The Six Ayurvedic Tastes

Instead of looking at the individual components of foods—ie: carbohydrates, protein, fats, and calories—Ayurveda identifies six "tastes" of foods. Each taste has specific effects on the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha). By including all six tastes in each meal we satisfy our nutritional and dietary needs without the need to count calories or consult a manual.

Pittas should focus on eating more of the Sweet, Astringent, and Bitter tastes, ie: leafy greens, lentils, dried beans, pomegranates, potatoes, fish and shellfish, dairy, nuts and seeds, root vegetables, coconut, lime, cilantro, peppermint, dill, fennel, and aloe vera are good choices for you.

The Sweet Taste .:. earth + water
...is heavy, moist, and cool. This increases Kapha and decreases Vata and Pitta. Examples are nuts, grains, oils, meats, and most dairy.

The Sour Taste .:. fire + earth
...is heavy, moist, and hot. This increases Pitta and Kapha and decreases Vata. Examples are pickles and fermented foods such as yogurt.

The Salty Taste .:. fire + water
...is heavy, moist, and hot. This increases Pitta and Kapha and decreases Vata. Examples are sea salt, sea vegetables, and seafood.

The Pungent Taste .:. fire + air
...is light, dry, and hot. This increases Pitta and Vata and decreases Kapha. Examples are chili peppers, ginger, and black pepper.

The Astringent Taste .:. earth + air
...is dry and cool. This increases Vata and decreases Pitta and Kapha. Examples are most beans, cranberries, and pomegranates.

The Bitter Taste .:. air + ether
...is light, dry, and cool. This increases Vata and decreases Pitta and Kapha. Examples are leafy greens and herbs such as goldenseal and turmeric.

Pitta Food Guidelines

Qualities to Reduce:
hot, light, dry

Tastes to Maximize:
sweet, bitter, astringent

Tastes to Minimize:
salty, pungent, sour

The Pitta Dinner Plate
## Pitta Food List

### Grains

- **Best:** barley, white basmati rice, millet, oats, white rice, wheat, whole wheat, quinoa
- **Small Amounts:** brown rice (only in acute pitta conditions, otherwise it can be used often)
- **Minimize:** buckwheat, corn flour

### Dairy

- **Best:** unsalted butter, cottage cheese, cream cheese, ghee, milk
- **Small Amounts:** hard non-salted cheeses
- **Minimize:** buttermilk, salted cheeses, sour cream, kefir, cultured milks, yogurt

### Nuts and Seeds

- **Best:** almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachio, peanuts, and any other nut not mentioned
- **Small Amounts:** pinon nuts, sesame seeds
- **Minimize:***          

### Condiments

- **Best:** carob sweetened with the "Best" sweeteners noted
- **Small Amounts:** mayonnaise, sweet mustards
- **Minimize:** chocolate, salt, vinegar

### Oils

- **Best:** Ghee, olive oil, coconut
- **Small Amounts:** avocado, corn, non-GMO soy, sunflower
- **Minimize:***          

### Fruits

- **Best:** apples, avocados, blackberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, coconut, cranberries, dates, dried fruit, figs, grapes, lemons, limes, nectarines, pineapple, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries
- **Small Amounts:** apricots, bananas (very ripe only), cherries, grapefruit, oranges, pineapple
- **Minimize:***          

### Vegetables

- **Best:** alfalfa sprouts, artichoke, asparagus, bean sprouts, bell peppers, bitter melon, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cilantro, cress, cucumber, green peppers, kale, leafy greens, lettuce, mushrooms, onions (well cooked), peas, pumpkin, seaweed, squash, zucchini
- **Small Amounts:***          
- **Minimize:***          

### Legumes

- **Best:** black lentils, chickpeas, mung beans, split peas, soybeans (soy products), tofu
- **Small Amounts:** aduki beans, kidney beans, navy beans, pinto beans
- **Minimize:*** red and yellow lentils

### Beverages

- **Best:** Bitter and astringent herb teas such as alfalfa, chicory, dandelion, hibiscus, and strawberry leaf. Milk, wheat grass juice. Pitta tea.
- **Small Amounts:** Chai tea or black tea, fruit juice diluted with one-half water
- **Minimize:*** alcohol, carbonated water, coffee, sweet fruit juices, spicy herb teas, soft drinks, tomato juice

### Meats

- **Best:** chicken, egg whites, fresh water fish (trout), turkey
- **Small Amounts:** beef, duck, egg yolk, lamb, pork, sea fish, venison, any other red meat
- **Minimize:*** none

### Spices

- **Best:** cardamom, chamomile, cilantro, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, lemon verbena, peppermint, saffron, spearmint, turmeric
- **Small Amounts:** basil, bay leaf, black pepper, caraway, cinnamon, fenugreek, garlic (cooked), ginger (fresh), rosemary
- **Minimize:** anise, asafoetida, calamus, Cayenne pepper, cloves, garlic (raw), ginger (dry), horseradish, hyssop, marjoram, mustard seeds, nutmeg, oregano, poppy seeds, sage, star anise, thyme

### Sweeteners

- **Best:*** molasses, maple syrup, rice syrup
- **Small Amounts:** dextrose, fructose, raw honey, table sugar
- **Minimize:*** raw sugar

### Avoid

- Margarine, canola, GMO anything (ie: soy, corn, etc.), agave nectar, high fructose sweeteners, grapeseed oil, soda, CAFO meats

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**"Best"** Foods can be eaten without reservation on a daily basis. These foods are the most ideal ones as they are the most balanced for this dosha. Individuals who are sick should consume only the foods on this list.

**"Small Amounts"** Foods can be eaten in small portions fairly often or in larger portions once or twice each week. Eating a wide variety of these foods is better than an abundance of just one. Overreliance on these foods can cause imbalance.

**"Minimize"** Foods should be eaten only on rare occasions, ie: once each month. They can significantly disturb the dosha.

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

*When spicing, the overall spiciness is more important than individual spices. Even some “Minimize” spices can be used if balanced with other spices on the “Best” list. For pitta, food should be spiced mild to moderate and never very hot or bland.*

*Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance.*