

Wellbeing Insights



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Get Cozy With Hygge

Embracing Ease in Rhythm With the Season

In a culture that rushes headlong into January with resolutions, reinvention, and relentless productivity, February often feels like an afterthought. Yet in nature, this quieter month tells a very different story. The earth is still resting. Seeds lie dormant. Energy is conserved rather than forced. Perhaps that's our cue, too.

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Get Cozy With Hygge

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In today's fast-paced world, many Americans are searching for ways to slow down and feel more content. The annual World Happiness Report ranks the U.S. 19th overall, reflecting rising stress, loneliness, and burnout. Meanwhile, countries like Finland and Denmark consistently top the list. One reason often cited is hygge (pronounced hoo-guh), a Scandinavian concept rooted in comfort, coziness, and quiet joy.

Hygge has no direct English translation, but it broadly means finding wellbeing in life's simplest pleasures. Derived from the old Norwegian word hugga, meaning "to comfort or console," hygge emphasizes warmth, presence, and connection. Similar ideas exist across cultures, from Germany's *Gemütlichkeit* to Scotland's *coorie*. In Denmark, however, hygge has become a way of life, especially during the long winter months.

Rather than treating hygge as a trend, it can be helpful to see it as part of a larger, more ancient wisdom: living in harmony with natural rhythms. While March will mark our transition into an action phase, February is still a season for rest, reflection, and inward attention, a perfect time for cozy rituals, gentle routines, and nourishing slowness.

Cultivating coziness doesn't require a complete lifestyle overhaul. It's about creating moments that feel safe, warm, and grounding, whether you're alone or with others. Hygge may look different for everyone, but any activity that fosters comfort and connection can support emotional and physical wellbeing.

Here are a few simple ways to cultivate cozy, season-aligned living:

- **Atmosphere.** Create a warm, inviting environment. Think candlelight, firelight or soft winter sunlight. Layer in texture with blankets, pillows, wool socks, and natural elements like plants or dried flowers. Reduce digital distractions and let the space feel unrushed and lived-in.
- **Connection.** Coziness thrives in meaningful connection. Share a meal, a conversation, or a laugh with loved ones. When alone, practice self-connection — check in with your body, your breath, your emotions. Treat your inner world with the same kindness you'd offer a close friend.
- **Nourishment.** Favor warming foods and drinks, such as soups, stews, herbal teas, and slow-cooked meals. Cook with intention and savor each bite. Moderation is key; indulgence without excess supports both pleasure and balance.
- **Presence.** True coziness is impossible without presence. Slow down enough to notice sensations, the warmth of a mug in your hands, the sound of rain, the softness of a blanket. Gratitude for these small moments deepens their impact.
- **Nature.** Even in winter, time outdoors matters. A quiet walk, fresh air, or simply observing the seasonal landscape helps anchor you in the natural cycle of rest and renewal.

By embracing hygge-inspired coziness in February, we honor not only a cultural tradition but the wisdom of the season itself. This is not the time to push; it's a time to pause, soften, and replenish. In doing so, we create the conditions for genuine wellbeing to unfold naturally.





Celebrating Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual celebration of the achievements of African Americans and a time to recognize the significant role they have played in shaping U.S. (and global) history. The celebration of Black History Month began as "Negro History Week," which was created in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard-trained historian. Dr. Woodson is also known as the father of Black history. He strongly believed that African Americans should be proud of their heritage and that other Americans should understand it.

Negro History Week eventually became a month-long celebration, and President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976. He said the country needed to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

Black History Month is recognized during the month of February because it coincides with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Both of these men played a significant role in helping end slavery in America.

One of America's greatest strengths is its rich diversity. In February, we should all take a moment to reflect on the achievements and sacrifices of the African American community. Most of us are aware of well-known African Americans such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Barack Obama, and Oprah Winfrey. Here are a few lesser-known African Americans and their contributions to our world:

- **Granville T. Woods** – Woods accumulated nearly 60 patents during his lifetime (1856-1910), many of which improved the functioning of railroads. His most notable inventions are the induction telegraph system, which enabled traveling trains to communicate with one another and allowed dispatchers to locate them, and the first electricity-powered railway.
- **George Washington Carver** – Carver is famous for giving us peanut butter and much more! He was an agricultural chemist and, in an effort to increase the profitability of sweet potatoes and peanuts, Carver began conducting experiments in 1896. He created 518 new products from these crops, including ink, dye, soap, cosmetics, flour, vinegar and synthetic rubber.
- **Madam C.J. Walker** – Madam C.J. Walker was the first African American woman to become a self-made millionaire after creating a line of hair products for Black hair. There's a series on Netflix about her life called "Self Made." Check it out!
- **Marie Van Brittan Brown** – Brown filed a patent in 1966 for the first-ever home security system. Her original design included a camera, a two-way microphone, peepholes, and monitors, all of which served as the foundations for today's modern system.
- **Shirley Jackson** – Jackson, the first African American woman to earn a doctorate at MIT, is responsible for telecommunications research that led to the invention of products such as the touch-tone phone, portable fax, fiber-optic cables, and caller ID.
- **Mark Dean** – Dean is a co-inventor of IBM's original personal computer, the PC color monitor, changing how we all interact with the internet. He also invented the technology that enables printers, keyboards and mice to communicate with your computer.
- **Garrett Morgan** – Morgan is known as the inventor of the traffic signal. His invention was the first to offer a third "caution" signal, which we now know as the yellow light. And in 1912, Morgan received a patent for his "Breathing Device," which was one of the earliest versions of a gas mask.

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Celebrating Black History Month

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African Americans have made significant contributions to the world we live in, which have gone unrecognized for many years. Black History Month provides us all — not only African Americans — with the opportunity to pause, learn, celebrate, and commemorate these achievements. Recognizing this month reminds us all that Black history is everyone's history.

10 Ways to Celebrate Black History Month

1. Enjoy poetry by an African American poet, such as Langston Hughes or Phyllis Wheatley, the first African American poet and the first woman to publish a book.
2. Explore Black music. From the soulful sounds of jazz and blues (Miles Davis, Etta James) to the origins of hip-hop.
3. Support Black-owned businesses — even better if they're local businesses!
4. Watch movies about Black history, Black culture or by Black film makers.
5. Take virtual tours of the Civil Rights Museums or the National Museum of African American History and Culture.
6. Celebrate Black history through food by cooking a meal or recipe by a Black chef or cook.
7. Donate to a Historically Black College or University (HBCU).
8. Read Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech.
9. Extend the celebration beyond February by creating a safe space for dialogue and discussing serious topics such as racism, poverty and everyday experiences that members of the Black community may face.
10. Strengthen your allyship. While you're doing your research and reading up on Black history, identify intentional ways you can fight injustice each day.

<https://www.loc.gov/> (Library of Congress), [history.com](https://www.history.com/), [naacp.org](https://www.naacp.org/), [africanamericanhistorymonth.gov](https://www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/)



Power Bowls



Power bowls are layered, one-bowl meals built from whole foods: a hearty base, plenty of vegetables, a quality protein, flavor-boosting garnishes, and a satisfying sauce. They’ve become popular because they’re nutrient-dense, customizable, and practical. They are easy to prep ahead, endlessly adaptable to dietary needs, and balanced enough to support steady energy, gut health, and satiety. The magic of a power bowl is that it delivers carbohydrates for fuel, protein for fullness and repair, fats for flavor and absorption, and fiber for gut health — all in one colorful, craveable bowl.

When building your bowl, keep these tips in mind:

- **Pick a flavor palette first.** Mediterranean, Mexican, Middle Eastern or Asian flavors help guide ingredient choices and keep bowls exciting.
- **Switch up proteins regularly.** Rotate animal and plant proteins (fish, poultry, tofu, beans) to broaden nutrients and prevent boredom.
- **Eat the rainbow.** Different colors signal different phytonutrients. Variety supports immunity and overall health.
- **Mix textures.** Combine soft (roasted veg), crisp (raw veg), and crunchy (seeds, nuts) for satisfaction.
- **Don’t skip fat.** A little olive oil, tahini, avocado, or nuts enhances flavor and helps the body absorb fat-soluble vitamins.
- **Season every layer.** Lightly salt grains, roast vegetables with spices, and finish with acid (lemon, vinegar) and heat (if you like a little spice) for balance.

Grain / Starchy Veggie	Veggies	Protein	Garnish	Sauce
Start with ½-1 cup as the base of the power bowl.	Pile on the veggies as high as you’d like. Experiment with different cuts or spiralizing for a unique texture.	Add about 4 ounces of protein. Experiment with refrigerated vs. fresh off the grill/skillet.	Introduce some flavor and crunch with these additions.	Finish off the flavor and add some creaminess with the sauce.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brown rice• Quinoa• Farro• Millet• Noodles• Cauliflower rice• Roasted sweet potato• Winter squash	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leafy greens• Cucumber• Carrot• Radish• Broccoli• Peppers• Celery• Onion• Plantain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lean meat (turkey, chicken)• Salmon• Tofu• Beans & lentils• Edamame• Eggs• Shrimp	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh herbs (cilantro, parsley, basil, mint)• Seeds• Nuts• Dried seaweed• Avocado• Nutritional yeast• Pickled veggies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vinaigrettes• Salsa• Hummus• Tzatziki• Greek yogurt with herbs/seasonings• Balsamic vinegar

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Build Your Own Bites: Power Bowls

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Venture Into Variations

Here are four flavor-packed ideas to get you started. Customize each one based on what you have on hand.

1. Mediterranean Glow Bowl

- **Base:** Quinoa
- **Veggies:** Roasted zucchini & red pepper, cherry tomatoes, baby spinach
- **Protein:** Grilled chicken (or sauteed chickpeas) seasoned with lemon and oregano
- **Garnish:** Kalamata olives, parsley, toasted pine nuts
- **Sauce:** Tzatziki (make your own by adding chopped red onion and cucumber to some Greek yogurt with a splash of lemon juice and a sprinkle of dill)

3. Better Burger Bowl

- **Base:** Chickpea or lentil pasta (short shapes work best)
- **Veggies:** Shredded romaine or iceberg lettuce, diced tomato, chopped red onion, dill pickles
- **Protein:** Lean ground turkey or beef (seasoned with garlic powder, onion powder, and black pepper)
- **Garnish:** Sesame seeds or 'everything' seasoning blend, shredded cheddar cheese
- **Sauce:** Better burger sauce (Greek yogurt, ketchup, yellow mustard, a splash of pickle juice)

2. Smoky Mexican Sweet Potato Bowl

- **Base:** Brown rice & roasted sweet potato seasoned with garlic and chili powder
- **Veggies:** Shredded red cabbage, corn
- **Protein:** Black beans and/or grilled shrimp
- **Garnish:** Avocado, cilantro, pumpkin seeds
- **Sauce:** Tomatillo salsa or a chipotle salsa

4. Sesame Ginger Chicken Power Bowl

- **Base:** Steamed jasmine rice or brown rice
- **Veggies:** Roasted or sautéed broccoli, shredded carrots, raw sliced cucumber
- **Protein:** Pan-seared chicken (or baked tofu) marinated in some of the sesame-soy dressing (see "sauce")
- **Garnish:** Sesame seeds, green onions, avocado
- **Sauce:** Sesame-soy dressing (soy sauce or tamari, rice vinegar, a touch of honey, grated ginger, and sesame oil)



MINDFUL MINUTE

A Cozy Check-In

Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down. If you can, wrap yourself in a blanket, place your feet on the floor, and let your shoulders soften. Allow your eyes to close or lower your gaze.

Begin by taking one slow breath in through your nose and an easy breath out through your mouth. Let your body know there's nowhere else you need to be.

Bring your attention to your feet. Notice any warmth, heaviness, or contact with the ground. Slowly move your awareness up through your legs, hips, and lower back, inviting these areas to soften. Continue scanning upward through your belly, chest, and shoulders. Imagine them gently relaxing, as if melting under a blanket. Notice your hands, your jaw, your forehead. Let your face relax. Take one more unhurried breath.

Now, with this sense of physical ease, turn inward with a few gentle reflections:

- What feels quietly ready within me, even if it's not time to act yet?
- What feels in need of comfort right now?
- What wants to be carried forward from this season of rest? What needs to be released?

There's no need to answer perfectly. Simply notice what arises. Before you return to your day, offer yourself a quiet moment of gratitude for the warmth, the pause, and the permission to rest.



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