

THOROUGHLY MODERN MEDITERRANEAN

The saying “what’s old is new again” rings true when it comes to the Mediterranean diet. This delicious, intrinsically healthy way of eating is the OG diet—and the heart of what healthy means now.

STORY BY HOLLY PEVZNER PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER CAUSEY

You’ve heard it, you know it: The Mediterranean diet is crazy healthy. In fact, if the typical American ate a traditional Mediterranean diet, this could lower heart disease and stroke risk by about 30 to 40%, says Walter Willett, MD, DrPH, of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. But guess what else it is? It’s hands-down one of the easiest and most delicious diets in the world. It’s rooted in diversity and flavor. And it’s millennia old. People eating the Mediterranean way in Italy, Spain, or Greece are not sneaking greens into their smoothies. They’re not Pinning

complicated recipes that require multiple cooking methods. Instead, they’re leisurely dining on an abundance of produce, fish, whole grains, olive oil, and what we now dub “artisanal” cheeses. They’re embracing fresh, local ingredients. In essence, old-school Mediterranean dining is the ultimate in modern eating. It’s minimalist without the hoity-toityness of it all. It’s healthy without the blinding halo. It’s a celebration of real food made with whole ingredients. Here’s everything you need to know about the most modern of ancient diets, starting with the big-hitter tentpoles that hold it all together.



SEARED SEA BASS
WITH LEMON-OLIVE
WHITE BEANS
RECIPE P. 192



1

FISH

The communities that dot the Mediterranean Sea make fish-based meals a part of life. Mackerel, sea bass, shrimp, mussels, and sardines are prepared simply with olive oil, herbs, spices, and lemon or are tossed in pasta dishes or salads. “Not only is fish eaten more readily, but red meat is only consumed a few times a month,” says Connie Diekman, RD, author of *The Everything Mediterranean Diet Book*. This combo lowers the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer thanks to a balanced fat ratio.

STAFF FAVE
FALL VEGETABLE
AND LENTIL SALAD
RECIPE P. 193



2

OLIVE OIL

Olive oil is the prime fat in the Mediterranean diet, trumping butter and vegetable oil. It's delicious and chock-full of heart-healthy unsaturated fats. “Plus, oleocanthal, an antioxidant in olive oil, has anti-cancer properties,” says Kelly Toups, RD, of the nutrition nonprofit Oldways. The most flavorful and healthful option? Cold-pressed extra-virgin olive oil (see our picks on page 191). While most recommend up to 5 teaspoons of olive oil a day, studies have shown that ¼ cup (12 teaspoons) daily can boost “good” HDL cholesterol.



3

QUALITY
DAIRY

It's hard to imagine a Mediterranean meal sans cheeses or yogurt. They do love their dairy, but quality beats quantity. Often, instead of dairy serving as a main component, Toups says, "dairy is integrated as a flavor into the meal." Think: a dollop of tangy yogurt atop veggies, as shown here, or a kebab accented with ever-so-slightly grilled chunks of cheese. (Folks are not short on calcium. The Med diet leans heavily on non-dairy calcium-rich foods, such as leafy greens, beans, and bony fish like sardines and anchovies.)

**HARISSA-ROASTED
EGGPLANT WITH
MINCED CHICKEN**
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**CHICKPEA
"MEATBALLS"
WITH CRUNCHY
ROMAINE SALAD**
RECIPE P. 194



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LEGUMES

While beans are the most famous of the legume family, peas, lentils, chickpeas, and even peanuts are also part of the clan. "Legumes became a huge part of the Mediterranean diet because they were affordable sources of protein when meat wasn't," says Toup—because they're high in fiber and antioxidants, which protect against cancer and heart disease. Legumes are diverse, too: They're a perfect addition to ragouts or whole-grain dishes, and they can be mashed and blended with herbs and spices to make amazing dips and spreads.

5

RED
WINE

Who doesn't love a diet that features a daily 5-ounce glass of red? Wine, says Toup, is sipped slowly and enhances food's enjoyment. For women, one glass is on the menu; for men, it's up to two. For the most heart-healthy antioxidants, toast with a Cannonau, Pinot Noir, Syrah, Shiraz, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, or Merlot. Moderate drinking lowers your heart disease risk better than abstaining, notes a 2017 study. But no matter what's in your cup, it's just as important to clink glasses with friends, so teetotalers, don't sweat.

6

VEGETABLES

Less than 9% of Americans eat enough veggies. Part of the problem: “The recommendation tends to trigger an I-can’t-do-that reaction, and people stop trying,” says Diekman. But those enjoying the Med diet aren’t counting—they simply believe that no meal is complete without vegetables. Veggies are folded into pasta, hearty stews, and sauces. They’re also dressed in olive oil, which enhances your body’s ability to absorb health-promoting carotenoids. “Veggies’ disease-fighting compounds may be why the diet is so good for you,” says Diekman.

STEWED CHICKPEAS AND CHARD OVER GARLIC TOAST
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7

WHOLE GRAINS

A plain-Jane side scoop of brown rice is not quite the Med way. “Mediterranean eating casts grains in a leading role,” says Toups. “Grains stretch seasonal vegetables, cheeses, or fish into a satisfying, cohesive meal.” You see grain salads, such as herby tabbouleh; crunchy barley rusks eaten like croutons; whole-grain cornmeal in polenta that’s topped with veggies. This flavoring-up of grains is smart: People who eat whole grains every day have a 9% lower chance of dying from heart disease, says a JAMA Internal Medicine study.

PAN-GRILLED MACKEREL WITH CREAMY MILLET PUREE
RECIPE P. 192

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FRUITS

For the non-Mediterranean set, fruit is a snack, a smoothie add-in, and a tried-and-true breakfast accompaniment. But fruit has a more diverse role in the Mediterranean diet. It's eaten fresh, baked, poached, and dried. It's in desserts and veggie salads and mixed into yogurts. "Don't get caught up in what specific fruit to eat," says Diekman. "Rotate a diverse selection of whole fruit." While fruits' benefits are far-reaching, research shows that those who eat a Med diet including about 5 ounces of fruit daily are 15% less likely to have macular degeneration.

9

NUTS & SEEDS

Nuts and seeds tend to fall directly into our collective snack basket, and we also sprinkle some on salads and into baked goods. But as those in the Mediterranean will tell you, there's a lot more this duo can do. Crush them into bread-crumbs; mix into a barley, farro, or bulgur wheat dish; blend into homemade breads; or toss onto sautéed veggies. There's good reason to: People who ate five to six servings of nuts a week cut their risk of heart disease by nearly a quarter and their cancer risk by 19%, notes a 2016 report in *BMC Medicine*.

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STAFF FAVE
CHUNKY
MUHAMMARA
RECIPE P. 195

10

EAT
WITH
OTHERS

A true Mediterranean "diet" goes beyond what is on your plate. "It's a lifestyle," says Diekman. "Meals are eaten slowly, amongst friends and family." TVs aren't on. Phones are tucked away. Attention is divided only among food, wine, and company. All of this makes for a pleasant, more mindful experience—and a healthier one. For instance, people who never watched TV while eating are 37% less likely to be obese than those who always did, notes a 2017 study in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.



THE MODERN MEDITERRANEAN STAPLES

Keep these items on hand to incorporate the Mediterranean diet into your everyday eating—in addition, of course, to fresh fruits, veggies, and fish.

EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

CANNED FISH

Sustainable tuna, salmon, anchovies, clams, and sardines

DRIED FRUIT

Apricots, blueberries, cherries, cranberries, figs, raisins, and prunes

RAW OR ROASTED NUTS AND SEEDS

Walnuts, almonds, pistachios, pine nuts, and tahini (sesame seed paste)

WHOLE-GRAIN STAPLES

Pasta, bulgur wheat (the base of tabbouleh), farro, millet, whole-grain cornmeal or corn grits

TOMATOES

Canned, paste, sauce, and sun-dried

OLIVES

WHOLE-GRAIN CRACKERS

CANNED BEANS

Chickpeas, cannellini, fava, kidney beans, and lentils

HERBS AND SPICES

Oregano, cumin, basil, bay leaves, black pepper, crushed red pepper, curry powder, dill, garlic powder, ginger, paprika, rosemary, saffron, sage, thyme, and turmeric; also stock blends like Italian seasoning or za'atar, which often contains sumac, sesame seeds, thyme, and other herbs

ONIONS AND GARLIC

PLAIN GREEK YOGURT

ARTISANAL CHEESES

Feta, Parmesan, etc.

YOUR GUIDE TO GOING MEDITERRANEAN

THIS IS WHERE you'd expect to see the down and dirty details for how many fruits and veggies to eat daily and the exact whole-grain serving size to heap onto your plate. But that's not how the Mediterranean diet works. Rather, it suggests examples of what to eat over time—not just at one meal. The keys are variety, frequency, and relative proportions to other items on your plate. Fruits, veggies, whole grains, olive oil, legumes, herbs, and nuts should be the core of most meals, enjoyed multiple times a day. Fish and poultry are at least a twice-a-week thing. Dairy and eggs are a few times weekly (or daily), but in small amounts. Red meat is a few times a month. Wine is enjoyed in moderation with dinner, and when it isn't poured, the beverage is water. "Don't get caught up in too many do's and don'ts," says Diekman. "A good first step is to add more veggies to what you're already eating."

BUYERS GUIDE: 3 OLIVE OILS WE LOVE



1 BOTTICELLI ORGANIC EXTRA VIRGIN COLD EXTRACTED OLIVE OIL

This is our top choice for everyday cooking (sautéing vegetables, even baking). Its mild but still distinct olive flavor makes it a workhorse for moderate-heat cooking. Cooks, beware: Don't use it for high-heat cooking (like stir-frying or searing), as the smoke point is too low.



2 LUCINI PREMIUM SELECT EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

This is our pick for a finishing oil. Use it to drizzle over salad greens or already cooked veggies, to dip your favorite bread into, or to put the finishing touch on a homemade hummus.



3 CALIFORNIA OLIVE RANCH EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL EVERYDAY

If you only have room in your pantry for one olive oil, this is our go-to. Its super-clean flavor is neutral enough for cooking but nuanced enough to use in dressings or as a finishing oil.

GO MED, GET HEALTHIER

It's not an overstatement to say that the Mediterranean diet saves—and extends—lives. Here's how:

Improves Heart Health That's in large part a result of the heart-helping benefits from the monounsaturated fatty acids that abound in olive oil and nuts, which take a leading role in the Med diet, pushing artery-clogging saturated and trans fats to the side. Plus, extra-virgin olive oil spurs a decrease in bad cholesterol and an uptick in HDL cholesterol (aka the good stuff). HDL works to eliminate excess cholesterol from your arteries and keep your blood vessels open and blood flowing, notes new research in *Circulation*.

Fights Other Chronic Conditions Olive oil's phytochemicals are also believed to quell inflammation and insulin resistance, the root of many diseases like breast cancer and diabetes, according to Diekman. To wit: A Mediterranean diet has been shown to reduce one's risk of breast cancer by 57% and diabetes by 30%, according to a 2016 study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. That inflammation reduction? It decreases pain, too, and it helps the brain, notes a 2017 study at The Ohio State University.

Bolsters Brain Power The Mediterranean diet's ability to tamp down inflammatory responses is part of the reason it's been shown to slow rates of cognitive decline and boost brain function. Further brain-fortifying news came earlier this year when Australian researchers found that one-third of clinically depressed individuals who ate a Mediterranean diet for three months reported a significant improvement in their mood and depressive symptoms.



PAN-GRILLED MACKEREL WITH CREAMY MILLET PUREE

Active: 30 min.
Total: 35 min.

While fresh sardines and anchovies are plentiful in the Mediterranean, those species can be hard to find in the U.S. We look instead to rich mackerel, a sustainable option with a similar fat profile.

- 1/3 cup uncooked millet
- 2 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 3 cups small cauliflower florets (about 9 oz.)
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/3 cup thinly sliced shallots
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1 Tbsp. light brown sugar
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. drained capers
- 2 Tbsp. toasted pine nuts
- 5/8 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper, divided
- 4 (6-oz.) sustainable skin-on mackerel fillets
- Cooking spray
- 1/4 cup roughly chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 4 tsp. chopped fresh dill

1. Heat a medium saucepan over medium-high. Add millet and garlic to dry pan; cook, stirring occasionally, until millet is lightly toasted, about 5 minutes. Add 1 1/2 cups water; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 10 minutes. Add cauliflower; cover and simmer until cauliflower is tender and liquid is absorbed, about 15 minutes. Set aside.

2. Meanwhile, heat a small skillet over medium. Add 1 tablespoon oil; swirl to coat. Add shallots; cook, stirring often, until softened, about 2 minutes. Stir in vinegar, raisins, sugar, and capers. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly syrupy, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in pine nuts.

3. Transfer millet mixture to a food processor. Add 1 tablespoon oil, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper; process until smooth, about 20 seconds. (If mixture is too thick, add water, 1 tablespoon at a time, and process until desired consistency is reached.)

4. Heat a large grill pan over high. Brush flesh side of fish evenly with remaining 1 tablespoon oil; sprinkle evenly with remaining 1/8 teaspoon salt and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add fish to pan, skin side down; cook until crisp, about 3 minutes. Turn fish over; cook until flesh flakes easily when tested with a fork, about 3 minutes. Spread about 1/2 cup millet puree on each of 4 plates. Top each serving with 1 fillet, skin side up, and about 2 tablespoons relish. Sprinkle servings evenly with parsley and dill.

SERVES 4 Calories 456; Fat 18g (sat 3g, unsat 14g); Protein 43g; Carb 31g; Fiber 4g; Sugars 12g (added sugars 3g); Sodium 706mg; Calc 10% DV; Potassium 36% DV



SEARED SEA BASS WITH LEMON-OLIVE WHITE BEANS

Active: 20 min.
Total: 20 min.

Meaty, buttery Castelvetro olives are lower in sodium than many other olive types. They pair particularly well with rich sea bass and creamy white beans, but if you can't find them, you can use any olive you like.

- 4 (6-oz.) sustainable skinless sea bass fillets
- 3/4 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper, divided
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 5 garlic cloves, sliced
- 2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 8 cherry tomatoes, quartered (about 1/2 cup)
- 2/3 cup unsalted chicken stock
- 1 (15-oz.) can unsalted cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 5 oz. fresh baby spinach
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 oz. pitted Castelvetro olives, quartered (about 1/3 cup)

1. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Sprinkle fish with 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Add 1 tablespoon oil to skillet; swirl to coat. Add fish; cook to desired degree of doneness, about 3 minutes on each side for medium. Remove fish from pan; discard drippings. (Do not wipe skillet clean.) Lightly tent fish with foil to keep warm.

2. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in skillet over medium-high. Add garlic; cook, stirring often, until light golden brown, about 1 minute. Stir in thyme and tomatoes; cook, stirring often, until heated through, about 1 minute. Add stock and beans; bring to a simmer. Add spinach in batches, and cook, tossing gently, until spinach is wilted after each addition. Stir in lemon juice, olives, remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Divide bean mixture among 4 shallow bowls; nestle 1 fillet into each bowl.

SERVES 4 (serving size: about 3/4 cup bean mixture and 1 fillet) Calories 382; Fat 16g (sat 3g, unsat 12g); Protein 40g; Carb 19g; Fiber 6g; Sugars 2g (added sugars 0g); Sodium 708mg; Calc 10% DV; Potassium 28% DV

A TRULY SEDUCTIVE WAY TO EAT

“The Mediterranean diet is a very easy diet to understand. And anyone who already knows how to cook already knows what to do. You don’t need any ‘special’ ingredients. You don’t need to learn any new techniques. Just add more vegetables, legumes, whole grains, seafood, extra-virgin olive oil—and eat less red meats and sweets. Its overall deliciousness makes it a seductive—and easy—way to eat.”

NANCY HARMON JENKINS, author of several books, including *The Four Seasons of Pasta*, *Virgin Territory: Exploring the World of Olive Oil*, and *The Essential Mediterranean*



STEWED CHICKPEAS AND CHARD OVER GARLIC TOAST

Active: 20 min.
Total: 20 min.

This is one of those go-to dishes for busy weeknights—it’s fast, easy, and filling. It also happens to be a vegan recipe. Though we’re calling this dinner, it would be splendid for breakfast, too.

- 1 (14.5-oz.) can unsalted diced tomatoes
- 8 oz. rainbow chard
- 6 garlic cloves, divided
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 cup chopped yellow onion
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 3/4 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 1 (15-oz.) can unsalted chickpeas, drained
- 4 (1 1/2-oz.) slices whole-wheat boule or country bread

- 1. Preheat broiler with oven rack in top position.
- 2. Place tomatoes in a mini food processor; pulse until pureed but not completely smooth, 4 to 5 times.
- 3. Strip chard leaves from stems; coarsely chop leaves. Cut stems into 1/2-inch pieces.
- 4. Mince 5 garlic cloves. Heat a large skillet over medium. Add 2 tablespoons oil; swirl to coat. Add onion and

minced garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, 3 minutes. Add chard stem pieces; cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is tender, about 3 minutes. Add cumin, paprika, salt, and pepper; cook, stirring constantly, until heated through, about 30 seconds. Stir in chickpeas and pureed tomatoes; bring to a simmer. Add chard leaves. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until leaves wilt, about 5 minutes.

5. Cut remaining garlic clove in half. Place bread in a single layer on a baking sheet. Broil until toasted, about 1 minute. Turn bread over; brush with remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Broil until toasted, about 1 minute. Rub cut sides of halved garlic clove over oiled side of toasted bread. Place 1 toast slice on each of 4 plates; top each with about 1 cup chickpea mixture.

SERVES 4 (serving size: 1 topped toast) Calories 352; Fat 13g (sat 2g, unsat 10g); Protein 13g; Carb 48g; Fiber 9g; Sugars 7g (added sugars 0g); Sodium 586mg; Calc 18% DV; Potassium 21% DV



FALL VEGETABLE AND LENTIL SALAD

Active: 30 min.
Total: 40 min.

We love firm French green lentils, but you can also use standard brown lentils. You’re not likely to find a whole butternut squash that’s only 1 pound; just buy the smallest one you can find, and use 1 pound of it.

- 2/3 cup uncooked French green lentils
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 lb. butternut squash, peeled
- 1 lb. large carrots
- 1 small red onion (about 8 oz.)
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 3/8 tsp. ground red pepper
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 2 cups plain 2% reduced-fat Greek yogurt
- 2 tsp. grated lemon rind
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 3/4 cup pomegranate arils
- 1/2 cup roughly chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. 2. Place lentils and bay leaves in a small saucepan; cover with water to 2 inches above lentils. Bring to a boil over high; reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until tender, 25 to 30 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, cut squash in half lengthwise; discard seeds and membranes. Cut squash halves crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices; cut any wide slices in half lengthwise. Cut carrots into 1/4-inch-thick slices on an extreme diagonal to create similar-size pieces. Cut onion into 12 thin wedges. Place vegetables in an even layer on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Place 2 tablespoons oil in a small bowl. Whisk in cumin, red pepper, cinnamon, and 3/4 teaspoon salt; drizzle over vegetables, and toss gently to coat. Bake vegetables at 425°F until tender and lightly browned, 25 to 30 minutes.

- 4. Whisk together yogurt and 1 tablespoon oil in a small bowl; whisk in lemon rind, garlic, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Set aside.
- 5. Drain lentils, and place in a large bowl. Discard bay leaves. Stir lemon juice, remaining 1 tablespoon oil, and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt into lentils.
- 6. To serve, spread 1/3 cup yogurt mixture on each of 6 plates; top with about 1 cup vegetables, about 1/3 cup lentils, 2 tablespoons pomegranate arils, and 4 teaspoons parsley.

SERVES 6 Calories 250; Fat 10g (sat 1g, unsat 8g); Protein 7g; Carb 37g; Fiber 9g; Sugars 10g (added sugars 0g); Sodium 543mg; Calc 9% DV; Potassium 23% DV

NO DIET LEAVES PEOPLE THIS CONTENT

“After writing about seasonal Mediterranean cooking for more than 20 years, I’ve learned that people can’t get enough of these traditional, mostly vegetarian dishes. They satisfy even the most demanding palates, and furthermore, the people who feast on them leave the table feeling well nourished, light, and content.”

AGLAIA KREMEZI, a Greek culinary historian, instructor, and author of several cookbooks, including *The Foods of the Greek Islands* and *Mediterranean Vegetarian Feasts*

FOOD STYLING: TORIE COX; PROP STYLING: MINDI SHAPIRO LEVINE, TILE COURTESY CLETILE.COM. PHOTOGRAPHY (OLIVE OILS): KELSEY HANSEN



CHICKPEA “MEAT-BALLS” WITH CRUNCHY ROMAINE SALAD

Active: 30 min.
Total: 30 min.

The expected chickpea dish might be falafel, but the flavor here is more akin to hummus. The chickpea mixture will be soft at first; it firms up as it cooks.

- 3 cups torn romaine lettuce (about 3 oz.)
- 1 cup loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 cup chopped English cucumber
- 1 cup quartered grape tomatoes (about 5 oz.)
- ⅓ cup slivered red onion
- 3 garlic cloves, divided
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1½ Tbsp. water
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 5 Tbsp. tahini (sesame seed paste), divided
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1⅞ tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1 (15-oz.) can unsalted chickpeas, drained
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. smoked paprika
- 1 large egg

1. Combine lettuce, parsley, cucumber, tomatoes, and onion; set aside.
2. Grate 1 garlic clove. Whisk together lemon juice, 1½ tablespoons water, pepper, grated garlic, 3 tablespoons tahini, 1 tablespoon olive oil, and ⅔ teaspoon salt; set dressing aside.

3. Chop remaining 2 garlic cloves. Process chickpeas in a food processor until almost ground, about 15 seconds. Add panko, cumin, paprika, chopped garlic, remaining 2 tablespoons tahini, and remaining ¾ teaspoon salt; process until almost smooth, about 15 seconds, stopping to scrape down sides as needed. Add egg; pulse just until combined, 5 to 6 times. Shape mixture into 20 balls (about 1 slightly heaping tablespoon each).

4. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Add remaining 3 tablespoons oil; swirl to coat. Add chickpea balls to skillet. Cook, turning occasionally, until browned all over and crisp on the outside, 8 to 10 minutes. Serve chickpea balls with salad; drizzle with tahini dressing. Serve immediately.

SERVES 4 (serving size: 5 chickpea balls, 2 cups salad, and about 2 Tbsp. dressing) **Calories** 424; **Fat** 26g (sat 4g, unsat 20g); **Protein** 14g; **Carb** 36g; **Fiber** 8g; **Sugars** 4g (added sugars 0g); **Sodium** 616mg; **Calc** 14% DV; **Potassium** 18% DV



HARISSA-ROASTED EGGPLANT WITH MINCED CHICKEN

Active: 30 min.
Total: 55 min.

Here we play with the concept of meat as condiment, using a small amount of rich chicken thighs as a sort of relish on spicy roasted eggplant. Creamy Greek yogurt offers cooling balance to the heat of harissa.

- 2 (1-lb.) eggplants, halved lengthwise
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ¼ cup harissa sauce or paste
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- ¾ tsp. black pepper, divided
- 8 oz. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- ¼ tsp. ground turmeric
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ¾ cup plain 2% reduced-fat Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup roughly chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 red Fresno chile, thinly sliced

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Score flesh side of each eggplant half in a cross-hatch pattern, being careful not to cut through the skin. Place eggplant halves on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Brush 2 tablespoons oil evenly over flesh side of eggplant halves; brush evenly with harissa. Bake at 400°F until tender, 40 to 45 minutes. Sprinkle evenly with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper.

3. Meanwhile, heat a small skillet over medium-high. Add 1 tablespoon oil; swirl to coat. Add chicken; cook until golden on both sides and cooked through, about 4 minutes per side. Transfer chicken to a cutting board. (Do not wipe skillet clean.) Cool chicken about 10 minutes. Finely chop chicken.

4. Heat skillet over medium-high. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil; stir in garlic. Cook, stirring constantly, until garlic is lightly golden, about 30

seconds. Add oregano, coriander, turmeric, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add chicken and lemon juice; cook until chicken is crisped, about 4 to 5 minutes.

5. Stir remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper into yogurt. Spoon 3 tablespoons yogurt mixture over each eggplant half; top each with about ¼ cup chicken mixture. Sprinkle evenly with cilantro and chile slices.

SERVES 4 (serving size: 1 topped eggplant half) **Calories** 265; **Fat** 17g (sat 3g, unsat 13g); **Protein** 14g; **Carb** 17g; **Fiber** 7g; **Sugars** 8g (added sugars 0g); **Sodium** 601mg; **Calc** 4% DV; **Potassium** 21% DV

NOT A DIET, BUT A WAY OF LIFE

“I’m a child of Greek immigrants. I’ve never known anything but a dining room table filled with fresh fish, colorful salads, tons of seasonal fruits and veggies, plates of olives, briny cheese, and of course a bottle of quality extra-virgin olive oil. Now that I’m a chef and father, though, I really understand how beneficial this way of life is. It’s not a diet. It’s the secret to a long and, quite frankly, delicious life.”

CHEF MICHAEL PSILAKIS, author of *Live to Eat* and executive chef and owner of MP Taverna, Kefi, FISHTAG, and The Hall at MP, all in New York City



CHUNKY MUHAMMARA

Active: 10 min.
Total: 25 min.

Build a healthy “snack dinner” platter with this flavor-packed dip at the center—surround it with crunchy vegetables and whole-wheat flatbread for dipping, and add a tin of oil-packed sardines, olives, nuts, feta cheese, marinated artichokes, and some dried and fresh fruit for a colorful, well-rounded meal.

- 2 large red bell peppers (about 1¼ lb.), halved and seeded
- 1½ oz. whole-wheat pita or lavash
- 1½ Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. pomegranate molasses
- 2 tsp. Aleppo pepper
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ¾ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 large garlic clove, chopped
- ⅔ cup chopped toasted walnuts

1. Preheat broiler with oven rack in top position. Place bell pepper halves on a foil-lined baking sheet, skin sides up; flatten slightly by pressing with heel of hand. Broil until blackened, 8 to 10

minutes. Remove from oven, and wrap in foil used to line pan. Let stand 10 minutes. Rub off and discard skins.

2. Place pita in a food processor; process until coarsely ground, about 30 seconds. Add bell peppers, oil, pomegranate molasses, Aleppo pepper, cumin, salt, and garlic; process until smooth, stopping to scrape sides as needed. Add walnuts; pulse until almost smooth but with some small chunks, 4 to 5 times.

SERVES 8 (serving size: ¼ cup) **Calories** 121; **Fat** 9g (sat 1g, unsat 8g); **Protein** 3g; **Carb** 8g; **Fiber** 2g; **Sugars** 3g (added sugars 0g); **Sodium** 206mg; **Calc** 2% DV; **Potassium** 4% DV

NUTRITION IS SIMPLY A BONUS

“Countries of the Mediterranean have rich culinary cultures, deeply rooted in local ingredients and tradition. The focus has never been on what the latest study deems healthy, but rather it’s about cooking and eating delicious, wholesome foods, made from real, fresh, unadulterated, seasonal, and local ingredients. It just so happens that the result is almost always nutritious.”

CHEF SEAMUS MULLEN, author of *Real Food Heals* and executive chef and owner of Tertulia in New York City

BRING OUT YOUR BOLD

MAKE THE SEASON SAUCY

Sherry Triple Berry Cranberry Sauce

Visit HollandHouseFlavors.com for this recipe and more.