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Harmonizing With the Seasons

SPRING

Spring is associated with the WOOD Element and the Chinese Liver & Gallbladder

Keywords and phrases: Upwards moving energy, growth, clear vision and purpose, decisiveness and decision-making, ambition, hopefulness, starting new projects, productivity,

Sound: Shouting **Color:** Green **Emotion:** Anger **Gift:** Smooth flow around obstacles, flexibility

Climate: Wind **Direction:** East **Time of Day:** Dawn **Time of Life:** Childhood

How can we attune with the seasonal influence of Spring?

- Food Energetics–Eat light. Lightly cooked, more raw than any other season. NOT a time for heavy, oily, and salty foods. Food should be cooked very lightly (if at all) on high heat for a short time, so the food is *not* thoroughly cooked. A quick sauté with a small amount of oil, fast steam of veggies, etc.
- Flavor–Eat foods that emphasize aspects of *yang*- upward moving, rising and expansive. The sweet and pungent (spicy) flavors have this influence on our body.
- Best Foods & Herbs– GREAT time for all the young wild spring edibles– Lamb’s Quarters, Nettles, Dandelion Lvs, Yellow Dock Lvs, Violet Lvs, Young herbs– Bee Balm, Mugwort, Tarragon, Oregano, Thyme, Sage, Chives, Mint. Also spring mustard greens, brassicas, etc. Raw carrots and beets, all the pungent cooking herbs, grains, onions and garlic, seeds, raw foods in general.
- Daily Lifestyle Practices– Create a little Spring within! Launch new projects, be decisive, get plenty of movement and exercise, get your hands in the dirt– grow something!

Wild Salad

1/2 Organic Mesclun Greens

1/2 Wild!

For the wild part here's what I like to use, in any combination...I usually go pretty heavy on the chickweed and dandelion.....

Wild Strawberry lf (*Fragraria vesca*)

Cleavers Herb young tops (*Gallium aparine*)

Dandelion lf + flower (*Taraxacum officinalis*)

Garlic Mustard lf (*Allium petiolata*)

Oxeye Daisy lf (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)

Chickweed herb (*Stellaria media*)

Field Garlic lf (*Allium sp*)

Day Lily young shoots (*Hemerocallis sp*)

Yellow Dock lf (*Rumex crispus*)

Plantain lf (*Plantago lanceolata or major*)

Wild Carrot lf (*Daucus carota*)

Chicory lf (*Cichorium intybus*)

Bee Balm young tops (*Monarda didyma*)

Mugwort young tops (*Artemesia vulgaris*)

Violet lf + flowers (*Viola sp*)

Sheep Sorrel lf (*Rumex acetosella*)

Mix all together, mix in your favorite dressing and enjoy!

Uses:

In addition to being delicious and incredibly good for you (many of these species are off the charts in vitamins and trace mineral content), wild salad is gently detoxifying, as many of these herbs are classified as liver tonics and/or alteratives, also known as blood purifiers. I consider wild salad to be a spring tonic! The bitter and sour flavors stimulate our digestion and help the liver work optimally and perform its function—just one of many—of clearing the blood of toxins and other unwanted substances. On a side-note, the liver and gallbladder also happen to be associated with spring in Traditional Chinese Medicine, definitely not a coincidence! And alteratives, or blood purifiers, help the body break down and remove metabolic waste, both through our digestive system and urinary system, and are often considered to be all-around "tonics" that promote vitality and good health, so eat up!

SUMMER

The Summer is associated with the FIRE Element and the Chinese Heart

Keywords and Phrases: Full expression of Spring *yang* energy, wake early with the sun, joyful, travel, movement, expansiveness, lightness, creativity, outward activity, heart, play, spontaneity, connection

Sound: Laughter

Color: Red

Emotion: Joy & Sorrow

Climate: Heat

Direction: South

Gift: Contentment

Time of Day: Noon

Time of Life: Young

Adulthood

How can we best harmonize with the energy of the Summer?

- Food Energetics–Food should be bright, colorful and diverse to reflect the bounty of high summer. Food should be cooked lightly and include some warming spices. Saute on high heat for short periods of time, flash steam, etc. NOT a time to eat excessive amount of food or heavy foods.
- Flavor– Pungent (spicy). This brings heat to the surface, cools our inner core, and brings our surface temperature more aligned with the outward temperature, thus making us less affected by it. On very hot days cooling foods should be taken.
- Best Foods & Herbs– To cool excessive summer heat eat fruits, especially melons, apples, pears and berries, as well as cucumbers, mung beans, salads and sprouts and herbal teas like mint, rose petal and chrysanthemum are excellent. Pungent foods that help disperse summer heat include cayenne pepper and all hot peppers, fresh ginger and black pepper. Remember, everything in moderation!
- Daily Lifestyle Practices– Wake early (be with the sun!), travel, be joyful, spend time with friends, prioritize connection, make merry!

“One misunderstanding often arises regarding the use of flavors for seasonal attunement. The flavor associated with each Element affects the organ in that Element in specific, therapeutic ways, but it is not used for general attunement to the associated season. The key to understanding this lies in the difference between specific and general uses. For example, the bitter flavor’s cooling, contracting, yin properties are of special value in treating overheated conditions of various organ systems, particularly those of the heart, so bitter is assigned to the Fire Element. To generally attune to summer, however, one must become more yang and expansive, like the summer itself, using hot spices. Fortunately, these cause cooling through sweating, by pushing yang to its extreme. (Recall that yin and yang at their extrememes transform readily into each other.) If one is attuned to the summer by being hot on the body’s surface so that the sensation of hot weather is not overbearing, and by being able to sweat when necessary, the bitter flavor will be required only occasionally for cooling, if at all.”– Healing With Whole Foods, By Paul Pitchford

Summer Soother Tea

Hibiscus 1 part

Spearmint 1pt

Lemongrass 1pt

Tulsi (Holy Basil) ½ pt

Lemon Peel ½ pt

Mix all ingredients together. A refreshing and also calming blend. 1 tsp. 1 cup Water. Steep covered 5–10 minutes. Delicious hot or iced!

LATE SUMMER

Late Summer is associated with the EARTH element and Chinese Spleen.

Keywords and Phrases: Center, the middle, balance, simplicity, harmony, tranquility, fulcrum, no extremes, unity, dreamlike, listen to the subtle currents, the tipping point inbetween the *yin* and *yang* months, gratefulness, giving, digesting & assimilating

Sound: Singing **Color:** Yellow **Emotion:** Sympathy **Climate:** Moist **Direction:** Center

Gift: Integrity, Gratefulness, Incredible ability to nourish oneself and others, community, and family

Time of Day: Late Afternoon **Time of Life:** Adulthood, Parenthood

How can we attune with the seasonal influence of Late Summer?

- Food Energetics–Avoid complicated dishes. Food should be prepared simply with a minimum or seasonings and ingredients, and should have a mild taste. Moderation in cooking time, amount of water or oil used, and cooking temperature
- Flavor– Mildly sweet
- Best Foods & Herbs– We want foods that harmonize our center and help us balance the influences of the other four seasons. To do this favor foods that are mildly sweet, round and a golden/yellow color. Good examples include corn, millet, carrots, chickpeas, winter and summer squash, potatoes, sweet potatoes, sweet rice, rice. Sweet herbs include marshmallow rt (*Althaea officinalis*), licorice/ gan cao (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*)*use organic only, NEVER wildcrafted, shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*), american ginseng/ ren shen (*Panax quinquefolius*)*use organic only NEVER wildcrafted, astragalus/huang qi (*Astragalus membranaceus*), and codonopsis/dang shen (*Codonopsis pilosula*)
- Daily Lifestyle Practices– Stick with simplicity, no extremes, daily meditation, create simple daily rituals and rhythms that are centering and grounding

NOTE: The Earth Element is also associated with the 15 days surrounding the solar holidays– Spring + Fall Equinox and Summer + Winter Solstice, specifically the 7 ½ days before and after each

FALL

The fall is associated with the METAL element and the Chinese Lungs.

Keywords and Phrases: Harvest time, pulling inward, collecting what we need and letting go of excess, what we have done that is worthy of saving (to get us through the winter), consolidating, the essential,

contracting, moving inward and downward, planning for stillness of winter, organization, rhythm and ritual, acknowledgement, moving inward after the more expansive and scattered *yang* summer months, *yin*

Sound: Weeping **Color:** White **Emotion:** Grief **Climate:** Dry **Direction:** West

Gift: Inspiration **Time of Day:** Sunset **Time of Life:** Elders

How can we attune with the seasonal influence of the Fall?

- Food Energetics– the sense of smell is associated with the Chinese Lungs, and it is through smell that we receive the “essence” of food. In the fall our appetite is stimulated by the aroma and fragrance of foods roasting. Food should be cooked for longer periods, on a low temperature of heat with a minimal amount of water.
- Flavor– The sour flavor has a contracting, consolidating effect on the body and helps it begin to align with the inward-moving energy of fall. As the fall starts progressing and moving into winter, start adding bitter and salty foods. These flavors move energy strongly downward and inward, harmonizing us with the yin elements of the fall and winter seasons.
- Best Foods & Herbs–For sour, think fermented foods like sauerkraut, pickles, sourdough bread and yogurt. Also lemons, limes, grapefruit, autumn olives, sour varieties of apples, pears and plums, olives, vinegar, cheese, aduki beans. Sour herbs include rose hips (*Rosa sp*), hibiscus (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*), elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*), hawthorn berry (*Crateagus sp*) and lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*). Bitter and salty foods will be discussed under “winter”....
- Daily Lifestyle Practices– Organize and take stock after the expansive and *yang* spring and summer months, assess and make distinctions between objects, habits, and routines which are feeding you, and those that are not. Don’t be afraid to move on from and discard this accumulated “stuff”! Plants are dying back to their roots, the “essentials” needed to life through winter– make yourself a microcosm of what is happening in nature around you. This will create space for the dreamtime and manifestation most possible in the winter.

Basic Herbal Vinegar Recipe

Plant Material of Choice

Apple Cider Vinegar (Raw if possible)

Directions: To make a vinegar with FRESH plants, chop up your plant material as much as you can and put it in a glass jar. Fill the jar loosely (not packing it in), and completely cover the herb with your vinegar of choice. Give it a little stir to remove air bubbles and top-off. Put a layer of wax or parchment paper between the lid and your vinegar, since it will corrode the plastic lining of most lids and the metal too. Let your vinegar steep for at least 4

weeks. Then strain out and store in an amber glass jar or in any glass jar just out of direct sunlight, since this can degrade the medicinal properties. Some folks say vinegars last just a year, but I have seen them last much longer...I generally give them a shelf-life of at least 2-3 years. Mineral-rich herbs are often made into vinegars, such as nettles, chickweed, raspberry lf, red clover, dandelion lf and horsetail). Also the pungent and aromatic culinary herbs also make very delicious and healthful vinegars- try basil, rosemary, thyme, sage, tarragon, or oregano...

Fire Cider

1 Quart Organic Apple Cider Vinegar (Use Raw if you can!)

¼ cup fresh horseradish, grated

½ cup fresh onion, chopped

1/8 cup-1 head fresh garlic (to taste), chopped

½ cup fresh ginger, grated

½ cup fresh burdock rt, chopped

1 small cayenne pepper (or about 1 tsp dried)

WARNING! Do not touch your eyes or any other mucous membrane after making this unless you wore gloves!

Directions: Chop-up all the ingredients, using organic if possible, and combine with the apple cider vinegar in a jar. Cover the top with wax paper (since the vinegar will corrode metal) and then put the lid on over that. Let sit 4-8 weeks, shaking often. Strain and store out of direct light, will last at least a year. Other nice additions include burdock root and for spices- oregano, thyme, sage, rosemary, cumin, coriander, fennel and honey.

Uses: Antiviral, antibacterial, anti-fungal, expectorant, immune-stimulant, decongestant, liniment, cardiovascular tonic. Nearly every ingredient is antibacterial, and garlic and ginger additionally are antiviral, making this mixture a natural antibiotic! Fire Cider increases your white blood cell count and stimulates immune response. It is also a respiratory aid and will help break-up congestion in the lungs. To help soothe a painful, drier cough or sore throat, add honey and about 1 tsp fire cider to a cup of warm water and drink as a tea, 2-3 cups/day while symptoms persist. Also very helpful for sinusitis and allergies to relieve sinus congestion, sinus headaches and copious mucous discharge. Also a circulatory stimulant, both internally and topically as a liniment for bruises, strains and injuries. Fire Cider is also a cardiovascular tonic for high cholesterol and to prevent arteriosclerosis, and for heart health in general. As a general tonic to prevent cold and flu as well as its many other uses, take about 1 tsp 1-2 x/day mixed in water or straight. If you are coming down with a cold or flu or already sick, increase dosage to 1/2-1 shotglass of Fire Cider anywhere from 1-5x/day, diluted or straight. Since this formula is so hot and spicy in nature precaution should be taken for those with chronic heartburn, acid reflux, gastric ulcers, IBS, Crohn's Disease, sensitive stomach. Stop taking 2 weeks before and after surgery because of blood-thinning effects.

WINTER

The winter is associated with the WATER element and the Chinese Kidneys.

Keywords and Phrases. End of all the seasons, receptive, introspective, rest, going deep, within, internal, meditation, manifestation, endless possibility, gathering, wisdom, seed/gestation, listening, storing-up physical energy, *yin*

Sound: Groan **Color:** Blue, Black **Emotion:** Fear **Climate:** Cold **Direction:** North

Gift: Wisdom, Courage, Will (personal power) **Time of Day:** Midnight **Time of Life:** In the Womb

How can we best harmonize with the seasonal influence of the Winter?

- Food Energetics–The Chinese Kidneys “open to the ears” and the sounds of voices in the kitchen and the sounds of cooking nurture us and stimulate our appetites. Food should be cooked for long periods of time on low temperature– think roasting, soups, stocks, stews, and so on.
- Flavor– Salty and bitter foods harmonize us with the seasonal influences of winter. They are centering, consolidating, sinking/downward-moving and heighten our capacity for storage (physically!). Additionally these foods are cooling, driving cool energy to our outer, exterior, layer– keeping our cores warm– so we notice the cold less! But if you a person who tends to run very cold, you should include some warming foods in your diet.
- Best Foods & Herbs– The bitter taste is generally found in foods in combination with other flavors. Some good examples are lettuce, watercress, dark leafy greens, rye, oats, quinoa and amaranth. Some bitter herbs include dandelion rt and burdock rt. Also, many of culinary herbs– in addition to being fantastic winter immunity herbs– are also bitter in nature. Cook with them– a lot! Examples include rosemary, oregano, sage, thyme and basil. The salty taste can be found in miso, sea vegetables (seaweed is an *excellent* food for the winter), soy sauce and anything that has salt added to it (use sea salt!). Herbs that are considered “salty” are the mineral-rich ones, think mineral salts. Example include nettles (*Urtica dioica*), alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), raspberry lf (*Rubus ideas*), dandelion lf (*Taraxacum officinalis*), horsetail (*Equisetum sp*), parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*), violet lf (*Viola sp*) and chickweed (*Stellaria media*)
- Daily Lifestyle Practices– Rest, be open and receptive, listen and dream, manifest

Winter Harmonizing Tea

Nettles 1 part

Raspberry lf 1 pt

Red Clover blossoms ½ pt

Tulsi (Holy Basil- *Ocimum sanctum*) ½ pt

Spearmint ½ pt

A nourishing and immune-boosting blend. Helps one harmonize with the natural seasonal influences of winter. 3 tbsp. 1 qt water. Steep at least 4 hours, up to 12 hours if possible. Strain. Drink throughout the day.

Beef Stock aka “Bone Broth” (Adapted from www.westonaprice.org)

Ingredients:

About 4 pounds beef marrow and knuckle bones

1 calves foot, cut into pieces (optional)

3 pounds meaty rib or neck bones

4 or more quarts cold filtered water

1/2 cup vinegar

9 cups (at least) of frozen vegetable cuttings from freezer OR 3 cups each of onion, celery and carrots

Garlic

LOTS of fresh or dried herbs (Especially good are basil, rosemary, thyme, oregano and sage)

1 Bunch parsley (opt)

Directions. Place the knuckle and marrow bones and optional calves foot in a very large pot with vinegar and cover with water. Let stand for one hour. Meanwhile, place the meaty bones in a roasting pan and brown at 350 degrees in the oven. When well browned, add to the pot along with the vegetables. Pour the fat out of the roasting pan into the pot. Add cold water to the pan, set over a high flame and bring to a boil, stirring with a wooden spoon to loosen up coagulated juices. Add this liquid to the pot. Add additional water, if necessary, to cover the bones; but the liquid should come no higher than within one inch of the rim of the pot, as the volume expands slightly during cooking. Bring to a boil. A large amount of scum will come to the top, and it is important to remove this with a spoon. Once it has come to a boil, turn down to as low as your stove will go, a very low simmer, and cook for at least 12 and as long as 72 hours. Just before finishing, add the parsley and simmer another 10 minutes. You will now have a pot of rather repulsive-looking brown liquid containing globs of gelatinous and fatty material. It doesn't even smell particularly good. But don't despair. After straining you will have a delicious and nourishing clear

broth that forms the basis for many other recipes in this book (Nourishing Traditions). Remove bones with tongs or a slotted spoon. Strain the stock into a large bowl. Let cool in the refrigerator and remove the congealed fat that rises to the top. Transfer to smaller containers and to the freezer for long-term storage.

Uses. Stock contains minerals in a form the body can absorb easily—not just calcium but also magnesium, phosphorus, silicon, sulphur and trace minerals. It contains the broken down material from cartilage and tendons—stuff like chondroitin, sulphates and glucosamine, now sold as expensive supplements for arthritis and joint pain. It supports adrenal function and can help turn around “adrenal fatigue” and low energy, libido and even pre-mature aging.

The 5 Phases Creation & Control Cycles

Creation Cycle:

WOOD burns to make FIRE , whose ashes decompose into EARTH, where are born and mined METAL, which enrich WATER which nourishes trees (WOOD)

Control Cycle:

WOOD is cut by META, FIRE is extinguished by WATER, EARTH is penetrated by WOOD, METAL is melted by FIRE, WATER is channeled and contained by EARTH

Favorite Resources

The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Classic

Nourishing Traditions By Sally Fallon

Staying Healthy with Nutrition By Elsom M Haas, MD

Staying Healthy with the Seasons By Elsom M Haas, MD

“Living Medicine”- Larken Bunce, Clinical Herbalist

The Complete Book of Ayurvedic Home Remedies By Vasant Lad

The Yoga of Herbs By Vasant Lad

Healing with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition By Paul Pitchford

The Way of Herbs By Michael Tierra

www.nourishedkitchen.com

www.westonaprice.org

Identifying and Harvesting Edible and Medicinal Plants in Wild (and not so wild) Places By
"Wildman" Steve Brill

Botany in a Day By Thomas J Elpel

Uses of Plants by the Indians of the Missouri River Region By Melvin R Gilmore

Invasive Plant Medicine By Timothy Lee Scott

Edible and Useful Wild Plants of the United States & Canada By Charles Francis Saunders

Stalking the Wild Asparagus & Stalking the Healthful Herbs By Euell Gibbons

Peterson's Field Guide to Edible Plants

