



Traditional Chinese Medicine Nutrition

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE ENERGETICS OF FOOD

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) focuses on healing the root causes of disease in addition to treating symptoms. Chinese medicine encompasses nutrition, acupuncture, herbal medicine, mind-body exercise, and Asian bodywork.

The study of TCM energetics of food includes how specific foods relate to the seasons, the five elements, and health. This chart shows the energetic profiles and nature of certain foods.

Energy	Nature	Foods
Yin	Cold	tomato, watermelon, banana, grapefruit, seaweed, kelp, crab, clams, sprouts, watercress, lettuce, asparagus, salt
Yin	Cool	millet, wheat, eggplant, cucumber, celery, peppermint, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, peas, mung bean, pears, apple, pineapple, coconut, strawberry, orange, mango, papaya, mushrooms, egg white, cream, yogurt, cheese
Balanced Yin & Yang	Neutral	rice, corn, sweet potato, potato, turnips, carrot, cabbage, radish leaf, beetroot, soybeans, adzuki beans, peanut, cashew, pistachio, plums, figs, grapes, lemon, olives, pork, beef, quail, egg yolk, milk, sugar
Yang	Warm	black bean, onion, leeks, asparagus, sweet peppers, spearmint, peach, cherry, raspberry, walnut, pine nut, chicken, ham, goat milk, cumin, clove, fennel, garlic, ginger (fresh), nutmeg, kale, rosemary, sweet basil, coffee, vinegar, wine
Yang	Hot	black pepper, cinnamon, ginger (dried), chili pepper, mustard seed, lamb

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE ENERGETICS OF FOOD

Within Chinese medicine, each "organ" is not just the actual, individual organ, but rather a whole system unto itself that regulates many aspects and functions of the body. There is a close relationship between these organ systems, the five flavors of food, and the elements.

The practice of Chinese dietary therapy comprises of choosing specific foods to cause a desired change in health. For example, pungent or "spicy" foods tend to increase circulation and sweet foods nourish the body.

Flavors	Organs	Element	Effects	Foods
Pungent	Lung & Large Intestine	Metal	increase circulation, stimulate appetite	fresh ginger, onion, leeks, garlic, chili pepper, sweet peppers, turnips, cinnamon, mustard seed, wine
Sweet	Stomach & Spleen	Earth	neutralize toxins, lubricate & nourish the body	honey, dates, shiitake mushroom, sweet potato, potato, pumpkin, carrot, rice, wheat, corn, peanut, milk, apple, pears, cherry
Sour	Liver & Gall Bladder	Wood	astringent, bind diarrhea & heavy sweating, generate fluid	lemon, tomato, pineapple, apple, strawberry, papaya, orange, peach, olives, plums, grapefruit, mango, grapes, vinegar
Bitter	Heart & Small Intestine	Fire	clear heat, dry dampness, promote urination and bowel movements	celery, turnips, bergamot, asparagus, wild cucumber, coffee, tea leaf
Salty	Kidney & Bladder	Water	soften hardness, lubricate intestines to induce bowel movements	millet, barley, seaweed, kelp, shrimp, oyster, crabs, ham

EATING WITH THE SEASONS

SPRING

Dominant Organ: Liver

In spring, energy starts to awaken. New leaves and sprouts emerge. It's a season to eat fresh vegetables and green sprouts.

JADE GREEN SOUP

4 dried shiitake mushrooms
1 cup boiling water
6 cups vegetable stock
1 1/2 tbsp grated ginger root
1 1/2 cups thinly sliced carrots
1 1/2 cups thnly sliced leeks or onions
2 cups chopped chinese cabbage, bok choy, or kale
4 cups firmly packed, rinsed, chopped fresh spinach
1 cake tofu cut into 1/2 inch cubes (3/4 pound)
salt to taste
several drops dark sesame oil

Place the shiitake mushrooms in a heatproof bowl, cover with the boiling water, set aside for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the stock in a large soup pot. When it boils, add the ginger, carrot, onion and greens. Lower the heat and simmer for around 10 minutes. Drain the mushrooms, adding their liquid to the pot. Slice the mushrooms and add them to the soup along with the tofu and spinach. Cook for 5 minutes, add some salt and sesame oil.

Recipe Source:
Moosewood Cookbook

SUMMER

Dominant Organ: Heart

Summer is the season of exuberant growth and heat. Energy is strong and rises easily. It is best to eat foods that are cooling in nature.

MINTED LEMON-LIME WATERMELON AGUA FRESCA

1/4 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
1/3 cup coarsely chopped fresh mint
1 tablespoon grated lime rind
1 tablespoon grated lemon rind
12 cup cubed seeded watermelon
1/4 cup fresh lime juice
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Combine 1 1/4 cups water and sugar in a small saucepan; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook for 30 seconds or until sugar dissolves, stirring frequently.

Remove from heat; stir in mint, lime rind, and lemon rind. Let stand 20 minutes. Strain mixture through a fine mesh sieve over a bowl; discard solids. Place one-third each of sugar syrup and watermelon in blender; process until smooth. Pour puree into a large pitcher. Repeat the procedure twice with remaining sugar syrup and watermelon. Stir in lime and lemon juice. Serve over ice, or refrigerate until ready to serve. Stir before serving.

Recipe Source: Cooking Light

AUTUMN

Dominant Organ: Lung

In the autumn, dryness can occur easily (dry cough, dry nose) and one must nourish bodily fluids by eating food that are moistening.

CONGEE WITH PEARS

Traditionally known as "rice water", congee is eaten throughout China as a breakfast food. It is a thin porridge, usually made from rice, although other grains may be used.

1 cup rice, millet, or quinoa
6 cups water
1-2 pears, cut in half
1/4 cup goji berries (optional)

Cook in a covered pot four to six hours on warm, or use the lowest flame possible; a crockpot works well for congees and can run on low overnight. It is better to use too much water than too little, and it is said that the longer congee cooks, the more "powerful" it becomes.

Source: Healing with Whole Foods

WINTER

Dominant Organ: Kidney

In winter, energy begins to move inward. It is a time of quietude and the best season to tonify and store essence internally.

LAMB STEW

1 leg of lamb, cut into 2-inch pieces
1 cup red wine
3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3-4 cups beef or lamb stock
several sprigs fresh thyme, tied together
1/2 teaspoon green peppercorns, crushed
1/2 teaspoon whole cloves
several small pieces orange peel
4 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 tablespoons arrowroot mixed with 2 tablespoons filtered water
sea salt and pepper
1 pound turnips, quartered
1 pound carrots, peeled and cut

Marinate lamb in wine for several hours or overnight. Remove from wine and dry with paper towels. In a heavy casserole, brown the meat in batches in butter and olive oil, removing to a plate. Pour out oil and add stock, wine used in marinade and tomato paste. Bring to a boil and skim. Add peppercorns, cloves, orange peel and garlic. Return meat to dish with thyme, cover and bake at 300 degrees for several hours or until meat is tender. One-half hour before serving, add turnips and carrots. Just before serving, add arrowroot mixture, until desired thickness of sauce is obtained. Season to taste.

Recipe Source: Nourishing Traditions

NUTRITION & DIETARY THERAPY

Nutrition & Dietary Therapy is one course taught in the [Master of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine program](#) at AOMA. It is an introduction to theoretical principles and practical application of traditional Chinese dietetics. Topics include the history of nutrition, the five elements, the flavors of foods, the directional movements of foods, the energetic profiles of foods, and treatment of TCM disease patterns with dietary therapy.

This information is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

SOURCES

Healing With Whole Foods: The Tao of Food, Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition
3rd Edition, Paul Pitchford,
2002 North Atlantic Books

The Tao of Food, Richard Craze and Ronifjay,
1999 Godsfield Press

Learn more
about TCM

Contact
Admissions

Apply
Now

AOMA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE
4701 WEST GATE BLVD.
AUSTIN, TX 78745
512-492-3013
(800) 824-9987, ext. 213

WWW.AOMA.EDU

AOMA
GRADUATE SCHOOL *of*
INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE