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SPRING 2016

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# FIND YOUR OHM

This beginner-friendly routine, designed by Los Angeles-based yoga instructor Ulrika Eden (also our model), helps you release muscle

tension and improve your mind-body connection. The simple meditative poses encourage you to quiet your thoughts, which is “more challenging than you’d think,” Eden says—especially if you’ve had a hectic day. Hold each pose for at least one minute and up to five.

STORY BY **CHRISTINE RICHMOND**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **JONAS JUNGBLUT**

INSTRUCTOR **ULRIKA EDEN, RANCH AT LIVE OAK**

HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **PRINCESS TUIPELEHAKE FOR AVEDA**

WARDROBE BY **ATHLETA**





## Breathing Exercise

**BENEFIT:** Calms down the parasympathetic nervous system, slows your heart rate, and brings you into a meditative state of mind

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Breathe in deeply and slowly through your nose, then exhale through your nose. You should feel your belly rise and fall and feel your heart rate slow down. This pose also can be done standing up straight or lying down on your back.



## Seated Forward Fold

### **BENEFIT:**

Stretches the hamstrings and releases tension in the lower back

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Sit with your legs and feet together and toes pointed up. Keeping your spine straight and your sits bones pressed into the earth, hinge forward from the hips and lead with your heart to stretch toward your toes. If you can, hold onto your toes with your hands; if you aren't that flexible, don't force it—use a towel or yoga strap to help you reach, or simply fold forward as far as is comfortable.

## Spine Twist

**BENEFIT:**

Improves digestion, stretches the hips and opens the shoulders

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Lie on your back with your legs straight. Use both hands to gently pull your right knee toward

your right armpit while pressing your back into the mat. Then, keeping your right knee bent and your left hand on your

knee, bring your right leg across your body into a twist, and extend your right arm out to the side. Repeat on the other side.



## Heart Opener

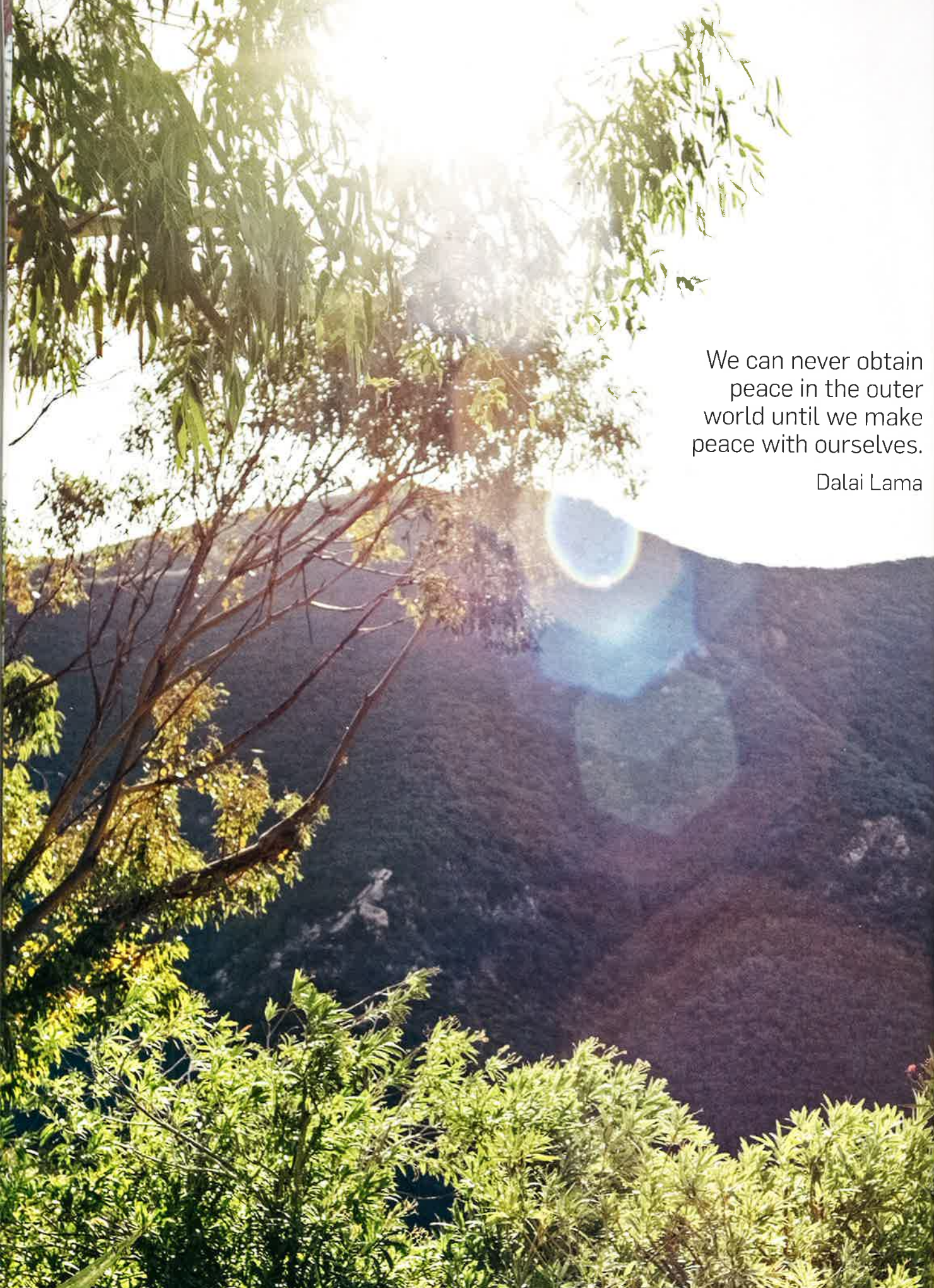
**BENEFIT:**

Opens the chest and arms and releases muscle tension caused from desk jobs

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Sit with your legs and feet together, and place a bolster behind you at your tailbone, arranged vertically. Gently lean back until you're resting your back on the bolster. Stretch your arms out to your sides and let your hands drop to the floor, palms up.



A scenic landscape photograph featuring a mountain range in the background, lush green trees in the foreground, and a bright sun creating a lens flare effect. The sun is positioned in the upper right quadrant, casting a strong light across the scene. The mountains are dark and rugged, with some rocky outcrops visible. The trees in the foreground are vibrant green and appear to be part of a dense forest. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

We can never obtain  
peace in the outer  
world until we make  
peace with ourselves.

Dalai Lama



## Restorative Inversion

**BENEFIT:**  
Calming, eases insomnia, reduces swelling in feet

**INSTRUCTIONS:**  
Sit with your left side facing a wall. If you need extra back support, place a pillow, folded towel or bolster next to the wall behind

you. Gently swing your body to the left to bring your legs up against the wall (use your hands for balance) while you lower your back, shoulders and head to the floor (if you're using a bolster, rest your lower back on it as you bring your

upper body to the floor). Scoot your buttocks close to the wall and rest your arms at your sides, palms facing up. Keep your core engaged so you don't strain your shoulders, and tuck in your chin slightly so you don't collapse your neck.



Curtis gathering organic ingredients in the garden at Live Oak Ranch at Live Oak.



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# HEALTHY

★ STORY BY CHRISTINE RICHMOND

# HACKS



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**CHEF NINA CURTIS SHOWS YOU HOW TO MAKE EASY, CREATIVE AND SUPER-HEALTHY TREATS USING A FEW UNEXPECTED SUPERMARKET INGREDIENTS.**

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONAS JUNGBLUT  
HAIR & MAKEUP BY PRINCESS TUIPELEHAKE FOR AVEDA

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Sue Glasscock (left), co-owner of The Ranch, takes in the sunshine with Curtis. Below: The grounds of The Ranch feature succulents and eucalyptus trees.



“

A

lot of people think healthy food can't be delicious, and that cooking takes tons of skill and effort—but that's not the truth at all,”

insists chef Nina Curtis. She's changing minds in her role as executive chef at The Ranch at Live Oak, a wellness retreat center in Malibu, CA. (Check out the last issue of *Naturally*, to read about The Ranch's seven-day bootcamp, which involves lengthy hikes, fitness classes and Curtis's plant-based food). “At first, guests worry they'll be hungry and aren't sure they'll make it through the week,” Curtis says. She knows they'll be satisfied—she's feeding them nutrient-dense food, after all—but she's figured out how to put them at ease quickly. “I take dishes people are already familiar with, rather than putting something unusual in front of them,” she explains. That means pizza, tacos, burgers and Alfredo pasta are usually on the menu.

The Ranch grows much of the organic produce Curtis uses in her cooking; there's always an abundance of organic kale, spinach, chard, cilantro, leeks, lemons, grapefruit and apples. Curtis has come up with some truly innovative ways to cook with these ingredients. For example, she slices trumpet mushroom stems and sears them like scallops, which has fooled more than a few diners. She's also known for her “toona” wraps, made from a sunflower seed base; they get their fish-like flavor from dulse and nori. “I put a lot of effort into texture—there's always a crunchy element to my food,” Curtis says. “Nina's food speaks for itself—it's artfully and masterfully prepared,” says The Ranch's co-owner Sue Glasscock. And although it's detox food, “It's not limiting, and it's not about feeling deprived,” Glasscock says. “It's about adding, not taking away.”

Curtis didn't always know she wanted to be a chef. A licensed cosmetologist, she once ran a holistic day spa in West Hollywood (her clients raved about the *#*facials). She was also a competitive bodybuilder. About 17 years ago, she began exploring plant-based cuisine by taking one-off classes and feeding her friends experimental dishes; eventually she sought out training at the Living Light Culinary Institute, a raw vegan school in California, and at Natural Gourmet Institute in New York City. “I am like a mad scientist in the kitchen. I love finding unique ingredients like coconut aminos that enhance the nutritional value of food and allow me to create new flavor profiles and textures,” she says.

If you're thinking, *sounds good, but there's no way I could do this at home*, you have to try Curtis's healthy hacks. The recipes happen to use exotic ingredients, but they're incredibly quick, easy and delicious (we had no idea making kelp noodles could be so effortless). It's all part of Curtis's goal to demystify healthy cooking and make it *fun*. As she explains, “I love it when guests tuck into their first dinner at The Ranch and say, ‘This is so good! I want to eat like this at home.’”

## BLACK SESAME BUTTER

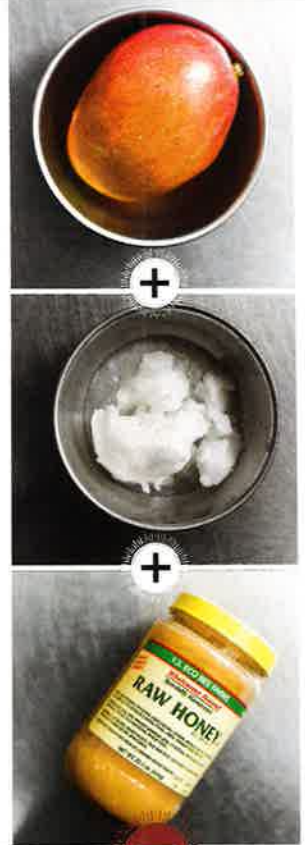
• Put 2 cups organic black sesame seeds, 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seed oil and a pinch of salt in a high-speed blender and blend until smooth. Store the sesame butter in a glass container in a cool place for up to one month.



## MANGO BUTTER

*"Three ingredients, that's it! This butter is so easy and yummy, and it's great as a spread on toast, muffins or seed crackers," Curtis says.*

• Blend 1 ripe mango (skin and seed removed), 1 cup raw, cold-pressed coconut oil and 1 tablespoon raw organic honey together in a blender until smooth and creamy. Store in a glass container in the refrigerator to solidify; it will keep for 3 to 4 weeks.



## Chef Nina's Shopping List

HERE ARE THE INGREDIENTS YOU'LL NEED TO WHIP UP HER CLEVER CREATIONS. YOU'LL RECOGNIZE A FEW, BUT THE REST ARE PRETTY UNUSUAL.

### Coconut aminos

This alternative to soy sauce is made from the sap of coconut trees.

### Organic coconut meat

Find this in the frozen section—it allows you to skip the laborious step of opening a coconut yourself.

### Raw, organic honey

If you live near a farmer's market, you can find a local variety, but for something more widely available, Curtis recommends Y. S. Eco Bee Farms.

### Raw seeds

Curtis stocks her pantry with black sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. Raw seeds retain nutrients that are destroyed during the roasting process.

### Maple syrup

Curtis likes Grade B (the bottle may also be labeled "dark with robust taste") because it has a deep, earthy flavor.



## QUICK LEMON HONEY COCONUT YOGURT



◆ Combine 1 16-ounce package coconut meat (Nina uses the brand Exotic Superfoods, available at Whole Foods Market) and ½ cup fresh lemon juice in a blender until smooth. Add 1 tablespoon raw organic honey and continue to blend until creamy. Store in a glass container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. To serve, add berries, fruit, seeds and/or nuts as a topping.



## AL DENTE KELP NOODLES

*"This is my go-to after I've cooked 12 hours for others," Curtis says. One serving of kelp noodles is just 6 calories and is loaded with calcium and iron.*

◆ Pour off the liquid from a package of kelp noodles (Nina loves Sea Tangle brand) and place noodles in a bowl with enough warm water to cover them. Add 1 tablespoon lemon juice (citric acid) and 1 tablespoon baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) to the water and let the kelp noodles "cook" for 7 to 10 minutes. Drain and rinse. Place noodles in a bowl and drizzle with olive oil. The noodles can be topped with sauces like marinara and pesto. Or, dress noodles with sesame oil, sesame seeds and sliced scallions, as shown above.



## SEED CRACKERS

"These are a Ranch classic. Try them with some of that mango butter on top," Curtis says.

### DRY INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup organic chia seeds
- 1 cup raw pumpkin seeds
- 1 cup raw sunflower seeds
- 1 cup raw sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon mixed dried herbs such as rosemary,

- thyme and oregano
- 1 tablespoon dulse (sea vegetable)
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon sea salt

### WET INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups water
- ¾ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon coconut aminos
- 1 tablespoon Grade B maple syrup

• In a medium bowl, use your hands to thoroughly mix the dry ingredients with the wet. Let sit for 10 to 15 minutes—the batter will become thick and gelatinous as the chia seeds expand in the liquid. Pour batter onto a cookie sheet lined with a Silpat or parchment paper, and spread evenly with an offset spatula.



Bake in a 300°F oven for 25 minutes. Remove pan from oven, place another lined cookie sheet on top and flip. Score the crackers gently with a blunt knife (cut just enough to leave a dent in the crackers so that they will be easy to break when they are finished).

Put crackers back in the oven for another 24 to 25 minutes. Let cool for 15 to 20 minutes, then break them where you have scored them.