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Enliven Summer Meals with a Healthy Mediterranean Mix

- Pompeian OlivExtra® Plus with Omega-3 DHA and Pomegranate Red Wine Vinegar -

BALTIMORE, MD – May 2009 – With summer nearly upon us, now is the perfect time to start engaging in healthy activities and enjoying a healthy Mediterranean Diet.

“May is ‘Mediterranean Food Month*,’” states dietician Sue Canonico, R.D. “It’s a time when consumers should start using the newly revised Mediterranean Diet Pyramid.” The new pyramid emphasizes the health benefits of meals prepared with plant food ingredients such as fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, legumes, seeds, olives and olive oil. Canonico suggests that these items can easily be combined into delicious salads or into a variety of healthy recipes using other ingredients.

Scientists who worked on the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid believe it is beneficial to eat fish that contain DHA and shellfish at least two times per week, and Canonico notes both can be prepared with olive oil and served with healthy, fresh or grilled vegetables.

“Olive oil should be thought of as the principal fat, replacing other fats and oils, including butter and margarine,” Canonico stated. “Pompeian, which has been bringing the benefits of olive oil to the American table for over a century, has recently introduced a significant advancement in the product line called Pompeian OlivExtra® Plus with Omega-3 DHA. This special blend of extra virgin olive oil and canola oil is infused with DHA, an essential fatty acid that supports brain, eye and heart health, enhancing the benefits of the traditional Mediterranean oil. And the canola oil adds another Omega-3 while raising the smoke point so that OlivExtra Plus is smart for sautéing, as well as great to use as a salad oil.”

Dietary data from the Mediterranean region in recent years show that the region has enjoyed the lowest recorded rates of chronic diseases and the highest adult life expectancy. The Mediterranean Diet is associated with less heart disease and protection from some cancers because its main nutritional components include Vitamin C, beta-carotene, tocopherols, polyphenols, and essential minerals.

Minimally processed, seasonally fresh, locally grown foods often maximize the health-promoting micronutrients and antioxidants that make for healthier meals. Olive oil has natural antioxidants and so does red wine vinegar. In this category, too, Pompeian has innovated with the recent introduction of three Pompeian red wine vinegars that are antioxidant enriched with the infusion of pomegranate, Açai and blueberry.

Beyond the antioxidants, Pompeian Açai Pomegranate Infused Red Wine Vinegar and Pompeian Blueberry Açai Pomegranate Infused Red Wine Vinegar have unique flavor profiles that make them a tasty addition to any number of recipes from salads and salsa to chicken dishes. When blended in a vinaigrette with Pompeian Extra Virgin Olive Oil or OlivExtra Plus with Omega-3 DHA, these vinegars provide a delightfully tangy alternative to less healthy creamy dressings.

To learn more about the Mediterranean Diet and Pompeian products and the delicious recipes you can make with them, visit: www.pompeian.com.

*Mediterranean Food Month was announced by Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust, a Boston based non-profit educational organization, and its Mediterranean Food Alliance.

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