



## BALI, A MAGICAL JOURNEY INTO RAW FOOD, YOGA AND HOLISTIC WELL BEING

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Spending a month in Bali to undertake a raw vegan chef training course was a very enriching experience for my professional and personal life. Although I signed up primarily for a raw food chef training, incidentally it taught me so much about health, wellness and the inward journey. It's not just what we feed our bodies that matters; but also what thoughts & emotions we are constantly feeding ourselves. The question is not simply limited to what's on our plate but also what's on our minds, in our hearts; and how to achieve harmony among the body, mind & spirit. Working at Prisim Healing Institute over the last two years has reaffirmed for me that wellness is a holistic concept and not just categorised as workout/ fitness regime and diet; which is essentially what 'healthy' means today. Having said that, yes, I do agree that movement is essential for wellbeing - to get the chi flowing; and a balanced diet is key to nutrition but what is often missed out is the importance of spending time with yourself; i.e. your breath and your inner child. That is where yoga plays a vital role in my life. It is a tool to reconnect with my breath, check-in to my inner-being and confront stressful situations with a lot of ease and composure.

### Holding a Raw Vegan Cheese Platter plated by me

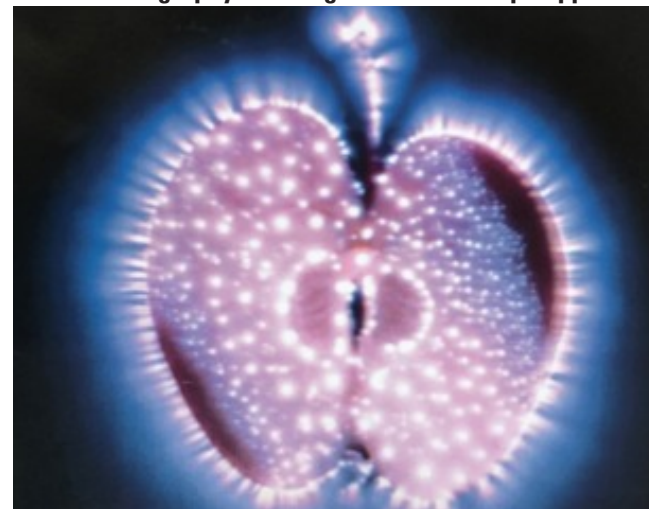


"An intimate friendship, a frequent conversation held alone with the Beloved", is the definition of prayer given by St. Teresa of Avila, a 16th century Spanish mystic. My morning sadhana on the mat is summarised by this definition, those moments of intimate conversation with the divine are very sacred to me. The body becomes a tool and the asana a vessel to connect with my inner child and my breath. This allows me to drop the mental and emotional baggage from time-to-time

and create space for the new. Stress is one of the biggest challenges I see around me, and the inability to cope with it is what causes dis-ease of mind, body and spirit. We generally only think of food as nutrition and only assess the quality of our food in terms of 'how much micro or macro-nutrients does it provide to our being?' However I feel that is a very limited way to assess food because intention and energy in our food plays a vital role too. In fact Kirlian photography shows a pictorial display of the energy (sunlight and water) in our food. Moreover the attitude with which we eat our food too determines how the body shall metabolise it. For eg. If we eat a very nutritious meal but are emotionally very disturbed our body won't be able to digest and absorb all the nutrition from the food and assimilate it into our body as efficiently as an emotionally balanced person, due to the 'stomach receptors that send signals to the brain via nerve impulses'<sup>1</sup>

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### Kirlian Photography showing the aura of a ripe apple



The month-long intensive programme at Sayuri's Healing Food Cafe in Ubud, included a lot of technical knowledge (knife skills, plating, food storage, fermentation, dehydration, flavour profiles & flavour balancing etc) as well as practical hands on experience and excursions to a spirulina farm, herbal cosmetic factory, handmade raw chocolate factory etc. These trips were very educational for me as a co-founder of Prana Kitchen as I could witness the freshness of these small businesses that large scale industries lose out on. Currently, for the past year and a half, Prana Kitchen has been working on building a small community of like-minded people who are committed to wellbeing. Our initiatives so far have included farmers markets, yoga and breathwork circles, catering for sustainable fashion events, sound healing and kirtan sessions, soulcation retreats etc., which are small steps to support the larger vision of wellness of mind, body and spirit. Recognising that healing is a dynamic process that has many other variables barring diet and workout alone, we are cultivating a group of individuals who are willing to commit to their inward journey i.e. take responsibility for their own health acknowledging the determination, patience, perseverance and courage required. At this training programme in Bali the culinary academy had yoga every alternate morning as a part of the schedule, and after dinner the space was let out for various kinds of alternative healing workshops such as cacao ceremonies, theta healing, seminars on the moon cycle, educational documentaries etc. This enabled me to cultivate a balance between my professional and personal education.

### Raw Vegan Pina Colada Cheesecake



PASSION is the link for me that connects my professional and personal growth. It is that which drives and propels the curiosity in me to learn, create and share these experiences. We, at Prana Kitchen, have a lot in the pipeline for the new year, from starting our own raw vegan cooking courses to ecstatic dance sessions, yoga nidra sundaze, sacred circles, etc. My raw chef training was a crucible of creativity as we were 20 participants from 20 different countries uniting over one element, plant-based whole foods. It emphasizes the multi-cultural aspect of food and how it continues (from time immemorial) to remain the reason over which families unite

and share their love. We studied a variety of flavour profiles and ethnic cuisines ranging from Italian, Indian, Mexican, Japanese, Middle Eastern, Thai, American etc. While our teachers Eléanore Julius (former Matthew Kenney teacher) and Sayuri Tanaka (retreat chef and raw food trainer) constantly stressed upon the most important ingredient in our food being LOVE; which seems to explain why nothing tastes as good as our grandma's and mom's handmade food. To summarise my key take-away, from the two levels of Raw Chef certification at Sayuri's healing food academy, is that the intention behind the food is everything because "we are what we eat" and we become the energy and vibrations of the food we consume.

### Nasi Campur plated by me (traditional Indonesian Dish)



Lastly, it's not just the students and teacher that are crucial to effective education but also the environment which facilitates the progress. Ubud has always been one of my favourite destinations because of the people who are so full of life and vitality. In fact during my visit to Ubud this year I learned that "Peru and Bali are energetic portals as it is where the sacred lines intersect - the masculine and the feminine; where the meridians cross." I would highly recommend this place to anyone seeking radiant health for mind, body and/or spirit. From the floor-seating dining arrangements in most cafes, to comfortable apparel, to cozy homestays and the smiling faces of the locals; it is all a reflection of Balinese hospitality and culture. Overall, it has been a magical journey into wellbeing and transformations at Ubud.

1. Forks over Knives documentary film

**Parmita Shroff** is a certified raw, vegan food chef from Sayuri Healing Foods, Ubud completed Level 1 and Level 2 of training in Raw Living Culinary Arts. She has successfully completed a post graduate diploma in yogic sciences from ICYHC Kaivalyadhama Mumbai. Co-founder to Prana Kitchen, serving plant-based whole foods which is located at the wellness centre Prisim Healing Institute. She has recently completed a 90+ hours training in Mysore style Ashtanga Yoga with Bharat Shetty, Indea Yoga and is a frequent Vipassana Retreat participant.