

# coffee, deep breaths & *happiness.*

Uplifting cultural practices from around the world



Seema Sethi Design LLP Concept & Design: Seema, Kaizurina, Keshav, Sandeep

The human search for happiness is endless. In these explorations, people have discovered ways which help blossom their smiles. So, what pours this light of smiles? Well, the ingredients in the recipe of happiness vary — people to people.

Some grab happy moments through daily indulgence in a ritualistic coffee break. It slows life on its tracks and soothes stress-wracked nerves. Others find bliss and wellness in practicing breathwork and mindfulness. These practices have a magically transformative effect on their body-spirit-mind. And, the outdoorsy folks, on the other hand seek bliss in nature; phytoncide released from plants bolsters the body's immunity and reduces stress.

Hemingway observed, *"The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places."* Many people, shattered by a tragic loss, find solace in repairing themselves the Japanese Kintsugi way. And, some mortal souls 'do nothing' and find happiness; such a detached state provides altogether new perspectives.

Whatever be your pick, embrace it. Practice it well. And, you wouldn't need to describe your life as a Shakespearean hero did: *"a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."* Remember, in seeking happiness, the key is always at hand. Always.

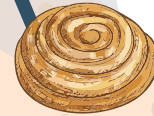
Wishing you abundant HAPPINESS in 2023!

**hygge. fika. lagom. wu wei. sisu. nixen. friluftsliv. kintsugi. ikigai.**  
**wabi sabi. sobremesa. shinrin yoku. ichigo ichie. dolce far niente. pranayama**

*A cup of magic in a coffee break*

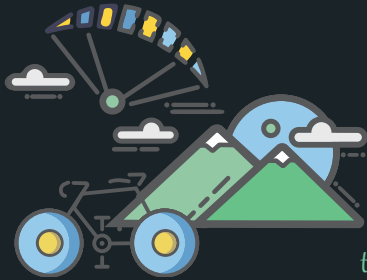
# FIKA

[fee:ka] - Swedish



An uplifting daily ritual of the Swedish coffee break. A moment to slow down and a legitimate reason to put work aside.

Fika is derived from flipping the syllables of 'kafi, the original name of coffee. Fika originated way back in the 18th century when coffee first made its way into Sweden. Today, in Sweden's offices, one finds Fika in action at least once in a day. All the employees across hierarchies gather together for coffee, cake (the original custom used fikabröd or fika bread), and agendaless conversation. Fika unfolds delightful magical moments of happiness. Do we not all need Fika in our lives? Surely, we do! To yield to quality time: to slow life in its tracks, to soothe our wracked nerves and to connect with our folks—along with a sweet something. So, go grab your fika spot and de-stress over a cup of coffee and sweet conversations!



*there is no such thing as bad weather*

# FRILUFTSLIV

[ free-loofts-liv ] - Norwegian

The valuable act of spending time in remote, outdoor locations to enhance one's spiritual and physical well-being. Friluftsliv literally means 'free air life'.

Norway, the land of fascinating fjords and timeless pines, is the original home of Friluftsliv. In a country where winters are stubbornly long and dark, Norwegians have learned to embrace the outdoors as much as possible through "friluftsliv"— a concept that translates into 'open-air living'. Friluftsliv is a way of life. It's a commitment to connect with nature, to breathe in fresh air irrespective of age or physical condition, regardless of the season and weather forecast. Friluftsliv is a way of celebrating the outdoors, completely experiential. As you would discover, in your aimless wanderings in the woods, your lungs will be happier, and your mind more peaceful.

embracing imperfections

# Kintsugi

Kin=golden + tsugi=joinery Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold



In Japan, when traditional artists put together the pieces of broken pottery, they highlight the joints with pure gold. Kintsugi, thus, embraces flaws and imperfections graciously. And in doing so, it creates stronger, unique and more beautiful, and resilient pieces of art. The philosophy of Kintsugi offers solace and a new and more helpful perspective to people to recover from their brokenness after tragic, overwhelming losses. Using Kintsugi as a metaphor for healing, we learn powerful lessons in finding dignified acceptance of loss and adversities. Kintsugi also helps us discover courage and beauty in survival.





*a warm atmosphere*

# hygge

[hue-guh] - Danish

An atmosphere of warmth, well-being, and cosiness when you feel at peace and are able to enjoy simple pleasures.

Hygge, a Danish lifestyle concept, has its etymological origin in the word 'hug'. It fosters a way of living, replete with warmth found in harmonious connections with one's community. Hygge is an experience. It happens when we mindfully create an atmosphere of cosiness and safety. It traces its Scandinavian roots to the post-snow-sports activities. After sports, people pull up hand-knitted sweaters and huddle together with friends in their homes to play board games. People sit together in candle-lit spaces, drink strong coffee, and relish bakery goodies. Simplicity is at the heart of Hygge. You get it merely by simply setting the right atmosphere, your here-and-now presence, pleasure, and parity (we above I). Hygge, as say the Danish, is all about 'tribe spirit'.





action in  
non-action

# wu wei

[ woo wey ] - Chinese

Wu Wei means – non-doing or 'doing nothing'.  
The concept and art of conscious non-action

The concept of Wu Wei is based on Taoist principles, which evolved more than five thousand years ago. Wu Wei refers to achieving a state of being in which our actions are effortless and in perfect alignment with the ebb and flow of the elemental cycles of the natural world. It is a kind of “going with the flow” which is characterized by great ease and awareness. In this state of being, without even trying, we’re able to respond perfectly to whatever situations arise. However, it is not to be mistaken with not acting; it means ‘effortless action’ or ‘actionless action’. Wu Wei keeps the mind tranquil, even amid the most frenetic activities; thus, allowing you to carry out tasks with maximum skill and efficiency.



just enough

# Lagom

[ lar gahm ] - Swedish

Lagom is a Swedish philosophy that roughly translates to *'not too much, not too little.'*

It is an Old Norse word that means 'law', and in Swedish, 'team'. Lagom's origin can be traced to the centuries-old Viking practice of 'laget om' ('sitting around the team'). At evening time, weary after work, the good old Vikings gathered around the fire to consume mead (a honey-fermented beverage) from a common horn. The rule for all was to have a moderate sip from the horn which was passed around in the circle, to ensure everyone gets a fair share. Today, though we don't drink from a horn, the ethos of the ancient Lagom custom remains intact. Lagom, in modern times, is practiced as a lifestyle of moderation and balance. It promotes good health, happiness and well-being. In our daily lives, Lagom requires you to embrace optimalism: exercising moderation in food consumption, maintaining balance in the home and office interiors, and making business practices logical.





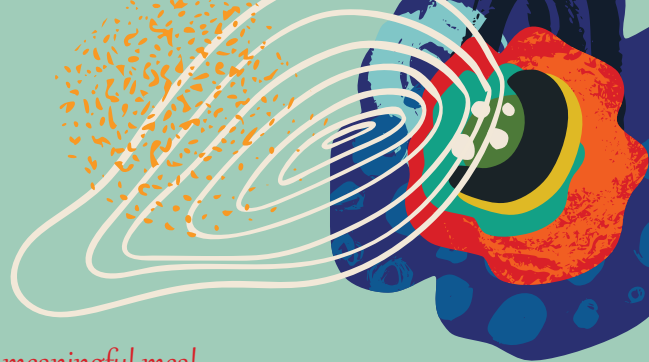
*finding your resilience*

# SISU

[ si-sue ] - Finnish

Sisu can be roughly translated as strength of will, determination and perseverance. It's not momentary courage, but the ability to sustain that courage.

The word 'Sisu' comes from the Finnish word 'sisus', which means 'guts' or 'the intestines'. It connotes granite-like resilience, extreme perseverance, and the maintenance of dignity amid harsh circumstances. Amid exceeding harsh conditions, these exceptional qualities helped the Finnish forces to gain independence from the formidable Russian forces. Since then, Sisu, as a concept, has acted like a glue to keep the Finnish society united, reminding them about their nation's honorable survival. For the rest of us, Sisu is best viewed and valued as the 'second wind' of human strength. Many of us, at some stage in our lives, might have experienced Sisu— as a moment of self-discovery. We know that we have Sisu in us when we realise we have a lot more than what we deem to be our mental and physical limits.



*the art of a meaningful meal*

# SOBREMESA

[ so-bre-me-sa ] - Spanish

The time after lunch or dinner, spent talking to the people you shared the meal with



Sobremesa is one of those beautiful Spanish words that doesn't exist in the English language, which literally means "over the table". Sobremesa is the time you spend after a delicious meal with your family or friends in deep, meaningful conversations, relaxing together, sometimes for hours, well after the dessert has been served. You talk, drink, debate, laugh, and fully enjoy each other's company. The beauty of sobremesa is that the conversation is rarely shallow or boring. It's not a time for small talk. You... sobremesa! In Spain, the tradition of sobremesa is why after a meal, you won't get a check until you ask for it. It would be thought rude to rush your meal, or to discourage postprandial chats. Ready for some sobremesa? Bring in the company, the stories, the laughs...



*just breathe*

# Pranayama

The yogic practice of focusing on the breath

In the world of wellness, world wide, Pranayama, which is a set of ancient yogic breathing exercises, has gained tremendous popularity. The word ‘Pranayama’ comes from two separate words; “Prana” which means “vital life force”, and “Yama”, to control. Pranayama, thus, as evident from its meaning, enhances our life energies—just by teaching us to breathe correctly. The benefits of Pranayama on your body and mind are phenomenal. By breathing the right way, you can detoxify your internal organs and immerse your mind in infinite tranquility. The breathing techniques of Pranayama are immensely helpful in reducing stress, tension and anxiety, and in fostering better concentration and mindful living.



make every moment special

# Ichigo Ichie

[ ichi-go Ichi-e ] - Japanese

Ichigo Ichie, a concept from Zen Buddhism, teaches us to appreciate the uniqueness of a moment. It profoundly observes that a moment comes by only once and is ephemeral. No two moments are alike, however similar the circumstances might be. Therefore, Ichigo Ichie implores us to live each moment mindfully. The foundational essence of the Ichigo Ichie is derived from the rituals of the 16th century Japanese tea ceremony. The elaborate rituals of the tea ceremony demanded complete attention to detail, made possible by keeping mental faculties tethered to 'now' or the present. Ichigo Ichie, thus, is all about being present in the moment, senses alive, and lending value to every passing moment of life.

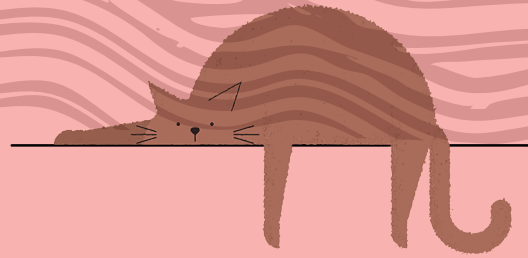


absorbing the forest

# shinrin- yoku

Shinrin in Japanese means '*forest*,' and yoku means '*bath*.' literal meaning forest bathing or taking in the forest through our senses.

Shinrin-yoku, as a practice, is said to have developed in the 1980s in Japan. For better health and mental well-being, practitioners spend mindful time in the woods. Shinrin-yoku does not ask you to do any hikes or running, all it asks from you to soak in the forest with all your five senses. As you 'bathe' in the forest, your senses become bridges to fill the gap between you and the natural world. The sweet sounds of the forest, the revitalizing scent of the trees, the sunlight playing through the leaves, and the freshness of clean air transport you into a realm of perfect ecstasy. In this way, Shinrin-yoku fulfills our body's innate need to 'listen to the wind and taste the air'. Hence, it serves as a powerful antidote to our confined and stressful urban living.



*sweetness in doing nothing*

# DOLCE FAR NIENTE

[dolce=sweet; far(e)=do; niente=nothing]- Italian

The art of doing nothing. And finding sweet virtues and joys in doing so!



Dolce far Niente is this sensation when you sit at a bar in an Italian village while you drink coffee and watch passersbys. Time, fleetingly, halts. You admire life in its bare simplicity, and, before you know it, you simply smile! Its practice disengages you (temporarily) from the din and bustle of daily cluttered living. In action, it demands a proactive abandoning of all the important occupations and preoccupations of the mind. This releases you, and helps soak in the marvel of 'doing nothing'. And, enjoying it!