

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 VATA-KAPHA FOOD PROGRAM

Qualities to Reduce:

hot, light, dry

Best Taste:

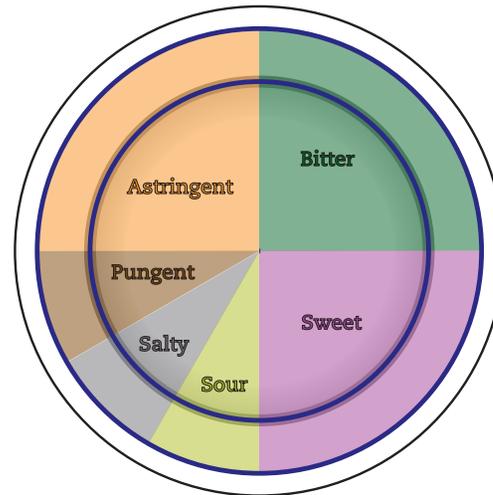
sweet, bitter, astringent

Most Aggravating Tastes:

salty, pungent, sour

THE VATA-KAPHA DINNER PLATE

To trick to pacify Vata-Kapha is to eat Vata-pacifying foods but in Kapha-appropriate (= smaller) portions. You can use a smaller plate to help control your portions.



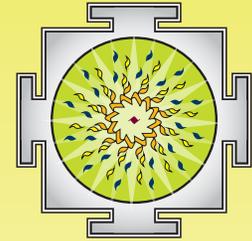
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Vata-Kapha Food Program

a holistic wellness practice
steeped in the timeless traditions
of Ayurveda





FOOD LIST FOR VATA-KAPHA



GRAINS

It is best to eat these as cooked grains, though a small amount of bread may be eaten.

Best:* amaranth, barley, basmati rice, brown rice, buckwheat, quinoa, wild rice

Small Amounts:* millet, rye

Minimize:* corn flour, oats, rice (sticky, white, short, or long grain), wheat

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:* buttermilk, ghee, 2% milk, low-fat yogurt

Small Amounts:* kefir, sour cream, whole milk yogurt

Minimize:* butter, cheeses, cottage cheese, ice cream, frozen yogurt

FRUITS

Fruits are best when they are sour and not overly ripened or sweet. These will bring balance to both doshas. In general, due to their cooling effects on the body, their intake should be consumed in small amounts. The best fruits may be taken in greater amounts. Fruit in general should not be a staple of the diet but is all right for occasional use.

Best:* apricots, grapefruit, lemon, papaya

Small Amounts:* apples (baked is best), banana (sour), blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, cherries, lime, mango, oranges (sour), pineapple, plums (sour), pomegranate, prunes, raspberries, tangerines

Minimize:* avocado, banana (sweet), coconut, dates, figs, grapes (sweet), jujube, melons (watermelon, cantaloupe), oranges (sweet), nectarines, peaches, pears, persimmons, plums (sweet), raisins, strawberries

SWEETENERS

Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance. Those listed under "Small Amounts" are more likely to cause imbalance with regular usage and should not be used more than once each month.

Best:* honey

Small Amounts:* jaggery, molasses, sucanat

Minimize:* date sugar, dextrose, fructose, grape sugar, maltose, maple sugar, maple syrup, rice syrup, white table sugar

NUTS AND SEEDS

These should be eaten lightly dry-roasted to assist digestion and be only very lightly salted, if at all. Nut butters, except for peanut, may also be eaten.

Best:* pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, pine nuts

Small Amounts:* filberts

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

MEATS

If you choose to eat meat, limit consumption to 2–3 times per week, and eat it at lunch.

Best:* none

Small Amounts:* chicken and turkey (dark meat), fresh river and sea fish

Minimize:* beef, duck, pork, lamb, shellfish

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:* vinegar

Small Amounts:* catsup, carob (with proper sweeteners), chocolate (with proper sweeteners)

Minimize:* mayonnaise

OILS

Healthy oils are very important and should be used abundantly if the skin is dry. Though generally heavy, the lighter oils will not aggravate kapha. Ghee should be used with warm spices.

Best:* flaxseed, ghee, mustard, safflower

Small Amounts:* almond, castor, corn, olive, peanut, sesame, soy

Minimize:* avocado, coconut, sunflower

VEGETABLES

The diet should consist primarily of cooked vegetables. However, occasional use of raw vegetables is all right as long as there is no constipation or gas.

Best:* artichoke, beets, carrots, cauliflower, chili peppers, corn (fresh), green beans, leeks, mung bean sprouts, mustard greens, onion, parsley, potato, radish, sunflower sprouts, tomato

Small Amounts:* alfalfa sprouts, avocado, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, celery, cilantro, kale, lettuce, mushrooms, okra, peas (green, snow), rutabagas, seaweed, spinach, squash (zucchini, crookneck), Swiss chard, turnips

Minimize:* asparagus, bitter melon, cabbage, cucumber, eggplant, Jerusalem artichoke, squash (acorn, winter), sweet potato, yams

SPICES

Spices aid the digestion and absorption of nutrients, and they improve flavor. Warm and hot spices are recommended for vata-kapha types. It is the overall effect of spicing that is most important and not the individual spice used. If food becomes too hot it may contribute to greater dryness. The hottest spices should be used in moderation. Food should never be bland.

Best:* allspice, anise, asafoetida, basil, bay leaf, black pepper, caraway, catnip, cayenne, celery seed, chamomile, cloves, coriander, cumin, curry powder, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, ginger, horseradish, hyssop, lemon verbena, marjoram, mustard seed, nutmeg, oregano, paprika, parsley, peppermint, poppy seed, rosemary, saffron, sage, spearmint, star anise, tarragon, thyme, turmeric

Small Amounts:* salt

Minimize:* none

LEGUMES

Legumes are best taken well cooked with warm spices, as they can be hard to digest. Soaking them before cooking improves digestibility as well. As they contain earth and air, they are heavy and dry which can harm both doshas when digestion is weak. Those listed as best are easiest to digest and usually will not cause harm.

Best:* mung beans, soy milk, tempeh, tofu

Small Amounts:* none

Minimize:* aduki beans, black beans, black gram, chickpeas, fava beans, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, navy beans, peas (dry or split), pinto beans, soybeans

BEVERAGES

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

Best:* chamomile tea, licorice tea, mint tea, spicy teas, water

Small Amounts:* sour fruit juices (cranberry, lemon, lime, pineapple, pomegranate), vegetable juices. Diluted fruit juices preferred.

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

*"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.