OURPLACENews

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

AUGUST 2024



Happy feet!

7 essential foot care tips for a blissful summer

When in France:

15 of the best things to do in Normandy

'Food is the key to understanding Mars:

A gastronomic city tour

Summer pruning and more

Gardening tips for August

PLUS

What's on Health & Beauty Money & Work Leisure & Travel Food & Drink Arts, Crafts & Hobbies Home & Garden

Welcome

Letter from the Luitor

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
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address below.



NEVER leave your dog in a hot car!

Every year, dogs suffer and die when their guardians make the mistake of leaving them in a parked car, even for "just a minute" while they run an errand.

Parked cars are deathtraps for dogs: On a 78-degree day, the temperature inside a parked car can soar to between 100 and 120 degrees in just minutes, and on a 90-degree day, the interior temperature can reach as high as 160 degrees in less than 10 minutes

Animals can sustain brain damage or even die from heatstroke in just 15 minutes. Beating the heat is extra tough for dogs because they can only cool themselves by panting and by sweating through their paw pads.

If you see a dog left alone in a hot car, take down the car's colour, model, make, and license plate number. Have the owner paged in the nearest buildings, or call local humane authorities or police. Have someone keep an eye on the dog.

Don't leave the scene until the situation has been resolved.

If the authorities are unresponsive or too slow and the dog's life appears to be in imminent danger, find a witness (or several) who will back up your assessment, take steps to remove the suffering animal from the car, and then wait for authorities to arrive.

Watch for heatstroke symptoms such as restlessness, excessive thirst, thick saliva, heavy panting, lethargy, lack of appetite, dark tongue, rapid heartbeat, fever, vomiting, bloody diarrhoea, and lack of coordination. If a dog shows any of these symptoms, get him or her out of the heat, preferably into an air-conditioned vehicle, and then to a veterinarian immediately. If you are unable to transport the dog yourself, take him or her into an air-conditioned building if possible and call animal control: Tell them it is an emergency.

Provide water to drink, and if possible spray the dog with a garden hose or immerse him or her in a tub of cool (but not iced) water for up to two minutes in order to lower the body temperature gradually. You can also place the dog in front of an electric fan. Applying cool, wet towels to the groin area, stomach, chest, and paws can also help. Be careful not to use ice or cold water, and don't overcool the animal.

When walking your dog, keep in mind that if it feels hot enough to fry an egg outside, it probably is. When the air temperature is 86 degrees, the asphalt can reach a sizzling 135 degrees - more than hot enough to cook an egg in five minutes. And it can do the same to our canine companions' sensitive foot pads.

On an 87-degree day, asphalt temperatures can reach 140 degrees, hot enough to cause burns, permanent damage and scarring after just one minute of contact. Rapid burns and blistering can occur at 150 degrees. Hot sidewalks, pavement and parking lots can not only burn paws, they also reflect heat onto dogs' bodies, increasing their risk of deadly heatstroke.

If you wouldn't put your dog in a frying pan, please don't make him or her walk on a hot pavement. Always test the pavement with your hand before setting out (too hot to touch is too hot for your dog), walk early in the morning or late at night when it's cooler, carry water and take frequent breaks in shady spots and never make dogs wear muzzles that restrict their breathing.

Summer tips for your dog

1. Exercise your dog early in the morning or late at night.

Since these are the cooler parts of the day, this will make the walk more comfortable for both you and your dog. I'm a believer in vigorous exercise for healthy dogs, but this is the time of year to back off on exercise intensity.

2. Use doggie boots.

You can find these at your local pet supply store. If you can't walk your dog during the early and later hours of the day, this is a good way of protecting him. Heat rises from the ground, especially on surfaces like cement and asphalt, and dogs absorb and release heat through their feet. Just like boots prevent the dog from absorbing the cold in the winter, they also isolate heat.

3. Keep your dog hydrated!

Different dogs have different needs when battling the heat. Keep in mind that darker coats absorb more heat than lighter coats. Also, overweight dogs are at higher risk for dehydration. Carry a bottle of water when going on a walk with your dog. Better yet have your dog carry it for you in a backpack or a vest! The water in the bottles will keep the dog cooler and also give the dog a sense of purpose.

4. Keep your dog in the shade

Don't have air conditioning? No problem! Find a spot in the shade and set up a kiddie pool. Lay down a wet towel for your dog to lie on. Or simply set up a fan in front of a pan of ice.



Happy feet! 7 essential foot care tips for a blissful summer

As the summer sun shines bright, it's time to kick off those shoes and let your feet breathe. Your feet deserve special attention during the summer months, as they are often exposed to sand, heat, and various outdoor activities.

To keep your feet healthy, happy, and sandal-ready, we have compiled a comprehensive guide on how to look after your feet in the summer. By following these tips, you can maintain optimal foot health and enjoy all the joys of the season without any discomfort.

Keep them clean and dry

Summer heat can make your feet prone to excessive sweating, leading to bacterial and fungal infections. Clean your feet daily with mild soap and lukewarm water.

Ensure that you dry them thoroughly, especially between the toes, to prevent the growth of fungi. Avoid walking barefoot in public areas to reduce the risk of picking up infections like athlete's foot.





Health & Lifestyle Feature

Exfoliate and moisturise

Sandal season calls for smooth and supple feet. Regular exfoliation helps remove dead skin cells and keeps your feet looking fresh.

Use a pumice stone or a foot scrub to gently slough off dry skin. Afterwards, moisturise your feet with a foot cream or lotion to keep them soft and hydrated.

Pay extra attention to the heels and calluses, as they tend to become rough and cracked during the summer.

Protect from the sun

While you may diligently apply sunscreen to protect your face and body, don't forget about your feet. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a high SPF to your feet, especially the tops and sides.



Remember to reapply after swimming or excessive sweating. Wearing breathable and lightweight footwear can also provide an added layer of protection from harmful UV rays.

Practice foot hygiene at public pools and beaches

Public pools and beaches are popular summer destinations, but they can harbour harmful bacteria and fungi.

Protect your feet by wearing water shoes or flip-flops when walking on hot sand, pool decks, or in public showers. It will help prevent skin infections and reduce the risk of contracting conditions like plantar warts or fungal nail infections.

Opt for comfortable footwear

Summer is the time to embrace open-toed shoes, sandals, and flip-flops. However, not all footwear is created equal when it comes to foot health.

Choose shoes that provide adequate arch support, cushioning, and a proper fit. Avoid high heels and flat sandals without any arch support, as they can lead to foot pain and discomfort.



Look for breathable materials such as leather or canvas to allow airflow and prevent excessive sweating.

Pamper your feet with soothing soaks

Give your feet a treat after a long day of summer activities. Soaking your feet in warm water with a few drops of essential oils or Epsom salt can help relieve tiredness, reduce swelling, and provide a relaxing experience. Additionally, adding a few drops of tea tree oil to the foot soak can act as a natural antifungal agent and keep your feet healthy.



Stay hydrated and maintain a healthy diet

Proper hydration is essential for maintaining overall foot health. Drinking an adequate amount of water throughout the day helps prevent dry skin and keeps your feet moisturised from within. With the arrival of summer, taking care of your feet becomes even more crucial. By following these simple yet effective foot care tips, you can ensure that your feet remain healthy, comfortable, and ready to take on any summer adventure.

Prioritise cleanliness, protection from the sun, proper hydration, and comfortable footwear to maintain happy and sandal-ready feet

(Article source: Silver Surfers)



Health & Lifestyle News

Do I really need to disclose all my health conditions when taking out travel insurance?

Filling out the form properly could save you tens of thousands of pounds, say the insurance experts.



Silver Surfers reports that travel insurance complaints are at their highest since the pandemic, according to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

The dispute resolution service recorded more than 4,400 complaints in 2023/2024 - and disgruntled holidaymakers shared their concerns about delayed flights, missing luggage and the levels of emergency assistance after falling ill abroad.

Not disclosing your medical history when filling out the insurance form could lead to astronomical medical bills and a lot of stress, so here is everything you need to know about health insurance abroad so you can enjoy your holiday without any stress...

Is it worth paying for travel insurance?

Paying a little extra for travel insurance when booking your next holiday could save you from being sent a whopping medical bill worth tens of thousands of pounds in the post.

"A tailored travel insurance policy should be one of your holiday essentials, no matter where you're going, or for how long," says Simon McCulloch, chief commercial officer at Staysure Insurance. "It provides cover for unexpected events such as medical emergencies, cancellations, lost luggage and more.

"The main two areas you need cover for is for cancellation and medical emergencies," explains McCulloch. "The cost of a medical emergency abroad and repatriation to the UK can be substantial, so travel insurance is there to offer travellers peace of mind and protection against financial loss for unforeseen situations."

Alice Lawson, associate director for insurance at Holiday Extras agrees and adds: "In the rare circumstances where something goes wrong, it can be either dangerous or expensive not to have the right travel insurance.

"The largest costs holidaymakers face if something goes wrong overseas are often medical bills or medical repatriation - a special plane or helicopter for transporting people who are still undergoing medical treatment, plus the trained medical professionals to travel with them.

"Medical repatriation alone, just from Europe, can cost between £30,000 and £60,000, so the financial risk of travelling without the right insurance can be high."

What sort of conditions should I be declaring?

"It's important to declare all pre-existing medical conditions to your insurer to get a tailored policy specifically for your needs," says McCulloch. "This includes long term or chronic conditions (such as diabetes or heart disease), recent or ongoing medical treatments, major health conditions such as cancer or any condition for which you have seen a doctor, undergone surgery, or taken medication for." Alex Cross, insurance director at Tesco Bank, also advises travellers to declare any psychological conditions such as anxiety, depression or eating disorders.

"Honesty really is the best policy when it comes to travel insurance, as failure to declare conditions can invalidate a policy," says Cross. "Full disclosure is essential in every scenario as saving a few pounds on your travel insurance premium is more than offset by the cost of high medical bills overseas if you're not covered."

Lawson agrees and says that even minor conditions like mild asthma should be declared on the form.

"Asthma is a pre-existing chronic condition, even if you consider it mild, this will need to be declared to your insurance provider," states Lawson

What if I'm in good health at the moment?

"Even if you are in good health or your symptoms are well-managed, it is important to declare any past or current medical conditions," advises McCulloch. "Insurance providers need this information to accurately assess risk and provide appropriate cover."

But I won't be doing anything risky on my trip - do I still need to declare?

Even if you have booked a relaxing getaway to the Mediterranean and don't plan to lift a finger once you get there, it is still worth declaring your medical history on the insurance form.

"Your travel insurance is intended to provide reassurance and support if something goes wrong, and not all of the things that can go wrong are a result of risky activities, so you absolutely need to declare everything," urges Lawson. "If you don't declare a relevant condition to your insurer, your insurance may be invalid."



Health & Lifestyle News

What about surgeries and injuries?

"If you're waiting for surgery, you will need to declare that. If you have previously had surgery, you may need to declare that - it will depend on when it was and what it was for. If you're not sure, check with your insurance provider," says Lawson.

Should I get specialist insurance for certain conditions?

If you or a family member has a more complex condition, it may be worth paying extra for a specialised insurance plan.

McCulloch says: "For certain medical conditions, it may be beneficial to seek specialist travel insurance that offers more comprehensive cover tailored to your specific needs."

(Article source: Silver Surfers)

Seven ways to improve your balance

Lack of balance is associated with elderly people, but deterioration can start in your 20s. Here's how to avoid the wobbles.



Work on it, for the sake of your social life

Ageing often leads to a loss of balance, which can result in an increased risk of falls.

But, as a report from the Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago shows, a lack of balance has other consequences.

"A tendency to lose balance among elderly people often results in an overall reduction in the level of physical activity," it says, "and to a decreased ability to function satisfactorily in social roles."

Eliminate medical issues

Ear infections, vertigo and medications, including some antidepressants, antihistamines and pain relief, can cause problems with your "vestibular function" - the system in your inner ear that aids balance and spatial orientation.

You should always see a doctor if you experience any sudden, unusual or severe problems with your balance. Hearing Link has a list of the most common causes.

Strength training

Balance can start to deteriorate in your mid-20s. However, strength training can help, whatever your age. A 2013 study that examined the effects of strengthening exercises on balance concluded: "Improvement in lower limb strength may lead to balance enhancement in neurologically intact older peeople."

Be a flamingo

Simple balance and proprioception exercises can be done at home without the need for equipment. Try alternate balancing on one leg (bending the standing leg slightly at the knee will help if you are wobbly, as will focusing on a stationary point in front of you).

Closing your eyes makes it much harder. Most people are "better" on one leg than the other - single leg exercises can help to strengthen the weaker side.

Step-ups

Using a single step or stair, step up with your right leg in a slow and controlled manner, then bring your left leg up to join it. Step down and repeat, alternating leading legs.

To make it more difficult, find a higher step or use a box in the gym. This simple exercise helps to build hip stability, as well as strengthening knees.

Sit down

Sitting on a stability ball challenges your core and balance. Start with your arms by your sides and your feet on the floor, then lift and extend your right leg while raising your left arm to shoulder height.

Return to a sitting position, then do the same on the other side. Repeat 10 times. Note, though, that a study at the University of Waterloo in Canada concluded there is no benefit to sitting on a ball all day instead of an office chair.

Bodyweight exercises

Exercises such as lunges and squats will help to make you stronger, increase your range of motion and challenge your balance.

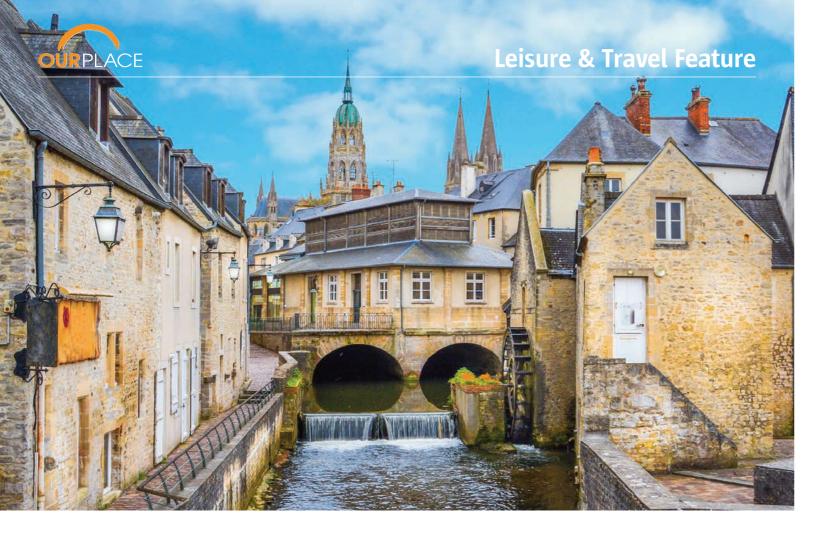
Good form is important to maximise benefits. For a squat, stand with feet facing forward, hip distance apart.

Making sure not to arch your back, hinge at the hips and push them back - imagine there is a chair behind you that you are about to sit on

Keep your abs engaged and don't go too low if it causes your back to arch. Hold for a couple of seconds, then drive up through your heels, back to standing.

(Article source: The Guardian)

6



When in France: 15 of the best things to do in Normandy

Normandy: the northwest region of France rolls off an English-speaking tongue as easily as a French one. It's known for its bucolic countryside and impossibly long stretches of beach where the famous D-Day landings took place during WWII.

Beyond the shores lies much to discover: a rich literary history, four protected designation of origin cheeses, and of course, the iconic Mont St-Michel, a surreal Gothic abbey dating from the 13th century set on top of an island that appears to float like a mystical dream on water during high tide.

But the floating abbey is just the tip of an iceberg of things to do in the region, which can be divided into two main sections.

There's La Normandie Haut, or upper Normandy aka the Parisian's Normandie, accessible by train and dotted with beachgoers and casino gamblers in Deauville and Trouville.

Then there's La Basse Normandie, or lower Normandy, which is much farther from the country's capital and offers sights and tastes a bit more off-the-beaten-track.

For those who are in need of a deep breath of fresh air, here are the very best things to do, eat and see in Normandy that'll leave you wanting to come back for more.

Holiday like a Parisian in seaside Deauville

For those with busy schedules that want to carve out a weekend with fresher seaside air, a quick train ride will take you from the bustling French capital to the calmer and more relaxed shores of the Côte Fleurie. One popular destination is the glamorous beachside town Deauville.

There you'll find locals with their sunglasses on and sleeves rolled, strolling in loose linen outfits that perfectly match the white sand beaches dotted with colourful umbrellas.



Leisure & Travel Feature

Along the shore you'll find Les Planches, 1920s wooden art-deco changing cabins bearing the names of Hollywood stars who've attended the town's yearly fall American film festival.

If proximity to fame makes you hungry, get the perfect meal at L'Etoile Sur Mers where you can pick out seafood that will freshly cookedand served (though the uni - or sea urchin - is exceptional raw).

Equestrian fans can head to the Deauville-La Touques racecourse, where the fiberglass sand track allows for races even in the winter, or sit on a plush leather chair and test your luck at one of the many spinning bright lights of the slot machines at the Casino Barriere.

Planning tip: If you're making the trip from Paris, book train tickets in advance online. You could also save up to 30% on train fares

See the famous 11th-century tapestry in Bayeux

Before there was Netflix, there was the Bayeux Tapestry, an 11th-century 70m-long (230ft) scroll of hand-embroidered wool thread on linen that tells the story of the Norman Conquest of England. And incredibly, this rare piece of art is just as mesmerizing as it ever was.



At the museum, you enter a dark and cool chamber wrapped with tales of 1066: warfare, kings being crowned, kidnappings, farming, and even a comet.

This one-of-a-kind piece radiates with a strange magic; since it was commissioned shortly after William the Conqueror's victory at the Battle of Hastings, it's as if the emotions of the time were captured through thread and needle by those who lived and witnessed the events.

Tour Caen Castle and visit the Caen Memorial Museum

Caen is the capital city of the Calvados department of Normandy and has a history going back to Roman times.

Today you can still spot stone houses from the Middle Ages in the Vaugueux neighbourhood, and history buffs should check out this unique tour with Viking specialist, Laurence. With tours available in both English and French, you'll visit the castle, town hall, and both the men's monastery (L'Abbaye-aux-Hommes) and the nunnery (L'Abbaye-aux-Dames).

On rainy days (chances: high, bring an umbrella), you can head inside to the Caen Memorial Museum that sits atop an old German bunker. One of the most visited memorials by the French, this sprawling museum covers an immense amount of ground (plan at least three hours).

Despite the breadth of information, there is an uniquely intimate glimpse of the past offered through artefacts: shoes and uniforms that belonged to the actual soldiers, newspapers and propaganda of the day and even a wartime wedding dress made from a parachute.

Once you've worked up an appetite, head to Le Bouchon Du Vaugueux for a taste of traditional dishes of the terroir made from locally-sourced seasonal products in a snug and convivial space - hone your French-listening skills by eavesdropping on neighbouring conversations.

Planning tip: The Memorial Museum, despite a deceptively grand entrance, can get really crowded in the mornings with tour groups. Visit in the afternoon for more breathing room.

Sample Camembert on a Normandy cheese tour

In French, there's a saying "en faire tout un fromage", which essentially means to make a big fuss, or cheese, out of something. It's used in a chiding manner, but let's be real: French cheese is something that deserves a big fuss. Normandy doesn't lack in the cheese department, and each of the famous four has a hometown you can visit.

There's the world-famous Camembert, which is creamy and soft. Livarot, which is a soft and stinky cheese made from the local Normandy breed of cows. Pont l'Evêque is a square and soft cheese that reached the height of its fame during the 14th century, and offers a subtle hazelnut taste. Finally, there's Neufchâtel, another soft cheese made from raw milk that also has the honour of being the oldest cheese from the region, and usually comes in a heart-shape.

All are worth a taste, but a visit to the Fromagerie Reo in Lessay merits a visit above the rest. Tour the factory to see first-hand how Camembert is made there with a brilliant English-speaking guide and best of all, at the end, you get a to sample the cheese.

Detour: If you've got enough dairy and have an interest in antique vehicles, head to the nearby Paul's Classic Cars, where you can look at vintage collection cars like a 1961 Austin Healy and a 1966 Ford Mustang. While there are many Americans obsessed with French cheese, it's charming to meet one Frenchman obsessed with American cars - most of them are imported from California.

Continued on pages 10-11...



Frolic at the colourful beach huts at Gouville-sur-Mer

Sometimes the most beautiful sights are the unexpected and unassuming: impressive Gothic cathedrals are nice, but after a while all of that grandeur can tire the eye.

Take refuge in the pleasing line of white beachside changing cabins with bright primary colour roofs in red, yellow and blue that turn the natural landscape of Gouville-sur-Mer into a painting one can meander in.

The cabins were originally built for vacationers in the 1920s, disappeared during the German occupation and were reinstated post-liberation - now, there are about 70 in total. Nearby, you can lunch at L'azac, where you'll find unpretentious and delicious food at affordable prices served by friendly staff.

Detour: Coutances is a 15-minute drive from Gouville-sur-Mer and is home to one of Normandy's best creperies, Crêperie Le Râtelier, which has been around for over 20 years. Call ahead to reserve a table (+33 2 33 45 56 52) since it's often fully booked and ask for the soubise, a simple crepe of confit onion and butter.

Eat oysters fresh off the beach at Barneville-Carteret

For the French, prendre l'air, or to get some fresh air, is a key concept to good health, and there's no better way to do that than to go for a long stroll on a Normandy beach.

Clear your mind in Barneville-Carteret, a town that won't be teeming with tourists, where you can even find fresh oysters in the water to eat if you can shuck 'em by hand.

An easier-to-eat fresh and free sea treat are the calyptraea chinensis, also called the Chinese snail hat, which are often found clinging on to the sides of the jagged rocks poking out of the shore.

All you need to do is pop them off and you can eat the flesh immediately for a taste of the Normandy sea. Keep walking north past a row of blue-and-white cabins until you see the ruins of an old church then look for Le Russel, a cozy and intimate bar à vins with comfort foods like quesadilla and large wedge fries.

Wash everything down with a perfectly mulled wine on cooler nights

Detour: Pick up dessert at La Maison du Biscuit, a charming store that transports you back to 1903. The family-run business offers artisanal cookies, which you can enjoy with a coffee in the tea salon.

Sip on Calvados and chug down AOP cider (pictured top left)

Apples are abundant in Normandy, and with the plentiful harvest the locals have turned the fruit into liquid gold. Calvados is a brandy that must be made in Calvados to merit its AOC status (Appellation d'Origine Protégé).



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Apples are abundant in Normandy, and with the plentiful harvest the locals have turned the fruit into liquid gold. Calvados is a brandy that must be made in Calvados to merit its AOC status (Appellation d'Origine Protégé). Get a taste and tour at Calvados Roger Groult, a family-run distillery that's been around since the beginning of the 19th century and has been distilling apples over wood-fires for over five generations.

The estate is impressive and the tour is infused with passion without being overly salesy - but the tasting at the end works its own magic.

Two hours' drive to the west is Ciderie Claids, is a cidery that's been around since 1992. A visit here is a full-body apple-trip; you smell them first and then the fizzy flavours dance on your tongue. You can even take home a bottle that's been made a certain year, just like wine.

Visit the charming harbour town of Honfleur

Another Upper Normandy port village to visit with cobblestone streets and houses made of timber, Honfleur oozes with charm. It has been around for over a millennium, but unlike other port cities, it is situated at the end of the Seine, which means it's at the edge of the sea and riverside. Lining the harbour are tall and narrow slate roof houses that are reflected in the water lined with boats by day and glowing with amber street lights by night.



Meander towards the town hall, where you'll find a decadent carousel from 1900 that remains frozen in time; lions, giraffes, horses and old-world glamor carriages spin around and around as the sailboats drift by.

From the historic centre it's a nice uphill hike to the 17th-century chapel (which may be difficult for young children or those with mobility issues) Notre-Dame de Grâce, where you can see model ships, an ancient organ, and views of the sea and the Pont de Normandie.

Planning tip: From Honfleur, it's a 25-minute bus ride to the neighboring port city Le Havre. Famous for its artistic inspiration, Le Havre is where the Impressionist painting movement was born thanks to Monet. Cinephiles may recognize the city too as it's been the backdrop to over 100 films, including the French classic The 400 Blows (1959).

Walk the rocky cliffs at Étretat

For a contact high with nature, head straight to the falaises of Étretat to enjoy the staggering sights of the dizzying chalk cliffs, made up of a type of porous limestone that inspired the likes of painters Claude Monet and Gustave Courbe. Due to the fragile nature of the stone, walking underneath is not allowed, but there are numerous hikes in the area for those who want to take in the natural splendour of the rocky arches.



The well-paved hike of Porte d'Amont Loop that begins at Chemin de Criquetotis is suitable for any fitness level and takes about an hour (though allow longer to really soak in the mythic scenery). For more hardcore hikers, the Roc Vaudieu loop, which takes about four to five hours, offers incredible views of the massive cliffs that emerge from the water.

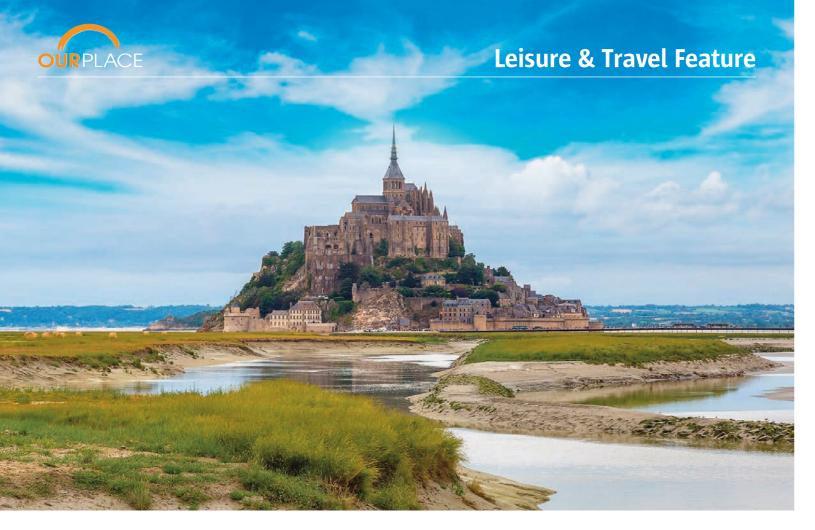
Detour: Aspiring writers may want to visit La Guillette, a villa built by short story writer Guy de Maupassant after he achieved publishing success. You can see the house where Maupaussant worked on Bel Ami and Pierre et Jean, but for actual visits inside contact the association via a form.

Immerse yourself at an interactive old manor turned museum

Part immersive-theatre, part-history lesson, kids and adults alike will giggle and delight in the poetic and playful adventure-meets-spectacle that takes place at Le Manoir du Tourpe. Located in La Hague, this 16th-century manor covers local history, legends, and origin stories through characters that quite literally come to life.

Nestled atop a tranquil and lush countryside where the grass stretches for miles, this free museum also offers craft workshops for children, temporary exhibitions, a cafe-hotel-restaurant Auberge des Goubelins, a library, guided hikes, and even a seed and plant library, where you can bring and swap seeds and plant cuttings.

Detour: Lovers of French romanticism can pay homage to famed poet and screenwriter at Maison Jacques Prévert and daydream of an idyllic, creative existence, about 15km (9 miles) away in Omonville-la-Petite. After a morning of writing under exposed wooden beams, take a leisurely walk along stone-paved paths through a garden perfumed with orange tulips, daisies and lilies until you reach an old church and cemetery to ponder the ephemeral nature of life.



Spend a day in Rouen, Normandy's capital city

Like other charming port cities of Normandy, Rouen has endured since Roman times and is brimming with medieval architectural charm. Art-aficionados will particularly appreciate the Museum of Beaux-Arts, which offers a range of idyllic landscape paintings, homages to ecclesiastical greatness, and of course Impressionist masterpieces.



Best of all: admission is free. If contemporary art is more your speed, Rouen is also known for its street art - follow the map for a glimpse of urban and contemporary art in an ancient city.

Next, be awed as you stand underneath the 14th-century astronomical clock in the city centre as the bells ring.

A guide is available to explain the intricate detailing of the clock thoroughly, though at \in 7.50, it is somewhat steep for the brevity of the tour.

Detour: If you just want to get a taste of the slow life, book yourself a stay at a Parcel tiny house. It's under two hours from Paris but offers a true nature escape to the middle of an apple orchard haven.

Through a partnership with the neighbouring organic farm Jardins de la Thillaye, you can taste Saint-Émilion wine, the best butter of the region, locally made calva and cider, and Norman beef. Bring boots - the trek out to the cabins is long and the grassy fields can turn muddy easily under the volatile Normandy skies.

Snag a striped sweater at Saint James

Clichés of French style include a beret paired with a horizontally striped sweater (cigarette and baguette accessories depending on the time of day), and one of the classic brands for French knitwear, Saint James, is also a charming little village you can visit.

The most famous export, the striped shirt, has a long history: they were uniform for the navy seaman of the North, and the original 1858 design has 21 stripes for each of Napoleon Bonaparte's victories of war.

For a first-hand look at how the sweaters are made, you can get a tour of the Saint James atelier and then leave the shop with your own Breton striped sweater or shirt.



Leisure & Travel Feature

Tour the D-Day beaches

About 22km (14 miles) from Bayeux is Omaha beach, one of the most famous locations of the D-Day landings locations and home to an impressive Memorial Museum.

Nowadays, little evidence of the events of 1944 remain, except for the harrowing American cemetery and concrete German bunkers.

At very low tide you can see remnants of the Mulberry Harbour, a huge temporary port set up off the coast. Otherwise, it's a tranquil spot, a gorgeous golden stretch with dunes and summer houses. Look out for the yellow stripes marking the Circuit de la Plage d'Omaha, a self-guided tour along the beach.

Detour: Once you're done feasting on history, get ready for some of the creamiest and best ice cream of your life at Ferme de la Haizerie in Vaux-sur-Aure. It's a tiny and unpretentious ice cream shop that offers local flavours such as Calvados, and teurgoule - a Normandy rice pudding - made from fresh farm milk.

Marvel at Monet's House and Gardens at Giverny

Claude Monet's house and garden is in the village of Giverny to the north west of Paris. The garden is simply stunning, visit if you can!

Claude Monet's garden at Giverny is probably the most famous garden in France. 500 000 people visit every year. Monet painted some of his most famous paintings whilst living at Giverny.

These included his water lily and Japanese bridge paintings. Monet lived in Giverny from 1883 until his death in 1926.

The garden itself is in two parts with a flower garden in front of the house and the more famous water gardens were started ten years after Monet's arrival at Giverny and constructed on land bought on the other side of the road from his house.

As well as visiting the gardens you can visit Monet's lovely, and very colourful house. It is fairly simple in style but filled with warmth, colour and paintings.

The inside of Monet's house is simply furnished and colourfully painted and has a very warm and inviting atmosphere. You can see the beautiful collection of Japanese prints that inspired Monet's water garden and in his studio there is the Claude Monet foundation's giftshop.

In the room that was originally his studio but became his smoking room there are copies of some of Monet's paintings many of the originals are in the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris. Other rooms contain paintings by Monet's friends - Cezanne, Sisley, Renoir, Manet...

Monet's bedroom is charming, painted pale yellow with simple furniture and three large windows looking out on his beloved garden.

The dining room is the most vibrant with walls and furniture all painted a rich canary yellow - apparently Monet did not care for the dark wood so fashionable in Victorian times!



Planning tip: There are often large queues and so booking on line or buying tickets from the tourist office of Vernon is highly recommended to avoid the queues.

Visit the iconic abbey at Mont St-Michel (pictured top left)

Finally, it'd be impossible to talk about Normandy without mentioning the iconic Mont St-Michel, a floating abbey known as "the Wonder of the Western World".

The sight of it is surreal and unique but it's even better when you aren't fighting for boardwalk space. Get there as early as possible to avoid crowds (or late), and if you can walk, skip the free shuttle that's usually packed with tourists and has long lines.

The best way to discover the island is to simply wander into the tiny crevices and narrow alleys. The abbey itself is beautiful, with chimneys as big as some modern living rooms.

Trekking around barefoot in the surrounding bay is also quite an experience, and the cool sand relieves worn feet, but due to quicksand and a fast-rising tide you should only attempt it with a seasoned guide, such as Ludo, who was raised in the area.

Local tip and detour: While the famous, large and fluffy omelette de la mère Poulard that tourists usually flock to looks impressive, it's quite pricey and not good value.

Drive instead to the Auberge Sauvage, an incredible modern French restaurant that offers 6- or 8-course meals made with locally grown garden fruits and vegetables - the humble carrots transformed into glazed edible sculptures are nothing short of art

(Article source: Lonely Planet)

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'Food is the key to understanding Marseille': A gastronomic city tour

Seduced by the cuisine of the Mediterranean port, an expat American food writer guides us around the 'no fuss' cafes and restaurants that embody France's oldest city.

Tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you what you are," wrote philosopher-gourmand Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in 1825, and this is particularly true of today's Marseille: food is the key to understanding the city.

The kesra flatbread grilled by grandmothers from the Algerian diaspora in Noailles. The pizzas scarfed by Olympique de Marseille jersey-clad teens and families on the rocky beach at sunset. The waterfront restaurant that has served fish to generations of marseillais for more than 80 years. These foods embody the heritage, diversity and conviviality of Marseille.

I moved to Marseille from the US seven years ago, following in the footsteps of celebrated American food writers MFK Fisher and Julia Child, who were similarly seduced by the city.



Exploring its flavours in my articles has broadened my culinary education, as did translating Taste the World in Marseille into English.



Food & Drink Feature

My friends joke that I'm a "living guidebook". I also lead food tours with Culinary Backstreets since, apart from eating, the best way to understand this complex city is to walk it.

Marseille's food scene has boomed in the past few years, sparked by young, self-taught chefs lured by the city's diversity and lower costs. But while I sample these new tables for my work, given the choice I tend to dine à la bonne franquette, choosing the nofuss spots this city does so well.

The first stop of the day is for coffee. Hidden away on the first floor of the Hotel Bellevue above the bustling Vieux-Port is La Caravelle, which was a cabaret venue for sailors in the 1920s. Old murals of vintage boats and the southern French coastline decorate the all-day cafe. On nice mornings, I grab a seat on the sliver of a balcony for an orange pressé, a croissant and a coffee, and admire the view of the Bonne Mère, the famous church that soars above the port.

On the port's esplanade, I walk past fishmongers hawking sea bream and squid and a plaque commemorating Marseille's founding by Phocaeans in 600BC, which "radiated civilisation throughout the Occident". At Patisserie Journo, a Tunisian-Jewish hole-in-the-wall bakery, David offers me a tray of cornes de gazelles, crescent-shaped almond cookies that coat my face in powdered sugar. When I'm there for lunch, I have a tuna- and veggie-packed Tunisian sandwich, deliciously drenched in olive oil. Hot days call for citronnade, Tunisian fresh lemonade.



I stroll past the boutiques on Rue Paradis to the tree-lined Cours Pierre Puget, an elegant avenue named for the 17th-century Marseille-born urban planner and sculptor. Station Uvale is the last remaining grape juice bar in France - a green wooden stand that has been pouring fresh-pressed grape juice since the late 1940s. Known as a cure-all, jus de raisin concentrates the natural sweetness of the grapes without added sugar. The juice bar also acts as a non-alcoholic neighbourhood watering hole, "a gathering place", smiles owner Yannis Amokreze.

As I head west, the opulent, neoclassical buildings give way to graffiti-lined streets. The Noailles district is known as the "belly of Marseille" for its central location and array of foodstuffs. There are Vietnamese spring rolls at Tam-ky, peanuty Ivorian mafé at Mama Africa and Corsican figatelli (pork liver sausage) at Au Grand Saint-Antoine.

At Pizza Charly, calentica, a chickpea flan of Hispano-Algerian origins, illustrates the influence of travel and trade on Marseille's cuisine. People and their recipes have come through the port for 2,600 years, their diversity giving Marseille its signature sauce on and off the table.



Up La Canebière, the city's main artery, the white Saint-Vincent de Paul church (worth a visit for the improbable animals - bats and langoustines - carved on its doors) towers above La Boîte à Sardine. The chalkboard menu at this nautically kitsch space invites you to dive deeper into local cuisine than Marseille's ubiquitous bouillabaisse. Co-owner and former fishmonger Fabien Rugi sources the freshest catch from small fishing operators. His business partner, chef Céline Bonnieu, stuffs the sardines with local goat's cheese, makes octopus caillettes (sausages) and swaps potatoes for panisse, the city's famous chickpea fritters in its signature fish and chips. All are served with the bonhomie of a booze cruise. Solo diners will appreciate the counter seating.

Continuing to the La Plaine neighbourhood, I pass blue and white murals for the revered football club, Olympique de Marseille (OM). The square is also home to the city's cheapest glass of pastis, though I prefer sipping this legendary tipple in my own neighbourhood, Chave, one of the 111 villages that make France's second-largest city feel like a small town. I join regulars under the plane trees outside Le Dernier Métro, the historic bar du quartier that is packed at apéro hour, the post-work drink that is sacred in France. When I'm in the mood for wine, bar à vin Carnage serves natural wines and charcuterie such as porchetta made in-house by owners Auregan Dean and Mathieu Zurcher, who are part of Marseille's new gastronomic guard.

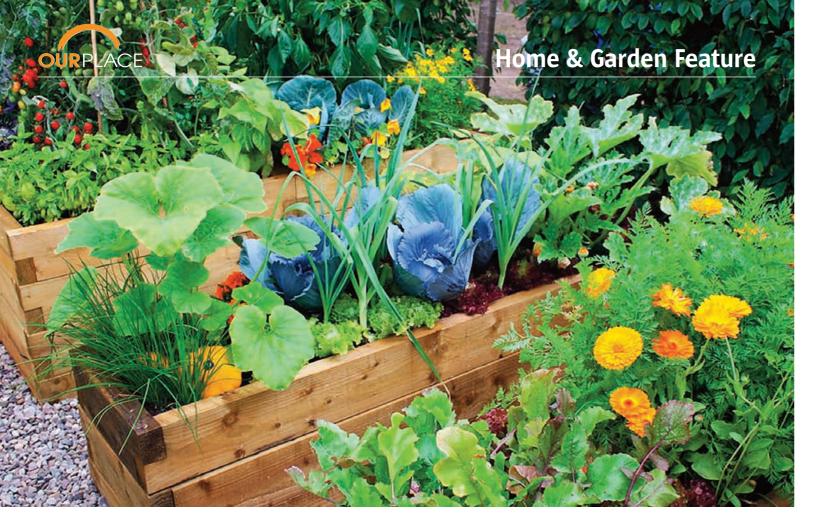
For a pizza evening, my friends and I take the Corniche Kennedy coastal road to Chez Zé, a family-run spot at the edge of Calanques national park that has been going since the 1960s. Following tradition, we order pizza to share as an appetiser - the classic moitié-moitié, part anchovy, part emmental, is Marseille's briny and French spin on the snack brought here by Italian immigrants in the 19th century.

Other Provençal dishes include supions à l'ail (garlic-sautéed small squid), moules marinières, and aubergine à la parmesane baked in the same wood-fired oven as the pizzas. The waiters offer us limoncello at the end, a digestif to soothe our stuffed bellies and, more importantly, share a dose of conviviality. Which is the most important ingredient in Marseille.

(Article source: The Guardian)







Summer pruning and more: Gardening tips for August

The garden is looking very green and lush and weeds, in particular, are growing at a rate of knots.

August is traditionally holiday-time, so you might need to enlist the help of friends and family to look after the garden with some container watering and feeding the birds while you are away.

There is always plenty to do this time of year, to keep everything in tip-top condition whilst planning ahead for the autumn!

lobs to do:

Pre-order Spring bulbs

Autumn is the best time for planting spring bulbs giving them the winter months to put out roots in readiness for a spectacular display next spring, so now is the time to order them.

Think of a sunny area where you can allow the grass to grow long and plant with spring bulbs and wildflowers for this autumn.

Long grass looks fabulous and is amazing for encouraging wildlife, butterflies and moths - many breed in long grass.



Frogs, toads, and newts love it, especially the young ones they can hide and feed on creepy crawlies. Voles in the long grass are food for kestrels and owls.

In essence, long grass, wildflowers, Spring and Summer flowering bulbs and annuals will give you immense pleasure to encourage wildlife, and biodiversity, helping restore one of the most important ecosystems declining in Britain.

Salad crops

Continue to sow lettuce, parsley, spinach, dill, coriander, basil, mustards, chicory and mizuma. Some of these can be brought in on a bright windowsill, greenhouse or conservatory for supplies during the autumn/winter.

Courgettes, keep cutting and feeding any of the squashes. Raise larger fruit off the ground like pumpkins and squashes to stop rotting - a tile works well placed underneath the fruit.

Cut back strawberries if they have finished fruiting, if you don't want the runners, remove straw and weeds.

Raspberries - summer fruiting cut down fruited canes, mulch and

Vegetables

Onions, shallots and garlic can be harvested if the foliage falls over and start to die off. Lift to dry off somewhere warm and sunny - greenhouse floor on tarmac or gravel but don't allow it to get wet. Dry off thoroughly until foliage is crispy dry them hang them up in bunches in the shed or garage, cool and dry to store.



Potatoes

Lift when you have flowers or they have flowered. Any signs of dieback from disease must be removed, cutting the foliage (Haulms) to the ground. The potatoes can stay in the ground until required or dug up, dried and bagged in paper sacks. Discard any green potatoes. As with all storing of fruit and veg only storing perfect specimens - damaged, split or diseased will cross-infect healthy ones. Try to check your stores regularly.

Wisteria

Pruning - time to attack the wisteria. Cut back long tendrils to 3-4 leaves, resulting in short spurs. These will turn into flower buds for next year!



Prune Pyracantha to expose the berries - leave a bit of this year's growth for flower next Spring. (Other shrubs include any Summer flowering ones- Philadelphus, Deutzia)

Roses

Climbing Roses and ramblers: Cut back old flowered stems - even really old long ones. Keep all the new stems especially the ones coming from near ground level. Tie these into the support. These are next year's flowering stems! Bush roses continue to deadhead unless you want the rose hips. Feed and mulch for flowers this autumn.

Cuttings

The perfect month for taking Lavender and Rosemary cuttings. Snip off non-flowering shoots 10-15cms long. Strip off lower leaves and cut with a sharp knife just below a leaf joint. Fill a pot with gritty compost. Dip the cuttings into Hormone Rooting powder and push the cuttings in around the edge of the pot. Water and place in a shaded area. You will be able to pot them on this autumn and plant out next spring. Other plants for the same treatment are Geraniums (Pelargoniums), Fuchsias, Salvias and many more. A bit of time spent dead-heading every day or so keeps the garden smart, and encourages more flowers. Picking Sweet peas, climbing or runner beans, dahlia flowers, and courgettes will also keep up a constant supply. Water and feed in dry/windy weather.

Hedges

Time to give these a haircut, just check for nesting birds beforehand. Sharpen blades, grease and oil before use, nothing worse than using dirty or blunt tools!

Weeds

With the recent wet weather, weed growth isn't slowing down. Pull up any large weeds before they flower and set seed!

Whatever the weather enjoy your gardening, take time out, use your senses, listen to the bird song, stop and observe life around you, relax with a glass of your favourite tipple, draw breath and inhale the scents of yours or somebody else's garden!

Happy Gardening!

(Article source: Silver Surfers)



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

favourite mammal

A shocking study has revealed that hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside, with numbers <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-Wye HR9 5NB

