



## Inspiring Healing Traditions

As we ring in the year of the dragon, we can also look east for traditional healing wisdom. From Japan to Indonesia, Asian cultures and traditions inspire and captivate the rest of the world. Traditional healing modalities such as Ayurveda in India and traditional Malay herbal medicine are closely intertwined with local cuisines and cooking methods. As our own awareness of the nature of true health and healing grows, traditional healing systems provide a model for truly holistic self care. Healthy eating is at its best when infused with a sense of adventure. The foods outlined below truly live up to the adage, "Let your food be your medicine."

### **Bitter Melon**

True to its name, this bitter green cucumber-shaped fruit is famed for helping Okinawans live long, healthy lives. Iron rich, bitter melon may help to lower blood sugar. Diabetics and those undergoing chemotherapy should use bitter melon under the supervision of their doctor due to risk of hypoglycemia and drug interactions. Add sliced bitter melon to stir-fries or small pieces to your favourite juicing blend.

### **Coconut**



Coconut is a culinary staple. From hydrating coconut water to coconut milk and flesh, the coconut is used throughout East Asian cuisines. High in potassium, coconut water is a great natural hydration source and alternative to chemical-laden sports drinks. Coconut milk, while rich in saturated fat, contains a unique fatty acid called lauric acid which holds promise as an immune booster. When your appetite is low, use energy-rich coconut milk as a drink or add it to a smoothie.

### **Ginger**

Pungent and spicy, ginger has a long history of use for easing nausea, stimulating digestion and improving circulation. An important addition to any healing diet, ginger is also anti-inflammatory. Add chopped ginger to curries, stir-fries and fruit salads, or make a ginger lemon tonic by simply boiling sliced lemon and ginger for 5 minutes and stirring in a little honey before sipping.

### **Lemongrass**

Anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and rich in immune-supportive vitamin C, lemongrass is traditionally prized to relieve colds, improve circulation and cleanse the body. Slice lemongrass in curries and stir-fries, use it to flavour soups, or create a tea by boiling briefly and serving with honey.

### **Tamarind**

The fruit of the tamarind is found in pods, similar to large beans. Bittersweet, tamarind is used in candies, drinks and chutneys from India to the Philippines. Tamarind fruit is a natural laxative and may have positive effects on blood cholesterol. A staple in Pad Thai, look for natural tamarind chutneys or use tamarind concentrate for an exotic twist on iced rooibos tea.

### **Tea**

Tea in all its forms - green, white, oolong and black - has long been consumed as a health tonic and social beverage. EGCG, a component of green tea, has been researched for its ability to inhibit the growth of cancer cells. Rich in antioxidants, tea is also a calming alternative to coffee, thanks to its l-theanine content (an amino acid).

### **Turmeric**

Botanically related to ginger and the signature component of both Indian and Thai curry, turmeric is a potent anti-inflammatory and is traditionally used as a liver tonic. It appears that turmeric may interfere with progression of cancer at several physiological pathways. Add dried turmeric to savory dishes or chop fresh turmeric root and add as you would garlic or ginger. To encourage better bio-availability, always consume turmeric with fresh black pepper.

Have fun introducing these tasty ingredients into your diet and experimenting with different flavours and tastes - that's what cooking is all about!

Desiree Nielsen, RD, Choices Dietitian



For more grocery and cooking tips, I invite you to visit us in store or to come along on an [InspireHealth Nutrition Tour](#). To support the InspireHealth community, we are pleased to offer this new, exciting, complimentary service every other Friday at 11:30am at our [Kitsilano location](#). The key InspireHealth food and nutrition teachings will be put into practice at the grocery store with Choices' dietitian. You can learn practical tips and techniques for incorporating more healthful foods into your life and also understand more about foods you should be cautious towards.

Tours are FREE and open to all [InspireHealth](#) members, however, **registration is required**. Please call 604-734-7125 to join the next tour!

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## Your Chance to Ride a Stage of the Tour de France with InspireHealth

*Are you passionate about cycling?*

*Is witnessing the Tour de France on your to-do list?*

*Does supporting a great cause inspire you?*

We have two places left for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity - to join the 2012 InspireHealth L'Etape du Tour team and travel to France to participate in a leg of the world-renowned Tour de France.

Team leader, Mitchell Edgar, like so many, has been deeply impacted by cancer. He lost his mother to the disease in 2002 and wished he had known about InspireHealth at that time. His father was diagnosed with

prostate cancer a few years ago and fortunately, he was able to take advantage of and benefit from InspireHealth's programs.

Mitchell was so inspired that, along with four other riders, he set out to ride a stage of the Tour de France in 2011 benefiting InspireHealth. This dedicated team succeeded in raising an amazing \$28,488 to assist InspireHealth with the expansion of integrative cancer care across British Columbia.

Driven by this past summer's success, Mitchell's goal for 2012 is to bring together a team of 12 riders to raise \$60,000!

Ten passionate individuals are already on board and **we invite you** to join them for this amazing opportunity!

If you are interested in registering or would like more information, please contact Team leader, Mitchell at: [mitchelledgar@shaw.ca](mailto:mitchelledgar@shaw.ca) or call 604-527-4536 during office hours.

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