

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-PITTA FOOD PROGRAM

Qualities to Reduce:

hot, light, dry

Best Taste:

sweet

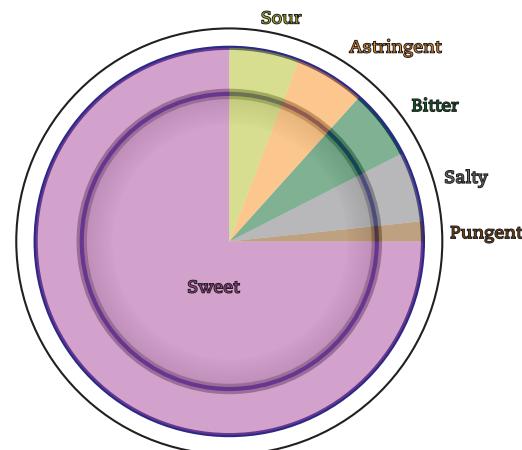
Small Amounts:

astringent, sour

Most Aggravating Tastes:

salty, pungent, bitter

THE VATA-PITTA DINNER PLATE



Katrina Johnson

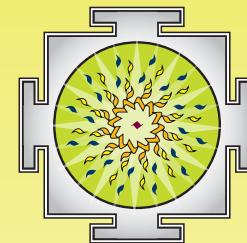
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Vata-Pitta Food Program

a holistic wellness practice
steeped in the timeless traditions
of Ayurveda





FOOD LIST FOR VATA-PITTA



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:* butter, cottage cheese, cream cheese, ghee, milk (whole), paneer cheese

Small Amounts:* buttermilk, hard non-salted cheeses, kefir, sour cream, yogurt

Minimize:* ice cream, frozen yogurt

SPICES

Spices aid the digestion and absorption of nutrients and improve the flavor of food. Food should have an overall spicing effect of being warming but not hot. It is the overall effect of spicing that is most important. You may use large amounts of the best spices and even very small amounts of the "minimize" spices. Food should never be bland.

Best:* bay leaf, caraway, cardamom, catnip, chamomile, cilantro, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, lemon verbena, peppermint, rosemary, saffron, spearmint, turmeric

Small Amounts:* anise, basil, cinnamon, coconut, fenugreek, fresh ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, poppy seeds, sage, salt, star anise, thyme

Minimize:* asafoetida, black pepper, calamus, cayenne, cloves, raw garlic, dry ginger, horseradish, hot mustards, hyssop

VEGETABLES

Cooked vegetables are best as they are more nourishing and easier to digest than raw ones. Leafy greens (only) may be eaten raw with dressing. Raw salads may be eaten in the hot summer if digestion is strong and there is little gas or constipation.

Best:* artichoke (with oily dressing), avocado, bean sprouts, cauliflower, cilantro, corn, Jerusalem artichoke, leeks, okra, cooked onion, potato, pumpkin, seaweed, squash (acorn, winter, crookneck, zucchini, etc.), sunflower sprouts, tomato (sweet vine ripened)

Small Amounts:* alfalfa sprouts, asparagus, beets, bell pepper, bitter melon, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrot, celery, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, kale, raw lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, parsley, sweet peas, spinach, sweet potato, sour tomato, turnips

Minimize:* cabbage, chilies, hot peppers, radishes, raw onion, tomato paste and sauce

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:* coconut, pine nuts, sunflower seeds

Small Amounts:* almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, lotus seeds, macadamia, pecans, non-salted pistachio, pumpkin seeds

Minimize:* peanuts

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, mayonnaise

Minimize:* catsup, chocolate, tamari, vinegar

FRUITS

Fruits are best when they are well ripened and sweet. These will bring balance to both doshas. In general, due to their lightness, their intake should be consumed in moderation.

Best:* apricots, avocado, very ripe bananas, blackberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, coconut, dates, figs, grapes, lemons, limes, mango, nectarines, sweet oranges, sweet papaya, peaches, pears, persimmons, sweet plums, pomegranate, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries

Small Amounts:* apples, bananas, cherries, cranberries, grapefruit, sweet pineapple, tangerines, watermelon

Minimize:* dry fruit, olives, oranges, sour papaya, sour pineapple, sour plums

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 them as a soup broth.

Best:* white chicken meat, egg, fresh water fish, pork, white turkey meat

Small Amounts:* beef, duck, lamb, seafood, venison

Minimize:* dark chicken or turkey meat, shellfish

GRAINS

It is best to eat these as a cooked grain or as an unyeasted bread.

Best:* cooked oats, wheat, white basmati rice

Small Amounts:* amaranth, barley, millet, quinoa, rice (brown or white, short or long grain), rye

Minimize:* buckwheat, corn flour products, dry oats

LEGUMES

Those listed in "Small Amounts" are best as a dal or a spread with spices added. When digestion is weak or constipation is present, even those beans listed under "Small Amounts" should be avoided.

Best:* mung beans, tofu

Small Amounts:* aduki beans, black gram, chickpeas, kidney beans, black lentils, navy beans, pinto beans, soy beans, split peas

Minimize:* fava beans, red and yellow lentils

BEVERAGES

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

Best:* chamomile tea, licorice tea, mild spice teas, milk, mint tea, water

Small Amounts:* diluted carrot juice, diluted fruit juices, naturally flavored soda and juice beverages, black or green tea

Minimize:* alcohol, coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated), soft drinks, very spicy tea, tomato juice, green vegetable juices

SWEETENERS

Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance.

Best:* fresh honey, maltose, maple sugar, maple syrup, rice syrup

Small Amounts:* date sugar, dextrose, fructose, grape sugar, jaggery, molasses, sucanat

Minimize:* white table sugar

OILS

Healthy oils are very important and should be used abundantly if the skin is dry. They alleviate dryness and are generally heavy and nourishing.

Best:* avocado, coconut, ghee, olive oil, sunflower

Small Amounts:* almond, castor, corn, flaxseed, sesame, soy

Minimize:* canola, lard, margarine, mustard, peanut, safflower

*"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.