

Fuel for the soul



We're excited to introduce our Next Fitness Star, p.52

There is something about the breaking of bread that tends to bring people together. We make many of our memories around the dining table, be it with family, friends or on dates, and there's something delightfully intimate about sharing a meal with someone. As the only animals who really cook our food, humans have evolved from eating purely for function to cementing it as an almost symbolic social act, reflective of our place in society, our culture and our lifestyle. Various studies have shown that sharing meals can give us both psychological and physical benefits—and as sociologist Alice P. Julier so discerningly points out in her book, *Eating Together*, it can help us to shift our perceptions of inequality by allowing us to view people of different genders, races or backgrounds as more equal than we might in other social circumstances.

Yet it can be easy to forget that at the end of the day, food is fuel for the body (and soul) and it's important to remember that what we choose to put into it is just as crucial as how we eat it. And as cliché as it may sound, aside from trying to use whole, real, nutritious and high-quality foods wherever possible, I firmly believe that one of the most important ingredients in cooking—and life in general—is passion. It's what takes the ordinary into the extraordinary, and that same perspective can be applied to everything from our hobbies to our relationships and careers. Whether it's turning an activity that you love into something more substantial, or learning secrets that will help you become a better chef (or enjoy your meals more), we've packed the pages with ways to help ignite your passions.

October is also breast cancer awareness month, and for us at *Women's Health Middle East*, this is a topic very close to our hearts. Chances are that like us, many of you have been affected by this disease—whether it's you directly or someone you know. Despite the incredible advances that have been made in terms of research and treatment in the past decade, breast cancer is still the leading cause of cancer death among women, and recent figures show that somewhere in the world, a case of breast cancer is diagnosed every 19 seconds. The good news? Statistics for survival have also improved significantly, and early detection is one of the most important factors. So let's make a pact: to make sure we all get tested for it, carry out regular check-ups, and remind our loved ones to do the same, not to mention live the healthiest lifestyles we can to keep our bodies strong and in fighting condition... whether it's ourselves or those around us that we need to be strong for. I hope you enjoy the issue—and our DVD of The Next Fitness Star workout!—and see you in November!

Yi-Hwa

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TIME FOR A CHANGE

IF YOU HAVE...

1 MINUTE

Pop a handful of cashews and some spinach into your morning smoothie for an antioxidant boost and a lovely, buttery flavour. "40+ Food Tips That Will Change Your Life!" p.82

5 MINUTES

Give yourself an essential oil-based DIY massage using moderate to deep pressure, to increase blood flow and ease tension at that time of the month. "Peace Out, PMS!" p.70

10 MINUTES

Learn all about the winner of our competition for The Next Fitness Star, Heba Abdel Gawad—you voted for the former Olympian and she's nothing short of inspirational! "Meet The Next Fitness Star," p.52

15 MINUTES

Exfoliate with a peel pad then slick on some cream containing hydroquinone and melanozyme before bed for glowier and more even-toned skin in the AM. "Watts Up!" p.27

30 MINUTES

Book yourself in for a SUP, horse riding, rock climbing or skateboarding session to discover a new hobby along with a great new way to get some exercise. "Fun or Fitness?" p.56

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