



Eat Like an Italian for a Longer Life

On my recent trip to Italy, I discovered why Italians are able to savor and enjoy their food while maintaining a healthy weight. This Mediterranean-style diet has many health benefits, from reducing heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

5 Key Features of The Italian Diet:

1. **Pasta!** Of course Italians eat pasta, but their portions are much smaller (think fist size) and a vegetable dish or salad is usually served as a first course to help fill you up.
2. **Dark Leafy Greens** contain vitamin C, potassium and fiber that helps control blood sugars, lowers cholesterol and prevents constipation.
3. **Olive oil** is rich in monounsaturated fats and antioxidants that protect your heart. Italians cook with oil instead of butter. They sauté their veggies in olive oil and dress their salads in extra virgin olive oil and lemon.
4. **Tomatoes** are an Italian staple found on salads or cooked into tomato sauce. They contain nutrients, such as vitamin C and lycopene. Lycopene protects against prostate cancer and is better absorbed from cooked tomatoes.
5. **Garlic** contains sulfides that have anti-cancer and heart protecting properties. Using garlic also allows Italians to use less salt for flavoring foods.

Indulge a Little!

The Italians don't avoid sweet indulgences. However, they aren't snacking on processed cookies and chips like we do in America.

3 Simple Yet Delicious Italian Desserts:

1. The traditional pear cake is prepared without butter or eggs. This "vegan" pear cake contained pears, sugar, oil, flour, baking powder and anise seeds.
2. The delectable dark chocolate cake is made only out of dark chocolate, unsweetened cocoa powder, cream and candied oranges. The candied oranges can be substituted with nuts for a heart healthy, lower sugar twist!
3. When compared to ice cream, Italian gelato wins in taste and nutrition. Per ounce, gelato contains fewer calories and grams of fat and sugar.

Note: Watch portion sizes! Overall, portions in Italy are smaller, which is a healthy trick we should adapt here in America.

Be part of a Nutrition Counseling research study! Is your weight more than expected for your height and age? Are you between 9-17 years of age? Do you want to lose weight and learn how to eat healthier? Contact Vanessa Wissing at 718-920-7394 or vwissing@montefiore.org

Ask Endo-Nutrition

Send your questions to alkaplan@montefiore.org and look out for answers in next months issue!



Vegetable Crostini from Elena's Cooking School in Florence

Ingredients

Cut the following vegetables in small cubes (the size of a pencil eraser):
 1 medium eggplant, peeled
 1 yellow pepper
 1 red pepper
 2 zucchini, unpeeled
 2 ripe tomatoes cut as above or grape tomatoes cut in 6-8 small pieces
 1 onion, finely chopped
 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
 Extra virgin olive oil
 Basil, julienned

Put peeled eggplant in a strainer over an empty bowl and sprinkle with salt. Put a soup plate upside down over them (this process helps remove the bitter taste). Sauté the onion together with 2 cloves of garlic in extra virgin olive oil until translucent, (few minutes). Add peppers and zucchini.

Cook in a large covered pan for 5 minutes and then add the eggplant cubes and 2 ripe tomatoes. Salt to taste and cook another 10 minutes without a lid. Remove from heat, add the basil and let the vegetables cool down. Serve the "caponata" on slices of whole grain bread or over an arugula salad. Drizzle olive oil over vegetables. You can also sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

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