

You read earlier that this is not a fad diet, but a plan for life. I say that because, again, fad diets tend not to be sustainable. The Mediterranean diet plan is backed by science, and it's based in common sense—a variety of good whole foods with an emphasis on nutrition-dense foods. But to be successful, even the best diet requires commitment. Commitment is a huge factor when it comes to losing weight and keeping it off. This is a 28-day plan. Before you start it, take some time to fully commit to the time frame and the plan. Consider all the factors discussed so far, especially your habits and goals.

Every piece of this plan is equally important. The diet, the exercise, the charts, and the tips all go together to create the foundation of your journey to weight loss, weight maintenance, and overall good health.

The meal plans that follow are based on a 1,500- to 1,800-calorie-per-day diet. As you begin, it's important to follow the portions noted in the recipes (so if a recipe says it serves four, split it into four equal servings and only eat one). Everyone's individual caloric needs vary based on a number of metabolic factors and activity levels, so some people may discover the meal plans contain too many calories to lose weight. If this is the case for you, the following steps can help you adjust your calorie intake to a level that helps you lose weight:

- ◆ Decrease portion size by one-fourth, so portions would be 75 percent of that listed in the recipes.
- ◆ Increase activity levels.
- ◆ Eat fewer and/or smaller snacks.

Conversely, if you exercise quite a bit and are losing more than a safe 1 to 2 pounds per week, add 3 ounces lean grilled protein to any vegetarian meals.

A NOTE ABOUT SNACKS: Snacks are okay—just make them count! This plan actually allows for two to three snacks per day if you are hungry. Suggested snacks are provided, but generally, snacks should include 1 ounce of protein—such as an ounce of nuts, two tablespoons of hummus, a tablespoon of nut butter; a half piece of fruit (or half cup of fruit such as berries); and either a cup of nonstarchy vegetables or a half cup of starchy vegetables.

Week 1

You might be following this plan to lose weight, or perhaps you just want to become healthier. Whatever your reason, this first week is all about first steps—and you may feel a mix of excitement and apprehension. This is natural. Once you go food shopping and tackle the prep work on a few recipes, you will feel better equipped to get through this toughest week. Take it one day at a time and be patient as you get into the swing of things. Remember your goals—post them or supportive words on your refrigerator as a reminder. You can do this.

If you are trying to lose weight, weigh yourself on the first day as a benchmark, but wait a week to weigh yourself again.

Prep Ahead

- ◆ Hardboil 5 eggs for breakfasts.
- ◆ Prepare Greek Salad dressing (page 110).
- ◆ Steam brown rice and refrigerate or freeze it in single-serving ($\frac{1}{2}$ -cup) containers.
- ◆ Finely chop red onions and refrigerate them in a well-sealed container (or buy prechopped).
- ◆ Make Red Wine Poached Pears (page 198).
- ◆ Prepare Hummus (page 100).
- ◆ Prepare Baba Ganoush (page 101).

Shopping List

DAIRY AND EGGS

- ◆ Almond milk, unsweetened, ½ gallon (can substitute skim milk)
- ◆ Cheese, feta, ½ cup
- ◆ Cheese, mozzarella, part-skim, 4 ounces
- ◆ Cheese, Parmesan, grated, 6 ounces (¾ cup)
- ◆ Cream, heavy (whipping), 3 tablespoons
- ◆ Eggs, 18
- ◆ Yogurt, Greek, unsweetened nonfat plain, 2½ cups

PRODUCE

- ◆ Asparagus, 1 pound
- ◆ Bananas, 2
- ◆ Basil, fresh, 2 bunches
- ◆ Bell pepper, red, 1
- ◆ Blackberries, 1 pint
- ◆ Blueberries, 2 pints
- ◆ Broccoli, 1 head
- ◆ Carrots, baby, 1 pound
- ◆ Cilantro, fresh, 1 small bunch
- ◆ Cucumbers, 2
- ◆ Dill, fresh, 1 bunch
- ◆ Eggplant, 1
- ◆ Fennel bulbs, 5
- ◆ Fruit (fresh or frozen, your choice), 2 cups
- ◆ Garlic, 3 heads
- ◆ Ginger, fresh, 1 (3-inch) piece
- ◆ Jalapeño pepper, 1
- ◆ Lemons, 9
- ◆ Lettuce, romaine, 1 head
- ◆ Lime, 1
- ◆ Mangos, 2
- ◆ Mint, fresh, 1 bunch
- ◆ Onions, red, 2
- ◆ Onions, yellow, 2
- ◆ Oranges, 2
- ◆ Parsley, fresh, Italian, 3 bunches
- ◆ Pears, 5
- ◆ Peas, shelled (fresh or frozen), 3 cups
- ◆ Raspberries, 1 pint
- ◆ Rosemary, fresh, 1 bunch
- ◆ Salad greens, 1 (9-ounce) bag
- ◆ Scallions, 6
- ◆ Shallot, 1
- ◆ Strawberries, 1 pint
- ◆ Sweet potatoes, 4
- ◆ Thyme, fresh, 1 bunch
- ◆ Tomatoes, cherry, 2 pints
- ◆ Tomatoes, large, 4
- ◆ Zucchini, 11

MEAT, POULTRY, AND FISH

- ◆ Bacon, turkey, low-sodium, 2 ounces
- ◆ Chicken breast, ground, 1 pound
- ◆ Chicken breasts, boneless, skinless, 1 pound
- ◆ Crabmeat, lump, 1½ pounds
- ◆ Pork tenderloin, 1½ pounds
- ◆ Salmon, 1½ pounds
- ◆ Shrimp, baby (cooked), ½ pound
- ◆ Turkey breast, deli-sliced, 3 ounces
- ◆ Turkey breast, ground, 1½ pounds

GRAINS

- ◆ Bread, whole-wheat, light, 1 loaf
- ◆ Brown rice
- ◆ Hamburger buns, whole-wheat, 1 package
- ◆ Pasta, whole-wheat, 8 ounces
- ◆ Pita, whole-wheat, 1 package

CANNED

- ◆ Chickpeas, 1 (14-ounce) can
- ◆ Tomatoes, crushed, 1 (14-ounce) can
- ◆ Tomatoes, chopped, 1 (14-ounce) can
- ◆ White beans, 1 (14-ounce) can

OTHER

- ◆ Cocoa powder, unsweetened
- ◆ Tahini
- ◆ Honey, ½ cup
- ◆ Vanilla extract, 1 teaspoon
- ◆ Mustard, Dijon
- ◆ Vinegar, balsamic
- ◆ Olive oil, extra-virgin
- ◆ Vinegar, red wine
- ◆ Olives, black, 2 cups
- ◆ Walnuts, 4 ounces
- ◆ Pine nuts, 2 ounces
- ◆ Wine, dry red
- ◆ Sunflower seeds, 2 tablespoons (optional)
- ◆ Wine, dry white

PANTRY AND REFRIGERATOR STAPLES

(Check On-Hand Supplies)

- ◆ Cayenne pepper
- ◆ Oregano, dried, 1 tablespoon
- ◆ Cinnamon sticks, 2
- ◆ Peppercorns
- ◆ Cumin, ground
- ◆ Red pepper flakes
- ◆ Garlic powder
- ◆ Rosemary, dried, 2 tablespoons
- ◆ Ginger, ground, ½ teaspoon
- ◆ Sea salt
- ◆ Italian seasoning, 2 tablespoons
- ◆ Lite Italian dressing
- ◆ Marjoram, dried, 1 tablespoon
- ◆ Nonstick cooking spray
- ◆ Nutmeg, ground, 1 teaspoon

Menu

MONDAY

Breakfast

1 hardboiled egg
Chocolate Banana Smoothie (page 87)

Lunch

Greek Salad (page 110)
3 ounces deli turkey

Dinner

Pan-Roasted Salmon with
Gremolata (page 155)
Broccoli with Ginger and
Garlic (page 186)
¼ cup cooked brown rice
3 ounces red wine

Water

8 (8-ounce) glasses throughout the day

Snacks

2 to 3: mid-morning, mid-afternoon, evening

TUESDAY

Breakfast

1 hardboiled egg
Leftover Chocolate Banana Smoothie

Lunch

Leftover Salmon with Gremolata
Leftover Greek Salad

Dinner

Chicken Gyros with Tzatziki (page 173)
½ whole-wheat pita
Parmesan Zucchini Sticks (page 188)

Water

8 (8-ounce) glasses throughout the day

Snacks

2 to 3: mid-morning, mid-afternoon,
and evening

WEDNESDAY

Breakfast

1 hardboiled egg
Berry and Yogurt Parfait (page 89)

Lunch

Leftover Chicken Gyros with Tzatziki
½ whole-wheat pita
½ cup baby carrots

Dinner

Zucchini Noodles with Peas and
Mint (page 146)
Caprese Salad (page 112)

Water

8 (8-ounce) glasses throughout the day

Snacks

2 to 3: mid-morning, mid-afternoon,
and evening

THURSDAY

Breakfast

1 hardboiled egg
Fruit Smoothie (page 88)

Lunch

Leftover Zucchini Noodles with Peas
and Mint
½ cup cooked brown rice
½ pear

Dinner

Crab Cakes with Shaved Fennel
Salad (page 157)
Sweet Potato Mash (page 127)
Red Wine Poached Pears (page 198)

Water

8 (8-ounce) glasses throughout the day

Snacks

2 to 3: mid-morning, mid-afternoon,
and evening

FRIDAY**Breakfast**

1 hardboiled egg
Leftover Fruit Smoothie

Lunch

Leftover Crab Cakes with Shaved
Fennel Salad
Leftover Sweet Potato Mash

Dinner

Turkey Burgers with Mango
Salsa (page 164)
1 whole-wheat hamburger bun
½ cup baby carrots

Water

8 (8-ounce) glasses throughout the day

Snacks

2 to 3: mid-morning, mid-afternoon,
and evening

SATURDAY**Breakfast**

Tomato and Zucchini Frittata (page 95)
½ cup sliced strawberries

Lunch

Leftover Turkey Burgers with
Mango Salsa
1 whole-wheat hamburger bun
2 cups salad greens with 2 tablespoons
Lite Italian dressing

Dinner

One-Pan Tuscan Chicken (page 168)
2 ounces cooked whole-wheat pasta
Roasted Asparagus with Lemon and
Pine Nuts (page 183)

Water

8 (8-ounce) glasses throughout the day

Snacks:

2 to 3: mid-morning, mid-afternoon,
and evening

SUNDAY**Breakfast**

French Toast (page 94)
½ cup sliced strawberries
2 low-sodium turkey bacon slices

Lunch

Leftover One-Pan Tuscan Chicken
2 ounces cooked whole-wheat pasta
2 cups mixed greens with 2 tablespoons
Greek Salad dressing (page 110)

Dinner

Dijon and Herb Pork
Tenderloin (page 175)
Roasted Fennel with Tomatoes (page 190)
½ cup cooked brown rice
3 ounces dry red wine

Water

8 (8-ounce) glasses throughout the day

Snacks

2 to 3: mid-morning, mid-afternoon,
and evening

Suggested snacks:

Carrots, ½ cup, and Hummus,
2 tablespoons (page 100)
Date Nut Energy Balls, 1 (page 202)
Carrot and Bran Mini Muffins,
1 to 2 (page 93)
½ apple and 1 tablespoon almond butter
Hardboiled egg, 1

Your Personal Trainer

The following is your exercise plan for the week. Fill in the table with the cardio and strength-training exercises (see page 32) you plan to do.

M	T	W	TH	F	SAT	S
Cardio:	Cardio: Strength Group A:	REST	Cardio: Strength Group A:	REST	Cardio:	REST
	Group B:		Group B:			
	Group C:		Group C:			
	Group D:		Group D:			

Habit Tracker

It's important to make healthy lifestyle choices in addition to dietary changes. Create a list of healthy habits you want to maintain over the next four weeks and mark the days when you succeed.

HABIT	M	T	W	TH	F	SAT	S
<i>Drank 8 Glasses of Water</i>	X		X	X		X	