

Why should Moringa not be consumed raw? What are the benefits of cooking vs eating raw?

Almost all famous ayurvedic shastras have a separate chapter within the section that addresses edible items, called “**kritany varga**”-s. This section contains all kinds of recipes, and all or most of them, are cooked. At the same time, many specific ingredient-based recipes are also listed which are not supposed to be cooked. But for our purposes here, we will review why cooking your food, in general, and Moringa in particular, is necessary.

According to SVA principles, why do vegetables, grains, lentils, and most spices, have to be cooked? Here are 8 reasons why:

1. Cooking makes things easier to digest, and the objective, when you ingest something, is for it to nourish you, if it is hard to break down and metabolize, then it will strain your digestive system, and may result in semi-digested materials that can cause harm and toxic build-up.
According to the Shastras, when you cook you infuse Agni into the food, when you infuse Agni you are basically supporting the break down and processing procedure taking away unnecessary stress from the body.
2. After proper **Samyog** (mixing) and **Samskar** (preparing and cooking) the food becomes medicine – or by extension, with improper preparation they become toxic. If foods that are contradictory in nature and are not meant to be consumed together (such as salt and milk, fruits and milk, or milk and fish) are consumed and are also not prepared properly, they will cause great strain on the digestive and other organ systems, resulting in long term imbalances.

3. Adding lipids to your food activates the lipid soluble molecules of the spices and the ingredients found in your food, so that these molecules become more readily bio-available to nourish your brain and physiology.
4. Adding water to your cooking activates the water-soluble molecules and makes those more readily available for digestion, integrating all the ingredients with each-other. And thus the whole recipes becomes medicinal
5. Proper integration of the flavor and the VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) of the spices and the other ingredients (including the molecular interaction of salt and sugar whenever available) make a dish rich in taste and flavor, thus more satisfying and nourishing to the brain and its centers. Flavor affects the overall mental and emotional health as well.
6. Sometimes in certain foods, some unwanted chemicals may be found in the raw form, that can be harmful to your health. Many plants contain chemical or chemical compounds (phytates) that can interfere with the body's ability to metabolize certain nutrients. Examples of plants with nonlethal but nonetheless potentially harmful chemicals include bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and soy, which contain goitrogenic compounds. These chemicals bind iodine, preventing its uptake, thus leading to impairment of thyroid gland function, which in turn leads to a host of metabolic problems. Spinach, parsley, carrots, and chards contain calcium oxalate, which interferes with calcium uptake;



when fed as a significant portion of the overall diet, they cause the mineralization (hardening, crystallization) of organs and muscle tissue and can bind enough calcium to cause a form of metabolic bone disease. However, when these vegetables are cooked, the toxic effect of these chemical ingredients is neutralized.

7. The interaction of Agni with the other ingredients that are being cooked, infuses the vibration of Agni as mentioned, which in turn supports the whole digestive and metabolic system vibrationally. This has a specific name in Ayurveda: it is called **Agni Prabhava**. Agni is essential in our lives on so many levels, from the gross to the minute and most subtle. Without Agni we would not only not digest our food, but we would not “digest” stressful thoughts or emotions, we would get stuck and become depressed. If an item that we consume has less or no Agni, then the body will have to supply it. If the body is not able to do so for different internal or external reasons, then we have to supplement this through more agneya herbs, spices and through the cooking procedure.
8. The food you consume should always maintain a balance between the index of nutrition and that of detox. In other terms: it should not nourish you more than it helps you detox, and it should not detox you more than it helps you become nourished. Raw foods are high in nutrition but higher in their detox index, much more so than the body can handle on a daily basis. For example, the bitter and astringent tastes are very detoxifying, such as found in raw greens. However, when you cook with the spices, salt, and lipids, that taste gets diminished due to being



balanced by the other ingredients, so even though it still detoxifies, it does not do so drastically, particularly for leafy greens such as the ones with the highest chlorophyll like Moringa itself. When you cook with lipids (olive oil or ghee) with water it releases and transforms the lipid soluble chlorophyll. The structure of this lipid soluble chlorophyll is almost identical to that of Heme iron, an ingredient that can be obtained from consuming beef. Moringa being rich in iron, it is therefore always recommended to be cooked and never consumed in raw or in capsule form. Otherwise, long term usage can result in detox crises.

As for taking capsules, one may feel alright, but the overall balance and how to maintain it between detox and nourishment, remember: that is the key ingredient for long term usage.