. You can enjoy the benefits of kale—like protein, fiber, and omega-3 fatty acid—all rolled up in these tiny flavorful bites.

Serves 1–2 | Prep. time 10 minutes | Cooking time 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 medium-size bunch of kale
- ½ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½–1 teaspoon sea salt (to taste)
- ½–1 teaspoon garlic powder (to taste)
- ¾ teaspoon chili powder

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. Wash the kale and let it dry completely. You can pat it dry with a paper towel or let it sit on a paper towel until it has dried out. If you have a salad spinner, this is the easiest way to get the excess water off the leaves.
3. Remove the stems from the kale. You only want to use the leaves for this recipe; otherwise, the kale chips don't crisp up enough.
4. Once the kale is completely dry, pour some of the olive oil into your hand and toss the kale leaves like a salad. You need to get the oil on and into the leaves, but you don't want too much. A half tablespoon will work for the entire batch of kale chips. The oil will help the spices to stick.
5. Sprinkle the salt, garlic powder and chili powder over the top of the chips.
6. Spread the kale leaves on a baking sheet in a single layer. You may want to work in a couple of batches, as you don't want the leaves to touch each other.
7. Turn the baking sheet after 10 minutes and then cook for an additional 15 minutes. Make sure to keep an eye on the kale chips for the last 5 minutes or so as they can go from crisp to burnt relatively quickly.

Nutrition (per serving)

Calories 74, fat 4 g, carbs 8 g, protein 2 g, sodium 151 mg

Gluten-Free Lemon Cake

Lighten up a gloomy afternoon by baking this super-easy gluten-free lemon cake. It's doused with a fresh lemon syrup for moist lemon flavor.

Serves 8 to 12 | Prep. time 1 hour 33 minutes | Cooking time 40 minutes

Ingredients

Cake

- 2 cups almond flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup polenta
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{7}{8}$ cup unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus more for the pan
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 large eggs
- Finely grated zest of 2 limes
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract

Other ingredients

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- Whipped cream (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a springform pan with parchment paper. Coat the sides with butter.
2. Mix the almond flour, salt, baking soda and polenta in a bowl.
3. Beat the sugar and butter in a stand mixer bowl for 3 minutes.
4. Add the almond flour mixture and beat some more.
5. Beat in the eggs one by one, and the flour in batches.
6. Add the vanilla extract and lemon zest. Pour the batter into the pan and bake for 40 minutes.
7. To make the syrup, heat the powdered sugar and lemon juice in a saucepan.
8. Prick holes in the cake with a toothpick and drizzle the cake with syrup.
9. Let the cake cool for 1 hour and then cut into pieces. Top with whipped cream and serve.

Nutrition (per serving)

Calories 444, fat 29 g, carbs 41 g, protein 8 g, sodium 138 mg

***These recipes and more are found in Madison Miller's *Effortless Mediterranean Diet for Beginners Quick Start: Mediterranean Quick Start Guide 14-Day Meal Plan and Recipes*. To get your copy, click on the cover below or click [here](#).

