



FREE

Definition of a Mother

Embrace history by learning and understanding true motherhood

Mental Health Awareness

Education on the importance of prioritizing your mental health

Garden Meditation

Understand how gardening and meditation come together and thrive

Military Appreciation

Study the history of Memorial Day, told by a local Veteran



May 2025



The History of Memorial Day

By: Bob Adner

On May 30, 1868, General John A. Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, proclaimed a day to honor the Union soldiers who died, thus making it a holiday. According to the U.S. Army Airborne & Special Operations Museum’s website, General Logan stated the following: “The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land.” People do not just decorate the graves of fallen military soldiers who defended our freedom. Many families visit graves who are special to them. Flowers are usually presented at all ceremonies, whether they are private or public.

Many cities have laid claim to starting the decoration day celebration but Waterloo, NY was the first to



officially celebrate Decoration Day on May 5, 1868. On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery to decorate the graves of more than 20,000 Civil War soldiers that were buried there, more than 600,000 died during the Civil War. In 1873, New York was the first to designate Memorial Day as an official holiday. By the turn of the century, many more cities and several states did the same.

Following World War 1, it became an occasion to honor those who passed on in all of America’s wars. In the late 1960s, U.S. Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, changing Memorial Day from May 30 to the last Monday in May. This change went into effect in 1971, allowing federal workers a three-day weekend. It has remained that way ever since, making Memorial Day an official federal holiday.



The Body Talk – Are You Listening?

By: Tara Belizaire

For many years, mental health has been stigmatized while physical wellness has been continuously promoted. However, many people fail to recognize that you cannot have one without the other. You cannot have a happy and healthy life if you prioritize one above the other. Assessing mental and physical health in more depth reveals how they are intertwined. How Does Mental Health Affect Your Physical? Lack of a healthy way to release stress can have detrimental effects on your body and lead to a variety of illnesses, including:

- PTSD
- IBS
- Anxiety
- Heart disease
- Depression
- Insomnia
- High blood pressure

All these challenges, and more, can be brought on by poor mental health. Depression and anxiety can result in numbness throughout the body, inability to move, and a sense of being stuck for weeks or months at a time.

- Depression can trigger your stress hormones, which can raise your heart rate and blood pressure putting long-term strain on your heart.
- People with depression have a higher risk of developing heart disease.
- It can also weaken your immune system, making you more vulnerable to infections.
- Depression can cause eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating.
- Eating well becomes harder but more important during depressive episodes.
- Depression can lead to trouble sleeping or oversleeping and may increase risk of neurological conditions.

As you can see, maintaining your mental health is crucial. Prioritizing and sustaining body well-being requires both mental and physical well-being. Your physical health suffers greatly when your mental state is unstable, and it may eventually result in severe illnesses.

How Does Physical Health Affect Your Mental Health?

Most of us know the importance of physical health and eating right, as most of us are aware, eating well and maintaining physical health are important; after all, “an apple a day keeps the doctors away.” Frequent exercise, either twice or four times a week, can help lower stress levels, improve motivation and fatigue levels throughout the day, and increase self-esteem. Consistent exercise increases mind-body connection and provides an enjoyable release after a stressful day. A 2012 survey of 5,000 adolescents between the ages of 10 and 15 by the Economic and Social Research Council showed that those who adopted unhealthy habits like smoking, drinking, and junk food were considerably less happy than those who led more stable, healthy lives. The study continued by demonstrating that those who participated in sports on a weekly basis were significantly happier. Good physical health will also make a positive impact on your sleep giving you better sleep quality.

If you are dealing with your mental or physical health, do not be ashamed to seek help. Even if not, everyone admits it, we all have times in our lives when we need someone to talk to or someone to give us the boost we need. Ask for help when you feel overwhelmed or know something isn’t right because we are all human and nobody is perfect. Don’t wait until you’re at your breaking point. We must pay attention to what our bodies are telling us because sometimes they can tell us what we need before we even realize it. Both physical and mental well-being are vital to existence.



Definition of a Mother

By: Victoria H

What do you think of when you hear the word “mother”? Do you picture a timeless figure? Are you thinking of one who always looked their best while tending to the children, the garden, the household, while being involved in extracurricular activities in the neighborhood? That was the gold standard for many generations, but that may not be the case anymore. Society is changing dramatically and is triggering the responsibilities and expectations of a mother to evolve as well.



Traditionally, motherhood has been synonymous with staying at home. Mothers were the homemakers, child rearers, and nurturers who upheld family life and image. The smiling 1950s housewife who manages a pristine home comes to mind. That era idealized a single version of motherhood that may not be possible with today’s household demands and pressures. Fast forward to today where the mothering role is more dynamic, complex, and diverse than ever.

Mothers can hold more identities and titles now as breadwinners, protectors, providers, educators, and healers. The constant rise in the cost of living and more opportunities for career advancement has caused a shift in the traditional family dynamics. The modern mom may work multiple jobs while pursuing higher education outside of raising children to keep the home together. On top of that stress there is pressure from social media projecting the image of the perfect parent. With the constant comparison and information overload from social media, mothers can feel overwhelmed and exhausted. The “village” has



also changed over time. Gone are the days of spontaneous outside play and carefree neighborhood trust. Today’s parents are navigating a world that often feels more isolated and judgmental than supportive.

We need to give ourselves permission to redefine motherhood on our own terms. Social media is not always reality. There is no “one-size-fits-all” definition of a perfect mother. You can only be the perfect mother for your family’s unique needs. We also need to rebuild our own version of the village we had growing up. Mothers are all around us and we all need support no matter how strong we appear or how much we can handle. We can use social media platforms like the Peanut App to uplift each other and connect. There are opportunities to find each other organically in the park, library, or grocery store. You don’t have to do it alone and shouldn’t have to!

Be kind and congratulate yourself on the unique role you have developed to fit your family’s needs. You are adaptable, resilient and an irreplaceable pillar to your household. The best advice is not to mold yourself to anyone else’s expectations. You define what a mother is by becoming the person your family needs. No one knows your babies better than you do. As the saying goes, “Mother knows best.”

One thing for certain is that no matter how the description of a mother changes, love is the constant. Whether a mother births a child or steps into the role by choice or circumstance, she is not defined by how she looks, how much she does, or how she compares, but by how deeply she loves, nurtures, and shows up. You are enough, just as you are. Happy Mother’s Day!

Garden Meditation: Steps to Reach Pure Bliss

By: Sara Loft

The first day of Spring has officially sprung past us. Believe it or not, it began on the twentieth day of March. Time flies quickly, doesn’t it? I have noticed that our region had a fair share of colder than average temperatures and more precipitation during the early start of our new season. Do you remember the phrase, “April showers bring May flowers!”? Well, buckle up, Western New York! Let’s focus on the month of May, right now!

According to the University of San Diego, the month of May is considerably known as the International Meditation Month. On the third day of May itself, there is an annual celebration practicing both meditation and nature combined. It is called: National Garden Meditation Day. It was developed by a creative gardening expert, C.L. Fornari, or better known as “The Garden Lady.” If you don’t have a green thumb for gardening, that’s okay. We’ve got you covered to practice this simple technique that you can enjoy on any certain point of day with nature surrounding you. However, I personally recommend practicing this method first on a clear, warm and sunny day. If you’re too worried about this activity being too time-consuming, set an alarm for at least 5 minutes each day to step outside and breathe into fresh air. You will begin to foster wonderful benefits from this simple exercise for the mind, body and spirit! After all, we are more connected to Mother Nature as one than most people may realize.



Step 1 – Avoid your mobile devices. Place the notifications on silent or vibrate. Remember, this is your moment!

Step 2 - Select a quiet spot that you are most comfortable in. Whether you are located somewhere at a nearby park or your personal yard. Feel free to go barefoot and let your feet touch the ground. Wearing light ankle cut socks will do the trick, also.

Step 3 – Pay attention to your surroundings and then engage in all your senses. Whether you hear a bird chirping, breathe into fresh air, walk up to a fully bloomed flower and smell its scent. This alone will allow you to concentrate on the outer beauty that Mother Nature offers to us.

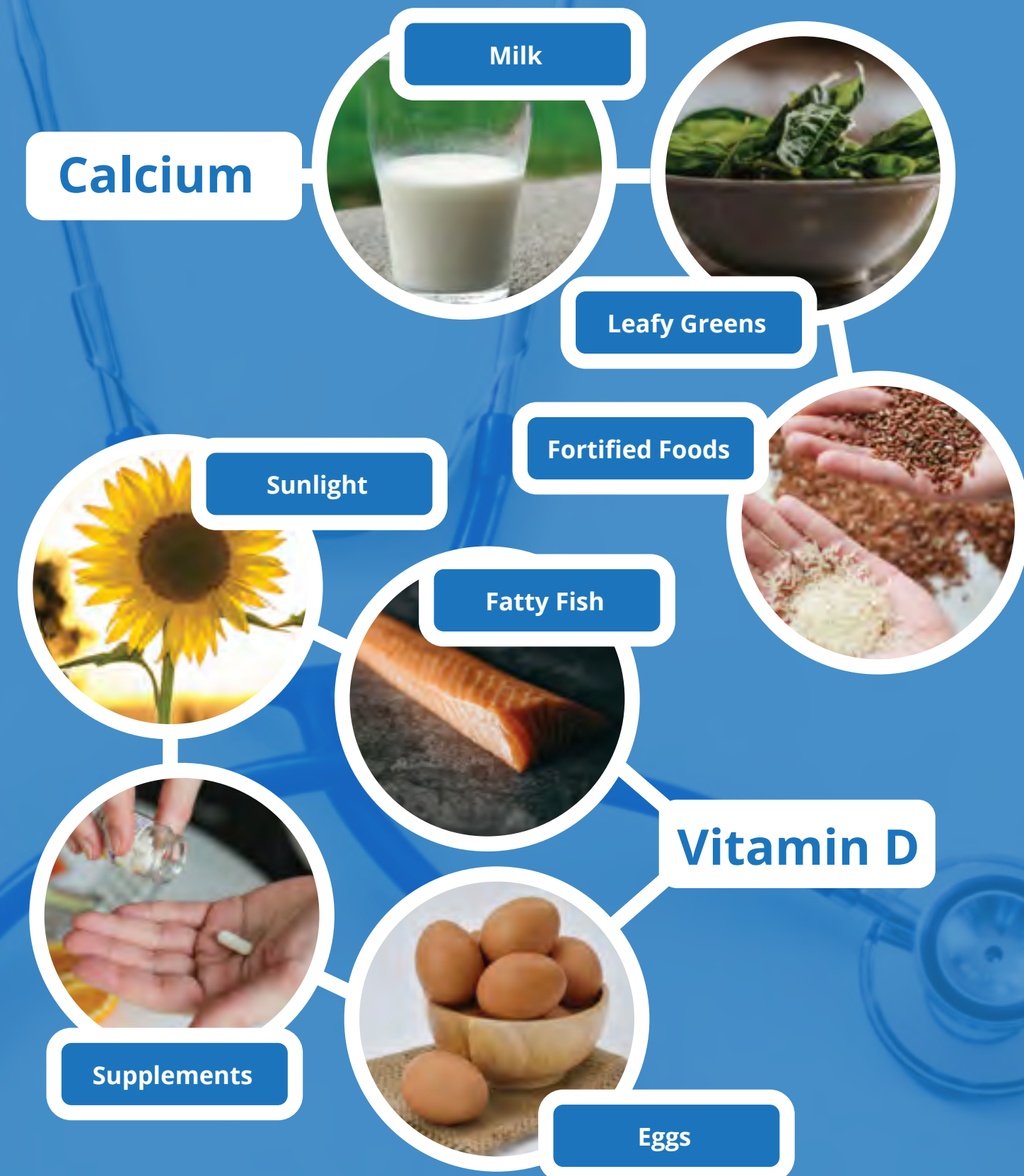
Step 4 – Express gratitude to nature. Pause to reflect on what you have experienced and thank nature for the little things you have collected on your day of solitude.



Both meditation and gardening promote a variety of health benefits. From increasing vitamin D levels, improvement on sleep and mental health, and so much more! Living in the present moment can bring a sense of tranquility – the opposite from our busy or hectic lives. We can find the balance of self-care and enjoy the quality of life. Together, we are as one.

Dr. Riffat Sadiq's Recommended Sources

Calcium and Vitamin D for Bone Health



Osteoporosis in Geriatric Care

By: Dr. Riffat Sadiq, CEO of WNY Medical PC, Channel Creator



As we age, our bones become increasingly important because we are more vulnerable to falls and fractures. Osteoporosis, a condition that weakens bones, affects about one in five women and one in twenty men over 50. Our bones consist of two types of cells; one that builds bones, and another that breaks them down. When we are young, we have a lot of bone-building cells called osteoblasts. However, as we get older, we have more bone-eating cells called osteoclasts.

The only way to combat these bone-eating cells is through a healthy diet and regular exercise. In women, hormone levels, such as estrogen, decrease, further impacting bone health. When we are young, our bones are dense and strong, but as we age, they can develop holes, making them more fragile. This makes us more prone to fractures, which can lead to persistent pain and loss of mobility.

It's very important to measure your height annually as a sign of osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is when your bones start to compress, which can be a crippling disease. It can lead to problems with walking, independence, and even digestion. In serious cases, even a cough or a minor bump can cause a fracture. Broken hips and spine bones are especially serious, potentially leading to loss of mobility and independence.

To keep your bones healthy, ensure you get enough calcium and vitamin D. Good sources of calcium include dairy products, leafy green vegetables, and fortified foods. Incorporating a daily glass of milk can contribute to your calcium intake. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium and can be obtained from sunlight, supplements, and foods like fatty fish and organic eggs. Furthermore, adequate protein intake is essential for bone health, as bones are partly made of protein. Don't forget magnesium, another crucial mineral for bone structure, found in foods like nuts, seeds, and leafy greens. Weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, jogging, and dancing, are also crucial for strengthening bones. Avoiding smoking and limiting alcohol consumption are also important. Regular bone density screenings are recommended, especially for women over 65 and those with risk factors.



Dr. Riffat Sadiq: Restoring Self

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First Things First 5: Your Health is Your Business

By: Faizan Haq, Editor-in-Chief and Publisher, Your Bliss Magazine
President & CEO, Manage Your Business LLC



Balancing health and the demand of work is one of the greatest challenges we face today. In the constant rush to meet deadlines, run teams, or grow a business, we often put our health on the backburner. We think we can push through small aches, skip meals, or sacrifice sleep for a little more productivity. But over time, the cost of neglecting our health adds up, and it shows not just in our bodies but in our businesses as well.

It is important to remember your health is your business health. A healthy mind and body bring clarity, energy, and resilience to leadership. When your health is strong, your decision making is sharper, your patience is deeper, and your vision stays steady. You can inspire confidence in your team, maintain stamina through tough seasons, and adapt quickly to changing demands.

Business health is directly tied to the wealth you create. A thriving business requires more than good ideas and hard work it needs a leader who is strong enough to carry it through storms. If your body breaks down, no business plan or smart strategy can fill that gap.

Often, we hear people complaining about various problems, financial issues, staffing problems, missed deadlines. But behind all these problems, if you look carefully, many times it starts with poor health. Once your health begins to fail, all other problems grow bigger, and harder to fix.

Taking care of your health is not a luxury, it is a duty. Regular exercise, proper diet, enough sleep, and stress management are not distractions from business, they are investments in it. If you want your business to last and succeed, start by protecting the most important asset you have **"yourself"**.

Your health is your first wealth.



Book Review of Onyx Storm by Rebecca Yarros

By: Samuel Defazio

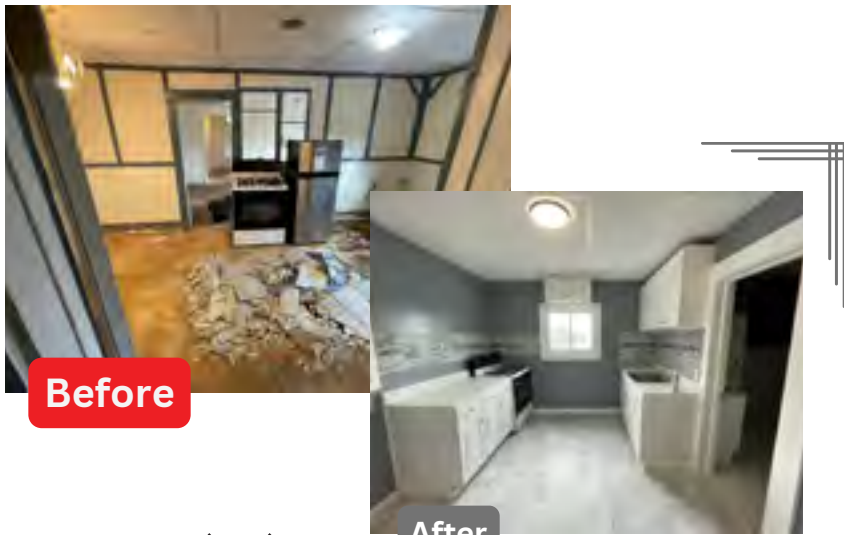
Adventure, action, love, loss, and dragons. Readers of *Fourth Wing* (*The Empyrean Series*) can rejoice as the third installment is upon them! Taking off right where *Iron Flame* leaves off, *Onyx Storm* keeps the dark fantasy and the romance and adds new places and new adventures. After the terrible revelation at the end of *Iron Flame*, Violet must now hold herself and Xaden together as more dark forces and fate try to destroy everything in their path. With new locations, new characters, new ideas, and even new knowledge, every detail of this story is important.

But be warned, the book jumps very often from place to place. Make sure you always check your map in the book so you don't get lost. I will also remind all of you that this is not a Young Adult series. There are plenty of bloodshed and sexual



situations to make some people blush. This book has divided fellow dragon rider fans to a 50/50 on either loving it or being confused by it. I personally loved the new places, though I will admit I got confused on how long the distances were between locations. Other than the constant world building this book dives deeper into its dragon lore and the lore of its characters. The only complaint I have is I now have to wait for the next book to be written and if that's the only complaint I have I could consider this novel a success.

Image Source: Amazon.com



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Healthcare for Refugees in Western New York

By: Ralph Hernandez

As the most vulnerable segment of the global population, refugees are currently facing a significant healthcare crisis, with inadequate access to healthcare due to legal barriers, payment difficulties, and transportation challenges.

This article aims to persuade readers of the urgent need for governments, international organizations, and local communities to collaborate in developing comprehensive healthcare solutions for refugees. Refugees face heightened health challenges due to enduring more stressful and traumatic experiences.

According to the World Health Organization, refugee populations experience health issues such as inadequate nutrition, infectious diseases, depression, and PTSD.

Refugees often face challenges in accessing the medical care they need in various parts of the world. Denying healthcare services to refugees not only violates their fundamental rights but also puts the health of our entire communities at risk. When we overlook the importance of providing essential healthcare to refugees, we jeopardize their well-being and increase the likelihood of serious health problems. Ensuring that refugees receive medical care is crucial for protecting public health.

Nearby refugee shelters pose health risks due to the rapid spread of germs. When refugees do not have access to adequate medical care, diseases can spread from one group to another, thereby impacting the health of community members.

Investing in healthcare for refugees also benefits host communities. By enhancing health and safety in these areas, we can reduce the economic burden of untreated illnesses and promote financial stability. It is our collective responsibility as a society to provide essential medical care to refugees, as this represents our shared moral duty to all human beings.

Denying refugees access to healthcare violates their fundamental human right to

medical assistance. It is our moral obligation to assist those who have faced profound hardship.

Delivering healthcare services to refugees involves overcoming significant challenges. Refugees face various barriers in accessing essential care, mainly because of bureaucratic obstacles and systemic issues affecting resource allocation.

The healthcare system must integrate refugees as patients to facilitate the development of practical policy enhancements.

The World Health Organization, governments, local healthcare organizations, and charities should collaborate to ensure that comprehensive healthcare programs for refugees are effective at all levels of implementation. Their expertise and resources can significantly enhance the quality and reach of these programs. These programs should both address the urgent healthcare needs of refugees and provide them with ongoing medical treatment, including mental health support.

Our local community has a remarkable opportunity to recognize the importance of healthcare services for refugees. By helping everyone understand these extraordinary individuals better, we can create a more inclusive and compassionate environment for everyone, including our refugee friends. Offering comprehensive healthcare to refugees not only showcases our dedication to compassion and justice but also upholds human rights for all. This is a crucial step towards building a fairer and kinder society together!

We must prioritize the well-being of refugees as they adapt to their new environments by promoting diverse healthcare systems and implementing comprehensive medical plans. Additionally, we must help individuals gain a deeper understanding of their circumstances. On a global scale, it is crucial to ensure that all individuals, particularly those who are most vulnerable, have access to essential healthcare services.



Happy Mother's Day!



Lentil Soup

As presented by Apna Dera & Mister Dee's



Instructions

1. Rinse the lentils.
2. Bring to a boil with the stock, turmeric, cayenne, cumin, cardamom and curry leaves.
3. Let simmer until the lentils are very soft (30 minutes).
4. Run the soup quickly in a blender to a not too smooth consistency (or mash the lentils with a ladle).
5. Sauté the garlic and mustard seeds lightly in the fat and add to the soup.
6. Let simmer for another 5 minutes.
7. Add salt, pepper and squeezed lemon to taste.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups red or yellow lentils
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon cardamom
- 2 - 3 curry leaves
- 6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons mustard seeds
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped





Happy MOTHER'S Day

May 11, 2025

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