

All About Food - Part 2

Learn Ayurveda from the Samhitas with Dr Rekha Radhamony



Gourds



The gourds

- Kushmanda - Ash gourd
- Tumbika - Bottle gourd (churakka, lauki)
- Kalinga - Pumpkin
- Karkkaru - Snake cucumber (kakri)
- Urvaru - Cucumber
- Tindisha - Indian Squash (tinda)

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Qualities of gourds

- Increases kapha, vata
- Laxative
- Causes vishtambha = stays long without getting digested
- Abhishyandi = clogs the channels
- Guru = heavy
- Sweet taste & sweet post digestive taste

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Ash gourd

Of all creepers, ash gourd is the best

Pacifies Vata & Pitta

Cleans vasti (urinary bladder)

Aphrodisiac

Trapusa (cucumber) - Extremely diuretic

Susruta says ash guard juice with mishri is great for psychosis

Bottle gourd (lauki)

- Extremely drying
- Constipating

Pumpkin, Cucumber

When tender, reduces Pitta & cold potency

When ripe, increases Pitta & hot potency

When extra ripe & separated from the plant

- Alkaline
- Increases Pitta, reduces Kapha, Vata
- Improves taste & appetite
- Good for the heart
- Cures prostate enlargement
- Causes bloating
- Easy to digest

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Lotus stalk (mrinala), Lotus root (bias), Saluki (lotus tuber)

- Absorbs water, causes dryness
- Constipating
- Cool
- Hard to digest

Tubers

Sweet

Slightly drying

Salty

Increases Kapha and Vata

Heavy

Hard to digest

Cooling

Laxative

Creates vishtambha

To reduce the ill effects, soak and boil in water, remove the water by crushing, cook in lot of ghee

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Note

- Care should be taken while cooking leafy vegetables
- After cooking a bit, squeeze out the water content and then make the dish
- Green chillies & curry leaves causes vishtambha. Cook well
- That's why these has to be added while tempering with ghee and not later



Varuna (*Crataeva religiosa*)
Tarkari (*Saccharum munja*,
munj, munja)

- Sweet taste, slightly bitter
- Reduces Kapha, Vata



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Varshabhu/ Punarnava
(hogweed, Boerhaavia
diffusa, thazhuthama) &
Kalasaka (curry leaves)

- Slightly alkaline
- Pungent & bitter taste
- Improves digestion
- Breaks down hard feces
- Reduces Kapha & Vata
- Medicinal use in edema & poisoning



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Chiruvilwa (South Indian Elm Tree, *Holoptelia integrifolia*, Chilbil)

- Bark is used in medicinal preparations
- Increases appetite
- Reduces Kapha & Vata
- Laxative

(Also used in Diabetes, skin diseases, wound healing, bleeding, worms, piles & blood purification)



Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*)

- Bitter
- Aphrodisiac
- Balances tridoshas
- Used in lactation, male and female infertility, insomnia, nerve tonic
- Should be taken upon medical prescription only



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Tender shoots of Bamboo (vamsha)

- Causes dryness
- Causes heartburn
- Increases Pitta & Vata



Bhadra/ Pattura (Mrva lanata,

- Whole plant has medicinal properties
- Useful in mutrakrichra & Asmari
- Enhances digestion
- Useful in splenomegaly, piles
- Reduces Kapha & Vata

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Kasamarda (Cassia occidentalis)

- Helpful in diseases caused by worms
- Cough
- Increases Kapha
- Laxative

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Mustard (Sarshapa)

- Not easily digestible
- Hot
- Constipating
- Causes increase of all the doshas

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Moolaka (Radish) when tender

Slightly alkaline

Bitter taste

Reduces all 3 doshas

Easily digestible

Hot

Cures abdominal tumors, cough, asthma, ulcers, disease of the eye and throat, hoarseness of voice, asthma, reverse peristalsis and chronic nasal catarrh



Moolaka (Radish) when big

- Hard to digest
- Pungent taste and post digestive taste
- Hot
- Increases all the three doshas
- Abhishyandi
- When cooked with fats it mitigates vata
- Dry radish causes increase of the dosha



Pindalu (Colocasia, Taro leaves, arbi, chembu)

- Pungent
- Hot
- Increases Pitta
- Reduces Kapha & Vata

Salanam

Veggies added to improve taste of food. These are either fried in ghee and added or as is. When added fried in ghee is easier for digestion

Onions, ginger, corriander etc fall under this group.

These are vidahi if uncooked

Katu taste

Dry

Hot

Good for the heart

Good for appetite, taste

Not good for the eyes

Reduces sperm

Sharp

Easy to digest

Causes slight increase of doshas

Other examples

- Shigru (Drum stick)
- Surasa (Tulsi)
- Jambira (Lemon plant)
- Asuri (Brown mustard plant)
- Ardrika (Corriander)

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Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*, Holy Basil, Krishnatulasi)

- Cures hiccup, cough, asthma, pain in the flanks, bad breath

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Corriander (ardrika)

- Bitter and sweet in taste
- Diuretic
- Does not increase pitta.



Garlic

- Aphrodisiac
- Unctuous
- Improves taste and digestion
- Gives strength
- Vitiates Rakta & Pitta
- Cures leukoderma, skin diseases, abdominal tumors, hemorrhoids, diabetes, worms, diseases caused by kapha and vata, hiccup, chronic nasal catarrh, asthma and cough

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Garlic contd..

- Penetrates deep into the tissues
- Rejuvenator
- Hot in potency
- Pungent in rasa and vipaka
- Laxative
- Good for the heart
- Great for hair
- Hard to digest

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Big garlic (Palandu)

- Inferior to garlic in qualities
- Increases Pitta



Grinjanaka (Shallots)

- Tikshna
- Great for haemorrhoids with vitiated Kapha & Vata
- Use shallots as food or for steaming pile masses in haemorrhoids
- Constipating
- Not good for Pitta

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Surana (Yam)

- Enhances digestion
- Improves taste
- Reduces kapha
- Non-unctuous
- Easily digestible
- Great for haemorrhoids



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- Leaves, flowers, fruits (unripe), leaves of tubers and tubers are heavy
 - Leaves are easily digestible compared to tubers in that order
 - Jivanti (*Lepadenia reticulata*, adapatiyan) is the best and sarshapa (mustard) is the worst among leafy vegetables



Fruits

Grapes

- Best among fruits
- Aphrodisiac
- Good for the eyes
- Helps elimination of urine and feces
- Sweet rasa & vipaka, slightly astringent
- Unctuous
- Cold
- Hard to digest
- Cures diseases of vata, pitta and rakta
- Improves taste
- Useful in intoxication, thirst, cough, fever, respiratory conditions, hoarseness, injury to the lungs and chronic respiratory diseases

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Pomegranate

- Reduces extreme Pitta
- Reduces Vata & Kapha too
- Sweet rasa
- Great for hearing loss
- Easily digestible
- Unctuous
- Stimulates appetite and digestion
- Good for the heart
- Constipating
- Light



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Other fruits

- Mocha (plantain)
- Kharjura (dates)
- Panasa (jack fruit)
- Nalikera (coconut)
- Parushaka (Falsa fruit)
- Amrataka (Hog plum/ wild mango)
- Tala (Toddy palm, nonku)
- Rajadana (Khirni, unripe dates)
- Madhuka (mahua)

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Other fruits contd...

- Badara (Ber fruit)
- Phalgu (Fig)
- Slesmataka (Indian cherry)
- Vatada (Almond)
- Abhisuka (Pista)
- Nikocaka (Pine fruit)
- Urumanam (Apricot)
- Kasmarya (Gambhari fruit)



Qualities of other fruits

Lead to weight gain

Not easily digestible

Sweet rasa & vipaka

Cold

Unctuous

Stays long in the stomach without getting digested

Increases Kapha


Aphrodisiac



Toddy Palm (Tala, nonku)

- Increases Pitta
- Laxative





Kashmarya (Gambhari)

- Cold
- Laxative
- Promotes hair growth
- Improves intellect
- Rejuvenating

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Vaatada (Almonds)

- Hot in potency
- Increases Kapha and Pitta
- Laxative

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Priyala (Buchanania latifolia, chironji)

Reduces vata effectively & pitta

Unctuous

Cooling

Rasa sweet

Aphrodisiac

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Kola (Kola nut)

- The fleshy part has similar properties as Priyala
- Relieves thirst
- Medicine for vomiting and cough

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Bael fruit (Bilwa)

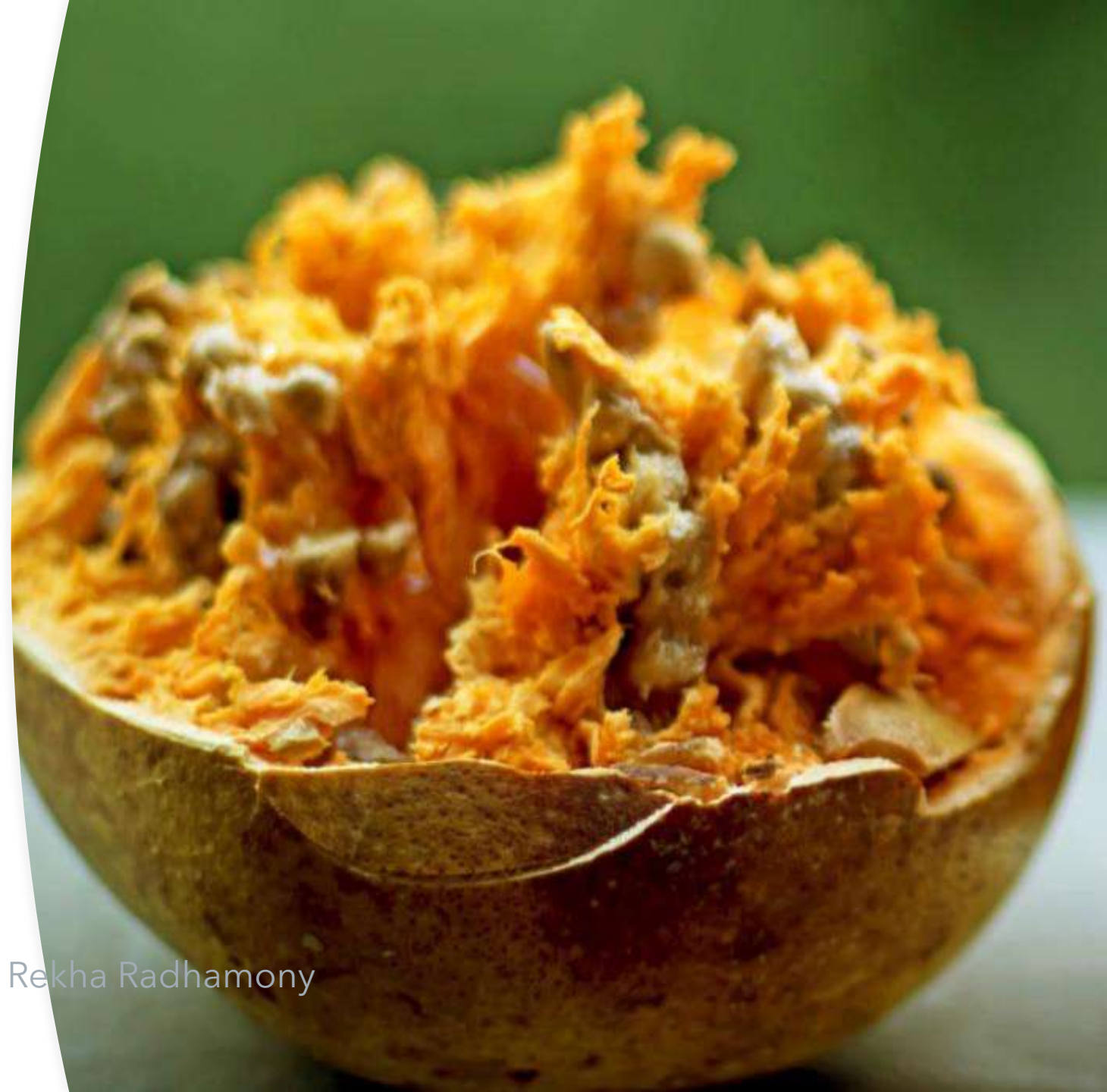
When ripe

- Hard to digest
- Aggravates doshas
- Causes flatus

When unripe

- Kindles digestion
- Reduces Vata and Kapha

Both are Grahi



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Kapittha (Wood apple)

When unripe

- Bad for the throat
- Increases tridoshas

When ripe

- Reduces tridoshas
- Relieves hiccup

Both are grahi & antidote for poisoning



Jambava (Java plum, Jamun fruit)

- Hard to digest
- Stays long inside the stomach
- Cooling
- Causes aggravation of Vata
- Absorbs moisture from urine and feces
- Bad for throat
- Reduces Kapha and Pitta

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Bala amra (Tender unripe mango)

When unripe

- Increases Vata, Rakta, Pitta

When its seed is fully formed

- Increases Kapha and Pitta

When ripe

- Hard to digest
- Increases Kapha
- Increases semen
- Reduces Vata



Vrikshamla (Garcinia fruit)

- Grahi
- Dry
- Heating
- Mitigates Vata and Kapha
- Easily digestible

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Samya fruit (Tamarind)

- Not easily digestible
- Hot in potency
- Causes loss of hair
- Causes dryness of the body



Peelu (miswak fruit)

Increases pitta

Reduces Kapha and Vata

Purgative

Cures diseases of the spleen,
hemorrhoids, worms, abdominal tumors

The variety of Pilu which has bitter- sweet
taste is not very hot in potency and
mitigates all three doshas

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Matulunga (Citron)

The skin of the fruit

- Bitter, pungent
- Unctuous
- Pacifies Vata

Fleshy part of the fruit

- Causes weight gain
- Sweet rasa
- Pacifies Vata & Pitta
- Not easy to digest
- Useful in treatment of cough, asthma, hiccup, alcohol intoxication, dry mouth, disorders of Vata and Kapha, constipation, vomiting, loss of taste, abdominal tumors, enlargement of the abdomen, hemorrhoids, colic and dyspepsia



Bhallataka (Marking nut, bhilawa, cherkkuru)

- Scrapes Kapha off
- The outer rind and fleshy part
- Causes weight gain
- Sweet rasa
- Cooling
- Seed is just like fire in properties
- Increases intelligence
- Effectively pacifies Kapha and Vat



Palaveta

Fruit with sweet taste is cooling

Fruit with sour taste is heating

Hard to digest

Improves taste

Cures diseases due to excess digestive activity



Aruka (peach)

Improves taste

Sweet

Ripe undergoes digestion quickly

Not very hot in potency

Sometimes hard to digest

Increases all 3 doshas



Green grapes, green Falsa fruit (Parushaka) & green Bengal currant (Karamarda)

- Sour
- Increases Pitta and Kapha
- Hard to digest
- Hot in potency
- Pacifies Vata
- Laxative

Karamardaka fruit ripened and dried does not cause increase of Pitta



Amlika (Indian gooseberry) & Kola fruit (Indain Jujube)

- Improves digestion
- Cause purgation
- Helpful in thirst, fatigue, exhaustion
- Easily digestible
- Pacifies Kapha and Vata



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Lakucha (Monkey jackfruit)

- Worst among all the fruits
- Increases all doshas

Varjya

(Foods that are worth rejecting)

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Grains

Spoiled by environmental conditions, animals

Grown in soil meant for another grain

Unseasonal

Mixed with other grains

Very very old

Veggies & Fruits

- Veggies without cooking ghee or oil should not be consumed
- Vegetables that are hard even after cooking should be avoided
- Tender veggies (not fully ripe) should not be consumed except Bilwa fruit



Aushadha Varga (Medicines/ Herbs)

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Salts

All salts are Vishyandi (creates secretion of mucous, etc in tissues)

Sookshma - penetrates into minute channels

Helps to form soft stools

Brings down Vata, increases Kapha & Pitta

Helps digestion

Tikshna - Sharp, penetrating

Hot

Improves taste



Saindhava - Rock salt /Himalayan pink salt

- Best among all salts
- Advised for everyday use
- Slightly sweet
- Aphrodisiac
- Good for the heart
- Balances tridoshas
- Easily digestible
- Not as hot
- Good for health
- Doesn't cause burning sensation
- Easily digestible

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Souvarchala (Black salt/ Sochal salt)

- Easy to digest
- Good for the heart
- Good for belching
- Vipaka Katu
- Relieves constipation
- Kindles digestion
- Improves taste

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Bida

- Artificially prepared
- Produces upward & downward movement of Vata & Kapha - useful in purgation
- Enhances digestion
- Good for constipation, flatulence, obstruction of flatus, colic and heaviness of the abdomen



Samudra (Sea salt, common salt)

Vipaka is sweet

Not easily digestible

Aggravates kapha

Other varieties of salt

Oudbhida salt

- Slightly bitter, pungent and alkaline in taste
- Penetrates deep tissues
- Increases secretions

Romaka salt

- Easily digestible

Pamsuttha salt

- Slightly alkaline, aggravates kapha and not easily digestible

Kshara (Alkalies)

- Teekshna
- Ushna
- Destroys worms
- Easily digestible
- Vitiates Pitta & Rakta
- Helps in digestion, healing wounds
- Breaks up hard feces
- Not good for the heart
- Creates punctures in the tissues
- Not good for sperm, Ojus, eyes, vision

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Yavakshara (Alkali made from Barley)

- Useful in abdominal tumours, heart diseases,
- Useful in abdominal tumors, diseases of the heart, duodenal disease, anemia, splenic disorders, distension of the abdomen, diseases of the throat, asthma, hemorrhoids and cough arising from kapha



Hingu (Asafoetida)

Alleviates Vata, Kapha

Increases Pitta

Useful in distension of the abdomen and colic

Pungent rasa & vipaka

Enhances taste, hunger, digestion

Easily digestible

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Haritaki - Terminalia chebula/ Harad



- Astringent rasa, sweet vipaka
- Causes dryness
- Devoid of lavana (possesses the remaining five tastes)
- Easily digestible
- Kindles hunger, helps digestion
- Improves intelligence
- Best to maintain youth
- Hot in potency
- Laxative
- Bestows long life
- Strengthens the mind and sense organs

Haritaki

- Used as a medicine in leprosy (and other skin diseases) discoloration, disorders of voice, chronic intermittent fevers, diseases of the brain and eyes, anemia, heart disease, jaundice, disease of the duodenum, intoxication, dropsy, diarrhea, obesity, fainting, vomiting, worms (intestinal parasites), dyspnea, cough, excess salivation, hemorrhoids, disease of the spleen, distention of the abdomen, enlargement of the abdomen, obstruction of channels, abdominal tumors, loss of taste (anorexia) and many other diseases arising from aggravation of kapha and vata



Amalaki

- Like Haritaki in all properties except - it is cold and reduces Pitta and Kapha



Vibhitaki (Aksha) - Terminalia bellerica,

- Pungent vipaka
- Cold
- Good for the hair
- Possesses properties like haritaki and amalaki but slightly less in degree

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Triphala

- Triphala (haritaki, amalaki and vibhitaki together)
- The best rejuvenator of the body
- Cures diseases of the eyes, heals wounds, skin diseases, excess moisture of the tissues, obesity, diabetes, alleviates aggravation of Kapha and Rakta



Trijata and Chaturjata

- Twak (Cinnamon) + Patra (Cinnamon leaf) + Ela (Cardamom) = Trijata
- Twak (Cinnamon) + Patra (Cinnamon leaf) + Ela (Cardamom) + Kesara = Chaturjata
- Causes aggravation of Pitta
- Penetrating
- Hot in potency
- Causes dryness
- Improves taste and hunger

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Maricha (Black pepper)

- Pungent rasa and vipaka
- Alleviates Kapha
- Easily digestible

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Pippali (long pepper) in green state

- Aggravates kapha
- Sweet rasa
- Cold in potency
- Not easily digestible
- Unctous



Pippali (dry)

- Aphrodisiac
- Pungent rasa, sweet vipaka
- Pacifies Vata and Kapha
- Laxative
- Useful in in asthma, cough
- Long pepper should not be used in excess for a long period, without following the regimen of rejuvenation therapy

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Nagara - Ginger Ardraka - Fresh ginger

- Increases hunger
- Aphrodisiac
- Water absorbent
- Good for the heart
- Relives constipation
- Bestows taste,
- Easily digestible
- Sweet vipaka
- Hot in potency
- Mitigates Kapha and Vata

Trikatu

Black pepper + long pepper + ginger =
Trikatu

Useful in obesity, asthma, dyspepsia, cough,
filariasis and chronic nasal catarrh



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Chavika (Piper chaba/ Big pippali)

Chavaika (Piper chaba) and pippalimula (long pepper root) possess qualities and properties like maricha (black pepper) but in lesser degree.

Chitraka (Leadwort)

Similar to fire in digesting food

Useful in dropsy, hemorrhoids, worms and
and skin diseases



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Panchakola

Pippali + pippalimula + chavya + chitraka and nagara = Panchakola

Useful in abdominal tumors, disease of the spleen, enlargement of the abdomen, distension and colic.

Best medicine to improve hunger and digestion.

Q+A

