



VATA/PITTA FOOD PROGRAM

Basic Principles

Qualities to Reduce: hot, light, dry

Best Taste: sweet

Small Amounts: astringent, sour

Worst Tastes: salty, pungent, 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 *doshas*. 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 *doshas* or very significantly disturb one of the *doshas*.

Grains

It is best to eat these as cooked grain or as unyeasted bread.

Best: Cooked gluten free oats, wild rice, red rice, forbidden rice, white basmati rice

Small Amounts: Amaranth, barley, millet, quinoa, rice (brown or white, short or long grain), rye

Avoid: Buckwheat, corn flour products, dry oats (granola)

Dairy

It is best to use raw or organic milk. Milk should be taken warm with a small amount of spices such as ginger and cardamom. Do not drink milk if you have mild food sensitivity to dairy.

Best: Butter, ghee, raw warm milk (whole), sheep milk feta, goat cheese, paneer cheese

Small Amounts: Buttermilk, hard non-salted cheeses, kefir, sour cream, yogurt

Avoid: Ice cream, frozen yogurt

Sweeteners

Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance.

Best: Honey (fresh), maltose, maple sugar, maple syrup

Small Amounts: Date sugar, dextrose, fructose, grape sugar, jaggery, molasses, sucanat

Avoid: White table sugar

Oils

Oils are very important and should be used abundantly if the skin is dry. They alleviate dryness and are generally heavy and nourishing.

Best: Avocado, coconut, ghee, olive oil, sunflower

Small Amounts: Almond, castor, corn, flaxseed, sesame, soy

Avoid: Canola, lard, margarine, mustard, peanut, safflower

Fruits

Fruits are best when they are well ripened and sweet. These will bring balance to both *doshas*. In general, due to their lightness, their intake should be consumed in moderation.

Best: Apricots, avocado, bananas (very well ripened), blackberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, coconut, dates, figs, jujube (cooked), grapes, lemons, limes, mango, nectarines, oranges (sweet), papaya (sweet), peaches, pears, persimmons, plums (sweet), pomegranate, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries

Small Amounts: Apples, bananas, cherries, cranberries, grapefruit, sweet pineapple, tangerines, watermelon

Avoid: Dry fruit, jujube (dry), olives, oranges (sour), papaya (sour), pineapple (sour), plums (sour)

Vegetables

Cooked vegetables are best as they are more nourishing and easier to digest. Only leafy greens may be eaten raw with dressing. More raw salads may be eaten in the hot summer if digestion is strong and there is little gas or constipation.

Best: Artichoke (with oily dressing), avocado, bean sprouts, cauliflower, cilantro, corn, Jerusalem artichoke, leeks, okra, onion (cooked), potato, pumpkin, seaweed, squash (acorn, winter, crookneck, zucchini, etc.), sunflower sprouts, tomato (sweet vine ripened)

Small Amounts: Alfalfa sprouts, asparagus, beets, bell pepper, bitter melon, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrot, celery, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, kale, lettuce (raw), mushrooms, mustard greens, parsley, peas (sweet), spinach, sweet potato, tomato (sour), turnips

Avoid: Cabbage, chilies, hot peppers, radishes, raw onion, tomato paste and sauce

Nuts and Seeds

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

Best: Coconut, piñon (pine nuts), sunflower seeds

Small Amounts: Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, lotus seeds, macadamia, pecans, pistachio (non salted), pumpkin seeds

Avoid: Peanuts

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 them as a soup broth.

Best: Chicken (white meat), egg, fresh water fish, pork, turkey (white meat)

Small Amounts: Beef, duck, lamb, seafood, venison

Avoid: Dark meat of chicken or turkey, shellfish

Legumes

Those listed in “Small Amounts” are best as a *dal* or a spread with spices added. When digestion is weak or constipation present, even those beans listed under “Small Amounts” should be avoided.

Best: Mung beans

Small Amounts: Aduki beans, black gram, chickpeas, kidney beans, black lentils, navy beans, pinto beans, split peas

Avoid: Fava beans, red and yellow lentils, soy beans

Spices

Spices aid the digestion and absorption of nutrients and improve the flavor. Food should have an overall spicing effect of being warming but not hot. It is the overall effect of spicing that is most important and not the individual spice used. You may use large amounts of the best spices and even very small amounts of the avoid spices. Food should never be bland.

Best: Bay leaf, caraway, cardamom, catnip, chamomile, cilantro, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, lemon verbena, peppermint, rosemary, saffron, spearmint, turmeric

Small Amounts: Anise, basil, cinnamon, coconut, fenugreek, ginger (fresh), marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, poppy seeds, sage, salt, star anise, thyme

Avoid: Asafoetida, black pepper, calamus, cayenne, cloves, garlic (raw), ginger (dry), horseradish, hot mustards, hyssop

Condiments

Best: None

Small Amounts: Carob, mayonnaise

Avoid: Catsup, chocolate, tamari, vinegar

Beverages

These are best taken at room temperature or warm and never ice cold.

Best: Chamomile tea, licorice tea, mild spice teas, milk, mint tea, water

Small Amounts: Carrot juice (diluted), fruit juices (diluted), naturally flavored soda and juice beverages, tea (black or green)

Avoid: Alcohol, coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated), soft drinks, very spicy tea, tomato juice, vegetable juices (green)