



Spring Cleaning

Your body is your temple—treat it to a spring cleanse and greet the green season with a fresh new feeling

By Elaine Gavalas

Last fall, while I was lecturing on seasonal yoga cleansing, a student asked if she could be on such a diet throughout the year. She felt so rejuvenated after a cleanse that she wanted to do it more often.

She wasn't the first to express these feelings. Over the years, I've found that many people who experience the benefits of a yoga cleansing diet want to make it a permanent part of their lifestyle. I've suggested that they can incorporate healthy aspects of a yoga cleansing diet into their daily lives.

Although traditional yoga cleansing is practiced

seasonally, you can derive some of its benefits year round by including sattvic (pure) foods in your diet every day. Try to eat foods such as whole unrefined grains (like brown rice, barley, and oats), beans (such as mung beans and lentils), and seasonally fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Avoid eating heavy, fried or oily foods, red meat, full-fat dairy products, and pre-packaged, refined foods such as white flour pasta, breads, and sweets, as much as possible.

The arrival of spring is the perfect opportunity to begin a cleansing diet to rejuvenate your body, detoxify your digestive system, and promote good health. For several days, try eating only sattvic foods,

YOGA SPRING STEW

This delicious, easy-to-digest dish may be eaten for a spring cleansing or anytime you want to promote good health.

Ingredients:

- ½ cup split mung beans
- 1 cup basmati rice
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander, cumin, ginger, or your favorite spice
- 1 cup chopped spring vegetables, such as dandelion leaves, broccoli rabe, or your favorite vegetables
- 7 to 8 cups filtered or spring water
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley or your favorite fresh herb

Directions:

1. Rinse the mung beans and rice well in cold water and drain.
2. In a large pot, add the beans, rice, turmeric, spice, vegetables and water, and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat, and simmer about 1 hour, or until the beans are soft and the water is mostly absorbed. Stir occasionally and add more water if necessary.
3. Garnish with fresh herbs and serve immediately.

Continued on page 83

FY: *Your sense of humor is a big part of how you communicate with the class. Is humor an important part of the practice?*

DS: Anybody who has studied with any of the old teachers of Ashtanga yoga like Pattabhi Jois or Manju Jois, Pattabhi Jois' son; or David Williams, Nancy Gilgoff, or Danny Paradise; or Saraswati, Pattabhi Jois' daughter—they're all funny. And this yoga is difficult, so it's important also to bring a lighter side to it—some joy, but you still have to get the work done... and there's no harm in enjoying ourselves while we're doing the work.

FY: *You said that as yogis, we are*

"I find yoga to be an incredible tool in helping us to possibly react differently than if we didn't do yoga—in a calmer manner."

the architects of our own practice. Can you elaborate?

DS: Each of us is really the architect of our experience in life. Of course, there are things that happen that are out of our control. The only control we have in life is how we perceive things or how we react to things. So, I find yoga to be an incredible tool in helping us to possibly react differently than if we didn't do yoga—in a calmer manner. When we practice yoga, it's almost like a little filter that helps us realize we can't control what happens to us in a day, we can only control how we react to it. So yoga helps us as sort of an equalizer, a balancing effect in our lives. 🧘

Elizabeth Kaufman is a certified yoga instructor and freelance writer in Chicago. She can be reached at mailbeth@yahoo.com.

Yoga Pantry

Continued from page 10

such as the following Yoga Spring Stew, which contains creamy mung beans, tender basmati rice, fresh vegetables, and fragrant herbs.

Enjoy fresh, succulent, spring fruits such as juicy, red strawberries, bursting blueberries, and sweet cherries. Include spring vegetables that are rich in healing antioxidants such as crunchy baby carrots, artichokes, and asparagus.

Also include detoxifying bitter greens such as broccoli rabe, radicchio, escarole, endive, and dandelion. To help stimulate your digestive fire (agni) and eliminate toxic waste (ama), drink green or black tea made with stimulating spices such as cinnamon and ginger.

Over the millennia, the rishis (ancient yoga masters) performed detoxification practices (called panchakarma) for cleansing and renewal during the change of seasons. Their panchakarma consisted of a cleansing diet and body treatments to detoxify, balance, and revitalize the body and soul. This was typically done during the spring and fall equinoxes and the summer and winter solstices.

Seasonal cleansing provided the rishis with an opportunity to practice self-discipline (niyama) and to deepen their meditation and spirituality. They believed that eating sattvic foods increased the prana (life-force) energy and helped purify the body and mind. Panchakarma helped bring heightened awareness and enlightenment.

So spring forward and re-energize yourself like the great rishis by combining a yoga cleansing diet, a simple, meditative yoga practice, and some Yoga Spring Stew. 🧘

Elaine Gavalas is a yoga therapist, exercise physiologist, sports nutritionist and author. Visit her website at www.elainegavalas.com.

Spa Europa



Yoga Italian style

Practice La Dolce Vita for a week this spring. The Spannocchia Foundation, an organic farm in Tuscany that promotes conservation and sustainable agriculture, is hosting a "Yoga, Walking, and Discovery in Tuscany" retreat from April 30 through May 6. The farm, where organic olives, grapes, grain, legumes, and vegetables are grown, is surrounded by 900 acres of a natural reserve. Yogi devotees stay at either the Villa or the Fattoria on the farm. For more information, visit www.spannocchia.org and click on "Education and enrichment programs".

Yoga Walk in Ireland

Strike a pose among the wee folk. Go Ireland is offering 7-night Yoga Week tours June 16, June 23, July 7, July 21 and September 1 that combines easy morning walks in the Green Isle's scenic Lakeland region followed by two-hour afternoon yoga sessions, suitable for both beginners and experienced yoga students. Your guide and yoga teacher is an expert Go Ireland walking guide who runs a yoga school during other seasons. You'll enjoy five afternoons of walking four to five miles at an easy pace through Killarney National Park, a wonderland of lakes, oak forests, waterfalls and boglands and take a boat trip to Inishfallen Island to visit the sixth-century Abbey. Packed lunches are provided for the walks and you'll also have a free day to explore the area's cathedrals, shops, restaurants and pubs. For more information, visit www.govisitireland.com and click on "walking tours" or call 800-722-4672.