

THE SIX AYURVEDIC TASTES

Instead of looking at the individual components of foods—ie: carbohydrates, protein, fats, and calories—as Western-based nutrition does, Ayurveda identifies six “tastes” of foods: **sweet**, **sour**, **salty**, **bitter**, **pungent**, and **astringent**. Each taste has specific effects on the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha). By including all six tastes in each meal we satisfy our nutritional and dietary needs without the need to count calories or consult a manual.

THE SWEET TASTE :: EARTH + WATER

...is heavy, moist, and cool. This increases Kapha and decreases Vata and Pitta. Examples are nuts, grains, oils, and most dairy.

THE SOUR TASTE :: FIRE + EARTH

...is heavy, moist, and hot. This increases Pitta and Kapha and decreases Vata. Examples are pickles and fermented foods such as yogurt.

THE SALTY TASTE :: FIRE + WATER

...is heavy, moist, and hot. This increases Pitta and Kapha and decreases Vata. Examples are sea salt, sea vegetables and seafood.

THE PUNGENT TASTE :: FIRE + AIR

...is light, dry, and hot. This increases Pitta and Vata and decreases Kapha. Examples are chili peppers, ginger, and black pepper.

THE ASTRINGENT TASTE :: EARTH + AIR

...is dry and cool. This increases Vata and decreases Pitta and Kapha. Examples are most beans, cranberries, and pomegranates.

THE BITTER TASTE :: AIR + ETHER

...is light, dry, and cool. This increases Vata and decreases Pitta and Kapha. Examples are leafy greens and herbs such as goldenseal.

THE PITTA-KAPHA FOOD PROGRAM

Qualities to Reduce:

hot, heavy, moist

Best Taste:

bitter, astringent

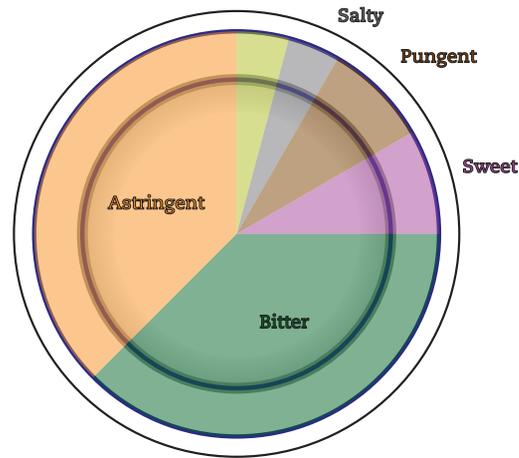
Small Amounts:

pungent, sweet

Most Aggravating Tastes:

salty, sour

THE PITTA-KAPHA DINNER PLATE



Katrina Johnson

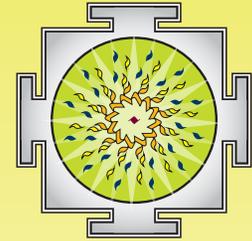
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Pitta-Kapha Food Program

a holistic wellness practice
steeped in the timeless traditions
of Ayurveda





FOOD LIST FOR PITTA–KAPHA



GRAINS

These may be eaten as a cooked grain or as yeasted bread.

Best:* barley, basmati rice, corn flour products (except chips), rye

Small Amounts:* amaranth, millet, quinoa, brown rice

Minimize:* buckwheat, oats, wheat, white sticky rice

DAIRY

It is best to use raw or organic milk. Milk should be taken warm with a small amount of spice such as ginger, cardamom, or fennel.

Best:* skim milk

Small Amounts:* ghee, goat milk, low-fat yogurt

Minimize:* butter, buttermilk, cheeses (hard and soft), cottage cheese, cream, kefir, ice cream, whole milk, sour cream, frozen yogurt, whole milk yogurt

SWEETENERS

Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance.

Best:* stevia

Small Amounts:* fresh honey

Minimize:* brown sugar, date sugar, dextrose, fructose, grape sugar, honey (older than 6 months), maltose, maple sugar, maple syrup, molasses, rice syrup, white table sugar

NUTS AND SEEDS

Heavy, oily and slightly warm, most nuts aggravate pitta–kapha individuals. Seeds are best, as they are lighter and drier.

Best:* pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds

Small Amounts:* filberts, piñon (pine nuts), sesame seeds

Minimize:* almonds, Brazil, cashews, coconut, lotus seeds, macadamia, peanuts, pecans, pistachio, walnuts

MEATS

Repeated research shows that plant-based diets are healthier than meat-based diets and prevent many diseases. Limit meat consumption if possible. Weak patients should take meat as a soup broth. White meat is more balancing than dark meat.

Best:* none

Small Amounts:* chicken, egg white, fresh water fish, turkey

Minimize:* beef, duck, egg yolk, lamb, pork, seafood, venison

CONDIMENTS

Condiments can be used to add one of the tastes to a meal or to balance out any heating or cooling qualities of a dish.

Best:* none

Small Amounts:* carob (sweetened with proper sweeteners)

Minimize:* catsup, chocolate, mayonnaise, vinegar

OILS

Oils, being heavy and moist, should generally be used in small amounts in pitta /kapha types. The best oils are light, dry and cool.

Best:* corn, soy, sunflower

Small Amounts:* safflower

Minimize:* canola, margarine, almond, avocado, castor, coconut, flaxseed, lard, mustard, peanut, sesame

FRUITS

As fruits tend to be light and cooling, they are generally good for pitta–kapha types. Because they contain a lot of water, overuse can aggravate kapha. Dried fruits are the best, though fresh fruit may be taken as well. Greater amounts may be eaten in the summer and less the rest of the year. Most sour fruits have the unique effect of being cooling despite the presence of fire in their taste. This makes them good for pitta, though they may still aggravate kapha in excess.

Best:* apples, blueberries, cranberries, lemon, lime, pomegranate

Small Amounts:* apricots, blackberries, cantaloupe, cherries, grapefruit, jujube, nectarines, oranges, peaches, pears, persimmons, pineapple (sweet), plums, raspberries, tangerines, watermelon

Minimize:* dates, figs, grapes, mango, papaya, pineapple (sour), strawberries

VEGETABLES

Raw vegetables are best in the summer. A mixture of raw and cooked may be eaten the rest of the year. Being light and cool, most vegetables reduce both pitta and kapha and thus should be eaten in great abundance.

Best:* alfalfa sprouts, artichokes, asparagus, bean sprouts, bell peppers, bitter melon, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cilantro, cress, green beans, green peppers, kale, leafy lettuce greens, lettuce, mushrooms, parsley, peas (green, snow), pumpkin, sunflower sprouts, sweet peas, turnips

Small Amounts:* beets, carrots, corn, cucumber, eggplant, garlic (cooked), leeks, mustard greens, okra, onion (fresh), parsley, potatoes, seaweed, spinach, squash (yellow), tomatoes (sweet)

Minimize:* avocado, chilies, Jerusalem artichoke, radish, squash (acorn, winter) tomato paste

SPICES

Spices aid the digestion and absorption of nutrients as well as improve flavor. As pitta/kapha individuals generally feel warm, mild to moderate spicing is good and care should be taken so that the overall spiciness of the food is not too hot. It is the overall effect of spicing that is most important and not the individual spice used. Large amounts of the best spices are best used to enhance flavor.

Best:* cardamom, catnip, chamomile, coriander, cumin, curry leaves, fennel, lemon verbena, peppermint, saffron, spearmint, turmeric

Small Amounts:* allspice, anise, basil, bay leaves, caraway, dill, fenugreek, ginger (fresh), hyssop, oregano, paprika, parsley, poppy seeds, rosemary, sage, star anise, tarragon, thyme

Minimize:* asafoetida, black pepper, calamus, Cayenne pepper, celery seed, cinnamon, cloves, raw garlic, dry ginger, horseradish, marjoram, hot mustards, nutmeg, salt

LEGUMES

Beans tend to be dry, cool and somewhat heavy. Moderate use is generally all right for pitta–kapha types. They should be taken with spices to assist digestion. Soaking beans before cooking makes them easier to digest. Of all the beans, tofu and mung are the very best.

Best:* aduki beans, black gram, fava beans, kidney beans, lima beans, mung beans, navy beans, peas (split), pinto beans, soy beans, tofu

Small Amounts:* black beans

Minimize:* chickpeas, lentils, peanuts, tempeh

BEVERAGES

These are best taken at room temperature or warm and never ice cold.

Best:* green vegetable juices, tea (chamomile, mint, spice teas from the spices best list), water, water with lemon

Small Amounts:* naturally carbonated pure juice drinks with no sugar added

Minimize:* alcohol, black tea, coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated), sweet fruit juices, soft drinks, sweetened soda, spicy teas

*“Best” Foods can be eaten without reservation on a daily basis. These foods are the most ideal ones as they are the most balanced for this dosha. Individuals who are sick should consume only the foods on this list.

*“Small Amounts” Foods can be eaten in small portions fairly often or in larger portions once or twice each week. Eating a wide variety of these foods is better than an abundance of just one. Overreliance on these foods can cause imbalance.

* “Minimize” Foods should be eaten only on rare occasions, ie: once each month. They can significantly disturb Pitta dosha.