
Ayurvedic Cooking: Everyone Can Make Rasayanas

by Joseph Immel

Western medicine studies nutrition. Ayurveda adds digestion. Put them together and you get rasayana. Rasayana formulas address *ojas* (nutrition) and *tejas* (digestion). Anyone can make a rasayana formula if they know the basics. To grow, cells need fats, proteins, and sugars. Add *dipana* (agni builders) and you have a simple rasayana. Let's look at our first example:

Example 1: 1 teaspoon each ghee, honey, turbinado, and a pinch of trikatu.

That's it! The most basic rasayanas in Ayurveda include ghee, honey, sugar and trikatu. Trikatu is a mixture of ginger, black pepper and pippali. If you don't have pippali, use black pepper and ginger only. If you want protein add a teaspoon of whey and voila! You have a delicious, simple formula with everything the body needs to re-grow tissues after *pañcakarma* (five Ayurvedic cleansing therapies).

Many rasayanas also address the gastro-intestinal (GI) tract and the blood. When the GI tract is clean and the blood is pure, the environment of the body is ideal for growing tissue. Since the GI tract and the blood directly affect the skin we can measure the effectiveness of the rasayana formula by its effect on complexion. The most popular rasayana herbs for the GI tract and the blood are amalaki and haritaki.

Example 2: Add 1 teaspoon each amalaki and haritaki to the above Example 1.

How do we know the body will use the nutrients in our formula for tissue growth? To encourage growth add building herbs like ashwagandha. Under stress, the body redirects energy away from rebuilding tissue. To reduce stress, address the mind through nervines like brahmi.

Example 3: Add 1/4 tsp ashwagandha, and 1/4 tsp brahmi.

Then direct the healing energies of the body to the right organ. For the lungs, include an herb like pippali that stimulates the lung (use just a pinch!). With this knowledge, you can create hundreds of rasayana formulas. Lacking a good definition of health, the art of tonics and elixirs has been lost in the West. Ayurvedic practitioners are in a unique position to resurrect this lost art. Following are some simple rasayanas you can make at home:

Spicy Pumpkin Milkshake

Pumpkins are soft, build ojas and have beta-carotene useful for regeneration of tissues. As a cooling demulcent and laxative, pumpkin is restorative to the GI tract. Beta-carotene

gives pumpkin an orange color and acts a tonic to the liver, purifying the blood. We'll add sugars, fats and proteins in the form of turbinado, ghee, and whey. Spices will address agni. Pumpkins are a sedative and nutmeg acts as a nervine. Both reduce stress for the rebuilding of tissues.

Ingredients

2 cup pumpkin puree	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 cup water	½ teaspoon ground ginger
¾ cup turbinado	¼ teaspoon ground cloves
¼ cup ghee	¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ cup whey	½ teaspoon salt

Recipe (Serves 4)

To puree whole pumpkins, bake at 350 degrees for one hour. Baking makes the skin peel easily. Since the skin is too thick for most potato peelers, slice along the ridges and peel with a chef's knife. Cut into squares, mix with water and blend. Mix in all remaining ingredients and continue blending. Bring to a boil in a saucepan and serve warm.

Saffron Date Elixir

This is a popular rasayana, aphrodisiac, and delicious rasayana! Dates and ghee provide sweet taste and fats. Dates are a slight laxative, cleansing the GI tract. Saffron reduces pitta in the blood, spices address agni. Dates also contain phyto-estrogens that target reproductive organs and build juiciness in women before love-making and restore strength in men after. At Joyful Belly we age our mixture one month to help blend the flavors.

Ingredients

	Dosage: One date per day.
36 pitted dates	1 pound butter turned into ghee.
1/8 teaspoon saffron	1/8 teaspoon cardamom
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon	1/4 teaspoon ginger powder

Peel the caps off the dates, cut in half. Dry and pulverize the saffron in a mortar and pestle. Mix the saffron and other spices with liquefied ghee. Pour into quart-sized jar of closely packed dates. Close and shake out the bubbles.

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