

Summer Eating IS Mediterranean Eating!

Summer – the perfect time to shift to the Mediterranean diet because fresh fruit and vegetables which are a staple in this lifestyle are plentiful, fresh, and extra delicious at this time of the year.

One of the core basic principles of the Mediterranean diet is to eat plenty of vegetables and fruit. In fact, at least half your plate at every meal should be filled with a combination of raw and cooked vegetables.

To accomplish this without getting bored, I recommend considering these three approaches to preparing vegetables

- Cutting them differently for maximum texture variations. Our mouth gets bored with the same textures, so for example, making slices, zoodles or thin ribbons with zucchini will all change the mouth-feel and make your zucchini more interesting.
- Using a variety of cooking methods – that same zucchini, eaten raw, lightly sautéed, or charred on the grill will make for more exciting alternatives than preparing it the same way all the time.
- Seasonings – flavoring that zucchini with a touch of Asian flavors like sesame and fish sauce, or the classic Greek lemon and oregano seasonings, or some warm spices like cumin and cayenne will create amazing enjoyment to the same vegetable. Multiply this by all the fresh herbs that are abundant in the summer, and you should never be bored with your veggies!

These three strategies to preparing veggies are a great year-round approach to adding more vegetables to your diet without too much repetition.

But summers are also about grilling outdoors and enjoying time with family. Traditional American grilled foods are often red meats, processed meats like sausages, and high sugar barbeque sauces and condiments. With a few changes, you can still enjoy grilling out while eating a Mediterranean lifestyle. I love to [grill fish](#) or a wonderful array of [vegetables with a halloumi cheese](#), and who said you couldn't make some amazing [black bean burgers](#) as well! There are so many options too, for marinading and grilling chicken – check out a couple of these ideas: [Yogurt Marinated Grilled Chicken](#), [Smokey Grilled Tenders](#), [Sticky Honey Garlic Chicken](#)

Perhaps you've been invited to bring a dish to a neighborhood or friends' event -- well, regardless of what they are putting on the grill, you can bring a healthy side that will vie to be the star of the day. I love substituting traditional mayonnaise-based slaws, macaroni salads and potato salads with lighter, olive-oil and vinegar-based dressings that stand up to staying outside on a warm day. My [favorite slaw](#) is perfect as a summer side, but also delicious with some grilled shrimp. And check out this [French Potato salad](#) and [Mediterranean Pasta Salad](#) for easy, healthy alternatives.

Certainly, eating seasonally is at the heart of the Mediterranean lifestyle, so don't forget to visit your local Farmer's Market or your own garden and incorporate delicious and [juicy summer tomatoes](#) or [plentiful zucchini](#) into your summer eating.

If you have been considering shifting to a Mediterranean Diet, now is a great time to make that transition. Email me for even more tips, tricks, and easy recipes.

Chef Veera