THE FREE STARTER GUIDE

Getting Started with the

Mediterranean Diet

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE + 4 RECIPES



4 TASTY RECIPES

BY CHEF JEFF

My Diet Chef

WELCOME

A Note from Chef Jeff

Hi friends, Chef Jeff here!

I spent more than five years cooking Mediterranean food on super yachts in the Mediterranean. This food is near and dear to my heart, and I love it, and I love this way of eating.

Mediterranean eating is built on vegetables, fruit, beans, whole grains, olive oil, herbs, and fish, with some poultry, eggs, and dairy. It is colorful, flavorful, and meant to be shared at the table, so it does not feel like a diet at all.

> *Fill your plate with color, cook with olive oil, and share the meal.*

Here is the best part: you do **not** need fancy ingredients or special equipment. Lemon, garlic, olive oil, and fresh herbs do most of the work, and a simple dinner can taste like a holiday.

That is why I put this little guide together. Inside, you will find a quick primer on what Mediterranean eating is, how to build your plate, and how to get started. Then comes the delicious part: four of my favorite recipes, from a cozy shakshuka to a lemon ricotta dessert.

So tie on your apron, grab a skillet, and let us get cooking.

Chef Jeff

Happy cooking!

THE BASICS

Mediterranean Eating, Explained

So, what is it?

Mediterranean eating is built on the traditional foods of countries around the Mediterranean Sea, such as Greece, Italy, Spain, Lebanon, and Turkey. Think vegetables, fruit, beans, whole grains, nuts, olive oil, herbs, and fish, with some poultry, eggs, and dairy, and less red meat and sweets. Every country and family cooks it a little differently, so there is no single official menu.

Every day
PLANTS + OLIVE OIL

Veggies, fruit, beans, grains, and olive oil

About 3
FISH DISHES A WEEK

Fish or seafood a few times a week

Less often
RED MEAT + SWEETS

Enjoy them now and then, not every day

Why do so many people love it?

It is real food that tastes good. Meals are built around colorful plants, simple cooking, and olive oil, so there is plenty of flavor and variety. It is also flexible: you can cook at home, eat out, and share meals with family and friends without feeling like you are on a special diet.

Why it fits real life

Full of flavor
Herbs, lemon, garlic, and olive oil make simple food taste great.

Plant-forward
Vegetables, beans, and whole grains take center stage on the plate.

Easy to share
One meal for the whole table, with easy swaps for every taste.

Fits real life
Works at home, at restaurants, and at family dinners.

YOUR GAME PLAN

How to Get Started

1. **Fill half your plate with plants.**
   Vegetables, fruit, beans, and whole grains come first. Then add a palm-sized portion of fish, chicken, eggs, or beans.

2. **Cook with olive oil.**
   Use extra-virgin olive oil as your main added fat. Measure it at first, since it adds up quickly.

3. **Enjoy fish a few times a week.**
   Aim for about three fish or seafood dishes a week. Frozen fish and canned tuna or sardines count too.

4. **Stock your pantry.**
   Keep canned beans and tomatoes, whole grains, olive oil, lemons, and garlic on hand, and cook a batch or two ahead on the weekend.

5. **Slow down and share.**
   Sit down, enjoy your food, and eat with other people when you can. It is part of the pattern.

Your Plate Guide

Approximate everyday servings

Vegetables 1 cup, any kind	Daily
Olive oil 1 tablespoon	1–2/day
Beans ½ cup cooked	Most days
Whole grains ½ cup cooked	Most days
Fish, seafood 4 oz cooked	~3/week
Poultry 4 oz cooked	2–3/week
Greek yogurt ¾ cup	Often
Red meat 4 oz cooked	Rarely

Amounts are general, not a prescription.

Good to know Needs vary by age, size, activity, and health. If you have diabetes, kidney or liver disease, take a blood thinner, have a fish, shellfish, or nut allergy, are pregnant, or take medication, check with your doctor or a registered dietitian before changing how you eat. This guide is general information, not medical advice.

RECIPE 1

BREAKFAST



COZY AND SPICED

Shakshuka

Eggs poached in a spiced tomato and pepper sauce, served with toast for scooping.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	CALORIES	PROTEIN
10 min	25 min	2	~445	~24 g

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup onion, diced
- ½ cup bell pepper, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 2 cups canned diced or crushed tomatoes
- 4 large eggs
- 2 oz feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 2 slices whole-grain bread, to serve
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Method

1. Heat the oil in a wide skillet over medium heat. Cook the onion and pepper 5 minutes until soft. Add the garlic, cumin, and paprika and cook 1 minute.
2. Add the tomatoes, salt, and pepper. Simmer 10 minutes until thickened.
3. Make 4 small wells in the sauce and crack in the eggs. Cover and cook 6 to 8 minutes, until the whites are set.
4. Top with the feta and parsley. Serve with the toast.

Chef Jeff's Tip The sauce keeps 4 days in the fridge. Add fresh eggs when you reheat it.

RECIPE 2

LUNCH



NO COOKING NEEDED

Tuna and White Bean Salad with Lemon

Pantry tuna, creamy white beans, tomatoes, and capers over crisp greens.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	CALORIES	PROTEIN
10 min	None	2	~530	~42 g

Ingredients

- 7 oz canned tuna, drained
- 1½ cups canned white beans, rinsed
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup thinly sliced onion
- 1 tbsp capers
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 3 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 2 slices whole-grain bread, to serve
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Method

1. Whisk the lemon juice, oil, salt, and pepper in a bowl.
2. Add the tuna, beans, tomatoes, onion, capers, and parsley and toss gently.
3. Serve over the romaine with a slice of toast.

Chef Jeff's Tip Buy tuna packed in olive oil for a richer taste, and drain it well.

RECIPE 3

DINNER



ONE PAN, ZERO FUSS

Lemon-Herb Baked Salmon

Salmon baked with lemon and oregano on a sheet pan with zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes, over brown rice.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	CALORIES	PROTEIN
15 min	25 min	2	~585	~35 g

Ingredients

- 10 oz salmon fillets
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 cups diced zucchini
- 1 cup chopped bell pepper
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- Lemon wedges, to serve

Method

1. Heat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Toss the zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes with half the oil, salt, and pepper on a sheet pan. Roast 10 minutes.
2. Mix the rest of the oil with the lemon juice, garlic, and oregano. Nestle the salmon among the vegetables and spoon the mixture over it.
3. Roast 12 to 15 minutes, until the salmon flakes with a fork. Serve over the warm brown rice.

Chef Jeff's Tip Leftover salmon makes a great cold lunch the next day.

RECIPE 4

DESSERT



A LIGHT, SWEET FINISH

Lemon Ricotta Cups

Whipped lemon ricotta with honey and fresh raspberries.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	CALORIES	PROTEIN
10 min	None	4	~170	~11 g

Ingredients

- 1½ cups part-skim ricotta
- 2 tbsp honey
- 2 tsp lemon zest
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup raspberries

Method

1. Whip the ricotta, honey, zest, lemon juice, and vanilla until smooth.
2. Spoon into 4 small glasses.
3. Top with the raspberries and chill until serving.

Chef Jeff's Tip Whisk well for a light, mousse-like texture.

YOU DID IT

Thanks for cooking with me!

You now have the basics, a simple game plan, and four delicious recipes to get started. The best way of eating is the one you actually enjoy, so make these your own, swap in your favorite flavors, and have fun in the kitchen.

1. **Plants first**
   Fill half your plate with vegetables, fruit, beans, and grains.

2. **Olive oil**
   Your main added fat. Measure it at first.

3. **Fish a few times a week**
   Aim for about three fish or seafood dishes.

More recipes and guides coming soon

Keep an eye on your inbox for new meal plans, cookbooks, and cooking guides from Chef Jeff.

Nutrition values are estimates and will vary with brands and portions. This guide is for general information and is not medical advice.

Questions? jeff@mydietchef.com • Instagram @mydietchef

Chef Jeff