Basic Principles

Qualities to Reduce: cold, dry, heavy

Best Taste: pungent, sour
Small Amounts: salty, astringent
Worst Tastes: sweet, bitter

Foods listed as "Best" can be eaten without reservation on a daily basis. Individuals who are sick should consume only those foods on this list. These foods are the most ideal as they are the most balanced for both dohas. Foods listed as "Small Amounts" 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. Over-reliance upon these foods can cause an imbalance. Foods listed as "Avoid" should be eaten only on rare occasions and can be eaten once each month. They either cause an imbalance in both dohas or very significantly disturb one of the dohas.

Grains
It is best to eat these as cooked grains, though a small amount of bread may be eaten.
Best: Amaranth, basmati rice, brown rice, buckwheat, quinoa, wild rice
Small Amounts: Millet, rye, barley
Avoid: Corn flour, oats, rice (sticky, white, short or long grain), wheat

Dairy
It is best to use raw or organic milk products. Milk should be taken warm with a small amount of spices such as ginger and cardamom. Ghee and yogurt should also be used with warm spices.
Best: Buttermilk, ghee, 2% milk,
Small Amounts: Kefir, sour cream, yogurt (whole milk)
Avoid: Butter, cheeses, cottage cheese, ice cream, frozen yogurt

Sweeteners
Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance. Those listed under “Small Amounts” are more likely to cause imbalance with regular usage and should not be used more than once each month.
Best: Honey
Small Amounts: Jaggery, molasses, sucanat
Avoid: Date sugar, dextrose, fructose, grape sugar, maltose, maple sugar, maple syrup, rice syrup, white table sugar

Oils
Oils are very important and should be used abundantly if the skin is dry. Though generally heavy, the lighter oils will not aggravate kapha. Ghee should be used with warm spices.
Best: Flaxseed, ghee, mustard, safflower
Small Amounts: Almond, canola, castor, corn, margarine, olive, peanut, sesame, soy
Avoid: Avocado, coconut, lard, sunflower

Fruits
Fruits are best when they are sour and not overly ripened or sweet. These will bring balance to both dohas. In general, due to their cooling effects on the body, their intake should be consumed in small amounts. The best fruits may be taken in greater amounts. Fruit in general should not be a staple of the diet but is all right for occasional use.
BEST: Apricots, grapefruit, lemon, papaya

SMALL AMOUNTS: Apples (baked is best), banana (sour), blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, cherries, lime, mango, oranges (sour), pineapple, plums (sour), pomegranate, prunes, raspberries, tangerines

AVOID: Avocado, banana (sweet), coconut, dates, figs, grapes (sweet), jujube, melons (watermelon, cantaloupe), oranges (sweet), nectarines, peaches, pears, persimmons, plums (sweet), raisins, strawberries

Vegetables
The diet should consist primarily of cooked vegetables. However, occasional use of raw vegetables is all right as long as there is no constipation or gas.

BEST: Artichoke (with a spicy, oily dressing), beets, carrots, cauliflower, chili peppers, corn (fresh), green beans, leeks, mung bean sprouts, mustard greens, onion, parsley, potato, radish, sunflower sprouts, tomato

SMALL AMOUNTS: Alfalfa sprouts, avocado, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, celery, cilantro, kale, lettuce, mushrooms, okra, peas (green, snow), rutabagas, seaweed, spinach, squash (zucchini, crookneck), Swiss chard, turnips

AVOID: Asparagus, bitter melon, cabbage, cucumber, eggplant, Jerusalem artichoke, squash (acorn, winter), sweet potato, yams

Nuts and Seeds
These should be taken lightly dry roasted to assist digestion and only very lightly salted if at all. Nut butters, except for peanut, may also be eaten.

BEST: Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, piñon (pine nuts)

SMALL AMOUNTS: Filberts

AVOID: Almonds, Brazil, cashews, coconut, lotus seeds, macadamia, peanuts, pecans, pistachio, walnuts

Meats
Repeated research shows that plant-based diets are healthier than meat-based diets and prevent many diseases. Ayurveda and Yoga emphasize a vegetarian diet primarily for spiritual reasons. Hence, omnivores should limit meat consumption if possible. Weak patients should take meat as a soup broth.

BEST: None

SMALL AMOUNTS: Chicken and turkey (dark meat), fish (fresh river and sea)

AVOID: Beef, duck, pork, lamb, shellfish

Legumes
Legumes are best taken well cooked with warm spices, as they can be hard to digest. Soaking them before cooking improves digestibility as well. As they contain earth and air, they are heavy and dry which can harm both doshas when digestion is weak. Those listed as best are easiest to digest and usually will not cause harm.

BEST: Mung beans, soy milk, tempeh, tofu

SMALL AMOUNTS: None

AVOID: Aduki beans, black beans, black gram, chickpeas, fava beans, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, navy beans, peas (dry or split), pinto beans, soybeans

Spices
Spices aid the digestion and absorption of nutrients and they improve flavor. Warm and hot spices are recommended for vata/kapha types. It is the overall effect of spicing that is most important and not the individual spice used. If food becomes too hot it may contribute to greater dryness. Hence, the hottest spices should be used in moderation. Food should never be bland.

BEST: Allspice, anise, asafoetida, basil, bay leaf, black pepper, caraway, catnip, cayenne, celery seed, chamomile, cloves, coriander, cumin, curry powder, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, ginger, horseradish, hyssop, lemon verbena, marjoram, mustard seed, nutmeg, oregano, paprika, parsley, peppermint, poppy seed, rosemary, saffron, sage, spearmint, star anise, tarragon, thyme, turmeric
**Small Amounts:** Salt
**Avoid:** None

**Condiments**
**Best:** Vinegar
**Small Amounts:** Catsup, carob (with proper sweeteners), chocolate (with proper sweeteners)
**Avoid:** Mayonnaise

**Beverages**
Beverages are best taken at room temperature or warm, and never ice cold.
**Best:** Chamomile tea, licorice tea, mint tea, spicy teas, water
**Small Amounts:** Sour fruit juices (cranberry, lemon, lime, pineapple, pomegranate), vegetable juices. Diluted fruit juices preferred.
**Avoid:** Alcohol, black tea, coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated), soft drinks, sweet fruit juices, sweetened soda pop