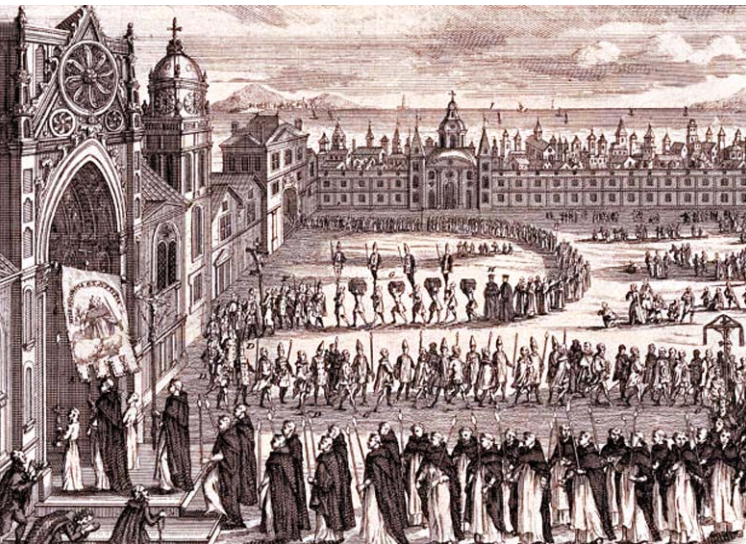


#HISTORY

He Ran To India

But what was Orta doing, learning about medicine in India in the 16th century? It began with the Spanish Inquisition!



The procession of condemned individuals during the Inquisition in Goa.

His face can be seen on Portuguese bank notes. There are gardens in Lisbon and in Goa that are named after him. He wrote one of the first books printed in India. And yet, his body was actually dug up and burned in a posthumous public denouncement. This is the story of Garcia de Orta, a Portuguese physician who fled to India.

The first contact between India and Portugal was when Vasco da Gama landed on the coast of Kerala in 1498. It was unpleasant and disastrous. Over the next century or so, the Portuguese would become a permanent fixture in Goa, using it as a waypoint in their dealings with the islands of Southeast Asia. They were here for spices and wealth and seemed to have little interest in the culture and knowledge of these faraway lands.

Yet, there have always been exceptions. One such exception was Garcia de Orta, a Portuguese physician, who wrote one of the first books to be printed in India. This landmark book, *Coloquios dos simples e drogas he cousas medicais da India* (liberal translation: 'Elementary Discussions on the Drugs and Medicines of India, and Their Uses') was a treatise on medicine published in Goa, all the way back in 1563!

But what was Orta doing, learning about medicine in India in the 16th century? It began with the Spanish Inquisition!

For many centuries in the medieval era, Spain was ruled by a series of Muslim rulers. They called it Al-Andalus. But after the Christian recapture of Spain, there came the Spanish Inquisition, a violent backlash to root out all non-Christian influence. Garcia de Orta came from a Spanish Jewish family, which fled to Portugal to escape persecution. The Inquisition spread to Portugal later and the Orta family had been coerced into converting into Christianity. Still, new converts were treated with suspicion and contempt, because they secretly retained their Jewish faith. Despite having a bright future ahead of him as a doctor, Orta was terrified of the Inquisition. In 1534, he got an opportunity to flee to India, and he grabbed it.

The early 1500s marked the beginning of the Portuguese presence in India, and they did not come in peace. It was a violent and bloody time but none of that

appears in Orta's book. Instead, we find him focusing on the benefits of aloe vera and ginger; the joys of cashew, clove and mango; and the pleasures of bhang and opium. Orta was engaging with India on his own terms.

For many years, he was the personal physician of Burhan Nizam Shah, the Sultan of Ahmednagar, who seemed to have a high opinion of the Portuguese. At the sultan's court, he interacted with Muslim hakeems and Hindu medical practitioners, quietly picking their brains. He didn't blindly absorb this 'exotic' tradition. Instead, he integrated it with his own experiences and medical frameworks. The *Coloquios* spend a lot of time talking about legendary Greek physician Galen, Arab polymath Ibn Sina and the other pillars of 'Western' medical thought.

He came to be widely respected in Portuguese India, receiving the leasehold of a barren island in (what later became) Bombay on which to build a home. In fact, when the British would take over those islands more than a century later, the 'Town Hall' would be built on the site of Orta's old mansion.

But this little oasis of safety that Orta found in India was soon about to end. In the 1540s, the Inquisition came to India. Jeronimo Dias, a physician and Jewish convert, just like Orta, was convicted of heresy and burned in 1543 in Goa. With the protection of powerful friends, Orta managed to avoid punishment, dying a natural death in 1568. But sadly, the story doesn't end there. His family was targeted after his death and confessions were wrung out of them through torture. His sister was burnt at the stake. Orta's body was actually dug up and burned in a posthumous public denouncement.

While the horrors of that time are not forgotten, Garcia de Orta is seen as a Portuguese national treasure today. His face can even be found on their banknotes. Indeed, most heartwarming of all, given that Orta means 'garden' in Portuguese, there are gardens in Lisbon and in Goa that are named after him. When residents take refuge from the bustle of the city in the quiet shade of a lush garden, they reenact a more pleasant version of Orta's life. After all, that's what he was doing as well, taking refuge from a harsh world and finding a cure in herbs and flowers.

From luxury, to enemy property, to now a parking lot



Elizabeth Sass Brunner.

By the early 2000s, the once-celebrated property had become dilapidated, with makeshift homes built on its open lands. In 2023, around 134 families were evicted from the property following Supreme Court orders, clearing the way for surface parking development. In October last year, the custodian office of enemy properties under the Home Ministry issued a temporary No Objection Certificate (NOC) to the Nainital district magistrate, allowing surface parking on an ad-hoc basis.

● Sunita Sasaram

Metropole is where Jinnah and his wife honeymooned in 1918. The design of its roof came to be known as Nainital-pattern-roofing, which the British then used across India. Why is the hotel being turned into a parking lot?

Last month, the Ministry of Home Affairs temporarily allotted Nainital's Metropole Hotel Complex, classified as enemy property, to the state government for use as a parking facility. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami had requested the allotment in light of the serious parking issues in the popular hill station.

Built in 1880, Metropole was owned by the Raja of Mahmudabad, Muhammad Amir Ahmad Khan, the leader of the Muslim League at the time of the Independence movement, and is one of the oldest luxury hotels in Nainital. This is where Mohammad Ali Jinnah

and his wife Ratibai honeymooned in 1918. The design of its roof came to be known as Nainital-pattern-roofing, which the British then used in many buildings across India.

Nainital's Metropole Hotel was a lavish place frequented by celebrities. Jinnah spent his honeymoon here and Hungarian painter Elizabeth Sass Brunner created the 'Last Winter' while she was one of its guests. It was also one of the first designated enemy properties. Over a 100 families that had encroached on its land were recently evicted. The recent demolition of encroached areas at the dilapidated Metropole Hotel in Nainital has put into focus the changing image of what was once the haunt of celebrities.

When Muhammad Amir Ahmad Khan moved to Pakistan after Partition, the hotel was leased by several people over the years, including famous historian Satyaketu Vidyalkar. Hungarian painter Elizabeth Sass Brunner, along with daughter Elizabeth Brunner, was among the hotel's many celebrity guests.



The Metropole hotel in Nainital today is a far cry from its glory days.



A major fire had burst out at the hotel many years ago.



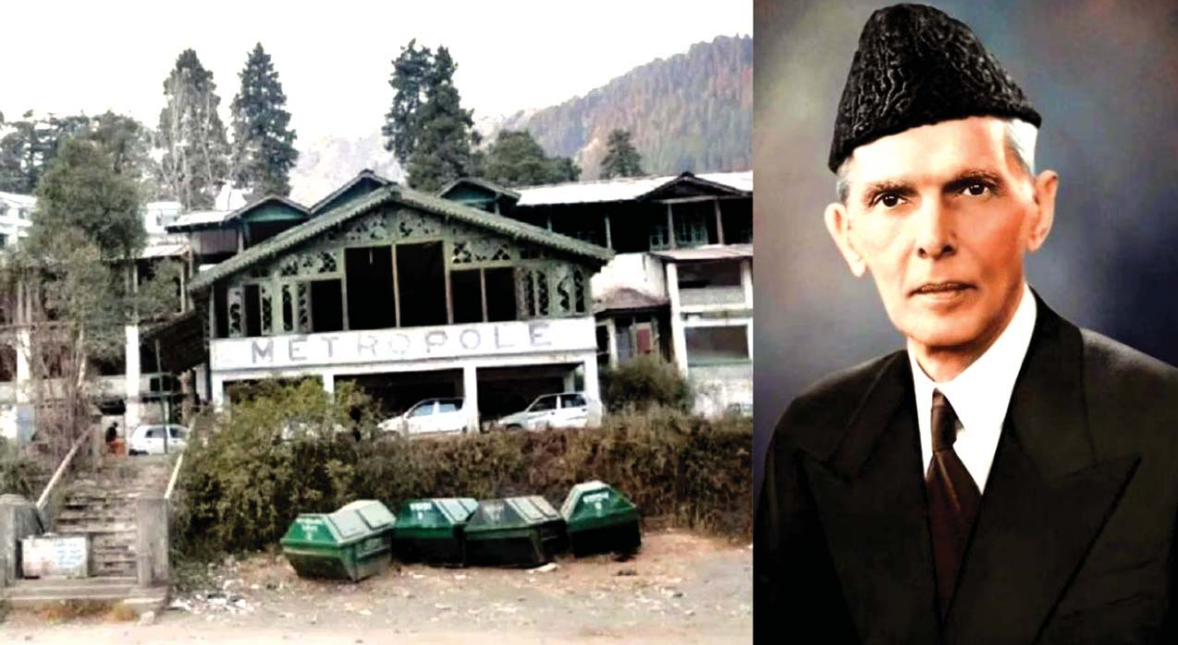
Photographing the Natural Beauty

The natural world is full of so much gorgeous beauty and wonder, and it is important for us to embrace it as much as possible. We can experience so much breathtaking scenery in nature, and it is important to make sure that you make the most of this. Nature Photography Day is here to encourage more people to capture photos of the everyday beauty of the world! The first step to celebrating the day is getting out into the world with your camera. Visit your local park and discover the beauty held in such a natural setting, or take a look in your garden for the little-hidden world of insects and flowers.



Metropole Hotel, Nainital.

#METROPOLE



Metropole Hotel complex will be converted into a parking lot. Jinnah spent time with his wife in this hotel.

It used to be a place of grandeur and prestige

Spread over 10 acres, the Metropole Hotel was a lavish establishment, boasting 75 rooms, 16 cottages, 24 servant quarters, and five tennis lawns. It was renowned for its flat non-corrugated, galvanized tin-roof, a design that later became known as the 'Nainital-pattern-roofing,'

influencing architectural styles across India. The hotel's scenic surroundings and exclusive amenities made it a preferred destination for high-profile visitors, including Hungarian painter Elizabeth Sass-Brunner, who created the artwork 'Last Winter' inspired by the hotel's landscape.

Transition to enemy property

At the time of India's independence in 1957, the Nawab of Mahmudabad owned the property. However, following the partition, the Nawab migrated to Pakistan, acquiring Pakistani citizenship. In 1968, the Enemy Property

Act was enacted, and the Indian government declared Metropole Hotel as enemy property, preventing its private ownership or commercial use. Over the years, the hotel fell into disrepair, and encroachers gradually occupied its open land.

Encroachments and legal action

By the early 2000s, the once-celebrated property had become dilapidated, with makeshift homes built on its open lands. In 2023, around 134 families were evicted from the property following Supreme Court orders, clearing the way for surface parking

development. In October last year, the custodian office of enemy properties under the Home Ministry issued a temporary No Objection Certificate (NOC) to the Nainital district magistrate, allowing surface parking on an ad-hoc basis.



Metropole is now just a memory

Pushpesh Pant, historian, food scholar, and a former professor of international relations at Jawaharlal Nehru University, recalled his stay at the Metropole as an eight-year old boy in 1953, when the hotel was managed by a Parsi man named Shapoorji.

"I still remember the luxury at the Metropole. It had four tennis courts, a billiards room, and a reading room. We had our meals in the suite we were occupying, and it was brilliant. I was too young to realize that the hotel was already starting to show signs of wear and tear," Prof. Pant said.

By the time Pant visited Nainital again in 1980, the hotel's fortunes had dipped considerably, and people had started to encroach on its grounds.

"When Nainital became a destination for films, several actors would stay at the Metropole. Shashi Kapoor, Dev Anand and their crew have stayed there. The cast of films

like *Gumrah* also stayed there. Till the mid 60s, the hotel was catering to guests. After this, the perception of 'Enemy Property' made people wary of investing in its maintenance," Prof. Pant said.

Another reason for Metropole's decline was the change in the client profile after Independence, Pant said. "After the departure of the Europeans, no one would pay to stay in a hotel to play billiards or go to a bar. They would rather go out. Soon, the hotel's sprawling grounds began to be used as a parking space. This is the connecting link to the present developments," he said.

Tied up in legal tangles and the lack of a Uttarakhand Heritage Act, despite High Court orders, it is not Nainital alone that has lost a part of history, but the hill-state of Uttarakhand. Enough to make the hardest of hard hearts weep.

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



Aerial view of the Metropole.

#LOOKS

Cleaning Your Makeup Brush Is A Must

All you need are household ingredients like olive oil, vinegar, and baking soda.

Makeup brushes can become bacteria hotbeds if you don't care for the tools properly. The American Academy of Dermatology Association recommends cleaning makeup brushes every seven to 10 days to avoid nasty skin infections. Thankfully, you can sanitize your grubby brushes with simple ingredients from your kitchen, including vinegar, olive oil, baking soda, and lemon. Making a DIY makeup brush cleaner is easier, cheaper, and more eco-friendly than buying cosmetic cleaning agents. Conventional cleaners often contain soaps and chemicals that disrupt ecosystems and wreak havoc on sensitive skin types. Plus, there's no plastic packaging involved when you whip up a fresh vinegar cleaner at home. Below are five recipes for DIY makeup brush cleaners. These homemade cleaners contain only common, healthy, and mostly food-grade ingredients.



How to Properly Clean a Makeup Brush

Contrary to instinct, never use hot water to clean your makeup brushes. The heat can weaken the glue that connects the bristles to the handle, ultimately shortening your brush's lifespan. When cleaning your makeup brush, agitate the bristles to loosen up gunk. But don't pull at them. Instead,

dab the brush in your cleaning solution and swirl it gently against your palm or a clean textured surface. Try not to get the cleaning solution on wooden handles. Reshape your brush while it's wet and lay it flat on a clean towel. Or, better yet, prop it up in a cup to dry overnight.

White Vinegar and Lemon

Vinegar is one of the most widely used and adored nontoxic cleaning ingredients. You can use it to scrub toilets, polish mirrors and windows, descruff hardwood floors, and yes, even sanitize makeup brushes. To make a natural and

effective makeup brush cleaner, combine two tablespoons of white vinegar with a cup of warm water. Whirl the bristles in the mixture, rinse, dip in fresh lemon juice, rinse again, and repeat as needed until the water runs clean.

Baking Soda

This one-ingredient wonder uses alkali's dissolving power to break down dirt and bad oils in your brushes. Sodium bicarbonate, better known by its street name, baking soda, has a pH of 8.3. Baking soda's alkalinity is the antidote to bacteria that thrive in neutral or acidic conditions, which is why the common kitchen ingredient is so popular as a deep cleaning agent. Add a teaspoon of

baking soda to a glass of room-temperature water and let your brushes soak in the mixture for 20 minutes (don't worry: baking soda isn't corrosive). Rinse and repeat with a fresh batch of baking soda-spiked water, as needed, until the water runs clear. The average box of baking soda costs negligible, so, this is probably the most economical method of brush-cleaning you'll find.



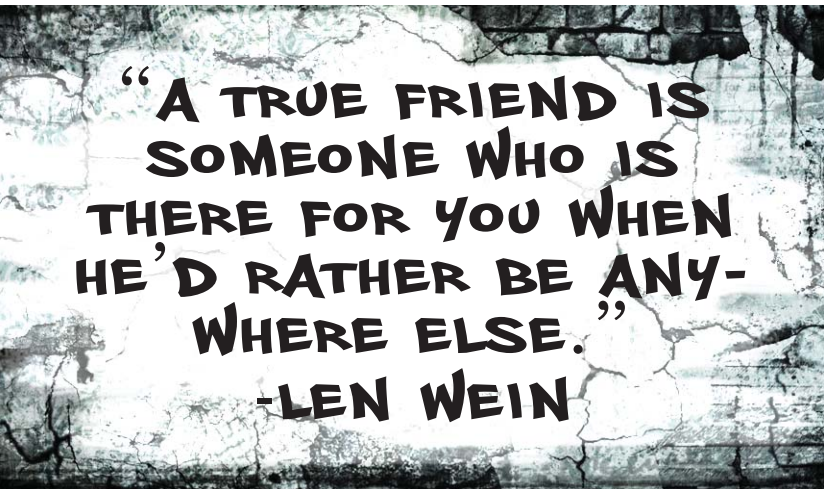
Witch Hazel and Grapeseed Oil

Witch hazel, an astringent extracted from the witch hazel plant's bark and leaves, is another natural product commonly used in DIY skin care. The ingredient contains 14% alcohol, which is effective for sanitizing brushes but could also dry them out. You can counteract this witch hazel's drying effects with a nourishing oil like grapeseed. Mix two tablespoons of witch hazel and a tablespoon of grapeseed oil. Work the mixture into the makeup brush bristles, rinse, and repeat until the water runs clean. Let your brushes dry overnight and you should have a soft, sparkling-clean makeup tool by morning.

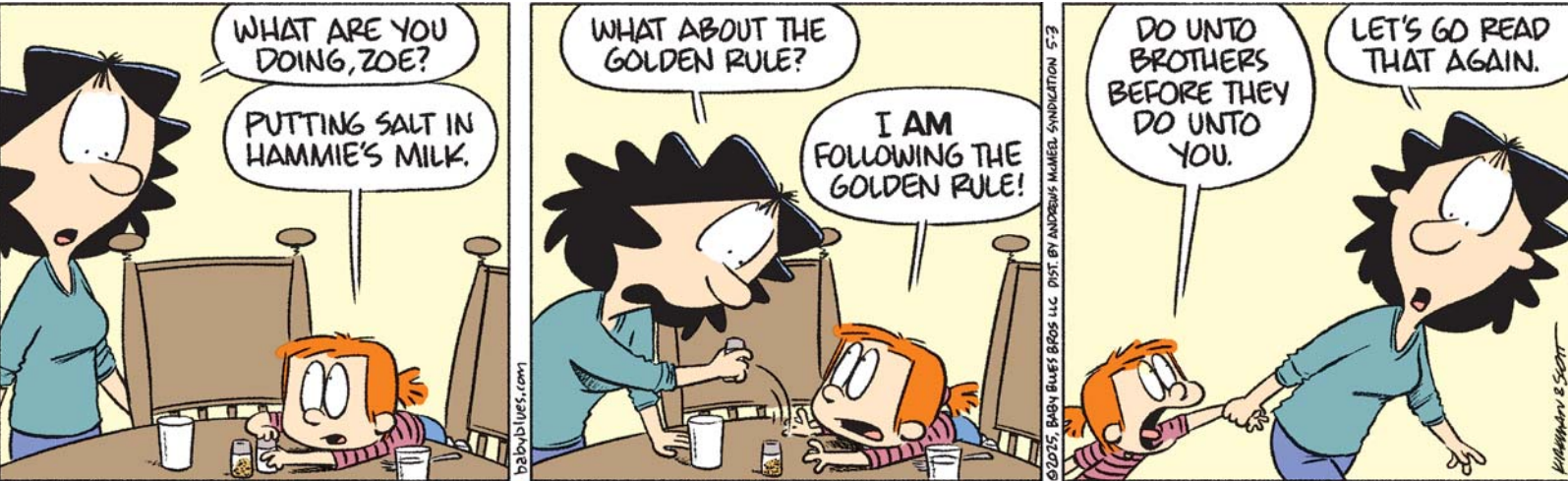
Tea Tree Oil

Tea tree oil is gentle enough to use with most skin types and leaves a refreshing earthy scent. To make a tea tree oil cosmetic brush cleaner, dilute five drops of the essential oil (in pure form) in a cup of lukewarm water. Add another five drops of coconut oil to keep the bristles soft. Then, massage, rinse, and repeat as needed.

THE WALL

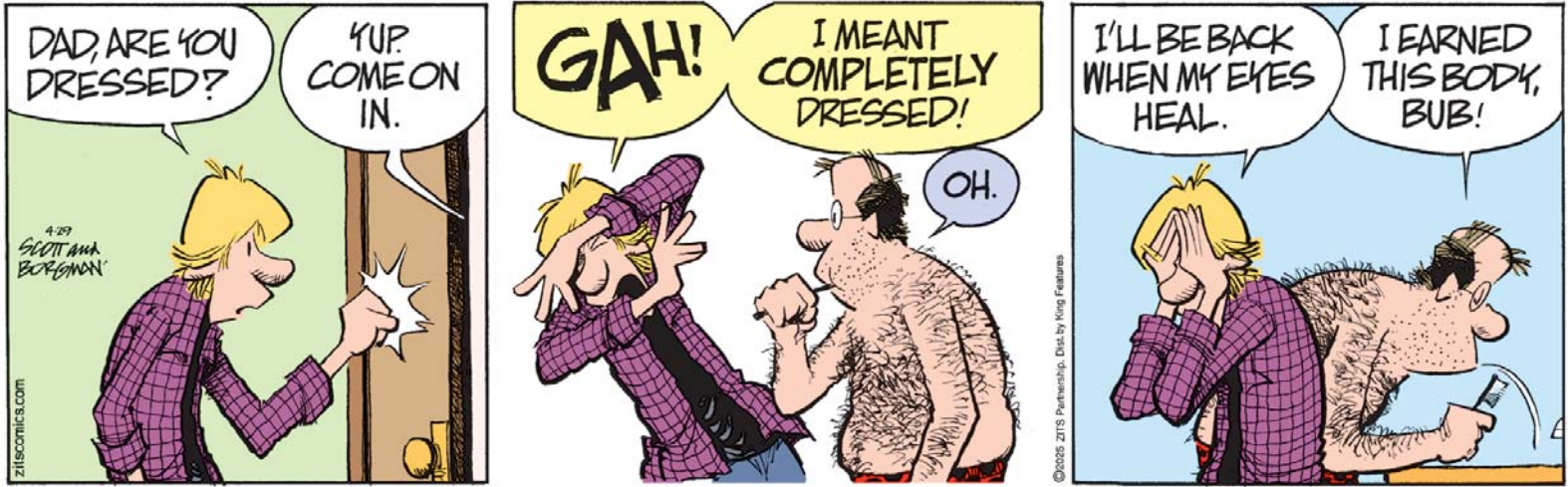


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

