

# The Lithuania Retreat

## Part 2

Our traditional Sauna ceremony starts with a talk from our Sauna Master, Lucas, who is wearing a yellow towelled robe that finishes just above his knees and, we later found out, has nothing underneath. He explains what we can expect: it will start off a fairly mild temperature and then increase so that we start to sweat. We will then apply a salt scrub in the sauna to exfoliate our skin. We then come out to shower, he will rinse the sauna down, and then we go back in for the second round. This will be hot, he tells us, and after this round we will need to come out and cool down - he suggests rolling in the snow or getting in the lake. If we must, he says, there's a cold shower we can use instead. Then, we will go back in the sauna for some relaxation where we will rub melted honey into our skin as a natural moisturiser. As we head into the sauna we're each given our own little sauna cap to wear "it's to protect the brain from boiling" Lucas explains.

The sauna has the normal benches but instead of coals, there's a huge what looks like an oven. Lucas begins by scooping the first ladle-full of water and comes to each of us, asking us to dip our fingers in the water and say out loud our intention for the ceremony. "To stay present" I say. Then, when we've all said something, he opens the lid of the oven and pours the water inside, and we begin.

Along with the little robe, he's now wearing a hat that makes him look like woodland elf. It looks to be made of felt and similar shape to a pirates' hat but with nature decorations. He picks up his "whisks," which are bundles of small birch branches, adds a few more ladles of water to the oven, and then uses the whisks to get the steam moving round the sauna. He catches the warm air in the whisks and brings it down, moving across our feet with them. Next it's our legs, and then our upper bodies. In between, he adds more water to the oven, and holds herb bundles over the steam before coming to hold them in front of each of us so we can take in the smells and goodness.

When the salt comes round, it's bright red as it's been made with strawberries that were picked and frozen in summer. I feel the salt stinging my skin in places as I rub it over myself. Then he adds a couple more ladles and we sit in little sweaty salty puddles waiting for the salt to dissolve.

Then it's snack time and we come out to wash off the remaining salt. I learn that there's a village in Lithuania that has a spring which provides naturally carbonated water and this is typically drunk when "at Sauna." It also has some added salt to help replace the electrolytes you lose when you sweat. For snacks, Lucas has made fresh rye bread and garlic butter, served with grapes, cheese and honey, and fresh herbal tea, too. Delightful.



Once the sauna has been washed down, and we've enjoyed our little sauna snacks, we head back in for round two: the HOT round. Lucas is now in a short red robe, still with his hat on, and he straight away adds three ladles of water to the oven and quickly whisks to circulate the steam around. We are each then given our own whisk! "Arm up," he says, and we stick them up, whisk, and then pull down fresh steam, "right knee, stroke" he tells us, and I stroke the whisk down from my right knee to my shin, and I don't think that part of my body has ever been happier. The warm air feels magnificent. We continue to work round our bodies, then he tells us to turn to our left and do it for our neighbour's back. Then, he says, "arm up, beat harder" and we really beat each other with our whisks.

This process is very physical and takes a long time. It's getting hotter, ladles continue to be added, and soon I'm panting. After a while it feels like I'm struggling to catch my breath in the wet steamy heat, but still we whisk... Finally, he opens the door - we need to come out and cool down. We head to the lake.



It's started snowing since we've been in the sauna, it's so quiet and peaceful, and I barely feel the cold on my bare skin as I head down the narrow jetty to an even narrower set of stairs that lead straight down into the ice. I don't even have time to think, as I make my way down the icy steps and into the water. I love it - I feel alive, so peaceful and so connected to myself and these beautiful surroundings.

We head back in for more fizzy water, bread and cheese, before the final part of the ceremony. Lucas is now in a pale green robe (having taken a dip in the lake himself which is when we learnt there was nothing on underneath the robe). But the hat has come off and he's put some music on for us. He sprays us with mint mist and the whisks go back to gentle swooshes rather than the pummelling of round two.

Then he really does bring out some honey. He pours spoonfuls of it into our hands and tells us to rub it in everywhere to seal in the moisture. There's Ylang Ylang in the honey too, and it smells like a spa treatment "don't wash hair til tomorrow" he orders. We relax in silence in the pleasant warmth, letting the honey melt and settle, listening to the soft and gentle music.

It was a truly unique experience, but also so wonderful to experience it here, where it's such an important and intrinsic part of life in this country. This is why I love to travel.

Part Three includes more cold exposure (not as peaceful this time) and Cacao.



# The Spring Declutter Challenge



The start of Spring often brings with it the urge to clean, to sort, declutter and refresh. Common rituals for *Ostara* include decorating eggs, nature walks and... cleaning, so it's in our ancestral bones to want to do it.

At its simplest, Spring cleaning is tied to light and energy - as the days get longer and brighter, we naturally become more aware of our surroundings. Dust, clutter and unfinished corners that were easy to hide in winter are suddenly more visible. Historically, this was also the time when homes were aired out: windows were opened, soot cleared and fresh air let in. It was an important way of welcoming the new season.

But there's also more going on beneath the surface. Spring marks a transition from conservation to expansion. In Winter, we turn inward towards resting, nesting and surviving. In Spring, our energy begins to rise again. Cleaning becomes a physical expression of that shift: it's a way of saying *I'm ready to make space*. Especially when it comes to decluttering.

Decluttering doesn't just change our environment - it impacts how we feel in our minds and bodies, too.

So why does decluttering feel so good?

1. Our brains crave clarity and visual clutter creates mental noise. When we reduce what's around us, the nervous system often responds with a sense of relief. Fewer objects competing for attention can mean fewer micro-decisions and less background stress.
2. It restores a sense of agency - clearing a room, a drawer, or even a shelf, is a small but tangible act of choice. It reminds us that we can influence our environment. This is especially comforting during times of transition or uncertainty.
3. It mirrors inner change. Spring is often a time when we're subconsciously reassessing: habits, rhythms, and priorities. Letting go of physical items can feel like letting go of old versions of ourselves, outdated needs or emotional weight we no longer want to carry.
4. It creates space both physically and emotionally. Empty space isn't absence... it's possibility. Decluttering makes room not just for light and movement, but for our rest, creativity and ease. Our homes begin to feel more supportive and less demanding.

# The 100 in 10 Challenge

If you're feeling like a big Spring declutter, but don't know where to start or feel overwhelmed at even the thought of it, try the **100 in 10 Challenge** and over the next 10 days, throw out or donate/give away 100 items from your home. Sounds a lot, right? Keep reading.

## The rules:

Every day, for 10 days, focus on one room or space and find 10 items within that space to part with.

This could be make-up or toiletries that are out of date, for example. Forgotten tins in the back of a cupboard. I think we all have a few items of clothes that no longer make us feel special and so we avoid wearing them - go through your wardrobe and really look at what's there. Do you have a kitchen appliance that's taking up space? Buying an ice-cream maker was a great idea at the time, but do you have a friend that you know would really love having it now?

I came across this challenge on social media and I like it because it feels achievable - one space a day, and only 10 items (and you can always choose more if you find more, which some days you do!) Also it's amazing how quickly you find the items when you know there's only 10 to get!

Keep it a time-bound challenge (I know life can get in the way) but this will help create momentum and keep it purposeful. And because it's only 10 days, it doesn't feel like a lifelong commitment.

Before you know it, you and your spaces will feel clearer both inside and out.



# Little Pockets Book Club

In February we crossed mountains in Iraq in the night, and exploring the art of video game-making in New York and Los Angeles. How did you find our journeys?

*Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin followed Sam and Sadie - from meeting as children and forging a close friendship over video games, to then crossing paths again as adults. The pair start creating their own games, becoming incredibly successful and the book follows their friendship and partnership. It was also a look at the impermanence of everything and everyone - the title of the book a quote from Macbeth, that life “is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.” Nothing lasts forever. It reminded me of *Daisy Jones and The Six*, looking back at a fictional cultural phenomenon and exploring what made it successful through different methods of storytelling. Though the characters were at times unlikeable, I found the story fascinating and surprising.



Then it was something completely different: *Fundamentally* or “Bridget Jones in Iraq” as The Times review called it. And there are definitely similarities: our protagonist, Dr Nadia Amin, new to her job in the UN (which she took to get away from her ex), through sheer naivety does end up in some awkwardly funny moments. Except, unlike Bridget, Nadia’s job is trying to help rehabilitate foreign ISIS brides held in Iraqi camps, in the hope that one day they can return to their home countries. Given the subject matter, it was an incredibly fun read, with some (quite rude) jokes and observations that genuinely made me gasp and laugh out loud. But it was also gripping: we learn from the start that Nadia will attempt to help one of the women from the camp escape, and there were points that I had to put the book down because it became so tense to read. I’ve not read anything like this book before and I keep coming back to it in my mind.

# March Picks

## *Sirens*

by Emilia Hart

*The Sirens* is a powerful story, richly woven with fantasy and a reimagining of real historical events in Australia, told in different narratives.

2019: Lucy wakes up in her ex-boyfriend's room with her hands around his throat. Horrified, she goes to her sister's house on the coast of New South Wales, hoping that Jess can help explain her vivid dreams before the attack, to find Jess is gone. As Lucy waits, she starts to unearth strange rumours about Jess's town including tales of numerous missing men over the decades, a baby abandoned in a sea-swept cave, and whispers of women's voices on the waves. All the while, her dreams start to feel closer than ever.

1800: Mary and Eliza are torn from their loving home in Ireland and forced onto a convict ship heading for Australia. As the boat takes them farther and farther away from all they know, they begin to notice unexplainable changes in their bodies.

I loved Emilia's first book *Wayward* and I was lucky enough to go to an event in Farsley last year where Emilia spoke about *Sirens*. This is our first in-person book-club pick too - so please do send me your comments to share!

April and May book clubs available to book now.

## *The Names*

by Florence Knapp

In the wake of a catastrophic storm, Cora sets off with her nine-year-old daughter, Maia, to register the birth of her son. Her husband, Gordon, respected in the community but a controlling man at home, intends for her to follow family tradition and name the baby after him. But when faced with the decision, Cora hesitates.

Spanning thirty-five years, what follows are three alternate and alternating versions of their lives, shaped by Cora's last-minute choice of name. *The Names* explores the painful ripple effects of domestic abuse, the messy ties of family, and the possibilities for autonomy and healing.

Through a prism of what-ifs, Florence invites us to consider the "one precious life" we are all given. Full of hope, this is the story of three names, three versions of a life, and the infinite possibilities that a single decision can spark. It's the story of one family and love's endless capacity to endure, no matter what fate has in store.



# Spring Journal prompts

Although a new season brings with it a wind of change, Spring doesn't require clear answers or big decisions. It can be a time for just noticing what's changing, both around and within you.

These prompts are here to support this reflection work at your own pace - there's no need to answer them all. If you prefer, choose one that feels relevant, and let it keep you company for a while. I hope they help.



What feels like it's beginning to stir in me right now, even if it's quiet?



What parts of me are still resting and how can I look after that?



What am I making space for this Spring?



Where do I feel most like myself lately?



Where in my life do I feel a sense of belonging right now?



Where am I going to allow myself to be seen a little more this Spring?



What shared rhythms, rituals or practices help me feel less alone?

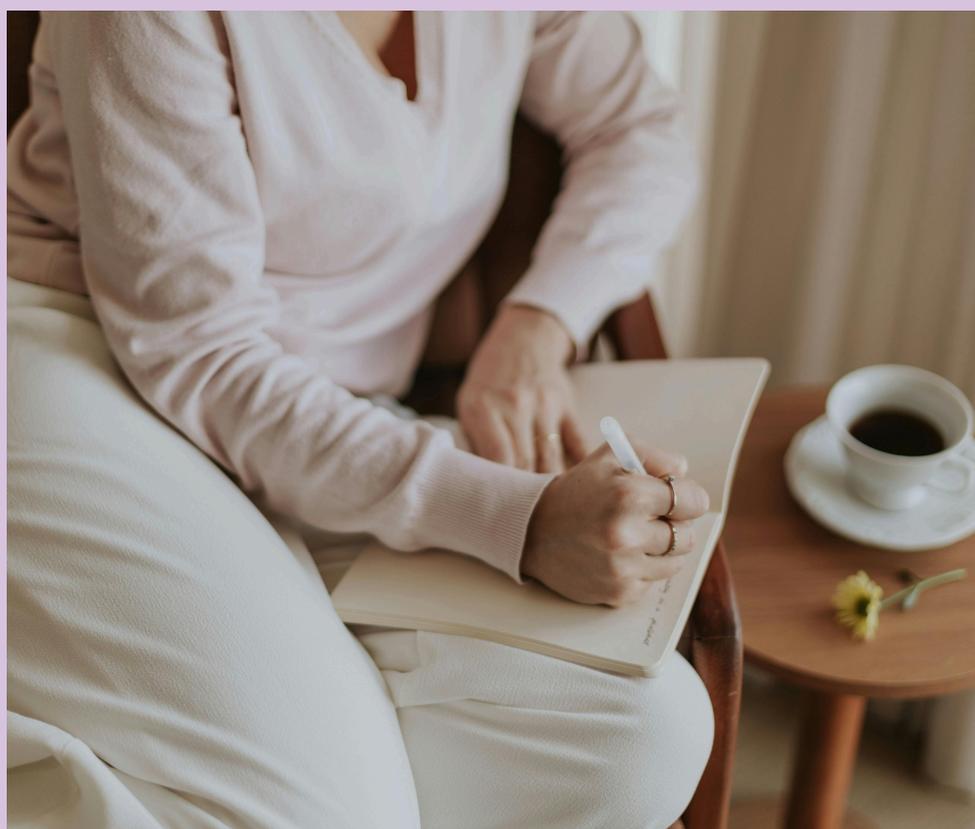
In what ways am I already changing, even if no one else can see it yet?



How can I protect my energy whilst being open and connected with others?



If I trusted my own timing completely, what might shift?



# The Lithuania Retreat

## Part 3



### Day Five: Cacao and Angels

Today was a day for slow and intentional footsteps in the snow, and mindful sips of tea looking out over the lake. Time for reflection and integration, absorbing what has already happened on the retreat.

Our main activity for the day arrived, or floated to us, in the evening: a cacao ceremony with two local facilitators, Viktoria and Rudra, who looked like angels. I've not experienced a cacao ceremony before. I've tried it as it's common to have it at women's circles, but, to be honest, I've never loved the flavour, nor have I felt a strong connection to cacao before. But tonight was different. Whether it was the group surrounding me, the energy of the snow and forest outside, or our wonderful facilitators, but something opened up.

We began with passing the cacao around with intention, then we sipped it, slowly and mindfully. After, we lay down for a short sound healing session using different drums. Followed by an illuminating guided meditation that asked us to reconnect with our inner child.

I sank deep into the meditation, allowing the cacao to do its work. Then it was a dance break as we got up for a bit of a bounce around. The energy was so strong at this point, and we were invited to create an 'angel tunnel'. Standing in two lines, each of us took it in turn to walk down the centre of the 'tunnel' with our eyes closed, guided by the women so we wouldn't fall. You could choose to touch, hold or whisper to the woman walking, telling them something comforting, what they meant to you or something loving and kind. As I walked down, I could feel myself shaking, feel myself held, and I received some truly beautiful words of kindness. Then we all had a good cry.

The magic of coming on a retreat, somewhere unknown and with people you don't know, is the strength of the connections you can build so quickly. The way you can be a version of yourself that is just you because no one is expecting anything from you, or needing anything from you. It's a true chance to be fully open and, if you get a group like I've been blessed with this week, you will be welcomed, seen and held.

Before we left, we pulled some oracle cards, and mine was 'community.'





### **Day Six: B\*\*\*\*\* Wim Hof**

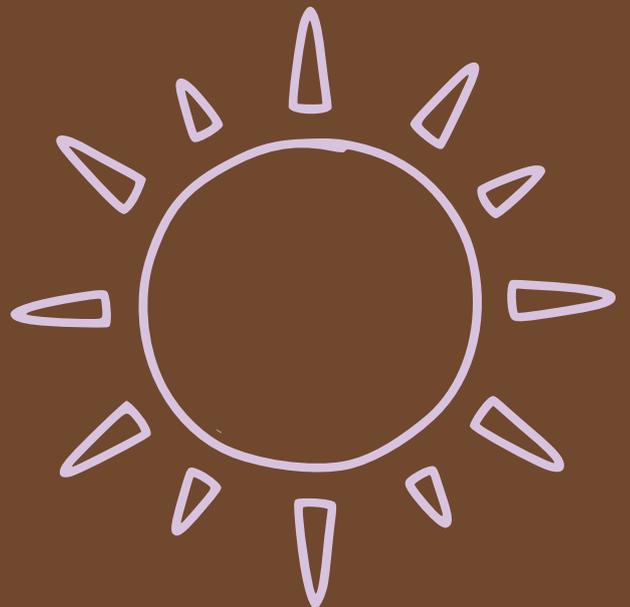
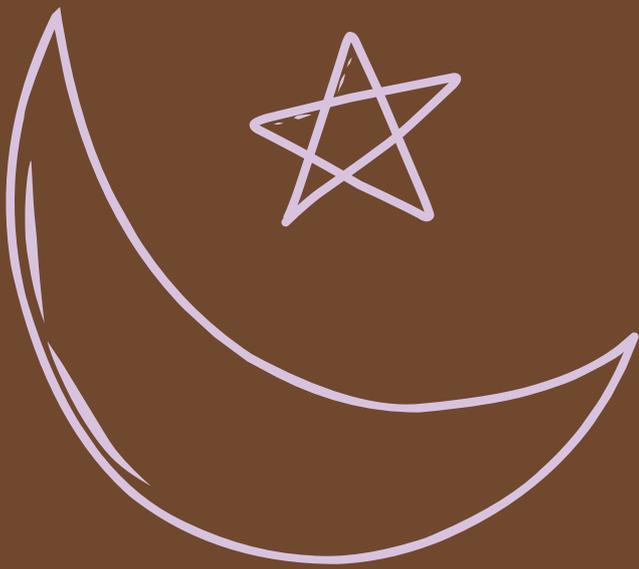
It was a strong yoga practice to start the day. Astrologically, this was a week of portals, which we reflected on the mat. Acknowledging how the past has made us who we are, and welcoming what the future may bring.

Then it was time to meet Zee, our Wim Hof Method guide. Our cold exposure leader. Wim Hof (named after the man who founded it), is the process of breathwork followed by cold water. But why do it? In the decluttering article, we talked about decluttering as a way of finding calm by reducing the number of daily decisions we have to make. Zee spoke of something similar - we're all stressed, not because we have big stresses, but because we have *so many* little ones. Then, one day, one small thing tips us over the edge. Cold exposure teaches us, amongst other things, how to cope with stress. We started with a breathwork practice - full breaths in and "let it go" breaths out, which was very calming. Then a talk about what the 1C water will feel like, and what we should do when we get out as how you warm back up is crucial. I'll be honest, I enjoyed the breathwork, but I didn't enjoy the cold water like I did when we Sauna-ed. I had an expectation that I would find a calm mental state in the water, but once in, I couldn't get past the agonising pain in my feet, instead thinking "why am I doing this, how has it not been two-minutes yet?" (except with more colourful language). But I loved the sense of camaraderie, the group cheering each other on and clapping as we got out. We all find moments of calm and spirituality in different things, and guess, today, this wasn't mine!

Zee was one of the many passionate people who took care of us this week, who facilitated our experiences with their expertise. From Laura who brought us here, Andrejus, Sauna Master Lucas, Viktoria and Rudra our cacao goddesses, and the team of ladies who cooked and shared with us their traditional food. It's a special thing to be in the presence of people sharing their purpose and knowledge, and it's a with deep sense of gratitude that we were able to receive such special offerings.

### **Day Seven: Closing**

We opened on the ice, we closed on the ice. On the last morning (the coldest and freshest of the trip), we took one last walk out, each choosing a spot to stand looking out to the trees. A few slow Qigong movements to ground, and one final deep breath of the purest Baltic air. Cherry porridge for breakfast.



# Yoga Philosophy Corner

## *Svadharna + Sangha*

In yoga philosophy, *Svadharna* speaks to our own path and the particular way we move through the world, shaped by our values, capacities and lived experience. It reminds us that growth isn't meant to look the same for everyone, and that comparison often pulls us away from what's actually true for us. Honouring *Svadharna* means listening closely to your own timing and needs, even when they don't match what seems expected or visible around you.

At the same time, yoga places deep importance on *Sangha*, community. Not as something that demands sameness, but as a space where many different paths are held side by side. *Sangha* offers support, reflection and a connected rhythm. It reminds us that while our journeys are personal, they don't have to be solitary. We go to a yoga class for a personal practice but also to share energies with others. We learn not only through introspection, but through being witnessed, supported and accompanied.

Held together, *Svadharna* and *Sangha* invite a softer understanding of belonging. We don't have to dilute who we are in order to be part of something larger. In fact, communities are strengthened when individuals feel safe enough to show up authentically as themselves - moving at their own pace and contributing in their own way.



# Move with Lucy

What's Coming  
Up



This month, join me for a mindful yoga class or strengthening Pilates session at Birstall Community Centre or Eastthorpe Hall in Mirfield. My classes aim to create space and presence, with no pressure to be perfect. Come with an open mind, ready to reconnect with your breath and find your flow. All of my classes are kept to a small group, each with a strong sense of community and support, and I offer variations and options suitable for all-levels of experience.



## **March Special Event:**

### **Little Pockets of Calm Book Club**

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March at Eastthorpe Hall. Currently fully booked, but please do join the waitlist and I can notify you if a place becomes available. The 26<sup>th</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> May are available to book on my website (books to be decided).

### **Coming Soon: Little Pockets of Calm Summer Retreat** 🌻

I have a new **full day retreat on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June** at The Croft House in Upper Hopton. It will include summer-inspired movement and meditation sessions, a fun craft workshop learning how to make colourful wreath-ribbons (so easy to make, and they look so good!) as well as delicious food and calming company. A limited number of early bird tickets are available now.

[www.lucyscottyyoga.co.uk](http://www.lucyscottyyoga.co.uk)

# Thank You



Thank you, as always for taking the time to read *Little Pockets of Calm*.

I hope it felt like a warming cup of tea on a grey morning, as comforting as fresh sheets after a long day, and as hearty as a slice of freshly baked lemon drizzle cake.

Next month, we'll be fully immersed in Spring! I'll be sharing some mindful and simple craft projects to celebrate the season, as well as all the regular features.

I hope you have a wonderful March and enjoy every tulip you meet - remember to grow your own way, in your own time, the bunch would not be the same without you.

## See you in April!



*Find your  
Little Pocket  
of Calm*

[www.lucyscotttyoga.co.uk](http://www.lucyscotttyoga.co.uk)