



# The Great British Med diet

Weight loss, heart health and anti-ageing! The fantastic health and wellbeing benefits of the Med diet are now beyond doubt. But much as we love the idea, up until now there's been a problem... How do you do it here? Introducing GH's unique British take on cooking and eating Med-style meals

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**Good Housekeeping**  
HEALTH WATCH

PICK YOURSELF  
A BASKET  
OF GOODNESS

**T**he healthiest diet in the world just got better by being British. And it means you don't need to buy expensive out-of-season produce to gain the health benefits of the Med style of eating. Focusing on British ingredients, GH nutritionist Anita Bean has come up with – as far as we're aware – the first-ever home-grown version. Why? Because it seems plain wrong to buy peaches flown in from Italy or tomatoes from Spain when for many weeks of the year you can eat British-grown versions – and get just the same health benefits (at a fraction of the cost!).

## THE NEW RULES

The essence of Med-style eating is generous quantities of vegetables, fruit, beans, lentils, fish; moderate amounts of dairy produce and whole grains, and limited portions of red meat. Most of the fat is unsaturated and comes from British-produced rapeseed oil, and nuts. A small amount of red wine (14 units a week max) is known to be good, too.

- ❖ Instead of focusing on seasonal Med-produce such as red peppers, aubergines, and peaches, choose British-grown fresh fruit and veg in season
- ❖ Buy from local markets and suppliers – the produce is likely to be fresher, more nutritious and cheaper
- ❖ Use rapeseed oil in place of olive oil for cooking and salad dressings
- ❖ Eat smaller portions of high-carb foods (eg, potatoes and pasta) and larger portions of filling veg, salads and high-protein foods (eg, fish and poultry).
- ❖ If you feel hungry between meals, snack on fresh fruit, veg, plain yogurt and nuts (we suggest a 25g portion limit for nuts if you're watching calories), instead of cakes, biscuits and crisps
- ❖ Choose plain yogurt. If you choose the, full-fat type, you'll feel more satiated after eating, because it contains more protein, so. Both protein and fat help to satisfy the appetite and ward off hunger.
- ❖ Use herbs and spices instead of salt or ready-made sauces to flavour your food
- ❖ Drink water instead of sugary drinks wherever possible

## GOOD FOR YOU

### DAILY

- ✓ Rapeseed oil: 2 portions (2 tbsp each portion)
- ✓ Dairy 1-3 portions (each portion: 150ml milk or 3tbsp/150g yogurt)
- ✓ Fruit: 2-3 portions
- ✓ Vegetables: 3-6 portions
- ✓ Grains: (wholemeal bread, wholegrain pasta, rice, etc): 3-6 portions (each portion: 25g). Visit [goodhousekeeping.co.uk/healthy-wholegrains](http://goodhousekeeping.co.uk/healthy-wholegrains) for ideas from GH's cookery team
- ✓ Red wine: (optional) 1 small glass (125ml)

### WEEKLY

- ✓ Potatoes: 3 portions (150g each = 1 medium potato)
- ✓ Poultry: up to 4 portions (100-150g each portion)
- ✓ Fish: up to 4 portions (100-150g each portion)
- ✓ Pulses: 3-4 portions (150g cooked weight each portion)

### MONTHLY

- ✓ Red meat: up to 4 portions (each portion: 85-125g)

THE HEALTH ADVANTAGE

The health benefits for people choosing a Med diet are well established – they're less likely to develop heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and Alzheimer's disease or become obese. One study suggested that a Med diet could prevent about 30% of heart attacks and strokes in people at high risk. Following the diet has also been linked with a lower risk of early death and has proved a successful strategy for healthy weight reduction.



HOME-GROWN STRAWBERRIES WILL KEEP YOU HEALTHIER

protein, unsaturated fats, fibre, vitamins, minerals and protective phytochemicals. Studies show eating 30g (a small handful) of nuts at least 5 times a week can cut your risk of cardiovascular disease by up to half. Nuts are high in calories but are also satiating – studies show that people who eat nuts often are more likely to lose or maintain their weight than those who don't. Nuts can also stabilise blood sugar and lower your cholesterol.

MED vs BRIT

Here's how to get the equivalent nutrients from British fruit and veg:

VEGETABLES			
INSTEAD OF MEDITERRANEAN VEG	EAT THIS BRITISH EQUIVALENT	WHY WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON	BRITISH BONUS HOME GROWN IS BETTER FOR US
Rocket	Cruciferous veg: broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, curly kale	High levels of vitamin C, potassium, fibre, calcium and carotenoids.	Cruciferous veg provide cancer-fighting compounds
Red, orange and yellow peppers	Butternut squash, carrots, pumpkin	High levels of carotenoids, important for healthy skin and for the immune system	These veg provide lutein and zeaxanthin, antioxidants that protect eyes against macular degeneration
Red onions	White and yellow onions, shallots	Great sources of folic acid, fibre and potassium and flavanols that have anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer effects and help protect against heart disease	Yellow onions contain the highest levels of quercetin, which helps thin the blood, lower cholesterol and ward off blood clots
Aubergine	Red cabbage	Contain folic acid, fibre and anthocyanins, pigments that help and protect against heart disease	Red cabbage contains high levels of vitamin C, important for strengthening the immune system
FRUIT			
Year-round tomatoes	Locally-grown tomatoes	Packed with vitamin C and lycopene, which may help reduce the risk of some cancers (lung, stomach and prostate)	Local and seasonal produce contains more vitamin C than imported produce
Peaches, nectarines	Plums	Rich in antioxidants and phytonutrients	Plums contain hydroxycinnamic acid and ferulic acid, which help the body fight cancer
Grapes	Apples, pears	Good for potassium and soluble fibre	Apple eaters have a lower risk of heart disease and stroke, cancer and type 2 diabetes according to studies, thanks to the fruits' high content of flavanols
Oranges, lemons	Strawberries, raspberries, currants	Packed with vitamin C	Strawberries contain ellagic acid, an antioxidant that helps prevent cancer



CHICK PEAS: YOU'LL HAVE TO OUT-SOURCE THESE!

ALL BRITISH?

Our plan includes a few ingredients that aren't grown in Britain but are key components of Med eating and widely available in supermarkets. These include pulses (beans and lentils) and nuts (but look out for Kentish cobnuts in the Autumn) and seeds, which are rich in heart-healthy monounsaturated fat, vitamin E, fibre, protein and minerals.

BEANS, LENTILS AND CHICKPEAS

Beans, lentils and chickpeas provide protein along with iron, zinc, B vitamins and calcium. They also give you filling doses of fibre, phytates and phytosterols. Studies suggest pulses may help manage type 2 diabetes, prevent colon cancer and reduce heart disease risk.

NUTS AND SEEDS

Nuts and seeds are highly nutritious, packed with

4 BENEFITS OF EATING SEASONALLY



SEASONAL FRUIT IS FULL OF VITAMINS

- BETTER FOR YOUR BODY** – foods picked and eaten when in season are higher in nutrients (especially vitamin C) than those flown in out of season from abroad. One study, found spinach harvested in season contained around 3 times more vitamin C than out-of-season produce. Another study found the vitamin content of veg picked and frozen in season was much higher than fresh
- BETTER VALUE** – so you don't pay a premium for food that is scarcer or has travelled a long way. Research has shown that a basket of fruit and veg bought in the Summer can be as much as a third cheaper than the same basket bought out of season
- Better for the planet** – seasonal produce has a lower environmental impact – growing fruit and veg in season requires lower levels of artificial inputs (heating, lighting, pesticides and fertilisers) than at other times of the year, and reduces the energy (and associated CO2 emissions) needed to transport food.
- Better taste** – we all know that a ripe tomato or peach eaten in season is a completely different experience from something air-freighted here.

THE KEY MED SWAPS

Instead of olive oil use: **RAPESEED OIL**

**HEALTH BENEFITS:** Rapeseed oil is good in nutritional terms as a substitute for olive oil – it's produced in the UK, available in supermarkets and cheaper than most olive oils. Like olive oil (which we have been importing since Roman times), it contains high levels of

monounsaturated fatty acids (59g per 100g, vs 73g per 100g in olive oil). These fats help to lower harmful LDL cholesterol and maintain levels of beneficial HDL, which helps carry cholesterol from the arteries to the liver. It is also a rich source of vitamin E and plant sterols, both of which help reduce heart disease risk. It's even lower in saturated fat than olive oil (7g/100g rather than 15g/100g)

and has much higher levels of omega 3s (30% rather than 10%). It works better than olive oil for cooking as it has a higher smoke (or burn) point, making it more stable at high temperatures, so it doesn't degrade into potentially toxic compounds or develop off-flavours when sautéing or frying.

Instead of Mediterranean-grown fruit and veg use: **BRITISH-GROWN SEASONAL FRUIT AND VEG**

**HEALTH BENEFITS:** Substituting seasonal home-grown produce for Mediterranean-grown fruit and veg not only helps look after the budget but is also just as good – or even better – for you. Imported produce is usually picked under-ripe before it has developed all its vitamins and may have lost nutritional value on its journey to the shop. So you're often better off with

British fruit and veg – they contain the same nutrients, vitamins and minerals as Med produce, only in slightly different proportions. The key is to buy your ingredients as fresh as possible, check they are unblemished and undamaged, and buy locally (eg, from local markets and farm shops) wherever possible.

Instead of pasta and rice use: **OATS, BARLEY, SPELT, POTATOES**

**HEALTH BENEFITS:** British-grown cereals such as barley, spelt and oats have more to offer than pasta nutritionally. They contain higher levels of soluble fibre than pasta (wheat), which has been shown to regulate appetite, stabilise blood glucose levels and lower blood cholesterol levels. They also contain more magnesium, zinc and vitamin E. Use grains in stews, soups, salads, risotto. Potatoes contain useful amounts of vitamin C.

8 TIPS FOR EATING OUT

- Try a double first course (fish or veg-based) and skip the main course. Often, that is more than enough food.
- Eat a salad first. Scientists at Pennsylvania State University found that volunteers who ate a big veg salad before the main course ate fewer calories overall than those who didn't.
- Say no to bread – it's all too easy to over-consume it when you're hungry. If you must have something to munch on while you wait, ask for a plate of raw vegetable crudités
- Order fish or poultry for your main course – protein is more satiating than high carb pizza or pasta
- Ask for double veg. Often a side of vegetables in a restaurant is more like garnish – a carrot and a floret of broccoli. When ordering, ask for 2 or 3 times the normal serving of veggies
- Drink water throughout the meal. It'll slow you down, and let the message get to your brain that you're full – before your plate is empty.
- Slow your eating by trying to keep pace with the slowest eater at the table. Take time to savour the flavours of the meal and enjoy the company.
- Skip dessert. You can have sorbet, or even a piece of fruit at home – better health-wise than the chocolate fudge cake or a mountain of ice cream.

# Your Great British MED DIET MENU

## LOOKING FOR MORE IDEAS?

To find out what fruit and veg are in season when, and for more delicious triple-tested Med-style recipes, visit [goodhousekeeping.co.uk/british-med-recipe-ideas](http://goodhousekeeping.co.uk/british-med-recipe-ideas)

### BREAKFAST

approx 300 calories

Plain yogurt with nuts and fruit: 150ml yogurt with 25g chopped nuts, 125g strawberries and 1tsp honey

Apple muesli: mix 50g oats with 100ml semi-skimmed milk and 1 grated apple. Ideally leave overnight in the fridge.

Fruit salad: 100g raspberries, a pear and 2 plums served with 15g almonds

Plain yogurt with honey and walnuts: 150g yogurt with 2tsp honey and 25g walnuts

Muesli with fruit: 25g muesli base, 15g mixed nuts and 100g fresh berries with 125ml skimmed milk

Porridge with plums: cook 40g oats with 250ml semi-skimmed milk; serve with 2 sliced plums and 1tsp honey

1 poached egg on 1 slice wholewheat toast with butter; 2 sliced tomatoes

### LUNCH

approx 400 calories

New potato & chicken salad: combine 125g boiled new potatoes with 125g shredded cooked chicken breast, 125g cherry tomatoes and 50g salad leaves with 1tbsp rapeseed dressing\*

1 small wholewheat pitta bread with 100g baked or grilled salmon fillet, 1tbsp low fat cream cheese and 50g baby spinach leaves

A wholewheat wrap filled with 100g cooked turkey, 50g watercress, sliced tomatoes and 1tbsp rapeseed dressing\*; 1 apple

Mackerel salad: 75g grilled mackerel fillet, combined with 50g mixed salad leaves, chopped spring onion and 1tbsp rapeseed dressing; 150g fresh berries

Houmous and salad pitta: Toast a wholemeal pitta and fill with 2tbsp houmous, tomato slices, and salad leaves

Broad bean, pea and mint soup, 1 slice wholewheat bread with butter; 2 plums  
Click: [goodhousekeeping.co.uk/food/recipes/broad-bean-pea-and-mint-soup](http://goodhousekeeping.co.uk/food/recipes/broad-bean-pea-and-mint-soup)

4 falafels (eg, Cauldron brand) with a mixed leaf salad, sliced tomatoes and spring onions and 1tbsp rapeseed dressing\*

### DINNER

approx 500 calories

Trout served with 150g boiled potatoes and 100g watercress & spinach salad drizzled with 1tbsp rapeseed oil dressing\*

Pork & veg stir-fry made with 100g pork tenderloin (cut into bite sized pieces), 50g shredded spring cabbage, ½ sliced onion, 1 crushed garlic clove, and ½ carrot (cut into thin strips), cooked in 1tbsp rapeseed oil. Add soy sauce to taste and scatter over 1tsp sesame seeds. Serve with 50g (uncooked weight) wholewheat noodles

Prawn salad: combine 75g cooked green beans with 2 chopped spring onions, a few tomato and cucumber slices, a portion of salad leaves and 100g cooked prawns. Drizzle with 1tbsp rapeseed oil dressing\*. Serve with 1 wholegrain roll and butter.

125g turkey breast steak, pan-fried in 1tbsp rapeseed oil (approx 8-10 min); 100g broccoli, 100g carrots and 125g boiled potatoes; 125g stewed rhubarb and 2tbsp ready-to-serve custard

Salmon with roasted vegetables: 150g boiled new potatoes; 100g strawberries with 1tbsp single cream  
Click: [goodhousekeeping.co.uk/food/recipes/salmon-with-roasted-vegetables-and-pine-nuts](http://goodhousekeeping.co.uk/food/recipes/salmon-with-roasted-vegetables-and-pine-nuts)

Smoked mackerel superfood salad, plus 150g strawberries, 2tbsp plain yogurt and 1tsp honey  
Click: [goodhousekeeping.co.uk/food/recipes/smoked-mackerel-superfood-salad](http://goodhousekeeping.co.uk/food/recipes/smoked-mackerel-superfood-salad)

Chicken and barley stew; 125g fresh raspberries with 150g plain yogurt  
Click: [goodhousekeeping.co.uk/food/recipes/chicken-and-barley-stew](http://goodhousekeeping.co.uk/food/recipes/chicken-and-barley-stew)

### SNACK

approx 150 calories

25g houmous plus carrot and celery sticks

170g pot plain yogurt with blueberries

170g pot plain yogurt with 100g fresh berries and 1tsp honey

2 apples and 2 plums

170g plain yogurt with 15g cashew nuts and 1tsp honey

2 oatcakes with 1tsp peanut butter

25g cashews

\*Rapeseed dressing: whisk together 1tsp clear honey, ½tbsp Dijon mustard, juice of ½ lemon and 3tbsp rapeseed oil

