

Chinese Food Energetics - **Daverick Leggett**

The temperature of food will also be influenced by the cooking or preparation method. The effects of the various methods are as follows:

- Raw Cooling
- Steamed Cooling/Neutral
- Boiled Neutral
- Stewed Warming
- Stir-fried Warming
- Baked More Warming
- Deep-fried Heating
- Roasted More Heating
- Grilled More Heating
- Barbecued Most Heating

The Flavors of Food

The **Salty** flavor belongs to the Water element and enters the Kidney

The **Sour** flavor belongs to the Wood element and enters the Liver

The **Bitter** flavor belongs to the Fire element and enters the Heart

The **Sweet** flavor belongs to the Earth element and enters the Spleen

The **Pungent** flavor belongs to the Metal element and enters the Lung

Salty Flavor

The salty flavor moves inward and downward, drawing the action of a food towards the center and root of the body. The salty flavor moistens, softens and detoxifies, counteracting the hardening of muscles and glands. It regulates the moisture balance in kidneys stimulates digestive function and improves concentration.

Yin tonics tend to be sweet and cool. To tonify Yin we favor sweet, sour and salty over bitter and pungent flavors.

Foods, which especially tonify Yin, are listed below.

Apple	Asparagus	Cheese
Chicken Egg	Clam	Crab
Cuttlefish	Duck	Duck Egg
Honey	Kidney Bean	Lemon
Malt	Mango	Milk
Oyster	Pea	Pear
Pineapple	Pomegranate	Pork
Rabbit	String Bean	Tofu
Tomato	Watermelon	Yam

Yang Deficiency

Yang is the Fire of the body. All the processes of life require heat. Without heat life slows down and eventually stops altogether. Our Yang keeps us warm and provides heat for all the body's functions. If our Yang is low we cool down and our metabolism slows down. The moist Yin of the body cannot be transformed and may begin to accumulate. As a result we begin to under function and we may become cold and sluggish. To build the Yang means to fan up the flames, to tend the fire within. We can support this process by keeping warm and keeping moving. Physical exercise will produce heat, which increases the power Yang. At an emotional level our Yang represents our passionate engagement with life. The more we actively partake in our lives, the more we build our Yang.

Yang tonics tend to be sweet, pungent and warming. Foods, which especially tonify Yang, are listed below.

Basil	Cassia Fruit	Chestnut
Chive Seed	Cinnamon Bark	Clove
Dill Seed	Fennel Seed	Fenugreek Seed
Garlic	Ginger (dried)	Kidney
Lamb	Lobster	Nutmeg
Pistachio	Raspberry	Rosemary
Sage	Savory	Shrimp
Star Anise	Thyme	Walnut

Foods, which tonify Chi, tend to be sweet and often warm. Foods which especially tonify Qi are listed below.

Beef	Cherry	Chicken
Coconut	Date	Eel
Fig	Ginseng	Goose
Grape	Ham	Herring
Lentil	Licorice	Longan
Mackerel	Microalgae	Molasses
Oats	Octopus	Potato
Rabbit	Rice	Royal Jelly
Sweet Potato	Shiitake Mushroom	Squash
Sturgeon	Tofu	Yam

Blood Deficiency

Our ability to produce Blood is strengthened by maintaining a balance between rest and physical activity. Physical activity strengthens the Spleen's ability to convert food into Blood and helps the Heart circulate it around the body. Rest, especially in the early afternoon, enables the Liver to renew the Blood during the day.

Supporting our Blood through Food: The overuse of fatty foods, denatured foods and sweetened our salted foods will tend to weaken the Blood. Foods, which especially tonify Blood, are listed below.

Adzuki Bean	Apricot	Beef
Beetroot	Bone Marrow	Chicken Egg
Cuttlefish	Dandelion	Dang Gui
Dark Leafy Greens	Date	Fig
Grape	Kidney Bean	Liver
Longan	Microalgae	Nettle
Octopus	Oyster	Parsley
Sardine	Spinach	Sweet Rice
		Watercress

Dampness

Dampness comes from the failure to burn off or transform moisture in the body. It is nearly always associated with a weak Spleen, often with a weak Kidney and sometimes with a weak Lung. Dampness can lodge in a specific part of the body or affect us more generally. As the word suggests, Dampness can make us feel heavy and tired. It can make us swell up and it can obstruct our body's functioning.

Resolving Dampness Through Food

All Dampness is treated by strengthening the Spleen and may also need notification of the Kidney, the Lung and the Yang. Phlegm demands the reduction of Phlegm-forming foods and the use of Phlegm-resolving foods. Water is helped by Water-removing (diuretic) foods. Dampness is often the result of overeating or over nutrition. It may also result from jamming the digestive system with poorly combined foods. All the device on supporting the spleen earlier in this booklet is important in avoiding the over accumulation of Dampness. Dairy products (sheep and goat products are less dampening), Pork and rich meat, Roasted Peanuts, Concentrated juices especially Orange and Tomato, Wheat, Bread, Yeast, Beer, Bananas, Sugar and sweeteners, Saturated fats.

Foods which resolve Dampness

Adzuki Bean	Alfalfa	Anchovy
Barley	Buckwheat Tea	Celery
Corn	Daikons	Garlic
Green Tea	Horseradish	Jasmine Tea
Job's Tears	Kidney Bean	Kohlrabi
Lemon	Mackerel	Marjoram
Mushroom (button)	Mustard Leaf	Onion
Parsley	Pumpkin	Radish
Rye	Scallion	Turnip
Umeboshi Plum	White Fungus	

Foods which drain Water

Adzuki Bean	Alfalfa	Anchovy		
Barley	Black Soybean	Broad Bean		
Celery	Clam	Fenugreek		
Frog	Grape	Job's Tears		
Kelp	Lettuce	Mackerel	Sardine	Seaweed

Foods which resolve Phlegm

Almond	Apple Peel	Clam		
Daikons	Garlic	Grapefruit		
Lemon Peel	Licorice	Marjoram		
Mushroom (button)	Mustard Leaf	Mustard Seed		
Olive	Onion	Orange Peel		
Pear	Black and White Pepper	Peppermint		
Persimmon	Plantain	Radish		
Seaweed	Shiitake Mushroom	Shrimp		
Tangerine Peel	Tea	Thyme	Walnut	Watercress

Driving Out cold Through Food

Amasake	Anchovy	Basil
Bay	Black Pepper	Brown Sugar
Butter	Caper	Cayenne
Cherry	Chestnut	Chicken
Chive Seed	Coconut Milk	Coriander Seed
Dill Seed	Fennel Seed	Garlic
Ginger	Kohlrabi	Lamb Kidney
Leek	Leeches	Longan
Malt Sugar	Mussel	Mustard Leaf
Mutton	Nutmeg	Onion
Peach	Pine Kernel	Rosemary
Scallion	Shrimp	Sorghum
Soya Oil	Spearmint	Squash
Sweet Potato	Sweet Rice	Trout

Removing Heat Through Food

Asparagus	Aubergine	Bamboo Shoot
Banana	Chicken Egg white	Clam

Elderflower	Grapefruit	Lemon
Lettuce	Millet	Mung Bean
Mung Bean Sprout	Peppermint	Potato
Salt	Tofu	Watermelon
Wheat		

Foods with draining qualities such as adzuki beans and alfalfa sprouts are especially useful in resolving Dampness in the lower abdomen, affecting the genitourinary system and colon.

Dampness in the middle zone of the body which includes the Liver, Gall Bladder and Stomach can be helped by bitter foods which dry Dampness such as endive and dandelion and pungent foods which break through Dampness such as the onion family. In the upper body, Phlegm in the Lung can be helped by pungent foods such as radish, garlic or mustard greens.

Fruit is generally moistening but certain fruits have decongesting qualities that can benefit Dampness. Papaya, pineapple and pears can be useful helpers. Papaya enzymes have sometimes been used to increase the digestibility of meat, and pineapple is a natural accompaniment to cheese. It would be a mistake and a shame to cut out fruit; rather more care needs to be taken not to cause fermentation though combining fruit with starchy foods. It is the more lubricating fruits such as banana and the tropical fruits that are most likely to aggravate Dampness; although, where Cold and Dampness combine, all raw fruit intake needs to be very restricted.

The treatment of Dampness depends on how and where it is manifesting. It may be combining with heat or Cold and focused in the Gall Bladder or manifesting as Phlegm in the Lung. Generally speaking all bitter flavored herbs will be helpful. For example, a cup of dandelion coffee after a meal can help the breakdown of food and when Dampness is affecting the skin, burdock is a good remedy. Barley water is an excellent general counter to Dampness. It is customary in China to serve jasmine or green tea with a meal to reduce its Dampening effects. Sage is recommended as a remedy for Damp conditions.

Such bitter leaves as chicory and endive are helpful: rye and roasted barley are helpful grains; mung beans will cool and drain moisture. A soup of mung bean and seaweed or watercress soup would be appropriate. A dish of barley and lightly cooked cabbage also has reputation for helping this condition. Useful herbs include purslane, wormwood, goldenseal, gentian and dandelion root.

Dampness in the Bladder

Dampness in the Bladder can combine with either Heat or Cold. Its characteristic symptoms are difficult, frequent and cloudy urination. Heat or Cold are distinguished by the color of the urine; more yellow in cases of heat and more pale in cases of Cold. This pattern frequently occurs as a result of exposure to cold or damp environments. The appropriate dietary approach is to drain the Dampness and resolve the heat or Cold.

Diuretic foods such as adzuki bean or peas are helpful for all conditions of Dampness in the Bladder. Where heat is present, more cooling foods such as celery, cranberry, seaweed, melon, alfalfa, adzuki or mung bean are good choices; goldenseal, celery seed or corn (the tassels on the end of a corncob) are very effective as tea, and barley water is a classic remedy (see recipe section). Where Cold is present, some warming spices such as fennel, fenugreek or ginger can be added to support the Kidney Yang.

Phlegm in the Lung

In cases of Hot Phlegm such cooling, bitter and/or pungent foods as radish, watercress and seaweed are appropriate. Where there is Cold, more warming foods such as garlic, onion, horseradish, mustard greens or kohlrabi can be chosen. A simple dish of turnip can be used as a remedy for both Hot and Cold Phlegm. Expectorant herbs such as mullein, coltsfoot, eucalyptus and elderflower help to resolve conditions of Hot Phlegm. An effective and pleasant tea can be made from equal parts coltsfoot, mullein and licorice. Thyme, hyssop, basil and winter savory can be used to resolve Cold Phlegm and tangerine peel is excellent in ea. Nettles provide a useful tonic for the Lung and help resolve all conditions of Phlegm.

Moderating the effects of Dampening foods

To moderate the Dampening nature of wheat, wheat bread can be toasted; or less Dampening flours such as rye can be used. Caraway, dill seed or other decongesting spices and herbs can be added when making your own bread. In the case of pasta, use pesto, garlic, peppers, onions or walnuts to create a decongesting sauce. Pizza can be served with toppings of anchovy, garlic, onion, tuna, sweet corn and olives, flavored with Damp resolving herbs such as basil and thyme and accompanied by a small bitter salad.

If using dairy, try goat and sheep, soured dairy products, soya milk and un-pasteurized raw milk and consider combining them with some Damp-resolving spices. Hard cheese can be eaten with apple or onion; chives, garlic or pineapple can accompany cottage cheese, which is a less Dampening option., Rye crackers make a more drying base.

Beef and heavy meat can be served with horseradish or mustard and accompanied by green leafy vegetables or a bitter salad. Beer drinkers can favor more bitter varieties, organically produced and served at room temperature. Nuts can be dry roasted gently to lessen the effects of rancidity. Sugar "fixes" can make use of less refined sweeteners such as molasses, multi-extract, date syrup, amasake or honey.

The absolute avoidance of Dampening foods isn't fun. When Dampening food is consumed to try to limit the amount, avoid overeating and offset the food's Dampening nature with foods that have Damp-resolving properties.