

# The Mediterranean Diet

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The Mediterranean Diet is a diet based primarily on fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, and grains; all of which would preferably be locally grown and unprocessed. Every meal would include these basic ingredients. In this diet, seafood (locally sourced) would be eaten around twice a week, and dairy products, also from nearby farms/shops is recommended in small portions daily. Lastly, meats and sugary foods would be a very small part of the diet, recommended roughly monthly. The M.D. is extremely sustainable compared to the average American diet. Since it does not cut out any main parts of the American diet completely, it is more likely to be adopted on a widespread scale, as opposed to veganism or vegetarianism, which the average American is much less willing to commit to.

## Sustainability

- Diversity = quality (nutritional) and biodiversity
- Healthy
- Eat food within season
- Food grown in diverse areas
- "a less demanding food in primary energy and having in priori less environmental impact, due to low consumption animal products"

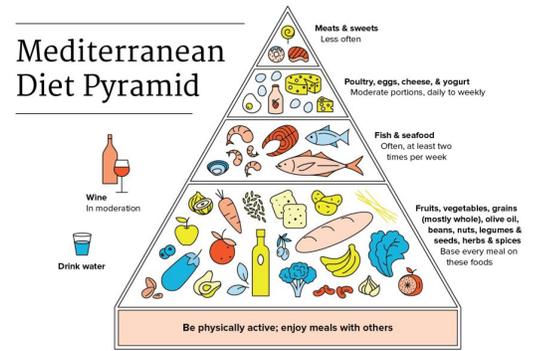
## Emissions

- The greenhouse gas emissions produced are 30% less from the estimated emissions produced by the average global diet (Tilman-2014)
- The average increase in cropland needed by 2050 is approximately 100 million hectares for the Mediterranean Diet, as opposed to approximately 600 million hectares for the average diet (Tilman-2014)

## Plausibility

Based on a sample of 11,000 adults, only two percent of Americans are vegetarian. Only 1/4th of those vegetarians, or 0.5% of the USA adult population, is vegan. One half of a percentage point of the 300,000,000 people in the United States, or 1.62 million of us, are vegan. These statistics are showing that people are not willing to take the huge step in

1. Tilman, D., & Clark, M. (2014, November 27). Global diets link environmental sustainability and human health. Retrieved October 30, 2017, from *Nature*. 2. Kuper, Arthur, et al. "Vegan Demographics 2017 - USA, and the World." *Vegan Bits*, 23 May 2017, [veganbits.com/vegan-demographics-2017/](http://veganbits.com/vegan-demographics-2017/). 3. Sáez-Almendros, Sara, et al. "Environmental Footprints of Mediterranean versus Western Dietary Patterns: beyond the Health Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet." *Environmental Health*, BioMed Central, 30 Dec. 2013, [ehjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1476-069X-12-118](http://ehjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1476-069X-12-118). 4. Padilla M. Mediterranean diet as an example of a sustainable diet. Biodiversity and sustainable diets United against Hunger. 2010 Oct 5 [accessed 2017 Oct 31]. <http://www.fao.org/ag/humannutrition/25350-045b6f1a6449ed404d35745e4dbeea488.pdf>



cutting out the entirety of what they eat for the health of the planet. This diet is revolutionary in the sense that it is not extreme change so everyone could realistically make this change. (Kuper-2017)

## Health Benefits

Eating these ingredients in moderation up and down the pyramid shown above, can lead to an overall much healthier lifestyle compared to eating the average american diet. Eating healthier this way by keeping protein in your diet and eating many natural and locally grown foods would:

- Make your lifestyle happier and easier.
- Create less pressure on joints by not carrying as much weight
- Lead to less stress on the heart
- Cardiopulmonary health would increase if the mobility leads to exercise.
- Leads into the interaction with others which can increase mental health (Padilla-2010)

## Results

If the Spanish population changed their eating habits to the Mediterranean Diet,

- Greenhouse gas emissions would decrease by 72%
- Agricultural land use would decrease by 58%
- Energy consumption would decrease by 52%
- Water consumption would decrease by 33% (Saez-Almendros-2013)

