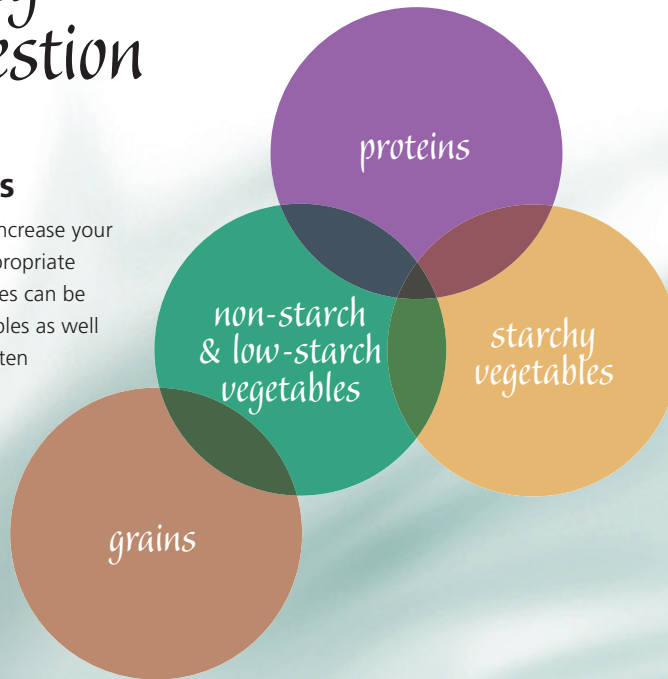


Food Combining for Easier Digestion

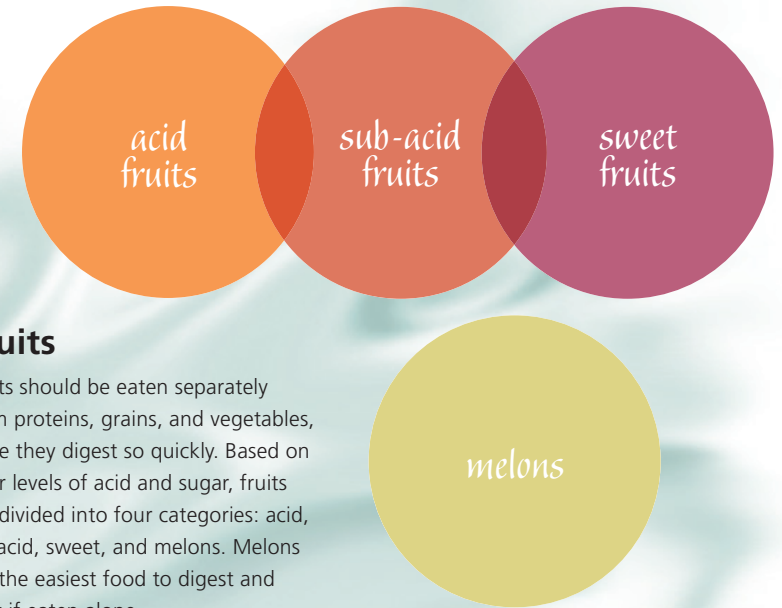
Vegetables, proteins & grains

Improve your digestion and increase your energy by combining the appropriate foods at meal time. Vegetables can be combined with other vegetables as well as proteins. Grains can be eaten alone or in combination with non-starch and low-starch vegetables. Proteins can be eaten alone and with all vegetables. For easiest digestion, have only one type of protein at a meal.



Fruits

Fruits should be eaten separately from proteins, grains, and vegetables, since they digest so quickly. Based on their levels of acid and sugar, fruits are divided into four categories: acid, subacid, sweet, and melons. Melons are the easiest food to digest and best if eaten alone.



Proteins and Fats	Grains	Starchy Vegetables	Non-Starchy and Low-Starchy Vegetables		Acid Fruits	Sub-Acid Fruits	Sweet Fruits	Melons
Avocados	Amaranth	Artichokes (<i>Globe, Jerusalem</i>)	Arugula	Mizuna greens	Clementines	Apples	Bananas	Canary
Beans	Buckwheat	Beets	Asparagus	Mushrooms (<i>Enoki, Oyster, Shiitake</i>)	Cranberries	Apricots	Cherimoya	Cantalope
Eggs	Millet	Burdock	Bok choy, pak choy, tat soy	Mustard greens	Grapefruit	Berries	Dates	Casaba
Fish	Oats	Carrots	Broccoli	Onions	Kiwis	Cherries	Dried fruit	Christmas
Milk and other dairy products	Quinoa	Celery root	Brussel sprouts	Peas	Lemons	Grapes (<i>most varieties</i>)	Fresh figs	Honeydew
Nuts	Rice	Corn (<i>fresh</i>)	Cabbages	Peppers	Limes	Nectarines	Grapes (<i>Muscat or Thompson</i>)	Musk
Olives	Spelt	Edamame (<i>fresh soy beans</i>)	(<i>red, green, napa, savoy, Chinese</i>)	Radishes (<i>red, black, daikon</i>)	Oranges	Peaches	Mangoes	Persian
Poultry	Wheat and flour products	Parsnips	Cauliflower	Scallions	Pineapples	Pears	Papayas	Watermelon
Red meat		Potatoes	Celery	Sea vegetables (<i>arame, dulse, hijiki, nori, wakame</i>)	Pomegranates	Plums	Persimmons	
Seeds		Rutabagas (<i>yellow turnip</i>)	Chard	Spinach	Strawberries			
Tofu and other soy products		Sweet potatoes	Collard greens	Sprouts	Tangerines			
		Winter squashes	Cucumbers	Summer squashes				
		Yams	Dandelion greens	Tomatoes				
			Eggplant	Watercress				
			Fennel root	White turnips				
			Green beans					
			Kale					
			Leeks					
			Lettuces					
			Mesclun greens					

Five Tastes: The Spice of Life

Traditional Chinese medicine identifies five categories of taste and recommends a balance of these flavors each day for optimum health. These tastes are sweet, salty, bitter, sour, and spicy/pungent. The flavors don't need to be consumed in exact proportion; the important thing is that you have at least some small amount of bitter, sour, and spicy foods each day to balance the larger quantities of sweet and salty flavors. The five tastes teach us that there's a whole world of taste outside of the familiar salt and sugar characters that we all know and love so well. Let's take a closer look at what they are.

Sweet

This is one of the most obvious tastes. Ice cream, cake, cookies, candy, baked goods, fruit, sodas. But the sweet taste also pertains to carrots, potatoes, rice, corn, tomatoes, red peppers, and peas. Sweet is the most readily available taste of all the five flavors. And it's the one we turn to most often for comfort. For some people, sweet is the only taste they ever develop, and it becomes their downfall. Sweet cravings seem to have a life of their own. Unless we get serious about reining them in, they will continue to live quite greedily within your body. If you find yourself plagued with sweet cravings, try sour- or bitter-flavored foods and drinks for a quick antidote. Because of their cleansing properties, foods such as lemons and dark green bitter vegetables like kale, watercress, and arugula cut the sweet cravings.

Salty

Table salt is just one example of the salty flavor. Salty foods also include miso (fermented soy paste), sea vegetables, pickled vegetables, and some cheeses. The salty flavor is the polar opposite of sweet. For this reason these two tastes frequently go together. French fries and a Coke. Beer and pretzels. For people who consume a lot of sweets, the only way they know how to balance their bodies is with salt. Salt is an important mineral, yet in this country, salt is dramatically overused. Like sugar, salt is a flavor enhancer that sneaks into almost all processed and packaged food, let alone the liberal use of the salt shaker in your own home or restaurant.

Bitter

The bitter taste exists in many green vegetables, particularly the cool-weather greens such as arugula, asparagus, collard greens, broccoli rabe, dandelion greens, kale, scallions, mint, basil, and snow peas. Bitter foods aid in digestion and are cleansing to the system. As such, they provide an excellent balance to the extremes of salt and sugar excess.

Sour

The sour taste can be found in citrus fruits like lemons, limes, and grapefruits, as well as sour pickles, sauerkraut, Granny Smith apples, and certain green vegetables like parsley and sorrel. At the taste of sour foods, most of us pucker up. Sour foods aid digestion by creating an acidic medium in the stomach that helps break down fats and protein. The sour taste also acts as an astringent and helps cut down on excessive food cravings. If you're a person who tends to crave dessert after a meal, consider drinking a glass of hot or room-temperature lemon water to ease the need for sweets.

Spicy/Pungent

Cayenne, chili, jalapeño peppers, cinnamon, fennel, ginger, garlic, radishes, turnips, and onions. Are you beginning to sweat a little? This flavor is highly stimulating to our system: It aids circulation and turns up the heat of our digestive fire. Spicy and pungent foods open our pores and make us sweat, which is one way to draw out toxins, making spicy foods particularly beneficial to people who don't get a lot of exercise. For those who are sensitive to spicy foods, you can still play with this taste by using the more mild flavors of cinnamon, fennel, sweet onions, and turnips.

Tips for Daily Practice

- Ask your body what it needs in this moment. Take cues from your body — not what you crave or your mind wants, but what you genuinely need for strong energy and mental clarity.
- Fuel up instead of fill up. Use the fuel test to notice how you feel 1-2 hours after a meal. Energy strong? Thoughts clear? Heart Open? If so, then you know that food is good fuel for you.
- Free yourself from the salt and sugar pendulum by expanding the tastes you eat every day: sweet, salty, bitter, sour, and spicy.
- Increase the amount of land and sea vegetables to keep your body and spirit feeling vibrant and light.
- Don't just feed your taste buds; let food nourish all of your senses. The more engaged you are with the smell, textures, colors, even the sounds of your food, the more deeply food will satisfy you and the less likely you will be to overindulge.
- Prepare ahead by keeping healthful snacks in your purse, briefcase, backpack, desk, or with you while you travel.
- Simplify and ease digestion through food combining practices.
- Give your body a rest from digestion so it can have a chance to repair and rejuvenate itself. A 12-hour rest from digestion is ideal, so try not to eat late in the evening.