

Indian Version of Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet is a way of eating that emphasizes plant-based foods and healthy fats. You focus on overall eating pattern rather than following strict formulas or calculations.

In general, you eat : -Lots of vegetables and fruits, beans, lentils, and nuts -A good amount of whole grains, like whole wheat bread, and brown rice -Use extra virgin olive oil as a source of healthy fat -A good amount of fish, especially rich in omega-3 fatty acids -A moderate amount of natural cheese and yogurt -Little or no red meat, choosing poultry, fish, or beans instead of red meat -Little or no sweets, sugary drinks or butter -Moderate amount of wine with meals, but if you don't already drink, don't start.

INDIAN ADAPTATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET If you combine the foundation of the heart protective Mediterranean diet with vibrant and vegetarian friendly aspect of the Indian cuisine, you will get variety of flavorful dishes, packed with fiber and anti-inflammatory diet that may also provide health benefits.

There was a small study published in August 2025 in the journal of the clinical lipids in which researchers swapped in foods common to northern India to create an Indian adapted Mediterranean diet. This is a small study involving 53 people recruited from a cardiology clinic in New Delhi.

After three months on the diet, the participants had modest improvement in body mass index, blood sugar, and leptin levels. Leptin is produced by fat cells which can trigger inflammation- an outpouring of harmful substances in the bloodstream that is known to contribute to heart disease.

DIETARY INFLAMMATORY INDEX SCORE According to the study, Indian version of Mediterranean diet has the lowest dietary inflammatory index score ever reported in a scientific study. This score, which is based on 45 dietary factors, such as vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial compounds, reflects a diet's inflammatory potential.

Anti-inflammatory foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and healthy oil have lower scores, while pro-inflammatory foods(rich in sugar, unhealthy fats, and red and processed meat) have higher scores. There is wide variation in Indian cuisines in various regions, but there are aspects of a heart healthy diet commonly found throughout India.

This include red meat in moderation, but plenty of legumes, along with variety of inflammation-fighting foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and spices.

These are the ingredients of Indian version of the Mediterranean diet **PROTEINS:** About 40% Indians are vegetarians and those who consume animal protein, often choose chicken or fish, as many people avoid beef and pork for religious reasons. Legumes, which are low in fats, but high in fiber are popular sources of protein in Indian diet.

Featuresd recipes include Chana Masaala(chickpeas in a tomato based sauce), Dal(a soupy stew made from dried split lentils or peas) and Paneer(mild flavoredcheese dish) are all protein sources used in curries and other dishes. **CARBOHYDRATES:** White basmati rice is common in Indian diet.

However., changing to brown rice and other whole grains, including millet, barley and buckwheat may improve nutritional value. Flat breads, such as roti and chapatis are prepared with whole wheat instead of white flour. **HEALTHY FATS:** In some Indian cuisines Ghee(Clarified butter) or coconut oil are used, both of which contain high amount of saturated fats.

Instead of these, more healthy oil sources include using peanut oil or mustard oil which are easily available in India. The ideal choice would be extra virgin olive oil or avocado oil, and use ghee only sparingly for extra flavor. **VEGITABLES:** Eggplant, tomatoes and peppers are often in both Mediterranean diet and its Indian version.

Green leafy vegetables include spinach and readily available fenugreek leaves and radish leaves in India. In United States, especially in Southern states, collard greens are healthy options.

FRUITS: Besides oranges and bananas, fruits commonly eaten in India include tropical fruits, such as mangoes, papaya, and guavas .People in this country, who go to Indian restaurants often drink mango lassi, which is made with mango pulp and yogurt. However, this often include added sugar and heavy cream, making them more like a rich unhealthy drink.

For those who like mangoes, a healthier version would be to make your own by blending plain yogurt, and chunks of frozen mangoes, and a pinch of ground cardamom. Off-course in this country, there are plenty of varieties of healthy fruits available.

AROMATIC ROOTS AND SPICES.: These compounds are responsible for the unique flavors to Indian foods, but they are also known for their anti-inflammatory properties. This include onions, garlic, and ginger, and of course, Garam masala, which is a blend of spices that often contains coriander, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, and black pepper.

Turmeric and red Indian chili or other popular and potent additions are part of healthy Indian cuisins

BENEFITS OF MEDITERRANEAN DIET: The Mediterranean diet and it's Indian version have many benefits, which include: -Lowering your risk of cardiovascular disease, including heart attack, and stroke -Supporting body weight that is healthy for you -Supporting healthy blood, sugar levels, blood pressure and cholesterol. - Lowering your risk of metabolic syndrome -Supporting a healthy balance of gut microorganisms in your digestive system -Lowering your risk of a certain cancers - Slowing the decline of brain function as your age -Helping you live longer

Keshava Aithal

Dr Keshava Aithal

ॐॐॐ 8 Double o