

AYURVEDIC COOKING FOR SELF-HEALING

A Meal-Time Prayer

अन्नं ब्रह्मा रसो विष्णुः
पक्तो देवो महेश्वरः ।
एवं ज्ञात्वा तु यो भुङ्क्ते
अन्न दोषो न लिप्यते ॥



Annam Brahmā Raso Vishnu,
Pakto Devo Maheśaraḥ
Evam Jñātvā Tu Yo Bhunkte,
Anna Dosho Na Lipyate.



The creative energy in the food is Brahma,
The nourishing energy in the body is Vishnu,
The transformation of food into pure consciousness is Shiva.
If you know this, then any impurities in the food you eat
will never become a part of you.



AYURVEDIC COOKING FOR SELF-HEALING

Second Edition

by

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The
Ayurvedic
Press

Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Ayurvedic Press, Albuquerque 87112

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Printed in Canada.

15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06

10 9 8 7 6 5

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

ISBN-13: 978-1-883725-05-1

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Cover Design: The Lad Family & friends. Art work: drawn by Dr. Lad.

The authors lovingly acknowledge the support and help of everyone at the Ayurvedic Institute in Albuquerque.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lad, Vasant, 1943-

Ayurvedic Cooking for Self-Healing / by Usha and Vasant Lad.

254 p.: ill. ; 23 cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p. 243) and index.

ISBN: 1883725054 \$15.00

1. Vegetarian cookery. 2. Cookery, Indic. 3. Medicine, Ayurvedic.

I. Title.

RM236 .L33 1997

641.5/636 21

97-070608

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Dedication

To our most loving children, Aparna and Pranav

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Chapter 2

FACTORS THAT AFFECT OUR HEALTH

Ayurveda is a way of healing and a way of life that always takes into consideration the whole person. According to the teachings of Ayurveda, every aspect of life contributes to overall health. Poor health seldom has a simple or single cause. This chapter will cover just a few of the things that may affect one's well-being. Some factors will respond to changes, like diet, and some are beyond individual control, like the weather. With the latter, there are actions that can be taken to reduce or eliminate the impact. Of course, it is not possible or wise to try to change everything at once. Ayurvedic literature states slow and steady is the best route to successful change. Most people find that diet is the best place to begin an Ayurvedic lifestyle.

The Doshas

One's sense of well-being reflects the inner state of health. Good health is the maintenance of one's unique combination of the *doshas*, a balanced condition of *agni*, of the seven body tissues, of the three waste systems (urine, sweat and feces), as well as balance in the mind, senses and consciousness. It is equally important to one's well-being to have love, happiness and clarity in daily living.

Doshic imbalance governs internal biochemical changes that will eventually lead to either high or low metabolism.

Pitta dosha governs all physical and biochemical changes that take place within the body. Through this process foodstuffs are transformed into energy, heat and vitality. *Pitta* performs these functions throughout one's life, but is especially prominent during the adult years. All these activities of *pitta* depend upon "digestive fire" or *agni*. Poor *agni* means poor health.

Wrong diet such as hot spicy foods, wrong lifestyle such as living in a hot climate and repressed emotions can alter the normal function of *pitta*.

Anabolism is the process of building up the body. It is the repair, growth and creation of new cells. This process is managed by *kapha* and is most active in the baby, child and teen years. *Kapha dosha* can be disturbed by excessive intake of dairy, cold and oily foods.

Catabolism is the destructive, but necessary, stage of metabolism. Larger molecules are broken down into smaller ones. This molecular death is governed by *vata dosha* and is most active in old age. Repeated intake of *vata*-provoking food, such as salads and popcorn, and over-exercising can escalate *vata* and disturb health.

Improper Eating Habits

1. Overeating
2. Eating soon after a full meal
3. Too much water or no water during a meal
4. Drinking very chilled water during a meal or, indeed, anytime
5. Eating when constipated
6. Eating at the wrong time of day—either too early or too late
7. Eating too much heavy food or too little light food
8. Drinking fruit juice or eating fruit with a meal
9. Eating without real hunger
10. Emotional eating
11. Eating incompatible food combinations
12. Snacking in between meals

Time of Day and Time of Season

The body's biological clock is regulated by the *doshas*. The time of maximum activity of *kapha* is during early morning and early evening, 6 to 10 AM and 6 to 10 PM. The *pitta* period is during midday and midnight, 10 AM to 2 PM and 10 PM to 2 AM, while *vata* hours are dawn and dusk, 2 to 6 AM and 2 to 6 PM. Thus a *pitta*-type disease, like ulcers, may cause the most discomfort late at night in the *pitta* time of the bio-clock. The reverse is also true, in the sense that experiencing a sharp pain in the stomach region late at night may signify ulcers or another *pitta*-type aggravation.



Chapter 5

SETTING UP AN AYURVEDIC KITCHEN AND PANTRY

Before you begin to cook the Ayurvedic recipes in this book, you will want to have some basic foods, spices and utensils on hand for this way of cooking. Use the list that follows as a guideline to slowly build an Ayurvedic kitchen. Just one of the benefits of this kitchen is that many of the basic ingredients are dried and happy resting on your kitchen shelves, so that when you have six unexpected guests for supper you can always prepare an Ayurvedic meal.

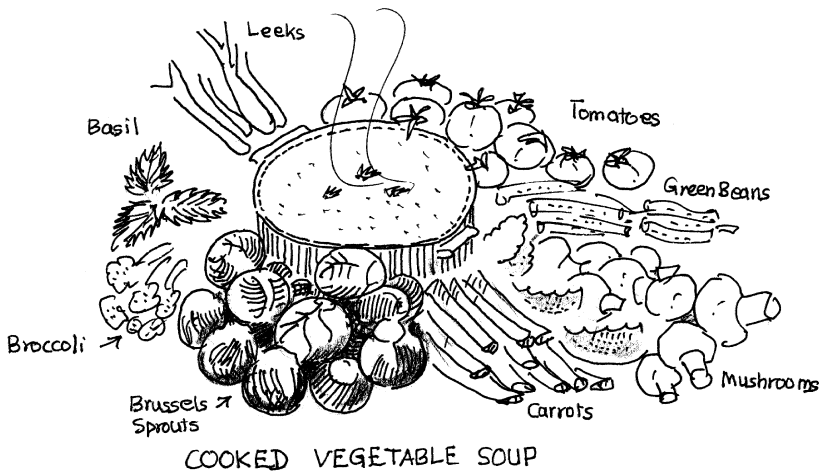
Every act you perform around food should be in a loving, honoring and sacred manner. Whether you are growing the food, selecting it in a supermarket or preparing it for cooking, the amount of loving awareness and respect you give it transfers exactly to the food and to the hungry stomachs. Food that is prepared in a loving manner can bring truly healing results to everyone.

Utensils for your Ayurvedic kitchen

- One (at least) heavy cast-iron frying pan
- One chapati skillet, if possible (saucer-shaped, without steep sides)
- Two or three medium-sized pots with lids—stainless steel is best
- One soup pot with lid—also stainless steel
- One small metal pot for melting *ghee*
- One deep pot for frying—cast iron is best
- One heavy frying pan with lid
- Two or three mixing bowls, measuring cup and spoons
- Hand eggbeater
- Large metal spoon and soup ladle
- Blender
- Chapati, or other rolling pin, and cutting board

Soups

In Ayurvedic cooking, soups are most often eaten with the main course. Soups made of beans, peas or lentils and spices are the most common, and provide the complement to a grain (usually rice) to make a very digestible, high protein dish.



Kokam Soup




Serves 4

- 9 dried Kokam fruits
- 4 cups water
- 2 tablespoons *ghee*
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 4 curry leaves, fresh or dried
- 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons chickpea flour
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 pinches cayenne or black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon jaggary (or Sucanat) sugar

Wash and soak the Kokam fruits in 1 cup of the water for 10-20 minutes. Then squeeze the fruit several times into this water and remove it from the water. Heat a saucepan until medium-hot and add the *ghee*, cumin seeds, curry leaves, cilantro and bay leaves. Stir or shake the pan until the seeds pop. Pour in the fruit water plus 2 more cups of the water. Mix the chickpea flour with the last cup of water very well, then add to the soup. Stir to prevent lumps forming. Add the cinnamon, cayenne, clove, salt and jaggary. Stir and boil gently for 5 minutes.

Do not store this in a metal container (except for a stainless steel one), for the acid in the fruit will react to the metal and turn the soup bad.

 Kokam is available from Indian grocery stores. It is sour and heating. This soup is a good appetizer and digestive. It stimulates normal gastric fire and detoxifies the body of toxins (*ama*). It is also an excellent blood cleanser. If taken before the meal, it acts as an appetizer. At the end of the meal, it is a digestive. Do not use for breakfast!

Okay for *pitta* and *kapha* if not more than one cup is taken.

Medicinal uses: Good for diarrhea, heart, swellings, hemorrhoids and worms. It can help as an anti-allergic agent in skin rash.

meric powder, 1 teaspoon of sandalwood powder, ¼ teaspoon of edible camphor, a pinch of saffron and 1 teaspoon of lime juice. Close the hole by putting the cut piece of skin back in place. Keep the watermelon in a warm, dry place for a week. After a week, cut open the watermelon and collect the inner pulp. Dry it in a hot, dry place, but not in direct sun. This soft, powdered pulp is used for cosmetic purposes. If one applies this powder daily to the face, the skin will look young and beautiful. It helps remove wrinkles, acne, eczema and other skin conditions.

6. Drinking 1 cup of watermelon juice with 1 teaspoon of honey, in the early morning on an empty stomach, helps to reduce edema in congestive heart conditions.

VEGETABLES



Bitter Melon is bitter and cooling with a pungent *vipaka*. It can provoke *vata*, while its bitter quality can soothe *pitta* and *kapha*. It is a good food for fever, anemia, diabetes and worms.

Note: Bitter melon is an Indian vegetable available from specialty stores and Indian groceries.

1. During fever, take 2 tablespoons of fresh bitter melon juice 3 times a day, to bring down the temperature.
2. Cooked bitter melon, as in *Bitter Melon Bhaji*, is good for cleansing the liver and can help in anemia.
3. For intestinal worms and parasites, try 1 tablespoon of bitter melon juice with a pinch of *trikatu*, 3 times a day, ½ hour before each meal. Do this for 1 week and the worms should vanish.
4. Cooked bitter melon is laxative and can be used to relieve constipation and hemorrhoids.
5. Insulin-dependent diabetics can help to regulate the insulin dose by taking 2 tablespoons of bitter melon juice with ¼ teaspoon of turmeric powder, 15 minutes before each meal.
6. Jaundice, hyperthyroidism and migraine headaches can all be helped by putting 5 drops of fresh bitter melon juice in each nostril in the morning and again in the evening.