



Getting to the Meat of the Mediterranean Diet

Mediterranean-Style Eating with Lean Beef Supports a Healthy Heart

The Mediterranean diet is one of the most popular eating patterns. It is often described as being rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts/seeds and olive oil, and lower in sweets, sodium and red meat. Interestingly, many Mediterranean countries eat about the same amount of red meat or more as the United States, but those countries pair red meat with more fresh vegetables and fruits, whole grains and healthy oils.¹

Recent research shows that a Mediterranean-style eating pattern that includes fresh* lean red meat can support heart health. The study demonstrates that following a Mediterranean-style eating pattern that includes up to 18 ounces of cooked, fresh lean beef and pork per week – along with poultry and fish – is just as effective at improving certain heart disease risk factors (such as blood pressure and total and LDL cholesterol) as a Mediterranean-style eating pattern that limits red meat.²

Why Include Lean Beef in a Mediterranean Diet?



You can rest easy knowing that along with being delicious, lean beef contains important nutrients, like **protein, iron, zinc and B-vitamins** that your body needs.³



The eating pattern allows a wide variety of proteins (including fresh lean beef, pork, poultry, and fish) that support heart health, and can help keep you satisfied throughout the day.^{2,4}



Beef is a delicious tasting, high-quality protein that can be enjoyed at any meal throughout the day. It's easier to start and stick to a healthy eating plan when it is satisfying and enjoyable – and includes⁵ different foods and flavors.

¹ Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015. Available at <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015-scientific-report/PDFs/Scientific-Report-of-the-2015-Dietary-Guidelines-Advisory-Committee.pdf>

² O'Connor LE, et al. A Mediterranean-style eating pattern with lean, unprocessed red meat has cardiometabolic benefits for adults who are overweight or obese in a randomized, crossover, controlled feeding trial. Am J Clin Nutr 2018, nqy075. <https://academic.oup.com/ajcn/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ajcn/nqy075/5036105>

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Nutrient Data Laboratory. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference Legacy Release, April 2018. Available at: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/ndl>

⁴ Leidy HJ, et al. The role of protein in weight loss and maintenance. Am J Clin Nutr 2015;101:1320S-9S.

⁵ Wycherley TP, et al. Self-reported facilitators of, and impediments to maintenance of healthy lifestyle behaviours following a supervised research-based lifestyle intervention programme in patients with type 2 diabetes. Diabet Med 2012;29:632-9.

* Fresh meats were defined in the study as requiring no further preservation or processing beyond refrigeration or freezing; they are not cured, salted or smoked or include chemical preservatives.



The Latest Mediterranean Diet Research: Questions & Answers

A recent research study, “A Mediterranean-style eating pattern with lean unprocessed red meat has cardiometabolic benefits for adults who are overweight/obese in a randomized crossover controlled feeding trial,” was conducted by a research team led by Wayne Campbell, PhD at Purdue University. The study demonstrated that a Mediterranean-style eating pattern that includes typical U.S. intakes of fresh* lean red meat was just as effective as a red meat-restricted Mediterranean-style eating pattern in supporting heart health.¹

Why was the study conducted?

The study objective was to assess the effects of consuming different amounts of lean, unprocessed red meat in a Mediterranean-style eating pattern on cardiometabolic disease risk factors.

How long was the study?

Participants followed a Mediterranean-style eating pattern for two 5-week interventions separated by at least 4 weeks of self-selected eating (known as the “wash out” period).

What did study participants eat?

Forty-one participants followed two Mediterranean-style eating patterns during the study and were split into two groups - a group consuming the typical U.S. lean, unprocessed red meat intake (Med-Red) and a group who consumed the amount of lean, unprocessed red meat commonly recommended for heart-healthy eating patterns (Med-Control).

- **Med-Red:** 18 ounces a week of lean, unprocessed red meat (beef and pork), along with eggs, poultry, fish/seafood, vegetables, fruit, whole grains and dairy.
- **Med-Control:** 7 ounces a week of lean, unprocessed red meat (beef and pork), along with eggs, poultry, fish/seafood, vegetables, fruit, whole grains and dairy. Red meat intake was compensated by poultry and other protein-rich foods.

What did the study find?

Study participants in both groups remained weight stable and experienced a decrease in total cholesterol, with greater reductions occurring in the Med-Red group compared to the Med-Control group. LDL cholesterol decreased in the Med-Red group, but was unchanged in the Med-Control group. Additionally, blood pressure decreased in all study participants. Researchers concluded that adults who are overweight or obese may improve multiple cardiometabolic disease risk factors by adopting a healthy Mediterranean-style eating pattern with or without reductions in lean, unprocessed red meat intake.

Why does the study matter?

A healthy diet should be both satisfying and enjoyable to promote adherence, and this study shows that people can consume a healthy Mediterranean-style eating pattern with fresh lean beef, which may have a positive impact on cardiometabolic disease risk factors.

¹ O'Connor LE, et al. A Mediterranean-style eating pattern with lean, unprocessed red meat has cardiometabolic benefits for adults who are overweight or obese in a randomized, crossover, controlled feeding trial. Am J Clin Nutr 2018, nqy075. <https://academic.oup.com/ajcn/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ajcn/nqy075/5036105>

* Fresh meats were defined in the study as requiring no further preservation or processing beyond refrigeration or freezing; they are not cured, salted or smoked or include chemical preservatives.

Enjoying Lean Beef on the Mediterranean Plate

What's In a Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern?

The Mediterranean-style eating pattern encompasses a wide variety of foods and flavors from the countries that surround the Mediterranean Sea. While the cuisines of each country differ slightly, they all have a few things in common. To build a healthy Mediterranean plate, start with fresh vegetables and fruits, add lean protein and whole grains, and enhance with dairy and healthy fats. Use the following foods and lean beef recipes to inspire your next meal.

Vegetables

Artichokes, Arugula, Beans, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Carrots, Eggplant, Fennel, Kale, Leeks, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Onions, Radishes, Peas, Peppers, Potatoes, Pumpkin, Spinach



Fruit

Apricots, Cherries, Dates, Figs, Grapes, Oranges, Melons, Pears, Pomegranates, Strawberries, Tomatoes



Protein

Lean Beef, Lean Pork, Lean Poultry, Fish/Seafood, Whole Eggs, Soy, Lentils



Whole Grains

Breads, Barley, Bulgur, Couscous, Farro, Oats, Polenta, Rice



Dairy

Cheese (Brie, Goat, Feta, Mozzarella, Parmigiano-Reggiano, Pecorino, Ricotta), Yogurt, Milk



Fat

Olives, Olive Oil, Nuts & Seeds



Apply the Mediterranean-style eating pattern principles and add lean beef to your eating routine with one of these tasty recipes. Full recipes and other lean beef meals can be found within our [Mediterranean Inspired Recipe Collection](https://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com) at [BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com](https://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com).



Greek-Style Beef Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms



**40
MINUTES**



**4
SERVINGS**



**319
CALORIES**



**35 G
PROTEIN**

Enjoy a taste of the Mediterranean with a savory Portobello mushroom stuffed with Greek-seasoned Ground Beef plus a variety of fresh toppings.



**30
MINUTES**



**4
SERVINGS**



**282
CALORIES**



**28 G
PROTEIN**

This simple yet flavorful meal pairs lean Strip Steaks with Kalamata olives, red onion and fresh baby spinach for a delicious Mediterranean-inspired dish.



Garlic Steak with Warm Spinach



**40
MINUTES**



**2
SERVINGS**



**550
CALORIES**



**47 G
PROTEIN**

The most tender of them all, the Filet, is served beside a salad of farro, kale, dried cranberries and almonds.



Beef Filets with Ancient Grain and Kale Salad



For more research and information on beef's role in a heart-healthy diet, visit:

[BeefLovingTexans.com](https://www.beeflovingtexans.com)
[BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com](https://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com)

