



“The young cancer survivor and the ancient Khoi-San Buchu Man joined forces on a quest to engineer power veg patties, provide longevity with indigenous detoxing buchu water, and make food more sexy.

FABULOUSLY FLEXITARIAN

SF We chat to taste evangelist and ‘eco-preneur’ James Kuiper from Sexy Food about flexitarianism and becoming a human doing.

did you know?

You can pop one of the Sexy burgers into your toaster from frozen. It takes a bit longer than a piece of toast but comes out delicious and ready to eat.



At the vital age of 17, James was diagnosed with lymphatic cancer. The diagnosis was a shock and before he could quite grasp what was happening, he’d spent what seemed like a lifetime in hospital, hooked up to aggressive chemotherapy agents and constantly fighting nausea. Because he was diagnosed when the cancer was at a critical stage, James had little involvement deciding his treatment route and was rushed along a journey of toxic treatments.

TOXINS, TOXINS AND MORE TOXINS

After a year at Constantiaberg’s haematology unit, James’ cancer was successfully eradicated. But, his body and mind remained in a much confused state. Before getting sick, James considered himself in perfect health. He was a talented

sportsman, had a zest for nature, was cricketer for Western Province, always trail running and surfing, had a 7 handicap in golf, was a keen tennis player, and considering becoming a professional sportsman. Post treatment, he was depleted and exhausted, his only missions to regain the energy he once remembered having, and pursue a career in the outdoors. After jubilantly going into remission and free to socialise away from anything medical, James soon realised the battle had only just begun. Naturally returning to his ‘everyday’ family diet and being passionately sporty was simply not enough. The novelty of surviving soon wore off. His fatigue and concentration level seemed to be dipping to pre-diagnosis levels. Having had no exposure to alternative or natural medicine or philosophies, he really wasn’t sure how to address his health needs. What he was sure about, was not taking any more pharmaceuticals. His body



felt distinctively acidic, and it wasn’t normal to constantly feel so tired after meals. He instinctively knew what he was eating in a bid for wellness was making him less than well.

ARE YOU LISTENING?

So, James began to listen closely to his body. At this stage, not believing anything, he started asking questions and documenting his reactions. By just being cognisant of what food or substances affected his body in what way (exhaustion, indigestion, etc), his awareness opened up and he began to ‘emerge from a prison of limitations’. He started to relate food to feelings and began by eliminating certain food from his diet. Firstly, he stopped drinking milk and eating dairy. His energy levels went up. Then, he stopped bread, and his energy levels upped even further. Stopping caffeine eliminated his downs, and when he stopped eating sugar he was no longer exhausted all the time. That’s not to say eliminating those items off your daily menu will have the same effect – as James points out, it’s all about listening to your own body and knowing what’s right for you. Everyone has a different digestive system. He is convinced his cancer was caused by readily available foods we all eat on a daily basis. It just so happens his body is extra sensitive to the side effects, hence getting lymphatic cancer at an early age. He says we all need to work it out for ourselves. It’s about finding your own particular digestive and metabolic blueprint by listening to the signals your body is constantly sending out. Being self responsible is key.

After a clear awakening around how food affects his body, he eagerly began searching for alternatives to bread, sugar and dairy. Serendipitously he met a superfood ambassador on a mountain hike who had lots of answers for James and he soon became hooked on superfoods. But, you can’t live on powdered goodness alone so he went to a sprout and micro-herb farm. Here he spent a year learning about the extraordinary nutrition that explodes at the sprouting phase of a plant’s life (he’s a strong proponent of chia seeds). Another magical meeting where he miraculously crossed paths with a first generation Bushman, led James to explore the extraordinary healing powers of indigenous detoxing buchu water. His new bushman friend became his ‘taste-buddy’.

SPROUTS? I THINK NOT



Impassioned to tell the world about the extraordinary nutrient power he’d discovered in superfoods, sprouts, the plant-kingdom and buchu water, James soon realised that although sprouts are the most nutritious food you can eat, they are also the least available in local stores – and most people aren’t really aware of their intense goodness; in fact they’re mostly considered fodder for salads and maybe an Asian dish or two.

With some lateral thinking and a lot of experimentation, James began developing his sexy nutrient-packed veg burger patties, filled with no less than 20 healthful ingredients. From sprouted seeds and legumes, to fresh vegetables, herbs, coconut flour and spices, James maintains he has a hand in every stage of growth in this symbolic recipe of his life. After the concept debuted successfully at Noordhoek market, the demand for the extraordinarily delicious patties took off. They can now be found at Wellness Warehouse and specialist stores around Cape Town, as well as Hout Bay Market.

While his retail pursuit makes him money, for James it’s a way to get his message across and educate more people about the incredible power of listening to what your body tells you it needs.

WHAT KIND OF A ‘TARIAN’ ARE YOU?

It’s all about you and James is savvy enough to know that many people balk at the words ‘healthy’ and ‘vegetarian’, so, he’s simply shifted the concept and equates being healthy to being sexy (something most people can aspire to). He uses the concept flexitarian. This means you can pair his sexy food with anything you want, but at least know you’re getting something supreme in the mix. He’s also convinced that if everyone has more awareness of what’s going into their bodies, the human race will become sexy-doings, rather than human-beings.

We asked James for some healthy eating tips and he came up with 7 fabulous guidelines to LIVING LIFE WELL

1. Imagine your daily happenings through the eyes of a Bushman, and you’ll forever be smiling and existing in the moment.

2. In this on-the-go modern lifestyle, take time to reflect and listen to your bodies’ signals, even if it’s the only person you ever listen to. You’ll start becoming friends with your taste-buds, and realise we’re living in a world of abundant energy.

3. Nourish your child with ingredients you know their bodies will recognise and digest. The early years set a vibrant platform for life.

4. Be your own dietician and create a food regime for yourself. Take cognizance of your effects after each meal. Everyone is different, and the flexitarian friendly journey is about finding your unique ‘blue print’ of ingredients that provide sustained energy, and clarity in thoughts. The plant-kingdom is extremely vast in its offerings, so keep tasting and keep monitoring. Getting to know and love ourselves is the most important ingredient in this recipe of life.

5. ‘Spoiling’ yourself is a harmful word that we use in a positive light today. Celebrate occasions with a sexy meal and a good rest.... Get into the outdoors early the next morning, release some endorphins, sip on some spring water and enjoy getting used to being naturally high.

6. Sprouting requires zero soil, just sunlight, a jar, tap water morning and evening, and seeds. THAT’S ALL for fresh nutrient bursting salad greens every day of the week, grown in your kitchen. Grow fresh herbs for cooking, build a small veg patch, get into the mountain more... Always have at least one element growing; you’ll find things falling into place and coincidentally happening more and more for a reason.

7. Pay close attention to your time spent economically with your time spent environmentally. Allow the combination of eating food that loves you back, and spending time in the outdoors, be the fuel you direct into making a living. When the tank is low, you know exactly where to fill up, let this become a constant habit in monitoring and integrating the two worlds positively! South Africa is a gold mine of ancient beauty.

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