

Lowering your intake of saturated fat not only helps control cholesterol particle sizes but also encourages a healthy insulin and blood sugar response. Saturated fats can trigger insulin secretion which can lead to insulin resistance. By lowering saturated fat intake and adhering to Mediterranean Diet principles, you can significantly lower inflammation, cholesterol, blood sugar, and insulin.

Key components of the Mediterranean Diet are below.

- Fresh, unprocessed, preservative and additive free foods
- Lean protein choices
- 4-6 cups of fresh vegetables, fresh fruits daily
- Whole grains
- Healthy fats nuts, seeds, avocado and avocado oil, olives, olive oil, fatty fish
- Goals: 10% of total calories as saturated fat; include 10% of total calories as Omega 3 fat  
For example: If you eat 1500-2000 calories per day, limit saturated fat to 15-20 g daily and strive for 15-20 g of Omega 3 from food each day.

Comparison of saturated fat in foods per 100 g or 3.5 oz:

Ground Beef	6.0	Milk 1%	0.6	Apple	0.0
Beef ribs	15.0	Milk 2%	1.3	Banana	0.1
Beef steak	8.0	Cheddar cheese	21.0	Broccoli	0.0
Chicken breast	1.0	Sour cream	12.0	Spinach	0.1
Chicken drumstick	2.5	Butter	51.0	Carrot	0.0
Chicken wing	2.3	Eggs	3.3	Kidney beans	0.1
Pork	4.3	Chocolate	19.0	Peanuts	7.0
Bacon	14.0	Choc chip cookies	14.0	Almonds	3.7
Lamb	9.0	Ice Cream	7.0	Coconut	30.0
Salmon	3.1	Donuts	13.0	Coconut oil	87.0
Oysters	3.2	Croissants	12.0	Palm oil	49.0

Adapted from [Barnard ND, Willett WC, Ding EL. The Misuse of Meta-analysis in Nutrition Research. JAMA. Published online September 18, 2017. doi:10.1001/jama.2017.12083](#)

Other regional foods can also meet the Mediterranean guidelines. Thai, Indian, vegetarian, Greek, and Japanese cuisines can all be good choices.

Lean protein: legumes (all beans, peas, lentils), all nuts, all seeds, fish, shellfish, chicken, turkey, leaner cuts beef like filet, sirloin, London broil

Fresh vegetables: Salads, leafy greens, broccoli, cauliflower, root vegetables, celery, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, squash of all kinds, pumpkin

Fresh Fruit: Berries, apples, pears, figs, grapes, oranges. Choose less often, tropical fruits and melons which are higher in sugar: pineapple, banana, mango, papaya, honeydew, cantaloupe, watermelon

Whole grains: Whole wheat, brown, black, or red rice, barley, millet, buckwheat, oats, amaranth, rye, teff, quinoa, and corn less often  
Choose gluten containing grains less often: wheat, barley, rye, spelt, farro

Healthy fats: Olive oil, avocado oil, walnuts (high in omega 3), all other nuts, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds, all other seeds, avocados, mackerel, salmon, halibut, sardines, tuna (high in Omega 3)

**When Dining out:**

Look for options prepared in broth or olive oil. Avoid choices with cream-based sauces and dressings. Choose olive oil-based salad dressings and ask for olive oil on the side for steamed veggies. Lentil soup and beans are good additions and you can 'construct' a meal from various side dishes as needed.

- Salads, vegetable and broth-based soups, vegetable purees, roasted, steamed, sautéed veggies and root veggies
- Brown rice, quinoa, farro, barley, choose potato and bread less often
- Legumes: lentils, peas, fava, black, pinto, garbanzo, edamame
- Fish, shellfish, chicken, turkey, choose beef less often
- Add nuts to salads, stir fry, steamed veggies
- Dessert options include berries, apples, oranges, figs, dates. Ask for a side of frothed milk rather than whipped cream, decaf cappuccino, sorbets