

## #INSIGHT

### Ayurvedic Myths & Facts



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Ayurveda, an ancient traditional system of medicine has become an elusive discipline. There are two key reasons why we are losing touch with this rich tradition. First and foremost, Ayurvedic books are written in Sanskrit, which most of us don't understand. The other reason is the western influence on our lifestyle, which has led us to believe that traditional belief systems and practices are not as effective as those based on modern science. Let's dispel some of the common myths associated with Ayurveda.

**Myth #1: Ayurvedic medicine takes longer to work and is not very effective.**

**Fact:** One reason why Ayurvedic medicines take longer to provide results is that they don't merely alleviate symptoms; instead they work on removing the underlying cause of the disease. Another reason for the prevalence of this myth is that people tend to try Ayurvedic medicine only after trying other medication, and this can delay the effect of Ayurveda. If it is adopted from the onset of an illness or disease, the results may be seen sooner. The time needed to cure patients depends on several factors, including how soon the problem was diagnosed, its severity, as well as how readily the body reacts to the remedy.

**Myth #2: Ayurveda is an outdated and obsolete system.**

**Fact:** Many people think of Ayurveda as an 'exotic' system of medicine not relying on scientific facts. However, Ayurveda has existed in our country for more than 5000 years and is still practised today due to its efficacy. It is a well-recorded form of medicine, and clinical trials and researches were widely conducted in ancient times. It was refined over thousands of years, using observation and experience - the fundamental principles of science. The old books record the diagnosis of diseases, as well as detailed facts about foods, herbs and minerals in detail. In recent decades, with the increased realization of the importance of a holistic lifestyle and healthy eating, Ayurveda has seen a resurgence and is being accepted far and wide.

**Myth #3: Ayurveda medicines lack clinical testing.**

**Fact:** The truth is that firm guidelines have been established for quality control and standard of Ayurvedic medicines in the country. The Pharmacopoeial Laboratory of Indian

Medicine (PLIM) and Central Council of Researches in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has published the 'Protocol for Testing of ASU Medicines'. Moreover, Rule 160 has been instituted in Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945, for quality control and standard of ayurvedic medicines, which ensures the establishment of drug testing laboratories throughout the country. It is mandatory for manufacturers of Ayurvedic Medicines to get certified from these laboratories regarding the quality and stability of their product. However, it is best to buy Ayurvedic medicines from registered Ayurvedic practitioners and renowned brands.

**Myth #4: Ayurvedic treatments do not need a doctor.**

**Fact:** If someone gets cured by ayurvedic medicine, they advise others also to try the same. But the truth is that for specific diseases, ayurvedic treatment is based on 'Prakriti', i.e. the constitution of the person's body. Thus, blindly taking ayurvedic medicine prescribed by someone else or opting for home remedies based on an internet search, can cause more harm than good. Instead, you should visit a registered ayurvedic practitioner or opt for proper formulations available for the treatment of specific issues from the market.

**Myth #5: You don't need any ayurvedic creams for skin since you can easily use home remedies.**

**Fact:** You should remember that even some of the best naturally derived ingredients may at times need to be processed in a lab to isolate the good compounds and remove the bad. For example, while citrus ingredients like lime may have good antioxidants, their direct use may make skin sensitive to sun damage. Also, several essential oils need to be used with caution in particular amounts. It may not always be possible to maintain exact proportions of ingredients in home remedies, and thus right ayurvedic formulations that are made after proper research can be your friends for handling skin issues.

Ayurveda can also help you get smooth and glowing skin. An Ayurvedic formulation such as *Bejai* Nomarks Ayurvedic Antimarks cream can ensure complete protection as it contains effective natural ingredients such as Turmeric, Calendula, Aloe Vera, Lemon and Neem, which help to remove pimples, dark spots and blemishes.



Sooji ka Halwa.



**Beena Subramaniam**  
The artist is a self-confessed foodie and a lover of all trends and new foods



Gajar Ka Halwa.

ne winter holiday, as a kid in my grandmother's home, I wandered into her kitchen to find she was stirring a large kadhai. She was making halwa, wonderful sooji ka halwa, fragrant and billowing, roasting it in ghee and stirring it furiously to remove all lumps. Some raisins sat on the counter next to her, plump and bursting in a katori of warm water, ready to be chucked in. "Today is 'bada din' (big day) so I'm making halwa," she informed me chattily. My staunchly Hindu grandmother was making halwa (as she did every year) to celebrate Christmas.

#### Celebration with Food

This is why I wouldn't rewrite anything in my childhood. Because no matter what else went down when I was a kid, there were always weird and wonderful things that popped up unexpectedly, like wildflowers on a grassy hillside. There was always my family's casual embrace of reasons to celebrate. (And celebrate the only way it matters, with food; most importantly in my childhood there was my nani's halwa.)

#### Ingredients of Love

She was an inspired cook, so everything she made was wonderful. But her halwa was the stuff of dreams conjured up at the drop of a hat for celebrations and commiserations, on a cold day to eat as breakfast and on a rainy day to eat with pakoras. Always fragrant and light, bursting with simple flavour and goodness, it was heaven in a katori. Though it was strictly a four ingredient affair - sooji (or atta), ghee, sugar and

No Indian festival can be complete with a generous helping of the lip smacking, ghee dribbling halwa. This simple dish has played the hero in most of our childhood memories where our grandmothers used to dole out generous portions of this sweet meal without even a thought of weight or hour glass figures.

## Halwa hai kya?

streaming overhead and the presence of vast hirsuteness that domestic kitchens can never ever achieve. Even today, a ghee-slicked palmful of Kadha Prashad can lift the darkest clouds in my day and simultaneously reduce me to a blubbering wreck.

#### Taste of Childhood

That's the thing about atta or sooji ka halwa. It's the taste of childhood, of quiet celebration, of marking auspicious times, it's the taste of a home-made happy, even if just for a moment. That's why these halwas can never be eaten at restaurants or banquets, because they aren't meant to be grand; they are meant to be comforting and contemplative. If they are made the way they should be, then you can contemplate infinity when you eat them, but that's a different sort of grand we're talking of. These are the halwas you think of when the storm clouds gather and it looks like the rain will come down in sheets. These are the tastes that you accessorize with old pyjamas and warm slippers - but there are others that sit better with brocades and bandgals.

#### Halwas Classified

Those are the set of halwas belonging to the same family, but a different genus and species. These are halwas that are firmly on the other side of the tracks: moong ki dal ka halwa, besan ka halwa, badaam ka halwa etc. These are different in every way - richer in mouthfeel, respectful with nuts and ghee and requiring hours and hours of stirring and roasting over a slow flame.

#### Mystery of the Moong Dal Halwa

First, the moong ki dal ka halwa, staple of North Indian winter weddings and banquets and purveyed in the finer mithai shops everywhere. Nutty, rich, flavourful and earthy, it's interesting how schizophrenic this halwa is, the exact molecular opposite of its main ingredient, the pale light moong ki dal that is routinely fed to patients and convalescents. But in this avatar it is as far removed from that as it is possible



Gajar Ka Halwa.



I used to love gaajar ka halwa when I was young. My mother would make a fantastic version in which she pressure cooked the carrots with just milk and then cooked that down. Skipping the cream really lightened up the halwa so I could eat combine harvester loads of it at one sitting.

And finally to complete the halwa family is the other genus, the vegetable halwas. We all know people who swear by kaddu ka halwas and lauki ka halwas and such people must always be allowed to swear by them because the world is large enough to hold every sort of lunatic fringe (including those who believe that broiler chicken is anything other than styrofoam melted down and those who believe that lauki and kaddu are stellar halwa ingredients). The other day I also came across this recipe for a zucchini ka halwa cooked in almond milk; it had got a five star rating from many enthusiastic readers. As far as I am concerned, this is one more definition of kalyug, when a dish born out of joy and exuberance is made to wear sackcloth and ashes but if this floats your boat more power to your vegan vessel far from me to judge.

#### Roasting Besan

Similarly the besan ka halwa, which needs the vigilant eye of the former East German secret police to be able to roast properly. There's a lot going on here, ghee heated to smoking point, milk added to it and then besan added to this hissing, spluttering mix and slow roasted. Sugar syrup is added after a lifetime of patient roasting which when absorbed yields the prize. There is something about this process and this dish that is ultra-sensitive to neglect of any sort. If you look away for an instant, it will choose that precise moment to get spititely burnt and taste scorched forever. However, the reward for vigilant loving care is a taste that is distinct and unique, that halwa connoisseurs the world over will give their right arm for. A friend of mine makes this now and again when she has a few days and some elbow grease to spare.

#### Eating with Eyes Wide Shut

I also have another friend who calls me over every Eid and feeds us kababs and biryani, along with a small swimming pool sized bowl of badaam ka halwa, which she makes from scratch. (Well from badaams,

actually, but you know what I mean.) And both these halwas are rich, nutty and divine, and so utterly sinful that even glancing fearfully in their direction can make you put on weight. Which is why I am very disciplined about polishing off vast amounts of both but with my eyes firmly closed.

#### Halwa Evolutions

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#### The King of all Halwas

But, no matter what your views on any other vegetable, it is hard to deny that the king emperor of all vegetable halwas is the world famous gaajar ka halwa. Grated carrot cooked in milk and cream till it becomes mooshy and melty with just sugar and powdered elaichi or flavouring. There are raisins and nut purists who walk among us and bloody battles have been known to break out between those who believe that raisins have their place in a halwa but not nuts or those who feel the opposite and the equal opportunity eaters who believe that both are welcomed. Either way, gaajar ka halwa is something that needs both and neither to be the poster dish of the North Indian winter. This is the perfect fusion occasion dish made at home, eaten at weddings, sold in mithai shops - everyone has a recipe and mostly



Aate ka Halwa.

everyone has a taste for it.

I used to love gaajar ka halwa when I was young. My mother would make a fantastic version in which she pressure cooked the carrots with just milk and then cooked that down. Skipping the cream really lightened up the halwa so I could eat combine harvester loads of it at one sitting. When she wanted to make it slightly more mellow, she would roast this basic starter halwa again on a heavy bottomed iron tava with a teaspoon of ghee. This suffused the halwa with the wonderful ghee aroma and the slow heat reaching out in lazy licks through the heavy bottomed tava made the milk solids in it caramelize and turn gooey; chewy and wonderful in your mouth. I've eaten my way joyously through several mountains of this

tava-roasted Halwa 102 every year too, every spoonful an ode to joy.

#### Lost Mojo

However, for the last few years, this has changed. I have clearly exceeded the critical amount of gaajar ka halwa that is possible for one person to consume in one lifetime because I can't seem to approach it with anything nearing my earlier enthusiasm. This is one of the great food-related tragedies of my life. As someone who has always equated halwas with wellbeing and small happinesses, with joy and comfort, with family and celebration, having one of the pillars of this belief snatched away from me when I am not yet past the hump of middle age is a horrible setback. Those of you who feel like you have the recipe to help me get my gaajar ka halwa mojo back or have another halwa recipe (no, I'll skip the zucchini, lauki and kaddu brigade if you don't mind please) which you feel will help offset this hideous loss, please help. Send recipes or google maps pins to reach homes of best practice followers of making the halwas you are recommending - think of it as your noble effort to help me alleviate my suffering.

#### A New Halwa Resolve

And as a toast to my childhood memories, I've decided I'm going to follow my nani's example. Every month, I will choose a reason or a day to celebrate something I typically wouldn't. I will make a halwa, eat a halwa, share a halwa recipe with someone I wouldn't generally reach out to. Even if nothing else changes, I reckon I will be a lot happier with halwa inside me than not.

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## #AWARD

### Rashtradoot Lauded as Rajasthan's Best Brand



Rashtradoot received the certification for Rajasthan's best brands.



**Tusharika Singh**  
Freelancer writer and city blogger

Rashtradoot added yet another feather to its cap as it was recently bestowed with the Rajasthan's Best Brand Award. The award applauds the differentiated, consistent and rooted credibility of the newspaper and its innovations over the years. Endorsed by World Marketing Congress, CMO Global and World Federation of marketing professionals, the awards seek to identify and celebrate outstanding brand building and marketing by organizations.

#### Felicitating homegrown brands of Rajasthan

Throwing light on the objective of the awards, Executive Director, CMO Asia / CMO Global, Dr Aalok Pandit shared that the awards are entirely state-oriented and seek to felicitate homegrown brands and local businesses of Rajasthan. "It is an independent brand recognition exercise initiated to give recognition to those brands and organizations who have achieved extraordinary success from innovative and effective marketing practices. The Awards are based not only on financial valuation but also on consumer preferences. Held to foster marketing awareness in the professional community, the underlying mission of these Awards is to educate and disseminate the importance of

#### 12 Awards in 24 Months

It is worth noting for almost 70 years, Rashtradoot had been a Hindi newspaper specializing in intrepid, in-depth political reporting and analysis. With the introduction of ARBIT - a unique English center spread - in 2016, Rashtradoot offered readers a hybrid platform that catered to the two most important aspects of a newspaper hard news in the vernacular language and leisure reading in English.



Senior Vice President, Rashtradoot, Abhinav Saxena receiving the award from Rakesh Chopra, Managing Director, Rajasthan Electronics & Instruments Ltd.

#### branding and brand building in Rajasthan," said Dr Pandit.

The Academic Council and Awards Committee undertake copious research and focus on aspects such as quality, reliability and distinction to shortlist its awardees. Trust, openness, vision as well as respect and responsibility are also factored in as key competency indicators. As many as 45 brands from arenas as diverse as CSR, education, technology, media etc. were felicitated at the Rajasthan Best Brand felicitating ceremony in Jaipur recently. The Senior Vice President of Rashtradoot, Mr Abhinav Saxena received the award on behalf of Team Rashtradoot.

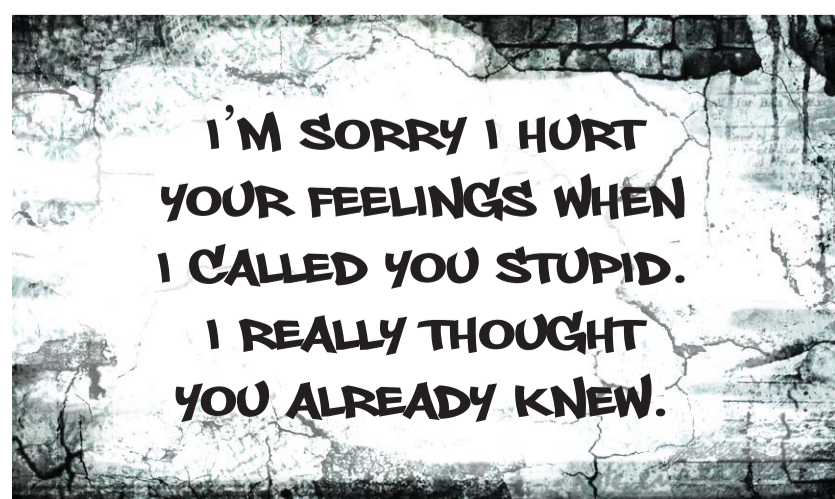
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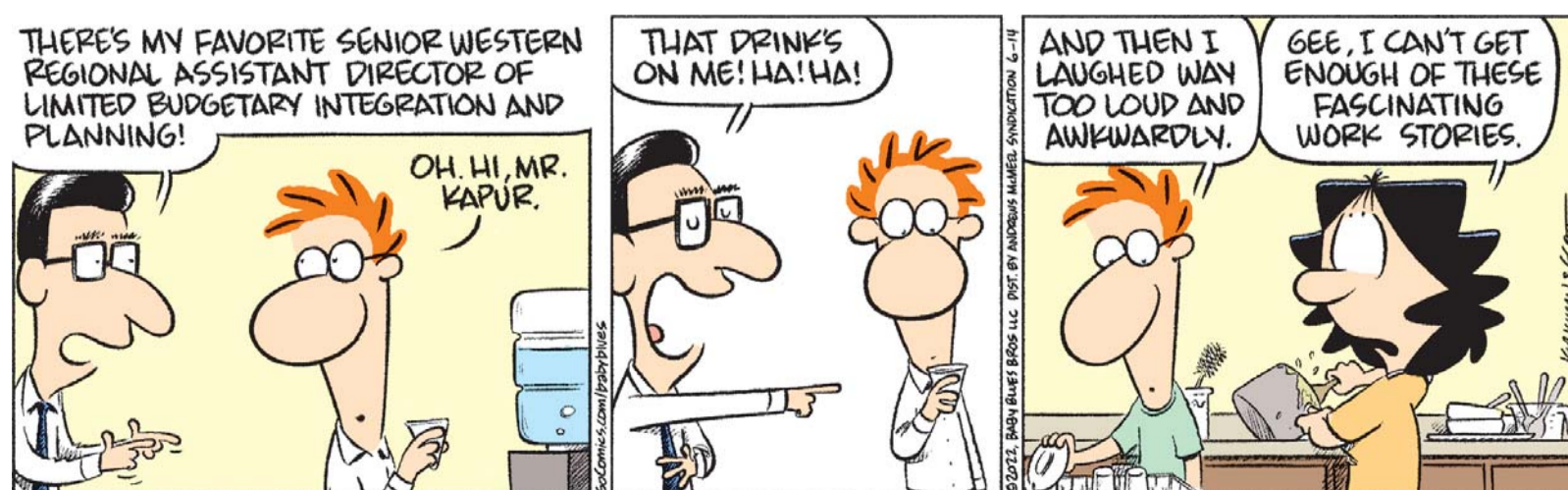
'Rashtradoot: The Bilingual Newspaper'. Prior to this, the newspaper also won the Silver at INMA Global Media Awards 2020 under the special category of 'Best Initiative in Response to Covid-19'. Similarly, it bagged the Gold at Media Innovation Awards 2020 under the category of 'Innovation in Editorial for Arbit'. The newspaper has also previously been awarded *The Asia-Pacific Stevie Award*, *The Decade Award*, *The India Content Leadership Award* and *Maharaja Sawai Ishwari Singh Award for Excellence in the Field of Journalism* at the Sawai Jaipur Awards 2020.

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## THE WALL

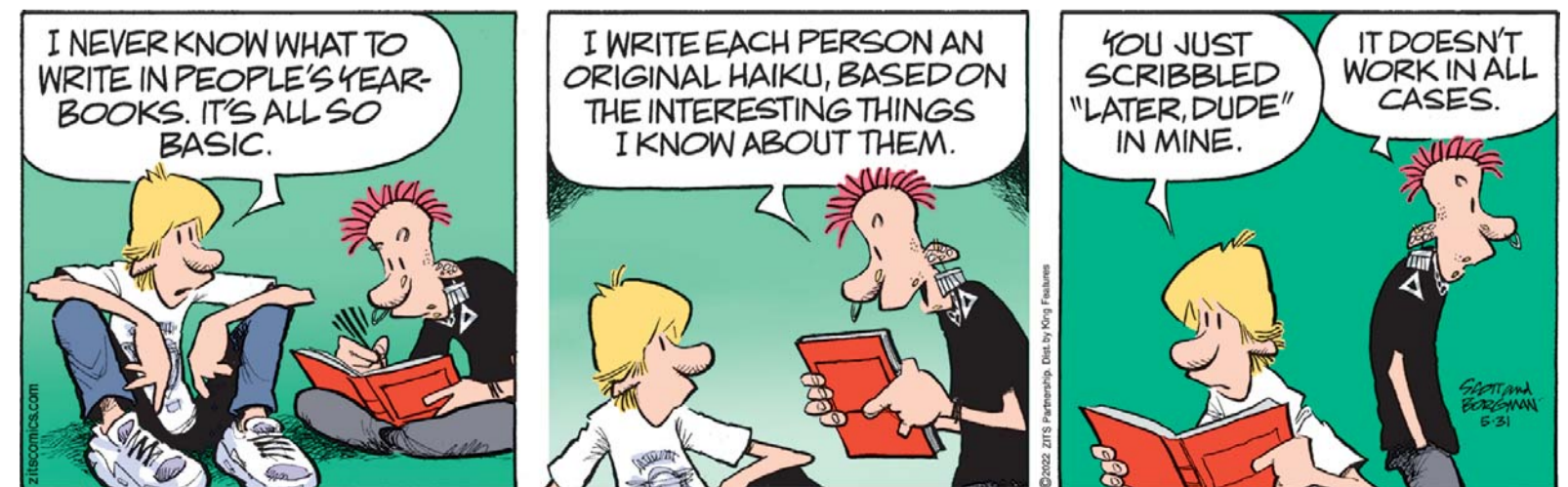


## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

