

# OUR PLACE *News*

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

JUNE 2021

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## 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](http://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.

1. 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 home
- not have visitors, such as friends and family, in your home

You can use your garden, if you have one.

### STAY AT HOME!

## Trained dogs can sniff out coronavirus with up to 94% accuracy

The canines were able to sniff out samples from people who were infected with coronavirus but were asymptomatic.



**Silver Surfers** reports that Covid-19 infection has a distinct smell that can be detected by specially trained dogs with up to 94% accuracy, UK research suggests.

The findings, which have not yet been peer-reviewed, are based on six dogs who tested more than 3,500 odour samples donated by the public and NHS staff.

The canines were able to sniff out samples from people who were infected with coronavirus but were asymptomatic, as well as those who had low viral loads.

They were also able to identify infections caused by the coronavirus strain that was dominant in the UK last summer as well as the UK (Kent) version of the virus which appeared later in the year.

Professor James Logan, head of the department of disease control at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), who led the project, said: "What was great was the dogs that have been trained on the original variant transferred to the new (Kent) variant.

"They could detect the new variant without any additional training. "So this gives us real hope and really suggests that dogs are able to detect different variants of Covid."

Six dogs - Asher, Kyp, Lexie, Tala, Millie, and Marlow - from the charity Medical Detection Dogs took part in the double-blind trial.

This means neither the research team nor the dogs knew which of the odour samples came from those infected with Covid-19 and which were coronavirus-free.

The research, which was part-funded by the UK's Department of Health and Social Care, showed that the specially trained dogs were able to quickly detect coronavirus-infected samples with up to 94.3% sensitivity (the ability to correctly identify positive cases) and up to 92% specificity (the ability to correctly identify negative cases).

The scientists said the next phase of the trial will test whether these "super sniffers" are able to detect coronavirus on real people in real-world settings such as airports and sports events.

Meanwhile, preliminary analysis using mathematical modelling suggests two dogs could screen 300 plane passengers in half an hour.

The researchers said using a rapid screen and test strategy, individuals who are identified by the dogs would then require a PCR test to confirm diagnosis.

They believe a combination of specially trained dogs, along with a confirmatory PCR test, could help detect more than twice as many cases and halt onward transmission, when compared to isolating symptomatic individuals only, or testing people with a lateral flow test and a PCR test.

Professor Steve Lindsay, from the department of biosciences at Durham University, said: "This is a very exciting result showing that there is a distinct smell associated with Covid-19 and, more importantly, that trained dogs can detect this with a high degree of accuracy.

"Dogs could be a great way to screen a large number of people quickly and preventing Covid-19 from being reintroduced into the UK. "Trained dogs could potentially act as a fast screening tool for travellers, with those identified as infective confirmed with a lab test. "This could make testing faster and save money."

Dr Claire Guest, chief scientific officer at Medical Detection Dogs, said: "These fantastic results are further evidence that dogs are one of the most reliable biosensors for detecting the odour of human disease. "Our robust study shows the huge potential for dogs to help in the fight against Covid-19."

(Story source: *Silver Surfers*)

## Hope for new drug to prevent some causes of heart failure within a decade

**Scientists hope tens of thousands of cases of heart failure could be prevented in the UK every year.**

**Inews** reports that a new drug could be available within a decade that would save the lives of tens of thousands of heart attack patients a year by preventing heart failure.

About 200,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with heart failure every year, which commonly develops after a major heart attack.

About half of them will die within five years as the heart is unable to pump blood properly around the body and there are no drugs that can repair the damage. Now, Cambridge University researchers have found a promising way to stop heart attacks from leading to heart failure.

They have discovered that hearts with low levels of a heart muscle protein - known as MARK4 - are considerably better at pumping blood than those with high levels, significantly reducing the risk of heart failure.

And they are working towards a drug to switch off the activity of this protein, which they hope will be available on the NHS within a decade, if all goes well - although they warn that much more work is needed with no guarantee of success.

"After years of research we've revealed an entirely new and promising way that could help the recovery of failing hearts," said Xuan Li, of Cambridge University. "It's early days, and we now need to test the longer-term effects of switching off MARK4. But if drugs to do that prove successful, the life-changing benefits could be seen in people with other types of heart disease as well as those who've had a heart attack and developed heart failure," she said.

Professor Metin Avkiran, associate medical director at the British Heart Foundation, which funded the research, added: "There's a huge unmet need to treat the hundreds of thousands of people in the UK who each year are diagnosed with heart failure, which commonly develops after a major heart attack."

"In its advanced stages, heart failure has a survival rate that is worse than many forms of cancer. New drugs that can safely and effectively support the contractile machinery of the heart, which is vital for it to pump blood around the body as it should, could be transformative in the treatment of this devastating condition. "These findings are a significant step forward and open up a highly promising new path towards developing such drugs," he said.

(Story source: *Inews*)

## Drawing helps me process my mental health issues - and it doesn't matter if it's 'good' or 'bad' art

**Scientists hope tens of thousands of cases of heart failure could be prevented in the UK every year.**

**Inews** reports that Ruby Elliot's honest drawings and comics have won her hundreds of thousands of followers online. She explains why making them has been her salvation.



When I was growing up I had mental health problems to the point where I was hospitalised multiple times, and I was very isolated. I had depression and eating disorders and I missed out on a lot of secondary school.

When I was able to go to school, I hated art lessons and found them too prescriptive, even though I'd loved drawing at primary school - lots of silly things like sheep on skateboards. I found that when I was able to draw in my own time, I didn't have to feel judgmental of myself. I wasn't concerned about getting it wrong, and it was a way to process feelings, as talking about what was going on was hard.

Now, I keep sketchbooks, so I'll have one or two a month that I will draw in most days. And then when I look back, it's a record of experiences and feelings, which I think can be really useful to work out what's going on with me. With drawing, the page is literally yours to do with what you want, and that can be powerful.

In my drawings I try not to pathologise feelings, but to draw about emotions and psychological states in a way that's just honest. I bring humour to it to bring some lightness into the dark. I also try not to sanitise it, either. I'm not presenting the most acceptable parts of being mentally ill.

That's partly what's so brilliant about comics and cartoons - the medium is very digestible, and I think it can take some of the sting, or the fear, out of any "difficult topic". Once you start looking, there's a there's a real wealth of artists making work about all sorts of things, including mental health.

I left school without A-levels and I didn't go on and study art, so I used the internet to get my work seen. Of course, with the internet there are downsides too, and as someone who shares their work online, it's easy to let your sense of self get tied up with the internet.

I'd advise anyone wanting to share their art about personal things online, to make sure you're sharing enough with real people in your life as well, as that can be just as satisfying.

People often categorise themselves as bad or as good at art. It's good to remember that drawing can be learnt, that it's just mark making and you don't need to be a genius from the off. I'm very much in favour of drawing on anything you can find whenever you feel like it; Post It Notes, napkins, tablecloths. Drawing should be for everyone.

(Story source: *Inews*)



# Step it up! 16 creative ways to increase your daily step count

**We all know that doing plenty of walking is good for us. It promotes bone and muscle strength, reduces the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure, and improves balance and coordination.**

Walking also has a powerful effect on mental health, helping to alleviate stress and anxiety, and improve mood. But on days when the weather takes a turn, going out for a walk can be less appealing - making it harder to get our steps in.

Most fitness trackers set a default goal of completing 10,000 steps a day - a figure that many of us have become used to hearing. Though scientifically, it's yet to be proven exactly which step count goal would be most beneficial for fitness and longevity. However, what we do know is that, in general, moving more is good for our minds and bodies - and aiming to increase your daily step count is a great way to start being more active.

It's a good idea not to become too focused on reaching the specific 10,000 goal - as some days this won't always be realistic, and might not reflect other exercise you do like cycling, or fitness classes.

Instead, it could be useful to set your own goals. For example, if you currently walk 400 steps a day, then aim to start by increasing it to 4000 - which is the rough equivalent of around 2 miles. Then you can always build it up over time.

It's also worth noting that Public Health England and the Royal College of GPs are also encouraging adults to focus on walking briskly, rather than counting steps alone. We recently wrote an introductory guide to power walking, which explains how, with the right technique, you can get a full body workout from introducing speed and power into your walking style.

If you're looking to increase your step count in a bid to boost your activity levels, then there are lots of different ways you can do this - and some of them don't even involve leaving the house! Here are 17 creative ways to increase your steps each day.

### Track your steps

One of the best ways to increase your daily step count is to start tracking how much you're walking. Fitness trackers and pedometers are great ways to stay motivated and encourage healthier habits because they increase accountability and make us more aware of our daily activity.

It can be easy to lose sight of how little we're walking - particularly now, when many of us are spending more time at home - so getting confirmation that you've only walked 200 steps today could be the nudge you need to start making some lasting changes.

Simple pedometers track how many steps you do and shouldn't cost more than £20. However, fitness trackers like Fitbit\* can record lots of different things, like distance, heart rate, calories, and even sleep. You can buy both pedometers\* and more high-tech fitness trackers\* from Amazon.

### Walk to get your shopping

If you usually drive to the shops to buy food, why not consider walking instead? If your local supermarket or high street is within walking distance, deciding to walk there is a great way to boost your step count - and if you carry your shopping back home, you'll also be doing a strength workout too. It's best to bring a backpack with you to take your shopping home in, as they're designed to carry weight, and it'll be much easier than carrying multiple shopping bags.

Plus, if you're walking home with your shopping, you might be forced to buy less than you would if you were driving - meaning you could get into the habit of doing a food shop more frequently - which means getting even more steps in!

Alternatively, if you don't want to carry your shopping back home, you could always buy a shopping trolley and pull it along with you as you walk. Amazon\* sells a good range of shopping trolleys, as do Shopping Trolleys Direct.

### Walk and talk (pictured top left)

If you spend a lot of time at work on the phone, then deciding to take that business call outside while you walk can boost your step count by thousands. Alternatively, if you have one-on-one meetings with a colleague, then why not skip the meeting room or Zoom call, and have a walking meeting instead? You might find that getting outside helps give you a bit more inspiration, too.

This method works just as well when you're at home: if you're catching up with friends or family, consider taking the call while you walk around the block or to the local park - or, if you don't fancy going outside, just walk around your home, or pace in the living room. For those of us who enjoy long conversations with loved ones, this can be a very enjoyable and effective way to up your step count!

### Use walking to relieve stress

Whether it's drinking alcohol, smoking, or eating sugary food, there are many ways we might try to deal with stress that aren't good for our bodies. Getting outside and going for a walk is a great way to clear your head, feel more relaxed, and get a new perspective on things - and it's obviously great for our health too. Whenever you feel anxious or angry, try to get into the habit of going for a walk, even if it's just around the block.

You could even do a walking meditation as you stroll. If you use the Headspace app, you might want to check out their walking meditation (this is free for the first two weeks, and requires a subscription fee thereafter), or you can use this free walking meditation on the Mindful website. Aside from racking up lots more steps, when you get back home you'll probably find you feel significantly calmer, positive and more grounded.



### Do some household chores

We recently wrote about how doing household chores can be an unexpectedly good way to keep fit from home - and it's just as effective for boosting your step count. Chores like mowing the lawn, gardening, mopping the floor and vacuuming can be great forms of cardio, so if you want to get some more steps in but don't fancy heading out for a walk, why not get out the Hoover instead? As an added bonus, you'll wind up with a clean home as well as a higher step count!

### Park further away

When we're looking for a parking space, many of us are in the habit of driving round and round in the quest to find a spot right outside our destination. But why not deliberately choose a parking space that's further away? It might not seem like much, but those extra steps to and from your car can quickly mount up. So, if you can't walk to the supermarket, park at the furthest end of the car park and get some bonus steps in - and if you're visiting a friend or family member, park a few streets away and enjoy the walk.

*Continued on pages 8-9...*



### Find a walking partner or group

If you don't have a friend who's willing to be your walking buddy, then why not find a new partner or a small group to walk with? Meetup.com is a great website for finding out about local walking and fitness events (many of which are still operating in small socially distanced numbers). Here you can meet like-minded people, and join a fitness community. Meetup.com is free to join, and events are also free, unless an organiser decides to charge group members a fee. There is also a fee to pay if you yourself decide you want to organise an activity, or set up a group.

Joining forces with people who have similar fitness goals can help you stay motivated and look forward to walking - and it's a great way to meet people and make new friends too.

### Walk while you wait

No one enjoys waiting, but unfortunately it's something that we just can't avoid. The good news is that you can use waiting time to boost your fitness and get some more steps in! If you're waiting for a bus and it's ten minutes away, then rather than sitting and waiting, why not go for a walk around the block instead? If you're waiting for an appointment, ask how long the wait will be; if you don't have time to go for a walk outside, walk around the building, or even pace in the waiting room.

### Walk after a meal

Getting into the habit of taking a post-meal walk has several powerful health benefits, and is an easy way to boost your step count - especially if you take a walk after every meal. Science tells us that walking after eating can improve digestion, help manage blood sugar levels, reduce the risk of heart disease, regulate blood pressure and promote weight loss. It doesn't have to be a long walk - just 15 minutes is effective.



### Meet a friend for a walk

If you're single, then why not get into the habit of walking with friends, instead of meeting for coffee or lunch? It's much easier to talk to someone and connect when you're walking, than while chatting in a crowded coffee shop, or a noisy restaurant - plus, you'll be saving some money as well as boosting your step count. You might also want to consider getting into power walking, which is a great activity to do with a friend.

### Consider getting a dog (pictured left)

If you love animals and are willing to commit to having a pet, you might want to think about getting a dog. Dogs need to be walked, rain or shine, so if you want to make yourself get out of the house, this is a great way to do so. Giving a loving home to a dog who needs one is a wonderful thing to do, and there are many ways people benefit from having a pet, too - whether it's helpful in alleviating loneliness, or adding purpose and meaning to your life.

Check out your local animal shelter or dog rescue websites to see if there are any dogs you can take in: you can find your nearest Dogs Trust rehoming centres here, and find animals needing homes on the RSPCA website here. Alternatively, you can find out more about rehoming a dog on the Battersea Dogs Home site. However, before you decide to pursue this option, it's important to make sure that you're ready for the commitment that having a dog entails.

If you already have a dog, why not up your step count by walking them more? If you usually take your dog for a daily walk, you could make it a habit to walk them twice. Your dog will love the extra time outside and your body will thank you for it! Alternatively, you could always offer to walk a friend or neighbour's dog.

### Get off a stop early

If you use public transport, then you could try to get into the habit of getting off the bus or train one stop early and walking the rest of the way. Alternatively, if you don't use public transport, you can do the same in a taxi or uber - plus, you'll also save yourself some pennies in the process. And who knows, you might discover a new corner of your neighbourhood, or an exciting new shop along the way.



### Take a moving break

Making it a habit to get moving during your lunch break is a great way to get your steps in while at work - plus, you might find you're more focused when you return. If you usually head out to buy lunch, try walking to a different area and checking out some of the shops or takeaways that are further away - or, if you eat at work, you could go for a walk around the block once you've finished.

### Go on a walking date

Getting in the habit of going for a daily walk with your partner is a wonderfully romantic way to reconnect while enjoying some gentle exercise. There's something lovely about taking a sunset stroll together and appreciating some of the small things you might otherwise miss, like the changing colours of trees, or different flowers appearing.



### Take the stairs

If you want to move more, then you could make it a habit to avoid escalators and lifts and always take the stairs, whether you're at work, at a train station, or in a shopping centre. Taking the stairs multiple times a day can increase the number of steps you tally up far more than you might think - and if you do wear a fitness tracker, you'll often get points for both steps and climbing. Plus, climbing stairs is one of the best exercises when it comes to burning fat and strengthening and toning your muscles. It's also great for your lungs and heart, and can give you an energy boost.

### Take the longer route

Deciding to always take the longer route (weather permitting) is another good way to boost your step count - sometimes by a lot. Whether you're doing some errands or visiting a friend, try taking the scenic route rather than going directly there. This can apply to much shorter trips too - for example, if you're at work or at a shopping centre and need to go to the toilet, don't go to the nearest one; go to one on a different floor - and take the steps, not the lift or escalators!

### Final thoughts...

With a little creativity, it can become easy to incorporate more walking into your daily routine. Often it's the smallest changes that make the biggest difference - because combined, you could see your step count soar. As you begin walking more, you might be surprised at how much it boosts your mood, and changes your outlook on life. Many of the best ideas come to us while we're on the move, and it's a great way to feel calmer and more centered. And the good news is that you can have plenty of fun while you walk.

*(Article source: Rest Less)*



## For book worms: 9 captivating novels by female authors

**The process of searching for interesting new books can be time-consuming and end up eating into your reading time. While the majority of us don't want to spend too long searching bookshops or the web for a good read, we often don't want to pick up the first thing we see either.**

To hopefully save you some time and offer you some literary inspiration, we've teamed up with book publisher, HarperCollins, to bring you nine captivating novels by female authors. From tales of death and deception to stories of family and friendship, this list should have something for everyone.

### Daughters of Cornwall, by Fern Britton

A heartfelt tale that takes place over the course of a century, *Daughters of Cornwall* is the story of three generations of women and how they navigate love, family and sacrifice. Set against the backdrop of some of the past century's most turbulent times, Britton's novel explores how families evolve and how their secrets are passed down through generations. Just like the vast moors of Cornwall itself, it's easy to lose yourself in Fern's epic novel of mothers and daughters, secrets and lies, and a love that lasts a lifetime.

### The Wife Who Got A Life, by Tracy Bloom

If you're looking for something that's going to bring a smile to your face, then look no further than *The Wife Who Got A Life* by Tracy Bloom. After years of prioritising her family, Cathy Collins decides to take control of her life and put her own goals and happiness first. Told entirely through Cathy's diary entries, *The Wife Who Got A Life* is a riotous journey of self-discovery filled with wit and attitude, as well as touching insights into what it's like to grow older and be a woman in modern society. Cathy's mission to find out what truly makes her happy while being a mother and a wife is sure to make you laugh, and encourage you to think about your own life and happiness.

### Under A Greek Moon, by Carol Kirkwood

A mysterious tycoon, a vacationing Hollywood star and the opal waters of the Mediterranean... Television presenter Carol Kirkwood's upcoming debut *Under a Greek Moon* is the escape we've all been dreaming of. If you're looking for a novel that'll whisk you away to a place that is both glamorous and exciting, then look no further than *Under a Greek Moon* - a tale of romance, scandal and secrets set against the mesmerising backdrop of the islands of Greece. *Under a Greek Moon* won't be released until July.

### The Lost Hours, by Susan Lewis

There's nothing quite like a great thriller to get your heart pounding and your blood racing, and Susan Lewis' *The Lost Hours* will do just that. Annie Crayce lives a near-perfect life. She's happily married with three beautiful children and has a successful business. However, when her husband, David, is linked to the murder of a teenage girl that happened over twenty years ago, Annie and her family's life is sucked into a downward spiral. This gripping story follows Annie's search for answers: any answers that will prove her husband innocent. However, at the centre of her investigation is a handful of lost hours that she just can't solve. *The Lost Hours* will have you tearing through pages, as anxious as Annie herself to find out who really committed this long-forgotten crime. Lewis' snappy dialogue and original characters make this the perfect novel to really sink your teeth into.

### The Motion Of The Body Through Space, by Lionel Shriver

*The Motion of the Body Through Space* tells the story of Serenata, an exercise enthusiast who, at the age of sixty, has learned that her active lifestyle has taken a terrible toll on her knees and she now needs debilitating surgery. All the while, Remington, her previously inactive spouse, has decided to join the world of fitness in possibly the most jarring way imaginable - he decides to run a marathon. Shriver's signature knack for social and psychological observation is on full display here. *The Motion of the Body Through Space* takes a bold and satirical look at marriage and modern exercise culture - particularly the obsession and competitiveness that comes along with them.

### A Single Thread, by Tracy Chevalier

If you're a bit of a history buff, then you'll surely love *A Single Thread* - a timeless story of one woman's quest to carve out a life for herself in the wake of the First World War. Not only has Violet been traumatised by the war that took both her brother and fiancé, leaving her alone with her overbearing mother, but society now considers her a 'surplus woman'. Being fiercely independent, Violet escapes to Winchester where she joins an embroidery group. Tracy Chevalier's excellent blend of fact and fiction explores the role of women in mid-twentieth-century society in a way that is still relevant to this day, while touching on themes of art, identity and friendship.

### The Killings at Kingfisher Hill, by Sophie Hannah

If you're a fan of classic crime fiction, then you've surely heard of Agatha Christie's legendary detective Hercule Poirot and his timeless stories *Murder on the Orient Express* and *Death on the Nile*. In *The Killings at Kingfisher Hill*, Poirot is summoned to the exclusive estate of Richard Devonport to solve the murder of his brother and prove the innocence of his soon-to-be wife. However, Poirot must conduct his investigation while concealing his true reason for being there. For this new murder mystery, acclaimed author Sophie Hannah takes the driver's seat and delivers a captivating and complex whodunnit story while honouring Agatha Christie's beloved legacy. Longtime fans of the moustachioed detective - as well as first-time readers will surely enjoy this twisting crime tale.

### Saving Missy, by Beth Morrey

If you are looking for a book that'll offer an escape from the stress of everyday life, then you'll want something charming, heartfelt and hopeful. Beth Morrey's *Saving Missy* might be the perfect medicine to help your tension and worries melt away. Seventy-nine-year-old Missy Carmichael leads a solitary and somewhat miserable life. She's lost her husband, her son has moved halfway around the world, and she's estranged from her daughter. However, after a chance encounter in the park, two strangers (and a dog named Bobby) enter her life and offer her a second chance to find connection. *Saving Missy* is a heartfelt tale that'll have you laughing and crying along the way. It touches on universal themes that are important to us all, such as loneliness, the power of friendship, growing older and dealing with regret.

### The Silent Wife, by Karin Slaughter

One of the undisputed powerhouses of the genre, Karin Slaughter delivers the goods once again with this edge-of-your-seat thriller. *The Silent Wife* is the latest instalment of the Will Trent series: a collection of novels that follows the titular character of federal agent Will Trent, as he investigates violent crimes. *The Silent Wife* tells the story of the death of a young woman who is found in the woods. After a prisoner connects her demise with the murder he was previously accused of and jailed for, Will and his team find themselves simultaneously investigating crimes that took place almost a decade apart. Is the prisoner innocent? Is the killer still out there? You'll have to read *The Silent Wife* to find out. The unpredictable plot and the attention Slaughter pays to each individual character will keep you engrossed from start to finish. And though it's part of a series, *The Silent Wife* is an excellent stand-alone read, so you won't have to go back and catch up on Will Trent's other adventures - unless you want to, that is!

(Article source: *Rest Less*)

*Have you read one or more of these books?  
If so, tell us all about it by emailing:  
[www.ourplace.co](http://www.ourplace.co)*



# Right on our doorstep! 22 inspiring places to visit in the UK

Here in the UK, we are fortunate enough to have an abundance of natural beauty and culture right on our doorstep. With so many interesting and beautiful places to choose from when planning a trip, we thought we'd highlight a few of our favourites to hopefully give you a few ideas.

So, if you fancy planning an adventure that's within easy reach, then take a look at these 22 inspiring destinations in the UK.

## Lake District, Cumbria (pictured right)

The beauty of the Lake District has led UNESCO to name it as one of their newest protected sites. With stunning mountain ranges, tranquil lakes and unique little villages, this little gem is the perfect place for a relaxing break.

## Watergate Bay, Cornwall

If you're looking for some great UK beach vibes, then why not head to this gorgeous bay in Cornwall which boasts two miles of golden sand? It's the ideal spot for sea lovers and you'll feel like you're a world away from home.



## Windsor, South East England

Windsor is a historic market town in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Windsor Castle, Eton College and Great Windsor Park are some of the main attractions. This quaint town thrives on rich cultural heritage, stunning architecture and beautiful scenery.

## Jurassic Coast, Dorset

Nope there aren't any dinosaurs here, but you can go fossil hunting! This intriguing UNESCO protected coastline is full of pre-historic treasure just waiting to be found. It stretches 95 miles from Devon to Dorset, so there's no shortage of beautiful scenery for you to enjoy.



## The Dark Hedges, County Antrim (pictured top left)

The Dark Hedges are some of the most photographed natural phenomena in Northern Ireland, and are now popular with visitors from around the world. This impressive scene is located on a quiet road in Ballymoney, County Antrim. A line of beech trees with twisted branches form an arch over the road, which makes for an amazing photo opportunity. The Dark Hedges are just a short half an hour away from the mysterious Giant's Causeway, and a one hour drive from Northern Ireland's capital of Belfast, which is home to the World's largest Titanic visitor experience!

## Tenby, Pembrokeshire

Tenby is known for its beautiful beaches, which look like they're straight from the Mediterranean. It has three - North, South and Castle beach - each with its own unique charm. As well as having plenty of natural beauty to enjoy, Tenby also has cultural exploits to offer, such as Tenby Museum and Art Gallery or the National Trust owned Tudor Merchant's House. There are also some eerie ghost walks on offer near Tenby town centre.

## Stonehenge, Wiltshire

As one of the most famous spots in the UK, this unusual attraction is a must-see. To this day, no one knows how and why it was built, which just adds to its wonder and mystery! You can make a day trip, or stay for longer in the surrounding county of Wiltshire - which is famous for its ham, horses and prehistoric monuments!



## Bath, Somerset

Bath is the largest city in Somerset. It's bursting with ancient history and culture, but it's most famous for its Roman-built baths, hot springs, medieval heritage and Georgian architecture. This unique, feel-good city is quite unforgettable.

## Robin Hood's Bay, Whitby

This captivating little coastal village was once where smugglers brought in contraband items like alcohol - and it still has a fascinating network of smuggler tunnels underneath it. Steeped in history and beauty, you won't be able to help falling in love with this charming location.

## London, England

Who could forget the iconic capital city of our country - London! There's so much to do, from mooching through the funky market stalls in Camden to seeing the changing of the guards at Buckingham Palace. If you're on a budget, then consider staying in Kings Cross or Camden, which has plenty of affordable accommodation, cafes and restaurants and vintage shops.

Although pricier, Belgravia, Kensington and Knightsbridge are also great places to stay during your first time in London. All three are in close proximity to some of London's most famous landmarks, including Buckingham Palace, Big Ben and Westminster Abbey.

*Continued on pages 14-15...*



## Edinburgh, Scotland

Edinburgh - Scotland's capital - is often described as looking like a "real-life fairytale". Looming over the city is Edinburgh Castle, which is where you can see Scotland's crown jewels and the Stone of Destiny. There's also plenty of history and culture to explore along the cobbled streets of the Medieval Old Town and Georgian New Town.

Fun fact: Edinburgh is the home of Sean Connery, Sherlock Holmes, digestive biscuits and Harry Potter!

## Bristol, South West England

Bristol is home to some of Banksy's most iconic works, as well as some fantastic boutique shops and the famous Clifton Suspension Bridge. It's full of so much character that your first visit probably won't be your last!



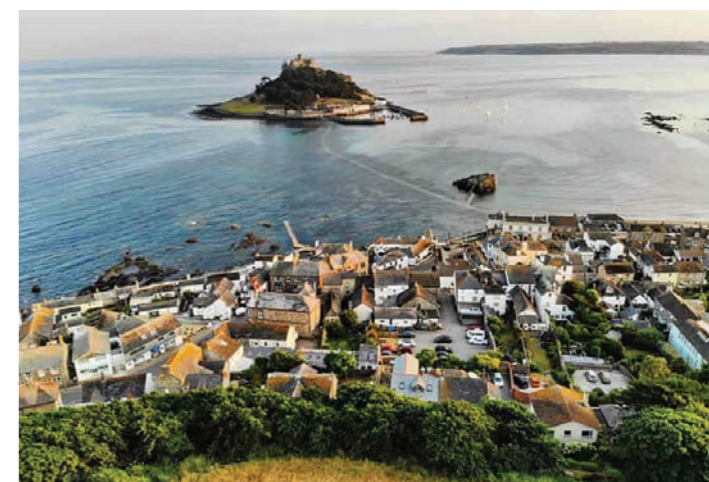
## Snowdonia National Park, North Wales

The picturesque mountain range in North Wales is home to England and Wales' largest mountain, standing at 3,560 feet tall. Climbing Snowdonia is challenging, but is sure to be an experience that you'll never forget. If climbing isn't for you, then there's still plenty of other ways to appreciate the scenic landscape that the area has to offer. Meander through wooded valleys, historic villages, or take a leisurely ride on the Snowdon Mountain Railway. There's also 60 miles of glorious coastline to enjoy!



## St Michael's Mount, Cornwall

If you want to visit somewhere that combines stunning scenery with a good old legendary tale, then St Michael's Mount is one place you'll definitely want to visit. This small tidal island is possibly one of the prettiest places in England, and rumour has it that a giant still inhabits one of the island's caves. Spooky!



## Brecon Beacons, South Wales

The Brecon Beacons are a striking mountain range in southern Wales that are cared for by the National Trust. The range has six main peaks, including Pen y Fan - the largest peak, standing at 2,907 ft tall. The iconic area features nature walks, a national park, campsites, and plenty of village eateries. It's also a popular place for stargazing!

## Holy Island, Northumberland

Transport yourself to this magical island, which is even more breathtaking in person - the photos just don't do it justice. This gorgeous little island is home to Lindisfarne Castle which is so pretty that you'll wonder whether it's even real.

## Manchester City, North West England (right)

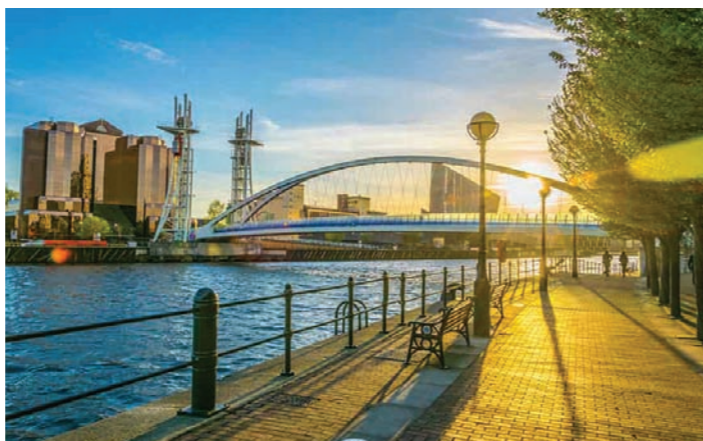
If you want to experience a vibrant city outside of London then you could head to Manchester - it's trendy vibes will completely lure you in. If you're looking for a tasty bite, then this city is well known for its wide variety of restaurants, with everything from BBQ food to sushi heaven. You can also have a nice walk around the quays and canals!

## Cirencester, Gloucestershire

Cirencester lies on the River Churn and is the largest town in the Cotswolds. It's the place to go if you love a good market and can be easily reached by car or train. You'll soon wonder where the time went, as there's so much to see and explore.

## Castle Howard, York

You'll be blown away by the jaw dropping beauty of this castle. While the house remains closed, the gardens are still open to visitors. You can explore 1,000 acres of parkland and winding woodland paths, temples, terraces and fountains - not forgetting the beautiful Walled Garden!



## Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

This elegant city is laced with impressive buildings such as the historic chapel at King's College which was gifted by Henry VIII to one of his six wives (Anne Boleyn). Definitely one to add to your bucket list if you're interested in history and culture.

## Giant's Causeways, County Antrim

If you're looking for a getaway that can offer some dramatic scenery, then the Giant's Causeway in County Antrim, Northern Ireland, is definitely worth a visit. It lies at the bottom of the basalt cliffs and is made up of 40,000 huge black basalt columns sticking out of the sea, which interlock in perfect horizontal alignment. Scientists believe that the striking scene was caused by volcanic activity 50-60 million years ago. For many, this UNESCO heritage site has also inspired myths and legends about giants striding over the sea to Scotland.

## Finnich Glen, Stirlingshire (pictured top left)

If you're looking for adventure and don't mind walking through water, then Finnich Glen in Stirlingshire, Scotland, is a top UK destination to add to your list. This steep gorge is up to 70ft deep which was carved from red sandstone. Some of its most memorable features include a steep staircase known as the Devil's Steps and a mushroom shaped rock that rises above the rushing stream, nicknamed The Devil's Pulpit. This beauty spot has been used to film scenes in TV series Outlander and The Nest, and the film King Arthur: Legend of the Sword.

## Final thoughts...

From stunning scenes of natural beauty to enchanting villages, towns and cities, the UK is certainly not lacking in its varied and interesting destinations.

So if you are looking to get away for either a day trip or something a little longer, we hope this list of 22 inspiring places has given you some ideas as to where you'd like to go.

(Article source: Rest Less)



## Planning a staycation: Where to go (and avoid) for good weather in the UK

Met Office data reveals the wettest, warmest and windiest places the UK has to offer.



**Silver Surfers** reports that the weather isn't the only reason to holiday outside the UK, but it must be pretty high up the list.

Famed for its unpredictability, British summertime is quite capable of delivering a sudden cool snap or pouring rain - turning what should have been a gentle camping trip or relaxing hiking holiday into some kind of survival test.

But while nowhere can promise pleasant British weather, you can at least rig the dice a little by noting down the places most likely to soak or sun you.

According to data from the Met Office, these are the warmest, coldest, wettest and windiest spots in the UK...

### The warmest

They might look exposed and windswept when viewed on a map, but it's actually Britain's southern islands that scoop the title of warmest all year round. Channel Islands Jersey and Guernsey both maintain an average temperature of around 12C (data running 1981 to 2010), as do the Isles of Scilly off the southwesternmost tip of Cornwall.

Southeast England, meanwhile, can claim the hottest summer highs, with the UK's warmest temperature to date, 38.7C, being recorded in the Cambridge Botanic Garden in the midst of 2019's July heatwave. June's hottest temperature was recorded in the southeast too - 35.6C in the Mayflower Park, Southampton, way back in 1976 - while the hottest August temperature was 38.5 in Faversham, Kent, in 2003.

### The coldest

Altitude sticks something of a spanner in the race to be Britain's coldest, as temperatures decrease by around 0.5C for every 100 metre increase in height above sea level, meaning the lowest temperatures are inevitably recorded at the tops of mountains. Braemar in Aberdeenshire scoops the crown as Britain's coldest low-lying area, returning an annual mean temperature of 6.6C.

Scotland also notches the coolest maximum temperatures recorded for each of the main summer months. The lowest for June is 5.1 at Nunraw Abbey (East Lothian) in 1975; for July it is 7.5 in Clashnoir (Banffshire) in 1978; and for August it is 8.9 in Lerwick (Shetland) in 1964.

### The wettest

If you remember your secondary school geography, it should come as no surprise that the wettest parts of the UK are also the most mountainous. Met Office sites in Snowdonia, the Lake District and the Scottish Highlands all receive more than four metres of rainfall per year - the highest levels recorded anywhere in the UK.

Other rainy parts of the UK include west-facing slopes of the Pennines, higher-elevation areas of Dartmoor, Exmoor, and Bodmin Moor in the southwest, and mountainous areas of Northern Ireland.

### The windiest

Another category in which offshore areas dominate, the northern archipelagos of Shetland and Orkney are comfortably the two windiest places in the UK, notching average wind speeds of 14.6 and 14.3 knots respectively.

The mainland's windiest spot is also Scottish - the Argyll & Bute region, whose 12.1 knots lands fourth place overall. The top ten is rounded out with the Western Isles in third place (12.6), Gwynedd (11.3), Tweeddale (11.0), Ross & Cromarty (10.9), Banffshire (10.9), Sutherland (10.8), and the Isle of Wight (10.7).

(Story source: Silver Surfers)

## Four-day Bank Holiday weekend announced for 2-5 June 2022 to celebrate Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The UK will receive a special four-day Bank Holiday weekend next year to mark the Queen's 70 years on the throne.

**Inews** reports that Britons will get a special four-day Bank Holiday next summer to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Buckingham Palace has confirmed.



The Palace has unveiled a full itinerary for June 2022 to mark 70 years on the throne for Britain's longest-reigning monarch.

A four-day Bank Holiday weekend will run between 2 and 5 June next year, with a series of events reflecting Her Majesty's time at the helm.

The Queen will be 96 by the time the landmark is reached, making her the first British sovereign to reign for seven decades.

(Story source: Inews)

## Do I need a vaccine passport to travel?

If you're planning on travelling soon, you might be wondering whether you'll need a vaccine passport. Find out what you need to know here.



**Silver Surfers** reports that as more people are being vaccinated for COVID-19, the discussions around the use of vaccine passports are intensifying. So, will you need one to travel?

It's not completely clear at the moment. But, it does look like quite a few countries - especially around Europe - are looking to allow travel for people who've been vaccinated.

Some places will also require you to have had both doses, while others might accept people who've had one dose.

Here's what you need to know about vaccine passports as of right now.

### What are vaccine passports?

Put simply, vaccine passports are just a way of telling quickly and securely whether people have been vaccinated against coronavirus. In theory, they can be used to allow people to travel more freely, and they might also be extended for use in domestic cases like going to indoor venues.

When you receive your vaccine at the moment, you get a vaccination card and it goes on your medical record. A vaccine passport is, essentially, a more usable way of proving you've been vaccinated - similar to WHO's 'yellow card'.

### Where are vaccine passports going to be used?

At the moment, most of the movement on vaccine passports is from the European Commission with their 'Digital Green Certificate'.

Countries within the EU have been some of the first to release their individual plans, including Estonia, Iceland, and Romania, but this is the first large-scale statement of intent so far.

For the UK, things are moving a little slower on the vaccine passport front. The discussions are underway but there are ethical and privacy concerns: like whether it puts people who haven't yet been offered the vaccine at a disadvantage.

If the UK does opt to roll out a vaccine passport, it could be integrated into the NHS app and extended to prove whether you've recently tested negative for Covid as well. If this happens, it's very possible that it might be used for indoor venues like bars and sports stadiums.

### Airlines and holiday providers

Airlines and holiday providers are starting to put their own guidelines in place in regards to vaccinations. For example, some cruise lines have announced that all passengers must be vaccinated in order to travel with them.

It's important to keep an eye out on the country you're going to, and from, and all the travel providers you're booking with to make sure you know about their requirements - and whether you'll need a vaccine passport.

Travel insurance is another vital component for protecting you from things like cancellations and cutting your trip short, so make sure to take out a policy that covers your needs. Avanti specialises in cover for pre-existing medical conditions, offers Covid Cover, and more.

(Story source: Silver Surfers)

What is your opinion on vaccine passports?  
Tell us by emailing: [www.ourplace.co](mailto:www.ourplace.co)



# The History of the Barbecue: A Native American method of tenderising meat goes global.

Lockhart, Texas has plenty of reasons to feel proud. With its unique collection of 19th-century buildings, it is one of the prettiest towns in Caldwell County - and a favourite of Hollywood producers.

More than 50 films have been made there, from *Baby, the Rain Must Fall* (1968), starring Steve McQueen and Lee Remick, to Clint Eastwood's acclaimed drama *A Perfect World* (1993). But what really makes locals puff out their chests is the barbecue.

Ever since Jesse Swearingen opened Lockhart's first meat market in 1875, the town has been famous for its barbecued beef and sausages, usually served with saltine crackers, onions and pickles.

Every year, its four restaurants welcome more than 250,000 diners from around the world; and in 1999, Lockhart was officially named the 'Barbecue Capital of Texas'.



## Salt, pepper, spice

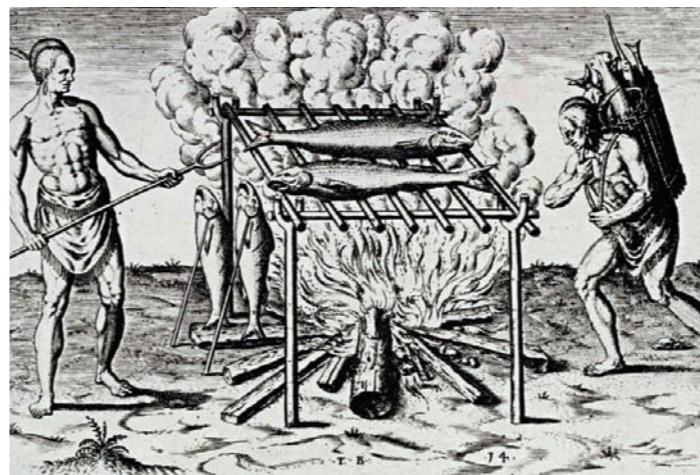
The secret is in the smoke. Generally rubbed with nothing more than salt, pepper and a few spices, the meat is cooked slowly over a smouldering bed of oak and mesquite wood, often for hours at a time. This gives it a distinctively sweet, smoky flavour and makes even the toughest cuts mouth-wateringly tender. It is not the only way of barbecuing.

In San Antonio, 60 miles to the south, they slather the meat in a sticky, molasses-like dressing to keep it moist. Further to the north, in Memphis, pork shoulder is lightly seasoned and served 'pulled' in a sandwich with coleslaw; while in Kansas City, tomato-based sauces are de rigueur.

But in Lockhart, they like to think that their way is the truly American way - and it's easy to see why. Regardless of whether you're eating pork, chicken or a hunk of Texas steak, the earthy taste conjures up images of a virile, honest-to-goodness frontier life, of upstanding individualism, of aspiration, of optimism and liberty.

## Barbacoa

Yet while barbecues may be dear to the American soul, they are not native to the US. Instead, they trace their roots to the indigenous peoples of North and South America - and their troubled, often confusing, history says more about colonialism, war and migration than it does about freedom.



The Spanish word barbacoa was first used by the explorer and historian Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés (1478-1557). On returning to Europe after nine years in the New World, he published a series of books describing the course of his voyages and the customs of the peoples he had encountered.

In *La historia general y natural de las Indias* (1535), he introduced his readers not only to tobacco and pineapples, but also to the barbacoa, a word he claimed to have learned from the Tainos, an Arawak-speaking people, who were the main inhabitants of Hispaniola, Jamaica and Cuba.

Its meaning was, however, curious. According to Oviedo, a barbacoa was a type of lattice, made from a variety of natural materials and put to a wide range of purposes. In the Darién region of Panama, he saw Cueva sleeping in barbacoas 'which are beds made of reeds and other wood, raised some two or three spans above the ground, because of the damp'.



Elsewhere, when mahiz (maize) was harvested, the adults got boys to build rudimentary shelters from wood and cane, which they also called barbacoas. On the river Guayas, opposite Punó Island, in modern Ecuador, the natives made rafts, 'made of fat and light sticks, like beams, and others crossed', with their barbacoas - that is to say, their hammocks - in the middle.

But if barbacoas had any culinary applications, Oviedo does not seem to have noticed them. On only one occasion did he mention a barbacoa being used for cooking and, even then, it was a rather grisly affair.

One day, he reported, the governor of Cuzco, Hernando de Soto (1500-42) and his secretary entered an Inca temple, where they found a number of graves containing 'the bodies of men roasted on a barbacoa'.

## Holy smoke

Not until the mid-17th century does the word 'barbecue' come to be associated clearly with a method of cooking food in European texts. Yet even here the evidence is not always clear. The earliest reference appears in Beauchamp Plantagenet's pamphlet, *A Description of New Albion* (1648).

Describing various native peoples in North America, the author noted that the 'Indians' of Chesapeake Bay 'in stead of salt doe barbecado or dry and smoak fish'. But given that the veracity - even the authenticity - of this work has been called into question, it should perhaps be treated with scepticism.

More reliable is the testimony of Edmund Hickeringill (1631-1708), an eccentric English pamphleteer, who - after many strange adventures - received an appointment in the West Indies.

*Continued on pages 20-21...*



For a time, he lived in Jamaica, which had only recently been seized from the Spanish and was still in the grip of a brutal war against the rebellious Maroons, a heterogeneous group of former slaves.

While this conflict would later lead the Maroons to develop jerk (see *History Today*, May 2019), HICKERINGILL noticed that, among the native Tainos, a different method of cooking meat had emerged. Whenever they killed one of the wild hogs that inhabited the island, they would slice them open, and 'their flesh Barbecu'd and eat'.

Such is the brevity of HICKERINGILL's description that it is hard to determine exactly what this involved; but later accounts suggest that, by the late 18th century, 'barbecuing' referred to the process - common in the Americas - of placing meat on a lattice frame above the dying embers of a fire and cooking it slowly in the smoke.

A vivid picture is provided by the African abolitionist Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-97). Although he did not use the word 'barbecue', Equiano reported that, during his travels in Cape Gracias a Dios (in modern Honduras), he witnessed some of the Miskito people kill an alligator and cook its meat over a hole in the earth, filled with wood which had been burnt 'to coal'.

This method had a variety of advantages, especially for those, like the Tainos and Miskito, who lived by hunting or subsistence farming. First and foremost, it meant that nothing was wasted. Since it made even the toughest meat tender, virtually every part of an animal could be eaten. It also required little fuel; and best of all, it made for a tasty meal.

There is evidence of Europeans eating barbecue meat during this period, particularly when on manoeuvres or when travelling with native guides. And there is no doubt they enjoyed it. Such was their taste for it, in fact, that by the late 17th century, the word had already become a commonplace of English literature.

In Aphra Behn's play *The Widow Ranter* (1690), for example, the rabble turns against Captain Dullman, shouting 'Let's Barbicu this Fat Rogue'; while in Alexander Pope's *Imitations of Horace* (1733-8), Oldfield, 'with more than happy throat endued, Cries, "Send me, gods" a whole hog barbecued!'

Yet barbecuing nevertheless remained the preserve of natives and, occasionally, of slaves. There is little, if any, evidence of colonists barbecuing meat except on journeys into the interior and none whatsoever of (true) barbecues in Europe. There were two reasons for this.

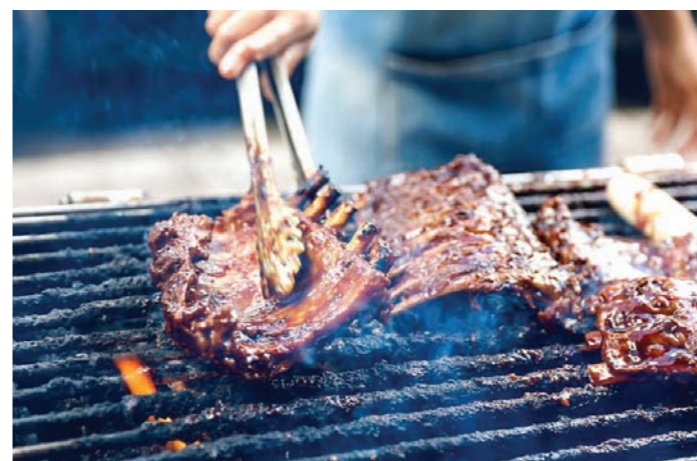
The most obvious is that there was simply no need to cook in the barbecue manner. If you had enough fuel and could afford the better cuts, why not simply broil or roast? More important, however, was the fact that colonial prejudices were still strong.

Even as late as the mid-18th century, it was common to look down upon the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and Central America as uncivilised; and while colonists and travellers were willing to eat barbecue meat when there was no alternative, they still regarded it as rather crude. That Behn and Pope associated it with acts of barbarity and gluttony was indicative of the disdain in which it was held.

### Washington heights

Within a few decades, however, this was to change. As the prosperity and self-confidence of Britain's North American colonies grew in the second half of the 18th century, barbecues appear to have become more common: not just among slaves, brought over from the Caribbean, but also among the colonial elites. In Massachusetts and Virginia there are accounts of barbecues held by wealthy landowners. In 1769, George Washington, for example, noted in his diary that he had gone 'up to Alexandria for a Barbecue and stayed all Night'. Four years later, he held one of his own at Accatink.

Given that most American colonists shared the prejudices of their English counterparts, this sudden shift is unlikely to be the result of a more positive attitude towards native culture. More probably, it was a misunderstanding. On the whole, the colonists seem to have been even less clear about what 'barbecue' meant than Behn and Pope. Having encountered it second-, or even third-hand, they do not appear to have recognised it as a 'native' term, or even as a word used to describe a method of cooking. Instead, they saw it as something like a picnic: that is, as a social gathering, usually held outdoors, at which animals were roasted whole.



It was prejudice which caused this veil of ignorance to lift. After winning independence from Britain, the former colonists were anxious not only to safeguard their freedom against foreign threats, but also to expand their territory westwards. These twin goals exacerbated their long-running conflict with the native American tribes, many of whom had allied with the British.

Over the decades that followed, a series of brutal wars were fought, resulting in a programme of forced removals so severe that it has been classed as a genocide. Yet perversely, it was in perpetrating these horrors that American settlers gained a fuller understanding, not only of native society, but also of barbecuing, which, as the Irish trader James Adair noted, was a speciality of the Chickasaw.

They soon realised that smoking was a method particularly well suited to the hardships of frontier life; and by the time of the Texas annexation (1845), the smell of barbecued meat (usually beef) had become as familiar a feature of pioneer towns as tumbleweed and dust.

Having been appropriated from the Native Americans, the barbecue evolved in step with the frontier. As railroads reached the townships, immigration gathered pace. A particularly large number of people arrived from Eastern and Central Europe.



This not only transformed the character of frontier life; but it also revolutionised the barbecue. Settling throughout Texas and the Mid-West, Germans, Russians, Poles and Czechs each brought with them their own traditions of smoking meat and their own ideas about how barbecuing should be done. By the beginning of the 20th century, these influences had led to the emergence of different varieties, some of which still survive to this day. In Lockhart, for example, smokemasters are proud of the fact that their distinctive way of preparing sausages and ribs owes a lot to the town's Polish heritage.

### All American

Yet it was not until much later that barbecue became quintessentially 'American'. The catalyst was the Cold War. As Kristen L. Matthews has recently argued, the United States' uneasy relationship with the Soviet Union, coupled with fears of communist infiltration at home, raised the question of how to differentiate 'us' from 'them'.

The barbecue offered a tasty solution. Despite its native origins and Eastern European connections, its status as a 'frontier' practice allowed it to be claimed as a symbol of US exceptionalism - and, by extension, as a mark of American identity. Anyone who enjoyed barbecue meat, the logic went, must be 'one of us'. And as it was enthusiastically adopted by the urban middle classes, it gradually acquired an association with home ownership and consumerism, which served to cement it in the popular imagination as an 'all-American' activity.

Since the 'barbecue boom' of the 1950s, it has spread to many other countries. It flourishes in the UK, is popular in Germany and is almost a national religion in Australia. But it is still unmistakably 'American' - and we should not forget the irony of that, least of all in today's climate. For, while it is only natural for a town like Lockhart to take pride in its barbecue, it is high time we acknowledge that 'the taste of liberty' - like so much else - was taken from indigenous peoples, nurtured by immigrants and distorted by myth.

(Article source: *History Today*)



## Spruce up your garden: Ideas to decorate your outside space

Spring has sprung, the days are warmer and the nights are longer. If you are lucky enough to have a garden, this is when it really comes into its own, a place to entertain and to relax in.

However even the most cared for garden can sometimes look a bit tired, so how do you put some new life into it?

A great idea that makes a real difference is to bring the indoors outside and decorate your garden as an extension of your home, injecting style and personality into it.

Let's look at some of the best ideas in outdoor garden décor, transforming your garden no matter the size or budget.

### Garden Lighting

There is something magical about a garden in the evening, make it even more so by adding some new and imaginative lighting to yours. Fairy lights strung around trees and tea lights in glass jars create a wonderful mood and a magical atmosphere. You can also hang some outdoor lanterns within the trees or even place some hurricane lanterns on your patio for a lovely effect.



### Ladder Planters

Whether you have a little space or a lot, an old wooden ladder is a great way to display your pots and flowers. Simply clean it, sand it down and if you want paint it in a new fresh colour. Then all you need to do is position your flower pots on different levels of the ladder planter and secure them against a feature wall. This is a great idea if you have a small garden and are short on space.

### Colourful Pots

A quick and easy way to inject colour into your garden is with new pots. There is a huge range of different coloured ceramic pots available now. Experiment in your garden with bright and bold colours to really get that instant wow factor.

### Mirrors

Mirrors of all shapes and sizes are a fantastic way to make your garden feel more spacious. For instant garden wall décor, hang a full length mirror for an illusion of space or a couple of small mirrors side by side for a window effect. You will find that a well-placed mirror will reflect sunlight and take your interior style outdoors.



### Inspiring Patios

If your patio or decking has been looking rather dull, why not invest in a statement outdoor rug? Or for something even more creative try some peel and stick floor tiles. These are stylish and inexpensive when compared to painting or staining the tiles. However, as a cosmetic addition bear in mind they may not be long-lasting unless protected from the elements.

Vibrant and bright parasols on your patio table or some new cushions and seat covers for chairs can also make a real impact on your outdoor seating area at a minimal cost.

### Painting

Outside decoration with paint can brighten up your garden instantly. There are so many inspiring exterior paint colours to choose from to make a real impact. Luckily there is a paint for nearly every surface outside so you can spruce up a fence or a statement wall in no time. Just remember to prepare the surface first before you start.



### Repurposing plant pots

You don't have to stick with the same old tried and tested plant pots. When it comes to decorating your garden why not try repurposing old objects such as kettles, wheelbarrows or watering cans? Not only will they inject some creativity and style into your garden but repurposing is great for the environment! If you would rather stick to traditional pots try experimenting with different sizes or unusual plants to create an eye-catching display in a corner of your garden.

Hopefully, these tips have given you some fantastic ideas on enhancing your outdoor garden décor. Have fun with them, get creative and enjoy the result!

(Article source: Silver Surfers)

# 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 **HALVED** 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 **HALVED** 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:

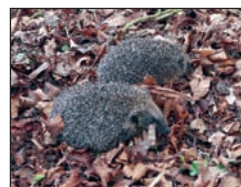
## 'Julie'



'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**

