

Look to Ayurveda to Re-Align

Unlike some popular cleanses that ask you to undergo dramatic fasts or to take other extreme measures, purvakarma (which literally means “up-front actions”) is designed to support, rather than shock, your system. Purvakarma gently balances the whole person so that you *can* detox without destabilizing the body in any way.

This protocol, or program, is all about rejuvenation. I will outline how to use nourishing foods, herbs, and self-care techniques to achieve this. You are encouraged to prepare a couple days in advance and shop for the foods you will need. Be mentally ready - prepare by forgoing substances and habits that contribute to any kind of overload— processed foods, alcohol—and the un-addressed stress that strain your nervous system (even hard core/upbeat music). Spend time thinking about what influences you want to keep in your life and what you might want to let go of.

Diet

kitchari, a simple dish of rice and mung beans widely used throughout Asia to purify the body. Its combination provides a balanced protein/carbohydrate meal that is easily digestible and highly nourishing. Kitchari is also tridoshic, which means that it’s appropriate for all three doshas. The dish reduces kapha in the body at the same time stabilizes vata by offering a complete source of protein. And the astringent nature of the beans cools pitta, so kitchari is naturally anti-inflammatory. Best of all, eating kitchari twice daily keeps hunger and cravings at bay. Add ghee (clarified butter), which acts to lubricates the digestive tract and facilitates the elimination of toxins from the body. Spicy teas and chutneys are recommended to keep the fires of digestion stoked throughout the cleanse; and triphala, a traditional Ayurvedic digestive tonic (made up of three fruits— amalaki, bibhitaki, and haritaki) with antioxidant properties, acts as a mild laxative.

Of the three doshas that make up your energies—Kapha, Pitta, and Vata—Vata dominates the fall season. Between October and February, its qualities, coldness, dryness, irregularity, and change, are amplified by what’s happening outside. Since Vata governs movement, the nervous system, and your body’s elimination system, it’s no surprise that you may be feeling a bit out of whack. Your body and mind are in overload.

The key to purvakarma is that it’s a conversion of bad habits into positive lifestyle choices that generate the kind of health and vibrancy you want for your life

Diverting mental over-activity is perhaps the most important element in the success of this sort of program. Habitual rushing and multitasking results in an overtaxed liver, mind and nervous system - thus leading to a host of health issues, including adrenal fatigue, insomnia, irregular menstrual cycles, indigestion, and unwelcome weight gain.

Autumn is the perfect to give thanks - thanks for our bodies and assist it's natural process for detoxification. Stressors such as environmental contaminants and poor diets to un-resolved emotions and psychological stress accumulate toxicity.

Groceries

- Optional: Organic Rolled Oats (1½ cup or 6 ounces)
- Optional: Raisins (¾ cup or 4½ ounces)
- Optional: (1½–3 cups apple, apricot, peach, or pear)
- Organic White Basmati Rice, (21 ounces)
- Organic Yellow Mung Dal (12 ounces)
- Organic Ghee, Clarified Butter—available at most health food stores (6 ounces)
- Optional: Organic Roasted Sesame Seeds (1 cup per batch of sesame seed chutney)
- Vegetables for Kitchari (6 cups total), your choice of:
 - Asparagus
 - Carrots
 - Celery
 - Green Beans
 - Summer Squash
 - Sweet Potato
 - Winter Squash
 - Zucchini
- Spices and Garnishes to Have on Hand
 - Black Mustard Seeds
 - Black Pepper
 - Optional: Cardamom powder (for oatmeal)
 - Optional: Cayenne Pepper (for sesame seed chutney)
 - Cilantro (¼ pound per batch of fresh coriander chutney)
 - Optional: Cinnamon powder (for oatmeal)
 - Cumin seeds, whole
 - Coconut, Unsweetened and Shredded
 - Coriander powder
 - Coriander seeds, whole
 - Fennel powder
 - Fennel seeds, whole
 - Optional: Ginger powder (for oatmeal)
 - Ginger Root, fresh
 - Hing (Asafoetida)
 - Optional: Kitchari Spice Mix (replaces some individual spices in kitchari)
 - Lemons
 - Limes
 - Mint, fresh or dried Peppermint
 - Natural Mineral Salt
 - Optional: Nutmeg (for oatmeal)
 - Sweeteners: Barley Malt or Raw Honey; Turbinado Sugar
 - Turmeric powder

Or, save time and money with one of Banyan's Cleanse Kits at <http://www.banyanbotanicals.com/shop/category/cleanse-kits-and-kitchari/kitchari-kit/>

Recipes

Simple Oatmeal

Kitchari is traditionally eaten three times a day during an Ayurvedic cleanse, but this simple oatmeal recipe is a good alternative, if preparing kitchari before breakfast is not realistic for you. This recipe can also provide a helpful break from the kitchari monodiet—which is especially important if you tend to tire of similar foods easily.

While fruit and grains are typically considered a poor food combination, the cooking process generally renders stewed fruit lighter and more digestible. These particular fruits all have something in common with the taste profile of oatmeal; when cooked together, their more diverse qualities are able to mingle in a way that makes them more compatible.

Ingredients

- ½ cup dry rolled oats
- 1½ cups water
- ¼ cups raisins
- ½ - 1 cup fresh apple, apricot, peach, or pear (cut into small pieces)

Optional Warming Spices

- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon cardamom powder
- ⅛ teaspoon ginger powder

Combine the raisins, cut fruit, 1 cup water, and any desired spices in a small saucepan and bring to a boil on medium-high heat. Reduce heat and simmer for ten to fifteen minutes, or until the fruit is tender and well cooked (apples may take a tad longer). Add the oats, the remaining ½ cup of water, stir, and return to a boil. When the mixture boils, stir thoroughly, remove from heat, cover, and let stand for five to ten minutes, until the oats are soft and the water is absorbed. Cool and serve.

Fruits By Dosha:

For vata, favor apricots and peaches.

For pitta, favor apples and pears.

For kapha, any of the fruit is fine. If you are primarily focused on balancing kapha, you may also want to try this delicious kapha pacifying modification: simply combine a couple of varieties of cut fruit, omit the oats and the second batch of water, follow the rest of the recipe as it is, and enjoy a breakfast of stewed fruit.

Spices By Dosha and Season:

For vata, kapha, and cooler seasons, the optional spices offer a tasty addition of warmth to this dish. If there is pitta imbalance, favor cinnamon and cardamom, and consider reducing the quantity. For severe pitta imbalance (or if the season is hot) consider foregoing the spices altogether. The oatmeal with cooked fruit is surprisingly tasty on its own.

Tridoshic Kitchari

Kitchari is a stew type meal that is prepared from basmati rice and split mung dal. During a cleanse, appropriate vegetables provide texture, flavor, and an important source of fiber. Kitchari is very easy to digest, which makes it a wonderful food for any cleansing regimen. It allows the digestive system to rest, allocating extra energy to the body's natural detoxification processes. The quantities in this recipe provide a good starting point for a day's supply of kitchari, but as you learn your preferences and habits, you are welcome to adjust the quantities to better fit your needs.

Ingredients

- 1 cup white basmati rice
- ½ cup split mung dal
- 2 tablespoons ghee
- Spices (or 1 tablespoon kitchari spice mix)
 - ¼ teaspoon black mustard seeds
 - ½ teaspoon cumin seeds
 - ½ teaspoon turmeric powder
 - 1½ teaspoons coriander powder
 - ½ teaspoon fennel powder
 - 1 pinch hing (asafoetida)
 - 1 teaspoon fresh grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon natural mineral salt
- 6 cups water
- 2 cups easily digestible vegetables (such as asparagus, carrots, celery, green beans, summer squash, sweet potato, or zucchini)

Soak the split mung dal overnight (or for at least four hours). Strain the soaking water, combine with the rice and rinse the mixture at least twice, or until the water runs clear, and set aside. In a medium saucepan or soup pot, warm the ghee over medium heat. Add the black mustard seeds, cumin seeds and sauté for a couple of minutes, until the mustard seeds begin to pop. Add the turmeric, coriander, fennel, hing, and fresh ginger. Stir briefly, until aromatic. Stir the rice and dal mixture into the spices and sauté for a few moments, stirring constantly. Add the 6 cups of water, turn heat to high, and bring to a boil. When the soup comes to a boil, stir in the salt, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about forty minutes. Meanwhile, cut your vegetables into small, bite-sized pieces. About halfway through the kitchari's cooking process, stir in the vegetables and allow the stew to return to a boil. Continue to simmer until the rice, dal, and vegetables are fully cooked. Remove from heat, cool, and serve. Note: some vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, might require more cooking time and may be added earlier, if necessary.

Aim to have very little water remaining when finished. The consistency should be that of a vegetable stew as opposed to a broth. While you want the beans, rice, and vegetables to be thoroughly cooked,

excess water and over-stirring can cause the ingredients to become thick and gummy. Garnish the kitchari with your choice of fresh cilantro, coriander chutney, and sesame chutney. Enjoy!

Fresh Coriander Chutney

This tridoshic recipe from *The Ayurvedic Cookbook* by Amadea Morningstar is very tasty and is especially useful for reducing excess pitta.

Ingredients

- 1 bunch (¼ pound) fresh coriander leaves and stems (also known as cilantro or Chinese parsley)
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup water
- ¼ cup grated coconut
- 2 tablespoons fresh ginger root, chopped
- 1 teaspoon barley malt or raw honey
- 1 teaspoon natural mineral salt
- ¼ teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

Blend the lemon juice, water and fresh coriander until the coriander is chopped. Add the remaining ingredients and blend until it is like a paste.

Use sparingly. This chutney can be stored in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to one week. For a silkier texture, use only the leaves and the tops of the fresh coriander stalks.

Sesame Seed Chutney

This tridoshic recipe from *Ayurvedic Cooking for Self-Healing* by Usha and Vasant Lad, is especially good for people with vata and kapha imbalance. Reduce cayenne pepper to ¼ teaspoon if there is any pitta imbalance.

Ingredients

- 1 cup roasted and ground sesame seeds
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon natural mineral salt

Blend ingredients together and garnish kitchari with about 1 teaspoon of the mixture.

Cumin, Coriander, Fennel Tea

Ingredients

- 1 quart of purified water
- 1 teaspoon whole cumin seed
- 1 teaspoon whole coriander seed

- 1 teaspoon whole fennel seed

Place all the ingredients in a pot, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for fifteen minutes, or until the seeds begin to sink. Remove from heat and strain. Store the tea in a thermos or in the refrigerator, but do not drink it cooler than room temperature.

Rehydration Tea

Ingredients

- 4½ cups pure water
- 2 heaping teaspoons peppermint or fresh mint
- 1 heaping teaspoon brahmi (gotu kola) powder
- ¼ teaspoon natural mineral salt
- ¼ lime (squeezed juice)
- 2 teaspoons turbinado sugar

Boil water. Remove from heat and add herbs, salt, and lime. Steep ten minutes, strain, add turbinado, and drink warm or at room temperature.

Appendix A

What Defines Healthy Elimination?

According to Ayurveda, healthy elimination occurs one to two times daily. In a perfect world, the first bowel movement of the day occurs within a few minutes of waking, ideally before sunrise. If there is a second bowel movement later in the day, it often occurs after a meal, in the afternoon or evening.

Balanced stools themselves:¹

- are well formed, about the consistency of a ripe banana.
- maintain their shape after being eliminated.
- are a light brownish-yellow color.
- float (if eliminated into a toilet bowl containing water).
- are slightly oily.
- are not sticky; the anal orifice is easily cleaned and the stool does not stick to the toilet.
- have only a mild odor.

