OURPLACENews

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

SEPTEMBER 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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Our Charity of the Month

mitted to do so by other lawful re your data is safe and secure at all times ure your free subscription to our newsletters and entry ed and for the purpose of direct marketing based on a process your service without this. We Collect your phone so that we can email you with any queries that may arise will be unable to advise you of any changes with your y. We need to share your personal data with third parties opliers and business partners. We may also share your with retailers and charities whose products and services you may We will store your personal data for as long as it is required for ur service, our statutory requirements or for direct marketing purposes. ils please visit www.ourplace.co. Please inform us of any changes to the I data we are holding on your behalf. At any time, you have the right to withdraw nsent for marketing, you can also request that we no longer use your personal data as detailed above for legitimate interests including direct marketing. Please email your request to support@ourplace.co, or phone 01989 564468 or write to us at the







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!



Healthy honey: 6 surprising health benefits of honey

Thick, gooey and golden in colour, raw honey has been used as a natural remedy for thousands of years. The sweet liquid, which is produced by bees using the nectar of plants, has been touted as a potent healing agent in cultures around the world.

In ancient India, it was even believed honey could ward off evil spirits and ensure a happy romantic life.

Since it tastes delicious, is a good alternative to sugar and can pretty much be added to everything, there's really no excuse for it to be missing from your shopping list.

But if you really need further convincing, here are just a few medical benefits of honey that may just surprise you...

It's great for the skin

If you're suffering from a nasty flare-up, honey is a brilliantly effective skin saviour that won't cost the earth.





Health & Lifestyle Feature

Its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties can calm and soothe irritated skin, as well as being loaded with enzymes and other nutrients that nourish and cleanse the surface - some beauty bloggers even claim it's cleared up their acne.

If it's a natural summer glow you're looking for, get slathering honey is a natural humectant, meaning it hydrates the skin by drawing in moisture from the air. Try mixing two tablespoons of raw or Manuka honey with one tablespoon of uncooked porridge oats for a DIY exfoliating mask.

It's good for the heart

As well as being a super tasty topping to your morning bowl of porridge, honey is jam-packed with polyphenols; helpful antioxidants that have been linked to increased blood flow and preventing blood clots from forming.

One study in rats even showed honey can protect the heart from oxidative stress, which can contribute to heart attacks and stroke, although more research needs to be done on the link between long-term human heart health and honey.



It gives you an energy boost

Looking for a pre-workout snack that will fuel you through a sweaty HIIT session? Try adding a dollop of honey to your protein balls. As a carbohydrate made up of fructose and glucose, the sticky stuff makes for a high-powered, natural energy snack.

Unlike refined sugar, it also contains small amounts of proteins and minerals such as B6, riboflavin and amino acids; compounds that help the body metabolise bad cholesterol and fatty acids. While whizzing a spoonful into your smoothie won't do any long-term harm, it's important to remember to eat honey in moderation.

"It's a source of energy, but it's still sugar, so it should be eaten more as an indulgent treat rather than a substitute for more nutritionally-rich foods such as fruit and veg," says nutritionist Liz Tucker

It can heal wounds and burns

When applied topically, researchers believe honey can have a healing effect on painful burns and lesions. Applying honey to wounds has been a technique that's been around since ancient Egypt, and modern studies have found it can be effective.

One study published in the Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice journal found a 43.4% success rate of using honey on diabetic foot ulcers, while another published in The Scientific World Journal found honey could also be an effective home remedy for reducing painful haemorrhoids.

It can treat dandruff

Suffering from a dry, itchy or flaky scalp? A 2001 study conducted by the Dubai Specialised Medical Center discovered that raw honey can be used to treat scaling, itching and hair loss.

This is thought to be thanks to its anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and antioxidant properties. Fancy giving it a go? Mix two tablespoons of vegetable oil with equal amounts of honey and apply it to your hair for a DIY hair mask. Leave it to sink in for 15 minutes, and then rinse it off before you shampoo.

It can help suppress a cough

When flu season strikes, we all know there's nothing worse than being kept awake at night by a dry, tickly cough that simply won't go away. Next time you're a victim of this infuriating health woe, try easing the aggravation with a spoonful of soothing honey.

A 2012 study published in the journal Pediatrics found children with upper respiratory tract infections experienced more cough relief after drinking 1.5 tablespoons of labiatae (it's an aromatic) honey 30 minutes before bedtime, than those that received a placebo. If nothing else, it'll be a delicious pre-slumber treat that'll satiate your sweet tooth.



(Article source: Silver Surfers)



Money & Work News

"They're supposed to be looking after all the people that have built up society... from all the years that we spent working. "It is the first

time in my life that I think we've got a bit of a silly government...

'What have we put these people in government for? They're supposed to be looking after all the people that have built up society'.

State pension: Older

withhold support from

Tories if triple lock ends

people threaten to



Inews reports that many pensioners will refuse to support the Conservative Party at the next general election if ministers scrap the state pension triple lock in response to the pandemic, campaigners have warned.

The party will be "null and void" for older people who believe the leadership is deserting them, one life-long Conservative voter told

"We silver surfers put Boris [Johnson] in power, but I am afraid we will all be placing our votes in a different camp next time," said 74year-old Peter Bradbourne, who lives in North Yorkshire.

And Silver Voices, which campaigns for the over-60s, warned that its members might "actively campaign against the Conservatives at the next election".

The triple lock ensures that the state pension is boosted every April by whichever is the highest of inflation, earnings growth or a 2.5 per cent floor. Despite promising to maintain the policy at the last general election, Chancellor Rishi Sunak is expected to amend it.

The increase for 2022 is set to be unusually high due to the effect of the pandemic on earnings - meaning the cost of the triple lock will balloon for the Government. Meanwhile, many working-age people will be worse off because of the end of the Universal Credit uplift.

Responding to the prospect of the triple lock policy being watered down, Mr Bradbourne said: "I wanted to tear my hair out because I thought, 'What have I put these people in government for?'

There doesn't seem to be any long-term thinking." Mr Bradbourne, a retired entrepreneur, understood the Government's concerns over the cost of the triple lock but added: "That's part of the package that they bought into. It's like spoiled schoolboys now, they don't want to do it."

Some pensioners could be forced to use food banks, he warned, adding that there was a misconception among younger generations that older people are wealthy.

"Our mantra was that if you couldn't afford it, you didn't get it. I think youngsters should be cognisant of the fact that we put a lot of hard work in." Dennis Reed, director of Silver Voices, said older people felt as though their votes were being taken for granted by the Conservatives. "A lot of our members who are Conservative voters have been saying if the triple lock is scrapped or suspended, that will be the final straw," said Mr Reed.

"It comes (amid) what we see as a series of attacks on pensioners," he added, referring to the end of universal free TV licences and the consultation on increasing free prescription eligibility from 60 to 66. His members, he said, may "actively campaign against the Conservatives at the next election".

The Waspi (Women Against State Pension Inequality) campaign called on the Government to "think very carefully about destabilising women's financial independence further" by amending the triple lock, adding that women born in the 1950s are likely to be entirely reliant on the state pension for retirement.

The group signalled that some women may decide to turn their back on the Government should the triple lock be amended.

"Although Waspi works cross-party, many women have indicated to us that the way they have been ignored when raising their issue of lack of notice about a six year increase to their state pension age has changed their outlook politically," said the group. Women who have waited so long for their expected state pension, and suffered the consequences of that, will be further affected financially by any effort to remove the "triple lock by the Government".

Daniela Silcock, head of policy research at the Pensions Policy Institute, said: "Removing the triple lock entirely would negatively impact those on low incomes... and younger people, who would receive a lower state pension income when they reached retirement."

Ms Silcock said that using "a temporarily altered earnings smoothing mechanism" for the triple lock would save around £15bn. "However, any decision regarding the triple lock would require thought about the trade-offs between the potential long term costs to the state and long-term benefits to individuals."

The Treasury said: "We will continue to support retired people while ensuring future decisions are fair for both pensioners and taxpayers. The Government will confirm next year's state pension rates in the autumn."

(Story source: Inews)



Money & Work News

Want to give relatives some of your retirement savings? 5 tips from financial planners to read first

A fifth of over-55s expect to spend some of their money supporting their family, but how should you go about it?

Silver Surfers reports that around one in five over-55s (22%) are planning to spend some of their retirement savings on supporting their family financially, according to research by retirement living provider, Audley Villages.

And among those in this age group who have reconsidered how they want to use their retirement savings, as a result of the pandemic, nearly a third (31%) want to spend more on their family.

It can be hard to know where to start when passing on wealth - while also making sure you also have enough to live on. Unsure how to go about it? Here are some tips from financial planners...

1. Use your pension wisely

People with a defined contribution (DC) pension have flexible options for their savings from the age of 55. Emma Watson, head of financial planning at Rathbone Investment Management, says: "From age 55, you can usually take up to a quarter of your pension savings as a tax-free lump sum and this can be useful for parents looking to help their children with a house deposit, big purchases. or to help them set up savings for their future.

"However, before accessing your pension, you'll want to think about the impact this might have on your future finances. There's little point giving a significant sum away, if it means you'll be left financially vulnerable and potentially a burden on your loved ones in the future. Working with a financial adviser will help you to understand how much you can afford to share now, without compromising on your own retirement plans."

Watson says considering how you might be able to boost your retirement savings is also worthwhile, as it will give you a bigger pot of wealth to start from.

"One way to do this is by increasing your national insurance contributions to make up for any gaps in your employment history, thereby maximising the state pension you will receive," says Watson. "Every little helps, and the more you have in your pot, the more you will be able to support your loved ones.'

2. Make use of gifting rules

Watson continues: "There are plenty of rules that enable you to gift money to your children or grandchildren. For smaller gifts, you can gift up to £3000 per year tax-free. There are also additional allowances for money given as wedding presents."

Gifting could help family members to kickstart a savings habit, perhaps by putting money into an Isa that could be relied upon in emergencies.

While gifting can be a tax-efficient way to support loved ones, by gifting money directly you won't have control over how the money is spent. Watson says: "If you'd prefer to have some say over the money and how it is used, you could consider putting the money into a trust for your loved ones instead."

3. Review your investments

People may need to adjust the amount of investment risk they are taking on in their 50s and 60s. Watson explains: "For many in their 50s, their pension may have been invested in a 'lifestyle fund'. This used to be a popular choice as the fund would automatically reduce its risk exposure as you grew older to try and ensure you retired with a decent sized pot with which to purchase a guaranteed level of income in retirement, often called a lifetime annuity.

"However, the introduction of pension freedoms has given greater flexibility to pension saving, meaning more flexible strategies are now available, which may be more appropriate."

4. Don't forget about yourself

Emma Hammond, financial planner at Charles Stanley, says: "If you are thinking about looking after your loved ones financially, the important thing to remember is to not forget about yourself in the process. Remember that once you've made a financial gift, it's permanent – you won't be able to change your mind.

"Gifting too much also means that you could lose a sense of financial security in later life; it's best to have a buffer in case you need to factor in for unforeseen future expenses, such as care costs.

"Speaking with a financial adviser can help you to assess how much you have for your own retirement, and therefore how much you can afford to give away to your nearest and dearest."

5. Pass on good money habits

Hammond describes learning the basics of money management as "one of the most valuable financial gifts of all".

"Gifting money creates an opportunity to teach good money habits at the same time," she says. "For younger generations, having a lump sum land in their bank accounts can feel as though they've won the lottery, but if they aren't prudent about handling money, it may not last as long as intended."

(Story source: Silver Surfers)



Greg Davies on his new comedy, The Cleaner: 'The notion that I'm an adult is just preposterous'

As he stars in a macabre new sitcom, the comedian talks about writer's rage, his years of depression and why he still feels like he's in his twenties.

Greg Davies is late but, of course, he has a tale to tell. "I've just been throwing my niece through a window," he says, slightly wild-eved and out of breath.

"Well, feeding her through it. Like a Victorian child." He is on holiday in Cornwall, went out for a walk first thing and locked himself out.

"Because," he sighs. "I am an incompetent human being."

That may be true, but he is a deliciously proficient storyteller. He just loves it, really, as anyone knows who has ever seen him

do stand-up, or maybe watched him on The Graham Norton Show regaling an appalled Ryan Gosling with how, in his past life as a teacher, he once wore his mother's knickers to school (a compilation titled The Funniest Greg Davies Moments on The Graham Norton Show has 3.5 million hits on YouTube).

Today almost every answer comes with a baroque anecdote about the time he had such bad writer's block he ran away to a forest in blind fury, say, or the mind-melting boredom he used to feel in the classroom. He must be very good value down the pub.



Special Feature - Greg Davies

Anyway, getting locked out and having to throw the nearest child through a window sounds very much like the kind of pickle Davies would write for one of his characters.

In his Channel 4 sitcom, Man Down, which ended in 2017 after four series, he played Dan, a teacher in his forties who is resolutely single, lives with his parents and gets into scrapes involving lost trousers, dead pets and largely unsatisfying sexual encounters

He has now written a new six-part BBC comedy, The Cleaner. He plays a crime scene cleaner who turns up at people's houses to clear up the messy aftermath of a death (or accident) and frequently finds himself in a mess of his own.

The series is based on the German comedy Der Tatortreiniger, which ran for seven series: Studio Hamburg had the idea of a BBC adaptation and suggested Davies would be the ideal man to do it



Paul "Wicky" Wickstead (as Davies has named the lead) is in his late forties, resolutely single and unencumbered by ties, barring his commitment to curry night at The White Horse and the occasional, unsatisfying sexual encounter. You can see what Studio Hamburg was thinking.

Davies combed through the back catalogue of original episodes and picked six stories, which he then rewrote. Each unfolds essentially as a theatrical two-hander, with an impressive roster of guest stars, including Helena Bonham Carter as a murderous wife, David Mitchell as a precious writer, and Stephanie Cole as a deranged aristocrat.

Bonham Carter is a particular revelation for one, audibly scatological, bathroom scene. "That was actually the scene that persuaded her to do it." notes Davies.

Wicky acts as a kind of ingénu and sounding board, mopping up gloopy pools of blood as he absorbs the confessions and neuroses of people who are on the edge - of grief, trauma and loneliness. "I like to put things right," he says of his job. And in the end, he usually does.

It is a refreshingly odd premise. "I found myself asking, 'how the hell did he end up doing this?" says Davies. In the final episode, "The One", his client turns out to be an old flame (played by This is England's Jo Hartley), through whom we find out more about his past. Wicky has not really moved on from his youth - he listens to the same music, drinks in the same pub, with the same friends.

"The man-child is a theme of anything I've written, for very obvious reasons," says Davies. "It's personal to me. Arrested development is always going to be an obsession."

Davies is 53, but he definitely doesn't feel it. "The notion that I'm an adult is just preposterous. The idea that there is a point when one becomes a fully functioning adult is endlessly fascinating to me. I just don't think there is."

I wonder what age he feels. "Well, when I'm talking to late twentysomethings, I feel like I'm talking to my peer group. And it's only every now and again that you see the way they..." he trails off.

The other day, while filming the new series of Never Mind the Buzzcocks, he rapped a Dr Dre lyric off the cuff and was appalled to hear the audience cheer. "I was like, 'Don't f**king patronise me!' They're looking at a grey-haired old man and thinking, 'Isn't that cute? He knows some rap lyrics!"

He is the new host of the music panel show, which was axed in 2015 and is now coming back to Sky with Daisy May Cooper and Noel Fielding as team captains.

Davies, a music fan, whose tastes run from the Boo-Yaa TRIBE to Nirvana ("If you looked at my starred playlist you would think me insane"), took the job partly out of nostalgia, he says.

Like Taskmaster, which he also hosts, and in which gangs of competitive stand-ups are driven to the brink of madness by bizarre challenges, Buzzcocks offers a sideways glimpse at the famous. "Pop stars who are managed in a very slick way, packaged very cleverly and sell their wares very effectively - if they come onto a show like Buzzcocks, they can't continue that. You have to give of yourself somewhat."

Continued on pages 10-11...



He will be a softer host than he is on Taskmaster, where he doles out points, criticism and ridicule with sadistic relish. "I can't be a dictator," he says.

So this won't be a return to the high snark of ex-Buzzcocks host Simon Amstell? "I quickly realised that's not the best way to get musicians, who can be nervous, to chat and let their guard down. It's more relaxed and silly."

As for his unlikely role as a commanding figurehead, he finds it, like many things in his life, absurd. "I'm just a silly fat man.

The idea that there's any natural authority in this human being is ridiculous," he says. "It's pantomime authority, which is what I lived on for 13 years of teaching."

Davies was born in St Asaph, Wales but grew up in Wem, Shropshire. He wasn't a particularly funny child, "but I learned very early on that I liked the response that making people laugh got."

His father, who died in 2014, was the funniest person he has ever met, and he spent much of his childhood (and perhaps beyond) trying to impress him. "You held his attention when you were being silly, for sure."

He has a distinct memory of telling his primary school teacher a joke from a cracker and that teacher laughing. From that moment on, he became obsessed with comedy.

"I think we make a decision very early on. I don't buy into 'funny bones.' To me, they are the comedians who just practised longer, who worked it out from an early age that they needed it."



He studied English and Theatre Studies at Brunel University where the only course he could get on was a deeply serious physical theatre course.



comedy, Greg."

For his finals, he had to produce a piece of work and having spent half an hour telling his lecturers what it would entail - an attack on American imperialism, no less - they responded, "Just do a

So, he wrote a spoof autobiographical one-man play, and that should have been the beginning of his comedy career. Except that he had no idea what to do next.

So he became a teacher - of secondary school English and Drama - and stayed a teacher for 13 long years. He remembers sitting in one lesson, marking the minutes off, one by one, on a piece of paper.

"I didn't hate it, I hated myself for staying with it. I was forever angry with myself, because all I ever wanted to do was comedy. If through sheer cowardice, you're not doing the thing that you would most want to spend your life doing, then no job is going to be a happy place to be."

Once he was nominated for the Teacher of the Year award. His headteacher called him into discuss the application by a pupil, which read simply: "He's a well good laugh and he don't make us do no work". Does he ever miss it? "Not for whatever the smallest part of a second is.

"I was miserable. Looking back on it, depressed, frankly. I think if I'd spoken to somebody even remotely qualified, I would have said I'd had many years of depression. I was just aware I was only happy on Saturdays and Sundays."

In the end it was his then-girlfriend, a "very pragmatic Australian", who forced him to do something about his misery.

He Googled 'comedy courses' and found Logan Murray's standup workshops in London, which, in 11 short weeks, changed his life (and, incidentally, that of his coursemate and Buzzcocks predecessor, Rhod Gilbert).

He was 33 years old at the time. "I thought there was absolutely no chance it would go anywhere. But I really felt like I would go mad if I hadn't tried." He took to it instantly, winning the Laughing Horse New Act of the Year award on his third gig in 2002.

It turned out, he had a lot of stories to tell. In his last tour, You Magnificent Beast, which was filmed for Netflix, his anecdotes run from his mother's brush with sex toys to manscaping and finding moments of joy in his father's illness.

It feels like he has absolutely no filter, but at the same time, he does not like to talk about his private life, at all. He was in a relationship with the Labour MP Liz Kendall for several years but they split in 2015.

"One of the things that appeals to me about stand-up is the selective honesty of it. That you have absolute control to present whatever sides of you, you think are palatable," he grins. "Or selectively unpalatable."

Special Feature - Greg Davies

He is now writing Safe Space, a new comedy drama for Sky in which he plays a psychotherapist who starts to give deliberately bad advice. It is darker than anything he has tried before, he says. "But if you want to try new things, you often have to drive it yourself."

That said, he suffers terribly with writing, which he describes as a kind of madness.

He used to find crafting the plots of Man Down so tantalising that he would break things.

"Like my sock drawer. I opened it so it was fully extended, and then I kicked it off its hinges. Like a psychopath. That drawer is now glued shut, a monument to my fury. I often look at it when I'm cross."

Once while writing, he made himself a cup of tea and spilt a drop of water. "And I said, out loud, 'Oh that's the way it's going to be, is it?'

Then I poured the whole kettle of hot water onto my floor like a lunatic. And I got in a car and I drove to Norfolk."



The story continues at length, with him going for a walk, chasing a couple down the beach and getting lost in a forest for several hours before driving home to London again, to start writing once more.

"It was, " he says, "very much a case of wherever you go, there you are."

It's a typical Davies anecdote - self-lacerating, elaborate, with a genial fury bubbling under the surface at how absurd he is.

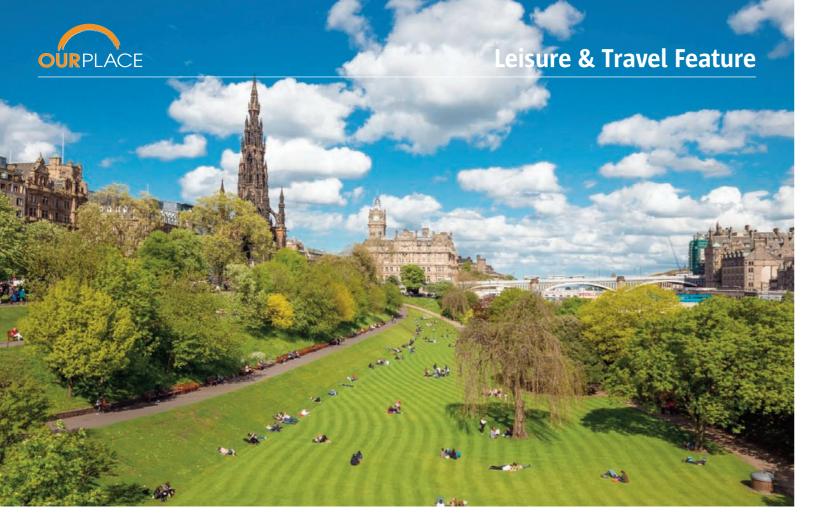
He's clearly delighted that this is his life now, pinballing from one TV show to another, with occasional flurries of creative madness.

"There's a compulsion that comes from leaving it so long.

I'm trying to think of a less clumsy analogy, but if you've spent a long time staring at a cake, and you suddenly get the cake," he says. "You really want to ram the cake in your face."

The Cleaner starts on Friday 10 September at 9.30pm on BBC One. The full series will be available on BBC iPlayer from 10pm

(Article source: Inews)



Only in Scotland: Five breathtaking Scottish cities to visit this summer

Some of the world's most spectacular sights are just a train ride away. Here's what Scotland has to offer you this summer.

It just wouldn't be summer without a city break. Art galleries, shopping, sitting on a cafe terrace and watching the world pass by, and this summer is the perfect opportunity to discover the amazing cities right on our doorstep.

From mind-blowing scenery to buzzy bars, restaurants, galleries and shops, Scotland's cities have it all. Only in Scotland can you climb an extinct volcano, explore a historic castle and treat yourself to a Michelin star meal all in one day (brownie points if you can guess which city we're talking about).

After almost a year of near-constant closure, it's time to support local businesses and get back to what we do best: eating, drinking and exploring.

Thinking of taking a trip? Here are five Scottish cities worth paying a visit to this summer, plus what to do when you get there.

Edinburgh

Edinburgh is an enduringly popular choice for city breakers, and it isn't hard to see why. Even if you've visited before, the Scottish capital is a city that never fails to show up new hidden gems from breath-taking green spaces, to cosy pubs with oodles of charm.





Leisure & Travel Feature

Places to see

Renowned for its integration of city life with nature, from the historic old town to the Georgian new town, cities don't get much more magical than Edinburgh. For museum lovers, the National Museum of Scotland is a must-see; filled with displays covering everything from history to natural heritage, world cultures, design, technology and much more.

Of course, there's also Edinburgh Castle - a non-negotiable for first time visitors that, yes, really is as good as everyone tells you it is. (Get there early, though, if you want to avoid the crowds.) Art lovers, meanwhile, will want to head straight to the Scottish National Gallery, The Fruitmarket Gallery (a haven for lovers of contemporary art) and the truly impressive City Art Centre.

And no, before you ask, it wouldn't be a trip to Edinburgh without a hike up Arthur's Seat. Promising incredible panoramic views across the entire city (and even as far as The Kingdom of Fife) this is one view that simply can't be replicated on Instagram, so go and see it for yourself ASAP.

Scotland's rich cultural heritage also makes it the perfect place to soak up the atmosphere at a live event. With events beginning to restart across the country, like the renowned Edinburgh Festivals in August, it's yet another reason to start planning your trip!

Places to eat & drink

From fine dining to delicious cheap eats, Edinburgh is a foodie haven. For special occasions, be sure to visit one of the city's four Michelin star restaurants - decadent diners will also love the Colonnades at the Signet Library or The Dome on bustling George Street. Or for a more casual vibe, hit up one of the many gorgeous restaurants on George IV Bridge or the Royal Mile, or sample some of Scotland's best fish and chips at The Fishmarket Newhaven. Followed, of course, by a dram of whisky on picture-postcard Victoria Street.

Glasgow

Places to see

Glasgow is abuzz with creative spaces. A city that doesn't take itself too seriously, it combines world-class museums and galleries, striking architecture and beautiful parks with signature Glasgow humour. For those who haven't been, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in the city's west end is a must-see. Filled with over 8,000 objects covering art, archaeology, and natural history, this beautiful red sandstone building is just as picturesque outside as it is in.

Art lovers won't want to miss the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA), housed in a stunning neoclassical building in Royal Exchange Square, while the House for an Art Lover, a fitting homage to Charles Rennie Mackintosh, is breathtaking if you have some time to spare. Oh, and don't forget the Glasgow Botanic Gardens - the prettiest location imaginable for an after dinner stroll.

Places to eat & drink

Speaking of dinner, Glasgow is second to none when it comes to diverse, unique dining. For cocktails and some of the best mac and cheese you've ever tasted, head to Absurd Bird in the city centre.

Or for a little bit of everything, hit up Platform on Argyle Street - Scotland's largest bar and restaurant housed beneath Glasgow Central Station - which has both a food hall and a micro brewery for beer lovers.



We also love The Finnieston for the best of seasonal and sustainable Scottish seafood; while Hanoi Bike Shop is incredible for Vietnamese food served under the stars.

And before you go thinking we've forgotten you vegans, there are plenty of amazing options for you, too. The city centre is home to some of the best veggie and vegan spots in the UK; like The 13th Note Cafe, which also happens to be open from midday to midnight seven days a week.

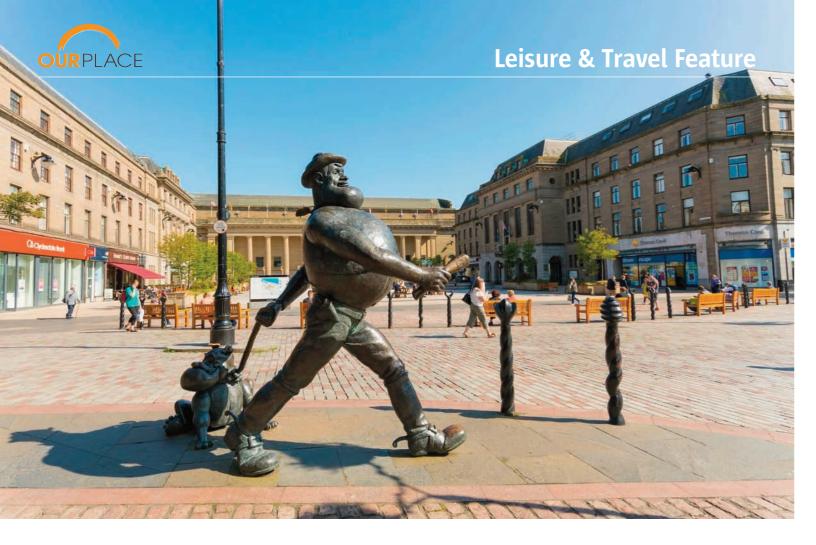
Aberdeen

Aberdeen is where harbour meets city centre. Think: dolphins on your doorstep, sparkly granite buildings, and one of the UK's most exceptional art galleries. Combining architecture with ancient charm, Aberdeen makes for the ultimate weekend getaway. (We'll bet our right arm that you'll want to stay for much longer, though.)



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Places to see

The Aberdeen Art Gallery is a must - even if visual art isn't quite your thing. Having recently undergone a once-in-a-lifetime makeover, this stunning Victorian building is home to works by some of Scotland's best and brightest. (And the rooftop café and terrace ain't bad, either.)

This summer you can catch British Art Show 9 (BAS9) - the Hayward Gallery Touring's landmark exhibition - while fashion lovers can look forward to Fifty Years of Fabulous, a celebration of Zandra Rhodes, coming later this year.

Art isn't just relegated to the gallery in Aberdeen, though. A walk around the city's NuArt trail is a lovely way to pass an afternoon. Make sure to bring your trainers with you and head along the promenade at Aberdeen Beach and all the way up to the River Don - who knows, in the summer you might even spot some leaping bottlenose dolphins around the harbour mouth and Torry Battery.

Places to eat & drink

Foodstory Cafe on Thistle Street, just a short walk from the Aberdeen Art Gallery, does great artisan coffee and delicious lunch (especially veggie and vegan dishes), so if you're in the area be sure to stop in. It just wouldn't be a trip to Aberdeen without sampling some of the incredible local catch, either.

Our go-tos are the magnificent The Silver Darling on the harbour and Moon Fish Café in the city's medieval merchant quarter. (Worry not non-seafood eaters. There are plenty of options for you, too.)

Inverness

Compact and cosmopolitan, Inverness combines a whole lot of heart with the wonders of the Highlands right on its doorstep. Add to that the city's flourishing culinary scene, charming city centre (hello, Inverness Castle and St Andrew's Cathedral), and an unmissable outdoor summer festival, and you'll find that this little city packs a cultural punch.



Places to see

Topping our Inverness bucket list is outdoor summer festival Under Canvas at Eden Court, next to the breathtaking banks of the River Ness. Running from now until 30 September, it's a field day for live music lovers; with performance and DJ offered alongside delicious pizzas, local beers, gins and whisky.



Leisure & Travel Feature

And of course, a trip to Inverness wouldn't be complete without a visit to the world famous Loch Ness. Containing the largest volume of freshwater in the British Isles (that's more than all the lakes in England and Wales combined), take a loch cruise or explore the ruined Urquhart Castle for a city break that won't soon be forgotten.



Places to eat & drink

Inverness's food scene is eclectic, offering everything from the best of Scottish cuisine cooked in a converted church, to luscious beer gardens and a cafe and bike shop combo to remember.

For a truly authentic Highland pub experience, visit MacGregor's Bar. Offering the very best of Scottish craft brewing and distilling alongside an incredible menu of local and seasonal dishes, it wouldn't be a trip to Inverness without it. Veggies, meanwhile, will love the Velocity Café - a social enterprise that prioritises the community as much as it does delicious coffee and wholesome vegetarian dishes.

Dundee

Not only is Dundee Scotland's sunniest city (so feel free to leave your rain ponchos at home) it's also the country's coolest little city. A UNESCO City of Design, and home to the only V&A outside of London, Dundee is quickly becoming one of the country's most exciting hot spots, and it isn't hard to see why.



Places to see

Yes, the V&A Dundee is worth the hype. The first museum of its kind outside of London, exhibits span everything from fashion and engineering to video game design. The building - designed by renowned Japanese architect Kengo Kuma - is a work of art in its own right, and well worth spending a couple of hours marvelling at.

Just a short walk away is the Verdant Works, which gives a fascinating insight into the history of Dundee's industrial textile heritage and is also well worth a stop-over. Family city breakers will also love Dundee Science Centre, which has just reopened following a major refurbishment. And if you're after some light relief following that, be sure to embrace your inner Tarzan as you take on the obstacles at Wildshore Dundee. It's tons of fun, we promise.

Places to eat & drink

Dundee's culinary scene is just as creative as its cultural one. Take, for example, Gallery 48 in the bustling Westport quarter the perfect place to enjoy a cocktail, try some tapas and browse some of the city's impeccable art all at once. Dundee is next to none when it comes to a good night out, and the bar scene is incredible. Some of our all-time favourites include cocktail bar The King of Islington, quirky speak-easy Draffens, and cosy barmeets-restaurant-meets-ceilidh-hall Forgans in nearby Broughty Ferry.



Ready to go?

Before you set off on your city break, please ensure to check the latest government guidelines and always plan and book ahead.

Travel responsibly and where you can, choose to support local, independent businesses. We'll bet that they're just as excited to see you as you are to see them. Please note, face coverings are required in Scotland.

Happy holidays!

(Article source: Rest Less)





Leisure & Travel News

UK holidays: Trip to Lake District £1,500 more expensive than Italy as families priced out of staycations

An analysis by consumer group Which? found that while increased demand because of Covid has pushed prices up, the UK was one of the most expensive European destinations even in 2019.



Inews reports that Families are being priced out of self-catered staycations in the UK amid cost surges of more than 40 per cent, with a trip to Italy £1,622 cheaper than a family holiday to the Lake District. Analysis by Which? found that increased demand amid the pandemic had led to a steep rise in the cost of private accommodation in the UK over the course of the pandemic.

Data from AirDNA shows that self-catered accommodation in the UK in August costs 41 per cent more on average than it did in 2019, working out at roughly an extra £300 a week.

In August 2019, private accommodation in Brighton would have cost an average of £109 a night, but this month the cost is up by 89 per cent to £206 a night. Prices have also risen by an average of 74 per cent in Lyme Regis, 63 per cent in Sidmouth and 42 per cent in St Ives.

Price increases in UK self-catered accommodation

The data below, from AirDNA, shows average nightly prices of bookings made on either Airbnb or Vrbo during the weeks commencing 19 August 2019 and 23 August 2021.

Brighton, East Sussex: £109, versus £206 – 89 per cent increase. **Lyme Regis**, Dorset: £150, versus £260 – 74 per cent increase. **Sidmouth**, Devon: £124, versus £202 – 63 per cent increase. St Ives. Cornwall: £141, versus £200 – 42 per cent increase. Whitby, North Yorkshire: £138, versus £171 – 24 per cent increase.

Though the extra demand for self-contained accommodation has driven up prices elsewhere, other countries have not seen surges as dramatic as the UK. In popular Portuguese and Spanish resorts, such as Alvor in the Algarve and Costa Adeje in Tenerife, the price of private accommodation has increased by 22 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. The consumer group also found that holidays to some popular UK destinations currently cost hundreds of pounds more than trips to European destinations even when airfare is

Which? compared the average cost of private holiday rentals and hotels in British destinations in comparison with overseas tourist hotspots for August. A seven-night stay in a highly-rated hotel in Lake Garda, Italy, was nearly a quarter of the price of a similar holiday in the Lake District - totalling £802 in comparison to £2,424. Transport costs for staycations were based on an estimate that the average UK resident travels 310 miles for their holiday, which works out at £43 in petrol costs. The only holiday Which? found this month which worked out cheaper in the UK than abroad was a break in Tenby, Wales, compared to Estepona, on the Costa del Sol in Spain. However, this was only £10 cheaper.

How does seven nights at the cheapest highly-rated hotel in August compare between UK destinations and abroad?

Windermere, UK Garda, Italy £2,831 Accommodation £631

£43 Estimated transport cost £171 £2.424 Total £802

Seaside breaks Brighton, UK Nice, France £1,088 Accommodation £679 £43 Estimated transport cost £405 £1.131 Total £1.085

Prices are based on 2 adults with breakfast at the cheapest central hotel rated 8+ on Booking.com. Overseas transport costs are based on the cheapest reasonable flights on Skyscanner. It also found that while the pandemic had helped to push the price of UK breaks up, even before Covid, it was among the most expensive holiday destinations in Europe.

According to data from travel firm Kayak, the average nightly rate of three and four star hotels in 2019 in the UK was £109 – 79 per cent more than Malta, 35 per cent more than Portugal and 21 per cent more than Spain, on average. Meanwhile, despite British hotel prices dropping by an average of 13 per cent last year due to Covid, prices in other European countries dropped by as much or more. In Greece, prices dipped by 20 per cent in 2020, with a hotel room costing £71

Rory Boland, Which? travel editor, said: "Holidaving at home has always been expensive, but the situation has become far worse during the pandemic and it's no wonder many people have felt priced out of a holiday this year. "The reasons for higher prices are complex, but it is hard to avoid the conclusion that some unscrupulous accommodation providers are charging over the odds."

(Story source: Inews)



Leisure & Travel News

A dog-friendly city break is easy in Edinburgh

Touring town with a hound? Take our lead and head to Scotland's capital to find out how easy it is, from finding a place to stay to the best walks and days out.

Inews reports that ordinarily, Edinburgh would be teeming with festivalgoers, but that torrent of visitors is more of a tranquil pool this summer. At other times of the year, Harry Potter nerds delight in its connections with JK Rowling and her series of witchy fantasy novels: history buffs trail to the 900-year-old castle and handsome historic buildings on the Royal Mile; and families spend hours in the many engaging museums and galleries that dot the city.

But there's one member of the household you might not consider taking on a city break to Edinburgh (or, indeed, other cities around the country): the dog. But that would be remiss. Edinburgh is one of the UK's most dog-friendly cities, with plenty of parkland, petfriendly pubs and - most excitingly - a handful of attractions that'll let you bring the whole family. Earlier this month, I did exactly that, and was delighted by how enjoyable it was exploring the Scottish capital with my pup. Here's what I learned.

Where to go for walkies

Needless to say, the most important thing on a dog owner's mind is where you can go for that all-important walk. Thankfully, Edinburgh is a delightfully green city, with central parks for little strolls and vast landscapes worthy of far longer hikes.

In the heart of town, Princes Street Gardens is a beautiful spot for a short stroll, with pretty seasonal planting and brilliant views of that ever-present castle. To the east is Calton Hill, a 103m-high mound you can climb for fantastic views over both Old and New Town, and on a clear day you can see right over Leith to the Firth of Forth.

Inverleith Park, north of New Town, has 54 acres in which your dog can roam off-lead and chase a ball if they're so inclined.

But the walker's highlight in Edinburgh has to be Arthur's Seat. This extinct volcano sits within Holyrood Park and towers above the surrounding area at 251m high. It's just under a 5km (about 3 mile) walk from Holyrood Palace, at the end of the Royal Mile, and with a steady incline throughout it's a good two-to-three-hour hike and a bit of a scramble at the end to reach the very top (not suitable for elderly dogs), but the reward is unrivalled views of Edinburgh Castle and the entire city.

Animal-friendly attractions

It's a shame that Edinburgh Castle doesn't allow dogs inside, but there's still enjoyment in strolling along the Royal Mile that leads up to its gates. You could join the free Sandemans daily walking tour, which takes in the famous high street while guides regale you with tales of Edinburgh's illustrious and occasionally sordid past.

Or, if there are children (big or small) in your midst, book in to visit the Camera Obscura & World of Illusions - a five-storey townhouse packed with interactive installations, ranging from holograms and glowing plasma tubes to a mirror maze and the rather sickening vortex tunnel. Dogs are allowed everywhere and they make a great prop in the Ames Room, where an optical illusion can turn them (and vou) into a giant.

For more refined fun, Edinburgh's creative hub, Summerhall, is dogfriendly throughout. Pop in to see the latest exhibitions in its galleries, then have coffee or a Pickering's gin and tonic (the distillery is based here) at the Royal Dick Bar in the courtyard. Further afield, you could spend the day cruising the Firth of Forth with Forth Boat Tours. The 90-minute Three Bridges cruise takes in all three of the bridges across the waterway and a smattering of islands nearby, and it includes an insightful commentary on the area's history.

If staying on land is more your vibe but you do like to be beside the seaside, then don't miss Portobello, the city's coastal suburb where all the good dogs come to run along the vast sandy beach. While you're there, don't miss a visit to Harry's Gourmet Treats to pick up their home-made haggis-flavoured treats (incidentally, this is also the only shop in the UK where you can bring your dog to be fitted for the brilliant Equafleece coats).

Where to eat and drink

When the weather's good, almost any outdoor dining area is dogfriendly in Edinburgh, but let's face it, the Scottish weather cannot be relied upon. Nip into Arcade on Cockburn Street for whisky and haggis served in a multitude of ways, drink local ales alongside hearty pub grub in the 17th-century Ensign Ewart on the Royal Mile. or head further east to seek out ludicrously tempting cakes at Mimi's Little Bakehouse.

In New Town, The Huxley on Rutland Street does great hot dogs, burgers and beef-dripping chips, but the highlight out here is Baba on George Street. This rabbit warren of rooms offers plenty of space for dining with the dog and the Levant-inspired small plates that come from its open kitchen are spectacular. The blackened sweet potato with saffron crème fraîche and the slow-cooked lamb shoulder are particularly unforgettable.

Where to stay

There's a host of hotels in the Scottish capital that allow dogs, including the new Moxy Edinburgh Fountainbridge (doubles from £80 with additional £20 for pet) and the illustrious Balmoral (doubles from £150 with an additional £50 for your pet, which must be under 9kg), a former railway station converted into a 167-room property now home to the suite where JK Rowling finished writing Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. But the cream of the crop is Kimpton Charlotte Square Hotel. Set inside seven interconnected townhouses right in the heart of New Town, it has handsome interiors decorated with quirky artworks and a leafy indoor courtyard, and the dogfriendly bedrooms are spacious with big, supremely comfy beds. Staff will make a fuss of your pup on arrival with treats at reception, and when they need a little comfort break you can grab the keys to Charlotte Square's pretty enclosed garden, where the dog can run safely off-lead for a leg stretch any time of the day or night (doubles from £135, dogs must be under 35kg and are free to bring along.)

(Story source: Inews)

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Perfect Pubs: 40 of the best UK country pubs for food

From farm-to-table suppers in Wiltshire to Sunday roasts in Devon, these pubs provide the perfect backdrop for long lazy lunches celebrating the last days of summer.

Hare and Hounds, Bath (pictured above)

Expect legendary roasts, 10-mile views and cool interiors at this beautifully renovated Victorian pub above Bath, looking across the city to Solsbury Hill. A conservatory, decked terrace, sprawling garden and a vast mullioned window in the bar all face the right way - you gaze out over fields and hills. You might find goat's cheese and honey terrine, beer-battered haddock and hand-cut chips, dark chocolate mousse and clementine purée. The pub is open all day, breakfast is served from 8am during the week and from 9am at weekends.

Open daily, lunch and dinner £10.50-£22, Sunday lunch £13.50-£15.50

The Acorn Innz, Dorchester, Dorset

Perfect Evershot and rolling countryside lie at the door of this 400-year-old gem in Thomas Hardy country. It's very much a traditional inn; locals sup pints of Otter Ale in the long flagstoned bar and menus are sourced from within 25 miles. In the dining room, the atmosphere changes to rural country house with smartly laid tables, terracotta tiles, soft lighting and elegant fireplaces. Good food is taken seriously, be it a home-made burger, or open lasagne of confit rabbit followed by twice-cooked pork belly, and sticky toffee pudding.

Open daily, lunch and dinner £5.25-£22.95, bar meals from £4.95



Food & Drink Feature

The Durham Ox, York, Yorkshire

Find this cosy pub at the picturesque top of the Grand Old Duke of York's hill - it's the heart of the village. There's a lot of space to enjoy - sit outside in the beer garden, sample one of their locally brewed gins in the bar or book the private dining room with its own pre-dinner sitting area and log burner. Food is excellent - classic British menus from fresh, local ingredients: try queenie scallops followed by cauliflower and cumin fritters with roasted monkfish. Rich sunken chocolate tart makes an irresistible pudding.

Open Weds-Sun, dishes from £9-£32, bar meals from £9, Sunday lunch from £15

Lord Crewe Arms at Blanchland, **Northumberland**

Set in a sheep-clad valley village on the moors' edge, you'll find this Grade II listed inn steeped in history. Inside: ancient flags, inglenook fireplaces, fortress walls and a classy country décor. With a head chef from Mark Hix's "stable", the robust modern British menu includes steaks, chops and spit-roasted meats, fresh crab salad and ruby beets. Puddings hark back to ancient times: sea buckthorn posset, rhubarb fumble. Wines include great burgundies and clarets, ales range from Allendale's Golden Plover to Nel's Best from High House Farm, and there are water bowls for dogs in the garden.



Open daily, lunch and dinner from £12.75, Sunday lunch £18 for two course, £24 for three

The Horseshoes at Long Lane Village, **Ashbourne**, **Derbyshire**

Between Derby and Buxton, the Horseshoes sits in a pretty spot in a village where locals are spoilt rotten by monthly taster menus and local food that hits the spot.

Food is king here, so work up an appetite in the surrounding hills and feast on the likes of pan fried scallops with black pudding. followed by Hardwick Hall rump of lamb with wholegrain mustard mash. Leave room for the famous Horseshoes cheese board, or sticky toffee pudding with clotted cream and salted caramel sauce.

Open daily (food served Weds-Sun), starters from £6, lunch from £11, dinner and Sunday lunch from £16

The Hollist Arms, Lodsworth, Sussex

This is a great walk and Sunday roast destination. Award-winning Langham Brewery is just down the road, and the bar features other ales too; a short but well thought-out wine list includes Sussex choices. The menu is good pub food following the seasons, using as many local ingredients as they can: pie and quiche of the day, home-made burger, risotto, home-baked ham, crab mayo with chilli and lime. You can sit outside in the large garden at the back - the local food shop adjoining is a bit of a

Open Weds-Sun, starters from £6, mains from £12

The Cholmondeley Arms, Malpas, Cheshire



Seldom has going back to school been this much fun. The glorious carved oak bar dominates the main hall in this converted old school house, offering the malted charms of Cholmondeley Best Bitter as well as a staggering 366 varieties of ruinously good gin; they've recently been awarded the title of UK's Best Gin Pub. Study the blackboard menus or opt for sharing a seafood trawler board followed by their legendary steak and kidney pie.

Open daily, lunch and dinner from £11.95, Sunday lunch £14.95

The Felin Fach Griffin, Powys, Wales

Nestled between the Black Mountains and the Brecon Beacons, this quirky inn resembles the sitting room of a small hip country house. An open-plan feel sweeps you through to the restaurant, where stock pots simmer on an Aga; try hake fillet with pernod cream, pheasant rillette, Eve's pudding with cinnamon custard, all of it delicious. Lanes lead into the hills, and a small organic kitchen garden provides much for the table.

Open daily, lunch from £12, three-course dinner £29-£35. Sunday lunch from £16

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Food & Drink Feature

The Griffin Inn, Fletching, Sussex

A proper inn, one of the best, a community local that draws a well-heeled and devoted crowd. There's a lively bar, a small club room for racing on Saturdays and two cricket teams play in summer. Smart menus based on the finest seasonal produce include fresh fish from Rye and Fletching lamb; food and beers are as local as can be. There's a wood oven on the terrace and, on summer Sundays, a spit-roast barbecue - accompanied by 10-mile views stretching across Sheffield Park to the South Downs.

Open daily, bar meals from £6.50, three-course dinner £30-£40

The Swan, Pewsey, Wiltshire

When The Swan was threatened with closure the locals rallied and bought it, now it's run with unpretentious charm. There's a welcoming atmosphere for anyone who stops for sustenance, and the kitchen turns out wholesome dishes: homemade pies, chilli con carne, chicken Kiev. Produce is locally-sourced, meat comes from nearby farms and most of the real ales come from local breweries. Old photos on the walls nod to its history, with an attractive thatched roof and a lawned garden, a terrace for seating and a pretty orchard.

Open Weds-Sun, starters from £4, lunch and dinner from £10

The Watership Down Inn, Whitchurch, Hampshire

A smartly renovated 19th-century pub at the foot of the North Wessex Downs, overlooking the Test Valley, this is a treat for dog-walkers, families and foodies.

Menus are seasonal and imaginative: try pan-fried Hampshire pigeon breasts with pickled carrot, blackberry dust, apple and beetroot purée followed by fresh ravioli stuffed with red pepper and goats cheese topped with olive tapenade, then double chocolate mousse cannelloni; all paired with a great selection of wine. After indulging, borrow a map and take a walk through the water meadows.



Rooms for two from £115 per night, open daily, starters from £6.75, mains from £15

The Litton, Litton, Somerset

You're perfectly placed for Bath and Bristol here, tucked into the Mendips in a pretty village that's fallen in love with its pub - and it's easy to see why. Tuck yourself into a corner and order up a Welsh rarebit, or grab a Moroccan blanket and an armful of cushions and head for the riverside terrace where fire pits blaze and kids can perch on colourfully upcycled beer barrels. The whisky bar is a temptation all of its own, as are the splendid Sunday roasts.

Rooms for two from £100 per night, open daily, starters from £6, mains from £12, Sunday lunch from £12.95

The Shilton Rose and Crown, Shilton, Oxfordshire

The 16th-century Rose and Crown, set in an idyllic Cotswolds village, holds just two rooms: the bar itself, simple and unadorned, and a (slightly) larger extension built in 1701. There's an open fire in the inglenook, a medley of kitchen tables and chairs, well-kept beers and serious wines. Join a happy crowd for delicious, authentic renditions of parsnip and chestnut soup, roast partridge with haricot beans, bacon and garlic; steak ale and mushroom pie, bread and butter pudding and pear and almond tart.

Open daily, lunch £8.50-£19.50, dinner £12-£19.50, three-course Sunday lunch £27

Rose and Crown, Romaldkirk, Durham

Romaldkirk is one of those lovely villages where little has changed in 200 years. It sits peacefully in the north Pennines, lost to the world and without great need of it. As for the Rose and Crown, book a table in the panelled restaurant for excellent food, perhaps local Raby Estate venison pie followed by white chocolate panna cotta and pistachio ice cream. Dogs are very welcome too.

Open daily, rooms for two from £115 per night, lunch from £10.50, three-course dinner from £27, Sunday lunch £19.50

The Black Bull, Sedbergh, Cumbria

A smartly refurbished gastropub in Sedbergh, part of the Yorkshire Dales and on the edge of the Lake District. Owners Nina and James are very hands-on and passionate about provenance - Nina bakes the breakfast bread and pastries, they do their own smoking and curing and there's a little kitchen garden at the back. Sample inventive cooking by the fire in the cosy bar, or in the airy restaurant with floor-to-ceiling windows.

Open daily, rooms for two from £99 per night, starters from £6.50, mains from £12.95

The Fitzherbert Arms, Swynnerton, Staffordshire

In the old village of Swynnerton on Lord Stafford's estate is the spruce and dog-friendly Fitzherbert, perfect for a meal after a bracing walk. A vivacious team ferry platefuls of flavoursome food to elegant tables: seafood platters, steak and stout pies, crumbles, brownies and local cheeses. They do a great line in comfort food, have a good list of local suppliers and Staffordshire ales star at the pumps.

Open daily, lunch and dinner from £11.95, Sunday lunch £14.95



The Cat, West Hoathly, Sussex (pictured left)

A fine medieval hall house with a Victorian extension, this 16th-century free house has a buzzing atmosphere and heaps of character. Harvey's Ale and top-notch pub food, passionately put together from fresh local ingredients, attract a solid crowd: retired locals, foodies and walkers. Tuck into rare roast beef and horseradish sandwiches, Rye Bay sea bass with brown shrimp and caper butter, South Downs lamb chops with dauphinoise (and leave room for treacle tart). The setting is idyllic, in a pretty village opposite a 12th-century church - a welcome sight after a walk in Wakehurst Place or Ashdown Forest.

Open Weds-Sun, lunch and dinner from £12, bar meals from £6, three-course Sunday lunch £26

The Harpx, Powys, Wales

Chris, Angela and their friendly team run this ancient Welsh longhouse, tucked up a lane near the parish church, as an authentic country pub: unfussy, well-loved and honestly traditional. Accompany a pint of Wye Valley or Three Tuns bitter with locally-sourced steak and chips, sea bass with salsa verde, or a vegan or vegetarian dish. Or take a simple ploughman's to a seat in the garden and gaze on the spectacular Radnor Valley. The menus change every six weeks; otherwise, life in this tiny village, like its glorious pub, remains delightfully unchanged.

Open Weds- Sun, lunch from £5, dinner from £10, three-course Sunday lunch from £22

Continued on pages 22-23...



The Duck at Yeoford, Crediton, Devon

On a quiet road through a thatched and flowered Devon hamlet sits the Duck at Yeoford. Hunker down in one of the wooden booths and enjoy a pint of local ale (try the pub's own Muddy Duck) and a good lunch. Menus change with the seasons. There are chunky ciabattas, steak frites, fish of the day, baked Camembert, confit duck leg with cassoulet. Children have their own menu, puddings are truly tempting, and the cheeseboard is an ode to all things local. The Tarka Line runs through the village with walks from the pub along the trail to Copplestone and Crediton.

Open Weds-Sun (bookings only), lunch from £7.50, mains from £14 $\,$

The Double Red Duke, Bampton, Oxfordshire

A seasonal, locally-sourced menu can be paired with superb ales in this beautiful old coaching inn. The garden is a flower-strewn piece of classic English tavern life, with the grandeur of the old stone building hanging above clad in tumbling foliage. The village is right on the Thames Path too, so it's simple to drop in after a hike for bar snacks that range from pie to oysters and get a sample of the fine food on offer even if you don't stay for dinner.

Starters from £9, mains from £10.50. Sunday lunch £30 for two course, £40 for three

The George, Alstonefield, Staffordshire

Although it's now more of a restaurant than a pub that does food, we still love The George for its relaxed attitude to doing wonderful things with local produce. There's honey from the beehives, plants from the kitchen garden and a real love of land and community in the careful selection of all their ingredients. Field-to-fork supper club events are worth waiting for, but drop in any time and this lovely building on the village green will serve you something fantastic with a minimum of fuss.



Open Thurs-Sun, set menu lunch: £14 for one course, £21 for two, £28 for three, dinner: starters from £9, mains from £20



Food & Drink Feature

The Holford Arms, Tetbury, Gloucestershire (pictured left)

The Holford Arms really makes the most of its outdoor setting, with glamping chalets, bell tents and a covered beer garden festooned with fairy lights scattered through the seven acres of cider orchard hidden behind the bright white frontage on the roadside. Menus are creative and their championing of local produce runs from their own growing to the beers at the bar, which feature several nearby breweries. It's the sort of place where you finish eating and linger at your table for the atmosphere.

Open daily, mid-week specials from £15 for three courses

The Lamb Inn, Crediton, Devon

The little walled garden of The Lamb is exactly what you'd expect to find outside a place that wears its traditional feel with such warranted pride. It goes perfectly with the skittle alley, the low beams and the deep red carpet. There's a fancy restaurant area indoors as well as the bar, but nothing beats grabbing one of the wonky benches and treating yourself to a superb Sunday roast surrounded by the chatter of locals and visitors alike.

Open daily, lunch from £6.95, three-course dinner £22-£35, Sunday lunch £10.95-£12.95

The Five Horseshoes, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

The view from the garden of The Five Horseshoes makes it one of our favourite places to eat. You have to be lucky (or very early) to get the spots that give you those unbroken Chiltern panoramas, but you can still take in the scenery from the conservatory and the dining room too, so this is a great stop whatever the weather. The menu embraces a wide mix of styles, with small plates and classic mains all available and all superbly cooked.

Open Tues-Sun, lunch and dinner £8.50-£16, bar meals £5-£9.75, Sunday lunch £13.75

The Swan at Marbury, Marbury, Cheshire

The place that brought legendary pub owner Jerry Brunning out of retirement because he couldn't resist the location, The Swan has wonderful views from its charming garden. It doesn't rest on the laurels of its setting though, with the pub's own artisan producer in Bordeaux supplying their wine and menus that change daily to make it always worth dropping in.

Open daily, starters from £5.50, mains from £13.50

The Crown Inn, Andover, Hampshire

Take a lovely stroll through the Test Valley and end it in the centre of the village of Upton, where this classic country pub sits waiting to reward you for the walk. There are benches out front and in the garden if you fancy a quick pint in the sun, but for a unique and fun dining experience, try out their H'igloos (Hampshire Igloos), little huts warmed by a woodburner and perfect for a small group to eat, drink and chat in cosy privacy.

Open Weds-Sun, starters from £7, lunch from £13.50, dinner from £15

The Greyhound Inn, Wantage, Oxfordshire

As you'd hope the canine name suggests, this is a dog-friendly pub, right down to the secure garden where the only worry you'll have if your dog wanders off is that they've gone snuffling round other tables for food. The menus are a mix of pub classics and off-the-cuff dishes based on whatever their local suppliers have to offer. The Midweek Fix meals are superb value but there's great hiking along the ridgeway that make it a brilliant weekend stop as well.

Open daily, starters from £6, lunch from £6.50, dinner from £14.50

Crown and Anchor, Ham, Wiltshire

The terrace in the walled garden of Crown and Anchor is a lovely spot to soak up the sunshine, but has also been kitted out with a canopy, heaters and blankets so you can sit outdoors in any weather. There are big hikes along the Test Way and through the ancient Avebury stone circle, so you can work up an appetite before settling in at this gorgeous thatched country pub. Dishes from a diverse menu can be paired with something special from a well-stocked and reasonably priced cellar.

Open Weds-Sun, starters from £7.50, mains from £14.50, Sunday lunch £24 for two course, £29 for three

The Greyhound Inn, Woodbridge, Suffolk

A gem of a community pub, reinvigorated by passionate young owners. Scottish Stewart oversees the growing range of malt whiskies and gins from north of the border, while Louise is a tireless force of culinary creativity, smoking her own salmon, baking soda bread, churning ice cream and cranking out batches of oatcakes to go with the cheese board. Enjoy it all in the fenced garden where kids and dogs can run free.

Open Tues-Sun, starters from £5.95, mains from £10.95

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Food & Drink Feature

The Bull, Ditchling, Sussex

The Bull doesn't just have a garden, but an entire "garden tent" menu, served in the beautiful surroundings of its Bedouin tent with straw bale seats and strings of lanterns overhead. There are wood-fired pizzas and a range of hot dogs, as well as more traditional roasts on Sundays. Wash it all down with a pint of the pub's own Bedlam ale or any of the great guest beers, then sit back and see where the evening takes you.

Open daily, lunch and dinner from £13

Scourie Hotel, Lairg, Highland

This famous old fishing inn is a treat from top to toe. It's a quirky place run with great panache by the Campbells, who refurbished in style and now it shines. It's supremely comfy and very friendly - smart without being stuffy. There's great tradition, too; a board master allocates fishing beats each morning, a gong announces dinner. There are two bars, a pretty garden and paths that lead down to the sea. This is a wildly beautiful corner of Scotland.

Closed From October - April, lunch from £4.95, bar meals from £10, three-course dinner £32

The Perch, Binsey, Oxfordshire

The building has been a pub for over 800 years and it seems as if it's only been improving all that time. A massive riverside garden, overhung with willows and served by the Shed Bar, make this a pub for long summer afternoons that turn into lively nights. Look out for special events that celebrate the area's history and produce, or drop in any time for fabulous food with a British farmhouse focus, served in a laid-back, scenic setting.



Open daily, starters £5.95-£9.95, mains £12.95-£19.95, Sunday lunch £13.50-£16.95

The Meikleour Arms, Meikleour, Perth and Kinross

With their own ale, the Lure of Meikleour, more than 50 malts and a bevvy of artisan gins, you'll find a toast for every occasion at this lovely country inn. Much of the food comes from the estate - vegetables and herbs grown in the walled garden, scallops hand-dived on the west coast and venison from Meikleour forest. There's a sweet beer garden for the warmer months.

Open daily, light bites from £8, lunch and dinner from £20 for two courses

The Ship Inn, Elie, Fife

There are few inns where you can sit on the terrace and watch a game of cricket on the beach below. But it's not beach cricket as you know it. This is serious stuff, played at low tide. As for this cute little boutique inn, it doubles as the pavilion. Dine on the terrace for lunch in the sun and gaze across the Firth of Forth to Edinburgh's hills. Feast on delicious food - fish and seafood from local waters, lamb and beef from nearby farms, sinful puddings. The Fife coastal path awaits for excellent walks.

Open daily, lunch and dinner £5-£35, Sunday lunch from £12.95

Y Ffarmers, Llanfihangel y Creuddyn, Ceredigion

The drive to this pretty village, once a silver and lead mining community, is well worth it. Friendly Y Ffarmers is under the delightful stewardship of Caitlin and Lewis. You can walk into the quarry-tiled bar with mud on your boots and not an eyelid will be batted. The dining room serves up excellent food - try panfried trout with dill and samphire potatoes and beetroot pesto, then bara brith bread and butter pudding with cream.

Closed Mon (except Bank Holidays) and Tues lunchtime, lunch and dinner £5-£18.50, Sunday lunch £16-£19.50

Cross Foxes, Brithdir, Gwynedd

Nicol and Dewi have worked wonders breathing new life into this stone-built former farmhouse. A steel and glass entrance leads to a modern bar with flagstones, exposed stonework and beams. Take a pint of Purple Moose's Snowdonia to the terrace and gaze up at lofty Cadair Idris - a giant's seat indeed. Food from the open kitchen comes with impeccable local credentials. What could be more local than Conwy mussels, leeks and cream followed by confit leg of Welsh lamb with a rosemary and honey gravy?

Open daily, lunch from £4.95, dinner and bar meals from £9.95, two-course Sunday lunch £12.95

The Plume of Feathers, Mitchell, Cornwall

It was an inspired move to transform the 16th-century coaching inn where John Wesley once preached into a warm and stylish pub-restaurant. A menu carefully-curated by head chef Andrew Dudley draws an appreciative crowd, and food is available all day. Friendly staff serve seasonal meals at sensible prices - take hand-pressed burgers made with Cornish beef, or risotto of the day with locally-grown, organic vegetables. There are beetroot and gin-cured salmon sandwiches at lunch - and delicious desserts after

Open daily, breakfast from £5, lunch from £7.50, dinner from £12.50

The Tower Inn, Slapton, Devon

Standing beside the ivy-clad ruins of a chantry tower, a flower-bedecked classic, a southern belle, loved by all who visit. Despite the hidden access and tricky parking, this 14th-century inn attracts not just locals but families from Slapton Sands. Accompany golden, bitter-sweet St Austell Brewery Proper Job from the handpump with a plateful of Devon crab gnocchi, mussels in Addlestones cider cream broth, Start Bay scallops and locally-caught fish of the day.



Lunch from £5, dinner from £10, three-course Sunday lunch £22

The Sun Inn, Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria

Set in a narrow street, with the historic church in view, The Sun is a fine example of an old country inn. Step under the ancient portico and into a lovely low-ceilinged bar. Food is lavish, so enter the smart brasserie-style dining room - for potted mackerel pâté with rhubarb chutney; monkfish with herb gnocchi, clams and squid; steak and kidney pudding; rhubarb crumble tart. There are cask ales to keep beer buffs happy, the wine list is sublime and the staff are wonderful.

Closed Mon lunchtime, lunch from £9.95, dinner from £15.95

(Article source: Inews)



OURPLACE Home & Garden Feature

In the shade: 25 best plants and perennials that thrive out of the sun

Time to brighten up those shady areas of your garden! Everyone adores a sunny garden with bold and bright blooms. But shady gardens also deserve some love.

These shade perennials boast beautiful leaf colours and delicate, exotic flowers - and some have irresistibly cool names too! Remember: Full shade means the area never gets direct sunlight. Part shade means it doesn't get more than 3 or 4 hours of sun daily.

Hostas

Hostas is a go-to plant for shady areas with moist soil. Primarily a foliage plant, the broad-leafed beauty can actually be very small or very large. "Sum and Substance is a variety that gets huge - about five feet across," says Beyers. "Meanwhile, Mouse Ears is really, really tiny."

Varieties to try: Halcyon, Sum and Substance, Mouse Ears



Liqularia

Sometimes called "leopard plant," Ligularia is an excellent choice for any shade garden - and not just because deer don't enjoy eating it. "One of the other nice things about this plant is its striking, purplish-red leaves," adds Daryl Beyers, author of The New Gardener's Handbook. "There's another variety that features yellow, daisy-looking flowers, and yet another called 'The Rocket' that boasts spikier blooms." If you're looking for a plant with a large leaf structure, this might be your best bet.

Varieties to try: Desdemona, Britt-Marie Crawford, The Rocket

Astilbe

Lacey, toothed leaves and feathery plumes of pink, white, red, or purple flowers bloom in profusion in early to midsummer. A little morning sun helps them bloom better.



Varieties to try: Younique Lilac, Milk and Honey

Aconitum

This gorgeous perennial can grow up to three feet tall. Talk about a beautiful addition to a shadier area of your lawn! "They also have strong stems, so you may not have to stake them," offers Beyers. "Of course, the main attraction is the flower itself. It's got this really nice, deep blue or purple hue. And deer don't like them!"

Varieties to try: Albus, Blue Scepter, Monkshood

Ferns

Frothy-looking ferns are sturdier than they appear, popping up again after even the toughest winters. They like somewhat moist ground but are fairly drought-tolerant once established.

Varieties to try: Autumn, Japanese Painted



Viola

These spring bloomers tolerate some sun, but they prefer part to full shade, especially in the heat of summer. Some types are fragrant, too.

Varieties to try: Penny Purple Picotee, Johnny Jump-Up

Asarum canadense

Asarum canadense - Canadian wild ginger - is an interesting native plant to choose for your shade garden. It's a low-grower and prefers the deepest shade with a moist soil. "It actually does make flowers," Beyers adds. "They're just not very showy."

Spiderwort

Spiderwort or Tradescantia is a part shade - not deep shade - plant. It features a beautiful flower and can grow anywhere from a foot-and-a-half to two feet tall. "The variety Sweet Kate has unique, chartreuse-colored leaves, so I recommend checking it out," advises Beyers.

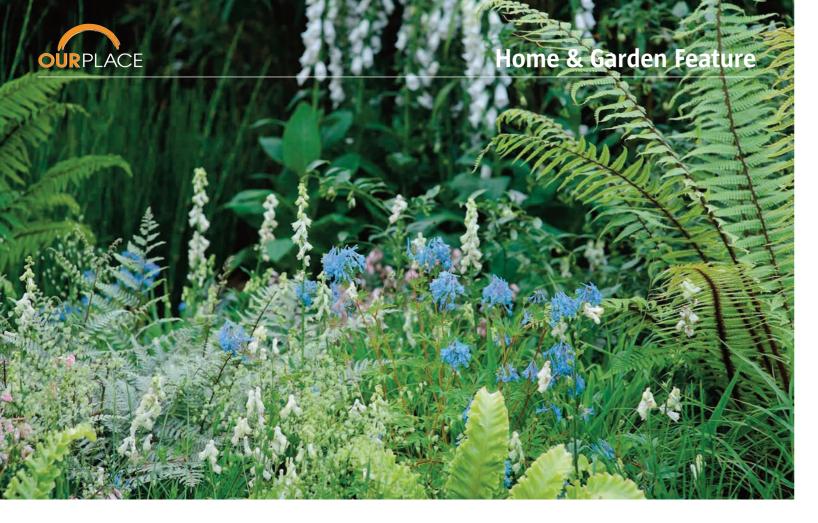
Varieties to try: Sweet Kate, Concord Grape

Epimedium

These little plants are also known as fairy wings or bishop's cap due to the adorable shape of their flowers, which appear in early spring. They don't like foot traffic, so plant them where they won't be stepped on

Varieties to try: Pink Champagne, Lilafee

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Tiarella (Foamflower)

Lobed foliage with red or purple veins make this plant interesting. Floaty little flowers arise on long stems in late spring to early summer.

Varieties to try: Cutting Edge, Jade Peacock

Hellebore (Lenten Rose)

These evergreen plants produce unusual, long-lasting blooms in late winter or very early spring. Pick a spot and stick with it; they don't like to be moved once established.

Varieties to try: Phoenix, Kingston Cardinal

Lamium (Dead Nettle)

Silvery, variegated foliage and yellow, pink, or purple blooms make this a great addition to the shade landscape. It's not super fussy and does well in dry areas.

Varieties to try: Beacon Silver, Herman's Pride

Bletilla (Ground Orchid)

You'll fall in love with this exotic-looking flower that appears in early spring in white, purple, and various shades of pink. Its blooms often last up to six weeks. It's an unusual landscape plant for warmer climates, or it can be overwintered indoors in containers.

Varieties to try: White Pearl, Kate

Toad Lily

The intricate flowers (spotted like a toad!) are the reason to grow these little gems. They bloom mid-to-late summer to fall in a variety of spotted colors ranging from white to lavender.

Varieties to try: Purple Beauty, Raspberry Mousse



Heuchera (Coral Bells)

Grown primarily for its pretty ruffled foliage, this perennial's mounding habit shoots up small flower spikes with teeny flowers in spring to mid-summer. It will tolerate some sun, but its best color typically occurs in shade.

Varieties to try: Obsidian, Peachberry Ice



Home & Garden Feature

Brunnera (Siberian Bugloss)

This perennial is grown for its striking foliage and graceful sprays of tiny blue flowers, which appear in spring. It's a hardy, low-maintenance plant.

Varieties to try: Jack Frost, Alexander's Great

Corvdalis

Tubular lightly-scented spring flowers hang above finely-cut foliage. The plant may die back in summer and sprout again in fall

Varieties to try: Purple Bird, Blue Line Couriblue

Bleeding Heart (Dicentra)

Charming sprays of heart-shaped flowers in early summer make this old-fashioned favorite a must-have. The flowers come in a variety of colors ranging from deep red to pink with lime-green to dark green foliage.

Varieties to try: King of Hearts, Valentine



Lungwort (Pulmonaria)

This pretty ground cover blooms in early to late spring with small bell-shaped flowers and spotted foliage. It looks best planted en masse. The name comes from its historic usage to treat lung ailments!

Varieties to try: Raspberry Splash, Sissinghurst White

Trillium

The triangular shape and three leaves below the blooms of this striking native flower gives the plant its name. It's hardy, showy, and tolerates wet soil.

Varieties to try: White, Red

Foxglove

Although this perennial blooms well in full sun, it tolerates part shade, especially in hot climates. The tall spiked flowers are a standard in cottage gardens.



Varieties to try: Polkadot Princess, Foxy

Jack-in-the-Pulpit

This intriguing native perennial blooms in late spring. The flower spike is the "jack" while the hood is the "pulpit."

Varieties to try: Crossing Over, Triphyllum

Lily of the Valley

These delicate bells dangle on short stems and have a strong fragrance. It's a ground cover that spreads readily, so be careful where you plant it.

Varieties to try: Bordeaux, Rose

Caladium

Huge heart-shaped leaves in splashy colors offer plenty of drama. They're tropical so if you live in a cool climate, put them in pots so they can be brought indoors and enjoyed as a houseplant over the winter.

Varieties to try: Red Flash, White Christmas

Solomon's Seal

This perennial boasts a thick blanket of deep-green leaves that grow on upright red stems. Pendulous tuber-shaped flowers dangle from the stems in late spring and become bluish berries in the fall.

Varieties to try: Ruby Slippers, Fireworks

(Article source: Country Living)





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:

'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-Wve HR9 5NB

