OURPLACENews

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

AUGUST 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

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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

- 1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited
- 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
- · have a condition that makes you much more likely to get
- 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 selfisolation.

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
- 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!

Health & Lifestyle News

Reasons to be cheerful after England's Euro 2020 defeat

Dispel your post-match gloom with bright spots such as an improving squad and Atomic Kitten's return



The Guardian reports that if you are still feeling glum about what now feels like an inevitable defeat on penalties for England last month, here are a few reasons to brighten your step.

1. It is a young squad of role models that will only get better

Much has been made of the likability and social conscience of this group of England players. There is so much attacking talent in the squad, which was one of the youngest England had ever taken to a tournament. With the experience of reaching a final, they can only improve, and the core of this team will be around for years to come. And in defeat, they were truly role models, and there for each other at the end, exemplified by Leeds United's Kalvin Phillips running half the length of the pitch to console Arsenal's Bukayo Saka after that fateful penalty miss.

2. They gave us something to rally around after a long, hard year

While we cannot entirely sweep away the unsavoury aspects of behaviour and the racist abuse directed at players by some on social media, the team have brought a huge amount of joy during the summer after months of frustration over dealing with a pandemic. When the pain of defeat recedes, people will be able to look back on some great days and nights spent cheering on the Three Lions with friends and family, and in some cases, throwing beer over total strangers in joy.

3. For a game so often distant from its fans, there's been a real reconnection

For a bunch of mostly millionaires, the England squad seem to have managed to reconnect the game with the public. Gone are the aloof days of the early 2000s' so-called golden generation, replaced by directly approachable young men expressing their hopes and dreams.

There has also been a breath of fresh air from the FA. Often criticised for a staid and old-fashioned approach to running the game, the England TikTok account alone has been a constant source of enjoyment during the tournament. The FA had also led with two messages - one a wholehearted condemnation of racism, and the other trying to link the game to the grassroots footballers up and down the country who are just beginning to dust off their boots for the season ahead. It feels like, just a few months after the European Super League debacle from England's leading club sides, the national team can at least walk forward with pride.

4. They really did do exceptionally well

They may have fallen at the last hurdle of penalties, but take a step back and England's tournament record at Euro 2020 is incredible and something they genuinely can be proud of. Put it this way, there cannot be many teams in history who have gone seven games unbeaten at a tournament, winning five, drawing two, only conceding two goals, and still not coming away with the trophy.

5. It's always lovely to cheer your neighbours up

The National newspaper in Scotland had faced some stick from pofaced commentators mocking its decision at the weekend to focus the front page on a match Scotland were not involved in. However, on Sunday night its social media team was quick on the draw when Italy's Giorgio Chiellini hauled back Saka on the touchline, with a tweet that turned out to be a prescient verdict on where the evening was heading. England might be heartbroken, but it is always lovely to spread a smile somewhere. Even if it is Scotland.

6. Southgate is still the one (for now)

Gareth Southgate will still be England manager. Well, probably. His current contract takes him to the end of the 2022 World Cup. which is being held - Covid permitting - in November and December next year in Qatar.

The FA has already said it would be interested in extending it. The chief executive, Mark Bullingham, backed Southgate when the team were preparing to face Germany earlier in Euro 2020, saying: "Gareth knows exactly how we feel about him. We feel he is brilliant, both on and off the pitch. We would love him to carry on, for sure, beyond this contract." However, do not be surprised if you see Southgate's name heavily linked with any managerial vacancy that comes up over the next few months, whether it is with Leyton Orient or Liverpool.

7. They got Atomic Kitten back in the charts and the public eye

The rerecorded Southgate You're the One (Football's Coming Home Again) is the band's first top 10 hit in the UK since 2005.

8. England's women have the chance to do it all again next summer

England is hosting the women's Euro 2022 next year, and Northern Ireland have qualified for the tournament too. Advanced tickets go on sale this week. England's women have been runners-up twice before in 1984 and 2009. Can they go one step further at Wembley on 31 July next year? Save the date.



Health & Lifestyle News

And before all that, there is the small matter of Team GB playing in the women's football competition in the Olympics. Their first match is against Chile on Wednesday 21 July.

9. A Christmas World Cup is not that far away

The Covid delay to Euro 2020 means we are not that far away from the next tournament.

England currently top their World Cup qualifying group and if they can get decent results away to Hungary and Poland in the next round of games in September, they will be well on their way to securing their spot in the 32-team tournament.

Which means that come the end of 2022, we are almost certainly guaranteed adverts that combine football and Christmas.

And surely record executives are already planning a festive version of Atomic Kitten's Whole Again that feature sleigh bells, a children's choir and Noddy Holder bellowing "It's Sooooouuuuuuthhhgate!!!". Maybe, just maybe, the World Cup will be coming home for Christmas.

(Story source: The Guardian)

Romantic love most often starts out as platonic friendship, study finds

Love at first sight may be the story told in rom-coms, but reality is different.



Inews reports that it is the well-worn conceit of films and novels alike: strangers meet across a crowded room and romantic sparks

But a study has found the reality is perhaps a little more mundane the majority of couples start out as friends. Researchers from Canada analysed data from nearly 1,900 university students and crowdsourced adults.

They found 68 per cent reported their current or most recent romantic relationship began as a friendship.



There was little variation across gender, level of education, or ethnic groups, but the rate of friends-first initiation was even higher among 20-somethings and within LGBTQ+ communities, with 85 per cent of such couples beginning as friendships.

Danu Anthony Stinson, lead author and psychology professor at the University of Victoria, Canada said: "There are a lot of people who would feel very confident saying that we know why and how people choose partners and become a couple and fall in love, but our research suggests that is not the case.

"We might have a good understanding of how strangers become attracted to each other and start dating, but that's simply not how most relationships begin."

In the study, among the university students, the friends-first participants were friends for one-to-two years before beginning a romantic relationship. The vast majority of these did not enter the friendship with romantic intentions or attraction.

Nearly half of the students reported that starting out as friends was their preferred way of developing a romantic relationship, and was far more popular than other options presented, such as meeting at a party or online.

Given the prevalence of romantic relationships that begin platonically, Professor Stinson would like to see further studies examining this kind of relationship initiation.

She also hopes this research, which is published in the journal Social Psychological and Personality Science, will push people to revisit their preconceived notions about love and friendship.

She adds: "Our research suggests that the lines between friendship and romance are blurry and I think that forces us to rethink our assumptions about what makes a good friendship but also what makes a good romantic relationship."

(Story source: Inews)

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



Health & Lifestyle Feature

What do you find so appealing about wild swimming in particular?

"I'm still very much an amateur, but I find it easier to swim in open water than in a pool. I used to think water was just water wherever it was, but the density definitely varies, and I think swimming outside is way, way easier."

Do you find it good for your wellbeing, mentally and physically?

"Oh definitely, you just have time to think. I learned in Shepperton Lake, and there's nothing out there but open water, maybe the odd duck and swan. It's so peaceful and tranquil - just you and nature, and you gliding along without a care in the world. In that respect, it's completely different from track and field."

What are the other main ways you look after your wellbeing?

"I eat right, and I still go to the track and lift weights, even though I don't run. To be in the right mental state, you have to have the right environment, and I can understand the struggle people had in lockdown, when you couldn't really exercise."

Did you continue to exercise intensively after you retired from running?

"When you've been exercising all your life, you get to a point where you're glad you don't have to, and then one day you look in the mirror and think: 'I need to do something about this'. It keeps me sane and helps me sleep, but when I was running I was obsessed with it, and I was competitive all the time. Now I exercise as and when I feel like it."

You didn't really see sprinting as a career until your mid-20s. Was there a world in which you never became an athlete?

"Yeah absolutely, I was trying to do some of the things that young people do. Once you start specialising in sport, you have to start living it 24/7, and when that happened it took a long time to change habits."

Looking back over your career, what have been your biggest highs and lows?

"Highest: winning the World Championships and the Olympics. The lowest would be being accused of drugs when I didn't do anything, but you can't dwell on that, you've just got to get out there. I do think I could have done more in the sport than I did, but I don't know if I'd change anything. You make mistakes, and you learn from them."

How are you enjoying coaching now, as opposed to competing?

"I love it, but it's stressful. I always think back to my coach and wonder how stressed he must have been. When the race starts, sometimes you just think: 'Why can't you just run that little bit faster?' It's easier said than done!"

How hard has it been for young athletes preparing for the Olympics during the pandemic?

"In the UK, we've struggled. If you look at the times people are running, the Americans are outperforming everyone because in a lot of places, they didn't really have a lockdown. You worry about the young people coming through because, in track and field, all you've got is your body. People think you can train alone, but you need your training group and your coach. It's taken a toll."



What are you most looking forward to in a post-pandemic world?

"I think freedom of travel, without 10 days isolating; 10 days in the life of a sportsperson might as well be 10 months."

Have there been positives to getting a bit older?

"Honestly, the only negative about getting older is you're nearer to dying. My dad always said: 'The young may die, but the old must', but otherwise I'm really enjoying my later life. I can just step out and enjoy life." Linford Christie is supporting Zone3's Embrace the Escape campaign, which promotes participation in Open Water Swimming for improved fitness and mental wellbeing (zone3.com).

(Article source: Silver Surfers)



Linford Christie: Open water swimming is so peaceful

The former runner talks about getting older, exercising for mental benefits, and making a late transition from track to pool.

Linford Christie's Olympic and World Champion days might be behind him, but that isn't stopping the 61-year old from breaking new sporting ground. The former sprinter only learned the swim shortly before the pandemic began, and has since started a brand new love affair with wild swimming. Jamaica-born Christie talks about how he learned to love the water, and how he looks after himself as an ex-elite athlete...

What was it like learning to swim a couple of years ago?

"It was one of the best things I've ever done. I just really enjoy it, and I didn't think it was possible to learn in such a short space of time. It took me 12 weeks, or even less, and although it was slow at first, it really picked up. "I found it very tiring, not gonna lie, but once I got into the swing of it, it wasn't so far away from running. In some senses, the technique is the same - you've got to make yourself tall, streamlined and aerodynamic. I think being an athlete allowed me to pick it up quicker, and process instructions better."

Were you previously very aware of not being able to swim?

"I didn't give it too much thought, because I was never too afraid of water. I could sort of swim a tiny bit underwater, if you can call that swimming, so I had to learn the strokes and how to do more than 20 metres. "I made sure all my kids could swim, so the motivation was there for me because I didn't want to be the worst in my family. Once I got into it, I loved it and still do."

You've taken up open water swimming too. How do you make sure you stay safe while doing that?

"I would definitely never enter the water without my wetsuit, because it gives you extra buoyancy. And I recently discovered a bag that blows up into a float. You should never go wild swimming on your own anyway, but for added safety, it's really good."

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"One man's rubbish is another man's treasure": How to make money from your clutter

Decluttering is a great way to clear your head as well as your house, and many people say that it can be a liberating experience. It's amazing how much simpler life becomes once you remove all the stuff you no longer want or need from your life.

The trickier bit can be deciding how to get rid of your clutter, especially if you paid good money for some of it. However, there's a lot of truth to be found in the saying, "One man's rubbish is another man's treasure" because there's nearly always someone out there who will pay to take it off your hands.

Decluttering is a fantastic way to boost your bank balance and give a new lease of life to items that you no longer use. We've handpicked five effective tools that you can use to make money from your clutter - why not give it a try?

Ebay - Best for electronics

When we upgrade things like laptops and mobile phones, it's easy to stash away old versions, often thinking that you paid too much money for it to simply throw it away. But the good news is, you don't have to!

Buying brand new electronic devices can be pretty pricey, which is why so many people are happy to settle for a second hand device instead. eBay is a great way to shift electronics that are in all sorts of conditions - from not working through to brand new - just so long as you're completely honest about it.

You can choose to auction your items if you're feeling adventurous, or use the 'Buy it Now' option to set a fixed price - it's worth having a look on site at items similar to the ones you want to sell. This will give you a better idea about which of these is more likely to lead to a successful sale.

Cost: It's free to list up to 1,000 items a month and the site will take a ten per cent cut of each item you sell.

Amazon Marketplace - Best for books and DVDs

With Kindles and online movie streaming becoming increasingly popular, it's understandable that you may no longer want or need to keep huge book or DVD collections.

Things like textbooks and higher quality DVDs (4K Ultra HD or Blu-ray) will often sell extremely well on Amazon. Many people don't feel the need to pay the full price for a brand new copy, especially if they plan to watch/read it a few times and then pass it on themselves. So before you assume that your books and DVDs aren't worth anything, try looking them up on Amazon to see how much second hand copies are being sold for - you might be surprised!

Cost: Amazon charges 75p per item sold, plus a small cut of each item sold - for books and DVDs this is 15.3%.

Gumtree - Best for furniture

Gumtree is the perfect place to sell large furniture items to people in your area. There are plenty of people out there who only buy second-hand furniture - either to use as it is, or to fix up if it's looking a little shabby. So whatever the condition of your furniture, your chances of making a sale are pretty good.



It's up to you to decide how you want the buyer to pay - cash, paypal, cheque, etc. - and how the item will be delivered. Usually the buyer comes to collect the furniture from you at an agreed location, or the seller delivers it themselves in exchange for a fee. However, when arranging to meet up with a buyer, you should always make sure someone else is with you and never give out your bank details, as you can never be too careful!

Facebook Marketplace - Best for beauty products

If you've got unopened beauty products that you know you'll never use, then consider listing them on Facebook Marketplace. It's a great tool for selling to people in your local community, as buyers can search for the products being sold nearby and offer to collect them in person.

With many of us now spending so much time on social media, Facebook has become a hotspot for impulse buying - which means it's a great place to shift your clutter quickly. As long as the items you want to sell are unopened, there's no reason why someone won't want to bag their favourite beauty products at a discounted price.

Cost: Free

Car boot sales - Best for unusual bits and bobs

People usually head to car boot sales in search of hidden treasure - and to be honest at a car boot sale, anything goes! Whether you've got an old service uniform, miscellaneous ornaments or an old tea set - there's often someone out there who will buy your bits and bobs out of nostalgia, or even just for fun.

Clothes are also a big hit at car boot sales - no matter what decade your clothes are from, they'll often sell, especially with vintage clothes being so on trend at the moment. So if you don't fancy selling online and you'd rather get out in the fresh air amongst other sellers, then why not get yourself to a car boot sale?

Cost: There is sometimes a fee for your pitch - prices will vary depending on which car boot sale you decide to sell at.

SellMyMobile.com - Best for mobile phones

The market for second hand phones has boomed in recent years as people are looking to save money whilst protecting the environment and re-using more. But how many old phones do you have stashed away as a backup? With new models being released all the time, the old handsets in your drawer lose value the longer you hold on to them.

Only allow yourself to keep one spare mobile phone if you feel you need to and trade in anything extra for cash - you'll be glad you did when you find yourself with more space and more money. If you're looking for somewhere to start then SellMyMobile.com* offers a fast and easy comparison service to ensure you're getting the best deal on your old handset.

(Article source: Rest Less)

Cost: Free

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Old gold: Why are we all so obsessed with nostalgia?

Prudence Wade speaks to a psychologist to find out more. If you get together with a group of old friends, chances are you'll spend a large chunk of time reminiscing about the past.

Shared memories from bygone times are comforting and can make you feel warm and fuzzy. Not only this, but reminiscing also has the power to bring you closer to the ones you love -particularly if you've been drifting apart.

The Oxford English Dictionary's definition of nostalgia is: "A sentimental longing or wistful affection for a period in the past." The word itself evokes positive feelings of the past - you don't really look back nostalgically at anything bad.

Even when we're on our own, we love anything nostalgic, whether it's listening to the Backstreet Boys or re-watching old episodes of I Love Lucy.



Our obsession is real, but why is that so? We asked Dr Meg Arroll, psychologist and author of The Shrinkology Solution, to explain a bit more about why we have this obsession.



Special Feature

It brings people together

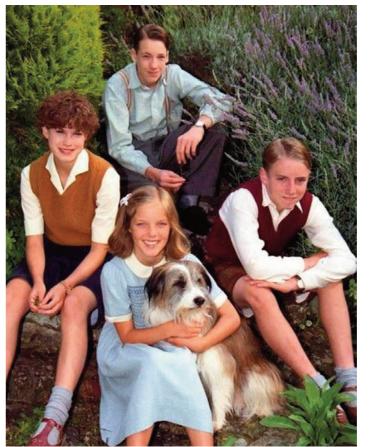
Nostalgic presents are a big industry - just think of the tongue-in-cheek remakes of Enid Blyton's books which have been updated with titles like 'Five Go Gluten Free' and 'Five On Brexit Island'.

Arroll says: "I both personally and professionally see the benefits of nostalgia - for instance, buying retro gifts immediately connects both the giver and receiver not only with one another but also with a shared past."

The same applies to going to remakes of films with your friends and discussing memories from the original.

"Nostalgia has the ability to bring people together who may have drifted apart - friends may have very different lives now, and so lack a common thread, but childhood memories bind us," Arroll explains.

"Studies have demonstrated this and found that when feelings of nostalgia are triggered, social bonds strengthen, positive self-regard increases, and there's a boost in positive effect (good mood)."



It can improve your mood

Speaking more about the potential impact on your mental state, Arroll says: "Further research suggest that nostalgia may protect against future bouts of depression." It's true - looking back on the good times has the peculiar ability to make you feel good.

Perhaps it's because 2018 felt like something of a firestorm of a year, but our passion for nostalgia seems to be stronger than ever.



In a scholarly article by Clay Routledge, Tim Wildschut, Constantine Sedikides and Jacob Juhl, the authors describe how from the 17th century to the end of the 20th century, nostalgia was considered a neurological disorder - but now it's been shown to have a positive impact on your mental health. They write: "We argue that nostalgia, far from being an illness, is an important resource for maintaining and promoting psychological health."

But there are some negatives

Nostalgia does, however, have some drawbacks.

Reliving the past can bring people together, but it also has the power to make you feel even more lonely than before.

It's altogether too easy to look back with rose-tinted glasses, and that can make you feel sad when comparing that time with today.

Instead of using memories to work through new challenges, some people use it as a way of living in the past without moving forward.

Arroll also notes we need to beware of "longing for the way society used to be, known as collective nostalgia". After all, society didn't used to be as accepting or diverse as it is now, and looking back nostalgically can gloss over the more insidious aspects of the past.

But if it's flicking through a 1998 copy of a glossy magazine, slurping on a cocktail you used to drink with your girlfriends in the Eighties or snuggling up on the sofa watching Breakfast At Tiffany's, we're confident a nostalgic cuddle with the past is most definitely a good thing.

(Article source: Silver Surfers)



Don't forget your best friend! 7 dog-friendly UK holiday ideas

If you have a pet in your family, you probably already know how hard it can be to leave them behind when you go on holiday. So if you're thinking about booking a break, why not take your furry friend with you this time?

Not only can this save on pet-sitting fees and stop you feeling bad when you see those puppy-dog eyes, but it can also be a lovely experience for your pet, and a chance for you both to have fun together and bond in new, beautiful surroundings.

From specific UK destinations that are known for welcoming pets to the very best dog-friendly accommodation companies, here are seven ideas for pet-friendly UK holidays.

North Cornwall

Thanks to its rugged coastline, beautiful beaches and subtropical climate, North Cornwall is one of the most popular holiday destinations in the UK - and if you have a dog, you'll be pleased to know it's one of the most dog-friendly too.



While many of the most popular family beaches ban pets in the summer months (Easter to October), others welcome dogs all year around. To save yourself a wasted journey, check out The Beach Guide to see if the beach you want to visit is dog-friendly.



Leisure & Travel Feature

The Visit Cornwall website is also really useful for dog owners, as it has a filter that highlights all the attractions, events, accommodation etc. where pets are welcome. Some of the top attractions in the county welcome dogs too, from the Camel Estuary to the historic castle of Tintagel, and there are countless dog-friendly pubs and restaurants too. The lovely Lusty Glaze beach restaurant even provides dogs with cosy dog beds at the table, a dog menu, and plenty of treats!

If you'd like to do plenty of walking on your holiday, you'll be spoiled for choice in North Cornwall: from woodland trails to riverside walks, there's plenty of varied scenery here, and many of the best routes are dog-friendly. From the mystery and history of the King Arthur Tintagel walk to the flat Camel Trail, and the quiet beauty of Cardinham Woods, there's a walk for every dog - and owner! You can have a look at some of the best dog walks in North Cornwall over on the Corncott website.

One of the most pet-friendly towns in North Cornwall is Padstow, where if you're walking around the harbour, dogs often seem to outnumber humans!

If you'd like to stay at a dog-friendly hotel in North Cornwall, you can find a list of 15 of the top dog-friendly hotels over on Global Grasshopper. Or, if you'd prefer to camp, you can check out the best campsites that welcome dogs over on Cool Camping.

Snowdonia & North Wales

With its green valleys, dramatic peaks, thundering waterfalls, and gleaming lakes, Snowdonia is just as magical in the eyes of dogs as humans! And just as there's plenty of variety for people, this region provides plenty of variety for pets, too. If you enjoy getting active and so does your dog, you can even spend the day climbing Mount Snowdon. There are several different routes that vary in difficulty, so you can choose the one that best suits you and your four-legged companion.



If you don't fancy such a strenuous trek, there are plenty of other dog-friendly walks to take through Snowdonia National Park - just be aware that many of these walks pass through farmland, so it's important to keep your dog on a lead. To find out more about some of the most dog-friendly walks in Snowdonia, head over to the National Trust website for more ideas; you might even want to follow in the footsteps of the legendary hound Gelert, and hike up to his bronze statue at Beddgelert!

If you or your dog aren't ones for walking long distances, there are plenty of other interesting places in Snowdonia that welcome dogs. The pretty town of Betws-y-Coed is one of the top attractions in the National Park, and it has lots of dog-friendly shops and cafes. If your dog likes swimming, they can even enjoy splashing around in the river! The nearby Conwy Falls is a popular beauty spot where you and your pet can relax and admire the majestic waterfall before refueling in the cosy dog-friendly café around the corner.

Snowdonia is also famous for its historic castles, and many of them, like Penrhyn Castle and Criccieth Castle, welcome dogs on leads. In Snowdonia, you can even head underground with your dog if you like. Sygun Copper Mine is a popular tourist attraction that welcomes dogs, and if your dog is up for it, you can explore this fascinating Victorian mine together (just be aware there are some metal steps to climb).

Yorkshire

With its rolling dales, wild moorland, craggy castles, and picturesque coastal towns, Yorkshire is incredibly diverse, and offers plenty of variety for pet owners as well as pets themselves. If you and your dog like going for long walks together, the Yorkshire Dales are packed with scenic walking trails. You might want to check out Miles without Stiles, which is a collection of walking routes in the Yorkshire Dales that are suitable for wheelchair users, people with limited mobility, and dogs.



If you fancy a beachside break - and your dog loves running on the sand - then the North and East Yorkshire coastline is also one of the most welcoming areas in the UK for pets. Head over to The Beach Guide to see which beaches welcome dogs. One of the area's best-loved coastal destinations is Whitby, a traditional seaside town where you and your dog can get some exercise by climbing the famous 199 steps up to the abbey. Plus, Whitby Beach has restricted dog access, which means that while dogs aren't allowed on the Southside of the beach, they're welcome elsewhere on the sand.

There are dozens of dog-friendly attractions throughout Yorkshire, whether you choose to visit the dales, the moors, or the coast. If you're visiting the North York Moors, have a look at some of the best dog-friendly walks on the moors. You may also want to visit Helmsley Walled Garden, a beautiful five-acre garden next to the historic Helmsley Castle, where dogs are welcome in the garden or cafe.

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Leisure & Travel Feature



Or why not head to Brimham Rocks near Harrogate, where you and your dog can explore strange rock formations and stroll through heather moorland and peaceful woodland? Dogs are welcome in the shop and exhibition room here too, and water bowls are provided at the refreshment kiosk. If you love wandering through historic towns, why not step back in time and visit Wharram Percy, in the lovely Wolds valley?

This deserted medieval village is fascinating to explore, and you can wander around at your leisure with your dog. The market town of Otley is also well worth a visit, and has lots of dog-friendly shops, pubs, and restaurants. Just be sure to visit the dog-friendly cafe Salami & Co, where dogs have their very own menu and can enjoy a range of treats from handmade pupcakes, biscuit bones to refreshing pupachinos! For a comprehensive list of the best dog-friendly places to eat in Yorkshire, head over to Dales Discoveries.

The Scottish Highlands (pictured above)

The beautiful Scottish Highlands are also an ideal destination for dogs, and the miles of unspoilt wilderness here are just perfect for dog-walking. Boasting heather-covered moors, pristine lochs and deserted, wind-swept beaches, if you're looking for variety you'll definitely find that here - and thanks to the 2003 Scottish Land Reform Act, you and your dog have the right to walk pretty much anywhere in the country, as long as you abide by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

If you want to really appreciate nature and do plenty of walking, why not head to Scotland's first National Park in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs - or alternatively, see if you can spot leaping salmon at the Hermitage and Black Linn Falls in Dunkeld?

You might also want to visit the Castle & Gardens of Mey, the former home of the Queen Mother, where dogs are welcome; there's even a dedicated shaded dog parking area in the woods if your pup needs a break. Brodick Castle Garden & Country Park is another ideal spot for dog walking.

If you want to enjoy a bit of history and culture on your holiday, then check out the Historic Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland websites, as dogs are allowed at many of the most popular properties. Dogs are welcome at Fort George, the most powerful artillery fortification in the UK, as well as Melrose Abbey and Dryburgh Abbey. If you want to explore the coast with your pet, there are 33 dog-friendly beaches in the Highlands: you can check out the full list over on The Beach Guide.

For something a bit different, why not climb aboard a boat with your dog and go hunting for the Loch Ness Monster? Dogs are allowed to join select boat trips with Jacobite Cruises, free of charge. You can even hop on a vintage steam train with your pup and enjoy a breathtaking journey together through the Cairngorms National Park. For more ideas on dog-friendly days out in the Scottish Highlands, head over to Your Dog or Visit Scotland.

Northern Ireland

One of the most popular destinations in Northern Ireland is the spectacular and mythical Giant's Causeway on the North Coast, which became fully dog-friendly last year. Today your pet can be assured of a warming welcome complete with water bowls, tieup spots and even homemade treats available to buy, and they'll be able to stay by your side for every step of the experience, from joining a guided tour to relaxing in the cafe.



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If you want to do plenty of hiking with your pet, the nearby Antrim Cliff Path to Dunseverick Castle is one of the best trails in the area for dogs: this five-mile section of the 33-mile Causeway Coast Way boasts some truly awe-inspiring scenery that your pup will love exploring - from gorse-covered clifftops to secret coves. The walk takes you past Benbane Head and the highest point of Hamilton's Seat, before reaching Dunseverick Castle, where the dog-friendly village of Ballintoy is just a short way away.

According to the National Trust, there are many other beautiful outdoor spots in Northern Ireland that are perfect for dog walking. If your dog loves playing on the sand, then why not head to Portstewart Strand or Murlough Nature Reserve for a walk on the beach?

If you want to experience a bit of history on your break, you can visit the unique 18th-century mansion Castle Ward with your dog, or the neoclassical house and celebrated gardens of Mount Stewart. If you want to let your dog off their lead and allow them to run and play freely, the training area at Mount Stewart is perfect for this, as is the dog exercise area at Rowallane Garden. There are over 170 dog-friendly pubs in Northern Ireland - 59 of them in Belfast, 46 in Co Down, 25 in Co Antrim and 16 in Co Derry - and thanks to an EU directive allowing dogs to enter into pubs and restaurants, dog-friendly dining options are growing all the time. For more suggestions on dog-friendly destinations and attractions, head over to Discover Northern Ireland.

The Lake District

Extremely popular with both nature lovers and ramblers, the Lake District is also one of the best destinations in the UK to holiday with your pet - it's even been awarded first prize in the Kennel Club's Great Outdoors category in their Dog Friendly awards, two years in a row! This wildly beautiful region provides dogs with so much space to run around in, and if they like swimming, there are countless rivers and lakes to cool off in too.



There are 16 main lakes that make up the Lake District, and these are all great spots to spend the day with your pooch. Windermere is the most widely-known lake as well as the largest, and you can spend hours here walking or swimming - or perhaps even take a cruise around the lake with Windermere Lake Cruises, where dogs are welcome (and free) to bring on board. Derwentwater, Bassenthwaite Lake, and Buttermere are all great spots for dogs,

Many of the most popular towns in the Lake District like Coniston, Keswick and Ambleside welcome dogs into shops, tea rooms, and cafes - and if you plan on spending a good portion of your break inside the pub now that restrictions have loosened, you can do that with your pup too. Just check out these dog-friendly pubs in Keswick, Ambleside and Coniston where you and your pet can enjoy some relaxation and refreshments. The Lake District is also home to some truly excellent restaurants, so head over to the Lake District website to browse the best dog-friendly places to eat.

If you're into history, the Lake District is home to 20 English Heritage Sites where dogs are welcome, so you can spend the day exploring ruins, castles, and brilliantly preserved buildings with your pet by your side. Some of the best dog-friendly attractions include Ambleside's Roman Fort, the ruins of the 14th century Penrith Castle, and the medieval Furness Abbey and Brougham Castle.

Dog-friendly accommodation

If you're not sure where in the UK you want to visit yet - or you don't fancy any of the above destinations - then why not have a browse through some of the best dog-friendly cottages throughout the UK? Some of the UK's biggest holiday rental sites, like Sykes Holiday Cottages,* have nearly 9,000 holiday cottages that welcome four-legged friends*, so we're sure you'll find an appropriate property in a destination that suits you.

Otherwise, there are several other UK-wide accommodation sites that are specifically designed for dog-owners. Head over to Dog-Friendly Retreats to browse holiday cottages in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland to find a cottage where your pup will be just as happy as you. Or alternatively, why not check out Dog Friendly Cottages, where you can browse dog-friendly accommodation in some of the country's most popular tourist destinations - from the Cairngorms to the Norfolk Broads?

Or, if you fancy camping, you can head over to Cool Camping and have a look at some of their most popular dog-friendly campsites. Whether you want to stay in a tent or a yurt, a caravan or a pod, you'll hopefully find the perfect campsite for you and your pet - and with sites ranging from the Scottish Isles to the South Downs, finding the right location shouldn't be too difficult.

Final thoughts...

Many of us are looking forward to a holiday right now - and with more and more cottages and hotels accepting dogs these days (not to mention pubs, restaurants and shops), travelling with your pet has never been so easy. Dogs are part of the family after all, so for your next staycation why not make sure your dog can come along too?

Whether you want to head to a specifically dog-friendly booking site for a browse or figure out which area you want to go to first and then look for dog-friendly accommodation, it shouldn't be too tricky to find somewhere that both you and your pet will love.

(Article source: Rest Less)

Woman, 82, to launch into space five decades after Nasa training

Wally Funk will join Blue Origin chief Jeff Bezos, his brother and the winner of a charity auction, as the first people to ride a New Shepard rocket.



Silver Surfers reports that Blue Origin chief Jeff Bezos has chosen an 82-year-old pilot who was denied astronaut wings because of her gender to rocket into space with him in just three weeks.

The company announced on Thursday that Wally Funk will be on board the July 20 launch from west Texas, flying in the capsule for the 10-minute hop as an "honoured guest".

She will join Amazon boss Mr Bezos, his brother and the winner of a charity auction, as the first people to ride a New Shepard rocket.

Ms Funk is among the so-called Mercury 13 women who went through astronaut training in the 1960s, but never made it to space - or even Nasa's astronaut corps - because they were female. Back then, all of the Nasa astronauts were military test pilots and male.

In an Instagram video posted by Mr Bezos, Ms Funk said she feels "fabulous" about being asked to launch.

"Nothing has ever gotten in my way," she noted. "They said, 'Well, you're a girl, you can't do that.' I said, 'Guess what, doesn't matter what you are. You can still do it if you want to do it and I like to do things that nobody has ever done'."

Ms Funk will become the oldest person to launch into space, beating the late John Glenn, who set a record at the age of 77 when flying on board space shuttle Discovery in 1998.

"No one has waited longer," Mr Bezos said via Instagram. "It's time. Welcome to the crew, Wally. We're excited to have you fly with us on July 20 as our honoured guest."

Ms Funk was the first female inspector for the Federal Aviation Administration and the first female air safety investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board. She said she has 19,600 flying hours and has taught more than 3,000 people to fly.

(Story source: Silver Surfers)

How to plan a holiday that benefits everyone involved - including the planet

Once the world opens up again, it will be vital to travel more responsibly and sustainably.

Inews reports that sustainable travel is not one genre of travel, nor is it a set of criteria; it is a mindset that can be applied to every trip. Having a positive impact could mean being more discerning about where we go, favouring destinations with strong environmental credentials, and places that put locals first.

By choosing a specific tour, hotel or operator, we can show solidarity with a marginalised part of society, or champion places suffering from a natural or human-made disaster. In cities, our choice of hotel might help to fund green innovations, or we could help to break down prejudices on a migrant tour. We can even use our travels to help save a species from extinction.

Community tourism

Sharing a meal with strangers, or catching a glimpse of an indigenous ritual - it is meaningful interactions with people that often make travel experiences life-changing.

There are plenty of experiences that connect travellers and communities. This could be through visiting a locally owned lodge or a homestay. But is this enough? According to the UN World Tourism Organisation, only five dollars of every \$100 (£72) spent in developing countries stay in its economy.

The most exemplary responsible travel experiences do more than foster connections; they make communities stronger and help people to become financially and socially independent.

Learning from one another and exchanging skills is a great way to foster genuine connections. Skill-sharing also has a much more profound positive impact than token volunteering experiences.

Before embarking on any form of volunteering, contemplate what your most valuable skill is, and explore where and how to share it with those that need it most. Look for specialist organisations that set up placements for specific professions, or turn to charities that advertise skill shortages. For example, in Nepal, there's a shortage of psychologists to deal with child-trauma and human-trafficking victims



Voluntourism

Building a school and digging a well are just some of the activities that would have once been celebrated as responsible travel success stories. Today, however, "voluntourism" has a murkier reputation. Travellers could be taking away a much-needed local source of income

Worse still, they could be complicit in corruption. The most extreme example of this is orphanage tourism. It is estimated that of the eight million or so children living in institutions worldwide, more than 80 per cent have at least one living parent. Many are coerced into orphanages to make money from tourists.

Supporting enterprise

Responsible tourism can best uplift communities by creating economic opportunities. Rather than simply generating custom, travel companies need to support and facilitate enterprise - funding entrepreneurs, reaching out to communities with ideas, and guaranteeing a sustainable level of custom. Find out from the tourist board which locally owned enterprises you should support.



Wherever you are in the world, there will be marginalised groups of people struggling to make their voice and needs heard. Tourism is well placed to help. In many destinations, travellers bring open minds eager to listen to and understand different perspectives. Some of the most successful examples are those that address gender inequalities and uplift women, which has a positive knockon effect because women are more likely to invest in education and community infrastructure.

Giving back

"Impact travel" is a new breed of trip that gives back. Look for organisations or companies creating travel experiences that address a tangible need, whether building community infrastructure or delivering medical supplies. These experiences should be tailored; avoid generic approaches.

Some platforms connect travellers with meaningful ways to give back, including Visit.org, Backstreet Academy and Airbnb Social Impact Experiences. US-based Impact Travel Alliance shares regular inspiration for how to travel to support poverty alleviation and equality.

Throughout remote regions such as Bhutan's Ura Valley and India's Pindar Valley, hiking company Village Ways works with each village to help develop a tourism enterprise that the village then owns.

Other successful examples include Kasbah du Toubkal in Morocco, which is now managed by the local Berber community, and Fordhall Farm Yurts in Shropshire, which is owned by 8,000 local shareholders. In British Colombia, Spirit Bear Lodge is owned by the First Nation Kitasoo Xai'xais people.

Community ownership

Tourism has a "leakage" problem. Money spent in a destination often leaves the country to go into the hands of international businesses. Be part of the solution by injecting your money in locally owned business. In an ideal scenario, travellers would support lodges and tour operators that are either owned by local individuals or a whole community. In some destinations, there's not the local infrastructure to support all forms of tourism.

Community tourism - the dos and don'ts

When community tourism isn't managed responsibly, it can do more harm than good. Here are some things to consider before booking an experience:

- Community tourism mustn't be voyeuristic. If a community or indigenous people aren't benefitting from their stories and culture being shared, it's exploitation.
- · Guides should always be local.
- If a situation wouldn't be comfortable at home, it isn't comfortable abroad either
- Always ask permission to take photos and do so respectfully.
- If in doubt, ask: how would I feel in this situation if the tables were turned?
- Always follow local advice on interactions and cultural sensitivity.
- Never disrupt school lessons.

Safequarding culture

Over 40 per cent of travellers identify themselves as "cultural tourists". This form of travel can be positive for tourists, locals and heritage. Immersing yourself in a new culture forges connections, expands worldviews and increases understanding.

Tourism can also fund the protection of heritage. Safeguarding culture can be vital for the health of our planet, too. Respecting and uplifting more traditional, rural ways of life can challenge urban migration and the destruction of landscapes. But tourism is a double-edged sword. Last year, approximately 10 million tourists visited the most popular section of the Great Wall of China and nearly 20 million visitors explored Venice.

Rather than following the crowds, we can use our travels to help lesser-known heritage sites or a marginalised culture. To do so, we need to seek historical sites that would be destroyed if not for tourism, and support social enterprises that help traditions to thrive. World Heritage Journeys, a partnership between Unesco and National Geographic, is a platform promoting lesser-known cultural tourism projects that have a positive impact across Europe and Asia.

Despite making up just 5 per cent of the world's population, indigenous people protect 80 per cent of the world's biodiversity. Supporting indigenous lives is a vital part of protecting our planet, and tourism can do its bit. Either the travel industry provides financial or in-kind support to ensure the protection of land rights, or it connects tourists with indigenous people that want to share their story

(Story source: Inews)



Let's cook! 9 of the UK's best cooking classes

Whether you consider yourself a dab hand in the kitchen or you rarely make anything more complex than beans on toast, everyone can benefit from attending a cooking class.

Cooking is just as relaxing as it is rewarding - and now that we're able to see friends and family again, being able to knock up delicious dishes to share with your loved ones (or just enjoy yourself!) is even more pleasurable. Plus, cooking from scratch can be a great way to save money, as well as become more aware of what you're putting into your body.

So whether you're interested in learning more about a specific cuisine or just want to become more confident in the kitchen, here are 9 of the UK's best cooking classes to get you inspired.

The Raymond Blanc Cookery School, Oxfordshire

If you're a fan of French food and you love visiting the Cotswolds - then why not combine the two with a cookery class at The Raymond Blanc Cookery School in Oxfordshire?

As you approach the idyllic, honey-stoned Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons hotel and walk through its gorgeous gardens, it's tempting to think you're just here for fun and relaxation - but don't be fooled. This is a cookery class for people who are serious about improving their culinary skills.

One of the great things about The Raymond Blanc Cookery School is the variety of classes they offer. You can book yourself onto classes that celebrate the magic of vegetables, pulses, and herbs, classes that focus on knocking up perfect souffles or macaroons, or classes that'll teach you how to take your summer dinner parties to the next level.

There are even classes dedicated to Raymond Blanc's mother's recipes, where you'll be shown how to make her famous apple tarte tatin.



Food & Drink Feature

All courses can be tailored to all levels and abilities, and from snappy half-day courses to thorough dinner party masterclasses, there's something for everyone. You'll receive a certificate at the end of the course and enjoy light refreshments throughout - and if you're booked onto a full day course, you'll enjoy an informal lunch in the cookery school too.

Praveen Kumar's Indian Cook School, Perth

If you love Indian food and dream of making your own restaurant-quality curries from home, then Praveen Kumar's Indian cooking classes might be for you. The classes are a chance to learn from multi-award-winning restaurateurs and chefs Praveen and Swarna, and their one-day class combines lots of hands-on cooking training as you learn about the authentic dishes and spices of South India.

While you'll be cooking at your own individual cooking station, this is cooking class with a social emphasis, and at the end of the class you'll sit down with the other participants and enjoy your culinary creations with a glass of beer or wine - though there's always plenty of food to take home to share with your loved ones, too! Whether you've never cooked Indian food before or have a few recipes under your belt, classes can be tailored to all abilities and dietary requirements.



Depending on your taste preferences and diet, you can expect to make a whole range of dishes during your class. Starters include papadoms, spicy onions, mint chutney, raitha and vegetable pakoras, and mouthwatering mains include tandoori salmon or chicken bhuna (or veggie alternatives) with tarka dal, chapatis and rice.

The Avenue Cookery School, London (top left)

There are few people who don't like tucking into a comforting bowl of pasta, and if you're a pasta enthusiast who's based near London, you might want to check out The Avenue Cookery School. The Pasta Workshop is one of the school's most popular classes, and for good reason: the class focuses on how to make the perfect ravioli, and by the end of the class you'll be able to mix, knead, roll, shape, and fill your own pasta parcels like a pro. Plus, the class is bring your own booze (BYOB), so if you enjoy your pasta with a couple of glasses of wine, you can do just that!

If you love all Italian food, not just pasta, then you're also in luck, as The Avenue Cookery School also hosts an excellent Italian Cooking Class, where you can choose which delicious dishes you want to make: from tagliatelle and tiramisu, to beef carpaccio and risotto. If Greek food is more your thing, then why not book yourself onto the Greek Cooking Class, where you'll learn how to make traditional Greek dishes like orange, parsley, and olive salad, and pomegranate chicken with skordalia and griddled aubergine.

More interested in picking up technical cooking skills rather than focusing on a specific cuisine? You can take technical cooking classes at The Avenue too. At the Knife Skills Class you'll be taught how to use a knife to slice, peel, chop, julienne, chiffonade, concasse and segment - skills that you'll then use to prepare a three-course meal. Or, if you're interested in learning foolproof ways of cooking that pretty much guarantee perfect results each time, then why not try the Sous Vide Class, where you'll learn to cook a range of meat, vegetables and desserts using this cooking method?

Rick Stein's Cookery School, Padstow

If you love seafood and want to get better at cooking fish and shellfish, then you might want to think about booking yourself onto Rick Stein's fish and shellfish one-day course. This course takes place in lovely Padstow in North Cornwall, where since 1975, Rick Stein's The Seafood Restaurant has carved out a reputation for serving up some of the best fish and shellfish in the UK. During this course, you'll learn how to cook many of the dishes that have become synonymous with the restaurant.



You'll learn techniques like preparing squid, deveining, peeling, and cooking prawns, filleting a round fish, and shucking oysters. You'll also watch expert chefs demonstrate different recipes and then have a go at making them yourself. Recipes include dishes like fillet of bass with vanilla butter vinaigrette, Indonesian seafood curry, and chargrilled whole Dover sole with sea salt and lime. After you've prepared your meal, you'll be able to enjoy the fruits of your labour, before relaxing with a glass of wine and watching as the chef demonstrates the final recipe. The course includes lunch, which you'll eat overlooking the Camel Estuary with a glass of wine - or two! This is a cookery course that'll teach you plenty of techniques, but is also geared around providing a good time. Plus, you can always book a guest room at Rick Stein's Seafood Restaurant and make a holiday out of it.

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Demuths Vegan Cooking Classes, Bath

There are now around 1.5 million people in the UK who identify as vegan, so it's no surprise that so many plant-based cookery classes have appeared on the scene in the past few years. If you'd like to get better at knocking up delicious, healthy and creative plant-based dishes, then why not join a Demuths cookery class in Bath? The great thing about Demuths classes is that they're incredibly diverse, and whatever type of cuisine you're into, you should be able to find a course to whet your appetite.

If you love Italian food, you might want to attend the Summer in Italy cookery class, where you'll learn how to make mouthwatering plant-based dishes that transport you to sunny Italy: recipes include polpettine di melanzane, almond and peach tart, rosemary focaccia and even an indulgent tiramisu. Or, if the idea of Indian street food is more your thing, then you could try the Indian Street Food course, where you'll make dishes like squash samosas, carrot and leek pakoras and aloo chaat.

If you don't especially want to focus on a specific cuisine and would rather just get better at knocking up simple yet delicious plant-based meals, you can do that at Demuths too. Their Vegan Fast and Delicious course shows you how to make tasty seasonal recipes that you can make quickly and easily at home. Alternatively, the 30 Minute Suppers course will teach you how to cook vibrant vegan meals every night of the week, even when you're pushed for time.

Totally Wild UK Foraging Course, Nationwide

If you love the idea of foraging for your food but don't know your spinach from your samphire, you might want to think about attending one of Totally Wild UK's foraging courses. With 18 different locations including Southern and Mid-Scotland, the Lake District, Devon, Cornwall, London, and Sussex, you'll hopefully find a location that's accessible to you - and if getting there is still a bit of a trek, then why not combine your foraging course with a staycation?



Whichever cooking class you choose, you'll be taught all the basics of foraging - from identifying edible plants to learning how to avoid trampling other wild foods that may be growing. You'll also be given plenty of expert advice on harvesting, and get to taste an enormous range of foraged food types, including pickles, jams, chutneys, syrups and alcohol infusions. Once you've learned the basics, it's time to put your knowledge to the test and head out to do some foraging!



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Once you've collected enough fresh foods, the next part of the class is learning how to prepare your foraged ingredients in the best possible way. With the Totally Wild UK team, you'll cook up a fresh and delicious two-course lunch. Depending on the season, you can expect mouthwatering dishes like wild risotto, wild noodle salad, orange and hogweed seeds cakes (over an open fire!), dandelion root coffee pancakes with birch syrup, and elderflower cheesecake.

Bodnant Welsh Food Centre, Conwys

Deep in the Welsh Conwy Valley, hidden among the green hills, you'll find the Bodnant Welsh Food Centre - and this is a place that once you arrive, you probably won't want to leave. Not only does Bodnant have lovely accommodation, a restaurant, farm shop, tea room and even a beekeeping centre, it also has some of the best and most versatile cooking courses in the UK.

Cookery classes change regularly here and are updated on the website every couple of months, so you never know what you might find. Upcoming classes include Winner, Winner Chicken Dinner, where you'll learn how to make five dishes from one chicken, Meat-free Meals, where you'll learn how to make delicious hearty meals without any meat or fish, and Classic French Cuisine, where you'll learn how to recreate your French favourites.

The Bodnant cookery school is packed with state-of-the-art cooking equipment, and you'll be taught by local chefs as well as some of the artisan cooks who work at the centre. Plus, the school overlooks the Conwy estuary, so you'll be able to enjoy beautiful rural views while you prepare your dishes. In November and December there are classes on festive cooking and Christmas cake making, as well as how to make lovely edible gifts, too.

Forestside Cooking School, Belfast (top left)

If you're based in Northern Ireland, you might want to think about checking out Forestside Cooking School, which is located on the outskirts of Belfast city centre. This cookery centre has an incredibly varied range of classes, so whatever your skill level or taste preferences, you'll hopefully be able to find a cooking class that appeals to you.

If you're interested in improving your baking skills, you may want to attend the Traditional Irish Bread course, where you'll learn to make authentically Irish loaves like wheaten bread, farls and fruit loaves. If you're interested in baking but have more of a sweet tooth, then why not try Forestside's Amazing Donuts class, where you'll learn how to bake mouthwatering cakes, tarts, buns and scones?

If you'd prefer to focus on foreign cuisine, there's just as much choice. Courses coming up include the Tapas Masterclass, where you'll learn about the different regions of Spain and be taught how to prepare dishes like calamares fritos with roasted garlic aioli, and pan con tomato with fried quails egg and sardines.

Or why not try the Asian Street Foods course, where you'll learn to make tasty treats from China, Thailand, Japan, Cambodia, and Vietnam, including salt and chilli squid, Thai lime & coriander dressing, and a Korean rice bowl?

Jamie Oliver Online Cooking Class, Nationwide

And finally, if you're not sure you'd like to attend an in-person cooking class - or you can't find a class you like in a location near you, what about attending an online cooking class? During lockdown online cooking classes became all the rage, and just because restrictions have been lifted now, that doesn't mean we still can't take advantage of how accessible these classes are.

Why not have a look at some of Jamie Oliver's online cooking classes? When it comes to cooking, Jamie is known for his versatility and approachability outlook, and his online cookery classes are no different. You can choose online cooking classes where you learn to make a specific meal, or classes where you delve into a specific cuisine, and there's hopefully a class that'll get everyone excited, whatever type of food you're into.



Fans of Italian food might be interested in joining Jamie's Pasta Master class, where you'll learn to make fresh pasta in a variety of shapes - from pappardelle sheets to farfalle - or the Italian Favourites class, where you'll learn how to make the ultimate Italian soul food. If you love Mexican food, why not try Jamie's Mexican Street Food class, where you'll be shown how to make delicious handmade tortillas? Alternatively, you might prefer the Taste of Sushi class, which gives you a crash course in the basics of sushi making.

Final thoughts...

Improving your cooking technique and learning to prepare delicious new dishes is a hugely rewarding and enjoyable way to spend your leisure time. Cooking has many powerful benefits: it's therapeutic, relaxing, and an expression of love - and now that we can see loved ones again, there's never been a better time to host a dinner party and impress your friends with your newly acquired cooking skills. While we might not be able to jet off to an international destination just yet, by using a bit of culinary creativity, we can still transport ourselves to an exotic location and enjoy the fragrant flavours of our favourite foreign cuisines.

(Article source: Rest Less)

Al fresco dining to become the norm on nation's high streets in Boris Johnson's bid to level up the UK

Pavement cafe culture is to become a permanent fixture in a raft of measures announced by the Prime Minister.



Inews reports that pavement café culture is to be at the heart of a bid to level up the country and breathe new life into the nation's high streets, the Prime Minister will reveal.

Boris Johnson is to launch a high streets strategy infusing them with a European flavour under the umbrella of levelling up.

Alfresco dining will become the norm in towns and cities across the country and pubs will be able to continue to serve takeaway alcohol for at least another the year, under new plans.

But Labour has warned "a few chairs outside cafes isn't going to fix the glaring inequality".

The Government will also be tapping into the country's football fever, in the wake of the Euro 2020 tournament, with a £25 million commitment to build new grass roots sports facilities such as artificial pitches.

"The Prime Minister is determined to level up the UK and deliver a fairer, stronger society - one where whatever your background and wherever you live, everyone can access the opportunities they need to succeed", said a government spokesperson, "While talent and potential is distributed evenly across this country, opportunity is not.

"That's why, as we emerge from the pandemic, it's vital that we do not make the mistakes of recovery from the financial crash and seize this moment to ensure a better quality of life for people in every part of the UK."

A fast-track application system for pavement licences permitting restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars to serve people at tables outside their premises was introduced last July to help the hospitality industry recover from the economic disruption of the pandemic.

The streamlined process was brought in so businesses would benefit from the licences in time for summer trading last year and were to remain in place for up to a year, not extending beyond 30 September 2021

Now it looks set to become a permanent fixture, while the temporary permission for pubs to serve takeaway alcohol also to be extended for a further 12 months.

The Prime Minister will vow to tackle inequalities and divisions created by the pandemic in a speech next week, kicking off a summer of consultations ahead of the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper in the autumn.

A $\pounds 4.8$ billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure to improve everyday local life and boost growth and jobs.

Levelling Up, touted in the 2019 general election, is the government's drive to even out regional inequalities in the UK which 10 Downing Street has described as the "central purpose of (Mr Johnson's) premiership".

But Angela Rayner MP, Labour's deputy leader, warned "no one can believe a word this incompetent Prime Minister says. His rhetoric never matches reality."

She added: "The Conservatives have choked the life out of our high streets, slashed funding for our young people, and acres of playing fields and football pitches have been dug up and concreted over.

"We all want life to get back to normal, but a few chairs outside cafes isn't going to fix the glaring inequality that scars our communities because of the Tories' wrong priorities."

(Story source: Inews)

Euro 2020 and warm UK weather drives 40% summer spending increase in pubs and bars

Total consumer spending grew 11.1 per cent in June compared with the same period in 2019, as restrictions eased and Britons socialised more in public settings.

Inews reports that spending in pubs and bars rose by almost 40 per cent in June as people flocked to watch the Euros and enjoy a spell of sunshine.

Barclaycard compared last month's figures to levels for the same period in 2019. It was the first sales growth across hospitality since September 2020.





It is believed sporting that events such as the Euros and Wimbledon, together with warmer weather, helped spark the boost across the hospitality sector. Restaurants also enjoyed an 8.4 per cent rise in sales.

Overall, consumer spending grew 11.1 per cent in June compared with the same period in 2019, as Covid-19 restrictions eased and Britons started socialising more in public settings.

It is thought the early summer "staycation" boom also contributed to the promising numbers, which look set to carry on thanks to the upcoming Tokyo Olympics, and "freedom day" on 19 July.

"The Euro 2020 tournament was a welcome boost for hospitality in reminding people of the joy and thrill of watching important sporting moments as a shared experience, with fantastic food, drink and atmosphere in safe, supervised venues designed for such occasions," said Kate Nicholls, the chief executive of UKHospitality, which represents the industry. However, bosses are still warning that pubs and restaurants have a long road to recovery.

Ms Nicholls added: "The sector is experiencing severe staff shortages, compounded massively by the absence of team members who have been told to isolate despite not having shared shifts with colleagues who tested positive. What the Government has so far proposed is too little and too late.

"With cases predicted to continue to rise, this means that hospitality's recovery after 16 months of lockdown and severely disrupted trading will be harmed."

Lawson Mountstevens, the managing director of Star Pubs & Bars, told i: "Clearly the England game wasn't the result we'd liked to have seen, but it was a good evening for pubs to welcome back many of their customers, with trade up threefold as people headed to their local to watch the match.

"This was a huge and much-needed boost for a sector that continues to face huge challenges.

"As we focus our attention on 19 July, we hope the Prime Minister will address the impact the Track and Trace app is having on hospitality, and call on him to provide longer-term support for the pub sector, such as an extension of business rate relief, a reduction in beer and cider duty as well as an extension to the VAT reduction."

(Story source: Inews)

Healthy eating advice and food tips for the over-fifties

Seven Seas nutrition consultant Helen Bond on what to eat for great health after middle age.

Limit saturated fat

Saturated fat - found in fatty meat, full-fat dairy products, cakes and pies - is bad news for your weight, cholesterol and heart health. Opt for the heart-healthy unsaturated fats in foods such as oily fish, rapeseed oil and avocado. Adults should aim to keep below 20g of saturated fat per day. Try not to add blood- pressure-raising salt to your food: add flavour with garlic, pepper, lemon juice and chilli.

Eat oily fish

We should eat at least two 140g portions of fish a week, of which one should be oily, such as mackerel, sardines, fresh tuna and salmon. If you don't, it may be worthwhile to supplement your diet with something full of goodness such as cod liver oil - rich in omega-3s, plus vitamins D and E that can help replenish your natural resources.

Go for wholegrain carbs

White bread, pasta and rice have been stripped of their bran coating and germ in the milling process, leaving just the endosperm. Starchy carbohydrates with a low GI (like wholegrains) release their energy slowly, so they're better for refuelling the brain and body. The fibre in them also keeps your digestive system running smoothly. We're advised to eat at least 30g of fibre every day (on average, we eat 18g).

Remember calcium

Adults over the age of 19 should eat 700 milligrams of calcium a day, equivalent to a 200ml glass of milk, one small pot of low-fat fruit yoghurt, and a matchbox-sized piece of cheese. Post menopause, women are susceptible to osteoporosis (thinning of the bones) so it is vital that they eat plenty of calcium-rich foods, to minimise bone loss.

at fruit and veg

Only one in three adults and 41 per cent of older adults meets the five-a-day fruit and vegetable recommendation1. Take advantage of seasonal produce as fruit and veg are another great source of fibre. They also contain main vitamins and minerals.

Be moderate

We generally need to eat less, move more and enjoy a variety of different foods - fruit and vegetables, starchy wholegrain carbs, dairy and alternatives, and beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins, as shown in the new Eatwell Guide. There's no need to be a puritan. Some sugary foods are fine in moderation - a flavoured yoghurt will bring with it calcium, protein and iodine, and a wholegrain breakfast with added sugar may offer fibre, folic acid and other B vitamins.

(Story source: The Telegraph)





Vine and dandy: Alan Titchmarsh on growing grapes in your garden

You don't need a garden bathed in Mediterranean sunshine for grape growing. Find a warm, sheltered spot and it'll be a vintage year.

The Romans cultivated vineyards in Britain 2,000 years ago and today's warm summers are again making vine-growing a very practical proposition.

Growers have been quick to take advantage of the changing climate to produce local plonk but at home the reason most people want to grow grapes is simply to eat them.

It is not difficult to do and vines give the garden a delightfully Mediterranean atmosphere with their architectural foliage and bunches of fruit.

But you do need the right spot - your warmest, sunniest and most sheltered corner, ideally against a south-facing wall where the soil is well drained. It is also worth growing grapes on a free-standing trellis, pergola or gazebo if you have a very sheltered, sunny spot.



To enjoy ripe, sweet fruit you also need the right type of grape. Most of those sold in garden centres are wine-making varieties and are too sour to eat, or they are ornamental types that are grown for their foliage rather than their fruit. So to be sure of getting a really good dessert variety go to a specialist nursery.



Home & Garden Feature

Each variety of grape has its own likes and dislikes. Some do reasonably well in a warm, sheltered spot out in the open and a few are fine for pots on a patio, but most need the protection of walls, since brick or stonework act like a giant radiator that is almost, but not quite, as good as growing in a greenhouse.

The best time to plant a vine is while it is dormant between November and early March. If it hasn't already been pruned by the nursery cut it down to three leaf-joints above ground level when you plant it. This might seem wasteful, but believe me it helps the new vine establish itself well and it will soon make lots of new growth when it gets going the following year.

You can plant vines while they are still in leaf in summer as long as they have been grown in pots. If you do plant in summer, though, wait until the following November or December before cutting them down hard. They bleed if you cut them in growing mode

Before planting a vine you need to prepare the soil exceptionally well. Dig out a big trench at least 3ft (1½metres) wide and 2ft (61cm) deep and bury as much organic matter as you can in the bottom.

A couple of barrowloads is not too much as grapes need plenty of moisture-retaining material underneath them, especially if you are growing them against a wall.

Put up netting or trellis for tying the long floppy stems on to - it will make life so much easier later - then mix more organic matter in with good topsoil and plant your vine at least 12in (30½cm) from the wall or fence. If you are putting in several plants, space them 3ft apart.

The next spring, when the vine starts to grow, you can take the easy route and let it ramble naturally over the wall, but space out the stems and tie them in for support. From then on just shorten the main stems and remove weak, overcrowded or unwanted side shoots every December to keep the plant tidy. It will look good as a decorative climber and produce some useful fruit.

But if big, serious bunches of grapes are your objective, it pays to train a vine properly. It may seem complicated when it is described but it is much easier to do than it sounds.

In spring, select the two strongest shoots and nip out all the others while they are still small. Allow the chosen shoots to grow upwards. In December, prune them back to within three leafjoints of the base - the aim is merely to strengthen the plant for now.

In year two, leave three strong shoots to grow and nip out the rest. Prune off two more at 2ft high in December and cut the third off at three leaf-joints above the ground.

In the spring of year three train the two long shoots out horizontally, one each side of the plant about 18in (45¾cm) above ground level. These should each carry one or two bunches of grapes that summer. Let a couple of shoots grow up from the base of the plant and prune these off at 2ft high in December.

Cut off the fruited stems a bud or two from the main plant stem, then in spring tie the two 2ft shoots in their place. Do that every year afterwards. You will have fewer but bigger and easier to reach grapes. To ensure the fruit is a good size, remove one in three grapes from all over the bunch once they have reached the diameter of a pea.

Growing grapes is a real feather in your cap. Put some in a blender with other fruit to make smoothies or feed them through a juicer for fresh grape juice. You can keep it in the freezer, so nothing goes to waste.



Pick of the bunch

Interlaken - These sweet, golden-yellow seedless grapes will grow well on a south-facing wall or on a fence around a suntrap

Black Corinth - With small, sweet, red seedless grapes, these do well in pots and the fruit can also be dried to make currants.

Brant - This reliable old faithful is ornamental and edible with great autumn-tinted foliage and small bunches of sweet, black, but pippy grapes.

Gloire de Boskoop - A dual-purpose vine with crops of sweet black grapes and colourful foliage.

Léon Millot - This black grape is good for eating or for grape juice. It has slight autumn tints.

Strawberry - A large, vigorous, prolific vine with pink grapes that have a faint strawberry flavour.

Vitis vinifera Purpurea - This is the classic purple-leaved vine that is usually grown as an ornamental climber. But in a sunny spot it also bears crops of sweet, purple grapes.

(Article source: The Express)



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

