OURPLACEMENS

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

APRIL 2022

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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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The Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race Sunday 3rd April 2022

London

Watch crews from Oxford and Cambridge universities battle it out on the Thames during The Men's Boat Race and The Women's Boat Race.

One of the biggest free sporting spectacles in London that can be enjoyed by the whole family, The Boat Race creates a festive atmosphere on the banks of the river Thames. Up to 250,000 people flock to the riverbanks every year to join the celebrations and watch the University of Oxford and University of Cambridge eight-oared rowing boats race along the river Thames. You can enjoy the Festival of Rowing from 11.30am to 1.30pm, a flotilla of traditional and historically significant boats and vessels, led by the Royal Row barge Gloriana, which was built in 2012 for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

What is The Boat Race route?

The Boat Race course, known as the Championship course, between Putney and Mortlake has been home to The Men's Boat Race since 1845 and The Women's Boat Race since 2015. You can find a place to watch on either side of the river along the full length of the course, but some of the best spots include:

- Putney Bridge, where Positively Putney is running a Street Food Festival at St Mary's Church Square (at the start).
- Bishop's Park, where you can find the Chapel Down Sparkling Wine Bar, Shepherd Neame Beer Bar, street food traders and a big screen to follow the action.
- Furnivall Gardens, where you can enjoy the Shepherd Neame Beer Bar, street food traders and a big screen to follow the
- · Dukes Meadows and Chiswick Bridge (at the finish).

When is The Boat Race?

The Boat Race 2022 takes place on 3 April. The Women's Boat Race starts at 2.23pm and the Men's Boat Race begins at 3.23pm.

The Grand National 2022

Saturday April 9th, 2022 at 5.15pm

Aintree Racecourse, near Liverpool.

The greatest steeplechase in the world.

No other race arouses so much interest worldwide. At least 600 million people are said to watch on TV. And in England, people who never bet on anything have "a flutter" on the Grand National. Plan ahead and you could be one of almost 200,000 who attend the three-day race meet. Friday is Ladies Day, a great social event with smart attire and big hats.

The Grand National itself is run on Saturday and, after the buildup, the four and a half mile race, over 30 fences, is finished in minutes. Seventy thousand are there on the day and the atmosphere is electric.



Van Gogh Self-Portraits 3rd February to 8th May 2022

Courtauld Gallery, Somerset House, London

Self-Portraits takes as its springboard Van Gogh's iconic Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear, one of the most celebrated works in The Courtauld's collection, and will bring together around half of the self-portraits Van Gogh created during his short years as a painter.

This will be the first time that the full span of Van Gogh's selfportraiture has been explored in an exhibition. Several works in the exhibition were last together in Van Gogh's studio and have never been reunited, until now.

An outstanding selection of 16 self-portraits will be brought together to trace the evolution of Van Gogh's self representation, from his early Self-Portrait with a Dark Felt Hat, created in 1886 during his formative period in Paris, to Self-Portrait with a Palette, painted at the asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in September 1889, one of his last self-portraits before his death in 1890. The myth of Van Gogh today is linked as much to his extraordinary life as it is to his stunning paintings. This exhibition will allow both aspects to be explored.



Is it cheaper to have a bath or a shower? Your energy questions answered

From boiling pasta to vampire devices, experts explain how you can reduce your bills. With energy bills on everyone's mind, those little questions about how to cut your use have come to the fore. We asked experts to answer some FAQs.

Is it cheaper to boil water for pasta in an electric kettle or a pan on a gas hob?

The million-dollar question. Brian Horne, a senior insight and analytics consultant at the Energy Saving Trust, says a kettle is more efficient than a hob for heating water as it is heated from the inside, whereas the pan is heated from the outside and needs to get warm first. Kettles will boil water faster and use fewer units of energy. But while gas hobs take much longer and use up to three times more energy in unit terms, the consumer group Which? says that because gas is cheaper than electricity (less than a third per unit), it works out slightly cheaper to boil water on a gas hob than using an electric kettle. This assumes you are boiling only the quantity you need, are using a lid and switch off the hob as soon as it has boiled.





Health & Environment Feature

Am I wasting energy by leaving my phone charger plugged in?

Yes. British Gas estimates that as much as 23% of our electrical usage, or £200 a year currently, could be put down to what are being termed vampire devices - chargers left plugged in and switched on or items on standby. Hi-fis, televisions, set-top boxes and games consoles that sit on standby are all using power - and the older the device, the greater the standby load.

However, it is also the unseen chargers, such as those for electric toothbrushes, razors, etc. "As soon as your device is fully charged, try to get into the habit of unplugging it," says Marc Robson, a British Gas smart energy expert. "As well as saving energy, this will prolong your battery life. And it could also save you about $\mathfrak{L}60$ a year on your electricity bills."



Are electric or gas hobs cheaper to cook on?

Gas, because the unit price is far less than the unit price of electricity. This is partly offset if you have an induction hob. "If you're looking to reduce your carbon emissions, consider using an electric or induction hob rather than gas," Horne says. "Induction hobs are typically the most energy-efficient as no energy is wasted heating space around the pan."

Whichever you use, Robson says you can cut energy use by some careful choices: "Use the right size of saucepan for what you're cooking and fill it with just enough water. Putting a lid on will save energy and reduce condensation in the kitchen, too."

Should I microwave soup rather than using a hob?

If you are reheating food, microwaves are more efficient than electric and gas ovens, Horne says. "Comparing a microwave with a hob is trickier, though - the microwave is likely to use the least energy but a gas hob may still be cheaper."

Can I wash my clothes properly at less than 40C?

Yes. "Modern washing powders and detergents work effectively at lower temperatures," Horne says. Brands such as Ariel and Persil advertise that their products work at 30C. None seem to make claims about washes below that. However, Which? says its tests found "cleaning power was slightly worse at 20C compared with 40C" but "switching to a liquid detergent helped, and should still be enough for everyday cleaning".

Just moving the dial down to 30C will make a big difference to the cost of running a washing machine - Horne says it will cut the energy needed by 40%. Robson adds: "Spin your clothes before hanging them out to dry, instead of relying on your tumble dryer."

Should I keep my house at a constant heat or let it cool down and warm up?

You will always save money by turning the heating off when you don't need it, Horne says. It will take extra energy to heat up when you turn it back on but this will always be less than the energy wasted by running the heating when you don't need to. He says the only exception is if you have a heat pump, as these are more efficient if you leave them running for longer at a lower output.

Martyn Bridges, the director of technical support at the boiler maker Worcester Bosch, agrees: "It is generally more economical to turn off your heating system when you are not so much in need of it. For example, through the night or parts of the day when the house is empty."

Does it always make sense to turn lights off when you leave a room?

Traditional lightbulbs and modern LED lights don't take any extra energy to turn on, so you should always turn them off when you are not using them or when you leave a room, Horne says. He says this could save you about £20 a year.

Robson says LEDs are so energy-efficient that it won't make much difference to your bills if you leave them on for five minutes when you pop out of the room "but we always advise turning them off anyway, so that you get into good habits".

If you do still have any traditional lightbulbs, switching them for LEDs will result in a 69% energy saving.

Is it cheaper to have a bath or a shower?

A short(ish) shower. Worcester Bosch's Bridges says: "A typical bath requires about 90 litres of water, split between 60 litres or so of hot water and 20 to 30 of cold. A normal thermostatic mixer shower head discharges about nine litres a minute, requiring about six litres of hot and three litres of cold. So, providing you shower in less than 10 minutes, it will be more economical to shower."

(Article source: The Guardian)



Health & Lifestyle News

A new start after 60: I worked in a tiny office for 30 years - then I took up falconry and am out in rain, shine and cold'

After decades working in IT, with a window overlooking a car park, Mitch Law took redundancy and now watches his Harris hawk soaring in the wind.



The Guardian reports that for nearly 30 years, Mitch Law went to work in the same office - four metres square, with a window that overlooked a car park. As an IT manager in Warrington, he wasn't isolated. Besides, his wife Bernice was a colleague. But Law spent his working life tethered to a desk in a room like a box.

When they both applied for redundancy, Bernice was turned down. "But for me, they went, 'Mitch, oh right, 28 years - yeah, byeee!"

He must think of his tiny office when he is flying Chokky, the Harris hawk he bought in 2019, when he was 65. "I walk up a bit of a ridge. The west wind's coming.

He goes out of sight and then slowly works his way back, working the wind, until he hovers above me, hanging in the wind, looking down at me. When he lands on my glove you can hardly feel him, he's so soft. I never get sick of it."

Law had no family history of falconry, but when Bernice retired five years later, it spurred him to action. "That's when I realised that she was going to catch me doing nothing all day. I thought, what shall I do?

"I rang up our local falconry and asked if they wanted any volunteers. They said, 'Come along on Monday." It must have felt strange turning up as a novice; he had been there only once, when Bernice gave him a falconry experience for his 50th birthday. "The first thing you get shown is cleaning. Sixty birds - that's a lot of poo."

Next he learned to tie the jesses, to secure the birds to the glove. He practised the "falconer's knot" at home on the bathroom towel-holder.

"Slowly I gained knowledge and I never stopped learning. The contrast between being in that office - centrally heated, nice and warm, cup of tea - to going out every morning - rain, shine, cold ... It was invigorating."

After five years as a volunteer, he bought Chokky. For the first two weeks, the hawk would not eat. Law sat in the dark in Chokky's mews (as falconers call their birdhouses), with the bird on his fist. After a few days, he let in light.

Next, he took Chokky to the kitchen; they would sit watching telly. Law feared the hawk "would die of dehydration". Then, one day, Chokky gobbled the food Law offered him; two days later he hopped from the gatepost to Law's glove. Within a week, he was flying free.

"Harris hawks just get it. In the wild they hunt in family packs," and work well with people because of that, Law says.

Law describes himself as a doer; management profile tests have told him this. Before retiring, he tried flying model aircraft, canoeing, kickboxing, surfing and golf.

His father was a doer too, "a very accomplished man" who handbuilt boats and flew model aircraft at the same club Law later attended.

He had left home at 17 "because of friction" between them. He tried lots of jobs, from deep-sea trawling to wire drawing, working in shops, factories and warehouses, before discovering his talent for computer programming.

"Men have to leave home, make their own way and come back to appreciate their dads," Law says. In adulthood, he and his father became close.

Unlike the myriad pursuits he had tried before, "Falconry was something I loved immediately and stuck with," he says. "I know Dad would have absolutely loved it and joined me.

"I sometimes say to Bernice, 'Let me work this out again. Am I 68?'" It doesn't seem long since he used to wonder, as older colleagues celebrated their 40th birthdays, "What are they going to do now they are so old?"

Chokky is likely to live about 25 years, Law says. "He will probably out-see me. So that will be my future as a falconer. And I know in my heart I will always love it."

Climbing the ridge to release the hawk is beginning to feel like hard work - Law is "not in great health" now - but nothing will stop him from flying Chokky.

"When I get to a point where I can't hop over that gate and get up that ridge, I'll fly him out of the tree in my garden."

(Story source: The Guardian)



Health & Lifestyle News

Drinking two coffees a day may cut the risk of heart disease and an early death by up to 15%, studies claim

Drinking two to three cups of coffee per day may slash the risk of developing heart problems and prolong your life, studies suggests.



The Daily Mail reports that researchers analysed data from nearly 400,000 people in their 50s who did not have heart disease and followed them up for 10 years.

They found in general drinking two or three cups of coffee each day - in line with the amount consumed by the average Briton and American - was best. These people had a 10 to 15 per cent lower risk of developing coronary heart disease, heart failure, irregular heartbeat or dying for any reason within a decade.

The benefits held regardless of whether participants drank instant or ground coffee - but decaf did not yield the same health benefits. Researchers also looked at people who already had some form of heart disease, and discovered two to three cups a day was associated with lower odds of dying compared with not drinking any, despite concern among medics that the stimulant can worsen heart issues.

Professor Peter Kistler, an expert at the Baker Heart Institute in Melbourne, Australia, who led the study, said: 'Our data suggest that daily coffee intake shouldn't be discouraged, but rather included as a part of a healthy diet for people with and without heart disease.'

Coffee beans contain more than 100 compounds linked to lower levels of inflammation and an increased metabolism. The researchers said these mechanisms may be some of the factors behind how drinking the beverage can boost heart health.

Researchers at the Baker Heart Institute in Melbourne studied data from the UK BioBank - a database containing health information from more than half a million Britons who were monitored for 10 years.

Those included in the database completed a questionnaire on how many cups of coffee they drank per day.

In the first study, the team examined data on 382,535 people, aged 57 on average, with no heart problems. Study results, which will be shared in full at an American College of Cardiology conference in Washington, DC, next week showed drinking two to three cups per day was linked with the biggest benefit.

Their risk of suffering from coronary heart disease, heart failure, a heart rhythm problem or dying for any reason by the end of the study was 10 to 15 per cent lower. However, the team found those who drank one cup of coffee per day were at the lowest risk of having a stroke or dying from heart problems.

Professor Kistler, head of arrhythmia research at the Alfred Hospital and Baker Heart Institute, said there is a 'whole range of mechanisms' through which coffee may improve heart health and reduce mortality.

The biological compounds in coffee can reduce inflammation, improve insulin sensitivity - which reduces blood sugar - and boosts metabolism. It also reduces the gut's ability to absorb fat and blocks receptors involved with abnormal heart rhythms. Caffeine is also known to suppress appetite, which could lead to lower rates of obesity and its related health conditions.

In a second arm of the study, the team looked at 34,279 individuals with cardiovascular disease to determine how coffee intake affected their health. Overall, those who drank two to three cups of coffee each day had the lowest odds of dying over the 10-year period. And consuming any amount of coffee did not increase the risk of developing heart rhythm problems, which some doctors cite as a reason to cut back coffee intake. Coffee is known to trigger an increase in heart rate and heart palpitations. The team found those who had atrial fibrillation - a common type of heart rhythm problem - and drank one cup of coffee per day were nearly 20 per cent less likely to die during 10 years of follow-up compared to non-coffee drinkers.

Professor Kistler said doctors 'generally have some apprehension' about people continuing to drink coffee if they have cardiovascular disease or arrhythmias - an abnormal heart beat. He said: 'So they often err on the side of caution and advise them to stop drinking it altogether due to fears that it may trigger dangerous heart rhythms. 'But our study shows that regular coffee intake is safe and could be part of a healthy diet for people with heart disease.'

In a third arm of the study, Professor Kistler and his team examined whether the type of coffee consumed - instead, ground, caffeinated or decaf - affected the health benefits gained from the drink. They found the best health benefits were spotted among those who drank two to three cups a day.

Drinking decaf coffee was not linked with lower rates of arrhythmia or heart failure, but appeared to protect against other forms of cardiovascular disease. Professor Kistler said this suggests caffeinated coffee is 'preferable'. The team noted that their findings did not take into account the participants' diet - which can play a role in the development of cardiovascular disease - or whether they added cream, milk or sugar to their drink.

(Story source: Daily Mail)



Railway routes: 10 of the best train journeys in Europe - fast or slow

A new book on rail travel across the continent showcases gorgeous scenery, historic routes and adventures at a slower pace.

Railways in Europe are many things. With their grand stations, history and evocative destinations, they evoke a timelessness that is absent from the uniform experience of flying. In recent decades, high-speed services have complemented classic routes, while the demand for more climate-friendly travel has grown and new options have sprung up, including a recent wave of night trains.

Lonely Planet, which for nearly 50 years has championed a down-to-earth, connected style of travel, has produced a new Guide to Train Travel in Europe aimed at unlocking adventures by rail from any starting point on the continent. Here the authors pick fantastic journeys from the book.

Paris to Berlin - fast or slow

A well-established network of high-speed trains and a huge choice of slower options connects two of Europe's great cities. A glorious three-country tour would allow you to head from Paris to Brussels, travelling on to Cologne via the space-age architecture of Liège-Guillemins station.

Cologne's cathedral is so close to the station you can hardly miss popping in before boarding an onward ICE German fast service to the capital, which takes less than five hours. To see more than the immediate surroundings of the station buildings in each city, book separate tickets for each leg at trainline.com, or add in a stop of a few hours or an overnight booking via Deutsche Bahn (bahn.de). A high-speed connection from Paris via Frankfurt is also possible.

Amsterdam to Vienna on the Nightjet

One of several recent additions to Europe's sleeper train scene, the Nightjet service operated by Austrian Railways (oebb.at) departs every evening at 7pm or 7.30pm from Amsterdam.

As you doze off, the train will trundle alongside the Rhine, passing Cologne and Koblenz, then continuing south-east through Germany and entering Austria at Passau. A 9.19am arrival in Vienna ensures time for a lie-in and breakfast.



Leisure & Travel Feature

This train can easily be combined with the Eurostar service from London or a ferry from Newcastle to Amsterdam, or from Harwich to Hoek van Holland.

Loop the loop in North Wales

Some of the world's most beautiful narrow-gauge railways can be found in Wales and two of the best can be combined in a loop that takes in the mountains and coastal scenery of Snowdonia.

Catch a service from Llandudno Junction - which has main line connections - down the Conwy valley to Blaenau Ffestiniog. Change for the celebrated Ffestiniog Railway, a distinctive steamhauled service that winds 13 miles down to the coast at Porthmadog. Return via the sublime steam service of the Welsh Highland Railway under the summit of Snowdon to Caernarfon, where you can catch a bus to Bangor and main line services.

From Bastia to Ajaccio through the Corsican interior

The Chemins de Fer de la Corse (Corsican Railways) is a narrow-gauge railway centred on Ponte Leccia - from where three main lines head to Ajaccio, Bastia and Calvi, all providing incredible views of beautiful and rugged terrain. The route linking Ajaccio and Bastia is the longest and most celebrated, taking three and a half hours, so is best done with an overnight stop, rather than attempted as a day trip. Corsica is well served by ferries from mainland France such as Toulon, Marseille and Nice, opening up a tempting train-and-ferry route from the UK.

Dublin to Madrid by train and ferry

It is possible to head from Dublin direct to mainland Europe. A largely single-track line skirts the Irish Sea heading south as far as Wicklow before veering inland and stopping in the appealing county town of Wexford, set on the estuary of the River Slaney. It's a short hop along the tracks from there to the port of Rosslare for the twice-weekly ferries to Bilbao, which take about 30 hours. Then it's a five-hour rail journey on to Madrid. Recommended stops take in Burgos's treasured cathedral, the former Spanish capital of Valladolid and Segovia's Roman aqueduct and Alcázar fortress.

Venice to Palermo - across the water in Italy

Heading from top to toe in Italy, this dramatic journey's potential stopping points need no introduction. Fast Frecciarossa trains connect Venice to the gastronomic centre of Bologna in 90 minutes, with Florence 40 minutes down the line. An hour and a half further on you're in Rome. From here the south of Italy opens up. For one of Europe's most unusual rail experiences take a train service all the way to Sicily. At Villa San Giovanni in Calabria, you and your carriage board a dedicated ferry to Messina, in Sicily, from where the hectic fun of Palermo is a slow-rolling four and a half hours' ride away along the coast. There are several daily intercity and night services that run from the mainland, via the ferry, through to the Sicilian capital including sleepers direct from Milan. Genoa and Pisa.

From coast to coast, via a mountain high - Oslo to Bergen

A contender for Europe's best train trip, the Bergen Line (Bergensbanen) thunders past southern Norway's mountains and lakes between Oslo and Bergen, reaching 1,222m at Finse station, where a snowball fight is generally on offer. The trip takes nearly seven hours, which passes quickly in a blur of incredible scenery on a comfortable intercity service. There's scope to do a longer version of this route taking the Norway in a Nutshell tour, which includes the Flåm Railway - possibly the world's most scenic branch line - and a boat journey through Nærøyfjord and Aurlandsfjord.

Paris to Barcelona on the slow train

These cities are linked by a fast train, but there's a leisurely route south through France to the Pyrenees via Limoges, Toulouse and through magnificent rural and mountain scenery to Latour-de-Carol. While it's possible to reach Latour-de-Carol by direct night train from Paris, you would miss the slowly unfolding views you can enjoy when doing this journey in daylight. From Latour-de-Carol a commuter line runs all the way to Barcelona and takes just over three hours. Possible stops along the way include fortified Ribes de Freser and Ripoll, home to an ancient monastery and a good starting point for hiking trails.

Budapest to Split on a sleeper

During the summer there's a tempting night service between Hungary's capital and the Adriatic. In recent years the train has left Budapest at midnight, getting into Split after lunch. En route it passes the Hungarian holiday playground of Lake Balaton and Zagreb, Croatia's capital. Once on the Adriatic coast, buses head south to Dubrovnik, while ferries and catamarans radiate out to nearby islands.

Locarno to Domodossola through the Swiss Alps (pictured top left)

Pretty much any journey in Switzerland promises jaw-dropping scenery, and on several routes trains run slowly specifically to show off the mountains, rivers and lakes that can be seen from the window. Travelling between Locarno in Switzerland to Domodossola in the Piedmont region of Italy, the Centovalli (Hundred Valleys) Railway is a short but scenic service past 52km of waterfalls, chestnut groves, church-topped villages, deep ravines and vineyards. Highlights include the Isorno Bridge near the village of Intragna and Intragna's gorge.

These routes, plus tips on rail travel, are featured in Lonely Planet's Guide to Train Travel in Europe by Tom Hall, Imogen Hall and Oliver Smith (£19.99), available at shop.lonelyplanet.com

(Article source: The Guardian)

8



Food & Drink Feature

'It hugs your soul!' 9 dishes to get you fighting fit after an illness, from ramen noodles to spicy tom yum soup

Whether you're getting over Covid, or just a nasty cold, these comforting recipes from top chefs will lift your spirits.

When you are feeling under the weather, eating good, nutritious food can make all the difference. Simple, comforting dishes, such as soup, are a firm favourite among the convalescing, as are nourishing casseroles, while some people swear by meals with a spicy kick when they are feeling blocked up. Fluids are important, as are foods that will give you energy and provide essential vitamins and minerals.

Sadly, there is no miracle dish to provide a quick fix when you are sick. But, with Covid cases on the rise once again in the UK, and seasonal lurgies still doing the rounds too, we asked chefs about the meals they turn to when they are unwell.

Roast chicken with lentils and kale

Tamal Ray, doctor, TV presenter and 2015 Great British Bake Off finalist. When I'm ill, I eat simple stuff: my mum used to make me mashed potatoes with basmati rice. I also have a chicken dish I make after I've been ill, to get back on track. I roast a chicken in a big tray, along with onions and garlic in a separate tray. Once the chicken is cooked, I take it out and pour some boiling water into the tray to make a stock to cook the lentils in. Then I steam kale, stir it into the cooked lentils along with the onions and garlic, and serve with the chicken on the side and a spoonful of Greek yoghurt.

Fish curry with maize

Nokx Majozi, chief pie-maker at the Holborn Dining Room, London. When I'm not feeling well, I like to make a comforting fish curry with maize. There are some great health benefits: the fish is high in protein, the maize (you can also use polenta) provides fibre, and ginger and garlic are known for their antioxidants. This meal also has a lot of sentimental value - it reminds me of being in the kitchen as a child with my late father, who used to make it for us. I'm from Durban in South Africa, and he worked in the harbour, next to the fishmonger. He often used to come home with fresh fish for dinner, so it's a fond memory.

Ramen noodles

Stuart Gillies, chef and co-owner of Number Eight, Sevenoaks. When I'm unwell, I usually go for broth and ramen - you get so much goodness in there. I use dashi stock and bonito flakes as the base - then you can add whatever you want: herbs (freshly picked and coarsely chopped), soft boiled eggs, salmon or cod, chicken or beef, soya beans, peas, broccoli - anything goes. Then we cook and add udon noodles, and top with togarashi (seven-spice mix) or chilli oil. You feel as if you're getting healthier as you eat it! It's really delicious. We're a family of six, so I make it for all of us when we're under the weather.

Ginseng chicken soup

Judy Joo, chef patron and co-founder of Seoul Bird, London. I'm a big fan of hearty soups and stews when I'm not feeling well, and I have perfected my ginseng chicken soup recipe. You simply stuff a whole, corn-fed poussin with dried ginseng, sweet rice, jujube fruit, garlic and other oriental herbs, then boil in a large pan with water for two to three hours until the meat is soft. Serve with freshly chopped spring onions. It warms you from within and hugs your soul. I also make a lot of bone broth and slurp my way back to health! To drink, I'll usually go for a cup of hot water with fresh lemon, ginger slices and manuka honey.

Tinned tomatoes on toast with grated cheese

Lisa Goodwin-Allen, executive head chef at The Gamebird at the Stafford, London. When I'm sick, I want something hearty. I often turn to homemade soups and broths, but my guilty pleasure is tinned tomatoes on toast with grated cheese. You want tiger bread or sourdough, nicely toasted and buttered. Heat the tinned tomatoes until piping hot, then place them on the toast and top with grated cheese - I'd recommend a lancashire cheese - and a little bit of salt. It's quick, easy and not too heavy. If you're not feeling 100% you can leave out the cheese and butter and it will still get you eating something. I'd have it with a cup of green tea.

Pava

Nikhil Mahale, head chef at Farzi Café, London. I don't remember the last time I was ill - but, when I am, I really like to eat an Indian soup made from lambs' trotters, called paya. You boil the trotters for six to eight hours, then add onion, turmeric, roasted cumin, a lot of fresh black pepper, and you can also add red chilli powder and tomatoes. It's a yellow-ish soup, flavoured by the bone marrow from the trotters. It is spicy, but it's really good and it takes all the cold from your body. We serve it with pav bread, baked in a wood-fired oven. I also like to eat chicken ghee roast with wholewheat rotis and chapatis.

Thai tom yum soup (pictured left)

Luke French, chef-owner of Jöro, Sheffield. Whenever I'm poorly, I make a hot and sour Thai tom yum soup. I start by making a really spicy and aromatic Thai red curry paste, which I cook down in coconut oil, then add chicken stock and a touch of coconut milk. Then I add fresh lime juice and rice wine vinegar to make it sour, and a little palm and caster sugar. To that, I'll add shredded chicken or prawns and loads of fresh vegetables: broccoli, pak choi, mangetout, broccoli, sweetcorn - anything. I add the veg for 30-40 seconds at the end, so it's nice and crunchy and full of nutrients. At this time of year, I also add handfuls of wild garlic.

Beans on toast with pesto and parmesan

Shaun Rankin, chef patron at Grantley Hall, Ripon. When I'm ill, a quick and easy meal is baked beans on toast with pesto and parmesan. Cook the beans (I use Heinz), then add a dollop of pesto, grated parmesan and butter, give it a good mix, then place on nice, crunchy, sourdough toast. It's feel-good food. I'm a tea drinker, but if I'm ill, it's Lemsip and Berocca. I had Covid in January last year, and lost my sense of taste and smell, so I was fuelling my body with hot porridge and batches of homemade leek and potato soup. I had to add lots of seasoning and garlic to get any flavour out of it.

Kadhi

Tanya Gohil, chef-owner of Silk Road Deli, Glasgow. My go-to dish is kadhi, which is essentially spiced, sour yoghurt soup. My family is from Gujarat, where we have it with sautéed okra. You start off by heating whole spices: mustard seeds, cumin seeds, curry leaves, a cinnamon stick and whole black peppercorns. You also add freshly grated ginger and turmeric for that wholesome-goodness vibe. Separately, mix natural yoghurt with chickpea flour, then add to the spices along with a couple of cups of water. It becomes thick and velvety, with lots of warmth and depth. Add in the sautéed okra 10 minutes before serving and top with fresh coriander, a drizzle of chilli oil and a spritz of lemon.

(Article source: The Guardian)



'Revolutionary in a quiet way': The rise of community gardens in the UK

Royal Horticultural Society sets up first Community Awards as community gardens become more common.

The first melon of the season always tastes amazing," says Lucy Mitchell. "I don't think anyone has ever taken one home - every year, we just cut them into as many slices as there are people in the garden and make sure everyone gets a melon moment."

After almost a decade of being involved with the Golden Hill community garden in Horfield, Bristol, she never gets complacent about the significance of these simple things.

"We remember 'Big Jim', the biggest sunflower who ever grew here, or the miracle sunflowers that grew in the gravel and we wait for the frogs to return to the pond. These things all layer into our story and we look forward to them."

Community gardens are becoming ever more common across the UK, and at the end of September, the Royal Horticultural Society will announce the winners of its first Community Awards.





Home & Garden Feature

"Where groups like this existed, communities seemed to be more resilient when it came to a crisis [like Covid] because they had a pre-established network of volunteers and people already knew each other so they could easily offer support," says Kay Clark, who heads up the RHS community gardening programme.

"With wellbeing and nature connection becoming top priority during lockdown, we had this massive surge of interest in gardening and the community groups were there to help people learn how to garden, teach skills, share knowledge, plants, tools and all sorts as well as inspire people and cheer them up."

Because so many community gardens spring up at such a grassroots level - you just need the landowner's permission and a small group of willing helpers - it's hard to gauge exact numbers, but anecdotally, Clark has seen a big uplift in volunteer numbers coming to existing groups over the past 18 months.

The RHS will be focusing on supporting new groups with resources and training in the near future in response to growing demand. Some gardens can be run on a shoestring, too, and she advises to start small: "Gardeners are often naturally thrifty - by growing plants from seed and minimising waste, costs can be kept right down. It doesn't have to be Grand Designs."



Mitchell is the only paid member of staff at Golden Hill, a 2000m2 sanctuary tucked away between a prison and a primary school.

Over the course of three years, from 2011 to 2013, an £88k grant from the national lottery's local food fund helped transform a boggy site into a multi-functional, wheelchair-accessible garden that is now home to a big pond, two polytunnels, raised beds for growing veg and an edible forest.

The plan was always to become financially viable and selfsustaining and in 2015 Golden Hill registered as a communityinterest company, a type of social enterprise.

Pilot projects are funded by small fundraising events and occasional grants but day-to-day running is supported by a combination of modest monthly donations from Friends of Golden Hill, and revenue from the educational programmes that they run year-round.

"When we began, we had no idea it would become so childoriented - it has evolved into what it is today," says Mitchell who holds weekly toddler groups (which are as much for the parents for the little ones), afterschool clubs for approximately 70 children every week during term time and holiday adventure days for the local primary children and their families.



"Giving people's children an amazing experience in the garden is a much more feasible income for us than selling our produce. All the organic veg and flowers we grow go to our 25 or so volunteers - as soon as you have freshly grown flowers on the kitchen table, your quality of life goes up."

A sense of fascination runs through Golden Hill, but it is not always guaranteed. When Mitchell takes children into the garden, she never quite knows what their reaction will be: "Sometimes their minds will be blown by something that's absolutely random, like picking gooseberries, another time kids will just shrug their shoulders and be absolutely nonplussed." At the moment, the sea buckthorn that is in fruit has really captured their imagination - despite it tasting 'tart like Haribo sours' they devour them like sweet berries, Mitchell says.

For the children at Golden Hill, gardening club offers a space in nature where they can be free from organised activities. Mitchell says a lot of them just want to spend the time running round and not being told what to do, so nothing is too prescribed.

"When we got to picking potatoes this year, just one person wanted to have a go but by the time we started harvesting, everyone wanted to get involved - I don't think any city folk can ever not find digging up potatoes wildly exciting because it's like finding buried treasure, no one's ever too cool for that." She has noticed an increase in phone calls from people asking advice about how to set up their own community garden: "There's so much potential for growth - every area could have a community garden, I don't think you could ever reach saturation point."

Above all, it's open to everyone, without judgment. "Community gardens are something that nobody is priced out of - anyone can come to this organic garden, pick up a watering can and get involved. You don't need to buy a bamboo toothbrush or an electric car." For Mitchell, it feels "revolutionary in a quiet, non-commercial and fairly radical way".

To find a community garden group near you, visit https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/find-a-group

(Article source: The Guardian)



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

favourite mammal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

'Iulie'



'Julie' (pictured left) came in las small, out in daylight and had tick few weeks, put on enough weigh full recovery. She was released b 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. O

As a friend who knows what a wonder animals can will support our Annual Appeal. Your kind gift will and care for many more vulnerable hedgehogs - Bri mammal.

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



Registered Charity No: 1126812 (England & Wales)

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