

Although not simple to explain, Archana Joshi has defined doshas beautifully for us:

People are born with a specific constitution called, Prakruti. There are seven types of Prakruti: vata, pitta, kapha, and their combinations. Each dosha is responsible for certain bodily functions. Doshas are constantly affected by day/night, seasons, diet, exercise, environment etc. We are predisposed to the problems associated with the dosha that is predominant in our Prakruti.

Vata controls bodily motions like chewing, swallowing, nerve impulses, breathing, muscle movements, thinking, peristalsis, bowel movements, urination, and menstruation. When vata is out of balance, any of these movements may be affected.

Pitta plays a role in digestion, metabolism, temperature maintenance, sensory perception, and comprehension. Imbalanced pitta can lead to sharpness, and inflammation in these areas in particular.

Kapha plays an important part in growth (anabolism), lubrication, fluid secretions, patience, and compassion. An imbalance of kapha leads to obesity, problems associated with the lymphatic system, and allergies.

**“Health is a combination of healthy body, mind, senses, and spirit/soul,
and is much more than the absence of a disease.”**

Health is achieved by doshas, when they are in balance. Ayurveda seeks to know what brings balance within doshas. The balance can be maintained by following a diet specific for the Prakruti type, and practicing the daily Ayurvedic routine meticulously. Likewise, any imbalance can be corrected by simple lifestyle changes, dietary changes, and by treatment with herbal remedies. Archana has also suggested a few ways to improve our overall prakruti, regardless our dosha type:

breathe

Bhastrika, Kapalabhati, Anulom/vilom Pranayama: Provides quick relief from stress, anxiety, and sleeplessness. I have noticed a great increase in positive thoughts immediately after practicing. It also naturally decreases appetite, and helps with weight loss. I strongly believe Pranayama has a tremendous power to heal us if practiced diligently.

<https://www.yogaoutlet.com/guides/how-to-practice-kapalabhati-pranayama-in-yoga>

love

Acupressure points in hands: Get into a habit of pressing the acupressure points while sitting/ watching TV. This releases any obstruction in the energy flow in the body.

nourish

Palming : Brings great relaxation to eyes. Here is a link to a YouTube video... I have yet to try this, but think it would be a great addition to meditation as a double-bonus!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-OgRoCKGPA>

I found a great article on [BanyanBotanicals.com](https://www.banyanbotanicals.com), written by Melody Mischke... she speaks directly from an ayurvedic mind-set, focused on the foods to consider this winter. I have included the main food portion of the article, but the link is below if you want to reference the entire piece:

<https://www.banyanbotanicals.com/info/ayurvedic-living/living-ayurveda/seasonal-guides/winter-guide/>

A Supportive Winter Diet

Winter is actually the season when the digestive fire is strongest. The body requires more fuel to stay warm and healthy in the winter months, and the cold weather forces the fire principle deep into the core of the body—igniting the digestive capacity. Our bodies therefore crave a more substantial, nutritive diet at this time of year, and you will likely find yourself eating larger quantities of food. A supportive winter diet will be aimed at pacifying kapha without increasing vata or visa versa and, for many, appropriate winter dietary habits actually come quite naturally.

In general, you'll want to focus on eating warm, cooked, slightly oily, well-spiced foods, favoring a balance of the sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes. Drink room temperature, warm, or hot beverages and avoid iced or chilled drinks, if possible.

You can increase heat and circulation while encouraging clean and clear respiratory passages by drinking a tea boiled for five minutes with ½ teaspoon each of dried [ginger](#), [cinnamon](#), and clove. Teas made with combinations of [ginger](#), [cinnamon](#), and black pepper or [coriander seeds](#), [cumin seeds](#), and [fennel seeds](#) encourage strong digestion and can be taken after meals.

Hearty, heating vegetables like radishes, cooked spinach, onions, carrots, and other root vegetables are generally well received this time of year, as are hot spices like garlic, ginger, black pepper, cayenne, and chili peppers.

Cooked grains like oatmeal, cornmeal, barley, tapioca, rice, or kitchari make a terrific breakfast, and lunches and dinners of steamed vegetables, whole wheat breads, and mushy soups are ideal.

Legumes are generally good for kapha, but they should be well-cooked, well-spiced, and garnished with a dollop of ghee so as not to aggravate vata.

If you eat them, winter is also a great time to enjoy eggs (especially poached or hard-boiled) and meats like chicken, turkey, rabbit, and venison. In the evenings—either before or after dinner—you can treat yourself to a few ounces of dry, red wine.

And while dairy is best reduced in the winter months, a cup of hot, spiced milk with a pinch of [turmeric](#) or dried [ginger](#) and nutmeg before bed can help to encourage sound sleep and should not be overly congesting.

It is best to reduce or avoid cold, damp foods, excessively sweet foods, overly heavy or oily foods, and frozen foods. You may also find that your body responds well to an occasional one-day water or juice fast.

The following is a list of ideal winter foods:

Fruits to Favor

Apples (cooked)
Apricots
Bananas
Berries
Cantaloupe
Cherries

Dates
Figs
Grapefruit
Lemons
Limes
Mangoes

Oranges
Papaya
Peaches
Prunes (soaked)
Tangerines

Vegetables to Favor

Asparagus
Beets
Brussel Sprouts
Carrots
Chilies
Corn

Eggplant
Garlic
Green Beans
Greens (cooked)
Mushrooms
Leeks and Onions

Okra
Potatoes
Rutabaga
Spinach (cooked)
Winter Squash
Turnips

Grains to Favor

Amaranth
Barley
Buckwheat
Corn

Millet
Oats
Quinoa
Rice, Basmati

Rice, Brown
Rye
Seitan
Wheat

Legumes to Favor

Lentils, Brown
Lentils, Red
Miso

Mung Beans
Navy Beans
Tempeh

Tofu
Tur Dal
Urad Dal

Nuts and Seeds to Favor

Almonds
Brazil Nuts
Cashews
Hazelnuts

Macadamia Nuts
Peanuts
Pecans
Pine Nuts

Pistachios
Walnuts
Pumpkin Seeds
Sunflower Seeds

Dairy to Favor

Butter
Soft Cheeses

Cottage Cheese
Cow's Milk (not cold)

Goat's Milk (not cold)
Sour Cream

Animal Products to Favor (If You Eat Them)

Eggs
Freshwater Fish

Poultry
Rabbit

Shrimp
Venison

Oils to Favor

Almond Oil
Corn Oil
Flax Seed Oil

Ghee
Mustard Oil
Olive Oil

Safflower Oil
Sesame Oil
Sunflower Oil

Sweeteners

Honey

Jaggary

Molasses

Spices to Favor

- All spices will generally be supportive during the winter months.