WINTER '23/24
ISSUE 12

VM

PLANTBASED LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR MELANATED PEOPLE

Seeing Red

CONGO

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Embracing Plant-Based Living

BOOK REVIEWS, TRAVEL, EVENTS AND MANY MORE

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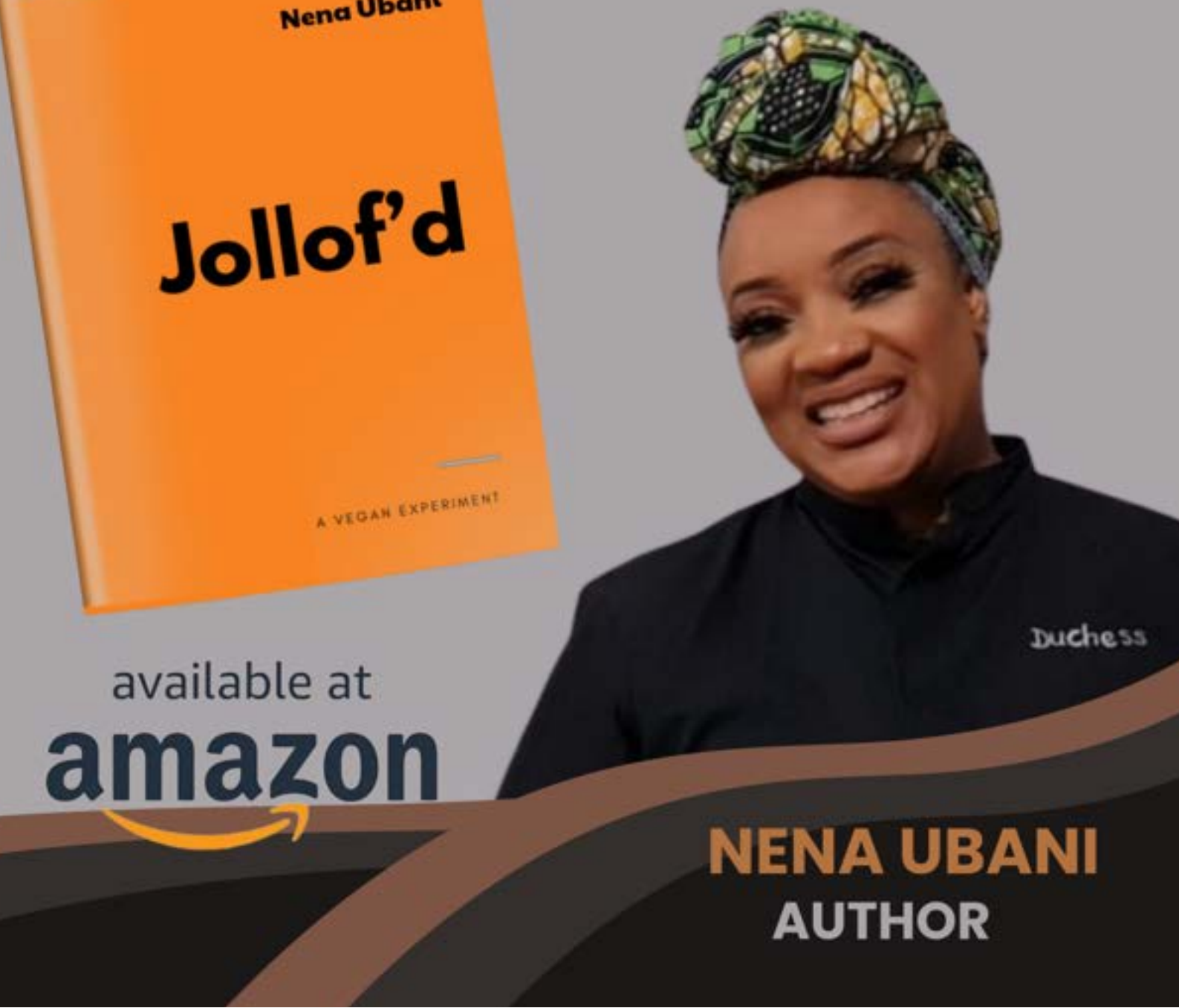

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NENA UBANI

AUTHOR

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Readers,

We are delighted to present the latest issue of Vegan Melanated Magazine. In this issue, we showcased remedies for winter ailments, delectable vegan creations shared by your favourite influencers, embark on an exciting journey through our travel blog, and delve into the fascinating psychology of colour, with red taking the spotlight as this year's favourite winter colour.

Our diverse array of articles extends beyond the seasonal charm, featuring insights on maintaining fitness after 40, tackling the winter blues, and addressing pressing global issues like the crisis in Congo. We also bring you engaging book reviews to add to your winter reading list.

Amidst the festive season, we emphasize the importance of friendships, charity, and family relationships—whether you're celebrating traditional holidays or not. Discover heartwarming stories that remind us of the spirit of giving and the joy found in meaningful connections.
Thank you for staying on this journey with us.

Wishing you warmth, health, and joy throughout this winter season.

Love and Light,

Nena Ubani

S.A.D

HOW TO COPE WITH SEASONAL AFFECT DISORDER (SAD)

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs seasonally, typically during the winter months when daylight hours are shorter. This article aims to shed light on SAD, its symptoms, and provide practical tips for self-help. If you suspect you may be experiencing SAD, it's essential to understand the signs and explore avenues for assistance.

How to tell if you might have Seasonal Affective Disorder:
Low Energy: Persistent fatigue and a lack of interest in activities.
Mood Changes: Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or irritability.
Sleep Disturbances: Difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or oversleeping.
Appetite Changes: Craving carbohydrates and gaining weight.
Difficulty Concentrating: Struggling with focus and making decisions.
Social Withdrawal: A tendency to avoid social situations and a decrease in social activities.

*5 Things you can do to help yourself **:***
Light Therapy: Increase exposure to natural light or invest in a light therapy box, which mimics sunlight.
Regular Exercise: Engage in physical activity to boost mood and reduce symptoms.
Balanced Diet: Consume a well-balanced diet with an emphasis on whole foods to support overall health.
Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques: Practice meditation, deep breathing, or yoga to manage stress and anxiety.
Social Connections: Stay connected with friends and family; social interaction can positively impact mood.

***Where to Go for Help if you are struggling to cope or at risk to yourself**:*

- Consult a Healthcare Professional
- Local Support Groups
- Emergency services
- Crisis Hotlines
- Online Counselling Services
- Talk to family and friends about how you are feeling
- Spiritual/Religious leader

BY NENA UBANI
Mental Health Practitioner and Cognitive Behavioural Therapist

SEEING RED

HOW TO WEAR RED THIS WINTER

By Michelle Ubani

This winter, fashion takes a bold turn as red emerges as the undeniable colour of the season, dominating catwalks across the globe. Renowned designers have passionately embraced this vibrant hue, infusing it into their collections and inspiring a resurgence of passion for all things red.

Leading the charge is Valentino, whose runway showcased a stunning array of red garments, establishing the tone for the season. Alexander McQueen also elegantly incorporated red into their designs, proving that this timeless colour is versatile and timeless.

When it comes to embracing the red trend, the possibilities are endless. A red coat becomes a statement piece, effortlessly elevating any winter ensemble. Picture yourself wrapped in a rich, crimson overcoat, turning heads as you navigate the chilly streets.

For a subtler approach, consider red skirts or trousers. Paired with neutral tones, these pieces add a pop of colour without overwhelming your look. Michael Kors′s collection beautifully demonstrates how red bottoms can be both chic and understated.

Dresses take on a new allure in shades of red. From bold scarlet to deep burgundy, a red dress exudes confidence and sophistication. Wear it to a winter soirée or a casual outing—the elegance remains unmatched.

Accessories, often the unsung heroes of fashion, play a crucial role in embracing the red trend. Imagine a classic black ensemble suddenly brought to life with a red handbag or gloves. Telfar's attention to detail exemplifies how these accents can transform an outfit.

Hats, hijabs, and scarves provide additional avenues to incorporate red into your winter wardrobe. A red hat adds a touch of playfulness, while a red hijab or scarf offers a graceful nod to cultural diversity. The beauty of red lies in its ability to seamlessly blend with various styles and preferences.

This winter, join the fashion revolution by embracing red in all its glory. Whether you opt for a statement coat, elegant dress, or subtle accessories, let this rich hue become your style signature. Life is your runway.

MAMA EKU'S

Herbal Remedies

My grandma, lovingly known as Grandma Eku Sika, had a unique way of living that I would like to share with you. She kept things simple—no meat, chicken, eggs, or sweet treats for her. Instead, she took joy in looking after sheep, goats, and chickens, and she had a little garden where she grew watermelons and tiger nuts, not just for us but also as thoughtful gifts for others.

My grandma's way of life wasn't just about her diet; it was her whole outlook on staying healthy and happy. As I reflect on her life, I'm excited to reveal one of the plant-based remedies she believed in. Join me in celebrating Grandma Eku—a kind, strong woman who taught me that the simple things from the earth can be truly magical.

Eku Sika's Immunity-Boosting Elixir:

Inspired by Grandma Eku's resilience, here's a vegan flu and cold remedy that she herself swore by.

Ingredients:

- **Pineapple**
- **Orange**
- **Lime**

Instructions:

- **Peel the skin of the pineapple, leaving a bit of the fruit. Cut the orange and lime into four pieces, including the skin.**
- **Boil the pineapple, orange, and lime together with water for 15 to 30 minutes.**
- **Allow the mixture to cool down, then strain the liquid (juice).**
- **Consume a glass of the juice three times a day.**

Though the fruit skins might seem ordinary, Grandma Eku believed in the magic they held.

WRITTEN BY AGATHA ZILLA HAIZEL

YOUR FAVOURITE INFLUENCERS SHARE THEIR FAVOURITE

WINTER RECIPES

Chakalaka, Bean and Tomato Relish

Kathleen Cochrane, Plant-Based Recipe Creator Based In The UK
(IG: @aveggiefeast) (Blog: www.aveggiefeast.com)

Chakalaka is my favourite winter recipe as it is that easy, comforting dish that we have as a family every winter without fail. It's warm and gently spiced making it a pleasant change to the usual baked beans. Chakalaka is a simple South African dish consisting of beans and vegetables in a chili sauce. It can be eaten or cold but is delicious and served hot with crusty warm bread in winter.

Ingredients
Serves 4 (as a side dish)
Cook time 15 minutes

2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion finely chopped
3 garlic cloves minced
1 red fresh chilli finely chopped
1 green bell pepper diced
1 carrot grated
1.5 tbsp medium curry powder
1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
1 x 415g tin baked beans
1 tsp dried thyme
1/4 tsp salt

Direction
1. Heat the oil in a saucepan over a low-medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 4-5 minutes. The onions should be starting to caramelize.
2. Add the garlic, chili (including the seeds), green pepper, and carrot and cook for 2 minutes. Stir in the curry powder and cook for roughly a minute, until fragrant
3. Next, pour in the tomatoes, baked beans, thyme and salt. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes.
4. Serve alongside South African greens or kale and marinated tofu.

Veghana Fonio Jollof

Nana-Serwa Mancell, Chef and Owner of Veghana, based in Dubai.
(IG: @veghanalife)

When I'm craving extra flavour for winter, my to-go favourite dish is Fonio jollof which is a twist on the classic West African dish. This awesome superfood is both low calorie and gluten free making it a favourite for those looking to eat healthier. What I love about Fonio is that it soaks flavours from any dish you match it with. I recommend fried plantain and salad to go with the Fonio Jollof.

Ingredients:

Serves 4

1 cup Fonio (available from online in most cities)
½ cup of boiling water
1 tsp cayenne pepper
1 small red chili
3 medium-sized onions
6 medium tomatoes
2 tbs tomato paste
2 cloves of garlic
1 small finger of grated ginger
1/2 cup of olive oil
1 cup vegetable stock.
Salt to taste

Directions

1. To make the stew: Fry onions with garlic, ginger, chili, add paste, and blend tomatoes. Fry together until you have a tasty thick mixture cooking on medium heat in a frying pan for 25 mins. Add the vegetable stock.
2. Steam 1/2 cup chopped carrots and green beans. Add salt to taste and set aside.
3. In a pot add 1/2 a cup of boiling water, cayenne pepper, and the tomato stew.
4. Bring to boil, add the Fonio and cover the pot
5. Let the Fonio cook at a very low heat for 5 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave to stand for about 10 minutes, after this, you can fluff the Fonio and add the steamed veggies.

Tofu Chickpea Curry

Miles Strozier, Fitness Trainer (IG: @milesjstrozier)

Tofu chickpea curry is my favourite winter dish because it's so delicious, easy to make, high in protein and I can make plenty for the rest of the week. It's such a satisfying and filling dish. I encourage you to try it for yourself.

Ingredients:
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 inch of ginger, minced
3 garlic cloves, minced
Cooked and seasoned chickpeas
Crispy tofu (coated with cornstarch)
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon coriander
2 tablespoons curry powder
Salt and pepper to taste
1 teaspoon garam masala
1 teaspoon turmeric
Juice of 1 1/2 limes
1/2 cup tomato paste
3/4 cup coconut cream
1 1/2cups water
Olive oil for cooking
3 Carrots, sliced
1 cup Edamame

Instructions:
1. Heat olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add chopped onion, minced ginger, and garlic. Sauté until translucent.
2. Add seasonings and tomato paste. Mix well and cook over low heat for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.
3. Incorporate the cooked chickpeas into the mixture, stirring to combine.
4. In a separate pan, crisp up tofu cubes coated with olive oil, cornstarch, seasonings, and salt.
5. Add in water coconut cream, lime juice
6. Toss in sliced carrots and edamame, letting them cook until tender but still crisp.
7. Once some of the water has cooked down add in crispy tofu
8. Adjust seasoning to taste and serve your delicious tofu chickpea curry with rice and/or naan.

Shepherd's Pie (with Casa Vegan Mince)

Casavegan NG (IG: @casavegan_ng) (Website: www.casavegan.com)

There is nothing like a warm and delicious Shepherd's pie on a warm winter evening, what makes this better is that this is 100% plant-based

Ingredients:
1 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
3 Large potatoes, peeled and quartered (depending on desired quantity)
1 medium onion, chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)
1 red pepper, chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)
1 to 2 cups mixed vegetables, such as diced carrots, corn, or peas
1 Pack of Casa Vegan Mince
1 tablespoon Vegetable Oil
½ clove of Garlic
1 teaspoon sauce / Tomato Paste (Depending on preference)
2 tablespoons plant-based butter
½ or 1 cup of Broccoli oil (based on preference)
Spice and seasonings of choice

Directions (Prepare the potatoes)
1. Peel the potatoes and slice them diagonally.
2. Boil the potatoes for about 10 -15 and add a tablespoon of salt.
3. Drain the water once the potatoes are soft
4. Add the desired amount of margarine or plant-based butter
5. Mash the potatoes

Directions (Prepare your sauce)
1. Slice and dice your onions, peppers, garlic, and vegetables (as required).
2. Add some veg oil into a pan (1 tablespoon), and let the oil heat up.
3. Once the oil is hot, add your sliced onions, peppers, and garlic - fry for 1/2mins
4. Add your Casa Vegan Mince
5. Add your Vegetables
6. Let the mix fry for about 4/5mins
7. Add some Tomato paste or sauce of choice (Soy, Sweet chili, hot sauce)
8. Add your preferred spices and season
9. Add Broccoli oil (if preferred)
10. Let the mix cook for about 5 - 10mins (depending on how dry you want it)

Directions for Layering
1. Pour the sauce into a flat & deep pan (that can be put into the oven)
2. Spread and flatten the mashed potatoes over the sauce (covering the entire sauce base)
3. You can add a design to the top of the mash
4. Put the mash and sauce into the oven - 180°C, 20-25 minutes, until the top of the mash is slightly golden.
5. Slice in triangles, dish, and enjoy.

Eggplant Curry w/ Herbed Jasmine Rice & Roasted Asparagus & Green Beans

Chef Lonnie. G (IG: @cheflonnieg)

This is one of my favourite winter dishes due to the simplicity & richness of flavours. I'm Jamaican & vegan (sounds like an oxymoron yes I know) but I always loved curry chicken my family cooked that a lot growing up. I love using fresh veggies & the eggplant is such a great addition. It's high in fibre & great for brain health. The curry coconut sauce tastes immaculate it's very filling & great for the cold weather. The roasted asparagus & green beans taste amazing & they are seasoned to perfection. One of my winter favourites.

Ingredients

Serves 4

1 1/2 Cup of Jasmine Rice
1 bunch of Asparagus cut in half
1/2 bag of Green Beans
1/2 of an Eggplant Dicedinton2-inch pieces
1/2 Cup of Rough Chopped Yellow Onions
1 Can of Coconut Milk
1/4 cup of Diced Shallots
1 tablespoon of Chopped Ginger
1/2 Cup of Grape Seed Oil/Olive Oil is fine too (for sauté & rice)
1 Tablespoon of Plant-based Butter
2 Tablespoon of Curry Powder
1/2 Tablespoon of Black Pepper
1/2 Tablespoon of Garlic Powder
1/2 Tablespoon of Sea Salt
1/2 Old Bay Seasoning
1/2 Tablespoon of Italian Seasoning
1/2 Tablespoon of Oregano

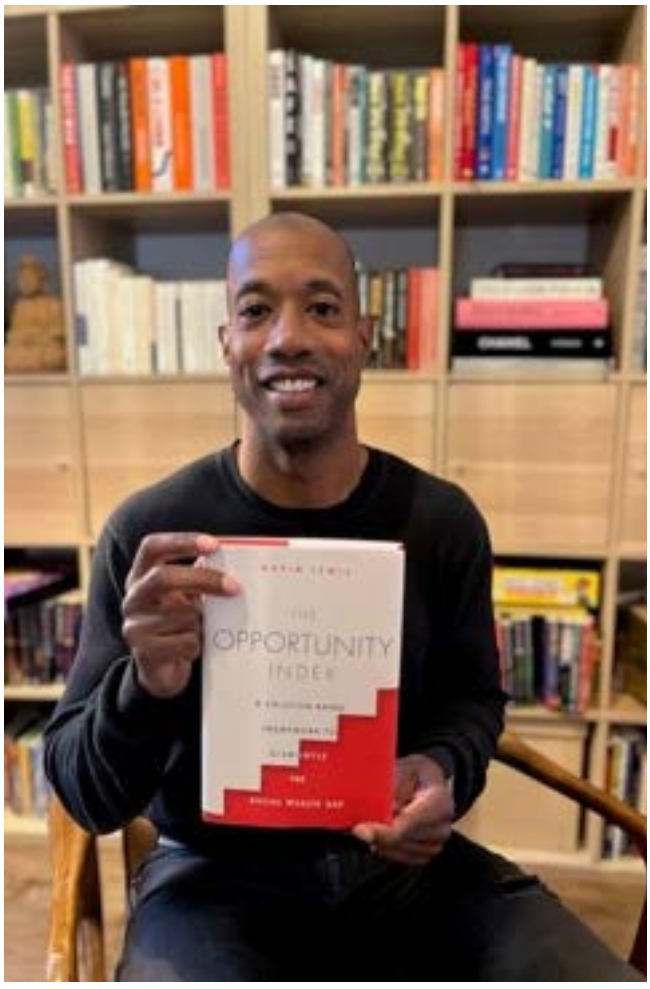
Instructions

1. Boil 3 Cups of Water on high heat (this is for the rice)
2. Chop eggplant, shallots & onions.
3. Add oil to the sauté pan & turn the fire on high heat.
4. Sauté onions & shallots until translucent & fragrant.
5. Once water is boiling add oil & pinch of salt.
6. Pour the rice into the pot & turn the heat down to medium/low heat.
7. Add eggplant & curry powder & sauté until eggplant is soft but still firm.
8. Allow the eggplant to cook for 2-3 mins
9. Add coconut milk, & turn the fire on low heat to let the sauce simmer.
10. Stir everything thoroughly, once the sauce starts to thicken add all seasonings.
11. Add asparagus & green beans to a sheet tray & roast for 15 mins at 350. Add oil & seasonings before baking.
12. Check your rice, the grains should be tender but not too soft.
13. Once the rice is done add the butter & seasonings (garlic powder, black pepper, sea salt, oregano) and mix everything well.
14. Turn off the heat on the curry and set it aside.
15. Take veggies out of the oven & sprinkle a little sea salt on top.
16. Scoop rice on a plate, add curry on top & add the veggies.

Eat & enjoy!

THE OPPORTUNITY INDEX, A SOLUTION BASED FRAMEWORK TO DISMANTLE THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP BY GAVIN LEWIS

If you're a bookworm like me, then you will understand how important it is for a book to achieve its main aim using various writing techniques—to keep readers engaged and convey its key messages effectively.



Very little has been done to tackle the root cause of the economic disadvantages that has plagued black communities for a long time and how that colours their experiences in many visible spheres of life, inadvertently leading to a wealth gap.

The Opportunity Index, A Solution Based Framework to Dismantle the Racial Wealth Gap by Gavin Lewis examines the origins of the racial wealth gap and its impact on the inequities facing black people today. While identifying the symptoms and root causes of economic deprivation amongst black communities is not necessarily revolutionary, possible practical solutions to tackle these causes have yet to be analysed in detail just like they are in this book. Using anecdotes interwoven with historical and political moments such as the Rivers of Blood speech, the opposition of the Race Relations bill and other key events, Lewis, Managing Director, Head of Institutional Client Business at BlackRock, outlined the effects of this wealth gap on society, health and opportunity, exploring solutions to close this gap holistically.

Lewis posited that reducing the wealth gap requires understanding the household a child is born into, their access to healthcare and ability to enter the workplace amongst other key factors. With these considerations in mind, he recommended the introduction of an index as a benchmark to examine the progression of black people from different backgrounds, hereby measuring various interventions throughout their respective lives.

Lewis's use of imagery, likening the understanding of oneself to peeling an onion unified the narrative, sharing a general concept that we can all relate to regardless of our race, class or any other social grouping. According to him "you remove one layer only to find another". Although I appreciated the in-depth examination of the symbolic meanings behind the sculptures above the Royal Exchange building, readers who aren't so interested in art and popular images may find that section dull given how detailed it is. Besides, the average person isn't necessarily paying attention to different sculptures dotted across the city of London and the meanings behind them.
Lewis stated that finding a solution to inequality must not limit its assessment by only "exploring the interconnection between social and economic disadvantage. It must also understand the importance of education, recognition and physical environment". Today, this need for recognition has heightened the awareness on increasing the representation of black people working in the 'City' to showcase the varied possibilities that young black people could aspire to become.

In academia, this book strengthens the discourse on how including black history in our school's curriculum will instil confidence in young black students, ensuring they are valued and recognised and subsequently, pave the way in eradicating structural and institutional racism.

Overall, this book did meet its objective as it thoroughly examined the origins of the wealth gap, outlined what the causes were and provided practical solutions to tackle this wealth inequity. Incorporating Lewis's suggestions will foster an equal society where black people will be recognised for the value they bring to various parts of the society. A fairer world where everyone is given the same opportunity to succeed regardless of your race or socio-economic background will eventually eradicate this wealth gap.

Reviewed by Tochi Danny

5 MUST-DO TIPS TO

BOOSTING YOUR METABOLISM AFTER 40

If you are in your 40s, 50s and 60s and feel like your metabolism is slowing down, here is what you can do to boost your metabolism, lose weight or just feel better. There are simple things that you can do every day to boost your metabolism and achieve your fitness goals.

Eat more protein:

'Metabolic rate can increase by 15-30% when protein accounts for 30% of a person's total diet.' (Source: PubMed.gov)

When you eat food, food has calories and protein is pretty unique, your body has to actually use and burn those calories to metabolise the protein. In fact, your body uses and burns 30% of the calories that you eat in protein for instance, 200 calories of chicken breast, 30% is actually burnt up in the process of breaking down and metabolising that protein. You can eat good food and burn calories and protein actually keeps you full longer meaning you're going to eat less food. Here is how you prepare your plate: 50% vegetables, 25% lean protein and the other 25% whole grains and a perfect plate is only 500-600 calories.

Drink water:

Especially if you really want to amplify your calorie burn, drink water. The body is around 70% of water, we need it for functioning, and it energises the body. Drink a glass first thing in the morning and add salt in it for some trace minerals and if it's actual cold water then you get an additional metabolic boost because our bodies are always trying to regulate core temperature, when you introduce something cold, the body has to use calories and energy to heat it up.

Start lifting heavy things:

Start lifting heavy things to build muscle because muscle is very energetically expensive. The more muscle you actually put on, the easier it is to keep the fat off, less fat building. That is why is it advisable to combine strength training and cardio because you get a muscle building benefit and high intensity benefit all in one.

High intensity workouts:

High Intensity workouts are different than steady state cardio where you might see people at the gym walking on the treadmill or bicycle at a slower pace for 45mins. It is great for your heart and you do burn some calories but if you start doing high intensity exercise you will have a bursts of effort in a minute with some rest, i.e., you could be doing sprint of the treadmill and rest for a min and a half at a slower pace and you do another sprint or do a metabolic resistance training of 4 to 5 exercises, i.e., squats, shoulder press, rows, chest press, swings and combine them into a circuit, rest when you finish and repeat again 4 to 5 times. This is a high intensity calorie burn plus you are going to get some stimulation to your muscles because you are lifting weights, it is probably the most efficient way for people to exercise.

Get great sleep:

Sleep is one of the most overlook aspect of health and longevity in general, our bodies need sleep and here is what happened when we miss sleep for few days. A metabolic change happens in the body that is absolutely damaging. Your body becomes insulin resistant. Insulin is an important hormone that once we eat carbohydrates or some proteins, we have an organ called the pancreas that releases insulin, insulin helps clear out the blood sugar and some of those amino acids from the bloodstream and gets them in to the cells into the muscles, into the metabolically active tissues. Insulin is vital for life so when you are insulin resistant, insulin floats around for a long time and prevents fat burning so when you miss sleep you are insulin resistant, your blood sugars are higher and it actually makes you hungrier, increasing this hunger hormone called ghrelin and actually decreases a hormone called leptin that increases your metabolic rate and keeps you full. So, when you get great sleep your metabolism functions so much better, you will do better with your weight loss and your overall health goals.

Written By Lilas Mukendi
Fitness and Lifestyle Coach
@cheriepombafitness

THE SITUATION IN CONGO

Truth is bad for business when it comes to Kongoland as we'd love to call this vast space at the "Heart of Darkness"

To write about what is called Democratic Republic of the Congo nowadays in few sentences is comparable to writing the history of industrial revolution and all its ramifications in 500 hundreds words.

Kongoland and its people are victims of our appetite for high-tech and the deliberate conspiracy to silence anyone trying to uncover the truth; surely there must be a way to speak out without upsetting the vested interests.

An old African saying " Where everyone is eating, none dare to talk".

Since 1482, the "Discovery theory" was the backbone of policies for Euro-centrists till March 2023 when out of the blue the Vatican in a statement said:

“The Catholic Church therefore repudiates those concepts that fail to recognize the inherent human rights of Indigenous peoples, including what has become known as the legal and political 'doctrine of discovery. ”

"The 550-year-old Doctrine of Discovery, which granted European nations the right to claim the new lands they discovered on behalf of Christendom"

So the logic behind these unjust Laws was that the good catholic had the right to confiscate lands they " found" in their quests to Christianise the world.

You will agree with us who believe that all these laws and Papal decrees are the causes of centuries injustice AGAINST NON-EUROPEANS who were and we believe are still considered not worthy of humanity and respect.

The separation of church and state, the rise of multi-nationals and pseudo-structure that control international politics and policies are the dark forces guiding and supporting these injustices.

How can one imagine that people are driven out of theirs ancestral lands by extreme violence, as millions have been killed and incapacitated by the firm desire to exploit the land for its vast mineral deposits? Yet the sad truth is that, our appetite for gadgets and other high-tech goodies is fuelling this "Low Intensity war" which has claimed millions, starting with the famous explorer David Livingstone voyages and subsequent expeditions of the famous Henri Morton Stanley on behalf of Leopold II King of the Belgians. History has been unfair to the people of Kongo basin, the land is controlled and run from far away countries who claim to this day legitimate rights to choose the destiny of others to whom they do not have, natural nor blood rights.

These spiritual crimes are imprescriptible and the indigenous are crying Justice and equality, which to this day, remains a distant dream...

The story continues...

(Extract from coming up book "From Kongoland to England & Back" |On the footsteps of Bula Matadi and Cies)

Tata Kanga of Kongo Friends Society

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HOW TO BE THE MAIN CHARACTER IN YOUR LIFE

By Ekwuru Hunters

"Life is a story, and you are both the author and the protagonist. Embrace the power to shape your narrative, set the scene for your dreams, and become the main character in the epic tale of your existence."

In the grand narrative of life, it's easy to get lost in the supporting roles, but it's time to reclaim the spotlight and be the protagonist of your story. Here's a guide on how to step into the leading role and embrace the journey of self-discovery :

Define Your Character: Begin by defining who you are and who you want to become. What are your values, passions, and goals? Understanding your character traits lays the foundation for a compelling narrative.

Set Goals as Plot Points: Craft a storyline for your life by setting meaningful and achievable goals. These goals act as plot points that drive your narrative forward, providing direction and purpose. Recognise that you have the power to shape your story. Take control of your decisions, actions, and reactions. Don't be a passive observer; be an active participant in your own life.

Prioritize Self-Care: A resilient and vibrant protagonist requires self-care. Prioritize physical and mental well-being, ensuring you have the strength to face challenges and relish victories.

Embrace Challenges as Character Development: Every good story has its challenges. Instead of avoiding difficulties, embrace them as opportunities for character development. Learn from setbacks and let them add depth to your character.

Surround Yourself with a Supportive Cast: Build a supportive cast of characters in your life. Surround yourself with people who uplift and inspire you. A strong support system enhances your narrative and helps you overcome obstacles.

Cultivate a Growth Mindset: Adopt a growth mindset that sees failures as stepping stones and challenges as opportunities for growth. This mindset not only fuels resilience but also propels your character arc forward. Regularly evaluate your goals, values, and priorities. Adjust your course if needed, ensuring your story remains authentic and fulfilling.

Celebrate Achievements: Take a moment to celebrate your achievements, no matter how small. Acknowledging your successes reinforces the idea that you are the hero of your story, worthy of recognition.

By defining your character, setting goals, taking control, and embracing challenges, you create a compelling narrative that reflects your true essence. Remember, you are the author of your story, and each day is a new chapter waiting to be written.

PSYCHOLOGY OF COLOUR

HOW COLORS IMPACT MOODS AND BEHAVIORS

"Colors, like features, follow the changes of the emotions," said the artist Pablo Picasso. This means that colors can go along with how we feel. They can make us happy, calm, or excited. In this article, we'll explore how different colors affect our moods and behaviors. Imagine it like a colorful journey, where we'll use studies to show how colors play a big part in our daily lives.

INFLUENCE OF WARM COLOURS

Think about warm colours like red, orange, and yellow. They make us feel strong emotions and give a warm and energetic vibe. Studies from the University of Rochester say that red can help us focus on details and do well in tasks that need accuracy. Warm colours also make us more alert and even hungry, which is why many restaurants use them.

THE MAGIC OF GREEN

Green is special because it's linked to feeling good. Researchers at the University of Essex found that spending time in nature with lots of greenery makes us happier and less stressed. This is super important for planning cities and designing buildings to help people's mental health.

CULTURE OF COLOURS

Colours might mean different things in different cultures. A study in the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology found that where you come from can change how you feel about certain colours. This matters a lot for people who make ads, designs, and messages that need to reach lots of different people.

COLOURS FOR CALMNESS:

Now, cool colours like blue, green, and purple do the opposite. They make us feel calm and relaxed. A study in the Journal of Environmental Psychology found that being in blue surroundings makes people feel peaceful and like there's more space. That's why these colours are often used in places like hospitals to make a soothing atmosphere.

COLOURS IN SHOPPING

Colors also play a big role in making us buy things. A study in the Journal of Business Research says that red makes us feel excited and in a hurry, so we might buy things on impulse. But blue makes us feel like we can trust a brand, especially in finance or technology.

The mix of colours and how they affect our feelings and actions is really interesting. Whether it is the calm feeling of cool colours or the energizing power of warm ones, understanding how colours influence us is crucial for anyone who wants to create spaces that make us feel good.

By Zoe Hunters

BIPOC HERBALISM *CONFERENCE*

On October 21st, I participated in a conference that celebrated the voices of Black Indigenous People of Colour (BIPOC) Herbalists and Wellness practitioners. It was a profound experience for both speakers and attendees. Our voices were at the forefront, our traditions and experiences were validated, and we experienced the powerful variety of what mother earth has to offer, and the amazing commonality between the various nations.

The event was organised by Abril Donea of @beautyherbsandtea on Instagram, who, like me, realised the gaps in her herbal education when it came to the practices of her ancestors and indigenous communities that have greatly influenced Western medicine. The conference aimed to decolonize herbalism, recover our herbal knowledge, and share the richness of our traditions and cultures. It was to share with more people what our traditions and cultures have had to offer for centuries. We wanted to contribute to creating a herbal narrative that is more representative and reflective of the abundance of Earth.

For several years I had learned about herbal medicine in the west. Learned an extensive Materia medica that utilised a variety of herbs from around the world. Some of that valuable knowledge came from cultures whose voices were not represented - from cultures like mine. Unfortunately this was not uncommon

My topic for the event was ‘Herbs used in GaDangme Medicine and ritual’, and one thing i must say, Is how much the spirituality stood out in this conference. It was not separate from the practice of herbalism and far from reductionist.

Over 1000 people attended the online conference from around the world. Over two days we not only had lectures but also making and taking sessions and networking events where people expressed their emotion at having a space where their feelings were recognised and acknowledged - a few times a couple of us felt teary about having a platform that recognised the value of what we always knew.

One thing I realised was how much I needed this space, where I can talk about my culture and heritage and its amazing wisdom without having to justify it through a Western Lens. Where spirituality was welcomed and where we were inspired to work with the message of our heritage. If it is our aim to heal the world, mentally, physically and spiritually, We must be active in creating a space where we don’t limit the work of Mother Earth just because we are yet to understand it. We must be open to truly acknowledging the wisdom the world has to offer even if it doesn't look like us.

If you are interested in learning about the work I do as a herbalist from the GaDangme people you can find me on:

- *YouTube: www.YouTube.com/Tsofanye*
- *Instagram: @Tsofanye*

MAMI WATA .

REVISTING AFRICAN MYTHOLOGY

I had the pleasure of attending a private showing of the award-winning movie "Mami Wata" on November 18th at the BFI, and to say it was a delightful surprise would be an understatement. Directed by the talented C.J. 'Fiery' Obasi, the film not only boasted a stellar cast and a nostalgic soundtrack featuring music from Victor Uwaifo but also presented a unique touch with its black and white cinematography.

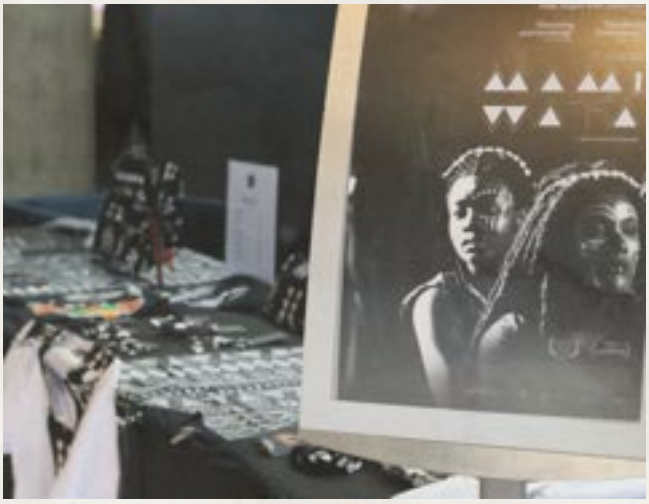
What makes "Mami Wata" even more special is that it's a creative collaboration between a husband and wife team. C.J. 'Fiery' Obasi, the husband, wrote and directed the film, while his wife, Oge Obasi, played a pivotal role as the producer, contributing significantly to the movie's success.

C J. 'Fiery" Obasi

The casting choices were a revelation, and the decision to make the film in black and white added an extra layer of nostalgia, harking back to the golden era of cinema. The use of tie and dye throughout the movie was a beautiful ode to culture, skillfully recreating a bygone era. The most remarkable aspect was the outstanding cast, with Evelyn Ily's portrayal of Prisca standing out as a personal favorite. Learning that she had to master English, sewing, and bike riding for the role only deepened my appreciation for the dedication of the cast.

The Q&A session that followed the preview, hosted by Jumoke Fashola, provided insightful perspectives on the movie's themes. "Mami Wata" tackles profound subjects such as greed, the hunger for power, the conflict between predetermined paths and personal aspirations, clashes of culture, betrayal, and the impact of westernization on traditional ways of life.

It's worth noting the challenges the production faced, including the backdrop of the COVID lockdown, lack of funding, and a lack of support due to superstitions. Despite these hurdles, "Mami Wata" stands as a testament to the resilience and dedication of the husband-and-wife team behind it, including the Fiery Film Company, Guguru Studios, Ifind Pictures, and PalmWine Media.

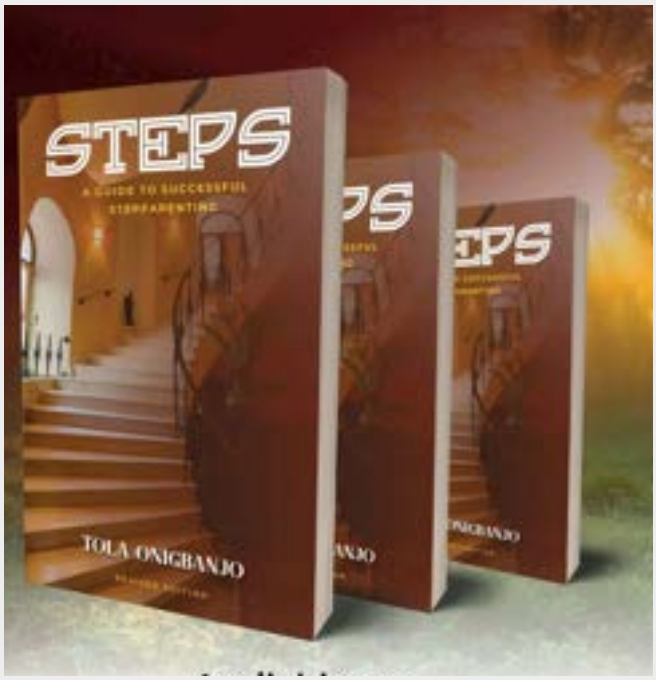


In summary, "Mami Wata" is more than just a movie; it's an African mythological masterpiece that can confidently stand alongside international giants like Thor. C.J. 'Fiery' Obasi's vision, coupled with the exceptional cast and the meticulous attention to detail, has given audiences a cinematic experience that is both nostalgic and groundbreaking. If you have the chance to see "Mami Wata," prepare to be captivated by a film that beautifully bridges the past and the present.

Written by Nena Ubani

Steps: A Guide to Successful Stepparenting

BY TOLA ONIGBANJO



If you're stepping into the world of being a step-parent and looking for some guidance, Tola Onigbanjo's book, "Steps: A Guide to Successful Stepparenting," is like a friendly hand to help you along.

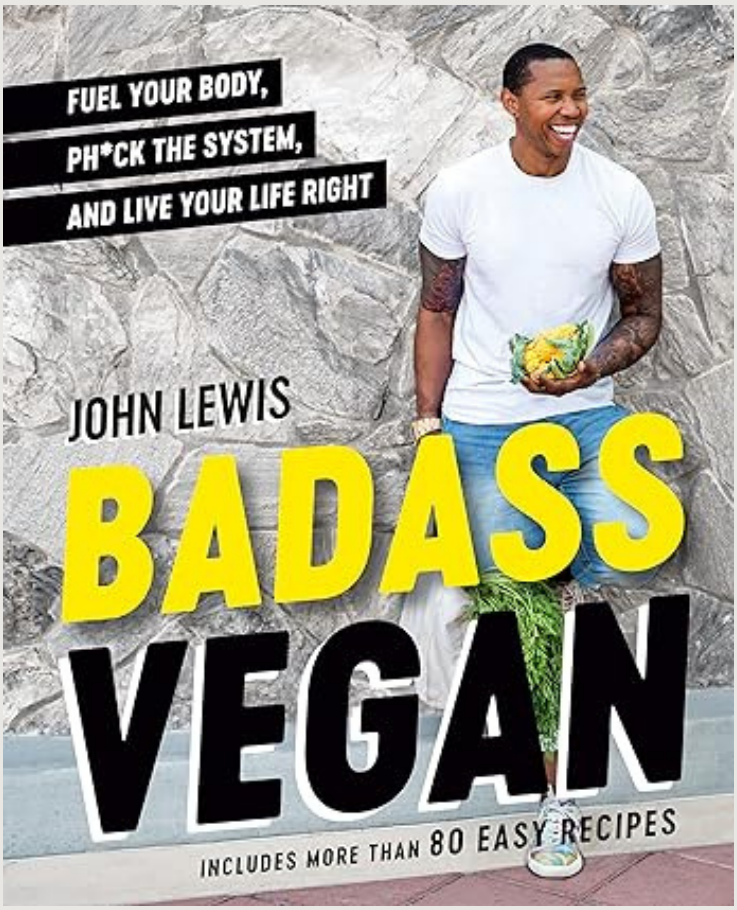
Tola writes in a way that feels like chatting with a friend. She's been there as a stepmom herself, and her book is packed with down-to-earth advice that's easy to understand. No complicated jargon–just real talk about the challenges and joys of step-parenting.

What's cool about "Steps" is that Tola gets how emotions can run high in blended families. She talks about the importance of talking openly, understanding each other, and being patient. These ideas are like building blocks for creating a strong and happy family.
Tola doesn't shy away from the tough stuff either. She talks about things like dealing with conflicts, figuring out how to co-parent, and finding the right balance in your family. And she gives practical tips that make it feel like you're not alone on this journey.

What I really liked was that "Steps" is for everyone. No matter what kind of family you have or where you come from, Tola's advice is relatable. The book includes real stories from people who've been there, making it feel like you're getting advice from a friend who's been through it all.

In a nutshell, "Steps: A Guide to Successful Stepparenting" is like having a friendly guidebook for your step-parenting adventure. Tola's friendly words and practical tips make it a must-read for anyone stepping into this role, whether you're just starting or you've been on this journey for a while.

Reviewed By Nena Ubani



"John Lewis" describes this book as a "wake you up" manifesto and plant-based lifestyle plan to challenge the system that keeps us fat, sick, and tired. "

"Badass Vegan" is a book that combines personal stories, recipes, and practical advice on how to adopt, maintain, and promote a plant-based lifestyle. The book aims to inspire and empower individuals to make positive changes in their lives and embrace a vegan lifestyle.

Here are some key points about "Badass Vegan" by John Lewis:

Personal Journey: John Lewis shares his journey from being a butcher to becoming a vegan, and how it transformed his life, health, and mindset.

He discusses the challenges he faced and the benefits he experienced through adopting a plant-based lifestyle.

Recipes: The book includes a variety of plant-based recipes, ranging from breakfast ideas to main courses and desserts. These recipes are designed to be simple, delicious, and accessible to individuals at any level of cooking experience.

Health and Wellness: "Badass Vegan" emphasizes the health benefits of a vegan diet and provides insights into how plant-based eating can improve overall well-being. It explores topics such as nutrition, fitness, and mindfulness to helpreaders achieve optimal health. rights. The book discusses the importance of advocating for animals and the planet, guiding how to become a more effective advocate in your community

Cultural Perspectives: The book does touch upon the intersection of veganism and cultural identity. John Lewis shares his experiences as an African-American vegan and how cultural influences can shape our food choices and lifestyles.

John Lewis emphasizes that being healthy is a right, not just a hobby.

Reviewed by Daniella Oshiame

AFRICAN FOOD AND DRINKS FESTIVAL 2023

The culinary scene in Nigeria recently witnessed a spectacular celebration of African diversity at the 2023 African Food and Drinks Festival, organized by the African Food Network. Spanning across Lagos and Abuja, this grand event unfolded into a rich tapestry of flavours, aromas, and cultural experiences, leaving attendees with a heightened appreciation for the continent's gastronomic wealth.

Held at Muri Okunola Park in Lagos and Tobix Garden in Abuja, the festival, which took place on November 19th and 26th respectively, drew over twelve thousand people. The air was filled with excitement as attendees indulged in a sensory delight, experiencing the

culinary richness of various African regions. Sponsors like Golden Penny Noodles, Hayche, foodblog, Malta Guinness, Imperial Blue, Rida, and Airtel added to the festivity by offering free samples and exclusive offers.

Masterful Chefs and Cooking Demonstrations:

In Lagos, a masterclass session hosted by Onga featured the expertise of Chef Giggles and Zen Master George. Blending African and Asian influences, their presentation not only showcased culinary mastery but also provided a unique tasting experience. Attendees were not only spectators but active participants in savouring the final creations.

Marketplace of Delights:

The festival's bustling marketplace hosted over 30 diverse vendors, presenting an array of dishes, snacks, spices, condiments, drinks, and unique ingredients that define African cuisine. Attendees immersed themselves not only in the delectable treats but also in the rich variety that characterizes African culinary offerings.

Cultural Showcases:

Highlighting Africa's vibrant cultural heritage, the festival featured the Eyo Masquerades in Lagos and the Ogene Cultural Group in Abuja. Dance routines and performances narrated the histories of the cities and the Igbo culture, adding a dynamic and enriching layer to the festival experience.

Global Fusion:

While rooted in African traditions, the festival embraced a global perspective, illustrating the evolution and influence of African cuisine on worldwide culinary trends. The fusion of flavours and techniques showcased the dynamic nature of African food, positioning it as a global culinary force.

Community Engagement:
The festival actively engaged the community through various activities, including cooking competitions, games, mini dancing competitions, and interactive classes. In Abuja, the festivities included horseback riding, local foods, cultural displays, face painting, dance and eating competitions, and fireworks, fostering a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere.

Cooking Competition:
The Jollof rice cooking competition in Lagos, sponsored by Onga, featured five cooks vying to create the standout Jollof dish. Online celebrity critics and judges, including yourfoodgirl, Paul Kezu, and Restaurant Critic, provided valuable input, offering the audience a chance to taste the contestants' creations.

In conclusion, the 2023 African Food and Drinks Festival was a resounding success, providing a dynamic platform for cultural exchange, gastronomic exploration, and community building. Attendees departed with a profound appreciation for the diversity and richness of African cuisine, solidifying the festival's role as a testament to the power of food in fostering connections and celebrating cultural heritage.

Embracing Plant-Based Living

WRITTEN BY
NIKKI BOTHA

In the course of my life, I've undergone a remarkable evolution in my dietary choices. From being an avid consumer of animal products until the age of 17, I transitioned into a vegetarian lifestyle for 18 years, only to embrace a fully plant-based existence 14 years ago. Today, as I reflect on this transformative journey, I wholeheartedly assert that adopting a plant-based lifestyle stands as the single most beneficial decision I've ever made. Let me share my insights and recommendations, encouraging you to consider this life-changing shift for yourself.

The Simplicity of Change

The decision to transition to a plant-based lifestyle might seem daunting, but from my experience, it's far simpler than anticipated. The initial step involves understanding the motivation behind this shift. It's more than just a trial; it's a commitment to a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle. I've identified four primary motivations—health, environment, ethics, and religion—each a valid reason to embark on this journey.

Health Benefits Beyond Expectation

If health is your driving force, rest assured that a plant-based lifestyle is a step in the right direction. While the transition might seem challenging initially, focusing on nutrition is crucial. Don't be swayed by misconceptions; plant-based diets can be as unhealthy as any other if not properly balanced. My rule of thumb is to embrace a colorful plate, ensuring a diverse range of nutrients.

Addressing concerns about protein, iron, and B12 is paramount. Plant-based sources such as beans, chickpeas, tofu, and lentils are not only rich in protein but also offer superior nutritional value compared to animal products. A well-informed approach to nutrition eliminates worries about deficiencies.

Three Inevitable Shifts

Upon making the decision to go vegan, anticipate three significant shifts:

- Body Transformation: Be patient, every body reacts differently. Consider a gradual transition, allowing your body to adapt.
- Social Dynamics: Prepare for diverse reactions, from support to hostility. Stay firm in your beliefs, educate gently, and weather the storm with dignity.
- Altered Perspective: Experience heightened energy levels and awareness. As stress diminishes, so does the quality of your sleep, creating a positive feedback loop.

Addressing Concerns Head-On

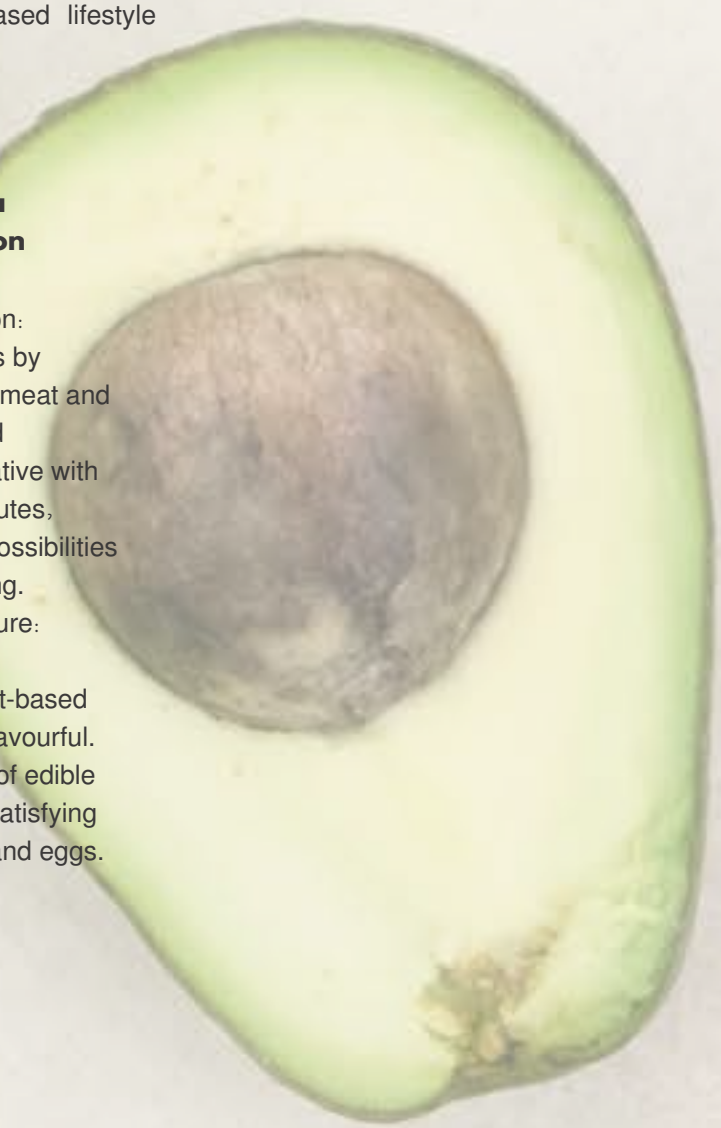
- Nutrition: Prioritize colourful, nutrient-rich meals. Diversify protein sources and dispel worries about iron and B12 with a well-rounded plant-based diet.
- Environmental Impact: Understand the profound impact of animal agriculture on the environment. Your dietary choices can play a crucial role in shaping a sustainable future.
- Ethics: Going vegan is a personal, courageous choice. Stand firm against opposition, knowing you're contributing to a more just and compassionate world.
- Religious Perspective: Many religions advocate compassion towards all living beings, making a plant-based lifestyle worth exploring.

Practical Tips for a Seamless Transition

- Cooking Transition: Ease into the process by gradually eliminating meat and exploring plant-based alternatives. Get creative with dairy and egg substitutes, embracing the vast possibilities of plant-based cooking.
- Flavour and Texture: Contrary to common misconceptions, plant-based food is diverse and flavourful. Explore the plethora of edible plants and discover satisfying substitutes for dairy and eggs.

Embrace the Journey

Embarking on a plant-based lifestyle entails more than just altering your diet; it's a holistic transformation that extends to your well-being, the environment, and ethical considerations. The initial challenges are temporary, and you're not alone in this journey. Seek support, stay committed, and witness the transformative power of embracing a plant-based existence. Your health, the planet, and countless lives will thank you for it.



My Journey To VEGANISM AND CLIMATE CONSCIOUSNESS

My consciousness about the unnecessary killing of animals for human consumption dates back to my childhood. Additionally, I developed a strong desire for cleanliness. In December 2015, an encounter with a like-minded vegetarian left a lasting impression, and although still an omnivore at that point, I made a sudden decision to become a vegetarian in March 2016. Research on vegetarianism led me to discover the term "vegan," and within a week, I fully embraced the vegan lifestyle, later learning about its health and environmental benefits.

My love for spending weekends on the beach was marred by the littering habits of beachgoers. Displeased, I joined forces with like-minded individuals to clean the beachfront briefly.

In 2021, I became part of the Animal Save Movement, joining the Health Save Movement and establishing the Lagos Health Save chapter. Our focus is on spreading knowledge about the health benefits of veganism, organizing quarterly vegan hangouts funded by the NGO, sponsors, and vegan vendors.

In July 2023, discovering Rite on the Beach on Instagram, I joined their monthly beach clean-up. The highlight was the recycling of collected trash, making the clean-up efforts worthwhile.

In August 2023, I collaborated with Rite on the Beach through Lagos Health Save, hosting volunteers to delicious and healthy vegan meals after the cleanup. The aim was to educate volunteers on the correlation between adopting a plant-based lifestyle and climate care, emphasizing that one can enjoy tasty and nutritious meals on a plant-based diet.

With two successful collaborations to date, the latest on November 18, 2023, we anticipate many more collaborative efforts in the future.

BY MODUPEOLA OGUNNIYA

The US VS Europe

Exploring US as a vegan of colour

By Nena Ubani

Traveling as a vegan of color can be a unique and enriching experience, offering a fresh perspective on food culture and accessibility. In this article, we will delve into the differences I encountered in food labeling, accessibility, dining out, and variety during my travels in the United States and Europe.

Specifically, my journeys took me to Atlanta, New York, North Carolina, Houston, Las Vegas, and Detroit in the US, providing a stark contrast to my experiences in various European destinations.

Food Labeling: One of the noticeable disparities I encountered in the United States was the inconsistency in food labeling. While some products clearly display vegan or vegetarian labels, many others lacked such transparency. In contrast, European countries tend to have more standardized and easily recognizable vegan labeling, making it easier for travelers to identify suitable options.

Accessibility: Accessibility to vegan options varied significantly between my US and European travels. In the US, major cities like New York and Atlanta offered a plethora of vegan-friendly restaurants, but in less urban areas like North Carolina, I found limited choices. On the other hand, Europe often excelled in accessibility, with vegan options being readily available even in smaller towns and rural areas.

Dining Out: Dining out as a vegan in the US was a mixed experience. In cities like New York and Los Angeles, I could easily find diverse and high-quality vegan restaurants. However, in more conservative regions like the southern states, it often required extensive research and planning to locate suitable dining options. European cities, in contrast, consistently provided vegan choices in various types of eateries, from street food vendors to high-end restaurants.
Variety: In terms of culinary diversity, both the US and Europe had their own unique offerings. In the US, I was delighted to explore a wide array of vegan fast food and plant-based versions of classic American dishes.

Southern cuisine in places like Atlanta and North Carolina had their vegan interpretations, albeit fewer in number. European cities like Paris, Barcelona, and Berlin boasted a rich tapestry of plant-based options with a more international flair, reflecting the diversity of the continent.
Conclusion: As a vegan of color, my travels in the United States and Europe offered a captivating exploration of the world of plant-based cuisine. While the US showcased dynamic and evolving vegan scenes in urban hubs, it also had its share of challenges regarding labeling, accessibility, and variety. In contrast, Europe presented a more consistent and accessible vegan landscape, even in smaller towns. Ultimately, both regions have their unique charms for vegan travelers, making each destination a rewarding experience in its own right.

WORD SEARCH

D Y D A F L J G I U U F Z C K
I E Z L E X S B F F H L B H Z
F W S N A W G G O A F N O I Z
U L T A K N D T B F V S X C N
W I D M B A O Q U I N O A K A
L E T Z D T L I E W A O T P G
N A T I E S N E T H Q Y S E E
G G Y C G D C A E I F Z A A V
B A H N T B W P L U R W E S F
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A V O C A D O S P V C Q J M I
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Agave
Avocado
Chickpea
Hummus
Kale
Lentil
Nutritional
Plantbased
Quinoa
Seitan
Spirulina
Tempeh
Tofu
Vegan
yeast

Harmattan Beauty Regime

By Daniella Oshiame

The Harmattan is a dry and dusty season in West Africa from November to March, with a northeast wind blowing from the Sahara to the Gulf of Guinea, and its name comes from the Twi language word haramata.

During the harmattan season, it is essential to take extra care of your skin to protect it from the harsh and dry weather conditions. Here are some beauty rituals and skin protection tips you can follow:

HYDRATE: Drink plenty of water to keep your skin hydrated from within.

MOISTURIZE: Use products that contain ingredients like hyaluronic acid, or glycerine which help to lock in moisture.

SUN PROTECTION: Even during the harmattan season, it's important to protect your skin from the sun's harmful UV rays. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher to shield your skin from damage.

LIP CARE: The dry harmattan weather can cause chapped lips. Use a lip balm to keep your lips moisturised and protected. Avoid licking your lips, as saliva can worsen dryness.

GENTLE CLEANSING: Use a mild and hydrating cleanser to avoid stripping your skin's natural oils. Avoid hot showers as they can further dry out your skin. Instead, use lukewarm water and limit your shower time.

EXFOLIATION: Regular exfoliation helps to remove dead skin cells and promote cell renewal. However, during the harmattan season, it's best to use gentle exfoliants to avoid irritating your skin. Consider using a chemical exfoliant with ingredients like AHAs or BHAs.

THE ELEPHANT GUARDIANS

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

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WINTER GARDEN GALLERY, BROOKFIELD PLACE, NEW YORK

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