

Spring, The Season of New Beginnings, Ayurveda's Guide to Spring, Kapha Season

Please consult your healthcare provider before incorporating herbs into your diet,
making dietary changes or incorporating lifestyle changes

Spring is a season of new beginnings, renewal, and growth. Mother Nature is bringing forth her latent potential all around us. As winter's bitter cold recedes, the ice and snow melt and the gentle rain nourishes the earth. New life abounds all around us. Leaves are unfurling from trees, spring flowers are blooming, birds are singing, and insects are buzzing.

Even though, in our modern world, we may feel disconnected from nature, our bodies understand the shift in this season. It's time for spring cleaning! There is an innate sense within our bodies to release any stagnant energy, lighten things up, cleanse ourselves of any accumulated imbalances, and rejuvenate our deepest tissues.

Ayurveda offers insight on how to bring balance with a spring routine, promote optimal health, and embrace the gifts this season has to offer and alleviate some of the symptoms associated with spring- feeling heavy, lethargic, and irritated with seasonal allergies.

Ayurveda's Guide To Spring, Kapha Season

Spring is a season characterized by moisture, coolness, a gentle nurturing presence, and heaviness. These are just a few of the characteristics that align spring with Kapha dosha, which in Sanskrit (the language of Ayurveda), means "that which flourishes in water,".

Ayurveda teaches balance is achieved when opposite qualities are combined. And, like increases like, where similar qualities create an imbalance. We notice the qualities of spring are similar to Kapha dosha, leading to an increase of these qualities in our bodies/minds, which in turn increases Kapha dosha, creating an imbalance.

But Mother Nature always guides us to balance. Spring melts away the lingering ice and snow of winter. By supporting our body's natural detoxifying organs (liver, lungs, skin) with diet and lifestyle practices, the accumulated Kapha dosha liquifies to be eliminated.

Ayurveda offers a guide for a seasonal diet and lifestyle that invites a little extra lightness, sharpness, dryness, and heat into our lives to support our body's natural process of springtime renewal, cleansing, and revitalization.

It's important to keep in mind as you practice Ayurveda, that the nuances of your local climate can vary, and to respond to the qualities that are showing up within your body by adding in some appropriate recommendations for balancing Vata dosha (cold, light, dry qualities), and



balancing Pitta dosha (hot, sharp qualities) when necessary. And above all, not to be rigid and always be kind to yourself.

An Ayurveda Diet for Spring

Balance the energy of Kapha dosha (earth and water), which has the qualities of coolness, heavy, solid, hard, stable, static, dull, large in mass, moist, liquid, cohesive, sticky, and fluid.

Enjoy cooked foods that are warm, lighter, and with pungent, bitter, astringent tastes. Eat smaller amounts of foods that are heavy with sweet, salty, and sour tastes.

When we tune into our body's needs, we notice a natural and distinct shift in our cravings to lighter foods. Our appetite may diminish, and we start to crave fresh fruit and fresh vegetables.

- Start your day with a light breakfast and tea. Try herbal teas such as roasted dandelion root tea, which supports the liver.
- Lunches and dinners should include cooked dark green vegetables and legumes which provide fiber, astringent, and bitter tastes/qualities our bodies need to naturally cleanse.
- Spice your foods and beverages to promote circulation and good digestion.
- Drink room temperature, warm, or hot beverages. Stay hydrated by sipping on some warm water throughout the day.
- Eat in moderation animal protein such as freshwater fish, poultry (white meat), and poached or hardboiled eggs.
- Eat plant protein that is not ultra-processed.

Springtime-Kapha Food List

Kapha Dosha (Earth and Water Elements) Qualities:

cool, heavy, solid, hard, stable, static, dull, large in mass, moist, liquid, cohesive, sticky, and fluid

Season of Spring (start of spring equinox): Northern Hemisphere March-May; Southern Hemisphere September - December

Tastes for Kapha Dosha:

Best: Pungent, bitter, astringent

Avoid: Sweet, sour, salty



Foods listed as “Best” can be eaten without reservation on a daily basis.

Foods listed as “Small Amounts” can be eaten in small portions fairly often or in larger portions once or twice per week.

Foods listed as “Avoid/Minimize” should be eaten only on rare occasions. Remember, it is not what you do once in a while that matters. Long-term habits determine your health. Healthy habits create a healthy life. Unhealthy habits lead to an unhealthy life.

Spices

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

Best:

Anise, basil, bay leaf, black pepper, calamus, chamomile, caraway, cardamom, catnip, cayenne, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, ginger, horseradish, hyssop, marjoram, mustard, nutmeg, oregano, peppermint, poppy seeds, rosemary, saffron, sage, spearmint, star anise, thyme, turmeric. Hot spices are best. Any spice not listed is probably fine.

Avoid: Salt

Vegetables

Vegetables are best eaten raw during the summer and cooked the rest of the year and during times of digestive difficulty. In general, vegetables are good and even the “Avoid/Minimize” group, if eaten in small amounts and spiced, will cause no harm.

Best:

Alfalfa sprouts, artichoke, asparagus, green beans, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, celery, chilies, cilantro, corn, kale, lettuce, and other leafy greens, mustard greens, onions, parsley, peas, hot peppers, potatoes, radish, seaweed, spinach, rutabagas/turnips

Small Amounts: Mushrooms, tomatoes

Avoid/Minimize:

Beets, cucumber, eggplant, okra, squash (all), sweet potatoes, water chestnuts, Zucchini



Fruits

Best:

Dried fruits as they are not too sweet. Apples, cherries, cranberries, grapefruit, pomegranate, prunes, raisins.

Small Amounts: Apricots, lemon, lime, papaya, pineapple

Avoid/Minimize:

Sweet fruits, avocado, bananas, berries (raspberry, blackberry, blueberry, strawberry), cantaloupe, coconut, dates, figs, grapes, mango, melons, pineapple, oranges, peaches, pears, persimmons, plums, tangerines, watermelon

Legumes

Best: Mung beans, red lentils, soybeans (tofu and soymilk), split peas

Small Amounts:

Aduki beans, black gram, black beans, fava beans, kidney beans, lima beans, pinto beans

Avoid/Minimize: Black lentils, chickpeas

Nuts and Seeds

Soak seeds and nuts prior to eating to help remove phytic acid/tannins. Lightly roast seeds and nuts. Avoid salted nuts and seeds.

Best: Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds

Small Amounts: Sesame seeds, pecans, walnuts

Avoid/Minimize: Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, coconut, filberts, lotus seeds, macadamia nuts, pistachio, peanuts,

Grains

Toasted breads are very good, as they are drier.

Best: Amaranth, barley, basmati rice, buckwheat, corn flour, quinoa

Small Amounts: Millet, rye



Avoid/Minimize: Oats, long and short-grain rice (white or brown), wheat, whole wheat

Dairy

It is best to use organic milk, preferably A2 milk. ⁽²⁾ A2 beta-casein protein-rich milk is easier to digest. Milk from these animals contains mainly A2 milk: goat, sheep, buffalo, and certain breeds of cows-Jersey, Guernsey, Normande, and Brown Swiss. Milk should be taken warm with a small amount of ginger and cardamom.

Best: Goat milk, skim milk, soymilk

Small Amounts: aged cheese, cottage cheese from skimmed goat milk, buttermilk,

Avoid/Minimize: Butter, cheese, cream, cottage cheese, ice cream, kefir, sour cream, yogurt

Meats

If you choose to eat meat, limit consumption to 2-3 times per week. Meat soups can be particularly nourishing during convalescence. *Kapha* individuals can thrive as vegetarians.

Best: Chicken or turkey (white meat), freshwater fish, rabbit

Small Amounts: Eggs, shrimp, venison

Avoid/Minimize: Beef, duck, lamb, pork, seafood, shellfish

Oils

Use all oils in small amounts only. Even the best oils, if overused, will aggravate *kapha*.

Best: Canola, corn, flaxseed, mustard, safflower, soy, sunflower

Avoid/Minimize: Almond, avocado, castor, coconut, olive, peanut, sesame

Beverages

Best: spring water, herbal teas (spicy and bitter), cranberry juice, green vegetable juices, wheat grass juice

Small Amounts: Carbonated mineral water, coffee, tea

Avoid/Minimize: Apple juice, carrot juice, orange juice; Avoid soft drinks and sugary beverages



Sweeteners

Best: Raw honey only. (Look for honey that is more than six months old or store some jars.)

Small Amounts: maple syrup

Avoid/Minimize: Fructose, molasses, raw sugar, white and brown sugar

Condiments

Small Amounts: Catsup, vinegar, hot sauce, , Chutney, mango (spicy), horseradish, mustard without vinegar,

Avoid/Minimize: Mayonnaise, salt

Ayurvedic Spring Daily Routine

Spring awakens the energy of growth and light. Create a stimulating and inspiring morning routine for yourself:

- Wake up before the sunrise, around 6 am.
- Spend time on yourself in the morning to emphasize self-care for the whole day.
- Scrape your tongue with your morning hygiene.
- Drink a glass of warm water with lemon juice to support your digestion and to hydrate.
- Make time for exercise or yoga first thing in the morning to promote clarity and improved energy this spring. If your mornings are too hectic, then move in the late afternoon.
- After your morning shower/bath, give yourself a massage with safflower oil.
- Try to avoid naps. If you are tired, consider a [yoga nidra guided meditation](#)⁽²⁾ practice to recharge yourself.
- Go to bed by 10 pm.

Spring Exercise for Kapha Dosha

Incorporate stimulating exercises that increase circulation, and heat to balance the heavy, wet energy of Kapha dosha.

Consider biking, brisk walks, jogging, hiking, or swimming. Exercise in the morning, between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. or in the evening.

Spring Yoga

Enjoy an expansive and stimulating spring yoga practice that is faster-paced, energetic, and heating.



KAPHA Dosha FLOW 🧘 Vinyasa for BEGINNERS 💛 Ayurvedic Yoga Therapy on YouTube
<https://youtu.be/fDRnH3erao4?si=m2naap8hx1mMptTD>

Gentle Yoga Flow for Beginners: Perfect Desk Break to Reboost Your Energy on YouTube
<https://youtu.be/GOQJSjQAXTw?si=HUoMiroJXRkls-Wf>

Chair Yoga + Kapha Dosha on YouTube
<https://youtu.be/4xO8EoiNJnk?si=HplqfmKs-iVevja8>

Spring Pranayama (Breathing)

Spring is also an excellent time to reap the benefits of pranayama to support our body's natural detoxification process. If you have high blood pressure or are pregnant, Kapalabhati and Bhastrika practices are not recommended.

Kapalabhati (Skull Shining Breath)

- Cleanses the lungs
- Improves circulation,
- Removes sleepiness, invites alertness, energizing the body and brain
- Sharpens sensory perception
- Bolsters memory, concentration, and intelligence
- Prepares the mind for mental work and meditation
- Keeps the forehead cool
- Tones the digestive organs, improving agni (digestive fire) and appetite
- Cleanses the blood
- Stimulates synovial circulation in the joints
- Balances and strengthens the nervous system
- Supports immunity

How to do Kapalabhati: Step-by-Step Tutorial & Benefits on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/52TOhE94fEg?si=EC6leBf2rEUAg3At>

Bhastrika (Bellows Breath) will bring a sense of lightness to the mind and are both very cleansing practices—perfect for the spring season.

- Burns ama(toxins)
- Cleanses and rejuvenates the lungs, increases lung capacity
- Tones the muscles of the heart, bronchial tree, diaphragm, and abdomen
- Helps to strengthen the heart and lungs
- Infuses the blood with oxygen
- Facilitates the proper removal of carbon dioxide from the blood and tissues
- Kindles agni (the digestive fire), and tones the digestive system as a whole
- Cleanses and invigorates the liver, pancreas, and spleen
- Alleviates allergy and asthma symptoms
- Cleanses the nasal passages, sinuses, and chest of excess mucus



- Improves circulation

How To do Bhastrika: <https://youtu.be/FRETVhibMdU?si=TxLJym0ZXJ7KvDsK>

Alternate Nostril Breathing

- Deepens the awareness of the breath and shifts in breathing patterns to aid in early detection of stress
- Cleanses the left and right energetic channels
- Improves concentration by helping to focus thoughts, and grounds the buzzing energy of stress.
- Fosters balance between the two hemispheres of the brain: the left, logical side and the right, intuitive side
- Rejuvenates the nervous system and helps to settle stress.

Alternate Nostril Breathing YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/8VwufJrUhic?si=FK4q2LvBy07QEBw>

Ayurvedic Herbs for Spring, Kapha Dosha

Herbs to support detoxification, promote circulation, remove ama (toxins) and support digestion.

Chyavanprash: try 1 teaspoon or two of [Chyavanprash](#) every morning to boost your energy and support your immune system.

Pippali: to clear and rejuvenate the lungs, take ⅛–¼ teaspoon of pippali mixed in honey twice a day. ⁽¹⁾

Turmeric + Aloe Vera Juice support the liver, which is vital to detoxification, try taking ¼–½ teaspoon of turmeric with 2–4 tablespoons of aloe vera juice. ⁽¹⁾

Triphala ⁽¹⁾ : taken at night helps cleanse the body of ama (natural toxins) and supports healthy digestion.

Herbal Teas: Enjoy spicy herbal teas throughout the day and experiment with supportive spring combinations like:

- Lemon and ginger
- Coriander, cumin, and fennel
- Ginger, black pepper, and pippali

After meals, a tea of ginger, black pepper, and cinnamon to support digestive strength.



References:

(1) Pole, Sebastian. Ayurvedic Medicine: The Principles of Traditional Practice. Churchill Livingston Elsevier, 2006. 49-51, 303-304, 328-329.

<http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/69491/1/62.pdf.pdf>

(2) Yoga Nidra Guided Meditation, 25 minutes, with Betty Brown

https://youtu.be/XlgXhN_zQjg?si=0AxlggYA_esEQjIj

