



Simple Ayurvedic Recipes

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Contents

Introduction 3

Watermelon Salad 7

Arugula salad 8

Chickpea porridge 9

Sautéed okra bowl 11

Black eyed peas 15

Baked plantains 17

Egusi soup 21

Red lentil soup 23

Sautéed mushrooms 26

Overnight Oats 28

CCF Tea 30

Mint Rose Tea 31

Butterfly Pea Tea 32

Tamarind Tea 34

Introduction

Ayurveda is a wisdom tradition steeped in the philosophy that humans are intricately connected to all other living beings and to everything in our environment. Therefore, we are not separate from one another and we are deeply influenced by our surroundings. To harness the beauty of this connection for improved health and vitality, Ayurveda places prime importance on nutrition, because we are what we digest! When you stop to consider this it transforms your way of moving through the world. We become more mindful of what we choose to put into our mouths and that in turn changes our bodies and minds for the better.

Introduction

Serving sizes:

There is no calorie counting in Ayurveda just a recognition that each human body is unique and therefore we must use our own intuitive sense as a guide for when we are hungry or full.

In general, however, here is a guide to approximate serving size for certain foods.

Palm of your hand = size of your stomach when empty

1/2 palm = serving size for cooked grains (rice, couscous, quinoa), meats, fish, poultry

Center of cupped palm = serving size for whole, raw nuts, raw seeds, oils, fats (butter)

There is no serving size for fruits and vegetables because it is not as easy to overeat them.

Introduction

Six tastes:

In Ayurveda we recognize that there are 6 tastes perceived by our tongue during meals and they are: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent and astringent. These six tastes, ideally should be present or incorporated into at least 1 meal of the day in order for the brain and gut to feel properly nourished and by extension the rest of the physical body and mind. Here is a list of foods that belong to each category of taste:

Sweet - grains, bread, meat, fish, fat, oil

Sour - lemon, lime, tamarind

Salty- celery, rock salt, root vegetables

Bitter- leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables

Pungent- spices (garlic, ginger, peppers, bay leaf, cinnamon, nutmeg)

Astringent- seeds, nuts, legumes/beans

Keeping Cool From the Inside Out

The last few weeks of Summer can be some of the most challenging of the entire season due to the length of time spent enduring the heat and the increasing dryness of the air as we approach Fall.

In Ayurveda, summer is referred to as the pitta season. Pitta is the energy of heat and transformation. There are several practices for keeping the skin and internal organs cool to prevent overheating and the ensuing illnesses that can result. Emphasizing sweet, bitter and slightly astringent (drying) tastes in foods keep the skin cool and calm. The most important practice is the mindful preparation of our meals, because we are what we digest!

Below I share some pitta and vata balancing meals you can easily make and enjoy throughout the Summer season and into early Fall.

Watermelon Salad



Ingredients:

- 1 small watermelon
- 4 small cucumbers
- 1 small bunch of fresh mint leaves
- 1 small bunch of parsley (alternate with basil or cilantro)
- 3 tablespoons of diced fresh cheese (mozzarella or feta cheese)
- 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 tablespoon of balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 tsp of ground black pepper
- Sprinkle of Himalayan pink salt
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Preparation

- Chop all fruit, vegetables, herbs and place in a wide bowl.
- Season with black pepper, salt, olive oil and balsamic vinegar.
- Mix and enjoy!

Arugula Salad



Ingredients

- 4 handfuls of arugula
- 6 fresh black mission figs (any kind will do)
- 4 tablespoons of raw pumpkin seeds
- 2 tablespoons of hempseeds
- 2 small heirloom tomatoes (slice and marinade in 2 tablespoons of olive oil and 1 tablespoon of balsamic vinegar for 1 hour prior to serving)

Garnish:

- 1 tablespoon of goat cheese
- 1 tablespoon of salad dressing of choice

Chickpea Porridge



Ingredients:

- 2 cups of boiled chick peas
- 1 head of kale or Swiss chard
- 1 medium yellow onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon of fresh ginger
- 1 cup of pureed tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon of ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon of ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1/4 cup of water (or broth)
- Himalayan pink salt
- Black pepper

Chickpea Porridge

Preparation:

- If preparing your own boiled chick peas, make sure to soak 1 cup of dried chick peas in 4 cups of water overnight. Discard water, rinse beans and boil in fresh water in a pressure cooker or large pot.
- If not preparing your own chick peas, you can purchase cooked chick peas from health food stores. Remove chick peas from packaging, rinse with cold water, strain and set aside.
- Chop onions, garlic, ginger and leafy greens.
- In a large pot on the stove set to medium heat, add olive oil. When oil is hot, add cinnamon stick, bay leaf and onions. Sauté for 2-3 minutes then add ginger, garlic and pureed tomatoes. Stir and add water or broth. Cover and bring to a boil, then turn heat to low and cook tomatoes for 10-15 minutes.
- When tomatoes are cooked (oil rises to top), then add cooked chick peas, ground cumin, ground coriander, turmeric, nutmeg and leafy greens.
- Stir well, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
- Season to taste with Himalayan pink salt and black pepper.

Sautéed Okra Bowl with Rice and Tofu



Sautéed okra

Ingredients:

- 1/2 pound of fresh green okra (can use frozen)
- 1 small red or yellow onion
- 1 teaspoon of fresh ginger
- 1 clove of garlic (optional)
- 1 teaspoon of cumin seeds
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil (or sunflower seed oil)
- 2 tablespoons of water
- Fresh ground black pepper
- Himalayan pink salt

Sautéed Okra Bowl with Rice and Tofu

Preparation:

- Do not submerge fresh okra in water as it will increase the sliminess during cooking.
- To clean okra, wet a cheesecloth and individually wipe down the okra to remove any dirt or debris.
- Chop okra, onion, ginger and garlic
- In a shallow sauce pan set on medium heat, add olive oil. Then add cumin seeds and garlic.
- When cumin seeds begin to ‘pop’ (about 15 seconds), add chopped onions and sauté until onion edges begin to turn golden brown.
- Add chopped okra, ginger and 2 tablespoons of water to the sauce pan. Sauté for 2-3 minutes then reduce heat to low, cover pan and let cook for 3-5 minutes.
- Uncover, stir and season to taste with black pepper and Himalayan pink salt.

Sautéed Okra Bowl with Rice and Tofu

Tofu

Ingredients:

- 1/2 pound of plain tofu (firm or extra firm)
- 1 tablespoon of soy sauce or tamarind sauce
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil (or sesame oil)

Preparation:

- Rinse tofu, pat dry and chop into small pieces
- In a shallow pan or wok set to low heat, add oil of choice and soy or tamarind sauce. Stir and then add chopped tofu.
- Turn heat up to medium or high and fry tofu in marinade for 2-3 minutes

Sautéed Okra Bowl with Rice and Tofu

Basmati Rice

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of basmati rice
- 2 cups of water (or broth)

Preparation:

- Wash and rinse rice in colander
- Transfer rice into a small pot
- Add water or broth, turn heat to medium, cover and bring to a boil. Then reduce heat to low or simmer and cook until rice is done (10 minutes).



*You can use chicken instead of tofu and baked sweet potatoes instead of rice for a heartier meal in Fall and Winter

Black-eyed Pea Porridge



Ingredients

- 1 pound of black eyed peas (place in large bowl and cover with 8 cups of water, let soak for 6-8 hours prior to boiling OR purchase pre-cooked)
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 dried Guajillo chile
- 8 green cardamom pods
- 1 tablespoon of paprika powder
- 3 tablespoons of red palm oil (or coconut oil)
- 1 teaspoon of Himalayan pink salt

To prepare:

- If pre-soaking, discard water and rinse beans with fresh water and drain.

Black-eyed Pea Porridge

- Pour beans into a large pot and add water just to cover
- Add cinnamon stick, dried Guajillo Chile, cardamon pods and paprika powder. Stir and bring to a boil, then cover and simmer for 30 minutes or until beans are soft.
- Add red palm oil and salt to the pot, stir and season to taste.

Baked Plantains



Ingredients:

- 2 large ripe plantains
- Drizzle of olive oil
- Fresh crushed black pepper

To Prepare:

- Pre heat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit
- Peel plantains and slice in a diagonal fashion into a shallow baking pan
- Drizzle olive oil and a pinch of black pepper
- Toss, cover with aluminum foil and bake in oven for 30 minutes or until golden
- Enjoy with black-eyed pea porridge (see recipe on page 15)

Pumpkin Seeds

Autumn is such a lovely season for many reasons. The harsh sun wanes inviting us to create our own warmth by engaging in outdoor activities and cooking warm grounding foods. In celebration of the season, I would like to highlight a superfood - pumpkin seeds.

The pumpkin skin and flesh are a good source of fiber, potassium and vitamin A. However, pumpkin seeds are often overlooked as a food source. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of healthy fats, vitamin E and zinc all of which naturally support collagen production, reduce inflammation and support healthy cell membranes.

Pumpkin Seeds

Skin and hair health:

Pumpkin seed oil is derived from cold pressing pumpkin seeds. Clinical studies have shown that pumpkin seed oil applied topically to the skin twice a day for at least 12 weeks can treat acne by reducing sebum production and inflammation.

Pumpkin seed oil has also been shown to inhibit the conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone (DHT). DHT is known to be involved in the pathogenesis of hormonal cystic acne as well as patterned hair loss in both men and women. Clinical studies have shown that topical application of pumpkin seed oil to the scalp once to twice a day for at least 12 weeks can increase hair density, hair shaft thickness and encourage new hair growth.

Pumpkin Seeds

If these are the benefits of topical application of pumpkin seed oil, imagine the amplified effect with consuming pumpkin seeds regularly during meals. Raw pumpkin seeds can be added by the tablespoon to oatmeal for breakfast or as a topping on a salad during lunch. One of my favorite ways to eat pumpkin seeds is to make a soup.

Here is a recipe for pumpkin seed soup (aka Egusi soup) well known to many West African cultures and now enjoyed by many all over the world.

Egusi Soup



Ingredients:

- 4 cups of dried pumpkin seeds (pepitas) yields 2 cups of ground pumpkin seeds
- 1/2 large onion
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup red palm oil or olive oil
- 6 cups of chopped greens (spinach, Swiss chards)
- 6-8 cups of vegetable stock or meat stock
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt (optional)
- Meat of choice (optional)
- Jalapeno pepper (optional)

Egusi Soup

Preparation:

- Bring vegetable or meat stock to a boil in a large sauce pan. Add the ground pumpkin seeds and dried thyme to the stock and stir for 5 minutes on medium heat. Then cover and cook the seeds in the stock until the ground pumpkin seeds starts to form a paste or when the pumpkin seed oil rises to the surface. Stir and add a little water regularly to prevent burning.
- In a food processor, blend the onion, bell pepper and jalapeño pepper together. Add the palm oil or olive oil to the mix and pour into the pumpkin seed paste and stock. Cook, stirring frequently for about 10 minutes.
- Add the chopped greens and salt, stir together.
- Cover the pot and simmer on low heat for 15 minutes.

Red Lentil Soup

Nothing says Fall like a warm bowl of red lentil soup. For me, lentils are a celebration of the simple joy and abundance that is nature! Lentils are a rich source of protein, fiber and complex carbohydrates. From an Ayurvedic perspective, they are grounding and nourishing - excellent to balance and calm Vata.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of red lentils
- 1 teaspoon of cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon of mustard seeds
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 4 stalks of celery
- 1 medium carrot
- 1 teaspoon of fresh minced ginger
- 2 cloves of garlic (optional)

Red Lentil Soup

- 1-2 tablespoons of ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon of ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon of ground turmeric
- 1/2 cup of pureed tomatoes (optional)
- 1 1/2 cups of water (or vegetable stock)
- 1/2 - 1 teaspoon of Himalayan pink salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- Unsalted butter
- Parsley

Preparation:

- Wash and rinse the red lentils in a colander and set aside
- Chop the celery, carrot, ginger and garlic on a cutting board and set aside
- Heat the olive oil in a large, deep sauce pan then add the cumin and mustard seeds
- Once the seeds begin to bubble or ‘pop’ (about 15 seconds) add the celery, carrots, ginger and garlic. Turn heat down and stir continuously for 1-2 minutes to prevent burn.

Red Lentil Soup

- Add the red lentils, pureed tomatoes and 1 1/2 cups of water to the pan. Stir and season with ground cumin, ground coriander, turmeric and black pepper.
- Cover and bring to a boil, then simmer for 15-20 minutes.
- Check periodically to see if more water or broth is needed as lentils quickly absorb the liquid.
- Season to taste with Himalayan pink salt.
- Garnish with butter and parsley and enjoy.

Mushroom Medley



As we approach winter, mushrooms are a hearty vegetable that provides sustenance without heaviness. Well cooked mushrooms, seasoned with spices eases digestion and increases lightness in the body.

Ingredients:

- Maitake mushrooms
- Portabello mushrooms
- Brown mushrooms
- White button mushrooms
- 1 large yellow onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 teaspoon of fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons of oil (sesame or olive)
- 1 jalapeño pepper (optional)
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
- Black pepper
- Himalayan pink salt

Mushroom Medley

Preparation:

- Wash, strain and chop mushrooms into fine pieces
- Chop onions, garlic and ginger
- In a wok or large sauce pan on medium heat, add oil.
- When oil is hot, add onions and garlic and sauté until golden brown.
- Turn heat down to medium and add chopped mushrooms and ginger. Stir and sauté for 5 minutes or until mushrooms begin to soften.
- Add chopped walnuts and jalapeño pepper if desired.
- Season with black pepper and Himalayan pink salt.
- Enjoy with basmati rice.

Overnight Oats



Oatmeal is a staple breakfast meal. However, its preparation can sometimes be uninspiring and induce dullness or heaviness. In Ayurveda, oats are considered 'sattvic' or 'deeply nourishing' to the mind and body when prepared correctly. Oats are grains and can be paired with seeds and nuts for added protein. However, prior to adding to oats, it is best to soak seeds and nuts in a liquid for several hours to make them easier to digest and reduces bloating. Below is an overnight oats recipe that can be adapted for the season and enjoyed year round.

Overnight Oats

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of rolled oats
- 1 tablespoon of raw pumpkin seeds
- 1 tablespoon of flaxseeds
- 1 tablespoon of chia seeds (or hempseed, sesame seeds)
- 3-4 raw almonds (or 2 cashews, 2 walnuts)
- 1 medjool date (or 1 teaspoon of date syrup)
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground cinnamon (or cardamom, nutmeg)
- 1/2 cup of non-dairy milk (almond milk, soy milk, oat milk, rice milk)
- 1/2 tablespoon of nut or seed butter (sunflower seed butter, peanut butter, tahini)

Preparation:

- Place all items, except nut or seed butter in a bowl and cover with a lid. Let soak for at least 4 hours or overnight
- Prior to eating, pour 1/4 cup of hot water into bowl and add nut or seed butter
- Stir well to mix and enjoy

CCF Tea



Lubricate and detoxify the gut:

- Drink warm fluids in the form of tea 2-3 times a day.

CCF Tea

- In particular, consuming 2 cups of CCF (cumin seed, coriander seed, fennel seed) tea is known to improve digestion, improve mood and enhance a sense of well being.
- To prepare, take 1/4 teaspoon of each of the seeds, steep in 1 cup of hot water for 5-10 minutes. Strain and drink as is or lightly sweetened with honey.

Mint Rose Tea



Ingredients:

- 2 stems of fresh or dried spearmint
- 6-7 dried rosebuds
- 1 Liter of warm water

To Prepare:

- Place spearmint and rosebuds in a teapot
- Bring 1L of water to boil in a kettle and pour into teapot
- Steep for at least 10 minutes
- Pour out and enjoy as is or sweeten with 1 teaspoon of maple syrup or honey
- Sip and enjoy after your meal

Butterfly Pea Tea



Ingredients:

- Fresh mint leaves
- 4 organic medium limes
- Keffir lime leaves (dried)
- Fresh ginger
- Fresh galangal
- Butterfly pea flowers (dried)
- Palm sugar or Maple syrup
- 8 cups of hot water

Preparation:

- Wash, peel and slice ginger and galangal roots, set aside.
- Wash and cut limes into quarters (keep skin on)
- Boil 8 cups of water in a kettle

Butterfly Pea Tea

- To a glass pitcher, add mint leaves, dried butterfly pea flowers, keffir lime leaves, galangal and ginger. Squeeze the lime juice into the pitcher and add the entire lime pieces as well.
- Pour the hot water into the pitcher, stir and watch the vibrant blue-purple color emerge.
- Sweeten with palm sugar or maple syrup.
- Leave in a sunny place (by a glass window) or outside in direct sun for up to 10 minutes to make a sun tea (optional).
- Then let cool in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to an hour before serving.



Tamarind Tea



Ingredients:

- 2-3 whole tamarind pods
- 4 cups of water

Preparation:

- Place 4 cups of water in a small pot and bring to boil on the stove.
- Add the shelled tamarind to the boiling water, stir, cover and reduce heat to medium.
- Boil for 10 minutes.
- Let cool for 10 minutes. Strain and lightly sweeten with maple syrup.
- Enjoy as an afternoon tea.