

GHEE – A AYURVEDIC COOKING OIL

Ghee is simply clarified butter — butter with all the milk-solids removed. It's a time-honored alternative to hydrogenated oils that clog arteries and promote free-radical damage. All-natural, salt-free and lactose-free, Ghee stays fresh for weeks at room temperature. It is not hydrogenated or oxidized, and contains no transfatty acids. In Ayurveda, Ghee is considered an effective "carrier" of the lipid-soluble portion of herbs and spices to the various parts of the body. Plus, it's so flavorful and aromatic that you can use half as much as ordinary oils. Spread it on corn-on-the-cob ... use it to top a baked potato ... sauté spices in it ... pour some over hot cooked rice or pasta ... mmm, delicious!

Looking for a cooking oil that's healthy, yet doesn't mean you have to compromise on taste? Consider *Ghee* – the ayurvedic cooking medium that's been around for thousands of years. It has a rich, buttery taste and aroma, and comes with a host of benefits that are listed in the traditional ayurvedic texts.

WHAT IS GHEE?

Ghee is clarified butter – the butter oil, without the lactose and other milk solids. The word ghee is pronounced with a hard G as in GO and a long E as in GLEE. It is traditionally prepared by gently heating butter until it becomes a clear golden liquid. The lactose and other milk solids coagulate and are meticulously removed. This process also evaporates most of the natural water content, making ghee light, pure and resistant to spoilage.

BENEFITS

Benefits recognized in the ayurvedic texts

Ayurveda considers ghee the ultimate cooking oil, with diverse mind/body benefits listed in the ancient texts –

Absorption: Ghee is an integral part of the science of ayurvedic herbal formulation. Since ghee is an oil, it can bond with lipid-soluble nutrients and herbs to penetrate the lipid-based cell walls of the body. It is stated to increase the potency of certain herbs by carrying the active components to the interior of the cells where they impart the most benefit.

Preservative: Ghee does not spoil easily, and actually preserves the original freshness and potency of herbs and foods. It does not need refrigeration.

Digestion: The ayurvedic texts say that ghee helps balance excess stomach acid, and helps maintain/repair the mucus lining of the stomach.

Mild Burns: Like aloe, Ghee is said to prevent blisters and scarring if applied quickly to affected skin.

Mind: Ghee is said to promote all three aspects of mental functioning – learning, memory and recall.

Ayurvedic Balance: *Ghee* balances both Vata (the ayurvedic

mind/body operator that controls movement in mind and body) and Pitta (the operator that controls heat and metabolism).

Ghee has been given the cherished title of "Rasayana" in Ayurveda – pre-eminent herbs and foods that help overall health, longevity and well-being.

Milk, according to AYURVEDA, is nectar for the human system. When child born his or her mother automatically has her breasts full of milk to feed the new born child. Hence milk is the most natural food for human being. One may go anywhere in the world; one would find the status of milk peerless in human diet. Right from the birth a human being takes milk as his natural diet. And milk has very many other forms, which we use in our diet. Ghee is one of such forms. It can be deemed to be a super concentrated form of milk only. Especially in the Aryan used to keep large herds of cows with them. For, they believed if one has the uninterrupted supply of milk and Ghee in one's diet, one would not only live long but remain healthy also. The ancient believed that milk and Ghee are the only elixir available on the earth.

In Ayurveda, cow's milk & Ghee is believed to be the best for human consumption. It is full of nutritive qualities and ideal diet for these heart patients who suffer due to excessive cholesterol in their blood. Its regular consumption enhances physical and mental strength, keeps the body healthy and increases the potency of the body. It is not only nutritive, but helps in also taking out the impurities from the body. It makes eye rights, muscles and tendons healthy, and bone sturdy yet supple. Its taste is also very good.

Goat's milk, light on the human system, cool in effect and easily digestible. It is sweet in taste with a slightly insipid tinge. For the patients suffering from digestive disorder, it is a very effective potion to rejuvenate their body and hence good for those whose body growth period is over. For children below 10 years and for elderly people beyond 45 years of age, for the general maintenance and upkeep of their body. It can be deemed to be a sort of medicated milk.

Buffalo's milk, it is more viscous, sweet in taste and very effective to enhance the sexual potency of male. It is rather a heavy potion and difficult to digest for those suffering from Insomnia. It is more effective than even cow's milk. To digest this milk one should do a lot of exercises otherwise it would make the person obese.

Sheep's milk, it is sweet with a slightly salty tinge, heavy and especially effective to cure excess gas. It makes the person sexually more potent and fires passion. The heart patient should avoid consuming this milk. If a person is injured, or having kidney stones or diabetes, this milk is ideal for him. It produces more bile and phlegm in the body.

One of the most important milk products is GHEE. Here, by this term Ghee we mean not the hydrogenated clarified butter but pure Ghee. Although it has very great fat content, yet it is an ideal cooking medium. This is a form of naturally saturated fat, which has a very conductive effect on the human system if taken

in small quantity. This Ghee if taken with vegetable fats and proteins like pulse and grams is believed to be the ultimate tonic for human body.

Milk & Ghee used as medicine to cure the following ailments: Acidity, Anemia, Anti-dote of poison, Anti-dots of drugs (Bhang etc.), Asthma, Biliary Irruption, Boils on the tongue and palate, Blood Impurity, Bleeding Dysentery, Burning sensation of eyes, Constipation, Chronic cough, Chronic fever, Chilblains of sole, Dark complexion, Dark freckles on the face, Diarrhea, Diabetes, Epilepsy, Gonorrhoea, Gout, General Debility, Jaundice, Nose Bleeding, Natural sleep inducing tonic, Piles, Rashes due to Bilioussness.

Ghee is prized because it increases Agni without simultaneously fueling Pitta. Ghee in fact is considered excellent for balancing Pitta. Kapha types generally need to avoid too much oil of any kind, but Ghee is the best for them, too. Ghee is used: as a cooking oil. Small amounts of Ghee are good for sauteing vegetables. Ghee does not work as well as butter in baking-breads and deserts need the moisture and milk solids in regular butter.

THE RIGHT KIND OF FAT

It is generally recognized that some fat is essential for health. A totally fat-free diet can actually accelerate aging of the skin, nerves and brain cells. Without an adequate quantity of the right kind of fat in the diet, cell regeneration can be adversely impacted. Fats are needed for efficient absorption of crucial lipid-soluble vitamins such as A, E, D and K. The stomach lining, which protects the stomach from the acids it secretes to help break down foods, needs fat to maintain a healthy coating. Similarly, cholesterol in the body serves functions that are crucial to health, such as building cell membranes, and hormone and bile balance. It is only when cholesterol is damaged by harmful free radicals that it leads to clogged arteries and heart problems.

Ghee imparts the benefits of the best essential fatty acids without the problems of oxidized cholesterol, transfatty acids or hydrogenated fats. It is also resistant to free radical damage and is both salt and lactose free.

VERSATILE COOKING MEDIUM

Ghee has an excellent aroma and is so flavorful that you can use half or two-thirds as much as other cooking oils. It has a very high burning point and doesn't burn or smoke during cooking. It combines excellently with a wide variety of spices. You can use ghee to saute foods, in baking, to deep

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TRIPHALA

is one of the most famous herbal compounds in ayurvedic medicine. Triphala literally means "three fruits." The three fruits contained in Triphala are Haritaki, Amalaki and Bibhitaki. Traditionally, Triphala comes in many different forms, including the Triphala tablets.

Triphala can also be mixed with other herbs in compound formulations. Triphala Guggulu, for instance, is much more powerful than Guggulu alone.

A POWERFUL RASAYANA

There is a saying in India that if a Vaidya (ayurvedic expert) knows how to use Triphala properly, he can heal any disease. It is a highly revered Rasayana in Ayurveda.

A Rasayana is the most highly refined and powerful herbal and fruit combination in Ayurveda, and is known to promote long life and vitality. A Rasayana promotes ojas, the finest product of digestion that prevents disease, creates luster in the skin and rejuvenates the whole body.

Besides nourishing the mind and body and promoting longevity, Triphala has many specific effects. It is particularly rejuvenating for the digestive tract, and is a Rasayana for the eyes and the skin.

Triphala balances Apana Vata, the subdosha of Vata that governs the colon, lower abdomen, menstrual flow and elimination. For most people Triphala is a mild laxative, and for that reason it is excellent for clearing toxins from the digestive system. In very rare cases it has a stronger laxative effect, but usually it is an ideal bowel cleanser precisely because of its mildness. In moderate doses it is gentle, and detoxifies the body slowly. Because it is slow, you can take Triphala for longer periods of time, and then it has a deeply purifying effect. It goes deep into the physiology and releases the toxins at a much deeper level. Because it detoxifies the blood, muscle and fat tissues, it is excellent for preventing skin disease. And because it removes Ama from the fat tissue, Triphala also helps balance cholesterol. Triphala also purifies the urine and prevents urinary tract disease. It enhances all thirteen Agnis (digestive fires), especially the main digestive fire in the stomach. It pacifies Kapha and Pitta, and if taken regularly, is a powerful anti-aging Rasayana.

THE INGREDIENTS

The ingredients that make up Triphala are powerful individually. When combined correctly, synergy enhances the healing quotient exponentially.

The first ingredient is Haritaki. This fruit is mentioned in almost all ayurvedic textbooks. Charaka goes so far as to say that Haritaki is as nourishing and useful for everyone as mother's milk. He mentions that it's a Rasayana for the eyes and good for the digestive system. It helps enhance the absorption of nutrients in food. Haritaki is a yogavahini, which means that it cleanses the channels and is absorbed quickly by the body. In addition, the Charaka Samhita says that Haritaki is all-Dosha balancing. Very few fruits and herbs have this designation. Amalaki, the second ingredient, is known as a divine plant in the ayurvedic materia medica. Amalaki is also a Rasayana, which means that it has longevity-enhancing and disease-defying qualities. The Charaka Samhita says, "Amalaki is the best among rejuvenative herbs."

Amalaki fruit contains the sweet, sour, bitter, astringent and pungent tastes. The only taste missing is salty. Because it contains five out of the six tastes, it is balancing to all three Doshas.

There are many excellent qualities in Amalaki. Amalaki helps purify toxins from the body, by enhancing food absorption. When your digestion becomes stronger, the food you eat is converted to nutrition rather than staying undigested and producing impurities. The unique thing about Amalaki is that it heightens digestion, yet is not heating. That's why it's traditionally considered one of the best herbs for balancing stomach acid. By enhancing digestion, it helps eliminate toxins from the body. It also does this by strengthening and stimulating the liver. Amalaki also helps elimination and helps relieve constipation, so you can see why Triphala also has that quality.

Amalaki is an excellent source of Vitamin C, and is the most concentrated and absorbable source of the vitamin in the plant kingdom. It also contains other absorbable minerals that nourish the skin, the blood and the whole body. Because of its high content of Vitamin C, Amalaki is a powerful antioxidant. Bibhitaki, the final ingredient in Triphala, is also famous in the classical ayurvedic texts for its many good qualities.

Charaka reports that it is ideal for pacifying both Pitta and Kapha, and that it cleanses the nutritive fluid (Rasa Dhatu), the blood, the muscle and the fat tissue.

Sushruta points out the bhedana effect of this fruit, which means that because of its heating quality it clears the clogged channels almost as if drilling them clear.

So now you can see why Triphala is so powerful: it's because the three fruits that make up the formula have remarkable abilities to cleanse impurities, tone the digestive tract, nurture the body and restore health.

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