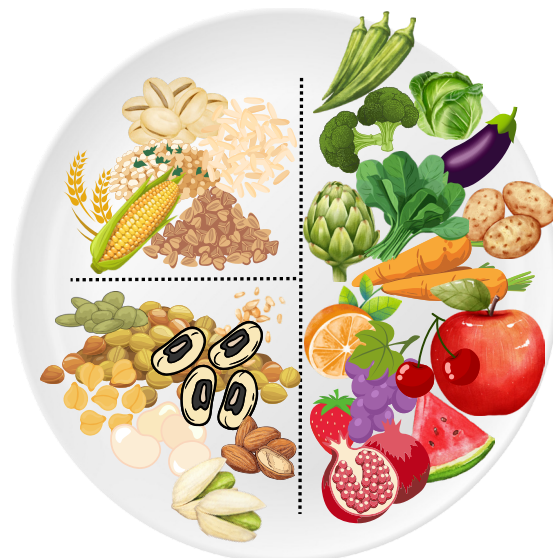


VN DPG Culture Plates: Mediterranean Cuisine



About the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean region comprises countries with coastal regions touching the Mediterranean sea. In this brochure, these countries are categorized into four regions to reflect shared foods and meal patterns. Although there are similarities that tie together the Mediterranean region, each country also holds its own unique cultural history and cuisine.

Meat, seafood, and dairy products are common dietary staples throughout the Mediterranean region, as are grains, legumes, vegetables, nuts and seeds. Additionally, a number of traditional dishes are plant-forward or entirely vegetarian.

Portion Plate

How to select foods:

To build a well-balanced Mediterranean inspired plate, one should select foods from a variety of groups. These can be plated separately or mixed together in a dish, such as a stew or pasta dish. Many Mediterranean countries are also known for using olive oil, citrus, herbs, and spices in their cooking as well.

Building your Mediterranean Plate:

Vegetables - Tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, eggplant, potatoes, leeks, onion, garlic, peppers, okra, carrots, cabbage, artichokes, spinach, asparagus

Fruit - Citrus, grapes, figs, dates, pomegranate, melon, watermelon, persimmon, peaches, pears, strawberries, apricots

Grains - Wheat (often prepared as pasta, leavened breads, or flatbreads), rice, maize, bulgur, barley, sorghum, semolina (couscous), farro

Protein - Lentils, chickpeas, peas, black-eyed peas, fava (broad) beans, cannellini beans

Seasonings - Olive oil, lemon (juice and/or rind), parsley, dill, mint, thyme, oregano, basil, bay leaves, cumin, paprika, fennel, nigella seeds, coriander, harissa, za'atar, ras el hanout, allspice

Dairy (substitutes) - Milk, yogurt, cheese, cream (Plant-based alternatives for milk, yogurt, cheese, cream, etc.)

North African

Countries include: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt

In North Africa, the majority of the population lives along the Mediterranean coast. Islam is the predominant religion, which may influence dietary choices or eating patterns, such as avoiding pork products and alcohol and fasting during Ramadan. Spices and herbs (detailed in the table below) are often used heavily. Some common plant-based dishes include fuul medammes (fava bean stew) and tagines (which often include a combination of vegetables and legumes and/or meats prepared in a clay cooking vessel).

Middle Eastern

Countries include: Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and (at times) Egypt

The Middle East is a very diverse region with people of many different races and religions. Religious practices such as Ramadan or Shabbat contribute to differences in diet and eating patterns. Some popular plant-based dishes in this region include falafel (fried balls comprised of chickpeas or fava beans), hummus and pita bread, fresh salads like tabbouleh or fattoush, and lentil stews.

Southwestern Europe

Countries include: Portugal, Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, and Malta

The Southwestern European diet is diverse and reflects the unique microclimates of each country, yet certain staples like breads, wine, and olive oil are shared across the region. Traditional diets emphasize fresh, local and seasonal ingredients, with a cultural appreciation for the preparation and enjoyment of food (i.e., terroir). Often, a midday meal is the largest

meal of the day. Meals frequently include multiple courses and are eaten slowly. A mid-afternoon snack, such as the Spanish *merienda*, Italian *la merenda*, or French *gouter*, is a cherished tradition.

Southeastern European

Countries include: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, and Greece.

Southeastern European countries on the Balkan Peninsula, have overlapping, but unique Mediterranean, Ottoman, and Slavic influences that are reflected in their cuisines. Central to their culinary traditions is *mezze*, a style of dining that features an assortment of small dishes, dips, and salads encouraging communal eating and showcase the diversity of local ingredients. Whole grains, such as farro and barley, and fava bean and cannellini (white) bean dishes are popular.

Mediterranean Cuisine by Region:

	North Africa	Middle East	Southwest Europe	Southeast Europe
Legumes	Lentils, chickpeas, fava beans Black-eyed peas	Lentils, Chickpeas, Fava beans, Black-eyed peas, White beans	Cannellini beans Lentils Pulses	Fava beans Tetovac (white) beans Lentils Chickpeas
Cereals and Cereal Grains	Rice, wheat and wheat products, barley, couscous	Rice, couscous (Durum wheat), Sorghum, Freekeh, Bulgur, wheat and wheat products	Rice Buckwheat Barley Spelt Polenta Couscous (durum wheat) Farro Maize	Rice Farro Barley Wheat and wheat products Spelt
Fruits	Pomegranates, oranges, watermelon, dates, lemons	Pomegranates, citrus, kiwi, apples, persimmons, quince, strawberries, peaches, apricots, mangoes, cherries, cantaloupe, watermelon, plums, figs, dates, and grapes	Grapes, citrus, pears, apples, strawberries, cherries, peaches, plums, apricots, figs, melons, persimmons	Cherries, pears, apples, peaches, apricots, melons, watermelons, figs, grapes, lemons, oranges and persimmon

	North Africa	Middle East	Southwest Europe	Southeast Europe
Vegetables	Leeks, cucumbers, lettuce, arugula, watercress, carrots, okra, green beans, potatoes, zucchini, eggplant, cardoons, artichokes, turnips, cabbage, spinach, tomatoes, peppers	Okra, Molokhia (jute leaves), tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini, cucumbers, peppers, carrots, fennel, turnips, onions	Potatoes, tomatoes, onions, garlic, celery, leeks, eggplant, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, asparagus, artichokes, fennel, chard, spinach, broccoli, cabbage	Eggplant, spinach, cabbage (sometimes as sauerkraut), onion, garlic, tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, carrots, artichokes, mushrooms, and asparagus
Nuts	Almonds, pistachios, pine nuts	Pistachios, almonds, walnuts, pine nuts	Chestnuts walnuts hazelnuts almonds pine nuts	Walnuts, almonds, chestnuts, peanuts
Seeds	Sesame seeds	Sesame seeds, sunflower seeds	Flaxseeds	Sesame seeds
Herbs and Spices	garlic, dill, mint, thyme, parsley, cilantro, Oregano, caraway, coriander, cumin, Paprika, Harissa, sumac, dried chiles, Fennel seeds, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, black pepper, anise, turmeric, nigella seeds, ras el hanout	Sumac, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom, lemon juice, allspice, zaatar, parsley, mint, thyme, tarragon, basil, bay leaf, nigella seeds	Oregano, basil, rosemary, mint, bay leaves, parsley, chamomile, cumin	Dill, oregano, thyme, coriander, rosemary, bay leaves, parsley, fennel, basil, sage, cumin
Beverages	Sobia, Coffee with cardamom, tea, sugarcane juice, black tea with mint leaves	Ayran, Turkish coffee, Tamarind juice, Raki	Wine, limoncello, espresso	Turkish coffee, wine
Dishes	Fuul medammes, tagine, harira soup,	Mezze, falafel, lentil stew, tabbouleh, hummus, fattoush salad	Pasta, risotto, paella, lentil soup, ratatouille	Mezze, spanokopita, soparnik, dolma, salad, breads

Citations

(APA format, alphabetical)