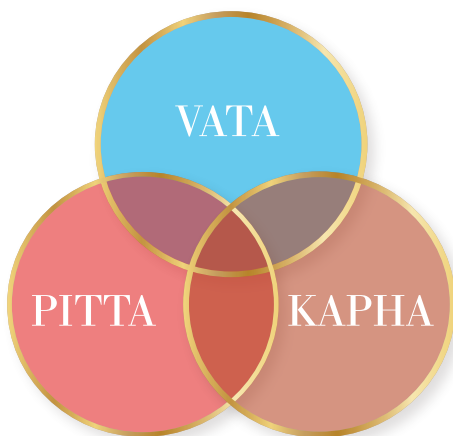


Hot weather, Cold food?



Ayurveda distinguishes three Doshas, i.e. basic functional principles: Vata, Pitta and Kapha Dasha. They operate in our physiology and in the whole of nature.



For a good and healthy functioning of body and mind, it's important that the Doshas are in balance. Many factors influence this balance, such as our work, our diet, and the seasons. In the summer, when temperatures rise, Pitta Dasha (= heat) increases in the environment. Because the body has a natural tendency to compensate, it reduces its internal Agni (= digestive fire).

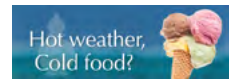
Then the blood, which is normally concentrated around the digestive organs, is directed more to the outer layers of the body, where the blood vessels are dilated for better heat dissipation. This leads to a lowering of the metabolism and a reduction

of the digestive power. When the weather is hot, any activity is more taxing and appetite is less than usual; you have surely noticed this yourself.

When the summer shows its hot side, we tend to go for cold or even ice-cold food and drink. But according to Ayurveda, this is an overreaction with an unpleasant effect, because cold food severely reduces Agni. A British study showed that an ice-cold meal takes 50 minutes longer to pass through the stomach than the same meal when it's eaten hot. After those 50 minutes, however, all digestive enzymes that were produced in the intestine in anticipation of the food have been long reabsorbed! Result: the food can no longer be properly digested and utilized and metabolic residues are formed, which Ayurveda calls Ama. Ama, when left to accumulate, can eventually cause disease.

Therefore, Ayurveda recommends food that cools gently by its character, not by its temperature. It should be at room temperature or lukewarm, so the body doesn't have to expend too much energy to warm it to body temperature. This is because anything you eat cold must first be gradually warmed up by the body, before all the digestive processes can take place. People with weak Agni may feel clear discomfort, like a twinge in the stomach area, when they eat or drink food that is too cold.

To make sure you will not experience the same, here are some recommendations from Maharishi



Hot weather, cold food?

Ayurveda on how to stay cool even when it's really hot outside:

- **Cold drinks** give us a short-term feeling of cooling. However, the body first has to warm up these cold drinks to make them digestible. As a result, the body temperature rises and you'll be sweating more than before – and feeling even more thirsty! This cycle can be broken with warm drinks. Warm drinks help to regulate body heat better.
- **Ice cream** taxes the digestion due to its low temperature. But also the combination of cream or milk with uncooked fruits can lead to abdominal pain and increased gassiness. If you aren't ready to give up your ice cream, you should keep the following things in mind: Ice cream should be viewed as a meal in its own right and is best enjoyed around lunchtime, when the digestive fire is strongest. Develop a habit of not eating ice cream in chunks, but licking it and keeping it in your mouth for a bit, so that the body can warm it up before it enters the stomach. It makes a difference if the ice cream is high-quality and not industrially produced. Sorbets, which are becoming more and more popular, are usually easier to digest.
- **Peppermint** leaves are cooling and excellent for quenching thirst. Peppermint tea, served at room temperature, soothes and refreshes when temperatures are high – as does Pitta tea: below is a recipe for Ayurvedic "ice tea" you can try out on a hot day.
- **Light food is the best choice** when the weather is hot. Cucumbers, zucchini, melon, berries, but also Basmati rice, Ghee, cottage cheese, almonds, olive oil, coconut oil and other fruits are suitable. Strict fasting days, where one only drinks water, are not beneficial in summer, as they weaken the Agni further.
- **Avoid** very salty, sour, and spicy foods, as they increase Pitta Dosha and heat in the physiology.

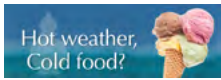
- **Be very moderate** with red meat, fish, sausages, strongly spiced cheese, and alcohol. The same goes for these herbal foods and spices that tend to raise the body temperature: Beet, tomatoes, radish, onions, garlic, bell peppers, citrus fruits, as well as hot and heating spices such as chili or pepper, and salt and vinegar.
- **In India**, where high temperatures are common, food is often spiced more strongly to stimulate the formation of digestive juices. This is possible without unnecessarily increasing Pitta Dosha by using ginger, coriander, fennel, cardamom, cinnamon and saffron, as well as herbs fresh from the garden.
- **In general:** Try to include all six tastes (sweet, sour, salty, spicy, bitter, astringent) into your meals. This significantly enhances your ability to handle the food and also increases digestive power.

Ultimately, it's all about listening to the signals of your physiology and getting a feeling for your needs. Many people intuitively have certain preferences and inclinations during the different seasons, which are perfectly logical from an Ayurvedic point of view – expressions of their own body's intelligence. We just have to learn to read the signs and interpret them correctly.

Ayurvedic "ice tea"

Here's a simple & sumptuous recipe for Ayurvedic "ice tea" by Heide-Maria Vendler from Austria. The basis is the delicate and mild Maharishi Ayurveda Pitta tea, which has a pleasant cooling effect. Rounded off by the fruity-sweet aroma of elderflower syrup and the sour-fresh taste of lemon and ginger, this Ayurvedic "ice tea" tastes great – not only on hot days!

It's clear: iced tea traditionally is a cold drink. Still, in order not to weaken the digestive power,



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Ayurveda recommends to avoid iced drinks, especially when the weather is hot. Therefore, serve our Ayurvedic “ice tea” at the appropriate temperature, i.e. cooled to room temperature.

Preparation:

- Cut slices from a lemon and a piece of fresh ginger.
- Put a Pitta tea bag with the lemon slices, ginger slices and a cinnamon stick in a heat-resistant pitcher.
- Pour boiling water over it and let it steep for 30 minutes.
- Drain the tea, add elderflower syrup to taste.
- Serve warm or at room temperature.

Enjoy your refreshing Ayurvedic “ice tea”!

Recipe © Maharishi Ayurveda Europe – with kind permission.

