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Kitchen Pharmacy: Garlic for Ayurvedic Recipe

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Allium sativum – Rasona – Garlic

Latin name: Allium sativum

Family: Liliaceae

English Name: Garlic

Hindi Name: Lahsan, Lahson

Sanskrit name: Rasona

Parts Used: Bulb, oil



Plant Description:

Allium sativum is an erect, underground bulbous perennial of about 30-60 cm height. Its leaves are flat and long resembling the leaves of Chives. The bulb consists of numerous cloves, held within a whitish sac. The flowers rise direct from the bulb and are white in color (1). There are two varieties of Lahson 1.Rasona 2. Maharasona. The bulbs of Maharasona are larger. It is the single bud rasona that is used in Ayurvedic pharmacopoeia (1)

Use: Like all culinary herbs and spices used in Ayurvedic cooking (recipe below) garlic has profound medicinal properties. Garlic cloves can be eaten raw or cooked. They may also be dried or powdered and used in tablets and capsules. Raw garlic cloves can be used to make oils and liquid extracts. Garlic is very commonly used as a spice in many Indian recipes as garlic adds to taste of the food as well as it aids in digestion. It is also used in ayurvedic therapeutics.

Attributes & Ayurvedic Pharmacology According to: *Guna* (attributes), *Ras* (taste), *Virya* (potency), *Vipak* (post digestive effect) and *Karma* (action) (1).

Guna: *Snigdha* (oily), *tikshna* (sharp), *pichchila* (slimy), *guru* (heavy), *sara* (acts on cellular level).

Rasa: has *Pancharasa* (five tastes) and lacks only *lavana* (salty) taste. Mainly, *tikta* (bitter) and *madhur* (sweet). However, different parts have different taste. Bulb- pungent, leaves-bitter, stem-astringent, seeds-sweet.

Veerya: *Ushna* (hot)

Vipaka: *Katu* (pungent)

Karma: *Kaphaghana* (depletes aggravated kapha) by its pungent and hot properties.
Vatashamak (balances vata) by its oily, slimy and heavy properties and

Rakta pitta vardhak (controls rakta & pitta) by its hot and pungent properties.

Chemical Composition & Pharmacokinetics: Cystein Sulfoxide is its main sulphur containing amino acid. It also contains other amino acids and glutamyl, steroids, and adenosine (2). Garlic is anti oxidant. It inhibits platelet aggregation, cholesterol synthesis and lipid peroxidation (2, 3). The strong odor of garlic is attributed to the sulphur compounds present in garlic.

Therapeutic use:

Garlic is used in Ayurvedic medicine as anti-inflammatory drug. Garlic paste is used for swelling in rheumatoid arthritis, paralysis, sciatica (1). Garlic juice or oil is used in skin disorders & eczema (1). Garlic may induce hepatic enzymes, enhance glutathione peroxidase activity and may enhance glutathione and is shown to aid cancer prevention (2, 6). Garlic is used for digestion, pain relief, bacterial infections and diseases of kapha and vata. Milk boiled with garlic is used to reduces cough, asthma (1)

Garlic is said to reduce kapha and vata, and increase pitta. Its stimulating effect aids in the secretion of digestive juices (7). Garlic juice has been used to treat infected wounds and amoebic dysentery. Garlic may prevent blood clots and destroy plaque preventing atherosclerosis. Hence, garlic does reduce the chances of stroke, heart attacks, and PVD. Garlic is used as a natural antibiotic, and as a blood pressure and cholesterol reducer, is hypolipidaemic and reduces blood clotting (1-4,10). The juice from the garlic bulb is used as an insect repellent (11)

Adverse reaction:

Being of *its ushna virya* and *katu Vipak*, garlic should be used with caution in pitta aggravating conditions and in people with *pitta prakurti*. Because of its *ushna virya* and *katu vipaka* garlic is contraindicated in pregnancy (1).

Interaction with drugs

Having to have antithrombotic properties, garlic should not be used with anticoagulants such as Warfarin or other blood thinners(12). Garlic should be used with caution if one is planning to have surgery or dental work, or if one has a bleeding disorder. A cautious approach is to avoid garlic in diet or as a supplement for at least 1 -2 weeks prior to surgery.

Ayurvedic recipe: Using garlic as one of the spice

Mung-Dal and Spinach Flavored with Garlic

1 Cup Whole Mung Dal

Fresh bunch of Spinach, chopped

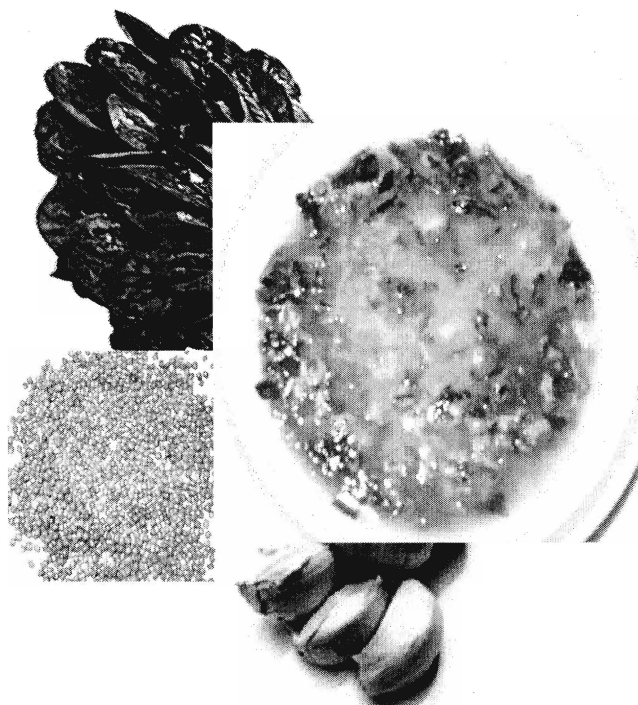
2-3 Cloves of Garlic, diced

Few flakes of Asafetida

½ tea spoon of turmeric

1 dried red chili

2-3 Table spoon cooking oil or ghee (clarified butter)



Boil the whole mung beans in 1/2 Lt of water to tender

Heat the frying pan then add 2-3 table spoon of cooking oil/ghee, add asafetida, chili
Turmeric power and tamper (add the turmeric last and make sure not to burn it)

Add the tempered spice and the chopped spinach to the cooked Dal. Let it sit for few minutes for spinach to be wilted. Add salt to taste and serve hot in a bowl

For best result, serve with ½ tea spoon of ghee.

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