



# Simple Food-Based Cleanse

A home cleanse does not have to be complicated. These instructions are designed to support the body in its natural ability to release toxins that we accumulate through daily living. This food-based cleanse is most effective when done in the context of a healthy daily routine.

## Elements of the cleanse

- Reduce the intake of toxins: This sounds obvious, but what it really means is paring down the diet to just some simple, whole, easy-to-digest foods for a period of a few days to one week. More specific instruction on what to eat and drink is below in the dietary section.
- Just as important as watching what you eat is watching what you watch, listen to, and expose yourself to in general: Ayurveda teaches that we digest every sight, sound, experience, emotion, etc. Reducing intake of toxins includes reducing exposure to violence, negative emotions, electronics, and overstimulation in general. This is a good time to evaluate what you read, watch and listen to and consider at least a temporary restriction on anything that might add to stressful thoughts and emotions.
- Rest more: Have the intention to rest during the cleanse period. It takes energy to digest and to cleanse, and by resting often, you free up resources to help release toxins. You may also experience more emotions during this period, and resting will help them to keep moving.
- During the entire period, sip warm water or detox tea every half hour or so throughout the day. The warm water helps to loosen toxins and keep you hydrated.

## The pre-cleanse diet

For a few days or a week prior to the cleanse, begin reducing and eliminating the following from your diet:

Meat

Dairy

Eggs

Alcohol

Caffeine (especially coffee - green tea is OK if you don't want to eliminate caffeine entirely)

Anything packaged (crackers, chips, snack foods, processed foods in general)

Sugar, sweets and baked goods (including artificial sweeteners)

## The cleanse week diet and routine

- For the three to five days of the cleanse week, for breakfast eat only a simple porridge of rice, millet, oats or another light grain such as teff. Feel free to add spices (cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, etc.) if desired, as well as ghee or coconut oil.

- Stewed apples and/or prunes are helpful to keep the bowels moving. Serve as a snack or instead of porridge for breakfast.
- For both lunch and dinner, prepare a variation of kitchari (recipe below).
- Try to space meals 4 hours apart, with only the stewed fruit in between for a light snack.
- Important: It is **more** important to feel **relaxed** and **nourished** than to restrict the diet; add in other simple foods, preferably vegetarian, as necessary for you to feel comfortable.
- In addition to the hot water, make a tea of equal parts (approximately 1 tsp each per 4 cups of water) cumin seed, coriander seed, and fennel seed by simmering them together for ten minutes or so, then straining. You can make a pot at a time and keep it in a thermos if desired.

## The post-cleanse week diet and routine

For the week or so after the cleanse week, add back more variety into your diet a little at a time, noting how the foods make you feel. Try not to overeat at any meal, and continue to follow the three meals per day with no snacks routine.

Add back greater levels of activity and stimulation slowly as well, paying attention to their effects on your physical and mental state.



## Basic kitchari recipe:

Kitchari is a classic Indian comfort food and often recommended as the monodiet part of an Ayurvedic cleanse. It is a complete, nourishing meal by itself, yet easy for nearly anyone to digest. Kitchari can be adapted for any dosha or season by varying the ratio of split mung dal to rice (more rice for vata, more dal for kapha, equal parts for pitta) and changing up the spices to be more warming or cooling.

The following recipe is for one serving, but can easily be scaled up.

1/4 cup split mung beans (also called yellow mung dal or lentils) - available through Banyan Botanicals or [LifeSpa.com](http://LifeSpa.com) (red lentils - split, no hulls - may be substituted but are not as easy to digest.)

1/4 cup white basmati rice, rinsed and drained

2-4 tsp ghee or coconut oil

Small pinch asafoetida ("hing") which helps the dal cook

1/4 tsp cumin seeds

Pinch clove powder

Pinch cinnamon

Pinch cardamom

1/4 tsp turmeric

Pinch or so of black pepper

1/2 inch piece of ginger root, peeled and grated  
Salt (add when mostly cooked)  
2+ cups of water

Optional spices and additions:

Handful of chopped cilantro leaves

1-2 tsp of grated coconut

Fenugreek

Black mustard seeds

Curry leaves

Chopped vegetables (carrots, leafy greens, asparagus, green beans, etc.)

A quarter stick of kombu to add minerals, aid digestibility

Rinse the dal and soak for an hour or two if you have time.

Bring the dal, hing and water to a boil, uncovered (watching closely to prevent a mess) and then turn down to a simmer.

In a skillet, melt the ghee or coconut oil over medium heat and add the cumin seeds. Saute until they start to smell fragrant, then add remaining spices and ginger. If using coconut and/or cilantro, add them at this point. Saute briefly, then add the drained rice. Stir thoroughly to coat the rice with the ghee. Add to the cooking dal and simmer the whole mixture for 30-40 minutes, or until everything is tender. If using chopped vegetables, add them about halfway through. The end consistency will be closer to stew than soup; add hot water as needed during the cooking to make sure the dal is well-cooked.

Garnish with cilantro and additional ghee as desired.

Notes:

You can experiment with the spices based on your own preferences. The recipe can even be prepared with Mediterranean/Italian spice combinations. The important thing is to include spices to aid digestion.

Plain kitchari can be constipating, so you can mix in some whole or freshly ground flax seeds before serving, especially if not adding vegetables. The spices and oils also offset the constipating effects.