

The Healthy Benefits of Oil Pulling

My new morning ritual got a little fresher with oil pulling, another one of nature's way to detox the body.

What is Oil Pulling?

Oil pulling also known as "kavala" or "gundusha," is an ancient Ayurvedic therapy dating back over 3,000 years and believed to promote oral health and detoxification. The healthy benefits of oil pulling using cold-pressed oils such as coconut oil, sesame, or even olive oil has been reported to "pull" away harmful toxins from the mouth, teeth, gums, and throat. Since oral health reportedly correlates to the health of your body, oil pulling is a safe and effective way to stay healthy.



Oil pulling is a traditional Ayurvedic method of dental care.

Why I Practice Oil Pulling

The human mouth is home to bacteria, fungi, viruses and other toxins, so the healthy benefits of oil pulling will remove the chance of toxins spreading throughout my body.

Also, studies show good oral hygiene and oral health can improve one's overall health. With oil pulling there is a reduced risk of disease, reductions in stress, fresher (kissable) breath, and whiter teeth.

After a few weeks of oil pulling, I've noticed an increased energy and clarity, another great reason to spend a bit of time swishing oil between my teeth a few minutes a day.

Which Oil is Better?

It's a matter of taste and choice which oil you prefer. I began oil pulling using organic cold-pressed sesame oil at my first yoga retreat. The scent and taste are palatable and I had a bottle already at home to continue the practice. Others I know use extra virgin cold pressed coconut, sunflower or olive oil.

Sesame oil does have a high concentration of omega-6 oils. Therefore, *coconut oil* may be a better choice for you. Also, coconut oil has anti-fungal properties to kill off bad bacteria in the mouth. Keep in mind, you'll need to let the thick coconut oil warm in the mouth for about 10 seconds before the consistency becomes runny. For some the texture of coconut oil is a turn off. Others find the taste of coconut oil more pleasing than sesame or olive oil. Personally, I'll save the olive oil for cooking.

Depending on what you have in the cupboard (make sure it's still fresh and not rancid), start with the oil of your choice and switch to another one until you find the best one for you.

How to Oil Pull

1. In the morning, gently brush your tongue using a tongue scraper.
2. On an empty stomach, take one tablespoon of organic cold-pressed oil (coconut, sesame, or olive) in the mouth but do not swallow it.
3. Pull the oil slowly between your teeth sucking and pulling it around your mouth for about 10-15 minutes.
4. The oil will become whiter after around 10 minutes indicating it has been pulled long enough.
5. Spit the oil out of your mouth (in the toilet or sink) and thoroughly rinse your mouth out with water.
6. Brush your teeth as normal.
7. Clean the sink properly to remove the harmful toxins.

Oil pulling does not replace regular dental checkups, flossing, or brushing, so if you have questions consult your doctor or dentist to find out if the oil pulling is for you.

What to Pack for a Yoga Retreat

Things to Pack for a Yoga Retreat? Here are some essentials you'll need to bring.

I decided to treat myself to a yoga meditation vacation near Tours, France and it's time to start thinking about what to pack for a yoga retreat. I still have a bit of time before the retreat, but really want to be prepared for my solo getaway.

During this retreat held at [Chateau de Montgoger Yoga](#) in St. Epain, I'll spend 7 glorious days practicing yoga, meditation, and eating delicious vegetarian foods. I'm traveling by train and will need to travel as light as possible. I don't want to over pack, yet I don't want to under pack. Oh my, such dilemmas for an event that should be calming.



Packing as light as possible for a yoga retreat isn't so easy.

What to Expect

Wish I could tell you, but I have no idea. This is my first yoga retreat. In fact, my first retreat ever outside of Girl Scout camp. I re-started my practice after many years but feel it's the right time to treat myself with more love.

The daily schedule for the retreat includes silent walks in the forest, yoga, meditation, and the practice of breathing techniques. I'm using it as a guide to decide what to pack for a yoga retreat. If I don't get it right, I'll update the post after the retreat.

Yoga Gear

- **Yoga mat** You'll need to bring your mat, but some yoga retreats such as [Chateau de Montgoger Yoga](#), supply the mats, blocks, belts, and other accessories.
- **Yoga hand towel** Great for when I want to wipe away the sweat and dry my hands. Also keeps me from slipping on the mat during extreme practices.
- **Yoga mat towel (My optional tip)** Highly recommended if you don't have time to clean and dry your mat between practices or if you'll be borrowing a yoga mat.
- **BPA-free water bottle**

Yoga Clothing

I don't have a lot of yoga clothes. I still use some of my general exercise clothes that work fine for now. I wish I had more pretty yoga clothes, but the prices are pretty outrageous. Therefore, I will pack for a yoga retreat by bringing the following:

- **3 pairs of yoga pants.** One mid-calf, one wide leg, and one wide cuff that can double as dressy pants.
- **2 sports bras** If one is soiled I can quickly wash and dry it and have the second as a spare.
- **2 tank tops** Take at least one top that isn't super sporty, so it can be worn alone or with a shirt.
- **2 leggings** Who doesn't love leggings? They're perfect for relaxing and meditating.
- **1 pair of walking pants** Even if it's hot, during a forest walks one way to protect yourself from mosquitoes is to simply cover your legs. They can be washed and dried in a jiffy.
- **1 long sleeve shirt** Also for the silent walks in the forest, a camping shirt with roll-up sleeves is very versatile.
- **2 pairs undies per day** Sounds crazy, but hand washing

undies and finding a line to dry them in a shared room/bathroom ain't my thing.

- **3 pairs socks** Shoes aren't normally allowed in yoga centers, so I prefer to cover my toes. Also, I'll need them for the sport shoes.
- **Comfortable walking shoes** An absolute must for any trip. Invest in a good lightweight pair of sport shoes. Your feet will love you for it.
- **Flip-flops** Well, I'm not a ~~flip-slops~~, I mean flip-flop fan, but since we're sharing a bathroom, I might just make an exception just this once.
- **1 light sweatshirt or pullover** For walks in the forest, during meditation practice, or evenings under the moon light.
- **1 dress** Throwing in a 100% cotton dress that I'll probably wear after the day's session around dinner.
- **Headbands** Keeps my Afro-Caribbean hair out of my face and allows me to change my look. Uh oh! another diva statement.
- **Sarong** A sarong is so multi-functional and can double as a dress, skirt, shawl, meditation blanket, and much more.
- **Salwar kameez** (Another optional tip) I picked up a few the beautiful Salwar kameez (3-piece tunic, pant, and shawl) outfits while visiting India. Not only are they lovely, but practical too. The loose fitting pants are cool, the tunic top can be worn with leggings, and the scarf makes a great wrap. All pieces worn together are perfect for dress-up evening.
- **Travel wallet** The bare essentials such as cash, credit card, insurance card, ID. Leave all the other stuff at home.
- **Light/Foldable Rain Jacket**

Tech Gear, Never Leave Home Without It

I should shut off during this retreat, but let's be realistic,

there are some essentials one must pack for a yoga retreat and they include the tech gear we have difficulty living without. I will indeed stay in touch with my husband, family, and friends, so will pack the following techie travel essentials yet keep them out of the practice area:

- **Smart phone and charger**
- **Kindle** (For the train ride to France)
- [Universal Travel Adapter/converter](#)

Cosmetics/Toiletries

When you pack for a a yoga retreat trip, any trip, keep it light. The essential cosmetics and toiletries are scale breakers and weigh one down when traveling.

- **Shampoo** One that doubles for hair and body.
- **Hair Conditioner**
- **Deodorant**
- **Toothbrush and toothpaste**
- **Facial wipes** They double as a cleanser, toner, and light moisturizer.
- **Makeup** I'm a bit of a diva, but do need to protect my skin from the sun's harmful rays. I like the Kiehl's BB cream tinted moisturizer (SPF 50 PA +++ UV protection). It has everything I need.
- **Mosquito bracelet** I just purchased a bio-type bracelet that contains no DEET (That stuff is deadly ☹). The bracelet sachet fits on my wrist or ankle and is filled with an enhanced citronella gel. Never tried it before, but hoping it will repel the mosquitoes, gnats, and other creep-crawly insects.
- **Medications and first aid travel kit** I use homeopathic remedies and have a small, lightweight kit with the essential remedies. If you need to take medications, especially traveling to Europe, bring the original bottle in case you need a refill.

Anything Else I Need to Pack for a Yoga Retreat?

Yes, most importantly, an open mind.

Namaste ☐