



BMM Yuva Newsletter March 2021

Scientists Have Potentially Found a New Life-sustaining Planet by: Krish Mehta

As we all probably know by now, the search for life outside of our blue planet has been an ongoing expedition ever since the first satellite, Sputnik 1, launched in 1957. As of now, that search just took a major leap forward. Researchers working on the New Earths in the Alpha Centauri Region (NEAR) project have potentially discovered a new planet in the habitable zone of nearby star Alpha Centauri A, located approximately 4.37 light-years from Earth. In an image taken of the star using the European Southern Observatory's (ESO) Very Large Telescope (VLT) in Chile, the team spotted a separate glowing object. They suspect it might be a planet -- one that's roughly four to five times larger than Earth, or about the size of Neptune. It's located between one to two astronomical units (AU) from its star (to put it into perspective, one AU is the distance from the Earth to the sun), putting the planet in the habitable zone, where water might be able to form to support life.

An intriguing thing to scientists is that Alpha Centauri A is a binary star (a system of two stars in which one star revolves around the other or both revolve around a common center) with Alpha Centauri B -- many theorized that planets wouldn't be able to form in such a system. However, the planet is only a planet candidate for now, as the research team needs more data to verify its existence.

If it does turn out to be a planet after further research is conducted, it wouldn't be too surprising. In 2016, scientists discovered a potentially habitable planet orbiting the third star in the Alpha Centauri system, Proxima Centauri.

Interestingly, the most exciting part of this discovery is not necessarily the planet candidate itself -- it's how scientists have spotted it. Previously, astronomers could only determine the existence of exoplanets by watching the behavior of the stars. If they dim during observations, planets are likely passing in front of them; if they wobble, it's likely due to a nearby planet's gravitational pull.

The NEAR team's new observation, however, marks the first time that astronomers were able to directly image the habitable zone of a nearby star, opening up a whole new world of possibilities when it comes to searching for exoplanets.

Now, you may think that this is only truly exciting for astronomers, which is true, since they get recognition and the feel of finding a new habitable planet, but at the same time, it's exciting for us too. We have entered a new era where most of us are aware about global warming, and about plans to colonize the Moon, Mars, and more. This discovery gives us an idea of what will happen in our future, to us, our children, and beyond.

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Breakfast with Ayurveda by Vaidya Swati Mhaske

Today I would like to focus on a very important topic of Ayurveda lifestyle and that is the- Breakfast. According to Ayurveda Breakfast also called as Nyahari (NYAA- HAREE) which means to eat something healthy once you start your day.

According to Ayurvedic Dinacharya, Din- Morning, Charya- Activity waking up between 4 am to 7 am and after all the morning rituals the best time to complete our breakfast is sometime between 6:00 and 10:00 a.m.

In the morning the digestive fire or agni is quite low, and it's not easy for most bodies to digest a big or heavy breakfast. According to Ayurveda a morning breakfast must be light and easy to digest, an easily digestible meal that nourishes the body by giving it the fuel it needs, without overwhelming it. It helps the person to be productive throughout the day and also have healthier relationships.

Think of it this way: Your metabolism is like a wood-burning furnace that needs careful tending so it can heat the house (your whole body) and support all of the activities going on inside. In the morning, there may be embers left over from the previous day, so we have to be gentle with our food choices in the morning. To have a healthy fire, you need to gently rekindle the flame.

We have to keep this in mind, Digestive fire is energy and energy is Digestive fire. Trying to focus on eating a warm and hearty breakfast should be our goal. A bowl of cold cereal or a buttery toast and a sweet doughnut, gives the body a sugar rush and burns the agni furiously for a bit and then the flames die out.

So, in addition to self-care morning rituals that aim to ignite agni, we have to ensure that the first meal of the day gently stokes the fire. This means eating warm, well-spiced, easy-to-digest foods, with an emphasis on hot cereals and cooked fruits, rather than cold cereals and raw fruits or cold juices and heavy fatty breakfast. The Ayurvedic approach both feeds the body and helps the mind achieve a sharp but calm sense of focus.

A balancing morning meal might consist of stewed apples, pears, and dates, stirred into hot cereal cooked with some warming spices. Spices which help in digestion, provide the warmth to the digestive fire are those that stoke agni and make it stronger. Examples are allspice, basil, black pepper, cardamom, cayenne, cinnamon, cloves, fenugreek, fresh ginger, green chili, mustard, nutmeg, rock salt, rosemary, and turmeric.

● **My morning chai**

A healthy cup of Chai or tea not only provides the energy to start the morning but also helps to kindle the agni in a gentle way. Chai is a beverage that is a blend of black tea, honey or sweeteners, spices and milk. (ref- Merriam Webster dictionary)

Ingredients:

1 teaspoon of black tea of your choice

1 teaspoon of sugar

½ inch piece of ginger root

1 cardamom pod



Recipe:

- Boil a cup of water on a medium low flame
- To the boiling water add 1 teaspoon of black tea of your choice
- Add a teaspoon of sugar (optional)
- In a mortar take ½ inch piece of fresh and raw ginger root, one cardamom pod
- With the pestle grind the mixture
- Put in all the mixture with the juices if any in the boiling pot of tea
- In another pot warm ½ cup of milk (avoid nut milk)
- Pour the warm milk into the tea mixture and let the tea boil for 2-3 mins
- Strain the tea and enjoy it warm every morning.

❖ **Sweet potato pudding/Sweet potato kheer**

Sweet potatoes are loaded with nutrition and are earthy and sweet in nature which provide you the essential energy, a boost to the digestive fire and also help in good elimination due to their fiber content. Sweet potatoes are Vata and Pitta dosha pacifying, a person with kapha constitution should limit the intake of sweet potatoes.

Ingredients:

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- A medium sized sweet potato
- 1 tbsp of ghee
- A pinch of cardamom powder
- A pinch of Nutmeg powder
- ½ cup of Milk (your Choice)
- 4-5 crushed Almonds and cashews
- 4-5 black currants

Recipe:

Boil, peel and grate the sweet potatoes in a bowl

Add the above ingredients and give it a stir

Warm the milk and add in the pudding.

Enjoy each delicious bite, knowing there's no better way to fire up your body's furnace and start the day right.

Thank You!

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My Hike to Delicate Arch Anisha Neklikar

Exploring national parks is lot of fun and we have many in the US to explore. I, with

went on a trip to see Arches National Park and Zion National Park in May 2019. We flew to



Salt Lake City Utah from Chicago. Salt Lake City is surrounded by mountains which I don't see much in Chicago. I was able to see some snow on the mountain. We then drove to Moab to stay in the hotel. The drive to Moab was very different than what I see in Chicago. Lots of mountains on both sides of the road, rivers running parallel to the road and lots of green trees. It was very beautiful.

Next day was our day 1 of exploring. The road from the hotel to Arches was all covered with red colored mountains. We purchased an entry ticket at the gate and took a map of the park at the visiting center. First we took a scenic drive that runs through the park. It was 19miles long. As we drove I saw many signs for hiking trails, viewpoints, safety sign boards and park rangers' cars.

After the drive we took a break and ate some snacks. Per the map we drove to Park Avenue hike. It is an easy hike. Lots of red rocks stacked together. They look very tall. Next we went to see a balanced rock. My dad then planned to hike north and south, but I was tired so I decided to rest in the car with my mom.

Next on the list was Double Arch which is the tallest arch in the park. My favorite in this National Park is Delicate Arch. Total hiking distance is 3 Miles. When we started it was sunny. After hiking for some time it became cold and we had lots of wind. As we hiked further we had rain. I wanted to go back to our car but my dad kept saying, I will get you an ice cream if you complete this. You have big rocks to hike and some flat areas in the middle. Most of the hike is uphill. There were many kids who were enjoying the hike. Aai and I were tired so we took some break. Every time we were tired we wanted to go back to the car but Baba used to ask other people how much more to go and everyone said only a small distance. We continued to hike further. As we went much closer there was a part of the trail with drop-off on one side. We had to be very careful as we were walking. It was very scary for me. All I could see was some ground deep down. It started to drizzle as we were closer to arch and also had heavy winds. Everyone was walking very slowly. Finally we reached the delicate arch. It was very windy at the top. Everyone was taking photos but it was very cold. There was another hike to go to the top of arches but my Baba and aai decided not to. This arch is very beautiful.

After resting for some time we started our journey back to the car. The uphill I thought was hard but as we started the return journey the downhill was hard too. And then we had some rain so the rocks were slippery too. Baby steps and turtle speed was all my aai- Baba kept telling me. Finally we came to the car. Now I wanted my

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ice -cream so we decided to drive back to the hotel. This was my first ever hike at age of 5 and my aai-Baba were very proud of me.

I loved hiking and wanted to explore more. So far I have explored Zion National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Glacier National Park, Grand Teton National parks in addition to Arches National Park.





Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle for Teens During a Pandemic: Anwita Kasar

For many teens, parents, and elders, living in the Coronavirus pandemic has been extremely difficult. It has especially taken its toll on the teens who have online school right now. The endless amount of work and the loss of connection between the teachers and students are simply just a few of the many issues that have resulted in distance learning. They have also been added to the pile of stress that students experience in these times, and this increase of stress takes a huge toll on mental health. Luckily, there are many ways to relieve stress and keep a happy mind. Here are a few activities I do and suggest you do to maintain a healthy life during this pandemic.

First and foremost, there is the art and practice of meditation. Meditation is one of the most common ways, and one of my most favorite ways, to keep a positive mind. Whether you do a few simple breathing exercises, listening to calm music, or having a time of reflection and gratitude, meditation can come in the form of whatever you desire. Moreover, you can meditate for however long you want, whether it is for 20 minutes or 45 minutes. However, when you are meditating, you should be completely focused at the time, and there should not be any distractions or side thoughts in your mind. Otherwise, there will not be any positive effects. Meditation has been extremely beneficial because there are a wide variety of positive outcomes. For example, it reduces anxiety and improves one's concentration in whatever he/she does, which all together reduces stress. Because of all the positive impacts, I strongly suggest meditation as one stress reliever during these times.

Additionally, one can retain a fresh mind by exercising. Regardless of whether you are under stress or not, it is extremely important to get some type of physical exercise almost everyday. In addition to the number of days you exercise, it is recommended that you should get at least 30 minutes of exercise every time. A clear example of exercising is going to the gym to workout, but especially in these times, there are so many other ways you can exercise easily. Physical activity can come from dancing, cycling, running outside, or even taking a walk in a nearby park. From my experiences, there is always a feeling of being rewarded after I exercise, and it gives me a great amount of energy that I need for the rest of the day. It also feels better to not sit in the same place for long periods of the day. There are also factual benefits of physical activity, including that it increases relaxation and helps you sleep better, which is vital in reducing stress.

Finally, having a hobby or interest is a great way to maintain a healthy mindset. Perhaps it may be the most obvious way that can help keep a positive mind because when you do it, you feel nothing but joy. One of my favorite pastimes is baking. During quarantine, I have been baking more than I normally do, and I have found new recipes and desserts to try. I really enjoy myself when baking because it sets a positive mood for me for anything else I have to do for the day or for the rest of the week. During times of COVID, it is especially useful to find a hobby to do because there are now restrictions to what you can do, so it is best to make the most out of what you have available. These interests can range from arts and crafts to cooking and baking, playing sports outside, or spending time with a few friends (as long as there is the maintenance of social distancing). Anything that makes you happy and you feel passionate about counts as a hobby, and doing these activities will give you more motivation to do other work and feel better about it. The happiness you receive is why it is awfully important to find something you are excited to do in your spare time.

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There is no doubt that these times have brought stress to many, even teenagers. Nevertheless, it is crucial to save time for yourself to reduce the amount of anxiety or mental strain you have. Your free time can be in the form of meditation, physical activities, or some of your favorite interests. No matter what, however, if you put all your attention on just that activity and nothing else, I assure you that after, you will feel much better both physically and mentally, which will help you do other work without any addition of stress.