What is the Mediterranean diet?

The Mediterranean Diet, sometimes referred to as the ‘Greek Mediterranean Diet’ or ‘Mediterranean Diet Plan’ is actually more of a dietary pattern that is characteristic of people living in regions around the Mediterranean Sea. Although it is called a diet, the Mediterranean diet is not about cutting calories and restricting foods like the popular diet trends in America today. Instead, it is a way of life and is about enjoying a wide variety of whole, nourishing foods with friends and family while practicing an active lifestyle.

The characteristic components of this diet include:

- **Whole grains**, which includes all parts of the grain - the bran, endosperm, and germ. Each of these parts has healthful nutrients, which are lost or reduced when they are refined into products such as white flour.
- **A wide variety of vegetables and fruits**, often eaten seasonally and locally.
- **Legumes, nuts, and seeds** as the main plant-based sources of protein in the diet.
- **Olive oil** as the main source of fat, replacing less-healthful fats such as butter.
- **Seafood, poultry, and eggs** are consumed more often than other meats.
- **Moderate amounts of dairy**, mostly as yogurt and cheese, consumed a few times a week.
- **Red wine**, consumed moderately with meals.
- **Physical activity** - at least 30 minutes a day on most days of the week.
- **Plenty of water** to stay hydrated.
- **Fresh herbs and spices** are added to dishes for flavor and color in replace of excess salt.