



Stay Warm This Winter

Foods To Keep Winter Blues Away

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WINTER... that time of the year when we love to bring out our beautiful pashmina shawls, thick woollies, thermals, mufflers, stoles etc. It is also the time when our skin begins to dry, lips get chapped and heels crack. So we pamper our bodies with lanolin based creams, beeswax chap sticks and cocoa butter. As the temperatures dip, we crave a hot cup of chocolate, savour pumpkin spiced lattes and yearn for yummy soups. Yes dear readers, winter is the time when we feel hungrier and can digest heavier foods.

Winter is also the time when immunity levels dip and lots of people have to visit doctors' clinics. It is sad to see the plight of patients with upper respiratory tract infections during the cold winter months. Loud sneezes, allergic rhinitis, runny noses, wheezing, asthma attacks, respiratory distress, coughs and colds can ruin this beautiful season. But you will not be able to really enjoy yourself, if you are sick.

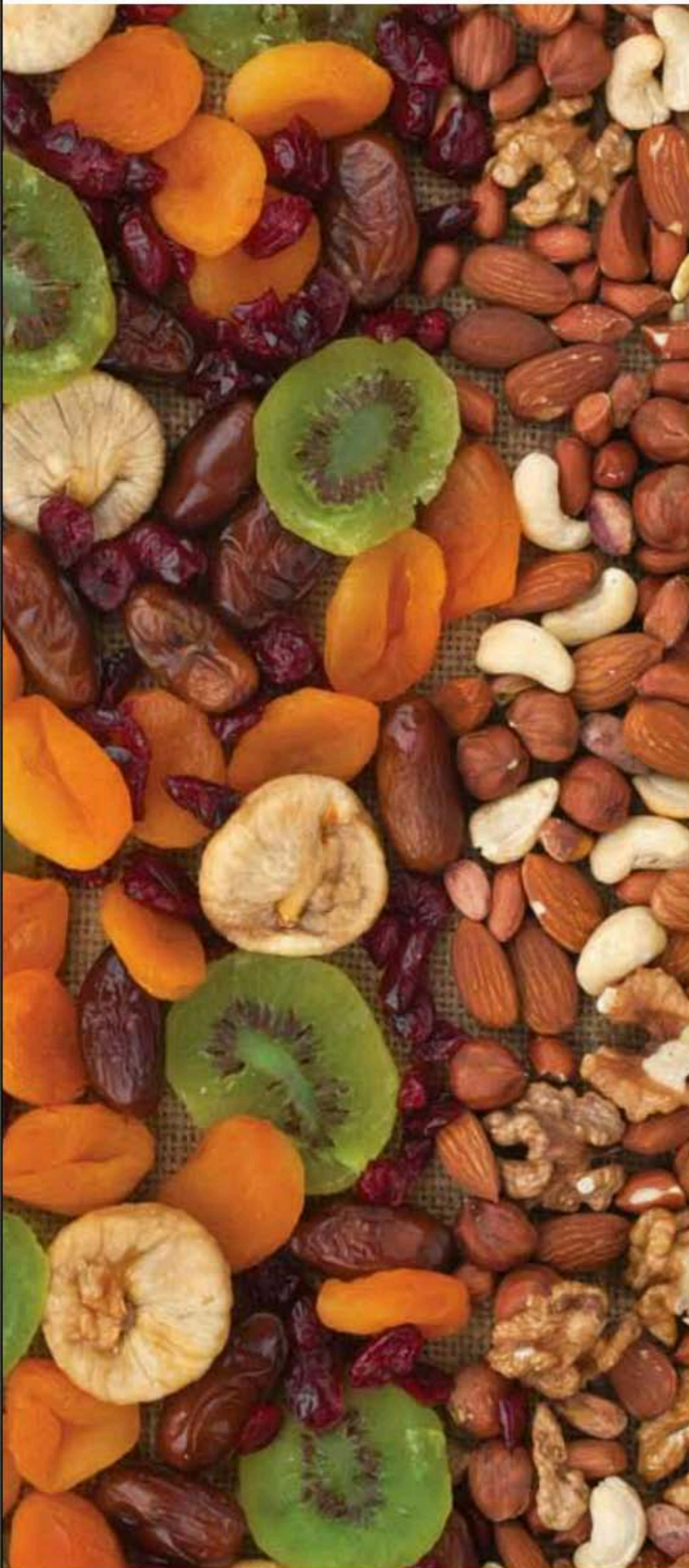
So how do you boost your immunity and that of your family during this lovely season? How do you ensure good health all through the winter? By eating immunity-boosting and antioxidant rich fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, dry fruit, dairy products like milk, cheese, paneer and ghee, whole grains, lentils and whole pulses and drinking lots of water to ensure that the body stays properly hydrated. In addition, there are so many of our Indian herbs and spices that have therapeutic, anti-microbial properties that can be brewed to make rejuvenating, warm beverages.

Foods To Eat In Winter

In order to stay fit and healthy during winter, we need to eat foods that warm and nourish us without causing our weight or cholesterol levels to increase. Every home has at least two or three traditional dishes that are cooked during this season that are typically laden with ghee and loaded with dry fruits and jaggery. Lamb stews, chicken broths, *paya* (trotters) soup, *khichda*, rich dry fruit *pulavs*, *bajra rotis* with *jaggery*, *muli parathas*, *makai rotis* with *sarson-da-saag*, ginger pickles, *shalgam achaar*, *gaajar ka halwa*, *gajak*, *revdi*, *til chikki*, *badam halwa*, *khajoor pak*...the list is endless!

Here is how you can stay healthy this winter:

- ◆ **Eat plenty of seasonal fruits.** Amla, guavas, oranges, sweet limes and papayas are loaded with vitamins A and C as well as antioxidants. They build immunity, increase stamina, vitality and fight disease causing germs.
- ◆ **Load up on fresh seasonal vegetables.** Roots and tubers like yams, potatoes, sweet potato, beets, carrots,



radish, onions, ginger, garlic and vegetables like green beans, green peas, mint, spinach, cauliflower, cabbage etc. are all loaded with nutrients that are good for your system.

- ◆ **Eat protein-rich foods.** Foods like lean cuts of meat, fish, eggs, poultry, dairy and lentils and whole pulses provide energy to the body.
- ◆ **Do not avoid carbs.** Whole grains and cereals provide much needed energy to keep us warm on a chilly day. Carbohydrate-rich foods also provide B-complex vitamins and minerals like zinc and selenium which prevent us from feeling down in this season. An added benefit is the prevention of low blood sugar induced hunger pangs, irritability and mood swings that occur when you do not eat enough carbohydrates.
- ◆ **Stock up on healthy fats.** Essential fatty acids are found not only in ghee but also in nuts and seeds. These include almonds, walnuts, pine nuts, pistas, cashews, sesame seeds, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, melon seeds, sunflower seeds and even cucumber seeds. Do not go overboard though. Remember, most annual medical check-ups, especially for health insurance policies are conducted at the end of this season!
- ◆ **Drink plenty of liquids.** During winter, we do not sweat as much as we do in the hot summers because of which we do not feel as thirsty. It is important to drink soups and broths made with garlic, onion, radish, pepper and paprika. Also drink fruit and vegetable juices with ginger, lemon and fresh turmeric or just water and tea infused with cloves, ginger, *elaichi* and cinnamon.
- ◆ **Eat dried figs, raisins and dates.** These are a good source of fibre, calcium, magnesium, iron, vitamin C and also energy needed to keep warm.
- ◆ **Add herbs, spices and condiments to food.** Peppers, parsley, celery, fresh basil, chilli flakes, *methi* seeds, mustard seeds, *ajwain*, cinnamon, cardamom and cloves can be used to cure or prevent ailments that come with severe winter.
- ◆ **Have 1 tablespoon of virgin cold pressed coconut oil daily.** The medium chain fatty acids (MCFAs) found in coconut oil are highly beneficial and contain lauric acid which is also found in breast milk. This strengthens the immune system.
- ◆ **Exercise regularly.** Don't slack off on your regular exercise pattern. This will ensure good cardiovascular activity, boost serotonin levels, and makes you feel good!

So this winter make a pact to yourself to stay warm in the cold, both externally as well as internally.