

Add Some Global Wisdom to Your Diet

Take a look around the world, and you'll find that certain eating patterns are linked to lower rates of heart disease, cancer and other health conditions.

In China and Japan, for example, obesity rates are below 8 percent. The Asian eating pattern includes plenty of green leafy vegetables, soy, tofu, noodles and rice. In fact, Asian diets are often loaded with plant-based foods and include only limited amounts of dairy and poultry. Fish is a mealtime regular, while red meat is a rarity. Indian cuisine emphasizes vegetables and legumes, and dishes often include turmeric, a spice that appears to have anticancer properties.



Take these steps for a globally inspired healthy diet:

- Enjoy smaller portions. Calories count, so eating less is a smart way to keep your waistline trim.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables. Aim for 2.5 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit a day.
- Consume legumes (beans and peas), nuts and seeds. Legumes are rich in fiber and protein. Most nuts and seeds contain healthy polyunsaturated oils and vitamin E.
- Cook with olive oil rather than butter and other solid fats.
- Eat less red meat and processed meat. Substitute other sources of protein, such as seafood, lean poultry and legumes.
- Avoid consumption of high-fat dairy foods. Nonfat and low-fat milk and yogurt have less saturated fat and sodium.
- Choose whole-grain breads and cereals. They contain fiber as well as iron, folate, magnesium, vitamin B6 and other nutrients.
- Season food with herbs and spices instead of salt to keep sodium levels low.

Try These Healthy International Ingredients

Do your taste buds yearn for a little excitement? Consider keeping this list as a resource for the next time you dine out.

Healthy Mexican: pinto and black beans, soft corn tortillas, spicy chicken, baked fish with mango salsa, mango with lime, fresh tomato salsa, guacamole, pico de gallo, papaya sorbet

Healthy Middle Eastern: falafel (baked, not deep-fried), hummus (chickpea dip), tabbouleh (parsley salad), tzatziki (yogurt dip), lentil and rice pilaf, roast chicken with lemon, eggplant dip, whole wheat pita bread, bulgur wheat, toasted sesame seed butter, almonds, walnuts, figs

Healthy Italian: whole-grain pasta, marinara sauce, polenta, pasta primavera (no cream), grilled rosemary chicken, baked or poached fish, eggplant caponata, white beans, olive oil, garlic, grapes, red wine