



If everything around seems dark,
look again,
you may be the light.

-Rumi



Winter Newsletter

Some seasonal insights from a herbalist & naturopath



When we learn to listen to the winter landscape it speaks of stillness and depth. Our winter festivals celebrate light and hope, I don't believe they were intended to make our lives unnecessarily busy and stressful or leave us struggling financially and physically. Many of us try to live out the season in a more self directed way, making choices by listening to our inner spirit whilst being aware of the world outside rushing forever faster. The most radical thing we can do in winter is to avoid busyness and observe the stress within us that arises when we try to keep up. At the heart of our economy and institutions there is a real fear that if you slow down you will be overtaken. This competitive element in our culture produces a relentless pressure. In all our places of work & activity we can be revolutionary voices in carrying light and space into structures that never slow down. Any form of work and routine that doesn't allow space for creativity is energy sapping, we therefore need to carve out our own spaces while allowing others to do the same.



Seasonal Tips

Living in harmony with nature's rhythms may feel lonely so seek the company of soul friends (even the squirrels and birds), sunshine and fresh air.

Leave regular empty days in the diary to allow for space, creativity, new ideas and insights.

Meditation and early bedtimes feed the soul and body, they in turn give us energy.

Filling our tummies with nutritious, warming soups and broths will make digestion easier and lighter. Add turmeric, ginger & black pepper for warmth and boost the immune system.

Recipe

Most of us eat too much around Christmas. So having short breaks from sweet foods is a good idea and avoiding any kind of refined sugar is important. When we do need more energy this recipe is ideal due to the dates releasing their energy gradually; the ginger is warming too. Just a mouthful can keep the spirits up in these cold, dark months. It's one of the many recipes on my [website](#)

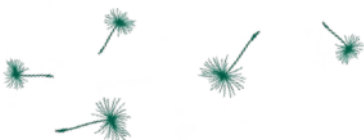
Sticky Date Gingerbread

200g chopped dates 200ml boiling water 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
1tsp vanilla essence
150g wholemeal flour or gluten free flour
(Try 100g flour & 50g fine oatmeal to add fibre & chewy goodness)
2tsp baking powder
1-2 tsp ground cinnamon & 3-4 ground cloves
75g organic unsalted butter or vegan alternative
50g date sugar (made from dried, ground dates OR raw cane sugar
OR coconut sugar)
1 tbsp molasses
2 eggs beaten (can be substituted with 2 tbsp ground linseed
soaked in a little vegan milk)
2-4 inches of fresh ginger root (finely grated or chopped in a mini
food processor). This amounts to 2tbsp of chopped root which
makes it satisfyingly gingery, however use more or less as desired.

Directions...

'No animal, according to the rules of animal-etiquette, is ever expected to do anything strenuous, or heroic, or even moderately active during the off-season of winter.'

Kenneth Grahame (Wind in the Willows)





- Pour boiling water over the chopped dates and add the bicarb and vanilla. Soak for 10 mins at least, (this can be soaking while you prepare the other ingredients) then blend with a blender stick or in a liquidiser.
- Combine the flours, dried spices and baking powder.
- Cream the butter & date sugar in a mixer then add the molasses.
- Add the beaten eggs & a spoonful of the flour, mix alternately until the egg is used up.
- Add the rest of the flour, stir in the blended dates and add ginger.
- Line or grease a 17x30 traybake cake tin or similar, spread the cake batter in the tin. It should be no more than 1 inch deep with some room to rise.
- Bake at 160 fan for 40-50 mins until it feels bouncy on top and not too wet inside, a skewer should come out clean, it may sink towards the end of baking but it is still moist and yummy.

Herbal Remedy

Many of us struggle with colds during the winter months. Making our own potent, natural remedies can help us fight off the viruses we are exposed to. Fire Cider is fabulous for warding off cold symptoms, take 1 tbsp with warm water - add honey if preferred - as soon as you feel a cold starting. It also makes an excellent salad dressing with olive oil.

Fire Cider

*2 Tbsp chopped fresh turmeric root
1/2 cup fresh ginger root chopped or grated
1/2 cup fresh horseradish root chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
10 cloves of garlic, crushed or chopped
1 cayenne pepper, chopped or crushed black pepper
1-2 slices of lemon (or more to taste)
1-2 slices of orange (or more to taste)
Unpasteurised apple cider vinegar
Several sprigs fresh rosemary*

- Prepare all ingredients and place into a 1 litre jar.
- Cover all ingredients with cider vinegar.
- Use piece of greaseproof paper under the lid to prevent vinegar from touching metal
- Shake jar daily
- Let it sit 4-6 weeks. The longer you wait, the more potent and pungent it will be. Taste it to assess it's potency and whether you want to add honey or not.
- Strain through a cheesecloth.
- If desired stir in gradually 1/4 cup of raw honey until you reach the desired level of sweetness. Alternatively, you can add honey to the cup before drinking it.
- Keep the fire cider in a glass bottle or jar (protecting the metal lid from the vinegar)
- Fire Cider will keep unrefrigerated at cool room temperature for several months, or indefinitely in the fridge.

To drink: add 1 tbsp to a small cup of hot water (I prefer mine without honey but you can add 1 tsp of honey to the hot water mix before drinking)



Keep in touch with your health concerns and progress. Herbal remedies and dietary advice work together to bring us into balance. They need seasonal changes to be most effective.

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