

6 TASTES DIGESTION BLEND

Ayurveda (the oldest form of medicine meaning Ayur = life, Veda = knowledge) recognises six tastes, each of which play a vital role in physiology, health and wellbeing. Ayurveda sees taste as powerfully therapeutic and has a deeper significance than we are accustomed to in the West. Our taste buds do much more than simply identify tastes, they also unlock the nutritional value of foods and kick-start the digestion process.

The six tastes are **sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent**. From a modern nutritional perspective, the 6 tastes satisfy each of the major dietary building blocks. Sweet foods, for example, are rich in fats, proteins, carbohydrates, and water, whereas Bitter and Astringent foods are high in vitamins and minerals. Our brain sends the body signals when it requires energy in the form of food. By incorporating all the 6 tastes into each meal, we can ensure that these signals are adequately met. This may also help reduce food cravings or the over-consumption of certain foods.

In Ayurveda, the exact combination of tastes needed for you depends on your constitution, imbalances, age, environment, season, so tweak it until you like the taste. The same substance can taste differently, depending on where it is grown or raised, when it is harvested, whether it is stored or preserved, if and how it is cooked or processed, and how fresh or how old it is.

This mixture (of 4 ingredients) is an ancient Ayurvedic recipe that helps to stimulate all of the 6 tastes at a meal, which can help promote healthy digestion.

- Grated ginger (1/4 inch)
- Lemon juice
- Himalayan or sea salt (not table salt)
- Brown sugar (dark molasses) / honey (a little)

Mix all of the above together into a paste to your personal taste.

Add daily to foods as desired

Keep in the fridge for up to 3-4 days.

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The six tastes of Ayurveda are: -

Sweet	From the elements of earth and water Sweet is the flavour of love, sharing and compassion
Sour	Made from the elements of earth and fire. Stimulates digestion and clears dryness by stimulating saliva. Often found in citrus fruits
Salty	Made from the water and fire elements. Creates moisture and heat. A grain of salt dropped onto the tongue is moistening and stimulates digestion. Grounding for the nervous system and encourages stability. Only tiny amounts are often needed as we get large amounts from the diet.
Pungent (spicy)	A combination of fire and air, with hot, dry and light qualities. Ginger (also chillies, garlic, cayenne, cardamom) help dry excess moisture and mucus and helps stimulate metabolism.
Bitter	A combination of space and air elements. Cool, dry and light qualities. Bitters in a plant help it to defend itself and helps support the body's natural defences and cleansing processes. These receptors are at the back of the tongue. (spinach, kale, rocket, turmeric, dandelion)
Astringent	Driest flavour, made from the earth and air elements. Heavy, cold and dry. Makes the whole mouth contract and draws mucus membranes closer together. These are the tannins in plants. (Beans, lentils, quinoa, broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus, artichoke). Helps to support wound repairing and excess swelling or fluid in the body.

Dosha	Taste
Vata	Spicy, Bitter, Astringent
Pitta	Sour, Salty, Spicy
Kapha	Sweet, Sour, Salty

Increases Vata	Decreases Vata
Spicy	Sweet
Bitter	Sour
Astringent	Salty

Increase Pitta	Decrease Pitta
Sour	Sweet
Salty	Bitter
Spicy	Astringent

Increase Kapha	Decrease Kapha
Sweet	Spicy
Sour	Bitter
Salty	Astringent

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The 6 Tastes and Their Predominant Elements

Sweet (Madhura)	Earth & Water
Sour (Amla)	Earth & Fire
Salty (Lavana)	Water & Fire
Pungent (Katu)	Fire & Air
Bitter (Tikta)	Air & Ether
Astringent (Kashaya)	Air & Earth