

Food As Medicine and Setting up your Ayurvedic Kitchen:

Some basic things to have on hand in your kitchen space:

The spices listed below, Fresh in season vegetables and fruit (learn to look for high prana produce in the produce section), dry grains and beans (especially rice and mung dahl), a nice cast iron skillet (for dry roasting seeds, popping seeds and for preparing Dosas and Roti.), Homemade Ghee, Almonds, Dates, an instapot or crockpot, a nice thick bottom pot (for cooking veggies, soups, and dahl), an assortment of thermoses (for warm nourishing meals on the go), whole milk or non dairy alternative (for chai or golden milk), a recipe binder to save favorite recipes. A good quality mortar and pastel (for grinding spices), a way to organize the spices (Indian spice Caddies are helpful or a system of jars or easy to open and well sealed spice containers that are clearly labeled.)

Setting up an Ayurvedic Kitchen

The kitchen is ideally a sanctuary where we feel happy and are free to put love and good intention into the food we prepare. It can be nice to have a simple alter or reminder of the divine (however we like to connect with the divine). A copy of a mealtime prayer in a visible place, a speaker that we can play peaceful music on while we are cooking. Music is a great way to set a tone that others immediately feel when they walk in the room. We can't always control outer factors in the kitchen but we can certainly do our best to create the most pleasing atmosphere possible. Having a clean workspace is important as well as having simple basic tools on hand. Making a meal plan at the beginning of the week before going shopping is valuable so that we have the supplies on hand (before we are too hungry to wait for a home cooked meal)

Our Kitchen herbs and spices can be our medicine chest!

Please visit Dr Vasant Lad's book "Ayurvedic Cooking for Self Healing" for detailed information on the medicinal uses of common kitchen spices and herbs. Also remember "for whom and when" when it comes to the medicinal uses. There is no cure all herb or spice.

Popping of Seeds:

Dry toasting seeds in a skillet or Popping seeds in Ghee or coconut oil help bring the flavor and medicinal properties out of the spices.

Santosha Massala Recipe:

3 parts whole cumin Seeds
2 parts whole coriander seeds
1 part Tumeric powder

Dry toast each of the above spices separately until fragrance comes out. Mix them together and coarsely grind with mortar and pastel or in a blender or coffee grinder.

Place in a Jar. Will stay fresh for at least a month and can be used in kitchori or any of your favorite recipes.

Pre-meal Agni building ginger pickle:

Fill a jar with peeled ginger that has been thinly sliced length wise.

Mix fresh squeezed lime juice, raw honey (according to taste preference), and a pinch of himalayan salt together. Cover the fresh ginger with the lime juice mixture. Allow to marinate for at least a few hours ahead of time. Make enough for a week and store in the refrigerator.

Enjoy a slice of ginger "pickle" about 20 minutes before each meal to stoke the digestive fire (Agni).

Post meal Digestive Churnas:

Churnas are digestive spice mixes that can be custom made to suit an individual's constitution or unique health concerns. Following are sample churnas for each body type: The following mixtures can be dry roasted and stored in a jar. It is nice to take a little bit after eating a meal to assist with digestion and assimilation. Feel free to play with the ratios to find a combination that tastes and feels really good to you.

General tridoshic digestive churna: Equal parts Cumin seeds, Fennel seeds, Dhana Dahl (crushed coriander seeds that can be purchased at the indian market), Kalanji (also purchased at the indian market)

Vata additions: -crystal sugar, cinnamon pieces, maca,

Pitta -Coconut flakes, goji berries, Rose petals

Kapha - Cinnamon pieces, Chitrak

***Note - if you don't have a local indian market, dry toasted fennel seeds alone are a really nice digestive churna**