

Cooking the Ayurvedic Yoga Diet

A Yoga Sutra
of Simply Healthful
and Tasty Recipes

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So what are these body constituencies???

Although the recipes in this book are not *strictly* ayurvedic, they are soundly based as they were gathered from a series of small, serious-minded country hermitages as I traveled the back roads of India. They are meant to bring you the healthfulness of the method without being made difficult by its stringencies.

It will be helpful to explain the basics of your constitution. The ancients believed that all humans were composed of five elements—air, fire, earth, water, and ether (space). Ether is also known as quintessence when it is the makeup of celestial beings. The relationship of these elements to each other differs in each individual. This individuality is called “dosha.” There is no good or better type of constitution, it is simply what has been genetically programmed into the body and remains largely unaltered throughout one’s lifetime. This loose definition seemed rather incredulous to me at first and I thought that my friendly old swami was having a laugh at my expense. When the old man assured me that he was extremely serious, I decided to give it a rest and listen on to what he had to say.

Ancient European medical history references the four humours made famous by Hippocrates, the father of modern-day allopathic medicine. He proclaimed that the body was governed by four types of liquids – blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile; that a healthy person had these liquids in perfect proportion and harmony and an imbalance would cause illness. It was believed that these humours gave off vapors that rose up to directly affect the workings of the brain.

This concept was picked up on by several well-known heavyweights such as Immanuel Kant and Alfred Adler. Terms such as melancholic, sanguine, choleric and phlegmatic were used to describe patients who suffered from an excess of the corresponding humour.

The humors were proven wrong, but, as a concept it was not just a “made up” theory.

What Hippocrates and Galen (*Galen* Claudius Galenus) picked up on and improved was a theory believed to have originated in Mesopotamia more than two thousand years ago. In fact, what they were working with were the foundations of ayurveda which originated, you’ll remember, over five thousand years ago. It was carried over by Assyrian and Mesopotamian traders like a game of “whispers,” and mutated through reinterpretation over the centuries.

Quintessence (ether) as an English word is an amalgam of two Latin words: “Quinta,” meaning five, and “Essentia,” meaning element. The ancients believed that celestial beings were composed of a mysterious fifth element which

and you can see flecks of golden solids at the bottom, it is done. Remove it from the flame and pour it off carefully in order to avoid mixing in the solids.

Spices and herbs found in a yogi's kitchen

Spices have been used in India for several thousands of years. They were originally used for their medicinal properties and to mask the flavor of food that has gone off. The listing of these herbs and spices, while naming the bodily organs they are thought to affect, and stating their use as remedies, is historical and is neither proposed for nor intended for medicinal use.

Cinnamon/ Dalchini The thin rolled bark of an evergreen tree. It is often confused with the cassia bark that comes from China. You can buy the flattened or rolled bark in most Asian stores or supermarkets. I tend to avoid the powdered option since a major part of the flavor missing is missing. Cinnamon has been used in various remedies for stomach ailments and as a calming tea.

Cumin/Jeera is a member of the parsley family. It is a pretty plant that sprouts clusters of white and pink flowers. The seeds are used to season food. It is found in three colors; white, black, and amber. The black seeds are the ones most commonly found in the Indian markets.

Ayurveda uses it in remedies to treat digestive problems caused by overeating. It can be chewed or made into a tea to dispel symptoms of colitis, gas, and abdominal pain.

Cardamom pods/Chota elaichi grows on a perennial bush that is between six and ten feet high. It is highly sought after for its rich fragrance and distinctive flavor.

It is among the most expensive spices in the world. The reason for its expense is that each pod is harvested by hand.

In Indian homes it is used as a mouth freshener after a meal. It is often found for the taking in a bowl at Indian restaurants in the United States near to the door as you exit.

According to ayurveda, it helps the spleen and pancreas in the absorption of nutrients, and it helps to digest food in the colon.

Fenugreek/Methi seeds are known throughout India. It is used a great deal in Bengali and South Indian cuisine.

This spice provides edible leaves and shoots that are used in a wide variety of Indian foods from salads to sweets.

It has been used to treat diabetes, allergies, bronchitis, flu and dysentery.

Curry leaves/kadi patta It is through a misinterpretation of the native name of these leaves kariveppilai that the word curry came about. The leaves may be

Spiced Tea

Garam Masala Chai

This spiced tea is quite different from the “masala chai” that most people have come to expect. This brew does not contain tea leaves and is thus not stimulating. Coupled with a warm oil massage one will be headed to complete relaxation.

This spiced tea is also prescribed for colds, congestion, and digestive problems.

Cardamom	10 pods
Cinnamon	2 sticks
Cloves	6 buds
Fennel seeds	a pinch
Cumin seeds	a pinch
Honey	50 g/ ¼ cup

Individually roast the cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, fennel and cumin until they begin to change color. Simmer them in 500 ml/ 2 ½ cups of water for twenty minutes. Remove from heat and strain the tea, discarding the spices. Stir in the honey until it melts and serve warm.

Papaya, Ginger, and Coconut Milk Cooler

Narkol Pepeyer Rosh

Papayas have featured prominently in yogic and ayurvedic diets. Referred to as a “wonder-fruit,” it is often prescribed in ancient Indian texts.

Peeled ripe papaya	400g/ 2 cups
Coconut milk	500 ml/ 2 ½ cups
Peeled and chopped ginger	10 g/ 2 tsp
Palm sugar	50 g/ 1/4 cup
Crushed black pepper	a pinch
Chopped mint leaves	5 g/ 1 tsp

In a food processor, blend together the papaya, coconut milk, ginger, palm sugar and black pepper to get a smooth juice. Stir in the chopped mint and serve chilled.

Green Pea Soup with Burnt Garlic

Lassoni Muttar ka Shorba

Green peas	300 g/ 1 ½ cups
Oil	20 ml/ 1 tbsp
Cumin seeds	a pinch
Asafoetida	a pinch
Chopped ginger	5 g/ 1 tsp
Salt	to taste
Crushed black peppercorns	5 g/ 1 tsp
Ghee	10 g/ 2 tsp
Chopped garlic	10 g/ 2 tsp
Chopped mint leaves	a pinch
Chopped coriander leaves	a pinch
Juice of one lemon	

Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed pot and add the cumin seeds and asafoetida and roast until they change color. Add the green peas, ginger, salt, and black peppercorns. Simmer for a couple of minutes. Pour in 600 ml/ 3 cups of water and simmer for ten minutes until the peas are soft. Crush the peas coarsely in a food processor, taste and adjust the seasoning and thickness, if required. Set aside.

Heat the ghee in a pan and stir in the garlic on low heat until it turns a deep golden. Pour the mixture into the ground pea base. Stir in the chopped mint, coriander and lemon juice. Serve hot.

Curried Papaya Soup with Coconut Milk

Pepey Sorr

I love papaya. The first time I treated papaya in this manner I was apprehensive because I could not imagine wanting to cook a beautifully ripened papaya. I was pleasantly surprised by the flavor and ultimately mystified as to the kind of genius who had come up with this brilliant idea in the first place.

Papayas are often eaten to clear out the stomach and digestive tracts. I have used it extensively as part of a detox therapy and diet.

pan. (This is very important because the acid might react with other metals.) Place the tray in the oven and set the temperature to 50C/ 110°F for five hours until the ginger becomes transparent and is limp. Remove, cool, and put in sterilized glass jars.

Spicy Lemon Pickle

Nimboo ka Achaar

Lemons	300 g/ 1 ½ cup
Salt	50 g/ ¼ cup
Dried red chillies	6
Chilli powder	20 g/ 1 heaping tbsp
Turmeric	10 g/ 2 tsp
Shredded ginger	50 g/ 1/4 cup
Peeled garlic cloves	20 g/ 1 heaping tbsp
Slit green chillies	40 g/ 2 heaping tbsp
Mustard seeds	35 g/ 2 tbsp
Mustard oil	100 ml/ ½ cup
Asafoetida/ hing	5 g/ 1 tsp

Cut each lemon in half and then into quarters. Remove seeds. Mix them with the salt, turmeric, and chilli powder and keep them in the sun or in a warm place, covered, for two weeks to let the juices come out.

In a heavy-bottomed pot, heat the oil. When it smokes, remove from heat and add the mustard seeds and asafoetida. Stir continuously to prevent burning. Return to the stove at simmer. Add the garlic cloves, shredded ginger, slit green chillies, and the lemon pieces along with the juice. Simmer for about fifteen minutes, until the juices thicken and begin to coat the lemons. Cool and store in sterilized glass jars.