



## **Eat, Drink, and Be Pretty: Can Beauty Really Come From the Inside?**

Sandra Ballentine explores the newest tonics, elixirs, snacks, powders, and pills

I used to think Moringa was a fitness class (it's actually a superfood) and ashwagandha, a town in India (close, it's an ayurvedic herb). As for bone broth—well, isn't that just another term for soup? But after consuming all manner of tonics, elixirs, snacks, powders, and pills intended to make my skin glow, hair grow, and the rest of me, well, become better-looking, I'm an ingestible-beauty believer. Or, at least, a wanna-believer.

Sure, *beauty from the inside* is an age-old concept. Chinese women have been munching on donkey-skin gelatin (aka ass-hide glue) for centuries in order to stave off wrinkles, and the Japanese have gulped down gallons of collagen drinks in the name of dewy skin. But thanks to a new crop of highly evolved (read: chic, tasty, and, in some cases, supported by actual science) beauty-enhancing products, I now, sort of, know the difference between cordyceps and chaga mushrooms, have started putting maca-root powder into just about everything, and will never drink water straight-up ever again.

My regimen already contained essentials like omega fatty acids (my favorite is NYR Organic Omega 3.6.9, a blend of golden flaxseed, evening primrose, pumpkin seed, and avocado oil), probiotics, and a good raw multivitamin. But **Amanda Chantal Bacon**, the owner of Moon Juice, in Los Angeles, and a high priestess of everything ingestible, persuaded me to go further. Bacon's mission is simple—to encourage her customers to incorporate brain- and body-boosting herbs, plants, and adaptogens into their daily routines. “For example, I know how much people love their coffee, so let's not feel guilty about it,” she says. “Let's make it better for you.”

To that end, Bacon is debuting Alchemy Bar this summer at Moon Juice Melrose Place (her first New York shop, opening this fall, will have one too), where you can order your beverage of choice—tea, coffee, even hot chocolate—supercharged with ingredients from the Moon Juice pantry. To show me how it works, Bacon devised a custom (and, thankfully, caffeinated) brew based on how I'd been feeling: tired, stressed, hormonal, and unsexy. While, admittedly, it was not as convenient as popping a pod into my Nespresso machine, I quickly got the hang of making it. Using a saucepan, I heat up the following: eight ounces of drip or cold-brewed coffee with six ounces of coconut or nut milk, one tablespoon of organic ghee, a half-teaspoon of cordyceps (for sustainable energy and adrenal support), a half-teaspoon of ho shou wu (a Chinese herb said to balance hormones, aid libido, and help with hair growth), a quarter-teaspoon of reishi (another magic mushroom), and a half-teaspoon of ashwagandha (for calming and thyroid support). Not only is the result delicious, but just like that, I no longer find myself in a post-coffee brain fog at 11 a.m. Call me crazy, but now, as I prepare my special Sandra coffee, I drink a bottle of Sakara Life rose-oil-infused Beauty Water (for intense hydration and skin-plumping benefits) and pop two Beauty Works West Youth capsules, a blend of amino acids and marine-plant extracts developed by the London hormone specialist Daniel L. Sister, M.D. A good friend told me about the latter at a wedding in the Bahamas, after I admired her radiant skin and pep on the dance floor. "It changed my life," she said. "I went from zero to 60 in the sex-drive department, and I have tons of energy and feel fantastic." Frankly, I would have snake-brain puree for breakfast if I thought it could produce the same effects. So I went to Net-a-Porter to buy some Youth and while shopping recklessly added to my cart Elle MacPherson's the Super Elixir Alkalisizing Greens powder and Chocolate Nourishing Protein, figuring that if I could feel like my friend *and* look like Elle, all my problems would be solved.

As I waited for Elle's Elixir to turn me into an Australian supermodel, I heard from the New York cosmetic dermatologist Paul Jarrod Frank about another mother's little helper to add to my arsenal. He pooh-poohed much of my ingestible initiative (doctors can be such downers), saying, "There is some charlatanism in this billion-dollar industry." But he admitted to having seen good research on the nutri-cosmetic line GliSODin Skin Nutrients, whose star ingredient is the humble muskmelon.

I'd grown to like getting my antioxidant fix from the high-tech Spanish brand Sepai's V8.2 Detox powder, which is packed with green tea extract, berry juice, grape-seed extract, and hibiscus, and is yummy mixed with hot water. My favorite beauty edibles, however, tend to be ones that make my vices more virtuous, like Esthechoc from Cambridge Chocolate Technologies. Stylishly packaged, these dark-chocolate wafers seem like a healthy alternative to my beloved After Eights. Nutritious or not, they sure taste good.

I'm also vaguely obsessed with Sakara Life's gorgeously bottled Beauty Water Cocktail Mix, which you shake up with lemon juice, sparkling water, fresh berries, mint, and vodka. And if (when) I overindulge, I can always head to the Vitality Bar at Naturopathica's Healing Arts Center & Spa, in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood, for a flacon of Long Night Elixir, a cleansing tincture of pineapple, kombucha, coconut water, aloe vera, ginger, parsley, cilantro, citrus, turmeric, and milk thistle. Or, if I really go off the rails, I might spring for a week's worth of Dirty Lemon charcoal-infused detox juice. Wildly popular with models and celebs, the brand also just introduced a hair-and-skin tonic. Now, if someone would please market those cookies that shrank Alice in Wonderland, because while all the ghee, chocolate, and beauty cocktails may be improving my skin, they can't possibly be helping my waistline. Never mind—there's probably a magic potion for that too.