

Postcards by Pinch

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The Heat Is Coming: How to Stay Cool When the World Turns Up

On Pitta season, the overheated mind, and the quiet intelligence of slowing down



You will have noticed it already. The afternoons are different now. The light that was pleasant in February has acquired an edge. By two o'clock, the air has a quality that is less warmth and more warning. The ceiling fan, switched on experimentally last week, is now non-negotiable. And somewhere in the back of the mind, a familiar calculation has begun: how many weeks until it becomes genuinely difficult to be outside?

April arrives this way every year, and every year it catches us slightly unprepared. Not for the heat itself, we know it is coming, but for how quickly it reorganises everything. The morning routine shifts earlier. The appetite changes. The quality of sleep deteriorates. The temper, for many people, shortens noticeably. These are not separate, unrelated inconveniences. They are a single system responding to a single seasonal pressure, and Ayurveda understood this with a clarity that modern life has largely forgotten.

April is the beginning of Pitta season. And knowing what that means is one of the more practically useful things you can bring into the months ahead.

The Pitta Problem

In Ayurvedic understanding, Pitta dosha is composed of fire and water. It governs digestion, metabolism, transformation, and the body's capacity to process: food, experience, emotion, information. When Pitta is in balance, it produces clarity, sharpness, warmth of personality, and effective action. When it is aggravated, which the heat of April and May reliably does, it produces inflammation, irritability, acidity, overheating, and a particular kind of mental restlessness that feels like urgency without direction.

The important thing to understand about Pitta aggravation is that it is not just physical. The mind and the body run on the same system. The person who finds themselves snapping at colleagues in April, lying awake with a racing mind at midnight, making decisions from a place of pressure rather than clarity, or experiencing a short fuse in situations that would not have bothered them in January, is not simply having a bad month. Their internal temperature has risen alongside the external one, and the two are directly related.



The Overheated Mind

There is a conversation worth having about what Pitta aggravation does to the mind specifically, because it is something most of us experience without a framework for understanding it.

April and May tend to produce a particular quality of mental experience: the sense of too much happening at once, difficulty prioritising, a low background irritability, the feeling of being constantly slightly behind. Decisions feel harder than they should. Patience runs thinner. The capacity for the kind of slow, generative thinking that produces good ideas and good relationships contracts, while the reactive, firefighting mode of thinking expands to fill the available space.

This is Pitta in the mind. And the interventions that help are not the ones most of us reach for. More coffee makes it worse. Working longer hours makes it worse. Consuming more news, more content, more input of any kind makes it worse. What helps is the opposite: deliberate reduction of stimulation, deliberate creation of cool and quiet in the daily schedule, and the recognition that the mind, like the body, needs to be managed differently in summer.



Specifically: the hours between noon and four, when the heat peaks, are poor hours for high-stakes cognitive work. The traditional Indian practice of the afternoon rest was not laziness. It was an accurate reading of the body's rhythms in a hot climate. Not everyone can restructure their workday around this, but most people can identify one or two decisions or conversations they have been having in the afternoon that would be better handled in the morning. The quality of the outcome, in most cases, will be different.

The evening, as the temperature drops, is when the mind recovers its steadiness. This is the time to walk. To sit. To have the conversations that require patience and presence. To do the kind of thinking that deserves more than a heated, reactive mind. Protecting the evening from overscheduling is, in Pitta season, one of the more intelligent things you can do for the quality of your work and your relationships.





The ancient prescription is not complicated, but it requires a kind of deliberate counterintuitiveness. When everything around you is heating up and accelerating, the intelligent response is to cool down and slow down. Not to match the energy of the season, but to consciously resist it. This is harder than it sounds in a culture that rewards speed, output, and relentless forward motion. But the alternative, running hot through the hottest months of the year, is something most of us have experienced. It ends in exhaustion, in illness, in the particular hollowness of having pushed through summer only to arrive at the monsoon already depleted.

What the Home Needs in April

The home, as always, is where the recalibration begins. And April asks for some specific adjustments that are worth making early rather than reactively.

The first is about light. April light in North India is abundant to the point of aggression. The instinct to let it in, trained over the long winter, now needs revision. Heavy curtains serve a real purpose in summer, not just for sleep but for the ambient temperature of the entire home. Drawing curtains on the south and west-facing rooms during peak afternoon hours can reduce indoor temperature by several degrees without air conditioning. This is not a new idea. It is what every traditional Indian home did before glass facades became fashionable.

The second is about materials. The heavy cotton and wool of winter need to go into storage, and what replaces them matters. Linen, khadi, and light cotton are not just aesthetically appropriate for summer: they breathe in ways that synthetic fabrics cannot, and the body temperature regulation that happens during sleep is meaningfully affected by what the bedding is made from. This is also the moment to bring out the mat, the cane furniture, the tactile surfaces that feel cool underfoot and under hand. The home should begin to feel lighter, more porous, more willing to let air move through it.

The third, and perhaps most overlooked, is water. Not drinking water, though that matters too, but the presence of water in the home environment. A clay pot of water in the kitchen. A small vessel of water near the workspace. The practice of splashing water on the wrists and the back of the neck during the afternoon hours. These are not spiritual gestures, they are thermodynamic ones. The body's cooling system responds to water on the skin, and the mind responds to the presence of water in the visual field in ways that neuroimaging has begun to document. What our grandmothers knew intuitively, modern research is now confirming.



Eating for the Heat

The kitchen in April is where Pitta management becomes most immediately practical, and also where most people make the most avoidable mistakes.

The foods that serve the body in winter, the heavy dals, the rich gravies, the warming spices like ginger and black pepper, are actively counterproductive in peak heat. They add internal fire to external fire. Digestion, already slower in the heat, is further burdened. The result is the familiar summer combination of low appetite, bloating, acidity, and an afternoon heaviness that no amount of air conditioning fully resolves.

What the body is asking for instead is specific. Cooling foods: bottle gourd, ash gourd, cucumber, tender coconut, curd, raw mango in its early sourness. Cooling herbs: pudina, dhania, fennel, rose. Lighter proteins. Smaller meals. The tradition of the afternoon buttermilk, chaas with roasted cumin and a pinch of black salt, is not nostalgia. It is precision nutrition for this exact moment in the year. It cools the gut, aids digestion, replaces electrolytes lost through perspiration, and is arguably the most sensible thing you can drink between noon and four in the hottest months.

Hydration more broadly deserves attention. The commonly cited advice to drink eight glasses of water a day is not wrong, but it is blunt. What the Ayurvedic tradition adds is nuance: room temperature or slightly cool water is preferable to ice cold, which shocks the digestive system; water stored overnight in a copper vessel has mild antimicrobial properties and is considered beneficial for digestion; and sipping water slowly throughout the day is more effective than drinking large quantities at meals. These distinctions feel minor until you apply them consistently, at which point the difference in how the body handles the heat becomes noticeable.



Brand Feature

Coppre: The Ancient Logic of Copper, Made Contemporary



There is a reason copper vessels appear in virtually every traditional culture that developed in a hot climate. The Egyptians stored water in copper. The Ayurvedic tradition prescribed it. The Greek physician Hippocrates documented its use. And in Indian homes, the copper lota and matka were standard equipment for centuries before stainless steel arrived and quietly displaced them.

The reason is not mystical. Copper is one of the few metals with proven oligodynamic properties: the ability to destroy bacteria, fungi, and viruses on contact through a process of ion transfer. Water stored overnight in a copper vessel for eight to twelve hours has a meaningfully lower microbial load than the same water stored in steel or plastic. In a country where water quality is variable and gut health is a constant concern, this is not a trivial distinction.

Coppre (coppre.in), founded in Bengaluru, is one of the more thoughtful contemporary responses to this ancient material. The brand began with a simple observation: the functional case for copper was well-established, but the objects available were either purely utilitarian or heavily decorative in ways that sat uneasily in a modern home. There was room for something that took the material seriously without aestheticising it into uselessness.

What Coppre makes is precisely that. Their bottles, tumblers, and vessels are designed with the clean lines and considered proportions of contemporary product

design, while being made entirely from pure copper using traditional craft techniques. No lacquer coatings that would interfere with the metal's properties. No mixed materials that complicate the interaction between water and copper. The objects are honest about what they are and what they do.

Their Vayu Mudra bottle has become something of a quiet cult object among people who care about both function and form. At 950ml, it is sized for genuine daily use rather than display. The weight is substantial in a way that feels intentional rather than excessive. And the patina that develops over months of use, the slow darkening and warming of the copper surface, is not a flaw to be polished away but a record of the object's working life. In this sense, it behaves exactly as a good object should: it becomes more itself with time.

There is also a practical logic to recommending Coppre specifically for April and May. The Ayurvedic properties of copper-charged water are considered particularly relevant in Pitta season. Copper is classified in classical texts as cooling and balancing for Pitta dosha. The water it charges is described as easier on the digestive system and more effective at maintaining internal temperature regulation. Whether you approach this through the lens of traditional medicine or simply through the lens of replacing a plastic bottle with something that is better for you and better-made, the case for a copper vessel at this time of year is a strong one.



To Drink

Rose Sharbat by Mapro

Before the wellness industry discovered rose water and began selling it in small amber bottles at significant prices, the Indian summer already had an answer. Rose sharbat, made from concentrated rose syrup diluted in cold water, sometimes with a few strands of sabja (basil seeds) floating in it, is one of the more quietly perfect things about this time of year. It is cooling in the Ayurvedic sense, genuinely pleasant to drink, and carries a particular quality of occasion that plain water, however necessary, does not.

Mapro's rose syrup is made from Damask roses grown in their farms in Panchgani and has been a consistent product for decades. The syrup is concentrated enough that a small quantity goes a long way, and the flavour is recognisably floral without tipping into the artificial sweetness of cheaper variants. A tablespoon in a tall glass of cold water, with a squeeze of lime and a pinch of black salt, is the kind of thing that makes an ordinary afternoon in April feel briefly considered rather than endured.

The addition of sabja seeds is worth the small extra effort. Soaked for twenty minutes in water, they swell into a pleasing texture and carry their own cooling properties, classified in Ayurveda as one of the most directly Pitta-pacifying foods available. Together with rose, the combination is both functional and distinctly Indian in a way that feels appropriate for the season.

Available at mapro.com

To Use

Khadi Natural Aloe Vera Gel

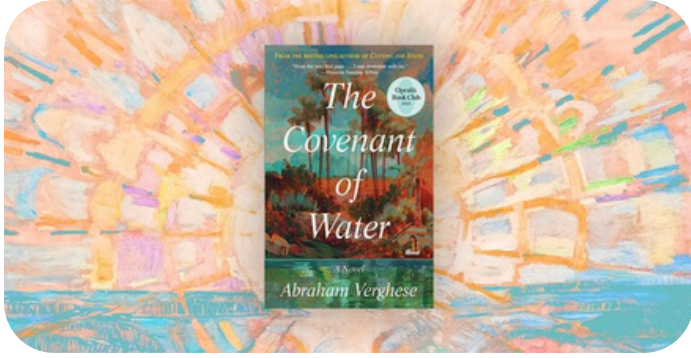
The skin in April is navigating a rapid adjustment. The dryness of winter has barely resolved when the heat and dust of early summer arrive to create a different set of problems: clogged pores, uneven texture, a general reactivity that makes many standard skincare products suddenly feel like too much. This is not the moment for heavy creams or complex routines. It is the moment for something simple, effective, and genuinely cooling.

Khadi Natural's Aloe Vera Gel does exactly what the season requires. Pure aloe vera, applied to the face and body after washing, provides immediate surface cooling, reduces inflammation, supports the skin barrier without occluding it, and absorbs quickly enough that it can be applied before getting dressed in the morning without any residue. It is also inexpensive enough to use generously, which matters when the goal is whole-body application rather than a careful dab on the face alone.

Applied to the back of the neck, the forearms, and the temples during the afternoon heat, it provides a few minutes of genuine cooling that is more effective than it has any right to be for such a simple preparation. In the Ayurvedic tradition, aloe vera is one of the primary cooling herbs, classified as directly Pitta-pacifying. In the rather less poetic language of dermatology, it contains compounds that reduce inflammatory cytokines in the skin and support wound healing, making it useful for any heat-related skin irritation, rash, or sun exposure.

Available in stores and online at khadinatural.com.





To Read

The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese

Some books arrive at the right moment by accident. This one feels almost designed for April.

Abraham Verghese's *The Covenant of Water*, which featured on Oprah's Book Club list, is set almost entirely in Kerala across three generations of a family whose lives are shaped, in ways both literal and metaphorical, by water. The novel spans from 1900 to 1977, moving through monsoons, floods, backwaters, and the particular quality of light and heat that anyone who has spent time in South India will recognise immediately. It is a long book, and it earns its length. The kind of novel that slows your reading down not because it is difficult but because you do not want to leave.

Verghese is a physician by training, and it shows in the best possible way. The body in this novel is not a metaphor. It is observed with the precision and tenderness of someone who has spent a career attending to it. Illness, healing, the inheritance of physical conditions across generations, the relationship between a doctor and a patient and a family: these are rendered with an authority that most fiction writers cannot access. But the medicine never overwhelms the story. It is simply part of the world the novel inhabits, as natural as the water that runs through all of it.

The reason this belongs in an April edition, specifically, is the quality of attention it asks of the reader. *The Covenant of Water* is not a book that can be read in the anxious, slightly overheated way that April can produce. It requires the kind of settled, unhurried reading that the season does not always make easy, which is precisely why it is worth attempting. A chapter in the morning before the heat arrives. Another in the evening when it retreats.

Available on Amazon India and at good independent bookstores.

To Experience

A Morning Walk Before Seven

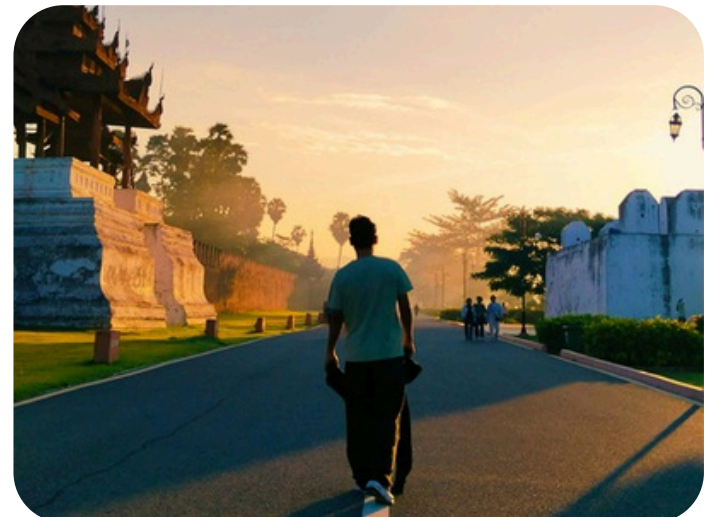
This is not a product. It is a prescription.

In April in North India, the window between first light and seven in the morning is one of the more valuable things the season offers. The air is still cool enough to move through comfortably. The light is extraordinary: clear, directional, without the harshness it will acquire by nine. The streets carry a quality of quiet that disappears within the hour. And the body, in this brief window, can experience the outdoors without the defensive bracing that the afternoon requires.

The research on morning walking is extensive enough to summarise briefly: thirty minutes of moderate walking in natural light within the first two hours of waking regulates cortisol rhythms, anchors the circadian clock, supports cardiovascular health, and has measurable effects on mood and cognitive function for the hours that follow. In Pitta season specifically, the cooling quality of early morning air and the relative stillness of the pre-rush environment make this the one time of day when being outside actively reduces internal heat rather than adding to it.

The practical barrier for most people is the adjustment of the wake time, and this is real. Moving a wake time earlier by forty-five minutes requires going to bed earlier, which requires the evening to be protected from late screens and stimulation. But the exchange is a good one. The morning walk before seven in April is not a luxury. It is arguably the most effective single intervention available for managing the season.

No booking required.





A Quiet Practice for the Week Ahead

The Afternoon Pause

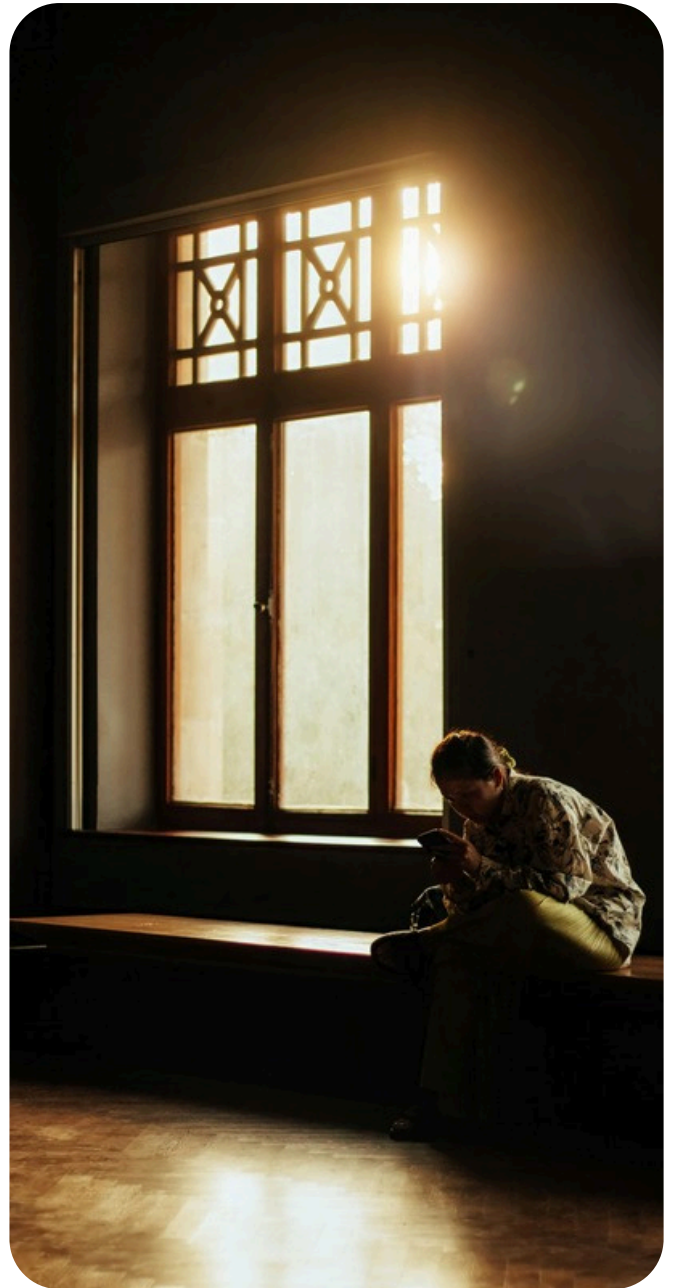
Most of us treat the afternoon as something to push through. The heat makes it uncomfortable, the post-lunch dip makes it slow, the mounting weight of the day makes it feel like a test of endurance. We respond with more coffee, more screens, more forced productivity, and arrive at the evening already frayed.

The Afternoon Pause is a deliberate interruption of this pattern. It is not a nap, though if you can sleep, sleep. It is something shorter and more specific: fifteen minutes, ideally between one and three, in which you stop completely.

Not a scroll. Not a podcast. Not a rearrangement of the to-do list. A genuine stop.

Find the coolest spot available to you. Lie down or sit. Close your eyes. Place one hand on the abdomen and breathe slowly enough that you can feel the hand rise and fall. Do this for ten breaths. Then simply rest in whatever state that produces. Set a timer for fifteen minutes so that the mind does not spend its rest calculating how long remains.

The physiological case for this is specific to the season. Core body temperature peaks in the early afternoon, which is also when cognitive performance, reaction time, and emotional regulation are at their lowest point in the daily cycle. The body is not failing you. It is following its own logic, the same logic that produced the siesta in Mediterranean cultures and the afternoon rest in traditional Indian households. Fighting it is expensive. Working with it is free.



What most people find, after a week of doing this consistently, is not that they lose an hour of productive time. They find that the hours between three and seven, which had been increasingly unreliable, become steadily more useful. The quality of the afternoon changes when the middle of it is not treated as something to be overcome. The heat is coming. The afternoon pause is one of the more honest things you can do in response.



Make Time for More

Postcards by Pinch is published monthly for our community. It is meant to be read slowly, set aside, and returned to. We hope something in these pages finds you at the right moment.