

sation of *Ushna* (hot) or *Shita* (cold). *Ushna Virya* has the properties of combustion, digestion, vomiting, purging; it imparts a feeling of lightness to the body and destroys semen. *Ushna Virya* subdues *Vata* (Wind) and *Kapha* (Mucus) and increases *Pitta* (Bile). *Shita Virya* creates steadiness and nourishment, imparts strength, increases heaviness, and aids in the buildup of body fluids. It subdues *Pitta* (Bile) and increases *Vata* (Wind) and *Kapha* (Mucus).

Generally, foods that have a hot taste have a Hot *Virya* but there are exceptions. For example, the *Virya* of honey is Hot, although most sweet foods have Cold *Virya*; the *Virya* of lemon is Cold, although most sour foods have a Hot *Virya*. The chart on page 12 shows the relationship of Tastes to *Virya*.

Foods are also categorized according to whether they are Dry (*shushk*) or Unctuous (*isnidhb*), and Light (*laghu*) or Heavy (*guru*).^{*} Dry foods are mostly hot (*Ushna Virya*) and increase *Pitta* (Bile). Unctuous foods are mostly cold (*Shita Virya*) and increase *Vata* (Wind) and *Kapha* (Mucus). However, there are some dry foods that are cold and some unctuous foods that are hot. Light foods cause constipation, promote gas, and subdue *Kapha* (Mucus). Heavy foods, which subdue *Vata* (Wind) and *Pitta* (Bile), and increase *Kapha* (Mucus), aid in clearing urine and feces from the system. Sour-, bitter, and pungent-tasting foods are Light; salty, sweet, and astringent are Heavy. When foods are used properly, their effect can be felt on one's own system.

Sweet

Heavy, Cold, and Unctuous

The sweet taste results from the combination of water and earth. This taste is *sallvic* in nature—nourishing, soothing, and satisfying. The sweet taste provides calories, removes nervousness created by glucose deficiency, removes acidity, and provides a healthy, radiant glow to the skin. Honey and raw sugar are the best examples of this taste.

The sweet taste is congenial with the body. It increases the seven dhatus: the nutrient fluids of the body—the blood and semen—as well as the flesh, fat, bone, bone marrow, and vital essence or

ojas. It prolongs life, clarifies the sense organs, imparts vigor, and helps the complexion. It alleviates toxicosis, allays thirst and burning sensations, and helps subdue excess *Vata* (Wind) and *Pitta* (Bile).

Sweet-tasting foods have a beneficial effect on the skin, hair, voice, and strength.

Sweet-tasting foods are not good for the teeth if taken in excess. Sweet is a taste that increases *Kapha* (Mucus); in excess, it produces softness, lethargy, heaviness, loss of appetite, indigestion, weak gastric fire, coughs, constipation, vomiting, worms, and other diseases.

Sour

Light, Hot, and Unctuous

The sour taste results from the mixture of earth and fire. This taste is *rajasic* in nature; it excites the mind, increases appetite, produces saliva (even when a sour food is simply remembered), and helps digestion. Lemon and yogurt are the best examples of this taste.

The sour taste stimulates the digestive fire, builds up and invigorates the body, stabilizes sense functions, lightens the mind, increases strength, and regulates the movement of gases. It gives strength to the heart, encourages the production of saliva, and conducts the food downward; it moistens, digests, and gives pleasure.

If used to excess, the sour taste provokes thirst. It increases *Pitta* (Bile) and *Kapha* (Mucus) and subdues *Vata* (Wind). Excessive use of sour food by men is not advised because it thins seminal fluid. An excess also creates acidity in the blood and causes a general sensation of burning in the throat, chest, and heart.

Salty

Heavy, Hot, and Moist

A salty taste is produced from the merging of water and fire. This taste is *rajasic* and excites hunger. It attracts water and improves radiance of the skin. Rock salt, sea salt, and lake salt are the best examples of this taste.

The salty taste is a digestive; it diffuses food particles, liquefies food, and subdues *Vata* (Wind). It cures stiffness and obstruction of body fluids, and prevents the accumulation of toxins. It increases the secretion of saliva, liquefies mucus secretions, clarifies the digestive passage, and soft-

*See preceding footnote on page 9.

ens all the limbs of the body. It can easily dominate all other tastes.

If salt is used exclusively or in excess, it provokes dryness and thirst, causes fainting and body heat, increases and breaks open the skin of swellings, dislodges teeth, creates impurities of the blood, destroys virility, and impairs the functions of the sense organs. It also induces premature wrinkles, gray hair, and baldness. It is harmful for the skin and eyes, and it aggravates Pitta and Kapha.

Pungent Light, Hot, and Dry

The pungent taste is a combination of air and fire. This taste is *rajasic-tamasic* in nature and excites the sense organs. When taken in pure form, one bite is enough to make the eyes water and the nose run. Pungent foods increase circulation and make one sweat. They dry up wounds and kill worms in the upper and lower digestive tracts. Black peppercorns, ginger, and red chilis are the best examples of this taste.

The pungent taste purifies the mouth, stimulates the gastric fire, promotes desiccation of food, and sharpens the sense organs. It gives relish to food, removes intestinal obstructions, helps elimination, and subdues Kapha (Mucus).

If used in excess, pungent foods cause a burning sensation and thirst in the throat, a dryness of mouth and lips, intense body heat, and gastritis. They are harmful for the eyes and seminal fluid, because of their postdigestive effect, an excess of pungent foods can destroy virility. An excess of this taste creates Vata (Wind) and Bile (Pitta) disorders.

Bitter Light, Cold, and Dry

The bitter taste is produced from a blend of air and akasha (ether). This taste is *rajasic* in nature and excites the nervous system. As a blood purifier, it rids the body of toxins and destroys intestinal worms. Bitter foods cure diseases caused by excess Pitta (Bile) and Kapha (Mucus). Coffee and quinine are good examples of this taste.

Although the bitter taste is not pleasant, it is appetizing in its action. It is an antidote to poison and vermicide; it cures burning, itching, dermatosis, and thirst. It gives firmness to the skin and flesh. It is a digestive, a stimulant, and purifies milk in the breasts of the mother.

If used to excess, the bitter taste has a drying effect on the body; it induces weariness, fainting, and giddiness. It dries the mouth and creates Vata (Wind) disorders, which result in nervousness and loss of strength.

Astringent Heavy, Cold, and Dry

The astringent taste is produced from a mixture of air and earth. This taste is *rajasic* in nature and excites the vascular system. It purifies the blood, helps the skin, and aids digestion and the assimilation of fats and oils. Alum, unripe bananas, and pomegranates are good examples of this taste.

The astringent taste is a sedative for the blood; it decreases Pitta (Bile) and Kapha (Mucus), and consumes fluids.

In excess, the astringent taste afflicts the heart, distends the stomach, impairs virility, and causes retardation of metabolic functions; it engenders various Vata (Wind) disorders. If overused, astringent foods cause dryness of mouth, palate, and lips. They cause constipation and thirst and create a change in body color.

Thus we see that the six tastes are directly responsible for the operation of and balance among the three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.

Vata (Wind) is stimulated by astringent, bitter, and pungent tastes and subdued by sweet, sour, and salty tastes.

Pitta (Bile) is stimulated by pungent, sour, and salty tastes and subdued by sweet, astringent, and bitter tastes.

Kapha (Mucus) is stimulated by sweet, sour, and salty tastes and subdued by bitter, pungent, and astringent tastes.

These six tastes can be beneficial if they are administered in proper dosages; otherwise, they can be injurious. An intelligent and creative cook will provide all six tastes in foods rather than sticking to only a few—say, just sweet, salty, and sour tastes. Unless we use all tastes in turn, some taste buds will remain unsatisfied and the system will certainly experience a chemical deficiency. A balanced meal should include all tastes—some in large quantities, some in smaller, according to their potencies. Foods with one taste should not be used exclusively, except when fasting.

COMPOSITION, QUALITIES, AND EFFECTS OF THE SIX TASTES

Attributes

- ❖ **Hot foods** cause heat in the body, excite Bile, and cure cold. These foods are suitable for mucus-dominated individuals (Kaphas).
- ❖ **Cold foods** cause cold in the body, excite Mucus, and cure heat. These foods are suitable for bile-dominated individuals (Pittas).
- ❖ **Hot and unctuous foods** are soothing, oily, and calming and cure diseases of Wind and pains of all kinds. These foods are suitable for the wind-dominated individual (Vata).
- ❖ **Cold and unctuous foods** are cooling and vis-
- cous and cure heat and dryness. They aggravate Mucus and are suitable for the bile-dominated individual (Pitta).
- ❖ **Hot and dry foods** are drying and dehydrating and cure diseases caused by mucus. These foods are suitable for the mucus-dominated individual (Kapha).
- ❖ **Cold and dry foods** are drying and cooling. These foods aggravate Wind and pain and are suitable for the bile- and mucus-dominated individual (Pitta and Kapha).

TASTE	ELEMENTS	ATTRIBUTES (Gunas)	ESSENCE (Virya)	EFFECT (Vipak)	EFFECTS ON THE THREE DOSHAS			MODE OF ENERGY (Guna)
					Vata	Pitta	Kapha	
SWEET	Earth and Water	Heavy, Cold Unctuous	Cold	Sweet Heavy	Subdues	Subdues	Increases	Sattvic
SOUR	Earth and Fire	Light, Hot Unctuous	Hot	Sour Light	Subdues	Increases	Increases	Rajasic
SALTY	Water and Fire	Heavy, Hot Unctuous	Hot	Sweet Heavy	Subdues	Increases	Increases	Rajasic
PUNGENT	Air and Fire	Light, Hot Dry	Hot	Pungent Light	Increases	Increases	Subdues	Rajasic Tamasic
BITTER	Air and Akash	Light, Cold Dry	Cold	Pungent Light	Increases	Subdues	Subdues	Rajasic
ASTRINGENT	Air and Earth	Light, Cold Dry	Cold	Pungent Light	Increases	Subdues	Subdues	Rajasic

FOODS & SPICES ACCORDING TO THEIR ATTRIBUTES

**Hot and Unctuous
(Subdues Vata)**

Almonds,* Apples, Beets, Black cumin, Coconut (dried), Eggs, Figs, Fish, Ghee, Honeydew melon, Kidney beans, Malai (scum of cooked milk), Mango, Meat, Milk (buffalo and goat), Peanuts, Pine nuts, Pistachios, Rock sugar candy, Sago, Sesame seeds, Sweet potatoes, Urad beans (whole and split, unpeeled), Wheat

**Cold and Unctuous
(Subdues Pitta)**

Bitter melon (karela), Butter, Buttermilk, Coconut (fresh), Cucumber, Grapefruit (sweet), Flaxseeds, Ice cream, Lemons, Locast, Lychee, Oranges, Panir (milk cheese), Peaches, Pomegranate (sweet), Pumpkin, Radishes, Spinach, Squash, Tinda (round summer squash), Water (fresh), Watermelon, Zucchini

**Hot and Dry
(Subdues Kapha)**

Anise, Alcohol, Black pepper, Cinnamon, Dates (dried), Eggplant, Fenugreek, Ginger powder, Gram (chick-peas and chick-pea flour), Grapes, Grapefruit (sour), Honey, Kohlrabi, Lentils, Mint, Mustard greens, Onions, Peas (dried), Pickles (all types), Red pepper, Salt, Tea, Walnuts

**Cold and Dry
(Subdues Pitta and
Kapha)**

Barley, Berries, Cauliflower, Coriander, Corn, Ice, Lotus roots, Pears, Pomegranate (sour), Rosewater, Tamarind, Vinegar

Neutral

Cow's milk, Moong (mung) beans, Tomatoes, Turnips

*When almonds (soaked and peeled) and jaggery (raw cane sugar) are made into a cold drink, they become cold in nature and remove heat and dryness from the body.

most of the nutrients required by the human system. It serves well as a basic item in a summer diet. Yogurt made from raw milk has the highest nutritional value and provides a lot of energy. Yogurt made at home from pasteurized milk is preferable to that found in stores, which may be old, sour, and made from skimmed and/or powdered milk products.

Yogurt can be eaten alone or can serve as a base for fruit salads or raitas. It is best served before sunset.

Yogurt increases Kapha (Mucus) and therefore is not good for people suffering from colds and coughs or those with kapha-dominated temperaments. Because its sourness stimulates Pitta, it is not recommended for people with Pitta disorders. Yogurt should always be taken with a little salt, cumin, or black pepper, or, if a sweet taste is desired, with saffron and honey or raw sugar.

GRAINS

Wheat

Sweet, Cooling, Increases Mucus

Wheat has justly been called the "monarch" of foods. No other dietary staple, except fresh yogurt and buttermilk, provides such concentrated nourishment for all seven of the body constituents, or dhatus. Of all grains and cereals, wheat is the most readily digestible by the human system because of its capacity to absorb water, which, in turn, conducts heat uniformly through the grain.

Wheat is a food that should not be eaten fresh. The grain freshly plucked from the stalk contains more solar energy than the human system can adequately process. Therefore, wheat should be eaten only after it has been aged for at least four months. If this is not possible, wheat should be soaked in water overnight, then sun-dried for three days before being converted into wheat flour and used for making breads. Since stored and water-soaked wheat remains fertile, the excessive solar energy is discharged into the atmosphere instead of the stomach. So great is the solar energy concentrated in wheat that granaries storing vast quantities of this nutritious food must be continuously ventilated; otherwise, spontaneous combustion could generate fire or even explosions in the freshly ground flour.

In whatever form wheat is taken, it should first be thoroughly browned. Breads are best toasted.

Preferably, thin, tortilla-like breads ought to be prepared fresh for each meal. These breads may be roasted dry, or in a lightly oiled pan over medium heat. Wheat cereals should be browned in a dry (unoiled) pan over medium heat before adding water. Cracked wheat prepared in this fashion provides an excellent breakfast food.

Wheat is sweet in taste, cooling in effect, and heavy. It is rich in vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates, and many other nutrients. It can be taken with any meal on any occasion. The gluten content in wheat provides the body with physical endurance and sexual stamina. For this reason, celibates should eat smaller amounts of wheat products than married individuals, unless they are engaged in hard physical labor. Persons wishing to reduce their gluten intake should use coarsely ground whole wheat flour, since in this form less gluten is assimilated.

Wheat Flour

Sweet, Cooling, Increases Mucus

Wheat flour contains vitamins B and E in sufficient quantities to provide heat and energy for the body. Whenever possible, stone- or hand-ground whole wheat flour should be used. Before the dough is made, the flour needs to be sifted through a medium-mesh sieve; this procedure will allow the nutritious wheat germ to pass through, along with the flour. This sieved flour is easily digestible.

When making Indian breads, such as chapatis, the wheat dough preferably is made about two hours before cooking. This will help make the bread light and easy to digest, so that the stomach and intestines do not have to waste extra energy in breaking down and assimilating. Also, while rolling the dough, dusting flour should be used sparingly since too much of it will make the bread heavy and spoil the stomach.

If desired, 1 teaspoon of salt can be added to 2 pounds of wheat flour to make the bread tastier, easier to digest, and more energy-giving.

Wheat can be stored, but once converted into flour, it should not be kept for more than fifteen days. Packages of wheat flour sold in supermarkets should not be used, as they are sure to be over fifteen days old. Freshly ground wheat flour, obtained from a farmhouse or health food store, should be used within two weeks. One can also purchase the wheat berries (unprocessed whole wheat

kernels) and grind them at home when needed.

Whole wheat flour is preferable to the enriched white varieties. Fresh, whole-grain, homemade bread is always better than store-bought bread. The finely ground white flour usually sold in supermarkets does not contain the husk of the wheat. For this reason it sticks to the walls of the stomach and intestines and is hard to digest and constipating. Most commercial breads found in hotels and restaurants are made from finely ground white flour. Avoid them. If finely ground white flour must be used for baking bread, add one teaspoon of ajwain seeds to 2½ cups of wheat flour. This will remove the constipating effect, rendering it digestible.

Rice

Sweet, Cooling; Increases Mucus

Rice, more than any other grain, is an international food. All varieties of rice are digestible, and only occasionally are they constipating. People with gastritis can tolerate rice when it is cooked with ½ cup of coconut powder and a few whole cloves for every 2 cups of uncooked rice. Rice cures and removes heat. Brown rice is regarded as healthy because the husk stays intact. Along with the luxurious wild rice (which is actually a grass), it takes a longer time to digest. Dals (beans) with skin and whole wheat flour contain the same vitamins as brown rice. Basmati, available at health food stores and Indian groceries, is a richly scented rice that is easy to digest; hand-pounded and unpolished white Basmati, which contains the husk, is best for cooking and is the kind intended to be used in all of the rice recipes in this book.

It is always advisable to let rice age. There is a saying: "Wood, rice, and wine improve in quality when they are old." The best rice is rice that has been stored (in its unpounded, unpolished form) for at least one to two years before being consumed. The husk is removed by hand pounding just before use.

All varieties of rice are sweet in taste, cool in action, and provide vitamins A and B. These vitamins are lost, however, in polished rice. When rice is cleaned and polished by machine its best part is removed, and the whole grain is reduced to white rice. This outer layer, called the husk, provides the very substance that saves the human body from skin diseases and gives energy to the brain. Hand-cleaned, unpolished rice is best. However, if dal

(any kind) with skins are combined with an equal amount of the polished rice, the required amount of A and B vitamins can be obtained, thus compensating for the loss.

When rice is cooked as *pulao* (*pilaf*), the peas, nuts, and seeds that are added while cooking provide the proteins and vitamins not present in rice. Of all grains, rice has the least power or energy-giving potential, but when taken with milk, nuts, and seeds, or saffron, this potential increases. Boiled rice is very good.

Made into a sweet dish, such as *kheer* or *pudding*, rice is spectacular. Because rice is cold (*lunar*), its use should be avoided in cold climates.

Persons anxious to lose weight can eat rice boiled without salt, sugar, or spices. In cases of chronic dysentery or tuberculosis, old rice cooked with dal in the form of *khichari* is beneficial. For diarrhea or loose bowels, rice and yogurt are ideal foods, but they are poison when taken during a fever or when suffering from a cold.

FRUITS

Apricots

Sweet, astringent, Heating; Increases Bile

Apricots are a favorite food in the northwest Himalayas. They have been used there for centuries as a staple food because they provide a great deal of nourishment. Apricots are similar in shape to peaches and also have a pit inside. The pits are sold in the market and oil is extracted from the kernel. This oil is as good as almond oil.

Fresh apricots subdue excess *Vata* (Wind) and *Kapha* (Mucus). Rich in protein, carbohydrates, sodium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, sulfur, copper, iron, and chlorine, they are also an excellent source of vitamin A. Dried apricots contain three times more vitamin A than fresh ones. Taken in large quantities (from six to twelve) by patients with chronic constipation, dried apricots help evacuation. (*Vatas* can have dried fruit if it is soaked first.) They help anemic patients because of their rich iron and calcium content, and also increase the production of hemoglobin.

For ease in chewing and assimilation, dried apricots must be soaked overnight before serving. Before soaking, they must be properly rinsed. The water in which they are soaked, rendered rich with

kernels) and grind them at home when needed.

Whole wheat flour is preferable to the enriched white varieties. Fresh, whole-grain, homemade bread is always better than store-bought bread. The finely ground white flour usually sold in supermarkets does not contain the husk of the wheat. For this reason it sticks to the walls of the stomach and intestines and is hard to digest and constipating. Most commercial breads found in hotels and restaurants are made from finely ground white flour. Avoid them. If finely ground white flour must be used for baking bread, add one teaspoon of ajwain seeds to 2½ cups of wheat flour. This will remove the constipating effect, rendering it digestible.

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For ease in chewing and assimilation, dried apricots must be soaked overnight before serving. Before soaking, they must be properly rinsed. The water in which they are soaked, rendered rich with

apricot juice, can be drunk. Dried apricots are most easily digested when boiled or soaked in milk.

Soaked apricots can be used in salads and chutneys, and in place of tamarind when making *saunth*. The compressed pulp of apricots is very good for making saunth (see recipes on pages 197 and 198).

Bananas

Sweet, astringent, Cooling,

Increase Mucus and, in excess, Bile

Bananas are a holy food and are very popular in India as *prasad* (consecrated food). They are useful in cases of dysentery, diarrhea, chronic indigestion, and in general for people suffering from weak digestive fire. As a fruit they are a great tonic and provide the system with large amounts of nutrients.

Ripe bananas are popular everywhere. Size and shape differ depending on where they are grown. The ones with a golden yellow skin and brown spots are among the best tasting.

According to Ayurvedic texts, bananas are tasty, appetizing, and fibrous. They are a flesh-building fruit and quench the thirst. They are good for diseases caused by excess Wind (Vata); in excess they aggravate Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha) because the long-term effect of bananas is sour. Being sweet in taste, they increase the amount of semen, and thus, increase vitality and virility. Bananas cure all kinds of weaknesses, and they especially help cure diabetes and spermatorrhea.

Slightly constipating when taken in small quantities, bananas remove and cure constipation if used properly and regularly. One large banana, or two or three small bananas eaten one after the other, will remove constipation. Bananas solidify stools and may be given to children from the age of two months. Infants and grandparents without teeth can take bananas mashed or liquefied. Ripe bananas digest easily, providing one does not eat too few. Regular eating of bananas, oranges, and apples—depending on your constitution—keeps the system healthy. (Apples, for example, aggravate Vatas but are good for Pittas.)

For thin, bony people, bananas are an ideal food. Thin people should eat two bananas a day after food regularly for a few months. This will help them gain weight without getting fat and will help them look more beautiful. For those who urinate often, bananas are a very good remedy. In general,

they help reduce disease. Bananas help make people who have exhausted themselves by sexual overindulgence strong again.

For dry coughs and whooping cough, a drink made from bananas can work like an expectorant and help break up the cough.

Bananas are best eaten after other foods so they can aid in digestion. They contain plenty of calories, vitamins A, C, D, and E, and many mineral salts. Bananas contain 75 percent water, a number of carbohydrates, a small amount of protein, and very little fat. Bananas also contain B vitamins, and minerals such as calcium, phosphorus, iron, magnesium, copper, sulfur, and potassium.

Flour can be made from dried banana flakes (available in health food stores). Pancakes made from this flour are delicious and satisfying. Banana flour is more nutritious than any cereal flour. Ripe bananas with milk, nuts, and seeds, or bananas in muesli make a good breakfast treat. They are highly alkaline and help maintain the alkaline reserve in the body. Bananas are an ideal food for gastric ulcers, gastritis, and ulcerative colitis.

In cases of weak digestive fire, bananas can be given with tamarind and salt. One banana, thoroughly mashed, is a good remedy for dysentery in children.

Bananas help build bones and are very good for jaundice because of their iron content. They also aid acute gout and arthritis.

Eating bananas helps the heart; when there is pain in the heart, bananas blended with honey can be a lifesaver. With honey, they are an ideal sattvic food; a pinch of saffron may also be added.

Placing banana skins over an area with muscular pain or on an area of pain due to scratching prevents swelling and provides relief. If, by chance, one eats more than a reasonable number of bananas and experiences indigestion, the seeds of one black (or red) cardamom pod should be chewed slowly and swallowed to aid in digestion.

Coconut

Sweet, Cooling, Increases Mucus

The coconut is oily and smooth in nature. Coconuts subdue excess Wind (Vata) and Bile (Pitta). Being a holy food, the coconut is popular in India as *prasad* (blessed food). For worship it is taken with sugar candy or raisins. The coconut, with its rough bark and "beard" intact, is offered to Vishnu and

Shakti at their shrines or put into the river Ganga* as an offering. Coconut is worshiped as Vishnu and as Satya Narayan, the Lord of Truth. At the commencement of all ceremonies a coconut is broken, symbolizing the breaking of the ego, and is offered to God. Its pieces are then distributed to the people present. The coconut is sent as a token of good luck in Indian marriage arrangements. According to legend, this sattvic fruit is a gift from the gods to human beings.

Coconut is used daily as a food in many parts of the world. Rich in food value, coconut meat is especially high in calories and easy to digest. The protein found in coconuts is regarded as of particularly high quality because it contains all the amino acids necessary for the body. Coconut is a good source of B vitamins and several minerals. The oil content of coconuts makes them sought after by thin persons who wish to gain weight. When it is cold-pressed, the oil is easily digestible and consumed by the body with the same ease as other oils and fats. Coconuts, green or ripe, and coconut milk are excellent remedies for curing acidity in the stomach. The oil present in the milk and flesh neutralizes and reduces stomach acids.

The coconut is utilized in all stages of growth: Green coconut milk is a refreshing drink and good for the stomach because of its alkaline nature. The milk of green coconuts contains the full complement of B vitamins. These rich resources make it a rejuvenator. When tender and sweet, the pulp of a ripe coconut is eaten raw; since its sugar is in solution, digestion and assimilation are easy.

Dried coconut in grated, shredded, or powdered form (available at health food stores and Indian groceries) is good for the intestines because of its particular chemical content; the digestive residue serves as a brush to clean the intestines. It is useful in curing hiccups, vomiting, and over-acidity. Coconut powder can be used in sweet dishes, rice, chutneys, confectionaries, and puddings; it also can be eaten raw.

Coconut oil is very good for the hair and for massage of the body. It is cooling when used on sunburned skin. Excellent for healing wounds, it also moisturizes the skin and is widely employed in cosmetics and shampoos.

*Ganges

Dates

Sweet, Cooling, Increase Mucus

Dates give power to the stomach and cure diseases of excess Wind (Vata). Normally dates increase Mucus but in conjunction with certain herbs, they can cure diseases of excess Mucus (Kapha). They are very useful for those suffering from dry coughs. Dates help to increase body weight. If followed by buttermilk, dates are immediately digested.

In India, dates are found in two main varieties: One is large, sweet, and tasty; the other is small and not so sweet. Dates are used as a sweetener and as candies in certain parts of India. They are rich in food value and satisfying. Dates increase semen and give strength, stamina, vitality, and virility. Those who have exhausted themselves from sexual overindulgence, or those who are always depressed or fatigued, should eat fifteen to twenty dates a day after meals for several months. Date sugar is easily digestible and high in calories. By doing this and taking at least 2 cups of milk, as well as exercising, within forty days one will feel rejuvenated, with both physical and mental strength restored.

In cases of injury involving much blood loss, dates and milk with a little ghee or cream will make the patient feel better immediately.

For those with anemia or general weakness, dates with milk and cream at breakfast are very helpful. For those who feel they are losing stamina, date milk is a tonic. Persons who do not have clear morning bowel movements should drink milk boiled with four or five dried dates (*chuhara*) before going to sleep at night.

Dates have vitamins A and B, a combination that gives the system the power to resist viruses and infections. Dates also contain protein and carbohydrates, as well as calcium, phosphorus, potassium, iron, and pectin, which makes them rejuvenators.

Dates can be used in many ways: as a sweet, with vegetables, as pickles, and in sour chutneys.

According to Ayurveda, dates combined with specific herbs can work to expel mucus and thus have a medicinal value for ailments of the chest region and coughs. Dates provide strength to the heart, liver, pancreas, and kidneys. They help in building up nerves in the brain and increase appetite. They are tissue-building. According to an Indian handbook dating from the Middle Ages, dates

are cold and dry, good if taken in moderation for the intestines, and dangerous if taken in excess for the throat and chest. It recommends combining dates with comb honey; it also considers dates a most suitable food for seniors and debilitated persons, for those convalescing, and for children. Through regular use of dates, friendly bacteria become established in the intestines.

Dates are alkali-forming in nature. They maintain an alkaline balance in the system, are regarded as a health food, and serve to purify and strengthen the blood.

Wealthy Arabs eat dates filled with butter. The carbohydrate content of dates helps the digestion of butter. Dates are reputed to be a holy food. The date palm tree and the coconut palm, which belong to the same genus, are both holy trees.

Figs

*Sweet, astringent, Cooling,
Increase Mucus*

Figs, which are also a holy food, can be eaten fresh or dried. When dried, their nutritional value is doubled. When allowed to ripen on the tree, the fruits that are collected are either eaten or kept for drying. Ripe figs are palatable, sweet in taste, and cold in nature; they aid the digestive process and help rid the system of impurities in the blood. Figs subdue excess Wind (Vata) and Bile (Pitta). Fresh figs are best for Vatas; if they are not available, dried figs can be soaked in water overnight and then eaten.

Figs contain protein and minerals, such as sodium, potassium, calcium, iron, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, sulfur, and chlorine.

Figs are always recommended for chest troubles and for constipation. They are also good for chronic coughs. Fig syrup is an excellent tonic for infants, increasing appetite and improving digestion. This syrup also cures rheumatism, seminal disorders, skin troubles, stones in the kidney or bladder, enlargement of the liver, and leukorrhea.

It is advisable for women of all age groups to eat two figs per day. From the onset of menstruation until the onset of menopause, women should take three figs daily to compensate for the loss of certain elements in the body, such as iron and calcium. Because of the iron content in figs, they are prescribed to patients with anemia.

Figs promote quick recovery after prolonged

illness. If taken in large quantities, they help thin people put on weight. Bodybuilders and wrestlers eat figs with nuts. Figs are also used as a laxative, and they help cure piles.

The skin of dried figs is very tough, so it is better to soak them overnight in clean water. Because of its rich mineral and sugar content, this water can then be drunk or used in cooking. The skin of (soaked) dried figs may be discarded, and the seeds and pulp should be thoroughly masticated.

Grapes

*Sweet, sour, astringent, Cooling,
Increase Mucus*

Grapes are one of the oldest and most delicious fruits known, principally because they are so rich in glucose and because of their alkaline-forming nature. The acids and glucose are thoroughly assimilated by the body and stimulate activity of the kidneys and bowels. Grapes subdue excess Wind (Vata) and Bile (Pitta).

The ancient Indian Ayurvedic scholar Vagbhatta considers grapes to be a laxative and diuretic. The wise master Sushruta considers them to be nutritious. He believes they provide the body with life force, which saves it from infection and deterioration. Organic grapes definitely help the intestines; they should be consumed by those suffering from weak digestion. The cellulose in grapes forms the initial pulp for stools. The skins should be thoroughly masticated, otherwise they will produce flatulence.

Grapes have also been found helpful in diseases of the skin and lungs, as well as in gout, rheumatism, arthritis, and obesity.

Apart from glucose and acid, grapes contain vitamins, some minerals, such as phosphorus and calcium, a negligible amount of fat, and very little protein.

In India grapes are eaten both fresh and dried. Fresh grapes are either eaten raw or are used in certain exotic drinks. Dried grapes are of two kinds: raisins and munnaqua. Raisins are small sun-dried grapes and are sweet/sour in taste. Munnaqua are raisins made from large, ripe, sweet grapes; they are sweet in taste. Munnaqua are often recommended by doctors. They are very tasty and nutritious. Their glucose is predigested and readily absorbed by the body. It enters into the bloodstream as soon as it reaches the stomach and gets

converted into heat and energy very quickly. Therefore, munnaqua are given to older people and people suffering from fever, anemia, general weakness, weak digestion, constipation, dropsy, dysentery, colitis, bronchitis, cardiac disorders, and kidney trouble.

Fasting on grapes, or grapes and milk, for four to six days once a year is a good method of purification. One should consume two to four pounds of grapes per day during this period. Ripe, sweet grapes should be eaten fresh, or taken as juice.

Vinegar made from grape juice of the sour variety is also good when taken in small quantities with food.

Grapefruit

*Sweet, bitter, Cooling,
Increases Bile and Mucus*

This appetizing and refreshing member of the citrus family was developed from a large, sweet lemon tree that grows all over India. But the actual use of grapefruit in India is recent. They are grown only in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

Grapefruits prove to be a good substitute for oranges, having almost the same food value. They subdue excess Wind (Vata).

These fruits are an important source of vitamin C and bioflavonoids. They contain minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, and potassium.

An alkali-forming food, grapefruit balances the acid reactions of different foods and relieves constipation. For these reasons the fruit is eaten fresh, with its pulp. Grapefruit encourages healthy intestines and prevents diarrhea, dysentery, and other infectious diseases of the digestive tract. Grapefruit has also been found useful in various diseases of the liver.

Grapefruit should be taken before other food, not after. If the juice is taken, the pulp should be taken with it. The seedless variety is healthier and preferable.

Fasting on grapefruit juice with pulp for three days is an excellent way to purify the stomach and intestines, because, in their postdigestive state, grapefruits produce an alkaline residue even though they are an acidic fruit.

A delicious grapefruit chutney is made by grinding together grapefruit, mint leaves, and fresh green or red peppers. Add to this mixture a pinch of salt and freshly ground or dried coconut powder.

(While the coconut powder is optional, it increases food value and bulk.)

Grapefruit salad can be made with onions, tomatoes, and salad greens.

An ideal summer drink from grapefruit can be made either from the pure juice alone, or by mixing it with raw sugar or honey.

Lemon

Sour, Heating,

Increases Bile and Mucus

Lemons, which belong to the same family as grapefruit, are highly praised in Ayurveda for their qualities. Lemons are an appetizer—they stimulate digestion and assimilation. Lemons are healers—they calm the system and provide nutrients. Almost every part of a lemon is used for human consumption. Apart from providing juice, the peel of lemons is used for making pickles. The medicinal value of a fresh lemon is as high as that of a pickled lemon.

Lemons are good for subduing excess Wind (Vata). In all stomach disorders, pickled lemon is used as a home remedy. Its medicinal value is reputed to increase as it matures. Some sort of pickle is a must with food. Pickles tickle the tongue and encourage digestive juices and saliva. Pickling (see page 199) is an ideal way of preserving lemons and of increasing their medicinal value. It is good to take pickled lemon with the midday meal, but avoid it at breakfast and dinner.

Because lemons contain vitamin C and bioflavonoids, they prevent scurvy and capillary fragility. Lemons also contain B vitamins as well as minerals, such as sodium, potassium, magnesium, calcium, iron, copper, phosphorus, and sulfur.

Lemons are an important source of citric acid. Because of this, they are popular in medical and home remedies. Lemons relieve thirst, are cooling, soothe the nerves, and cure nausea. They are used for indigestion, acidity, dysentery, and diarrhea. Lemon juice is a sedative for the heart and reduces palpitations. The juice is helpful for people with high blood pressure and for the bowels and kidneys, uterus, and other parts of the body. Lemons stimulate the flow of saliva and cure loss of appetite and dyspepsia.

Lemons encourage secretion of bile and are, therefore, recommended for patients with jaundice. Because they convert into an alkaline substance dur-

ing digestion, lemons counteract conditions such as acidity, rheumatism, and gout.

Lemon juice is an organic disinfectant that causes no harm to body tissues. It prevents the formation of stones in all parts of the body. Lemon juice checks colds and possesses an antipneumonia substance. Lemons cure gas and the juice is a mild laxative. Lemon juice taken with lukewarm water every morning cures constipation. Drinking the juice through a straw will prevent erosion of tooth enamel.

The use of lemons in salads and as a preserver is well known. A lesser known fact is that lemon seeds are especially useful in curing nausea brought on by aggravated bile and in curing repeated vomiting. A few fresh lemon seeds, peeled and ground into a fine paste in a mortar with a pestle and mixed with a teaspoonful of honey, can work miraculously in these situations.

Lemon juice taken in lukewarm water with a tablespoon of honey early each morning as the first drink of the day helps dieters lose weight. Lemons are also used in fasting. A one-week lemon-water fast cures all diseases of the stomach and intestines.

Finely sliced or chopped onions mixed with lemon juice, a pinch of salt, and some freshly sliced or chopped red or green pepper, is a very popular salad among Muslims and onion-eating Hindus.

Constant use of lemon juice with food or in food, or of lemon pickles keeps the body in good shape. In all preparations, however, the seeds should be removed. The seeds are to be used separately only for relief of nausea, as mentioned above.

A special lemon drink call Shikangibin is very popular on hot summer days in India. Shikangibin is made by adding fresh lemon juice to a sugar solution. Some powdered spices with a pinch of black salt are then sprinkled over the drink (see recipe on page 243).

Mangoes

*Sweet, slightly sour, Heating,
Balance all doshas*

Mangoes are unctuous, give energy, and are satisfying. A hybrid mango that has no fiber is heavy to digest, although it tastes better than one with fiber. Natural mangoes are smaller and juicier than hybrids but both usually are sweet and sour. The sweeter the mango, the more easily it is digested

and the more energy it provides. A sour mango should never be eaten, except in the form of *amchur* (mango powder) or as dried mango flakes.

Mangoes are good for excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha). A ripe, sweet, juicy mango helps the body generate blood. If a glass of lukewarm milk is taken after eating a mango, it balances Bile (Pitta) and energizes the entire system—especially the intestines. During the hot season, cold water can be added to the milk to reduce the effects of the heat and give strength, vigor, and vitality to the system.

Mangoes stimulate and energize the nervous system and are weight-producing. They cure constipation, activate the kidneys, and prompt the flow of urine, which enables the system to flush out toxins. A drink made from a juicy mango that has a lot of fiber is a cure for people who suffer from too little digestive heat, chronic dysentery, or constipation.

Because their acid content increases stomach acids, mangoes should never be eaten on an empty stomach. They help one stay youthful for a long time, check premature aging, and hold back decay. By going on a Mango Kalpa, or fast—living on juicy, ripe mangoes in season followed by milk for forty to sixty days—one rejuvenates the stomach and intestines, increases digestive heat, and thus stimulates the appetite. Milk absorbs all the heat of mangoes and prevents stomach disorders; water should never be taken after eating a mango.

Mangoes soaked in a sugar syrup give energy; they remove constipation and are a tonic for the brain, stomach, lungs, and blood.

Papayas

*Sweet, astringent, slightly bitter,
Cooling, Increase Bile*

Papayas, when soft, sweet, and ripe, are a delicacy. They subdue excess Wind (Vata). Papayas are considered rich in vitamins, especially vitamin A.

Papayas also contain protein, B vitamins, vitamin C (which increases as the fruit ripens), and minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, and iron. The carbohydrate in papayas contains mainly invert sugar, which is readily absorbed into the blood. As the fruit is exposed to the sun, it gets sweeter and richer in vitamins.

Vaidyas (Ayurvedic doctors) and Hakims—

(physicians who practice Unani-Tib, the Greek system of medicine)—prescribe papaya to people suffering from liver, heart, and/or intestinal trouble. The fruit is also used as a cure for intestinal worms. Papaya encourages the appetite and helps digestion; it is a diuretic and prevents flatulence. Raw papaya can be used either in a curry or as a dried fruit. It is delicious in sweet dishes. Papaya has a soothing effect on the stomach and pancreas. It is used with meat and fish as a "softener" because it helps the digestion of these foods. Grated papaya cooked with milk converts the milk into cheese and makes a delicious dish that is easy to digest and also good for the intestines. Raw papaya is helpful for patients with liver trouble. It also makes the muscle fibers of the womb contract, thus aiding menstrual flow.

Warning: Raw papaya can induce abortion if taken by pregnant women.

Ripe papaya, served with cream, nuts, and seeds, is an excellent summertime breakfast. In winter, papayas should not be eaten after sunset. During the rainy season, papayas should be eaten less often because of their diuretic effect.

Peaches

*Sweet, astringent, Cooling,
Increase Mucus, in excess*

Peaches are good for those who suffer from loss of appetite due to excessive heat in the system. Patients with fever feel energetic if they are given one peach every two hours during the day.

Peaches subdue excess Wind (Vata); however, eating two or three peaches a week is good for everyone.

Peaches are delicious in fruit salad with honey, nuts, and seeds, or in muesli. They can also be cooked with vegetables, in which case small pieces are added in place of tomatoes to the basic masala mixture while it is cooking.

Pineapple

*Sweet, sour, Cooling,
Increases Mucus, in excess*

Pineapple cures both anxiety and a disturbed heart; it provides a cool feeling to the head and heart. It is sweet/sour in taste, and sweet in action. The pulp of pineapple quenches thirst and increases mucus. It is good to subdue excess Wind (Vata) and Bile (Pitta). Pineapple is an excellent aid to digestion

when taken in small quantities with a meal. It adds a refreshing quality to curries. Sweet pineapple can be cooked with, or as a substitute for, tomatoes.

Plums

*Sweet, astringent, Cooling,
Increase Mucus*

Plums are cold and easily digestible. If eaten in small quantities, plums help the system produce more blood, open the lower digestive tract, and clean the stomach. Plums are very useful in subduing excess Wind (Vata) and Bile (Pitta). They give strength to the liver and purify the blood by expelling toxins from the body.

If plums are pickled in vinegar, they make an excellent appetizer and help in digestion.

Plums are eaten dried or fresh. Dried plums are a medicine for fever. Raw sour plums are not good to eat. (Plums are sour only when they are unripe. If an unripe plum is kept for a few days, it becomes ripe and then may be eaten).

Cooked in vegetable dishes, sour plums are healthy to eat, their sour taste providing a good substitute for dried pomegranate seeds.

Pomegranates

*Sweet, sour, astringent,
Cooling, Increase Wind*

Pomegranates subdue Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha). They are palatable and unctuous. Pomegranates are found in two varieties:

- ❖ Sweet with small seeds
- ❖ Sweet/sour with large seeds.

Both varieties are good for one's health. It is recommended, though, that only the sweet variety be used for eating fresh. The sweet/sour variety can be sun-dried and then used as a spice to lend sour taste to foods and vegetables. The sweet variety is cooling and has a cold and wet effect. The sweet/sour variety is cold and dry.

Sweet pomegranates cure dysentery, diarrhea, vomiting, dyspepsia, and heartburn. They cleanse the mouth, throat, stomach, and heart; they increase semen, purify the blood, remove restlessness, and quench thirst.

One pomegranate a day is more than adequate. Seeds should be swallowed whole and never chewed. In cases where heat has increased in the body, both varieties of pomegranate will provide

a cure. If taken in excess, pomegranates create constipation.

Raisins

*Sweet, sour, Cooling,
Increase Wind*

Raisins made from the best type of sweet, sun-dried grapes are recommended. Not all grapes make good raisins. The high nutritive value of raisins has made them popular. Their sugar content is about eight times that of fresh grapes, and the quality of the sugar is as good. Raisins are the richest source of glucose, which is readily assimilated into the blood, producing the heat and energy that sustains physical existence.

Glucose is used by the brain to activate the electromagnetic energy in the body. It is, therefore, a life-substance that is regularly consumed by the body. While grapes are not available everywhere, in every season, raisins can always be found. Raisins subdue excess Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha).

Anyone who is weak, old, or suffering from a debility or disease in which the body slowly wastes away should eat raisins in some form. The iron content of raisins is easily assimilated and helps the system produce more blood. Because raisins are more alkaline than many other fruits, they maintain the acid-alkaline balance in the organism and provide it with more stamina and vitality.

Raisins are best taken raw with peeled almonds (roasted or unroasted), cashews, pine nuts, and pistachios. This makes a complete food, which provides plenty of nourishment for growing children. This mixture is especially good for students. It is not advisable to use peanuts with this mixture. Peanuts are tamasic in nature, whereas other nuts and raisins are sattvic (see chapter 6 for a discussion of foods and the *gunas*).

Raisins contain carbohydrates, protein, fat, and minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, and iron. They also have vitamins, such as thiamine and niacin. Raisins are an excellent natural laxative. Those made from the large variety of sweet grapes (the seedy kind) are frequently used by Ayurvedic and Unani-Tib physicians for medicinal preparations. These raisins are boiled with milk and given to patients suffering from constipation, preferably just before they retire. Raisins

made of large, ripe, sweet grapes (munnaqua) act as a tonic for the heart. People can fast on munnaqua alone for quite some time. Patients with certain chronic diseases can be cured by taking only munnaqua regularly for a specified period of time.

Raisins with milk or yogurt make a wonderful combination because they complement each other.

Raisins can be used in many ways: in curries, salads, breads, milk, yogurt, sweet dishes, baked foods, and confectionaries (jams and jellies, cakes, puddings, and pies). The best way to use raisins is to soak them for twenty-four hours, or at least overnight. They can then be mashed in a small amount of the soaking water and strained. The remaining water can be drunk as is, or added with the raisins to food.

The water in which raisins have been soaked overnight and boiled for 30 to 40 minutes is a powerful tonic. It may be given to people of all ages. Washed and soaked raisins may be boiled in milk as well as in water.

In the Ayurvedic and Greek systems of medicines, munnaqua raisins are used more often than the smaller variety.

Eating sun-dried raisins daily makes one healthy and energetic.

VEGETABLES

Arwi Root (Taro)

*Sweet, pungent, Neutral,
Increases Wind*

Arwi is a root vegetable that is neither hot nor cold. It is unctuous and heavy to digest, but if digested well, it gives much strength. Arwi subdues Mucus (Kapha). People who are hot and dry in nature digest arwi without any problem, and for them it increases appetite. In cases of dry cough, arwi root liquefies the dry cough and expels the mucus.

Available at Indian and Latin American groceries, arwi is slightly constipating. However, if black cumin, red cardamom, ajwain seeds, or ginger are used in cooking the arwi, then it becomes a nourishing food. Ajwain seeds, in particular, make it less constipating. Also, the use of garlic or fenugreek seeds with arwi makes it easier to digest.

Red Beets

Sweet, Heating, Increase Bile

Red beets, although a root vegetable, are not tamasic in nature. Because of their sugar content, red beets are sattvic. Their alkaline nature and iron content make them a blood-producing food. Their heat-producing quality makes beets a good food for those who dwell in cold countries.

Beets are found in two varieties: sugar beets (white) or table beets (red). The sugar beet is not good as a food and is used only for making sugar. Table beets are used mostly in salads, stews, and soups. Sometimes they are added to sweet dishes for color. Beet tops are cooked as a green vegetable. Beets are excellent pickled in vinegar. Beet sugar, taken raw or cooked, is easily assimilated by the body.

Although sugar is their main constituent, beets also contain protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, and iron. Beet tops are rich in vitamins; they are also a good source of calcium, iron, and potassium.

Those suffering from iron- or calcium-deficiency can eat beets and beet tops as often as possible. Boiled beets are not as nutritious as raw beets. Pickled or preserved beets are not as easily assimilated as fresh ones.

Bitter Melon

*Bitter, astringent, Cooling,
Subdues all three doshas*

Bitter melon, also known as *karela*, is bitter in taste. It cures mucus and gases, and kills worms in the stomach. Bitter melon is especially suitable for mucus-dominated individuals (Kaphas). It creates lightness in the stomach and is a diuretic. Bitter melon is also an appetizer and digestive. It cures diseases caused by disturbed bile. It helps cramps when cooked in ghee or oil. People suffering from excess mucus should eat it alone, without tamarind or mango powder. Others can eat it as a vegetable prepared in any manner. It is good for pregnant women and diabetics, because it controls the blood sugar level and reduces the amount of uric acid in the blood. Its juice is good for liver, kidney, and mucus problems. Bitter melon helps the liver purify the blood and is very good for pregnant women. It is available at Indian and Asian groceries.

Sweet Carrots

*Sweet, astringent, Heating,
Increase Bile, in excess*

Sweet carrots are hot and unctuous; their skins are bitter. Bitter and pungent carrots are dry and aggravate Bile (Pitta). Sweet carrots are a diuretic; they aid digestion and clean the stomach and intestines. Because of their sugar content, they are heat producing. They are high in calories. Sweet carrots are also rich in vitamins A and C; vitamin B is found in them in small quantities.

Sweet carrots cure constipation and subdue excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha). They help people with heart palpitations. Sweet carrots increase the production of blood in the system, give power to the brain and stomach, and help in maintaining celibacy. They are, therefore, a sattvic food, suitable for brahmacharias, ascetics, and saints. They are rich in carotene, which is one source of vitamin A. Carotene assists the mucus secretion of certain tissues of the nose, mouth, respiratory, and digestive tracts. Carotene also has a beneficial effect on tooth enamel, protein synthesis, and vision—hence the saying, "Did you ever see a rabbit wearing glasses?"

Carrots are a rich source of calcium. A natural antiseptic, they keep the intestines free from bacteria. They are both a food and a medicine.

In cases of chronic diarrhea and colitis, carrots are a good dietary item. They also cure skin diseases. Fasting on milk and carrots alone for two or three weeks cures most chronic skin diseases. Women and children especially should consume plenty of carrots to keep their skin soft and shiny.

In India, carrots are used in many ways: as a sweet dish, as a fruit, as a vegetable. They are also juiced, and pickled in vinegar. Carrots are sometimes used in a raita (yogurt salad) and may be cooked with milk as in kheer (a milk dessert). When used as a fruit, carrots should be eaten raw.

While cooking carrots as a vegetable, fenugreek seeds can be added, or they can be cooked with turmeric and coriander powder. Carrots cooked in combination with cabbage, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, or potatoes are excellent. A *pulao* (rice pilaf) may be made with the above-mentioned vegetables. Carrots with green peas make a tasty dish and a highly nutritious food. Carrots remove uric acid from the blood and are good for ailments of gout and

SOOTHING VEGETABLES

Arwi root (taro), cooked	Subdues Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha)
Red beets, raw and cooked	Subdue Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha)
Bitter melon (karela), cooked	Subdues all three doshas
Sweet carrots, raw and cooked	Subdue Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha)
Cucumbers, raw	Subdue Wind (Vata) and Bile (Pitta)
Peas, raw (when tender and fresh) and cooked	Subdue Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha); Increase Wind (Vata)
Plantains, cooked	Subdue Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha)
Potatoes, cooked	Subdue Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha)
Spinach, cooked	Subdues Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha)
Sweet potatoes, cooked	Subdue Wind (Vata) and Bile (Pitta)
Tomatoes, cooked	Subdue Wind (Vata)
Turnips, cooked	Balance all three doshas

gallstones. As a fat-free food, carrots are beneficial in treating liver diseases. Carrots regulate menstrual discharge. Their use, however, should be avoided by diabetics and those patients who have excessive urination.

Cucumbers

*Sweet, astringent, Cooling,
Increase Mucus*

The cucumber is regarded as a holy fruit in northern India. For the birthday celebration of Krishna (Krishna Janmashtami), every Vaishnava (believer in Vishnu, the Lord of Preservation) brings a cucumber for worship. It is a sattvic, light food. The cucumber belongs to the squash family and, in very small quantities, contains all the food substances necessary for the preservation of health. Thin-skinned, unwaxed cucumbers are best. Cucumbers contain protein, carbohydrates, fat, and vitamins, such as thiamine, riboflavin, ascorbic acid, nicotinic acid, and vitamin A; they also contain minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, and iron.

The cucumber is cooling, calming, and refreshing. It works magically on restlessness caused by heat; its juice gives instantaneous relief to any burning sensation in the stomach. Cucumbers counteract hyperacidity, and gastric or duodenal ulcers. Whether in the form of juice or cooked as soup, cucumbers can be given safely to patients who cannot digest even milk. While solid, raw cucumbers cannot be tolerated by patients with chronic stom-

ach trouble or intestinal diseases like ulcers, they can easily digest cucumber juice or soup in small quantities.

Because it is an alkali-forming food, cucumber helps protect against acidity in the organism. Cucumbers cure constipation and are popularly used in salads, as well as in pickled foods. Cucumbers are also a diuretic and encourage the free flow of urine when eaten fresh and raw (with a touch of salt, if desired).

Cucumber and yogurt together make a wonderful dish (see page 188). The best way to eat cucumbers is raw, without any seasonings. Their seeds are nutritious and are dispensed in India by Vaidyas and Hakims. The seeds contain protein and fat and are used as a general tonic.

Both ends of a cucumber contain bitter-tasting chemical substances. For this reason, in India the top half-inch and the bottom quarter-inch are discarded.

Plantains

Astringent, Cooling, Increase Mucus

Plantains are large, green cooking bananas that have more starch than regular bananas. They are cold and unctuous and slightly mucus-producing. They provide strength, help in building tissues, and increase the body's production of blood and fat. Those with weak digestive power should not eat too many.

Available at Latin American and some Indian and Asian groceries, plantains cure excess heat and

diseases of the blood; they are slightly constipating and an aphrodisiac. For women suffering from leukorrhea or vaginal bleeding, they are an ideal food.

White Potatoes

*Sweet, salty, astringent, Cooling,
Increase Wind*

Potatoes are cold and dry; they tend to solidify stools. The main minerals in this starchy tuber are potassium, calcium, and phosphorus.

Before cooking, potatoes should be scrubbed thoroughly in cold water. If the skin is very thin, no peeling is necessary. When potatoes are stored for a long time the skin thickens. Since underneath this skin is a layer of potassium that will enter the potato while cooking, it is best to boil them first, then peel them. The potassium makes them easy to digest.

The starch in potatoes gives energy. Potatoes are an ideal food if cooked with fenugreek leaves or seeds.

If potatoes are eaten to excess by people who do not exercise or do hard labor, they can create diabetes, dryness of the trachea, and dry skin. There is also recent evidence that overconsumption of potatoes by pregnant women may cause spina bifida in the infant.

Potatoes are grown practically all over the world. Because of their starch, salt, and mineral and vitamin contents, potatoes have been a staple for centuries. Since potatoes can be stored for a long time, they are used in many different ways. Eating potatoes alone is not good—they should be complemented by grains, beans, yogurt, milk, ghee, or oil. Oven-baked potatoes are easy to digest and healthy. If fried in ghee, potatoes become heavy and constipating.

Spinach

*Astringent, Cooling,
Increases Wind and Bile*

Spinach is good for everyone, except those suffering from colitis. Since it increases Wind (Vata), people of this constitution may eat cooked spinach prepared with garlic and fenugreek seeds. Delicious if cooked properly, spinach is rich in minerals and vitamins. It contains protein, carbohydrates, and vitamins A, C, and riboflavin. It also contains the

minerals calcium, iron, copper, and phosphorus. Spinach has more vitamin A than any other green vegetable. Also, its carotene content is more easily absorbed than that of any other green vegetable.

Spinach is well-known for its iron and copper content. It contains a substance that stimulates the iron already present in the blood, which activates the formation of hemoglobin. This makes it a good food for people suffering from anemia.

Spinach stimulates digestion and absorption. Easily digestible, it produces very little flatulence. Its postdigestive action is alkaline. It is not advisable to eat spinach raw because it contains oxalic acid. Oxalate deposits help in the formation of stones in various parts of the body. Oxalic acid aggravates gout and liver ailments. Also oxalic acid combines with calcium in the intestines and passes out of the body, preventing the absorption of this important nutrient. For this reason raw spinach is not good for children. Steamed, however, the oxalate content of spinach is separated from its cellulose, and when blended with spices, such as garlic, fenugreek, tumeric, coriander, cumin, cardamom, cloves, black peppers, and especially nutmeg, its harmful aspect is eliminated from the body.

Spinach is a mild laxative. It is not suitable for people whose stools are already thin. However, for those who have problems with bowel movements, spinach juice, soup, or boiled spinach leaves will provide an immediate cure.

Fresh, green spinach should always be used when available. Frozen spinach is only for those who need its laxative effect or its iron.

Sweet Potatoes

Sweet, Heating, Increase Mucus

Sweet potatoes are far more nutritious than white potatoes; they contain less water and more solid food. Sweet potatoes contain carbohydrates and protein and are quite rich in vitamin A. They also contain vitamin C, which is not lost even when they are stored for long periods of time. Phosphorus, iron, and calcium are also found in sweet potatoes. Apparently, some traces of pantothenic acid (B_5) have also been found in sweet potatoes.

With all these attributes, sweet potatoes are a heavy food. Therefore, people with a weak digestive system, sickly people, and those whose lives involve a lot of mental activity should avoid them.

In some parts of India, sweet potatoes are taken during religious fasts. They are mostly baked or roasted in hot sand, but sometimes are boiled at a low temperature. Baked sweet potatoes yield the best food value and taste, as they become deliciously sweet when baked.

In India, people make many kinds of sweet dishes using sweet potatoes. One simple dish is made by mashing baked or boiled sweet potatoes in milk (after having removed the skins), then adding a paste of ground nuts and seeds, followed by a few raisins. In cold climates, a pinch of saffron dissolved in a tablespoon of milk may be added to make this dish even more palatable and vital. The addition of saffron makes the sweet potatoes beneficial for both sick people and those who do a lot of mental work. If an extraordinary flavor is desired, either a few drops of rose water or powdered green cardamom seeds can be added. If a sweeter dish is desired, honey or raw sugar can be added. This is a delicious and easily digestible sweet food.

Sweet potatoes can be stored safely in a root cellar without suffering nutritional loss. Their sweetness increases in storage.

Tomatoes

*Sweet, sour, Heating,
Increase Mucus*

Tomatoes have become very popular in recent times. For the past 100 years, tomatoes have occupied an important place on the table because of their high vitamin content and the variety of acids they contain, which have a beneficial effect on the human organism. Tomatoes are a source of vitamins A, B, and C. The vitamin-A content is not destroyed through drying, and tomatoes actually contain more vitamin A than butter made from cow's milk. The high acid content preserves the vitamin C in tomatoes when they cook.

Because of the citric and malic acids they contain, tomatoes have a sour taste. The acids in tomatoes increase the alkaline content of the blood, which is nourishing for the blood.

Tomatoes contain carbohydrates in the form of invert sugar, which is easily assimilated. Due to their high vitamin content, tomatoes are a tonic. Tomatoes are a vegetable that increase longevity. Because of the starch content of tomatoes, those who wish to reduce should include them in large quantities in their diet. They are good for patients

suffering from diabetes. If taken raw, tomatoes are a mild laxative and are beneficial for sufferers of chronic constipation.

It is advisable to eat tomatoes when they are ripe. Green tomatoes are not harmful, but some people suspect the presence of oxalic acid, a substance never present in ripe tomatoes. Another consideration is that riboflavin is completely absent in green tomatoes. So, one should not pick green tomatoes from the plant but should wait until they start to ripen and change color. Tomatoes grown in open fields contain more vitamin A than those grown in a greenhouse or in a shaded area.

Good-looking, smooth, thin-skinned tomatoes can be eaten raw. People like to use tomatoes in curries, salads, fruit salads, soups, and with legumes and pulses. In northern India tomatoes are used in basic masalas (spice mixtures) because they add flavor and provide vitamins.

Turnips

*Sweet, pungent, Cooling,
Balance all three doshas*

Turnips are cooling and unctuous in nature. They purify the system and help it produce more blood. Turnips can be taken by people suffering from chronic dysentery and stomach trouble. However, in these cases they must be cooked with very little butter. A soup made of turnips can be given to patients suffering from fever.

Turnips are a delicious and healthful vegetable. They can be served often and are never harmful. Turnips are sattvic in nature because they have some sweetness. They may be used as a filling for *parathas* (griddle-fried breads). Young turnip leaves, a rich source of vitamins and minerals, are very popular in northern India. The roots stimulate the kidneys and are a diuretic. Turnips are prescribed for healing certain diseases, such as jaundice, edema, bronchitis, scabies, psoriasis, and eczema.

FLAVORINGS AND SPICES

Flavor involves the blend of taste and smell sensations evoked by a substance in the mouth. These sensations can be altered almost infinitely by altering the seasonings of the food. This is done mostly by the use of spices.

All spices are good for Vatas, if taken in the proper proportions and combinations, as in the reci-

pes that follow. Vatas must take coriander seeds, which are cooling, only when they are combined with turmeric, a heating spice.

Generally, spices are **not good for Pittas, with the exception of coriander, cinnamon, cardamom, cumin, fennel, saffron, turmeric, and black pepper (in moderate amounts).** Kaphas can have any spice; especially beneficial are turmeric, ginger powder, garlic, fenugreek seeds, cumin, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom seeds, black pepper, anise, fennel, and saffron (in small amounts in soups).

Spices have a pungent aroma and are pleasant. Each has an appetizing and soothing taste uniquely its own. Internally, spices provide taste and change the chemical nature of the food; externally, each distinctive aroma creates an atmosphere that excites the appetite. Sometimes aromas are so strong they can be detected from quite a distance. Asafoetida, bay leaves, cinnamon, fenugreek leaves, garlic, and onion, for example, all have very appetizing aromas.

Some flavorings are so mild that their aroma can be experienced only when the food is served. Certain aromas make one think of salt-flavored food, and others remind one of sweet dishes. Flavorings also make foul-smelling foods smell good by removing the bad odors and changing the total chemical nature of the food.

The qualities of these flavorings should be very well understood. For instance, garlic and onions contain such strong chemicals that they taint the breath; this problem, however, can be easily remedied with the following recipe:

Combine 2 tablespoons roasted and 2 tablespoons unroasted anise seeds (if anise seeds are not available, fennel seeds may be used) with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup coconut powder. Add the powdered seeds of 16 green cardamom pods. Add 1 tablespoon finely powdered rock sugar candy, ground in a mortar with a pestle. Mix well and store at room temperature for up to a month in a covered jar. To cleanse the mouth and aid digestion, chew $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon and swallow. This wonderful remedy destroys bad breath caused by garlic and onions or by disease.

Spices lend character to food and stimulate the taste buds. By producing more saliva, they increase the appetite and one's enjoyment of food.

Spices can be categorized as sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic:

Sattvic

Anise
Cardamom
Coriander
Cumin
Fennel
Fenugreek seeds
Rose water
Saffron

Tamasic

Garlic
Onions

Rajasic

Asafoetida
Bay leaves
Black peppercorns
Cinnamon
Cloves
Fenugreek leaves
Ginger
Mint
Ajwain seeds

Sattvic Spices. Fresh coriander leaves (cilantro, Chinese parsley) are delicately appetizing and are used in curries. Cumin powder is used to enhance *enhance* the flavor of yogurt. It helps the digestion of yogurt and minimizes its mucus-producing elements. Cumin seeds have a piquant quality, ideal for flavoring *flavoring* dals, legumes, and beans.

Rose water subtly flavors water, making it more pleasant to drink; as well, it aids digestion and is beneficial to the eyes, heart, and nerves. Rose water can be used in all sweet dishes, particularly if they have a semisolid or liquid form. Rose water can be used alone or with cardamom seeds.

Saffron, the supreme spice, lends a sweetly succinct flavor to rice, yogurt, and most sweet dishes. It can be used alone or with cardamom seeds.

Rajasic Spices. Bay leaves, black peppercorns, cinnamon, and cloves are used in curries as flavorings. They also provide heat and energy to foods, which stimulates the taste buds and salivary glands. In turn, the glands secrete more digestive juices and the digestive fire is increased.

Cloves provide aromatic flavoring to rice and minimize its mucus-producing effects.

Fenugreek leaves give a good flavor to all vegetables and beans, especially to potatoes. Potatoes cooked with fenugreek leaves, and a touch of garlic or asafoetida, lend a soothing aroma to an entire house.

Ginger brings a pleasant bouquet to tea, and to all beans and vegetables. Mint adds a refreshing flavor to almost all foods. Although hot in nature, mint produces a cooling effect. Ajwain seeds lend flavor to wheat flour dough used for *parathas* and *puris* (Indian breads). They also aid in the digestion of wheat.

Tamasic Spices. Some people in India do not

use onions or garlic; many upper-caste Hindus—Brahmins and Vaishyas, for example—have not used these foods for generations. Even those who ordinarily eat onions and garlic avoid their use in religious feasts.

Anise

*Sweet, pungent, Heating,
Increases Bile*

Anise grows in abundance in all parts of India. It is commonly used as a spice in food. Often, after a meal, people take a mixture of anise, coriander, and cardamom with coconut powder to change the taste and refresh the mouth.

Anise seeds are light brown, green-brown, or yellowish-brown in color. Anise is sweet and pungent in taste and pungent in postdigestive action. An appetite stimulant and a digestive aid, anise also increases semen, cures diseases caused by gas, and soothes fevers and burning sensations. Anise is an anodyne; it quenches thirst, cures eye diseases and wounds, and removes mucus from the intestines. Anise is a wormicide. It also helps the spleen, cures diseases caused by bile, and relieves vomiting.

According to the Greek system of medicine, anise seeds improve vision. They are diuretic and a stimulant. Since anise seeds increase the body's production of milk, it is advisable for mothers to increase their normal intake during lactation. A paste of anise seeds applied to a child's stomach cures all intestinal ailments. Anise seeds are also beneficial in cases of chest and spleen disorders, kidney troubles, headache, asthma, and inflammations. Anise regulates menstruation and helps women whose periods have stopped for any reason other than pregnancy.

Anise seeds cure any burning sensations in the urinary tract. Being diuretic, anise clears urinary blockages; in cases where one has loose bowels because of mucus, indigestion, or vomiting, anise seeds are very helpful. Being an anodyne, anise cures pain in the intestines caused by mucus. For dry coughs and to cure mouth diseases, anise seeds should be sucked. Anise seeds can also cure venereal diseases.

Taking anise seeds in drinks during the summer is very popular in India. It is advisable to use them in food as well during this time, especially in foods that produce mucus or gas.

Asafoetida/Hing *Pungent, bitter, Heating, Increases Bile*

Asafoetida, also called Hing, is the milk of a plant that is found in abundance in Persia. Once solidified, the milk becomes a dried gum resin.

Asafoetida, which is blackish-brown in color, is available at Indian and Middle Eastern groceries. It has a very strong, sharp odor when it is ground. It creates a burning sensation when applied to the skin. Asafoetida subdues excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha).

Ayurveda describes asafoetida as having a pungent and bitter taste. It has a heating effect on the system; it is lightly unctuous in nature and aids in digestion. Ayurvedic texts say it is a laxative and an appetizer; it increases the stomach fire and cures dry coughs, asthma, heart diseases, indigestion, worms in the intestines, lymphatic disorders, and tumors of the stomach. It regulates the menstrual cycle, cures ailments of the liver and spleen, gives strength to the body, and is beneficial in cases of paralysis, deafness, dizziness, shortness of breath, rheumatism, eye sores, and throat diseases.

According to the Greek system of healing, asafoetida gives power to the brain, liver, and nervous system. It helps the organism synchronize with seasonal changes, cures all kinds of inflammations, and increases the power of memory; it is also a wormicide.

Asafoetida contains an essential oil that evaporates quickly. When applied to the skin, it penetrates the pores, killing germs. This oil stimulates the areas to which it is applied and makes the body discharge all its toxins through sweat, phlegm, and urine. Applied to the throat and chest, it helps cure colds and cough. At the same time, it strengthens the system. In cases of severe bronchitis, asafoetida (a few drops of liquid extract in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of warm water) purifies the trachea and the lungs by first watering down the phlegm and removing the bad odor of the mucus. It then slows down the rate of breathing which takes away the cough.

In cases of nervous tension, when a patient becomes irritable, forgetful, pessimistic, moody, and depressed, asafoetida is reputed to be soothing to the nerves; it balances the rhythms of the body. Asafoetida is used by Ayurvedic and Unani-Tib physicians for all heart ailments, whether the disorder is palpitations, pain in the heart, angina pectoris, or "sinking"

of the heart (as in depression or the literal slowing of the heartbeat associated with some heart troubles).

Asafoetida is often taken internally after it has been dissolved in a small amount of water for easy swallowing. Given at the time of childbirth, asafoetida helps the mother with delivery and, most importantly, helps to expel toxins with the after-birth. Asafoetida cleans the womb and stops pain. Its use has also yielded miraculous results in cases of pneumonia and globus hystericus (the sensation of having a lump in the throat or difficulty in swallowing).

In Ceylon, asafoetida boiled in coconut water is used to cure snake and scorpion bites.

Bay Leaves

*Sweet, bitter; Heating;
Increases Bile*

The bay tree is found in the Himalayas at an altitude of 3,000 to 8,000, feet. Bay leaves contain the oils rutin and furocoumarin, which are stimulants for the skin.

Bay leaves cure heart troubles, stimulate appetite, and promote digestion. They also lend fantastic flavor and aroma to food. Bay leaves are bitter and sweet in taste. According to Ayurveda, bay leaves are hot and dry in nature and subdue conditions caused by excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha). They work extremely well in cases of skin rashes and skin irritations, either taken internally, in the form of bay leaf tea, or externally, in the form of a paste made from crushed bay leaves. They also cure piles and diseases of the anus and large intestine.

Bay leaves are especially beneficial when used in food that is particularly mucus-producing. They cure indigestion, pain in the stomach, loose bowels, diseases of the alimentary canal, and coughs.

According to the Greek system of healing, bay leaves are hot and dry in the second stage of postdigestive action. They help produce wind (*prana*), increase longevity, and cure conditions of the tridoshas.

Bay leaves help expel gas from the intestines; they clean the milk in the breasts of mothers who have just given birth, and regulate menstruation. The smoke of bay leaves helps delivery in childbirth. Bay leaves cure stones in the kidneys or urinary bladder by breaking them down so that they can be expelled. Bay leaves cure mouth odor caused by stomach disorders. If they are used in tooth pow-

der, bay leaves will protect teeth from infection. They are beneficial for people suffering from jaundice and are good for liver disorders and intestinal troubles. Bay leaves cure madness caused by fear. Stammering will be cured and pronunciation will improve if a piece of bay leaf is kept under the tongue.

Bay leaves are also used for curing cataracts and partial blindness. A paste of finely powdered bay leaves is used in Ayurvedic medicine for cleansing the eyes and improving vision. Bay leaves are soothing and strengthening for the heart. They cure madness, tympanitis, venereal diseases, and winter depression. Finely powdered bay leaves may be used on salads or mixed into salad dressings.

Black Peppercorns

*Pungent; Heating;
Increase Bile*

Black pepper is a great appetizer. Easy to assimilate, it is a stimulant and diuretic. It contains the Five Elements in equal measure and stimulates the body to recycle chemicals and food already present in the system so that no new food is needed. The use of black pepper in vegetables and other foods helps digestion and creates a good taste. It is recommended that black pepper be taken with honey first thing each morning. Black pepper is light and dry in nature. It subdues conditions of excess Mucus (Kapha), destroys diseases created by gas, and increases digestive fire. Black pepper is a medicine for those suffering from coughs, asthma, indigestion, colds, excessive sleep, poor digestive fire, and constipation.

Black peppercorns are a wormicide and an anodyne. If taken in excess, they create aggravated bile. Black peppercorns aid in the digestion of fats; therefore, their use in foods cooked with a lot of ghee or oil is advisable. For bile-dominated people (Pittas), a modified tea recipe, made from five to seven whole black peppercorns, is good if taken with honey, milk, and other spices and used in small amounts. It is an aid as well for those suffering from abdominal trouble. The regular use of this tea with honey cures chronic dysentery. The tea opens the pores of the stomach and intestines; it increases fire and expels old deposits from the walls of the intestines. This tea also cleanses the trachea and expels mucus from the lungs and chest region. It is through the heat-generating effect of the tea (which increases cir-

culation) that the lungs can discharge waste material and excess mucus. It also cures fever. To make regular black peppercorn tea, add fifteen peppercorns to 2 cups of water. Boil until the water is reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and add raw sugar to taste.

Black peppercorn tea made without sugar is helpful in curing diseases of the throat and mouth. Rubbing it on the gums can relieve swelling. The tea also cures skin diseases.

A mixture of powdered black peppercorns with ghee, honey, or raw sugar helps cure all sorts of coughs, if used regularly. If powdered black peppercorns are administered with jaggery and yogurt at the onset of a cold, the cold will be prevented.

Excessive use of black pepper is harmful for students and for people who want to increase their power of memory.

Cardamom

Cardamom belongs to the family of ginger plants. Cardamom is one of the most popular spices used in Indian cooking. It is found in two varieties: Large black or red pods and small green pods. Both are available at Indian and Middle Eastern groceries, and at some specialty stores.

Large Black or Red Cardamom

*Sweet and pungent, Heating,
Balances all three doshas*

Trees of red cardamom are found in India and Nepal. Black cardamom seeds are an excellent spice and are used for flavoring curries and soups in every kitchen in India.

According to Ayurvedic texts, the large cardamom seed is aromatic, sweet, tasty, and appetizing; it aids digestion and is a stimulant. Black cardamom subdues Mucus (Kapha), Bile (Pitta), and Wind (Vata). It increases stomach fire and stops hemorrhaging and vomiting. Black cardamom also cures stones of the kidney and gallbladder. Warm and light in nature, it is a carminative and a diuretic. Large cardamom seeds cure diseases and pains of the anus and poisonous bites.

According to the Greek system of medicine, these seeds help strengthen the heart and liver. They induce sleep, improve the appetite, and cure swellings in the mouth. They also help to cure diseases of the teeth and gums. The black cardamom bark is used as a paste to cure headaches.

Oil extracted from cardamom seeds is aromatic

and a stimulant; it increases body fire and soothes the heart.

A drink made of cardamom and cantaloupe or honeydew melon seeds mixed together with water, honey, and lemon, provides a cure for kidney and gallbladder stones and for problems with urination.

Black cardamom seeds mixed with anise seeds cure all stomach troubles. To relieve a burning sensation in the stomach and alimentary canal, mix $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 grams) of rock sugar pieces with the seeds of 5 cardamom pods and 1 teaspoon anise seeds. Chew the mixture in small amounts. Large cardamom seeds taken with black salt will cure stomach pain and tympanitis.

To cure pain of the gums and teeth, boil seeds of 1 black cardamom pod in 1 cup of water until the water is reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. Use the mixture as a gargle.

Black cardamom seeds are good for the heart and are used as a tonic and aphrodisiac.

Green Cardamom

*Sweet, pungent, Heating,
Increases Bile*

The plant of green cardamom, which also belongs to the family of ginger plants, is an evergreen. It grows in shady places and a sea climate is the most suitable. Green cardamom is smaller than black cardamom and is used primarily in sweet dishes and drinks.

According to Ayurveda, the seeds of green cardamom are warm, light, and dry in nature. Green cardamom has a superb aroma—much stronger and more refined than black cardamom. Green cardamom stimulates Bile (Pitta) and soothes coughs (Kapha) and Wind (Vata). It cleans the mouth and the mind. Green cardamom cures piles, venereal diseases, kidney and bladder stones, skin rashes, and vomiting of any kind.

Green cardamom has been honored and praised in India since time immemorial. Green cardamom has always been used as a flavoring in sweet dishes and delicacies. In almost all Ayurvedic medicines that are orally ingested, cardamom is generally added to make the remedy more palatable.

According to the *Sushruta Sambita* and the *Vagbhatta Sambita* (also known as the *Ashtanga Hridaya*), two well-known Ayurvedic texts, green cardamom seeds cure problems of urination. *Bhav Prakash*,

another Ayurvedic scripture, mentions that green cardamom seeds cure coughs, tuberculosis, and hemorrhoids. They also cure vomiting and serve as an expectorant, diuretic, and aphrodisiac.

According to the Greek system of medicine, green cardamom seeds are aromatic, diuretic, and carminative; they strengthen the heart, are a stimulant, and can cure headaches, earaches, and toothaches, as well as liver and throat troubles.

Green cardamom seeds also help weak digestion, are good for the stomach and appetizing, and cure nausea. The oil of green cardamom seeds is a miraculous remedy for night blindness and earaches. This oil can even cure scorpion bites.

Green cardamom taken after food with anise or fennel seeds and rock sugar candy refreshes the mouth, aids digestion, and pleases the heart.

Cinnamon

*Sweet, bitter, pungent, Heating,
Balances all three doshas*

Cinnamon is found in the Himalayas, Ceylon, and Malaysia. There are three main types of dried cinnamon bark used in Ayurvedic medicines and recipes:

1. The bark of the Chinese cinnamon tree, which is thick, very rich in oil, and khaki in color.
2. The bark of the Taj tree, which is grown in western and southern India and produces no oil.
3. The bark of the Ceylon cinnamon bush, obtained from its tender branches, is thin and reddish brown in color, aromatic, and rich in oil.

Bay leaf tree bark is also used as a substitute for cinnamon bark. Cinnamon bark is used in dry powders and pills; the oil is used in the preparation of liquid Ayurvedic medicines and creams.

According to Ayurveda, cinnamon bark is hot, light, and dry in nature. Cinnamon subdues conditions of excess Wind (Vata), Bile (Pitta), and Mucus (Kapha); it is a blood purifier, an aphrodisiac, and an anodyne. It cures skin rashes, burning sensations in the trachea, heart diseases, diseases of the anus, vomiting, loose bowels, mouth odor, and thirst.

Cinnamon oil is a painkiller. It stops bleeding and cures vomiting and loose bowels. It is also an antiseptic and wormicide.

Massage with cinnamon oil cures rheumatism and nerve pain. Cinnamon has an essential oil that

enters the blood very quickly and helps the body keep an even temperature; it also increases memory. Cinnamon oil cures earaches and toothaches.

When taken as a spice in food, cinnamon excites the mucus membrane of the intestines, which increases the appetite. Being hot in its postdigestive action, it helps the intestines and stomach to properly discharge gases.

It can be added to milk, soups, and desserts.

For pregnant women, the use of cinnamon should be fairly minimal, because it may cause a miscarriage if taken in excess. It is recommended after childbirth to stop bleeding and to purify the inside of the uterus. Cinnamon also helps women with heavy menstrual flow.

Cloves

Pungent, Heating, Increase Bile

Cloves are the dried buds from an evergreen tree found in southern India. The plant is attractive and its leaves are aromatic. In India, cloves are used in worship and in Tantric practices. They are chewed with betel leaves and nuts, and they are used as a spice in foods. Cloves are included in thousands of Ayurvedic and Greek medicines. In other parts of the world, cloves are used for flavoring liquor, for aromatic baths, and in perfumes and tooth tinctures. Oil of cloves is used for relief from toothaches and sore gums.

Cloves subdue conditions of excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha) and increase Bile (Pitta), if used in excess. According to the *Bhav Prakash*, cloves balance tridosha. They work directly on the consciousness, the nervous system, and the veins.

According to Ayurveda, cloves are sweet, pungent, and bitter in taste. They are heating in nature and are used in hot spice mixtures, like *garam masala*.

Cloves are an astringent, a stimulant, an appetizer, a rejuvenator, an anodyne, and an aid to digestion. They are good for the eyes, asthma, hiccups, colic, tuberculosis, and most diseases of the head. They quench thirst, help stop vomiting, and cure coughs. Cloves cure a bad taste in the mouth. They are a wormicide and cure fits of tympanitis caused by worms in the stomach or intestines.

Cloves increase white blood corpuscles, thus increasing the body's resistance to diseases, infections, and viruses. They stimulate the nervous sys-

tem. Cloves alleviate congestion and make it easier to breathe.

Cloves are good for cleaning toxins from the body. When applied externally in the form of a paste or oil, they cure poisonous bites, cuts, pain, and swelling.

Coriander

*Sweet, pungent, astringent, Cooling,
Balances all three doshas*

Coriander plants, also known as cilantro or Chinese parsley, grow in abundance in India. They are quite small and grow to a maximum height of eighteen inches. Because it is used for chutneys, coriander is one of the most important of the masala spices.

According to Ayurveda, coriander is unctuous and light in nature and cooling. It subdues excess Wind (Vata), Bile (Pitta), and Mucus (Kapha). Coriander also increases stomach fire and cures thirst, vomiting, asthma, coughs, general weakness, and worms. It cures fever and is an appetizer.

Coriander leaves are sweet and astringent in taste and cold in nature. They subdue excess Bile (Pitta), cure fever, vomiting, and sore eyes.

The Greek system of medicine states that a paste made from coriander leaves cures inflammation caused by poison. Topical application of coriander paste (seeds or leaves) gives the impression of being hot, but in fact it cools burning sensations and only later becomes hot. For these kinds of inflammations, mix coriander with vinegar to make a thin paste the consistency of pancake batter and apply to the afflicted area.

The juice of coriander leaves will stop a nose bleed (which is sometimes caused by increased heat in the system) immediately. This juice, mixed with breast milk from a mother who has delivered a female child, relieves acute eye pain.

Coriander seeds are strengthening to the body and soothing to the heart. They subdue Bile (Pitta) and cure madness caused by excessive body heat, epilepsy, and fear. A paste made from coriander seeds and water helps rheumatism and relieves problems with joint articulation. Coriander seeds help in cases of excess Mucus (Kapha) in the chest, and help cure gases or excess Wind (Vata) and cramps. Coriander powder taken with rock sugar candy cures colic pain. Drinking a solution, made from coriander seeds soaked overnight, cures piles and neuralgia and stops blood in the stools. One-quarter teaspoon of powdered coriander seeds taken with a "peg" of any good

liquor cures the stomach of worms. Coriander is specific for strengthening the urinary tract and is used in curing urinary tract infections.

Excessive use of coriander seeds and leaves reduces sexual power in males and stops menstruation in females. Too frequent use of coriander is injurious for asthmatic patients.

Cumin

*Bitter, pungent, Cooling,
Increases Bile*

Cumin seeds are popular as a spice throughout the world. A relative of caraway, this seed is yellowish-brown in color and is almost always heated to bring out its rich aroma. Cumin is especially recommended for growing children. Cumin is one of the few spices, along with black peppercorns and saffron, that creates an alkaline body chemistry.

In Ayurvedic scriptures, cumin seeds are called cold in action and light, dry, and slightly hot in nature. Being hot in nature, they are also a rejuvenator. They subdue excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha). When cooked, cumin seeds have a sweet taste.

Cumin seeds are appetizing and aromatic and increase stomach fire. They aid digestion and kill poisons. They are beneficial to the eyes, soothing and pleasant, and good for the heart. They strengthen the uterus, cure fever, tuberculosis, tympanitis, and a bad taste in the mouth. They remove impurities in the blood and cure worms and piles, poisoning, and leprosy. Cumin increases milk in the breasts.

To cure a skin rash, add a small amount of water in which cumin seeds have been boiled to the bath water. Repeat this cumin seed bath several times.

Cumin seeds cure venereal disease, relieve urinary problems, and are a diuretic. Cumin also cures kidney and gallbladder stones and helps in all genital diseases. For piles, mix cumin seeds with water to form a paste the consistency of thick honey and apply to the anus for relief of acute pain. Eating cumin seeds with rock sugar candy also helps relieve piles.

The Greek system of medicine claims cumin cures gases of the stomach and gives strength to the liver, intestines, and kidneys. Cumin reduces mucus, cures constipation and swelling, and increases sexual virility. A paste of ground cumin seeds mixed with water cures eye sores, ruptures of the gallbladder, and kidney stones.

Cumin seeds stop hiccups when given with vinegar. They destroy worms in the stomach and cure nausea experienced by new mothers who are breast-feeding. The powder of roasted cumin seeds can be rubbed on the gums to cure a gum inflammation or toothache.

The oil of cumin cures scorpion bites. Cumin oil is quick in action, whether used externally or internally. Roasted cumin seeds with yogurt help constipation. The application of a paste of ground cumin seeds mixed with water reduces swelling of the testicles.

Black Cumin

Pungent, Heating, Increases Bile

Black cumin is found in Kashmir, the Himalayas, Afghanistan, and Iran. Ayurveda considers black cumin dry in nature, an appetizer, and an aid to digestion. It is beneficial to the eyes and a cure for fevers, coughs, swellings, head troubles, and leprosy.

Black cumin, available at Indian groceries, has all the qualities of cumin, except that it is a stronger diuretic. If the water in which seeds have been boiled is used for gargling, it relieves toothaches.

A drink made with black cumin seeds, honey, and water cures swelling in the uterus. The steam from water boiled with black cumin relieves piles; the smoke from black cumin seeds cures colds and relieves sinus congestion. Chewing black cumin seeds helps reduce inflammation of piles. These seeds are also used to cure hysteria and colic pain.

Fennel

*Sweet/pungent, Cooling,
Balances all three doshas*

Fennel has a taste similar to that of anise and is often used in cooking and pickling. While anise is an appetite stimulant, fennel is an appetite depressant. Fennel is an anticonvulsive, an aid to lactation, a nerve stabilizer, and an antidote to insect bites and food poisoning. It also helps expel worms and is used as an eyewash. Fennel seeds and anise seeds offer many of the same healing benefits (see Anise).

Fenugreek

*Bitter, astringent, Heating,
Increases Bile*

In ancient India, fenugreek was used as both a spice and a medicine. Fenugreek subdues excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha). It prevents premature

graying of hair and is slightly laxative in effect. Fenugreek is an appetizer, a carminative, and an anodyne; it also aids in digestion.

As a spice, fenugreek can be used with vegetables and in salads. It is beneficial to the lungs and intestines. Fenugreek leaves alone make a very good vegetable. They may be used fresh or dried. In northern India there is a tradition of drying the leaves and using them as flavoring for potatoes, cauliflower, cabbage, and turnips, as well as in various dals and with beans. They are flavorful cooked in butter or any organic oil.

Fenugreek is heating in its effect and, therefore, is an ideal food in cold climates. People who always feel cold and who have cold feet or a cold nose should use fenugreek, fresh or dried. The seeds of fenugreek may be sprouted and eaten for additional nourishment during the winter season.

Fenugreek aids those who are underweight and those suffering from weakness and tuberculosis.

Applied to normal skin in the form of a paste, with chick-pea flour, mustard oil, and turmeric, fenugreek makes the skin smooth and shiny. Fenugreek keeps hair dark for a long time if added to shampoo. It also cures constipation and helps those plagued with liver or spleen problems.

Garlic

*Pungent, salty, astringent, sour, bitter,
Heating, Increases Bile*

Garlic is more a medicine than a spice. It is called *rason*, meaning that it contains five out of the six *rasas* (tastes); only the sweet taste is missing. The sour and bitter tastes become more prominent in the garlic as it dries and ages. It is a Rasayan (a rejuvenator) and a complete medicine.

Garlic is hot and dry in nature. It is rich in sulfur and contains essential oils and vitamins A, B₁, and B₂. Garlic subdues excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha).

Garlic increases and purifies the blood and is a diuretic and a stimulant. It relieves pain, increases appetite, helps digestion, and kills worms. Garlic is very helpful in relieving accumulated gas in the stomach and intestines. It is beneficial for the throat and has a good effect on the sexual organs.

Garlic also removes plaque in the arteries. It cures circulatory disorders, diarrhea, colitis, dysentery, typhoid fever, ulcers, dropsy, intermittent fevers, bronchitis, asthma, disturbances produced by climatic change, tuberculosis, and heartburn. Gar-

lic stimulates menstruation. It is an antiseptic, a sedative, a disinfectant, and it helps toothaches. Garlic also prevents cancer.

In India, garlic is used for stings and bites—especially snake or dog bites. Garlic is a poison remover. It also prevents the skin from scaling. If a small clove is swallowed as medicine regularly first thing each morning, it gives vitality and virility, and rejuvenates the intestines.

Garlic aids the heart by helping the circulatory system. It cures irregular blood pressure and relieves constipation. It gives power to the eyes and improves eyesight and even cures leprosy.

Garlic increases stamina and strength and is good for flesh, fat, and semen. It prevents premature aging. Garlic should not be used in excess by bile-dominated people (Pittas).

Ginger

Pungent, Heating, Increases Bile

Ginger is grown in China and India and is a favorite spice of tropical and subtropical regions. It is available fresh, in root form, and dried, in powdered form. Both forms are good, but preference should always be given to fresh. It is hot and dry in nature. Ginger subdues excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha).

If a little over 1 teaspoonful of fresh ginger is taken with a touch of salt before starting a meal, it will increase the appetite and help in the digestion of all sorts of foods. Ginger pickled in lemon is appetizing and also promotes digestion. It can be taken with or before food for about one week; after this time it will grow a white fungus and should be discarded. Ginger pickled in vinegar (see page 199) keeps four times as long. Ginger juice mixed with honey relieves congestion in the lungs and facilitates breathing.

Each food carries its own vibration and alters the psychic makeup of the one who ingests it. In ancient times, there was a tradition that if a Brahmin (a member of the priest caste) had reason to eat in the house of a Shudra (a person of low caste), he was supposed to chew and swallow two teaspoons of fresh ginger twenty minutes to a half hour before eating the Shudra's food. This would protect the Brahmin from any low vibrations contained in the food; otherwise, he would have to undergo purifications.

Flaxseeds

*Sweet, Heating,
Increase Mucus and Bile*

Flaxseeds are cultivated throughout India. They are heating and unctuous in nature. They subdue excess Vata (Wind) and reduce thirst, fever, and high blood pressure. When ingested, flaxseeds are very slimy and create viscosity in the intestines, thus helping stools to pass without difficulty. If taken in small quantities, the seeds create constipation. However, if 2 ample teaspoons (10 grams) are taken, they remove constipation. From 1½ to 2 teaspoons is an ideal dosage; this amount can be used to cure ulcers of the intestines and amoebic dysentery. Flaxseeds with husks are tastier and work more quickly in the system than the dehusked variety.

Ajwain Seeds

*Pungent, bitter, Heating,
Increase Bile*

Ajwain is a shrub that grows throughout India. Its seeds (available at Indian and Middle Eastern groceries) are widely used as a spice in cooking and in the preparation of Ayurvedic medicines.

According to Ayurveda, the seeds of ajwain are hot, dry, and light in nature. They are appetizing, an aid in digestion, and an anodyne. They contain the essential oil thymol, which acts very quickly on the system. Ajwain subdues excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha).

In Sanskrit, there is a saying that ajwain seeds alone are able to digest hundreds of different varieties of grains. Ajwain seeds really have many good qualities; they have the same gas-killing quality as asafoetida; they have the power of black peppercorns to increase stomach fire; they have the sublimation power of cloves; and like cinnamon, they are a wormicide. Ajwain seeds relieve gas and spasms, coughs, piles, vomiting, and spleen troubles.

Ajwain seeds are not generally used for seasoning vegetables. They are used in the preparation of almost all pickles and in remedies for the stomach. Ajwain seeds are best used with dals—such as soybeans, garbanzo beans (chick-peas), *chana dal* (a split chick-pea)—and *dal masala* (a spice mixture). When cooking with any type of dal or bean flour, 1 teaspoon of ajwain seeds for every 2 cups of dal or flour helps to speed digestion and reduce gas. When making

bread, add 1 teaspoon of ajwain seeds for every 4 cups of wheat flour to enhance the digestive fire and aid weak digestion.

Ajwain seeds help cure fever, stomachaches, and problems created by overeating. They provide strength to the liver and spleen and cure dysentery. The seeds should be taken with foods that take a long time to digest. One teaspoon of ajwain seeds added to recipes using chick-pea and wheat flours will help these foods digest more quickly.

Ajwain seeds have an antiseptic effect on the intestinal canal. In cases of asthma, smoking ajwain seeds in a pipe relieves shortness of breath in the patient. The smoke of ajwain seeds is also good for relieving toothaches. Ajwain seeds are in Ayurvedic tooth powder.

Ajwain seeds are given to pregnant women in India because, in addition to their digestive benefits, they help cleanse the uterus. Ajwain seeds are also good for post-delivery fever.

The hakim Meer Mohammed, writer of the famous Unani scripture on medicine, also tells us ajwain seeds are a stimulant; they increase sexual feeling and virility and destroy gases.

A drink made of ajwain seeds helps paralysis and shaking. Water in which ajwain seeds have been boiled will cleanse the eyes and cure the ears of deafness. Ajwain seeds are useful in stomach, liver, and spleen disorders. They cure hiccups, vomiting, body odors, belching, difficulties in urination, and kidney and gallbladder stones.

If ajwain seeds are soaked in the juice of a lemon and dried seven times, and then ingested, they cure impotence.

In hot climates, the use of ajwain seeds in food should be limited to small amounts because of their dryness. In cold countries they can be used freely.

Pomegranate Seeds, dried *Sour, astringent, Cooling, Increase Wind*

Pomegranate seeds increase digestive fire. They are constipating and increase the appetite. These seeds should be used whenever a sour taste is required in food but not more than once a week. Pomegranate seeds have a smooth, oily nature. They subdue excess Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha).

Available at Indian groceries, dried pomegranate seeds are a good remedy for pregnant women who experience nausea, heartburn, indigestion, or

restlessness in the heart region. Soak about 3½ ounces of pomegranate seeds in water for 2 hours and then rub them with your hands to release the pulp into the water. Strain and then drink the water slowly; within 5 minutes the discomfort will disappear. This remedy is best repeated three or four times.

Onions

*Sweet, pungent, Heating,
Increase Bile and Wind*

Onions are hot, dry, and unctuous in nature, in small quantities. Onions subdue excess Mucus (Kapha). They drive mucus out of the digestive tract and, especially, out of the stomach. Onions are an aphrodisiac. They sharpen the eyesight and generate milk and sperm.

Onions provide heat and, therefore, are good for the elderly and infirm and those who live in cold climates. They contain oils of sulfur compounds, flavonglycocide, vitamin C, and fructose.

It is believed that if one has white onions in the house a snake will not approach. This explains the presence and regular use of onions in many Indian homes.

Onions are tamasic in nature. In cold countries, they are essential. However, in hot countries they should be used less because of their heating quality. Their smell can be counteracted easily by chewing a few coriander seeds.

Onions regulate the stomach and intestines. They help in kidney troubles and inflammation of the trachea and cure anemia and dropsy; they also help relieve pain from insect stings, small burns, abscesses, and rheumatic troubles.

Onions lower the blood sugar level and are useful for diabetics. They subdue Mucus and provide the organism with virility and resistance. Onions are used as a poultice on boils that are not yet ripe. They are especially useful for diseases caused by cold. They are also useful for people who travel continually.

Saffron

*Sweet, bitter, pungent, Neutral,
Subdues all three doshas*

Available at Indian and Middle Eastern groceries, saffron is famous in India for its aromatic quality and healing power. It is widely used as a flavoring and for coloring sweets and delicacies as well as spicy curries. Saffron's special use is in worship. It

is added to sandalwood paste, which is applied to the forehead before meditation, for its calming effect on the nervous system.

Saffron threads are the hand-picked stigmas collected from the flowers of the saffron crocus. Saffron crocuses are almost three feet (one meter) high and grow in many areas of the Himalayas. Kashmir is famous for cultivation of good-quality saffron. Large amounts of saffron are also imported from Spain to India, mostly for making Ayurvedic medicines.

When real saffron is put in water and rubbed on a white cloth, it leaves a yellow spot. Artificial saffron leaves an orange or red spot, which only later turns yellow.

The regular use of saffron in sweet dishes and foods helps to keep the system healthy, especially in cold climates. Saffron especially subdues excess Mucus (Kapha). It is an antiseptic, a wormicide, slightly laxative, and a diuretic. Strengthening to the body, it relieves dry cough, pain in the head, problems of urination, and liver and spleen ailments. Saffron removes burning sensations; it is a stimulant and increases stomach fire.

In the Greek system of medicine, it is pointed out that the leaves of the saffron plant cure swellings and are helpful in cases of gout or joint pain. The pollen of the plant is called saffron. Bitter in taste, saffron increases virility in men and milk in the breasts of mothers. It is intoxicating.

In Tibet, saffron was very popular. It is good in cold climates because of its heat-producing quality. As a stimulant for sexual power, there is no spice equal to it.

Saffron's essential oil has an aphrodisiac quality. Whether used externally or internally, it provides instantaneous results. As with all essential oils, it works directly on the central nervous system. When saffron oil has been used in cases of madness and for diseases caused by a disturbed psyche or mental stress, it yields excellent results.

Saffron also regulates menstruation. If it is mixed with water to form a thick paste and then rolled into a lentil-size ball and kept in the genital area, it relieves menstrual pain.

The application of saffron paste on the breasts of a mother who has just given birth increases her milk. Application of saffron paste on the forehead relieves pain and tension; when applied to the chest, it gives relief from colds and pneumonia.

Tamarind

Sour, Cooling, Increases Mucus

Tamarind refers to the pulp from the hanging pods of the tamarind tree, native to India. Available at Indian groceries and specialty spice shops, tamarind is cold and dry in nature. It subdues excess Bile (Pitta). As a medicine it works very well. It relieves constipation. Unripe tamarind irritates the throat and creates defects in the blood. Mucus-dominated people (Kaphas) should not take tamarind. It is good for curing malfunctions of the liver, jaundice, or cholera. Ripe tamarind cures thirst and dryness of the throat in the summer. A cold drink made by soaking a little less than 2 ounces of tamarind in 2 quarts of water (with raw sugar to taste) is useful in protecting the system from heat. This drink also cures stomach ailments or an upset stomach.

In hot countries, tamarind is used in many ways. It has a high vitamin C content. It cures scurvy and is useful, therefore, for sailors and people traveling by ship, or for people living near the ocean or in damp climates.

Tamarind increases digestive fire and is a medicine for gastritis or colic pain. The seeds of tamarind are good for seminal diseases in men. For instance, if the semen is thin, or the power of retention is lost, or if a man suffers from wet dreams, these seeds are remedial. Tamarind concentrate is taken as a medicine for enlarged spleen. It also stops vomiting.

Excessive use of tamarind should be avoided, as it sometimes causes thin stools and spasms in the intestines.

Turmeric

Bitter, pungent, astringent, Heating, Increases Bile

Turmeric is hot and dry in nature. It subdues excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha) and is one of the basic ingredients in *masalas* (spice mixtures) that are used for cooking vegetables and beans.

Turmeric purifies the blood and subdues accumulated gases. It relieves pain and kills worms; it cures jaundice, inflammation, skin diseases, itching, skin rashes, and diabetes. Turmeric removes toothaches and may be used as tooth powder with a pinch of salt and a few drops of mustard oil. It cures inflammation of the gums, and in India, it is applied to all sorts of inflammations.

Turmeric, like fenugreek, is used internally and externally. It purifies the skin and provides it with a natural glow and smoothness, if used externally as a paste made with chick-pea flour and mustard oil. For internal injuries, a small amount of turmeric powder should be swallowed, followed by a glass of milk. It can also be cooked in soups and other dishes.

SWEETENERS

Honey

Sweet, astringent, Heating; Increases Bile

Honey is smooth, dry, and heavy in nature. It subdues excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha). Raw, unfiltered honey is the mixture of bee saliva, the pollen, and juice of flowers. Bee saliva contains an enzyme that converts cane sugar into fruit sugar and glucose. In addition, honey contains a small amount of soluble wax, which makes it superior in quality to other sweeteners.

Honey is considered a holy food. It is one of the five nectars in the holy drink, Panchamrit. Raw, unfiltered honey can be given to a newborn or to the elderly. In this form and in moderation, it is never harmful, always gives energy, and is assimilated by the body without taxing the digestive organs; it is a medicine.

Honey contains iron, phosphorus, calcium, sodium, potassium, sulfur, and manganese. Honey from small bees is nectar and in Ayurvedic medicine is recommended for use on the eyes. It cleanses the eyes and is absorbed by them; it improves energy, cures diseases, and improves vision. In general, honey is good for the heart, throat, chest, lungs, liver, and, above all, for the blood, because of its alkaline nature.

If one fasts only on honey and lemon water for a period of three to six days, the body will become free from all bacteria. By adding honey to one's diet, one can enjoy a life free from bacteria and worms.

Honey keeps well for a long time. In the tomb of an Egyptian queen who was buried over 3,000 years ago, a jar of honey was found to be in good condition. It had not fermented or lost its natural flavor and taste. In medicine, however, Indian Vaidyas do not use honey that is more than ten years old. Fresh honey is preferred.

Honey is an incredible preserver; it was used by kings in India to preserve ripe fruits so that they could be consumed out of season. The stem of a ripe fruit was sealed with pure bees' wax, where it had connected to the tree branch; it was then put into a jar full of fresh honey. After six to nine months, the fruit would be as fresh as if it had just been plucked from the tree.

Honey is used as the base for many Ayurvedic medicines because it does not change the chemical balance of a remedy. Ayurvedic doctors usually mix medicines with honey before they administer them to a patient.

The process of assimilating honey begins in the mouth. Most of the honey is absorbed by the time it reaches the stomach; it does not need to reach the intestines to be digested. A medicine that is carefully mixed with the honey is immediately assimilated and enters the blood vascular system with ease. This helps the patient make a quick recovery. By carrying the medicine straight to the vascular system, without taxing the stomach, intestines, or liver, it helps to maintain the heart. This form of ingesting medicines is, in fact, miraculous for heart patients.

Honey taken with warm water or in large quantities works as a laxative. Patients with chronic constipation can benefit from an enema with hot water and honey. Honey with black pepper is a popular remedy for coughs and colds. Honey with powdered pearls and silver foil is given to heart patients. The silver foil is made of 100-percent pure silver. For improving appetite and digestion, honey is taken with ginger powder. If taken first thing in the morning with almond paste, it is a tonic for the heart and brain. Honey is recommended for growing children, weak and sickly persons, young adults, and pregnant women.

Honey should never be cooked or heated. By cooking honey, its natural, soluble wax is destroyed, its medicinal quality is lost, and it actually becomes toxic to the system. Nevertheless, honey is extensively used in cookery and in the manufacture of so-called health candies. Only raw, uncooked honey does not ferment in the stomach or produce gas.

Monkeys and bears are very fond of honey. Monkeys are afraid of being stung by bees and hence use tricks to get the honey. Bears quite happily suck the part of the comb containing the honey. The fur of bears is so thick that the bees cannot sting

them anywhere except on the nose or in the mouth.

Raw Cane Sugar

Sweet; Heating; Increases Mucus

Jaggery, also called *gur* (in some parts of India, *gur* refers to date or palm sugar), is heavy, smooth, and oily in nature. It subdues excess Wind (Vata) and Bile (Pitta). Jaggery is obtained by boiling sugarcane until it partially granulates and becomes a thick paste. The paste is then allowed to cool and solidify into jaggery, which can be safely preserved. Neither the cane nor the juice of sugarcane can be stored for a long time; the juice will ferment within thirty-six hours, and the cane will dry out rapidly, so its sugar content will be lost. Necessity made people boil sugarcane juice, so they could have it available whenever needed.

Raw sugar made from any natural source is far superior in food value to refined white sugar. In villages in India, jaggery is valued much more highly than refined sugar. Jaggery is often used, for example, with roasted garbanzo beans (chick-peas) and peanuts, in milk and yogurt, and with bread and rice. Many candies, puddings, and other sweet products are made from jaggery. During hot summer days, jaggery drinks are taken to help maintain a balance in the blood sugar and to provide instant energy. Jaggery is good for the heart and liver and stimulates the body's metabolism.

Excessive use of sweeteners should always be avoided. A piece of jaggery after meals helps take away the feeling of being too full. For this purpose, wealthy people in India make special preparation of jaggery mixed with pure cow's ghee, nuts and seeds, plus a touch of cardamom seeds for flavor. First the jaggery is boiled to a paste, and then the other ingredients are added. The mixture must be allowed to cool and solidify.

In Vedic literature, one finds the word *sarkara*, which refers to a sweetener often used in the sacred fire ceremony, called *havan* or *agni hotra*. *Sarkara* is obtained by straining the molasses out of the boiled sugarcane paste. It is then refined with a seaweed-like substance found in local ponds.

Available at Indian and Middle Eastern groceries, jaggery contains all of the food substance of actual sugarcane. During the process of manufacture, jaggery is cleaned, but not refined. The quality of jaggery depends on its cleanliness, which affects its taste and color.

Jaggery contains protein and carbohydrates. A good source of vitamins A and B, it also contains minerals, such as calcium, potassium, sulfur, iron, and phosphorus. The molasses contained in jaggery is high in B vitamins, including biotin, and minerals, such as iron and calcium.

Sucanot is an organic form of granulated sugarcane juice that can be found in health food stores.

NUTS

Nuts are a storehouse of concentrated food material. They are a good source of protein, fat, and certain carbohydrates; they contain vitamins A, B, and C, and minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, sodium, magnesium, and iron. Their use is essential for vegetarians.

The protein in nuts is of high quality—even higher than that in milk, meat, and eggs. This protein is as easily digestible by the system as milk. The oil content of nuts prevents them from undergoing putrefactive changes within the body. Nuts contain no uric acid, urea, or any other toxic matter. They are easily assimilated and hardly ever ferment in the stomach.

Nuts contain more fat than any other vegetable food. Because of this they provide more calories than any grain, legume, or fruit. Their taste is delicate and refined, and their food value is particularly healthy for young, growing people when combined with dates, raisins, figs, or apricots. They are slightly laxative in effect. The high nutritional value of nuts raises the nutritional level of foods they are combined with; hence, their use since the early stirrings of man in curries, rice, and sweet dishes. For good health, it is recommended that one eat a combination of nuts rather than selecting one or two favorites.

Nut Milk

After soaking nuts overnight and removing the skins, they can be ground into a fine paste. Nut paste is used in facial massages. By adding milk to this paste, a milk that is similar to cow's milk can be made. This nut milk is easily digestible and is good for very young babies and for the elderly. Cooked in cow's butter, it is especially good for women after childbirth. Nuts are also ingested this way by wrestlers and bodybuilders in India.

A curd of nut milk can be made in the same

way yogurt is made from cow's milk. When nut milk is brought to a boil and lime juice is added, the milk curdles and thus the "curd" is produced. This curd can be used in sweet dishes.

Nut Oil

Almond, cashew, peanut, and walnut oils are used for body massage.

Nut Butter

Nuts in the form of butter are ideal. Taken fresh, this butter is easily digested and does not produce much gas. Nut butter is best made from roasted nuts and should, like all roasted foods, be eaten as fresh as possible. Nut butter with honey is nourishing and at the same time cleansing for the system.

Nuts need to be taken in proper quantities, preferably after they have been soaked overnight, peeled, and ground. If not soaked, they should be thoroughly masticated. Digestive problems arise if nuts are not thoroughly chewed: the digestive juices cannot react directly with the nuts, which will be expelled from the system without having been utilized properly.

Nuts are very good to eat at breakfast time, or throughout the day, if taken as nut milk. They are to be included in curries or sweet dishes with dinner. They should always be taken at the start of the meal, never as a meal in themselves.

For those who do not do physical work, it is harmful to consume an excess of five ounces of nuts a day. Only wrestlers, bodybuilders, athletes, or those engaged in sports can digest more than this amount without trouble. For the average adult, five ounces usually proves sufficient. For older people and children, two to three ounces daily will suffice.

It is always good to take nuts in combination with other foods. Different kinds of nuts can be used with dates, apricots, and raisins in equal proportion; they can also be taken with milk, yogurt, cereals, halva, kheer, rice pudding, curries, and breads.

Almonds

Sweet, Heating,

Increase Bile and Mucus

Almonds are heavy and oily in nature and they subdue excess Wind (Vata). Almonds are a superior nut and a favorite of most people. They are delicious, nutritious, and vitalizing. Almond paste taken with honey is frequently served to children in northern India. For people who expend a lot of mental

energy, almonds are particularly essential. Almonds are equally popular with athletes, bodybuilders, and wrestlers.

Almonds contain the best-quality protein and fat. They also contain carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, and iron. The presence of thiamine (B₁) in almonds makes them a nerve tonic as well as a brain food. Because almonds are free from bacteria, their oil prevents them from fermenting. This makes them one of the best foods. Almonds are free from toxins, uric acid, urea, and fiber. As the protein found in almonds is of the best quality, they are easily assimilated and digested. However, since their skins are difficult to digest, Ayurveda recommends blanching almonds before using.

Almonds are eaten salted, roasted, candied, or sugared. They are served in the form of a paste, butter, milk, or curd; they are used in baked goods, confectionary, sweet dishes, salads, and curries.

Almond Paste

The best way to use almonds is to first soak them overnight and, after peeling them, grind them in a mortar with a pestle or, if that is not possible, with an electric grinder. (Grinding edibles with an electric blender or grinder is less desirable than using a mortar and pestle because of the change in ionic composition that occurs. Machines generate positive ions, which deprive the food of its negative, life-giving ions. Also, almond powder made with a blender or grinder is not as fine as that made with a mortar and pestle. Rubbing the soaked almonds against a flat sandstone surface is ideal; marble is too smooth.) Slowly add drops of water or milk, in which a few threads of saffron have been soaked, to the ground almonds and stir to form a paste. This paste can be taken alone or mixed with honey. When the almond paste is taken with honey and a pinch of freshly ground black pepper, its nutrients are absorbed by the fine capillaries in the mouth and assimilated without going through the stomach and intestines. Almonds are the only alkaline nuts, and honey is the only alkaline sweetener. Thus, this paste creates alkaline body chemistry if taken first thing in the morning. Seven almonds taken this way provide more energy and nutrition than one pound of roasted, salted, or sweet almonds eaten after proper mastication.

Almond Milk/Almond Milk-Yogurt

To make delicious almond milk for one person, simply add the paste made from 8 to 10 almonds to 1 cup of boiling milk. Cool and add raw sugar and a pinch of saffron or ground cardamom seeds. This liquid can be taken alone or used in other drinks.

Yogurt can be made from almond milk as follows: Bring the milk just to the boiling point, and allow it to cool to body temperature. Stir in the yogurt culture, and set aside in a warm place overnight (say, above the pilot light on the stove). Almonds are easiest to digest in "yogurt" form. As an alternative, they can be ground and boiled; this form is also easily digestible.

Almond Butter

This butter is made by soaking almonds in water, peeling them, and grinding them to a very thin paste. Either roasted or regular almonds can be used for making butter.

Almond Oil

Bitter almonds are poisonous and should not be eaten. Their oil is very good for the skin, however; massaging the body with a paste (made from 1 tablespoon of ground bitter almonds, 1/2 cup chick-pea flour, and water) improves the texture of oily or dry skin and makes people of any age look younger. The oil of bitter almonds is generally used in cosmetics for its scent and rejuvenating quality.

Consumption of more than seven to ten almonds per day is not good for the average person. If almonds are eaten raw, they should be taken with other nuts and with dried fruits such as figs, raisins, and apricots.

Cashews

Sweet, Heating,

Increase Bile and Mucus

Cashews are heavy and oily in nature; they subdue excess Wind (Vata). Several hundred years ago the cashew nut was brought to India from South America. Crops now grow in abundance in India's coastal areas. Cashews are the second most nutritious and popular nut, after almonds.

Cashews are sattvic in nature and rich in nutritional value. Up to 3 1/2 ounces of cashew nuts in one day can be taken safely by persons enjoying good health. In addition to containing protein and

carbohydrates, they contain B vitamins—such as thiamine, niacin, carotene, and riboflavin—and minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, and iron. This rich combination of nutrients makes them an ideal food for everyone, especially those suffering from weight-loss, anemia, and general weakness. For anemia, soak washed raisins and cashews, in equal proportion by weight, overnight in water. Grind them and add some of the soaking water to make a paste to be spread on toasted breads or to be eaten alone. The remainder of the soaking water can be used to extend the paste into a cashew-raisin milk, if desired.

Cashew oil is superior to olive oil. It can be used in salads, for cooking, and for body massage.

Cashew Nut Milk

Cashews are best when rendered into nut milk (see description under Almonds). Made to the consistency of cow's milk, cashew milk may be taken as is or with honey. Cashew milk also can be converted into yogurt, which is good for the intestines, or used in sweet dishes or curries.

One can drink cashew milk or eat the nuts in a mixture of almonds, walnuts, or pine nuts combined with raisins, dates, figs, or dried apricots. These combinations increase the nutritional value of cashew nuts.

Pistachios

Sweet, Heating, Increase Wind and Bile

Pistachios are cold in nature and subdue excess Mucus (Kapha). Pistachio nuts are prized and sought after for their color, taste, and flavor. They are regarded as having high food value. A storehouse of valuable substances, they contain protein, fat, and carbohydrates; they also contain vitamins A and B, and minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, and iron.

Pistachios aid in the production of blood. Their iron and thiamine (B₁) contents serve as a nerve tonic. Vaidyas and Hakims prescribe pistachios for patients suffering from anemia, debility, nervousness, heart trouble, low blood pressure, and many other afflictions related to the blood and nervous systems.

Pistachios are commonly used to revitalize and rejuvenate the system. They are eaten raw with other nuts and raisins by bodybuilders and wrestlers. They are used to enhance certain dishes—ice cream, pud-

dings, confectionaries, pulaos, and curries—making them somewhat expensive. They are also eaten roasted and salted. Pistachios are best taken in milk form (see description under Almonds and Cashews). Pistachio butter is very good. In all sweet forms, pistachios are sattvic.

Pistachios should be used in moderation. Consumption of more than a handful a day may cause digestive problems. Pistachio protein is better than that of meat or milk; if finely ground or thoroughly masticated, pistachios are more easily digestible.

Pistachio oil is superior to olive oil. Although not commonly extracted, it is sometimes used in medicines.

Walnuts

*Sweet and astringent, Heating,
Increase Mucus and Bile*

Walnuts are heavy and dry in nature; they subdue excess Wind (Vata) in the system. Walnuts are best consumed in small quantities. Five to seven walnuts at a time are more than enough for one individual. If taken in excess, walnuts will stimulate bile and create indigestion, small pimples in the mouth, and irritation in the throat. If taken in small quantities, walnuts are good for the nervous system, the brain, and the body in general. They provide energy and alertness.

FOODS AND THE THREE DOSHAS

Wind-producing	Broccoli, Corn (flakes and meal), Lemons, Parsley, Salt, Squash, Tea
Bile-producing	Celery, Chocolate, Coffee, Curds, Mint, Onions, Parsnips, Peas, Pickles (sour and hot), Potatoes, Pulses, Soybeans, Sugar (raw), Sunflower seeds, Vinegar, Walnuts, Wheat
Mucus-producing	Avocado, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Escarole, Grapefruit, Greens, Honey, Kelp, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Milk (bottled), Mushrooms, Pears, Persimmons, Rice, Spinach, Swiss chard, Tomatoes, Turnips
Wind- and Bile-producing	Banana
Wind- and Mucus-producing	Beets, Carrots, Chestnuts, Corn, Cream cheese, Dates, Grapes, Oatmeal, Olives (ripe)
Bile- and Mucus-producing	Endive, Sugar (refined)
Tridosha-producing	Cream, Milk (fresh, whole)



Chapter Six

FOOD AND CONSCIOUSNESS



SATTVA, RAJAS, AND TAMAS

Sattva, rajas, and tamas are not creations of the human mind but rather are three modes of primordial nature—pure, undifferentiated, universal Consciousness. Known as gunas, these three fundamental attributes present the natural evolutionary process through which the subtle becomes gross. In turn, gross objects, by action and interaction among themselves, may again become subtle.

Sattva, which means Essence, corresponds to Pitta.

Rajas, which means Activity, corresponds to Vata.

Tamas, which means Inertia, corresponds to Kapha.

By themselves, these three gunas are imperceptible. Being beyond perception, only the effects of their actions may be seen. By properly observing one's own physiology, one can note one or more of the three gunas actively directing energy into its respective channel(s).

The three gunas are explained clearly in the analogy given by Indian seers: Sattva, rajas, and tamas are three manifestations of the same essential substance called *Mul Prakriti*—or primordial nature—just as ice, water, and steam constitute three manifestations of the same substance, water.

In ice form, water, whose nature is to flow, loses its essence and mobility. It becomes static, confined to one form and one place. Ice is the tamasic form of the essence, water; the form in

which the movement of the individual particles have virtually ceased. Ice is water at rest.

In liquid form, the essence, water, is able to flow freely within the confines dictated by the shape of the container. Water is the rajasic form of the essence, water, and is the transitional state between ice and steam. To become steam, ice first has to become water and vice versa.

In steam form, the essence, water, is closest to its true nature, for it now fills whatever room it occupies and can go into every niche and corner. Steam is the sattvic form of the essence, water; it transcends the limits of gravity and form.

These stages can be called the three different phases through which all that exists passes. Sattva, rajas, and tamas can be seen as a tricolored braid: On the surface, one color appears dominant; yet, by observing the whole braid, one sees that the dominance is an illusion and that all three strands are ever-present.

Thus sattva, rajas, and tamas are not three separate entities, but rather three different modes or dimensions or frequencies of one single essence. One existence. One Reality.

The sattva-dominated person can look at any object and the past, present, or future of that thing becomes clear. The perspective is like that of someone standing on a high mountain peak, able to survey everything below.

The rajas-dominated person will try to fit any

object that he or she sees into a personal scheme of action, and he or she does so in terms of its present value alone.

The tamas-dominated person will be oblivious to the object, unless, perchance, he or she stumbles over it.

Sattva is light, clarity, and understanding.

Rajas is inspiration, activity, and pain.

Tamas is doubt, darkness, and attachment.

One may choose to generate more sattva in one's life, or join the downward flow of energy into tamas, which finally ends in complete inertia—death.

Increasing sattva means generating more rajas and, therefore, experiencing more pain, more hard discipline, and deprivation of temporary sensual pleasures. Tamasic energy is consumed by the fire of self-discipline. Through the pain one experiences by generating rajas, the light of sattva dawns. This *tapas*, or "heat," leads to bliss, to the clarity of understanding one's own true nature, one's role in the universe, and one's role in the cosmic sport of the Divine.

One who understands the three gunas—their nature and their omnipresence—can recognize their operation within, during the course of daily actions and interactions. By keeping watch over one's actions and drives, one can, with the help of the knowledge of the gunas, assume responsibility for the development of one's own being. Keeping a watchful eye on one's habits—eating, sleeping, sexual—and on one's pattern of breathing, one discovers inner changes created by such things as food, clothing, colors, and sounds; by the cycles of the day and night and of the seasons.

By paying attention to these changes, one discovers that some foods are sattvic, some rajasic, and others tamasic. One understands what it is to feel light (sattvic), surged with energy (rajasic), or to feel dull and drowsy (tamasic). One will experience that events that produce attachment, doubt, ignorance, and sleep are tamasic in nature. One's own feelings are the clearest guide to the workings of the gunas within.

When sattva dominates, rajas and tamas are pushed into the background. During this time all inspiration to undertake action vanishes, as does the sense of attachment. There is nothing to do, nowhere to go, no job to tackle, no desire to eat

or sleep, no confusion. All that remains is knowledge, existence, and bliss. Sattva is light and capable of removing confusion by giving clear perspective. Sattva has the power of intuition, with comprehension beyond time and space. Sattva has the power of clairvoyance. Seers and saints come from sattva. The true nature of sattva is bliss. Sattva creates illumination, radiance, and tranquility.

When rajas dominates, sattva and tamas recede. At that time there is a great rush of energy, a surge of inspiration, and one has a distinct desire to undertake work and projects. Being a mediator between sattva and tamas, it is rajas that encounters both knowledge and ignorance. Rajas creates instability and one goes through cycles of positive and negative moods. Rajas is the power that activates. The nature of rajas is pain, which is an outcome of interaction and ambition. It is through rajas that the infinite becomes finite. The true nature of rajas is pain.

When tamas dominates, rajas and sattva become inactive. The tamas guna "stops"—it is the source of resistance and obstruction. Tamas is the energy form that creates doubt and confusion. Tamas is said to have a veiling power; it makes a snake out of a rope. Tamas makes one experience laziness, dullness, drowsiness, and attachment. In this state darkness and illusion prevail; delusion and ignorance become dominant. One does not want to go anywhere; one has no inspiration to work. Even hunger and sex do not provide incentive. The relational faculties become completely blocked and there is a wish for withdrawal, very similar to that of the sattva-dominated state of non-attachment, when tranquility appears. With tamas, however, attachment and ignorance are the dominating factors. The true nature of tamas is attachment.

The gunas are inseparable, yet interchangeable.

The Gunas and Self-Development

Self-development is the process of seeking and finding improvement over time in the state of one's inner being. Sattva, rajas, and tamas provide a very important key to this understanding. Without this key it would be impossible to find out whether or not we are really developing.

From sattva, to rajas, to tamas is the natural course of evolution in the visibly manifested world. Yet rajas can be used to convert tamas back into sattva. With our five senses, we have the choice

of either flowing with attachment and desires ever downward into *tamas*, or of creating activity and moving upwards into the light of *sattva*.

The three gunas neither disturb nor contradict each other. Rather each one helps the other in solving problems, in evolving. *Sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* act together in unity and are present, in varying proportions, in everything.

Purpose of the Gunas

It should be clearly understood that there is no competition between the gunas: only one guna is dominant at a time. There are three gunas because energy has three modes. While energy is unfolding, it is going through a transition, which has three steps.

By using *rajas* to increase *sattva*, one can move against the natural gravitational pull and rejoin one's consciousness with the One, the Source, which gave us all birth. Thus the drop can merge back into the ocean. The prize for those who make the effort is *sat* (Truth), *chit* (Being), and *ananda* (Bliss everlasting).

SATTVIC, RAJASIC, AND TAMASIC FOODS

The main consideration when categorizing foods as sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic is their effect on the human organism. Do they create heat or dryness in the body? Do they create extreme cold? Do they stimulate the human organism—including the glandular secretions and the psychic centers (*chakras*)? Do they have an extended nourishing effect? What are the aftereffects? Are the foods readily digestible, or do they take some time and energy to digest? Do the foods disturb the doshas: Wind (*Vata*), Bile (*Pitta*), and/or Mucus (*Kapha*)?

Sattvic Foods

Sattvic foods are fresh, juicy, light, unctuous, nourishing, sweet, and tasty. Because these foods give necessary energy to the body without taxing it, they are helpful in achieving a balanced body chemistry—the foundation of higher states of consciousness, in which *sattva* predominates.

The psyche (*chitta*) is brought to a centered state by sattvic foods, because they bring readily digestible and nourishing food materials to the system. For aspirants of *sattva* and for spiritual growth and development, seasonal fruits, grains, and vegetables that are juicy, light, fresh, and sweet as well as easily digestible are the only diet. To eat only fruits, such as oranges, apples, bananas, grapes, and mangoes that are juicy (not pulpy), is ideal. If vegetables, grains, beans, and pulses are to be eaten, then wheat, cracked wheat cereal, bread made from freshly hand- or stone-ground flour (coarsely ground and with the wheat kernels), barley, moong (mung) beans, yellow split peas, rice, leafy vegetables, squash, milk, and butter are very good.

Wheat and barley are sattvic grains. As we have mentioned earlier, when cooked with excessive butter and spices, their sattvic nature is converted to *rajas*. Roasted garbanzo beans (chick-peas) are sattvic, but when eaten frequently, they produce gas and thus become tamasic. If garbanzo beans are sprouted and eaten raw they are sattvic. Fried moong beans also produce gas when eaten frequently and, therefore, give tamasic energy. Split peas are good if boiled with a little salt, turmeric, and coriander powder. They can be flavored with a small amount of cumin and asafoetida once cooked.

Fresh fruit juices from sweet, ripe fruits are the best sattvic foods.

Almonds, as well as sunflower, cucumber,

EXAMPLES OF SATTVIC FOODS

Butter, Buttermilk, Cheese (homemade), Milk, Yogurt

Barley, Rice, Wheat

Almonds, Black peppercorns, Fenugreek, Honey, Raisins, Raw sugar, Rock salt, Sesame seeds

Beets, Carrots, Cucumber, Green vegetables, Leafy vegetables, Moong bean sprouts, Spinach, Sweet potatoes, Squash, Turnips, Yellow split peas

Apples (sweet), Bananas, Coconut, Dates, Grapes (sweet), Honeydew melon, Mangoes, Oranges (sweet), Plums (sweet), Pomegranates, Watermelon

pumpkin, and honeydew melon seeds, are very nourishing. Almonds are rendered more sattvic when soaked overnight, peeled, and ground into a milky substance. In winter, a milky paste made from 7 almonds can be gently boiled with 1 cup of milk. Dates or raw sugar and ground anise seeds can be added, to taste. Ground seeds of the green cardamom pod or a pinch of saffron can be added to improve the digestion and give a pleasant aroma. In summer, water instead of milk can be added to the paste, which is then strained through a fine strainer. Anise or fennel seeds with cardamom and a little honey can be added. Although rose petals also can be added to these drinks, rose petals are best taken in cold drinks in the summer. After honey, raw cane sugar (jaggery) is the best sweetener and, like honey, it is sattvic.

The goat, sheep, water buffalo, camel, and cow all give nourishing milk. Of these, cow's milk is the most sattvic. However, four hours after milking, cow's milk becomes rajasic.

Kheer (rice cooked in milk) is sattvic. Fresh buttermilk and *lassis* (liquified yogurt with raw sugar) are also sattvic. The guna category for certain foods, such as lemons, black peppercorns, carrots, and sweet potatoes, is not so clear-cut. Because lemon is sour, it is not regarded as sattvic, but as a purifier, it is sattvic in nature. Black peppercorns are hot and dry but are considered sattvic. They provide energy to the stomach, increase the appetite, and clean and purify the chest region.

Carrots are roots and nearly all root vegetables are tamasic, yet carrots are sweet, cold, and unctuous, and they are easily digested. They cure excess heat in the body, help clean the lower digestive tract, cure diseases caused by gas and mucus, create more blood, make more urine, and thus clean toxins from the body. Carrots increase the digestive power of the stomach; they give energy to the brain and help in the maintenance of celibacy, and thus are classified as sattvic. Sweet potatoes, beets, and turnips are also roots, yet they, too, are sattvic and provide complete nourishment.

Mountain salt (rock salt) is sattvic and therefore recommended above sea salt which is rajasic.

Rajasic Foods

Rajasic foods are bitter, sour, salty, pungent, hot, and dry. These foods create sensuality, sexuality, greed, jealousy, avarice, anger, delusion, conceit,

fantasies, egotism, and irreligious feelings.

Rajasic foods are tasty only if a taste for them is developed; otherwise, they are not palatable. They need to be fried and then treated with spices before they can be served. These are foods for people who wish to have material prosperity and who take part in the race of greed and competition.

We are living in a world that demands that we work to generate the mechanism of supply and demand. In all of our concerns, earning money is of considerable importance. We cannot spend all of our time in ecstasy, bliss, prayer, and meditation—we need to struggle for material existence. Nature is not kind everywhere. We need technical help to keep our homes warm and cozy. We have responsibilities and we owe something to society, which provides us with social security. Therefore we cannot afford to eat only sattvic foods, as did the saints and seers of ancient India. We need a certain amount of rajasic energy to survive. This is why we need spices and foods that sustain our energy level, enabling us to keep pace with the changing world. This does not mean, however, that rajasic foods are the only foods we must eat. We ought to keep a balance between the sattvic and rajasic foods, and try to avoid tamasic foods as much as possible. As rajasic foods produce excitement, we should take the necessary precautions to avoid overexcitement.

Foods fried in oil, sweets sold in shops, spicy foods, stimulating vegetables, salted bread, biscuits, sodas, homogenized milk, and all aphrodisiacs are rajasic in nature. Sattvic foods become rajasic if they are fried in oil, overcooked, or treated with pungent and sour tasting spices. Sattvic foods cooked in ghee are not rajasic, but sattvic.

Rajasic foods increase the speed of the human organism. *Rajas* is synonymous with motion and activity. *Rajas* gives sorrow, pain, and also involvement. Therefore rajasic foods create disease, sorrow, melancholy, helplessness, and exhaustion. In small amounts, liquor, wine, beer, coffee, and tea are rajasic. Taken in excess, liquor, wine, and beer (not tea and coffee) are tamasic. Drugs, such as marijuana, hashish, opium, cocaine, and heroin, are tamasic because they disturb body chemistry, dull consciousness, and obscure perception of reality.

Onions and garlic are blood purifiers. Ayurveda classifies onions as tamasic, but garlic, because of

its medicinal qualities, is considered rajasic. Garlic is hot and unctuous. Excessive use can create dryness. Garlic increases longevity and produces muscular strength. It also increases semen and the glow of the skin and gives digestive power to the stomach. Garlic subdues excess Wind (Vata) and Mucus (Kapha). Bile-dominated individuals (Pittas) should avoid garlic. If it had a sour taste (thus giving it all six rasas) and did not have a bad smell, garlic would be categorized with sattvic foods.

Foods cooked in butter or ghee are sattvic, but when foods are cooked in oil they become rajasic. Raw milk that has been boiled for a long time acquires a thick consistency and becomes rajasic.

Red peppers, hot spices, pickles, oils, dry and fresh ginger, and salt are rajasic. Bread made with a pinch of salt is rajasic in nature. Foods that are hot in temperature while eaten, hot drinks, cold foods, and cold liquids are all rajasic. The temperature of food should not be greater than the temperature of the body and blood.

Rajasic foods create an unstable intellect.

Tamasic Foods

Tamasic foods consume a large amount of energy while being digested. They are dry, old, bad-smelling, decaying, distasteful, and/or unpalatable.

Tamasic food increases pessimism, ignorance, lack of common sense, greed, laziness, irreligion, criminal tendencies, and doubt. Tamasic foods create a severe inferiority complex and antagonistic feelings.

Foods that have been processed, canned, or frozen are tamasic. Foods that are cold and stale or that have been obtained by violence are tamasic, as are those that make one dull and drowsy. Incompatible food combinations—like milk and vinegar, or radishes and honey—produce tamas in the body chemistry. When hot and cold foods are taken together they become tamasic. Meat, fish, and eggs are tamasic foods. Candies, biscuits, and bread more than eight hours old are tamasic. Cod liver oil and shark liver oil, as well as hard liquor, are tamasic. Medicines that create dullness are tamasic.

By overcooking, foods become tamasic. Left-over food is also tamasic. Food contains prana, and this pranic energy is lost in food that is overcooked, overripe, or old. Dried milk, grains that create dryness, root vegetables (except carrots, beets, sweet potatoes, and turnips), and peanuts are tamasic. Indian breads—parathas, puris, and rotis—are rajasic but become tamasic about eight hours after they are cooked. All foods that create destructiveness are tamasic.

If one is interested in remaining alert and inspired, one should avoid tamasic foods.