

AYURVEDIC COOKING

The best cooking methods for healthy eating

Preparing a meal is pure creation. Transforming hard, indigestible food into a delicious meal that is easy to digest is an art form. Many factors affect the final outcome including the mental state of the cook, the quality of the ingredients, the combination of the ingredients, the cooking method, the type of pan and the source of heat. Cook with love and reap the rewards!

Cooking Methods

The vibration of the heat affects the vibrational quality of the food; quick and light cooking creates more dynamic food whilst slow and low heat cooking creates a more mellow and grounded meal.

Generally speaking, more watery food is better for thin and dry vata types and less good for heavy set kapha types; oily food is better for vata and the less good for hot pitta types who are prone to having oily skin and kapha types who carry too much fat, and drier food is better for kapha less good for vata. These are based on degrees of moistness, oiliness and dryness.

Steam - makes the meal soft and moist and enhances the flavours of the vegetables. Benefits vata, pitta and kapha.

Water Saut - makes the meal more watery, softer. Benefits vata. Also fine for pitta and kapha.

Stir-fry - adds heat and vitality to a meal. Can aggravate pitta.

Oven Cooking - more of a drying and heating effect on foods. Baking, rather than roasting is better for reducing kapha as this is a more drying. Roasting is a bit oily and can aggravate pitta and kapha.

Heat Sources For Cooking:

Fire - this method is not always practical these days, but when done properly a wood fire gives an excellent even heat for cooking.

Gas - has the great advantage of being able to be quickly turned up or down. It is a good quality of heat.

Electricity - a bit more of an aggressive form of heat, but extremely practical.

Aga / Range - being slow and steady, this is best form of heat for consistent and even cooking.

Microwave - microwaves work differently to other forms of cooking. The microwaves create a change in polarity within the food molecules which generates a friction that warms the food up. This activity also changes the molecular structure of the food, creating unnatural by-products along the way.

Microwaves transform one type of amino acid, L-proline, into a form that can harm the nervous system and kidneys. Microwaves have been banned in Russia since 1976. There are numerous studies showing microwaves cause increased carcinogens in foods, increased free-radicals, low haemoglobin and white blood cell counts. Ayurveda does not recommend using microwaves due to the denaturing of the prana in the food.

Cooking pans:

It is best to cook in a thick bottomed, heavy pan that evenly distributes the heat and reduces the chances of burning.

Glass or ceramic pots are excellent clean sources for cooking.

Avoid cooking in aluminium, thin, Teflon, synthetically coated pans as they contain toxins that can leach into food.

Cast Iron adds a strong metallic taste and increases iron content. Do not leave food in the pot or cook acidic foods (tomatoes, vinegar, lemons) or the food will go black.