



## AYURVEDA 101

### Introduction to an Ancient System

Ayurveda literally means “knowledge of life” and its scope is truly no less encompassing. While the tradition is thought to be over five thousand years old, Ayurveda remains as relevant as ever—and it is enlivened every day as individuals around the world engage its timeless wisdom in their day-to-day lives.

#### EMBRACING THE INDIVIDUAL

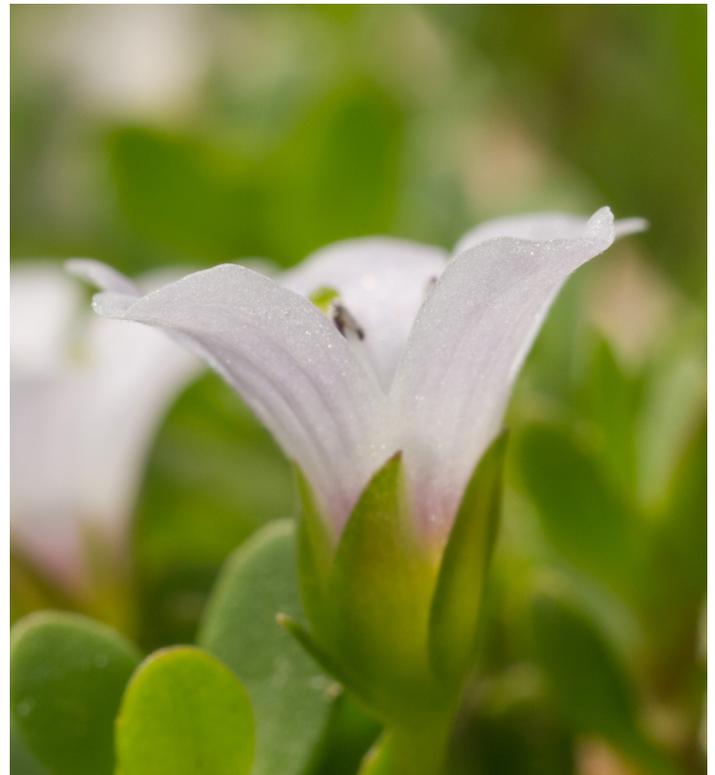
Ayurveda is a remarkably individualized system of medicine. The tradition is rooted in the idea that each of us is born with a completely personal blueprint for optimum health. From birth onward, it is this reference point—your constitution—that, in many ways, defines who you are. No two constitutions are exactly alike; therefore, no two human beings can have precisely the same expression of ideal health.

In Ayurveda, everything is medicine and everything is poison; what might be beneficial to you could harm someone else, and vice versa. It all depends on the context of who you are, and what patterns are currently at play in your particular system. Ayurveda is fundamentally opposed to one-size-fits-all remedies. While there are certainly some practices that are considered to be beneficial for most everyone, Ayurveda places the focus firmly on *you*.

#### DEFINING HEALTH

Ayurveda is an unequivocally holistic tradition that reaches far beyond the realms of physical health, healing, and the prevention of disease. It has a remarkable capacity to help each of us sync up with our truest inner nature, honor and develop our strengths, hone in on our challenge areas, redirect detrimental tendencies, and offer real support wherever it is needed—so that we can better maintain balance in the face of adversity. At its root, Ayurveda is a way of life that can help each of us to claim and celebrate our capacity for a fully embodied sense of *wellness*.

The Sanskrit word for health, *svastha*, describes an authentically harmonious interaction of many parts within the whole—such that the mind, soul, and senses are infused with an abiding sense of Self, wellness, and even bliss. Achieving this quality of life may seem a lofty ambition, especially when human beings throughout the world are riddled with stress, anxiety, and chronic disease. But Ayurveda provides a treasure chest of elegant and insightful tools that can be used to assess the degree of discord (no matter how slight or severe), determine its root, and ultimately, begin reclaiming our health.



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