## OURPLACENEWS

The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

**NOVEMBER 2020** 

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The best outdoor winter swimming spots in Britain

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Food & Drink • Arts, Crafts & Hobbies • Home & Garden

#### **Letter from the Editor**

Welcome to Our Place - The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

Every month, we bring you news and features on; Health & Beauty, Money & Work, Leisure & Travel, Food & Drink, Arts, Crafts & Hobbies, Home & Garden, plus... our Charity of the Month!

Our Place was founded with a mission to connect the mature online community to a world of news, features, offers and life changing products they may have missed out on. Bring them all into one place, Our Place.

What makes us special is that we are a vibrant team of all ages, from 21 to 65 who are all passionate about living life to the fullest irrespective of age. We have built strong relationships with some of the best UK age related businesses with the aim of brokering discounted rates for our Over-50s community.

Become a Friend of Our Place and receive our exclusive newsletters. They are a great way of keeping updated with the latest news and promotions. We aim to bring a smile to your face every time you open your inbox by selecting exclusive vouchers and discounts just for you.

We welcome you and hope you enjoy Our Place.

The Editor - Our Place

PS. Do you have an interesting story or article? If so, send us an email by visiting: www.ourplace.co

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#### Data Privacy

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## Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do Stay at home

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (where this absolutely cannot be done from home)
- Stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

#### Anyone can spread the virus

### Full guidance on staying at home and away from others

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

#### **Details**

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the government is now (23rd March 2020) introducing three new measures

- Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes
- 2. Closing non-essential shops and community spaces
- 3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public

Every citizen must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, will be given the powers to enforce them - including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

These measures are effective immediately. The Government will look again at these measures in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

#### Symptoms and what to do

Do not leave your home if you have coronavirus symptoms

#### Do not leave your home if you have either:

- a high temperature this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

To protect others, do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.

Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do.

#### Advice for people at high risk

#### Who's at high risk from coronavirus

Coronavirus can make anyone seriously ill, but there are some people who are at a higher risk.

For example, you may be at high risk from coronavirus if you:

- have had an organ transplant
- · are having certain types of cancer treatment
- have blood or bone marrow cancer, such as leukaemia
- have a severe lung condition, such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma
- have a condition that makes you much more likely to get infections
- are taking medicine that weakens your immune system
- are pregnant and have a serious heart condition

#### Who's at high risk from coronavirus

If you're at high risk of getting seriously ill from coronavirus, there are extra things you should do to avoid catching it.
These include:

- not leaving your home you should not go out to do shopping, pick up medicine or exercise
- stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from other people in your home as much as possible

Ask friends, family or neighbours to pick up shopping and medicines for you. They should leave them outside your door.

## Self-isolation helps stop coronavirus spreading

Do not leave your home if you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or live with someone who does. This is called self-isolation.

If you are self-isolating, you must:

- not leave your home for any reason, other than to exercise once a day - but stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from other people
- not go out to buy food or collect medicine order them by phone or online, or ask someone else to drop them off at your
- · not have visitors, such as friends and family, in your home

You can use your garden, if you have one.

#### STAY AT HOME!

## Could cold water hold a clue to a dementia cure?

Cold water swimming may protect the brain from degenerative diseases like dementia, researchers from Cambridge University have discovered.



**BBC News** reports that in a world first, a "cold-shock" protein has been found in the blood of regular winter swimmers at London's Parliament Hill Lido.

The protein has been shown to slow the onset of dementia and even repair some of the damage it causes in mice.

Prof Giovanna Mallucci, who runs the UK Dementia Research Institute's Centre at the University of Cambridge, says the discovery could point researchers towards new drug treatments which may help hold dementia at bay.

The research - although promising - is at an early stage, but it centres on the hibernation ability that all mammals retain, which is prompted by exposure to cold.

There are already more than a million people with dementia in the UK and the total is expected to double by 2050.

Researchers are searching for new ways to treat the condition, as current options have only limited impact.

#### Bears and hedgehogs

Doctors have known for decades that cooling people down can - in certain circumstances - protect their brains.

People with head injuries and those who need cardiac operations are often cooled during surgery, as are babies.

What has not been so well understood was why cold has this protective effect.

The link with dementia lies in the destruction and creation of synapses - the connections between cells in the brain.

In the early stages of Alzheimer's and other neuro-degenerative diseases, these brain connections are lost. This leads to the cascade of symptoms associated with dementia - including memory loss, confusion and mood swings - and, in time, the death of whole brain cells.

What intrigued Prof Mallucci was the fact that brain connections are lost when hibernating animals like bears, hedgehogs and bats bed down for their winter sleep.

About 20-30% of their synapses are culled as their bodies preserve precious resources for winter. But when they awake in the spring, those connections are miraculously reformed.

#### Why getting cold can be dangerous

Cold has a powerful effect on the human body. The shock of entering cold water causes a dramatic rise in heart rate and blood pressure, which can cause heart attacks and strokes in those with underlying illnesses. It also prompts a gasp reflex and rapid breathing, which can lead to drowning if water is inhaled.

The longer someone spends in the water, the slower their responses. People can become confused and clumsy, and find it hard to get out of the water. Dr Heather Massey of Portsmouth University's Extreme Environments Laboratory, says there are some key things to remember.

- Before taking a dip in cold water, make sure you are fit and healthy.
   If in any doubt, check with your GP
- Swim with others who are accustomed to cold water and know local hazards
- · Get out if you start to feel cold
- Find shelter, remove wet clothing and replace it with as many layers of warm, dry clothing as you can, including a woolly hat and gloves
- Keep moving around, do light exercise if you can, and don't worry about shivering - it will help get you warm

But Dr Massey says don't take a hot bath or shower. Changes in your blood pressure as you are re-warming, can cause you to faint and risk traumatic injury.

#### 'Cold-shock' chemicals

The Cambridge dementia team discovered the "cold-shock chemicals" that trigger the process in 2015. They cooled ordinary mice, and mice with Alzheimer's disease and prion (neuro-degenerative) disease, to the point where they became hypothermic, which means their body temperature was below 35C.

On re-warming, they found only the ordinary mice could regenerate their synapses; the Alzheimer's and prion mice could not. At the same time, they found levels of a "cold-shock" protein called RBM3 soared in the ordinary mice, but not in the others. It suggested RBM3 could be the key to the formation of new connections.

They proved the link in a separate experiment which showed brain cell deaths in Alzheimer's and prion disease could be prevented by artificially boosting RBM3 levels in mice. It was a major breakthrough in dementia research, and their findings were published in the scientific journal Nature.



#### Winter swimmers

Prof Mallucci believed a drug which prompted the production of RBM3 might help slow - and possibly even partially reverse - the progress of some neuro-degenerative diseases in people.

RBM3 had not been detected in human blood, so the obvious next step was to find out whether the protein is present in the human population.

In an interview on the BBC Radio 4 Today Programme, Prof Mallucci explained that she would like to test the role of RBM3 in humans - but that ethical guidelines would make it very hard to get permission to make people hypothermic.

Step forward Martin Pate, one of a small group who swim throughout the winter at the unheated open-air lido on Hampstead Heath in London. He and the other swimmers voluntarily made themselves hypothermic on a regular basis he told her in an email, and would therefore be ideal subjects of a study.

Prof Mallucci agreed, and during the winters of 2016, 2017 and 2018, her team tested for the protein in winter swimmers. The researchers used members of a Tai Chi club who practise beside the pool but never actually swim, as a control group.

The Cambridge team found that a significant number of the swimmers had markedly elevated levels of RBM3. All of them become hypothermic, with core temperatures as low as 34C. None of the Tai Chi group showed an increase in RBM3 levels or experienced these very low body temperatures.

#### Could cold slow dementia?

The Cambridge work on winter swimmers has been shared in online lectures but has not yet been published in a scientific journal.

A number of other researchers have found similarly higher levels of RBM3 in babies and heart and stroke patients who have been made hypothermic.

What these findings show, says Prof Mallucci, is that - just like hibernating mammals - human beings produce the "cold-shock" protein. But the risks associated with getting cold outweigh any potential benefits, so cold water immersion is certainly not a potential dementia treatment, she says.

The challenge now, she says, is to find a drug that stimulates the production of the protein in humans and - more important still - to prove it really does help delay dementia.

Dementia is predominantly a disease of the old, so even a relatively short delay in the onset of illness could have huge benefits for individuals, and the wider population.

Prof Mallucci says: "If you slowed the progress of dementia by even a couple of years on a whole population, that would have an enormous impact economically and health-wise."

(Story source: BBC News)

### Socialising regularly can help with brain health and could prevent dementia, study finds

The findings also suggest that 'prescribing' socialisation could help protect against the disease.

**Inews** reports that older adults who socialise regularly have a healthier brain structure which could help ward off dementia, according to research. The findings also suggest that prescribing' socialisation could help protect against the disease in much the way that prescribing physical activity can help prevent diabetes or heart disease.

Scientists from the University of Pittsburgh analysed the social activity of 293 people whose average age was 83. High scores were given to activities such as playing board games and going to the cinema.

#### Better grey matter

Meeting up with other people at least once a week; volunteering or working; or those who were married or lived with others also scored highly.

The group received a brain scan called Diffusion Tensor Imaging MRI that measures the cellular integrity of brain cells used for social engagement.

Researchers found that greater social engagement is related to better microstructural integrity of brain grey matter. Maintaining brain health is of critical importance as once brain cells die, dementia typically follows.

Social engagement with at least one other relative or friend activates specific brain regions needed to recognise familiar faces and emotions, make decisions and feel rewarded. According to the research even moderate "doses" seem to be beneficial.

#### Prevention

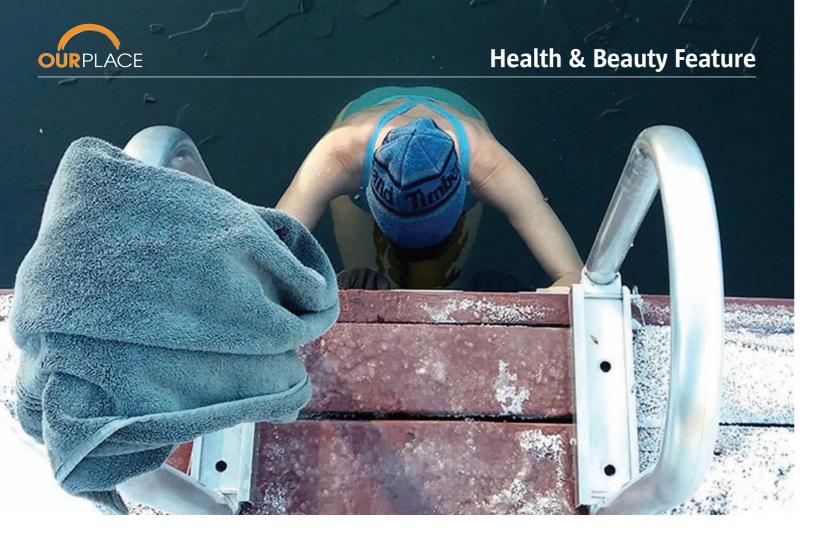
Cynthia Felix, lead author of the study said with no cure for the disease, preventing it had to be "the focus".

She said: "We need to do more research on the details, but that's the beauty of this - social engagement costs hardly anything, and we do not have to worry about side-effects.

"There is no cure for dementia, which has tremendous costs in terms of treatment and caregiving. Preventing dementia, therefore, has to be the focus. It's the 'use it or lose it' philosophy when it comes to the brain."

(Story source: Inews)





# Cold water swimming: Why an icy dip is good for your mental and physical health

Many people swear by the benefits of cold water swimming, and scientists think that they might be on to something.

Claire's legs ache with cold as she pushes forwards into the messy grey sea, grey sand stretching behind her, grey sky above. She braces herself against each incoming wave, the wind whipping at her exposed skin. This is the chilling reality of cold water swimming.

Her local beach, Scheveningen, on the western coast of the Netherlands, is a wide expanse of sand running uninterrupted beside the North Sea. It's March, and the sea temperature is about 6°C. In the water, Claire's skin temperature drops instantly, and after a few minutes, her muscles start to cool, stiffening like chewing gum.

Her swim is short, and warming up takes hours, but she's elated to be there. "We were jumping around, shrieking like schoolgirls," she says, remembering her first taste of cold water swimming. Claire needed the boost, as three months before, after suffering a personal trauma, she'd sunk into severe depression.

In the UK, where Claire is originally from, researchers are looking into the scientific benefits of cold water swimming for people who are experiencing mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression.

They're dipping volunteers into troughs of frigid water in labs, and leading groups into the water beside Brighton Pier. And they're discovering that cold water immersion can prime you, mentally and physically, to better deal with any stress that might come your way.



#### **Health & Beauty Feature**

#### How swimming in cold water shocks the body

One man who's leading the research into cold water swimming is Prof Mike Tipton, an environmental physiologist at the University of Portsmouth. An open water swimmer himself, he studies how people react to sudden immersion.

He says that the mood benefits of cold water swimming can be divided into two phases: the initial 'cold shock' response, and then adaptation that happens over the longer term.

If you've ever taken a wintry dip, you'll recognise cold water shock. First, you gasp involuntarily, then hyperventilate. Adrenaline courses through your body. Your heart races. You panic. Although you can't sense it, your blood pressure is skyrocketing, and glucose and fats are being released into your bloodstream, providing an energy source should you need to make a quick escape. This is the classic 'fight-or-flight' response.

Cortisol, a stress hormone, is released from your adrenal glands, which maintains this state for minutes to hours, while a surge of beta-endorphin hormones in the brain provides pain relief and gives a sense of euphoria. This explains Claire's post-swim high, which felt so good that she and her friend made it a ritual. Every Sunday, they rode their bikes to the beach to go for a dip.

In Portsmouth, Tipton puts his volunteers through a formalised version of Claire's weekly dips to measure how they adapt to cold shock. He sits his volunteers in a hanging chair, lowers them into a trough of water at 12°C, and keeps them there for about five minutes. Tipton notes that it only takes six immersions to halve the cold water shock response. In other words, your body learns to adapt: your heart and breathing rates only rise half as much, you panic less and you can control your breathing. This adaptation makes you less reactive to the shock of cold water, but it could also make you less reactive to everyday stress.

This is what researchers call 'cross-adaptation': adapt to one stressor, and you can partially adapt to others. Tipton's colleague Dr Heather Massey first demonstrated cross-adaptation in humans by habituating her volunteers to cold water, before putting them in a low-oxygen environment to simulate high altitude. The cold-adapted volunteers had a much smaller stress response to the lack of oxygen than other volunteers who hadn't been cold-adapted. Tipton believes that this cross-adaptation could lessen your response to psychological stress, too, Although physical and psychological stress can affect the body in different ways, they also share common elements. "These stressors are always stimulating the sympathetic nervous system (the part of the nervous system that's responsible for our 'fight-or-flight' response), as well as other systems responsible for cellular tolerance to stress," says Tipton. "We think that cold water habituation resets those systems to deal with stress

## Can cold water swimming help with depression?

While Tipton has been studying cross-adaptation in his lab, Dr Mark Harper, an anaesthetist at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals, has been looking at the same principle at the Brighton seafront.

He became interested in the potential stress benefits of cold water swimming because anaesthetised patients also go through a large physiological stress during surgery, and minimising that response could help patients to recover. While he has no current plans to test whether swimming in cold water could help improve surgical outcomes, it is nonetheless an interesting hypothesis.

He's especially fascinated in one specific component of the stress response. Just as stress causes an adrenaline surge, preparing us to attack or to run, it also kick-starts the immune system in preparation for possible wounding or infection.

This protective response, called inflammation, is healthy when stressful events are rare and isolated, but it can become chronic when people experience stress every day. What's more, chronic inflammation has been linked to depression. One study of identical twins found that the twin with higher levels of inflammation was more likely to have developed depression when revisited five years later. And a recent meta-analysis, pooling 36 studies that covered more than 9,000 patients, found that taking anti-inflammatory medication alongside antidepressants reduced depression symptoms, when compared to taking antidepressants alone.

So if adapting to the stress of cold water can decrease our general stress response and reduce inflammation, it follows that it could potentially reduce our risk of depression too. However, Harper is quick to point out that depression is complex, and inflammation is likely to be one of a number of factors that play a role.

Many open water swimmers talk about how their hobby has benefitted their mental and physical health, and it's not hard to see why. The exercise itself is good for the body, and spending time by water is associated with increased wellbeing. Swimming with others fosters a sense of community, and completing a challenging task creates a sense of achievement.

Harper recognises the importance of such a broad therapy: he's planning a study using cold water swimming to improve the mental wellbeing of NHS workers who have struggled through the coronavirus pandemic.

Back in the Netherlands, Claire swum regularly over the course of a year, underwent talking therapy, and took part in mindfulness training. When she was well enough to return to work, she took up a post as the mental health curriculum leader at the school where she teaches, ensuring that the students grow up knowing how to protect their own mental health.

She cites cold water swimming as a really important part of her own recovery. When she was struggling the most, it gave her social contact and didn't require her to be at her best. "We didn't need to talk," she says, "we could just go out and shout in the sea."

(Article source: Science Focus)

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#### **Money & Work News**

## Pandemic takes toll on UK retirement plans of over-50s

Hundreds of thousands of people facing prospect of working longer or tapping pension savings early.



**The Financial Times** reports that after two decades running his own management consultancy in Colwyn Bay, north Wales, 59-year-old Len Wilson was looking forward to retiring next year and embarking on a road trip around Europe with his wife Vanessa.

But the Wilsons plans have been blown off course by the coronavirus pandemic hitting his business revenue. Cash that was earmarked for his pension has been diverted to support the business. As a consequence, I will have to carry on working, on a part-time basis, for up to three years, said Mr Wilson. We wont be going away next year.

It is frustrating but we have to be pragmatic given the circumstances. Across the country, hundreds of thousands of workers in their fifties and sixties are facing up to the prospect of working longer than anticipated, or dipping into retirement savings prematurely, as the Covid-19 crisis takes its toll.

Some clients have decided to keep on working beyond the date they had planned to retire, said Christine Ross, client director with Handelsbanken Wealth Management.

I am (also) aware of instances where individuals who are still working have accessed their personal pension arrangements earlier than anticipated in order to bridge the income gap until their earnings return to pre-pandemic levels.

The coronavirus crisis has disproportionately affected the youngest and the oldest workers in the economy, since they have so far borne the brunt of job losses. Older workers are particularly sensitive to economic shocks as they have less time to recover financially from a market blow to their pension funds, or loss of income, before retirement.

The number of over-50s on unemployment-related benefits nearly doubled as a result of the pandemic, increasing from 304,000 in March to 588,000 in June, according to analysis by the Centre for Ageing Better, an independent think-tank.

Further, there is a risk of a surge in job losses for older workers when the governments furlough scheme ends this month, with one in four workers in this age group, 2.5m in total, having been furloughed. Of those who were still working, 20 per cent were working fewer hours. Hundreds of thousands of these workers may be unable to return to their previous jobs as some sectors struggle to recover, said the Centre for Ageing Better.

Advisers say over-50s who have been affected by the crisis are having to rapidly revise retirement plans. We are increasingly hearing from a large number of our 28,000 members who are concerned about the size of their pension pots, as a result of the severe impact of Covid-19 on their finances this year and what they see as bleak options for older workers on the horizon, said Natasha Oppenheim, chief executive of No Desire To Retire, which provides employment advice and support to older workers.

Compared with, say, two or three years ago, loss of income has become their primary motivation for seeking employment beyond statutory retirement age. Increased job insecurity is feeding through to increased retirement insecurity for older workers on a national level

Recent analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, a think-tank, found one in eight (13 per cent) older workers had changed their retirement plans as a result of the pandemic, with 8 per cent planning to retire later and 5 per cent planning to retire earlier.

Financial woes for older workers have been compounded by an increase in the state pension age, which this month rose to 66 for men and women. Eligibility for the full state pension, currently  $\mathfrak{L}9,100$  a year, is calculated on national insurance contributions, and cannot be taken early.

I do think there is a strong case reinforced even further by the recent pandemic to allow people who need it the chance to access their state pension early, even if at a reduced rate, said Ros Altmann, a former pensions minister. If they are unlikely or unable ever to return to work, then it seems unreasonable to force them to wait so long for their state pension payment.

Campaigners are now urging the government to pay more attention to the plight of older workers. Last month, the government announced its £2bn Kickstart scheme to help young people on universal credit, the main welfare benefit, back into work. But there was no similar intervention for over-50s, an age group that already suffers from employment discrimination.

Older workers who find themselves unemployed as a result of Covid-19 are likely to find it much more difficult than other ages to get themselves another job, said David Sinclair, director of the International Longevity Centre, a specialist think-tank. Without further support from government, a huge number of people aged over 50 will find early retirement forced on them.



The Department for Work and Pensions said jobcentre work coaches supported people of all ages to develop their careers, with its Plan for Jobs doubling the number of frontline work coaches to 27,000 by March 2021. We've also launched a new £2.5bn national skills fund, and we continue to work with employers through our Fuller Working Lives service to help them recruit, retrain and retain older workers, the department said.

(Story source: Financial Times)

## Booming property prices are good news for many over-50s

While the news that UK house prices have hit an all-time high doesn't help those trying to get onto the property ladder it is good news for many over 50s.



**Over 50s Money** reports that people over 50 are more likely to own their own home outright or have a small mortgage compared to the property value.

Currently the property market is buoyant fuelled by pent up demand during lockdown and Rishi Sunak's stamp duty holiday which runs until 31 March next year. However, there are concerns that prices will turn downwards later this year as unemployment starts to rise when the furlough scheme ends, and the anticipated post lockdown recession starts to bite. The next few months provide a window of opportunity for people over 50 to use their equity in their home to sort out their finances.

Currently the property market is buoyant with record house prices and high levels of sales. Even with the stamp duty holiday these conditions are unlikely to be sustained into the winter as the economic downturn kicks in. Many people over 50 are asset rich but cash poor. For those with significant equity in their home the time has never been better to realise this to make their lives more comfortable.

There are two options that most people could consider. The first is selling your house and downsizing to something smaller. The second is to look at equity release, which could give you a tax-free lump sum and enable you to continue to live in the same house. People should carefully think through which option is right for them. They should do this now before the property market starts to come off the boil.

(Story source: Over 50s Money)

## When is Black Friday 2020?

This year, Thanksgiving is on Thursday 26 November, meaning that Black Friday will start on 27 November.

*Inews* reports that it's that time of year again, when pre-Christmas shoppers scramble to get their hands on some heavily discounted goods in the Black Friday sale. Originating in the US, it has now been adopted by many other countries around the world including the UK.

This year it's set to be a little different, with social distancing and lockdown measures preventing many people from accessing deals in stores first-hand. However, as usual there's set to be plenty of reductions for bargain-hunters online, meaning many won't have to set foot outside of the house to get involved. Here's everything you need to know.

#### What is Black Friday and when does it take place?

Black Friday is the informal name given to the shopping day after Thanksgiving in the US when big retailers offer huge discounts on goods. This year, Thanksgiving is on Thursday 26 November, meaning that Black Friday will start on Friday 27 November. Some stores open just gone midnight, but most will open at either 5am or 6am. Customers will queue around the corner - some even camping out overnight - to get their hands on a bargain.

In the past, this has resulted in scenes of mayhem and scraps, as shoppers fight over discounted products. Since 2006, there have been 11 reported deaths and over 100 injuries throughout the US on Black Friday. The UK adopted the day at the start of the 2010s, when the then Walmart-owned Asda announced it would be running a Black Friday campaign. More and more retailers - including Tesco, Amazon, John Lewis and Argos - began to follow suit.

#### Why is it called 'Black Friday'?

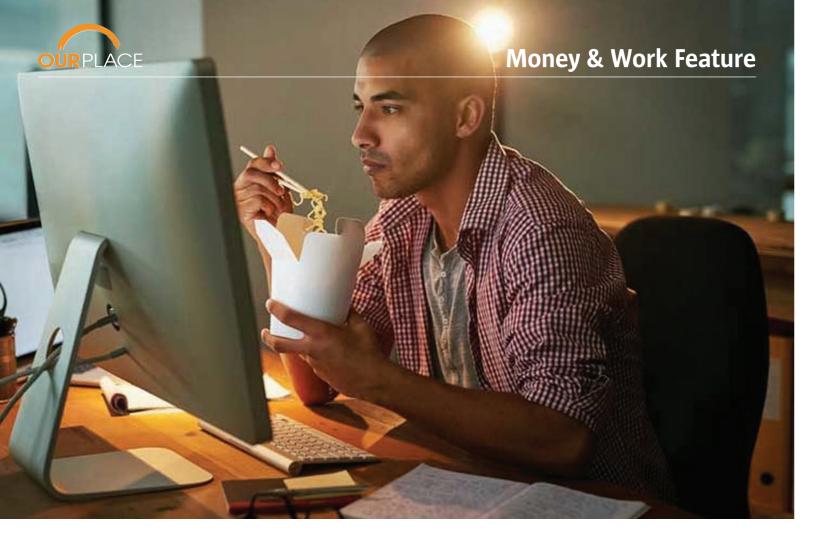
The name is believed to relate to the point in the year when retailers start to turn a profit, taking books from "in the red" to "in the black". Another explanation for the origin of the day dates back to the 1960s, when The Philadelphia Police Department coined the phrase to describe the chaos of gridlocked cars, huge numbers of people and the scuffles that ensue.

#### What items tend to be discounted?

Shoppers tend to go for goods that a usually high in price to take advantage of the big savings on offer. These include electrical goods such as TVs, games consoles, mobile phones and more. Most retailers get involved with the day however, so expect discounts right across the high street, from clothes and cosmetics, to toys, food, drink and homeware. Some retailers including Currys PC World, Argos and Amazon start their sales early online, so look out for when they are this year.

(Story source: Inews)





## Eating well while working at home: Step away from the biscuits and never dine at your desk

Seal found that most home workers don't take proper breaks, even though employed British workers are entitled to a minimum of 20 minutes.

It has taken a decade of working at home, but my body and my brain finally accept that, like a dog or a child, I need a walk after lunch. Without one I will eat more and waste time online.

The walk helps digestion, gives me energy, vitamin D and a new perspective to take back to my desk. If I can work an errand into the stroll, there's the bonus of self-satisfaction. Of course there are days when I read a magazine and eat a pack of biscuits, but a decent lunch followed by a short walk is the rule.

The post-lunch lull is a feeling familiar to most office workers. You ate lunch, quickly. Back at your desk, your brain is a fuzz of tuna mayo baguette or Pret macaroni cheese.





#### **Money & Work Feature**

Somehow the food you ate to give you the energy to survive the afternoon has instead rendered you slothlike. Your lethargic claws scratch at the keypad as you gaze across the office, searching for the energy to get up and walk to the printer.

Your saviour, and the only way you'll be able to run your 3pm meeting without falling asleep on your feet, becomes apparent: coffee and three cookies.

#### Working at home through the winter

If you've experienced these symptoms and are now working from home, let me introduce you to the WFH winter version. You eat four slices of toast with your soup, two while you're heating the soup and two dunked into it.

But you didn't notice eating anything because you were simultaneously checking last month's numbers and answering queries on Slack.

There's leftover crumble in the fridge so you slam that in the microwave and burn your mouth shovelling it down. Despite all the food, you're cold because you don't want to run the heating all day. You climb into bed with your laptop to work on a presentation. A phone call from school wakes you up. You've missed pick up.

A recent survey conducted by Slimming World found that during lockdown, two in three adults (65 per cent) had difficulty managing their weight.

Meanwhile, more than half of adults (53 per cent) said lockdown had made them feel worse about their bodies, according to a poll by the Commons Women and Equalities Committee. As a winter of working from home beckons for many, the challenges will persist.

#### Poor eating is a productivity killer

There are so many ways to lose and waste time when working from home, and eating poorly is a prime productivity killer. As a nation we're known for eating "al desko", but at home the drawbacks of not taking a break intensify.

You've already done less activity than any commuter. The option to make yourself a healthy and interesting lunch is there, but so is the leftover pizza.

When journalist Rebecca Seal was researching her new book Solo: How to Work Alone (and Not Lose Your Mind) she found that many solo workers were desperate for advice on how to make quick but interesting meals (not toast or cereal) and how not to overeat. As a food writer and long-time home worker she was easily able to respond.

Seal found that most home workers don't take proper breaks, even though employed British workers are entitled to a minimum of 20 minutes for any shift. The irony is that not making time to rest and eat kneecaps your productivity.

#### Give yourself a break

"There's something very grounding and centring about the process of chopping, slicing and assembling and it's a great way to give yourself the kind of break where your body and brain are absorbed in something else," she writes.

"But I think it also demonstrates a level of respect for yourself that slamming something in a plastic tray into the microwave doesn't quite reach."

Time and money operate differently when you're working from home. Stress around these two factors can fire the hormone cortisol and lead to hunger, especially for sugar and fat, but we need a variety of nutrients to keep our blood sugar steady and our brain and gut happy. It's fine to treat yourself when you really need to, but giving in to this behaviour frequently will lead to weight gain and its many associated illnesses.

#### **Biscuit issues**

I still battle with biscuits and use date and oat-based energy balls or rice cakes smeared in peanut butter or tahini as substitutes. I'd never thought of Seal's now-obvious suggestion - she has similar biscuit issues - of keeping them in the freezer.

My other favourite tip of hers is to imagine an employer saying you aren't entitled to a meal break. "You'd be incensed," writes Seal. "We shouldn't do that to ourselves."

#### Rebecca Seal's tips for solo lunching

- Don't prepare everything from scratch. Add fresh ingredients to ready-made, such as salad leaves, cucumber, fennel or radish to a fish finger sandwich.
- Keep long-lasting vegetables in the fridge like fennel, sweetheart cabbage, cucumber, carrots, endive or chicory, green beans, broccoli. Then add a hit of fresh, raw or lightly cooked veg to meals, even if the bulk is from a tin or jar.
- Chuck in a handful of frozen vegetables (eg: peas to pasta pesto or spinach to poached egg on toast) to raise the nutritional profile of the meal and add fibre.
- Use big flavours chillies, capers, strong cheese, anchovies, garlic, ginger.
- Extra ingredients ramp up nutrient levels a pinch of ground almond in pasta sauces; peanuts, sesame seeds or eggs into Asian-style noodles, pumpkin seeds or nuts into salads.
- Batch cook pasta bakes, soups, curries, fish cakes, even baked potatoes.

(Article source: Inews)

Do you work from home and stick to a strict diet and routine? If so, tell us all about it by email: www.ourplace.co



## Thrill of the chill: The best outdoor winter swimming spots in Britain

Dive into our essential guide to wild swimming with our pick of the best places to swim in the UK, water safety and tips on how to get started.

Wild swimming is all the rage in the UK, but how do you get started? Here is our essential wild swimming guide, including guidance on water safety, tips on how to get used to swimming in cold water, best swimming kit, plus our pick of the best wild swimming spots in the UK.

#### What is wild swimming?

Wild swimming is essentially swimming outdoors in natural spaces, such as rivers, lakes or the sea. It has seen a surge in popularity in recent years with more and more people taking to the water on a regular basis.

#### Is wild swimming safe?

Wild swimming - or swimming in general can be a fun and enjoyable activity. Swimming outdoors is a great way to stay fit and connect with nature but some basic safety precautions must be taken. Each year a number of water-related accidents and deaths could potentially be avoided by following proper safety measures.



#### How to stay safe wild swimming

Open water is usually cold and may be very deep. There can be hazards like shopping trolleys or broken glass in rivers and lakes. Shingle beaches 'shelve' quickly, often becoming very deep not far from shore. Riverbanks can be slippery and hard to climb.



#### **Leisure & Travel Feature**

These potential hazards don't mean you should stick to indoor swimming pools, but it's good to be prepared.

Here is our outdoor swimming water safety guide.

#### **Check the current**

If you discover a river of cool water and you're itching to dive in, check the water's flow first. Throw in a stick or branch - if it floats off faster than you can swim, you won't be able to beat the current when returning upstream. Avoid.

#### **Gauge the depth**

Diving or jumping should be carried out with great caution, even if you frequent a particular spot. Rocks, sand, branches and rubbish may have been swept downstream, creating shallow patches and hazards. If you must dive or jump always check the water is obstacle free and gauge the depth first by getting in and checking it out from the water, not from the side.

#### Don't get too cold

Outdoor swimming spots are often chilly, even in the summer months, so zip yourself up in a wetsuit and work on acclimatising slowly.



Hypothermia comes on gradually. You may start to feel 'foggy' or excessively tired. These are early warning signs. If your teeth start chattering or you're starting to shiver then get out, dry yourself, put on some dry clothing and do some light exercise to heat your body back up - a walk is enough.

#### How to acclimatise and avoid cold water shock

Cold water shock can be deadly so even if you're head to toe in neoprene it's better not to jump into open water. Instead, ease in and give yourself a few minutes to adjust to the temperature. Cold water triggers an involuntary 'gasp' response. You may find you're breathing more quickly or even feeling panicked. Allow these sensations to subside for a minute or two before actually swimming and splash water on your face before dipping your head under in a few times. You will get used to cold water after just a few swims but build up the amount of time you spend in colder water gradually. On windy days you will lose body heat more quickly.

If you feel very cold, are shivering, or notice your skin is going white or even blue then it is time to get out. Warm up by removing damp swimwear and putting on a dryrobe or towel. Sip a hot drink and try to keep moving by walking on the spot.

#### Have an escape plan

Always know and plan your escape routes, in case you get into trouble or need to get out of the water fast. Remember that riverbanks can be slippery and may be hard to climb so scout out shallow areas that will be easy to scramble out of.

#### **Know your algae**

Blue-green algae is a slippery and potentially dangerous substance. Avoid if possible. If it's rife, move to a different location. It's most commonly found around lakes in the late summer, and can cause skin rash, irritation to the eyes and sickness if swallowed.

#### **Watch out for reeds**

Weeds and reeds can be annoying but become dangerous if they are very thick. If you swim into dense reeds, avoid thrashing or fast movements and use your arms to swim away from that area. Pike also like to hide in submerged freshwater vegetation - another reason to avoid them!

#### Cover open wounds

Always cover up nicks and scratches with a good quality water resistant plaster.

#### Don't swim alone

Avoid swimming alone. A friend will maximise your safety when wild swimming, and as a bonus it'll make your swim will be more enjoyable. If swimming with a friend isn't possible then trail a bright tow float behind you on a cord and wear a colourful swim hat - red is the most visible. Although they're not designed as buoyancy aids and should never be relied on as such, tow floats also give you something to hang onto for a second if you need a rest. Some have waterproof pockets to put valuables in, or storage for water and snacks.



Continued on pages 14-15..







#### The Grantchester Meadows, Cambridgeshire

For a quintessentially English spring time dip, head to Grantchester Meadows. Amongst other luminaries, the river's shallows and pools were allegedly frequented by Lord Byron. Fringed with early blooms, they provide a relaxing place to bathe.



Follow the Barle up-river through Bluebell woods to find numerous clear, secluded pools. It provides good swimming

from Tarr Steps, a prehistoric stone bridge. As a biological site

of Special Scientific Interest, there is a wealth of rare flora and

The Barle, Simonsbath,

fauna to see, with good pubs nearby.

**Exmoor National Park, Somerset** 

#### **Various spots in the Lake District**

The jewel in the crown of the watery landscape of the North East, the Lake District is a wild swimmer's paradise. Avoid areas busy with ferries and boats for hire and stick to quieter spots like Rydal, or the secret stoney beaches at Ullswater.



## West Beach, Berneray, Isles of Harris, Outer Hebrides

The clear turquoise waters of Berneray are reached by wandering through dunes and crossing fine, white sands. The island's colourful landscape is covered in stone circles. With exquisite views, it is perhaps the most beautiful swimming beach in the UK; brace yourself for the cold waters!



(Article source: Countryfile)



#### Don't stray too far from the shore

Cramps are uncomfortable at the best of times, but in water they can be dangerous. Prevention is better than cure, so make sure you're well hydrated before you get in. Dehydration and excessive strain on muscles can cause cramp, particularly during a long swim - if this does occur swim backstroke back to shore and rehydrate before swimming again.

#### Take care of children

Young children need constant supervision in water and a good quality buoyancy aid is recommended. Lilos should be avoided as they can be blown across open water easily or drift in a current.

## How to choose somewhere to go wild swimming

The Outdoor Swimming Society has an interactive wild swim map where you can search for wild swimming spots all over the world and contribute your own secret swimming spots. Or download regional wild swimming apps direct to your iPhone or Android phone.

There are also some great books available which give details of brilliant wild swimming spots.

We like Wild Swim, by Kate Rew; Wild Swimming by Daniel Start; and Wild Swimming: Hidden Beaches, also by Daniel Start. All three of these have swim spots listed all over the UK and detailed maps or OS references and directions.

For more regional info try Wild Swimming Walks (Dartmoor and South Devon) by Sophie Pierce and Matt Newbury; and Wild Swimming Walks (London) by Margaret Dickinson.

#### How to meet other wild swimmers

If you're stuck for a swimming partner in crime or want to meet other wild swimmers, do a search for wild swimming on Facebook. There are lots of regional wild swimming groups and they often have regular meetups, meaning you don't have to swim alone.

It really is worth joining the Outdoor Swimming Society too. With 25,000 members it's the biggest wild swimming group in the UK and it's free to join. The OSS hosts several events across the country, including the legendary Dart 10k, and also hosts a national outdoor swim event calendar.

#### How to meet other wild swimmers

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#### **Best places for wild swimming in the UK**

There are literally hundreds of amazing wild swimming spots in the UK, from tiny secret beaches, to vast lakes and crystal clear rivers. These are just a few of our favourites.



#### Lady Falls 'Sgwd Gwladys' - near Pontneddfechan, Brecon Beacons, Wales (pictured top right)

Hidden in the heart of woodland, the gentle, green waters of Lady Falls are edged with a small beach, making it ideal for families. There are various trails through the Brecon Beacons National Park which lead to the falls; a truly enchanting place.



This year's top

#### Food & Drink News

Aldi won two awards, including for best Christmas pudding with their Specially Selected Damson, Plum and Pink Gin Pudding, at £8.99 for 800g, described as sweet and fruity with an almost jelly-like plum

Booths also won in two categories, including best turkey centrepiece for their Ultimate Turkey Feast (£85 for 3.5kg).

Judges said: "With turkey, two types of stuffing and pigs in blankets all in one package, this truly is a feast. "A succulent turkey crown is stuffed with moist, well-flavoured pork, sage and onion."

Tesco, Asda and the Co-op took home one win each and both Morrisons and Sainsbury's were highly commended in three categories each.

BBC Good Food editor-in-chief Christine Hayes said: "Getting the most for your money will be more important than ever this Christmas so be sure to check our winners before planning your big shop. "It's good to see some great-value wins in this year's taste test, all blind-tested by the expert BBC Good Food team."

(Story source: Silver Surfers)

## supermarket mince pies have been announced and the winner may surprise you Tasters have been casting their verdicts

after sampling the different Christmas food offerings from 13 supermarkets.



**Silver Surfers** reports that supermarkets at opposite ends of the price spectrum have had their products named best buys for the festive season in an annual Christmas taste test.

Rating the best Christmas staples from 13 of the UK's top supermarkets, judges for BBC Good Food magazine blind tested more than 150 products across 20 categories from leading UK supermarkets.

Marks and Spencer took home the most wins in the 2020 Christmas Taste Awards, but discount supermarket Aldi triumphed over other high street brands. And while 12 supermarkets entered the contest for the best mince pie, it was Spar's luxury version at £2 which won the top prize in the category for the first time.

The judges said: "These have a lovely golden colour and crumbly, buttery pastry. "The filling is sweet and jammy, with nice big chunks of plump, soaked fruit and a good hit of citrus from the candied

Morrisons The Best deep-filled mince pies (£2) and Aldi's specially selected mince pies (£1.49) were highly commended in the same category. Marks and Spencer ran away with a total of eight wins in the categories of gravy, vegetarian main course, vegan main course, gluten-free mince pies, Christmas cake, stollen, yule log and vegan dessert. Awarding the supermarket's turkey gravy (£4) the top prize, the judges said it "could pass as homemade".

Waitrose was awarded four wins, including for best pigs in blankets with their No.1 free-range pork chipolatas wrapped in bacon (£4.25), praised as attractive and succulent.

### **Pumpkin farmers are** reporting roaring sales as people fall in love with the versatile squash

This autumn in particular pumpkin-picking has emerged as a Covid-safe outdoor activity for families.

**Inews** reports that it is no exaggeration to say that 2020 has been a catastrophic year for plenty of industries.

However, one group of people celebrating this autumn is Britain's pumpkin farmers. Tesco's dedicated grower Oakley Farms, near Wisbech in Cambridgeshire, has said that demand for sweet, edible pumpkins has soared to record levels.

The farm grows about five million pumpkins each year and this year it has planted 100,000 of the eating variety, which represents a 150 per cent increase over the past two years.

For Holly Bell of Bells Horticultural, a family-run plant nursery in Boston, Lincolnshire, there has "absolutely been an increase in interest and demand" recently, with production growing year on year.

At Essington Farm in Wolverhampton, pumpkins have become one of the biggest-selling foods alongside meat and other veg. Richard Simkin, who co-owns Essington and lives there with his family, says pumpkins started off in a "very modest" way and now he is planting 30,000 a year.





While supermarkets like Tesco are selling more pumpkins than ever. there has also been an explosion in popularity of pick-your-own pumpkin patches across the UK. Tulleys Farm in Crawley, West Sussex, first grew pumpkins in 1994, but over the past five years has seen a 25 to 50 per cent year-on-year rise in footfall to its pickvour-own patch.

It now has 100 acres of pumpkins in which half a million grow a year. Further north at Essington Farm, 95 per cent of pumpkins are now sold through pick-your-own activities.

#### Versatile squash

What is at the root of this food's growth in popularity? Farmers have noticed a greater interest in the healthy benefits of the versatile squash, and this autumn in particular pumpkin-picking has emerged as a Covid-safe outdoor activity for families.

It is also down to the UK looking at the pumpkin's starring role across the pond. "As with many things, the US has background influence on UK habits," says Ms Bell. "In the US pumpkins are celebrated throughout the whole of the autumn."

Tulleys Farm believes the squash's popularity is largely down to pop culture and social media. "People saw lots of pumpkins in the Harry Potter books and films," says a spokesman.

"More recently they have seen them on display on Instagram and YouTubers like Zoella decorating their porches with pumpkins at Halloween. People want to go to pumpkin farms, take pictures with family and friends, and put them on Instagram."

To meet the increase in demand, pumpkin farmers across the UK have trialled and developed commercial production of much bigger pumpkins; the kind you see in blockbuster Halloween films, or Harry Potter.

Farmers i spoke to said they hoped the pumpkin would become a staple of our diets through the whole season, where pumpkin pie becomes as common a lemon drizzle cake.

#### **Autumn celebrations**

There is hope, too, that we will increasingly start celebrating autumn as a whole season, as the US does, instead of just Halloween itself. "We would like to see a move towards that in the UK," says Ms Bell, "where we feel retailers jump into Christmas way too soon."

**Food & Drink News** 

While the success of any pumpkin crop depends on the weather -2018 was an excellent year, while this year has been a little trickier due to the changeable weather - pumpkin farmers are feeling good. "The demand we are seeing for this year is incredible," says Tulleys Farm, despite trickor-treating being cancelled for most children across the UK.

It's a hugely uncertain time, but for pumpkin farmers in 2020, the future's bright, the future's orange.

(Story source: Inews)

### Tea, apples and cocoa can help lower blood pressure and protect against heart disease, study suggests

Compounds known as flavanols found in tea can help the heart, the study suggests.

*Inews* reports that consuming plenty of tea, apples and cocoa could be as effective as the Mediterranean diet in reducing blood pressure and protecting against heart disease, a study suggests.

Researchers took urine samples to monitor study participants' intake of a class of compounds known as flavanols. In a typical British diet, the main source appears to be tea, followed by apples. Cocoa and berries also contain the compounds.

The 10 per cent of people who consumed the most flavanols tended to have blood pressure that was between 2 and 4 millimetres of mercury lower than the 10 ten per cent who ate the least, reported The Times. Crucially, unlike most investigations into links between nutrition and health, it did not rely on the participants, some 25,000 people in Norfolk, reporting what they ate and drank.

#### Healthy lifestyle

Gunter Kuhnle, a professor of nutritional epidemiology at the University of Reading, who led the study, said: "This is the first epidemiological study of this scale to objectively investigate the association between a specific bioactive compound and health. What this study gives us is an objective finding about the association between flavanols - found in tea and some fruits - and blood pressure. "This research confirms the results from previous dietary intervention studies and shows that the same results can be achieved with a habitual diet rich in flavanols."

Red wine and chocolate can also contain flavanols, but Professor Kuhnle said any health benefit was probably offset by the alcohol, fat and sugar they also contain.

Ada Garcia, a senior lecturer in public health nutrition at Glasgow University, said the research, published in Scientific Reports, was "a great step forward to a better understanding of the interplay between diet and disease".

(Story source: Inews)







# You either love it, or hate it... Marmite: A potted history of the British-born spread

Panic spread across the UK as it emerged that the much-loved yeast extract Marmite was at risk of being removed from the nation's supermarket shelves. But what is the story behind this most British of brands?

The product that has been loved and hated around the world for more than 100 years was actually discovered by chance by a German scientist called Justus Liebig. In the late 19th Century Liebig stumbled across the delicious realisation that brewer's yeast could be concentrated then eaten. Yum.

Not long after, in 1902, the Marmite Food Company was founded in Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire - a place where the raw ingredients were readily available from the town's many breweries. Proving its international status, the controversial condiment was named after a French cooking pot, because British Marmite was originally supplied in earthenware vessels of a similar shape.

Since the 1920s, Marmite has been sold in its distinctive bulbous glass jars, with a picture of a marmite pot on the red and yellow label a reminder of the origins of its name.

#### Marmite's biggest fan? (pictured above)

Tracy Matthews, 48, from Cardiff, classes herself as a "Marmite superfan" and boasts what she thinks is the world's biggest collection of Marmite memorabilia.

"People only have to look at the jar and people know exactly what it is - even the people who hate it," she said. "There's not many brands that could have that much impact when it comes to food items.

## "The brand is more popular now than it ever has been, but it had its heyday when it first came out because it was the only food at the time that could give people vitamin B."

The early 20th Century saw Marmite become a classic British savoury treat as it was included in World War One rations. It would remain popular among troops and civilians alike in World War Two and beyond - it was sent out to homesick British troops in Kosovo in 1999.

The original recipe for Marmite contained yeast extract, salt, spices and celery. Later, folic acid, vitamin B12, thiamin and riboflavin - vitamins that occur naturally in some foods - were added in high concentrations, but the exact composition of the spread remains a trade secret.

The yeast extract became so popular the Burton factory could not keep up, so the company converted a former brewery in Vauxhall in London into a second plant. The smell from the site was said by one resident to be "disgusting" although the tangy whiff of Marmite-making is no longer an issue as the factory closed in the 1960s.



Today, the Marmite plant in Burton produces about 50 million jars a year, most of which are consumed domestically.

While beloved of Brits - if not those who live within smelling distance of its production - the brand is not so popular in other parts of the world. In 2011, Marmite was banned in Denmark because it fell foul of the country's law restricting products fortified with added vitamins.

It can be almost impossible to find on the shelves of many foreign countries' shops, and has been named as one of the top food items British people take abroad with them.

In 2000, as Marmite entered its third century of dividing opinion, the brand, which had been bought by CPC International Inc, merged with international goods supplier Unilever. But despite its status as being part of a vast multinational company's portfolio, even today this most British of products is still made in Burton. Residents remained so proud of the spread that in 2010 a monument, nicknamed the "Monumite", was put up in the centre of the town, making Marmite quite literally an iconic product.

Mr Liebig, the lovers of Marmite salute you. Here's to 100 more years of a love-hate relationship.

#### 10 surprising ways to cook with Marmite

You've got your classics: cheese and Marmite on toast, Marmite and lashings of butter on toast, boiled eggs and Marmite soldiers (more toast). But if you step away from toast-based Marmite dishes, what's left?

Well, according to the culinary world, the spreadable goo is 'having a moment', with chefs getting through jars of the stuff by making the most of its umami flavour, and chucking it in everything.

The brand meanwhile has been busy diversifying, producing everything from crisps and rice cakes, to Marmite Peanut Butters (a travesty? Or the best idea ever? As long as it's crunchy, of course.)

So how can you make your yellow-topped jar work hard at home? Here are a few ideas...

#### In fried chicken

A little Marmite in your fried chicken marinade - why not?

#### In cheesy pastry

Buttery pastry, lots of cheese and charred leeks, all laced with Marmite? It's a genius move.

#### In sausages

Marmite sausages and cheddar mash makes so much delicious sense.

#### On doughnuts

A brown butter Marmite sauce will definitely temper the sweetness of a glazed doughnut.

#### In a powder

One for wannabe MasterChef contestants, turn Marmite into powder and sprinkle the savoury dust on whatever you fancy.

#### In spaghetti bolognese

If you're out of stock cubes, or just want to add a bit of depth to your tomato sauce, stir through a teaspoon of Marmite - it really does the trick.

#### On popcorn

Step away from the salted caramel sauce and icing sugar, and douse homemade popcorn with Marmite instead.

#### On roast cauliflower

It may not go down quite so well as your usual cauliflower cheese at Sunday lunch, but worth a try...

#### On tempeh

Happily for those who are plant-based, Marmite is completely vegan - so slather it on as many meat substitutes as you can.

#### In pasta sauce

For a little umami pizzazz, when all you have in the house for dinner is butter and dried pasta.

(Article source: Various)



## The cream of the crops: Autumn sowing in the veggie patch

## Spring and early summer are not the only times of the year when we should think about sowing our vegetables.

Spring and early summer are not the only times of the year when we should think about sowing our vegetables. I do a lot of my sowing in late summer and autumn, using recently occupied ground following potatoes, carrots and other crops which have been cleared.

The advantages of sowing in autumn are that the soil is still warm and there's usually, by mid-September at least, plenty of available moisture so the seeds don't usually need watering in.

Also, the weather's nearly always warm and pleasant for sowing in, and there's not a great rush to get everything sown all at once as there is in the spring.

The only drawback is that the ground is not always unoccupied. Vegetables for autumn sowing fall into two categories:

- Crops which are to be harvested before the end of autumn and into early winter, such as quick growing radish and salad crops.
- Vegetables which germinate in autumn to then over-winter to provide a spring harvest, or for the earliest growth the following year - peas and broad beans, for instance.

In the first category, it's important that seeds are sown before the end of September if they are to be given a sporting chance of developing sufficiently to give a worthwhile crop, be it of leaves or of young roots. If they are sown a little late, it is always possible to give them a bit of cloche protection to keep the first frosts off

Weather protection is important when it comes to growing winter salads; not so much to keep the frost off (most are quite hardy enough, hence their suitability for the purpose) but more to keep the winter rains and winds from damaging the leaves.



#### **Home & Garden Feature**

Which is where a polytunnel comes in particularly handy. If you are growing in a tunnel or glasshouse, it's possible to keep sowing salads up to the end of October.

In the second category, they should actually be sown no earlier than mid October in most cases. It's important that plants sown for overwintering are not encouraged to make too much growth before the onset of winter, hence the later sowing date. If too much growth is made, they can sometimes be too lush to survive the worst winter weather, and few will survive. One of the most common reasons for broad beans to fail from an autumn sowing is if they have grown too tall - they then wind-rock and suffer irreparable damage to their roots.

#### Winter salads

I reckon there is a greater diversity of winter salads than there are summer ones. It is during winter when they are most appreciated, providing valuable vitamins when they are most needed. Remember, these are all salads for autumn sowing: some winter salads, like chicory, for instance, need starting earlier in the year for them to be worthwhile.

**Chinese Mustard Green in Snow**. A particularly hardy type of mustard, mild in flavour and resistant to the weather. Suitable for growing outside throughout the year, although spring sowings tend to run straight to seed.

**Cima di Rapa Quarantina**. An Italian winter green which is only suitable for autumn or early spring sowing: summer sowings run straight to seed. Quick to mature, providing tasty greens in late autumn and early winter.

**Coriander**. Coriander is much less likely to run to seed, in my experience, if sown in autumn. Much hardier than received wisdom would suggest, it will withstand very severe weather without cloche or tunnel protection. One of the tastiest and most useful greens.

**Corn Salad.** Any of the corn salads are entirely hardy, although the larger leaved types are not so weather proof. A late summer sowing is best if they are to produce strong rosettes. Corn salad gets its name as it germinates after summer wheat has been harvested.

**Italian Dandelion**. Not a true dandelion, but a type of chicory with similar growth to dandelion. Very hardy and the leaves are erect, keeping clear of rain splashes which are apt to spoil many winter leaves.

**Kale**. Normally it is recommended that kales are sown in late spring to early summer. This way, large plants are produced from which leaves can be picked through the winter. But it is possible to sow them as a cut-and-come-again crop, sowing densely and cutting all the leaves when they are large enough. If mild weather prevails, more leaves are produced to replace them. The leaves never get large, but they're very tasty.

**Lettuce**. Most lettuce are not particularly hardy, tending to rot off easily or succumbing to mildew in cold weather. Varieties with an open habit tend to fair better. Black Seeded Simpson is a variety more likely than others to overwinter.

**Land Cress**. Very hardy, and an underrated overwintering green resembling watercress and with a similar flavour.

**Mitsuba**. Not to be confused with mizuna (below). Japanese Parsley is what it is otherwise known as. Like many Oriental greens, it is better sown in autumn or very early spring as at any other time of the year it will run to seed.

**Mizuna**. An extremely useful green, and one of the most weatherproof. Can be used raw or cooked, whole or purÈed. Very ornamental. too.

Miner's Lettuce. (Or Winter Purslane). Very hardy and weatherproof, only growing through winter - summer sown plants will run to seed, if they develop at all. Will withstand dry shade and can be established under trees. Fleshy leaves are a particular treat in a mixed salad.

**Pink Purslane**. A relatively recent introduction, with similarities to Miner's Lettuce but with larger leaves and attractive pink flowers; the flowers can be eaten, too.

**Winter Radish**. Roots are just as valuable in a winter salad as leaves. Winter radish mature through autumn to yield in late winter. Black Spanish Round, for instance, is especially hardy, while Red Meat has an interesting red core which is particularly striking on the plate when sliced.

#### **Overwintered crops**

These need to be sown in autumn but will only give a worthwhile yield the following spring.

**Alexanders**. This gives a flush of useful greens with lengthening days in early spring. A common hedgerow plant, the leaves are tasty and nutritious.

**Good King Henry**. This one's a bit of an odd one out in that it's actually a perennial. However, it will not germinate unless the seeds are sown in autumn. Only after they have experienced winter cold and thawing will they germinate the following spring.

**Herb Patience**. Another perennial, but one which runs to seed if summer sown, but gives a lush crop of useful leaves following an autumn sowing. Germination is improved, too.

**Hamburg Parsley**. This tuberous form of parsley, and indeed any other form of parsley, will not make much growth over winter but will grow away rapidly to give a lush crop of leaves in the spring.

**Salad Burnet**. A tasty herb, useful as an addition to salads. Will not perform well if summer sown, but romps away the following spring from an autumn sowing.

**Sweet Cicely**. Another salad addition enjoying rapid growth in early spring.

(Article source: 50 Connect)



## Please help us rescue and care for vulnerable hedgehogs - Britain's

## favourite mammal

A shocking study has revealed that hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside, with numbers <u>HALVED</u> in the last 20 years.

I am delighted to tell you that Britain's hedgehog has won favourite mammal in a UK poll.

The UK's only spiny mammal won with 35.9% of the 5,000 votes, more than double that of the Red Fox, who came in second place with 15.4%. The Red Squirrel came third with 11.4%, out of a shortlist of 10 charismatic UK mammals.

Unfortunately, hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside as numbers have <u>HALVED</u> in the last 20 years, a shocking study has revealed.

Henry Johnson, hedgehog officer, People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) said:

"We Brits seem to love hedgehogs for a whole range of reasons, including their cute appearance, their role as slug controllers and the way they have colonised our gardens with such aplomb. This is why it is so sad to see them decline, with one in three lost since the millennium."

Threats to hedgehogs come mostly from us. In rural areas, our farmland increasingly lacks the diversity of habitats hedgehogs need and the invertebrates they feed on. In towns and cities green spaces are lost to development, paved over or increasingly fragmented. Hedgehogs are also very prone to road traffic accidents.

This is why we have launched this special Annual Appeal to protect Britain's favourite mammal.

At Hedgehog Rescue Rehabilitation and Care Centre we respond immediately to rescue injured hedgehogs. A vet is called in straight away and the hedgehogs are monitored and cared for. Once fit and well they are released back into the wild.

Hedgehog Rescue is now conducting its Annual Appeal. Only by continuing our huge effort and long-life commitment can we give these wonderful animals a safe, happy and contented life.





We care for many hedgehogs here at our rehabilitation centre. Hedgehogs just like these:

#### 'Iulie'



**'Julie'** (pictured left) came in last Autumn, quite small, out in daylight and had ticks. She stayed a few weeks, put on enough weight, and made a full recovery. She was released back to her own territory by the finder.

#### **Baby Hedgehogs**

These 2 hedgehogs came in as very small babies and had stayed with us a few weeks, gaining weight and giving us a chance to sort out their health issues. They had several ticks and needed worming. When they were 100% ready, we released them close to where they were found.



These hedgehogs are some of the lucky ones. Others are less fortunate.

As a friend who knows what a wonder animals can be, I hope you will support our Annual Appeal. Your kind gift will help us rescue and care for many more vulnerable hedgehogs - Britain's favourite mammal.

To donate to Hedgehog Rescue, go to: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hedgehogrescue or write to: Raisemore, Unit 1, Alton Road Industrial Estate, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5NB

