



Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.

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The Nordic Diet

The Mediterranean Diet is often held up as the gold standard dietary and lifestyle pattern for long-term health and longevity. It is based on the eating patterns of several Mediterranean countries and research has consistently shown it has significant health benefits. However, the Mediterranean Diet is not the only game in town. There are other regions of the world with very different climates, and therefore, diets, that may provide similar benefits.

One such diet is the Nordic Diet, consumed by people living in the countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Similar to the Mediterranean Diet, this diet is high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, beans and fatty fish. One major difference is the type of oil used—instead of olive oil, the Nordic Diet uses rapeseed (also known as canola oil), which is adapted to the colder climate in this region. In addition, although both diets are high in fruits and vegetables, the types of fruits and vegetables vary quite a bit. Due to the colder temperatures, vegetables acclimated to this region include root vegetables like carrots, turnips, potatoes, and parsnips, and cruciferous vegetables like cabbage and cauliflower. Fruits like apples and pears and berries like strawberries, blueberries, and lingonberries are abundant in warmer months. Like the Mediterranean Diet, the Nordic Diet includes dairy, especially yogurt. And this diet includes a lot of fish, particularly cold water fish like mackerel, salmon, sardines, and herring, that are high in healthy, unsaturated fats. It also includes whole grains like oats, barley, and rye, which are made into cereals and breads.

Studies show that the Nordic Diet has benefits similar to the Mediterranean Diet. Those who follow the Nordic Diet have lower cholesterol, lower blood pressure, lower risk of cardiovascular disease, improved insulin sensitivity, lower rates of diabetes, and lower

rates of obesity. The Nordic Diet may also support gut health because fermented foods are common. Kefir and skyr are fermented dairy products similar to yogurt. Sauerkraut and other pickled vegetables are also consumed in this region of the world.

A typical day of eating according to the Nordic Diet might look something like this:

Breakfast: Oatmeal with berries and skyr yogurt

Lunch: Rye bread with smoked salmon, boiled eggs, and pickled vegetables

Dinner: Mackerel, roasted root vegetables, and barley salad

Snacks or Desserts: Baked apples with nuts and cinnamon, berries and yogurt, whole grain crackers with smoked or pickled fish

Key features of both the Mediterranean and Nordic Diets are that they prioritize unprocessed foods. Unprocessed foods don't have a long shelf life, so people in these areas also tend to eat more locally and seasonally.

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The Nordic Diet (continued)

In California, we are lucky to have a long growing season with many microclimates that provide a variety of foods. But to truly eat locally and seasonally in the cold winter months, following the Nordic Diet might be a good approach. In the winter months, cold weather root vegetables and cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, and kale are in season. Incorporating small fish like mackerel, sardines, and herring is a wise move because these fish are lower down on the food chain, so they are less likely to accumulate environmental toxins like mercury or PCBs than some of their larger, more long-lived cousins. These fish are often canned or jarred, so they have a long shelf life and can be kept on hand in the pantry for quick meals. Whole grains, dairy like yogurt, and legumes are staples of both the Nordic and Mediterranean Diets.

Traditional eating patterns from around the world are usually healthier than today's modern diet because they use real, whole, unprocessed foods. While the Mediterranean Diet is the most well-studied, we can eat healthfully in any region of the world if we eat whole, local foods in healthy amounts, as the research on the Nordic Diet shows. And, incorporating dishes and ideas from other parts of the world as the seasons change keeps eating healthily exciting and enjoyable.



Are Seed Oils Bad for You?

If you get your nutrition news from TikTok, you might answer yes to this question. In fact, seed oils are excellent sources of healthy fats and vastly better for you than some of the alternatives. The seed oils being demonized on social media are canola, corn, cottonseed, grapeseed, soy, rice bran, sunflower and safflower oils. According to claims on social media, these oils are high in omega-6 fatty acids which break down into toxins when used in cooking, causing inflammation, impairing the immune system, and leading to chronic disease. However, this is not supported by evidence.

These oils are high in omega-6 fatty acids, essential fats that our bodies need to function. It is true that most people get more omega-3s than omega-6s, and that omega-3s may play a bigger role in reducing heart disease risk and inflammation. But that in no way means that omega-6s are bad for you, just that you need to also include sources of omega-3s in your diet.

Another criticism is that these oils are often found in processed foods. This is a flawed argument—just because something is included in a food that is unhealthy, it does not make that ingredient unhealthy. For example, you could put broccoli in a cookie, but that doesn't make broccoli unhealthy.

It is true that many of these oils require processing, either chemical or mechanical, to be removed from their original food source, unlike olive oil, for example, which is simply pressed from olives. But that also doesn't make them inherently unhealthy, especially considering they are generally used in small quantities, such as in salad dressings or stir-fries.

Studies consistently show that diets high in unsaturated fats like seed oils are linked to lower rates of heart disease than diets high in saturated fats, like butter and lard. And while olive oil might be the gold standard, its flavor profile doesn't compliment every dish. So as long as you are cooking a healthy meal—like a vegetable stir-fry with a lean protein, or a salad with an oil-based vinaigrette, using seed oils is absolutely fine, especially if it means you will eat more of that healthy meal.



Wellness Ambassador Spotlight!

Meet Erica Taylor

Administrative Assistant, Sonoma County Healing Center



[Erica Taylor, Rachel Ostrand, Francisco Palmerin]

What is your role at your campus?

I'm the Administrative Assistant and Wellness Squad Co-Chair. Along with supporting day-to-day operations, I help plan, coordinate, and promote the wellness activities and events hosted at our program to support a positive and healthy environment for our campus community.

What made you want to become a Wellness Ambassador for your campus?

I joined the Wellness Ambassador program because I care about fostering a supportive and welcoming space for staff, where everyone feels comfortable exploring personal wellness and accessing helpful resources.

What activities do you do in your role as Wellness Ambassador?

In this role, I help design and update the monthly bulletin board in the staff break room. We try to highlight things staff might enjoy and find helpful, such as resources, upcoming events and holidays. I also help host our monthly Wellness Squad meetings, where we organize upcoming activities and coordinate ways to engage and support staff throughout the year.

What are you most proud of in your role as a Wellness Ambassador?

I'm most proud of the connections that have been built amongst staff. Seeing staff feel more supported and engaged and sharing positive feedback reminds me that even small efforts can create meaningful change.

Why should others join as Wellness Ambassadors?

I would encourage others to join as this role provides opportunities to support workplace wellness and contribute to a healthy and positive environment. Anyone who enjoys helping others and promoting well-being would find this role meaningful and rewarding.

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Wellness Ambassador Spotlight (continued)

What challenges have you faced in promoting wellness on your campus, and how have you worked to overcome them?

One challenge has been increasing engagement in wellness activities. To help with this, we've focused on offering a variety of options and communicating more frequently so that staff are aware of what is available and feel encouraged to participate.

Where would you like to see this role going? What would you like to do but have not done yet? How can the Health and Wellness Foundational Tool help?

My hope is to continue building momentum and offering more regular and interactive wellness opportunities for staff. The Health and Wellness Foundational Tool can assist by supplying additional resources and direction to help strengthen and sustain these efforts. In the future, it would be great to explore options such as workshops or

ongoing themed activities or events held across multiple campuses.

“I’m grateful to be part of the Wellness Ambassador program and appreciate the opportunity to promote health and wellness in our work culture. I am excited to stay involved and help wellness become an ongoing part of our workplace culture.”

- Erica Taylor

Are you passionate about...

Health & Wellness, Cooking, Gardening, Fitness, Dancing, Cultural Diversity, Health Education or Journalism?

Become a Wellness Ambassador for your campus!

Contact Margaret Clayton, Director of Nutrition & Wellness, at mclayton@cbhi.net.



Dia De Los Muertos Ofrenda (Altar)

by Isela Cruz, Assistant Dietary Manager, Crestwood Manor Fremont

Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is to honor and to celebrate the lives of deceased loved ones. It is customary to set up the Ofrenda (altar) on October 27th.

- ◆ October 27th is when beloved pets are remembered.
- ◆ October 28th is when most souls are believed to begin their journey home.
- ◆ November 1st is dedicated to the souls of children, Dia de Los Angelitos (Day of the Little Angels).
- ◆ November 2nd is dedicated to the souls of adults who have passed.
- ◆ Altars are usually taken down November 3rd.

Decorations like marigolds (cempasúchil) are believed to guide the spirits; the flowers are thought to attract souls of the dead to the offering. The bright petals with a strong scent can also guide souls. The Ofrenda can be decorated with candles for light, food and water offerings, sugar skulls, salt, and incense. Colorful designs represent the vitality and individual personality of the departed ones. Typically, family and friends gather to pay respects and remember friends and family who have passed. It is widely observed in Latino culture.



Winter Salads

In the cold months of winter, eating salad may not be as appetizing or easy as the temperatures are cold and fresh locally-grown produce is scarce. However, there are many lettuce-free salads that can be hearty and filling in the winter months and that use produce more abundant in the season.

Fruits available in the cooler months, like apples, pears, and citrus fruits make delicious bases for winter salads. Pair with nuts like walnuts and almonds, some crumbled cheese, and top with a honey-sweetened vinaigrette to bring all the flavors together.

Roasted root vegetables can also be subbed for side salads. These vegetables are in season in the winter, are hearty and nutritious, and can be served warm with a light vinaigrette or just oil and herbs.

If you are missing your leafy greens in the dark months of winter, consider sprouting your own microgreens and sprouts. These are often available from greenhouses in the winter, but you can sprout your own under a grow lamp or in a sunny window with no soil required. Paper towels, coconut fiber, or reusable mesh trays can serve as a base for the plants to grow on.

Cabbage is also available in the winter, and can be made into an endless variety of slaws. Many cultures have their version of fermented cabbage, which illustrates how this winter crop can be stretched into the spring. Kimchi is Korean pickled cabbage, curtido is a Salvadoran pickled cabbage relish, and sauerkraut is common in Eastern European cultures, to name a few.

A unique salad using cold-weather-friendly cabbage is a grilled cabbage Caesar. Check out the recipe at the end of this newsletter!

Spirituality Corner: Using Winter to Rest and Restore

by Erin Lubniewski, Occupational Therapist at Crestwood Treatment Center Fremont

"The dark cold season sows your future growth and creative energy for all of your much-desired spring and summer activities and projects." -Patricia Bonnard

As the hustle and bustle of the holidays wind down in January it can leave us feeling depleted and burnt out. Coincidentally, **the winter season provides an opportunity to rest and restore** during the cold and short days. We can use this time to reflect on the year just past and the year just ahead. We can assess what to let go of (burdens, obstacles) that aren't serving us in our personal and spiritual growth. **We can ponder what we want to make space for and how to prepare for the growth that comes with spring.**

Winter brings us an opportunity for fewer distractions from hearing our inner voice. We can use this time to reconnect to our truest values and priorities. We can prepare for personal and spiritual growth in the coming

year by staying true to ourselves. **How will you rest and restore?**



Here are 5 ideas among many to consider during this period of hibernation and reflection.

Reading. With fewer daylight hours and opportunities to be outdoors, this is a great time to get comfortable and turn to materials that can inspire us. There are countless reading materials we can access: books (traditional, audio, digital), blogs, religious texts, and magazines. We can also add in some self care, treating ourselves to a hot beverage as we connect with new thoughts and ideas.

Setting Intentions. Intentions are different from goals; they are more about the path than the destination. They are rooted in our values and help guide our thoughts and actions towards who we want to become. They help us stay true to ourselves as our days get busier. Ask yourself questions like, 'How do I want to live?' 'What are my values?' 'What are my deepest desires?' We can also choose a meaningful word or phrase to focus on throughout the year.

Practice Gratitude. Journaling and listing things you are grateful for can help you identify what you truly value.

Release Past Burdens. Some people choose to write down on a slip of paper what they feel is holding them back and then rip or burn the paper to feel the release of those thoughts and emotions.

Vision Board. Create a visual and physical manifestation of your intentions, values, and priorities. As you refer back to your vision board throughout the year, it can help you stay aligned with your goals and help guide decision making according to your priorities and values.

Recipe: Grilled Cabbage Caesar Salad

If you have not tried grilled greens yet, put that on your short list of to-dos. Pick a hefty green, like romaine or bok choy, make sure the greens are thoroughly dried and brushed with oil, and then get them on a hot grill. A deep, smoky sear against crunchy, cool leaves is a delightful combination. This recipe elevates lowly cabbage into a show-stopping side dish. The cabbage is grilled to create visual and textural appeal, but if your grill has been put away for the season, a hot pan can achieve a very similar effect.

For the Dressing

- ½ cup olive oil or other plant oil of choice
- 1 egg yolk (1 tbsp mayo can be substituted)
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of pepper
- 8 anchovy fillets packed in oil

Directions: Combine the dressing ingredients in a blender or in a bowl if using an immersion blender. Blend until completely combined and emulsified. Chill until serving salad.

Heat a grill to medium-high heat, or heat a pan on the stove top over medium-high heat. Cut the cabbage into 8 wedges, keeping the core intact so the leaves don't fall apart. Brush the cabbage with oil and sprinkle with salt. Grill, cut side down, for about 10 minutes until lightly charred. Flip to the other cut side and repeat. When cabbage is tender and lightly charred, transfer to a tray to cool.

Heat the panko in a skillet with a small amount of oil, cook and stir until panko is just golden brown. Let cool.

Remove the cores from the cabbage and arrange the leaves in a bowl or on a serving platter. Drizzle with the dressing, then sprinkle with the panko and parmesan cheese. If using, add bacon or white anchovies.

For the Salad

- 1 head of green cabbage (romaine lettuce is a good substitute)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Pinch of salt
- ½ cup panko or plain breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup parmesan
- Optional additions: crumbled cooked bacon or marinated white anchovies



"You don't have to cook fancy or complicated masterpieces—just good food from fresh ingredients."

~ Julia Child

Any Health and Wellness News Questions?

Contact Margaret M. Clayton, M.S. at mclayton@cbhi.net