

#42ChinmayaSadhnas
#CBCC

Sattvik Diet
Sadhana 5: 31 August to 6 September

Eat only Sattvik food this whole week, in a cheerful mood.

Register for #42ChinmayaSadhnas at eepurl.com/buWYcT

Anecdote:

Once a devotee asked Swamiji, “This may be a trivial question, but is vegetarian food essential for the spiritual path?”

Swamiji replied, “First of all no question is trivial. If it is a question that is bothering you, it is an important question to you. About your diet, it is not essential that you eat only vegetarian food for your spiritual evolution; however, the experience of many seekers of Truth indicates that vegetarian food helps in keeping the mind balanced for contemplation.

Food has certain effects. Not only is our physical body built and maintained according to the food we eat, but our inner nature is also conditioned by it. The gross part of the food produces the energy for the physical apparatus, while the subtle part contributes to our thought energy.”

Chandogya Upanishad says - “Annamayam hi manah”. Our mind is made from the essence of the food we eat. “Aahaarashudhausattvashudhih” Purify the mind by purifying the food.

What is a Sattvik Diet?

The entire universe is made of a combination of 3 Gunas (textures or qualities) ie. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Anything we hear, smell, see, taste or touch may be classified into these.

Sattva represents calmness, peace, balance, knowledge, purity, brilliance etc. Rajas denotes agitation, passion, restlessness, ambition, greed, insecurity etc.

Tamas signifies lethargy, laziness, procrastination, destruction, ignorance etc.

Listen to a clip on 3 gunas by Swam Chinmayananda:

<http://youtu.be/TJHYgEgluUA> (<http://youtu.be/TJHYgEgluUA>)

In all of us one of the three Gunas has superior strength and it is reflected in all that we do and think. Our goal and endeavor should be to evolve to the Sattvik state. Thus our association with all things sattvik will only aid and hasten this process.

Sattvic foods are foods that are abundant in Prana - the universal life-force that gives life to all sentient beings in both plant and animal kingdoms. A **Sattvic diet** is thus meant to include foods and eating habits that increase life, purity, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness.(Geeta Chapter 17 Verse 8).

Fruits, vegetables, dry fruits, sprouts, milk, cereals etc. are sattvik

Rajasic foods are those which are pungent, salty, spicy, very hot, burning. (Geeta Ch.17 verse 9)

Tamasik foods are stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten, refuse, impure. (Geeta Ch.17 verse 10)

SATVIC FOOD

Sattvic foods are those which purify the body and calm the mind

Cooked food that is consumed within 3-4 hours can be considered sattvic

Examples - Fresh fruits, green leafy vegetables, nuts, grains, fresh milk , certain spices

RAJASIC FOOD

They stimulate the body and mind into action. In excess, these foods can cause hyperactivity, restlessness, anger, irritability, and sleeplessness

Food Cooked with more oil & spices is Rajasic

Examples – Spicy food, tea, coffee, fried food, food with lots of white sugar, maida alcohol, stale food, excessive (refined wheat flour)

TAMASIC FOOD

Tamasic food are those which dull the mind and bring about inertia, confusion and disorientation

Stale or reheated food, oily or fall under this category

Example – Non vegetarian diet, intake of fats, oil, onion, garlic

How to?

1. Choose food that is sattvik. Avoid junk/very spicy food and stale food. Just for a week. Try.
2. As much as you can, sit and eat the food. Avoid standing and eating.
3. 7 Practices of a Mindful eater:
 - a. Start with Silence & Prayer. If you can, maintain the same time of eating food.
 - b. Engage all your 6 senses(seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching & feeling)
 - c. Use small utensils and serve moderately. Do not waste food.
 - d. Savor small bites & chew thoroughly
 - e. Keep away all distractions - TV, phone, computer etc.
 - f. Eat a plant-based healthy diet
 - g. Eat small portions and more frequently. Avoid heavy lunches & dinners. Dont skip meals. (Lord Krishna ate 8 small portions a day)
 - h. End with gratitude to the Lord.

Benefits:

1. Maintain Harmony & Balance:

It is often said "We are what we eat!"

When you have a nightmare, the first question a doctor will ask is – What did you eat last night? Rich, spicy, hard to digest foods produce mental roaming and confusion, which manifest in wild dreams and thoughts.

Choosing to consume foods that are sattvik in nature help modify the mind from Tamasic or Rajasic to Sattvik state. Sattvik food helps restore and maintain harmony and balance in one's body and mind.

2. Develop Discipline:

The diet can be used as a means of developing self-control and discipline. Not just the right type of food but it is important to eat the proper quantity at the right time. Consistent and dedicated attention to these aspects enforces discipline which increases mindfulness and awareness that soon permeates into every action and slowly translates into a way of life.

3. Live in Moderation:

Is a key practice in sattvic diet which implies not over-eating and no denial or fasting for long periods.

4. Develop Empathy

Sattvik diet is based on the value of ahimsa (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahimsa>) (non-injury to all living creatures) and others. Over a period of time the mind will become sensitized to other creatures and without force automatically the body will not crave non-vegetarian food. You will just drop it one day.

5. Aids Inner Purification

Diet has intimate connection with the mind. Mind is formed out of the subtlest portion of food.

Sage Uddalaka instructs his son Svetaketu "Food, when consumed becomes threefold: the gross particles become excrement, the middling ones flesh and the fine ones the mind. My child, when curd is churned, its fine particles which rise upwards, form butter. Thus, my child, when food is consumed, the fine particles which rise upwards form the mind. Hence verily the mind is food."

In the Chhandogya Upanishad: "By the purity of food one becomes purified in his inner nature; by the purification of his inner nature he verily gets memory of the Self; and by the attainment of the memory of the Self, all ties and attachments are severed."

It takes time for the effects of dietary changes to manifest on the mind. Changing our diet may not impact our psychology overnight, but in a period of months can affect it significantly.

Beginners and Advanced:

Beginners:

A beginner should be careful in changing the diet plan overnight. Food exercises tremendous influence over the mind. Instead of making sudden and drastic changes in your diet let the change be slow and gradual. The system should accommodate it without any trouble. Nature never moves by leaps.

1. Start by eliminating canned and preserved food from your diet completely. No aerated drinks, reduce intake of tea or coffee.
2. Add a fruit and salad to your daily meal, fruit in the morning and salad in the evening.
3. The above can be done from day one.
4. Mid week remove fried snacks completely from your diet.
5. Maintain and follow for the rest of the week.

Advanced seeker:

Would be someone who is already following the above diet.

1. Reheated food, leftovers, foods with preservatives, white sugar, tea, coffee, desserts – all to be avoided for the entire week of the Sadhana. Observe how you feel.
2. To know the harmful effects of white sugar please see this trailer - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCUBvOwwfWM> (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCUBvOwwfWM)& details on - www.fedupmovie.com (<http://www.fedupmovie.com/>)
3. Follow a routine daily: Eat at fixed timings everyday, same quantity, similar mix of proteins, carbohydrates, fats. Observe your energy levels.
4. If on a particular day you are having a difficult time controlling your mind, eat fruits on that day. Observe your mind.

**UNTO HIM OUR****BEST****42 Sadhanas**

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