

A Traditional Ayurvedic “Cleanse”

This is a general overview of the guide found at [Banyan Botanicals](#). You can find the comprehensive guide here: [Banyan Botanicals](#) Also it is highly recommended to get your body profile with their free dosha quiz – you can take that [here](#).

In this overview we will be referring to the 21-day ‘cleanse’. One of the things to especially note about cleansing in Ayurveda is the attention to supporting the body holistically by first removing things which cause imbalances. There are many inflammatory responses just from basic living, eating foods, etc. When we take a step back and provide the body with foods that calm the inflammatory response we are supporting the body in being able to resolve why there are imbalances to begin with. This usually results in a long-term resolution compared to many common ‘detox’ cleanses which are focused on pushing detox pathways without consideration for nurturing the core digestive environment, what Ayurveda calls ‘fire’.

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The Four Phases of a Cleanse

A traditional Ayurvedic cleanse involves four distinct phases, each of which plays an important role in the process:



The Length of Your Cleanse

Length of 'Cleanse'			
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
• 7 days	• 7 days	• 7 days	• 3 mo

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What To Expect

Planning For Your Cleanse

Your cleanse will be far more successful if you take some time to plan ahead. Be proactive, intentional, and consider the following factors as you prepare for your cleanse:

Choose Your Timing

While this cleanse is workable at any time of year, it will be especially beneficial at the junction between seasons, when our bodies are already ripe with a sense of transition. In particular, the periods surrounding the fall and spring equinoxes are especially supportive of cleansing. The more completely you can clear your schedule for the entirety of your cleanse, the better. It is also important to minimize your exposure to stress for the duration of your cleanse. At a minimum, focus on making the days of active cleansing as obligation-free as possible. The best way to do this is to schedule active cleansing during a time when you can be a bit of a hermit and stay home most days. Preferably, you would not be working during the active cleansing phase at all, but if that is unrealistic for you, we recommend scheduling the first days of active cleansing over your weekend so that you can get familiar with the routine before you are juggling active cleansing and work obligations together. In general, eliminate any unnecessary obligations. Ideally, you would give yourself as much unstructured time to rest as possible for the entire length of your cleanse, but this is especially critical during the days of active cleansing.

Additional Considerations for Menstruating Women

A menstruating woman should schedule her cleanse around her cycle to ensure that she is not bleeding during the active cleansing phase. If her period comes unexpectedly, she can continue on the kitchari diet, but should suspend all other practices (abhyanga, nasya, triphala, etc.) until her menstruation is complete.

Next Steps

Once you have found a timeframe that feels like it will work with your time off and your unavoidable responsibilities, put your cleanse on the calendar, noting which days correspond with each phase of the cleanse. Next, come up with a plan to acquire as many of the necessary supplies as possible in advance of your start date (see our recipes and shopping lists at the end of the article). Once you are cleansing, it is best not to be running around gathering supplies; instead, you will want to focus your energy on the process of detoxification and renewal.

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Phase 1: The Preparation Phase

This phase is all about cleaning up your diet and lifestyle in order to prepare for an effective cleanse. During the preparation days, you will want to eliminate (or at least dramatically reduce) your use of coffee, caffeine, tobacco products, alcohol, and any recreational drugs. At the same time, you will be reducing your intake of fast foods, processed foods, meat, refined sugars, and sweets. Focus instead on eating as many simple, whole foods as possible (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds). This will set the stage for a more productive and beneficial cleanse, and will help your body ease into detox mode.

Phase 2: The Active Cleansing Phase

This is the heart of the cleanse. During this time, you will be eating a monodiet of very simple, cleansing foods such as kitchari. The diet is substantive enough that you can maintain your essential responsibilities, but it simultaneously resets the digestive system, supports the elimination of toxins, and balances vata, pitta, and kapha. During this phase of the cleanse, practices such as abhyanga (Ayurvedic self-massage with oil), gentle exercise, yoga, pranayama (yogic breathing practices), and taking supportive herbs can enhance the impact of the cleanse.

Freshly prepared foods are best, so you'll want to cook your oatmeal and kitchari fresh each day—at whatever time works best with your schedule. While you'll want to avoid eating leftovers from previous days during this phase of the cleanse (and all throughout, if you can manage), it is acceptable to prepare all of your food for the day first thing in the morning. Garnishes such as cilantro chutney and sesame seed chutney can usually be kept for several days without issue.

It is not uncommon to experience mild constipation during this phase of the cleanse. If your bowel movements slow in frequency or volume, or if your stools become more difficult to pass, some of the things below can be very helpful:

- Drink plenty of warm, hydrating fluids (like warm water and rehydration tea), away from meals.
- Increase the quantity of ghee (or other high-quality oils) in your diet; you can garnish everything with a little extra ghee.
- If you are eating cooked vegetables, eat more of them.
- Consider drinking a cup of mung broth before bed.
- Start with 1 part whole mung beans and 8 parts water. Cook them in much the same way as you would kitchari—adding ghee, spices, carrots, etc. When the beans are cooked, strain the soup and drink only the broth.
- Be sure to take Triphala about a half an hour before bed to support the proper functioning of the colon.
- Take 2 Triphala tablets with a glass of warm water, or if you prefer a powder, steep ½-1 teaspoon Triphala powder in a cup of freshly boiled water for 10 minutes. Cool and drink.
- If you have tried all of these measures and still feel constipated, consider adding some soaked prunes, soaked raisins, a ripe banana, or prune juice to your diet first thing in the morning, at least 30 minutes before any other food.

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Making Supportive Lifestyle Choices

- Keep your activities as quiet and mindful as possible.
- Surround yourself with things that you find uplifting and nourishing.
- Minimize stress and exposure to frantic or disturbing environments.
- If intense emotions arise during or after your cleanse, greet your emotions with compassion, observe them with detached awareness, and allow them simply to move through—honoring yourself in the process.
- REST as much as possible. You can ensure that the bulk of your energy is devoted to cleansing by minimizing the number of resources that your body allocates elsewhere.

Morning Routine During the Active Cleansing Phase

- Rise early so that you can complete your morning routine before breakfast.
- Sip 8–16 ounces of hot water to cleanse the system and to awaken the digestive capacity.
- Gentle Exercise
- Slow, gentle movements will support cleansing; more than that can be counterproductive.
- This is not a time to push yourself.
- Consider walking, tai chi, qigong, or a grounding yoga practice such as vata-pacifying yoga
- Eat Breakfast
- Simple Oatmeal or Kitchari: as much as desired (however do not overeat)
- **See Oatmeal & Kitchari recipes towards the end of this document**

Diet During the Active Cleansing Phase

- Eat Kitchari throughout the day, as desired, allowing at least three hours between meals and aiming to have a total of three meals per day. Eat enough to feel satisfied but do not overeat.
- You can garnish your kitchari with Fresh Coriander Chutney or Sesame Seed Chutney. (see recipes below)
- It is best to avoid snacking, but if you need a little something extra, you can enjoy some fresh fruit, a few raw nuts, or a couple of slices of avocado.
- It is very important not to feel deprived during your cleanse. Be sure to eat enough food and enough variety that you truly feel satisfied and at peace with the process.
- If the monodiet is causing a sense of deprivation, do not eat kitchari for breakfast. Have Simple Oatmeal instead. You can also vary the vegetables that you use in your kitchari from day to day. If you are still struggling, try steaming your vegetables and serve them as a separate side dish, garnished with a little melted ghee, a squeeze of lemon juice, and a pinch of salt. Or, have a side of 1/2 avocado with a sprinkle of salt and lemon juice.
- Try not to eat anything after 7 p.m.
- Drink at least 8–12 cups of room temperature, warm, or hot fluids each day to ensure adequate hydration and to help flush toxins as they are released.
- Ideally, most of your fluids should be taken between meals.
- Appropriate fluids include water, CCF Tea, Rehydration Tea, and detox teas: drink as much of any of these as you like.

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Evening Routine During the Active Cleansing Phase

- Triphala Tea – especially if having constipation
- About a half hour before bed, steep 1/2 teaspoon Triphala powder in a cup of freshly boiled water for ten minutes. Cool and drink.
- Or, take two Triphala tablets with a glass of warm water.
- Retire for the Night by 10 p.m.
- Sleep is the body’s best time to detox so be sure to get plenty of rest throughout the cleanse.

Phase 3: The Reintroduction Phase

After you complete the active cleansing phase, your body will still be processing the toxins that were stirred into circulation. And your digestive system will have become accustomed to a very clean diet and will be somewhat sensitive to overly stimulating or processed foods. Therefore, a slow transition back into your normal routine and a more diverse diet is critically important. Eat primarily simple, whole foods, diversifying your menu very gradually. The more committed you can be to maintaining a diet of simple, whole foods, the stronger your digestive fire will be after your cleanse.

Maintaining a very simple diet through this phase of the cleanse buffers your system, strengthens digestive fire, and prepares your digestive system to successfully receive more complex foods after the cleanse is complete. But the truth is that, it is often easier to maintain a highly structured monodiet than to stick to eating a more diverse range of very simple, whole foods after completing the monodiet. For many, this is actually the most challenging phase of the entire cleanse. It can feel like we’ve come through the hard part, and after days of kitchari, we are often craving some substance and stimulation in our diets. Therefore, it is extremely important to mentally prepare for this phase. Think of it as an essential part of—rather than a gradual transition out of—the cleanse. You may also find it helpful to plan a menu for this phase in advance. Choose meals that you will find delicious and exciting so that you are not tempted to dive right into overly complex and difficult to digest foods. This is not the time to celebrate with a pizza and a beer! Remember, the longer your cleanse, the more time your body will need to diversify your diet and strengthen your digestive fire. Go slowly and your fire will emerge from the cleanse much stronger— which means better sustained health moving forward.

Phase 4: The Rejuvenation Phase

It is important to follow any significant cleanse with a period of rejuvenation. Now that you’ve cleared your body of accumulated toxins and imbalances, your tissues are primed to receive very deep nourishment. Rejuvenating foods and practices are usually sweet and comforting, and most people find this phase of the process quite enjoyable. You can find everything you need to know about Ayurvedic rejuvenation in our Rejuvenation Department.

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A New Beginning... Transitioning Back into Your Normal Life

Toward the end of the cleanse, take some time to reflect on your life so that you can move forward with whatever new intentions feel important to you at this time. One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself as you wrap up your cleanse is to honor the effort you’ve made by slowly and gently easing back into a more diverse diet and a more typical routine. Even after you’ve moved through a defined period of reintroduction, understand that it may take some time—two weeks, a month, or longer—before you are able to fully appreciate the benefits of your cleanse. This is completely normal because the body is often still working to eliminate the toxins released during the cleanse. This is a wonderful time to cultivate deeper inner awareness and to listen to your body. You can further support optimal health by maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle, even after the cleanse is over.

See recipes and shopping list on following pages.

A Traditional Ayurvedic “Cleanse”

Recipes

Oatmeal

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Kitchari

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Coriander Chutney

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Sesame Chutney

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CCF Tea

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Shopping List

- ☐ Triphala powder (1/8 oz. per day) or Triphala tablets (two per day) of active cleansing
- ☐ Total Body Cleanse (Both Triphala and Total Body Cleanse can be purchased [here](#)
 - Optional: Vata Digest, Pitta Digest, or Kapha Digest tablets can be taken after meals to improve digestive fire (agni). Can be purchased [here](#):
- ☐ Organic White Basmati Rice, (7 ounces per day of active cleansing)
- ☐ Organic Yellow Mung Dal (4 ounces per day of active cleansing)
- ☐ Organic Ghee, Clarified Butter— (2 ounces per day of active cleansing)
- ☐ Vegetables for Kitchari (2 cups per day of active cleansing) such as:
 - Asparagus
 - Carrots
 - Celery
 - Green Beans
 - Summer Squash
 - Sweet Potatoes
- ☐ Optional for Oatmeal:
 - Organic Rolled Oats (1/2 cup or 2 ounces per day of active cleansing)
 - Raisins (1/4 cup or 1 1/2 ounces per day of active cleansing);
 - 1/2–1 cup apple, apricot, peach, or pear per day of active cleansing)
- ☐ Optional for Sesame Seed Chutney
 - Organic Roasted Sesame Seeds (1 cup per batch of sesame seed chutney)
- ☐ Spices and garnishes to have on hand:
 - Black Mustard Seeds
 - Black Pepper
 - Cilantro if making coriander chutney
 - Cumin seeds, whole
 - Coconut, unsweetened and shredded if making coriander chutney
 - Fennel Powder
 - Fennel Seeds
 - Ginger Root Fresh, if making coriander chutney
 - Hing
 - Lemons
 - Limes
 - Mint, fresh or dried Peppermint
 - Raw Honey, Turbinado Sugar
 - Turmeric
 - Optional: Cardamom, Cayenne Pepper, Cinnamon Powder, Ginger, Nutmeg
- ☐ **OR SAVE TIME AND MONEY** with Kitchari Cleanse and Spice Kit [HERE](#)