

It's a SPRING THING!
5 ways to KICK-START your Day
AND Increase your Energy!

The fundamental message of spring suggests renewal, repair and new growth.
And perhaps ... New ideas? Why not?

The idea of "cleansing" or empowering our eliminative pathways to work well means increasing our digestive "fire" as it's called in Ayurvedic terms. This can best be accomplished by starting the day with a positive thought and one of 5+ great-tasting 'tonics' described below. Experiment with old favourites or try something NEW!

Many health practitioners feel that "commercial cleansing programs" only serve to feed the billion dollar diet industry. In reality, I believe that if we shift away from meat and dairy, nurture our body with whole foods and focus on simple easy-to-digest meals, we will succeed, with the help of specific herbs, in strengthening our organ systems and achieving a "lightness of being".

Each of these 5 ideas offers a different taste and combination of benefits. Why not pick one and move through the list over a period of a month? Your body will thank you !

First and foremost; Use good quality filtered water for all of these recipes. Use organic ingredients whenever possible. Keeping in mind that the goal here is to start your day in an empowering way -- strengthening, nourishing, increasing digestive ability and supporting the eliminating organs and pathways.

1. Warm water and Lemon

1 cup of warm water and the juice of 1/2 lemon

Warming and very tasty, this combination can help relieve many digestive problems, soothe respiratory issues and contribute to lowering 'high blood pressure'. Vitamin C rich lemon promotes healthy skin and is thought to help reduce with weight reduction programmes as well.



2. Apple Cider Vinegar

1 cup of warm water - 2 tsp apple cider vinegar (organic when possible)

- optional → 1 tsp local raw honey

Apple cider vinegar is rich in minerals, of note potassium. It can be used to "flush out" uric acid crystals, the most prevalent of metabolic wastes produced in our bodies (with a tendency to accumulate in the joints) Made famous by Dr. D. C. Jarvis, apple cider vinegar has been used for a very long time for everything from weight loss to detoxification to chronic headaches and foot calluses (and athlete's foot!)

Apple cider vinegar can be purchased in supermarkets but I prefer the high quality, usually organic glass bottles found in your local health food store. It should have a pH level of 5-7. It can be found in capsules, too, but for this purpose, it's better to enjoy its wealth of nutrients in its natural liquid form.



Benefits of Apple Cider Vinegar:

- Reduce sinus infections and sore throats
- Balance high Cholesterol
- Increase stamina
- Increase metabolism
- Improve digestion & eliminate constipation
- Alleviate allergy symptoms

3. Wise Water Tea

Boil 1 litre of water. Place in a non-plastic thermos or 1 litre Mason jar with a lid. Add 1 tsp each of cumin, coriander and fennel. Let steep for about 15 minutes. Strain and drink a cup before breakfast and sip the rest throughout the day.

This combination of 3 herbs increases our digestive ability as well as extremely effective as detoxification tonic. It is perfect as a Spring Tonic, but has specific uses in herbal medicine circles; to help the body strengthen and clear toxins after cancer chemotherapy.

Cumin Seed - Rich in iron, vitamin C and E. Excellent herb for digestive upsets, detoxification, insomnia, anemia, and improvement of weak memory

Coriander Seed - Antioxidant, diuretic properties. Regulates cholesterol, excellent liver support, anti-microbial, detoxifying

Fennel Seed - High vitamin & mineral content. Excellent for digestive upsets, increases elimination, loosens phlegm, diuretic action

CUMIN SEED



CORIANDER SEED



FENNEL SEED



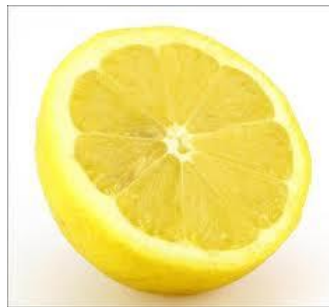
4. Lemon, Cayenne, Maple syrup

Sometimes, this combination is known as the 'master cleanse'. People make this in a large batch to enjoy for the entire day. That's an option. I am including both the "one serving" recipe and the "all day sip" version.

Ensure that you are using authentic maple syrup and not 'pancake syrup'. Do not use bottled lemon juice, but fresh lemons. The cayenne is an important addition to this mixture. It's a good source of Vitamins B & C, supports & increases blood circulation and helps to break up mucous in the body. (of great importance when releasing stored toxins.

**Single serving: 2 tbsp lemon juice (about 1/2 lemon)
2 tbsp maple syrup (preferably organic grade B)
1/10 tsp cayenne pepper (pinch of cayenne powder)
10 oz filtered water**

**To sip throughout the day: 12 tbsp lemon juice (about 6 lemons)
12 tbsp maple syrup
1/2 tsp cayenne pepper (powder)
60 oz filtered water**



5. Herbal Tea

a) Green tea

If using loose tea leaves, put about one teaspoon of green tea per five-ounce cup (150ml) of boiled water.

Alternatively, use a good quality "green tea tea bag", one per cup.

***note* Green tea contains caffeine so if you prefer 'decaf', you'll need to purchase tea bags.**

Green tea has high levels of antioxidants, which have been proven to be 'anti-aging'. Recent studies suggest that green tea is known to increase the fat oxidation process, which is an essential aid in weight loss management. Fat oxidation is the process where in the food we digest is eventually turned into essential energy for the body. By increasing this process, more energy is expended by the body, helping burn up the unwanted pounds easier. This link between green tea and its fat oxidation process is probably the reason why people have always believed that drinking this beverage helps eliminate fatigue and promotes boosts of energy.



b) ginger tea

The best way to enjoy ginger tea is to buy ginger root and make it fresh every morning.

Cut the ginger root in slices (often called 'coins'). Put 3-4 slices into a cup and add boiled warm water.

Beware of the ginger tea in packets sold in Asian food stores or originating from Asia, as most contain additives and sugar as well.

Ginger root is a great source of Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, Potassium, and Magnesium. Some people love it with a few drops of lemon juice added.

Ginger root tea helps digestive processes, relieves inflammation, reduces flatulence, eases arthritis symptoms and reduces some forms of chronic pain. It is known to minimize symptoms of the common cold, allergies, and other respiratory conditions

c) Rooibos tea

Use one tea bag or one teaspoon of loose tea per cup. For maximum health benefits, slow brew in a pot on the stove or steep in a teapot for 10-20 minutes. This longer brewing time will result in a tea, which is higher in vitamins, minerals, and anti-oxidants.

(if 5 minutes tests your patience, that's fine. Better to drink weak Rooibos than not at all!)

Rich in anti-oxidants, known in Japan as "long-life tea", Rooibos is a delicious herb to get to know. It has a soothing effect on the digestive and nervous systems. It has anti-inflammatory properties, which help to reduce histamine release so reducing allergic response. Contains magnesium, zinc, alpha-hydroxy acid, calcium, manganese and NO caffeine. Originally called "redbush tea" and first cultivated in South Africa, many commercial varieties are available in findable in tea bags or loose leaf.

Rooibos tea leaves are available in fermented (red) and unfermented (green) forms. The green rooibos tea has a higher anti-oxidant level. The fermented red rooibos has a slightly sweeter taste. I like both and sometimes add a little wedge of lemon afloat in my cup and a sprig of fresh mint.



We'll be talking a lot about ideas for busy folks – and how to include simple choices in daily life with life-enhancing results.

You've started off your day with a "kick-start" TONIC or life-enhancing tea. *Now what?*

- Choose foods that are grown locally and organically, if at all possible. Otherwise, wash thoroughly to remove toxic residues.
- Focus on high fibre fruits & vegetables, legumes & whole grains.
- Avoid all processed foods. Choose simple meals with limited ingredients.
- Drink 2 litres of pure filtered water every day.

Which foods are best for your body in Spring?

(and which should you try to avoid?):

FRUITS: Kiwi, oranges, limes, grapefruits, lemons, rhubarb (and eventually all the berries as they come into season)

VEGETABLES: Artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussel's sprouts, Bitter-leaf spring greens (such as dandelions, chicory, endive, arugula, garlic, cabbage, cauliflower, daikon, fiddleheads, parsley, parsnips, red radish, onions, sauerkraut and 'sprouts'.

GRAINS: Barley, millet, quinoa, wheat, rye.

Many of these foods are particularly helpful for strengthening and maintaining the liver and gallbladder. SPRING is THE season to support these organs.

Fibre acts like a broom to continually move food through the intestines as well as blocking absorption of substances like cholesterol. Lentils, beans, and whole grains help to naturally flush the body of what it doesn't need.

FOODS TO AVOID: Sugar and honey, fried foods, alcohol, coffee, chocolate, excessive amounts of dairy and red meat.

Experiment with making ONE day a week either

a. meatless (*Check out the posts for "meatless Mondays" on Studio Botanica's blog*)

b. an entire day of vegetables and veggie broths

c. an entire day of fruits and fruit juices

d. brown rice and steamed veggies

e. nutritious vegetarian soups

f. more of the same... i.e. EAT LIGHTLY. Give your digestive system a break.

The examples above are a kind of "mono-diet" which is easy to follow. It's simply the decision to enjoy one type of food all day, with the idea of simple meals and a gift if you will, to your entire Gastro-intestinal tract and digestive system. A gift or perhaps the idea of giving it a holiday! There is no need to starve ourselves or embark on costly commercial laxative- laden, "can't leave the house" kinds of regimens.

The most nurturing way to support the liver?

“BITTER IS BETTER”

(herbal quote from famed Ayurvedic doc Vasant Lad)

In the weeks to come, I want to expand on these SPRING THING ideas and hope you'll join me when time permits. I'll be posting a "meatless Monday" vegetarian main dish or appetizer when possible.

In the meantime, here's a favourite of my own family. I hope you enjoy it.

Bitter Greens – A simple treat!

This is especially yummy with dandelion greens, arugula, turnip greens, collard greens, wild nettle greens or garlic mustard greens.

2 tsp olive oil
1 tsp sesame oil
1 large shallot, sliced (or 1 medium onion, diced)
2-3 cloves garlic, finely minced
½ pound greens, chopped or cut into strips
½ cup vegetable stock
2 tsp tamari
3-4 tbsp sesame seeds

Heat olive oil over medium heat and immediately add shallots and cook for 1 minute. Add the garlic and then the greens. Toss gently to begin to wilt the greens. Add the tamari and the vegetable stock. Continue cooking until stock has reduced half and the greens are slightly wilted and tender. Toss once lightly with sesame oil and sesame seeds. Serves 4

Bitter Greens IDEAS :

Arugula

Bok Choy (aka Pak Choi or Choi Sum)

Baby Bok Choy

Brussel Sprouts

Cabbage (including green, red, Napa, Savoy)

Collard Greens

Dandelion Greens

Kale (many types, both green and red)

Rabe (Broccoli Raab, flowering cabbage)

Sorrel

Tops – beet greens, turnip greens etc.

Watercress

Make it fun. Experiment with this "Springtime" programme. It can be a lot of fun – It feels great to lighten up and shed the heaviness of winter. In addition to the ideas regarding tonics and specific foods, we can also benefit from an increase in movement – brisk walks in nature especially.

Finally...

- Finish your shower with cool water to tonify circulation, the lymph system and your organs.
- Invest in a loofah sponge or natural bristle brush and "dry brush" daily. Scrub until the skin is slightly pink. Slough off that 'old' skin.
- Enjoy a sauna or a fragrant steam bath if possible.
- Consistent small changes daily can add up very quickly to come together to create a difference in your energy!
- Positive thoughts crowd out fear and doubt.

I invite you to share your own adventures – favourite recipes or helpful hints – with us on my blog @ www.studiobotanica.com

Post a comment or share an idea! You are most welcome. You can email a question too → carol@studiobotanica.com

Studio Botanica's blog will feature ongoing seasonal ideas and recipes to help you on your way to feeling better & better.

I hope that you've enjoyed "It's A SPRING THING"

.....and that you'll check back often and participate by offering your own ideas and comments. It's easy to post a comment and your email address remains private. Join in.

green blessings, Carol