

The Ritual of Taste

We trust that this simple guide with recipes will encourage an interest in food preparation and cooking from ancient India. The traditional methods practised for centuries form the basis of these recipes and are known as Vedic cooking.

The joys of eating meals that are simple to prepare and based on sound principles will become an understanding of food guided by taste.

The effect will be distinct, subtle and

gentle.

The Guide covers basic principles, ingredients and methods that underpin the dictum: 'Health begins in the Kitchen'.

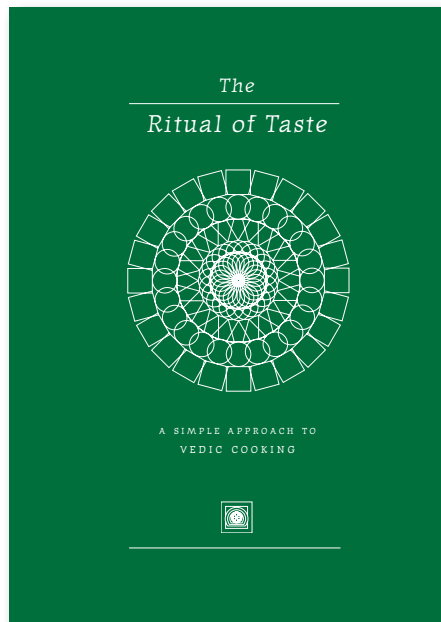
The Vedic approach will enable you to nourish and satisfy everyone as well as help to establish good eating habits for life.



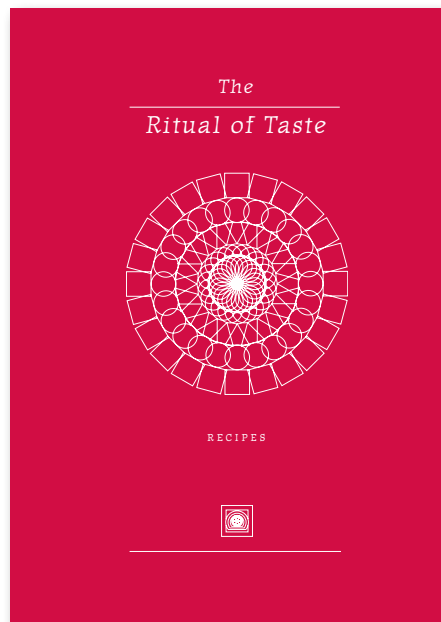
The Recipes require little preparation with simple kitchen tools and suit a modern lifestyle. However, the results satisfy even the most discerning palate. The tastes will restore your faith in the senses.

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We trust that this simple guide will encourage an interest in food preparation and cooking from ancient India. The traditional methods practised for centuries form the basis of this guide and are known as Vedic (way-dik) cooking.

We need to leave well alone the anxiety of diets and conflicting opinions about food in general. The joys of eating meals that are simple to prepare and based on sound principles will become an understanding of food guided by taste.

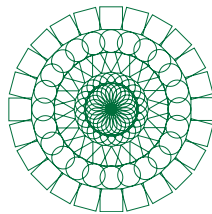
Do not change your diet. Instead, begin by discovering the effect of tastes that will occur within hours or days, if not immediately. The effect will be distinct, subtle and gentle.

Noticing reveals available energy, felt as lightness of body, alertness and wellbeing. Indeed, becoming intimate with these signals by way of attention may lead us to consider and discover their source.



*"You do not need medicine if your diet is right
and it is not medicine you need
when your diet is wrong"*

Ancient Indian proverb



*Health begins in the kitchen
Digestion actually starts with
the aromas of cooking*

The Vedic Tradition

Some say that the Vedic tradition of India has a practical history of some 50,000 years or more. Whatever the period, however, it is clear that this tradition was first written down about 5,000 years ago. This was just before the epic Mahabharata war, involving everyone, took place.

This culture was guided by the fundamental insight that we and our environment are really one. This was realised in practice with direct observation and a capacity to communicate with the intelligences and powers of nature. The principles they established illustrate the wisdom and understanding of their original vision. They concern a life of harmony for the health and wellbeing of all existence. Vedic cooking accords with these ancient principles, and reflects the original observation and understanding: that all is one in life appearing as many.

Today, however, Nature displays the consequences of collective ignorance everywhere; our uncertain struggle for health and happiness, an increasingly polluted environment and an uncertain food-supply.

All these suggest ignorance of the fundamentals of life. In other words, our activity has covered up our original insight and available knowledge. Many layers of notions have accumulated and now present a bewildering and awesome spectacle.

A return to fundamentals might simply mean taking note of the senses to discover that an unhealthy, diseased environment makes it impossible for human beings to be healthy and free from disease.

The Vedic Tradition

Health is always understood by the ease, comfort, happiness and taste for good living that we experience. The question is will our food nourish, heal and restore us or poison us all? The vibrant life-giving energy of fresh food is modified considerably by:

- how, when and where it is grown
- the processing and distribution for sale
- the treatment in the kitchen
- when and how it is absorbed

Deliberate modifications in the name of economics include:

- chemical fertilisers and pesticides used to support mono-farming
- pharmaceuticals used to maintain farm animals
- commercial food processes involving heat, vacuum, freezing, microwaves, irradiation and chemicals used to try to preserve appearance for market

Despite the packaging and promises, our taste reveals a lack of energy in much of our food. In the short term all this means a disturbed stomach and bowel, giving rise to incomplete digestion of food which in turn becomes sour and damaging to the body. In the longer term this situation can only promote ill-health.

We will outline taste with some basic notions that are easily verified by observing how the body absorbs food.

Direct experience by way of the five senses will provide the means for understanding food, guided by taste. Indeed further enquiry will reveal a wealth of material that only confirms the dictum: 'Health begins in the Kitchen'.

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Ingredients

Oils

The sweet taste

Fats are basically the same as oils but solid at room temperature

- Cold-pressed oil: Using a press to extract gives the highest quality and flavour as well as cost
- Semi-refined oil: Using higher pressure and temperature to extract more oil brings a loss of vitamins
- Refined oil: Whilst labelled 'pure' is an empty oil

Using solvents to extract, followed by bleaching and deodorising of the oil removes any food value. Vitamins have to be added as well as preservatives otherwise the oil will become rancid. Industrial methods to make oil solid and easier to market have produced hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated products such as margarine and enabled substitution of essential foods such as animal fats, milk, cream, cheese. These recreated oils produce many unnatural compounds such as 'trans' fats, never intended for use in the human body. The rise of modern ill-health parallels the rise in the use of processed seed and vegetable oils, particularly with snack and take-away food. Such oils are an immense profit option for the food industry.

See: Oil reference page 53 In The Kitchen Section 3.

Canola Oil

Originally called Rape Seed Oil, banned in some countries for its undesirable erucic acid but the global Agri-business has developed varieties with low levels. Used for blends of oil. Avoid products containing this oil if you can. It is everywhere.

Coconut Oil

Used in South India. Excellent oil. High in saturated fat 95%.

Recipes

Assorted

Breakfast Digestant	1
Porridge	2
Ginger Milk Tea	2
Spiced Milk Tea	2
Lassi Plain	3
Banana	3
Mango	3
Buttermilk	3
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Mint + Coconut Chutney	4
Onion Chutney	4
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KHICHARI SAUCE 1

MAKES 2 CUPS

GOOD WITH GRAINS AND FRIED FOOD



ASSEMBLE AND PREPARE ALL INGREDIENTS BEFORE COOKING BEGINS

1½ C	Yoghurt and	①	Mix well and set aside.
½ C	Water		
	or		
2 C	Buttermilk		
1 t	Salt		
1 t	Sugar raw		

2 T	Ghee or Olive Oil	②	Heat medium until hot but not smoking.
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1 t	Cumin seeds	③	Add and fry a few shades.
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10	Curry Leaves	④	Add with step 1 and bring slowly to near boil on low, stirring constantly. Do not boil as Sauce will curdle.
¼ t	Turmeric		
¼ t	Asafoetida (good pinch)		

	OPTIONAL	⑤	Add and simmer 5 minutes, stir constantly.
3 T	Besan Flour roasted and mixed well with		
2 T	Water		<i>Keeps 1 week sealed and refrigerated</i>

Take extra care to prevent boiling . . . the taste will be fine but the intended texture is lost

Reheat on medium-low and stir constantly to avoid curdling until as warm as required.

Traditionally served with Khichari but excellent with Rissoles, steamed Vegetables or Rice.

POTATOES WITH TOMATOES

SERVES 3-4



ASSEMBLE AND PREPARE ALL INGREDIENTS BEFORE COOKING BEGINS

-
- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 4 | Potatoes medium, boiled or steamed in jackets until fork-tender | ① | Cut into small pieces, set aside and keep covered. |
|---|---|---|--|
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- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---|--|
| 8 | Peppercorns black | ② | Grind to powder or roast then grind and set aside. |
| 2 t | Coriander seeds | | |
| 1 t | Fennel seeds | | |
| 4 | Cloves | | |
-
- | | | | |
|-------|------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 3 T | Coriander or Parsley chopped | ③ | Add and mix well then set aside. |
| 1 t | Ginger chopped | | |
| 1-2 t | Chilli Paste | | |
| 3 T | Water | | |
-
- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|---|
| 4 T | Ghee, Oil or Butter | ④ | Heat medium-high until hot but not smoking. |
|-----|---------------------|---|---|
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- | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---|---|
| 1 t | Mustard seeds | ⑤ | Add and cover until Seeds begin to pop and turn grey. Then lower heat slightly and add steps 2+3, mix well and fry 2-3 minutes. |
|-----|---------------|---|---|
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- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|---|-------------|
| 1 sml can | Tomatoes mashed | ⑥ | Add to mix. |
| 1 t | Turmeric | | |
-
- | | | | |
|---------|--------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 t | Garam Masala | ⑦ | Add and mix well. |
| 1/2-1 t | Chat Masala | | |
| 1-2 t | Salt | | |
-
- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | <i>If you prefer to make your own Chat Masala refer to The Ritual of Taste, Section 3, In The Kitchen, page 58.</i> | ⑧ | Add Potatoes, cover on low heat to warm through 3-5 minutes. Serve with Yoghurt or Sour Cream. |
|--|---|---|--|