

# A Simplified Three-Day Cleanse

Reset and Detoxify in Just Three Days

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There are a lot of different cleansing techniques out there, and finding the one that's right for you can sometimes feel overwhelming. If you really just want to give your body a break, hit the reset button on your digestive system, and do a short detox without a lot of fuss, this is the cleanse for you. The process is simple, straightforward, easy to follow, and it's only three days long—making it a very manageable undertaking for most people. If this will be your first experience with cleansing, you've chosen a perfect place to start.

This cleanse can be undertaken at any time of year, but it will be especially beneficial at the junctions between seasons—when our bodies are ripe with a sense of transition already. However, even a very simple cleanse like this one is not appropriate during menstruation, for pregnant or breastfeeding women, or for anyone who is extremely weak or debilitated at the moment.



# Benefits

The practice of cleansing is considered a vital part of an Ayurvedic lifestyle. It provides an important means of clearing accumulated waste and toxicity from the mind and the tissues, encouraging optimal health. These days, a periodic cleansing regimen is more vital to our health than ever before. Our bodies are being asked to process a seemingly endless barrage of harmful inputs such as environmental toxins, processed foods, unresolved emotions, and psychological stress. Over time, these stressors can cause toxicity to build up in the system, deposit in the tissues, and compromise our health. A periodic cleanse helps to clear these accumulations from the body.

This particular cleanse is based on eating a monodiet of whole grains and kitchari, drinking plenty of detoxifying fluids, and taking Triphala in the evening to support digestion, elimination, and the body's natural detoxification processes. This regimen supports the physiology by slowing the flood of harmful inputs and by providing the body with an important opportunity to rest, recuperate, and repair itself.

A simple three-day cleanse can help to:

- Improve digestion and metabolic function.
- Promote regular and balanced elimination.
- Support the maintenance of a healthy body weight.
- Nurture an improved sense of energy, vitality, and enthusiasm for life.
- Foster clarity and groundedness in the mental, spiritual, and emotional spheres.
- Encourage a balanced sleep cycle.
- Promote improved overall health.

The foods ingested during this cleanse are very easy to digest and therefore help to improve the strength of *agni* (the metabolic fire)—which is essential to optimal health. If the concept of *agni* is new to you, you might appreciate reading [The Importance of Healthy Digestion: An Ayurvedic Guide to Understanding Agni](#), which will provide a useful context for your cleansing process.

# Planning For Your Cleanse

The more completely you can clear your schedule for the entirety of your three-day cleanse, the better. More importantly, pick a time when you can minimize your exposure to stress. Ideally, you would not be working at all during the cleanse. If this is not realistic for you, we recommend scheduling the first day or two of your cleanse over your weekend so that you can get familiar with the diet and the routine before you are juggling the cleanse alongside work obligations. You'll also want to avoid any social engagements that would make it difficult to maintain the simple diet prescribed below. In general, eliminate any unnecessary commitments and give yourself as much unstructured time to rest as possible. A menstruating woman should also schedule her cleanse around her cycle so that she is not bleeding at any point during the three-day cleanse.



Once you have found a workable timeframe, put your cleanse on the calendar and come up with a plan for acquiring the necessary supplies ahead of your start date (see our [recipes](#) and [shopping lists](#) at the end of this article). When the cleanse starts, you will want to focus your energy on the process of detoxification and renewal. In other words, aim to be finished running around gathering supplies by the time your cleanse begins.

If you are in the habit of taking coffee, caffeine, tobacco products, alcohol, or any recreational drugs on a regular basis, you may find it helpful to gradually reduce or eliminate their use in the days leading up to your cleanse. Similarly, reducing your intake of fast foods, processed foods, meat, refined sugars, and sweets ahead of the start date can be very beneficial. You might also consider enlisting the support of close friends or family members who know what you are up to, what your intentions are, and can help to encourage you through the process.

## What To Expect

This three-day cleanse is generally safe for a diverse range of constitutions and imbalances. Still, any cleanse can be exhausting, emotionally taxing, and physically uncomfortable due to the nature of the detoxification process. This cleanse is extremely gentle and should not cause a great deal of discomfort, but you may still experience some ups and downs—on either emotional or physical levels.

## The Cleanse Itself

During the three-day cleanse, you will be eating a simplified diet of oatmeal and kitchari. This diet is substantive enough that you can maintain your essential responsibilities while resetting the digestive system, supporting the elimination of toxins, and balancing vata, pitta, and kapha. Freshly prepared foods are best, so you'll want to cook your oatmeal, kitchari, and teas fresh each day—at whatever time works best with your schedule. While you'll want to avoid eating leftovers from previous days, it is acceptable to prepare all of your food for the day in the morning, if that works for you. 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 a cleanse. If your bowel movements slow in frequency or volume, or if your stools become more difficult to pass, please see our resource on how to remedy [Constipation During a Cleanse](#). Healthy elimination is critical to the detoxification process, so it is best to be proactive about relieving any discomfort as soon as you are aware of it.



## The Diet

- In general, eat as much as is desired at each meal—enough to feel satisfied, but be careful not to overeat.
- Eat [Simple Oatmeal](#) or [Kitchari](#) for breakfast.
- Eat [Kitchari](#) for lunch and dinner, allowing at least three hours between meals.
- You can garnish your kitchari with a little melted ghee, [Fresh Coriander Chutney](#) and [Sesame Seed Chutney](#) to ensure that your system stays well-lubricated and that you continue to enjoy all six tastes in your diet.
- It is best to avoid snacking between meals, but if you need a little something extra, you can enjoy some fresh fruit or a few raw nuts.
- If the monodiet is causing a sense of deprivation, you can try steaming your vegetables and serving 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 lemon juice and a sprinkle of salt.
- 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 from the system.
- 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.

## The Daily Routine

- Rise early enough to give yourself a spacious and relaxed morning.
- Upon waking, scrape your tongue and brush your teeth.
- Sip 8–16 ounces of hot water to cleanse the system and to awaken the digestive capacity.
- Optional: Gentle Exercise
  - Slow, gentle movements will support cleansing; more than that can be counterproductive.
  - This is not a time to push yourself physically.
  - Consider walking, tai chi, qigong, or gentle yoga such as [vata-pacifying yoga](#) (which is appropriate during a cleanse).
- Take a bath or shower, using soap strategically (not all over the body).
- After that, you'll want to have plenty of time to prepare your breakfast, kitchari, and teas for the day without undue stress.
- Eat [Simple Oatmeal](#) or [Kitchari](#) for breakfast (ideally between 7–8 a.m.).
- Eat [Kitchari](#) for lunch (ideally between 12–1 p.m.).
- Eat [Kitchari](#) for dinner (ideally between 5–6 p.m., but no later than 7 p.m.).
- About a half hour before bed, take Triphala.
  - 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.



## A Supportive Lifestyle During Your Cleanse

- 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.

## After Your Cleanse

After you complete this simple, three-day cleanse, your body may continue to process toxicity for a few days. And, your digestive system will have become accustomed to a very clean diet; you may even be somewhat sensitive to overly stimulating or processed foods. A *slow* transition back into your normal routine and a more diverse diet will help to preserve the benefits of your cleanse. For a couple of days afterwards, eat primarily simple, whole foods, gradually diversifying your menu. This is not the time to celebrate with pizza and a beer! Also, pay special attention to how you handle potentially aggravating foods like dairy, wheat, soy, and nightshades after your cleanse. Your body may have some new information to offer you about your relationship with specific foods.

## A Fresh Start

While this cleansing model is incredibly short and simple, it can be quite powerful. According to Ayurveda, balanced agni is the key to optimal health and longevity. Our bodies are incredibly intelligent, and the three-day cleanse gives them an important opportunity to strengthen agni. So, while it may seem hard to believe, even a simple cleanse like this one can initiate dramatic improvements in the quality of your digestion and elimination, your cravings, your energy level, and your overall well-being.

As you wrap up the cleanse, take some time to reflect on your life so that you can move forward with whatever new intentions feel important to you. This is a potent time to cultivate a deeper level of inner awareness, to listen to your body, and to honor every aspect of your being as you transition out of the cleanse. You might also take some time to appreciate your body for all the ways it serves and supports you. Remember too, that you've offered yourself a valuable gift with this cleanse—one that requires a certain level of discipline and commitment. Congratulations on your accomplishment. We hope that it serves you in a multitude of gratifying ways.



# Recipes

Remember that your food will absorb the energy of your mindset and state of being while you are cooking. You can assist your healing process by bringing good intentions and a sense of presence into your kitchen.

## Simple Oatmeal

Kitchari is traditionally eaten three times a day during an Ayurvedic cleanse, but this simple oatmeal recipe is a good alternative, if preparing kitchari before breakfast is not realistic for you. This recipe can also provide a helpful break from the kitchari monodiet—which is especially important if you tend to tire of similar foods easily.

While fruit and grains are typically considered a poor food combination, oats are a particularly light grain and are generally quite digestible. The taste profile of oats also has a lot in common with these particular fruits, which makes them more compatible. In addition, when fruits and oats are cooked together, their more diverse qualities are able to mingle in a way that further improves their digestibility.

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup dry rolled oats
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/4 cups raisins
- 1/2-1 cup fresh apple, apricot, peach, or pear (cut into small pieces)

### Optional Warming Spices

- 1/4 teaspoon [cinnamon powder](#)
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon [cardamom powder](#)
- 1/8 teaspoon [ginger powder](#)

Combine the raisins, cut fruit, 1 cup water, and any desired spices in a small saucepan and bring to a boil on medium-high heat. Reduce heat and simmer for ten to fifteen minutes, or until the fruit is tender and well-cooked (apples may take a tad longer). Add the oats, the remaining 1/2 cup of water, stir, and return to a boil. When the mixture boils, stir thoroughly, remove from heat, cover, and let stand for five to ten minutes, until the oats are soft and the water is absorbed. Cool and serve.

### Fruits by Dosha

For vata, favor apricots and peaches.

For pitta, favor apples and pears.

For kapha, any of the fruit is fine. If you are primarily focused on balancing kapha, you may also want to try this delicious kapha-pacifying modification: simply combine a couple of varieties of cut fruit, omit the oats and the second batch of water, follow the rest of the recipe as it is, and enjoy a breakfast of stewed fruit.



## Spices by Dosha and Season

For vata, kapha, and cooler seasons, the optional spices offer a tasty addition of warmth to this dish. If there is pitta imbalance, favor cinnamon and cardamom, and consider reducing the quantity. For severe pitta imbalance (or if the season is hot) consider foregoing the spices altogether. The oatmeal with cooked fruit is surprisingly tasty on its own.

## Tridoshic Kitchari

Kitchari is a stew-type meal that is prepared from basmati rice and split mung dal. During a cleanse, appropriate vegetables provide texture, flavor, and an important source of fiber. Kitchari is very easy to digest, which makes it a wonderful food for any cleansing regimen. It allows the digestive system to rest, allocating extra energy to the body's natural detoxification processes. The quantities in this recipe provide a good starting point for a day's supply of kitchari, but as you learn your preferences and habits, you are welcome to adjust the quantities to better fit your needs.

## Ingredients

- 1 cup **white basmati rice**
- 1/2 cup **yellow mung dal**
- 2 tablespoons **ghee**
- Spices (or 1 tablespoon **kitchari spice mix**)
  - 1/4 teaspoon **black mustard seeds**
  - 1/2 teaspoon **cumin seeds**
  - 1/2 teaspoon **turmeric powder**
  - 1 1/2 teaspoons **coriander powder**
  - 1/2 teaspoon **fennel powder**
  - 1 pinch **hing (asafoetida)**
  - 1 teaspoon **fresh grated ginger**
- 1 teaspoon **natural mineral salt**
- 6 cups **water**
- 2 cups **easily digestible vegetables** (such as asparagus, carrots, celery, green beans, summer squash, sweet potato, winter squash, or zucchini)



Soak the split mung dal overnight (or for at least four hours). Strain the soaking water, combine with the rice and rinse the mixture at least twice, or until the water runs clear, and set aside. In a medium saucepan or soup pot, warm the ghee over medium heat. Add the black mustard seeds, cumin seeds and sauté for a couple of minutes, until the mustard seeds begin to pop. Add the turmeric, coriander, fennel, hing, and fresh ginger. Stir briefly, until aromatic. Stir the rice and dal mixture into the spices and sauté for a few moments, stirring constantly. Add the 6 cups of water, turn heat to high, and bring to a boil. When the soup comes to a boil, stir in the salt, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about forty minutes. Meanwhile, cut your vegetables into small, bite-sized pieces. About halfway through the kitchari's cooking process, stir in the vegetables and allow the stew to return to a boil. Continue to simmer until the rice, dal, and vegetables are fully cooked. Remove from heat, cool, and serve. Note: some vegetables, such as sweet potatoes and winter squash, might require more cooking time and may be added earlier, if necessary.



Aim to have very little water remaining when finished. The consistency should be that of a vegetable stew as opposed to a broth. While you want the beans, rice, and vegetables to be thoroughly cooked, excess water and over-stirring can cause the ingredients to become thick and gummy. Garnish the kitchari with your choice of fresh cilantro, coriander chutney, and sesame chutney. Enjoy!

## Fresh Coriander Chutney

This tridoshic recipe from [The Ayurvedic Cookbook](#) by Amadea Morningstar is very tasty and is especially useful for reducing excess pitta.

### Ingredients

- 1 bunch (1/4 pound) fresh coriander leaves and stems (also known as cilantro or Chinese parsley)
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup grated coconut
- 2 tablespoons fresh ginger root, chopped
- 1 teaspoon barley malt or raw honey
- 1 teaspoon [natural mineral salt](#)
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

Blend the lemon juice, water and fresh coriander until the coriander is chopped. Add the remaining ingredients and blend until it is like a paste.

Use sparingly. This chutney can be stored in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to one week. For a silkier texture, use only the leaves and the tops of the fresh coriander stalks.

## Sesame Seed Chutney

This tridoshic recipe from [Ayurvedic Cooking for Self-Healing](#) by Usha and Vasant Lad, is especially good for people with vata and kapha imbalance. Reduce cayenne pepper to 1/4 teaspoon if there is any pitta imbalance, or eliminate it entirely.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup roasted and ground sesame seeds
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon [natural mineral salt](#)

Blend ingredients together and garnish kitchari with about 1 teaspoon of the mixture.





## Cumin, Coriander, Fennel Tea

### Ingredients

- 1 quart of purified water
- 1 teaspoon whole [cumin seed](#)
- 1 teaspoon whole [coriander seed](#)
- 1 teaspoon whole [fennel seed](#)

Place all the ingredients in a pot, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for fifteen minutes, or until the seeds begin to sink. Remove from heat and strain. Store the tea in a thermos or in the refrigerator, but do not drink it cooler than room temperature.

## Alakananda Ma's Rehydration Tea

### Ingredients

- 4 1/2 cups pure water
- 2 heaping teaspoons peppermint or fresh mint
- 1 heaping teaspoon [brahmi/gotu kola powder](#)
- 1/4 teaspoon [natural mineral salt](#)
- 1/4 lime (squeezed juice)
- 2 teaspoons turbinado sugar

Boil water. Remove from heat and add herbs, salt, and lime. Steep ten minutes, strain, add turbinado, and drink warm or at room temperature.

## Shopping List

Amounts recommended are approximate and may need to be adjusted according to your needs.

### Herbs & Products

While you will certainly have leftovers of any herbs you order for your cleanse, you can continue to take any of them after the cleanse to support further detoxification.

- [Triphala powder](#) (1/2 ounce) or [Triphala tablets](#) (6 tablets)
- [Tongue Cleaner](#)
- Optional: [Brahmi/Gotu Kola powder](#) for Alakananda Ma's Rehydration Tea (1/2-1 ounce)
- Optional: [Vata Digest](#), [Pitta Digest](#), or [Kapha Digest](#) tablets can be taken after meals to improve agni (nine tablets)



## Groceries

- Optional: Organic Rolled Oats (1 1/2 cup or 6 ounces)
- Optional: Raisins (3/4 cup or 4 1/2 ounces)
- Optional: Fruits for [Simple Oatmeal](#) (1 1/2–3 cups apple, apricot, peach, or pear)
- Organic [White Basmati Rice](#), (21 ounces)
- Organic [Yellow Mung Dal](#) (12 ounces)
- Organic [Ghee](#), Clarified Butter—available at most health food stores (6 ounces)
- Optional: Organic Roasted Sesame Seeds (1 cup per batch of sesame seed chutney)
- Vegetables for [Kitchari](#) (6 cups total), such as:
  - Asparagus
  - Carrots
  - Celery
  - Green Beans
  - Summer Squash
  - Sweet Potato
  - Winter Squash
  - Zucchini
- Spices and garnishes to have on hand
  - Black Mustard Seeds
  - Black Pepper
  - Optional: [Cardamom powder](#) (for oatmeal)
  - Optional: Cayenne Pepper (for sesame seed chutney)
  - Cilantro (1/4 pound per batch of fresh coriander chutney)
  - Optional: [Cinnamon powder](#) (for oatmeal)
  - [Cumin seeds](#), whole
  - Coconut, unsweetened and shredded
  - [Coriander powder](#)
  - [Coriander seeds](#), whole
  - [Fennel powder](#)
  - [Fennel seeds](#), whole
  - Optional: [Ginger powder](#) (for oatmeal)
  - Ginger root, fresh
  - Hing (Asafoetida)
  - Optional: [Kitchari Spice Mix](#) (replaces some individual spices in kitchari)
  - Lemons
  - Limes
  - Mint, fresh, or dried Peppermint
  - [Natural Mineral Salt](#)
  - Optional: Nutmeg (for oatmeal)
  - Sweeteners: Barley Malt or Raw Honey; Turbinado Sugar
  - [Turmeric powder](#)



Or, save time and money with one of Banyan's [Cleanse Kits](#):

- [Kitchari Kit](#)
  - Seven-day supply of Organic [Basmati Rice](#)
  - Seven-day supply of Organic [Yellow Mung Dal](#)
  - [Kitchari Spice Mix](#)
  - Organic [Ghee](#)
- [Ayurvedic Cleanse Kit](#)
  - All of the above plus...
  - Organic [Triphala tablets](#)
  - Organic [Sesame Oil](#)
  - [Pukka Detox Tea](#)
- [Deluxe Ayurvedic Cleanse Kit](#)
  - All of the above plus...
  - Organic [Chyavanprash](#)
  - Organic [Nasya Oil](#)
  - [Nasal Rinse Cup](#)
  - Stainless steel [Tongue Cleaner](#)



## Additional Resources

For more information on Ayurvedic Cleansing, click here to return to our [Cleansing Department](#).

To explore the Ayurvedic practice of *rasayana* (rejuvenation), please see our [Rejuvenation Department](#).

For more information on agni and why it is so critical to our overall health, you may enjoy our piece on [The Importance of Healthy Digestion](#).

For more on *ama* (a toxic substance that interferes with our well-being), and why it is so detrimental, please see our article on [Ama: the Antithesis of Agni](#).

