

# Yogic Recipes for Immune Health: Astragalus Soup and Ajwain Pancakes

By Karta Purkh Singh Khalsa, DN-C, RH

Food has been the medicine of humanity since the dawn of time. Healing foods and herbs are the basis of Ayurvedic cuisine. It began as a way for people to ingest healing herbs and foods. Gradually, complicated mixtures of food ingredients, herbal medicines, and flavorings coalesced into a tasty amalgam that warms the soul, heals the body, and pleases the palate.

## Astragalus Root

Astragalus root boosts energy and immune function. Although mainly used for long-term disease prevention, astragalus can be used for colds and flu. Some Chinese families add astragalus to the stew pot during the cold season, and everyone gets a daily immune boost. Astragalus tastes surprisingly good as a tea, with a velvety texture and sweet, buttery taste. Cook it into a soup stock, or brew tea and use that to cook a grain like rice.



## Velvet Immune Broth

3 cups water or broth

1 ounce astragalus slices (about 7)

1 bulb fresh peeled garlic

Salt and pepper to taste

Place water, garlic, and astragalus in pot. Bring to boil. Cover pot and simmer on medium low for several hours, until garlic is soft. Remove astragalus slices and any fibrous material. Drink hot. You can eat the garlic with the broth, or remove the garlic and spread it on toast. Try adding noodles, barley or rice, slivered almonds, and/or carrots (cook till soft) to the broth to make a meal. Cook grains in leftover broth to add a healthier touch to a future meal. Add fresh sliced ginger root or ground ginger, and diced onion before cooking to add to the immune strengthening and antibacterial properties of the soup. For an extra immune boost, add medicinal mushrooms like shiitake.



## Ajwain Seed

Ajwain seed is in the parsley family, along with dill, and used as a spice. It tastes like caraway or thyme, but stronger and biting hot and bitter. Indian restaurants often serve a mound of rice with ajwain seed to enhance digestion. Ajwain adds zip to starchy foods, savory pastries, and breads, especially *paranths*.<sup>[1]</sup> It goes well with green beans, root vegetables, and lentil dishes. Ajwain relieves gas, promotes kidney function, and generally benefits the nerves and respiratory system. The seeds are immune enhancing, antimicrobial, and mildly aphrodisiac. You can brew ajwain seed in Yogi Tea or other *chai* tea formulas for an immune boost. During the flu season, add powdered ajwain seed to *parantha* filling.



## Ajwain Seed Immune Pancakes

1-2 Tbs fresh ginger root, peeled and finely chopped

2-3 Tbs cauliflower, finely chopped

1-2 Tbs ajwain seeds, whole or ground, or to taste

Red chilies, crushed, to taste

Black pepper to taste

Soy sauce or Bragg's Liquid Aminos to taste

Equal parts bran and whole wheat flour, approximately one half cup each (or substitute garbanzo flour)

1 green chili, finely chopped, per pancake

Combine ingredients. Drop batter onto griddle sprayed with vegetable spray or coated with lecithin. Cook on low heat, flipping once.



## Eggplant

Yogi Bhajan called eggplant “God’s ovaries.” It’s a warming circulation enhancer, excellent for “cold hands and feet,” and a diuretic food that promotes menstruation—one of the greatest foods for women’s healing. Eggplant can be helpful in chronic PMS, asthma, cough, and chronic pain. Generally, eggplant is not compatible with yogurt, milk, melon, or cucumber.



## Eggplant Curry

1 large eggplant

½ tsp fresh ginger root, peeled and pureed

½ tsp fresh peeled garlic, pureed

1 small green chili, finely chopped

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 tsp coriander seed powder

½ tsp turmeric powder

2 Tbs ghee[2]

Salt to taste

1 Tbs cilantro, finely chopped

Steam eggplant until almost cooked. Peel, mash, and set aside. Sauté ginger puree, garlic puree, green chili, and onion in ghee. (Yogi Bhajan recommended substituting castor oil for a cleansing effect.) Add spices and sauté. Add eggplant and salt, and stir. Simmer 5-10 minutes. Garnish with cilantro. Serve hot with rice. Serves 4.



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*Nothing in this text should be construed as medical advice.*



*Always check with your personal physician or licensed health care practitioner before making any significant modification to your diet to ensure that the recipes and ingredients are appropriate for your personal health condition and consistent with any medication you may be taking.*