



# *Best Foods for Your Heart: The Mediterranean Diet*

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE REGISTERED DIETITIAN  
AT GEORGINA NURSE PRACTITIONER LED CLINIC

**In honour of Heart Month this February, this issue of Minute Nutrition News will highlight the Mediterranean Diet, one of the healthiest and most enjoyable eating patterns. Do not mistaken this as a weight loss diet. The Mediterranean Diet is simply referring to the eating pattern of those living in the Mediterranean region, including countries such as Greece and Italy.**

Heart disease is a big deal. According to 2012/2013 data published by the Public Health Agency of Canada, one in twelve Canadians age 20 and older are diagnosed with heart disease. It is also the second leading cause of death in Canada. Having high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes or chronic kidney disease can increase a person's risk of getting heart disease. Chances are, we all know somebody who is managing one of these health issues. That is why everyone can benefit from eating a healthier, heart friendly diet.

A great number of research studies have shown that the Mediterranean style of eating is one of the best ways to eat when it comes to heart health. The Canadian Cardiovascular Society states that the Mediterranean diet reduces heart attacks, strokes and deaths related to heart disease by 28-30%! It can also reduce diabetes cases by 58%! The benefits aren't limited to just heart health.

Eating more of a Mediterranean diet has also been linked with lower risk of depression by 32%, 13% less cases of Parkinson disease and Alzheimer's Disease, and 4-6% less cases of, or deaths from, cancer. Most important of all, this diet is not only healthy, but also delicious and enjoyable with lots of variety of different foods to eat!

The Mediterranean diet is a lifestyle that focuses on fresh seasonal foods, and cooking foods from scratch rather than processed foods. Here is a checklist to help you start eating more like a Mediterranean:

- Do you mainly use olive oil for cooking?
- Do you eat at least 2 cups of vegetables OR 4 cups of raw leafy vegetables every day?
- Do you eat 3 whole fruits every day?
- Do you eat fish, chicken, turkey, and legumes more often than beef, pork, hamburger, sausage and other deli meat each week?
- Do you eat nuts 3 or more times each week?
- Do you limit sweet beverages and other commercial baked goods to less than twice a week?

Feel free to book an appointment with the Registered Dietitian to see how you can make some changes to improve your heart health today.

#### References:

Dietitians of Canada, 2018. Mediterranean Diet Toolkit: Supporting Patients to Reduce CVD Risk and Improve Mental Health.



## *Rapini with Kalamata Olives*

4 SERVINGS

Photo sourced from Oldwayspt.org

### **Nutrition Information (per serving):**

154 Calories, Fat 13g (17% DV), Saturated Fat 2g (10% DV), Protein 6g, Carbohydrate 7g, Fibre 4g (14% DV), Sodium 250mg (11% DV)

### **Ingredients:**

1/2 cup	Pitted Kalamata olives, drained, rinsed, and halved lengthwise
1/2 tsp	Crushed fennel seeds
3 tbsp	Extra virgin olive oil
4 cloves	Garlic, peeled and lightly crushed
1/4 tsp	Red pepper flakes
1/3 cup	Water or unsalted chicken broth
1 1/2 pound	Rapini (also known as broccoli rabe)
	Pinch of salt

### **Directions:**

1. Marinate the olives with the fennel and 1 tablespoon of the oil. Set aside.
2. Heat remaining olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic and red pepper flakes and cook until the garlic is browned.
3. Add the rapini and salt, and turn to coat. Add water or unsalted broth, cover, and cook until the stalks are tender, 5-6 minutes, turning from time to time.
4. Transfer to a serving platter and scatter the olives across the rapini.