

PITTA & KAPHA BALANCING DIET

The food we eat is that unique aspect of our life which we have almost total control over. Because we are what we eat, according to Āyurveda, it can be a very powerful tool for balancing and for promoting and maintaining health. One ancient authority says that food is our medicine—a good regimen of diet is worth a hundred drugs but no amount of drugs can overcome a poor regimen of diet. Generally, one should eat warm, freshly cooked foods. We can use the tastes in food as a guide to what qualities those foods have. For example, foods which have bitter, and astringent tastes have those qualities (especially dryness) necessary to balance both pitta and kapha qualities of liquid and oily. We will give below examples of foods with these tastes common in our culture. This information has been provided by Dr. Lad, in his book: *Ayurvedic Cooking for Self Healing*. This book is a good resource of knowledge and menus. Please note that agreement about the qualities of foods is not universal. Another important point is that a list of balancing foods is not a blanket proscription to totally avoid the foods with tastes of sweet, sour, salty (heavy things). Rather, do eat foods having these other qualities to help promote balance in the emotions and in the physiology but eat them less often and in smaller quantities. The foods to favor will provide a theme of influence but in a gentle and sustained way. Please refer to our article “Incompatible Food Combinations” for important information about what foods are toxic when eaten in the same meal. Also, refer to the article "Eating Guidelines" for more important points about eating. Finally, refer to our article “Cooking—Some Āyurvedic Strategies” for thoughts about how to address family meal planning with different body types and imbalances.

FAVOR THESE FOODS (eat less of those items in *italics*)

- Beverages: aloe vera juice, *apple juice*, apricot, berry, black tea—spiced, cherry, grain beverages, grape, peach, pear, pomegranate, prune
- Herbal Beverages: alfalfa, bancha, barley, blackberry, burdock, chamomile, chicory, *comfrey*, dandelion, fenugreek, ginger, hibiscus, jasmine, kukicha, lavender, lemon balm, lemon grass, nettle, peppermint, raspberry, red clover, *sarsaparilla*, saffron, spearmint, strawberry, wintergreen, yarrow
- Condiments: black pepper, chutney, coriander leaves, dulse, kiji, lemon, sprouts
- Dairy: cottage cheese—from skimmed goat’s milk, *ghee*, *goat’s cheese*—unsalted and not aged, lassi, non-fat milk—goat’s milk (avoid homogenized if possible)
- Food Supplements: aloe vera juice, barley green, brewer’s yeast, calcium, magnesium, zinc, spirulina, blue-green algae, vitamins D, E, EFA’s (essential fatty acids) found in cold process oils from cod liver, evening primrose, black currant seed, flax seed, borage; whey powder as a protein supplement; note that omega 3 and 6 are probably best taken in the ratio of 1:1 to 1:2.5, which implies that while one supplements flax oil, for example, one continues to eat ghee also
- Fruits: apples, applesauce, apricots, berries, cherries, *figs--dried*, *grapes*, *limes*, pears, pomegranate, prunes, raisins
- Grains: whole; grains stored more than one year, *amaranth*, barley, cereals—dry or puffed, couscous, durum flour, granola, oat bran, oats, white rice (basmati only), seitan—wheat meat, spelt, sprouted wheat bread—Essene, tapioca, wheat bran. (If digestion is weak carbohydrates and proteins e.g., rice and dal, may be taken in separate meals in the same day.)
- Legumes: aduki beans, black beans, black-eyed peas, chick peas, lentils—red and brown, lima beans, *mung beans*, *mung dal*, navy beans, peas—dried, pinto beans, split peas, white beans

- Meats: (NOTE: As recent research points to animal meat, fat, and cholesterol as promoters of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity my recommendations not longer include these as safe suggestions; also Āyurveda makes no recommendations for these foods as habitual diet), chicken—white, egg whites, fish—freshwater, pheasant, rabbit, shrimp, turkey—white, venison
- Nuts: charole
- Oils: ghee, [sunflower oil*]; * only cold processed, fresh, dark bottle
- Seeds: flax, popcorn, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds,
- Spices: basil—fresh, *black pepper*, *caraway*, cardamom, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, *curry leaves*, dill, fennel, *ginger—fresh*, mint, *orange peel*, *parsley*, peppermint, saffron, spearmint, *tarragon*, turmeric, saindhava (rock salt), *vanilla*, wintergreen
- Sweeteners: fruit juice, honey, rock crystal sugar
- Vegetables: artichoke, asparagus, beets, bitter melon, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cilantro, dandelion greens, fennel (anise), garlic, green beans, green chills, horseradish, Jerusalem artichoke, kale, kohlrabi, leafy greens--lettuces, leeks, mushrooms, okra, onions, parsley, peas--especially dried, peppers—sweet, prickly pear, potato (white), *radish*, rutabaga, *spaghetti squash*, sprouts, squash summer, watercress, wheat grass

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

Āyurveda suggests modest fasting to help maintain digestive capacity and to help burn off and release toxicity. This can be accomplished by a juice fast of fruit or vegetables taken for each meal one day per week. Review the entries above for guidance of appropriate items. Also, consider juice of romaine, celery, and carrot or pomegranate juice. Remember, breakfast is optional according to Āyurveda.

SOME THINGS TO AVOID

- Frozen, canned, fried foods, leftovers
- All ice cold food and drink
- Big, heavy, or late evening meals
- Milk (also yogurt) with fruits, vegetables, fish (is toxic)
- Honey cooked in anything (is toxic)
- Fruits and vegetables in the same meal
- Mushrooms, peanuts, tomatoes, garlic, eggplant (affect meditations and transcending)
- Sweet, flour desserts after a meal (before is best)
- Alcohol, caffeine--coffee, tea, chocolate, other beverages (temporary or infrequent may be beneficial but they affect meditations and transcending)
- All refined grains and sugar and foods containing them
- All food cooked in used fats/oils
- Because of significant contraindicating research ALL soy products no longer carry a recommendation.
- Refined foods—especially grains and sugar—made into flour and pastes; e.g. pasta, bread, etc.
- Foods with artificial coloring or other additives and GMO food products or meat fed GMO feeds
- Fluoridated water for any purpose and exclusive use of RO / distilled water in cooking / drinking

Eat a variety of foods having all 6 tastes and change the variety of foods you eat