

OUR PLACE *News*

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

OCTOBER 2023

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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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Halloween in London

London Dungeon South Bank, London

Delve into the ancient capital's most horrible history at the London Dungeon.

Experience live actors, thrilling rides and exciting special effects during this terrifying 90-minute experience.

The London Dungeon is a walk-through experience that recreates scenes from London's scary history. Take the medieval lift into the depths of the dungeon and begin your journey. Along the way you'll have a close shave with Fleet Street barber, Sweeney Todd, investigate the mysterious identity of Jack the Ripper and discover the dreadful secrets of the torture chamber. Not for the faint-hearted!

Tickets to the London Dungeon cost from £27 per person.

Jack the Ripper Museum 12 Cable St, Aldgate, London E1 8JG

Visit the world's only dedicated Jack the Ripper museum, learn about the suspects and victims of the terrible murders and step back to the year 1888 - the year that Jack the Ripper terrorised the streets of Victorian London.

Set across six incredible floors, the museum shows painstakingly recreated scenes connected to the murders alongside artefacts that have never before been shown to the public. See a realistic recreation of PC Watkins discovering the body of Catherine Eddowes on Mitre Square and visit Jack the Ripper's 'sitting room', containing medical instruments, books and an impressive and fascinating collection of Ripper memorabilia.

Visit a recreation of the Whitechapel police station that was the epicentre of the investigation and inspect a wall of clues, including original newspapers, police artefacts and the 'From Hell' and 'Dear Boss' letters. The attic of the museum is a recreation of victim Mary Kelly's humble living quarters, the room where she lived and died.

Here you will learn the life stories of the women he murdered - a poignant exploration of the domestic and working lives of the Ripper's victims. If you dare, descend to the morgue, where you can inspect actual autopsy photographs and read the medical reports of the nine women that fell victim to the Ripper's knife. With all this evidence, perhaps you will be able to solve one of the most famous crime mysteries of all time!

Experience Leicester's Festival of Light Leicester, Leicestershire

Wrap up warm for Leicester's spectacular Diwali lights switch on, or join in with a wealth of activities and celebrations leading up to the epic finale on Diwali Day.

To mark the start of Diwali, the Belgrave Road area of Leicester is bathed in twinkling lights, with a Festival of Light opening party on in late October.

For the next two weeks, the city comes alive with theatre performances, craft activities, parades, exhibitions and, of course, mouth-watering food. All faiths and races join in with the festivities, with thousands coming along to see the light switch-on, and even more attending the culmination of cultural celebrations on Diwali Day.

Alongside a fire garden and Global Rainbow that will beam light across the city, Diwali Day, in early November, will see an array of Bollywood dances, music performances and dazzling fashion. It's a street party like no other.

HEDGEHOG WARNING

At this time of year please check for these prickly creatures before lighting your bonfire.



Bonfires are perfect sleeping areas for hedgehogs and every year many get burnt alive. If you are having a bonfire, just make sure you check inside before lighting it. If you do find a hedgehog, move it to a safe place. This year second litters have been born later than usual. This means that there may still be young and underweight hedgehogs around. Remember if they are under 600gr they will not survive hibernation and need to be taken to a local animal rescue centre.





The sleep secret: How lucid dreams can make us fitter, more creative and less anxious

Freud described dreams as windows into our repressed desires. Today, researchers are using them to boost athletic performance and help veterans with PTSD, unlocking huge benefits for us all.

In 2020, the author Michael Rosen was admitted to hospital with Covid-19 and spent 40 days in an induced coma.

In the aftermath, he had a strange and vivid dream: he was at Land's End in Cornwall at the edge of a perilous cliff. He tried to squeeze through a hole in a wall to get to safety but got stuck.

"Immediately after the dream, I can remember feeling first that it was so real, that I had 'been there' on the cliff and my wife, Emma, helped me.

It really felt like it had happened," Rosen recalls. "This has stayed with me. I sometimes catch myself thinking that there really was a time when



I was stuck on the top of a cliff on the wrong side of a dry-stone wall with the sea hundreds of feet below, and that there was a hole through which I could escape that Emma was pushing me through."

It is a perfect illustration of how dreams can depict waking life in a bizarre and symbolic way, but also of how such imagery can provide inspiration and comfort. In Rosen's case, a reminder of the support that enabled him to pull through after a near-death experience.

Like many writers before him, Rosen used his dream as inspiration for a poem included in his book *Many Different Kinds of Love: A Story of Life, Death and the NHS*.

On reading it, Mark Blagrove, a professor of psychology at Swansea University, invited Rosen to participate in an online dream salon at London's Freud Museum.

For the uninitiated, dream salons allow a person to share their dreams and receive insights from the audience. Rosen received dozens of questions and insights about his dream, including the observation that *Land's End* could be a play on "life's end".

"There's always been this trope that there's nothing more boring than hearing about someone else's dreams," says Blagrove. "Yet it's something we feel compelled to do."

Before he started attending dream sharing events, Blagrove was sceptical. "I thought it was like reading horoscopes or something. But then I went to one and shared a dream of my own and received poignant and meaningful feedback."

He went on to create a research programme on dream sharing; his most recent study has established a link between dream sharing and increased empathy among listeners.

Blagrove is keen to point out that while we may share dreams for their bizarre or entertaining aspects, a lot of them are rather mundane.

In his book *The Science and Art of Dreaming*, co-authored with Julia Lockheart, he cites research showing that 83% of dreams relate directly to waking life events, a fifth of those from the previous day.

People tend not to dream of tedious activities, though. The study *We Do Not Dream of the 3Rs* found that reading, writing and arithmetic are too lacking in human drama to show up while we snooze.

In a world where so much is driven by algorithms and data, it's not surprising that oneirology - the study of dreams - continues to fascinate us. So many mysteries persist.

Why, for example, do I keep having a recurring nightmare about having to sit a random philosophy exam at university? Or how about a happier dream I often have about finding an extra room in my home? Sometimes it's a secret garden - what would Freud have to say about that?

As it happens, the "father of psychoanalysis" believed that all dreams contain a repressed wish, usually sexual. His rival Carl Jung disagreed, theorising that dreams were connected to nothing less than the entire history of humankind, the collective unconscious.

Most modern researchers now view dreams as a big brain dump, a way of integrating experiences and alerting us to potential threats we may have overlooked while awake.

Psychologists have hypothesised that the purpose of nightmares is to overcome perceived danger while dreaming and that this has an evolutionary advantage in waking life.

Research among Kurdish children living in an environment where their wellbeing is constantly under threat found that they reported a much higher number of dreams with menacing content than those living in peaceful circumstances. In other words, somehow nightmares are connected to basic survival.

It can be particularly difficult to untangle the meaning of recurring dreams like this, given they leave people drained and upset. Isabella Gray had a nightmare about having to drive a bus - definitely not job-related as she works as a goldsmith.

"I used to have the dream all the time. I would be driving from an odd vantage point, like from the top deck, reaching right down to the steering wheel with long arms or trying to drive the bus down narrow steps. It happened so regularly that I would wake up stressed and tired."

Gray heard dream psychologist Ian Wallace on a radio show and emailed him about her dream. "He told me my bus dreams were about having to control everything in my life and feeling there is no support.

And I did feel like that! I look after a lot of people; everything is on me all the time. As soon as he explained it to me, the dreams completely stopped, never to return."

Sometimes, a dream can offer more literal wisdom. When Kyle Frank was at university, he was suffering from disfiguring acne that had dogged him since his teenage years. The GP prescribed a new medication, which had debilitating physical and mental side-effects.

Then, one night, he had an intriguing dream. "I was walking through a jungle and I felt like a young boy again exploring in nature. Up ahead, I saw a village and a group of older men gathered by a stream.

They were preparing some kind of potion. One of them beckoned to me: 'The way you are doing things, it's not going to work. You need to find a solution yourself, and help others.'"

Continued on pages 6-7...



The dream struck Frank as bizarre and he didn't think anything more of it. But on holiday in Bali, he encountered people making skincare remedies and became intrigued by plant-based medicine.

Back home in his fathers' kitchen, Frank started experimenting with ingredients such as lemongrass, aloe vera juice and seaweed. After much trial and error, he found a formula that transformed his skin.

"I was really happy. And that would have been the end of it. But once I was back at uni, people kept asking me what products I had used to clear up my skin."

A business was born, and support from the Prince's Trust followed. "Details of the dream kept coming back to me, especially the part about helping others. It gave me the spark to create the remedy, and the confidence to turn it into a business."

It is an inspirational story but the process of getting wisdom from dreams is frustrating for many because they find it impossible to remember them.

Blagrove suggests that, for this task, technology is your friend. "Use your phone, assuming you leave it beside your bed."

When you wake up, turn the voice recorder on and try to recall as much as possible. If you don't, the dream will just disappear. So, make a record of it, and don't judge it even if you think it's nonsense or mundane."

It might sound like a lot of work or a recipe for annoying partners, but there are good reasons for doing so. Documenting your dreams is a crucial element in learning how to lucid dream, a technique that is being hailed as a cure for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and nightmares as well as enhanced creativity and athletic performance.

"A lucid dream is a dream where you know that you're dreaming as the dream is happening," says Charlie Morley, the author of *Lucid Dreaming Made Easy*.

"So, you're still sound asleep but in the dream and you are telling yourself: 'I know this is all a dream.'"

Most people have had a few. If you reckon you haven't, you might want to think about whether you have ever had a nightmare where you've reassured yourself by saying: 'This isn't real - I have to wake up.' That's also a lucid dream."

It may sound far-fetched, like something you have seen in a movie (in fact, the film *Inception* captured the power of lucid dreaming very successfully), but Morley maintains that choosing what you dream about and controlling what happens are skills that anyone can learn. Might I be able to use them to improve my tortoise-like running speed?

"There have been several studies showing that lucid dreaming can enhance performance," Morley tells me. "In a lucid dream, you are doing more than visualising - you are there in a 3D projection in your mind. The results exceed merely visualising, which has been widely embraced by sports professionals."

Great, so I will be running the London Marathon next year. Where do I start? Hacking your dreams begins with the dream diary.

To manipulate your dreams, you need to recognise patterns, Morley says. "Let's say that after a week of noting down your dreams, you look back and see that you've had three zombie dreams or several visits back to your childhood home.

These are part of your unique personal dreamscape." The idea is that once you become familiar with your dreams, particularly what the lucid dreaming pioneer Stephen LaBerge termed "dream signs", you will quickly be able to recognise that you are dreaming.

"A dream sign is anything that makes you realise that you are dreaming. For example, if you dream that you are walking down your street with your dog: no dream sign. But if suddenly Donald Trump appears riding a blue dragon, you know it's a dream."

These signs are known as "lucidity triggers", acting as reminders that it is time to start putting your dream plan (in my case, running faster than 5.6km an hour) into action.

To do this, I'm told that as I fall asleep I need to repeat "I remember my dreams, I have excellent dream recall" 21 times. Then, when I'm in my dream, and I recognise a dream trigger, I can start running and imagine myself running really fast.

Well, that's the theory. I'm afraid when I put this into practice, the first night I felt so stressed about trying to lucid dream correctly that I couldn't get to sleep.

The second time I tried, I had dreams about interviewing a lucid dream expert; and the third time, ominously, I dreamed that I fell over and injured my ankle. Back in real life, my speed remains pathetic.

Blagrove sounds a note of caution about some of the miracle claims being made about lucid dreaming. "Although there are scientific, health and recreational benefits, there have been questions raised in the scientific literature on whether it is a good idea to cultivate lucid dreaming.

Some have cautioned that lucid dream techniques might affect sleep quality. Also, if dreaming does have specific functions for processing emotions and memory, then deliberately altering the plot or contents of a dream or even just observing that one is dreaming might have an adverse effect."

One area where there may be real benefits is with victims of trauma. Lucid dreaming is particularly pertinent to PTSD because victims often relive their traumas in chronic nightmares.

In 2021, Morley facilitated a study with the Institute of Noetic Sciences in California and US veterans suffering from PTSD. Participants were each given a "dream plan" to enact during their nightmares.

These included intentionally changing the outcome of a recurring nightmare or simply staying present in the dream event, to allow it to be fully witnessed and integrated. After a week, 85% of participants were no longer suffering from PTSD. "They had to triple-check the results because no one believed them," says Morley.

Another use for lucid dreaming is to find creative inspiration. Tree Carr, the author of *Conscious Dreaming*, has run workshops at the Tate Modern and works with artists. "My favourite exercise is one called dream incubation.

An hour before sleep, go to bed with a notebook. You don't want blue light from devices. If you're an artist, sketch some doodles; if you're a poet, free-write some verse.

You want to incubate the creative process as an intention that will continue into your dreams. Do it until you feel like dozing off." As you're drifting off to sleep, she suggests telling yourself:

"Tonight my dreams are going to give me a creative breakthrough" or: "Tonight I'm going to receive a song or painting or a solution in my dreams." "Do it for a month and see what happens; it can be inspirational."



Of all the different types of dreams, Blagrove mentions that the most poignant and comforting is also one of the most common - a recurring dream featuring a loved one who has died.

"Although those dreams are bringing back the pain of loss, they can be healing because sometimes the person will appear fit and well.

They might have a message like: 'Everything will be OK' or other words of reassurance. That can be deeply meaningful for the dreamer."

(Article source: *The Guardian*)

Silent Sundays: Should we swap our lawnmowers, leaf blowers and power tools for peace?

Gardener and broadcaster Alan Titchmarsh is calling for hush, so at least once a week he can listen to a blackbird rather than a Black & Decker.



Name: Name: Quiet Sundays.

Age: Ancient. Some say since the very beginning... as the passage from the King James, rather than the Phil Collins, version of Genesis puts it: "On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it..."

What about Sundays? They are too loud.

Says who? Says Alan Titchmarsh.

The gardener? Also broadcaster, writer, novelist, decking enthusiast, bellringer, proud Yorkshireman, resident of Hampshire and Christian, as it happens. But, yes, we are talking about gardens, as well as Sundays.

A good day to mow the lawn? Titchmarsh says not. Unless you are doing it with a flock of sheep, perhaps. He has called for us to down tools - power tools specifically - on Sundays.

For religious reasons? He says he is not evangelising, just calling for some hush. Writing in Gardeners' World magazine, he said he believes "profoundly there should be at least one day in the week when we could go out into our gardens and experience a bit of quiet".

So that we can appreciate all the other stuff He made, back in the beginning - the trees, the herb-bearing seeds, the winged fowl and all that? Exactly! "I want to listen to the birds singing," Titchmarsh wrote.

"And hear the wind rustling the leaves of the horse chestnut across the garden, the splash of a duck landing on our wildlife pond, the cluck of a moorhen darting across the lily pads and the laughter of grandchildren."

... as they kick a football against the wall, incessantly. And the wail of a police siren, the screech of a car alarm... Yes, it's possible others have different living arrangements - not everyone has a duck pond, or lily pads. But, once a week, he just wants a bit of peace, with no noisy machinery. That's not a lot to ask, is it?

What if it is the only day I can mow the lawn, or trim the hedge, because of work? "Please do so between the hours of 9am and 6pm," says Titchmarsh. "So that I can sip my early morning tea in silence and enjoy my sundowner to the accompaniment of the blackbird, rather than the Black & Decker."

The jackdaw rather than the hacksaw... Maybe leave the poetry to Titch, eh?

Do say: "Hark! A mistle thrush, methinks."

Don't say: "WHAT?! SORRY, CAN'T HEAR YOU OVER MY LEAF BLOWER."

(Story source: The Guardian)

What are the health benefits of ginger?

Ginger, dried or fresh is an extremely popular kitchen staple. A versatile ingredient it adds flavour, fragrance and spice to a whole range of dishes. We cook it in curries, cakes and even have it in tea.



Silver Surfers reports that in other countries including South East Asia, India and China, ginger has long been recognised for its medicinal and health benefits as well as its culinary ones.

With an ever growing body of science supporting its medicinal effect, we take a look at the health benefits for you of this flowering plant.

It's a traditional remedy for fighting colds

The fresh root of ginger contains impressive anti-viral properties and whilst it won't stop your cold in its tracks, it can help in prevention and with some of the symptoms.

Ginger provides a lovely warm and spicy flavour to hot drinks taken for a cold, and can help to reduce the mucus build up in your chest. It also acts to warm your body and encourage perspiration thereby helping you to 'sweat out a cold'.

Its powerful anti-inflammatory properties similar to that found in aspirin, can help to reduce throat infections and also may ease a dry and irritating cough.

Try making a tea next time you have a cold, use ginger alongside cinnamon or honey.

It can help with feelings of nausea

Ginger has for years been known as an effective anti-sickness remedy. Studies into how ginger benefits women suffering nausea, show that as a supplement or fresh, it can reduce those feelings.

This is thanks to two powerful compounds, gingerol which gives it its smell and shogaols, its taste. Together they block those neurotransmitters in your body which cause you to feel sick, acetylcholine and serotonin.

The most common types of sickness it seems to help with are those associated with travel, pregnancy and that caused by medicinal side effects.

A small dose of 1 to 1.5grams a day has shown to be effective but consult your GP if you are unsure about taking it.

It might lower your risk of heart disease

In traditional Chinese, Indonesian and Ayurvedic medicines, the benefits of ginger to treat various cardiovascular conditions has long been reported.

The anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects within the gingerol component of ginger, can help to reduce your risk of chronic heart disease and stroke.

It does this by preventing clots forming in your arteries, easing circulation and relaxing muscles around the blood vessels reducing blood pressure. A daily dose the size of a thumb in your tea or smoothie is the recommended amount.

Assists your digestion

As well as treating sickness, ginger has been used widely to help with other stomach and digestive issues.

The active compound in ginger has been shown to reduce intestinal gas, breaking it up and reducing your chances of cramps, bloating and other nasty tummy troubles. It also has a calming effect which soothes the digestive tract.

Ginger also awakens your taste buds and gets saliva flowing which aids digestion and helps to speed up the movement of food within your body.

Helps to reduce arthritic pain

In the UK over 10 million people suffer from arthritis. For many, adding ginger to their diet alongside prescribed medication has a positive effect.

This is thought to be once again down to its potent anti-inflammatory properties which may help to relieve common arthritic symptoms including joint pain and stiffness.

Can combat migraines

Whilst research on ginger and migraines is not as developed as with other conditions, ginger oil and ginger capsules have been found to help with pain relief.

A 550mg capsule taken at the first sign of a migraine then repeated up to twice more in a day has been shown to be effective.

Diluted ginger oil when rubbed on your temples once or twice daily can also help and may reduce the associated feelings of sickness.

You can easily add ginger into your diet. Try it in baking or with curries and stir fries, or simply add to a cup of hot water and lemon in the morning. For those of you that do not like the taste, ginger capsules are also a popular and effective alternative.

Ginger is a potent herb that does act upon the body so it will not always be suitable for everybody and is best taken in small doses. Always consult with a GP if you are unsure about taking it.

(Story source: Silver Surfers)

WINTER CAT WARNING

At this time of year please check under your car and wheel arches for cats trying to keep warm, before you set off on your journey!



During the cold winter months cats will often seek out any warm space they can find. One particularly irresistible lure seems to be the cosy confines of a warm car engine. Unfortunately, cats that seek shelter under the bonnets of cars can then be injured or killed when that car is started. Help keep your own and your neighbourhood cats safe this winter by tapping the bonnet of your car before you start the engine.



Good for your soul: 10 of the best reasons to travel

Why travel? Well, that's what I want to share with you here because there are so many reasons to travel!

I only have to hear the word "travel" to get all starry-eyed and excited.

For as long as I can remember it's all I've ever wanted.

Since childhood, I've yearned for crazy escapades, dreamed about fantastic experiences, and bemoaned the 'ordinary' route through life.

I think about what the 'good life' means for me and know it doesn't involve a standard 9 to 5 routine, working for the man and living for the weekend. There's nothing necessarily wrong with all that- I just know it wouldn't make me happy.

I want to explore the world, immerse myself in new cultures, and experience different ways of life.

And so that's what I've done over the last few years. I've made travel a priority, working and exploring my ways around the world in a bid to see and experience as much as I can.

The experience has led me to believe that everybody should travel at least once in their lifetimes!

And you don't have to sell all your belongings and go on a year-long round-the-world trip (although there is a lot of value in that too). Just plan a trip to a destination you have never been to before.

There is, however, a big difference between vacation and travel, and here I'm talking about traveling, not about booking a trip to an all-inclusive resort.

So, in my bid to convince you to give it a try, I thought I'd write about the primary reasons to travel and how you stand to gain if you go.

Sound good? Read on for my 10 top reasons to travel the world.

Top 10 reasons to travel

Traveling makes life memorable

You don't make the best memories when you're stuck behind a desk all day.

Pushing paper does nothing but make you get bored, lethargic, and unmotivated. Days blend into one and you look to the weekend (or retirement) for salvation. Then it's back to the grind come Monday.

Travel is the total opposite! It's memorable from the very start.

You'll be exploring ancient ruins, camping under hammock tarps in the Amazon, riding bikes through Brazil, deep-sea diving the Great Barrier Reef, and jumping head first out of airplanes.

Traveling writes the tales you tell your grandkids and reminisce about over a drink with friends.

It's remarkable in every sense of the word, leaves an indelible mark on your soul, and makes life feel that little bit more worthwhile.

Traveling teaches you about yourself



Travel is an amazing educator.

And one primary thing it teaches you about is yourself!

It's hard not to learn about yourself when you're forced into tricky spots and come through the other side. The intensity of the experience makes you react physically, mentally, and emotionally in particular ways, which you can then observe and interpret.

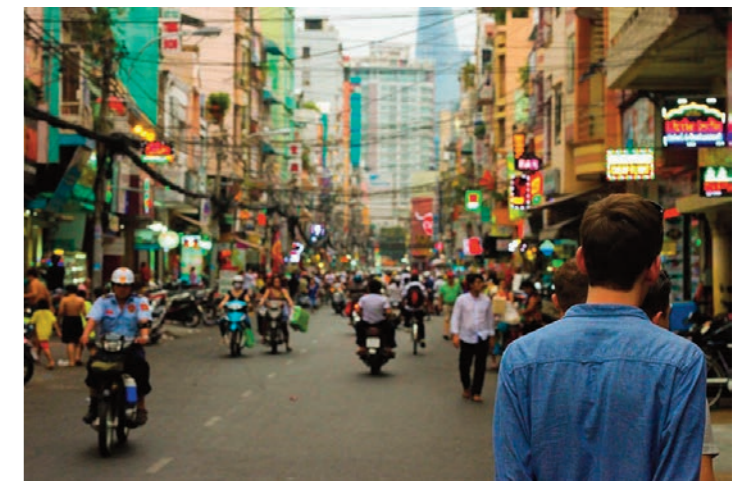
You meet people who confront you with new ideals and ideas that you may or may not agree with.

It's like shining a flashlight on yourself in the dark. You can't help but see who you are in a different light, and discover who you want to be in the future.

Traveling teaches you about life

When traveling you learn about life (and the world) at a macro level too.

You can't help it- traveling confronts you with the world. You see with your own eyes what life can be like; you witness unforgettable sights and encounter attitude-altering events.



You might experience true poverty in India. You might have all your worldly possessions stolen in Colombia. And you might see the most mind-blowing natural beauty in Nepal.

You might witness the damaging reality of globalisation and the darker side of capitalism.

Honestly, there's any number of ways for travel to teach you something about the world. It's almost inevitable that you come away with a freshly opened mind.

Traveling pushes you to do and be better

Travel involves challenges too.

It pushes and pulls you out of your comfort zone.

Ultimately, though, you come through the other side and are all the better for it.

There's something about the experience that lets you know you're capable of more.

That newfound self-knowledge may have revealed your aptitude for one thing or another. You might feel a new sense of confidence and bravery to boot.

Travel is stimulating, exciting, and engaging. You can't help but feel liberated and inspired to make more of life.

Continued on pages 12-13...



Traveling makes you humble

There's something humbling about travel as well.

It highlights your weaknesses and flaws. It showcases how small and insignificant you really are relative to the world.

You see that you're fallible and life is cruel. You see that privilege is total luck of the draw and that material wealth means very little in the grand scheme of things.



Any lingering bravado melts away as you start realising more about yourself and the world. In this way, immersing yourself in an adventure and embracing everything along the way is a recipe for newfound humility.

It's something different

For me, hitting the road is about doing something different.

Traveling is, of course, mega-popular these days. But I still think it sets you apart from the crowd. You move away from an ordinary, passive, linear trajectory through life and take time out to see the world!

It's inspiring and fills you with a sense of passion, where an 'every day' existence might not.

Honestly, I'd much rather do something different, struggle over the uncertainty and instability that arises, and come away with a host of battle scars in the process, than drag my heels through a safe and conventional life. In my experience, travel gives life meaning and purpose. You get out of bed each day looking forward to what's to come.

Traveling shows what's possible

I think travel helps you realise what's out there too.

You start seeing things differently. It removes the cotton wool from your eyes and reveals the possibilities that life has to offer. You see there's more to life than what you've been led to believe! There's a whole world out there to explore.

Like a child getting their first taste of chocolate, you can't help but want more and more and more. That first adventure sets the ball rolling and funnels you down a new path to better things.

Traveling makes you feel alive

I've never felt more alive than I have on my travels.

There's just so much to see and do! New smells, sights, and flavours excite your senses and stimulate you to the core of your being.

You become focused on the here and now, forget about your troubles, and enter fully into the experience.

As tiring as travel can be sometimes, you can't help but feel enlivened by the events of each day. They're novel, interesting, and exciting; visceral, triggering, and stimulating.

You pulled forcibly out of apathy and become more connected and attuned to your environment.

It provides a full mixture of emotions

Life shouldn't be lived in black and white. It should be full-colour, high-definition viewing!



Life should have highs and lows and ups and downs and everything in-between.

Travel does exactly that.

It's vibrant, intense, and exhilarating. It sends you through the wringer and back again. You'll feel a full range of emotions throughout your trip- from the depths of despair to the heights of joy.

And, though the tough times are never fun, they're necessary if you're ever going to fully appreciate the positives.

There's something inherently life-giving about experiencing life like this. I mean, it's literally the opposite of feeling apathetic about your days!

You feel alive, exuberant, and eager to embrace the adventure. More on this next.

It keeps you present

I hinted at this in the previous point. However, I think it's worth re-emphasising!

Basically, another key reason to travel is because it keeps you present, alert, and in the moment. You aren't focused on the past or future. You enjoy each instant as it passes, enthralled by what you're doing, and unable to see beyond the 'now'.

The result? You feel happier and at ease!

Indeed, it's hard not to be present when you're seeing and experiencing things for the first time; when you're tasting new foods and smelling new smells; when you're confronted with a reality you had no idea existed and a way of life that astounds and shocks in equal measure; when you're scared and unsure and lost in a strange new place; when you feel blessed and blown away by the generosity of strangers in a foreign land; when you meet inspiring new people and get the chance to learn from them... and so on and so forth.

Everything about having an adventure plonks you in what's happening and leaves you happily content in the moment.

Remember these reasons to travel the world

I think everybody wins when they go traveling.

From the newfound insight you gain into yourself and the world, to the intense joy it delivers on a daily basis, travel (and the adventures you have along the way) makes everything better.

Hopefully, the reasons to travel that I've outlined in this post have explained why that's the case.



(Article source: Spend Life Travelling)



I travel across Britain foraging wild food. Here's what to look for, and where

With a little skill and knowledge, delicacies can be found and savoured all year round, but bountiful autumn is the highlight of the British forager's year.

Every autumn, my father would load our family of five into his already ancient 1928 Morris and set off from our home in Portsmouth. Laden, as we were, with baskets, boots, crooked walking sticks, gloves and Elastoplasts, we were off blackberry picking. Apart from annual trips to collect cockles from the mud of Langstone Harbour, I loved those early autumn days more than any other. Unlike school, early-1960s television and just about everything else, they felt so very real; not just a thing to do but the thing to do.

Looking back, I think that we were revisiting the lives of our distant ancestors for whom foraging was an instinctive communal activity, one that nature rewarded with a sense of fulfilment and joy, and, in this instance, blackberries. Now those blissful days are mine every week, sometimes alone, sometimes with friends and family.

However, it is still autumn that I yearn for - its sloes, crab apples, sweet chestnuts, hazelnuts, misty mornings and mushrooms.

My interest in foraging was a development of what I can only call an irritation with the natural world. I would find something on a walk and have no idea of its name, where it fitted into the world and, eventually, whether or not it was edible. I see this curiosity in the people that accompany me on my walks. Rust fungi, lichens, plant galls, earthstars, tree burrs and fallen beech branches mysteriously covered in matt-black "paint" (fungal pseudosclerotial plates, don't you know) - all prompt questions. It is the slow, observant process of foraging that brings such marvels to their attention. "A walk will never be the same again," is something I have heard a hundred times over the years - I always hope that it sticks.

Such days, such interest, are of course available to anyone sufficiently mobile and motivated. But where to go? Autumnal urban foraging is certainly possible - new-growth stinging nettles that have been cut back for the fourth time this year, plus the ubiquitous chickweed and hairy bittercress. There is also the occasional parkland sweet chestnut and always the abundant rose hips found on rose bushes of every kind.

But it is urban mushrooms that can shine. I have picked horse mushrooms in a London cemetery, fairy ring champignons in Edinburgh and parasols in Leeds. Old lawns can also provide a feast. Still, for abundance and variety, one must search out wild food in an appropriately wilder setting. My own haunts are now in West Dorset, its chalk downland, lowland pasture, hedgerows, small woods and the splendid coast. But I travel widely in the autumn, from the Channel Islands to Inverness. Wherever you are, old, well-grazed pasture and edge habitats, such as wood edges and clearings, hedgerows and pathways, are more productive than overgrown or new pasture and dense woodland.

The seasons are paramount for the forager, and represented by a palette. In spring we have the greens of edible leaves; in summer it is the bright colours of raspberries, strawberries and rose petals; and in autumn it is predominately the browns and purples typified by mushrooms and nuts, bullaces and blackberries. Even within seasons, fruits will come and go - the hazelnuts of early September, for example, and blackberries are now fading fast. You will know these and more, so I will describe a few that are slightly less familiar, one of which you will need to remember for next year - sea buckthorn.

Sea buckthorn, although unsurprisingly found by the sea, has also been planted along roadsides by beneficent highway authorities. In full orange fruit, this willow-like shrub is easy to spot, but the berries that cluster densely around the twigs are impossible to pick - they burst. Cut the clusters whole on the twig, freeze, then knock the berries off. Simmer for a few minutes and sieve out the juice. The juice is sufficiently acidic to make your teeth fizz, but the taste can be acquired, and it is good for you.

Hawthorn berries ("haws") brighten the countryside in September, but despite their vast numbers they are difficult to use, so go for a gin infusion or a fruit leather (a thin, oven-dried puree). The statuesque sweet chestnut is at the north of its range, and its fruits disappointingly small. Nevertheless, they can often be found in great abundance and occasionally the size of their continental sisters. Do make sure to remove the nuts from their fiercely defended jacket with your boot.

The bullace is a type of domestic plum that has naturalised in woody edge habitats. It looks like a large sloe. If comparative size is insufficient to assure you that it is a bullace, just taste one. If your mouth dries out and your cheeks shrink inwards, it's a sloe.

The first-year biennial roots of wild carrot and wild parsnip, plus the perennial roots of horseradish, burdock and dandelions, are available for the more determined, though you should only harvest roots while the plant is still recognisable from its leaves as several wild roots are deadly.

Also, permission is required from the landowner to uproot anything, though most wild fruit, foliage, flowers and fungi are legally fair game on almost any land - even if you are trespassing, which, of course, you shouldn't be.

Down on the beach, the thick, dark green leaves of sea beet are in great condition in autumn. Sea beet is related to and very much like spinach, excepting that it is more succulent and sweeter. Seaweeds too are in fine fettle.

Boiled carrageen can set a panna cotta, and the thin, brown, membranous fronds that is laver, can, when boiled for up to 10 hours (really) turn into a sticky paste that tastes halfway between olives and oysters. Mix it with oats to make small, fried cakes for breakfast - superb, especially if bacon is in the mix.

And then there is dulse. This dull red, thin, cutout of a hand is the most versatile of the seaweeds. It will steam nicely in 20 minutes, resulting in what you would expect if your cabbage had just spent two weeks on a beach. Mix it with sea beet in a fish quiche. I dry and blitz a nutritious stock powder out of dulse every year and sprinkle it in and on everything. Best of all is flour-dusted dulse deep-fried into crisps. Seriously, do try this if you can.

Then there are the stars of the autumn show, the mushrooms. There is a great sense of adventure to be had when mushroom hunting. Spotting a dark ring of grass on the other side of a valley might, on closer inspection, reveal a ring of mushrooms, or the fizz when entering a woodland clearing and finding 20 perfect penny buns.

One might find an old friend that has proved elusive for years, such as the superb horn of plenty. And then there are those fungi that are inedible but still fascinating - the scarlet caterpillar club, earthstars and the blood red and frankly stinking devil's fingers come to mind.

Most edible wild plants are exceedingly common, with restraint by the hungry forager required but rarely. The same can be said for British fungi, with the added encouragement that the main part of the fungus is underground or within wood and no amount of gentle picking will harm it.

But I am still very cautious about the mushrooms I collect, giving them the benefit of any doubt and allowing any fungal gnat larvae (maggots!) to develop. There are an astonishing 574 British species of fungal gnat, so there is every chance that an endangered species could end its lineage as breakfast. Should you end up with maggots despite best efforts, then use them in a risotto. No one will notice!

The Observant Walker: Wild Food, Nature and Hidden Treasures on the Pathways of Britain and The Forager's Calendar: A Seasonal Guide to Nature's Wild Harvests, both by John Wright, are published by Profile Books.

(Article source: The Guardian)



Creature comforts: Top tips to help hedgehogs hibernate

Hedgehogs are charming and endearing creatures that often visit our gardens. It's almost time for hedgehogs to hibernate for the winter, although the Indian summer may have delayed the process by a few weeks.

Hibernation is a crucial part of their natural cycle, allowing them to conserve energy and survive harsh conditions. As responsible gardeners and animal lovers, we can do our part to help hedgehogs hibernate successfully.

In this feature, we will share the top tips to ensure these adorable spiky mammals have a safe and comfortable hibernation period.

Create hedgehog-friendly habitats

One of the best ways to support hedgehogs during hibernation is to provide them with suitable habitats. Ensure your garden has a variety of hiding spots, such as leaf piles, log piles, or even specially designed hedgehog houses. These shelters offer protection from the cold and predators.



Check for hedgehog residents

Before you start any garden work in the late autumn, especially bonfires, check carefully for hedgehogs. They may have already made a nest for hibernation in your garden. Gently inspect areas like compost heaps and under sheds or hedges. If you find a hedgehog, leave it undisturbed and adjust your plans accordingly.

Keep garden hazards at bay

Make your garden hedgehog-friendly by removing potential hazards. Check for open drains or holes they might fall into and cover them. Keep your garden free from litter and ensure netting is properly secured to prevent hedgehogs from getting tangled.

Monitor temperature fluctuations

Hedgehogs can be sensitive to temperature changes. During mild winters, they might wake up from hibernation, using up valuable energy reserves. If you notice a hedgehog active during winter, consult a local wildlife rescue centre for guidance.

Provide food and water



Hedgehogs need to stock up on food before hibernating, so ensure they have access to a reliable food source in your garden. Leave out dishes of cat or dog food (preferably wet food) and fresh water. Avoid giving them milk, as hedgehogs are lactose intolerant.

Avoid disturbance

Resist the urge to disturb hedgehogs during their hibernation period. If you find one out and about, it might be in trouble. Consult a wildlife expert or rescue centre for advice.

Create hedgehog highways

Hedgehogs need to roam and find food before and after hibernation. Ensure your garden is connected to neighbouring green spaces by creating small holes in fences or installing hedgehog tunnels.

This allows them to move freely, increasing their chances of survival.



Support local hedgehog rescue organisations

If you're truly passionate about hedgehog conservation, consider supporting local wildlife rescue organisations dedicated to the protection and rehabilitation of hedgehogs.

The British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) is a registered UK Charity, founded in 1982, dedicated to helping & protecting hedgehogs native to the UK. Your donations or volunteer efforts can make a significant impact.

Hedgehogs are delightful garden visitors, and by following these top tips, you can help ensure they have a safe and successful hibernation period.

By creating a hedgehog-friendly environment and being vigilant, we can play a crucial role in preserving these endearing creatures for future generations to enjoy.



(Article source: Silver Surfers)

*Do you have hedgehogs in your garden?
If so, tell us about them and send an email
by visiting: www.ourplace.co*

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:

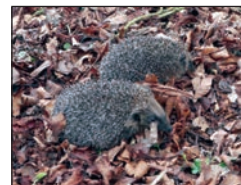
'Julie'



'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 1, Alton Road Industrial Estate, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5NB



HEDGEHOG RESCUE
 REHABILITATION AND CARE CENTRE

Registered Charity No: 1126812 (England & Wales)
 Registered Charity No: SCO47720 (Scotland)