

Ayurvedic Yoga & Nutrition for a Healthy Fall & Winter

Ayurveda is derived from two roots: Ayu, meaning life; and Veda, which means knowledge. The knowledge of life, the science of life, is Ayurveda.

Vata = Air + Ether

Responsible for movement

Primary location: colon

Pitta = Fire + Water

Responsible for metabolism

Primary location: small intestine

Kapha = Earth + Water

Responsible for lubrication and structure

Primary locations: upper half of the stomach, chest, throat, and head

Vata Qualities: dry, rough, mobile, cold, subtle, clear, light

Qualities to Balance: oily, smooth, stable, warm, heavy, cloudy, gross

To balance Vata: follow a vata-pacifying diet; eat grounding, nourishing and slightly spicy foods; drink warm fluids; avoid stimulants like alcohol and caffeine; stay warm; avoid strenuous exercise and focus on gentle movement; avoid wind and cold; relax in nature; have a routine for eating; and practice nadi shodhana pranayama.

Best Vata Food Choices

Basic principles

Qualities to reduce: cold, light, dry

Best tastes for vata: sweet, sour, salty

Have in small quantities: bitter, astringent, pungent

<p><u>Grains</u></p> <p>It's ideal to eat your grains cooked and have breads with no yeast.</p>	<p>Ideal: amaranth, cooked oats, quinoa, rice (brown/ white), wheat</p> <p>Small quantities: barley, millet</p> <p>Limited amounts: buckwheat, corn (chips/ bread/ tortillas), dry oats/ granola, rye</p>
<p><u>Dairy</u></p> <p>Raw, organic milk is best, warmed up taken with some ginger/ cardamom.</p>	<p>Ideal: butter, buttermilk, kefir, milk, sour cream, fresh homemade yoghurt</p> <p>Small quantities: hard cheeses</p> <p>Limited amounts: ice cream, frozen yoghurt</p>
<p><u>Sweeteners</u></p> <p>Even though the sweet taste decreases vata, in excess it will be disruptive. Attempt to get your sweet tastes from foods such as sweet veggies (beets, carrots, yams), sweet fruits and grains</p>	<p>Ideal: raw unpasteurized honey, maple syrup, molasses, rice syrup, sucanat</p> <p>Small quantities: date sugar, grape sugar</p> <p>Avoid: brown/white sugar</p>
<p><u>Oils</u></p>	<p>Ideal: almond, ghee, sesame</p> <p>Small quantities: avocado, castor, coconut, flaxseed, mustard, olive, peanut, sunflower</p> <p>Avoid: safflower, canola</p>

<p><u>Fruits</u></p> <p>Baked fruits are best.</p>	<p>Ideal: baked apples, apricots, avocados, ripe bananas, blackberries, cherries, coconut, fresh dates, fresh figs, grapes, lemons, mangos, nectarines, oranges, papaya, grapefruit, peaches, pears, plums, raspberries, strawberries, tangerines</p> <p>Small quantities: apples, pomegranate</p> <p>Avoid: dried fruits</p>
<p><u>Beverages</u></p>	<p>Ideal: warm water, teas such as chamomile, cinnamon, clove & ginger</p> <p>Limited quantities: fruit juices, alcohol, caffeine, carbonated drinks</p>
<p><u>Vegetables</u></p> <p>You will reduce gas and bloating and improve digestion by having your foods cooked and warm.</p>	<p>Ideal: beets, carrots, leeks, mustard greens, okra, cooked onions, parsnips, shallots, squash, sweet potato, tomatoes, water chestnuts</p> <p>Small quantities: broccoli, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, kale, potatoes, mushrooms, radishes, seaweed, sweet peas, zucchini</p> <p>Limited amounts: alfalfa sprouts, artichokes, asparagus, bean sprouts, brussel sprouts, cabbage, snow peas</p>
<p><u>Nuts & Seeds</u></p> <p>Lightly roasted nuts are preferred. Avoid dry roasting.</p>	<p>Ideal: almonds</p> <p>Small quantities: cashews, pecans, pine nuts, pistachio, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, most nuts</p> <p>Limit: peanuts/ peanut butter</p>
<p><u>Legumes</u></p>	<p>Ideal: mung beans</p> <p>Small quantities: hummus, tofu</p> <p>Limited amounts: aduki, black beans, chickpeas, fava, kidney, lentils, navy, pinto, soybeans</p>
<p><u>Meats</u></p>	<p>Ideal: chicken, beef, eggs, dark turkey meat, lamb, pork, seafood, venison, duck</p> <p>Small quantities: Shellfish, white chicken or turkey meat</p>

<p><u>Spices</u></p> <p>Spice your food moderately, not blow-your-mouth-off hot and not bland.</p>	<p>Ideal: anise, basil, bay leaf, caraway, cardamom, cinnamon, clove, cumin, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, ginger, marjoram, mustard, nutmeg, oregano, pepper, peppermint, rosemary, sage, saffron, thyme, turmeric</p> <p>Limited amounts: cayenne pepper, cilantro, horseradish</p>
<p><u>Condiments</u></p>	<p>Ideal: mayonnaise, vinegar</p> <p>Limited quantities: ketchup, carob, chocolate</p>

Vata Balancing Essential Oils

Rose, vetiver, jatamansi, cardamom, chamomile, cinnamon, clary sage, coriander, frankincense, geranium, ginger, jasmine, lavender, lemongrass, myrrh, neroli, patchouli, sandalwood, sweet orange, thyme, vanilla, ylang ylang

Vata Balancing Base Oils

Sesame, castor, avocado

Vata Pacifying Yoga Practice

Vata energy can be very changeable, spontaneous, flippant, and even destructible—marked by spurts of frenetic energy followed by complete exhaustion. Vata types need energy management! This includes time management, boundaries, knowing how much is enough or too much, and managing their own thoughts and speech.

Key words	Calm, slow, steady, grounding, strengthening, consistent, alignment, nourishing, loving, safe, warm, stillness, breathe, Mother, earthy, stable, cozy, trust, faith
Region	Asanas that compress the pelvis and flex the lower back, forward bends to reduce gas and support healthy bowel movements, asana that balance apana vayu (downward moving force)
Time of day	2-6am & 2-6pm

Vata season	Fall and the first half of Winter
Asanas (example)	<p>Sitting postures: lotus, siddhasana, vajrasana, navasana, dandasana</p> <p>Surya namaskara done slowly and consciously</p> <p>Standing postures: vrksasana, trikonasana, virabhadrasana, parivrtta trikonasana, utkatasana, urdhva prasarita ekapadasana</p> <p>Backbends (gentle, not too long of holds): bhujangasana, locust</p> <p>Forward bend: paschimottasana, janu sirsasana, balasana, uttanasana, Adho mukha svanasana, Vasisthasana</p> <p>Twists Sarvangasana, sirsasana, halasana</p>
Pranayama	Nadi shodhana, full yogic breath, abdominal breathing, ujjayi, brahmari
Savasana	Long, use of eye pillow, sandbags, blankets, bolsters
Rhythm & feel of class	Slow, consistent, sequential, methodical, balancing, still, gentle movement, grounding
Music	Instrumental, soft, steady, healing, grounding
Lighting	Soft, soothing, candles
Signs of balance	Calm, centered, clarity, feeling more grounded and less up in the head/ mind

The Golden Ghee

You will need:

1lb unsalted, organic butter
Thick-bottomed stainless steel pot
Stainless steel spoon
Glass jar with secure lid

1. Sterilize the storage jar, pot and a spoon in advance by filling with (or immersing in) boiling water. Dry very well. Water in the ghee will contaminate it and make it go moldy.
2. Cook the butter gently over low heat for approximately 15-25 minutes.

3. Foam will form on the surface throughout the heating process. Scoop this off with a dry clean spoon as it collects. These are the milk solids. This can be put aside and used later for other purposes such as baking.
4. Watch carefully to avoid burning. Making ghee requires patience and awareness.
5. When the ghee begins to boil silently with only a trace of glassy air bubbles on the surface and a golden clear colour, it is ready. You should be able to see to the bottom of the pot without any sign of cloudiness.
6. Depending on the butter used, more milk solids may float on top. Strain off with a clean spoon.
7. Allow to cool and then pour ghee through a fine strainer or cheesecloth into the clean, dry glass container.

Fall Bliss Balls

You may need a sweet and nourishing snack in the afternoon. These easy-to-make treats will boost your energy and ward off sugar cravings.

1 cup dates
3 tbsp tahini (sesame paste) 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon Sesame seeds for rolling

1. Soak dates 15 minutes in a bowl of boiled water until soft.
2. Remove date pits if not already pitted. Strain and remove from water. Mash well.
3. Stir in the tahini, mixing well. Mix in nutmeg and cinnamon.
4. Roll into small balls, and plop into sesame seeds to coat.

Tridoshic Fall Kichari

Serves 3-4

One of the best ways to give your over taxed digestive system a break is to eat *kichari*, an Ayurvedic superfood. *Kichari* is a *tridoshic* (good for all *dosha* types) food that can be adjusted according to the season or for your individual constitution.

6 cups water, may add more water for a more soupy *kichari*
2 tbsp ghee
Half a medium onion, finely diced
1 inch fresh peeled ginger, finely diced
1 cup split mung dal
1 cup white basmati rice
About 2 cups mixed veggies of your choice—seasonal root veggies, squash, and greens
1 tsp cumin seeds

- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 tsp sea salt or rock salt

Tip: Soak beans and rice overnight in cold water for shorter cooking time and easier digestion.

1. Wash beans and rice until rinse water is clear. Discard water and set rice and beans aside.
2. In a heavy-bottomed pan, heat the ghee on medium and add the onions to sauté until sweet and tender.
3. Add ginger, cumin, fennel, and coriander seeds and sauté for two or so more minutes.
4. Add rice and beans and sauté for a few more minutes.
5. Add the water, cover and bring to a boil. Once boiling, stir, lower heat and simmer on low with the lid on for about 20 minutes.
6. While *kichari* is cooking, wash and chop the veggies/greens.
7. Add to the mixture, stir in and cover.
8. Allow to steam for about 8-10 minutes. Add salt and mix in. If you are using veggies that take longer to cook than greens—squash or yams for example—add to mixture five minutes before the greens and other veggies.

Garnish: A squeeze of lemon or lime, fresh cilantro or parsley, a small dollop of extra ghee, and toasted sesame seeds or toasted sunflower seeds. This is just one suggested recipe for *kichari*. Feel free to adjust veggies and spices to suit your tastes. Get creative with it. Here's to simple eating and your health!

Recipes from: [Your Irresistible Life: 4 Seasons of Self-Care through Ayurveda & Yoga Practices that Work](#)