

The Yogic Diet

Yogi Bhajan encouraged his students to embrace a healthy, yogic lifestyle. The yogic diet he promoted includes whole, simple, fresh, nutritious food. The yogic diet does not include meat, fish, poultry, or eggs. You can get all the proteins, vitamins, and minerals you need without them.

A yogic diet is a balanced combination of:

- Fruits
- Nuts
- Vegetables
- Grains
- Legumes
- Dairy products (except eggs)

Whole, fresh, unprocessed nutritious foods give you energy and strength. When your diet consists of nutritious and sustaining foods and you eat only what you know you can digest, then you are on your way to a healthy, happy, and holy life.

About Dairy

Dairy products—except eggs—are on the list. This is because when you practice Kundalini Yoga and Breath of Fire, it tends to eliminate mucous. Mucous keeps the breathing passages lubricated and protects the membranes. You may need to replenish the system with a certain amount of mucous, which dairy products can stimulate. If you are allergic to cow products, then try goat products, which are easier to digest.

Sattvic, Rajasic, and Tamasic Foods

You are what you eat. If you are free to live a quiet, contemplative life, a *sattvic* diet is perfect. For those who wish to maintain a meditative mind but also must live and work in the world, a diet consisting of *sattvic* and some *rajasic* foods is best. For those who practice demanding disciplines, like Kundalini Yoga or marital arts, *rajasic* foods are necessary, along with *sattvic* foods. For all these lifestyles, *tamasic* food is best avoided.

Sattvic: Clarity and lightness

- Graceful, peaceful, disciplined, intuitive, sensitive.
- Most fruit and vegetables, sun foods, and ground foods.

Rajasic: Forcefulness and will-power

- Active, positive, demanding.
- Stimulating herbs and spices, many earth foods.

Tamasic: Functioning from need and instinct

- Impulsive, dull, angry, confused.
- Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, alcohol, intoxicating drugs.

Vata, Pitta, and Kapha Doshas

Ayurveda, the ancient holistic health sister science to yoga, recognizes that health is a state of balance between the body, mind, and consciousness. In ancient times, food was considered

medicine. The principles of healthy eating were well-known and the healing properties of foods and herbs were used to correct imbalances.

One of the most important aspects of the system of Ayurveda is the *tridoshas*, or forces that generate and maintain physical and mental health:

Vata (air): sustains the body and originates every kind of physical movement in the body. It controls the mind and senses and causes elimination of wastes.

Pitta (bile): responsible for digestion, heat, the digestive fire, and the formation of blood.

Kapha (phlegm): nourishes and lubricates the body, maintains sexual potency, and lends mental balance to the individual.

Yogic Foods & Recipes

Yogic Foods for Health & Healing

“The three roots—garlic, onion, and ginger—will maintain you through the times and through the age.” *Yogi Bhajan*

These three potent roots, known as the Trinity Roots, are essential for cleansing, sustaining, and producing energy in the body. The beneficial effect of each of them separately is amplified when they are cooked together.

Garlic

- Fights viruses and bacteria.
- Increases sexual energy that, with the practice of Kundalini Yoga, can be channelled upward for greater spiritual awareness.
- Eat raw, baked, steamed, or in capsule form.

Onion

- Universal healing food.
- Purifies and builds new blood.
- Recommended for colds, fever, laryngitis, and diarrhea.
- Increases mental clarity.
- Eat raw (preferred), juiced, or cooked.

Ginger Root

- Soothes and strengthens nerves by nourishing spinal fluid.
- Increases energy and vitality.
- Useful for menstruating women.
- Drink as a tea or juice or use it as a spice in main dishes.

Turmeric

- Good for the skin and mucous membranes.
- Good for female reproductive organs.
- Increases bone and joint flexibility, anti-inflammatory.
- Sauté for curries, casseroles, soups, gravies, and sauces.
- Turmeric needs to be cooked before eating; you can cook it with a little water to make a paste that will keep in the fridge.

Yogi Tea

- Black pepper purifies the blood.
- Cinnamon strengthens the bones.
- Cardamom supports the colon.
- Cloves build the nervous system.
- Ginger, with all its benefits, is an optional addition.
- Black tea (tiny amount) holds it all together.
- Milk protects the colon.

Mung Beans & Rice with Vegetables

A perfectly balanced protein dish, easy to digest and very satisfying. Good any time of year but makes a particularly good winter diet.

Ingredients:

4 ½ cups water
½ cup whole mung beans
½ cup basmati rice
1 onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
¾ cup finely minced ginger root
3 cups chopped vegetables
2 tablespoons ghee or oil
¾ tablespoon turmeric
¼ teaspoon dried crushed red chilies
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon coriander
½ teaspoon cumin
½ teaspoon salt

Cooking Instructions:

Rinse the mung beans and rice. Add the mung beans to boiling water and cook until they begin to split. Add the rice and cook another 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Now add the vegetables.

Heat the ghee/oil in a sauté pan and add the onions, garlic, and ginger and sauté until clear. Add the spices and cook 5 more minutes, stirring constantly. Add a little water if necessary. Add this to the cooked rice and beans. You can substitute vegetables as you like, as well as use Bragg Liquid Amines, tamari, or soy sauce instead of salt. Tastes great with yogurt!

Solstice Hot Sauce

Ingredients:

3 large onions, chopped
¼ cup dried crushed red chiles
8 ounces tamarind concentrate
16 ounces hot water
1 ½ cups sesame oil
1 tablespoon turmeric
1 whole small dried red chiles
2 cups apple cider vinegar

Directions:

Put the onions in a large bowl. Sprinkle with the crushed chiles. Melt tamarind concentrate in hot water. Add sesame oil and diluted tamarind to onions. Sprinkle with the turmeric. Add the whole chiles and vinegar. Stir and cover. Let sit overnight or several days for the

fullest flavour. Store in the refrigerator. The sauce will keep a long time and get better and better. Yields 2 quarts.

Yogi Tea

Yogi Tea is health promoting, delicious and soothing and a great coffee substitute. The benefits of Yogi Tea would fill pages. In the science of yogic foods the spices used are said to have the following properties.

- **Black pepper:** blood purifier
- **Cardamom pods:** digestive aid
- **Cloves:** beneficial to the nervous system
- **Cinnamon:** strengthens the bones
- **Ginger root:** healing for colds and flu, increases energy

The milk in the tea helps in the easy assimilation of spices. A homeopathic dose of black tea acts as an alloy for all the ingredients, creating just the right chemical balance. While it was not a part of the original recipe, the use of soy milk is a variation that Yogi Bhajan permitted.

Ingredients:

For each cup:

- 10 ounces of water (about 1 1/3 cups)
- 3 whole cloves
- 4 whole green cardamom pods, cracked
- 4 whole black peppercorns
- 1/2 stick cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon black tea
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 slices fresh ginger root

Cooking Instructions:

Bring water to a boil and add spices. Cover and boil 15 to 20 minutes, then add black tea. Let sit for a few minutes, then add the milk and return to a boil. Don't let it boil over. When it reaches a boil, remove immediately from heat, strain, and sweeten with honey, if desired.

Beet-Carrot Casserole

This dish is cleansing to the liver and the digestive tract. To help your body do its own inner cleaning, eat as a mono diet for one week in the spring or fall.

Ingredients:

2 bunches scallions, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
Ghee or vegetable oil
1 bunch beets
1 lb. carrots
Soy sauce or Tamari
Ground black pepper
1 lb. grated cheese

Directions:

Scrub beets and carrots. Steam beets whole. Don't cut off roots or stems. After about 15-20 minutes, add carrots. Steam until tender but firm. Then remove outer peels from beets and carrots. Grate using a coarse grater. Keep beets and carrots separate to preserve their distinct colours.

Sauté scallions and garlic in oil or ghee until tender. Toss with beets and carrots and black pepper. Place in a casserole dish. Sprinkle with Soy sauce or Tamari. Cover with grated cheese and broil until cheese is melted and golden. Serves 4-6.

Solstice Potato Soup

This recipe was given by Yogi Bajan. It makes the blood slightly alkaline, which promotes mental balance.

Ingredients:

1 quart potatoes sliced
1 quart celery sliced
1 quart onions sliced
1/8 cup raw minced garlic
1/8 cup cooking oil
2 tablespoons chili powder
1 tablespoon turmeric
1 tablespoon cumin
1 tablespoon coriander
Pinch of cayenne
Salt

Directions:

Layer the vegetables in a large pot with the potatoes on the bottom. Fill with water and add salt. Bring to a boil and cook until vegetables are tender. Meanwhile, sauté the chili powder, turmeric, cumin, coriander, and cayenne in the cooking oil and then add to the soup. Add garlic at the end before serving.

Golden Milk

This beverage is especially beneficial for stiff joints and provides a source of lubrication for the entire system.

Ingredients:

1/8 teaspoon turmeric
1/4 cup water
8 ounces milk
2 tablespoons raw almond oil
Honey to taste

Cooking Instructions:

Simmer turmeric in water until it forms a nice paste. Suggested cooking time is 8 minutes, you can add more water as necessary. Meanwhile, bring milk to a boil with the almond oil. As soon as it boils, remove from heat. Combine the two mixtures. Add honey to taste. Note that you can prepare larger quantities of paste as it keeps in the refrigerator for up to 40 days. The general ratio of turmeric to water is 1 part turmeric to 4 parts water.

Ghee

Ingredients:

Organic Unsalted Butter

Directions:

Simmer sweet butter for 10 minutes over medium heat. Let cool for a few minutes, and then remove all the white foam from the top. Clear yellow ghee will remain. Pour this through cheesecloth into a container, not allowing any white sediment at the bottom of the pan to slide in.