

Reclaiming the magic of menstrual cycle
BLOOD SISTERS

by Aiste Anandi



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welcome



Join thousands of women who have already started to work with their menstrual cycle, to create health and balance, and unlock the natural freedom and joy that comes from being grounded in feminine power. Here's the thing....

The menstrual cycle is a normal, vital and vitally important process in a woman, and a healthy menstrual cycle is a sign that your overall health is good. Treating the cycle as the enemy is one of the key causes of menstrual suffering in fact, making sure your cycle is happy is the number one practice for any woman wanting to feel well and on top of her game!

Aiste Anandi

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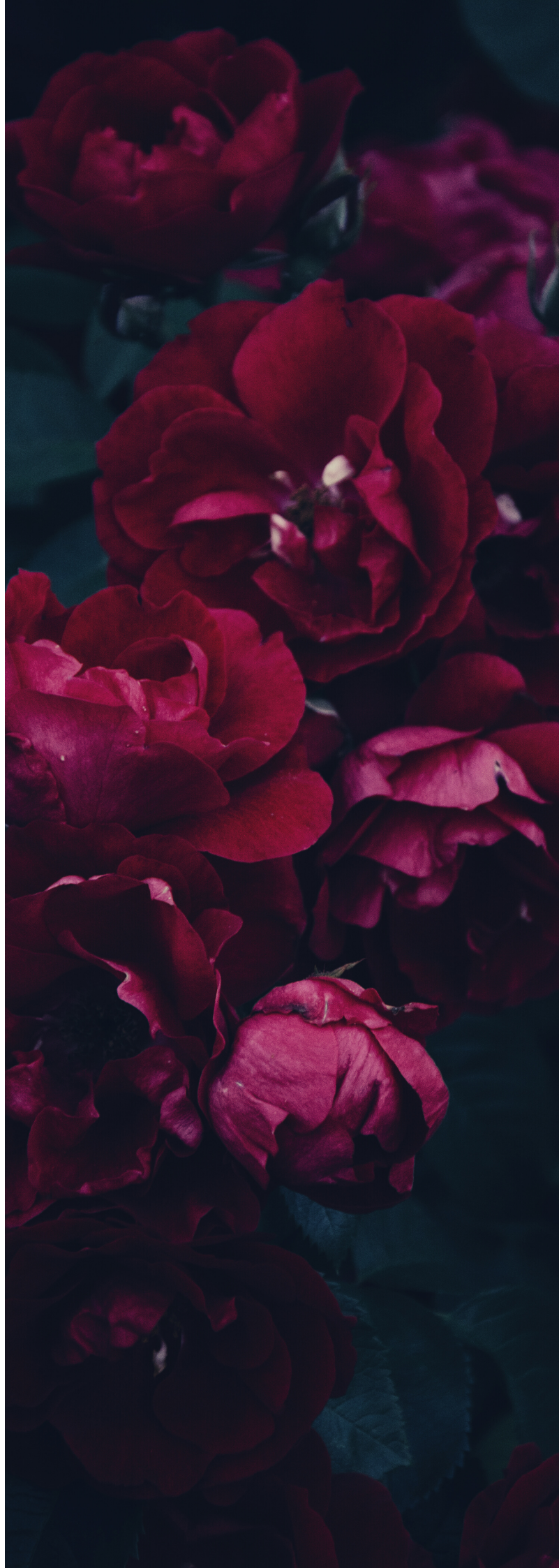


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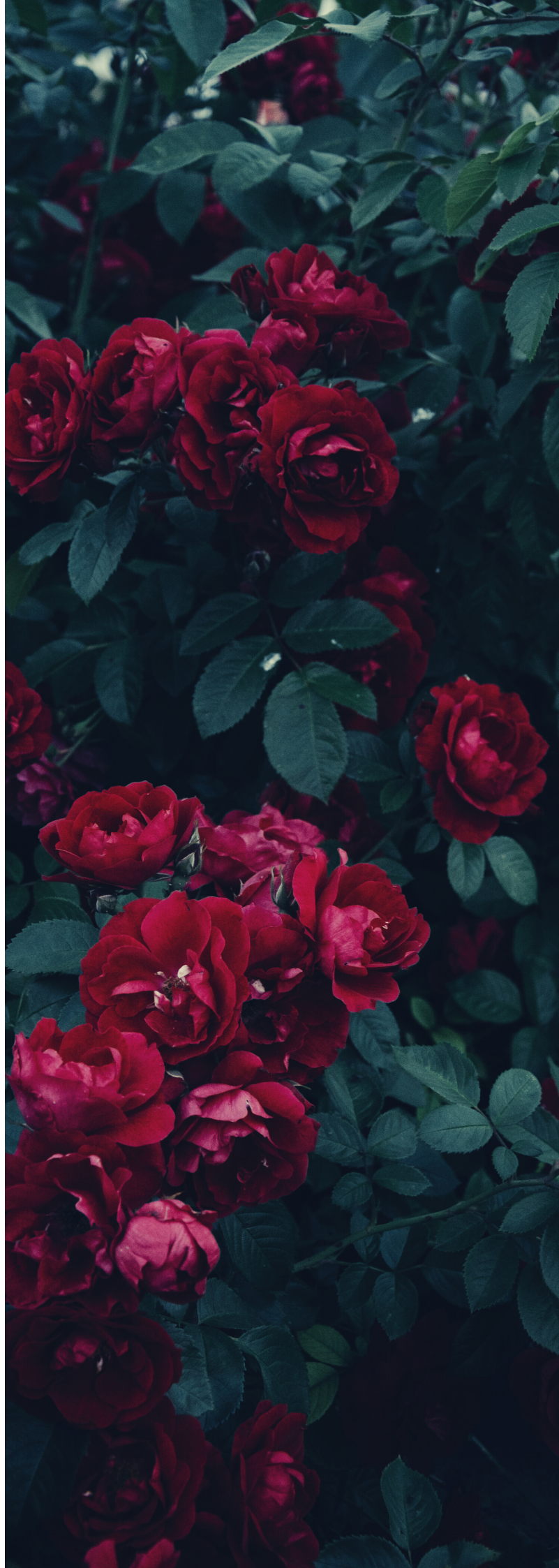
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01 THE HEALING POWER OF MENSTRUATION

If:

- you're suffering from menstrual pain or irregular periods and want to learn to heal those naturally
- or you're wanting to explore more about your feminine power, and the consciousness of the menstrual cycle
- or perhaps you're having fertility problems

Then “Blood Sisters” e-book is for you!

In this e-book, I've brought together my top resources, practical tips, links, tools, specialized dietary guidelines and accessible rituals to support you in naturally balancing your hormones and harnessing the power of each phase. No matter what your previous experience of menstruation is, we believe that you have the power to transform your relationship to your cycle – and this book will show you how.

01



THIS IS THE MENSTRUAL
CYCLE EDUCATION YOU
NEVER RECEIVED WHEN
YOU WERE YOUNGER



01

Is my cycle magical?

Your cycle is so magical! The menstrual cycle is the stress sensitive system in women. It gives you feedback on how you are travelling emotionally and physically. And working with your cycle is also your means for managing stress, creating well being and a fertile life. In effect the cycle is both diagnostic tool and remedy. If that isn't magic, what is?!

Awareness of your menstrual cycle

- means being connected to yourself
- is a way of decoding and understanding yourself at any one moment
- and an excellent energy and stress management system

This all adds up to being a health practice par excellence. It is the woman's mindfulness practice. Sister, to know all of this is your birthright!



No matter what your previous experience of menstruation is, I believe you have the power to transform your relationship to your cycle. You deserve to learn how to use your period as a source of power. and I want to show you how.

5 Key things to know about your cycle:

1

The cycle keeps you intimately connected to yourself

Can help you to feel more grounded, and give you more clarity and choice about your life and thereby create more harmony and ease. Women often comment that they feel like they have 'come home', and feel more optimistic and alive.

2

The cycle is a system of generation and regeneration

Simply put, it reminds you that there is a time for doing and a time for rest, a time to initiate and time to hold back. Respect for the cycle will help you to create a more sustainable life so that you don't burn out.

3

The cycle gives you feedback

The more you tune into the cycle the more you will be able to 'read' yourself. Disturbing symptoms are feedback on your overall well being physically and psychologically especially in the premenstrual time. Think of it like an early warning system encouraging you to pay more attention to your body and soul.

4

The cycle helps you to let go of control

Yes, the apparent loss of control premenstrually is a healthy release which we encourage you to let yourself have in a safe, protected environment so that no one will shame or judge you for being 'less together'. When you let yourself feel vulnerable and have a good cry, you can open the way to a quiet, sweet connection to your truth. Obviously, it's not good if your reactions are extreme and damage your relationships and capacity to work.

If that is the case, your being is seriously asking for help and it's vital you get nourishing, wise support for yourself.

*YOU DESERVE TO USE
YOUR PERIOD AS A
SOURCE OF YOUR
POWER!*

5

Menstruation is a place of release that is healing

You have to completely let go, even if it's only for an hour or two, to access this healing. This will make more and more sense to you if you really let yourself have the full experience of menstruation. What you experience may vary from month to month depending on what is going on in your life.

For example, if you've had a very stressful time, you may find in the first few hours of bleeding that you simply can't move. Don't move. Be utterly still within the altered state of menstruation—drift, dream, and then watch what happens. Your body is simply doing the work of releasing the build-up of tension from the previous days/weeks. It is a good health maintenance practice and can also ease period pain.



To get back to our bodies we need to find their own inner equilibrium one more, as well as to harmonise with, rather than fight against the bio-cycles that they have intelligently evolved in response to. To enable them to do this in this unbalanced word environment, we need to consciously and constantly reconnect with them. Why? Because our bodies have natural healing states build into them cyclically. The most obvious for all of us being the nightly sleep cycle. But most women's bodies have further cycles build in. Menstruation and the post-partum period are the two of most obvious.

At these times they enter a different state of conscious, releasing the toxins and toxic emotions from the previous cycle, resting deeply, and allowing for the regeneration of the tissue and the psyche. Or rather they do if we allow them to.

“

"When we mend our relationship with our cycles, we mend our relationship with ourselves and pave a healthier inner voice for our daughters and our sons about what it means to be a woman who bleeds."

Why women are so sick?

Learning to live by both our inner female rhythms and the outer bio-rhythms is vital for our health as women. We are staying sick because we are disconnected from our inner life-cycles and engaged instead with the life-denying, destructive-cycles of patriarchal culture.

When we reconnect with the feminine, with the cycles of nature within and outside of us, our bodies shift into life-affirming cycles once more. Once the flow state is re-established, once the physical and emotional blocks to it have been removed, our healing response can unfold naturally.

As the culture we ignore these recovery periods, and label them as times of weakness and taboo. Our attitude towards them combines our distaste for the Feminine, for sickness, bodies and death. Whereas actually they are a core part of the body's innate healing mechanism. As are the times when we are bedridden with illness, delirious with fever, exhausted or depressed. Our bodies detach us from calendars and clock, sequestering us from busyness, enforcing a break with daily life, allowing the mind and body to be still and enter the more trance-like state of consciousness necessary for healing.





02 4 WOMAN'S INNER SEASONS (EXPLAINED WEEK BY WEEK)

The structural breakdown of the menstrual cycle week by week is based on the ancient women's wisdom. I'm going to explain the seasons week by week from my own perspective with various creative additions I've made to my own cycle-tracking over the years. Keep in mind that as you get to know your own cycle, you'll be able to create a chart unique to how your body ebbs and flows with the seasons each month. Please don't feel discouraged if your cycle is irregular or certain phases are longer than average.

You can still use this information as a guide to building a strong relationship with your body. As you understand the energies and signs of each phase, you'll be able to tune in and sense where you're at even if it's different each month.

Week 1: Inner Winter – Around day 1-6 of your menstrual cycle when you're bleeding.

Week 2: Inner Spring – Around day 7-13 when you're in the pre-ovulation phase.

Week 3: Inner Summer – Around day 14-21 during your ovulation phase.

Week 4: Inner Fall – Around day 22-29 during your luteal phase (winding down again).

WEEK 1
INNER WINTER

Around day 1-6 of your menstrual cycle when you are bleeding.



Week 1

Phase – Bleeding (Moon Time) New Moon

Season - Inner Winter (5 days)

Archetype – Wise Woman/Crone/Visionary

Goddess - Calleach, Hecate

Winter or the Wise Woman phase begins on Day 1 of your moon time. This is the first day you begin bleeding, and it's week one of your cycle.

Winter is a time of inward reflection, a time of metaphorical death. The bleeding phase of your cycle is the time where your energy and hormones are at an all time low. Most women when left to their own devices will take more rest on the first few days of their moon time. Hibernation and rest are two qualities that accurately characterize what this phase is about for a woman, but there's also a spiritual element woven in. According to ancient women's wisdom, the winter phase, or wise woman/crone phase is a time when the veil between worlds becomes thinner. A woman on her moon is said to be more powerful and have deeper access to her own wisdom. In more ancient times, women would separate from the men during their bleeding time to gather in menstrual huts or tents to renew and tune in to the spirit world. As a woman moves into her inner winter, she might find it irritating when family members, partners or friends are asking her to "do things" for them during this phase. Winter is not a time to give to others, but to ourselves. Learning to be self-loving during this time is the healthiest behavior we can adopt for ourselves and our families. I like taking baths, having movie nights at home with my partner, spending the days alone creating or writing/reading in bed, sleeping, and being in nature.

Keywords: Peace and quiet, rest, alone time, solo-time, don't make demands of me, give me space, I want to feel safe and cozy, I'm not available right to you right now, sensitivity, wisdom, creativity, letting go, renewal.

WEEK 2
INNER SPRING

Around day 7-13 when you are in
the pre-ovulation phase.



Week 2

Phase: Pre-ovulatory/ Follicular

Seasons: Inner Spring (9 days)

Archetype: Goddess

Goddess: Athena, Aphrodite

Ahhh spring phase! This also represents the Goddess or Maiden Archetype. Spring is the second week of your cycle.

Think rebirth, renew, fresh-start, cleansed, energized and happy. As a woman moves into her inner Spring phase, she's ready to get back into the world slowly and take on new projects, start planning and organizing her month. Inner Spring is a re-emerging after a period of hibernation from the world. During this phase, the hormone estradiol (an estrogen) is rising and energy levels start making a come back. This is an optimal time to dedicate focused time to projects, reading and researching, learning, and performing physical tasks. You might find this is the best time to move, or to take on a challenge. I personally find myself wanting to spend more time alone working during this time so I can get into the zone.

Keywords/ phrases: Rebirth, renewal, fresh-start, productive, focused, independent, learning, strong, able to take on challenges, physically energized, concentration.

WEEK 3
INNER SUMMER

Around day 14-21 during your
ovulation phase.



Week 3

Phase: Ovulation (Full Moon)

Seasons: Inner Summer (9 days)

Archetype: Mother, Healer

Goddess: Freya, Gaia

Summer phase is when things begin to heat up – literally and metaphorically. This is the third week of the menstrual cycle, where ovulation occurs.

A woman with a 29.5-day cycle may ovulate on the 14th day, though some will ovulate a bit earlier or later. I ovulate on day 17 for example, and my cycle varies from 29.5 to 33 days. During the summer phase or mother phase, a woman's energy is more expressive and outward. She may feel more social, and this is a great time to focus on community building, nurturing relationships, hosting, cooking or being of service to others. Summer week is the most enjoyable time for taking care of children, offering friends support and having lots of delicious sex with your partner, with caution of course, because while pleasure is heightened at this time, so is your fertility. Oh, and by the way, some research suggests that ovulation is the best time to ask for what you want – whether that be from your partner, or asking for a raise at work.

Keywords/Phrases: outward and expressive, flirty, creative, playful, community-focused, relationship building, service, nurturing, love-making, creating, building, holding space for others.

WEEK 4
INNER AUTUMN

*Around day 22-29 during your
luteal phase.*



Week 4

Phase: Luteal (Waning Moon)

Season: Inner Autumn (9 days)

Archetype: Wild Women/ Priestess

Goddess: Lilith, Kali

Fall is the fourth week of your cycle, and this is where things start winding down.

A woman might notice herself feeling more inward at this time. She may become agitated by excessive demands placed upon her, craving more spaciousness and time alone. As an entrepreneur, I schedule my life according to my cycle. I purposefully schedule days off leading up to my cycle, dedicating time to my self-care. I encourage the women I coach and mentor to do the same. If we disown our own needs, PMS may intensify and wreak havoc in our lives. There are many practitioners of women's health who propose that PMS is symptomatic of our times. While we can attempt to ignore our bodies needs, our body talk often gets louder as a result and manifests as extreme irritability and fatigue, among other symptoms. Choosing consciously to acknowledge this inward phase is a courageous act of self-love. When a woman listens to her body during the Fall or Wild Woman/Priestess phase, she may be full to the brim with inspiration, and find herself more inclined to dedicate her waning energy towards pursuing creative ideas. This is a wonderful time to nurture one's own creative insights, write poetry, draw, come up with strategic ideas for your business or career, and assert yourself.

Keywords/Phrases: lower energy, hormones are dipping, need more space, ask less of me, I don't want to give right now, moody, less focus and concentration, I want to create, less coordinated, mentally creative, less physically active, heightened creativity, assertive, strategic.

FEMALE ENERGY CYCLE



03

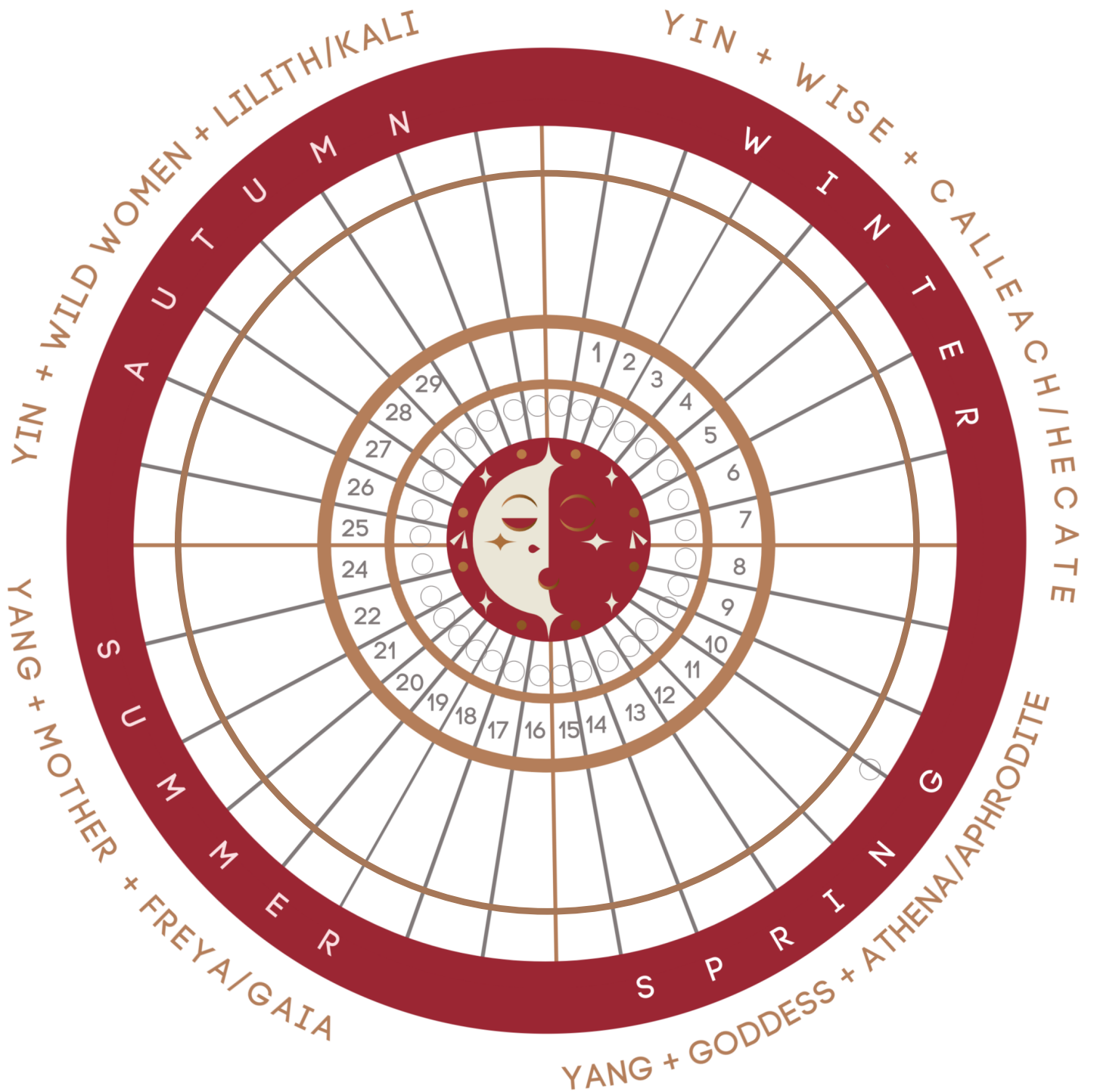
CHARTING THE CYCLE

Working from inside out...

- The inner segment with the round circle is for making the current moon phase, if its full moon fill all the circle, if it's new moon paint just a tiny bit and so on.
- The next segment with the number is the days of the menstrual cycle, print the chart double sided for cycles longer than 30 days side two becomes 31. 1 is always the first day of your bleeding.
- The next long blank segment is for writing down symptoms, moods, emotions, energy levels or whatever you feel will help you gain a better understanding of your cycle
- The next small blank segment is for the date
- The outermost segment that runs a circle around the whole chart has many different uses. A friend of mine uses colour coding, I do something similar. You may wish to mark the seasons of your cycle and transition at the end during your cycle and transition at the end during your cycle analysis or you might like to use it for additional notes.
- I often have much more to write than fits in these small segments so as you will see in the example chart I write around the edge and sometimes on the back!

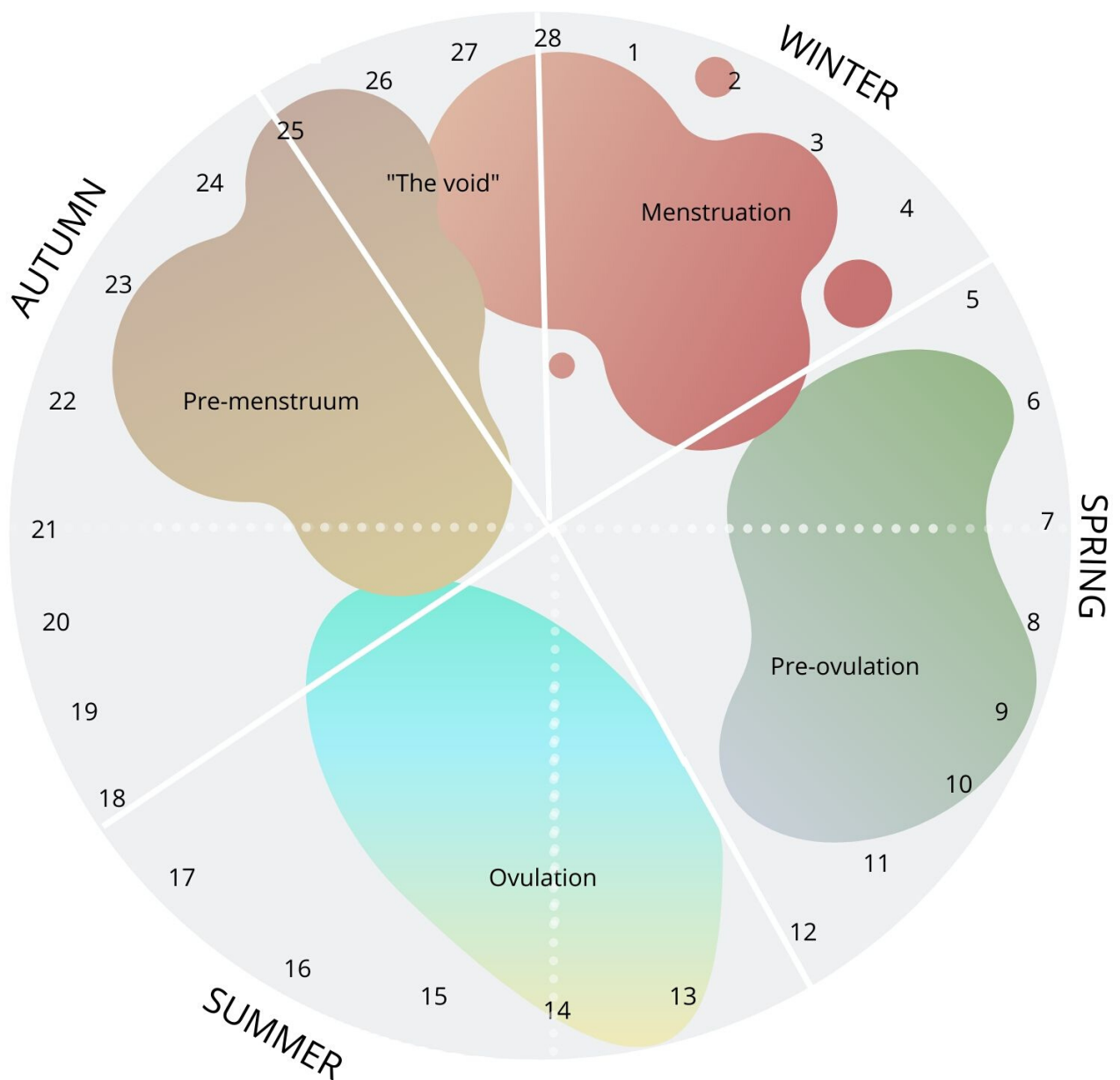
I also like to use the inner segment to mark my menstrual cycle flow rate, cervical mucus and moon phase zodiac and usually keep a tally in the corner of sexual contact, times I cried, creative days, conflicts as a measure of my emotional wellbeing each cycle. The options are endless.

Feel free to print the graphic below for your own cycle charting!



How Does Irregular Cycle Looks Like?

Most people who menstruate don't have a consistent 28-day cycle. It's normal for there to be some variation from person to person, and also from cycle to cycle. Sometimes my cycle is 27 days, sometimes it's 31 days. If you have a natural menstrual cycle you will ALWAYS be somewhere on this cycle, in one of these phases, or in a crossover phase, transitioning between one phase and the next. Look at the picture below.



How do the seasons work in an irregular cycle?

If you have a natural menstrual cycle, and you're ovulating and menstruating, no matter the length... you're still going to be moving through the four seasons.

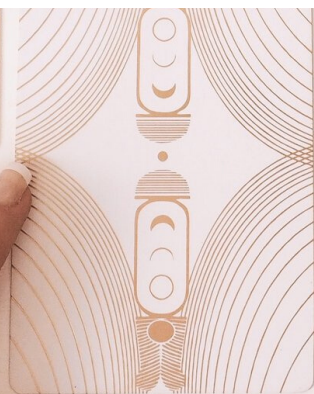
- **Your Winter** is the clearest season to identify, because it's when you have your period. That's easy.
- **Your Spring** is going to start when your period comes to an end, and it's characterised by an increase in oestrogen. It's going to end a few days-days-ish before ovulation. This means that if you have a longer cycle, as you are ovulating later, then you have a lengthier Spring.
- **Your Summer** is always characterised by ovulation. If you are ovulating earlier, then you're going to have a shorter Spring and Summer will come early. A 'normal' cycle might mean that day 12 marks the beginning of Summer, while someone who has a longer cycle, and ovulates later, could still be in Spring on day 12.
- **Your Autumn** will begin after you ovulate, about 4 – 7 days after. For some, it might feel like it begins earlier. Autumn is characterised by an increase in progesterone, and progesterone is dependant on a successful ovulation. So you need to have ovulated to move into Autumn.

MY TIP: Get to know where your two poles of menstruation (Winter) and ovulation (Summer) are, and the other two seasons will fall into place. To know this you have to start charting your cycle.

01 RITUALS: HOW TO CELEBRATE THE CYCLE

INNER WINTER:

-
- Be open and honest about your cycle. There is no shame in being a woman. If you need to take more time for yourself because you're having painful cramps, that isn't something you need to hide. Adorn yourself! I have red sheets that I put on the bed during moon time, a red towel, and I often wear more red clothing during my moon time as well as well I like to wear my favourite moon goddess necklace only on my bleeding days. Do not accept rude or berating comments from men or partners around your moon cycle. Educate gently and kindly, but set firm boundaries. If a partner is grossed out by your body, this is a red flag and I do not suggest ignoring it.
-
- Restorative Yoga (heat packs/ hot water bottles can be great here)
- Yoga Nidra - guided deep relaxation
- Naps - yum!
- Self-enquiry and Journaling
- Intention setting and Visioning
- Meditation
- Breath Awareness - practices that are soothing for the nervous system
- Soothing Herbal Teas - Ginger/ Raspberry Leaf/ Fennel/Peppermint/ Chamomile
- Oracle cards
- Pull back from always consuming information - have a break from Social Media
- Create your own 'Red Tent' space - a devoted area for you at your moon time (even if you have to put it away each time) and then:
- Create a Moon Time altar - decorate it with red flowers, crystals, candles etc - whatever feels right for you
- Using Natural Menstrual Products - moon cups and cloth pads
- Essential Oils like Lavender, Roman Chamomile, Frankincense, Clary Sage (in diffuser)



INNER SPRING:

From around Day 7 you begin to arise from the depths of Winter and feel the shift into your Inner Spring - a time of new beginnings, possibility and potential. In Spring you can start to feel and harness the budding energy building, and (slowly) begin bringing the seeds you planted in the Winter to fruition. This is a great time to implement new rituals into your daily life as you are feeling inspired and filled with energy. The Maiden archetype is evident here and you will perhaps feel playful, innovative, abundant, courageous, sensual and inspired.

- Feminine Yoga
- Beach walks
- Light Exercise
- Massage
- Meditation
- Journaling
- Self Love practices - breast massage/ mirror gazing
- Essential Oils in the diffuser for cultivating and harnessing that energy:
 - Citrus: orange/lemon/mandarin/bergamot
 - Minty - peppermint/ wintergreen/ spearmint
 - Spicy: cardamon/ black pepper/ cinnamon bark/clove/ frankincense
- Mindful + clean eating
- Beauty regimes and pampering that leave you feeling amazing!
- Nature time/ Bushwalking
- Swimming - for pleasure or exercise



INNER SUMMER:

After the Spring comes the fullness of Summer (and ovulation - around Day 14) and the peak of your energy during your cycle. This is a time to get expressive and use all that creative potential - in your work, life or the bedroom!

Aligned with the energy of the Full Moon and the archetypes of the Mother and the Sensual Siren, this is the time to have fun, play, not take life too seriously, share your love and bring the seeds of intention planted in the Winter and nourished in the Spring to manifestation.

Your focus is outwards and you may very well feel like you have the world at your feet - nothing can stop the energy of Summer!

Really this is the phase where you can go for it, however here are a few suggestions:

- More 'yang' style Yoga
- Stronger Activities in Nature - canoeing, paddle boarding, bushwalking - again this is totally personal
- Naked swims are perfect for this phase!
- Active exercise - bike riding, gym workouts, dancing - harness that energy with whatever turns you on!
- Tap into and cultivate your abundant sexual energy - solo or with a partner
- Connect with your sisters - this is your social phase!
- Massage
- Tantric love making rituals
- Yoni Egg practise



INNER AUTUMN:

Your Inner Autumn begins around Day 21 and lasts until your womb is ready to shed. As your hormones drop you may feel the need for more sleep, so honour your changing rhythms and rest when you need to.

The Wild/ Wise woman archetype is your guide through the Autumn - and she is untameable, fierce, sovereign and has a 'no bullshit' approach!

This is a potent creative time for you - and as you feel the waning energy drawing you close to bleeding, you can experience a final surge to get things done and finish projects so you can fully rest come Winter.

Autumn can also be the time you are most likely to fall prey to self-sabotage and inner judgement so it's crucial to hold yourself with kindness and compassion, and not take on too much in this phase.

- Creative projects - get crafty, write, paint, work with the clay, - mix it up!
- Gentle Yoga/ Exercise - can help to stimulate endorphin release, regulate hormones and lessen stress, Yin yoga does miracles in this phase!
- Nature walks
- Meditation on Wild Woman archetype
- Take extended periods off Social Media (comparisonitis can be rife this phase)
- Self-enquiry
- what did and didn't flow last cycle?
- what are my visions/ intentions for the coming cycle?
- Sleep ins and naps - in fact make sleep a priority!
- Nourishing and warming foods - the digestive system can be a little sluggish during this phase (try and give sugar a miss too)



Reach in before you reach out:

CHECK UP QUESTIONS:

1. Can you remember the day of your first menstruation? What kind of emotions you felt on this day. How your family/friends reacted to this event?
2. How is your relationship with period at the moment? Is it painful, irregular or maybe enjoyable or you don't have it at all at this period of your life.

YOUR FIVE DAILY QUENSTIONS:

1. What is the moon phase today?
2. Which phase of my moon cycle of feminine rhythm am I today?
3. How is my body feeling? (Physical signals like: body sensations, sexual/cervical fluid etc.)
4. What's alive in me today? (Mentally emotionally & deep in your heart/womb)
5. What does my Inner Woman desire or need today?

05 SOOTH, NOURISH AND HEAL

This chapter is all about the slowing down and nourishing our body temples!

We are all far too wired today for our own good. Our bodies are under constant stress from our 24/7 high tech lifestyles: a permanent state of hyperarousal and a downpour of adrenaline and cortisol all wreaking havoc with our health and most especially our hormonal health.

Anything that gives you pleasure, puts you in the slow lane is good for your menstrual well being—as long as it's natural and not drug induced of course. I am introducing you to the key tools, resources and practices for soothing and nourishing your body temple in order to heal irregular cycle or painful periods. Your number 1 tool for soothing it's being aware of your menstrual cycle or menstrual cycle awareness as I like to call it.

By accepting and cooperating with the emotional and energetic pattern of your cycle, its natural ups and downs, you naturally become more conscious of your needs, pacing yourself better and therefore getting less hyper and adrenalised. It also means you are cultivating stronger boundaries that make it so much easier to say 'No' to others and 'Yes' to yourself.

Lots of women healed their menstrual pain by reducing her workload in the premenstruum. My top advice would be to reduce work in your inner winter and rest as much as possible during menstruation. At menstruation you can get a fabulous wash of the love hormone oxytocin if you really let go and rest.

It's that simple! Why don't you try to access it at your next period. It's blissful!

My TOP Tips for Menstrual Cycle Healing:

Sleep

A regular healthy sleep routine - this should be top of everyone's list. There is no substitute for the healing forces of a good night's sleep. There's tons of great information online that can support you in improving the quality of your sleep.

Yoga Nidra

Yoga nidra is a wonderful deep meditative process. You'll find lots of free MP3s you can download and listen to. Deeply nourishing of your body/being. Check out Uma Dinsmore Tulli [nidras at www.yoganidranetwork.com](http://www.yoganidranetwork.com)

Earthing

Earthing: get outside and walk barefoot on the earth, sit and relax touching nature. There are also products that you can buy so that you can be earthed while inside your own home.

Eat right for you

Eat a non inflammatory diet. Eating the right diet for you can literally soothe your system, reduce anxiety and reduce menstrual problems (and all other health issues too).

Energy Medicine

Donna Eden's Energy Medicine this is another form of energy work that is excellent for restoring flow to the body's energy systems, creating balance and healing. Another essential for your self care tool kit. At Red School we run on this work and EFT!

Dance

Dancing with awareness of your body, thoughts and feelings. This is my favourite! .Play your favourite songs and allow your body to move you.

Emotional Freedom Technique

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) this practice is so easy to do and works wonders at releasing stress and blocked emotions which can in turn help you to heal. It needs to be in everybody's self care tool kit.

*THE THINGS THAT
MAKE YOU DIFFERENT
ARE THE THINGS THAT
MAKE YOU BEAUTIFUL.
DON'T EVER CHANGE
TO BE MORE LIKE
SOMEONE ELSE.*

Womb Yoga

Womb yoga: we love the work of Uma Dinsmore Tuli. It soothes, replenishes and awakens you to the power of the feminine way. If you can get to a class do it. And if you can't grab her book Yoni Shakti. Come to think of it, grab her book anyway.

Yogic breathing

Yogic breathing e.g. alternate nostril breathing. Alexandra swears by it and learnt from the book Balance Your Hormones, Balance Your Life by Dr Claudia Welch (a great book by the way especially her section on stress and hormones). You can also ask your yoga teacher if you have one.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness techniques:

A great book to introduce you to the world of mindfulness is Sane New World by Ruby Wax, easy to read, painfully funny and packed with resources.

Castor oil packs

Castor oil packs are amazing for a frazzled nervous system as well as being great for your immune system.

Healing massage

Healing Massage

Healing massage especially if you have it just before bleeding...pure bliss. It can reduce menstrual pain and soothe that premenstrual crankiness and sensitivity.

Herbal healing

Of course there are lots of wonderful herbs that help induce calm. Check out the great work and herbal healing repertoire of Susun Weed. We'd also recommend you work with a qualified herbalist.

Silence

Try silence – give yourself technology free time. Wonderful though technology is, it does hype our systems, so turn everything off and go lie on the earth if you can. We'd recommend you make this one a top priority. And it's an imperative if you want to activate that love and bliss hormone, oxytocin, at menstruation.

Nourish - Ancestral Eating

A Mediterranean type diet is one of the best for supporting health in general. It is whole foods based, primarily organic with an emphasis on vegetarian protein sources (although not exclusively vegetarian), good quality cold water fish, whole grains, fresh fruits, nuts, vegetables, and good quality olive oil. It does not contain excessive amounts of refined flour products, sugar, caffeinated products, too much red meat or dairy products. It is a brilliant base template to work off and we're going to master class it for your cycles.

I'm going to break down each stage of the menstrual cycle and look at what nourishment and energetics are best suited to each stage. Hormonally, each stage is vastly different. Many cultures have specific menstruation recipes that are prepared in a certain way at a certain time of the menstrual cycle. In India, a dish called kitchari is made with split mung beans, rice and spices such as ginger, cardamom, saffron, cumin, coriander, fennel, and cinnamon to balance blood flow to the womb. In Chinese medicine, a soup is prepared with the nourishing herb Dong Quai with red dates and chicken is eaten after bleeding to replenish the blood. The Eastern European version of this is a hearty borsht. We have lost so much of this wisdom in our modern times, but we have everything that we need to reclaim it.



Inner Winter / Follicular Phase / Day 1-6

Many different healing traditions have special recipes and rituals during the period. A common thread amongst them all is that they focus on blood and kidney restoring foods. The kidneys are associated with energy reserves in eastern medicine. In modern-day speak, we refer to this as 'the adrenal system'. The system that moderates stress in our bodies.

Foods that are best for eating during your period are pungent, salty, earthy and yin. It is the winter of the cycle and the foods are dark and earth like. The pungent taste (horseradish or wasabi are extreme examples) has a dispersing quality. These foods prevent energy from becoming heavy and stagnant. If we haven't been looking after ourselves well throughout the month, heaviness, stagnation and pain are common experiences.

EAT MORE

Protein – broth, black beans, black lentils, seafood in general (as they are high in trace minerals)

Whole grains – Rye, black or red rice, wild rice, black quinoa

Vegetables – beetroots, purple carrots, purple potatoes, burdock (gobo), mushrooms, seaweeds, romaine lettuce, radicchio, Cavallo Nero kale, purple kale

Nuts and seeds – Black sesame

Aromatic warming herbs – thyme, rosemary, bay, clove, ginger, cayenne, cumin, fennel, cardamom, juniper, horseradish, pepper

Herbal teas – Raspberry, motherwort, ginger, nettle



Inner Spring / Phase / Day 7-13

The follicular phase begins after your period has finished. All the hormones are beginning to build up again to prepare a new egg for ovulation. We are open, creative and energetic. It is the spring time of the cycle, thus spring-like foods go well. Bright fruits, light grains and delicate herbal teas. The traditional energetic for this stage is sour, which is cooling, light and stimulates digestion.

EAT MORE

Protein sources – lean meats, chicken, eggs, tempeh and tofu, good quality cold water fish – trout, clams, vongole, mussels.

Whole grains – buckwheat, basmati rice, millet, amaranth, oats

Fresh fruits – avocado, vibrant citrus (esp lemon), plum, nectarine, pomegranate, sour cherry, lycées.

Vegetables – sprouts, cabbage, radishes, asparagus, sauerkraut and kimchi, greens.

Nuts – cashews, flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds

Fats – good quality olive oil, walnut or hemp

Herbal teas – Red clover, rose, raspberry leaf, rosehips, hawthorne, elderberry, schisandra.



Inner Summer/ Ovulatory Phase/ Day 14-21

This is when we're feeling our best and on top of the world. All our hormones are tuning up for the lead event; ovulation. We are expansive and communication comes much more easily. It is the summer of our cycle. In Ayurveda, it is believed that foods that reinforce the spirit and heart, also known as "oja promoting foods", are the most nourishing now. Think clean, hearty food.

It is the time for the flavour of 'bitter'. Whilst this doesn't sound that soulful, bitter flavours support our digestive systems to process and absorb more nutrients from food. Bitter foods balance blood sugar which creates lovely smooth energy. They also assist the liver in processing the higher levels of hormones that are circulating around the body now.

EAT MORE

Protein – lamb, red lentils, tuna and salmon

Whole grains – amaranth, corn, quinoa and buckwheat.

Fruits – apricots, berries, purple and blue coloured foods, pomegranate

Vegetables – asparagus, mushrooms, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, brussels sprouts, artichoke, chicory, dandelion green

Nuts and seeds – chia, flax, pumpkin, almond

Spices and herbal teas – ginger, cinnamon, raspberry, dandelion root, schisandra, orange peel, turmeric



Inner Autumn/ Luteal Phase/ Day 21-28

The luteal phase begins after ovulation and lasts until bleeding begins. It is the autumn of our cycle. The hormones start beginning to drop and the yin element comes in. We're feeling like going within. It is also the time when PMS and cravings can arise. It is very comforting to bring in grounding and root-ing foods and herbs. It is the time of the sweet flavour (which is often why many women experience intense sweet cravings). Roots that have complex carbohydrates can cut those cravings. Think stabilising, soothing and moistening foods. The luteal phase is time to ensure we are getting ample amounts of calcium, magnesium, omega 3 oils and B-vitamins. Being replete in these nutrients prevents sugar cravings and period pain. Foods rich in zinc and selenium are also important to support progesterone production. Progesterone is the hormone that we need to sustain so we don't go pre-menstrual crazy, get skin flare ups or premature menstruation.

EAT MORE

Protein: beef, venison, kangaroo, trout, sardines, cod.

Whole grains: Brown rice, red rice, millet

Vegetables: anything from under the ground. Sweet potatoes, carrots, turnips, parsnips, onions, garlic. Greens and okra.

Nuts and seeds: Hemp seeds, almonds, walnuts, brazil nuts, sesame and sunflower

Herbal teas: nettle and dandelion leaf for fluid retention. Motherwort, rose, mugwort, tulsi, lemon balm for premenstrual tension. Fennel, chamomile, ginger, peppermint, lemon balm, licorice for bloating and digestive upset



The not good food guide—to be avoided:

- Soft drinks
- Sugar and artificial sweetener including sucralose and aspartame
- Commercially processed foods
- Soy products produced in non-traditional ways
- Coffee, tea and chocolate (raw chocolate naturally sweetened is OK occasionally)
- Hydrogenated fats and oils
- Excessive amounts of processed grain, like pasta, bread, cakes and biscuits (consider removing completely and especially if you are suffering with extreme symptoms)
- All refined vegetable oils from soy, corn, safflower, canola or cottonseed
- Processed, pasteurised, ultra-pasteurised, homogenised, low fat, skim milk, powdered milk or imitation milk
- Battery-produced eggs and factory farmed meat and fish
- Highly processed luncheon meat and sausages
- Quick-rise breads and extruded breakfast cereals
- Canned, waxed and irradiated fruits and vegetables

SACRED WOMEN, YOU ARE THE HEALER. TODAY WE MUST TRANSFORM OUR MODERN-DAY, TOXIS-FILLED, MICROWAVED KITCHEN THAT CREATES DISEASE AND SHORTEN LIVES IN A KITCHEN HEALING LABORATORY. OUR TOOLS ARE FRESHLY PRESSED JUICES, AND WHENEVER POSSIBLE LIVE, ORGANIC FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, SOUPS, SALADS, HERBS AND SPICES.

How to heal cycle with herbs?

Herbs and spices for the kitchen healing laboratory:

Cayenne: Checks profuse menstrual bleeding, improves circulation and low blood pressure.

Camomile: Contains compounds that can actually help to relieve menstrual cramps and bloating. This is because the tea can help to increase glycine in your body, which is a chemical that relieves muscle spasms and acts as a nerve relaxant to help your body relax.

Cinnamon: Stimulates the uterus, decreases menstrual flow, acts as aphrodisiac

Dandelion: Very helpful with PMS and bloating discomforts, a diuretic and digestive aid

Dulce: Is high in iron and minerals, great to use after bleeding to get the iron back to the body

Fresh gingerroot: brings on the menses

Goldenseal: Calms the stomach and the uterus. It may also aid the body in the treatment of bacterial and fungial infections.

Parsley: Has iron, vitamin A and C, iodine, magnesium and copper. Dries milk in swollen breasts. do not take parsley while bre feeding

Sage: Aids digestion, helps bring on delayed menses, promotes menstruation. Do not take sage while breasfeeding, because it can stop the flow of milk.

Sweet Basil: Cures menstrual pain, increases fertility, cures morning sickness, expels afterbirth.

Velerian: A calmative for intestinal cramps, nervousness and headaches

Raspberry Lief: This tea leaf has been consumed for centuries to naturally support healthy menstruation, tone the uterus and may be used for menstrual cramps. Drinking raspberry leaf tea before or during your menstrual cycle may help lessen or reduce cramps.

06 WOMAN'S YOGA

Woman's yoga is type of yoga that nourish every aspect of our lives as women, whether we have a womb, or not, whether we menstruate, or not, and whether we are mothers, maidens, enchantresses or crones!

Womb yoga enables us to re-connect joyfully with naturally arising inner wisdom, insight and vitality. It is both delicious and profoundly nourishing. It is healing and vitalising.

To practice Womb Yoga is to honour and embrace the original blood wisdom of your womb, or womb space energies, as the source of feminine intuition, connection, creativity and nurture. Womb Yoga is an evolving therapeutic approach to yoga specially developed to support women's health and healing.

Womb Yoga is a simple, subtle and delightful route to access feminine spiritual authority, a powerful set of techniques and attitudes for all women to use on their journeys toward spiritual empowerment, self acceptance and contentment.

I am going to share yogic asanas that helps to heal irregular and painful periods but this type of yoga can be used as a tool to heal fertility problems, low libido, sensuality and sexuality as well it can ease menopause and work as prenatal and postnatal yoga practice.

I am sharing this feminine practise in all of my retreats, workshops, circles and upcoming trainings in Ibiza. It is work I do with great joy, for I see how it nurtures, supports and empowers women and girls of all ages!



Menstrual Mala: 9 Core Practices:

1

Full Yogic Breath in Supreme Deluxe Savasana

The intention of the full yogic breath is to encourage our breath circle to be as full and wide as possible, by making space in the body.

In this practice, the breath becomes a wave flowing up to the body on the inhalation and down the body on the exhalation. Inhaling the breath flows up from the public bone to the base of the throat. Experience the rising up of the abdomen and the full sideways expansion of the ribcage.

Feel the shoulder blades moving down the back and pressing the spine forward, sense that the lifting upwards movement of the ribcage allows for a full inhalation. Allow the lungs to expand completely, and take the breath right the way up to the collarbones. As the breath leaves the body the movement of "deflation" flows down from the base of the throat to the public bone. Feel the ribs coming closer together, the whole ribcage settling back down into its starting position, and the belly moving back towards the spine a little.



2

Seed of Flower

INHALE

Wider the elbows, the easier this is. As the same time as the arms move up, allow for the knees to drop wide out to the sides so that the soles of the feet turn towards each other to touch. Let the knees drop as wide as is comfortable. The position of the body at the fullness of the inhalation will be fully open; arms above head and knees wide, soles of feet touching.

EXHALE

And reverse the opening movement: bring the hands back over the body to return to yoni mudra, and squeeze the legs closed to that the knees and ankles are touching again. By the end of the exhalation the body returns to its closed position. Continue to repeat the opening movement with each inhalation, and the closing movement with each exhalation.



3

Shakti Bandha - Grinding the Mill

Stand with your feet over hip-width apart and your knees bent. Lean very slightly forward and press the palms of the hands, and also the bases of the index fingers, onto the tops of the thighs, with the fingers pointing out to the sides.

INHALE, lengthen the spine.

EXHALE, allow for the abdomen and pelvic muscles to move swiftly upwards and inwards. Keep the breath out and "flap" the abdominal wall in and out, feeling that the movement work upwards from the pelvic muscles and the base of the abdomen around the pubic bones.

Start slowly with three repetitions of "flapping" to get a sense of how this pumping or bellows action builds heat and uplift in the body. Build up over a period of maximum of twenty breaths.

Avoid during menstruation or pregnancy. Practice with extreme caution if you have an IUCD in place or wishing to conceive.



4

Supported Forward Bend

Resting with the forehead supported brings a sense of deep tranquility.

Sit on the edge of a folded blanket or cushion, with your legs out straight and place a chair in front of you between your legs so that you can rest your head forward on the seat of chair. Put a bolster or cushion on the chair to make it right high, when is exactly perfect your lower back is completely comfortable. If it is too high, then use a bolster on the floor instead.

If it doesn't feel comfortable to have your legs straight, then bend the knees and put the feet on the floor. An alternative is to keep your legs crossed. If using this variation, swap the cross of your legs half way through the practice.



5

Chandra Sequence: Honouring the Moon

This lunar flow sequence encourages fluidity of movement and sustained self-awareness. It re-energizes and releases the pelvic area and it is best done with conscious awareness of the present position and cycle of the moon. All the movements are done on the exhalation. It is good idea to have a folded blanket or cushion under the knees throughout this practice.



5

Chandra Sequence: Honouring the Moon (2)



Repeat with right leg now and this will make one full circle.

6

Laying Twist

This makes a perfect gentle closure for any womb yoga practice. It affords the opportunity to bring the flow of the breath back into the river of energy between womb and heart.

EXHALE

Lie flat on the floor with your knees and feet together. Have a pillow under your head. Bend your left knee. Draw it up towards the belly and across the body to the right hand side. Roll over so the knee settles on the floor, or rest it on a cushion. Truck the toes of your left foot under the back of the right knee. Keep the right leg straight.

INHALE

Stretch the left arm out horizontally along the floor with the palm facing up. Move your right arm up across your body and place the palm of your right hand on top of the left hand.



7

The Queen - Hiranya Garbha

This is a blissful restorative pose, giving complete support and protection to the back of the body to promote an attitude of receptivity, acceptance and contentment. It offers the essential openness of the Open Flower above, without any physical effort. It can take a while to set up and uses lots of props but is well worth the effort because once you are in the pose, you can breath, rest or do meditative practices in total comfort for up to forty minutes or longer if you are comfortable.

You will need: a mat, cushion or folded blanket to sit on, a belt to support sacrum, a bolster or two plus a wall or bean bag to provide inclined support, and bolsters or cushions for thighs and elbows. Additional cushions for head support can be useful, plus blanket and eye bag.

Set up back support first, putting one end of bolster on cushion and leaning bolster against the wall, using bolsters, cushions or a bean bag to create a comfortable angle of around thirty degrees. Place bolsters either side of knees so they are easy to reach. Sit on cushion in front of bolster in full Butterfly. Place yoga belt around lower back, just across sacroiliac joints /either side of flat part of lower back. Take belt underneath feet so that soles are held together without any effort. Now lean back., ensure all weight of spine is supported by upright bolster. Rest hands on supports, or over your belly. When you are ready to come out, move slowly and gently.



8

Yoga Nidra

Check out www.yoganidranetwork.org for nourishing feminine Nidras recorded by Uma Dismore Tuli or Shivani Mata Francis.



9

Mudras and Meditations for honouring the feminine power

Heart-womb river gesture - Hridaya yoni nadi namaskar



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THE SECRET
TO GETTING
AHEAD
IS GETTING
STARTED

Michelle Lim

|

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07 WHAT'S NEXT?

If you are feeling called to dive fully into the sacred blood wisdom and or heal your cycle I am offering in dept 10 day online course

What's included?

- Daily lessons delivered via video and audio
- Recorded meditations, visualizations & yoga nidra
- Nourishing woman's yoga and movement practise for each phase of the cycle
- Breathwork session for each phase
- Printable charting templates
- Workbook
- 3 additional videos from top women's empowerment and menstruation advocates

For more info check our my website

www.aisteanandi.com/courses

08

USEFUL LINKS

- *Read "Wild Power" by Alexandra Pope and Sjanie Hugo Wurlitzer*
- *Read "Heavy Flow" by Amanda Laird*
- *Read "Period Power" by Maisie Hill*
- *Read "The Curse - the Cultural History of Menstruation" by Jenice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth*
- *Read "Womancode: Perfect Your Cycle, Amplify Your Fertility, Supercharge Your Sex Drive, and Become a Power Source" by Alisa Vitti*
- *Check out "Heavy Flow" podcast on Spotify*
- *Check out www.innerseasons.com online shop*
- *Check out eco-friendly menstrual products online shop:
<https://ecodreams.co.uk/>*



WANT MORE GREAT CONTENT?

Check out www.aisteanandi.com for more great content on women's wellness and empowerment. If you want to know first about upcoming retreats, workshops and trainings make sure you signing in to my monthly love letter.

[SIGN UP](#)

Aiste xoxo