

# Five Element Intuitive Eating

NOURISHMENT FOR BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

## Flavour and the Five Elements

**Sour** flavours are associated with the Wood element. For Wood types small amounts of sour food has a stimulating affect on the Liver and Gall Bladder the organs associated with this element helping with cleansing and balancing blood sugar. Sour foods include lemons, yogurt, limes, pickles and sauerkraut. In excess the sour taste will control the expansive, surging quality of Wood. Add lemon juice to a cup of hot water, add natural yogurt to your breakfast topped with fruit, make your own sauerkraut to support your bowel flora..

**Bitter** favours are associated with the Fire element Bitter foods take the heat out of firey, spicy foods and also balances issues within the Small intestine that affect digestion, bitter foods include romaine lettuce, rye, alfalfa, watercress, dandelion greens and aloe vera juice. Use romaine leaf lettuce instead of bread and load up with guacamole, have a green salad everyday.

**Sweet** flavours are associated with the Earth element Naturally sweet foods in moderation can be nourishing for the Earth types, these include grains, potatoes and sweet potatoes, also meats, fish, beans and nuts plus apples, apricots, cherries, dates, figs, beetroot, carrots and cucumber. Processed sugar and excess fruit sugar are not balancing for the earth element. Use sweet potato slices instead of lasagna sheets, roast carrot, beetroots and onions to make the most of the sweetness. • Pungent flavours are associated with the Metal element.

**Pungent** foods stimulate energy and counteract the natural descending nature of the Metal element. Warming pungents include onions, garlic, chilli, fennel, mustard greens, cinnamon, nutmeg, rosemary and cooling pungents include radishes, cabbage, marjoram, white pepper and turnip. Pungent herbs include citrus peel and ginger. Add cinnamon to puddings instead of sugar, add fennel to coleslaw for a chewy pungent flavour, toast spices to make the most of their delicious flavours.

**Salty** flavours are associated with the Water element. Salty food gets a bad press but the right amount can have balancing qualities to the Water organs of Kidney and Bladder. Salty foods include natural salt, seaweed, tamari sauce, barley and millet. Excess salty and certainly all processed salt will weaken the body. Make sushi from barley grain, nori wraps and some strips of smoked salmon, add sea 'salad' as a seasoning for a meal, add kombu to soups and stews especially if they contain beans and lentils, it gives a lovely flavour and helps with the 'gas' effect'

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## Colourful Food and the Five Elements

### Green

This is the colour of the Wood element so any naturally green food will have a resonance with the Wood element within you. Make sure you have greens everyday, they help strengthen the liver and make it more efficient at cleansing the blood. Broccoli, kale, cucumber, lettuce, cabbage, kiwi fruit are all yummy green food.

### Red

This is the colour of the Fire element, red foods are a good source of a carotenoid called lycopene. This antioxidant has been shown to help protect against cancers of the lung, colon, oesophagus, breast and skin. Our bodies are able to absorb more lycopene when food has been cooked or processed. Peppers, chilli, red apples, cherries, strawberries, watermelon.... Enjoy!

### Yellow and orange

These are the colours of the Earth element. Orange and yellow foods are rich in zeaxanthin, flavonoids, lycopene, potassium, vitamin C and beta-carotene. Beta carotene, is a pigment that gives orange food its orange colouring. Beta carotene is converted to vitamin A when it enters the bloodstream, and helps protect the body against cancer and cardiovascular disease, boost the immune system and protect the eyes. Yellow courgettes, yellow/orange pepper, oranges, lemons, sweet potatoes, peaches all have lovely Earth energy.

### White

White vegetables are linked to the Metal element and particularly support the immune system, garlic and onions have antimicrobial qualities and cauliflower is high in vitamin C, sauerkraut made from white cabbage will support the healthy bacteria in your gut.

### Blue

Blue foods are linked to the Water element. These foods get their bright hue from anthocyanins, which have been linked with antioxidants and anti-aging properties in the body. Blue and purple foods help promote bone health, and have been shown to lower the risk of some cancers, improve memory, and increase urinary-tract health. The main benefit of blue and purple foods is increased circulation and microcirculation. Look to blueberries, blackberries, aubergine, purple potatoes and plums.

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## Seasonal Eating and the Five Elements

### Spring

This is the time when we feel the energy of the Wood element the most, it is dynamic and pushy, imagine the force needed for a seed radical to burst through the seed case. This is the time for planning, organization and decision making. Seasonal food for this time is kale, cabbage, early potatoes, leeks, cauliflower. Lighten up your cooking by having less heavy carbs and start introducing some raw food.

### Summer

This is the time we feel the energy of the Fire element. It feels softer than Spring, more volatile, the push has stopped and there are flowers everywhere. Growth is still rapid and we have some cropping. Seasonal food for this time are beans, salad crops, cucumber, tomatoes and berries. This is the time for raw foods, as we have more energy available for digestion. - -

### Late Summer

This is the extra season which I always call blackberries and apples season. It is the time of harvest and plenty. This can be a languid time of year where the yearly energy is at a balance point before we dip down into Autumn. This is a time for squashes and pumpkins, courgettes, melons, apples, pears, blackberries, beans, potatoes and much more. This is still a time for plenty of raw food but start to slip in the odd vegetable soup and on colder days add some warming carbs in there too.

### Autumn

The energy is on the turn downwards as we head towards Winter, the days are cooler and becoming shorter. This is the time for soups and stews with added pulses and maybe some pot barley, keep a salad for a side dish to the main event. Keeping warm means we need those complex carbohydrates such as oats, barley, rice, buckwheat and millet to fuel our inner hot water bottle. Seasonal delights include cabbage, carrots, cauliflowers, leeks and main-crop potatoes

### Winter

We are in the deepest, darkest, coldest part of the year; the energy feels insular and quiet. Keeping warm and conserving energy is what our primitive body most craves. This means warming, oven baked foods, casseroles, roasts and complex carbohydrates for extra fuel burning such as wholegrain flour, buckwheat, barley and oats. Seasonal yumminess includes all the brassicas that love a bit of frost plus leeks and potatoes.

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## Food Super Powers and the Five Elements

### **Organised**

Wood people love a plan, love to be organized and thrive when there is a structure in place. So try a food diary and maybe plan your menu in advance for efficient shopping trips.

### **Playful**

Fire folk love fun and playfulness, they want to feel free to try out new ideas and maybe even outrageous combinations! Try adding flowers to salads and eating a savoury meal for breakfast, dance with your food!

### **Sensuous/tasty**

For Earthy people taste is everything; they love playing with new flavours and textures and the whole food thing is a visceral experience. Honour this quality and make time to really enjoy your meal, tasting every mouthful and quietly give thanks for the harvest.

### **Inspiring**

Metal types like to feel inspired by new ideas and can get bored easily by routine. Indulge this by buying or borrowing new recipe books, signing up to recipe blogs or joining foodie Facebook groups

### **Adventurous**

Water folk generally like to know what is going to happen and they probably have their good ol' favourites that they return to time and time again. They also like to flow so maybe seek out ways that add an unexpected twist or turn to favourite foods. So try stepping out and trying a new way of eating

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## Food Types and the Five Elements

### **Fats and oils**

For Wood types because of the link to the Liver and Gall Bladder meridian fats and oils can be challenging, make sure you have plenty of healthy fats such as olive and coconut oil, avocados, oily fish, nuts and seeds. Watch out for lethargy, excess yawning, flatulence, greasy skin and loose stools which may be a sign that you are not digesting the fats you are eating.

### **Spices and herbs**

For Fire types because of the link to the Small Intestine meridian having a healthy, efficient digestion may be an issue. Spices and herbs can help with digestion, reducing bloating and discomfort after a meal. Try chewing a mix of these seeds cumin, fennel, cardamom and coriander or having a herbal tea with any of these ingredients.

### **Sweet balancers**

For Earthy people the taste of sugar can be irresistible. Make sure you stick to whole grains and keep processed sugar laden food to an occasional treat. Fruit is best eaten whole and avoid juicing/smoothie-ing more than one piece at a time.

### **Pre and probiotics**

For Metal folk supporting the Large bowel with pre and probiotic foods is key. For prebiotic foods make sure you have plenty of onion, leek and garlic and some Jerusalem artichokes, these give some lovely fibre for the healthy bacteria to feed on. For natural probiotics choose cultured vegetables like sauerkraut and kimchi or natural yogurt or kefir.

### **Hydrating foods**

For Watery people staying hydrated is absolutely essential to keep them flowing and reassured that life is good; flow is health after all! So eat naturally watery such as fruit and vegetables in particular cucumber, water melon, celery, courgette, cauliflower, aubergine and red cabbage. Also take time to presoak dry food such as muesli, porridge, nuts and seeds to give a lovely message of hydration to your body.