

OUR PLACE *News*

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

MAY 2026

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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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RHS Chelsea Flower Show

19th - 23rd May 2026

Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London.

See vivid floral displays and innovative show gardens at the prestigious RHS Chelsea Flower Show from 19th to 23rd May.

Although the show tends to sell out in advance, there are lots of other floral-themed events in and around Chelsea during May. Many hotels and restaurants also offer special afternoon teas and menus in honour of the show.

London Craft Week

11th - 17th May 2026

Various venues in London.

London Craft Week brings together over 750 established and emerging creatives from around the world in a citywide programme that celebrates craft.

Mainly hosted in Bloomsbury and Mayfair, the event includes a range of talks, exhibitions, product launches and other immersive experiences that showcase a selection of work from both British and international makers.

The week-long event features activities across the city that aim to tell the complex stories behind crafted objects against a backdrop of performances and meeting places where visitors can listen, eat, drink and, in some cases, craft things themselves.

*Do you have a venue happening near you?
Or an interesting story or article?
If so, send us an email by visiting:
www.ourplace.co*

Brighton Festival

From May 2nd 2026 for 3 weeks

Brighton, south-east England.

Brighton is known as a place that welcomes diversity, creativity and innovative thinking, and its annual festival celebrates this pioneering spirit and experimental approach.

Established in 1967 and now one of Europe's leading arts festivals, this celebration of music, theatre, dance, circus, art, film, literature, debate and family events aims to make art accessible to all and takes place in a variety of venues across Brighton and Hove.



Blenheim Palace Food Festival

23rd - 25th May 2026

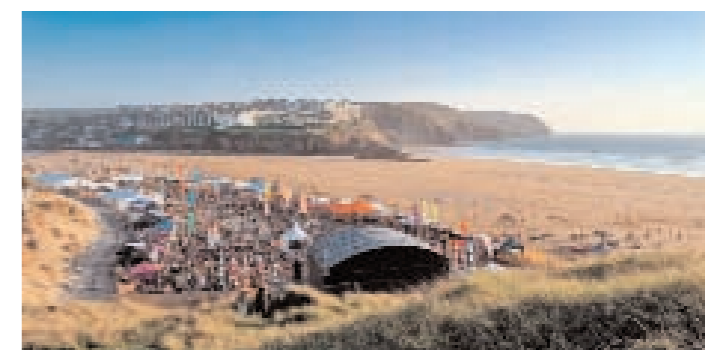
Oxfordshire, central England.

Oxfordshire's largest food festival brings food stalls, strolling jazz musicians, children's storytellers and some of the biggest names in the foodie world to Blenheim Palace's magnificent grounds. Raymond Blanc and MasterChef winners have attended in the past.

Tunes in the Dunes

5th - 7th June 2026

Perranporth Beach, Cornwall.



Tunes in the Dunes is a three day live music festival held on Perranporth Beach, North Cornwall with a line up including Basement Jaxx, The Proclaimers, The Wombats, Scouting for Girls and many others!



Feeling stressed? 4 ways to start prioritising your health and well-being

If you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed, you're certainly not alone. Data from the 2023 Kalmfulness Index revealed that nearly half of UK adults (46%) feel stressed and unable to cope, with 52% feeling close to burning out.

Looking at these findings, psychologist and psychotherapist Dr Charlotte Armitage said, "As a nation, we could all benefit from making our mental well-being a priority. For many, simple lifestyle changes such as prioritising sleep, keeping active, and eating well can help make a difference. Making time for loved ones, getting outdoors, or practicing self-care can also be wonderful ways to decompress and settle into a calm state of mind."

While it can sometimes feel difficult to prioritise our health and well-being, doing so is an important first step in alleviating stress, becoming happier, and taking back control of our lives.

For many, it can be natural to prioritise others, and you may even feel selfish putting your own needs first. If this sounds familiar, the good news is that, while shifting the focus onto yourself may take some boundary setting and inner reprogramming, it's a journey that can be profoundly fulfilling. The improved well-being that can come from prioritising self-care may lead to better relationships, increased self-esteem, and boosted productivity.

With that said, we've pulled together a list of six key things you can start doing today to look after your health and happiness.

Have open and honest conversations

We live in a fast-paced society where many face-to-face conversations have been replaced by fleeting texts, emails, DMs, voice notes, and video calls. These methods can be quick and convenient (especially at work or when maintaining long-distance relationships), but they can also make it difficult for people to approach sensitive or serious topics with one another.

As a result, it's not uncommon for people to bottle things up and to try to deal with problems by themselves; regardless of the impact on their health and well-being.

Therefore, while it can be awkward, it's important to work on becoming more open and honest with others about your needs and boundaries. This might mean saying no to unnecessary work meetings, telling your family that you need more time and space for yourself, or just being transparent about how you're really feeling when someone asks how you are.

If you find it difficult to have open conversations via text or email, then - if possible - try to organise phone calls or face-to-face meetings. It's also worth having these conversations somewhere you can speak openly while being clear that you need time to get things off your chest. This way, you'll know that the person doesn't have to rush off and has time to listen, which will hopefully relieve some pressure.

Speaking up about your needs and concerns is an important step in advocating for yourself at work and in life generally. It can allow you to feel seen and heard, give you greater control over your destiny, and help you build confidence. Plus, if you don't use your voice, how will people know what you need?

Get familiar with the different types of rest

It's easy to assume that rest equals sleep. But human beings are complicated and, according to author and TedX speaker Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith, we may need other types of recuperation to feel like the best versions of ourselves. For example, even if we get a good night's sleep and feel physically rested, we may still feel mentally or socially tired.

Signs that you may need mental rest could include feeling stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed. In this case - in addition to getting a good night's sleep - things like taking a few quiet moments, offloading thoughts into a journal, going for a peaceful walk, or taking some deep breaths may help you rest and recharge.

It's also possible to feel socially exhausted, regardless of the quality of your sleep. For instance, you may find yourself having little energy to generate small talk because you've been spending a lot of time around others. Or you may feel drained after spending time with particular individuals - perhaps due to unhealthy relationship dynamics.

In these situations, you might need to allow yourself space from toxic relationships, more time with people that boost your energy and make you feel good, and/or more time alone. How you manage your social rest may largely depend on whether you're an introvert, extrovert, or ambivert.

Explore ways to connect with nature

It's well-documented that spending time in nature can benefit our mental and physical well-being such as reducing stress and boosting immunity. But many of us find it challenging to make this a priority. Therefore, it can help to explore ways to make connecting with nature a habit. This could include enjoying your morning coffee while you watch the sunrise, treating yourself to some fresh-cut flowers when you do your food shop, or taking your run outside rather than doing it on the treadmill.

When we're feeling overwhelmed by technology or stuck in unhelpful thought patterns, connecting with nature can help us feel part of something bigger than ourselves. This can give us grounding and reassurance, and offer us fresh perspectives on situations.



Check in with yourself

When we're busy looking after others, completing to-do lists, and responding to emails and texts, it can be easy to deprioritise ourselves. When this happens, we may stop listening to our body's mental and physical cues, and fall out of sync with our needs.

Perhaps you're familiar with being so rushed off your feet that you don't realise you're hungry, masking your tiredness by having yet another coffee, or not allowing yourself sufficient time to grieve after a loss. Often, this is because it's only when we proactively stop and check in with ourselves that we're able to register how we're feeling and more carefully assess our needs.

If this sounds like you, why not consider creating self-checkpoints throughout your day where you meet with yourself (without distractions) and see how you're doing - in the same way you might do with a friend? To start with, your checkpoints could be for a few minutes first thing in the morning, at lunchtime, and in the evening.

You could even keep a mood journal - noting down the first thoughts and feelings that come to you during check-ins, and what may be triggering them. If you decide to do this, try to notice any patterns that appear. For example, if you wake up in a good mood but are often feeling miserable by the evening, perhaps there are reoccurring triggers you could work on addressing.

(Article source: Rest Less)

Food for thought: Is your diet ageing you?

From cooking at too high temperatures to consuming too little fat, what and how we eat can have a big impact on the way we age. Here's what you might be doing wrong - and how to fix it.



You're eating all day long

One of the challenges with the sheer availability of food in today's world is that lots of us end up spending many of our waking hours eating. Whether it's full meals, snacks or desserts, scientists have found that it's not uncommon for us to be mindlessly grazing at some point during all of our 16 or so waking hours.

The problem? As soon as this food hits the bloodstream in the form of glucose, it initiates the release of the hormone insulin. This in turn activates a switch present in every one of our cells, which is responsible for driving cell growth and proliferation.

We need this mechanism to survive, but too much cell proliferation can be a bad thing. It leads to more random mutations in your DNA and, over time, a greater likelihood of cancer, as well as fuelling the growth of a damaging form of internal fat known as visceral fat.

As Eric Verdin, president and CEO of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging in Novato, California, points out, our bodies need time away from eating to have a chance to focus on repair. He says: "There is a lot of evidence for this - 12 hours fasting and repairing, and 12 hours eating and building is more conducive to healthy ageing."

You're eating too many refined carbs...

You may not have heard of advanced glycation end products, or AGEs, but these toxins are responsible for pretty much every aspect of the ageing process that we're familiar with, including wrinkles, stiffness, cataracts, loss of heart elasticity and even Alzheimer's disease.

AGEs are formed during a chemical process called glycation, where sugars in the body react with proteins or fats. They're best known for turning collagen - the protein that gives our skin its youthful elasticity - into a drier, stiffer form. "AGEs change protein structure and, at the same time, cause a large amount of inflammation," says Jaime Uribarri, a kidney doctor at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, and one of the world's leading experts on AGEs.

Glycation happens more often when there's an excess of sugar in the bloodstream, which occurs when we eat sweets containing a rapidly absorbed simple sugar called fructose or easily digestible refined carbohydrates such as white rice, white pasta and pizza dough.

...and cooking at too high temperatures

AGEs can also be created within foods - particularly those containing a lot of protein and fat, such as meat, cheese and fish - when they are grilled, barbecued or fried at high temperatures. Researchers such as Uribarri are concerned about the long-term health impacts of eating lots of bacon, for example, as one of his studies found that just three slices of bacon fried for five minutes contain 91,577 AGEs, compared to just 23 AGEs in a tomato.

To limit the accumulation of AGEs in our bodies, it's recommended to eat more whole grains such as brown rice, while Uribarri suggests trying to do more slow-cooking and stewing rather than grilling.

You're aggravating your immune system with too much saturated fat (and not enough fibre)

Saturated fat - mostly found in animal products such as red meat, cheese and ice-cream - is broken down into ceramides. These have been shown to be capable of reprogramming immune cells in the gut into a more inflammatory state. This can lead to the gut wall becoming more leaky or permeable, making it more likely that microbes and toxic metabolites could leach into the bloodstream. Over time, this can accelerate the ageing of the immune system.

The good news? Scientists have found that our guts can handle a certain amount of saturated fat, as long as we're also consuming sufficient amounts of fibre and omega-3s, for example from oily fish. These foods actively help to resolve gut inflammation.

"We've found that two of the biggest dietary features associated with immune ageing are higher consumption of saturated fat and lower consumption of fibre," says Niharika Duggal, an assistant professor in the University of Birmingham's department of inflammation and ageing. Scientists specialising in ageing say we should be consuming the equivalent of 1g of omega-3s per day - which could be achieved by eating one mackerel fillet or two to three salmon fillets once a week - as well as at least 40g of fibre (present in whole grains and legumes).

You're not getting enough B vitamins

If you're interested in wellness, you've likely come across NAD+, a molecule that plays a critical role in how our cells generate and manage energy. While there's now a vast industry based around NAD+ supplements, our bodies make it naturally when we consume vitamin B3, found in foods such as turkey, tuna and anchovies.

This is just one example of the importance of optimising your intake of B vitamins to age well. The body uses them to make chemicals called methyl donors, which give it the ability to turn certain genes on or off at the right times. For example, ensuring that certain key tumour suppressor genes are kept turned on, defending us against cancer. Without sufficient methyl donors, this process becomes less well controlled as we age.

Not getting enough vitamin B12, which is found in foods such as salmon, tuna, beef, eggs and dairy products, can also make you more likely to develop a leaky gut, and even precipitate memory loss and slower brain processing speeds. This is one of the reasons why, if you're over 50 and experiencing signs of cognitive decline, it's particularly important to ensure you're not deficient in vitamin B12.

Your diet is too acidic

We all need a certain amount of protein in our diet, but balance is everything. In recent years, epidemiologists have become increasingly concerned that too many people are getting a high dietary acid load from their food.

This is essentially because we tend to consume a lot of protein, added salt and phosphoric acid (a common preservative and flavour enhancer in ultra-processed foods), which the body metabolises into acidic substances. However, we tend not to eat sufficient dietary potassium - which we can get from various fruits, vegetables and dried herbs (the drying process helps concentrate the minerals present) - to counterbalance all these acids.

This places increasing stress on the kidneys, the body's main acidity regulator, and over many years this has been linked with a variety of chronic health conditions. "As your kidneys fail, your ability to get rid of these acids goes down, so the problem gets progressively worse," says Lynda Frassetto, a kidney specialist and a professor at the University of California, San Francisco.

Ageing researchers advise us to focus on eating twice as much fruit and vegetables as protein with each meal.

You're consuming too few healthy fats

There's a very good argument to suggest that omega-3s - found in oily fish and available as relatively low-cost supplements - are one of the most potent anti-ageing tools of all.

As well as helping resolve gut inflammation caused by saturated fat, they are involved in numerous health-promoting functions around our body, from maintaining brain and heart health to retuning the immune system. They're even involved in regulating muscle mass across the course of your life. Ageing science has shown that getting enough omega-3s can prevent an age-related condition called anabolic resistance, which impairs our body's ability to build new muscle fibres from dietary protein, accelerating the onset of frailty.

While consuming the equivalent of 1g of omega-3s per day has been linked with slowing biological ageing, most of us don't come close to getting enough.

You're missing out on immune-stimulating phytochemicals

Alzheimer's Research UK has previously highlighted studies showing that people who consume more phytochemicals - found in brightly coloured fruits and vegetables - are at a lower risk of cognitive decline.

Take passion fruit, for example. Two years ago, I attended a conference where Norwegian ageing scientists presented data suggesting that regularly consuming these fruits may be protective against brain ageing. Similar discoveries have been made relating to pomegranates, strawberries, grapefruit, tomatoes and various teas.

But why? Ageing experts believe that when our bodies metabolise these fruits, they may rev up the brain's immune cells, prompting them to work more efficiently to clear toxins and promote repair.

You're eating too much at night

Finally, think about when you tend to eat your biggest meal of the day. If that's dinner - as is the case for most people - you may want to try switching to a bigger breakfast or lunch and a smaller evening meal, at least some of the time.

When we eat big meals at night, it's not only more disruptive for our sleep - a vital time for our body to carry out important repair - but we're also consuming a large number of calories at a time when our metabolism is at its most sluggish. "Our insulin sensitivity is much better in the first half of the day," says Satchin Panda, a professor at the Salk Institute in San Diego, California. "This allows us to manage [the blood sugar rise after eating a meal] much better."

So what should I eat?

Dr Cox's perfect longevity menu

This menu is low calorie and nutrient dense. It concentrates the protein-heavy meals in the first half of the day, when your metabolism is at its most efficient. It contains two portions of leafy greens, which are rich in vitamin K and also important for minimising dietary acid load. The lunchtime mackerel will provide a heavy dose of omega-3s, and the walnut snack will provide other micronutrients. Finally, it contains 40-50g of fibre, which will help nourish your gut and immune system.

Breakfast: Egg, spinach and mushroom muffins (or you could try these savoury muffins)

Lunch: Smoked mackerel salad (try Nigel Slater's version)

Dinner: Chickpea, spinach and coconut curry with brown rice, served with cauliflower (Check out Rukmini Iyer's twist)

Snack: 1 medium pear with 3 tbsp walnut halves. Two cups of green tea

(Article source: *The Guardian*)



Bonnie boltholes: The best scenic stays in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland

From a beachside bothy to a Highland bunkhouse and lochside inn, here are some of Scotland's bonniest blowholes.

Bothy on Loch Torridon, Wester Ross (above)

With its cheery, cherry-red tin roof, you can't miss the sturdy stone bothy on the Ben Damph estate. The family-owned 5,868-hectare (14,500-acre) estate nudges up to Loch Torridon, and the bothy, constructed from the ruins of an old black house (a traditional thatched home), has views over the loch to the mountains beyond. Restored by a team of stonemasons, it has two rooms (each sleeping two) warmed by log burners. The furniture has been made from the estate's timber by a local cabinet maker. Between the two rooms is a "sitooterie" with picture windows framing views over to Ben Alligin. There's no electricity, but there is running water and a gas-powered hot shower next to the bothy; a compost loo is in the garden. Sleeps 4, from £342.50 for two nights, bendamph.com

Hotel and bunkhouse perfect for exploring Glen Coe

Not much can match Glen Coe for jaw-dropping grandeur. This majestic glen is hemmed in on one side by the jagged peaks of the challenging Aonach Eagach ridge, and to the south, the buttresses of Bidean nam Bian. In 1692, one of the most infamous massacres in history took place here, government forces slaying the MacDonald clan as they slept. Today, it's a giant outdoor playground, its bleak beauty drawing Munro-baggers, hikers and mountain-bikers. The West Highland Way also passes through the glen, with walkers bedding down in Kingshouse hotel and bunkhouse, a smart wooden hostel with charcoal-grey tin roof. The hotel's glass-fronted restaurant gives panoramic views of the valley. From £44 for a bunk, £54 for a bunk and breakfast, kingshousehotel.co.uk

Remote cottage on the car-free island of Ulva

Anyone who binge-watched Banjo and Ro's Grand Island Hotel will know how picturesque the little community-owned, car-free Hebridean island-off-an-island of Ulva is. A short boat ride from Mull, it's just 7½ miles long by 2½ miles wide. A 5-mile tramp from the pier (next to the excellent Boathouse restaurant) through dappled woodland and along a coastal track, brings you to Bearnus bothy. Perched above a beach where you can go swimming, this little off-grid cottage has been thoughtfully kitted out by Andy and Yvette Primrose, who also run the island's hostel. Battery-operated fairy lights are strung around the bathroom – fill the old tin bath with water heated on the wood-burning stove. There are games, stacks of novels, guidebooks and maps, and Crocs and wellies to borrow for island yomps. Sleeps 2, from £121 for a two-night stay, airbnb.co.uk

Gastropub and bunkhouse, Cairngorms national park

Squirrelled away among the trees on the banks of the River Spey and on the edge of Aviemore, the Cairngorms' outdoor activity capital, the Old Bridge Inn is a gastropub with a handful of hip hostel rooms. The dogs-under-the-table inn has a roaring fire and is famous for its folk music sessions. By the riverside beer garden, paddle boarders, canoeists, wild swimmers and anglers make their way on to and into the river; while for climbers, hikers and mountain bikers, the forests and hills of the Rothiemurchus estate are on the doorstep. The bunkhouse has a vintage chic vibe, with seven en suite rooms and dorms and a kitchen – although if you don't fancy cooking, head next door to the pub and tuck into Strathspey venison samosas with carrot and cumin sauce and roast hispi cabbage. Dorm beds from £30, double rooms from £85, family rooms from £95, oldbridgeinn.co.uk

An inn with rooms and fresh seafood on the Isle of Skye

Charlie Haddock fell in love with the Stein Inn on her way to the Outer Hebrides years ago. In 2019, she packed up her life in London and moved her family to the remote Waternish peninsula to run this whitewashed waterfront hostelry dating from 1790, the oldest inn on Skye. Charlie works front of house and in the kitchen, preparing the langoustine, lobster and crab landed just a few feet from the door (her son and daughter help out in the holidays). The five rooms, all with sea views, were spruced up in 2024 with dove grey tongue and groove, burnt orange headboards and modern artworks. From about £80 B&B, thesteininn.co.uk

Eco-hostel on Rannoch Moor

Originally a timber-clad boathouse and stables, the old-school Loch Ossian hostel was built around 1895 on the eponymous loch's shores by Sir John Stirling Maxwell, the owner of the Corroul estate. A passionate environmentalist, in 1931 he handed the building over to the Scottish Youth Hostels Association.

Today, the ivy-green and white-trimmed award-winning eco-hostel, hunkered into the windswept wilderness of Rannoch Moor, is powered by a wind turbine and solar panels. It has compost toilets, a reed bed grey-water drainage system and non-toxic, bat-friendly paint. There is no access by car; catch the train to Corroul station then hike (20 minutes) or bike in. Beds from £25 a night, hostellingscotland.org.uk

Hotel with panoramic loch views

Sipping your morning coffee in the sleek wooden extension of the Kylesku hotel, a 19th-century coaching inn in the north-west Highlands, you can watch the fishers unload their catch on the slipway through picture windows. Right on the water's edge, overlooking Loch Glendhu, this gourmet bolthole on the North Coast 500 route has 11 rooms – four in the modern annexe, Willie's Hoose, next door; two with a sea loch-facing balcony. The rugged Assynt landscape is a Unesco-designated geopark, and the hotel offers a range of activities, from guided storytelling walks to sea kayaking and photography workshops. From about £109 B&B, highlandcoasthotels.com

New architect-designed bothies in Argyll

A derelict croft was the first property to be turned into an off-grid, hillside hideaway on the Lochnell estate. It is lit by hurricane lamps, and outside there's a wood-fired, sycamore-shaded, hose-filled vintage bath with views over the bay. Now, the Croft Collective's next batch of bothies is about to be completed. Three architect-designed boltholes, named after birds you can spot along the shoreline – oystercatcher, curlew, kittiwake – will open in June. Just a pebble's throw from the beach, wide-angled views over the Lynn of Lorne to the Isle of Mull in the west, and the Ardnamurchan hills and the mountains of Morvern, are framed by vast windows. Each bothy has a Japanese-style sunken bath, also with dreamy sea views, hammocks, and binoculars to scour the bay for seals, otters and eagles wheeling above. From about £220 a night, thecroftcollective.com

Lochside conservation village, Wester Ross

On the shore of Loch Carron, Plockton is a 19th-century conservation village that's picture-postcard pretty, with yachts bobbing in the bay and palm trees fringing the waterfront. The Plockton Inn has recently had a jaunty revamp – blowsily colourful rooms with floral feature walls, crimson chairs and navy paintwork are split between the old inn, Sorley's House over the road and The Haven next door. After a day spent visiting nearby attractions such as Eilean Donan Castle, one of the most photographed in Scotland, tuck into creel-caught langoustine or "Plockton prawns" landed on the pier. From about £170 B&B, highlandcoasthotels.com

(Article source: *The Guardian*)



Streets ahead: 14 of the best travel destinations for delicious street food

If you're a foodie who loves to travel, there are few things more exciting than visiting new places and sampling as many dishes as you can.

While going to a restaurant for a sit-down dinner can be fun, many of the best meals can be found on the streets, whether they're from pushcarts, holes in walls, or pavement vendors.

Plus, street food is often heralded as the most exciting food experience you can have, and it can be one of the best ways to get to know a new city or country.

So, if you want to sample some of the world's best street food, we've got you covered.

Here are 14 of the best travel destinations for delicious street food.

Cartagena, Colombia (pictured above)

Colombia's Cartagena is known for its colonial beauty and stunning Caribbean coastline, but this characterful city also boasts delicious street food. The local favourite is arepas, which are a type of cornbread stuffed with cheese, meat, vegetables, beans, or eggs, then spread with butter and cooked until golden and crisp.

Arepa carts can be found all over the city, and the plazas are packed with stalls and food trucks. If you love seafood, be sure to try tangy ceviche, which comes served in little cups and smothered in sauce. Meat lovers will also be spoilt for choice, as you'll find skewered meat and chorizo sizzling on open grills. Or, for something light, you can pick up some fresh mango from the countless fruit carts.

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Known for being one of the best cities in the world for street food, Ho Chi Minh City is home to some of the most delicious dishes you can imagine. As you stroll along these energetic streets you're soon greeted by mouthwatering aromas of freshly baked baguettes, which are then stuffed with meat or tofu, pickled veggies, zingy sauces, and fresh herbs, and served up as a banh mi.



Pho noodle soup is Vietnam's national dish, and the fragrant wafts of broth are another constant on the streets. Sit on a plastic stool on the pavement like the locals to slurp up these steaming noodles, or grab a box of com tam - broken rice with veg and protein - to eat on the go. Another plus is that the street food here isn't only fresh and delicious, it's also incredibly cheap.

Osaka, Japan

If you're a fan of Japanese food, you might be dreaming of going to Tokyo - but Osaka is actually the culinary capital of Japan. From grilled meats to unique sweet treats, the city's distinct street food culture is endlessly exciting, and while you can find delicious dishes and snacks all across the city, it's the vibrant Dotonbori district that really acts as a street food safari.



Alongside the flashing neon signs are street food vendors serving up local delights. Try okonomiyaki, a pancake dish stuffed with shredded cabbage and smothered in sauce; or kushikatsu, which is battered, fried meat on skewers. If you have a sweet tooth, you can also pick up taiko-manju - crisp, tender cakes filled with red bean paste or custard - from the many street stalls.

New York City, USA

New York City is a cultural melting pot, and its street food scene is no different. If you want to eat your way around the world but don't have the time or budget for a world tour, then a trip to the Big Apple is the next best thing. In the crowded streets of Chinatown, the carts sell spicy noodles, bao buns, steamed rice rolls, and satisfyingly squidgy dumplings.

Fans of Mexican food can't leave the city without picking up tacos, quesadillas or crispy corn tortillas from a taco truck, and sampling a hot dog (meat or veggie!) from one of the many vendors is a rite of passage. Some of the best pizza in the city comes from hole-in-the-wall joints, while if you're craving something sweet, the waffle stalls will hit the spot.

Marrakech, Morocco

Wandering around the labyrinth-like streets of Marrakech can overwhelm the senses and, as you stroll, all kinds of tantalising smells will drift past you. In the evening, Jemaa el-Fnaa square is packed with stalls selling various Moroccan delicacies, and no matter your diet or taste preferences, you'll find something to whet your appetite.



Aside from the ubiquitous tagine, you can feast on msemen or meloui, which are pancakes hot off the grill, and stuffed with onions and spices or drizzled with honey. Meat lovers will want to try the popular northwest African lamb sausages - known as merguez - or, if you're feeling brave, why not try snails or sheep's head? Alternatively, veggies will love harira, which is a humble soup made from tomatoes, lentils, and chickpeas.

Sicily, Italy

Italian food is celebrated all around the world, and you can find fresh, flavoursome street food in just about every Italian city. While Rome may seem like the obvious choice, Sicily might just pip it to the top place. Not only do the street vendors here serve up traditional Italian classics like pizza and focaccia, but they also serve up dozens of authentic Sicilian delights.

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Arancini are the most popular street food snack here, and these breadcrumb-rice balls are stuffed with meat, cheese, or veg, and fried until crisp. Panelle are delectable chickpea fritters, while pani ca meusa is a sandwich made with fried calf's spleen and topped with cheese. Aside from boasting the best gelato in Italy, Sicily is also home to the decadent cannoli; a dish of crisp pastry tubes filled with ricotta.

Mexico City, Mexico

If you're a fan of Mexican food but have never been to Mexico, then you're in for a serious treat. The food here is incredibly flavoursome and moreish, and the use of indigenous ingredients and methods results in tastes that are almost impossible to experience anywhere else. Street food is delicious and authentic all around the country, but it's best in the capital.



Even the simplest taco stand here has fresh masa (maize dough) tortillas and all kinds of zingy salsas and toppings. Often eaten for breakfast, tamales are also made from masa, filled with beans or meat, then wrapped and steamed in a corn husk. Elotes - corn on the cob smothered with chilli, cheese and mayo - are a popular late-night snack, while churros are the ultimate sweet treat.

Bangkok, Thailand (pictured above)

Bangkok's street food scene is undeniably one of the world's best, and the vendors and carts that line the streets here are impossible to avoid.

From first thing in the morning to late at night, you'll find tourists and locals feasting on local delights, whether it's tucking into a bowl of pad thai on a plastic chair or grabbing exotic fruits like mangosteen and durian to eat on the go.

The sois - short roads or alleys - are home to vendors selling wonderfully tasty satay dishes, while the smell of prawn noodles fried in an open wok may lure you around the corner. Papaya salad, fried rice, and stir-fried meat with basil can be found on almost every street, while vegans must try the sweet, creamy bean curd and soya milk dish that's popularly eaten for breakfast or dessert.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Brazil's Rio de Janeiro is one of the world's most beautiful cities - and it's also an incredibly exciting destination if you love street food... particularly if you like hearty meat-based dishes.

The country's population is a diverse mix of European, African, and Amerindian people, and this mix of cultures has found its way to the food, which fuses together all kinds of exciting flavours.

There are countless vendors serving up fried cod cakes, which are a reminder of Brazil's Portuguese heritage, while acarajé with vatapá - bean and onion cakes stuffed with shrimp and coconut milk - are a nod to its African roots. The beaches are great spots to pick up churrasquinho meat skewers and pao de queijo cheese bread, while tapioca crepes and chocolate churros are delicious desserts.

Istanbul, Turkey

Istanbul is a mecca for street food, particularly the Karakoy and Ortakoy neighbourhoods - though there are street stalls and markets dotted throughout the city. The most commonly eaten street food is probably simit, a circular bread that's like a cross between a bagel and a pretzel, covered in sesame seeds and then dipped in molasses.

Lahmacun - Turkish pizza - is another good snack to grab on the go, as are borek pastries, which are made from filo pastry and stuffed with spinach and feta, meat, or potatoes. If you like kebabs, pick up a durum on a street corner; these are wraps stuffed with spiced meat and veg. Balik ekmek - smoked mackerel sandwiches - are also popular, but leave room for some sticky baklava!

Lima, Peru

Peru is widely considered to serve the best food in South America, so it's no surprise its capital, Lima, is a street food hotspot. Peruvian cuisine traditionally contains a wide range of ingredients, and when combined with immigrant influences, it's incredibly unique and innovative. Lima is the birthplace of ceviche, which was inspired by Peru's Japanese immigrants, and is fresh, spicy, and salty.

Papa rellenas are potato croquettes filled with beef, onions, and spices, while anticuchos are grilled meats on a skewer, most commonly made with cow's heart. Butifarra sandwiches are found on carts throughout Lima, and contain ham, salad, and a sweet onion relish called salsa criolla. If you have a sweet tooth, try picarones - Peruvian doughnuts made from squash and sweet potato flour!

Port Louis, Mauritius

It might not seem like an obvious choice, but the capital of Mauritius, Port Louis, is another cultural melting pot that offers a dizzyingly diverse array of street food. The cuisine here is a mix of African, Indian, French, and Chinese, and the best street food can be found on the beaches and backstreets of the colonial capital, where food trucks set up tables.

The dhol puri is possibly the favourite street snack; similar to a roti, it's filled with spiced yellow split peas and cooked on a griddle.

Split peas are also used in gateaux piments - fried chilli cakes - while boulettes are Chinese-Mauritian dumplings you eat on stools on the street. The deep-fried breadfruit - which is rather like plant-based chicken nuggets - is tasty too, as are the sweet potato cakes!

Mumbai, India

If you're a fan of Indian cuisine, most of India will be a foodie paradise for you - but Mumbai is the culinary capital, and the street food here draws heavily from all the unique regions in India. There are thousands of food stalls all over the city, serving dishes inspired by the spicy north to the sweeter, milder south. The stalls don't all have signs, so if you're unsure what to order, copy the locals!



Some of the most popular dishes include vada pav - potatoes seasoned with chilli, garlic, and herbs - and biryanis. However, bhelpuri - puffed rice and veg in a tangy tamarind sauce - is another favourite, and if your taste buds need cooling off, a sweet and refreshing mango lassi is the perfect remedy. But save room for malpua pancakes and firni, which is a luscious caramel custard!

Hong Kong, China

And finally, there's Hong Kong. In this heaving, electric Chinese city, the locals are perhaps even more excited about the street food scene than the visitors, and you'll find long queues for food stalls and hole-in-the-walls winding down the street. The food here is delicious and dynamic, and there are all the classic Cantonese-Euro dishes you'd expect... as well as some more adventurous ones!

No visit is complete without trying cheung fun; a rice noodle roll that's smothered in sesame seeds and spicy sauces. Most vendors also sell delightfully springy fishballs, which, despite the name, are made mostly with flour. Pineapple buns and egg tarts are another must-try if you want something sweet - and if you're daring, there's pig intestine and fermented bean curd to try too!

(Article source: Rest Less)



‘I needed to be in that strange, flat place’: How an Orkney garden healed a writer

After her sister died, Victoria Bennett left Cumbria for the remote Scottish archipelago, where she learned to go with the ebb and flow of life.

It was during her first winter in Orkney that the nature writer Victoria Bennett experienced the joy of baying into the sea during a storm.

“There’s something very physically releasing about howling,” she says. “It’s quite animalistic and powerful.” On a stormy beach, when waves are crashing on the rocks, “you can really let rip”, she says. “The sound just disappears.”

Until that moment, Bennett had been struggling with her decision to move to the remote archipelago off the north coast of Scotland. “I was beginning to feel like I was in a fight against the sea, and against the weather.”

As the storm began, she frantically weighed down the contents of her nascent garden - the first she had ever owned - and felt a little frightened. There is no way to get off Orkney in bad weather, she says: “We can’t even go to the main town, the barriers get shut, and if you’re walking, you can get blown down the street.”

But a few hours later, as she stood on the shore and howled into the wind, the feeling that she was in a battle with the elements evaporated.

In her forthcoming memoir about her first year on Orkney, *The Apothecary by the Sea*, Bennett describes how she first visited the archipelago of more than 70 islands and islets more than a decade ago.

On the anniversary of the day her sister drowned in a canoeing accident, she went down to the seashore and cried her heart out into the salty wind. When she got back to England, the islands “whispered” to her, she says, urging her to return and make her home there.

By the time she heeded their call, it was 2022 and she was 51 years old. “I was ready to find my own shape again, and Orkney was where I needed to be to do that.

“I needed to be there, by the sea, in that strange, flat place,” Bennett says.

But that first winter, after she upended her life in Cumbria and bought a Victorian terrace house in Orkney with her husband and 14-year-old son, she felt vulnerable and, at times, frustrated.

For Bennett - whose 2023 nature book, *All My Wild Mothers*, won the Nautilus award for memoirs - the solution was to turn her back yard into an apothecary garden: a reflective space full of traditional medicinal and culinary plants that would nourish her, body and soul.

But she soon discovered that this would not be easy on Orkney. “When a wind comes from a certain direction off the sea, in 24 hours, the garden gets wiped out. That happened twice last year. The salt-burn destroyed everything.”

Forced to accept the dominance of the sea over the land, she began to swap plants that could not survive such onslaughts, such as elderberries, for similar but hardier species, such as fuchsia berries.

“That’s part of what living here involves: an acceptance that whatever I’m growing is in relationship with the sea, with the elements around me.”

The garden is fertilised with foraged seaweed and she has learned to look at the plants that flourish on the coastline when she goes swimming in the sea, which she does every day.

“Thrift, sea campion, roseroot - the coastline showed me what I could grow, because if it would grow wild there, it would grow in the garden.”

Bennett’s small walled garden, which measures 9 sq metres, has a central circular spiral bed of medicinal herbal plants, surrounded by a circular path. This is bordered by a micro-woodland of goat willow, elder, wild garlic and bluebells, as well as dwarf fruit trees, roses, wildflowers and larger apothecary plants such as mint, geranium and catmint in sunnier spots.

“There is a focus in the borders on colour, pollinators and scent,” she says.

She also grows Mediterranean and culinary herbs such as oregano, rosemary, tarragon and marjoram in pots on her patio and has a half-barrel pond of aquatic plants with marsh marigold and water mint, surrounded by flag iris and goldenrod.

“There’s not much room to stand in,” she laughs. “But I find it very peaceful and I love seeing the wildlife that live in it.”

Orkney is so far north there are up to 18 hours of light on summer days and an equivalent amount of darkness in winter. Bennett feels there is something magical about the islands - “something caught in the expanse of sea and sky, in the contrast of light and dark”.

Especially in winter, she says, living there has shown her “the most beautiful light is found in the darkest time”.

Now 54, Bennett is chronically ill: she has hypermobile Ehlers Danlos syndrome, a connective tissue disorder that causes joint pain and digestive issues, and genetic haemochromatosis, which means her body absorbs excessive iron.

Learning that she must stop fighting with the wind and the sea in her garden has taught her a bigger life lesson: that she must treat herself with more compassion and forgiveness, and love her body with all its flaws. “Coming here and growing this garden by the sea has helped me loosen and release into the ebb and flow of life,” she says.



Letting go can be necessary, she understands now, and what seems like a loss can, with acceptance, be reframed as an exchange - just as, when the tide goes out, the waves are exchanged for the shore.

“Relinquishing control and allowing my garden to be what it is - without wanting it to be something else - was a really important way of understanding that in myself.”

(Article source: The Guardian)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



We care for many hedgehogs here at our 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**

