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health

Bringing Nourishment

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H O M E

Let's say you've finally given yourself a break from your demanding life to treat yourself to a relaxing spa vacation. For about a week, you spend your days in a beautiful setting, supported by a staff who is ready to provide for your every need. You eat lighter foods, take hikes, receive massages, sleep when you are tired, and rise when you are rested. By the end of your stay, you feel noticeably different, as though you are seeing the world through new eyes. You have more energy, feel lighter,



happier, revitalized, and more connected to your spirit. As your vacation comes to an end, you begin to wonder how you can bring your new self back with you. How can you bring your vibrant spirit home?

To stay connected to our spirit, we have to nourish ourselves on a regular basis, not just once or twice a year. One way to nourish our body,

It's easy to feed yourself well when you are at a spa or retreat center where delicious and nourishing meals are prepared for you. But how do you integrate nourishment into your daily life once you've returned home?

heart, mind, and spirit—is by literally feeding ourselves. Obviously, we need to eat in order to live. But that's just our biological necessity. Actually, each time we eat we have the opportunity to pay attention to who we are and how we are feeling. When we connect to the process of feeding ourselves—from shopping to food preparation—each meal becomes a way to lovingly take care of ourselves.

Unfortunately, in our fast-paced lives the perpetual availability of prepared foods fosters a lifestyle in which we are cooking less and relying more on other sources—restaurants, supermarket deli counters, meal replacement bars and powders, even “healthy” fast food—for our meals. While this may seem like a quick and easy way to put a meal on the table, the truth is fast food only feeds fast lives and perpetuates a cycle of stressful living.

Home-cooked meals made with fresh ingredients not only taste better, they also feel better because you know that somebody (even if that somebody is you) cares enough to prepare the meal. If the kitchen is the least familiar room of your house then it may take some time to learn how to shop, organize, and cook. But cooking doesn't mean that you suddenly have to produce gourmet masterpieces every day, or that you never dine out. When you regularly shop and prepare your own food, you become a source for knowing what, when, and how

much food your body needs. Assuming this responsibility also furthers your desire to nourish yourself in other ways—from exercising to reading a good book to spending meaningful time with loved ones. When you bring nourishment home you stop feeding the frenzy: you develop your internal place of center and balance, the place within yourself where you are always at home.

7 WAYS TO BRING NOURISHMENT HOME

Listen to Your Rhythms. Liberate yourself from the clock and other external schedules that mandate how and when you should take care of yourself. You are the expert of your needs. Listen to your inner voice—the one who knows when you are hungry, tired or in need of some down time, social time, or creativity—and respond to your nourishment needs.

Reconnect with the Kitchen. Throughout history, the hearth has been the sacred center of the home. If you haven't played in this creative room for a while, think about re-igniting your kitchen fire by preparing foods that provide nourishment, health, and vitality for yourself and your loved ones. Try making beautiful meals at least three times a

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week—yes, even if it's just for you! Remember, an aesthetically pleasing home-cooked meal doesn't have to be a complicated culinary creation. Think of the elegance of bright-green steamed asparagus with a wedge of lemon or the healing quality of homemade soup.

One-pot Meals. Make nourishing yourself a simple pleasure with a one-pot meal. This style of cooking is great if you don't have a lot of time but want to feed yourself and your family a hearty and nourishing meal. Try poached chicken or fish with an abundance of fresh greens and root vegetables, or a hearty soup or stew, like the delicious and easy to prepare Soul-satisfying Fish Stew. (See recipe below.)

Learn which Foods Truly Feed You. With so much food around us all the time, not to mention all the ideas and changing theories about food and diet, how do we begin to make sense of what to feed ourselves? The "fuel test" is one easy way to begin discovering the foods that are our most potent sources of energy. After you eat something, make note of how you feel two hours later. If your energy is still strong, if you feel vibrant, focused, and emotionally balanced, then you know that particular food is good fuel for you. If you feel lethargic, irritable, unable to focus, and crave more of that same food, then that food depletes your energy. Use this simple self-check to discern the food sources that will help you purposefully fuel up and not just fill up.

Nourish All of Your Senses. When you eat, don't just feed your taste buds. Let food be a feast for your eyes, nose, mouth, hands, even your ears! The more engaged you are with the smells, textures, colors, and appearance of your food, the more deeply food will satisfy all of your senses and the less likely you will be to overindulge.

BEET AND SORREL SALAD

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 3–4 small raw beets, scrubbed
- 3 lemons, juiced
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium bunch sorrel, chopped

Preparation

Grate the beets by hand or in a food processor. Mix the beets, lemon juice, and black pepper together. Marinate for at least 10 minutes. Serve over the sorrel. If you can't find sorrel, you may substitute with other flavorful greens, like peppery arugula or wonderfully tart watercress.

Make Meals a Sacred Time. It used to be that meals were a regular time for family and friends to gather together, but as a society we're simply not eating together on a daily basis anymore. Even when we're eating alone, we're often grabbing something on the run or eating in front of the TV or computer. When we eat in this distracted way, we miss the precious opportunity to connect with ourselves. So, slow down, sit down, turn off the media noise, put fresh flowers on the table, light candles, take a few breaths of gratitude for yourself and your food, and make meal time sacred.

Take "Home" with You. Prepare ahead by taking nourishing lunches or snacks with you when you leave the house. Organic yogurt, almonds, baby carrots, fresh or dried fruit, and herbal tea bags all make easy and portable snack items. This way you'll always be ready to take care of your needs. ☺

SOUL-SATISFYING FISH STEW

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2–3 small leeks
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons freshly grated ginger root
- 2–3 carrots, matchstick sliced
- 6 shiitake mushroom caps, sliced
- 2–3 large potatoes, cut in 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons tamari
- 1 pound white fish fillets: haddock, sole, cod, or tilapia, rinsed
- 4 stalks bok choy, chopped
- 3 tablespoons arrowroot natural thickener (optional) scallions or fresh arugula, chopped

Preparation

Trim the roots off the leeks. Discard the tough green leaves from the top of the leeks. Wash the remaining white and light green portions thoroughly in cold water. Make sure to rinse in between the layers, removing any sand. Shake dry and slice thinly.

In a large soup pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Sauté the leeks and ginger for 2–3 minutes. Add the carrots, shiitakes, potatoes, tamari, and enough water to cover the vegetables. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer covered for 15 minutes. Add the fish fillets and simmer covered for another 10–15 minutes. Mix in the bok choy.

Dissolve the arrowroot in 3 tablespoons cold water. Add to the stew and stir for 1 minute until the stew thickens. Remove from the heat and garnish individual bowls with scallions or arugula. Serve immediately.