



Guide to Healthy Fire Service Meetings



A Free Resource Guide for the Fire Service

Supported by a grant from the US Federal Emergency Management Agency
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Introduction

How often have you attended a fire service meeting (even ones related to promoting health and wellness) and the food served is anything but healthy? Here are some simple plans for catering delicious and healthy meals consistent with the Mediterranean lifestyle. These are meals you can thoroughly enjoy, feel full and still feel great about the next day. Nutrition and medical experts agree that following a Mediterranean-style diet improves health. The Mediterranean Diet is most closely associated with the traditional dietary patterns of rural Greece and Southern Italy during the 1960's. Pioneering observations brought wide attention to the fact that the Mediterranean Diet was strongly associated with lower cardiovascular disease and mortality risks. Since then, a great number of studies support the adherence to Mediterranean Diet to prevent heart diseases, cancer and to improve longevity and have wonderful health. The appeal of the Mediterranean Diet extends beyond its many proven health benefits. By combining diverse flavors, colors and aromas fresh from the land and sea, and its liberal use of olive oil, herbs and lean proteins, the Mediterranean Diet provides delicious meals capable of transporting us to Mediterranean locales through our senses. Moreover, because of its emphasis on limited consumption, rather than abstention from red meat and sweets, as well as permitting the moderate use of alcohol, the Mediterranean Diet represents a healthy, yet indulgent and appealing **lifestyle** that can be sustained over long periods of time. Our aim is to motivate firefighters and their families to incorporate Mediterranean diet principles at work and home through education, participation and incentives. The ultimate purpose is to lower firefighters' risks for cardiovascular diseases, cancer and other chronic diseases by successfully getting more firefighters and their families to adopt and incorporate the healthy eating principles behind the Mediterranean diet.

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Mediterranean Diet Overview

The traditional Mediterranean Diet pattern differs significantly from other eating patterns. First, olive oil is used generously for most cooking and is consumed as the primary dietary fat. Second, the MD has a high intake of various plant foods (fruits, vegetables, legumes, unrefined cereals, nuts, and seeds). At the same time, there is moderate consumption of fish, seafood, fermented dairy products (yogurt and cheese), poultry, and eggs; as well as alcohol use in moderation with meals (usually wine). Finally, the consumption of red and processed meats, and sweets is limited. Frequent physical activity, good rest and quality time with friends and family are encouraged.

- Use generously olive oil (extra virgin if possible) to cook and dress salads and food
- Consume 3 or more servings per week of mixed nuts (including peanut butter made only with peanuts) - (e.g. a fist of nuts as a snack in substitution of other things)
- Consume 2 or more servings per day of vegetables; consume 3 or more servings per day of whole fruit
- Consume 3 or more servings per week of fish and seafood (including fatty fish, at least one serving)
- Consume 3 or more servings per week of legumes
- Consume lean meats (turkey, chicken) instead of red and processed meats (hamburgers, sausages, meatballs, beef)
- Consume 2 or more servings per week of “sofrito,” a sauce made with tomato and onion and/or garlic slowly simmered with olive oil as a side of main courses (whole pasta, brown rice) and use fresh herbs and allium to cook
- Limit commercial sweets and refined carbohydrates to less than 3 servings per week. Instead consume whole grains
- Limit the consumption of soda and sugary drinks, spread fats (whole cream, butter), fast and processed (fried foods, chips) to 1 or less times per week



General Conference Recommendations

- Support healthier choices, provide leadership and role modeling
- Allow time for walking and stretching throughout sessions; allow time for exercise/rest before or after sessions
- Inform attendees that the food being served follows the Mediterranean lifestyle guidelines
- Offer nutritious food and beverage options including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Avoid serving sodas, sweetened beverages and processed foods
- Ensure healthy options are attractively presented, appealing, and taste good
- Avoid candy and processed, sweet desserts

Please see suggested conference menus

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Breakfast Sample

#1

BREAKFAST BUFFET SAMPLE ONE:

Coffee & tea service with low fat milk (avoid cream & artificial creamers)

Fruit-infused water and fresh squeezed fruit juice

FAGE Plain Greek yogurt: Total (whole fat) and Total 2%, accompanied by choices of pure honey, raw walnut pieces and raw pistachios, and fresh fruits as accompaniments

Additional fresh fruits, whole grain breads with extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) and high-quality cheeses

Village- style Greek Pites (Pies) Spanakopites and Prasopites (Traditional spinach and leek pies)

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Breakfast Sample

#2

BREAKFAST SAMPLE TWO:

FAGE Greek yogurt Total and 2% (**PLAIN**) served with Local honey or Greek honey and Raw Walnuts, almonds and/or pistachios

Fresh fruit (mix of loose fresh blueberries, raspberries and blackberries, and other whole fruit)

Hard boiled Eggs

Scrambled eggs or omelets with mushrooms, spinach and peppers

Whole wheat and/or other whole grain sliced bread for toasting

Natural peanut butter (unsweetened) or almond butter (unsweetened)

Extra Virgin Olive Oil

100% juice – orange and pomegranate

Coffee, tea, water (provide 2% and skim milk, please avoid cream, half and half and artificial creamers)

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Lunch Sample #1

LUNCH BUFFET SAMPLE ONE: "Mezedes" (Greek Tapas)

Fresh fig halves with halloumi or fresh mozzarella cheese slice, wrapped with prosciutto slice

Dolmades (Grape leaves stuffed with brown rice and lentils)

Mini skewers of chicken kebabs

Whole-grain flat breads (brushed with extra virgin olive oil, lightly toasted on the grill and sprinkled with oregano)

Variety of freshly prepared Mediterranean Dips: Melitzanosalata or Baba Ganoush (Mediterranean eggplant salad), Tzatziki, Hummus

Fresh spinach and cheese pies

Variety of fresh fruits

Fruit-infused waters, coffee & tea service

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Lunch Sample #2

LUNCH SAMPLE TWO

Tuscan or other roasted Turkey breast and Provolone sandwiches on whole wheat bread (high quality mustards and EVOO-based vinaigrettes for sauces)

Chickpea salad – add lemon, garlic, herbs and extra virgin olive oil-based dressing at buffet or on side

Hummus and whole wheat pita chips [may request several different hummus flavors, e.g. sundried tomato]

Fresh, in-season fruit

Greek style olives and cheeses drizzled with EVOO

Bottled water, seltzers and/or fruit-infused water

Coffee, tea, water (provide 2% and skim milk, please avoid cream, half and half and artificial creamers)

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Lunch Sample #3

LUNCH SAMPLE THREE

Grilled Chicken salad: Grilled chicken breast, Romaine Hearts, Radicchio, Lettuce, Homemade Croutons, Grated Parmesan Cheese. Serve with EVOO vinaigrette

Grilled vegetable salad. Serve with EVOO vinaigrette

Pasta Salad. Serve with EVOO vinaigrette

Fruit salad

Bottled water, seltzers and/or fruit-infused water

Coffee, tea, water (provide 2% and skim milk, please avoid cream, half and half and artificial creamers)

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Buffet Style Lunch or Dinner #1

BUFFET STYLE LUNCH OR DINNER ONE

Horiatiki Salata (Greek village salad): Greek feta, tomato, cucumber, green and red pepper slices, oil cured Greek olives, large capers, red onion, and pepperoncini with dressing of extra virgin Greek olive oil, red wine vinegar, oregano, garlic, sea salt, pepper

Kalamata Chicken (Greek-style roasted chicken with Kalamata olives) and Farro pilaf

“Pappoutsakia” (Greek-style stuffed small eggplants, filled with a whole grain pilaf, pine nuts and garbanzos)

Whole-grain flat breads (brushed with EVOO, lightly toasted on the grill and sprinkled with oregano)

Fruit-infused waters, coffee & tea service

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Buffet Style Lunch or Dinner #2

BUFFET STYLE LUNCH OR DINNER TWO

Build your own Chicken Gyro or Chicken Shawarma: whole wheat pita bread, brushed with EVOO and lightly toasted; marinated chicken breast grilled and shredded or finely sliced; fresh tomatoes, onion and parsley finely diced; choice of sauces- Tzatziki (Greek yogurt sauce), hummus and/or tahini sauce

Tabbouleh salad with lemon-EVOO dressing

Grilled vegetable platter (eggplant, zucchini, peppers and grilled mushroom medley) drizzled with red wine vinaigrette

Bottled water, seltzers and/or fruit-infused water

Beer and wine service

Coffee, tea, water (provide 2% and skim milk, please avoid cream, half and half and artificial creamers)

Desert: fresh fruit medley and Greek yogurt served with walnuts and honey

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Buffet Style Lunch or Dinner #3

BUFFET STYLE LUNCH OR DINNER THREE

Build your own Chicken Fajitas: whole wheat and whole corn tortillas; marinated chicken breast grilled and thickly sliced; fresh tomatoes; EVOO-sautéed onions and peppers; fresh parsley finely diced; choice of salsas: guacamole (prepared fresh with EVOO), pico de gallo, salsa verde, salsa rojo.

Mexican Black bean soup

Mixed garden salad with red wine-EVOO vinaigrette.

Grilled vegetable platter (“Poblano” peppers (remove skin), green and red peppers, and grilled mushroom medley) drizzled with red wine vinaigrette

Bottled water, seltzers and/or fruit-infused water

Beer and wine service

Coffee, tea, water (provide 2% and skim milk, please avoid cream, half and half and artificial creamers)

Dessert: fresh fruit medley, dark chocolates and Spanish Flan

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Firefighters' Mediterranean Pyramid

FIREFIGHTERS' MEDITERRANEAN PYRAMID

Water as the main beverage.
Avoid sugary drinks and energy drinks



Use Extra Virgin Olive Oil for food preparation, cooking and all salad dressings. Use at the table to add flavor to foods.



Sleep 7-8 hours nightly.
Use naps during shift work.

Good Nutrition, Adequate Sleep and Frequent Physical Activity (150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic activity each week) promote weight control and reduce the risks of heart disease and cancer, while lowering stress and its negative consequences. Spend quality time with family and co-workers.

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