



Let's all give thanks by throwing a Thanksgiving get-together

Ok bear with me, I know Thanksgiving (25th November) is an American holiday, not typically celebrated by those of us this side of the pond. Yet I can't help but think we could all use an excuse to take the opportunity to come together with friends and families, to give thanks for all that we have. The events of recent months and the past year – let's face it – seem to be taking their toll on many of us. Summer's a distant memory, fuel and impending food shortages and warnings of winter flu flood the news, and people seem to have lost that lovely glow and the premise of 'love thy neighbour', nurtured during times of hardship and isolation.

So, let's bring kindness, gratitude and frankly the fun back and throw our very own mini thanksgiving celebrations. They needn't mean hours slaving at a hot stove to create a heaving table with all the trimmings, no – a takeaway or maybe a Sunday brunch with a few close family and/or friends would be just as beneficial. Just be sure to tell them why you're inviting them, because you're thankful they're in your life.

AMERICAN-STYLE SALTED CARAMEL PANCAKES:

Here's a winner of a recipe that will elevate your Thanksgiving brunch menu from boring bacon sarnies to plate licking pancake stacks!

Ingredients

- golden caster sugar 1 tbsp
- eggs 2
- butter 25g, melted then cooled, plus extra for the frying pan
- whole milk 275ml
- plain flour 225g
- baking powder 1 tbsp
- salted caramel 4 tbsp, plus extra to serve
- raspberries to serve
- greek yogurt to serve

Method

Put the sugar, eggs, melted butter, milk, flour and baking powder (in that order) into a blender, and whizz until you have a smooth batter. Pour into a jug.

Heat a non-stick pan and brush it with butter. Pour enough batter into the pan to make a thick pancake (about 10cm diameter). Drop a blob of caramel into the middle and spoon over a little batter to cover it. Wait for a few minutes until the surface starts to set, then flip the pancake over and cook until golden. Brush the pan with more butter and repeat with the remaining pancake batter and caramel. Serve with raspberries and yogurt or ice cream, and drizzle more salted caramel.



MINERAL OF THE MONTH – MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is a mineral that ensures our bodies function properly; heart, muscles and kidneys all need magnesium to work efficiently and we need this mineral to support nerve function and the production of energy. Magnesium also helps strengthen bones and teeth, and can also help with insomnia and reduce migraines and headaches. If you are taking supplements, it is important not to exceed 350mg daily of magnesium.

Foods rich in magnesium are spinach, dark chocolate (minimum 70% cocoa), avocado, almonds/cashews/peanuts (not salted), oily fish, pumpkin and sunflower seeds, and bananas.

If you have a magnesium deficiency you will experience constipation, muscle cramps, osteoporosis, high blood pressure and fatigue. It is also known that people who suffer with severe asthma have very low levels of magnesium.

Remember to observe a two-minute silence at 11am on Sunday 14th November; a moment of calm to reflect and to commemorate the contribution of British and Commonwealth military and civilian servicemen and women in the two World Wars and later conflicts.





LET'S TALK ABOUT DEATH *by Emma Symons*

Here we are at the beginning of November and, I don't know about you, but I can really feel a shift in the seasonal energy. Nature is turning inwards, drawing life back underground into its roots and shedding the dead leaves that it no longer needs. This is a good time to pause and acknowledge the importance that death plays in the cycle of life.

As a company we deal with death on a daily basis, we look after those who have died and also the families that are left behind, but how often do we stop and honour the critical role that death plays in our wellbeing? Now, I'm not talking literal death here, but death in the sense of letting go and releasing. Just as the trees release their leaves so we need to release things for our own emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

You can't grow and develop without allowing things to die in your life – outdated beliefs, stories, habits, relationships, all need to die away to enable your personal growth. The way we think and the things we believe have a huge effect on our mental health and releasing and changing any thoughts or beliefs that no longer serve you can have a positive impact. As the days get shorter and the darkness draws in, it can be very easy to feel depressed and weighed down by the gloomy days, but the antidote to that is to allow those feelings to flow through you, let them rise to the surface, acknowledge them, but don't get caught up in them, and then let them go as if they were leaves you are needing to shed.

Reflections

To help with this process here are a few journal questions to think about:

1. Name one thing that's holding you back right now. What are you feeling ready to let die?
2. Write down some things that come to mind around your answer above. What are you in the habit of thinking or telling yourself about this? Listen for things like "I never..." or "I always...", "I can't..." or "I need to..."
3. How would your life be different if you were able to let go of all those things that are holding you back? What would it feel like?

This is the time of year for serious nurturing and self care, spend some time on these journal questions. When you understand why you are the way you are and why you do the things you do, then you can change things for the better.

Be more grateful every day...

In the famous words of Ferris Bueller, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." Life stops for no-one and if you don't take your foot off the gas every once in a while, and look around you, you might just miss it. Here's are some easy ways to help you be more grateful every day:

Appreciate everything – don't save gratitude for the 'big' things in life, there is nothing too small for you to be thankful for.

Practise mindfulness – make time every morning to think through five or so things you're grateful for. Getting into the habit of doing this every day will help you to be naturally more grateful, and in turn you're start to feel happier too.

Keep a gratitude journal – after your mindfulness session, write down your positive thoughts. By keeping a record of all of the things you're thankful for, you can regularly check in to remind yourself of all the positives in your life.

Volunteer some time for others – for many, the key to having more gratitude is to give back to others – helping others helps you!

Express yourself – don't just keep your gratitude to yourself – express it to those you care about. As well as brightening up their day, it will help you too!

Spend time with loved ones – that can be as simple as sharing a cup of tea in silence, or taking the time to really listen to a friend when they're sharing their stories, instead of being the one doing all talking.



"An attitude of gratitude brings great things." Yogi Bhajan