

## *Snacking the Healthy Mediterranean Diet Way*

Unlike in the American way of eating, snacking is really not part of the Mediterranean way of living.

A filling breakfast of fruit, protein filled yogurt, and whole grains keeps one going until a big, healthy lunch that satisfies until dinner. But should you miss one of these meals, you can cure your hunger with the same wholesome foods that are eaten at main meals.

The most important thing is mindful snacking whereby you savor every bite while learning portion control and how to choose the right snack. Snacks should be about 100-250 calories, and should ideally include a

- high fiber carb such as fresh fruit, or granola, whole grain bread, or air popped popcorn
- healthy fat like avocado, almonds or walnuts, peanut butter, olive oil or cheese
- lean protein such as hard-boiled egg, Greek yogurt, tuna/turkey, cottage cheese, or edamame

Remember that eating fiber or protein with a carb slows down glucose absorption and keeps your blood sugars in check, so this combination will allow you to feel full and satisfied for a longer period of time.

Here are some options to consider:

Sliced tomatoes, avocado and a small sprinkle of feta crumbles, drizzled with an [Unflavored EVOO](#) and a sprinkle of za'atar or another favorite spice.

Bell peppers, summer squash, broccoli dipped in a small serving of [hummus](#) sprinkled with a tablespoon of pumpkin seeds.

Whole wheat pita bread dipped in a plain [Greek yogurt raita](#) alongside some crispy chickpeas.

¼ cup of nuts or seeds are nutritional powerhouses, providing heart healthy fats and protein, but they are calorie dense, so keeping your daily intake to that ¼ cup is a good idea. Pair with a tablespoon of calorie dense dried cranberries.

Craving something sweet, try this [Strawberry Parfait](#) sprinkled with sliced almonds, or these [Granola Cups](#) with fruit or even a small portion of a [Fruit Smoothie](#).

If crisp and spicy is more your thing, I love roasting chickpeas in the oven till crunchy and sprinkling them with harissa powder, or garlic and cumin powders. Alternatively, make home-made popcorn and drizzle with [Peperoncini oil](#) for heat, or nutritional yeast for a yummy cheesy flavor. Coming soon to the blog... some easy and delicious home-made kale chips!

Creating a snack for a group, try this [Mezze Platter](#) or Mediterranean grazing board, perfectly balanced to keep you going till your next meal. You can even make this into a mini mezze to take to work in a disposable bento box.

So, although there are lots of fun and easy ways to snack on the Mediterranean Diet, eating balanced and healthy meals will reduce the urge to snack. Another way to keep snacking to the minimum is to stay hydrated. Being thirsty can hide as hunger, and a glass of cool, clear water may do the trick. Adding a teaspoon of fruity vinegar (without any processed sugars), will add some nice probiotics and flavor to the water too.

Enjoy!

*Chef Veera*