

Healthy through Summer with Ayurveda

Thomas Thomas Mueller



For many people, summer is the best time of the year, because of the combination of sun, gardening, holidays and many other pleasant activities. Others can feel uncomfortable, perhaps even with low energy whilst struggling because of the heat, humidity or dryness.

From an Ayurvedic perspective summer is characterized predominantly by the following pitta qualities:

- *uṣṇa* — hot
- *rukṣa* — dry
- *tīkṣṇa* — sharp

Therefore, people with a pitta constitution may require a specially designed or customized routine in order to feel well in summer.

If you have a predominantly pitta constitution, you may naturally feel too much heat in the body, sweat easily and have a rather rosy, warm and sensitive skin. Therefore, avoiding sports or strenuous activity outdoors, whilst protecting skin and especially eyes from the sun, is probably the best.

Although in general a pitta constitution has a good digestion, in summer due to exposure to excess heat and dryness the usually optimal functioning *agni* (digestive fire) can be affected. Therefore, it is best to have more easily digested foods with predominantly bitter and astringent taste, such as cooked green leafy vegetables, sprouts, broccoli, artichokes, lentils and beans. To balance pitta, choose cooling herbs and spices such as mint, cardamom, coriander and fennel.

Drink lots of water throughout the day, not only

to replenish lost moisture from sweating and the heat, but also to help flush toxins out of the body. Herb or spice teas offer added therapeutic benefits, whilst it is recommended to avoid hot drinks where possible and instead choose beverages at room temperature. Reduce the intake of alcohol and coffee whilst avoiding ice-cold drinks, because they affect digestion and could even promote *āma* — toxic waste.

I find that this drink is excellent in summer to not only balance pitta but also rehydrate the body because of its cooling properties. The main ingredients in the drink are:

Coconut water¹

Coconut water has many medicinal properties. It contains organic compounds possessing growth-promoting properties. It keeps the body cool, prevents summer boils and subsides rashes. It aids quick absorption of nutrients and has natural isotonic properties that have the same level of electrolytic balance as we have in our blood. It is urinary antiseptic and helps eliminate toxic waste, especially



Total Fat	0.5 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	252 mg
Potassium	600 mg
Calcium	57.6 mg
Magnesium	60 mg
Total Carbohydrate	9 g
Protein	2 g

in the case of mineral poisoning. It is also good for infants (from the age of one) suffering from intestinal disturbances. It is an antidote to ward off the ill effects of tobacco and alcohol, an excellent tonic for the old and sick and may be useful to address malnutrition. It can be seen as blood plasma substitute because it is sterile, does not produce heat, does not destroy red blood cells and is readily accepted by the body.

NUTRITIONAL DATA²

Coconut Water (serving size 240 gm)

Amount per serving

Calories 46

Tukmuria Seeds *Salvia Aegyptiaca*³

Also called Egyptian sage, is used for treating various unrelated conditions that include nervous disorders, dizziness, trembling, diarrhea and piles. Tukmuria seeds are also known for their cooling and soothing effect on the central nervous system as well as their anti-inflammatory and antipyretic actions.

RECIPE:

Cooling Coconut Drink:

INGREDIENTS:

- 240 ml of coconut water
- 1 tablespoon of Tukmuria seeds
- Juice of half a lime
- 5-6 fresh mint leaves and/or fresh coriander leaves
- Coconut palm nectar according to need



Soak 1 tablespoon of tukmuria seeds (*Salvia aegyptiaca*) in one cup of coconut water for approximately 15 minutes. Blend together with fresh mint leaves, fresh coriander and the juice of ½ a lime. Add some coconut palm nectar as sweetener if desired.

Endnotes

1. PT. Tulus Agro. *Cocoinfo International*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2004/SSN <http://tulus.com/images/catalog/leaflet%20angzcoco%20coconut%20water%20concentrate.pdf> (accessed 27 February 2012)
2. Self Nutritional Data, 2006. *Nutrition Facts*, <http://nutritiondata.self.com/facts/nut-and-seed-products/3115/2> (accessed 27 February 2012)
3. M.H. Al-Yousuf, A.K. Bashir, B.H. Ali, M.O. Tanira, G. Blunden, "The effects of *Salvia aegyptiaca* on the central nervous system in mice", *J Ethnopharmacol*, 2002 June; 81(1): 121-27.

Thomas Mueller, B.A., D.A.Med. has been teaching and practicing Ayurveda for the past 23 years. He trained in Europe, India and New Zealand. His area of specialization is pulse analysis and classical Panchakarma. Thomas completed a Yoga Teacher training course with M.S. Vishwanatha, Patanjala Yoga Kendra, in Bengaluru, India. He is an international teacher of complementary and alternative therapies and is visiting faculty at Campus Naturalis in Germany. Thomas is an Ayurvedic practitioner at The Wholistic Medical Centre in London and a member of the APA.

Contact at: <thomas@ayuwave.com>