

A Warm and Toasty Collection for Autumn

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&
REMEDIES

AUTUMN 2000

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Down to earth

AUTUMNAL HYMNS

Food symbolizes a longing for one's roots. To remember the root of our nourishment with wholesome, nutritious foods reflects a true, inner wisdom. Autumn, in particular, is an earth-filled festival, celebrating harvest rituals, previous journeys, winding paths, small and large lessons, and open introspection.

In this issue of *Veggie Life*, you'll find shining tamales stuffed with savory and sweet fillings (page 18). And fear not, authors Chalda Maloff and Russell Zears show how easy it really is to make these delectable Hispanic favorites. Also, prizewinning cookbook author Rebecca Wood talks about the outstanding healing properties of the cabbage family. From sesame mustard greens to a broccoli rabe soup with miso and tofu, her recipes and remedies are sure to warm your taste buds as well your soul (page 46).

Our food editor Shanna Masters pulls together a lovely mix of desserts including her stellar recipe for persimmon pie (page 30). For quick, easy, and purely cheerful entertaining, Laura Nilsen's piece on olives is a salute to olive lovers everywhere (page 42). Those of you who requested an article on textured vegetable protein (tvp) will be pleased to find an array of recipes using this "chameleon of a soy food" (page 36).

I am also pleased to feature a profile of Miriam Kasin Hospodar, an extraordinary Ayurvedic cook, who discovered the merits of authentic Ayurvedic cooking while traveling in India. She discusses the invaluable lessons she learned from Ayurvedic masters and shares with us an exuberant banquet of recipes that satiate the body as well as the mind (page 56).

I would also like to point you to Don Buscher's, MS, "Choosing and Using Cooking Oils," which gives the reader a detailed description of the types of oils available on the market and how to best match these oils with particular dishes (page 60). Renowned wheat-free expert Carol Fenster, PhD, examines wheat-free breads, cereals, and pastas and shows how wheat-free eating can be as exciting and even more nutritious than traditional wheat foods (page 50).



Cleaning food properly is probably anathema to many of us. That's why we are featuring an important story on the best ways to clean your food (page 64). If you're expecting a baby, be sure to read our story on nutrition for pregnant women, written by nutrition editor John Westerdahl, MPH, RD, CNS. And finally, Joanne Saltzmann, Director of the School of Natural Cookery in Boulder, Colorado, recalls the sweet foods of the autumn of her childhood (page 82).

Remember to warm your hearth this autumn with the foods of your childhood roots.

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Hospodar:

Ayurvedic Cook Extraordinaire

by Eva Herriott

Miriam Kasin Hospodar vividly recalls a memorable lesson she received during a one-year stay in India dedicated to the study of Ayurvedic cooking. The year was 1987, and after weeks of waiting, she had finally secured an interview with one of India's most renowned Ayurvedic doctors, Dr. Balraj Maharishi.

"Dr. Balraj was not only a celebrated Ayurvedic doctor, he was also known as a great saint," Hospodar recollects, while sitting in the living room of her beautiful Santa Barbara home. "He was said to be able to tell the medicinal properties of a plant just by looking at it. Needless to say, I couldn't wait to hear what he had to say about Ayurvedic cooking."

Armed with a stack of notebooks, a pillow to sit on, and various other accouterments to ensure comfort for as many hours as Dr. Balraj would care to speak, Hospodar showed up at Dr. Balraj's residence at the appointed hour. After a short wait, she was ushered in to see the great sage.

"I sat down," Hospodar recalls, "and Dr. Balraj looks at me and says, 'Always have positive thoughts when you are cooking. Negative thoughts in the mind of a cook can cause disease.'"

"And that was it," she laughs. "The interview was over!"

It may have been Hospodar's shortest lesson on Ayurvedic cooking, but not the least significant. The remark was characteristic of the holistic approach Ayurveda brings to the understanding of food and cooking, and the many ways in which these affect our health and well-being. After all, this is a holistic system of cooking in which everything is considered important for deriving proper nourishment from food. The nutritional and energetic effects of food, according to the ancient Ayurvedic knowledge, come not only from ingested food items. Rather, the consciousness of the cook, the way in which food is prepared, the meal's combination of flavors, the types of food ingested, and the way food is eaten all combine to influence and nourish body and mind. In her monumental Ayurvedic cookbook, *Heaven's Banquet* (Dutton, 1999), Hospodar details these principles and serves up a scrumptious collection of more than 700 vegetarian recipes from around the world.

Hospodar's year-long stay in India studying Ayurvedic cooking was the culmination of a life-long culinary quest. She became an avid cook at the age of five, when she began helping her mother prepare the meals for their small Russian-Jewish

family. A vegetarian since high school, cooking remained a central theme in her life throughout college, as she began exploring different vegetarian cuisines and health diets. But something was missing.

"I was passionately interested in the link between food and health," Hospodar notes, "and I explored all sorts of health diets from macrobiotics, veganism, raw foodism to a long array of ghastly weight loss diets. But they all seemed to suffer from the same limitation—there was always a division between food that was healthy and food that tasted good. All health diets seemed to have a quality of barrenness and austerity, and that didn't make any sense to me."

When Hospodar first became familiar with Ayurvedic cooking, she was relieved to discover a system where healthy food not only could taste good, but also had to taste good in order to be considered nourishing. She first learned about Ayurveda in the early 1980s through the work of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the founder of the Transcendental Meditation program, who had just launched a major endeavor to revive this ancient system of natural healthcare.

"At the time, few people in the US had even heard the word Ayurveda," says Hospodar. "Even in India, the Ayurvedic knowledge had become scattered and fragmented during the British occupation, and many Indians had lost their appreciation for their own cultural heritage and

were turning towards Western medicine. Maharishi assembled together some of India's most renowned experts on the Ayurvedic knowledge and pooled their expertise to restore the Ayurvedic knowledge in its completeness."

In addition to Dr. Balraj Maharishi, who was a leading expert on Ayurvedic pharmacology, or the science of herbs, Maharishi gathered the expertise of a large number of other Ayurvedic practitioners, including the late Dr. Dvivedi, an expert on Ayurvedic rejuvenation therapies, and Dr. Brihaspati Triguna, India's foremost specialist in pulse diagnosis (the art of reading signs of imbalance and disease in the pulse). It was in this environment that Hospodar began her study of Ayurvedic cooking, becoming one of the few westerners to receive thorough training in Ayurveda from traditional Ayurvedic physicians, herbalists, and healthcare practitioners.

"I felt fortunate to be in that environment when I first began to study the Ayurvedic principles of healthy eating," says Hospodar. "Maharishi worked closely with absolutely the top *vaidyas*, or Ayurvedic doctors, in India to restore



"All health diets seemed to have a quality of barrenness and austerity, and that didn't make any sense to me."

the Ayurvedic knowledge in its authenticity.”

According to Hospodar, the resulting system of healthcare has become known as Maharishi Ayur-Veda, or more commonly Maharishi Vedic Medicine. The latter is a more expanded system of healthcare that draws on the practical wisdom found in all the branches of the ancient Vedic literature, not just Ayurveda. Doing one’s homework when it comes to using Ayurveda is important, Hospodar notes, as an Ayurvedic practitioner can be anyone from someone who has read a couple of books and taken a seminar or two to someone who has received the year-long training it takes to master this complex science.

Miriam Hospodar’s culinary quest didn’t just take her to India. She spent more than 20 years collecting recipes during extended stays in France, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the Philippines, where she manned the kitchens of Ayurvedic spas and health centers.

The great variety of her international repertoire of recipes is matched only by her amazing medley of cooking experiences. While in Europe, she cooked for an international clientele ranging from 60 to 1500 people, with guests including European and Indian royalty, rock stars and movie stars, ambassadors, and UN representatives. Along the way, she developed great skill in transforming recipes to match the ingredients available and instructing other people in the art of cooking. At one Ayurvedic health center, Hospodar recalls teaching a volunteer staff of diverse nationalities how to make an American cheesecake out of quark (drained yogurt)! At the other extreme of her cooking experiences, she lists the Thanksgiving dinner she cooked for 50 people over a charcoal pit in the Philippines. The meal was signature Hospodar fare and typical of her great transformational culinary abilities, with such main dishes as tofu ‘turkey’ and a purple ‘pumpkin’ pie made out of

a local sweet potato variety.

Many of the recipes and experiences Hospodar gathered while working in Europe went into her first cookbook, the *Age of Enlightenment Cookbook*, which was published in 1980. *Heaven’s Banquet* takes off where this book left

The Six Tastes

Sweet

Sugar, honey, rice, milk, butter, and pasta are examples of sweet foods.

Sour

Lemons, cheese, yogurt, tomatoes, and sour fruits are examples of sour foods.

Salt

Salt and any foods where the salty taste is predominant, such as chips, pretzels, and so on.

Bitter

Leafy greens, fenugreek, and turmeric are examples of bitter food.

Pungent or spicy

Cayenne and other chillies, ginger, and radishes are examples of pungent foods.

Astringent

Beans, lentils, apples, pears, and potatoes are examples of astringent foods.

(Adapted from Heaven’s Banquet, pgs. 27-28)

off, taking a number of dishes in the classic repertoire and applying to them the Ayurvedic principles of cooking.

According to Hospodar, Ayurvedic cooking provides a tool for balancing both body, mind, and soul. It not only presents guidelines for how to match one’s diet to one’s Ayurvedic mind-body type but also gives detailed instructions on how to prepare and combine foods so that the meal provides maximum nourishment. It also tells you how to adjust your diet according to the season. In the Ayurvedic framework, food is not just a vehicle for the nourishment of the body, it’s a therapeutic vehicle for increasing health and well-being. Ayurveda systematically shows how to use food to tap into the body’s intelligence to create lifelong health.

“Following the principles of

Ayurvedic cooking has enhanced my general health and well-being in so many ways,” says Hospodar. “Essentially, it has helped me get more in touch with my body’s inner intelligence, which in turn has made me more tuned in to my body’s ever-changing dietary needs. When you are in touch with your body’s inner wisdom, you just know what’s good for you and what’s not. In my experience, Ayurvedic cooking enlivens this inner knowing in everyone.”

FENNEL COLE SLAW WITH PECAN DRESSING

Makes 8 servings

The fennel, carrots, pecans, oil dressing, and sweet and sour flavors help balance the qualities of uncooked cabbage. The general sweetness, the cilantro, and the cool temperature of the dish further the Ayurvedic concept and add a delightful nuance to the flavor.

- 1-½ cups finely shredded cabbage
- 1-½ cups finely shredded fennel
- 1-½ cups grated carrots
- ¾ cup finely chopped cilantro
- ½ cup chopped crystallized ginger
- 1 tablespoon toasted fennel seeds

Dressing

- ½ cup sesame or other mild-flavored oil
- ½ cup pecans
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons honey
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

1. In a salad bowl, combine cabbage, fennel, carrots, cilantro, ginger, and fennel seeds. Toss to mix.
2. In a blender or food processor, combine dressing ingredients and process to desired consistency. Pour dressing over salad and toss to mix.

VEGAN

PER SERVING: 220 CAL (75% from fat), 1g PROT, 18g FAT, 15g CARB, 89mg SOD, 0mg CHOL, 1.7g FIBER.

CREAMY ZUCCHINI CASHEW SOUP

Makes 7 cups

Thickened with rice, as is a classic French bisque, this silky soup is rich and satisfying.

- 6 cups sliced zucchini
(about 2 pounds)
- 1 cup sliced celery
- ½ green bell pepper, sliced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup ghee (see Glossary), butter,
or oil
- Pinch hing (optional, see Glossary)
- 1 teaspoon curry powder (optional)
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- ⅓ cup long-grain white rice
- 1-½ cups raw cashews
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

1. In a large pot, over low heat, combine zucchini, celery, bell pepper, salt, and ghee, butter, or oil, and hing and curry powder, if using. Stir mixture, cover, and cook until vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes.

2. While vegetables cook, combine rice and 2 cups of the stock in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer 15 minutes, until rice is tender. Set aside.

3. In a blender or food processor, purée cashews, slowly adding remaining stock. Transfer to a large bowl. Add cooked rice and any liquid that remains, and cooked vegetable mixture. Stir thoroughly. In a blender or food processor, purée mixture in batches, until very smooth. (*Editor's note: At this point, we found nothing at all wrong with Miriam's lovely soup, however she recommends straining out any remaining bits that were not fully puréed. Perfectionists, please proceed to step 4, others may skip to step 5.*)

4. Place a large sieve over soup pot. Strain puréed mixture through it, stirring and pressing with back of a large spoon. Scrape underside of sieve periodically. Do not skip this part! It is essential for a creamy texture. In the end, there should remain a small amount of fibrous material that pulls away from the sieve. Discard it.

5. Warm soup to serving temperature, thinning with extra stock, if necessary. Adjust salt and pepper to taste.

LACTO/VEGAN

PER CUP: 274 CAL (65% from fat), 7g PROT, 20g FAT, 21g CARB, 167mg SOD, 0mg CHOL, 2.9g FIBER.

WILTED GREEK SALAD WITH CARAMELIZED WALNUTS

Makes 6 servings

Greeks cherish their horta (wild greens), and people forage for seasonal greens to use in what is referred to as "rural salad." Feel free to use other tasty leaves such as lamb's lettuce and not-so-Greek radicchio or arugula in place of some of the spinach.

- ½ teaspoon ghee (see Glossary),
butter, or oil
- Pinch hing (optional, see Glossary)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Seasoned salt (optional)
- 2 pounds spinach leaves, cleaned
and torn into large pieces
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Pinch hing (optional)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup feta cheese or panir (see
Glossary), crumbled

1. In a medium skillet melt 1/2 teaspoon ghee, butter, or oil over low heat. Sauté hing, if using, and cumin for 30 seconds, until fragrant. Stir in walnuts and sauté for about 2 minutes, until lightly toasted.

2. Sprinkle sugar and salt over nuts and sauté, stirring constantly, for 2 to 5 minutes, until sugar melts and coats nuts. Transfer nuts to a plate to cool.

3. Dry spinach leaves very well. (They must be very dry or else a watery broth will form in the bottom of the pot.)

4. In a large wok or pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add hing, if using, and sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add spinach and sauté 30 to 60 seconds, tossing until wilted.

5. Transfer spinach to a salad bowl. Add

lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Mix well. Sprinkle with cheese and caramelized walnuts.

LACTO

PER SERVING: 227 CAL (69% from fat), 11g PROT, 17g FAT, 11g CARB, 543mg SOD, 34mg CHOL, 4.5g FIBER.

POLENTA INDIAN PUDDING WITH DRIED BLUEBERRIES

Makes 6 servings

Originally called "basty pudding," Indian pudding was an attempt by creative American colonists to replicate English wheat-thickened puddings using New World corn.

- 5 cups milk
- ½ cup polenta
- ⅔ cup dried blueberries
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- ⅓ cup molasses
- 2 tablespoons melted ghee
(see Glossary), or butter
- 1-½ teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger

1. Preheat oven to 350°, and lightly brush a 2-quart baking dish with some of the ghee or butter.

2. In a large saucepan, combine milk and polenta and bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking frequently. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 15 minutes, until slightly thickened.

3. Remove from heat and stir in blueberries, brown sugar, molasses, remaining ghee or butter, cinnamon, and ginger. Pour into prepared dish and bake about 1 hour, until very thick and with a dark brown top.

LACTO

PER SERVING: 291 CAL (35% from fat), 8g PROT, 11g FAT, 41g CARB, 118mg SOD, 39mg CHOL, 2.4g FIBER.

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Eva Herriott, PhD, writes frequently on natural medicine and other health-related topics.