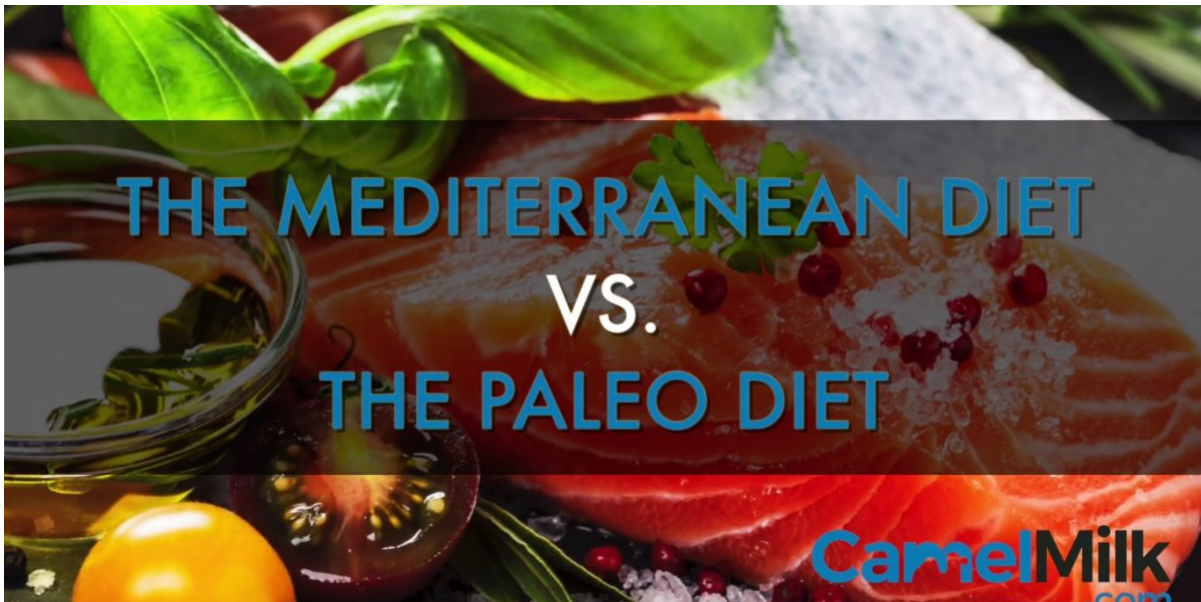


# Mediterranean vs. Paleo: Comparing Best Diets For Health



Every year there's a new popular diet or way of eating that claims to be the healthiest.

From low-carb to high-fat to grain-free, both experts and media alike have their input about current diet trends and which ones are best.

Two of the most popular diets in recent years are the Mediterranean and the Paleo diet. While these two diets are entirely different, both have notable pros and cons, but which diet do experts recommend?

Which diet is better for weight loss or for heart health? Read the differences, benefits, and research on the Mediterranean versus Paleo diet to determine which is best for you.

## What Is the Paleo Diet?

Founded by Loren Cordain, the Paleo diet is a hunt-and-gather way of eating that is built around the foods our primal ancestors ate. The diet concentrates on whole, unprocessed foods and eliminates grains, dairy, sugar, alcohol, vegetable oils, legumes, and processed foods.

The Paleo diet is generally high in fat, high in animal protein, and low to moderate in carbohydrates. The general message of this primal diet is that if a caveman did not eat it, neither should you.

## What Are Paleo-Approved Foods?

The Paleo diet is built around whole, unprocessed foods, grass-fed meat, vegetables, fruit, and healthy fats. Foods you typically consume on the Paleo diet include:

- **Meat (Grass-Fed Recommended)** - chicken, beef, wild game, turkey, lamb
- **Fish and Seafood (Wild-Caught Recommended)** - salmon, shellfish, shrimp, tuna
- **Eggs (Organic Recommended)** - free-range
- **Fruit** - apples, oranges, bananas, berries
- **Vegetables** - leafy greens, broccoli, cauliflower, starchy vegetables (like sweet potatoes)
- **Healthy Fats** - avocado, coconut oil, tallow, olive oil
- **Nuts and Seeds**
- **Herbs and Spices**

## What Is the Mediterranean Diet?

The Mediterranean Diet is a primarily plant-based diet that concentrates on healthy fats, seafood, fruit, whole grains, nuts, and seeds. The plan takes inspiration from the traditional diets of Greece, Italy, France, Egypt, Morocco, and other countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

The traditional Mediterranean Diet Pyramid builds the basis for this way of eating. Enjoying meals socially with family and friends is also encouraged in addition to a glass of red wine with dinner.

## What Are Some Mediterranean Diet Foods?

The Mediterranean Diet focuses on fruit, vegetables, whole grains, fish, and healthy fats. Red meat, sweets, and processed foods are limited. Foods you

typically consume on the Mediterranean Diet include:

- **Fresh Vegetables** - specifically non-starchy and leafy greens
- **Fruit** - apples, grapes, citrus, pomegranate
- **Healthy Fats** - specifically olives and olive oil
- **Seeds, Nuts, and Legumes** - lentils, beans, walnuts, almonds, chia
- **Fish**
- **Eggs and Chicken**
- **Whole Grains** - sprouted grains, whole grain bread and pasta, quinoa, barley, oatmeal
- **Dairy and Yogurt (in moderation)**
- **Red Meat (in moderation)**
- **Red Wine (in moderation)**
- **Plenty of Herbs and Spices**

## **Difference Between Paleo and Mediterranean Diets**

As seen above, both the Mediterranean and Paleo diet concentrate on whole, natural foods and limit processed foods and refined sugar. However, the Paleo diet puts more of an emphasis on red meat and poultry while the Mediterranean diet stresses fish with very limited red meat.

Both diets highlight healthy fats, nuts, seeds, fruit, and an abundance of vegetables and leafy greens. The Mediterranean diet allows and accents whole grains and legumes, while the Paleo diet bans those two ingredients completely.

The Mediterranean diet permits the occasional red wine, dairy, or dessert—foods generally excluded from the Paleo diet. Both of these diets are considered more of a lifestyle or long-term way of eating than a weight-loss diet.

## **Mediterranean vs. Paleo Diet: Which**

# Diet Is Healthiest?

Out of the two diets, the Mediterranean diet is less controversial amongst health professionals and more recommended. Since the Paleo diet is much more restrictive, the Mediterranean diet is also considered easier to follow.

The Mediterranean Diet is proven to be one of the best diets for heart health. Research shows the diet is associated with lower risk factors for cardiovascular disease, weight loss, and improved blood sugar and blood pressure levels.

The Paleo diet severely restricts foods that are typically considered healthy, including heart-healthy whole grains, beans, and calcium-rich dairy. Whole grains are linked with lower mortality rates and lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and obesity.

Legumes and beans are high in fiber, protein, and nutrients. Dairy is the primary source of vitamin D and calcium in modern diets, crucial to bone health and the prevention of osteoporosis. The Paleo diet completely excludes all of these food groups while the Mediterranean diet includes it in a balanced way.

However, both diets are very beneficial in the way that they eliminate processed foods and refined sugars, which are proven to be detrimental to our overall health.

This forces followers of both diets to cook more of their meals and to avoid fast food. Studies show that those who cook most of their meals at home consume fewer calories, fat, and sugar and are generally healthier.

Most research and nutritionists agree that a diet should be a balanced plan that includes whole grains and generally favor the Mediterranean diet over the Paleo.

What are your thoughts on the Mediterranean vs. the Paleo diet? Do you follow either plan? Let us know in the comments below.