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Tüz



It's June. I'll say that again. **IT IS JUNE**. Where did the year go?! Covid or not, this is a question I ask myself every year, when I look back at all the things I wanted to do & haven't managed to do at the half year mark. Every year I learn not to punish or guilt myself with that knowledge, and every year I repeat the same mistake. But this year, I'm being a bit more gentler than usual :) Those who know me, know that I believe in magic, as though my life depends on it. One of my favourite books that speaks of the magic that surrounds us, is *Big Magic* by Elizabeth Gilbert. There's a bunch of awesome stuff in there, which I am sure to quote at some point or the other, but for today this is what I'm feeling :



When I embarked on this journey to find the jewels hidden within me, I was scared. I still am, some nights I don't sleep wondering if i will ever be "successful", if I will ever find that authentic voice as a yoga teacher, if I will ever be able to offer all that I want to, to this world & this yoga community.

If you identify with this apprehension & the tightness of the chest before you work on something you love as you create something magical, know that you are not alone. We all struggle with it.

Here's the thing about fear "the more I fight my fear, the more it fights back. When i relax, my fear relaxes too." It's good to have fear, it means we have are about to embark on something brave. The hard part is to go **C.R.E.A.T.E**, even with that fear, not worrying about whether it's perfect. Create, for the sake of it. The idea of perfectionism has always been daunting to me. Disassociate your need to be perfect with your need to create. When you give a child a pack of crayons and a sheet of paper, have you ever seen them strategise about wanting to paint the next Picasso? Even Picasso did not did not create for the world, he painted for himself, he painted what came authentically and most naturally, to him.

The beauty is that NO ONE in the whole wide world can create something that you can, because you're unique, and so is your voice, your art & everything you do - there will never be another one like it. Believe in that voice, believe that the Universe has really hidden jewels inside you & embark on a treasure hunt, have fun, there is no clock ticking, take your time, be curious, tread on every path that calls out to you. One by one, you'll discover those jewels - while doing the world a favour by making it more beautiful, in a way that only you can.

Today I have for you a gorgeous banana bread recipe but also a way to honour your internal moon while recognising your menstrual cycle, by adapting your

With that, I will go click some pictures in my pink yoga bra for instagram  
.....just kidding ;)

Love,

nayana

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## Moving With the Moon



Not to take anything away from a non-female yoga practitioner, but women have something so powerful that connects us directly with nature & one of her most beautiful creatures, [the moon](#). *What is it*, you ask, why it's the very thing we dread every month as a menstruating woman : [our periods](#). It might be coincidental, but many (including me) think there is a link there between the cycle of a moon and our menstrual cycle. A woman's body & hormones are said to be linked intricately with the cycle of the moon. A moon takes about 28 days to circle the Earth and a woman's menstrual cycle is approx 28 days as well.

In ancient times, women said to have bled during the Dark Moon and ovulate during Full Moon. While a lot of women, still sync with this cycle, there are others who bleed on the Full Moon and who ovulate on the Dark Moon. Frankly, there is no right or wrong here - it is not *yet another thing* we need to achieve! What's important is to know where you are in your cycle and how it links to that of the moon and accordingly vary your yoga practice to reflect your changing needs.

Overall we can divide our cycle into four phases and many even attach seasons to this cycle, which I have done here as well. Here I use Dark Moon to mean Menstruation, this may not be the case for all women, so treat this as your own

always guide you.

### [Dark Moon | Menstruation | Winter](#)

I & my teachers, consider this a time to be in deep retreat, keeping our focus internal and conserving our energies to *let go of whatever it is that does not serve us & maybe set an intention for what you want to manifest in the coming month*. It is a hibernating, winter phase of your mind and body. Welcome your bleed, for it is a gift that signifies your womanhood, instead of resisting it. Women experience low energy and feel more sensitive and introverted during this time. Therefore *go at a slower pace*. Let that be the mantra for your practice as well.

*Yoga practices to do (& avoid)*

- Avoid strong backbends, deep twists, strong and dynamic standing asanas.
- Do more restful restorative postures, use props more, rest the lower back, do supported backbends (lie on a cushion with butterfly feet for eg), do gentle seated forward bends, more grounded seated asanas.
- Breathing : try to cool the body down, avoid practices like Kapalabatti.
- Examples : Supta Badhaknasana (supine supported butterfly), Pashimottanasana

### [Waxing Moon | Pre-ovulation | Spring](#)

The week after your periods, you will notice a rise in energy, a renewal of sorts almost. As the body prepares to grow and house an egg, our energy tends to shift to an upward spiral as well. Some even feel an abundant surge of creative energies, and find themselves growing brighter and brighter with the moon. You'll find more masculine/yang energy in you and would want to push forward through your to-do lists. But remember this is only one phase of your cycle - *pace yourself*.

*Yoga practices to do (& avoid)*

- Soon after ovulation, our oestrogen levels begin to drop, which is also the hormone that provides strength to the muscles. Avoid any strong asanas *without* sufficient warm up!
- Asanas that strengthen the uterus (gentle inversion like Downward Facing Dog)
- Reawaken the body with strengthening and stretching equally.
- Examples: Warriors (veerabhadrasana), Chair (utkatasana), Goddess Pose.

### [Full Moon | Ovulation | Summer](#)

While the Dark Moon is about letting things go, Full Moon or ovulation is about inviting the Summer in: taking things in. A woman's body is in a physical and emotional place to be "holding". Women tend to be more receptive towards others. It's maybe when you feel like socialising with friends.

*Yoga practices to do (& avoid)*

- There is nothing to avoid here really, you will feel the need to do more, but remember to gradually transition out of your cocoon into the world.

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- Examples: Heart Openers (Anahatasana), Back Bends (Bridge Pose) and Arm balances (Side Plank, Crow Pose)

### [Waning Moon](#) | [Pre-menstruation](#) | [Autumn](#)

In this phase the moon moves towards darkness, and we find that our physical and mental energy wanes as we prepare to menstruate. Yes, this is the PMS phase - just before we bleed, our hormones plunge to their lowest monthly levels - so *PMS is not in your head*. The strategy here is to understand what is happening to minimise or even transform premenstrual distress. This energy equates with the cleansing energy of Autumn - this is a time for cleaning & preparation. It is also a great time to recognise any unaddressed frustrations from the last month - but it is NOT a good time to solve them yet. Hold onto what you find until you're in your Full Moon phase. Indulge in some self-care here :)

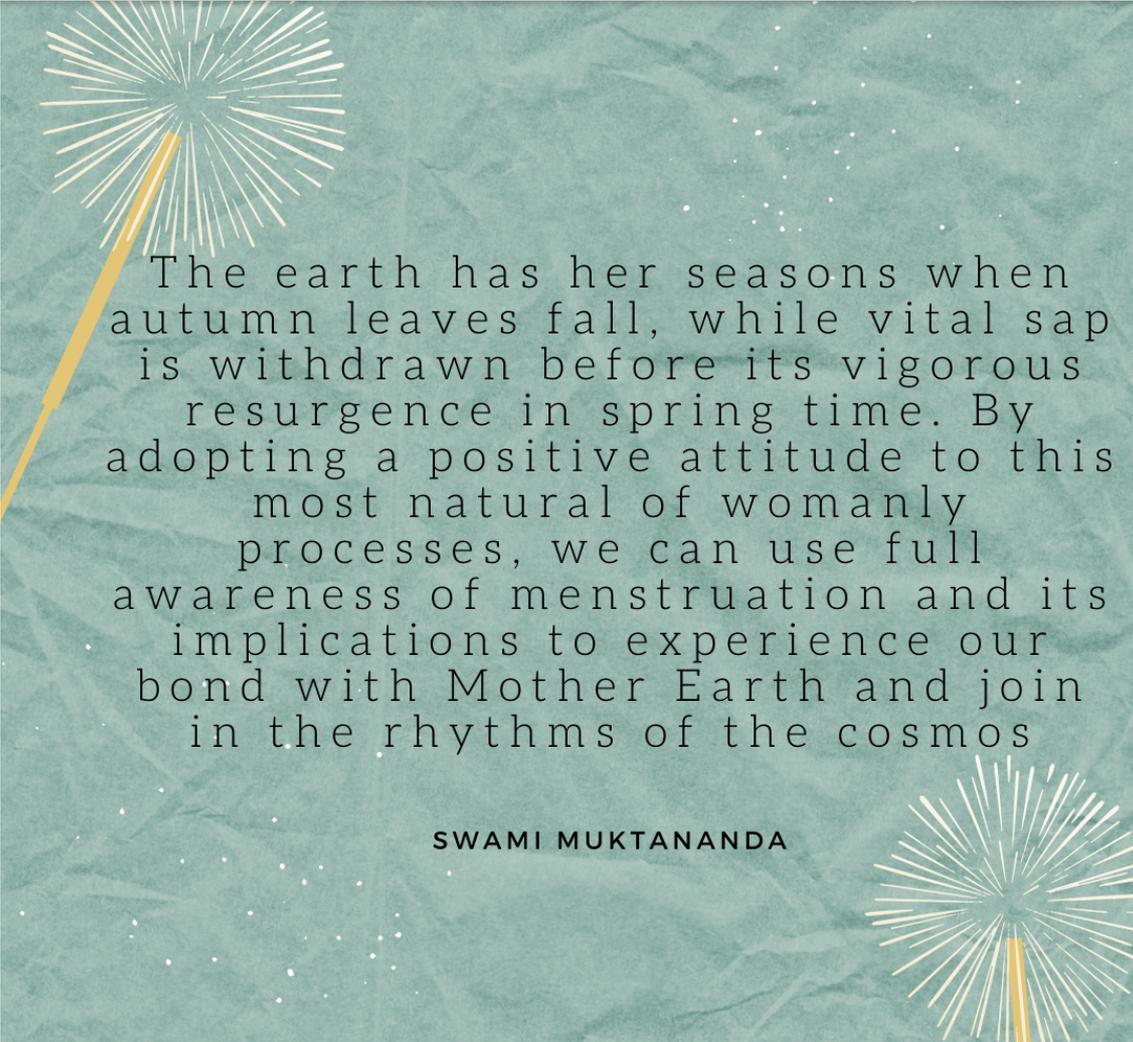
#### *Yoga practices to do (& avoid)*

- Listen to your body & honour its needs. If you feel tired avoid strong practices. Avoid strong backbends and strenuous standing poses that will further agitate the nervous system.
- Supported gentle inversion helps balance the hormonal system and might even help with the PMS symptoms while nourishing the nervous system too.
- Balances are a great way to focus our mind without letting it wander hither tither.
- Liver health declines now (as per Traditional Chinese Medicine), Twists and Side Bends helps with liver detox, while also helping the kidneys & adrenals that need detoxification as well.

*Each month a woman's body undergoes a series of changes, many of which occur without her being consciously aware of them."*

*-Miranda Gray-*

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The earth has her seasons when autumn leaves fall, while vital sap is withdrawn before its vigorous resurgence in spring time. By adopting a positive attitude to this most natural of womanly processes, we can use full awareness of menstruation and its implications to experience our bond with Mother Earth and join in the rhythms of the cosmos

SWAMI MUKTANANDA



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### HEALTHIER DOUBLE CHOCOLATE BANANA BREAD

I might be the only person who converted a healthy recipe into an unhealthy one. I used regular milk (instead of plant based milk), sugar (instead of agave). And it still worked. I've baked with it 3 times with great success (pic below). Do let me know how you enjoyed it!



### Ingredients

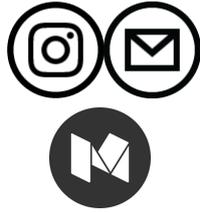
- 1/4 cup coconut sugar
- 1/4 cup agave
- 1/2 cup plant-based milk
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs (or two flax eggs - see notes)
- 1 heaping cup mashed banana (about 3 medium bananas)
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 cup natural cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup dairy-free chocolate chips (plus more to sprinkle on top)

### Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F and spray a 9x5" loaf pan with non-stick spray - I used olive oil spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the coconut sugar, agave, milk, oil, vanilla, and eggs. Mix in the mashed banana.
3. Sift in the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt and gently incorporate the dry ingredients into the wet. Stir in the chocolate chips.
4. Pour batter into your prepared loaf pan, top with extra chocolate chips (or banana slices, nuts, etc), pressing the chips slightly into the batter. Bake at 350°F for 45-55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the loaf comes out with no wet batter.
5. Allow the baked loaf to rest in the pan on a cooling rack for 10 minutes. Remove the loaf by loosening the sides with a butter knife, tilting the loaf

6. Slice and enjoy warm or allow to cool. Store any leftovers in an airtight container at room temperature.

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Tüz by Nayana Cariappa

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