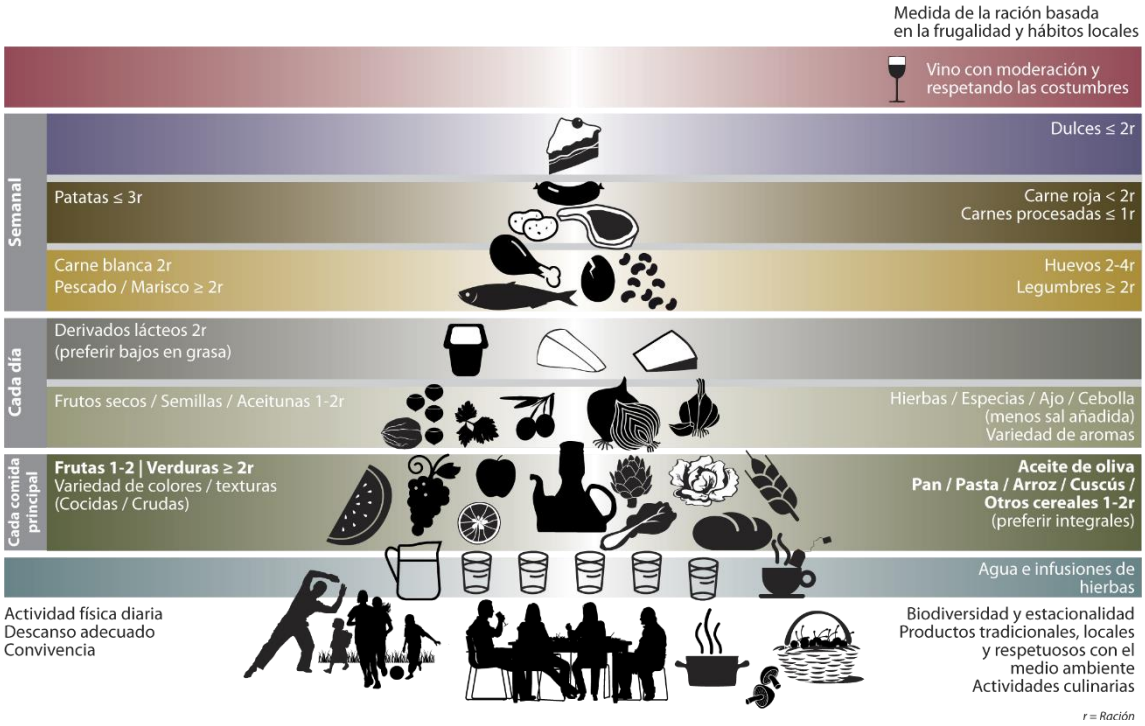
# Mediterranean diet

## 10 Principles of Mediterranean diet

1. Frugal and simple cooking (boiled or grilled food, soups...)
2. High consumption of vegetables
3. Consume of local and fresh vegetable products
4. Olive oil as the main source of fat
5. Moderate consumption of dairy products
6. Use of aromatic herbs
7. Moderate consumption of fish and low consume of red meat
8. Low to moderate consumption of wine (only in the main meals)
9. Water as the main drink throughout the day
10. Socializing around the table

# Explaining the Mediterranean Food Pyramid




### 1st Level - Habits

The Mediterranean diet is usually followed by good rest or some kind of physical activity. Cooking and sitting down to eat can become a social event, where friends and family can socialize. The products consumed are usually traditional and from local and natural sources.

**2nd Level - Liquids**

The following stand is about water and herbal infusions in the pyramid.

Specialists say that we should drink at least two liters of liquids, preferably water to other types of drinks like Coca-Cola or sodas.

**3rd Level – Cereals and vegetables**

The main meals during the day must include cereals. Bread, pasta, cuscus, or rice are the most usual. Also, we should include fruits and vegetables with different colors and textures. They can be raw or boiled as well. Olive oil should be included too.

**4th Level - Spices**

Spices, herbs, garlic, and onions are very important ingredients for a healthy lifestyle, as they, not only improve the digestion, but also add flavour to the plate, resulting in a reduced use of salt. Nuts, seeds, and olives are also a great source of healthy fats, as well as protein, vitamins, mineral and fibre, which reduce our hunger levels, and increase muscle mass and bones health.

**5th Level - Dairy products**

Dairy products such as milk, cheese, butter and yoghurt are rich in Calcium, vitamins A and B. These types of products can have some fat, so the recommended portions are small but we should have them every day.

**6th Level – Fish, poultry and eggs**

Fish and other seafood are the most common source of protein in the Mediterranean diet. Poultry includes chicken, turkey and duck or any other fowl. It has a low level of saturated fats compared with red meat, which is consumed one or twice a week. Eggs are also very commonly consumed; they are a great source of protein.

**7th Level – Desserts and alcoholic drinks**

At the top of the pyramid, we have desserts and alcoholic drinks (specially wine). These are very moderated, and the quantity depends on the country we are in. These desserts include pastries and fruit-based sweets.

# Why is the Mediterranean diet considered healthy?

The Mediterranean diet is the most advised diet by the WHO and UNESCO, not only because it protects us from heart diseases, but it also gives us a big quantity of antioxidants (like vegetables, fruits, and dried fruits). That prevents cellular ageing and the cancer. Also, the cholesterol can be reduced, avoiding memory impairment, and preventing the diabetes.

## What age group is the Mediterranean diet for?

The Mediterranean diet is considered one of the healthiest not only because of the rich nourishing effects but also because it is suitable for most of the ages (until 80 years).

## What are the long-term effects of the Mediterranean diet?

By following a Mediterranean diet, there's nothing we can't eat, since this diet has no restrictions. This means that we can eat whatever we want, but we only have to pay attention to the quantities.

These eating habits promote very good long-term results, such as lowering the cholesterol levels and the risk of heart disease, preventing diabetes, or even losing weight in some cases.

However, it is also very important to think about the negative effects: this diet recommends a decrease of meat consumption, which can result in lower iron levels as well as calcium loss from eating fewer dairy products.

Taking this into consideration, if you choose to follow the Mediterranean diet, you should talk to your primary care provider about ways to keep your diet balanced, as well as any supplements that you can take.

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