

ABUNDANT

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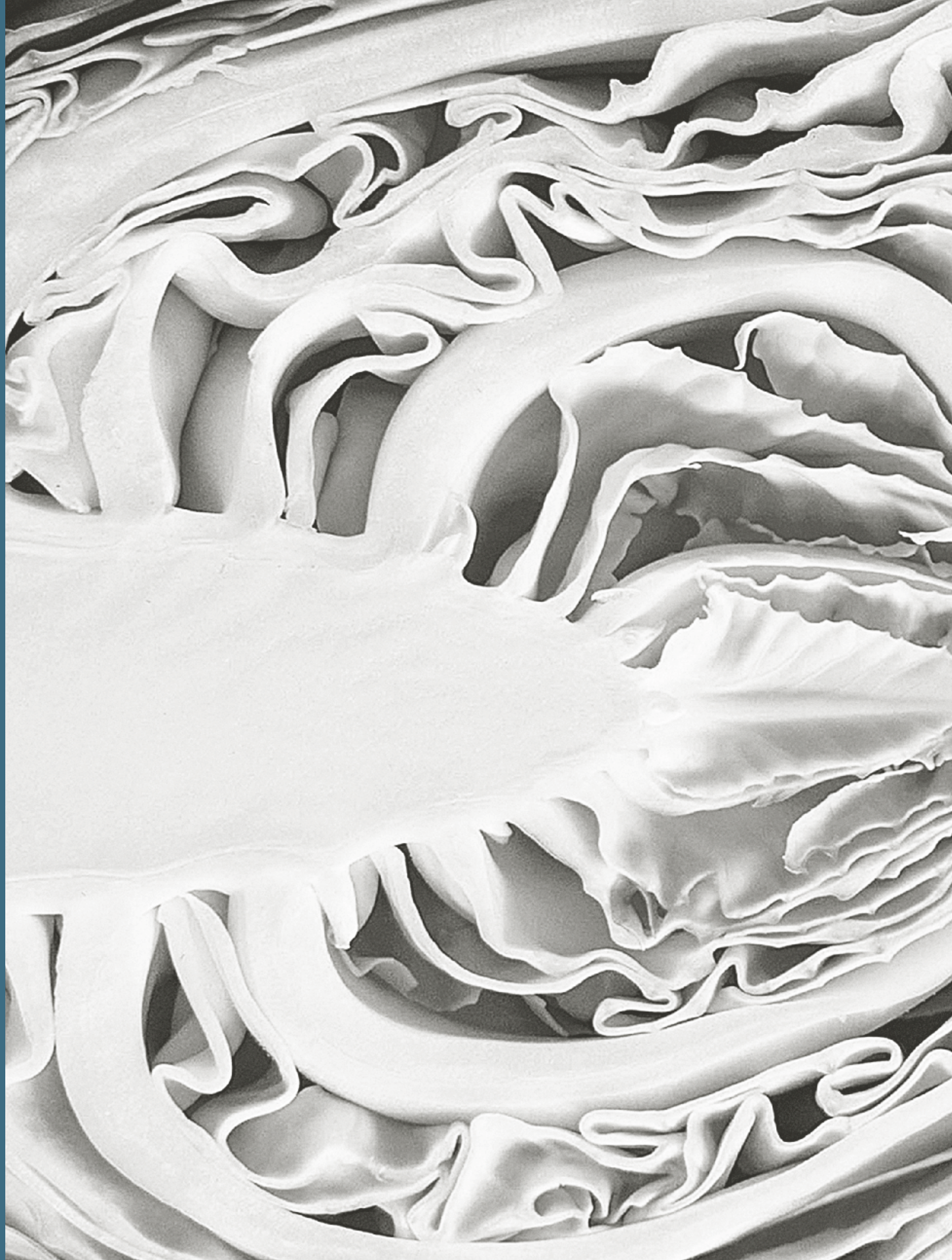
*Mrs. Dalloway said she would
buy the flowers herself.'*

— Virginia Woolf

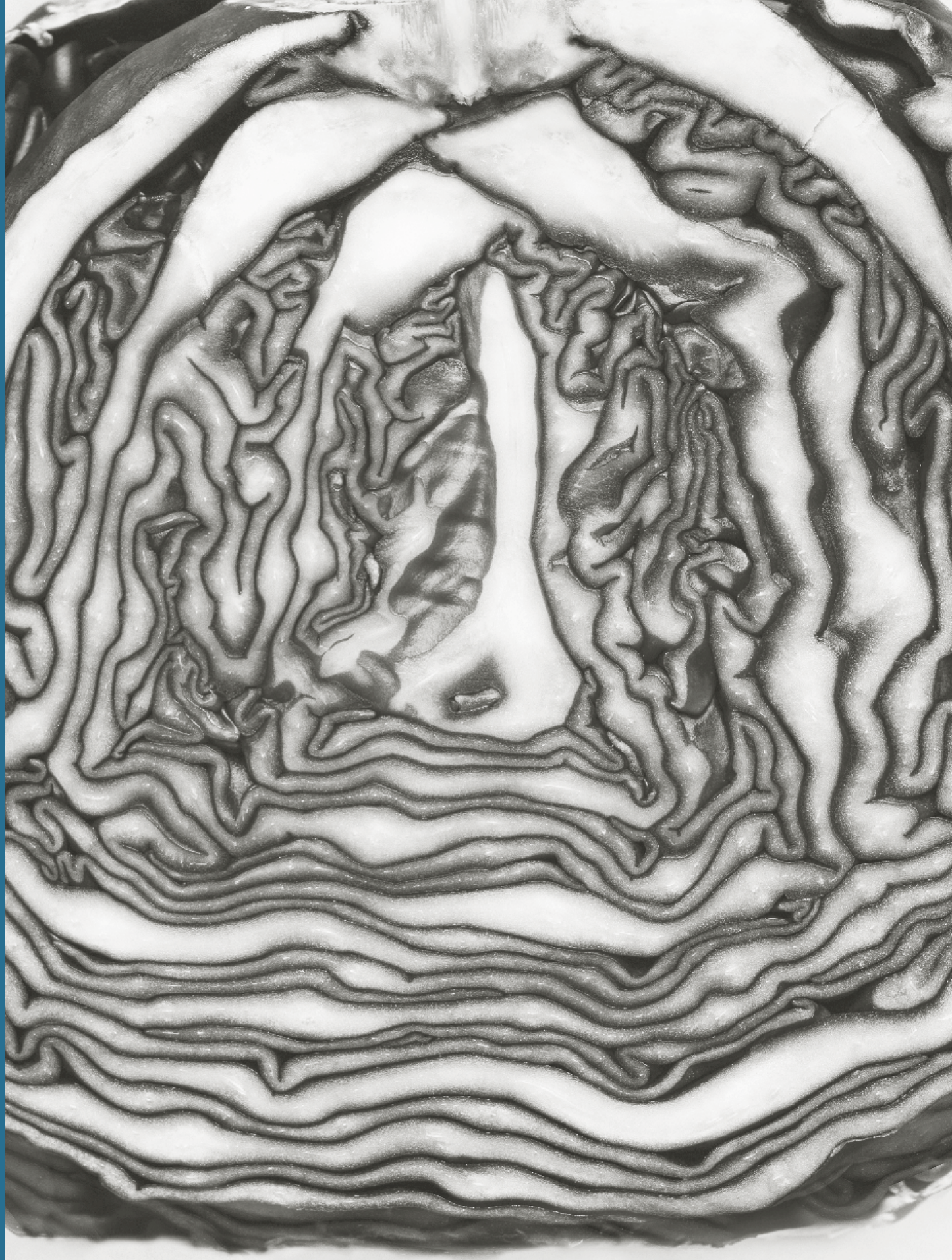
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Prologue

I had a vision. I was wandering the streets of a beautiful, wealthy city, alongside its canals and through its many parks. In this vision, I was observing the faces of people, how they moved, their mood or what we call their 'energy'. As I walked, I found myself questioning whether these people were happy. And as I continued walking, I realized that I couldn't remember the last time a stranger had smiled at me or simply looked at me, let alone spoken to me spontaneously.

When I first arrived there, I noticed that many people had a faint smile on their faces, like the Mona Lisa's smile. You know, the kind you can't quite put your finger on, but which, in my interpretation, projected a certain inner happiness and serenity.

But the longer I stayed there, the more stories I kept on hearing of burnout and issues with mental and physical health. Even more, I heard how the consumption of psychiatric medication and illegal drugs seemed to be getting more and more pervasive.

I wondered: what happened to these people?

Introduction

Cravings—Our Inner Compass

Whatever you crave is good for you. We are biologically designed to crave the foods that nourish us. Our bodies tell us what they need.

When I said this to one of my cooking students the other day, a man so overweight he had to sit because he couldn't stay standing for long, bitterly remarked, "Yeah right, look at me!" As he said this, he pointed to his body as evidence against my statement. Reactions like that are not uncommon. I often hear: "Wait a minute, all I crave is chocolate, chips, and Coca-Cola. How can that be good for me?"

Well, the way I see it, the craving itself is not the thing that is wrong. When you crave sweets, for example, your body is asking for simple sugars—carbohydrates—to provide energy. The real problem is that the food industry has identified these cravings, our weak spots, and designed ultra-processed products that manipulate our taste buds without truly satisfying our deeper nutritional needs. When you eat whole foods like fruits or vegetables that are rich in complex carbohydrates, you feel energized in a sustained way. But when you consume processed foods filled with sugar, all you satisfy is your taste buds, not your body's actual energy requirements. Sugar is a scam: the more you eat, the more tired, depressed, and drained you become. Then, because your deeper craving remains unsatisfied, you keep eating more and more. Without realizing it, you find yourself trapped in a vicious circle.

Modern people are like the prisoners in Plato's cave. We think that we see reality, but what we are really witnessing are merely cheap imitations of it—shadows of the real thing. Instead of real intimacy, we consume porn, satisfying immediate sexual urges but not our deeper need for connection. Instead of conversing with friends in person, we interact on social media, which often leaves us lonelier and more depressed than before. Rather than

building health and immunity from within at a deeper level, we increasingly rely on newly developed medicines and chemicals, which have harmful side effects that weaken our overall health. Instead of nourishing our bodies with real food, we are duped into eating ultra-processed imitations of true nourishment.

Yes, I believe that our cravings and the signals our bodies give us are always correct. The problem lies in how modern life offers superficial, quick-fix solutions to deep physical and emotional needs. What we need is a way to satisfy these cravings at a sustainable level—through real sources of nourishment that don't cause harm. When we are truly nourished, we feel deeply satisfied, fulfilled. We feel abundant.

What our body tells us is always correct. Your body is your compass. In this book, I want to encourage you to reconnect, at least on a food level, with your deeper cravings. The recipes are designed to help you eat the foods you truly love and desire, but as you do this, find nourishment from wholesome and healthy sources.

Modern lifestyles and ways of thinking alienate us from being deeply connected to our feelings and desires. Some of us have never learned a natural way of feeling satisfied. We are so disconnected from our bodies, sensations, and emotions that we no longer feel, on a deeper level, what food actually does to us beyond the initial taste. How does food really make you feel? Once you build this intuitive connection with food, you will naturally and instinctively start choosing differently; soon you will discover that your priorities are shifting.

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FRESH

BLACK BEAN SALAD WITH CHOPPED VEGGIES AND LECHE DE TIGRE

Here comes the sun... and the beans with a Mexican vibe and a fiery kick. A Latin American cook I once worked with had the idea of marinating the beans in a traditional Peruvian marinade called Leche de Tigre. This marinade wraps the salad in a wonderful flavor that gives each mouthful a fresh, zesty taste.

Beans are an essential part of a plant-based diet, but they can sometimes feel a bit heavy, especially in summer when they're served in stews. This light and refreshing salad gives the beans a pleasant twist and breaks that heaviness.

When you mix the beans into the salad, they can give it a darker color that may be less visually appealing. So what I do is layer the beans at the bottom and place the vegetables on top. This not only looks nicer but also allows the beans to soak up the juices from the salad.

In the recipe, I use medium-spice chili, so if you're using a very spicy one, consider starting with just half.

INGREDIENTS

200 g (1 cup) — dry black beans

For the leche de tigre (Peruvian mandarin marinade):

120 ml (½ cup) — mandarin juice
60 ml (¼ cup) — lime juice
½ tsp — sea salt
— black pepper
½ — chili pepper, roughly chopped

For the salad:

1 — large cucumber, unpeeled with the seeds, finely chopped
500 g (1 lb 2 oz) — tomato or cherry tomatoes, finely chopped
2 — large avocados cut into medium chunks/cubes
150 g (1 cup) — roasted hazelnuts, roughly chopped
1 — medium red onion, finely chopped
1 (70 g) — bunch of coriander, roughly chopped
2 tbsp — umesu
— generous grind of black pepper
6 tbsp — freshly squeezed lime juice
2 tbsp — olive oil
1 — garlic clove, chopped very thinly
1 — chili pepper deseeded, chopped very thinly

For 4 portions

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Wait time: 1 hour 15 minutes

METHOD

Pressure-cook the black beans in 700 ml (3 cups) of water for 1 hour and 15 minutes for unsoaked beans and 45 minutes for beans soaked overnight. Strain the cooking water and allow the beans to cool.

In a jug, blend the mandarin juice, lime juice, salt, a generous amount of black pepper, and chili pepper using a hand mixer; this is the leche de tigre.

In a mixing bowl, add the beans and leche de tigre, and let them marinate for 20 minutes.

On a large, relatively flat plate, use a spoon to arrange the marinated beans, forming a nice bed to cushion the rest of the ingredients. Make sure to spoon over some of the marinade to let it gently coat the beans.

In a salad bowl, combine the cucumber, tomato, avocado, hazelnuts, onion, coriander, umesu, a generous grind of black pepper, lime juice, olive oil, garlic, and chili pepper. Mix well and spoon a generous amount of the salad mix over the black bean bed.

Enjoy this uplifting and satisfying bite.



SICILIAN ORANGE FENNEL SALAD WITH BLACK OLIVES

It takes courage to cook simple food, because you have to rely on the quality of the ingredients, your skills as a cook and your ability to balance flavors. This is a salad of five ingredients only; a classic Sicilian salad that can be prepared in various ways. My twist is the addition of raisins and mint, which is not traditional. I encourage you to be brave and resist the temptation to add more than these five ingredients.

For 4 people

Preparation time: 10 minutes

FRESH

METHOD

In a large salad bowl, mix all the ingredients and enjoy.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 — fennel cut into thin slices
- 4 — oranges cut into medium-sized chunks
- 100 g (¾ cup) — Kalamata olives, cut in half
- 50 g (½ cup) — raisins
- handful — of fresh mint leaves (around 5 g)

