

# breaking down the nordic diet

## summary handout content

The Nordic Diet has grown in popularity, as plant-based eating has become more common. Rather than a prescriptive diet plan, the Nordic Diet may serve as a gateway to a more nutrient-rich eating routine that provides many benefits - it is nutrient-dense and environmentally friendly, and also supports heart health, reduces inflammation, and encourages culinary creativity and trying new foods.

### the “new” nordic diet, a modern take on nordic cuisine, is all about:

- Using what's available
- Emphasizing more plants and fish, and less meat
- Shopping local, choosing sustainable and eating seasonally

### the nordic diet loosely includes:

- Whole grains (barley, rye and oats)
- Fruits (apples, pears, plums and berries)
- Vegetables (potatoes, cabbage and carrots)
- Legumes (beans and peas)
- Nuts and seeds
- Seafood (fish and shellfish)
- Low-fat dairy
- Fermented foods
- Oils (canola, sunflower and flaxseed)

#### Additionally, emphasizes:

##### Moderate amounts of:

- Eggs, cheese, yogurt, and game meats like rabbit, wild duck, venison & bison

##### Small amounts:

- Red meats (such as beef or pork) and foods high in saturated fat like butter
- Ultra-processed foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, added sugars, and high-salt foods



### what does the science tell us?

- Research is limited, but shows the diet contributes fatty acids, minerals, vitamins, plant materials that have a positive effect on the health: reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol levels, as well as cardiovascular disease.
- More research is needed to support the health claims of lowering cholesterol, lowering risk of developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

**Nutrition must be individualized, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach**

#### Consider the following when discussing this diet with your clients:

- Budget
- Cultural foods
- Access for vulnerable populations

**References:** Bere E, Brug J. Towards health-promoting and environmentally friendly regional diets – a Nordic example. *Public Health Nutr.* (2008) 12:91–6. doi: 10.1017/S1368980008001985 | The Nordic Diet: Healthy Eating with An Eco-Friendly Bent. *Harvard Health* | M F Hjorth, H M Roager, T M Larsen, S K Poulsen, T R Licht, M I Bahl, Y Zohar, A Astrup. Pre-treatment microbial Prevotella-to-Bacteroides ratio, determines body fat loss success during a 6-month randomized controlled diet intervention. *International Journal of Obesity*, 2017; DOI: 10.1038/ijo.2017.220 | The Nordic Kitchen: One Year of Family Cooking by Claus Meyer | Analysis of the SYSDIET Healthy Nordic Diet randomized trial based on metabolic profiling reveal beneficial effects on glucose metabolism and blood lipids. *Clinical Nutrition*, 2022; 41 (2): 441 DOI: 10.1016/j.clnu.2021.12.031