

A FREE CARD FROM ASHA

MY 6 MORNING WATERS



Methi, jeera, ajwain, ginger, cinnamon and clove, with exact amounts and who should skip them

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My 6 Morning Waters

In my mother's house the first sound of the morning was a small steel pot on the stove. These are the six waters she made in it. Choose one, drink it warm before your tea, and keep it up for a week.

None of them is magic, beta. I tell you honestly what each one does, and who should skip it. That is the Indian way.

Kitchen tradition, not medical advice. If you take medicines for blood sugar, blood pressure or to thin the blood, read the Skip it if lines first and ask your doctor or pharmacist.

All six, with the full story behind each one, are in Chapter 2 of My Mother's Spice Box, together with 189 more remedies for hair, feet, knees and skin:
www.ashasremedies.com

Methi water, soaked overnight

HELPS A LITTLE

A warm, slightly bitter start to the day, but it does less than videos promise

YOU NEED

1 teaspoon (4 g) methi seeds (fenugreek seeds)

If you cannot find it: Indian grocery, health food shop or online. Ground fenugreek, 1/2 teaspoon (2 g), if you only find powder

1 cup (250 ml) water

HOW

1. At night, put 1 teaspoon (4 g) of methi seeds in a glass.
2. Pour in 1 cup (250 ml) of water. Cover the glass.
3. Leave it on the counter overnight, 8 to 10 hours.
4. In the morning, warm it a little in a pan if you like it warm.
5. Strain it and drink it slowly before breakfast.
6. Put the soft seeds in your dal or curry, or throw them away.

Keeps: Make it fresh every night. The soaked water does not keep, and it turns sour by the next evening.

You may notice: You will notice the bitter taste and a warm, settled feeling. Do not expect changes on the scale.

SKIP IT IF

- You take diabetes medicines or insulin. Fenugreek can push blood sugar too low. Ask your doctor first.
- You take a blood thinner. Fenugreek may raise the risk of bleeding.
- You are pregnant. Do not use more than you would cook with.
- You have ever had a rash, swelling or itching after fenugreek. Stop at once.
- You get loose stools or a heavy stomach from it. Use half the seeds or stop.

Jeera water

ONLY TRADITION

A pleasant, nutty glass of warm water. The water is the useful part

YOU NEED

1 teaspoon (2 g) jeera (cumin seeds), whole

If you cannot find it: the supermarket spice aisle. Called geera in the Caribbean

1 1/2 cups (375 ml) water

HOW

1. Heat a small dry pan on low heat.
2. Add 1 teaspoon (2 g) of jeera. Stir for 1 minute, until it smells nutty. Do not let it turn black.
3. Pour in 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) of water. Take care, it will hiss.
4. Boil gently for 5 minutes, until the water turns pale gold.
5. Strain into a cup. Drink it warm, not hot.

Keeps: Best fresh. You can keep it in a closed jar in the fridge for 1 day and warm it again.

You may notice: A nutty taste and a warm stomach. If you drink it instead of nothing, you will simply have more water in you.

SKIP IT IF

- You take a blood thinner. Herbal teas can change how warfarin works, so ask your doctor about a daily cup.
- You have reflux, and spiced drinks set it off. Leave it out.
- You are pregnant. Tell your midwife before you start any daily herb drink.

Ajwain water

ONLY TRADITION

A strong, sharp water my mother gave after heavy food. Expect taste, not miracles

YOU NEED

1/2 teaspoon (1 g) ajwain (carom seeds)

If you cannot find it: Indian grocery or online, sometimes sold as ajowan

1 1/2 cups (375 ml) water

HOW

1. Put 1/2 teaspoon (1 g) of ajwain in a small pan.
2. Add 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) of water.
3. Bring to a boil, then simmer on low for 5 minutes.
4. Strain into a cup.
5. Let it cool until warm. Sip it slowly after the meal.
6. If it is too strong, add 1/2 cup (125 ml) of warm water.

Keeps: Make it fresh. It turns bitter if it stands for more than a few hours. Keep the dry seeds in a closed jar, away from the stove.

You may notice: A sharp, warming taste and a warm stomach. Some people like to sit quietly with it after a big meal.

SKIP IT IF

- You take a blood thinner. Herbal teas can change how warfarin works. Ask your doctor first.
- You have reflux or heartburn, and hot spices set it off. Skip it.
- You are pregnant. Tell your midwife before any herb drink.

Ginger water, simmered not steeped

HELPS A LITTLE

A warming cup that many people enjoy, if you simmer it long enough

YOU NEED

1 inch piece (2.5 cm, about 10 g) fresh ginger

If you cannot find it: 1/4 teaspoon (1 g) dry ginger powder (saunth), stirred into hot water

1 1/2 cups (375 ml) water

1 teaspoon (7 g), optional honey

If you cannot find it: a little jaggery (gur) or sugar

HOW

1. Wash the ginger. You do not need to peel it.
2. Slice it as thin as you can.
3. Put the slices in a pan with 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) of water.
4. Bring it to a boil, then turn it down very low.
5. Simmer with a lid for 15 minutes. About 1 cup (250 ml) is left.
6. Strain into a cup. Let it cool until warm, then stir in 1 teaspoon (7 g) of honey if you like.

Keeps: Best fresh. You can keep the strained water in a closed jar in the fridge for 2 days and warm it again.

You may notice: Warm hands and a warm throat within about 20 minutes. Nothing more than that.

SKIP IT IF

- You take a blood thinner. Ginger with a blood thinner may raise the risk of bleeding. Ask first.
- You have heartburn or reflux. Ginger can make it worse.
- You have gallstones. Ginger supplements are not advised, so ask your doctor about a daily cup.
- You take any regular medicine. Ask your pharmacist before a daily ginger drink.

Ceylon cinnamon water

ONLY TRADITION

A sweet-smelling morning water. Choose Ceylon, and do not expect it to change your sugar

YOU NEED

1 stick, about 3 inches (7.5 cm, about 3 g) Ceylon cinnamon

If you cannot find it: health food shop, Indian grocery or online. Look for Ceylon or true cinnamon on the label

1 1/2 cups (375 ml) water

HOW

1. Break 1 stick (3 g) of Ceylon cinnamon into two or three pieces.
2. Put it in a pan with 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) of water.
3. Bring to a boil, then simmer on low for 10 minutes.
4. Strain into a cup.
5. Drink it warm, before or with breakfast.

Keeps: Keep the strained water in a closed jar in the fridge for up to 2 days. Warm it again in a pan.

You may notice: A sweet smell and a warm taste. Do not expect a change in your sugar readings.

SKIP IT IF

- You have liver problems. Cassia cinnamon especially can be hard on the liver. Ask your doctor first.
- You take a statin for cholesterol. Cinnamon with statins has caused liver trouble. Ask your doctor.
- You take a blood thinner. Herbal teas can change how warfarin works.
- You are pregnant. Large amounts of Ceylon cinnamon are not safe in pregnancy.

Clove water in the morning

ONLY TRADITION

A warm, spicy mouthful my mother liked in winter. It does little more than that

YOU NEED

4 cloves (about 1.5 g) whole cloves

1 1/2 cups (375 ml) water

HOW

1. Lightly crush 4 cloves (1.5 g) with the back of a spoon.
2. Put them in a pan with 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) of water.
3. Bring to a boil, then simmer on low for 5 minutes.
4. Strain into a cup.
5. Let it cool until warm, and sip it slowly. Do not chew the cloves.

Keeps: Best fresh. You can keep it in a closed jar in the fridge for 1 day.

You may notice: A warm, tingly mouth and a fresh breath for a while. Nothing more is likely.

SKIP IT IF

- You take a blood thinner. Herbal teas can change how warfarin works. Ask your doctor first.
- You have reflux, and strong spices set it off. Skip it.
- Never use clove oil in a drink. Small amounts of clove oil can harm adults, and less harms children.