

[Cooking for Your Health](#)

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AYURVEDA

Cooking for Your Health

Part textbook, part cookbook, this colorful guide tutors us in the Ayurvedic ways of using food as medicine

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Although *Eat, Taste, Heal: an Ayurvedic Cookbook for Modern Living*, by Thomas Yarema, M.D., Daniel Rhoda and chef Johnny Brannigan (352 pages, Five Elements Press, US \$29.95), has the word cookbook in its title, it is equally a comprehensive guide to ayurvedic medicine and nutrition. Written by a unique trio of a medical doctor who operates a holistic clinic in Hawaii, a patient led to the study of ayurveda by a debilitating health condition and an ayurvedic chef, respectively, it contains two books in one: "The Guidebook " and "The Cookbook." Drawing on knowledge of the ancient medicine of ayurveda, the authors persuasively assert that we are our own best healers, capable of leading lives of vibrant health by appropriately nourishing our bodies and souls.

The book's interactive nature will undoubtedly create a feeling in each reader that it speaks to him or her personally. Just from the first chapters of the guidebook, the reader can take a questionnaire that helps determine his or her constitutional type (dosha), ascertain whether it is in the state of imbalance, and immediately start on the road of self-healing.

Rather than classifying the foods according to their physical qualities, such as fats, carbohydrates and proteins, ayurveda categorizes foods according their effect on each dosha and presence of the six tastes (sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent and astringent). There are no dogmatic diets in ayurvedic nutrition. Eating fresh, organic foods rich in energy (or prana) and in accordance with our individual needs is a key

to health. The old premise, "You are what you eat, " is still true, but ayurveda expands the premise to read: "You are what, how, when and why you eat." It emphasizes other factors important to healthy eating, such as proper state of mind, ambiance and eating only when hungry, as well as changing seasonal nutritional needs.

The authors proclaim that, to stimulate our senses and promote digestion, food should taste delicious. In the cookbook, chef Johnny uses his cross-cultural cooking experience and training in ayurveda to create versatile, savory and therapeutic dishes. The stunning photographs will make your mouth water as you read through the recipes. The first part of the cookbook is a collection of menu options for each dosha that is fairly easy to tackle, even for a beginner cook. The expanded recipe section offers more complicated recipes that include main dishes, grains, side dishes, soups, salads, starters, snacks, dressings, sauces, condiments, breads, beverages and desserts. An entire section of the cookbook is devoted to the preparation of ayurvedic basics, such as ghee, yogurt, seasonings and stocks. Throughout the cookbook, each recipe is presented according to the specific dosha it is designed to balance. Modifications of the same recipes are suggested for the other doshas. One whole chapter is devoted to "Food as Medicine." It recommends foods for certain illnesses, pregnancy and breast-feeding, cleansing and fasting.

Both vegetarians and wanna-be vegetarians will find the book useful, since it offers vegetarian, as well as a few fish and chicken recipes to tide the meat eater through the transition. The authors recommend that a successful transition will include adopting a diet fitting your unique constitution and making gradual dietary changes.

The book is thoroughly researched and answers many important questions consumers have about organic food, genetically modified foods, safety of food additives and water. It gives advice on stocking your ayurvedic pantry, food storage and kitchen utensils and appliances. The presence of the color-coded pages, charts and tables make the book easy to follow and to refer back to. This thought-provoking, multifaceted book makes us reflect not only about our own nature and food choices, but on how these choices affect the world around us. Eat, Taste, Heal can proudly grace anyone's cookbook and holistic/self-healing collection.

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