

# Food & Ayurveda



## Diet Guidelines for Balancing the Three Doshas

*Eating is the most important activity we engage in for determining the health of the body and the mind. Eating nourishes the tissues, which in turn nourish the mind and emotions. It is essential to bring positive attention and reverence to the process of food selection, preparation, consumption, and digestion. Ideally, meals should be enjoyed in a state of mental, emotional, and physical serenity.*

**Vata** - Sweet, sour and salty foods are generally good for Vata people since they satisfy the system and reduce its insecurity about being well fed. Bitter, pungent, and astringent foods are less beneficial to Vata types; they dry the system and intensify emotional instability, especially insecurity. Avoid large amounts of any taste because Vata is aggravated by excess.

In general choose a diet that emphasizes warm, soupy, and easy to digest foods. The Vata gut prefers cooked vegetables to raw. Most sweet and juicy fruits are beneficial for Vata. Avoid unripe fruit or large amounts of astringent fruits such as pomegranate and cranberry. Of all the types, Vatas can best utilize animal foods in their diet. Legumes are an important food because it is the vegetable kingdoms equivalent of meat. Combine legumes with sweet grains such as rice. Vatas should especially avoid caffeine and sugar. Favor ginger and garlic for spicing food.

**Fruits**-apricots, avocados, bananas, berries, cherries, coconut, dates, figs, grapefruits, grapes, lemons, mangoes, melon, nectarines, oranges, papaya, peaches, plums

Avoid-cranberry, pomegranate, dried fruits, apples (except cooked)

**Vegetables**-Asparagus, beets, carrots, celery, sweet potatoes, onion, green beans, veggie juices w/ ginger

Avoid-eggplant, spinach, mushrooms, peas, too many raw vegetables

**Grains**- wheat, oats, rice- eaten with added ghee, butter, and oil

Avoid- corn, millet, rye, buckwheat, yeasted bread

**Legumes**-mung beans, red lentils, black lentils, pinto beans, tofu

Avoid-chick peas, black beans, soy beans

**Flesh foods**-eggs, turkey, chicken, venison, fresh fish, goat

Avoid-lamb, beef, shellfish

**Nuts and Seeds**-almonds (soaked and peeled), pumpkin seeds, cashews, nut butters and milks

Avoid-excess sesame and fatty nuts such as macadamia and cashew

**Dairy**-all in moderate amounts- yogurt is especially good or milk cooked with ginger, cardamom, and turmeric

Avoid-excess ice cream, smoothies, hard cheeses

**Sweeteners**- all

Avoid-white sugar, excess amounts of chocolate, cooked honey

**Spices**-ginger, garlic, asafetida (in legume soups), nutmeg

Avoid-overuse of "hot" spices- spices aid digestion but can dry Vata when overused

**Vices**-small amounts of wine and beer

Avoid-tobacco, sugar, caffeine

## Diet Guidelines for Balancing the Three Doshas (Cont'd)

**Pitta** - Pitta people should avoid sour, salty, and pungent, the “hot” tastes and should concentrate on sweet, bitter, and astringent, the “cold” tastes. Pittas should especially avoid meat, eggs, alcohol, and salt. All these foods augment Pittas natural aggressiveness and compulsive tendencies. Grains, fruits, and vegetables cool the Pitta heat and should form the majority of the diet. Vegetarianism is best for Pitta people; every Pitta should make a sincere effort to become vegetarian.

Pitta people have naturally strong digestion and digest raw fruits and vegetables well. They should avoid consuming too many sour fruits and vegetables such as citrus or nightshades. Chicken, turkey, and venison are the best flesh foods. Flesh foods, as well as, legumes should be eaten sparingly. Cooling spices such as cardamom, coriander, turmeric, and fennel are the best spices.

**Fruits**-apples (sweet), apricots, avocados, coconut, figs, grapes, lemon, mangoes, melon, nectarines, peaches, pears, persimmon, pineapple, plums, pomegranate

Avoid-excessively sour fruits such as apples, cherries, orange, and pineapple

**Vegetables**- All-asparagus, broccoli, cilantro, cabbage, cucumber, leafy greens, potatoes, squashes

Avoid-tomatoes, when pitta is high radishes, beets, carrots

**Grains**- barley, rice, oats, wheat

Avoid-Buckwheat, corn, millet, rye, yeasted breads

**Legumes**- black lentils, mung beans, chickpeas, tofu

Avoid-excess consumption of any legume, yellow lentils

**Flesh foods**-Chicken, turkey, rabbit, venison, egg

Avoid-regular consumption of any animal products

**Nuts and Seeds**-coconut juice, coconut, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds

Avoid-salted, roasted nuts, peanuts

**Dairy**-all

Avoid-hard, salted cheeses

**Sweeteners**- all

Avoid-molasses, long-term consumption of honey

**Spices**-fennel, coriander, cardamom, small amounts of turmeric, cinnamon

Avoid-mustard, salt, chilies, excessive black pepper, cumin

**Vices**-tea, very occasional coffee w/ cardamom, cream, and sugar

Avoid-tobacco, alcohol (except small amounts of beer)

**Kapha** - Kapha people need to focus on bitter, astringent, and pungent which invigorate their bodies and minds, and should avoid sweet, sour, and salty tastes which help them remain set in their ways. Kaphas should never eat fried or otherwise greasy foods and should shun dairy products. Fat is the worst possible food for Kapha types. Vegetables are the best for Kapha types who should limit the total amount of food they eat.

Kapha types need less grains than do Vata or Pitta people. All vegetables are good except potatoes, tomatoes, and water chestnuts. They should avoid especially sweet or sour fruits, dried fruits such as prunes and astringent fruits such as pomegranates and cranberries are especially good. Kaphas rarely need any flesh foods because their flesh is

adequately nourished by other foods. Kapha is increased by sweets, and Kapha's should not use any sweetener except small amounts of raw honey which helps reduce Kapha. They find spices useful to awaken their organisms; they can use all spices except salt, which increases kapha directly. As for Vata people, ginger and garlic are the best spices. Occasional consumption of coffee is permissible

**Fruits**-Dried fruits, apples, apricots, cranberries, mangoes, peaches, pears, pomegranate

Avoid-avoid excessively sweet, juicy, or sour fruits such as dates, orange juice

**Vegetables**-all including peppers and chilies in moderation

**Grains**- millet, buckwheat, barley, rice, corn

Avoid-wheat, breads

**Legumes**-well-cooked tofu, black beans, mung beans, pinto beans

Avoid-black lentils, kidney beans, soybeans

**Flesh foods**-very limited amounts of eggs, chicken, fish, rabbit, venison

Avoid-fried meats

**Nuts and Seeds**-small amounts of sunflower and pumpkin

**Dairy**-small amounts of ghee and goats milk

Avoid-most other forms of dairy especially cheeses

**Sweeteners**- raw honey in small amounts

Avoid-everything else

**Spices**-all spices-especially ginger and garlic

Avoid-salt

**Vices**-Black tea, coffee, small amounts of tobacco smoke

Avoid-alcohol, marijuana

### **Dual Doshas**

**Vata-Pitta**- Generally Vata-Pitta people should follow a Vata controlling diet in fall and winter and a Pitta controlling diet in the spring and summer.

**Pitta-Kapha**- Pitta-Kapha people should follow a Pitta controlling diet from late spring through early fall and a Kapha controlling diet from late fall to early spring.

**Vata-Kapha**- Vata-Kapha people should concentrate on controlling Vata in summer and fall and controlling Kapha in winter and spring.

*This compilation was partly excerpted from the book **Prakriti** with the help and permission of Dr. Robert Svoboda. For more books on Ayurveda by Dr. Svoboda go to [www.drsvoboda.com](http://www.drsvoboda.com).*