



# SPICE UP YOUR HEALTHY DIET

As the saying goes, variety is the spice of life and there is no reason the healthy food you eat needs to lack flavor. In fact, expanding your palate can be an adventure in cultures and cuisines with distinct flavors. While diets around the world vary in many aspects, healthy nutrients, a balanced mix of carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats, and prioritizes fresh, and whole foods to support energy needs.

Preparing foods in ways that preserve nutrients and limit the use of unhealthy ingredients will go a long way to enhance taste and satiety. Taking time to enjoy new flavors with family, friends and loved ones can help to make a healthy meal-time experience something to look forward to!

# MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE

Mediterranean cuisine stretches from Italy, Greece, Croatia, Spain, Egypt, Cyprus, France, and many more countries. The Mediterranean diet emphasizes whole, plant-based foods like beans, fruits, nuts, olive oil, fresh vegetables, and whole grains, healthy fats like olive oil, and moderate amounts of lean proteins like fish and poultry. Grilled meats with limited amounts of beef, breads dipped in olive oil, nuts and natural peanut butter are staples in the Mediterranean pantry. With its delicious and distinctive flavors, it's easy to see why the Mediterranean diet is recognized as one of the healthiest cuisines in the world.

Common spices and herbs used in the Mediterranean include basil, bay leaf, black pepper, cloves, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, garlic, lavender, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, paprika, rosemary, saffron, sage, savory, sumac, tarragon, thyme, lemon, mustard, black pepper, and turmeric with limited amounts of salt.

# JAPANESE CUISINE

The primary elements of Japanese cuisine include steamed rice, noodles, soybeans, fish, seafood, seaweed, and pickled fruits and vegetables with limited amounts of red meat and poultry. Japanese meals typically consists of low-calorie foods served

in small bowls or plates which helps to control portions, relying mostly on rice and vegetables.

Common Japanese spices include Shichimi Togarashi (Japanese Seven Spice Blend), Wasabi (Japanese Horseradish), Katsubushi (Bonito Flakes), Japanese Mayonnaise, Yuzu Kosho (Citrus Chili Paste), Tonkatsu Sauce, Ponzu (Citrus Sauce), Rayu (Chili Oil), Furikake (Rice Seasoning), Aonori (Dried Seaweed Flakes), Karashi (Spicy Mustard), Sansho Pepper.

# OKINAWAN CUISINE

Similar to a Japanese diet, the traditional Okinawan diet is well-known for longevity. The primary difference from the Japanese cuisine is that Okinawans consume more sweet potatoes and whole grains and very little rice. Traditional Okinawan meals often have a variety of steamed vegetables and whole grains, with either tofu or grilled fish.

Common flavors used in Okinawan cuisine are Kokuto or "black" sugar, Yukishio or "snow salt", Shiquasa "hirami lemon", Beni Imo "purple yams", Koregusu "chili sauce", Sanpin Cha "Jasmine Tea", Pineapple.





# MEXICAN CUISINE

Traditional Mexican dishes consists of vegetables, beans, high-fiber grains, including corn-based tortillas and wraps. Far from their American version, Mexican dishes include beans, chiles, corn, soups, and tomatoes using multiple layers creating a flavor that is both complex and exciting.

Common spices in Mexican cuisine are coriander, allspice, cloves, thyme, Mexican oregano, Mexican cinnamon (ceylon), cumin and cacao.

# SPANISH CUISINE

Frequently mistaken for Mexican cuisine, Spanish cuisine emphasizes small portions of fresh, whole ingredients such as vegetables, fruits, legumes, seafood, and lean meats and olive oil.

Spices that make food distinctly Spanish include Paprika, Saffron, Cayenne Pepper, Nora Peppers, Salt, Garlic, Onion, Peppercorns, Fennel, Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Cilantro, Rosemary, Thyme, Oregano, Parsley, Spearmint, Tarragon, Basil, Sage.

# ITALIAN CUISINE

Known for its pizzas and pastas, Italian cuisine actually comprises a variety of fresh, flavorful ingredients, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats, and usually locally sourced. The primary sources of protein in Italian food comes from beans and fish and hard cheeses are used as a flavor enhancer rather than a melty topping.

Spices that are essential for Italian cooking include Oregano, Basil, Bay Leaves, Rosemary, Thyme, Crushed Red Pepper, Fennel Seeds.

# SOUTH KOREAN CUISINE



# THAI CUISINE

The refreshingly intense taste of Thai cuisine comes from fresh, whole ingredients, and a variety of vegetables, herbs, and spices. Like curcumin, turmeric, ginger, chili peppers, and coconut milk combined with herb and spice marinated grilled seafood.

Thai cuisine is known for its grilled seafood dishes, which are usually marinated in a flavorful mixture of herbs and spices.

Lemongrass, galangal, lime (rind and leaves), coriander leaves, sweet Thai basil leaves and garlic are used in one way or another in all Thai dishes. Other spices, including cardamom, nutmeg, cumin and coriander seeds are added to some pastes.

# VIETNAMESE CUISINE

Vietnamese cuisine uses fresh herbs and vegetables, and lean protein sources like chicken and seafood. Their dishes often feature sweet, sour, salty, and spicy tastes with vivid colors. Vietnamese soups are usually broth-based, low in both fat and calories. The use of a lot of seafood and vegetables make soups a good source of protein and overall healthy.

Fresh aromatics, herbs, and dried spices used in Vietnamese cuisine are Galangal, Coriander root, Garlic, Ginger, Green Peppercorns,

South Korean cuisine typically features sweet, spicy, and savory flavors, heavily focused on vegetables, seafood, and fermented foods. Dishes often contain the bold flavors of gochujang (red chili paste), doenjang (soybean paste), and ganjang (soy sauce).

The most common ingredients used in South Korean cuisine are Chili pepper flakes (gochugaru), Ginger, Spring onions, Soybean paste (doenjang), Soy sauce, Sesame oil, Garlic.



Lemongrass, Young Ginger, Shallots, Spring Onions, Chilli, Turmeric, Kaffir Lime Leaves, Lalot (Betel leaf), Lemon Leaf, Bitter Herbs, Chinese Chives (Garlic Chives), Coriander, Sawtooth Coriander, Dill, Fish mint, Holy Basil, Lemon Basil, Thai Basil, Mint, Vietnamese Mint (Hot Mint), Peppermint - Hung Cay, Rice Paddy Herb- Ngo Om, Sorrel, Spearmint - Hung Lui,, Perilla Leaf - Tia To, Vietnamese Balm - Kinh Gioi, Black Cardamom, Black Peppercorns, White Peppercorns, Cinnamon, Coriander Seeds, Casia Bark, Fennel Seeds, Cloves, Cumin, Dried Chillies, Star Anise.

# SCANDINAVIAN CUISINE

Not talked about as much as other cuisines, the Scandinavian diet is made up of whole grains, berries, seafood, vegetables, nuts and seeds, and small amounts of meat. In particular, traditional Scandinavian diets include nutrient-dense, a high consumption of omega-3-rich fish, seafood, whole grains, root vegetables, and berries.

The most common spices used in Swedish food include dill, mustard, allspice, parsley, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cardamom, and juniper.



# LEBANESE CUISINE

The rich flavor of Lebanese cuisine uses herbs and spices, such as mint, parsley, and sumac and many traditional dishes are also gluten-free. Hummus and other healthy dips including potato-garlic dip and eggplant dip are well-known as some of Lebanese's healthiest foods.

Top spices commonly used in Lebanese cuisine are Za'atar a mixture of thyme, oregano, marjoram and slightly toasted sesame seeds, Cardamom, Sumac, Dried Green Mint, Lebanese seven spices - is a mix of spices (black pepper, allspice, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, fenugreek).

# FRENCH CUISINE



French cuisine is considered one of the healthiest, rich in olive oil, seafood, herbs, meat, cheese, and poultry.

Nine signature French flavors to transport you to the City of Light are Herbes de Provence, Persillade (chopped parsley and garlic mixture), Lavender, Marjoram, Bouquet Garni (bouquet' of herbs is made up of sage, thyme, parsley, bay leaf, and the occasional peppercorn), Vadouvan (a combination of turmeric, cardamom, black pepper, onion, garlic, and fenugreek), Fleur de Sel (salt), Fines Herbes (tarragon, parsley, chervil, and/or chives), Quatre Épices ('four-spice' mix of pepper, cloves, ginger, and nutmeg)



What is the common thread amongst all these cuisines? It's the fresh whole foods, a higher intake of fish and vegetables, and that meals should be a savored experience. So how can we start incorporating some of the unique flavors from around the world? You can go out to eat at restaurants that feature different cuisines, visit international grocery stores, or even order a meal kit to sample flavors but the bottom line is that your healthy eating can be full

of flavor if you're willing to try the plethora of herbs, spices, and seasonings that define cuisines around the world.

