

OUR PLACE *News*

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

SEPTEMBER 2025

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your home-grown herbs

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PLUS...

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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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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.



Green goodness: 10 ways gardening can enhance your wellbeing

Gardening can help reduce stress, improve mood and provide a sense of accomplishment.

If you're searching for a natural way to lift your mood, boost your health and add purpose to your daily routine, the answer might be closer than you think - perhaps right outside your door, or even on your windowsill.

Once considered a quiet pastime for seasoned horticulturists or those with sprawling estate gardens, gardening is now being embraced by people of all ages and lifestyles as a powerful way to support overall wellbeing.

Whether you're tending herbs in a kitchen window, planting a riot of colour in your flower beds, or simply caring for a few leafy houseplants, the rewards reach far beyond the visual appeal.

We spoke to Lucy Moss, psychotherapist and member of the Counselling Directory, to dig into 10 different ways gardening can help enhance your wellbeing - especially in later life.

Boosts mood

Tending to plants in the fresh air can do wonders for your mood.

"Being outside with plants, trees and fresh air is something that can naturally elevate your mood," says Moss. "The physical aspect of gardening releases serotonin - the feel-good chemical - in a more gentle way than going for a jog. You also get vitamin D from the sun, another serotonin booster to soak up when outdoors."

Gets you outside and off screens

If you find yourself constantly being sucked into a doomscrolling spiral, a change of scenery could help.

"Scrolling is such a time vacuum. It leaves people feeling quite empty and opens up an unhelpful comparison to others," reflects Moss. "However, when one is gardening and busy with muddy hands, it gives way to a rare moment where phones are put aside. This is highly positive for one's mental health."

Provides a sense of purpose

The act of nurturing plants, from planting seeds to harvesting, creates a structured activity and can help ignite a sense of purpose.

"I often find that clients, particularly those who have recently retired, sometimes feel like they have lost their sense of self," says Moss. "Gardening is a creative process which delivers tangible results and this naturally leads to increased feelings of agency and achievement."

"Gardening is a very accessible way to keep yourself mentally engaged, you don't even need a garden. You can start with a planting box on your windowsill. Plants are always changing, so will always need your attention and that can help give you structure to your day."

Offers a space free of judgement

Start off with something simple, and see your confidence grow as your plants begin to flourish.

"For clients struggling with anxiety or low self-worth, gardening offers a space free from judgement in which to try out new things without fear of failure," says Moss.

Keeps you active

Activities like digging, raking and weeding are great exercises that can help maintain muscle strength and flexibility.

"Once people stop working, they often see a physical decline, and if your body is struggling physically that can link to depressive symptoms," says Moss. "Gardening can be a helpful way to keep physically active, which will have benefits on your mental health."

Promotes mindfulness

"Being in nature deeply engages all our senses and invites us to slow down and be present," reflects Moss. "It's very tactile and very visual, because you are really paying attention to what you're doing in a garden. This offers similar benefits to mindfulness such as lowered cortisol levels."

Can help people cope with grief

"The act of tending to something living, especially after trauma or loss, offers a form of somatic regulation," says Moss. "If you're going through a very hard time in your life, and you're feeling low, that sense of nurturing and growing can give you a sense of achievement and hope."

"Gardening can also be very symbolic. The act of nurturing something and growing it can help you go through that process internally at the same time."

Helps regulate emotions

"There are often times where my clients feel very overwhelmed and being outside can have a calming effect," says Moss. "All of your attention is engaged in observing the nature around you and I think that can help your emotions feel less intense."

Boosts confidence

"Working with clients experiencing depression, I like to suggest small, manageable activities that offer a sense of purpose, and gardening is really great for this," says Moss. "It helps to build confidence and self-esteem."



Fosters social connection

"I've had clients who have engaged in community gardens, particularly after bereavement, and it's been really helpful for them," says Moss. "When you are gardening in a group, it's very collaborative. In addition, it's a great way to build up connections if you are feeling lonely."

"You can be together and have companionship, but because you are engaged in something at the same time, it doesn't feel as pressurised as going to a social event. It's a more gentle way of socialising."

(Article source: Silver Surfers)

How music can boost your mood and mind later in life

Music can uplift our mood, foster connection, and even enhance cognitive function.



Silver Surfers reports that as we grow older, it's easy to overlook the simple things that can bring us joy and keep our minds sharp. One of the most powerful tools for boosting mood and mental wellbeing is something many of us have loved our whole lives: music.

To explore the many ways music can benefit the mind and mood later in life, we spoke with Clare Maddocks, a qualified neurologic music therapist and education and research officer at the British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT).

Enhance mood

"Music can have a very transformational impact on mood and one of the reasons for this is because we have a very strong neurological, physiological, but also psychological reaction to music," says Maddocks. "It's very individual, so one piece of music can elicit different emotions in different people."

Engaging with music can create a multi-modal response in the brain, she explains, involving different domains of the brain such as the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex.

"As part of that, we can really tap into the reward and the emotional centre of the brain," says Maddocks. "So, if we use the kind of music that brings out a positive response in us, it can really help improve our mood."

Improve cognitive function, such as memory

"Engaging in music, whether that's learning an instrument for the first time or participating in a community choir, has been shown to actually be very good for cognition in older people," says Maddocks,

"You're never too old to learn an instrument."

An abundance of research suggests that music can have a powerful impact on memory in particular.

"There's lots of ways that we can use music to help our memory, such as using things like musical mnemonics to help remember day-to-day tasks," says Maddocks.

The more that we listen to a piece of music, the more that our brain remembers the predictable patterns of the music, she explains.

"It builds up a cognitive schema, which is essentially the fancy term for saying your brain remembers it, and remembers all the details of the music," says Maddocks. "Now, because we have this multi-modal response in the brain alongside the brain learning and becoming familiar with a piece of music, we're also tapping into the autobiographical memory centres and the emotional centres of the brain.

"That's why we can listen to a song on the radio that we've not heard say since our youth and it brings back so many memories."

Help people living with dementia

While dementia often affects short-term memory, music therapy can be a powerful tool for unlocking long-term memories, particularly those associated with significant life events and emotions.

"If we find familiar music from someone's past, particularly from their adolescence, we have found that we can, despite all the sort of degenerative aspects of the dementia, still tap into these autobiographical memories that have been built from a long time before," says Maddocks. "It can really help connect someone with the present, with themselves and their sense of identity."

Some research also suggests that music therapy can be an effective tool for reducing agitation and distress in individuals with dementia, she adds.

Reduces stress

"Listening to music that you enjoy and find relaxing can be a really helpful and quick way to manage stress in your everyday life," says Maddocks.

Increase confidence

"Identify what kind of music is going to leave you feeling good and boost your mood and self esteem," recommends Maddocks. "Doing things like songwriting can also be a great way to boost confidence. If you can write four lines of a poem, you can write a song."

Provides a safe space for emotional expression

Music can be a phenomenal tool for self expression.

"Music has the power to say everything you need to say without pressure to use verbal communication," says the music therapist. "You can do that just from simply listening to a piece of music or identifying with a song and saying, yeah, this is how I feel."

It also provides a safe space and a useful tool to release emotions. "You can release anger, hate, despair and all those difficult emotions in music," says Maddocks.

Fosters social connection

Joining a music group can help alleviate feelings of isolation and loneliness. "The great thing about a lot of the community groups that exist now is that you don't need to have played an instrument before or be able to read music," says Maddocks. "It's all about just being open to engaging in music and connecting with other people. "Even just finding someone who enjoys the same kind of music as you do, and having a conversation about that, can be a real boost in terms of lessening those feelings of isolation and loneliness."

(Article source: *Silver Surfers*)

The health benefits of blackberries

Blackberries are a delicious and nutritious fruit known for their deep purple hue and sweet-tart flavour.

Silver Surfers reports that beyond their culinary versatility, blackberries are packed with essential nutrients and powerful antioxidants that offer a range of health benefits. In this feature, we'll explore the numerous advantages of incorporating blackberries into your diet.

Nutritional Profile

Blackberries are low in calories but high in vital nutrients, making them an excellent addition to a healthy diet. A one-cup serving (about 144 grams) of blackberries contains approximately:

- Calories: 62
- Protein: 2 grams
- Carbohydrates: 14 grams
- Fibre: 8 grams
- Vitamin C: 50% of the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI)
- Vitamin K: 36% of the RDI
- Manganese: 47% of the RDI
- Folate: 9% of the RDI

Additionally, blackberries provide small amounts of Vitamin A, Vitamin E, copper, magnesium, and potassium.

Health Benefits

1. Rich in Antioxidants

Blackberries are loaded with antioxidants such as anthocyanins, ellagic acid, and resveratrol. These compounds help protect the body from oxidative stress caused by free radicals, which can damage cells and lead to chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease. The high antioxidant content in blackberries can help neutralise these harmful molecules, reducing the risk of disease.

2. Promotes Heart Health

The antioxidants in blackberries, along with their high fiber content, contribute to heart health. Fibre helps lower cholesterol levels, which can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Furthermore, the potassium and magnesium in blackberries help maintain healthy blood pressure levels.

3. Supports Digestive Health

Blackberries are an excellent source of dietary fibre, which aids in digestion by promoting regular bowel movements and preventing constipation. The fibre in blackberries also acts as a prebiotic, feeding the beneficial bacteria in the gut and promoting a healthy microbiome.

4. Boosts Immune System

The high vitamin C content in blackberries supports the immune system by stimulating the production of white blood cells and enhancing the body's ability to fight infections. Vitamin C also acts as an antioxidant, protecting immune cells from damage.

5. Improves Brain Function

Blackberries may benefit brain health and improve cognitive function. The antioxidants in blackberries have been shown to reduce inflammation and oxidative stress in the brain, which can help improve memory and delay age-related cognitive decline.

6. Promotes Healthy Skin

The vitamins and antioxidants in blackberries contribute to healthy, radiant skin. Vitamin C plays a crucial role in collagen production, helping maintain skin elasticity and reducing the appearance of wrinkles. The antioxidants also protect the skin from damage caused by UV rays and environmental pollutants.

7. Supports Bone Health

Blackberries contain important nutrients like vitamin K and manganese, which are essential for maintaining healthy bones. Vitamin K is necessary for bone metabolism and helps prevent osteoporosis, while manganese is involved in the formation of bone cartilage and connective tissue.

Tips for Enjoying Blackberries

Incorporating blackberries into your diet is easy and can be done in a variety of ways:

- Fresh: Enjoy blackberries as a snack or add them to yogurt, porridge, or cereal.
- Smoothies: Blend blackberries with other fruits and vegetables for a nutritious smoothie.
- Salads: Toss blackberries into salads for a burst of flavour and colour.
- Baking: Use blackberries in muffins, pies, and crumbles for a sweet treat.
- Preserves: Make homemade blackberry jam or jelly to spread on toast.

(Article source: *Silver Surfers*)



‘Who needs the scorching Med?’ Tips for cooler European coastal holidays

From the deserted Danish Riviera to the unspoilt beaches of Poland, our readers share their favourite, more chilled European coastlines.

White sand, dark past on the German Baltic

Spend some time on Rügen, Germany’s largest island, on its Baltic coast. White sandy beaches and darker history await. Visit Lauterbach, by the sea. From there, catch the coastal ferry to the tiny fishing village of Baabe, a near three-mile (5km) walk/cycle through rolling countryside and catch the “Raging Roland” steam train back again. Not far away, you can walk the cliffs that inspired Caspar David Friedrich. For a very different day, visit Prora and its massive beachside concrete apartment blocks, originally planned as a Nazi holiday complex, before becoming a Soviet army barracks, and now a part ruin, part reunification commercial and residential redevelopment. **Richard**



Deserted beaches on the Danish Riviera

Who needs the scorching Med when you have the Danish Riviera. The water is clean and refreshing. No wetsuits allowed - you’ll be laughed off the beach. Danish summer hols are in July so you’ll have the beach to yourself in August. Book a summer cottage near Gilleleje, a charming fishing village about an hour from Copenhagen. Denmark is expensive, so self-catering is best. Ice-cream at Hansens. Lunch in Gilleleje harbour. Culture at Louisiana modern art museum and Hamlet’s Castle in Helsingør. And day trips to Copenhagen. **Christina**

To Hel and back in Poland (pictured top left)

Hel is a tiny spit of land north of Gdańsk. Guys selling hot smoked fish meet you as you get off the ferry. Getting there is an adventure in itself, as the ferry takes you past the colossal cranes of Gdańsk’s shipyards. Long sandy beaches, pine forests and a small picturesque village make Hel a fantastic place to spend a few days. Famous for its seals, as well as its seaside, it really is the opposite of its fiery namesake. **Lucy Moore**

Swimming and seafood in Sweden

We’ve just returned from a Scandi road trip and had four fantastic, chilled nights on Björkö. It’s only 30 minutes from central Gothenburg by (free!) car ferry and regular buses. Great swimming and beaches; micro breweries and fresh fish; sunsets and sunrises to die for; days out in Gothenburg, including the excellent Liseberg theme park, with no queues for proper scary rides - highly recommended. **James**

Rowing in Finland’s Åland archipelago

Fuelled by our kids’ love of flags and a craving for quiet, we chose Åland, thousands of islands scattered between Sweden and Finland like granite gods wept there. We cycled between clouds and old boat sheds, stopping for smoked herring and cardamom pancakes with stewed prunes (sexier than it sounds). By the time Ivar lent us ancient alder oars to row to the next island, knowing they’d be returned by a friend, we’d learned that Åland doesn’t welcome visitors - it absorbs them. **Eliza Ainley**

Cliff-edge drama in north-west Spain

Based in Oviedo (the ideal compact city), in Asturias, we would explore the coast one day, mountains the next, finding unexpected Gaudí buildings, gingerbread houses in Ribadesella, amazing cemeteries on cliff edges, enjoyable easy driving on perfect roads, gorgeous unspoilt beaches and great weather! Few tourists, thousands of Camino pilgrims along the way and (very weak) cider! Cannot wait to return and yes, we’d love to live there. **Annie Hargreaves**

An idyllic island off Brittany, France

Camping Panorama du Rohou, near Paimpol in northern Brittany, has excellent views over to the beautiful Île de Bréhat. Walk down through the forest behind the campsite to take a short ferry ride to the island. Hire a bike or walk to explore its rocky coves and quaint villages. A lighthouse at the far end of the island has great views and is a good spot for a picnic, or to have a Breton galette or crepe at nearby Paradise Rose. Les Scènes de Bréhat is an annual festival with live music at the beginning of July; late-running ferries get you back to the mainland. **Stella**

Arctic beach holiday, Norway

When we booked a trip to northern Norway’s stunning Lofoten Islands and Andøya we didn’t expect a beach holiday, but blessed with August temperatures in the high 20s we spent days swimming in the Arctic Ocean. Bleik beach on Andøya is one of the longest in Norway - “bleik” means “white” or “pale” in Norwegian, and the almost empty white sand, coupled with refreshing blue sea and the towering cliffs behind the beach, made for a perfect end to a day’s hiking. Puffins abound here, and whale watching trips are available from Andenes, just a few miles to the north. **Rachel**

Seafood and sailing in Hanko, Finland

Hanko, Finland’s southernmost seaside gem, sits on a sandy dune that stretches out into the Baltic Sea. The town comes alive in early July during the celebrated Hanko Regatta, a sailing festival that draws about 200 yachts. To reach Hanko from Helsinki, take the VR train from Helsinki Central for about €15. Rent a bike once you arrive to explore the sandy beaches bordered by an ancient pine forest, historic villas and nature reserve. In the evening, enjoy fresh seafood with Baltic views and sit down for a pint of Lonkero. Don’t miss the spa scene and wild swimming! **Liina**

Winning tip: Bike to the beach in North Holland

Aan Noordzee campsite, on the North Holland coast, has a simple, tranquil feel and no entertainment facilities. With separate cycleways everywhere, you can explore the beautiful coastline up to Den Helder and, by ferry, Texel island (sandy beaches, pretty towns and robust Texel sheep). An unspoilt beach walkable from the campsite awaits, with dune footpaths that lead to restaurants built on stilts. The sunsets over the North Sea are stunning. Alkmaar is accessible via a regular bus service. **Nicola Hull**

(Article source: *The Guardian*)



19 slices of foodie heaven! The best pizzas in the world

There's Porteño-style, ultra-crispy and classic Neapolitan pizzas from all corners of the planet in this list - we hope you're hungry.

Everyone knows what great pizza means to them. It could have a paper-thin, crispy base or one so doughy it's comparable to a pillow; it could be an abundance of vegetables and cured meats or simply a great, classic margherita (for the purists). Some of us even crave a bit of pizza-induced controversy (fans of a white base or those who opt for a pineapple topping, we're looking at you).

But no matter your preference, whether it's socially acceptable or totally unhinged to everybody else, you'll find your perfect pizza pie somewhere in the world, and somewhere on this list, too. That's because we've asked our travel writers and international editorial staff about their absolute favourite spots for when they're craving a pizza, from Cape Town to Lisbon, Buenos Aires to Miami. We hope you're hungry - don your napkin and read on for the world's very best pizzas.

1. Pizzeria da Attilio, Naples (pictured above)

What is it? Pizza Margherita

What's on it? San Marzano tomatoes, fior di latte from Vico Equenese, and 24-month aged parmesan, topped with fresh basil.

Naples is the birthplace of pizza, so expect to find pizza parlours dotting the city's streets from left to right. But beware: not all are created equally. Located in Pignasecca, one of Naples's liveliest and oldest districts, Pizzeria Da Attilio is where you'll find traditional, authentic and quality pizza. This third-generation establishment has been serving classic Neapolitan-style pizza since war times and has remained unchanged for the better since 1938.

With intimate interiors in close quarters, Pizzeria da Attilio never fails you with its classic Pizza Margherita, the queen of all pizzas. Ingredients are carefully sourced from bordering coastal towns, prioritizing quality over fast food.

2. Scarr's Pizza, New York City

What is it? A cheese slice

What's on it? Cheese

I'm a bit of a pizza purist. Don't get me wrong - I've happily sunk my teeth into slices covered in kimchi, brisket and oxtail. But the real test of greatness, especially in New York, is how good your slice of cheese is. Can you do something simple and do it well? Scarr's Pizza is one such pizzeria that gives justice to the original. Every day, owner Scarr Pimentel is found in the basement of his Lower East Side pizzeria, milling grain for his base dough. The result is an airy, slightly tangy crust that can hold up to toppings yet is pliable enough to be folded for a slice on the go.



3. Pizza Marumo, Tokyo

What is it? Japanese Umami pizza

What's on it? Dried shiitake mushroom cream sauce, mozzarella, pecorino, mackerel, bonito flakes, kombu, green onions, sesame and soy sauce.

Perched in the Ebisu neighbourhood of Shibuya, Pizza Marumo is one of the standout pizzerias driving Tokyo's flourishing pizza scene. The restaurant is renowned for its light yet chewy dough, a result of a meticulous 24-hour fermentation process, and the creative pizzas on the menu reflect chef Yuki Motokura's diverse culinary background (he's worked at a Japanese kaiseki restaurant, an Italian, a bar and another pizzeria). One particular pizza stands out for its Italian-Japanese fusion: it's cream-based, topped with a medley of classic Japanese ingredients, resulting in a savoury, umami-rich flavour profile. Shiitake mushrooms, kombu (seaweed) and two types of fish provide depth, while sesame and soy sauce lend a flavourful lift to the pizza.

4. 180g Pizzeria Romana, Rome

What is it? Pizza Capricciosa

What's on it? A crispy margherita pizza topped with artichokes, ham, olives, mushrooms - and often an egg.

Rome's signature pie, la scrocchiarella, is a round pizza with a thin, charred base that delivers a satisfying crunch. Typically served at dinnertime (with a crisp Peroni), it comes in endless flavors, but the capricciosa (meaning 'capricious') stands out for its medley of toppings. For one of the best versions, head to the eastern Centocelle neighborhood, where authentic cuisine shines away from tourist crowds. Helmed by Jacopo Mercuro, 180g Pizza Romana's modern take on Roman classics has earned it spots on Italy's and the world's best pizza lists.

5. Bella Brutta, Sydney

What is it? Clam pizza

What's on it? Surf clams, pecorino, fermented chilli, garlic and parsley.

The ocean may not be in sight at Bella Brutta, but you can still get a taste of the sea with its banging clam pizza. A certified hit since day one, the pie is topped with a white, chowder-like sauce, tender sea-sweet clams, a kick of chilli, a liberal handful of fresh parsley and a squeeze of lemon that lifts. The base is bang on - charred, blistered and with just the right amount of chew. It's so good that no one will think you're being shellfish if you don't want to share.

6. Diamond Slice, Copenhagen

What is it? The 'Nbluja

What's on it? Spicy 'Nduja, Danish blue cheese, red onion.



Copenhagen's hyped pizzeria of the moment is Diamond Slice on Blågårdsgade in Nørrebro (Time Out's coolest neighbourhood in the world in 2021). Taking a New York-style approach, Diamond Slice serves its pizzas as massive slices (no exaggeration: one piece is half the size of an average pizza). The best selling and signature dish is the 'Nbluja, which pairs creamy Danish blue cheese with a warming 'Nduja spice and sweetly pickled red onions. Buy a t-shirt - 90s styled, like the pizzeria - and you get a free slice.

Continued on pages 14-15...



7. Dough Hands, London

What is it? The 'Jode'

What's on it? Tomato, mozzarella, nduja, hot honey, stracciatella, grano padano, basil.

Since last summer, Dough Hands has made London Fields boozier The Spurstowe Arms even more over-subscribed than usual. The pop-up pizza project of chef Hannah Drye has also, since last month, been in residence at The Old Nun's Head in Nunhead - giving south London a taste of the impeccable Jode. With perfectly crispy crusts, and a just-oozy-enough-middle, this is the pizza to shove in the mouth of anyone who pretends that they're bored of hot honey.

8. Novo, Cape Town

What is it? The Fellini

What's on it? Fennel sausage, caramelised red onion, fior di latte.

NOVO is a new kid on Cape Town's pizza block, but this family-owned place in Little Mowbray has quickly built up a loyal following among locals. Why? The quality of the toppings, that's why. Simplicity on a pizza only works when the ingredients are top-notch, but you don't need to worry about that here: fennel sausage from renowned cured meats producer Richard Bosma; fior di latte from Italian cheese specialists Puglia; dough slow-proved over 48 hours.

Beyond The Fellini, the menu is a compact offering, allowing for focus on getting each pizza perfect.

9. Oobatz, Paris

What is it? Number 6

What's on it? Be brave and choose the Number 6, where the chef has free-rein with the toppings.



You won't be disappointed. Daniel Pearson, a baker-turned-pizza-maker, opened this minimalist spot in June 2024 and we should all be thanking him for the career change. In this chic little restaurant, he crafts exceptional doughs for a delighted crowd using six ancient flours, sourdough, and a 36-hour resting period. The menu only includes six options, from classic pizzas (tomato, mozzarella, and basta) to much more original ones (salsiccia - Italian sausage - and caciocavallo cheese), but each is given a quick blast at 400C. It's simple, but it's good.

10. Baldoria, Madrid

What is it? Búfala Fest

What's on it? Roasted San Marzano tomato sauce, buffalo mozzarella DOP, confit cherry tomatoes, crispy parmesan, basil and lemon pesto.

Baldoria isn't a pizzeria per se, but rather a true Italian ristorante, a lively spot which takes inspiration from the colours and spirit of Procida, a small island near Naples. Chef Ciro Cristiano (previously of the popular Bel Mondo and Villa Capri) sourced a legendary Acunto oven from Naples (which reaches 420C and cooks pizzas in just a minute and a half), treats each dough with extraordinary care (the process includes 24 hours of fermentation, another 24 hours rest and includes a pre-fermentation with biga) and changes the six or seven pizzas on the menu regularly, according to what ingredients are in season. However, as with the classic margherita, the Búfala Fest is a year-round staple. The aromatic toppings will be a delightful surprise for cheese lovers, the dough is exceptional, and we pretty much guarantee you'll want another.



11. Milly's Pizza in the Pan, Chicago

What is it? A thick-crust pie that represents the pinnacle of Chicago's most iconic dish.

What's on it? Layers of cheese, tomato sauce, pepperoni and jalapeños.

In a city brimming with legendary pizzerias, it takes a lot to stand out. Yet owner Robert Maleski managed this remarkable feat when he launched Milly's during the pandemic, elevating a timeless recipe. The dough is baked with a ring of mozzarella around it, which produces a striking, caramelised crust. My favourite is the Untitled #1 - crowned with zesty pepperoni, jalapeños and chunks of fresh mozzarella. It was Maleski's first creation and, in my opinion, the perfect harmony of flavours and textures.



12. Oficina Local, Rio de Janeiro (pictured top left)

What is it? The Umbria

What's on it? Mushrooms, black garlic and a white cheese base of mozzarella fior di latte and ricotta.

You might be thinking: 'why is this pizza named after a region in Italy?'. Well, Umbria is known for its black truffles, which were the inspiration for this pizza. Instead of choosing artificially flavoured products, the chefs at Oficina Local recreated the taste of truffle by sautéing buttery mushrooms in wine and combining with black garlic. The truffle-like taste is then richly enhanced by the creamy base of mozzarella and ricotta. This pizza is so good that though it was originally introduced as a seasonal course, it quickly became a permanent menu fixture due to popular demand.

13. Civerinos, Edinburgh

What is it? New Haven style pizza, by the slice

What's on it? Italian sausage, double marinara, burrata, pepperoni, rosemary, black pepper, parsley and garlic oil.

Scotland probably isn't the first place that springs to mind when you think about pizza, but hear me out: with its chewy crusts, coal-fired bases, sweet-but-tangy marinara sauce and carefully curated toppings, I'd argue this New Haven-style pizza joint is up there with some of the best slices you'll ever shove down your gob. Civerinos now has four Edinburgh spots and one in Glasgow, so take your pick: its latest branch in Stockbridge is all red-and-white-checked table cloths and vintage, American diner decor, giving it a proper old school feel. One of the best things about this place is you can buy by the slice to takeaway at a really reasonable price tag - and trust me, the slices are a meal - or opt for a twenty-inch to share. Lush.

Continued on pages 14-15...



14. Eleventh Street Pizza, Miami (pictured above)

What is it? The Hot Honey Sicilian

What's on it? Organic Bianco DiNapoli tomatoes, mozzarella, pepperoni, roasted red onion, Calabrian chilli paste and honey.

Every great pizza begins with a solid base, and Eleventh Street Pizza's naturally leavened sourdough starter has been nurtured for over seven years. Made with both new and old-world firing techniques and topped with premium organic ingredients, and you've got a pretty perfect pie every time. While a monster NYC slice here sops up the late-night booze, we go for the thick Sicilian squares covered with cupped pepperoni and drizzled with Calabrian chilli paste and honey. No matter what you order, expect ample sprigs of fresh basil to top it all off.

15. Lupita, Lisbon

What is it? Pineapple pizza

What's on it? Pineapple, mozzarella, Viso cheese, bacon, pickled red onion, and coriander.

When Duda Ferreira opened shop in Cais do Sodré back in 2019, he wasn't exactly playing it coy. 'I want to make the best pizza in Lisbon,' he boldly proclaimed.

Fast forward nearly five years, and it's fair to say the pizzaiolo has lived up to his word. Lupita has even snagged a spot among the best pizzerias in Europe, according to the 50 Top Pizza list, but the buzz on the corner of Rua de São Paulo tells you all you need to really know.

The secret? Maybe it's the daringly unconventional toppings on their naturally slow-fermented bases, or the meticulously sourced ingredients. And yes, pineapple on pizza can actually be a game-changer. Whether you're dining in, grabbing a slice to go, or ordering in, Lupita is one not to miss.



16. Fiata by Salvatore Fiata, Hong Kong

What is it? A'Salcissa

What's on it? Onion cream, Neapolitan fior di latte cheese, caramelised red onions, and fresh Italian sausage.

Since opening in Soho in 2022, Fiata by Salvatore Fiata has been one of Hong Kong's go-tos for authentic Neapolitan pizzas. Their cheesy creations have earned them a coveted spot as the fourth-best pizzeria in the Asia-Pacific region in the Top 50 Pizzas 2024 rankings - and trust us, they're worth the hype. My personal favourite is the A' Salcissa, a thin and lightly charred pizza that gets loaded with toppings like onion cream, fior di latte, jammy caramelised red onions, and chunks of fresh Italian sausage that culminate in a sweet-and-savoury goodness that's incredibly moorish.



17. Güerrín, Buenos Aires

What is it? Porteño-style pizza

What's on it? Copious amounts of mozzarella



You can't visit Buenos Aires without trying a slice of our porteño style pizza. Unlike classic Neapolitan pizzas, this beauty is cooked in a pan, meaning the crust is thick, soft, and spongy. These 'pizzas al molde' (which translates to 'in pan') as their own have got to be strong, too, as the crust needs to support the generous amount of mozzarella cheese that overflows from the edges. Cheese lovers should also try the mozzarella and provolone style at Güerrín for an even gooier upgrade.

18. nNea, Amsterdam

What is it? Terra

What's on it? Salsiccia a punta di coltello, oyster mushrooms, roasted leek, thyme, and mozzarella di bufala.

Having been voted the 8th best pizzeria in the whole of Europe - and top dog in the Netherlands itself for four years running, too - there's no doubting nNea's credentials or commitment to excellence (each batch of dough takes two days to make). With this in mind, dive straight into their Terra, the hearty, wholesome taste of the land made real. Mouthfuls of homemade salsiccia a punta di coltello combined with oyster mushrooms, roasted leek, thyme, and pillow-soft mozzarella di bufala transport you to the rich, volcanic farmland of Campania; a true slice of heaven from pizza's spiritual home.

19. Mercado 20 de Noviembre, Oaxaca

What is it? Tlayuda

What's on it? Refried beans, Oaxacan cheese, mushrooms, red peppers, avocado, cactus.



México is famously the land of tacos and quesadillas, but Oaxaca is probably the most flavour-packed city I've visited in my life and the local street food, tlayuda, was a standout of all the many, many things I ate.

Fans of a crispy base, listen-up: tlayudas are made from almost wafer-thin tortillas which are toasted to a snappable consistency, and are slathered with refried beans and generously sprinkled with chopped vegetables, Oaxaca cheese, and most importantly, cactus (which taste like a lemony, smokey bell pepper). Grab a seat at Mercado 20 de Noviembre and tuck in - it goes well with a bottle of modelo.

(Article source: Time Out)



Healthy herbs: Tips on harvesting and saving your home-grown herbs

Air-drying and freezing can help you enjoy your garden herbs for months.

If you've been snipping away at your home-grown basil to throw on tomato salads, enjoying mint in your cocktails and adding sprigs of rosemary to your roast potatoes, it's time to think about preserving the best of your herbs to last into the months ahead.

"August is the perfect time to start harvesting some of your herbs," says Manoj Malde, TV and radio presenter, author and RHS ambassador who will be joining the Garden Theatre stage at this year's Malvern Autumn Show.

"Herbs like mint, lovage and chives will die down for the winter and should come back next year, but herbs like rosemary, sage and other woody varieties become a bit straggly through autumn."

"Cut herbs such as basil just above the nodes, which will keep the plant fresh," says Didrik Dimmen, co-founder and CEO of indoor smart indoor garden company Auk.

"Cutting just above the nodes, where the new shoots spring out, will allow the plant to refocus its energy, making it grow more bushy."

Harvest the leaves regularly when they are young, he advises. "If you wait too long to harvest and the leaves get really big, they also lose a bit of taste."

Herbs which are harvested will last between a day and a week in the fridge, Dimmen estimates.

Alternatively, you could put them in a jar of water on a sunny windowsill, to last a week or two in summer. Some more delicate plants, such as coriander, won't stay fresh in the fridge for long, he notes.

So, how can gardeners save their herbs now to use in dishes in the months ahead?

Air-dry

"Gather and prepare your herbs by harvesting them, removing any dead leaves and then tying the stems together in small bunches, then hang them upside down in a warm, well-ventilated place out of direct sunlight," Malde advises.

"The drying process can take a couple of days to a couple of weeks, so keep an eye on them to make sure they are drying properly. Once the leaves on the stems have dried, remove them from the stems and store in an airtight container and keep them in a cool, dark, dry place."

He says that sage, rosemary, mint, bayleaves, thyme, tarragon and oregano are all suitable candidates for drying. Drying herbs such as oregano can actually boost their flavour.

Freeze

Wash your harvested herbs, dry them and put them on a baking tray or a sheet of baking parchment and put them in the freezer, says Malde. Once they are frozen, transfer them into a freezer bag and store them in the freezer.

He warns that frozen herbs tend to lose some of their flavour.

Dimmen adds: "The leaves of plants contain a lot of water and when water freezes it expands, so it basically destroys the structure of the plant."

Put herbs in ice cube trays



"Blend your herb in a bit of oil (olive or sunflower oil) or water, turn it into a paste and then put the paste into an ice cube tray to freeze through the winter. Then, when you don't have herbs in the garden, you can take a couple of cubes out of the ice tray and put them into your pan to thaw out and use for cooking," Malde suggests.

Take cuttings

You can grow herbs indoors if you take cuttings and propagate them on a bright windowsill. That way, they should carry on growing, but ease up on watering during the winter and water very lightly in the morning.

"The last thing that any plant wants is wet, freezing cold roots," Malde observes.

Make your own sauce

Make sauces such as pesto with your fresh basil, suggests Dimmen. "You can freeze the pesto in ice cube trays and then take them out when you need them."



Harvest seeds

Once a plant has bolted, such as coriander or nigella, you can harvest the seeds and either use them whole in cooking or grind them into a powder to add to different dishes.

"Coriander plants might start producing flowers in August and then it will run to seed. Let it bolt if you want to harvest seeds," Malde advises.

Preserve in oil

Herbs like rosemary and other ingredients such as chillies can be submerged in olive oil in a jar or bottle to create a flavoured oil in cooking.

Make herb butter

Flavour butter with herbs using soft butter, salt, herbs and optionally garlic, which will last in the fridge as long as the butter does, says Dimmen.

Create a spice mix

Spread your freshly picked herbs evenly on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and dry them in a cool oven, checking regularly to make sure they don't burn. Once they are dry, you should be able to crumble them in your fingers and then crush them with a pestle and mortar.

Store your spice blend in an airtight container in a cool, dry, dark place, where they can last up to a year, although they will taste better in the first six months, says Dimmen.

(Article source: Silver Surfers)

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Julie'



'Julie' (pictured left) came in last Autumn, quite small, out in daylight and had ticks. She stayed a few weeks, put on enough weight, and made a full recovery. She was released back to her own territory by the finder.

Baby Hedgehogs

These 2 hedgehogs came in as very small babies and had stayed with us a few weeks, gaining weight and giving us a chance to sort out their health issues. They had several ticks and needed worming. When they were 100% ready, we released them close to where they were found.



These hedgehogs are some of the lucky ones. Others are less fortunate.

As a friend who knows what a wonder animals can be, I hope you will support our Annual Appeal. Your kind gift will help us rescue and care for many more vulnerable hedgehogs - Britain's favourite mammal.

To donate to Hedgehog Rescue, go to:
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hedgehogrescue>
or write to: Raisemore, Unit 2, Home Farm, Bishopswood, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5QZ

