

SATTVIC DIET

INFLUENCE ON BODY, MIND AND SOUL OF YOGA PRACTITIONER.
"THE WELL-BEING OF MAN DEPENDS MORE ON NUTRITION THAT
ON ANYTHING ELSE".

Agnieszka Borowska | borowsk9@gmail.com

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Abstract

Asana practice is often seen as the main element of yoga although it is only one part of all system. Yoga class may give the toned body but as always, optimal health is just as much about what is on the inside. To function optimally in life, we have to take care not just of the physical body but also internal functioning and mental and spiritual state. All is deeply connected between each other.

Introduction

The word “Sattvic,” or “Sattvikam”, appears in many Hindu texts on Yoga, and is translated to “in the mode of goodness” in English. In the *Srimad Bhagavad-gita’s* Chapter 17, Text 7, it states that each food is placed into one of three categories, which coincide with the three modes of material nature: goodness (Sattva), passion (Rajas), and darkness (Tamas). In the following three texts (verses) it states the following: “Foods in the mode of goodness increase the duration of life, purify one's existence and give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. Such nourishing foods are sweet, juicy, fattening, and palatable. Foods that are too bitter, too sour, salty, pungent, dry and hot, are liked by people in the modes of passion. Such foods cause pain, distress, and disease. Food cooked more than three hours before being eaten, which is tasteless, stale, putrid, decomposed and unclean, is food liked by people in the mode of ignorance.”

What is Yoga?

Yoga is an ancient oriental discipline that emerged from mystical and philosophical concepts. Etymologically, yoga means to “add”, “join”, “unite” or “attach” (Sanskrit yoga) where the body (anga), mind (chitta), emotions and the soul (atma or atman).

Yoga is unification of mind through awareness during the practice, body through asanas and spirit through meditation and breath.

Yoga is a journey inward for self-discovery to bring harmony in all areas of life through body-mind connection. All Yogis can gain many benefits of yoga on and off the mat. Yoga is much more than twisting and bending body...

Definition of Yoga

Sage Patanjali defined Yoga as “To still the movement of the mind is Yoga”.

Patanjali Yoga Sutras define the eight limbs of Raja Yoga as:

1. Yamas: Guidelines for external discipline
2. Niyamas: Guidelines (duties) for internal discipline
3. Asanas: The practice of physical postures
4. Pranayama: The practice of breathing techniques to control prana (the vital force)
5. Pratyahara: Withdrawal of the senses.

6. Dharana: The state of concentration
7. Dhyana: The practice of meditation
8. Samadhi: The state of bliss and enlightenment.

Yamas: non-violence, truth, honesty, non-stealing, sensual abstinence, and non-possessiveness are the five self-disciplines.

Niyamas: Cleanliness, contentment, austerity, self-study of scriptures, and self-surrender to God are the five duties for social discipline.

The Five Points of Yoga

The essence of Yogis knowledge is following The Five Points of Yoga which provide a framework for rightful living and lead to profound awareness, self-transformation, and the preservation of life-force.

1. Proper Exercises – Asanas

Yoga poses acts as lubricant to the joints, muscles, ligaments, tendon and other parts and organs of the human body, increasing circulation, improving digestion and strength.



2. Proper Breathing – Pranayama

Yogic breathing makes maximum use of the lung's capacity through clavicular, intercostal and abdominal breathing techniques to bring more oxygen to the blood and brain – to revitalize all body cells. Proper breathing exercises rid the lungs of stale air, revitalizes and rejuvenate the body and control the prana. By gaining control of prana, Yogis are able to gain control over mind.



3. Proper Relaxation- Shavasana

To release conscious and subconscious tension. It helps mentally, physically and spiritually. Proper relaxation giving a chance to recharge and heal. Often is more powerful than long sleep, practitioners can achieve peace of mind, good health and stable, abundant energy.



4. Proper Diet- Vegetarian

A Yogic diet is based on simple food choices: sattvic and lacto-vegetarian. Diet consists pure, wholesome, natural and highly nutritional food. It consists of foods with sattvic qualities, which increase energy and create balance in the mind and body

The yogic main principles are: purity (sattva), nonviolence (ahimsa), and balanced living.



5. Proper Thinking & Meditation- Vedanta & Dhyana

The controlled mind is clear, calm and focused. Steadiness and concentration of mind are essential to be able to live life making positive and healthy choices.



As Yogis become attuned to body, mind and soul through five practices, will begin feel more healthy, cantered and stronger within.

“Our body can be seen as a vehicle needing the same amount of care and maintenance. A vehicle needs five things: a lubricating system; a battery; a cooling system; fuel and responsible driver behind the wheel”.

Yogi lifestyle



A Yogi consciously works on shaping attitudes, habits and ways of life to be more congruent with philosophies, principles, morals and ethics of yoga. Yogis makes lifestyle choices that bring them closer towards a place of *sattva*, a state of equanimity and inner peace. Another important quality in yogi's lifestyle is the attainment of balance and harmony in each are of life.

No matter how much person practice yoga or any other physical regime, the body will not be benefited unless diet is not taken care of. So, Yogis are usually vegetarian and regards food as a medicine which will purify and fuel the mind, body and soul for the maintenance of life. Practitioners eating cautiously, mindfully with awareness and with a higher purpose than sensual pleasure.

Yogis who follow strictly sattvic diet are sattva predominant people and tend to be compassionate and pure minded. They clarity of perception and creative senses are often heightened, and they tend to have positive behaviour and spread happiness and harmony. Sattvic diet will promote also stable energy flow to keep practitioner more alert, builds mental and physical awareness of the mind, body and soul. The Yogic diet is based on the belief that our bodies are directly connected to our minds. Healthy eating is to be considered as a practice to seek for and attain harmonic body-mind balance.

Simply, yogic practice is incomplete without following a proper diet.

The yoga lifestyle helps to add more energy to day to day life; it teaches to eliminate all the negative aspects and focus only on the good things that life has to offer. Yogi lifestyle is not limited to the physical aspects only; it is about keeping body, mind, and spirit together in complete harmony.

Yogi lifestyle in key points:

- personalised environment
- adjusted, proper wardrobe
- honesty towards yourself and others
- regular asana and pranayama practice
- regular meditation
- calm, steady mind
- following yogi philosophy
- love and acceptance towards yourself and others

- aligned chakras
- good quality relax and sleep time
- water consumption, fasting cleansing and detoxification
- healthy, proper diet

What is Nutrition?

Nutrition is defined as the process of consuming food and utilizing it for the purpose of growth, metabolism, and repair.

The nutrition has stages like

1. Ingestion – The process of consuming food, drink, or any other substance into the body by swallowing or absorbing it.
2. Digestion - Digestion is the process of turning the food into nutrients for the body to use for energy, growth, and cell repair.
3. Absorption – Absorption is the uptake of nutrients from the gastrointestinal tract into the blood.
4. Transportation – The nutrition consumed must reach to each cell of the body which is possible through the circulatory system
5. Assimilation – Assimilation is the process by which nutrients are passed through the membranes surrounding each living cell.
6. Excretion – This is the final stage of nutrition for the efficient elimination of wastes from the body.

Why nutrition is important?

Healthy nutrition is necessary for supporting normal growth, development, and aging, to maintain healthy body weight, and minimize the risk of chronic diseases.

There are two major categories of nutrition

1. Macronutrient – As the name suggests we require this in more quantity. Examples of macronutrients are carbohydrates, fats, fibers, protein, and water.
2. Micronutrient – This is needed in small quantity and they are vitamins and minerals.

Now let us know why each of this nutrient is essential.

1. Macronutrient:

Carbohydrate:

Carbohydrate is one of the major macronutrients, they are called carbohydrates because at the chemical level they contain carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen.

Carbohydrate provides energy to the body and protects us from toxins. Each gram of carbohydrate provides 4 calories.

Carbohydrates are hydrophilic and require a series of reactions to digest them to monosaccharide which is absorbed in the small intestine.

There are mainly two types of carbohydrate

1.Simplex carbohydrate:

Simplex carbohydrate is broken down quickly by the body to be used as energy.

There is some category of Simplex carbohydrate that is good when it is consumed moderately like fruits and vegetables, as they are rich in micronutrients such as vitamins and minerals and they contain some dietary fiber.

There are some simplex carbohydrates referred to as bad carbs like processed foods or those with added sugar. Adding sugar to food increases its calorie content, without providing any additional nutrition. Examples of such food include candy, sugary drinks, syrups, table sugar, fruit juice concentrate, baked foods, and some cereals.

Due to the fast digestion process, a person might feel hungry again and there's always a tendency to consume more calories than required.

The simplex carbohydrate also lacks some of the nutrition due to the process of refining.

For example, when the milling process refines the rice it removes the rice's husk, bran, and germ.

This process increases the shelf life but removes much of its nutrition including fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

2.Complex carbohydrate:

Complex comes with more nutrients than the simplex carbohydrate. The complex carbohydrates are high in fiber and the digestion process is slow as compared to simplex carbohydrates.

The major advantage of consuming complex carbohydrates is it makes you feel full and averts you to consume more than needed calories.

They are also ideal for people with type 2 diabetes because they help control blood sugar spikes after meals.

A complex carbohydrate is recommended to keep oneself healthy in the long term. They help to maintain an ideal weight by making a person feel full after consuming to control overeating. Also, it helps guard against type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular problems in the future.

Examples of complex carbohydrates are Starchy vegetables like sweetpotato, beans, lentils, peas, whole grains like brown rice and oats.

Dietary fibers:

Dietary fiber, also known as roughage or bulk, includes the parts of plant foods your body can't absorb or digest.

The stomach cannot digest the fiber-like how the digestion process is involved in breaking down the carbohydrate, proteins, and fats. The fiber passes relatively intact through our stomach, small intestine, and colon and out of our body. There is a further classification of fiber as soluble which dissolves in water and insoluble which doesn't dissolve.

Now let us understand the soluble and insoluble fiber in detail.

Soluble fiber:

The soluble fiber dissolves in water to form a gel-like material. It can help lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels. The soluble fibers are found in oats, peas, beans, apples, citrus fruits, barley, and psyllium.

Insoluble fiber:

This type of fiber promotes the movement of material through our digestive system. It increases stool bulk so that it can be of benefit to those struggling with constipation or irregular stools.

Examples of insoluble fibers are wheat flour, wheat bran, nuts, beans, and vegetables such as cauliflower, green beans, and potatoes.

Benefits of High fiber diet:

Normalize bowel movement

Lower cholesterol level

Controls blood sugar level

Helps in Weight loss

Longevity is increased.

Protein:

What is a Protein in a diet?

Proteins are made up of many building blocks, known as amino acids. Our body requires dietary protein to supply amino acids for the growth and maintenance of our cells and tissues.

The daily recommended quantity for an individual is 1 gram of protein for a kilogram of weight. There are plant and animal-based protein which vary in their quality and digestibility.

Protein is also a must for people who are engaged in physical activities like playing games and sports, weight training, cardio exercises. When a person does the workout, his muscles are exposed to contraction and stretching which results in micro-tears.

These muscle tears start recovering once the workout is finished which may take 24 hours to 48 hours and this process of recovery or repair of the muscles makes a person strong. Protein in the diet helps in the recovery of muscles effectively.

What is the major source of protein in a diet?

As mentioned earlier there are plant-based and animal-based protein. Though the animal-based food like Egg, Fish, and chicken has been a good source of protein with 9 essential amino acids, more and more people are interested in following a vegetarian diet, and also the meat is known to bring a tamasic and rajasic state of mind.

Fat:

Fat is a macronutrient which generally people think is bad for health, but we must always remember that too much or less fat both are not good for health.

Consuming Fat gives 9 calories of energy per gram and it is twice the number of calories in carbs and protein, which have 4 calories per gram, hence it is advised to consume in moderation.

The main function of fat is an energy reserve. The body stores fat, or adipose tissue, because of excess calorie consumption.

During the workout, the body first uses calories from carbohydrates for energy. After about 20 minutes, it uses calories from stored fat to keep going.

What are the types of fat?

There are several types of fat-some are good and some bad.

- 1.Saturated fat and Transfat are commonly considered unhealthy.
- 2.Unsaturated fats like monosaturated and polysaturated fat are considered healthy.

Saturated Fat:

The saturated fats are solid at room temperature like cheese, butter, coconut oil. This means baked goods can be high in saturated fats. Saturated fats are linked to high cholesterol levels and an increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Trans fat: This is also called trans-fatty acid. Trans fat is sometimes found naturally in meats or dairy, but usually in small amounts.

The food industry artificially produces the trans-fat to increase the shelf life of the product. This is done by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make the oils more solid.

One of the reasons why people are advised to prefer home-cooked food is that the fast-food restaurants often use them in deep fryers because partially hydrogenated oil does not have to be changed as often as regular.

Examples of trans fat Foods: Cake, pie and cookies, biscuits, French fries, frozen meat, ice creams, popcorns.

The monosaturated and polysaturated fats are not saturated with hydrogen molecules.

Monosaturated fat: These fats are liquid in room temperature examples are canola, peanut or olive oil, avocados. The monosaturated fats are known to protect us from heart disease however this must be consumed in moderation.

Polysaturated fat: These fats are found in soybeans, sunflower oil, sunflower seeds, walnuts, and flax seeds.

Though good fats are essential we must consume this in moderation.

Micronutrient:

Vitamin:

The vitamins are essential nutrients that make it possible for our body to work efficiently and to remain healthy.

Most of the vitamins are supplied to our bodies through the food we consume and in few cases through supplements.

The vitamins are A, B, C, D, E, and K

Role of Vitamins:

1. The vitamins help in the production of skin, bone, and muscle.
2. Vitamins help in strengthening of the immune system.
3. They are also helpful in converting the food we eat into energy.
4. Maintenance and repair of cells, tissues, and organs is possible due to vitamins.

There are mainly two types of vitamins

1. Fat-soluble vitamins: The fat-soluble vitamins are usually stored in the liver and fatty tissues they tend to stay there for future use.

Example – Vitamin A, D, E, K

2. Water-soluble vitamins: Water-soluble vitamins are not stored in the body, meaning the body needs a continuous supply of them to get the required nutrients.

Example – Vitamin C, B₁/B₂/B₃/B₆/B₁₂. Pantothenic acid, Folic acid (Also known as B₉)

Minerals:

Like vitamins, our body uses minerals to keep our bones, muscles, heart, and brain function properly.

Some of the examples of minerals our body need is - Calcium, phosphorous, magnesium, sodium, potassium, chloride, iodine, sulphur, iron, manganese, copper, zinc, cobalt, fluoride and selenium.

The vitamins and minerals are available in various vegetables, fruits, cereals, and also dairy products. A proper diet must be including all the above food categories to meet the essential micronutrient in proper quantity.

Three Gunas



The Upanishads, ancient Indian scriptures compiled between 300 and 400 BC, divide food into 16 categories: 10 parts are classified as wastage, 5 parts affect the energy of the mind, and one part is vital for the intelligence. In this system, food can have positive or negative effects, depending on the immediate environment, the geographical and climatic conditions, and a person's constitution.

Yogic science recognizes three different qualities of food: sattva, rajas, and tamas. Sattva means “pure essence,” and represents the well-balanced and meditative aspect; rajas is the energy which seeks to accomplish, achieve, or create; and tamas indicates inertia and decay.

The maha gunas (qualities) are energetic forces that wave together to form the universe and everything in it.

Sattva



- lightness
- goodness
- joy

- contentment
- calmness
- serenity
- truthfulness
- generosity
- compassion
- concentration
- wisdom
- gratitude
- satisfaction
- discipline
- self-control
- pure

Sattva food are light and nourishing. It is a Guna of purity and harmony.

Rajas



- change
- activity
- movement
- restlessness
- stimulation
- hyperactivity
- sleeplessness
- attachment
- satisfaction
- desire

Rajasic food, such as onions, garlic, and pungent spices, are highly spiced and stimulating. It is a Guna of passion and manipulation.

Tamas



- dullness
- ignorance
- darkness
- inertia
- sluggishness
- lethargy
- confusion
- disorientation

Tamasic substances, such as alcohol and meats, are considered to be heavy and enervating. Junk food is a relatively new term, but its properties would certainly be categorized as *tamasic*. Consumption of those products leads to heaviness, dullness, laziness, and inertia. It is Guna of impurity and darkness.

The three gunas, each with its own unique attributes: Tamas (impurity and destruction), Rajas (passion and activity) and Sattva (purity and consciousness). Gunas are present in everything: humans, food, animate and inanimate objects. So, sattvic, rajasic and tamasic are not just related to food qualities but they are the way of life. After all, the man is what he consumes.

Sattvic food has the highest micronutrient density followed by Rajasic and Tamasic.

Every activity in our modern world is fast, and this includes activities related to food and the way we eat it. Junk food and food out of cans and packages has a tremendously negative impact on the body. The mind is as alert after a meal of *sattvic* food as it was before the food was eaten, but after meals which are largely *rajasic* or *tamasic* in nature, the mind becomes dull and sluggish. It is equally important to keep the mind healthy and the body well-nourished.

How we respond to life events depends on the specific balance of sattva, rajas and tamas in our mind. The basic nature of the human mind is sattvic, with just enough rajas and tamas to bring desires to fruition and rest. It is vital for health and happiness to keep this balance to move in progressive direction in life.

In yoga we dance between the gunas, constantly exploring how to attain and maintain most of the time the sattvic state.



What is a Sattvic diet?

Sattvic comes from word “Sattva”, which signifies pure, clean and balanced energy. Sattvic means also pure essence, and it is the purest, wholesome, fresh diet for anyone who is spiritually and health conscious. Considered to be extremely rich in micronutrients. Sattvic diet in bioenergetics view, is considered to help increase energy, produce calmness, happiness, and mental clarity. Also, it is said to be capable of enhancing health longevity and spirituality.

A Sattvic diet focuses on seasonal foods, fruits, nuts, ripe vegetables, oils, seeds, whole grains, legumes, and non-meat-based proteins.

Anyone who desires a quiet, meditative, and peaceful life will find a sattvic dietary plan worth following.

Every food that is considered in the sattvic diet is fresh, nutritious, juicy, and tasty. They are growing organically and unrefined as much as possible. Sattvic food includes a significant number of functional foods like tomatoes, red amaranth, and milk. Sattvic foods are similar to vegetarian diets, and as such, foods derived from animals are not permitted to be consumed.

High-frequency foods that are full of prana (life force) are plant based, organic, non-GMP, and from the garden or farm.

The Yogic tradition advocates exactly the lacto-vegetarian diet, strictly avoiding meat, fish, eggs. Predominantly plant-based, this diet ensures that your food gets its energy direct from the sun, the source of all life. Food should be freshly prepared and organic.

According to yogic tradition a non-vegetarian diet violates the principle of *ahimsa*, the sanctity of all living things (*nonviolence*). Sattvic foods are vegetarian and do not include foods derived from animals that have been harmed in any way. It is also important that foods are grown naturally and do not contain preservatives, artificial flavours, or additives.

Sattvic food, derived from yogic philosophy of living encourages clean eating, promotes physical strength, good health as well as prolong life. It focuses on eating foods or practising lifestyle habits which balance our emotions as well as clear out the toxins, keeping you energetic as well. It can also be a way to strengthen the body immunity. Produces happiness, calmness, and mental clarity. It could also enhance longevity, health and spirituality. According to Maha Narayana Upanishad (-5000 B.C.) it promotes a life expectancy of 100-150 years and it is recommended for saints.

Some foods have more subtle effects on the mind and your mood. Ayurveda, offer understanding, how different foods affect our physical health, mental well-being and spiritual strength. According to Ayurveda, Sattva is the pure quality of spiritual goodness and equanimity, manifested as intelligence, awareness, virtue, and joy. Sattvic food promote purity of both body and mind. A sattvic diet is intended to cultivate a calm, clear and compassionate mind.

Sattvic food are soothing, nourishing and promote and maintain a quiet, steady mind as well as help to sharpen your intellect and give you a greater sense of empathy.

Use sattvic food to bring your mind into balance, clear thinking, as well as to motivate *tamas* and calm *rajas*. In a balance state- your mind is clear. Diet is also wholly conducive to the practice of Yoga and spiritual progress.

Those who practice this dietary plan feed on nutritious foods, including fresh products, which is partly why the diet is considered to have different health benefits. The sattvic diet is rich in fiber and low in fat, thus, many yoga enthusiasts follow it.

A Yogi should always regard food as a medicine which will purify and fuel the body and mind for the maintenance of life and progress in *sadhana*.

Yogi will eat cautiously, with awareness and with a higher purpose than sensual pleasure, knowing that almost all diseases are due to irregularity of meals, overeating and unwholesome food.

Then in theme of sattvic food to consume, in place whole grains add this: whole grains and rice supply essential carbohydrates and vitamin B complex.

In dairy products add: Fresh milk and ghee maintain the mucous lining of the digestive tract and alimentary canal which is washed away by *satkarma*s practices. Milk should not be boiled too much. Excessive boiling destroys all nutrition's and vitamins.

In sweeteners, add sugar if necessary, for brain functioning as well as other body functions.

In fruits food add: Fruit diet exercises a marvellous influence upon the constitution. This is a natural diet. Fruits are tremendous energy-producers.

Practicing yoga is a good investment in health. Unlike other forms of exercise, it not burn up energy, it conserve it. With minimum of effort practitioner can get the maximum benefits.

In *Rajas*, add below: *Rajasic* foods may disturb body equilibrium as the mind become restless, uncontrollable and will strives to fulfil passion and desires.

Believes about Sattvic Diet

It is believed that Sattvic food is suitable for those who follow a yoga regime. It helps in nourishing the body and maintains a peaceful state. You stay calm and your body gets purified. Yogis should eat lacto-vegetarian diet. This is because animal protein contains too much uric acid and other toxins which are deposited in the tissues and joints. This can lead to arthritis and cancer. Good quality proteins are obtained from legumes, green leafy vegetables, and dairy products. They do not pollute internal system and are easily digestible.

How to start implement a Sattvic diet?

Following a sattvic dietary plan is not a challenging thing to do. It begins by planning the kind of meals to follow, which are expected to include a balance of carbs, protein and fats. While garlic and onions should be out of the meal plan because they tend to increase heat in the body. Fresh fruits, vegetables, dairies, legumes, whole grains, and nuts should be chosen based on their variety.

If practitioner diet was highly tamasic and rajasic before, can experience during a change some symptoms of detoxification (headaches, fatigues, skin problems). The transition toward a yogic diet can be challenging. If it happens it means that practitioner must slow down and give more time and first reduce tamasic and rajasic foods intake before ridding of all. Body and mind need time to adjust to new way of living. For best results is recommended to make the changes gradually and adjust accordingly. Everyone is different and need follow own body and needs. During the process, the most important is to let go of the old and be open on new with believes and confidence. At the beginning change can be difficult but with time, help of family and friends and strong character it will be possible to achieve lifelong. So, if diet through long time was highly Rajasic, person will be restless and unable to sit in meditation. If it was too Tamasic, can feel too heavy and dull to think with clarity. First step in transition is to avoid stimulants such as alcohol, tea, coffee and chocolate, sweets then reduce meat intake. The process can take even period of 6 months.

Foods to avoid

Yogic diet should be free from stimulants and chemicals. Yogis have to refrain from alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, artificial and processed sweeteners. These foods could divert the attention and may hinder yoga regime.

- Processed foods
- Artificial sugar
- Meat, poultry, fish
- Caffeine and alcohol
- Fried, spicy and overly cooked foods
- Added sugar
- Garlic, onion

This includes warmed-up, overcooked, rotten, and stale foods. Old, stale, reheated leftovers are also should not be consumed. Microwaved, canned and frozen products can be harmful.

They must be avoided, or else it would be considered tamasic and rajasic, and that is destructive. Processed foods are not encouraged when on this plan because freshness in whatever is consumed is essential. Those food, used in excess, creates imbalance, which leads to restlessness, hyperactivity, and anger.

Drinking a lot of water during mealtime should be avoided and drinking ice-cold water as it is too cold for the body should not have place in the sattvic diet.

Sattvic foods to consume



Foods to be consumed are expected to be cooked fresh and simple and should be combined from various sources to get the necessary nutrients that the body needs. Only what can be finished at the time should be combined from various sources to get the necessary nutrients that the body needs. Only what can be finished at the time should be prepared to avoid wastage, and when preparing any food, it should be done with love and gratitude before consumption.

It is important to eat unrefined, organic food, preferably locally produced and in season. Practitioner should be aware that eating fruits with meals may cause bloating and indigestion so better eat them separately. During a meal only a little sip of warm water is recommended. Liquids dilute enzymes and impair digestion.

Since food consumed is for the soul, to maintain a clean, true, and virtuous soul, the food also has to follow the same pattern.

-Fresh fruits and fruit juices- all fruits are sattvic.

-Fresh vegetables and vegetables juices- mild vegetables are consider sattvic.

-Dairy and non-dairy products- milk must be obtained from an animal that has a spacious outdoor environment, abundance of space, grass, water, and is treated with love and care, and is not pregnant. (ghee- clarified butter, fresh milk, plant-based milk and yoghurts, kefirs, cheese- paneer)

-Legumes, pulses, bean products- mung beans, lentils, yellow split peas, chickpeas, aduki beans, common beans, organic tofu, bean sprouts. Preparation includes splitting, peeling, grinding, soaking, sprouting, cooking and eventually spicing.

-Sprouted whole grains- rice, whole wheat, spelt, oatmeal, barley, sprouted wholegrain bread. Examples: khichdi, kheer, chapatis, porridge.

-Natural sweeteners- raw honey, jaggery, raw sugar, coconut sugar, stevia.

-Spices (cardamon, cinnamon, basil, ginger, coriander, turmeric, cumin, fennel, fenugreek, black pepper, red pepper, Himalayan salt, sea salt) in small amounts.

-Nuts and seeds- that have not been roasted and salted, need to be consumed in small portions. Almonds are highly recommended (especially when soaked in water overnight and peeled), hemp seeds, coconuts, pine nuts, walnuts, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, flax seeds.

-Cold pressed oils- good quality oils: red palm oil, olive oil, sesame oil, coconut oil, flax oil.

-Fresh herbs - ashwagandha, bacopa, calamus, gotu kola, ginkgo, jatamansi, purnarnava, shatavari, saffron, shankhapushpi, tulsi, rose.

Raw juice therapy or fasting is another way of diet Yogi practice.

Raw juice therapy is a method of treatment of disease through an exclusive diet of juices of fruits and vegetables. It is also known as juice fasting. It is the most effective way to restore health and rejuvenate the body.

During raw juice therapy, the eliminative and cleansing capacity of the organs of elimination, namely lungs, liver, kidneys and the skin, is greatly increased and masses of accumulated metabolic waste and toxins are quickly eliminated. It affords a physiological rest to the digestive and assimilative organs. After the juice fasting or raw juice therapy, the digestion of food and the utilisation of nutrients is vastly improved.

An exclusive diet of raw juices of fruits and vegetables results in much faster recovery from diseases and more effective cleansing and regeneration of the tissues than the fasting on pure water.

As juices are extracted from plants and fruits, they possess definite medicinal properties. Specific juices are beneficial in specific conditions. Besides specific medicinal virtues, raw fruit and vegetable juices have an extraordinary revitalising and rejuvenative effect on all the organs, glands and functions of the body.

The favourable effect of raw juices:

-Raw juices of fruits and vegetables are extremely rich in vitamins, minerals, trace elements, enzymes and natural sugars. They exercise beneficial effect in normalising all the body functions. They supply needed elements for the body's own healing activity and cell regeneration, thereby speeding the recovery.

-The juices extracted from raw fruits and vegetables require no digestion and almost all their vital nutrients are assimilated directly in the bloodstream.

-Raw juices are extremely rich in alkaline elements. This is highly beneficial in normalising acid-alkaline balance in the blood and tissues as there is over-acidity in most conditions of ill-health.

-Generous amounts of easily assimilable organic minerals in raw juices especially calcium, potassium and silicon help in restoring biochemical and mineral balance in the tissues and cells, thereby preventing premature ageing of cells and disease.

-Raw juices contain certain natural medicines, vegetal hormones, and antibiotics. For instance, string beans are said to contain insulin-like substance. Certain hormones needed by the pancreas to produce insulin are present in cucumber juices.

Fresh vegetables and vegetable juices are excellent source of vitamins and minerals, but also contain phytonutrients that are thought to protect against cancer. They have an alkalizing effect on the body, so should form a large part of practitioner's diet.

Health Benefits of Sattvic Diet



Considering all these varieties of foods, many health benefits can be delivered from them. For instance, whole grains have immunity-boosting properties and fibers that can help regulate your gastrointestinal tract. Spices also have antimicrobial properties which also aid digestion. For example, Brazilian nuts have monounsaturated fats, calcium, zinc, magnesium, vitamin E, and vitamin B and they also help reduce inflammation, regulate the thyroid gland, and reduce the risk of developing different kinds of cancer.

Moreover, spices like cinnamon do not just flavour food but also suitable for health. Cinnamon, for instance, contains magnesium, carbohydrates, calcium, and vitamin, which also reduce inflammation and blood sugar levels. Starch vegetables like sweet potatoes are a healthier alternative to starchy white potatoes. They contain vitamins B and C, potassium, copper, and manganese that help in the treatment of respiratory problems and fight against stomach ulcers and arthritis. Plant foods contain higher amounts of antioxidants, fibre and vitamins. They also contain phytonutrients that appear to offer protection against many cancers, assist in hormone balance, protect the health, and help reduce blood pressure.

Generally, a vegetarian diet has many nutritional benefits, of course, if it is rich in fruits and vegetables, and contains moderate amounts of seeds, nuts, whole grains, and legumes. One of the main benefits of a proper vegetarian diet is its low caloric content in relation to the bulk supplied, which helps maintain ideal weight.

Another benefit of the vegetarian diet is the much lower intake of fat, if dairy products, seeds and nuts are eaten in smaller amounts. This accounts for lower serum cholesterol levels found in vegetarians, which considerably reduces the risk of developing heart diseases and breast and colon cancer. A third nutritional advantage of the vegetarian diet is its high fibre content. Fibre, being indigestible, increases the bulk of the faeces, keeps them soft and makes them easy to expel.

The main health benefits are:

- Helping with weight loss**- diet has enough fiber and plant and low calories food.
- Reduction of chronic disease**- diet associated is with reduction in the level of risk of heart disease and high blood pressure.
- Contain whole nutrient-dense foods**- diet contained in healthy fats, protein, vitamins, fiber, antioxidants, and minerals, all of which promote proper functions in the human body.
- Improves mood**- consumption of plant-based foods may be associated with a reduced risk of depression.
- Increases energy**- food has a low glycaemic index which slows down digestion and provides the body with a steady stream of energy.
- Improves digestion**- diet promote healthier gut microbiomes.
- Boost metabolism**- plant-eaters have a high resting metabolic rate.

You become what you eat

According to the Upanishads, food is Brahman- the Divine reality. When we eat, we are unified with the environment and with each other. Our food produces energy that drives our body, shapes our emotions and affects our minds.

Eating with awareness

The Yogic way is to eat mindfully, being aware of what and where they are eating. As much as possible, mindful eating is encouraged, which means all forms of distractions must be avoided when eating.

When, sitting down to a balanced sattvic meal, it's also important to pause for a few breaths and eat all meal mindfully. Breathing deeply can often help to pacify hunger, especially when that hunger really isn't about food. Oxygen fuels the body and breathing deeply can increase your energy and sense of well-being. As you breathe deeply, you also relax, relieves stress and tension- common imitators of false hunger. Next it is important to notice the flavours of a dish and how it makes you feel. Slow down to truly enjoy your food. Then, when chewing, it must be done carefully. Portions served must be modest. A dieter on this food plan is admonished to avoid too many spices, salt, pungent, sour and bitter food, and at the same time, make sure that they enjoy the food for the taste and quality that is naturally has, instead of the added spices, seasonings and other additives. Since a person's primary reason for following a sattvic dietary plan is to enjoy a healthy mind and body, it is essential to eat according to one's dosha, that is, in correspondence to one's physical and personality traits.

“Mindful eating is about awareness. When you eat mindfully, you slow down, pay attention to the food you are eating, and savour every bite.”

Attitude towards food

Adopting a balanced, joyful approach to food is important. Enjoy it, respect it, and be grateful for it. It is a precious gift from nature. When you cook, your emotions are transferred to the food. Always prepare food with love, allowing the prana to pass to the food and nourish the people which you are feeding.

The proper way of eating

Make sure that you are comfortable when you are eating. Always sit down and eat in the place where is peaceful. If you are eating alone, be silent. If you are with people, avoid arguments and emotional issues. Eat slowly to really test the food, chew your food well and do not overeat. Keep your awareness on the act of eating.

The stomach should never be overload. It should be half filled with food, one quarter with water and one quarter with the air. Eat only up to about 75% of your stomach's potential.

Yogis should use their five organs of perception, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin, which are the gateways to the mind. For better control of the mind, the senses need appropriate nourishment. Not only food is important but also everything which is 'around'. Soothing music for the ears, soft, natural light, or beautiful, peaceful scenery for the eyes, and fresh pure air and the scent of flowers for the nose, all help to nourish the mind. The tongue needs nutritious, delicately flavored foods. The skin should be kept clean, soft, and supple. Finally, the mind must be nurtured by developing clarity of thought.

Proper way of eating mindful eating can:

- minimise inflammation in the body
- reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes
- enhance mood
- help with appropriate and healthy weight loss
- decries risk of cancer
- lower blood pressure

When to eat?

Sattvic diet not only focuses on the foods but also on eating habits and art of moderation, which are just as beneficial for a healthy diet as a type of food. The food has to be prepared mindfully and eaten slowly.

The best is to eat three meals at regular times each day and always wait until last meal is digested before eating again. Do not eat if you are not hungry and not eat large meals at night. At bedtime avoid heavier food as dairy and pulses. Practitioner must avoid eating foods before yoga practice or just before sleep. Ensure, that your stomach is empty before performing asanas or sleeping.

Rules of food preparation

The environment in which food is prepared must be clean and clutter-free. The person cooking should have taken bath and must wear clean clothes and should possess clear thoughts. The kitchen must be calm and pleasant during food preparation which enhances the quality of food being prepared.

Preparing food with a lot of care and love creates positive, energetic vibrations which gets absorbed by the food during preparation and has an overall positive impact on health. Quality of food is also enhanced by small act like- how the vegetables are cut, the way the spices are ground or even in the ways ingredients are added to the preparation.

Sattvic Diet Plan

Sattvic diet is not hard and do not have any strict rule that must be followed strictly. The dieter can mix and match the meals depending on preferences.

Breakfast- arrange at least 15-20 minutes time in the morning to eat slowly and in a relaxed environment, enjoying freshly prepared whole grains products that sustain balanced mood and energy level.

Lunch- should form the main meal of the day- including at least one cooked grain, one or more cooked vegetables, and, depending on digestion practitioner, and the season, a small serving of raw vegetables in the form of a salad. Extra protein can be provided by including tofu or beans, a small serving of soft cheese, or a dressing or condiment made with nuts or seeds.

Dinner- according to yoga and the science of Ayurveda, the evening meal should be light and easy to digest, as our digestive capacity is not as strong at night and our metabolism slows. As a result, a heavy, late evening meal may place a burden on your liver, leading to the formation of toxins, or *ama*. Eat three hours before bedtime and avoid dairy produce and big servings of pulses; soups, pastas, and stews are good options. Try these recipes and see if you wake in the morning with more energy for the day ahead.

Snacks- are not recommended in yoga, as eating between meals is thought to reduce digestive capacity and place an unnecessary burden on the body. Sweets should be used as occasional treats, and not as staple foods. Healthy snacks may be necessary from time to time. To avoid commercial products that are high in sugar, salt, and fat, try these easily prepared alternatives or snack on fruit, nuts, and seeds. Pastry products can be home-made, using non-refined sweeteners such as cinnamon, honey, maple syrup, and coconut rather than sugar, these dessert recipes are tasty, satisfying, and good for the soul.

Example of 3 days plan:

Day 1

Breakfast: Greek yogurt, with fresh fruits and muesli / oats and herbal tea.

Lunch: Salad with sweet potatoes, avocado, chickpeas, and fresh vegetables, with lemon and olive oil dressing.

Dinner: Chickpea cauliflower masala with cumin and turmeric served over brown rice.

Day 2

Breakfast: Oatmeal with nuts toppings or nut butter, cinnamon, fresh berries, herbal tea.

Lunch: Spring rolls with rice noodles, sliced veggies, basil and mint served in pad Thai

Dinner: Stir-fried vegetables with ginger, tofu, and brown rice.

Day 3

Breakfast: Green smoothie with avocado, kale, hemp seeds, ground flax seeds, chia seeds, banana, coconut water, plant-based protein mix.

Lunch: Sweet potato soup and lentil with spinach.

Dinner: Roasted cauliflower with lightly toasted pine nuts and pesto.

Snacks: Greek yogurt, raw or dry fruits, nuts, herbal tea (optionally)

It is very important that practitioner have own limits once eating, the stomach should never be overload. The food should be always source of energy and energy level after eating should be a little higher or balanced.

“Train your senses to be obedient. Regulate your activities to lead you to the goal. Hold the reins of your mind as you hold the reins of restive horse”. – The Upanishads

Downsides of a sattvic diet

Some nutritious foods are forbidden for anyone following the plan. For example, radishes are not permitted, even they contain medical and nutritional values that can be used in treating urinary infections, stomach disorders, cardiac disorders, ulcers, and hepatic inflammation.

Capsaicin is another spice that is discouraged but have potential for promoting metabolic and vascular health.

Foods like mushrooms, garlic and onions are also some other exceptionally healthy foods that are not permitted to be consumed when following sattvic diet plan because they are classified under tamasic and rajasic categories.

Dosha- Knowing Your Body Type

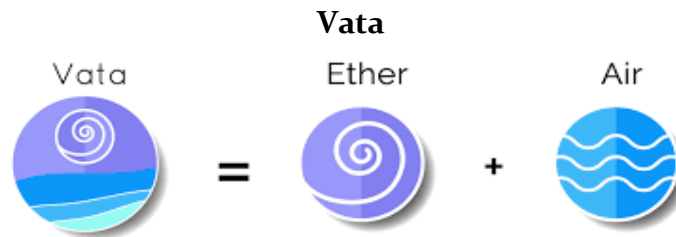


Our system should not have an excess or lack of anything in order to maintain harmony. Ayurveda, classical Indian medicine, expounds the concept of bodily doshas, consisting of air (vata), fire (pitta) and earth (kapha). It is the balance of these three qualities that maintains health. Because they are concerned with the relationship between mind and body, both Ayurveda and yoga – two facets of Tantra – assert that in order to be healthy, one must be happy and have mental clarity. Both systems emphasize preventative and maintenance medicine: participating in and taking responsibility for our health rather than relying on conventional medicine and pills. The earliest sacred scripture in which

Ayurveda is rooted is “arharva-veda”, part of the Vedic heritage which records the principles of anatomy and medicine. The key is health from within as opposed to health from without.

We can be diagnosed as predominantly one dosha, or more usually two. Being aware of our body type can help us make good choices regarding diet, exercise and environment. What we take into our bodies

can be nourishing, or a toxin if it does not absorb well. Coffee may stimulate a person who is predominantly kapha (earth) in a beneficial way; it may set a predominantly vata (air) type spinning and hyper.



Is light and thin. Enthusiastic, excitable. Has bursts of energy, performing activities quickly. Quick to grasp new information. Tends to worry and has changeable moods. Irregular hunger and digestion. Can be restless, like movements.

Element: air and ether. Vata controls movement in the body.

Exercise: needs to be soothing, grounding – Viniyoga or Sivananda, or other methods very softly approached. Needs steadiness, ample rest and lots of relaxation.

Qualities of a balanced vata: enthusiastic, happy, imaginative, alert.



Has medium strength and endurance. Has sharp intellect and likes challenges. Articulate, bold, competitive, intense with tendency towards anger.

Element: fire and water. Pitta controls metabolism in the body. Strong digestion.

Exercise: sensitive constitution, so needs calming. Medium strength of practice. All yogas. Would love Astanga Vinyasa because of the challenge, but should practise it softly, with gentle breathing. Calming pranayama is valuable. Needs a balance between rest and activity. Viniyoga and Sivananda forms are suitable.

Qualities of a balanced pitta: warm, emotional, content, confident.



Characteristics: solid, powerful, physical. Steady energy, tranquil. Slow digestion, and tendency towards obesity and laziness. Affectionate, forgiving. Heavy sleep.

Element: earth and water. Kapha controls structure in the body.

Exercise: there is a need to “stoke the fire” so Astanga Vinyasa is ideal, and Iyengar. Needs regular, strong exercise.

Qualities of a balanced kapha: tranquil, relaxed, affectionate.

How are the Gunas and Doshas connected?

-**Sattva** is connected to Pitta and associated with the ability to concentrate for long periods.

-**Rajas** is connected to Vata and movement, hence these individuals have constant desire for change.

-**Tamas** is connected to Kapha and can make an individual slow and deliberate with a tendency to dislike change.

Dosha-Guna combination of course can be different. For example, if predominantly vata is sattvic, then the qualities are creativity, clear thinking and lightness. If predominantly vata is rajasic, then will likely feel anxiety, fear, and hyperactivity. If predominantly vata is tamasic, then could feel sadness, grief and confusion.

Study

Yoga, while seeking for the harmony of the mind and body, benefits people at risk or with established Eating Disorders.

- Dittmann and Freedman, when studying body self-perception, attitudes toward food, and the spiritual benefits of 158 female yoga practitioners, observed improvements in body satisfaction and self-acceptance along with reduced disordered eating associated to their Yoga practice. Similarly, intervention programs in which Yoga is included as an alternative to the treatment of eating disorder in persons with chronic obesity have shown that 12 weeks of Hatha Yoga practice reduces compulsive eating (binge eating), lengthens mealtimes and improve food quality. Other interventions, in which problems of anorexia and bulimia nervosa are dealt with Yoga practice, also show similar results.

Vegetarian diet and influence on health.

- Findings of the China Study in 2006, indicated that the lower the percentage of animal-based foods in the diet, the greater health benefits, and that getting one's nutrients from plant-based foods reduces the development of cancerous tumours. Research shows that vegetarians living affluent countries enjoy remarkably good health and live longer than their meat-eating counterparts. They are slimmer, have lower blood pressure, and suffer less from heart disease, diabetes, dementia and many cancers.

Fasting as the way of detoxification and healing.

- Dr. Ragnar Berg, a world-renowned authority on nutrition and biochemistry observes: "During fasting the body burns up and excretes huge amounts of accumulated wastes. We can help this cleansing process by drinking alkaline juices instead of water while fasting. I have supervised many fasts and made extensive examinations and tests of fasting patients, and I am convinced that drinking alkali-forming fruit and vegetable juices, instead of water, during fasting will increase the healing effect of fasting. Elimination of uric acid and other inorganic acids will be accelerated. And sugars in juices will strengthen the heart. Juice fasting is, therefore, the best form of fasting. "

Lacto-vegetarian diet and health prevention.

- One study has indicated that lacto-vegetarians consume twice as much and vegans four times as much fibre as non-vegetarians. High fibre intake has been associated with decreased risks of diseases of the colon, appendicitis, cancer of the colon and rectum, hiatus hernia, piles and varicose veins. McCarrison, one of the greatest authorities on food, has outlined a perfect diet. According to him, " a perfectly constituted diet is one in which the principal ingredients are milk, milk products, any whole cereal grain or mixture of cereal grains, green leafy vegetables and fruits. These are the protective foods. They make good the defects of other constituents of the diet, protect the body against infection and disease of various kinds, and their use in sufficient quantity ensures physical efficiency. " Vegetarianism is thus a system based on scientific principles and has proved adequate for the best nutrition free from the poisons and bacteria of diseased animals. It is the best diet for man's optimum, physical, mental and spiritual development.

Conclusion

The sattvic diet is an essential part of yoga. It plays an integral function in maintaining a pure soul as well as a peaceful state. The plan emphasizes organic and fresh foods and the avoidance of foods that contain chemicals. Since the vegetarian diet has many health benefits, the sattvic diet, which shares similarities with vegetarianism, also assures many health benefits. Practically, when a person follows a sattvic dietary plan, such is considered to have higher frequencies that can help them cultivate a higher mind that understands a kind of spiritual contentment and deep truths. Organic foods from the garden or farm and non-GMO are considered high-frequency foods, while those that are frozen, fried, canned, or out of the box are considered low-frequency foods, and therefore discouraged from consumption.

Typically, the external environment that surrounds us most of the time (especially the 5 closest to us people), determines which Guna will be predominant and will become subordinate in a day. How we respond to life events depends on the specific balance of sattva, rajas and tamas in our mind. The basic nature of the human mind is sattvic, with just enough rajas and tamas to bring desires to fruition and rest.

Balance is the secret to perfect health. Awareness of gunas and doshas brings more sensitivity to ourselves and to our environment, and can be helpful in monitoring how balanced we are. The yogic approach to health and fitness does not separate mind from body, but asks the question, “how can I be balanced, centred in all aspects of my being?” It is as important to soothe the emotions as it is to heal backache. One thing is certain: everything, including our bodies, is continually changing – we are not fixed and immutable “sculptures”. For example, our skin completely renews itself every six weeks, and our skeleton every three months.

Food dramatically affects human well-being. It can affect the way you feel physically, how you respond emotionally, and how you manage mentally. It can boost your energy and outlook or it can drain your resources and make you feel sluggish, moody, and dispirited. To fully explore relationship with food, it's important to become aware of how different foods make us feel. Everyone is different and has different reactions on food which consume. Every one of us should be mindful and first ask a question to find the answer: How do I feel after you swallow the food? How do I feel in five minutes, in an hour, or few hours after eating? How do I feel generally throughout the day? It can give us deep insight and more understand our 'nature'.

We must remember that Diet is particularly important for healthy living and it can influence all aspects of human, even change personality of practitioner.

To be balanced, we need qualities of all three doshas. Ayurvedic clinics recommend sun salutations followed by 15 minutes gentle yoga to harmonize the doshas. The practice should always include six ways of stretching: a forward bend, backbend, side stretch, twisting, a balancing posture, an inversion (shoulderstand/headstand) with breathing awareness, equalizing inhalation and exhalation. Apart from following a proper diet, physical movement- yoga asanas are very essential for body and general health.

Summing up, Yogis strongly believe that diet is an integral part of yoga and that has high influence on the body, mind and soul. This knowledge and way of lifestyle not only helps in developing a mindful eating practice but also supports and nurtures yoga regime on a mat. It is important to remember that sattvic diet is intended to improve the mind on the first place.

Eating well is a form of self-respect and self-love.