Mediterranean food - Reading and speaking

B1 reading, vocabulary and speaking. Explore a way of eating, check what a text says and plan a meal together.

A. Before you read

What foods are common in the place where you live? Which ingredients do you enjoy cooking with? Compare ideas without judging anyone's personal diet.



B. Read for the main idea

Which description best matches the text?
a. One fixed menu for everyone.
b. A flexible pattern that can include many different meals.
c. A list of foods that guarantees good health.

1 The Mediterranean is a sea surrounded by countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece. Their dishes are different, but some traditional ways of eating share features. The term Mediterranean diet describes a broad pattern rather than one menu that everybody follows.

2 Vegetables, fruit, beans, lentils and wholegrain foods are important parts of this pattern. Fish and olive oil are also commonly included. Beans and lentils can provide protein as well as fibre. Wholegrain bread, pasta and rice contain more fibre than their refined versions. Olive oil is an unsaturated fat, but it is still used in small amounts.

3 A balanced diet includes a variety of food groups. This means there is no single ingredient that makes a meal healthy on its own. Food choices also depend on cost, availability, culture and individual needs. Frozen or canned vegetables can be useful when fresh produce is expensive or difficult to find.

4 For a simple lunch, someone might prepare a bean salad with vegetables and wholegrain bread. Another person might choose a different meal using local ingredients. The aim is variety over time, not copying every dish from another country. A general eating pattern cannot guarantee that a person will avoid illness.

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Mediterranean food - Vocabulary and tasks

C. Match the words to the meanings

1. pattern ___ 2. wholegrain ___ 3. fibre ___
4. balanced ___ 5. availability ___ 6. refined ___

a. Having a suitable mixture of different things.

b. How easy something is to obtain.

c. A regular way in which something happens.

d. With some parts removed during processing.

e. Keeping all the main parts of the grain.

f. A part of plant food that helps digestion.

D. Read for detail

1. Why is the Mediterranean diet not one fixed menu?

2. Name two foods in the text that provide protein and fibre.

3. How do wholegrain foods differ from refined versions?

4. Why might someone choose frozen or canned vegetables?

5. Name two factors that influence food choices.

6. Does the text say this eating pattern prevents all illness? Explain.

E. Plan a meal together

Choose ingredients for a simple lunch for a fictional study group. Consider variety, price and ingredients that are easy to find. Ask the group about allergies or dietary requirements before choosing. Explain one alternative if an ingredient is unavailable.

F. Write an email

A friend wants an idea for a simple lunch. Write an email of about 100 words. Suggest a meal, explain why you chose it and say how to prepare it. This is general B1 writing practice.

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Mediterranean food - Key and teacher notes

B. Main idea

b. A flexible pattern that can include many different meals.

C. Vocabulary

1 c; 2 e; 3 f; 4 a; 5 b; 6 d.

D. Possible answers

1. Countries have different dishes; the term describes shared features rather than one menu.

2. Beans and lentils.

3. Wholegrain versions retain more fibre.

4. Fresh produce may be expensive or hard to find.

5. Any two: cost, availability, culture or individual needs.

6. No. The final paragraph says that it cannot guarantee someone will avoid illness.

F. One possible email

Hi Alex,

You asked for a simple lunch idea. How about a bean salad with wholegrain bread? It is easy to prepare, and you can use ingredients you already have. You will need cooked beans, tomatoes, cucumber and a little olive oil. If you use canned beans, drain and rinse them first. Chop the vegetables, mix everything in a bowl and serve it with bread. You could add herbs or choose different vegetables. Check whether anyone has allergies before preparing food for a group. I like this lunch because there is very little cooking to do. Let me know how it goes!

Sam

Teaching the lesson

Ask learners to support answers with a paragraph number. In the speaking stage, assess explanations and responses, rather than the nutritional quality of a learner's own meals. Personal eating habits need not be disclosed.

Factual sources

Original lesson text written for this worksheet. Facts checked against the NHS balanced-diet guide and HEART UK's Mediterranean-diet guide on 11 October 2026. Source links are in the publishing brief.

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