

A Guide to Fasting *According to* *Hildegard of Bingen*

*From the archives of wisdom,
tried and true fasting techniques,
used for millennia by nuns and monks.*

Renew Energy Control Weight
Improve Metabolism Be your Best
Explore Mindfulness



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Introduction

*“ ... Those who are healthy benefit from periodic fasting,
by preventing sickness that has not yet arrived. ”*

-Hildegard of Bingen



We at Healthy Hildegard salute you, as you embark on your personal journey through fasting, and we wish you a lifetime of success.

This eBook is intended to guide you through a complete Hildegard fasting regimen. In addition to these materials, you will find supplemental fasting guidance, more recipes, and background information on nutrition and diet inspired by Hildegard of Bingen on our website: www.HealthyHildegard.com.

“Just as it would harm the stomach if it were always full or empty, it does the soul harm when the body lives in constant pleasure.”

- Hildegard of Bingen

As you read these lines, you come closer to your goals. No matter what your reasons for exploring a fasting ritual, this eBook provides a proven guide to discover the benefits of Hildegard of Bingen's centuries-old fasting methods. We believe you will find everything you need in this book for a successful personal fasting experience, including helpful tips and suggestions to make the most of your fast.

After a short period of time, you will feel positive changes in your body, mind and soul.



*Universal
Cure*

Hildegard of Bingen thought of fasting as a panacea for good health. She considered the fasting exercise an opportunity to create new space, slow down, purify the body, lift ballast from the soul, detoxify the body and spirit, and come to terms with our inner-selves. At its core, fasting opens new doors to rediscovering our essential nature.

For Hildegard, and those of us believers, fasting represents much more than a temporary change of diet. Rather, it provides a window for inward reflection.

Why Fast?

In our modern culture we satisfy virtually all of our needs at any time. We draw effortlessly from the inexhaustible resources available to us. As a consequence, we become weary of our abundance, eventually compromising our own vitality. Paradoxically, the fullness of our existence leads to emptiness in experience.

In the midst of all of our human progress, certain basic, natural rhythms get lost. The rhythms of sleeping and waking, working and resting, eating and fasting may fall out of the appropriate balance.

With all of its advantages, our modern society demands that we work too much, eat too much, and neglect the balance of our origin. Ultimately, our bodies force rest upon us, either through illness or exhaustion.

Discretio: The Golden Mean

It's up to us to find our "golden mean". Hildegard of Bingen would have each of us face the challenge of finding our unique "Discretio". It's not a one size fits all, but rather an independent balance that works for each of us, individually.

Each person carries the responsibility to find an accurate measure for him or herself. It requires first knowing thyself, and then managing thyself to identify the unique measure to apply.

According to Hildegard, we discover long-term health and well-being not through exaggerated severity or asceticism. Hildegard believed healthy discipline leads to overall improved quality of life.

“Moderation is the mother of all virtues for everything heavenly and earthly. For it is through moderation that the body is nourished with the proper discipline.”

– Hildegard of Bingen, Book of Divine Works

Periodic Deconstruction

The demands of daily life in a modern society have affected our compass in arriving at the right balance in life. We've insulated our true nature, and thereby made it harder to get to the core of ourselves. The exercise of deconstruction serves the worthwhile purpose of peeling away layers to find what lies beneath.

A fasting regimen following Hildegard of Bingen's teachings helps correct our internal compass to arrive at our own personal "golden mean."





Mindfulness

The fasting process can be used as a tool to cultivate mindfulness and awareness. The following steps help to orient your framework.

Step 1: Reason for Fasting

Before embarking on a fasting regimen, first come to terms with your purpose for fasting. Are you interested in losing weight, experiencing new sensations, relieving your body, or experimenting with ways to regain vitality and comfort?

Identify your reasons and preserve them throughout, as targets to carry you forward through your fasting period.

Step 2: Fasting Goals

Fasting is not starvation. Fasting is a manner of exploring our individual boundaries.

The term fasting derives from the Gothic, which means “holding on,” “watching over,” or “guarding.” The term hunger, on the other hand, describes a state of “burning desire,” “pain,” or “injury,” and is compelled by external circumstances. Fasting is a voluntary, self-prescribed refusal of food.

Know Thyself

Fasting has long traditions in virtually every culture and religion. The practice serves as a means of accessing new perspectives and introspection. The point isn't to agonize over physical obstacles, but rather to carefully observe yourself, get to know yourself, and discover new facets of your personality. Through this process, we expand our horizons, revealing new opportunities and pathways for living.

Habits & Dependencies

During a fasting period, the body, mind and soul become particularly sensitive. It makes sense to honestly assess and recognize those habits that have tacitly formed in your life as dependencies. Use this as an opportunity to release yourself from anchors such as smoking, drinking coffee, and alcohol. Also consider pervasive habits like television, internet, social media or other technologies.

By recognizing and limiting external habits, we reduce potentially harmful influences, and lay a solid foundation for the desired cleanse. Ideally, a deliberate evaluation of our habits helps to shake the grip of certain behaviors that may not serve our highest cause.

Hildegard of Bingen described fasting as a panacea, which in addition to improving physical health, helps overcome conditions related to anxiety, worry, conflict, stress, and external pressures. At the end of the day, it's up to each participant to take responsibility for understanding her own needs and what she wishes to accomplish with a fasting regimen.



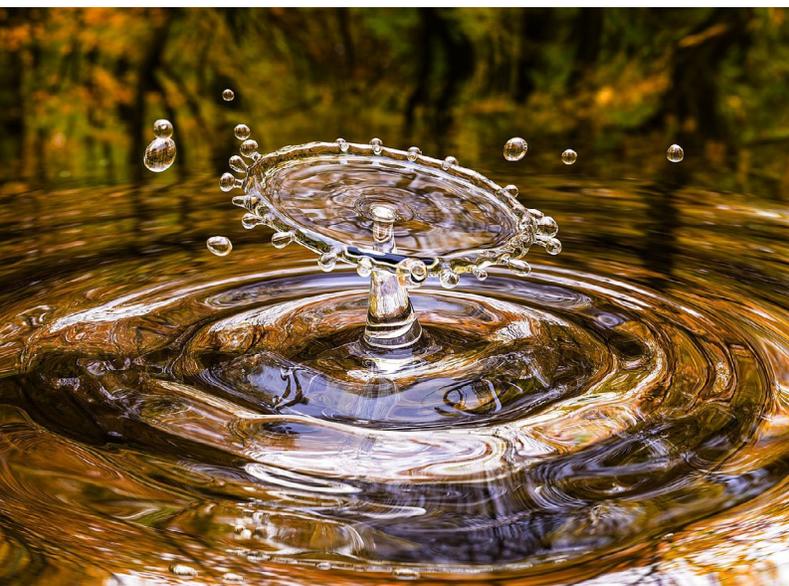
-Breaking the daily routine-

What to Expect?

We are empowered with responsibility over our own bodies. A successful fast exposes new and otherwise unknown opportunities, in part by introducing the sensations of wellness. Common experiences include the following.

- *New, unimagined energy and vitality*
- *Broader insights and perspectives*
- *Sharpened senses*
- *More time (reduced time spent shopping, cooking and eating)*
- *Balance and relaxation*
- *Relief from rheumatism, migraines, allergies, blood pressure problems, etc.*
- *Weight loss*
- *Detoxification*
- *Improved sense of body*
- *Positive thinking*
- *Personal development*
- *Improved sleep quality*
- *More frequent dreams (while sleeping)*
- *Strength to overcome stress*

-A fresh perspective on life-



Detoxifying Your Body

Fasting creates the space for our bodies to perform their own natural cleansing process, eliminating longstanding waste and toxins. Through the fasting process, our contamination is formally 'burned' and excreted. As an added benefit, the body taps its fat reserves, resulting in weight reduction. A successful fast immediately produces greater agility and resilience in body and spirit.

A fast helps you feel healthier, happier, and more radiant. Even starting with a single fasting day per week can significantly reduce susceptibility to illness and disease. Fasting according to Hildegard of Bingen does not involve counting calories. Rather, Hildegard places emphasis on a basic holistic approach to diet and nutrition.

-Manage the body and the spirit will follow-

Awareness of Soul and Spirit

Fasting helps lift the mental ballast we accumulate over time, providing opportunity for clarity of thought, and reflection of the self. The process of fasting helps release unimagined energies for use in spiritual redevelopment. Your perception sharpens, thoughts become clear, and your sense of time shifts. Old problems appear from different perspectives, and solutions arise to former challenges.

The exercise of fasting creates space to work through repressed anxieties and fears. Increased perception and the clarity to question our condition helps resolve existing mental blockages. Thus, fasting holds the promise of personal development.

-Breaking through blockage-



Spirituality

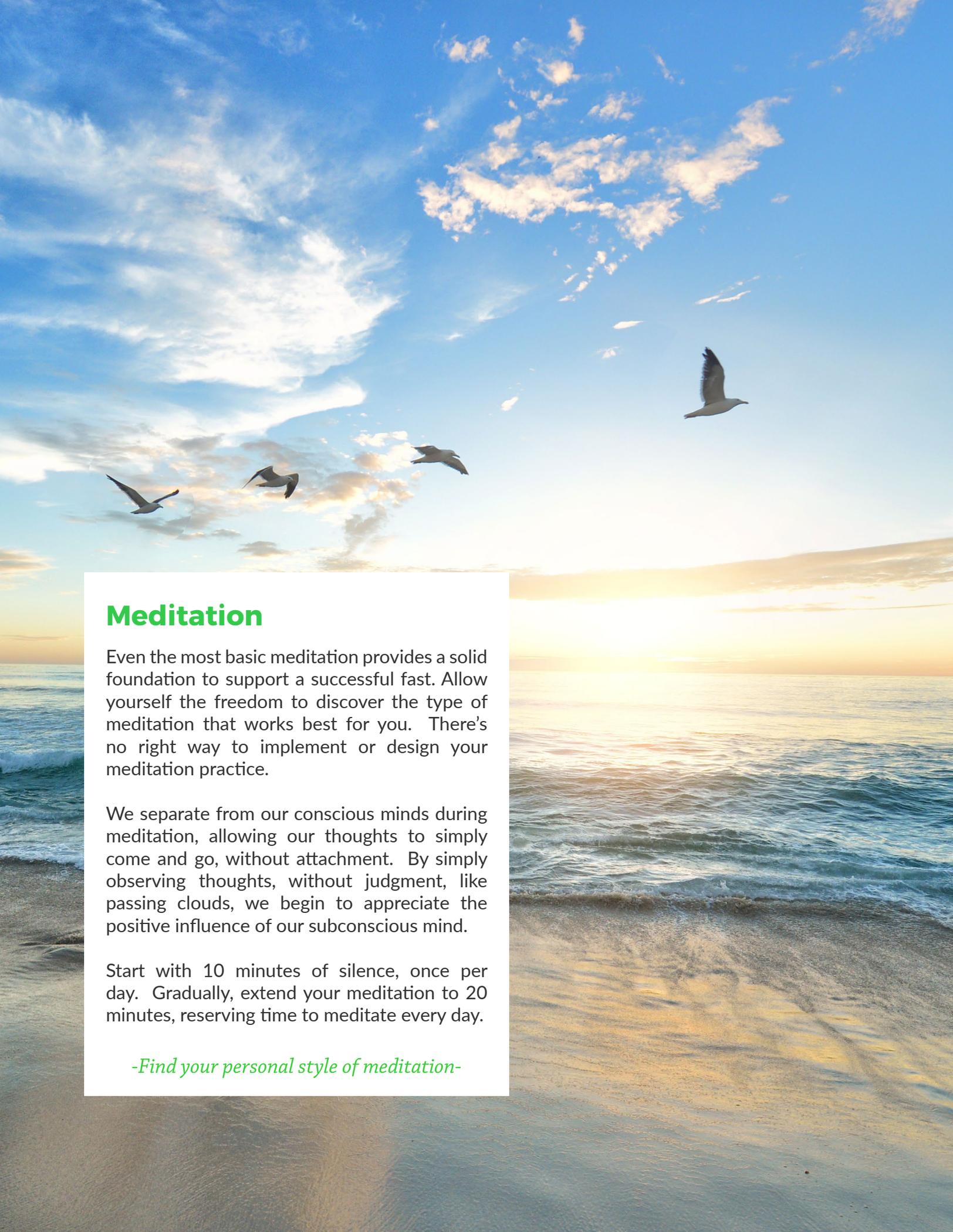
In contrast to a worldly existence, the term spirituality derives from the concept of spirit. Spirituality has become so popular in our daily conversation, some of its meaning may be lost. For many of us, spirituality has achieved an elevated status, as something aspirational. Simultaneously, we've discounted the value of our earthly existence.

Hildegard of Bingen believed in man's natural spiritual disposition. She believed in the individual responsibility of each of us to penetrate our inner core and discover our unique identities and creative spirits.

Spirituality is not something we learn by reading or studying scripture, it is much more of an attitude and feeling that we adopt and practice over time. Hildegard of Bingen thought of fasting as a practical experience to discover individual spirituality and practice mindfulness.

Daily Mindfulness: consider basic ways to incorporate mindfulness in everyday practice.

- *Observe your surroundings, as if for the first time*
- *Deliberately celebrate the beautiful things we encounter everyday*
- *Go slowly and pay attention to each step*
- *Pay close attention to others, and show your interest by asking relevant questions*
- *Consciously perceive those things that otherwise appear obvious*
- *Breathe consciously, and pay attention to the depth of each breath*
- *Take a moment before eating, and learn to appreciate the apparent naturalness*
- *Eat slowly by chewing food excessively to appreciate the many flavors*
- *Hold everyday objects in your hand, and observe how they feel*
- *Allow others to precede you*
- *Smile from the inside outward*
- *In the evening, let your thoughts pass through the day, allowing events to unfold*

A serene beach scene at sunset. The sky is a vibrant blue with scattered white clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the ocean and the sandy beach. Several seagulls are captured in flight, their wings spread, against the bright sky. The water is calm with gentle waves lapping at the shore.

Meditation

Even the most basic meditation provides a solid foundation to support a successful fast. Allow yourself the freedom to discover the type of meditation that works best for you. There's no right way to implement or design your meditation practice.

We separate from our conscious minds during meditation, allowing our thoughts to simply come and go, without attachment. By simply observing thoughts, without judgment, like passing clouds, we begin to appreciate the positive influence of our subconscious mind.

Start with 10 minutes of silence, once per day. Gradually, extend your meditation to 20 minutes, reserving time to meditate every day.

-Find your personal style of meditation-

Motivation for Fasting

Before embarking on a fasting regimen, evaluate your personal motivation. Is this about losing weight, relieving stress, experiencing a cleanse, redefining spirituality, exploring emotions, renewing vitality, finding comfort in your own skin, or just a way to appreciate yourself?

Establish clearly why you want to fast and preserve your motivation as a target throughout your process. We have gathered some of the following comments to help stimulate your thinking about your intrinsic motivation to embark on a fasting regimen.



- *I fast because I have high blood pressure. Fasting brings me comfort and relief.*
- *I have pain in the joints and fasting helps alleviate discomfort.*
- *Fasting contributes to my overall sense of well-being, including anxiety relief.*
- *Fasting helps reset my biorhythms, and I notice improved sleep during and after a fast.*
- *Through fasting, I experience clarity of vision and renewed vitality.*
- *Fasting brings me closer to my body through the unusual sensation of hunger.*
- *Fasting helps me practice self-discipline and regain an appreciation for food.*
- *I simply feel I've had enough, and I want to discover fasting and learn to eat slowly and consciously.*
- *I want to conscientiously simplify and create distance from the excesses of abundance. Habits and desires have control over me, rather than the other way around.*



Preparation

Requirement for a successful fast is a positive attitude. Optimism helps keep our goals within reach throughout the process. Embarking on a fast supports a positive outlook, because the fasting process takes us one step closer to physical, mental, and spiritual renewal.

Ask yourself the question “why am I fasting?” Spell-out your motivations clearly. Write-down your thoughts on a piece of paper to memorialize your motivations. When you know your own motivations, and you’re able to point to them in writing, voluntary food restriction becomes much easier.

Fasting Timeline

Through the experience of body and soul, we learn the degree to which fasting makes sense for us, individually. Throughout the process we work to identify the unique benefits we gain.

In the following chapter on Fasting Crises, we offer guidance along with concrete assistance on how to respond to challenges during the fasting process.

Clearly establish and write-down a termination date for your fast. Alternatively, you might consider some flexibility on the duration of

your fast. For example, start-out with a less ambitious goal, such as a 3-day Spelt Bread Fast, followed by a Liquid Fast to be determined on a day-by-day basis.

Be cautious not to overwhelm yourself with overly ambitious goals. Consider setting healthy goals, which you’re likely to reach. As you are setting goals, be sure to consider extraneous factors, such as your personal and professional obligations, and any social commitments you think might interfere with your plans.

-Define your fasting goals and the duration of your fast-



Fasting Partners

Particularly for those embarking on their first fasting experience, having the company of others helps to support the process. In Germany, formal Hildegard fasts are conducted in retreat settings. In the U.S., several centers follow Hildegard's philosophy. Alternatively, one can work through a related community organization retreat center.

Fasting as a couple or in a group strengthens all participants, particularly as they encounter moments of weakness. A positive group dynamic helps support the individual by providing energy and motivation. The open exchange of experiences creates a strong bond among participants, as they're all in this together.

-Fasting in pairs or groups fortifies-

In the absence of a fasting group, pay special attention to your thoughts and feelings by memorializing them in a journal or diary. This practice promotes the recognition and release of emotions and experiences that may no

longer serve. Allow yourself a conscientious practice of cleansing the spirit, by releasing psychic ballast.

The time of fasting is an intense time in which one's life is perceived in a new perspective. But it also makes sense to care for awareness and quality of life at this time: through regular rest, through relaxation, through good thoughts.

If you do not have the opportunity to fast in a group, then spend the time to write down your thoughts prior to and during the fasting period. This permits you to acknowledge and memorialize injuries to your soul, and simply let them go.

A successful fasting cycle can bring intense emotions. Often this serves as an opportunity to gain new perspective, or to view life through a different lens. To make the best of this experience, be sure to plan for self-care. "And preserve a comfortable quality of life." Pamper yourself with rest, moderate exercise, healthy relaxation, and positive thoughts.

Fasting Preparation List

The following list is not exhaustive and should be used as guidance only. You probably won't need all these items, and certainly you will discover personal items not here contemplated.

Ultimately, your list depends on your selected manner of fasting. This list should serve to inspire you to develop your own personalized fasting list, before starting a fasting cycle.

Spices, food, & fasting aids:	Helpful for:
Mugwort	Digestion
Bitters tablets	Moderate appetite and reduce cravings
Bertram powder	Digestion / mucilage
Pear puree or powder (fasting powder)	Recovery
Betony pillow	Improved sleep
Kvass Russian Rye-bread drink	Strength and vigor
Spelt bread	Fasting course
Spelt semolina	Fasting soup
Spelt pillow	Rest and relaxation
Whole spelt grains	Spelt salad
Fasting journal	Relieve stress and track progress
Psyllium husk	Digestion
Galangal powder	Provides warmth
Galangal root	Circulation
Vegetables	Fasting broth
Green fennel grains	Good breath
Linseed	Compress
Chestnut honey	Strength
Nutmeg	Mood
Parsley Heart Wine	Circulation
Breckland Thyme (Thyme)	Skin cleansing
Quince tabs	Acidosis
Celery powder	Pain and discomfort
Licorice	Digestion
Tea	Fasting drink
Cinnamon	General fasting relief
Skin brush	Muscle soreness

Detailed and further information on individual medicinal plants, herbs and foodstuffs as well as their use and recipes can be found at: www.healthyhildegard.com.

Tip: *It is advisable not to chew gum during fasting as it stimulates the formation of gastric juice and thus stimulates the appetite. Chewing on roots and / or bitters tablets does not have this effect.*



Ground Rules

All things are not equal to all people. Start the fasting process by getting to know yourself. Understand that while some people are highly disciplined and able to adhere strictly to any game plan, others respond best to a system of rewards.

In advance, spend time sitting with the different fasting methods, and deliberately decide which one fits you the best. A successful fast is confined, at the outset, to a finite, but reasonable period of time. Setting healthy goals often means setting modest goals.

Hildegard refers to moderation as *Discretio*, which varies, depending on the person.

Fasting is not a competition, but a gentle process to promote holistic well-being on physical, mental, and spiritual levels.

Healthy Ground Rules

Irrespective of the fasting method you select, the following ground rules should be observed for a healthy and successful Hildegard fast.

- *Plan for adequate rest and relaxation*
- *Plan activities that bring you joy*
- *Make time for movement in nature, selecting activities that bring humor and pleasure*
- *Consciously make time for breaks from your daily life (take afternoon naps, etc.)*
- *Plan for all meals at set times*
- *Eat meals in a deliberate and conscientious manner*
- *Consciously perceive an appreciation for each meal*
- *Stay away from hot and cold temperature, or extremes in food and drink*
- *Chew each bite 30 times, and allow your saliva to take effect*
- *Eat in good company*
- *Replace quantity with quality*
- *Drink sufficient liquid (especially water), at least 7 cups of fluid per 100 lbs of weight*
- *Eat your last meal in daylight to ensure its properly digested before bedtime*
- *Talk about fasting only with others who are fasting*





Fasting Methods

Of fasting, Hildegard of Bingen wrote:

“When people approach nutrition in an extreme manner, so that they do not have the right or adequate food in their bodies, they become unstable and too laidback in their way of life, while others may feel oppressed by ailments. This is when disasters occur in the body, because the elements are muddled.”

When selecting the best fasting method, pay close attention to your personal circumstances. Make an honest assessment of your health, your fasting goals, your character, and personality. Hildegard of Bingen points out that a pure Liquid Fast may not be suitable for everyone. A Liquid Fast is not recommended for chronically ill patients, patients with acute infectious diseases, moody, or depressive people.

There are Four Primary Fasting Methods

- 1 Spelt Fruit & Vegetables Fast
- 2 Spelt Reduction Diet
- 3 Spelt Bread Fast
- 4 Liquid Fast (Hildegard Fast)



1 Spelt, Fruit, & Vegetables Fast

The Spelt Fruit & Vegetables Fast is the easiest method of fasting and can be done by anyone safely. The basic concept behind the Spelt Fruit & Vegetables Fast is the elimination of meat and animal fats, milk protein, and high-fat foods. This fasting method serves as a great starting point for those interested in a long-term transition to a permanent low-meat diet.

Movement is a critical part of a Spelt Fruit & Vegetables Fast. Since you will still be ingesting calories at or above your base metabolic rate, regular exercise is an integral part of this first level of fasting. Hildegard recommends, at least, one hour of physical exercise per day. And, of course, that activity is best done in the fresh air.

During a Spelt Fruit & Vegetables Fast, be prepared to eat spelt, in some form, three times a day. Ideally, spelt is served at each meal along with some fruits and vegetables. Spelt is a versatile grain. There are many seasonal recipes and interesting combinations of ingredients – from sweet to savory that can satisfy your cravings.

As with any of the Hildegard fasting methods, implementing a short-term practice of this diet, for even one day per week contributes to good health. A single day fast provides the body with reprieve to regenerate and detoxify. There's also the added benefit to maintaining a healthy waistline.

This simple, everyday fast, contributes to an overall feeling of good health, along with strengthened immunity against illness. In addition, this method helps exert some reasonable controls over eating patterns. Mondays are a great day to schedule as a fasting day, because it contributes to a clean and fresh start to the week.

A good sample fasting day, using this method would look like the following.

Breakfast

A bowl of *Habermus*, a spelt porridge. *Habermus* is a traditional porridge, similar to oatmeal. We make *habermus* using rolled spelt flakes, adding some fruit and seasoning to taste. Traditionally, we add apples, cinnamon, and dried cranberries or raisins. It's not uncommon to add some *psyllium* and even trace amounts of *galangal*

or 1-2 slices of spelt bread with marmalade

Lunch

Lunch should be the most substantive meal of the day. Some good options include: *Vegetables-spelt pancakes*, *spelt risotto*, *spelt pasta*, *spelt "spätzle" pasta*, *spelt semolina*, *chestnuts with vegetables*, *fruit salad with cooked spelt grains*, or *vegetarian spelt pizza/flatbread* (hold the cheese) each combined with salad. You will find more delicious spelt dishes in the *chapter recipe*.

Dinner

Ideally, your evening meal is something light. Consider a *spelt meal porridge*, *semolina soup*, *pumpkin soup* or *spelt bread* with vegetarian spreads, such as a hummus derived from chickpeas, chestnuts and or beets.

Be sure to drink plenty of fluid each day. Some appropriate drinks include water, fennel tea, *spelt coffee*, apple, or quince juice and cut wine.

2 Spelt Reduction Diet

Like the Spelt Fruit & Vegetables Fast, the Spelt Reduction Diet is a gentle form of fasting that can be sustained for several months without risk to one's health. This method is particularly effective for obesity, high blood pressure, and metabolic disorders.

The Spelt Reduction Diet entails switching daily between a Spelt Diet and an ordinary Hildegard diet. In this method, every other day, one eats spelt bread at all three meals. This is not a starvation diet, so there is no harm in eating until full. The afternoon meal may also include a spelt lettuce salad.

Fennel tea is always recommended, particularly through fasting periods. Return to a normal diet on alternate days. Ideally, nutrition on alternate days includes some consideration for Hildegard of Bingen's basic nutrition principles, such as healthy fruits and vegetables, spelt in any form, and moderate meat for flavor.

Several recipes follow in this book, and can be found on our website at: www.HealthyHildegard.com.

A fine example of a Spelt Diet day may be structured as follows.

Breakfast

Habermus (spelt porridge)

Lunch

Chestnuts and vegetables

Dinner

Apple pan casserole or
Chard soup

Most find the reduction days very beneficial, in part because feelings of hunger do not arise. Since the diet avoids animal fats, the body draws on its own fat reserves, and breaks them down. In the course of this fast, a detoxification takes place and weight steadily declines.



3 Spelt Bread Fast

A Spelt Bread Fast can be tailored to the unique needs of the individual over several weeks. At its core, the Spelt Bread Fast is a variation of the Spelt Reduction Diet. As with all of the Hildegard fasting methods, it is important to have real spelt bread, made of pure spelt, because only pure spelt contains all of the necessary vitamins, minerals, and trace elements.

According to Hildegard of Bingen and modern research, spelt flour contains the primary nutrients required for good health. In their respective modern forms, the health benefits of spelt exceed those of wheat, particularly for fasting. For ideal nutrition, Hildegard fasting calls for waiting two days before eating bread to limit potential gastrointestinal effects.

On bread fasting days, the Spelt Bread Fast calls for a diet of only spelt bread and herbals teas three times per day. You may eat until you feel full or satiated; avoid eating spelt bread fresh out of the oven (wait 2 days).

Just like with the Spelt Reduction Diet, you can adopt a Spelt Bread Fast for any single day. Or, you may consider alternating with one day of Spelt Bread Fast, followed by a day of normal diet, according to the [nutrition principles of Hildegard of Bingen](#).

A good example of a Spelt Bread Fasting day may be structured as follows.

Breakfast

As much spelt bread as needed for satiety
Fennel Oil

Lunch

As much spelt bread as needed for satiety
Herbal tea of your choice

Dinner

As much spelt bread as needed for satiety
1 bowl of [spelt semolina soup](#)
Fennel or herbal tea

After extensive experience and feedback, we have found that people who start the fasting process overweight generally experience more success when they replace the spelt bread at lunch with a [spelt lettuce salad](#), and confine their evening meal to [spelt semolina soup](#).



3 Liquid Fast

Also referred to as the Hildegard Fast, the Liquid Fast represents Hildegard's most rigorous fast. In this traditional approach, diet consists of specific fasting fluids, and a greater emphasis is placed on actual fasting than in the other methods.

A traditional Hildegard Fast is not for everyone. People suffering from mental illness, emotional instability, depression or extreme mood swings, along with patients suffering infectious diseases, cancer, or others in a weakened state should avoid this type of fast, focusing instead on one of the moderate alternatives.

Ideally, if possible, a classic Hildegard Fast is performed within a community with other participants. This is especially true for those embarking on their first fasting experience.

Breakfast

Fennel tea consumed in small sips

Lunch

*Clear fasting broth or
Broth with pureed vegetables*

Dinner

Fennel oil mixed with apple, grape or blackcurrant juice or with a spelt broth





Framework

Consider the following framework a sequence to apply to all the four Hildegard fasting methodologies.

Before the Fast

Plan for two days of preparation or discharge prior to the start of your fast. During these discharge days, limit your diet to low-fat foods, avoiding meat and hard cheese. Similarly refrain from all stimulants, such as coffee, alcohol and nicotine.

Take 1-2 teaspoons of pear puree (or, powder) in the early mornings (before brushing your teeth) and evenings. Diabetics and cancer patients should avoid pear puree.

Pear Puree

Pear puree is easy to prepare at home, using the following recipe. Do not exceed 2 pounds of pears in preparing this recipe.

Take 2 lbs of ripe pears. Quarter, and remove the core. Add to a pot with plenty of water and cook until the soft and ready to puree. Once cooked, drain the water, and puree the pears.

Add 2 Tablespoons of a pear spice mix (see below, or available online) along with 4 tablespoons (to taste) of honey. Bring the combination, with pureed, pears back to a boil. Allow the mixture to cool, and place in small jars, refrigerating any opened containers.

A spice mixture for the pear puree can be made using the following ingredients (to make approximately 100 grams) in powdered form.

- *Meum athamanticum* or Spignel powder
35 grams or 5 Tablespoons
- *Galangal root powder* 28 grams or 4 Tablespoons



- *Licorice root powder* 22 grams of 3 Tablespoons
- *Rosemary / Thyme powder* 15 grams or 2 Tablespoons

The pear puree stimulates detoxification and supports the cleansing process. It has the advantage over Sodium Sulfate or Epsom Salt insofar as pear puree does not cause nausea and it has no negative side effects, such as contributing to heart irregularity and circulatory problems.

Also, the pear puree helps resolve mild forms of migraine headaches, constipation and rheumatism. For best effects, use pear puree over three weeks, but not to exceed a maximum of three months, at any one time.

Consistent with Hildegard's nutritional advice, and particularly when fasting, consume pear puree at room temperature (not too hot or cold) to protect the stomach.

During Fasting

The following activities apply to all forms of Hildegard fasting diets.

Light Morning Exercise

Start the day with low-impact movement. Try stretching in the bed by lifting your feet and pedaling in the air, in a cyclist's motion.

Morning Meditation

Before starting the day, incorporate a 10-minute, timed meditation into the early morning routine. Train for increasing duration, with a target of 20 minutes, practicing meditation once daily.

Brush Massage (preferably in the morning)

Sitting down, with legs bent at the knees, use a soft sisal brush or your fists. Start at the knee, and slowly work your way up to the hip joints in a circular motion. Ideally, massage from the outside of the legs toward the inside. This modest activity stimulates circulation and digestion.

Heart Wine (Parsley Wine)

Among those who closely follow *Hildegard of Bingen medicine* and healing remedies, parsley wine is considered a mainstay. Drink 2-3 mouthfuls (or, shot glasses) each day. This supports blood circulation and preserves contentment in disposition and mood. We have more information on Hildegard's recipe for parsley wine on www.HealthyHildegard.com.



Bertram Rinse

When it comes to herbal remedies, bertram is among Hildegard's favorites. This same herb also appears in Ayurvedic tradition as akarkara. In the context of fasting, bertram supports the internal cleansing process. A little bertram goes a long way in fasting.

Combine a knife tip of bertram powder with water and swirl the mixture in your mouth for 3 to 5 minutes, before spitting out. Once finished, rinse your mouth with water and brush your teeth. In addition to supporting a cleanse, bertram powder is known to prevent the symptoms of a common cold.

For more information on bertram, please visit our website www.HealthyHildegard.com.

Morning Shower as a Ritual

Design your morning shower in the manner of a daily self-care ritual. Exercise mindfulness by implementing a routine of sorts. As if practicing yoga, remind yourself of each of your body parts. Start at the right foot and lead the warm water up to the knee. Repeat the same process with your left leg. Then run the water jet on the right knee to the right hip and then from the left knee to the left hip. Next, run the water from your fingertips, up to your shoulders on each of your arms.

Once you've covered your limbs, allow the water to wash over your chest, stomach, back and bottom. After a first pass with warm water, repeat the process using cold water. Repeat the transition from hot and cold water 2 or 3 times, or until comfortable. Avoid using extreme cold water on your back particularly during the winter season. For more information on water therapy please visit our website: www.healthyhildegard.com

Skin Care

Among the liver, kidney, intestines, and lungs, the skin is our largest elimination organ. This means the skin (along with those other organs) plays an important role in the elimination of toxins found in our environment. In the context of fasting, this means we should take good care of our skin, as it plays a critical role in our own detoxification.

Find yourself lots of fresh air. Ensure sufficient fluid absorption. And, don't be afraid to use the brush for several massages each day. Use good skin creams or oils to give the conscious attention it deserves.

Intestinal Training

As a part of fasting, our goal is to cleanse the body. Our intestines serve the important function of gateway to detoxification. Fasting presents an opportunity to enforce some routine on our digestive systems. As we enforce discipline on our intake, we can simultaneously train our intestines for regular bowel movements. Begin the process by activating your intestines early in the morning, try 7:00 AM. Start by simply sitting on the toilet, and relaxing the sphincter. Avoid pressing.

Midday Rest

If possible, take a short (not to exceed 20 minutes) midday nap after lunch. A brief siesta contributes to vitality for the rest of your day. Surprisingly, the art of sleeping at noon requires some training, and it can take time to master. Lie flat on your back and relax, put your hands on your chest and breathe quietly, inhaling deeply, and exhaling completely. Think of a positive motif to allow relaxation to wash over, while falling into a gentle sleep. Cover-up to avoid a chill.

Liver Wrap

Along with the skin, the liver is an important elimination organ. Specifically, the liver takes charge of detoxification for the body. Support the liver with a warm topical wrap. Moisten a terry towel using hot water and thoroughly wring it out until almost dry. Place the warm, moist towel on the right upper abdomen. Place a hot water bottle over the moist towel and allow 30 minutes to rest.

Movement

Treat yourself to exercise in the fresh air. No matter if walking, jogging, cycling or swimming, choose the activity that best suits your personal preference. To avoid injury, Hildegard advocated activities with repeatable motion. For example, walking or biking satisfy the low stress criteria, suitable for a fasting regimen.

Hobbies

Maintain forgotten hobbies, listen to music or find creative outlets that bring joy. Revisit the hobbies and activities that a lack of leisure time has taken away from your routine. Play a board game, complete a puzzle, draw a picture, or sit on a park bench watching others play. If you remain time-constrained during this fasting cycle, make time to complete the work asked of you, and attempt to face these responsibilities deliberately, without added stress or unnecessary fuss.



Evening Meditation

Try meditating for few minutes before going to sleep each evening. Breathe deeply and regularly and try to relax your body consciously. Mentally, take inventory of each individual body part. Start with thoughts on the forehead and then work down to the cheeks, mouth, chin, and neck. Concentrate on consciously recognizing and relaxing each respective body part. Over time, this exercise develops into an achievable ritual of the mind.

Fasting Journal

Keep a fasting journal to track your thoughts, feelings, impressions and moods. Also, track your diet, reflecting on how your body responds to certain inputs and activities. This process helps to observe the changes taking place at each state in the fasting cycle. Your personal record of this fasting regimen also informs your behavior going forward, as you adjust midstream, or refine your process in future iterations.

Fasting Crises

The term crisis derives from the words opinion, meaning and decision. Thus, in the context of fasting, we think of a crisis as accompanied by opportunity. Crises are an integral part of our consciousness and result in some action generated from our decisions.

Try to devise your optimal conditions during fasting. Create a pleasant atmosphere, with positive visual stimulation and pleasant sounds. Use fresh flowers and music to improve your environment and support your physical and emotional well-being. Reward yourself with a relaxing lavender bath, a nice sauna, a walk in the park, and lots of fresh air.

When you face a fasting crisis, be sure to drink lots of water, often hydration is all you need. In her day, Hildegard also recommended consuming bitter herbs to help through a crisis related to fasting.

All listed countermeasures to certain fasting crises can be used generously and without restriction.



Fasting crisis symptom	Countermeasure / Remedy
Circulation problems	Brush massage 1 Drink of parsley wine
Joint and limb pain	Celery mixed powder, quince fruits or tablets 1 Drink of parsley wine
Cravings	2 Teaspoons of chestnut honey
Hunger (generally)	Bitters tablets Chewing on galangal root Chewing on fennel seeds
Cold feet	Warm red socks, the color red has a stimulating and activating effect Foot bath with sea salt Foot bath, alternative warm and cold
Low morale	Focus on the positive results from your fasting regimen.
Fatigue, headaches, shivering	Bitters tablets Chewing on galangal root 1 Drink of parsley wine
Sleeplessness	Place betony cushion next to the pillow Lavender bath before sleeping Valerian tea before bedtime
Bad breath	Chewing on green fennel seeds Take fennel tablets
Weakness, low blood pressure	2 Teaspoons of chestnut honey 1 Drink of parsley wine
Dizziness / vertigo	Bitters tablets Chewing on galangal root Lie down for a moment
Nausea	Slowly chew on a piece of spelt bread 1 Drink of parsley wine
Digestive problems	Psyllium or indian flaxseed Chewing on Bertram root

The preparation and application of the individual recipes are listed below.
Go to www.HealthyHildegard.com for more recipes, suggestions and information on spices and medicinal plants as well as their uses.

After the Fast

As your fasting cycle terminates, prepare yourself for a gentle re-entry into everyday life. The value of deliberately reacclimating to a post-fasting, long-term routine arises, above all at the end of a Hildegard Fast, or a Spelt Bread Fast, lasting more than one week.

Transitioning from the conclusion of a fast can be accomplished by incorporating the following in your first day meal plan.

Breakfast:

*Baked Apple or
baked Quince*

Lunch:

Spelt and vegetables soup and a slice of spelt bread or steamed vegetables without added fat

Dinner

*Spelt semolina soup
Fennel tea*

On the second, post fasting day, consider incorporating *spelt habermus* in the morning, a light vegetable dish at noon and some *spelt bread* with some cream cheese in the evening.

Only on the third day, post-fasting, should one consider returning to a variation of sustainable daily routine. Hopefully, by this time, some cravings have been tempered, resulting in a different nutrition program than had preceded the fast regimen.

In principle, meat and hard cheese should be dispensed with in the first days after fasting and animal protein should be consumed sparingly. In the long run, one might consider incorporating basic elements of a *Hildegard Diet* in everyday life.





Nutrition

Hildegard's nutritional treatment has less to do with strict recipes and more with discovering the unique qualities of food and their influence on each individual. Hildegard referred to this concept of identifying the healing powers within each food as the “subtlety” foods. Foodstuffs are thus used as remedies, with some more effective in addressing certain conditions.

The Hildegard Fast leaves a lot of room for individual preference. Hildegard fasting has more to do with finding balance and Hildegard's “discretio” than with following a prescribed formula of quantities and calories. Embark on a Hildegard fast with a view toward “discretio”, meaning “to find the right measure in all things”. Allow your own discretion to govern the right measure for you, individually.

Hildegard's Basic Nutrition

Consider spelt, sweet chestnuts, fennel, and the quince fruit. They are considered Hildegard's universal remedies, which means they always have a positive effect, no matter how they're consumed.

For more information on basic Hildegard foodstuffs, such as spelt, fennel, chestnuts and quince, take a look at www.HealthyHildegard.com. There you will find more information on individual medicinal plants and spices to support a fasting regimen or to resolve certain ailments.



Hildegard's Healthy Foods

Generally, we think of Hildegard's healthy foods as beans, butter, spelt, sweet chestnuts, fennel, spice cakes, roasted spelt porridge, lettuce salad with dill or garlic or vinegar and oil, honey, carrots, garbanzo beans, squash and its oil, almonds, horseradish, radishes, raw sugar, red beets, cooked celeriac, sunflower seed oil, wine vinegar, cooked onions.

More specifically, you may consider some of the following foods and food groups to include in your daily routine.

Healthy Fruits

Apples, cooked pears, blackberries, raspberries, red currants, cornels, cherries, mulberries, medlar, quinces, sloe berries, grapes, citrus, dates.

Healthy Fish

Trout, bass, cod, pike, (*also, consider grayling, catfish, perch*).

Healthy Meats

Poultry, lamb, beef, venison, (*goat ranks among healthy meats, but harder to find*)

Healthy Drinks

Beer, spelt coffee, fruit juice thinned with mountain spring water, fennel, rose hip or sage teas, wine, goat milk.

Healthy Spices

Bertram (akarkara, or pellitory), fennel, psyllium, galangal root, water mint, mugwort, chamomile root, nettles, watercress, burning bush root, gentian root, raw garlic, spearmint, cubeb, lavender, lovage, fruit of the bay tree, saltbush, poppy, nutmeg, cumin, clove, parsley, peppermint, wild thyme, tansy, sage, yarrow, licorice root, rue, hyssop, cinnamon.

Hildegard's Highest rated foods

Spelt, chestnuts, fennel and chickpeas (garbanzo beans).

"Spelt creates healthy body, good blood and a happy outlook on life" – Hildegard

Medieval Diet Guidelines

- *Meat should be from animals that eat grass and hay and don't have too many offspring.*
- *Butter and cream from the cow are good, but milk and cheese are better from the goat.*
- *Sunflower seed and pumpkin seed oils are good; olive oil is reserved for medicinal purposes.*

Hildegard also believed that individuals with cancer should not ingest animal protein at all.

Recommended Daily Routine

Hildegard believed the first meal of the day should be cooked and warm, to warm and ease the stomach into function for the rest of the day.

Drinks during fasting

Throughout the fasting cycle, pay special attention to maintaining or increasing your water intake. You should drink at least 9-13 glasses of water a day. In general, men should drink at least 13 cups of water and other fluids daily (about 3 liters), and women should aim for at least 9 cups (2.2 liters). Above all, during fasting, fluids help advance the cleansing process.

Water

Hildegard's so-called stone water advances an old-world fasting process. Stone water is made with crystals, soaked in a glass jar filled with water, and placed in the sun (or, a bright place) for 24 hours. After 24 hours, pour the complete stone water into another jug, and repeat the process for the following day.

The following stones serve particularly useful during a fasting process.

Rock Crystal: *promotes metabolism and glandular activity.*

Chalcedony: *regulates hormonal balance and moderates mood swings, stress and anger.*

Chrysoprase: *supports the discharge and cleansing of toxins in the body.*

Tea

Ideally, during a fast, prepare your tea in a diluted form, not allowing it to steep for too long. We become more vulnerable to the effects of herbs during our fasting process. Carefully select the appropriate teas for the intended effects.

For any seeds and grains included in herbal teas, soak them in cold water first, before heating in order to promote the release of essential oils. In contrast, directly heat any herbal teas containing mostly leaves and flowers.

Healthy tea and water intake helps combat the overwhelming feelings of hunger that often accompany a fast.

Fennel Tea

Combine one teaspoon of fennel seeds with one liter of (first, cold) water. Bring the combination to a boil, allow 5 minutes to steep, strain, and serve. As with other seeds and grains, allow the fennel seeds to soak in the cold water before cooking. This process helps advance the release of essential oils.

Rose Bud Tea

Combine 2 teaspoons of rose buds with one liter of hot water and allow the combination 2 minutes to steep, then strain, and serve.

Breakfast Tea Mix

Combine 35 grams of green fennel seeds, 15 grams of dried rose buds, 10 grams of milk thistle, 5 grams of galangal root, and 5 grams of cloves. Combine between one and two teaspoons of the mixture with one liter of cold water and allow the combination to soak. Heat the combination to a boil, allow 3 minutes to steep, strain, and serve.

Evening Tea

35 grams of green fennel seeds, 10 grams of dried rose buds, 10 grams of orange (citrus) leaves, and 15 grams of milk thistle. Combine between one and two teaspoons of the mixture with one liter of cold water and allow the combination to soak. Heat the combination to a boil, allow 3 minutes to steep, strain, and serve.

Also consider the following teas, during fasting.

- *Raspberry*
- *Blackberry*
- *Orange /citrus leaves*
- *Jasmine*
- *Melissa*
- *Rosehip*

Fruit juices

During a fasting regimen, dilute all juices with water. Ideally, add as much water as you start with juice, leaving the ratio 1 to 1, or more water. Use only natural, pasteurized juices during a fasting period. If possible, avoid citrus fruits during a fast, as they tend to cool the body.

Typically, we find tea more suitable and digestible during a Hildegard fast.

Spelt coffee

We know of Hildegard's preference for spelt. And, spelt coffee is a popular *alternative to coffee* in Germany. Find more information on how to roast your own spelt coffee on www.HealthyHildegard.com



Recipes

The following recipes derive from and are inspired by [Hildegard's nutritional treatment](#).
More recipes can be found at www.HealthyHildegard.com.

Basic Spelt Grains

Simple spelt grains taste great in soup or salad, or even as a standalone side dish.

- 1 cup of soaked spelt grains (organic)
- 1.5 cups of water
- Salt, bertram, galangal

Rinse spelt grains using a sieve and cold water, then allow them to soak in cold water for a few hours, or even better, overnight. Bring water to a boil, then add bertram and galangal to taste, allowing the combination to cook on medium heat for about 40 minutes.

Add a little salt and allow the spelt grains 20 minutes to simmer and swell until they eventually burst. If spelt is cooked in bulk, freeze some in small bags to reheat later.



Oatmeal

- ½ Cup of water
- 4 tablespoons of oatmeal
- 1 tablespoon raisins
- Some brown sugar or honey

Boil the ingredients together and allow 5 minutes for the oats to cool. Stir-in some natural yogurt to taste.



Habermus or Spelt Breakfast

Habermus or spelt breakfast is a German term used for muesli where spelt is used as the basic ingredient. This looks and tastes a lot like oatmeal, replacing the oats with spelt.

Ingredients

- ¼ cup rolled spelt flakes
- 1-2 tablespoons spelt semolina
- 1/3 cup of water
- ½ Apple
- Cinnamon to taste
- Salt to taste

Preparation

Bring the water to a boil in a saucepan and then add the rolled spelt flakes. Reduce heat and cook 10 to 15 minutes, depending on your preferred consistency. Continue stirring occasionally. Add salt, cinnamon, and a pinch of [Hildegard's fennel herbal powder](#) to taste. Serve with maple syrup, agave nectar, honey and/or milk.



Fasting Broth

Ingredients

- ¼ lb of mixed vegetables, including carrots, celery, turnips, and parsley
- 4 cups of water
- Hildegard spices, including galangal, bertram, thyme, fennel, hyssop and nutmeg
- Salt to taste

Preparation

Cook the vegetables in water and strain. Separately, boil the water used to cook the vegetables, and simmer with spices for another 5 minutes, lightly salting. Vegetables can be added and pureed, left whole in the broth, or left out for a basic vegetable broth.

Spelt Broth

Ingredients

- ½ cup spelt grains
- 2 cups of water
- 150 g vegetables (fennel, carrot, celery, turnips)
- Galangal, bertram, catmint, hyssop and muscat as spices
- Chopped herbs of choice

Preparation

Cook the spelt grains in water for 20 minutes, then add the vegetables and continue cooking for another 20 minutes, then strain. Add the spices and herbs. The broth can be easily produced in larger quantities and freezer-stored.

Spelt Semolina Soup

Ingredients

- 1-2 tablespoons spelt semolina
- 2 cups of water
- Galangal, bertram, thyme,
- Chopped herbs of choice
- Salt to taste

Preparation

Fry the spelt semolina in a dry pan until golden brown. Add water and stir to avoid lumps. Season with spices and allow 10 minutes to cook. Finally add the herbs.

Spelt Soup

Ingredients

- 1 carrot
- 1 piece of celery
- 1 fennel tuber (vegetable bulb)
- 3 cups of water
- 5 tablespoons of cooked spelt grains (see, spelt basic recipe)
- Galangal, bertram, thyme
- Add nutmeg, mugwort, and salt

Preparation

Cut the carrot, celery and fennel into cubes and cook in water, keeping the vegetables firm (*al dente*). Add the cooked spelt grains, season with spices and herbs, and allow a short time to simmer. Lightly salt to taste, before serving.

Chard Soup

Ingredients

- 1 lb of chard
- 1 large onion
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 2 garlic cloves
- Galangal, betram nutmeg, and salt
- 4 cups of water
- 2 tablespoons spelt flour
- 2 cups of sour cream
- Roasted pine nuts to taste

Preparation

Briefly blanch the chard in salt water (this means to place in boiling water briefly, immediately followed by cold water to stop the cooking process). Chop the onion and brown with butter in a pan. Add finely chopped garlic cloves and the chard to the pan. Add the spices and 2 of water. Stir in the spelt flour and the cream.

Allow the combination to simmer for about 15 minutes and then puree. Add another 2 cups of water, season with salt and sprinkle the pine nuts on top before serving.

Pumpkin Oil Marinade

Ingredients

- 1/2 Onion
- Pumpkin seed oil
- Wine
- Salt and galangal

Preparation

This marinade cleans the stomach and makes food more digestible. Chop the onion finely, roast it briefly and season with the pumpkin seed oil, add wine vinegar and spices. Allow 15 minutes to marinate, before serving.

Chestnut Marinade

Ingredients

- Sunflower oil
- Wine vinegar, salt, galangal
- 1-2 teaspoons chestnut honey

Preparation

Mix all the ingredients into a cold marinade and allow 15 minutes to marinate.

Spelt Chestnut Noodles (Spaetzle)

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup of chestnut flour
- 2 cups of spelt flour
- Salt, galangal, thyme
- ½ cup of water
- 1 egg
- 2 cups of mozzarella cheese

Preparation

Mix the chestnut flour and spelt flour with some salt, a pinch of galangal and a pinch of thyme. Form a hollow space and place the egg and ½ cup of water in this space. Stir the combination into a tough dough. Allow the dough 1 hour to rest, adding additional spelt flour, as necessary. Roll strips of the dough by hand into noodles, placing them directly in boiling (lightly salted water). Allow a short time to cook al dente. Place the finished noodles in a baking dish, sprinkle with mozzarella, and cook at 360 degrees in the oven.

Veggie Burger

Ingredients

- 2 cups of spelt flakes
- 3 tablespoons of spelt flour
- 2 eggs
- ½ cups of milk or water
- 2 tablespoons of sunflower seeds
- Thyme, hyssop, bertram galangal, salt
- ½ lb vegetables of your choice
- Butter

Preparation

Whip the 2 egg whites to a light foam. Chop the vegetables to a fine consistency, and combine with the remaining ingredients, including the two egg yolks. Then, fold in the whipped egg whites. Place butter in a frying pan and fry the mixed patties until golden brown on both sides. Serve with salad.



Fried Spelt

Ingredients

- 1 serving of cooked spelt grains
- 1 small Onion
- Butter lard
- Fresh herbs, at your discretion

Preparation

Chop the cooked spelt grains to a coarse consistency. Fry the chopped onion in butter, add the cooked spelt grains and roast the combination until crispy. Season to taste with selected fresh herbs.



FRESH HERBS, ONIONS,
COOKED SPELT GRAINS



Apple Pot Casserole

Ingredients

- 2-3 Apples
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 4-6 tablespoons cane sugar
- 3 tablespoons spelt semolina
- 2-3 eggs
- Sliced almonds
- 1 lb of Quark (a fresh European cheese, not the same as sour cream, cottage cheese or ricotta)
- 1 teaspoon of baking soda
- Salt

Preparation

Whip the 3 egg yolks with butter and sugar until the combination is frothy. Add quark cheese, spelt semolina, a pinch of salt and baking soda. Whip the egg whites until foamy and fold into the remaining combination. Cut the Apples (alternatively, use quince fruit) into slices. Grease a baking pan and spread the apple slices next to each other. Pour the combination of remaining ingredients over the apple slices, and sprinkle with sliced almonds. Bake the combination at 320 F degrees for about 50 minutes.



Fennel Soup

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 cups of chopped trimmed fennel bulbs (3 bulbs)
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 6 cups vegetable broth/stock
- Plain yogurt (optional)

Preparation

Remove fronds from fennel bulb and set aside. It's ok to leave portions of the stalks, as they will soften quite a bit when cooked.

Chop fennel as you would celery stalks. Chop onions. Heat oil in a large pot over medium to low heat. Add the chopped onion and fennel and cover. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 25 minutes or until the onions and fennel begin to soften, but do not brown.

Add vegetable broth/stock. Bring to boil, then reduce heat to medium and simmer uncovered until the onion and fennel are tender, about 25 minutes. Working in batches, puree soup in a blender until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Return puree to pot and serve hot. Or you can cover and chill and serve cold. It is delicious either way.



Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients

- 1 onion
- 1 Tablespoon of oil
- 1 lb diced pumpkin
- 1 cup water
- Salt, galangal, bertram nutmeg and hyssop
- 1 tablespoon spelt flour
- Some cream

Preparation

Lightly steam the diced pumpkin and strain the water. Separately, dice the onion and fry in oil until golden brown. Combine the onions with the lightly-steamed pumpkin and season the combination with spices and herbs until the pumpkin has softened further.

Puree the combination and add water to the desired soup consistency. Combine the spelt flour with water, mixing until it forms a loose paste, and add to the soup. Allow 10 minutes to simmer, and season with cream or milk.



Spelt Bread

Ingredients

- 3 ½ cups of spelt flakes (½ cup used for topping)
- 4 ½ cups of spelt flour
- 2 cups of lukewarm water
- 1 cup of lukewarm milk
- 1 package of organic dry yeast (7 grams) 1 Tablespoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon of sugar (substitute ½ lemon, or 2 Tablespoons)
- 1 tablespoon of sunflower seed oil
- Dash of bertram, fennel powder and hyssop

Preparation

Combine 3 cups of spelt flakes and 4 ½ cups of spelt flour in a single mixing bowl. Separately, allow the yeast powder to dissolve in the lukewarm milk (105 to 110 degrees.) Add the milk and yeast combination to the spelt flakes and spelt flour and begin mixing. Mix by hand or use a mixer on low speed.

As you mix, gradually add the lukewarm water, lemon juice (or sugar), salt and sunflower oil. Continue mixing for about 15 minutes, or until the mixture is smooth and elastic. Cover the mixture with a kitchen towel and let it rise until it has approximately doubled in size (this takes about 2 hours).

Baking:

Grease two 9×5-inch loaf pans. Once the dough has leavened, divide into two separate loaves and knead it again by hand for 2 or 3 minutes. Place the loaves in the pans and run a cut through the center surface of both breads (about ¼ inch deep). Cover them again and allow to rise to rise to the top of the pans.

Bake both loaves in the oven's center rack at 400 degrees F for 15 minutes, then reduce heat to 385 degrees F for an additional 30 minutes. This helps create a crispy crust. Remove the loaves and cool for 5 minutes, then remove from the baking tins and continue cooling on a rack.

Optional:

If you like a lightly crisped crust, you can brush some milk and melted butter to the surface of the dough prior to baking. Consider adding the remaining ½ cup of spelt flakes to the top of each loaf before baking.

During the fasting process light or fine grain bread supports efficient digestion. Consider your ideal mixture of fine or whole grains. In addition, add 1 Tablespoon of psyllium to further enhance digestibility.



Hildegard Spelt Salad

Ingredients

- 1 head of lettuce, mixed greens, or kale
- 2 tablespoons wine vinegar
- 4 tablespoons of sunflower seed oil
- 2-3 tablespoons boiled spelt grains
- Carrots, cucumber
- Red cabbage
- Onion, as desired



Preparation

Hildegard Spices: bertram, pepper, chives, parsley, savory, hyssop, stinging nettle, mint, dill (all herbs as desired).

- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon of xylitol or stevia (instead of sugar)

Preparing the spelt as stated above (basic spelt recipe). In a small bowl, mix vinegar, salt, sugar (or substitute), and whatever spices you have selected – minced or diced. Set aside.

Chop lettuce (or whatever greens you choose), carrots, cucumber, cabbage, and onions and place in salad bowl. Add in prepared spelt. Drizzle with dressing and lightly toss.

Cooked spelt is a great substitute for meat proteins and other savory items like cheese. Spelt kernels have a solid consistency that lends a nice chewy texture to the salad.

For variety, try with kale, mixed greens, or arugula.



Chestnuts & Vegetables

Ingredients

- 1 chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 lb chestnuts
- 1 tablespoon spelt flour
- 1 cup red wine
- Galangal, bertram, thyme
- Salt
- 1 pinch of clover powder

Preparation

Sautee chopped onions in a frying pan with butter until golden brown. Add chestnuts to the sautéed onions and continue frying until roasted. Dust the combination with spelt flour and continue frying until the mixture takes on a dark rich color. Deglaze with red wine, add spices and season with salt. Continue simmering until a creamy sauce forms, adding water as necessary.



Chestnut Stew

This recipe is ideal for winter times and serves 2 persons.

Ingredients

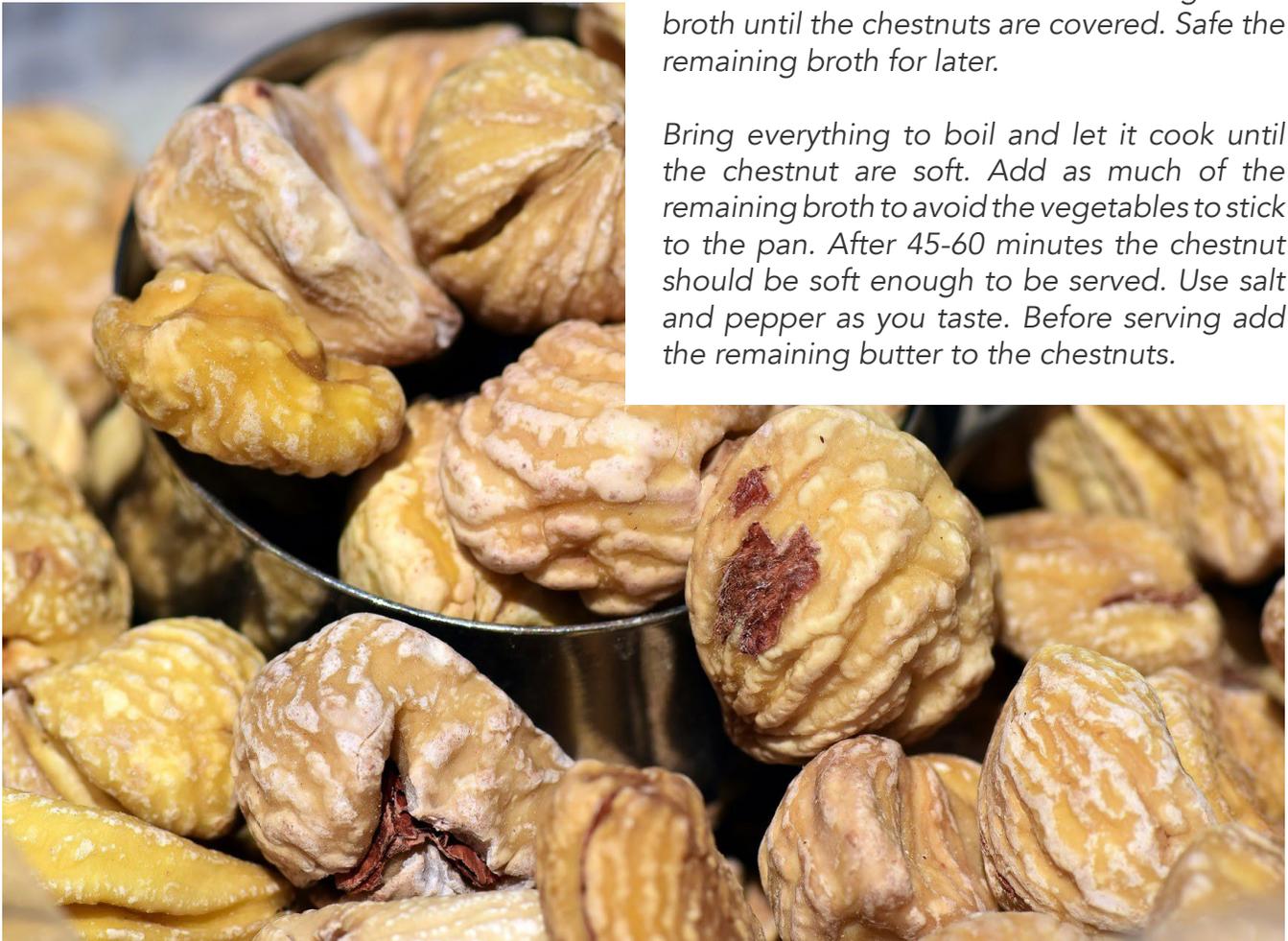
- 1lb peeled chestnut
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 Onion
- 1 Carrot
- 1 stick celery or a piece celery root
- 1 pinch of brown sugar
- Galangal, bertram, thyme
- Salt, Pepper
- 1 cup vegetable broth

Preparation

Clean the chestnuts, cut the husk crossfire with a sharp knife and put them on a wet baking tray. Pre-heat the oven to 400 degrees F, sprinkle the chestnuts with some water and keep them for 18-20 minutes in the oven. Remove the chestnuts and cool for a few minutes. Peel the still warm chestnuts including the inner layer of light brown skin

Peel the onion and cut into small dices. The same applies to the carrot and celery. Use the oil and half of the butter to roast gently the onions first until light brow and add the carrots and celery after. Lastly add the chestnuts to the pan as well as a a pinch of sugar. Reduce the temperature and let it stew for a couple of minutes. Add salt and as much vegetable broth until the chestnuts are covered. Safe the remaining broth for later.

Bring everything to boil and let it cook until the chestnut are soft. Add as much of the remaining broth to avoid the vegetables to stick to the pan. After 45-60 minutes the chestnut should be soft enough to be served. Use salt and pepper as you taste. Before serving add the remaining butter to the chestnuts.



Spelt Risotto

Ingredients

- 2 cups spelt grains
- 1 onion
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- ½ cup white wine
- Galangal, bertram, thyme, salt and clover
- 4 cups of water
- ¼ cup butter (4 tablespoons)
- Parmesan (two tablespoons)
- Herbs at your own discretion (e.g. parsley, nettle, dandelion)

Preparation

Making classic risotto by using spelt grains can take a little more time than when using arborio (risotto rice), because spelt grains take a little longer to cook. The results are worth it, though.

Fry the onion with oil and add the spelt, roast everything briefly. Separately, make a broth using water with white wine and spices. You may also consider including some chicken broth to taste. Allow the combination to boil for 20 minutes, stirring consistently.

Add broth one cup at a time, allowing the broth to fully absorb before adding more. The gradual addition of broth and slow cooking helps produce creamy consistency.

Once the risotto is complete, add some butter and stir in some parmesan. If desired, add vegetables (carrots, fennel, etc.) with 10 minutes left of cooking time.



Spelt Semolina Slices

Ingredients

- 3 cups soy milk
- 1.5 cups spelt semolina
- 1 pinch of salt
- Galangal, bertram and a pinch of nutmeg
- ¼ cup soft butter
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tablespoons grated parmesan cheese

Preparation

Mix milk, spelt semolina, salt, galangal, bertram and nutmeg in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and allow the combination to stand for 20 minutes. Once the mixture has cooled in temperature, stir-in butter, eggs, and parmesan.

Spread the combination on a baking sheet and place it in a cool location for about 4 hours. Then bake in the oven for about 25 to 30 minutes at 380 F degrees.



Fennel with Spelt Breadcrumbs

Ingredients

- 4 fennel bulbs (vegetable tuber)
- 1 onion
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 shot white wine
- Galangal, bertram
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 cups mozzarella
- 1 tablespoon spelt crumbs

Preparation

Briefly blanch the fennel tubers for 5 minutes in salt water. (Blanching means to place in boiling water briefly, immediately followed by cold water to stop the cooking process).

Place the outer leaves of the fennel into a buttered dish. Dice the fennel bulbs and combine with chopped onion to fry in a pan with butter. Add white wine, galangal, bertram and salt to the pan, mix well and let cool. Place the combination of diced fennel cubes on top of the fennel leaves in the baking dish. Top with grated mozzarella and spelt crumbs. Allow 15 minutes to bake at 360 F degrees.

Spelt crumbs are made from old spelt bread. Chop into cubes and fry in the pan with a little butter.



Zucchini or Pumpkin Pancakes

Ingredients

- 2 large zucchini (approx. 1 lb) (or, substitute pumpkin)
- 1 onion
- Salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fine spelt flour
- 4 eggs
- Galangal, bertram, thyme
- 1 cup grated mozzarella or feta cheese

Preparation

Grate the zucchini and dice the onion, combining and adding salt. Attempt to dehydrate the zucchini and onion combination by allowing 30 minutes on a paper towel or newspaper. Mix the spelt flour and the eggs until a dough is formed, then add the spices and cheese, and allow the dough 30 minutes to breath. If necessary, add milk while combining the zucchini mixture with the dough. Fry the combination zucchini pancakes, using sunflower oil or butter at medium heat on both sides.



Fried Quince

Preparation

Wash and place whole fruit on a baking tray and bake for approximately 40-50 minutes at 360 F degrees. The fruits are finished when you can easily pierce the casing with fork. Fried quinces can also be frozen for later use.

Baked Apple

Preparation

Wash apples, cut and remove the core. Cook in the oven for approximately 20-30 minutes at 360 F degrees. Sprinkle some cinnamon on top before serving.





Kitchen

The Hildegard Spice Rack

Lovingly referred to as “hormones of the kitchen,” a Hildegard-inspired kitchen contains numerous traditional healing spices. Many of the spices found in a Hildegard kitchen grow easily in a backyard or potted garden. While these fresh spices are well worth the effort, seasons change, and some are just not cooperative in certain climates, so dried, packaged, and store-bought spices are a perfectly good way to keep your kitchen stocked.

The traditional spices favored by Hildegard are packed with beneficial nutrients and healing properties. But they are also a natural, delicious way to liven-up your meals. Hildegard’s use of spice was done in consideration of their healing properties but also according to their flavor profiles and how she believed they would manifest within the body based on the four humors.

You don’t need to go to such depths to enjoy the favor and health benefits of these spices, but you should definitely look into some of the potential benefits of the more familiar spices and start to experiment with some of the less familiar.

Here are some of Hildegard’s favorites which you can use to spice up your diet.

- **Bertram / Akarara / Pellitory**
Along with galangal and thyme, bertram root is considered one of the three primary spices in a Hildegard kitchen. These spices can be added to almost any food. Bertram stimulates digestion by improving the absorption of nutrients in the gut / intestines.
- **Cubeb pepper**
Cubeb or tailed pepper has intense flavor and is perceived as cool. It produces a cheerful heart, promotes clear thinking and supports brain performance.
- **Dittany**
The dittany root strengthens the heart and promotes active blood circulation.
- **Galangal**
Galangal root powder gives food a healthy focus. Galangal acts as an antiviral, supports digestion, and stimulates body functions. Galangal is an ideal winter food for cold prevention to support immune defenses.
- **Cinnamon**
Hildegard had high regard for cinnamon. Recent studies show that the regular intake of cinnamon can have many positive affects, including supporting the regulation of blood sugar. The warming qualities of cinnamon make it a natural fit for easing discomfort brought on by colds and flu. There are many trace minerals and it is dense with antioxidants which make it a great culinary spice. There is even some indication that the aroma of cinnamon can increase brain functioning.

- **Hyssop**

Hyssop is an ancient herb with Biblical roots. Believed to possess healing and cleansing powers, it was often used both ceremoniously to ward off evil, sickness, and to cleanse the soul but also as an elixir to ease respiratory ailments and joint pain. It is still used today as a remedy for [arthritis](#). Most often it is prepared in a tea or added to a bath. The volatile oils of hyssop are powerful and should not be freely ingested without proper handling and dosage.

- **Licorice**

The licorice root is particularly suitable for sweet desserts. According to Hildegard, licorice strengthens the voice, supports a balanced mind, and brightens the eyes. Licorice tea is a great natural remedy for respiratory issues and some research is indicating that it influences the bile response leading to better elimination of excess cholesterol. It can be soothing to the digestive tract and can act as a mild laxative.

- **Mugwort**

Mugwort herb is aromatic, spicy, and slightly bitter; it promotes circulation in the stomach. Mugwort is a staple of Chinese medicine and was quickly adopted by European healers. In addition to its healing properties it has long history of culinary uses including for spicing meats, flavoring soups and drinks. Its cousin, *Artemisia Absinthium*, a.k.a. "wormwood" is a principal ingredient in absinthe. Prior to the cultivation of hops, mugwort was often used in making beer.

- **Nutmeg**

The nutmeg opens the heart, cleans the senses and supports a clear cognitive function. Nutmeg is a wonderful spice that is readily available in its prepared, finely ground form, but we recommend sourcing the freshest, whole-nut version that you can fresh-grate to unlock the optimal flavor and aromatic qualities.

- **Sage**

Sage can be grown in a lot of climate zones but is also easily sourced, both fresh and dry, in most markets. Sage supports the body's detoxifying functions, contains antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agents, and may help brain functioning.

- **Spearmint**

Spearmint is easy to grow. Often a bit too easy as it tends to overtake a garden rather quickly. It adds a spicy flavor; it warms the stomach and supports digestion. Spearmint is great for teas, chopped into salads like [tabbouleh](#), chutneys, sauces, and dips.

- **Thyme**

This wonderful evergreen herb is easily grown in your garden and can be dried and stored for use throughout the winter. It has many antioxidant properties, is naturally antimicrobial, and is nutrient dense. It can add a unique flavor on its own but also pairs well with rosemary, marjoram, and sage. Thyme is a versatile herb, essential to the Hildegard kitchen.

- **Water Mint**

Hildegard thought water mint is best when cooked with food, but it can also be used fresh in tea or salads. It adds a mild-minty taste to the food and promotes good digestion.



Remedies

Hildegard generally believed in the power of a modest diet in bringing about change and effective healing. A Hildegard Fast is an extension of her teachings around nutrition. The descriptions here focus on the right foods and spices to eat to moderate caloric intake.

In addition to [Hildegard nutrition](#) there is a whole range of preventative remedies that Hildegard would recommend both before and after an illness arises. The following sample of remedies offers only a handful of [Hildegard's Klosterheilkunde](#), or monastic remedies.

More information and more remedies can be found at www.healthyhildegard.com.

Chestnut Honey

Chestnut honey helps to address mild forms of stress, depression, and anxiety. It's a great addition to a fasting regimen, as it also helps to satisfy sugar cravings and support detoxification in the liver.

You can buy or make chestnut honey. To make it at home, slowly warm 1 pound of bee honey, adding 1 – 2 cups of chestnut flour while stirring consistently. Once finished, this honey should be refrigerated. Take a teaspoon of chestnut honey in the morning and / or in the evening, before bedtime.



Celery Seeds Mixed Powder

During a fasting regimen, the body's cleansing process can result in muscle and joint pain. Celery powder helps address some of these symptoms and helps promote an effective fast. Apart from fasting, celery powder serves as an effective remedy to address mild forms rheumatism and arthritis. This remedy is also known to resolve mild forms of gout.

- 5 Tablespoons celery seeds
- 1 ½ Tablespoons common rue
- 1 Tablespoon nutmeg powder
- 1 Tablespoon cloves
- 1 teaspoon rockfoils

For severe pain and discomfort, take 1 full teaspoon 3 times daily, then reduce to 2 teaspoons daily for two weeks, and finally take 1 teaspoon daily, until recovery.



Fennel Herb Powder

Hildegard's fennel herb powder consists of galangal root, fennel fruit, and dittany. These are three of Hildegard's most valuable herbal remedies. In that combination, fennel herbal powder strengthens overall health and well-being while the combination of these herbs deliver an effective healing agent to promote gradual recovery and recuperation from illness.

To make Hildegard's fennel herbal powder, combine $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of powdered fennel fruit, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup galangal powder and 2 tablespoons of powdered dittany root.

Ideally, take 2-3 pinches (or, 2-3 tablets) of the fennel herbal powder an hour after lunch, along with warm *parsley honey wine*.

Fennel Seeds

Fennel seeds or fennel tablets help resolve the bad breath caused by poor digestion. Bad breath may arise during a fasting process, when the stomach is empty and gastric juices remain active. Starting in the morning, chew fennel seeds or fennel tablets, particularly during fasting. Fennel is also known to improve and prevent the effects of deteriorating vision.

Galangal

Galangal helps support the heart, improve vitality, combat fatigue, advance blood circulation, and promote good digestion. Galangal helps address the common symptoms of a fasting crises, including headaches, low energy, overwhelming cravings, and lack of motivation. Chew on galangal root, or consume galangal in tablet form, allowing it to dissolve on the tongue

Cubeb (Piper cubeb)

Cubeb, is a form of pepper, known for its tail, and cultivated for its essential oil. Cubeb contributes to the enhancement of both mental and spiritual condition. It also serves to relieve anxiety, particularly in stressful situations. Chew on the cubeb fruit directly, or include as a spice in cooked dishes. Alternatively, cubeb may be found in powder form for combination with soups and veggies.

Quince Tabs

Gastric acidity can result in muscle pain. Quince fruit, and quince tablets help resolve hyperacidity and the resulting discomfort. Where available, quince tablets are meant to replicate the effects of the quince fruit, which generally resembles an apple. For muscle discomfort associated with acidity, take 10 - 15 quince tablets daily.

Sage

Sage helps prevent bad breath and it strengthens the stomach. Sage can also address mild cases of shortness of breath, and symptoms related to the common cold. For these ailments, simply inhaling the essential oils from a sage leaf can show marked improvement.

Licorice Root

Licorice roots helps resolve mild constipation and promotes digestion -- both important matters in the context of a fast. Records show, monks and nuns would chew on licorice root, and other bitter roots during the course of their spiritual fasts. When available, licorice root is an excellent addition to a Hildegard fast.

Psyllium

Psyllium is known for its volume of fiber, but it also lifts the mood. Because psyllium has the capacity of swelling up to 10 times its original size, this plant helps to regulate digestion. Sprinkle 1-2 teaspoons daily into cereal or soup. When taking psyllium, always ensure adequate hydration (at least 1 cup of water per teaspoon of psyllium).



Parsley Wine

One of Hildegard's best known wine elixirs .

“Whoever suffers from pain in the heart, spleen or side, drink this wine often (daily) and it will heal him.”

– Hildegard of Bingen, Physica Cap. 109

Ingredients:

- 8 – 10 parsley leaves with stems.
- Bottle of red or white wine (organic if possible)
- Two tablespoons wine vinegar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup honey

Bring wine and parsley leaves to light boil. Add two tablespoons wine vinegar. Boil for five minutes. Add honey (one-third cup or less for diabetics) and return to light boil (around five minutes). Skim off any foam, strain, and rebottle the wine.

Take one to three tablespoons (or, a small shot glass) daily to relieve heart pain, chest tightness, and other circulatory discomfort caused by weather or excitement. Take a half a cup before bedtime for a good night's sleep. Parsley wine is useful for pain caused by chronic rheumatic disease, as well as in cases of rehabilitation after heart attacks, and to aid in sleeplessness.



Psyllium-Wine

Psyllium wine is less known than psyllium itself, but this combination is no less important for digestion and for mood enhancement, relaxation, and improving skin conditions such as mild forms of shingles.

Boil one liter of red wine with 4 heaping tablespoons psyllium powder. Allow 30 minutes to cook, then sieve and fill back in the wine bottle with a cork. Drink a sip of warm wine before eating evening meals.



Diluted Wine

Diluted wine is known among Hildegard remedies for improving sleep, resolving stress and tension, moderating mood swings, and improving our sense of well-being. Diluted wine is also known as a remedy to address mild forms of high blood pressure.

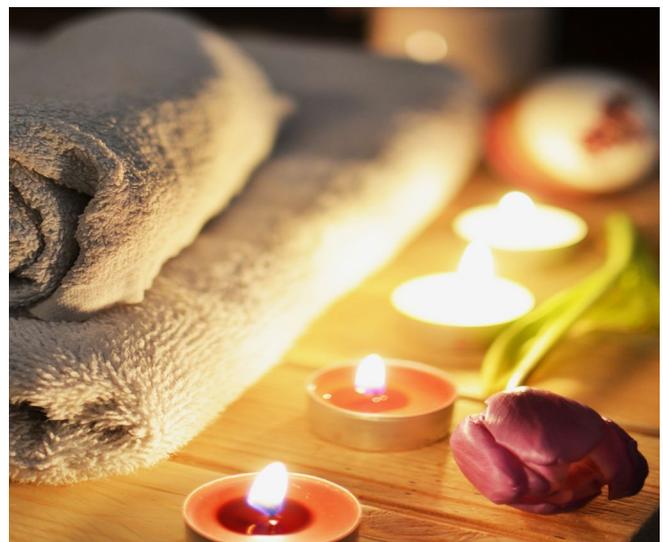
Heat a half cup of white wine to a boiling point and add a quarter cup of water. This combination works, 2-parts white wine to 1-part water. Drink about a cup of the combination, ideally still warm.



Flaxseed Wrap

The flax seed wrap stimulates digestion and promotes cleansing by releasing toxins. Combine 1/3 cup of flax seeds with one heaping teaspoon of galangal powder, together in 3 cups of water. Cook the combination over heat until it reaches a thick porridge-like consistency. Spread the mixture over half of a linen cloth, using the other half of the linen cloth to cover. Then, place the wrap on the belt zone, near the abdomen.

Keep the wrap warm using terry towels, and rest for one half an hour.



Hot Footbath

A warm or hot footbath sounds like a luxury with no real purpose. During fasting foot baths are known to prevent circulatory issues, resolve headaches, and improve mild sleep disorders. Add a little salt to the hot water to improve the effect.

Betony Herbal Pillow

A good German betony herbal pillow helps to calm the mind, improve rest and reinforce dreams. Use dried common hedgenettle or betony to make a betony pillow. Ideally, fill a small pillow case with one cup of dried betony herb, and simply place this next to a sleeping pillow.

The effects of betony last for about 6 months, at which point the pillow (or, its betony herbs) should be replaced.

Rose Oil

The rose oil has a pain-relieving effect. It helps with mild forms of rheumatism, joint pain, cramping in calves and legs, and with cold feet. Use rose oil topically by massaging into the effected areas. To make this at home, mix 2 parts of rose oil with 1 part ointment oil, adding with a small portion of olive or almond oil to balance the mixture.

Wormwood Creme

Wormwood is one of Hildegard's favorite cleansing herbs. In fact, she included wormwood in her Spring cleanse as a means to cleanse the kidneys, strengthen the immune system, stimulate digestion, promote detoxification, and improve energy. Topically, wormwood cream helps prevent the symptoms of mild rheumatism, which often arise at the outset of a fasting regimen.

During the fasting process, apply wormwood cream 2-3 times per day to areas of discomfort.



Remedies for After Fasting

To preserve the benefits of a fast, we have assembled the following list of Hildegard remedies considered ideal to maintain the well-being gained through the fasting process. These remedies are particularly useful after fasting when our bodies become receptive to cleansing and detoxifying treatment.

These remedies apply with or without a preceding fast and can be applied for long periods of time. (I though somewhere mentioned only a few months recommended)

Pear Puree

This Hildegard-inspired remedy can be found in the [preceding pages of this book](#). Hildegard thought of pear as a purification and cleansing agent. This Hildegard pear puree helps with mild respiratory problems, migraines and asthma. Ideally, if taken after fasting, pear puree remains effective for up to a few weeks without any harmful side-effects.

This Hildegard-inspired pear puree was first promoted by Hildegard to address migraine headaches, which often arise during a fast, and may persist afterwards. Take a teaspoon in the morning, 2 teaspoons after lunch, and 3 teaspoons before going to bed.



Wormwood Elixir

The Wormwood Elixir is also in the [Spring Cleanse](#) or [wormwood cure](#). This remedy cleanses the kidneys, strengthens the immune system, stimulates digestion, and improves vitality. It also contributes to positive effects on the heart and lungs, improves eyesight, strengthens the stomach, promotes the formation of digestive fluids, and stabilizes the circulation.

According to Hildegard, the Wormwood Cure serves from the end of May to the end of October.

“Drink the juice of fresh wormwood with cooked wine and honey every third day while fasting from May to October. It checks a person’s melancholy, clears the eyes, strengthens the heart, does not allow the lungs to become ill, warms the stomach, purges the intestines, and makes good digestion possible.”

- Hildegard of Bingen, Physica Cap. 109

Wormwood wine can be made using the following ingredients. Bring honey and wine to a boil, stirring gently. Stir in the Wormwood juice and bring to a boil. Reduce heat after a brief boil. Store in a clean bottle with a good seal. Drink a liqueur glass full of wormwood wine every third day on an empty stomach.

- One liter of good wine (red or white)
- 150g honey
- 40ml of Wormwood juice

Hart’s-Tongue Elixir

This elixir ranks among [Hildegard’s 3 natural cold remedies](#). In addition to addressing some of the symptoms of a common cold, it also supports body cleansing and improves abdominal pain, asthma, thyroid or pancreatic problems and hormone regulation difficulties.

“Hart’s tongue is warm and helps the liver and the lungs, and intestinal pain. Make a tea using hart’s tongue fern, long-pepper, and cinnamon and drink it often before and after eating, it benefits the liver, cleans the lungs, heals aching intestines, and takes away the inner rot and mucus.”

- Hildegard of Bingen

Cook 3 teaspoons of hart’s tongue fern in 2 liters of wine, add ½ cup of honey and boil a second time. Add 3 tablespoons of cinnamon and 2 teaspoons of long pepper and continue boiling then strain through a sieve. Long pepper (Piper Longum) is a flowering vine that is a closely related to the common black and white pepper, but spicier.

Dosage: in the 1st week take the equivalent of a shot glass 3 times daily, after the first week, take before and after dinner for 6-8 weeks.



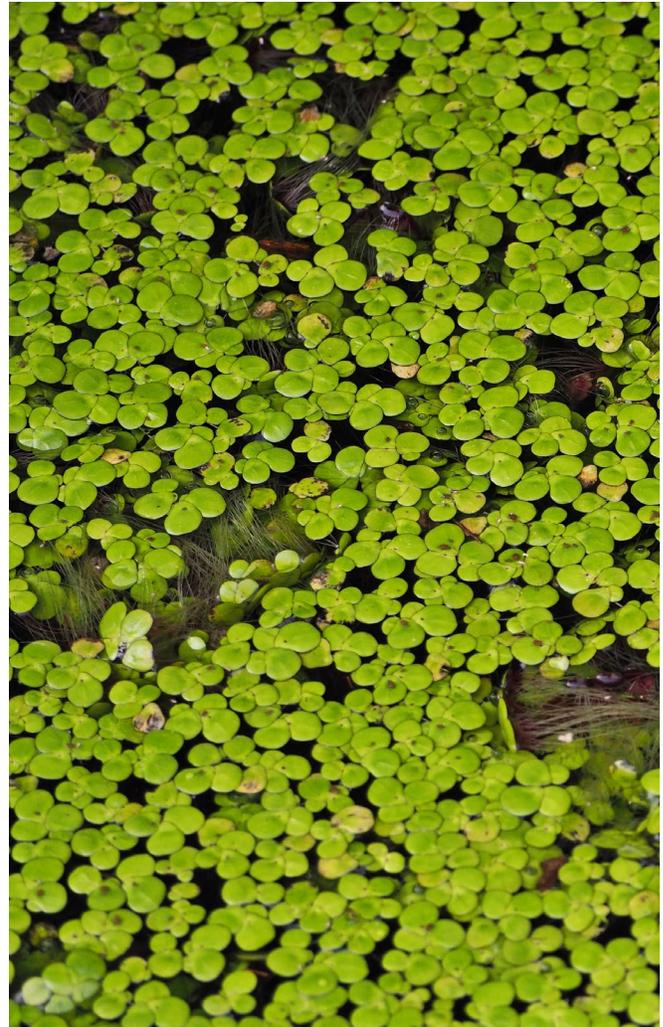
Duckweed Elixir

Hildegard's famous [duckweed drink](#) helps strengthen the immune system and cleanse the system. The duckweed drink supports detoxification and is useful before and after fasting periods. The result is a strengthening of the body's natural defenses against illness.

Of the duckweed elixir, Hildegard says, "drink the duckweed drink often, dry, as much as you can drink with one breath, and again when you go to bed at night. This prevents the bad juices that arise in dry conditions or form after meals."
- Hildegard of Bingen

The mind and psyche are strengthened using the duckweed elixir. However, making this elixir may prove complicated, take a look at our related post, showing the steps to complete the [duckweed elixir](#).

Ideally, use this remedy during the dark months of winter. During these three months, drink one shot glass (approx. 2,5 oz.) of the elixir first thing in the morning and one in the evening before bedtime.



Peppermint-Vinegar-Honey

The combination of peppermint vinegar honey cleans the stomach, strengthens eyesight, and improves body odor. To make this at home, mix 3 tablespoons of lukewarm bee honey are mixed with ½ cup of lukewarm wine vinegar until the vinegar is completely combined the honey. Then add a heaping teaspoon of peppermint powder.

Take one tablespoon a day before lunch and dinner. You can also take the honey with tea. See our post on peppermint for other [Hildegard-inspired benefits of peppermint](#).





Questions



I have tried numerous cleanses and nutritional programs, what makes the Hildegard fast different?

Hildegard's fasting techniques leave discretion in the hands of each individual. There are no specific calorie restrictions or limits on the amount of food to eat. A Hildegard fast provides loose guidelines, and a broad range of permissible foods and ingredients, without any strict time constraints. Above all, Hildegard fasting focuses on discovering inner-consciousness, realigning individual perception, finding connection to personal feelings, and strengthening self-reliance. Various forms of Hildegard fasts have been practiced for centuries, with varying emphasis on term, frequency, and calorie restriction.

The focus of a successful Hildegard fast goes beyond any interest in losing weight. The measure of success comes from recognizing and changing those habits that no longer serve our best selves. Finally, the fasting crises that we invariably encounter in any fasting regimen are best resolved using Hildegard's age-old remedies specifically designed to anticipate and overcome known obstacles.

I often find my spirits low during a fast, is that normal?

A productive fast makes room for all different moods and emotions. Much like the toxins and unhealthy waste our bodies dispose, our spirits discover and dispense with heavy emotions. Ultimately, these feelings represent personal discoveries on our true vulnerability. Use a fasting period as a time to appreciate and pamper yourself. If your mood becomes a personal burden, take a moment to care for yourself with a bath, some body lotion, some calming music, or a casual walk in nature.

You may also find relief with Hildegard's Heart Wine (*parsley wine*) or *Diluted wine*. These age-old remedies contribute to peace of mind quickly and reliably.

What can I do about sensitivity to cold temperatures while fasting?

During fasting, the body switches to emergency-mode, and reserves its energy for critical functions. While our bodies seek to moderate output, it's up to us to consciously prompt circulation. Movement works well to motivate our body rhythms. An old-fashioned hot water bottle also serves useful during a fast.

At the very least, keep your feet warm, and protect your neck and kidneys from cold. In Germany, it's not uncommon to wear a scarf, and wrap the lower abdomen around the kidneys during a fasting cycle. Warm drinks and soups, when combined with warm herbs and spices, like galangal and cinnamon, help warm the body from the inside.

Chewing galangal roots helps revive the cycle within a few minutes. Also, warm body or foot baths and skin brush massages help.

How can I prevent constipation during fasting?

Constipation commonly arises during a fasting process. When we limit or restrict our food supply, the body responds by slowing the gastric emptying process (fewer bowel movements). This natural process of preserving nutrients in the body leads to constipation. During any fasting term (long or short), be sure to increase your fluid intake, use psyllium powder, include more spelt, and consume pear puree. Chewing bertram root can help resolve constipation related to fasting.

HealthyHildegard includes [7 natural constipation cures](#) to serve you during your fast.

Is dizziness a normal reaction to fasting?

Depending on the type of fast, dizziness may occur. Dizziness most commonly arises in the rigid forms of fasting, or in cases where the body is unaccustomed to a sudden restriction of caloric intake. Chewing galangal root or bitters tablets helps resolve these symptoms immediately. When possible, it also helps to take a moment of repose and lie down or otherwise rest.

If you attribute the dizziness to an overwhelming feeling of hunger or emptiness in the abdomen, try chewing on a piece of spelt bread. It's nice to have some form of prepared spelt handy during a Hildegard fast. And, always remember to drink a lot of fluids.

How to respond to irritability and elevated sense of frustration during the fasting process?

A fasting cycle represents an opportunity to observe our condition and emotions. During this time, our sensitivities and vulnerabilities reveal to become more apparent. As we disrupt our everyday routine, we begin to perceive ourselves and our surroundings. Suddenly thoughts and emotions arise that we might otherwise ignore or overlook.

Use the fasting cycle as an opportunity to explore these feelings. And, perhaps a fresh perspective permits for different solutions, which we can take back to our everyday lives. Ideally, a fast brings clarity and order, which often we lack in our day to day lives. Use your fasting regimen as a time to address impatience and dissatisfaction with yourself, and to strengthen the virtues of patience and satisfaction. Give yourself the space and time to enjoy yourself. Hildegard's diluted wine or the famous [Hildegard cookies](#) may also contribute to achieving some peace of mind.

How to overcome a hunger attack?

In everyday life we often give in to our pleasure signals by unconsciously eating something we might otherwise try to resist. During the fasting process, these triggers are no less likely to arise (and, perhaps more likely). In most cases, the challenge goes beyond a simply feeling of hunger, but rather a desire to taste or feel something in our mouth.

We can help prevent these urges by drinking tea or water in small sips. Here too it helps to chew on galangal root, fennel seeds or bitters tablets. These are age-old strategies to tame hunger attacks. If all else fails, chew on a piece of spelt bread or take a tablespoon of chestnut honey.

What to do about shopping for groceries while fasting?

Try to limit exposure to food while fasting. Shopping for groceries brings hunger urges to the forefront. Plan in advance for a friend or family member to get groceries during the course of a fasting cycle. Whether fasting or not, it's a good practice to write a shopping list before going to the grocery store to help prevent against impulse buys, and to focus your shopping in a deliberate manner.

Drink lots of fluids before shopping and chew a bertram or galangal root to satisfy any oral fixation.

Does my full-time job interfere with my ability to complete a fasting regimen?

Ideally, there is a Hildegard fast for everyone, and for every point in our lives. Generally, while working it helps to avoid fasting during busy periods, during long training seminars, or while new policies or changes take place. Focus your free time on fasting rituals to ensure you get enough exercise, fresh air, and soothing activities / hobbies. The Spelt Bread Fast is perhaps the best alternative for working people with demanding schedules.

While fasting and working, consider preparing spelt soup for a hot meal at the work place.

How much personal preparation is necessary, for example grinding my own flour?

Most products can be purchased. It makes sense to use store bought products for almost everything. However, spelt bread is best made at home, as we don't know of a great alternative in the marketplace. It certainly is not necessary to go so far as to grind your own flour. During fasting, baking bread made with more fine-milled flour (and less whole wheat spelt flour) improves digestion and metabolism. Because of the difficulty with grinding fine-milled flour at home, the store bought alternative spelt flour works fine.

While fasting I tend to dream a lot and my sleep becomes restless, how does fasting influence sleep?

A successful fast, results in lower psychic and emotional stress by reducing the factors that consume us every day. The exercise of fasting simplifies our lives, creating space to observe the things we often otherwise overlook. This phenomenon of refocused attention takes place during the course of our days, and especially at night. As tensions decline, some may experience restless nights and intense dreams; as if to cleanse the legacy stress left behind in our bodies.

Long thought a function to process and store the memories from our days, dreaming helps to overcome stress and anxiety. During fasting, dreams may be perceived more intensely and remain vivid in our memory.

After the fast, what is the path to returning to a long-term, sustainable diet?

Identifying the best path to conclude your fast and returning to a long-term, sustainable diet requires some planning and a conscientiousness.

The first meal after a rigorous fast (particularly, after a Liquid Fast) represents a milestone for the body. Best to mark the conclusion of a fast with a baked apple or roasted quince fruit. Hold-off on alcohol, coffee, meats, and hard cheeses. Only use butter, vegetable oils and animal fats sparingly. Both the Spelt Bread Fast or Spelt Reduction Diet require little in the way of transition to getting back to a normal diet, including vegetable dishes or spelt dishes.

Whatever fasting technique you choose, avoid fatty foods post fast. After a long break from hard-to-digest meals, the body remains sensitive to the stress imposed by vegetable and animal fats.

Why use a pear puree to discharge toxins?

A German staple fruit, pears prevent water retention and flush fluids from the body. We also count pears among our [25 diuretic foods and drinks](#). Flushing the system and the colon in particular is an important process to reduce toxins prior to and during a fast. Though effective, a salt water flush can lead to nausea, dizziness or discomfort. Hildegard's Pear Puree represents a gentle alternative to flush the system without unwanted consequences.

How much residual alcohol do Hildegard's elixirs contain?

Since each of the Hildegard Elixirs, including the Hart's-Tongue elixir, include cooking the wine, most of the alcohol content evaporates in the process. What alcohol may remain, has negligible effects, given the unusually small quantity.

Why the preference for spelt bread? Can I substitute wheat or rye bread?

On Healthy Hildegard we try to answer the question [what is spelt bread?](#). In short, pure spelt does better for our systems than other modern grains. Our preference for spelt is as much a function of its own properties as an ancient grain, as of its benefits over other modern grains that have been genetically modified in recent years. On its own, spelt contains the vitamins, minerals, proteins, and trace elements that serve us best in the course of a fasting cycle. In addition to our posts on spelt bread, Healthy Hildegard contains several other posts on spelt to help answer the question [what is spelt?](#).

To what degree may I remain active during a fasting cycle?

A Hildegard Fast operates within the limits of comfort each participant set for herself. Those who feel physically fit should continue physical activities to the extent they remain comfortable. The fasting experience often brings renewed energy and vitality. Trust your judgment and the obey the boundaries set by your body.



Life Inspired

A life inspired by Hildegard of Bingen means many different things to different people. In this section we discuss Hildegard's inspiration on our physical condition and nutritional habits.



Man is What He Eats

Everything we eat affects the body, and our sense of well-being. In *Physica*, Hildegard starts her descriptions of each food with a general overview of its temperature and the effect on bodily juices and humours. Generally, Hildegard viewed foods on the spectrum of cold or hot.

For example, those with a more spirited or quick-tempered disposition should avoid hot and spicy foods to moderate the effects of extremes. In contrast, those suffering listlessness, or a lack of energy may benefit from the surges that often come with hot foods. Cooling foods, on the other hand provide a good balance for energy-charged people, but they often deprive the unemployed person of the last reserves.

For Hildegard, good health or *viriditas* came from finding balance in all things. She described the harmony and order found in a life lived in balance as *discretio*. Ironically, when our diets fall out of balance, we often crave the very things that harm, propelling us further out of balance. Noticing the foods and flavors we crave the most helps to identify our shortcomings, and the habits that cause harm.



Small Steps

The journey to nutrition starts with small steps. Those who find success in a Hildegard Fast come one step closer to incorporating the discipline of Hildegard Nutrition in their daily lives. Embark on this journey taking small steps and setting healthy goals. Like the effects of meditating, over time, the changes happen gently and almost imperceptibly.

Consider starting with something as simple as reserving one Spelt-only day per week. Mondays work great for this strategy, because most of us eat more over the weekends, leaving us feeling full through the start of the week. Over time, if you enjoy the results of one day, you might consider increasing the number of spelt days per week.

Remember, there is no rigid, all-encompassing formula for fasting. You can find what works best for you and proceed down your own unique path. A Hildegard Fast presents a framework, above all.

Sensory Eating

The practice of mindfulness includes taking the time to appreciate our surroundings. Incorporating simple steps into our day-to-day routine, such as adopting sensory eating habits help to promote good health. When it comes to food, too often, we simply feed ourselves without taking the time to appreciate each ingredient, and observe each bite.

For many, eating has devolved into a routine detour from our intended activity -- rather than an activity in and of itself. Rarely, do we take the time to cook and eat using all of our senses. By seeing, smelling, tasting, and handling the ingredients, we stimulate our bodies for the ritual of food.

Take your time preparing each meal. Consider the Slow Food Movement, taking the time and absorbing the pleasure of a mindful experience with the food we eat. Applying deliberate intention to the food we make and eat allows the food to develop its unique “subtlety” and healing power, consistent with the doctrine of Hildegard’s nutritional treatment.

Remember, you are what you eat!

It’s a common-sense reminder to say that the human organism functions on how it gets fed. Positive, healthy, and conscientious nourishment reflects in the way we live our lives. Ultimately, our bodies demand energy, and the cleanest forms work the best.

Use high-quality food, preferably natural and organically grown. Ideally, avoid all processed, convenience food, including ready-made meals of any kind.

Fasting presents an ideal opportunity to explore mindfulness. Try consciously observing the act of chewing. Chew each bite thoroughly, taking time to count each bite. The immediate benefit prepares the food for digestion, while the long-term consequence improves the state of mind.



Ritual

The Hildegard Breakfast

Hildegard's nutritional teachings advise having breakfast served later in the morning, not immediately after waking-up. Unless one is sick or weak, breakfast should be taken first in the late morning, around 10 AM or 11 AM, when the pangs of hunger arise. Ideally, take a warm breakfast of Spelt porridge or warm Muesli.

Early morning breakfast suits growing children, the elderly, and people suffering illness or infirmity, to help support a weakened state.

Fundamentally, concerning breakfast, Hildegard would have you consider three important factors: (1) in the absence of illness, do not rush to have breakfast in the morning; (2) the first meal of the day is best served warm, and (3) include spelt in your breakfast routine.

Chewing on a slice of spelt bread yields a warming result. Even better, take a slice of spelt bread with chestnut honey for a powerful foundation to your day.

When possible, stick with a light herbal tea with breakfast. *Spelt coffee is a tasty alternative to coffee.* Where the ritual of coffee is too great to abandon, try to limit the quantity to one cup a day.



At Lunchtime

Hildegard's nutritional philosophy underscores simple meals for greater well-being. Spelt stands at the foundation of virtually every meal. This ubiquitous grain works in so many dishes, including pasta, spätzle, soup, bread, salad, pizza, risotto, and more.

Based on her writings in *Physica*, Hildegard would have you avoid certain foods. These include pork, leeks, chicory, strawberries, plums and peaches. Eliminating or reducing these foods from your diet dramatically improves persistent headaches, mood swings, and mild sleep disorders.

Keep meat consumption in moderation. During Hildegard's day, and in most eastern cultures, meat serves for flavor, to enhance the taste of grains and vegetables, not as a main course itself. The modern condition of abundance results in excessive meat available at every meal. According to Hildegard, beef works for healthy people, whereas lamb, goat, poultry and wild game better suit our day-to-day lives.

Pay attention to regional and seasonal varieties. Our close relationship to the changing seasons and our environment reflects the basis of Hildegard holistic thinking. In addition, taking a seasonal look at fruits and vegetables helps impose some variety in our cooking. Replace seasonal fruits and vegetables with the recipes found in Hildegard's kitchen.

While over-cooking compromises the integrity of vegetables, raw foods are typically harder to digest. Consider cooking vegetables using the blanching process to improve digestibility without compromising valuable nutrients. Blanching basically means to place the vegetable in boiling water briefly, immediately followed by cold water to stop the cooking process.

Add at least one mood-lifting spice to every meal. Consider some of *Hildegard's favorite spices*, including fennel, cinnamon, bertram, summer savory, and more.

Let your mood and state of mind dictate the right foods to eat. For example, instances of depression or blue-moods call for a wholesome digestible meal to bring energy and vitality. In times of vibrancy and pleasure, moderate meal portions sustain strength and vitality.

Cautiously observe cravings, recognizing that we often crave the very things that harm us the most, propelling us further out of balance. Hildegard would have us seek balance in all things, paying special attention to the correct level ("discretio") with each meal, and consciously allowing the "subtlety" of foods to fully absorb.

Drink moderately during meals to aid digestion, avoiding soft drinks and sugary drinks altogether.



Rituals for Fasting

Afternoon nap

Many people (and, many cultures) swear by their afternoon nap. It recharges the batteries, revives the senses, clears the mind, and renews motivation. Hildegard would have us avoid sleeping right after eating, allow some time pass. Limit the midday nap to no more than 20 minutes.

Reviving your Green Energy, Viriditas

“No tree greens without Viriditas, no stone lacks the greening moisture, no creature is without this property, the living eternity itself is not without this power to the green.”

- Hildegard of Bingen

Hildegard’s green vitality of Viriditas supplies energy and results in the power found in nature. We all depend on the greening life force of Viriditas, which is found in nature. The more time we spend consciously moving in nature’s fresh air, the more comfortable we feel with ourselves. Surround yourself with the greening energy of plants to strengthen the Viriditas within you.



The Evening

Until recently, most western cultures have underestimated the importance of sleep. After spending years trying to remain industrious, and minimizing the time spent on sleep, studies abound show the sacrifice we make on our health. Sleep is crucial for holistic well-being and vitality.

Hildegard’s “discretio” captures the concept of balance and moderation in all things. Living in extremes causes us to fall further out of balance. Meeting the body’s basic expectation of sleep satisfies a moderate lifestyle.

“When a person sleeps, he recovers his strength and grows... the wisdom and knowledge of man grows from the unconscious. Thus, the soul possesses a greater inner warmth when man sleeps than when is awake.”

- Hildegard of Bingen

Let the evenings wind-down quietly. Permitting a gradual transition in the evening to sleep results in more energy and zest for life.

Hildegard suggests “Eat early enough in the evening, that one can take a walk before going to sleep.” This advice rings true with modern studies showing the benefits tied to walking after meals, particularly after dinner. Turn off the TV and take a walk; ironically, though not active, TV can stimulate and negatively affect sleep quality.

Hildegard's Six Golden Rules of Life

With these six golden rules of life, we close this fasting book and wish you success in the next chapter of life. We hope these six golden rules of life serve as simple guidance, derived from Hildegard's philosophies to lead a healthy and joyful life. We believe a modern interpretation of Hildegard permits for actively seeking to find our own center, living harmoniously with ourselves and the nature around us.

1. Environment:

Consider your exposure to natural light and fresh air, pay special attention to the effect of seasonal changes;

2. Nutrition:

Evaluate your relationship with eating and drinking, pay special attention to stimulants and depressants, as well as noting where habits override actual needs;

3. Exercise:

Mate exercise with recuperation, strike the right balance to find a rhythm of relaxation to reduce stress and tension;

4. Sleep:

Observe sleep hygiene practices, taking into account the time of day and length of productive sleep cycles;

5. Excretion:

Manage an efficient digestive process to preserve the balance of bodily fluids, or "juices";

6. Passions:

Permit your passions without being controlled by them.



*We wish you
much success with your
personal fasting cure
and we wish you a
healthy and happy life*

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