

# kitchen clinic

good health always with Charmaine

Foreword by  
**Rani  
Mukerji**



**Charmaine D'Souza**

# Praise

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‘Charmaine has been my nutritionist for the last few years and recently my children's too. I have benefited from the amazing home remedies which she provides. My immunity to common coughs and colds has increased due to her nut mixtures. Her over all approach to being healthy has become so fluid with my family's daily life. I would like to thank her as we have enhanced our life from all her experience and dedication to the field of health’—**Ami Modi, Firestone Diamonds**

‘As a fitness enthusiast, I strive to maintain my energy levels. Charmaine has helped me do so. Her book will be a ready reckoner for all those looking to stay fit and healthy’—**Anita Dongre, Fashion Designer**

‘Charmaine's powder remedies are magical as they cure and improve any specific ailments which need to be addressed, while also working on the individual's general well being’—**Apoorva Mehta, CEO, Dharm Productions**

‘It has been my privilege to have known and worked with Charmaine for seven years. Her nutrition plan helped me restore my hormonal balance without the use of any allopathic medication, and helped me maintain good health through and after my pregnancy. What I enjoy most about working with Charmaine is that she makes use of everyday kitchen ingredients as dietary supplements and works with your dietary preferences to improve your overall health and well being’—**Ashika Pohoomul Mehta, MSW**

‘Charmaine's naturopathy therapy helped me stay fit and glowing all through my pregnancy’—**Ekta Raheja, K. Reheja Universal**

‘In today's age of artificial flavours and sweeteners, Charmaine's homemade remedies have proven to be organic, simple and extremely result oriented. Natural is the way to go!’—**Siddharth Malhotra, Actor**

‘Charmaine did her internship under me when I was Chief Dietician at SL Raheja Hospital. I was able to gauge her commitment and dedication way back in 1990 and she imbibed good practices of nutrition. I am proud that she has worked hard to reach where she has today. She justifies my considering her as my student pupil’—**Gourpriya D. Koppikar R.D., Consultant Dietician, Bombay Hospital**

‘Charmaine's programme worked like magic for me. I met her on November 30, 2007, and by October 2008, I had lost 19 kg! Isn't that magic?’—**Hiroo Yash Johar, Producer, Dharma Productions**

‘I started using Charmaine's remedies eighteen months ago, and mentally and physically, I have never felt better. She has a very natural approach to things and it is refreshing and comforting. With my cholesterol levels under control now, I am focusing on monitoring other problem areas. It's been a life changing experience’—**Kajal Assomull, Jewellery Designer**

‘I have been following Charmaine's advice for a couple of years now in order to maintain my energy, fitness and thyroid levels. As an actor and politician I need to be at my healthiest and Charmaine's spice mix ensures that I continue to be blessed with good health!’—**Kirron Kher, Actor and Politician**

‘Charmaine is not just a nutritionist of exceptional ability, she's a magician. She has a complete understanding of the human body and her diet is individually crafted to suit your medical condition and history. Consequently, her prescribed regimen gets results beyond ones expectations’— **Madhu and Mohammed Khan, Founder Enterprise Nexus**

‘My passion, which happens to be fashion, has governed my life to the exclusion of everything else, for over a decade. Suddenly, one day, I actually saw myself in the mirror and could not recognize my own reflection. Physical beauty, as much as clothes, holds tremendous importance to me and my own appearance was belying this very fact. It was imperative for me to get back into shape and that too, super fast! Having heard really good things about Charmaine's work in the field of nutrition and naturopathy, I decided to get in touch with her. Believe me, it's been an incredible journey toward a fitter me’— **Manav Gangwar, Couturier Delhi**

‘I started Charmaine's programme soon after I had my baby and wanted to shed the excess baby weight in a natural and healthy way. She not only helped me do this by giving me powder recipes made from natural ingredients in my kitchen but also gradually transformed my health in totality by giving me homemade remedies to cure common ailments for me and my son, which built our immunity in general making my approach more naturopathic’— **Natasha Poonawalla, Poonawalla Group**

‘Charmaine has helped both of us regulate and create balance in our systems with her natural approach and remedy. We feel our ailments have come under control under her guidance and supervision’— **Nayana and Shailendra Singh, JMD Percept**

‘Charmaine can cure ailments which medication can't! It could be diabetes, thyroid, obesity, or PCOD. Whenever my family or I face any health issue, we call Charmaine. I have total faith in her. We are all addicted to Charmaine and her powders!’— **Neetu Singh Kapoor, Actor**

‘Charmaine is the queen of nutrition. She knows it all. She has helped me lose a lot of weight and keep the balance of all my blood levels’— **Nitasha Nanda, Escorts Group Delhi**

‘Charmaine helped me lose all my pregnancy weight and achieve my target!’— **Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, Designer**

‘I have been on Charmaine's powders for over six months now and I am pleased to say that she has made me feel healthier, more energetic and glowing!’— **Roopa Fabiani, Fabiani Group**

‘My mundane kitchen ingredients turn into miracle cures with Charmaine's magic!’— **Sarita Garwar, Ramsay, JMD Garware Group**

‘Charmaine is my 911 any time I'm sick, even before I call my doctor. And she always comes to my rescue. I run all my medical prescription by her and she has a natural solution to everything! I've been with her for years now. She has helped me through so many health issues, taught me to eat right and think healthy! And the best part is that she is so accessible—always responsive, no matter where she is. I carry her powders and water infusions all over the world, and they have worked wonders for me’— **Suman Manghnani, Hotelier**

'Charmaine has been a blessing—keeping us healthy with natural inputs and away from tabs and pills. Her friendly and accessible nature makes the relationship fun and productive. Charmaine is now a friend and necessity ... addiction'—**Sumi and Jaspal Bindra, Group ED and CEO, Standard Chartered HK**

'Charmaine has helped me and my family maintain good health over the past few years. Her simple and practical diet plans, therapeutic waters, and spice mixes have helped ensure good blood reports and overall fitness despite our hectic lifestyles and travel schedules'—**Swapnali Bhosale Kadam, ABIL Group**

'Charmaine is my godsent angel who with her vast knowledge of naturopathy has healed me and my family. I needed to heal quickly post my operation and wanted to get there naturally. Charmaine guided me through this with her expertise, patience, love, and care. I am forever grateful to her. She continues to look after me and my family in our daily stress-filled lives, building our immunity and helping in our mental and physical well being'—**Vaibhavi Merchant, Bollywood Choreographer**

'Meeting Charmaine changed my concept of long term medication altogether. By sheer coincidence I discovered I had thyroid disorder. Her fascinating yet purely SPICY medication was just the most amazing I have ever experienced. I followed it like the bible and now I am as good as new (which my endocrinologist said would be lifelong and so would the medication). Thank you Charmaine!'—**Zahra Morani, Ciney Production**

'Charmaine's plan for good health is like magic. I was amazed when I first met her and was given a plan of natural herbs and spices to cure me of my hormonal imbalance. Within six months I was cured without having to put chemicals into my body. Charmaine's natural spices, that I put together in my own kitchen was like a magic potion...really a big blessing in my life. I no longer need to deal with side effects of dangerous tablets because I have cured myself the natural way. I intend on following her plans for the rest of my life so I look and feel healthy inside out!'—**Zoa Morani, Actress and Producer**

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## **Charmaine D'Souza**



RANDOM HOUSE INDIA

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Random House Publishers India Private Limited  
Windsor IT Park, 7th Floor, Tower-B  
A-1, Sector-125, Noida-201301, UP

Random House Group Limited  
20 Vauxhall Bridge Road  
London SW1V 2SA  
United Kingdom

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EPUB ISBN 9788184004649

*To my husband Savio and my daughters Charlyene and Savlyene*

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*Introduction*



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*Acknowledgements*

*A Note on the Author*

# Foreword

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I AM AN AVID READER WHO LIKES TO KEEP ABREAST OF HEALTH and dietary issues; I'm also a constant worrier about food and its nutrients. So my curiosity was piqued when I first heard about Charmaine's work. After meeting her, I began to understand the nature of foods. There are foods that are good for you and there are foods that aren't. Understanding how food works solves most of our dietary issues and keeps us in the best of health. For me, Charmaine represents the world of naturopathy and healthy eating. It is with her that I finally started my good eating habits.

My father was always a fit and exuberant man but a sudden heart attack took away much of his zest and energy. His failing health transformed me from an ice-cream-loving child to a health-conscious eater. Having had an ailing father at home who was suffering from different ailments for quite some time, it was fascinating for me to understand the cause of my father's ill health. Charmaine came into my life many years after that incident. In retrospect, I wish our paths had crossed earlier because she has given me clarity about food and its many intricacies.

Though I am an actor, and actors are often scrutinized about how they look, I'm also a foodie, so it is very important for me to have met someone like Charmaine who doesn't restrict me from eating but instead gives me guidelines as to how I can balance my diet. All these years I have never been on a low-calorie or restricted diet and I never want to be on one because that goes against my inherent foodie nature. Charmaine's programme and simple plans make me feel extremely healthy and charged.

My advice to my fellow readers is to do what is best for your body. Understand what works for you and also how food works. One should be a little aware of the food they eat today, with so much adulteration going around.

Stick to home food at least 320 days of the year and you will stay fit and healthy.

This book will be beneficial to those you want to be healthy every day of their lives. Be an intelligent eater. The rewards are infinite.

**Rani Mukerji**

## MY STORY

AS A 5-YEAR-OLD, I REMEMBER MY MOTHER TAKING US TO THE pool every day for a swim. A nutritious snack would always be packed and taken along so that we wouldn't pester her to buy us those batata wads available right outside the pool complex. So, nearly forty years ago, while other kids would rush from the pool to Simla Canteen for their daily fix of deep-fried snacks, we would be fed sprouted moong, boiled eggs, chappati wraps, fruit, and dahi. We envied the other kids but my mother would always tell us that all the calories they had burned swimming would soon be piled on with the very first bite!

When I was a year old, my father developed diabetes. I spent most of my childhood watching him try to keep his blood sugars under control. A friend of his introduced him to an ayurvedic practitioner who would give him packets filled with ayurvedic powders. They were so bitter tasting that he would have to fill them in gel capsules and then swallow them. So every Saturday, we kids would sit around the dining table and he would fill empty capsules with the medicine. Our eyes would water and we would constantly be sneezing. I can still vividly recollect the scene. Unfortunately, this form of treatment never helped him decrease his blood sugars. There was also a doubt regarding the lead and other heavy metal content of the powders. Ultimately, he succumbed to cancer of the gall bladder and spleen.



When I started my career in the field of nutrition and dietetics, I knew I wanted to help people by first educating them about their disease and giving them informed choices. After studying naturopathy I was further able to help patients use kitchen ingredients to make their own therapeutic powder and water. Since I gave out the recipe for the powders to be made by them in their own kitchens, I knew that there would never be any doubt about adulteration/allopathic drugs being slyly introduced into the powders. Even today, when my patients/clients consume their powders at a party or a dinner and they are warned about taking a suspicious sort of treatment, they confidently inform their friends that the only place where adulterants can be added is in their own kitchen and their kitchen help would never do anything to hamper their treatment.

My first internship was in 1990 at KEM Hospital, Mumbai. I was lucky to have been offered a double internship...so while the rest of my batch mates were enjoying their vacation I started my second internship at the SL Raheja Hospital, Mumbai, under Dr Koppikar, who still is my inspiration, mentor, and guide. She offered me my first job as a locum at the hospital but a year later I knew I wanted to do something different from what the others in my field were doing. So I started lecturing on food and nutrition at Jaslok Hospital and a number of catering colleges. For eighteen years I taught the subject and also continued my private practice. However, in 2008, I set up a full-time practice. Today, here I am...perusing blood reports, empathizing with people who are unwell, taking dietary recalls, using my monitors to check them, listing out ingredients for their powders and waters...doing this all on a one-on-one basis and enjoying every minute of it.

**I can very proudly say that my 23-year-old practice is solely based on word of mouth referrals. I would**

like to think of all my clients as superstars in their own way, but Vinod Khanna was the first Bollywood film star I wrote out a diet plan for. I had already met many of Mumbai's top industrialists before that but Mr. Khanna bowled me over when he served me water and also took the tray back into the kitchen!

I start each day with the recitation of the Rosary and I also say a prayer before prescribing/jotting down therapeutic powder. I am humbled by the faith people have in me; it overwhelms me and sometimes even scares me. They are so sure I will be able to help them, even though there are times when I am in doubt. There are times when they call to let me know what their specialist has advised them and want to know if he/she is on the right track and that is when I have to remind them that I am only their nutritionist/naturopath...not their doctor. This implicit faith my clients have in me makes me do what I do daily.

## MY 'GOOD HEALTH ALWAYS' PROGRAMME

I am often asked about the 'holistic' approach that I prescribe. A holistic approach considers the whole person and how he/she interacts with his/her environment. They are motivated by how good they feel when they find reserves of energy and enthusiasm for life, and by the knowledge that their health is truly in their hands.

My **Good Health Always** programme is holistic and follows a natural, therapeutic approach towards achieving good health through self-cleansing. **The main objective of the programme is the prevention of illness or the cure of ailments, with the use of kitchen herbs and spices so that the body maintains and heals itself.** Naturopathic programmes treat people, not merely the symptoms of a disease, by removing the cause of the ailment. The fact that the recipe of the mix is always given to the client ensures that the individual can take an active part in maintaining good health...always!

The mix is tailor-made to suit a client's specific set of ailments and takes into consideration his or her dietary intake, medical supplementation, lifestyle, and activity. The fact that the ingredients for the mix are often found within the reach of your own kitchen or at your nearest grocery shop adds to the ease in making it in your own home.

My clients keep coming back to me because they see results! The lady who was my first private patient still takes my advice for her great grandson! And likewise, I do hope that this book enriches the lives of all my readers.



## DIETETICS

My work involves the blend of two very important fields: naturopathy and dietetics. So to understand what I do, it is first necessary to understand what these fields are. They both require follow-ups and working closely with the patients. I'll start by telling you about the main role of a dietitian.

Dietetics focuses on the interaction between nutrition and health. Dietitians and dietetic technicians design something called 'nutrition therapies' that help the body use the natural nutrients and properties of food to protect against disease and promote health. A dietitian is an expert in food and nutrition. He/she

gives dietary advice, helps promote healthy eating habits, and also helps in developing specific diets for people. Dietitians translate the science of nutrition into everyday information about food for health and well-being, and use this information to treat patients.

The day-to-day work of a dietitian often includes:

- ❖ educating clients on how food and healthy eating habits, help prevent illness, and achieve and maintain optimum health;
- ❖ educating and advising a wide range of patients about the advantages of therapeutic diets and dietary therapy and how they manage their conditions;
- ❖ calculating the patient's nutritional requirements using usual tests based on evaluations of blood chemistry, temperature, stress, mobility, and other significant factors;
- ❖ analyzing the nutritional content of the food a patient regularly intakes;
- ❖ devising eating plans and changing recipes for better nutrition;
- ❖ educating additional healthcare and non-healthcare professionals about food and nutrition issues;
- ❖ working with corporations to support well being programmes for their employees, as well as advising catering departments about precise dietary requirements;
- ❖ writing reports and case notes and maintaining correct records;
- ❖ carrying out appointments in people's homes, including nursing homes; and
- ❖ counselling the food and pharmaceutical industries.

Now, onto naturopathy.

## **NATUROPATHY**

Naturopathy developed out of the ancient healing customs of Europe, with its roots resolutely grounded in early Greek medical philosophy. Naturopathy is now increasingly being acknowledged by mainstream medicine as a valuable and efficient system for treating a range of disorders.

Naturopathy often uses dietetics to treat patients, however dietetics in itself is a very focused field. I combine the two, to the best of my abilities, so that I can help the patient in the best possible way.

## **MY METHOD**

I use an investigational process known as EQ4 meridian testing. The EQ4 equipment accesses the energy flow via the meridian channels in the fingers and the palms of both hands. The EQ4 introduces an imperceptible electric current to measure the resistance of the acupuncture points. About 50 points are tested and an overall snapshot of the organ system is obtained. Based on all this information, I formulate a programme tailor-made for the client from a vast database of healing remedies that will ultimately bring the unbalanced points and meridians into a state of balance.



Each and every one of us has to be a master of our mind and body and hence of our destiny. We need to understand how our body functions and this is an important step in our approach toward physical and mental wellness. Our body has the ability to heal itself if only we can learn to listen to it and respond by giving it what it really needs. In spite of all the years of abuse our body endures through exposure to environmental pollutants and toxins, poor nutrition, smoking and alcohol consumption, inactivity and emotional upheavals, it usually serves us well for many years before starting to break down and show signs of ill health.

If you intend to begin on a new route to good health and well being, I would strongly advise that you first undergo a thorough medical examination. Ensure that along with your routine blood tests you also test your glycosylated hemoglobin levels and apolipoproteins. Then sit down and **draw up a list of all your ailments, your dietary recall, your health history, as well as a family history of major health issues like cancer and diabetes.** Also put down a list of all the medicines and supplements you take on a daily basis. All this information will enable your healthcare practitioner to easily assess your health status and help you get back on the road to recovery as quickly as possible.

Stay blessed with good health...always!

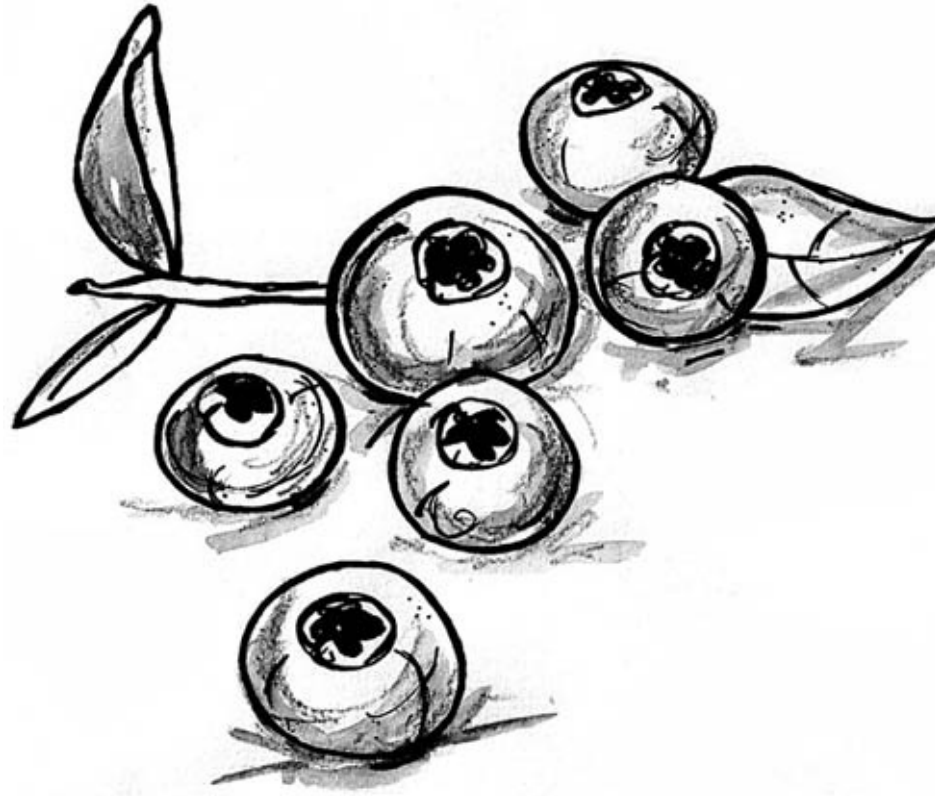
Charmaine D'Souza

June, Mumbai

# PART 1

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## UNDERSTANDING HERBS



# What is Naturopathy?

## WHY NATUROPATHY?

BELIEVERS IN NATUROPATHY ARE OFTEN VERY FEW, AND IN today's technologically advanced world, we are skeptical about ancient practices.

Radhika, a patient of mine, is the epitome of a modern woman. By the time she was 28, she was happily married and had two children. One day, she stopped getting her period. This continued for six months, after which she spoke to her friend, who was a gynaecologist. To Radhika's surprise, she found out that it was the early onset of menopause.

Convinced that it was a good thing, since she wasn't planning on having more children, she went over with her mother (who was 54 years old, and going through menopause at that point of time) for lunch. After hearing her mother talk about menopause and its troubling aspects, she realized that she was going through the same thing as her mother, twenty-four years earlier she should! Radhika, of course, got really worried about the fact that she was ageing early and asked her mother for advice. Her mother, who happened to be a patient of mine, got her to meet me. And so her treatment began.

Radhika got her period after two months of my treatment. And again. She also conceived and aborted twice in a span of six months. Radhika is now a strong believer in the powers of naturopathy. She is 35 years old now, and she still gets her periods regularly.

Even if you don't believe, like Radhika, in naturopathy, there must have been those countless times when you've found yourself tired and exhausted with no clue as to why or what you can do to snap out of the funk and re-energize yourself. Happens, doesn't it? Now if you had a quick cure to kill that headache, which required you to just rummage in your kitchen, wouldn't it be brilliant? Something that is easy to make, and not too difficult to inculcate in the hectic lives that we lead today? Just a little bit of this and a little bit of that and voila...cured! This, to a certain extent, is the root of naturopathy.

Naturopathy has been prevalent in India since the Vedic times. Its various forms have been practised in India for centuries, and it's only recently that allopathy has caught up. Many of the foundations of naturopathy—such as the importance of diet, clean fresh water, sunlight, exercise, and stress management—have been adopted by conventional medicine too.

The lives we live today are so full of pressures and deadlines; the food we eat is not nourishing enough, and sleep is a distant memory. Adding a lot of medicines to this lifestyle for things that we can cure with a few simple remedies seems unnecessary, don't you think? In this book, I'll talk about those few simple remedies that you can make yourself.

Let's begin with a little introduction to naturopathy.

NATUROPATHY IS GUIDED BY SIX FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES



- ❖ The healing power of nature
- ❖ First do no harm
- ❖ Find and treat the cause, not only the symptom
- ❖ Always treat the whole person, not only their disease
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Prevention

Naturopathy believes that the body is capable of healing itself in the proper circumstances and conditions. For example, if the pH of blood is maintained as near to neutral as possible then a lot of diseases can be avoided.

Naturopathy uses various treatments, which stimulate the healing powers that are present in the body itself. Nutritional medicine, dietetics, herbal medicine, homeopathy, lifestyle changes, and treatments like massage, acupuncture, or alternative healing treatments like the Bowen technique (named after the Australian industrial chemist Tom Bowen) are usually the different kind of treatments involved in naturopathy. The Bowen technique includes 30- to 45-minute sessions in which there are gentle rolling motions along the muscles and tendons with 2-minute pauses between each muscle group. The pauses are to allow the body to 'reset' itself.

## NATUROPATHY AIMS TO

- ❖ Minimize symptoms
- ❖ Support the body's vital force (its capacity to self-heal)
- ❖ Re-balance the system so that illness is less likely to occur in the future
- ❖ Educate the patients to look after their own health and the health of their family

Commonly treated disorders using naturopathy include:

- ❖ fatigue
- ❖ digestive complaints
- ❖ mood disorders and depression
- ❖ allergies and sensitivities
- ❖ behavioural problems
- ❖ chronic fatigue syndrome
- ❖ musculoskeletal complaints such as arthritis
- ❖ cardiovascular (heart and blood vessel) problems
- ❖ high blood pressure

- ❖ fertility problems
- ❖ endocrine disturbances
- ❖ hormonal imbalances, such as premenstrual tension and menopause

## ASSESSMENT BY A NATUROPATH

A naturopath doesn't just treat the illness; he/she treats the cause of it. For this purpose, a naturopath needs to know about your diet, lifestyle, family background, and environment as well as the history behind your illness and/or problem. As well as taking a detailed health history, the naturopath may use other diagnostic techniques, such as:

- ❖ iris analysis
- ❖ kinesiology
- ❖ blood analysis
- ❖ stool and urine analysis
- ❖ hair analysis
- ❖ functional testing

## TREATMENT BY A NATUROPATH

Treatment involves a lot of things, and a naturopath has to be aware of your daily lifestyle, amount of stress, and, of course, your eating habits to actually start treatment. An important thing that a naturopath always ensures is to make the treatment as comfortable for you as possible. A naturopath employs a range of non-invasive techniques and these include (but are not limited to):

- ❖ **Nutrition and dietary advice:** being one of the founding principles of naturopathy, it is imperative to eat whole, fresh, unprocessed foods. A poor diet is harmful as it stops the body from functioning well and the toxins can cause various diseases.
- ❖ **Herbal medicine:** is useful as Western medicine and can be used to extremely effectively.
- ❖ **Homeopathy:** is used to stimulate the immune system.
- ❖ **Hydrotherapy (water therapy):** involves the use of hot and cold compresses for certain conditions to influence the flow of blood and body heat in our bodies.
- ❖ **Physical therapies:** in naturopathy generally include massages, Bowen technique, acupuncture, bioenergetic acupuncture, etc.
- ❖ **Counselling techniques:** emotional problems and stress can interfere with the healing process. Counseling, combined with naturopathy, can help resolve these issues.

Naturopathy is a very important aspect of my work, and it helps you, as a reader, to understand me to a certain extent. As you now know, herbs and spices form the root of what I do. Let's go on to learn about the main herbs and spices and discover the mojo that lies in them!

## The Medicinal Power of Herbs, Spices, and Other Ingredients

HERBS HAVE POWERS. THEY ARE INDEED MAGICAL THINGS. NO, not just to make your food taste brilliant but also in your lives, and more specifically, in naturopathy treatments.

**Did you know, for instance, that drinking water with star anise is a good way to energize your system? It is equivalent to a caffeine shot.** I normally recommend that water infused with star anise should be consumed only till 7 pm. Otherwise, trust me, you won't sleep till 2 am!

Here is a list of different herbs and their properties. *A note of warning: consult your naturopath before taking them or combining them yourself.*

### ACAI BERRY



Acai, the celebrity berry, made popular by Oprah Winfrey on her talk show. The acai berry is fantastic because of its incredibly high levels of antioxidants. It is also rich in proteins, fibre, Vitamin E, minerals, and essential Omega oils—its fatty acid ratio is similar to that of olive oil, and is thought to be a contributing factor to low incidence of heart diseases in Mediterranean countries. **The fruit's protein content is more than what is found in an average egg.**

The acai berry is an energy enhancer, aphrodisiac, and weight-loss aid. It has the ability to boost energy and stamina, slow down the effects of ageing, and prevent the development of certain cancers. Its high antioxidant content has shown to slow down the effects of ageing.

These wonder berries also prevent heart attacks, protect the spread of bacterial infections, mitigating the

effects of diabetes, easing inflammation, and thwarting the development of neurological diseases. This is also a major superfood (discussed later in the chapter). **People have been using acai berry to get that age-defying beauty, energy, improved vision, stronger heart, and better mental clarity.** They are also a natural cholesterol controller.

## AGAVE SYRUP

The discerning eater prefers to use agave syrup as it is made up of fructose rather than glucose, which makes it easier to absorb (which means the body uses less insulin to break it down). It doesn't significantly raise blood sugar levels because of its very low glycemic index (GI), making it highly suitable for people with sugar sensitivities.

**Agave syrup makes a good alternative to honey, maple syrup, dates, sugar, and other sweeteners.**

## ALLSPICE

Allspice? Isn't it a weird name to have? The British gave the tree its name because they couldn't decide which spice it was! Allspice has notes of cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. **It has been traditionally used as a digestion stimulant to cure flatulence.** It is also used to treat rheumatism and arthritis as it is anti-inflammatory and soothes the joints and muscles. Allspice is also used to treat stomach aches, vomiting, diarrhoea, and fever. Women can also use it to soothe menstrual cramps. It is also used to treat diabetes.

## ALMONDS (BADAM)



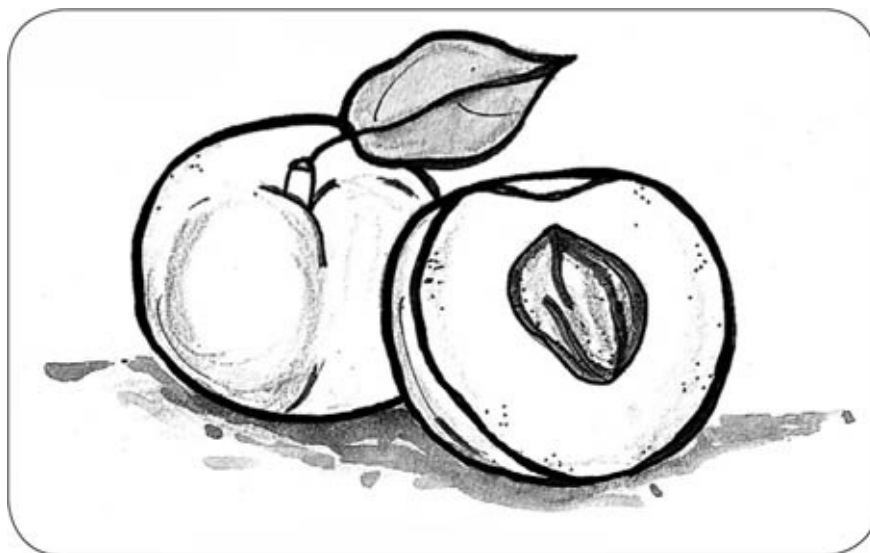
In India, a common retort to when you forget something is—'Badam khao! ('Eat almonds!'). **Almonds are given as 'brain food' to children in India.** It is a wonder drug in itself; it lowers the risk of gall stones and lowers high blood pressure, and also helps control cardiovascular disease and diabetes. They reduce the blood sugar level, weight and LDL (bad) cholesterol. They are known to keep the heart and blood healthy. Also, almonds improve the skin. The ancient Romans actually showered newly-weds with almonds as a fertility charm!

## ANISEED (SAUNF KE BEEJ)

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Aniseed can relieve flatulence and phlegm from the bronchial tube. Tea made from aniseed is helpful in improving digestion in adults. The essential oils that give it these properties also induce a lot of perspiration and urination, thereby cleansing the body. **It also acts as a first aid solution—it can also be given to someone having convulsions.**

## APRICOTS (JARDALU)



In English folklore, dreaming of apricots is said to be good luck. Apricots are brilliant laxatives and are immensely effective in the treatment of constipation.

**They aid in digestion if consumed before a meal.** It is an excellent food remedy for anaemia because of its high iron content. Fresh juice of apricot leaves is useful in treating skin diseases. Skin damage due to scabies, eczema, sunburns, itching of skin due to cold exposure, etc., can be reversed if apricots are applied regularly.

## ASAFOETIDA (HING)

Asafoetida is traditionally used as a carminative (to prevent the formation of gas) and effectively cures various digestive disorders like colic and stomach spasms, acidity, intestinal worms, and digestive weakness. **Minute quantities of asafoetida in food are beneficial for proper digestion.** The strong, unpleasant smell of hing has earned it the uncomplimentary names 'Stinking Gum' and 'Devil's Dung'!

It has been used in treating mood swings and depression too. The pungent odour of asafoetida is supposed to calm hysteria and epilepsy. Conventional medicines use asafoetida in healing painful menstrual cramps. **It is known to be an opium antidote, and administered on opium addicts.**

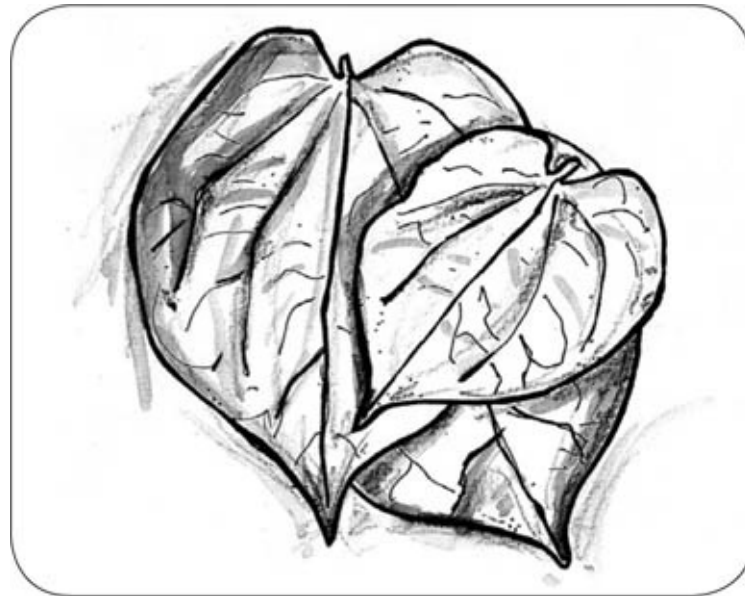
## BAY LEAF (TEJ PATTA)

The aromatic bay leaf, an indispensable ingredient in Indian cooking, has been proved to be highly effective in treating migraines, diabetes, and gastric ulcers. It is quite beneficial in cases of bacterial and fungal infections. Bay leaves are frequently used in aromatherapy due to their aromatic properties. They are also used in the treatment of rheumatism, amenorrhea, and colic. They also maintain the sugar level in the blood, pulse rate, and blood pressure. They improve the immune system of the body and thus act as an antiviral agent.

**Bay leaf is also used as an antidote to poison.** The fruits are extremely useful in case of abnormal vaginal discharge.

## **BETEL LEAF (MAGHAI PAAN)**

The betel leaf is used as a wrap for all the spices and sugar candy and gulkand that is put into the paan. An effective anti-wormal agent and anti-infection agent, it also helps in normalizing the digestive tract in the case of an infection. **It provides strength to the cardiovascular system and also helps cure constipation.**



## **BISHOP'S WEED (AJWAIN)**

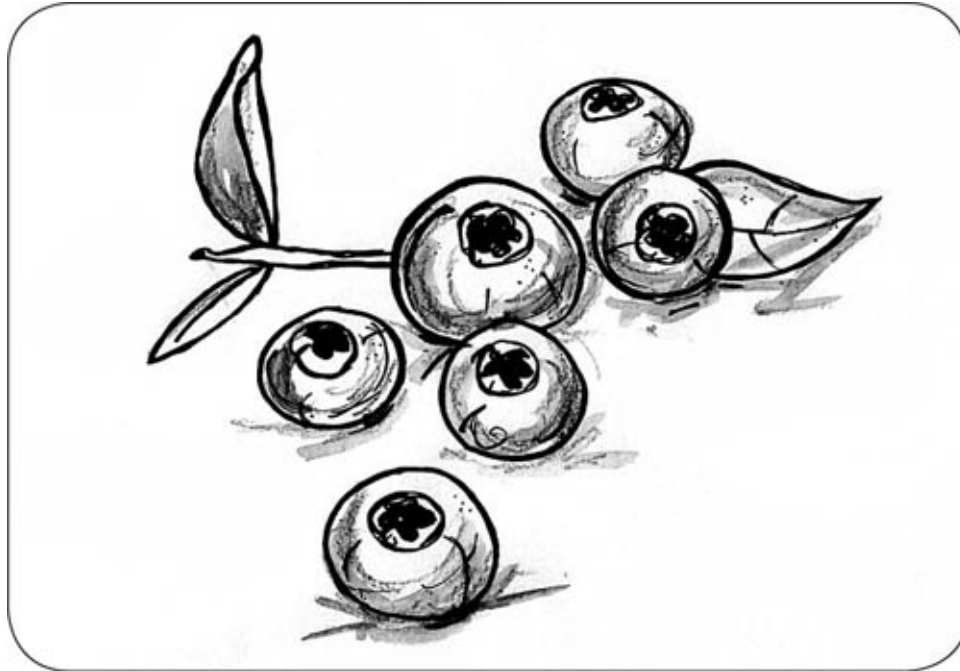
**Ajwain stimulates the appetite and enhances digestion.** It has anti-acidic properties. It is used as an antiseptic and for cleaning wounds and treating skin infections. Ajwain seeds are also used in prevention of bad breath. Ajwain is furthermore used to treat cholera and diarrhoea.

Aroma from crushed ajwain seeds provides respite in heavy colds and migraine headaches. Its oil is used in eardrops for ear aches. Ajwain has anti-spasmodic properties and the seeds are said to relax the uterus and provide relief from menstrual cramps. This herb contains several chemicals, including those which are used to make prescription medications!

## **BLACK SESAME SEEDS (KAALA TILL)**

The famous saying 'open sesame' (Ali Baba anyone?) came from the sesame seed pod, which bursts open when ripe. Black sesame seeds are generally very good in improving the health of bowels, hence promoting the health of the kidneys, liver, and regulating bowel movements. The seeds replenish essential body minerals, helping patients recover from serious illness and fevers much faster. They also help prevent illness by reducing cholesterol levels.

## BLUEBERRIES



**Blueberries have antioxidants and helps in anti-ageing.** They may reduce the build-up of bad cholesterol that contributes to cardiovascular disease and stroke. They also help in the prevention of urinary tract infections. Blueberries help ease eye fatigue.

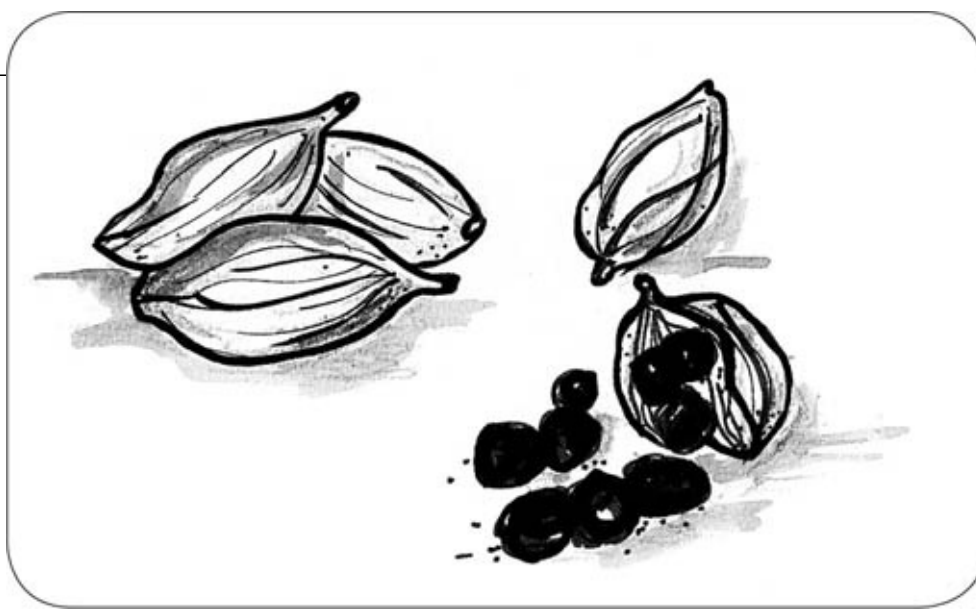
If consumed on a regular basis, blueberries greatly reduce blood sugar levels and prevent replication of the Hepatitis C virus.

Here's a baking tip: if dusted with flour right before adding them to the batter, blueberries do not sink!

## CARAWAY SEEDS (KAALA JEERA)

Caraway is used for digestive problems such as heartburn, bloating, flatulence, loss of appetite, and mild spasms of the stomach and intestines. Oil from caraway seeds is also useful in improving bladder control, killing bacteria in the body, coughing up phlegm, and relieving constipation in patients. **Women use caraway oil to induce menstruation in case of delays and relieve menstrual cramps; nursing mothers use it to increase the flow of breast milk.**

## CARDAMOM (ELAICHI)



Our ancestors around the world, the Romans, Arabs, and the Chinese, have been using cardamom in the medicinal healing for ages. **Green cardamom** is great in treating dental conditions such as infections in the teeth, gums, and even the throat. It also relieves congestion of the lungs preventing pulmonary tuberculosis, inflammation of eyelids and also helping digestive disorders. **It has even been reported to be used as an antidote for scorpion and snake bites.**

**Black cardamom** relieves formation of gases in the stomach. It has a pleasant and soothing impact on the mucus membranes. **It is widely used to treat abnormal increase in appetite.** This plant also plays a very important part in the treatments of health issues like ulcers and inflammations. Black cardamom is a mild aphrodisiac and is used to treat a variety of male health issues. **Prolonged usage of black cardamom has been proved to improve vision.**

## CASHEW (KAAJU)

Cashews are antiseptic, anti-dysenteric, antibacterial, antiulcerous, as well as an astringent. **It is mainly used to cure diarrhoea, dysentery, and colic as an internal and external antiseptic against bacterial infections.** In addition, cashews are also used for stomach ulcers and for ear and eye infections to stop bleeding and heal wounds. Interestingly, cashews belong to the same family as pistachios, mangoes, and poison ivy!

## CELERY (AJMUD)



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