

the simple things

August

Taking time to live well



RIPPLE

Beach bake brownies & canned peach sorbet • Art from the ocean
Veg bed posies & fig leaf prints • Good well hunting • Swimwear in brief
Front garden flower farms • How gossip helps • Hibiscus margaritas

Where
there's
hot
water

there's
great
coffee





A could-do list August

Hold a stone-skimming contest
at the water's edge

Teach a friend a new skill and ask
them to teach you one in return

Find a good gelateria and take
yourself off for an ice-cream

Pretend you're on holiday
in your hometown

Go for an evening swim before bed

Spend an afternoon in a hammock

Try some of our ideas, make
up a few of your own, or
just read and enjoy



Whether we're in it, on it, or alongside it, water makes us feel good. It both soothes and stimulates, humbles and opens our horizons. And this has a ripple effect, sending calming waves into our minds and bodies - maybe these rejuvenating properties are why we're drawn to the ocean's edge for our holidays.

By the water there's time to notice the small stuff; rock dwellers at the foot of a sea cliff, glistening seaweed, paper boats set sail on a still pool. Of course,

in August we're unlikely to have a beach to ourselves, unless we head for a picnic as the sun sets, or are passing through on a long-distance walk. Early mornings reveal flotsam and jetsam left by the overnight tide, offering artistic inspiration and food for thought. Living on an island, where the coast is no more than a day trip away, we can all enjoy that quintessentially high summer moment of savouring a cool ice cream while wearing a jolly cossie or a breezy dress. The simple things really are the best.

Lisa EDITOR LISA SYKES

PS Looking for amusement in your deckchair? Try our watery word search (p120) and flag identifier quiz (p123).

PHOTOGRAPHY: HOLLY JOLLIFFE



Sunset beach

HEAD DOWN TO THE COAST AS THE DAY WINDS DOWN, FOR A DIP IN THE SEA, FOOD WITH FRIENDS, AND THE BEST VIEW THERE IS...

Photography & Styling: **CATHERINE FRAWLEY** Recipes: **LISA JAMES**

Sometimes, making the most of your precious time is about waiting until you can have a whole beach to yourselves



On a summer's day, put off doing the chores just a little longer and make your way to the beach after work instead... just as others are heading home. Cossies and towels are essential, but bring a barbecue and things to eat and drink, too, and you can stretch out the pleasure long into the evening.

Thermos flasks can be filled with cucumber soup, refreshing cocktails made from fresh fruit and green salad packed into your beach bag, ready to go. Put the barbecue to use grilling artichoke hearts and stirring up a crowd-pleasing paella. You can even cook brownies over the heat, and delight in their gooey goodness. Just be sure to position yourselves in time to savour the spectacular showpiece that is a beach sunset.

As the sun finally dips, head home as it gets dark with salt on your skin, sand in your hair and your heart and belly full. This is what summer evening are made for. »



Cucumber soup

Can be served hot after a dip – or enjoyed cold and creamy.

Serves 4

2 large cucumbers, skin on, roughly chopped (courgettes work well, too)
550ml veg stock
30g butter
1 tbsp plain flour

1 Add the chopped cucumber to a large pan along with the vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Simmer for a further 15 mins, or until the cucumber is soft, then drain the cucumber but reserve the stock.

2 Blitz the cucumber with a little of the stock until smooth and set aside.

3 Meanwhile, in the same large pan, make a roux by adding the butter and flour and stirring over a medium heat until combined. Then gradually add the reserved stock, whisking constantly. When all the stock's incorporated add the processed cucumber and mix until smooth.

4 Add the hot soup to flasks or make the day before and reheat before filling the flasks.



Having a quiet beach means you can paddle, frolic or dance in the water like nobody's watching

The most versatile of summer soups (especially with our fickle weather), this can be enjoyed cold or heated for a post-swim warmer





Strawberry & mint lemonade cocktail

Fruity and refreshing, just what's needed as the sun sinks below the horizon.

Serves 6

175g caster sugar

Small handful mint leaves, washed

400g strawberries, hulled and quartered

200ml freshly squeezed lemon juice (4-5 lemons)

Ice

Small measure of gin or vodka per person (optional)

Strawberries, lemon slices and mint leaves, to garnish

1 Gently bring the sugar, 1 litre of water and the mint leaves to a boil in a saucepan, stirring until the sugar has fully dissolved. Remove the pan from the heat and allow the mint to infuse and the sugar syrup to cool.

2 Meanwhile, purée the strawberries in a blender and, if you'd prefer a smooth purée, strain it through a fine sieve to remove any seeds.

3 Combine the strawberry purée and sugar syrup in a large jug, add the lemon juice, and stir to combine.

4 To serve, pop a couple of ice cubes in each glass and pour the fruity cocktail over - you can also add gin or vodka for an alcoholic version. Garnish with strawberries, lemon slices and/or mint leaves.

Bartender's note: This also works well with watermelon flesh or peaches. »

SPOTS FOR A SUNDOWNER

Find a front-row seat for the daily show

- You want a clear view west to watch the sun dip behind the horizon. UK options for seeing the sun descend into the sea on the west coast are numerous, but there are also spots on the east coast that have a westerly view, too. Spurn Point in Yorkshire, Portmahomack in Scotland and Hunstanton in Norfolk all face the sunset.
- Inland, steeper hills and clifftops are great vantage points (if you're walking up, make sure you take a torch to get back down safely again). Take a look at an OS map and anything with the word 'beacon' in its name, or 'bluff' or 'crag', could offer a view, as could trig points (denoted on OS maps by small blue triangles with a dot in them).
- A low-altitude option is to head to rivers, canals, lakes or similar, and even if you can't see the horizon, you can still watch the spectacle of colours in the sky reflected on the water.





Paella

Summer like the Spaniards – a paella’s easy to cook outdoors. You could even buy prawns locally.

Serves 6

1.25 ltr fish stock, preheated and transported in a flask
 Pinch saffron strands
 3 large Spanish onions, chopped
 2 green peppers, chopped
 1 garlic bulb, chopped
 2 tsp smoked sweet paprika
 6 tbsg olive oil
 500g paella rice
 200ml dry oloroso or fino sherry
 500g whole large prawns
 200g baby leaf spinach
 Large bunch fresh parsley, leaves picked and chopped
 1 lemon, cut into wedges
 1 tbsg sherry vinegar

1 Before heading out, bring the fish stock to a boil, add the saffron, and pour into in a Thermos to keep hot.

2 Pan fry the onion and peppers in olive oil for around 10 mins. Allow to cool then place in a container for transport. Add the garlic and paprika to a separate container.

3 When ready to cook, heat a little olive oil in a 46cm paella pan and reheat the onions and peppers. Add the garlic and paprika and cook for a few minutes.

4 Add the rice to the paella pan, stir to coat in the oil. Pour in the sherry and allow to bubble for a minute.

5 Pour in the stock, stir through, and simmer for 10 mins.

6 Add the prawns, spinach and half of the parsley, cover, and cook for 5 mins more, or until the prawns are cooked.

7 Remove from the heat and allow to rest for another 5 mins. Serve with the lemon wedges, the remaining parsley, and drizzle with the sherry vinegar.



BARBECUE KNOWHOW

Check the beach allows barbecues and use of a portable barbecue – never use a disposable one. Keep away from vegetation and always have water close by. Raise the barbecue above the sand or pebbles on a level surface. Never leave it unattended and, when finished, make sure it’s completely extinguished with water. Take everything home with you.

Grilled artichokes

Nutty and slightly sweet, artichoke hearts are a delight – especially when grilled with flavoured butter.

Serves 4

400g tin artichoke hearts, drained (for easy transport) and sliced in half
50g butter
Small handful parsley, chopped
Zest of 1 lemon
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

- 1 Start by mixing the butter, parsley, lemon zest and garlic in a small bowl and chill until ready to transport.
- 2 Preheat the grill and gently melt two-thirds of the butter in a pan.
- 3 Add the artichoke hearts and fry for 2-3 mins on each side. Then serve with a knob of the remaining butter.



After your end-of-day dip, wrap up snugly and settle in to watch the sun take a dip of its own



Green summer salad with a spicy dressing

Easy to throw together and delivers a bit of a kick.

Serves 5-6

FOR THE SALAD:

Mixed greens (such as watercress, spinach leaves, cos or gem lettuce)

1 avocado

½ large cucumber, halved lengthwise and sliced into half moons

FOR THE DRESSING:

8 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

2 tbsp freshly squeezed lime juice

1 garlic clove, crushed

¼ tsp chipotle paste

¼ tsp smoked paprika

Pinch chilli flakes, optional

- 1 For the dressing, place all the ingredients into a lidded jar and shake to combine. Taste and season accordingly with salt and pepper.
- 2 Place the salad ingredients into a bowl and pour the shaken dressing over just before serving. »

GATHERING



Not much tastes better than a beach-baked brownie. Volunteer for washing-up duties to get full dibs on all the extra-crispy treats still clinging to the pan

Beach bake skillet brownies

Bring your brownie mix to enjoy some oozy, chocolate goodness freshly cooked on the beach.

Serves 8-10

300g caster sugar

40g unsweetened cocoa powder

¼ tsp salt

180g plain flour

220g chocolate chips, chunks or nuts

160g unsalted butter

120g finely chopped dark chocolate

1½ tsp vanilla extract (optional), or

favourite chocolate bar, chopped up

5 large eggs, at room temp

To serve:

Ice cream, chocolate sauce

or icing sugar

1 Combine the caster sugar, cocoa, salt, flour and chocolate chips in a rigid container and gently place the uncracked eggs in the middle to protect them during transportation. Pack the butter, chocolate and/or vanilla extract in separate containers.



2 To cook over coals or a camp stove, heat up a skillet and gently melt the butter and dark chocolate together. Add to the dry mix, along with the eggs and the vanilla extract/chopped chocolate bar, then stir to thoroughly combine. Pour back into the skillet.

3 Place the brownie-filled skillet in the centre over the warm coals. Cover it with either a second skillet pan or layers of tin foil and build the coals up around the edges of the pan. Close the cover if possible. If using a camp

stove, have the flame set to low/medium and cover the brownie mix. Cook for around 30-35 mins. Once cooked, allow the brownie to rest in the pan for 5 mins before serving.

To bake in the oven: Preheat your oven to 200C/Fan 180C/Gas 6. Combine all of your ingredients (including the melted butter and dark chocolate) and place in either a skillet pan or baking tray. Bake for 30 mins, or until the top is set. Once cooked, rest for 5 mins before serving. **S**

BEACH RETREATS

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Flying solo

SETTING OUT ALONE, WHETHER ABROAD OR AT HOME, CAN BE DAUNTING, BUT HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE REWARDS, AS LAURENCE MILLAR DISCOVERED HIKING A PILGRIMAGE TRAIL IN NORTHERN SPAIN

My first morning alone on the Camino de Santiago, northern Spain's long-distance pilgrimage trail, I was terrified. As I listened to the pilgrims quietly getting ready in the pre-dawn stillness of the hostel, pulling on boots, adjusting backpacks, filling water bottles and checking weather reports, I felt like a complete fraud.

As someone who's struggled with anxiety for years, the idea of spending any time alone with my thoughts was quite literally my worst nightmare. So, what was I doing even contemplating walking alone for days on end?

I texted my daughter. 'I'm too old for this.'

'Bilbo Baggins was 54 when he set off on his adventure,' she answered. 'And he vanquished a dragon.'

Never mind that she was comparing me to a fantasy creature with hairy toes and eating issues, it gave me the boost I needed. Panic attacks and getting lost felt less awful than the idea of not trying. So, I stepped onto the path.

Although walking the ancient pilgrim paths of the Camino Francés from St-Jean-Pied-de-Port in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain had been on my could-do list for years, I never intended to do it solo. My daughter had left home for university, and with an empty nest, it seemed like the right time to take the hike – a distance of over 900km. So, I lined up a relay of friends and family to keep me company, and an arsenal of music, podcasts and audiobooks to keep my mind out of trouble. Introspection without the isolation – that was the plan.

"With no one to please but myself, I settled into a rhythm that began and ended with what I wanted"

But what do they say about best laid plans? Day two saw my husband flying home to deal with a business crisis, and me facing a walk accidentally alone.

It was still dark as I walked out of that first town, clutching my phone, constantly checking my route app, and desperately searching through the mist for the yellow star makers that would confirm I was on the right path. But as the orange glow of the streetlights gave way to watery sunlight, and the hard pavements to gritty paths, I felt my fear transforming into laser-sharp focus. I was out of my comfort zone and there was no space for nightmare scenarios.

By the time I got to the tiny church perched on the sun-bleached hill that marked that day's halfway point, I realised my anxiety still had not caught up with me. Instead, without conversation or background noise, my attention was turning outwards – focusing on the rhythmic crunch of my boots, the dive bombing birds and the ever-changing path ahead.

Toward the end of that first day, I caught sight of my shadow walking next to me on the gravel path. Steadily advancing, hat on head and pack on back. I felt myself grinning – it was like tapping into the more confident, light-hearted version of myself that I sometimes glimpsed in old photographs. I was doing this.

As the days progressed, with no one to please but myself, I settled into a rhythm that began and ended with what I wanted. I lingered in cool, quiet churches and shady village squares and skipped 'must see' sights without a shred of guilt. But it wasn't all sunshine and tortillas. I got lost. I despaired through kilometres of ugly urban sprawl. I bandaged blisters, soothed sunburn and walked through cramps that had me limping into hostels. There were nights when I simply collapsed, vowing to catch a taxi to the closest train station the next day. But every morning saw me back on the path.

I discovered that walking solo doesn't mean



ILLUSTRATION: MARINA ESTER CASTALDO



walking alone. The Camino is divided into roughly 33 sections that everyone more or less follows, so it was inevitable that after a few days I started bumping into familiar faces. We'd chat or walk a little way together, or just nod and smile. But there was an unspoken solidarity. The path was enough of an adventure that I realised I was more self-reliant than I previously thought. But – unlike Cheryl Strayed who hiked the Pacific Crest Trail alone, as told in her memoir *Wild* – the Camino wasn't so remote that if I got injured or lost my passport, there would be no help. And I've found since that solo travel is like that, with help on hand and people to meet along the way.

On the Camino I met people who prayed at every crossroads and students who celebrated at every café. I met a man grieving his wife and a woman who came every year to get away from the family she adored. "I just need the space," she confessed over our communal dinner.

I knew what she meant. There was a freedom about introducing myself not as someone's mother, or wife, or colleague or friend; about setting these identities aside for a while and walking under my own name. No one cared about my kids or my job. They cared about where I had walked from, where I was going, and whether I had tried that incredible paella in the last village.

I didn't realise how much my mindset had shifted until I was waiting for my friend at our agreed rendezvous point. I found I didn't want to leave my new-found independence. What would happen when 'my' camino became 'our' camino? I shouldn't have worried. My friend wasn't joining 'my' camino. We were starting a whole new journey together.

Over the next few days, we watched the sun rise over sleeping villages and trudged for hours next to a motorway in the pouring rain. But now that I was in a completely different headspace, we weren't walking together because I needed the company. We were walking together because we wanted to.

They say the Camino doesn't give you what you want, it gives you what you need, and it turns out I needed a crash course in self-reliance. And the lessons have stuck. Now if I want to do something, be it a trip to the theatre or a trip to a new city, I go regardless of whether anyone else wants to come with me.

What still surprises me is how much I genuinely enjoy my solo adventures. And that still feels like something of a miracle. S

EXPLORE SPAIN'S CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

Discover the rich history of Northern Spain as you explore the ancient pilgrimage route of Camino de Santiago. With options to walk the route as part of a small-group guided tour, or drive on a tailored road trip taking in the highlights at your own pace, our experts are here to help you plan every element of your time away.

Prices from £1,535 pp incl. flights

For more information and to start planning, call a Wexas Spain expert on 020 7590 0677 or visit wexas.com/spain



CAKE IN THE HOUSE

If you can't show off a little in summer, when can you? This cocktail-inspired pudding-cake is a crowd pleaser.

PIÑA COLADA MERINGUE ROULADE WITH ROASTED PINEAPPLE

Serves 8

3 x 435g tins pineapple rings

300ml double cream

150g mascarpone cheese

3 tbsp coconut rum (optional)

20–25g icing sugar, to taste

50g coconut cream

1 tsp vanilla bean paste

FOR THE SYRUP:

25g caster sugar

FOR THE MERINGUE:

4 large egg whites

225g caster sugar

50g sweetened desiccated coconut

1 tsp white wine vinegar

TO FINISH:

Icing sugar, for dusting

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200C/Fan 180C/ Gas 6. Meanwhile, line a baking tray and also grease and line a swiss roll tin with coconut oil and baking paper.
- 2 Drain the pineapple, saving the juice. Slice into chunks and arrange on the baking tray, then pour over a little of the juice. Bake for 15–20 mins, or until reduced and golden. Leave to cool.
- 3 For the syrup, pour the remaining juice into a pan and add the sugar. Place over a medium heat until it reaches syrup consistency, then cool.
- 4 Place the egg whites in a bowl and whisk until they begin to stiffen. Once stiff, but not dry, add the sugar, 1 tbsp at a time, mixing well between each addition. Continue until firm and glossy.
- 5 Add the desiccated coconut and



- vinegar, then use a spatula to gently fold in. Scoop the meringue into the prepared tin and use a palette knife to distribute. Tap the tin a few times to remove air pockets, then bake for 8 mins, or until lightly golden. Reduce the oven temp to 180C/Fan 160C/ Gas 4 and bake for another 10 mins.
- 6 Add the cream, mascarpone, rum (if using), icing sugar, coconut cream and vanilla paste to a bowl. Whisk until the cream's at medium peak. Taste, then transfer to a piping bag and chill.
- 7 Remove the meringue from the oven and place the tin on a cooling rack.
- 8 Meanwhile, place a large piece of baking paper on your worktop, dust

with icing sugar and carefully turn the meringue out onto it. Pipe the cream on top, leaving a little for the topping, then scatter over the roast pineapple, reserving a handful for the garnish.

9 Gently score a line along the short edge nearest you, about 1cm from the edge. Using the baking paper, gently roll the roulade, then chill in the fridge.

10 To serve, top with the remaining coconut cream, drizzle with syrup, and decorate with the roasted pineapple. **S**

*Taken from One Bake Two Ways: Fifty Bakes With An All-plant Option Every Time by Ruby Bhogal (Pavilion Books).
Photography: Matt Russell.*



My day in cups of tea

We pop by the Cumbrian workshops of Catherine Douglas and husband Jamie to find out how they build their creative life around their cuppas.

Good morning! What time's the first cuppa?

Jamie gets up around 5:30/6am most days so there's usually a tea waiting for me a short while later. Weekends are more leisurely, often with a crossword.

And where are you waking up?

We're about 20 minutes east of Carlisle, with views to the Lake District and beyond. We live in a 150-year-old sandstone farmhouse, which had been abandoned for over 40 years before us. Our commute is 50 steps from the back door – I work from a large log cabin and Jamie from some ramshackle sheds.

Tell us a bit about your work

The premise of Supplies For Life is to create useful, beautiful things, which will last a lifetime. I work with textiles and Jamie with wood.

We have our own workshops – because one of us is very messy and the other is religiously tidy... Every single piece is made here and we hope that they'll be passed down through generations.

Cheers to that! Do you have favourite mugs?

Our studio mugs are Orla Kiely ones – a pink one for Jamie, green for me, and two more for visitors.

How do you like to switch off with a cuppa?

We try to have tea outside, weather allowing. Nothing beats the sound of the birds and the sun on your face.

Back to work. What do your afternoons involve?

After a restorative cuppa, afternoons are often making time, whether that's orders, prepping for Christmas (an all-year-round affair), or sampling new ideas.

What about sustaining snacks?

With a love of baking and eggs aplenty from our chickens, there's often cake on the go.

Excellent. What are you most looking forward to?

Right now, it's our teeny shop – Jamie's mid build! S



CATHERINE & JAMIE live in Cumbria and run Supplies For Life, a small creative company. Their Simple Thing is enjoying a fire pit at sundown. suppliesforlife.co.uk @suppliesforlifeco



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August

Almanac



SEASONAL THOUGHTS TO HELP YOU ENJOY THE MONTH

THINGS TO NOTE AND NOTICE



AUGUST BIRTH FLOWER

GLADIOLUS AND POPPY

Gladioli's tall, architectural shape recalls the swords they're named for. Symbolic of strength and integrity as well as remembrance... like their August birth flower counterpart, the poppy. Remembrance is a fairly new association, as until the end of World War One, poppies were mainly connected with dreams and sleep, due to the narcotic properties of the opium poppy.

Local lore

THE LEGEND OF BLACK SHUCK

The good folk of Suffolk have been plagued for centuries by Black Shuck, a sort of cross between a black lab and the devil. The most famous sightings, however, occurred on 4 August 1577, when a clap of thunder announced his arrival at St Mary's church in Bungay. The beast mauled a man and a boy to death, caused the steeple to collapse, then dashed on to Blythburgh Church where he killed several more. It's said the creature's scorch marks remain on the door at that church and if you hear Black Shuck's howl you should close your eyes as no good comes to those that see him.

Field work

CHINES

A chine is a steep, coastal ravine formed by a river flowing through soft clays and sandstone to the sea. Chines are formed over thousands of years and usually start when a stream runs over a cliff edge, making a 'knickpoint'. The flowing stream continues to erode the knickpoint and eventually deepens enough that it becomes a narrow gully.

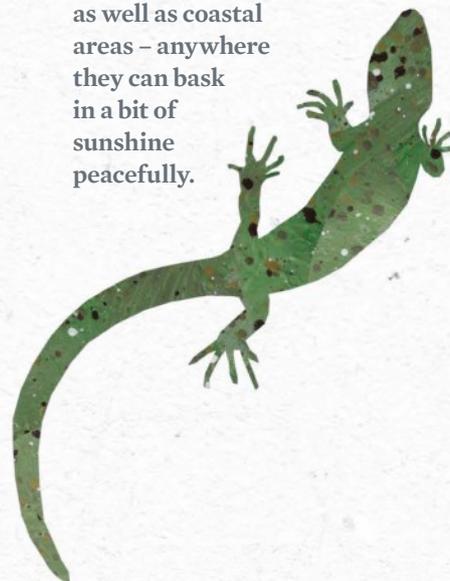
So what makes a chine a chine and not a ravine? Mainly it's location. Chines are exclusive to southern central England, particularly Dorset and the Isle of Wight (Blackgang Chine and Shanklin Chine are good examples) but they are essentially the same thing.

Nature spot

COMMON LIZARDS

'Common' (or 'viviparous') lizards can be found all over the UK mainland. In August herping, or searching out reptiles, is pretty easy since there are lots of baby lizards around. Interestingly, common lizards give birth to live young rather than eggs, unlike most reptiles. Look for small greyish-brown chaps – the females have a pale underbelly and the males a bright yellow or orange belly with spots... the little show-offs.

Good places to 'herp' for common lizards include heathlands, moors, grasslands and woods, as well as coastal areas – anywhere they can bask in a bit of sunshine peacefully.





THINGS TO PLAN AND DO

Back Garden Project

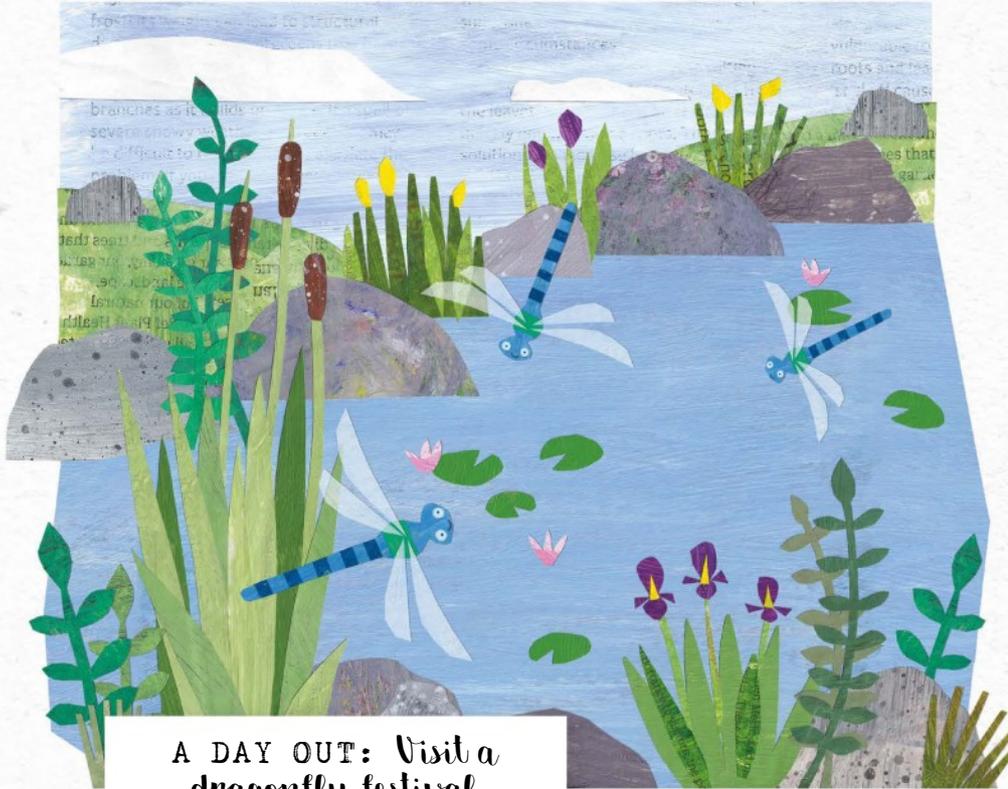
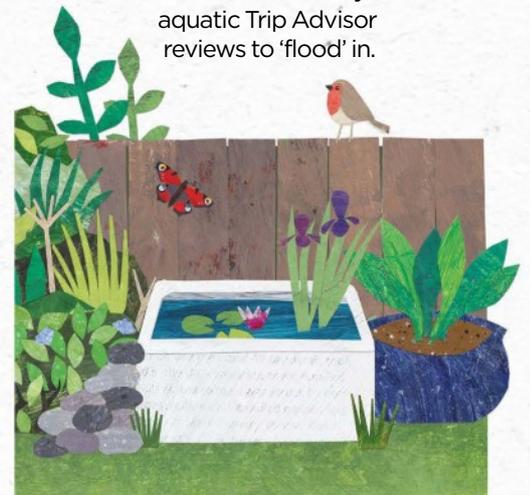
MAKE A POND FROM A BELFAST SINK

Create a bit of a kitchen sink drama for local watery wildlife.

You'll need: an old Belfast sink (if you can't get one, any large tub or a washing-up bowl will work); some pond liner; large rocks; a plank of untreated wood; smaller rocks; gravel; a few pond plants

To make:

- 1 Locate your sink on even ground, somewhere where it'll get some sun but not too much. Line it with pond liner unless you're sure that it's watertight.
- 2 Create a ramp at one side using the plank (or rocks) to help smaller creatures climb in and out easily. Add some large rocks in the sink where the plank joins it to help them get into the water.
- 3 Add smaller rocks around the other edges of the sink and then add gravel to cover the bottom of the pond. Fill with rainwater from a water butt.
- 4 Plant your pond plants in the gravel – miniature water lily and spearwort are good. Go for a mix of floating and upright plants.
- 5 Open your pond for business and wait for the flurry of aquatic Trip Advisor reviews to 'flood' in.



A DAY OUT: Visit a dragonfly festival

Spotting a dragonfly always lifts our spirits and the best place to do that is in wetlands, 'areas that are either permanently or seasonally inundated with water' including wet grasslands, lakes, peat bogs, fens, saltmarshes and more. As well as hosting dragonflies, wetlands are home to a huge diversity of wildlife and change with the seasons, so there's always something new to see.

A good place to start is at one of the UK's wetland centre reserves (find your nearest at wwt.org.uk). They often have watery activities on so you can find out about particular wildlife or habitats. And until September you can join in with the dragonfly festival, taking place at WWT centres all over the UK. As well as learning about these fascinating fellows, they're also a wonderful place to simply wander somewhere cool on a hot day and appreciate being able to immerse yourself (not literally, hopefully) in some of the world's most threatened habitats.

AN APP FOR THE SEASON

Encounter Nature app
Described as 'a guided nature journal that lives in your phone', this gives you seasonal prompts, tips and ideas, tailored to your area, to help connect with nature.

A PODCAST FOR AUGUST

Port cities and maritime cultures podcast
An in-depth look at the importance of waterfront and coastal communities by experts at Portsmouth University, sharing their knowledge about these often-forgotten areas.



A simple thing.

The energy of the meadow in late summer is much like that of our own – sun-kissed but listless, basking in the sunshine and warmth but already with half an eye on the season to come. There's no better place to while away an afternoon than among the rippling grasses and humming bees, idly watching a butterfly flit to the last of the flowers. Convince yourself there's really nowhere else you should be, nothing more important you should be doing. At least for an hour or two.





MY CITY
MILAN

ITALY'S NORTHERN BIG CITY IS A CENTRE FOR FASHION AND DESIGN,
BUT SUMMER REVEALS A SOFTER, CALMER SIDE SAY LOCALS
FRANCESCA GIOVINAZZO AND TOMMASO FOGLIATA



There's no better way to get to the heart of a city than through the people who live there. This month, bloggers Francesca Giovinazzo & Tommaso Fogliata (takemyhearteverywhere.com) guide us around their city. You may feel inspired to visit one day, but for now just sit back and enjoy some armchair travel.

How long have you lived in your city?

I [Francesca] was born in Milan, while Tommaso grew up just outside the city. About ten years ago, we decided to make Milan our home together – initially because of work, but also out of a desire to build something in a place that felt both international and deeply Italian.

Tell us what makes your city unique

Milan isn't loud or showy, but it stays with you. It grows on you one walk, one courtyard, one aperitivo at a time. Of course, there are the well-known sights like the Duomo and the Galleria, but the soul of the city is in the tiny churches, the family-run trattorias, and the secret gardens you stumble upon. Milan isn't trying to impress you – it just quietly wins you over.

What's it like in the summer?

Calm. As locals escape to the seaside, the city slows down and becomes lighter – quieter, golden, almost cinematic. Summer is when Milan shows its softer, more intimate side.

What time of day do you most enjoy, and why?

We love early morning coffees at LùBar, and strolling through Parco di Villa Reale in the shade. It feels like the city is exhaling. But late-night drinks in hidden courtyards are also great at this time of year.

Where's your favourite outdoor space?

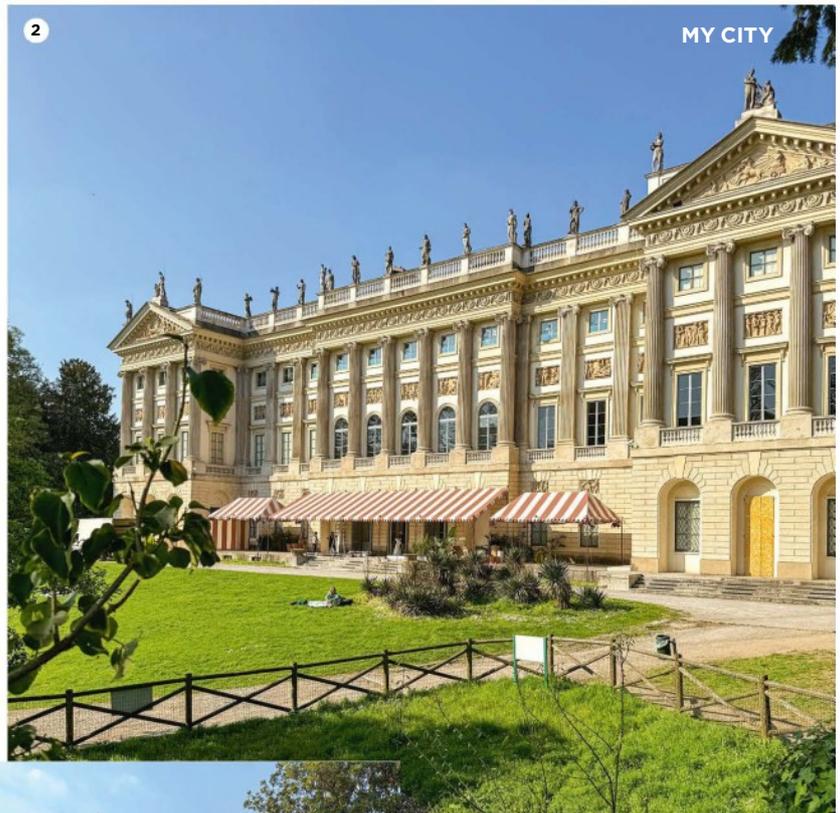
Parco di Villa Reale, without a doubt. Tucked behind busy streets, it feels like a secret garden for those who know where to look. It's full of statues and benches. It's where we go when we need to slow down.

Tell us about the people who live in your city

Milanese people are precise – not just in how they dress, but in how they live. There's a quiet sense of purpose in everything: how they drink their coffee, how they spend their Sundays, how they speak. At the same time, there's a deep appreciation for beauty, quality, and time well spent.

Where do you like to gather with friends?

We love catching up with friends in Piazza San Sempliciano, in the Brera district. It's a charming, relaxed square that feels hidden away, despite being very central – it's ideal for a casual aperitivo away from the crowds. Another of our favourite places to meet up with friends is Via Melzo in the Porta Venezia »



Opposite page:
 1 Window shopping meets architectural feat at Milan's stunning Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. This page:
 2 Keep things real – and a bit calmer – at the Parco di Villa Reale.
 3 Art Deco glamour at Villa Necchi Campiglio.
 4 Accidentally Wes Anderson? Nope, very intentionally Wes Anderson. Bar Luce was designed by the man himself. 5 Take a tram to sights such as Arco della Pace



1 With one of the prettiest piazzas in Italy, Vigevano is worthy of a day trip. 2 Villa Invernizzi offers another level of bird watching. 3 Castello Sforzesco sits in the middle of Parco Sempione, a great spot to escape the bustle of the city for an hour or two

“Milan doesn’t scream for your attention, but it does reward you when you look closer”

area. This lively street is full of independent cinemas and cool bars and has a very local atmosphere.

Tell us about eating in your city

For traditional comfort food, we love Antica Osteria di Ronchettino (ronchettino.it) and Al Garghet (algarghet.it) – both are a little outside the city centre, but you can sit in the gardens and enjoy generous portions of risotto. For something more refined, Pellico 3 (pellico3milano.it), IYO (iyo-restaurant.com), or Borgia Milano (borgiamilano.com) are a must visit. We also love Basara (basara.it) for sushi, Gran Baguttin (granbaguttin.it) for its old-school charm, and for something sweet, Marchesi 1824 (marchesi1824.com), Bistrot Bertarelli (bistrotbertarelli1894.com) or Da Vittorio Selection (davittoriogift.com).

What’s your favourite way to get about the city?

Milan is incredibly walkable, and we often explore on foot. But we also like to hop on the old orange trams – they’re nostalgic, elegant, and give you a whole different view of the streets. The metro is fast and easy, and when the weather’s nice, we ride e-bikes or scooters along the Navigli or through the parks.

What’s the shopping like?

It’s varied – you can go from the luxury of Via Montenapoleone to a vintage market along the Navigli in the same afternoon. We love browsing 10 Corso Como (10corsocomo.com) for design and fashion, popping into artisan boutiques in the district of Brera, and checking out the food hall at La Rinascente (rinascente.it) – especially for the terrace view of the Duomo. Milan has both glamour and hidden treasures.

Where do you like to escape to?

We have a few favourite day trips. The village of Morimondo is magical – it feels like stepping back in time, with a peaceful abbey and quiet cobbled streets. The town of Vigevano is another gem, with one of the most beautiful piazzas in Italy and a wonderfully local atmosphere. When the weather cools a little, we love heading to the Parco di Monza for long walks under golden trees and a proper escape into nature.

What are your city’s favourite cultural experiences?

Villa Necchi Campiglio (fondoambiente.it), an Art Deco house in the centre of the city, is everything we love about Milan in one place: it’s elegant, timeless, quietly luxurious. You walk in and feel like you’ve entered another world – a slower, more refined one. The

architecture is beautifully balanced, the interiors are full of personality, and the garden with the pool is a hidden gem. Every time we go back, it feels different.

What attractions do both tourists and locals love?

While most Milanese avoid the main tourist spots, we do enjoy spending time at Parco Sempione, which surrounds the medieval fortress of Castello Sforzesco, especially in the early morning or on weekday afternoons when the area is more peaceful. Another favourite is the new CityLife quarter – its futuristic architecture, green space and public art make it a unique place to discover Milan’s modern side.

What’s been your best discovery about your city?

We both love that Milan is small enough to walk everywhere, but big enough to surprise us on a daily basis. There’s beauty around every corner – little places like Via Lincoln or the church, Chiesa di San Cristoforo. Sometimes these special places are hidden, sometimes they’re right in front of you. The city doesn’t scream for your attention, but it does reward you when you look closer.

What would surprise a newcomer to your city?

Milan is far greener than people would expect. It has a reputation for fashion and business, but there are quiet parks, leafy courtyards, and entire neighbourhoods that feel like little villages. We love places like BAM – a park in the Isola district with a wide range of events – and the botanical gardens, Orto Botanico di Brera. Even modern developments like Bosco Verticale are full of plants. And just outside the city, spots like Cascina Pizzo feel like the countryside.

What one thing would you change about your city?

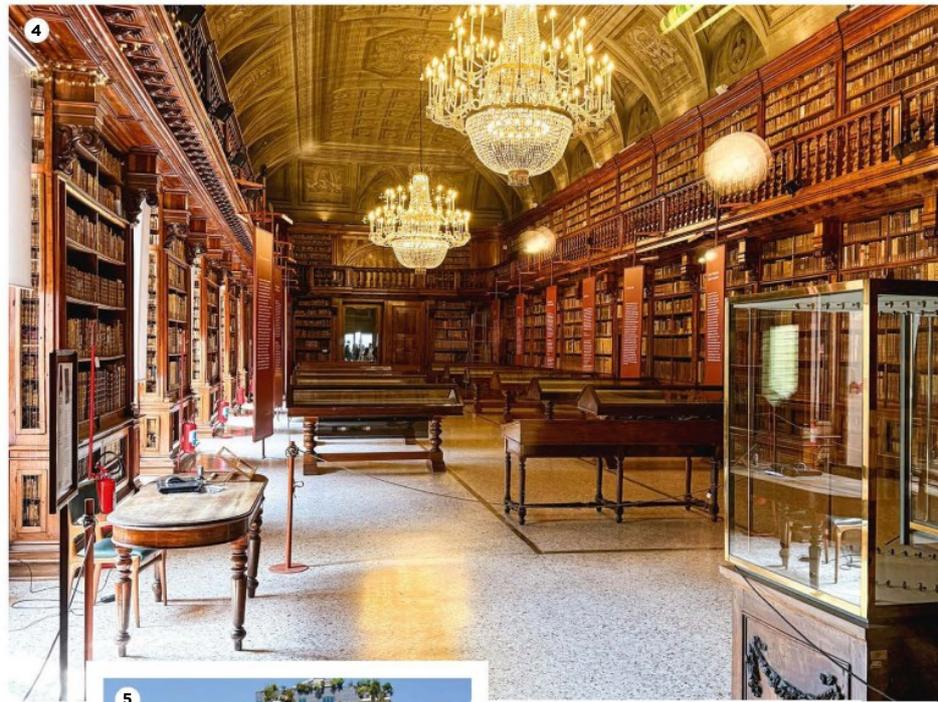
We wish Milan were a little more welcoming to newcomers. The city moves fast and expects you to keep up – but not everyone arrives at the same speed. A bit more patience and a bit more softness would go a long way.

Where would you recommend someone to stay?

For something stylish and central, Portrait Milano (lungarnocollection.com) is hard to beat – it’s quiet, beautifully designed, and just steps from everything. If you’re in the mood for something bold and artsy, the Toiletpaper Living apartments (toiletpaperliving.com) are the most creative places you can sleep in.

What keeps you in Milan?

The feeling that Milan reflects who we are – layered, evolving, sometimes understated, but full of depth. It’s a city that rewards curiosity and pays attention to detail. Here, life feels intentional. There’s always something new to discover, but also the comfort of familiar rituals. Milan grows with you – and that’s why we are so deeply rooted here. »



4 The beautiful Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense is one for the books. 5 Green living taken to new heights at Bosco Verticale. 6 Al Garghet serves traditional food that always makes the cutlet. 7 For an all-round look at Italian art, head to Pinacoteca di Brera, the city art gallery



COULD-DO MILAN

Francesca and Tommaso's favourite places

FAVOURITE BAR

Camparino in Galleria

For the best aperitivo in town, order a negroni, stand at the bar, and soak up the energy of the Duomo from one of the city's most historic bars. camparino.com

FAVOURITE CAFE

LùBar

A stunning café in a neoclassical greenhouse. Great food, and even better light. lubar.it

BEST VIEW

Duomo Rooftop Terrace

For one of the best views in Milan, walk among the cathedral spires and take in the skyline from the city's most iconic rooftop. duomomilano.it

FAVOURITE MARKET

Mercato del Naviglio Grande

Held on the last Sunday of every month, it's the best place for vintage treasures, quirky antiques, and spontaneous finds. navigliogrande.mi.it/mercato-dellantiquariato

FAVOURITE MUSEUM

Museo del Novecento

One of our favourite museums in the city. The space, the curation, the view of the Duomo from the upper gallery – it's all unforgettable. museodelnovecento.org

FAVOURITE GALLERY

Fondazione Prada

A cultural powerhouse, we go for the architecture, the exhibitions, and the strange beauty of it all. Also, Bar Luce, located here, was designed by Wes Anderson – it's a pastel dream. fondazioneprada.org

FAVOURITE WAYS TO SPEND AN HOUR

Brera

Wandering the cobbled streets of Brera District – one of the city's most charming neighbourhoods. We never get tired of exploring its art galleries and small boutiques.

Parco di Villa Reale

Elegant, quiet, and hidden behind tall gates. We come here to read, think, or just to sit under the trees. **S**





Soundtrack to August

EVERYBODY'S TALKIN'

<i>Happy Talk</i>	<i>Ella Fitzgerald</i>
<i>I Heard</i>	<i>Pearl Bailey</i>
<i>Call Me</i>	<i>Aretha Franklin</i>
<i>I Heard It Through The Grapevine</i>	<i>Marvin Gaye</i>
<i>Everybody's Talkin'</i>	<i>Harry Nilsson</i>
<i>Conversation</i>	<i>Joni Mitchell</i>
<i>Don't Talk (Put Your Head On My Shoulder)</i>	<i>The Beach Boys</i>
<i>I Don't Want To Talk About It</i>	<i>Everything But The Girl</i>
<i>Talk</i>	<i>beabadoobee</i>
<i>Talk About The Passion</i>	<i>R.E.M.</i>
<i>Careless Whisper</i>	<i>George Michael</i>
<i>Don't Talk To Me About Love</i>	<i>Altered Images</i>
<i>Talking In Your Sleep</i>	<i>The Romantics</i>
<i>Talk To Me</i>	<i>Stevie Nicks</i>
<i>Keep On Talking</i>	<i>Texas</i>
<i>Rabbit</i>	<i>Chas + Dave</i>
<i>Talkin' Bout A Revolution</i>	<i>Tracy Chapman</i>

🎧 Take a listen at thesimplethings.com/blog/talkplaylist

"Happy talk,
Keep talkin' happy talk,
Talk about things you'd like to do"

stop
look
listen

Kitchen therapy

SAVOURING *summer*

SPENDING TIME AT HOME COOKING AND BAKING CAN BE A FORM OF SELF CARE. LOTTIE STOREY INVITES US OVER TO FEED OUR SENSES AND PICK A DISH OR TWO THAT BRING US PLEASURE

Photography: **KYM GRIMSHAW**





High summer brings the joy of warm weather walks and picking sun-ripened fruits and berries. But the fun needn't end there. Set aside an afternoon to create something magical from your bounty, with nothing wasted, not even the leaves

GIVE A FIG

August feels like a transition month – out of the dog days, when the heat's still intense, and towards the mellow days of early autumn. Blackberries may be the biggest clue that a new season is incoming, but figs are my favourite last-gasp-of-summer crop. With their suncream scent and giant leaves, they provide freshness in an increasingly crisp and dry garden. Combine the fruits with filo and goat's cheese for a starter, but don't discard the leaves – blackberry and fig leaf jam is a way to keep hold of August in the colder months. Anyone with a glut of plums may be desperate for new ways to use them – try roasting with red grapes and adding to blue cheese on toast. The colours alone are delicious, as is the shade of a hot pink hibiscus margarita. »



The kitchen isn't always a place of calm and serenity, as we race to get dinner on the table. But if we try taking things slower now and again and lean into its sensory pleasures, we benefit from its inherently calming activities. The warmth of the oven, the scent of something on the stove and the soothing acts of stirring slowly or kneading and shaping are to be savoured, if we take the time to let them ground us.





Listen

FIG AND GOAT'S CHEESE FILO BUNDLES

It's the crunch of the filo pastry that's worth paying attention to - and, of course, the peppery fig, cheese and walnut filling. I like to eat them al fresco so that any crumbs can be left for the birds.

Makes 12

12 large figs
250g soft goat's cheese
4 tsp black peppercorns
100g walnuts, chopped
12 large filo pastry sheets
100g butter, melted
Handful chives

1 Preheat your oven to 200C/
Fan 180C/Gas 6 and line two baking
trays with baking paper.
2 Remove the stems from the figs and
score a deep cross in the top of each
one, cutting about two-thirds of the

way down. Gently squeeze the base
of each fig to open them up slightly.

3 Remove the rind from the goat's
cheese and grind the black pepper.
Mix together with the walnuts before
dividing the mixture evenly between
the figs. Try to get it as deeply into
the fig as you can before squeezing
the sides back up around it.

4 Divide each filo sheet into four
and stack them up, sandwiched with
a light layer of melted butter. On each
stack, place a fig in the centre and
then gather the pastry up around
the sides of the fig, pressing to keep
each one together.

5 Transfer the bundles to the baking
trays and bake for 12-15 mins, or until
the bundles are golden brown.

6 Allow to cool for 5 mins before
scattering with the chives and serving
while still warm.

While you wait...

FIG LEAF PRINTS

Fig leaves may get overshadowed by the fruit but they're beautiful in their own right. Here, they take centre stage in a printmaking project that anyone can try. I like to turn them into labels for the jam jars, so you know what is inside and when it was made.

You will need:

Water-based acrylic paint
Palette or dish
Paint brushes or sponges
Fig leaves
Newspaper or scrap paper
Thick paper or card

- 1 Squeeze a little paint onto your palette. Using a paint brush or sponge, gently daub a fig leaf with paint until you have fully covered the stems and veins well.
- 2 Do a test print by placing the leaf paint-side down onto some newspaper or scrap paper. Place another piece of newspaper or scrap paper over the top side of the leaf and then press hard enough that the paint transfers from the leaf to the paper. Remove the top sheet and peel away the leaf. If the details of the leaf are lost, try using less paint or lighter pressure. If the print looks faint, increase the amount of paint or press more firmly.
- 3 Once you're happy with the end result, begin printing onto your paper or card. Leave to dry thoroughly. These prints work beautifully as labels for the blackberry and fig leaf jam. Simply make a small hole in one corner, write onto the plain side, and attach to the jar with twine or string.



A KITCHEN BODY SCAN

Prepping at the kitchen worktop may be an all too familiar place for many of us. We stand at the hob, stirring whatever's warming in the pan in front of us. We lean over the sink, reach into the fridge, stretch up to get something out of a high cupboard. Our body works hard to fulfil all the different moves required to go from raw ingredients to dinner on the table. Usually, we're too busy to think about what's happening in our bodies as we cook. Maybe your mind is racing so much that you can't tune in. Perhaps you're on autopilot, disconnected from your limbs that have taken over the process. Next time you're stirring, or leaning, or stretching, notice how your body feels. What are you holding onto? Where can you feel it? Can you slow down? Are you breathing? Even just saying to yourself 'breathe in... breathe out...' as you work will tune you in a little closer to your body. »

FARM TO FORK

If you're fortunate enough to have a garden or growing space big enough to grow herbs, fruit or veg, then you'll be able to answer this easily. But have you ever thought about the people who do this for a living? From the farmers, growers and seasonal pickers to the delivery drivers and shop-workers who stack our shelves, there are so many stages to our food production process. It's easy to take it all for granted. Mindfulness is about noticing and reflecting on where your food comes from to honour the effort, time and travel involved. So next time you buy an ingredient, look at where it came from and imagine – in detail – how it got there, every step of the way.

The next time you go to chop veg on autopilot, stop and take a moment to consider its entire journey from seed to plate

Notice

ROASTED PLUMS AND GRAPES WITH BLUE CHEESE

When these plums and grapes emerge from the oven, I think they resemble a work of art. The juices combine to create the most vibrant magenta, swirling on the tray like a watercolour. Look at how the colours combine before enjoying the way the blue cheese offsets the intensity of the fruit, adding a salty, savoury layer.

Serves 4

200g plums, destalked

200g red seedless grapes

4 slices of baguette

200g blue cheese, such as Roquefort

Runny honey, for drizzling

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/Fan 180C/ Gas 6. Place the plums in a baking tray and roast for 15-20 mins, or until they start to soften and become juicy.

2 Snip the grapes into small bunches and then add to the tray with the plums. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and cook for a further 10-15 mins. Once the grape skins begin to split, the fruit is ready. Leave to one side.

3 Meanwhile, toast your baguette slices if you'd like, or leave untoasted if you'd prefer. Split the blue cheese between the four slices and spread generously. Top with black pepper.

4 Finish with the roasted plums and grapes, remembering to remove the plum stones and grape stalks. Drizzle over a little honey to finish.





Taste

HIBISCUS MARGARITAS

Dried hibiscus flowers turn these margaritas a vibrant, dark pink – but take note of their sour, floral fruitiness which works so well with tequila and lime.

Makes 2 Margaritas (and extra syrup)

Ice cubes
120ml hibiscus syrup
1 large lime, juiced (about 3 tbsp)
60ml tequila
15ml maple syrup
Salt to rim the glasses, optional

FOR THE HIBISCUS SYRUP:

75g dried hibiscus flowers
65g sugar

1 Begin with the hibiscus syrup. Bring 700ml of water to a boil and add the dried hibiscus flowers. Remove from the heat and leave for 30 mins. Sieve into a jug and add the sugar to the water. Stir to dissolve the sugar and let the syrup cool completely.

2 To make the margaritas, add ice, the hibiscus syrup, lime juice, tequila and the maple syrup to a cocktail shaker.

3 Secure the cocktail shaker lid tightly, shake until combined, and pour into two margarita glasses. If you want to add salt to the rim first, add salt to a saucer and rub the rim of the glasses with a slice of lime before upturning and dipping into the salt.

Bartender's note: Any leftover hibiscus syrup can be kept in the fridge for up to a fortnight.



As satisfying to make as they are to eat, enjoy using your hands to flatten the dough

Feel

RYE AND OAT SCONES

These scones are packed with texture, from the rye flour to the chunky oats on top. I like to get thoroughly stuck in, to really feel what I'm creating – something delicious made from simple ingredients and your bare hands.

Makes 10-12

Flour, for dusting
200g wholemeal rye flour
5 tsp baking powder
3 tbsp brown sugar
3 tbsp oil
150ml milk
1 egg, beaten
2 tbsp oats

1 Preheat your oven to 220C/ Fan 200C/Gas 7. Meanwhile, dust a large baking tray with a little flour or line it with baking paper.

2 In a bowl, combine the rye flour, baking powder and brown sugar. Add the oil and use a fork to bring the mixture together. Stir in the milk to form a dough, but don't over-mix.

3 Dust your work surface with flour



and place the dough in the centre. Dust the top of the dough with a little more flour, then gently flatten it with the palm of your hand until it's about 3cm thick. Using a floured 5cm round cutter, press into the dough to make 10-12 scones. Gather up the scraps, reshape, and cut more scones as required.

4 Transfer the scones to your baking tray and brush the tops with the beaten egg. Sprinkle over the oats and bake for 15-18 mins. The scones are ready when they are golden and risen. »



Lottie Storey is a qualified therapist & counsellor, as well as a life-long home cook who's finally designed her dream kitchen. Follow her at: @lottie_storey

Inhale

BLACKBERRY AND FIG LEAF JAM

As anyone who's brushed past a fig tree knows, the leaves have a very particular scent - coconutty with green and woody notes. As the jam bubbles, close your eyes and breathe in the aroma. This recipe whizzes the leaves with sugar, which you could also add to shortbread or cakes.

Makes 8 jars
15 fig leaves
1.5kg jam sugar
1.8kg blackberries
1 lemon

1 The night before you want to make the jam, tear the fig leaves into pieces

and add them to a food processor with the sugar. Blitz until the leaves are combined with the sugar.

2 In a bowl large enough to contain the sugar and the blackberries, build up in layers of berries and sugar so that the flavours begin to combine.

3 The next day, stir the mixture together. If the sugar's beginning to dissolve it will mean less cooking is needed later.

4 Put a saucer in the freezer (this will be used later to test whether the jam's ready). Pour the blackberry and sugar mixture into a jam pan, or any wide shallow pan you have. Add the juice of the lemon as well as the pips, contained in a tea strainer or bouquet garni bag.

5 Gently warm the mixture over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the temperature and allow the jam to simmer for a further 5 mins.

6 Test whether it's ready by putting a teaspoon of the jam onto the ice-cold saucer that was chilled in the freezer. After a minute or two, try pushing the jam with your finger - if it wrinkles, it's ready. If your jam isn't ready, continue cooking for several minutes and test again. Repeat the process until it's ready.
7 Allow the jam to sit for 15 mins before ladling it into sterilised jars. Seal and store in a cool, dark place. Once opened, refrigerate the jars.

Cook's note: This jam will keep unopened for at least 6 months. **S**

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Desmarestia tunica.



Out of the blue

MANDY BARKER'S IMAGES ARE BEAUTIFUL TO LOOK AT, WHILE SHARING SOME POIGNANT TRUTHS ABOUT OUR OCEANS

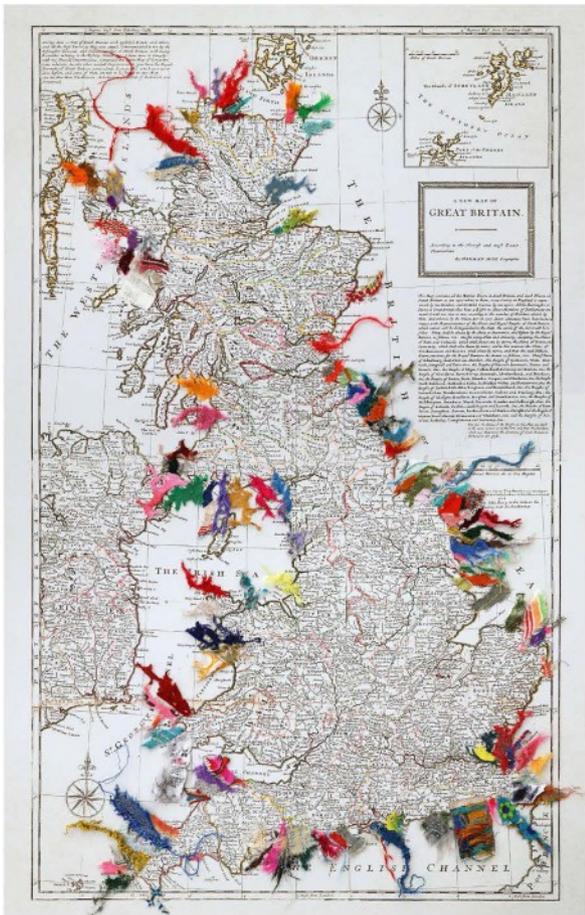
Words: **FRANCES AMBLER**

Blue is the colour: Mandy's 'Photographs of British Algae Cyanotype Imperfections' are not quite as they first appear...

PHOTOGRAPHY: © MANDY BARKER

From a central stem, delicate fronds extend across the surface. It invites you to look closer, to admire those organic curves. The deep, inviting blue of the background suggests it's a cyanotype, one of the earliest photographic processes, made using exposure to the sun. On a summer's day, what nicer pastime than gathering seaweed from the shore, pressing it and letting the rays of the sun work their magic to produce a beautiful image? Peer closer, and things get a little confusing. What is a *Desmarestia tunica*, as indicated on its hand-written Latin label? In fact, the specimen you've been admiring isn't anything natural at all – it's the opposite, the remnants of a T-shirt, made from synthetic fabric and one of

hundreds of clothing specimens collected by photographer Mandy Barker from the British coastline, where this waste has washed up. She's painstakingly pressed and presented fragments of old jumpers and discarded tights like this, even a St Michael care label. This double take is exactly what Mandy hopes to achieve. "People see rubbish everywhere; they become immune to it. I had to do something to draw the viewer in," she explains. "Once you've got people's attention, you can inform them about what's actually going on." Mandy's been creating images relating to the waste in our oceans since 2010, long before 'microplastic' became a commonplace word. "As a child, I spent a lot of time on the east coast collecting driftwood and sea glass." As she returned over the years, she spotted other things »



Over the years, Mandy has collected plastic fabrics from around the UK, like this jumper found in a rockpool on the west coast of Scotland

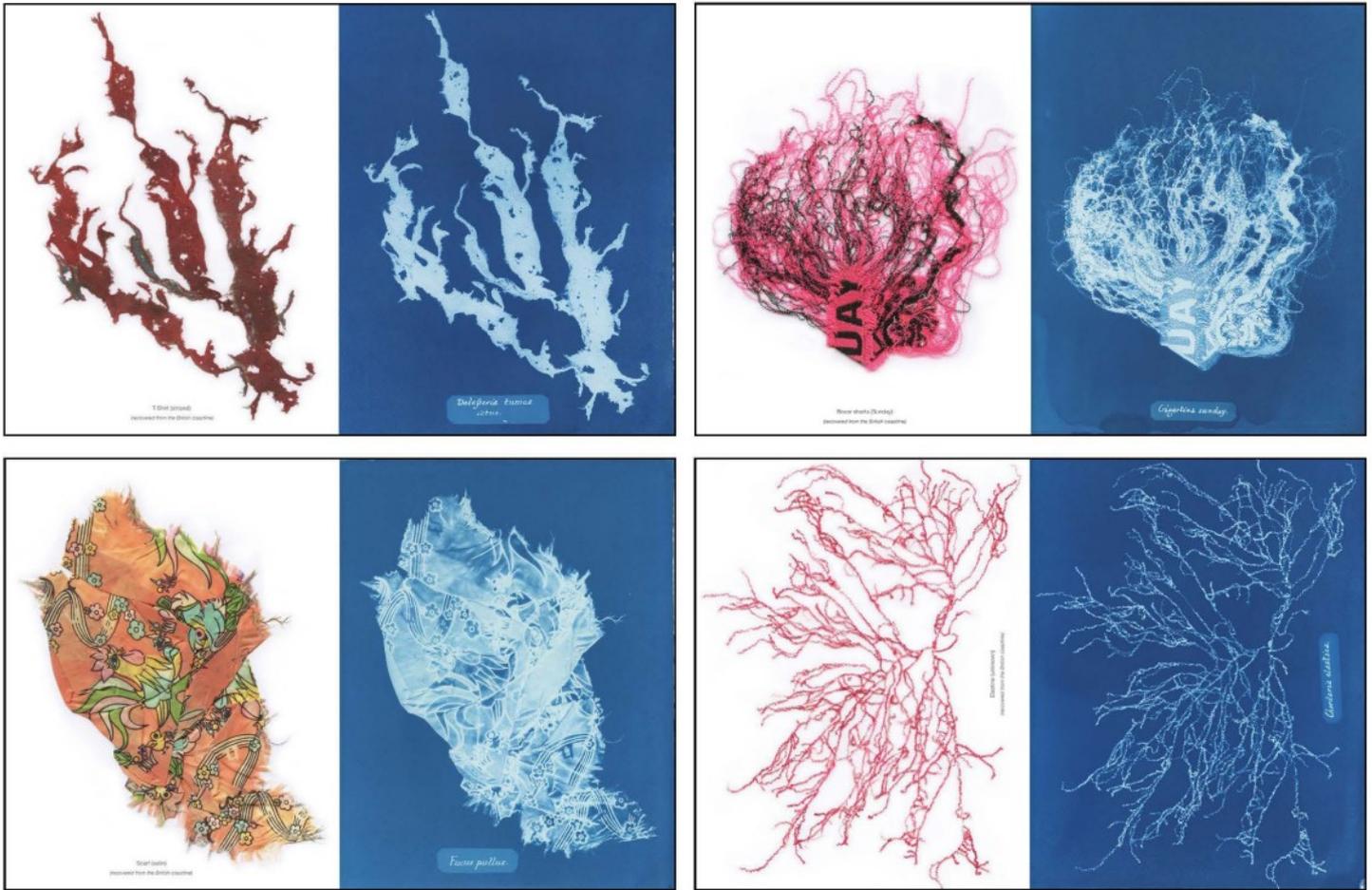
washing up, “a computer, a TV, a lawn mower, and have to ask what’s going on and where is it coming from?” While, over the years, she’s collected a vast number of found items (“a drawer of children’s dummies, a drawer of burnt objects...”), this project focuses specifically on synthetic clothing. It began in a rock pool at the East Riding of Yorkshire’s Spurn Point in 2012 where she saw “this strip that looked exactly like seaweed, brown and green, with markings.” Pulling it out, she realised “it was actually polyester, some sort of top, from about the 1970s.” Finding this bit of fabric changed her life – she realised that the clothing we were putting on our bodies was becoming the plastics going into our waters.

JOHN O’GROATS TO LAND’S END

For this project, ‘Atkins-Barker’, Mandy spent over a decade collecting, pressing and developing 203 cyanotypes, each one presenting a different remnant of found fabric. On *atkins-barker.com*, there’s a map of all the locations where she discovered the items, from John o’ Groats to Land’s End (top left) to show that “it’s not just certain beaches covered in plastic. It’s everywhere.” Likewise, Mandy used different clothing items to emphasise that these weren’t things accidentally left on the beach. From Halloween costumes to school uniforms, she found clothing dating back decades. The evidence is clear: “the likes of polyester and acrylics are getting into our oceans and they’re not degrading.” (57% of the fibre produced in the world is polyester.)

Mandy speaks as someone who’s seen the effects of consumption habits at their most extreme – partaking in a scientific expedition to uninhabited Henderson Island in the Pacific Ocean, which has one of the greatest densities of ocean plastic litter in the world. “Because people can’t visit these places, I can pass on as an artist what’s going on, whereas the academic research may not be read by the general public.”

That thinking inspires Atkins-Barker, highlighting fast fashion and how it churns out “synthetic clothing that’s so cheaply and poorly produced, only made to last a certain number of wears – and people don’t even wear it that long.” We don’t tend to think about what happens



to our clothing after we discard it – her beautiful images show the ghostly afterlife of what we consume and discard, often without much thought at all.

IMPRESSIONS & IMPERFECTIONS

In creating the cyanotypes, Mandy was deliberately shadowing another artist's work: the pioneering Victorian, Anna Atkins. Anna did collect seaweed specimens – 389 of them – and presented them as cyanotypes in her 1843 book, *Photographs of British Algae, Volume I* (you can read a poem inspired by her work on p42). Seeing an original volume, Mandy realised that “some of her algae looked like the hems and threads of things that I'd found. I thought that's it; I'll recreate what she did with algae, but with clothing.” What Anna called ‘Cyanotype Impressions’ became Mandy's ‘Cyanotype Imperfections,’ a painstaking undertaking. “I wanted to totally recreate her process: collecting them from the sea, pressing them as she did and exposing them to the sun in exactly the same way,” explains Mandy. She even copied Anna's handwriting for the Latin labels – “it took weeks doing just one.”

Just as Mandy aims to convey the latest research into plastic pollution through her work, Anna was cutting edge for her era – not only in expanding botanical

"It's not just certain beaches covered in plastic; it's everywhere"

knowledge, but also in her use of cyanotypes, the process having only been discovered in 1842 (some consider her the world's first female photographer). Mandy is pleased that she's also highlighting Anna. “As a woman, it was very difficult to get attention for what she did so brilliantly in the 1800s. Until about the 1970s, they didn't really know who she was. They thought the ‘AA’ on her prints stood for Anonymous Amateur.”

Our consumption of clothing has changed in ways that would be unfathomable in Anna's time. While that's disheartening, it's also a reminder that it doesn't have to be this way – there's potential for change. When completing the project last year, Mandy pledged to not buy any clothes for a year: she now regularly receives emails from those who vow the same after seeing her work. Even if people don't take that step, “if being in people's minds and being conscious of it makes them buy less, that's a massive win for me,” says Mandy. *For more information about Mandy's work and to buy the book, visit mandy-barker.com. You can see some of her cyanotype prints in the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition, London, until 17 August.* 

Tights, T-shirts and much more. Recovered clothing specimens alongside their resultant cyanotypes from Mandy's book, *Photographs Of British Algae Cyanotype Imperfections*

PAUSE

Take a moment with some well-chosen words

The First Book Printed By The Sun

Photographs Of British Algae: Cyanotype

Impressions by Anna Atkins, 1843

by David Morley

Anna Atkins presses dried seaweed on paper:

Corynephora, Catanella, Laminaria.

Sunlight sears their images for an hour.

She spells out the specimens in algal fibres,

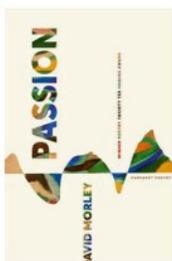
fretting them on the ferric coated paper.

Anna washes the light-burned pictures in water.

The rockpools of pages, where the sea rolls in
as her eye passes over them like the moon

and her seaweeds wave in star-startled wonder
as the tide of her hands lifts them one by one

Sargassum, Phyllophora, Punctaria,
into the first book printed by the sun.



Anna Atkins' marvellous botanical images, which she published in 1843, were the first of their type. Here, David Morley celebrates her inky blue cyanotypes, which can be seen at nhm.ac.uk, capturing this enchanting scientific process.

Things to ponder: How does the poet capture the sense of the wonder in Anna's achievements? Can you feel the tidal rhythm of the poem? Or the calm movement of Anna working on her photographs? Taken from *Passion* by David Morley (Carcagnet)



Magical creatures

AN APPRECIATION OF ROCK DWELLERS

Words: **VANESSA WRIGHT** Illustration: **ZUZA MISKO**

The low tide peels back the sea, revealing crinkles in the beach beneath. Craters between boulders cradle water, and these rock pools are a maritime world in miniature. It's easy to dismiss those who live in calcium carbonate homes as slow and sedate, but these shellfish are far from mundane. As mighty as mountains, they cling onto the rockface with a steadfast, muscular foot.

Sheltering beneath peak-shaped shells are limpets. When exposed to air, they don't move. Thanks to the strongest tongue in the animal kingdom, they've scraped a 'home scar' into the boulder, creating a watertight seal to keep them alive when the tide is out. The force of the waves dictates how tall their conical castles grow.

Periwinkles, meanwhile, tuck into crevices. Resembling tiny French horns, they're the jewels of the rock pool. On sheltered shores, their colours zing in lemon and tangerine, but where the beach bears the full force of the ocean, shells are more subtle in hues of pink, peat and peach. No one knows exactly why these kaleidoscopic variations occur, but it's thought to be influenced by water temperature, diet, and the presence of predators.

Ropes of mussels hang on sticky byssus threads entwined among stems of bladderwrack. These kidneys of the sea are bio-indicators of water quality, responding immediately to pollutants by closing their hinged bivalve shells. As filter feeders, they sift not only nutrients, but

also microplastics and pesticides, which scientists monitor to determine the health of the ocean. While people frequently harvest mussels to eat, they're also a favourite dish for carnivorous dogwhelks.

With a drill-shaped tongue, dogwhelks bore holes into the shells of their prey, injecting an enzyme to break down their food into a liquid soup, sucking it up like a milkshake through a straw. But mussels are not as helpless as they might appear; they fight back, tying the predator in knots, imprisoning it. And if you balk at the thought of a ferocious snail, wait until you hear about their offspring. These pointed, cream-coloured molluscs lay clouds of eggs which resemble a wasp's nest. Upon hatching, the juveniles begin to devour their nearest neighbours – these cannibals don't stop until all emerging embryos have been eaten. It's a dog-whelk-eat-dog-whelk world out there!

Submerged beneath stones are the tiniest of our sea snails: cowries. Their shells are ridged, reminiscent of a fingerprint. Once the creature has died and rests upside down on the strandline, its toothy grin is like a smile in the sand. In Celtic folklore, carrying one in your pocket is said to bring good fortune, while picking up three will help you find your way home in the fog.

As the tide rolls back in, rock pools become one with the open ocean again. And the marine molluscs continue their exciting lives out of sight for a while. **S**

That'll do ice-ly

THERE'S AN ICE CREAM THAT'S JUST RIGHT FOR EVERY SCENARIO IN THE SUMMER MONTHS

Cooling down on a hot day

Canned peach & ginger beer sorbet

A simple Korean inspired, dairy-free sorbet. Using spicy ginger beer to lift the flavour of the peaches makes a zingy, slushy dessert that all can enjoy.

Makes 1ltr

415g tin peach halves in juice

100g jocheong (rice syrup)

500ml non-alcoholic ginger beer

50ml fresh lime juice

1 Set a sieve over a small saucepan, drain the canned peach halves and collect the juice in the pan. Add the jocheong to the pan and slowly warm the mixture over a low heat, stirring to combine. Once the juice and jocheong are fully combined, remove the pan from the heat and leave to cool slightly.

2 Put the peach halves and the cooled, sweetened juice into a high-speed blender. Add half the ginger beer and all the lime juice. Blend until smooth, then stir in the remaining ginger beer.

3 Pour the sorbet mix into a freezer-safe container or resealable bag. Transfer to the freezer and leave until frozen, then leave to sit at room temperature for a few minutes to loosen the mixture from the container.

4 Cut into large chunks and transfer to the high-speed blender. Blend until smooth again to break up the ice crystals – the bright orange colour should turn a soft creamy yellow. Once blended smooth again, transfer back to the container and store in the freezer to set before serving.



Cook's note: If you don't have a high-speed blender, you can take the mixture to almost frozen, then energetically break up the ice with a fork every 30–45 mins or so, a few

times on repeat, to achieve a fairly smooth granita.

Taken from *Pocha* by Su Scott (Quadrille).
Photography: Toby Scott

A gathering of old friends

Gin & Tonic Semifreddo

Cocktail or pudding? Why choose when you can have both in this twist on the classic Italian frozen dessert. Invite friends round for an afternoon in the garden, under a parasol with a spoon and slice in hand.

Serves 6

FOR THE PARFAIT:

2 egg whites
100g caster sugar
250ml whipping cream
3 tbsp gin
2 tbsp lemon juice
Zest of 1 lemon
Zest of 1 lime

FOR THE LEMON SWIRL:

40g lemon curd
1 tsp gin
1 tsp tonic water (optional)

FOR THE TOPPING:

Zest of 1 lemon
Zest of 1 lime

1 Line a 1 litre loaf tin with cling film. Whisk the egg whites until stiff peaks are formed, then add the sugar, one-quarter at a time, beating well for 1 min between each addition until glossy, thick and holding its shape.
2 In a separate bowl, lightly whip the cream to very soft peaks (don't over-whip as the cream will thicken more when the lemon juice is added). Fold in the gin, lemon juice and the zest of the lemon and lime. Gently fold the cream into the meringue mix and spoon into the prepared tin.
3 In a small bowl, mix together the lemon swirl ingredients. Spoon little blobs over the parfait and use the tip of a teaspoon to swirl in a pattern. Scatter over the lemon and lime zest.
4 Cover the parfait lightly with cling film and freeze overnight. Serve straight from the freezer or let it sit at room temperature for 10 mins first. »



Taken from *Cook: Serve Up Joy* (Kyle Books).
Photography: Carolyn Barber



A summer birthday Mango ice cream with passion fruit swirl Arctic roll

Jazz up shop-bought ice cream with fruity flavours before rolling it in sponge to create a celebratory Arctic roll. Serve at any party with slices for all... candles optional.

Serves 6-8

FOR THE SPONGE:

120g caster sugar
4 large eggs
120g self-raising flour
Icing sugar, for dusting

TO ASSEMBLE:

400g vanilla ice cream, slightly softened (or use mango, or your favourite, and omit the flavourings)
3 tbsp canned mango purée (or the flesh from 1 small ripe mango blended with 1 tbsp caster sugar)
4 passion fruit, pulp scraped out

1 Preheat the oven to 190C/Fan 170C/Gas 5. Grease and line a 30 x 20cm shallow baking tray with baking paper.
2 Add the caster sugar and eggs to the bowl of a stand mixer or to a large mixing bowl. Using a whisk, beat the eggs and sugar together on high speed until they become pale and thick, and have tripled in volume.

3 Sift the flour over the egg and sugar mixture. Using a large metal spoon, gently fold the flour into the mixture, taking care not to deflate the volume you've created. Pour the batter into the lined tray and spread it out evenly.
4 Bake the sponge for 13-15 mins, or until it's golden and springs back when gently pressed. Allow it to cool in the tray for a few minutes, then turn it out onto a clean tea towel on a wire rack and leave to cool for a further 5 mins. Peel away the baking paper.
5 Using the tea towel to help you, roll up the sponge from one of the long sides, rolling the tea towel into it at the same time, so that the sponge retains its shape. Leave to cool completely.
6 Meanwhile, if using vanilla ice cream, mix in the mango purée and swirl it through with the passion fruit pulp. Use your hands to quickly shape the ice cream into a long cylinder to fit the length of the rolled-up sponge.
7 Carefully unwrap the sponge roll and remove the tea towel. Place the ice-cream cylinder at one end of the sponge and carefully roll it back around until the two edges of the sponge meet and the ice cream is completely encased.
8 Wrap the Arctic roll in baking paper and freeze for at least 1 hr. To serve, dust with icing sugar and slice. Birthday candles are optional.

Taken from *The Veggie Family Cookbook* by Claire Thomson (Quadrille).
Photography: Sam Folan

*Pretending you're
a kid again*

Raspberry ripple float

Combined with raspberry or cherry soda, this is the prettiest of drinks - bright pink and decorated with sugar sprinkles - to remind you of childhood treats. Serve with a spoon for eating the fresh raspberries and any leftover ice cream.

Serves 3

6 scoops raspberry ripple ice cream
9 fresh raspberries
500ml raspberry or cherry soda, chilled
Pink sprinkles, to decorate, optional

1 Put one scoop of ice cream in the bottom of each glass and divide the raspberries between them.
2 Top up the glasses with raspberry or cherry soda and finish with a second scoop of ice cream.
3 Decorate with sprinkles, if using, and serve immediately with straws.

Taken from *Frozen Sweet Treats & Desserts* (Ryland Peters & Small).
Photography: Ryland Peters & Small





Because one is never enough
Raspberry ripple ice cream

Get out the ice cream maker for a whole tub of vanilla with ripples of real raspberry for cups and cones you can serve all weekend long.

Serves 6

FOR THE RASPBERRY PURÉE:

500g raspberries
 2 tbsp caster sugar
 2 tbsp crème de cassis

FOR THE VANILLA ICE CREAM BASE:

350ml milk
 400ml double cream
 1 vanilla pod, split
 6 free-range egg yolks
 125g caster sugar

1 For the raspberry purée, preheat the oven to 190C/Fan 170C/Gas 5. Place the raspberries in a roasting tray and shake over the sugar. Roast for 8-10 mins, or until soft and juicy.

2 Transfer to a food processor and blitz until smooth, then pass through a fine mesh sieve to remove the pips.

3 Add the crème de cassis, then set aside to cool. Cover and refrigerate while you make the ice-cream base.

4 For the vanilla ice-cream base, pour the milk and cream into a heavy-based pan and add the split vanilla pod. Slowly bring to simmering point, then turn off the heat and leave to infuse for 10 mins. Strain through a fine mesh sieve into a clean pan.

5 In a separate large pan, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar, then pour in the warm cream mixture, stirring continuously. Place back on the stove and heat gently until

it begins to thicken or you can run your finger through it on the back of a wooden spoon and your finger leaves a trail. Allow to cool, then cover and refrigerate overnight.

6 The next day, churn the ice-cream base in an ice-cream maker until thick and creamy, according to the manufacturer's instructions. Spoon a third of the mixture into a container, then spoon over a layer of raspberry purée and gently swirl it into the base mixture. Repeat this process twice more, each time marbling the purée gently into the ice cream. Freeze for 3-5 hrs, or ideally overnight. Serve scooped into cones or bowls.

Cook's note: You can swap out the raspberries for blackberries, blackcurrants or strawberries. **S**

Taken from *Time & Tide* by Emily Scott (Hardie Grant). Photography: Kristin Perers

Suma

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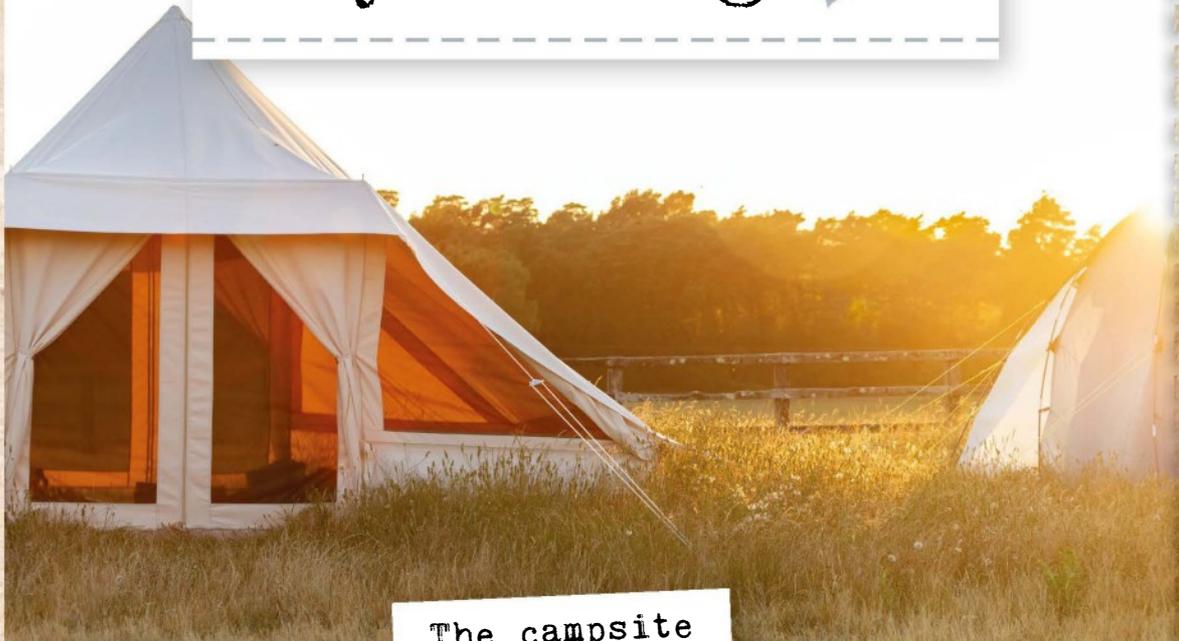
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My living ♥



The campsite



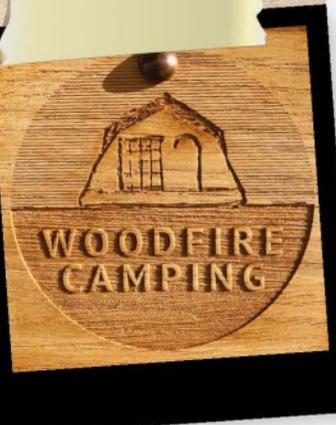
Many of us dream of running our own business. We ask the people who are actually doing it to share some of their insights and inspirations, the reality of the graft and their hard-won wisdom – and why they wouldn't have it any other way...

Words: JO TINSLEY



Woodfire Camping

The story so far Natural-born camper Stella set up Woodfire, Sussex, in 2018 with her husband Griff, combining their love of camping and sharing good wholesome food cooked over fire.



I grew up camping, in one of those 1970s orange A-frame tents. I remember waking to cows outside the tent and washing in a river. When my husband, Griff, and I were first together, we took our little two-man tent around Europe, then we just bought a bigger tent when our two boys came along.

Camping is far from the endurance test people believe. Comfy bedding, good food, coffee and wine make it one of the most luxurious experiences you can have. And if it's raining, there's nothing cosier than curling up with loved ones: reading, playing games and just being together in a way you never would in a house.

We dreamed of running our own campsite, but never thought we would. It took a life crisis to give

us the push we needed. We'd lived in London for 20 years. Griff worked in digital advertising and hated it, while I was working in children's publishing. Our relationship was struggling; it was a case of 'there's nothing to lose', so, we took this massive risk, selling our house and moving to a smaller place in Brighton, with a bit of money left over.

We thought we could buy a field and start something. We were very naive; it doesn't work like that at all. It's very difficult to buy land, especially in a National Park. If you can get anything for an affordable price, it's because you can't get planning permission to do anything on it. We realised we needed to talk to landowners. Griff would get up at 4am and go to livestock fairs because

we thought that would be a good place to meet the right people. He was walking up to people saying: "Hello, I'm so-and-so from London, can I buy some land?" Of course, it didn't work. In the end, we left flyers on peoples' cars at Ardingly Sheep Fair, and got six call backs! One of them was from the daughter of a couple who'd a stud farm in West Sussex. Like many farmers, they were working out how to diversify. We then went through this rigorous planning process

"After two days of camping, everybody is totally themselves; you see so many moments of love"



with the National Park, working closely with the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales. Looking back, I genuinely don't know how we did it; I felt like I was having a panic attack for most of 2018.

Although it was stressful, Griff and I were there for each other in a way we hadn't been before; we had this common goal. It really changed our dynamic. We'd gone from having those competitive conversations about who'd had the hardest day, to being this tight unit.

We came up with the idea of 'gastrocamping' after travelling around Italy on the cheap, staying in what's known as 'agritourism', which is like a farm stay where your hosts cook for you. We love this kind of easy hospitality, where the courses keep coming and there's a bottle of Grappa left out on the table for you. We wanted to create something similar on the South Downs.

We started off cooking a big stew over a fire for campers arriving on a Friday night, with half portions for kids. Because if you've finished work, hastily packed the car, had a row putting up the tent, and the kids are tired and hungry – having to rustle up a meal feels like the final straw. We wanted to take that pressure off. At breakfast the next day, everyone gets involved, buttering their own bread and making their tea just how they like it. The kids come over wanting jobs to do. It's like a little village that pops up every weekend.



The most challenging part of what I do is, well, everything apart from the running of the campsite.

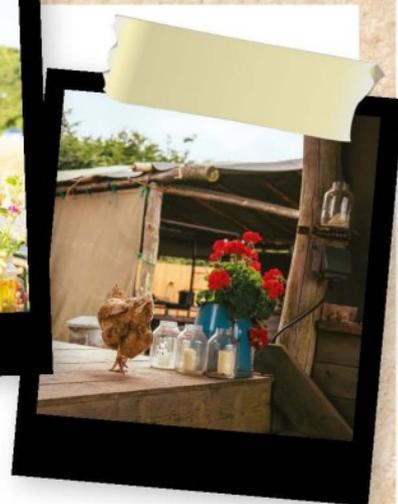
Like most jobs, the reality is that it's 50% admin. I thought I'd be floating around a field in a pretty dress, G&T in hand, but on top of all the admin there's a lot of physical, hard work.

One thing I try not to see as a challenge is rain.

We go ahead, whatever the weather. Rainy weekends bring about this Blitz spirit.

Aside from buying land, my advice for anyone wanting to start their own campsite is compost toilets! We've had 30,000 people staying here in the past eight years and we've only filled four 1m x 1m compost bins.

There's so much I love about camping. Being indoors yet outdoors – it creates this sense of openness and freedom. And I love sleeping in the same 'room' as your family. It lets you leave things behind at home. It's the fresh air and lack of surfaces to clean; dust is an indoor problem, after all. There's no need to do anything other than the simple tasks that life boils down to like cooking, eating and sleeping.



The greatest reward is seeing families in a way you wouldn't otherwise.

People often arrive stressed on a Friday night, the kids running wild in the twilight as they set up. But after two days of camping, everybody is totally themselves; you see so many moments of love. I remember watching a dad trying to teach his seven-year-old son how to field at cricket. The lad caught the ball as I walked past and their joy gave such genuine pleasure. Seeing these rare, life-affirming moments, makes it all worthwhile. S

Woodfire has two campsites in East and West Sussex; woodfire.co.uk. Follow Stella and Griff on Instagram: [@woodfire_camping](https://www.instagram.com/woodfire_camping).





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WEARING WELL

Stories of the clothes we love

MAXI DRESSES

Words: LAURA BROWN

Wearing a maxi dress on a scorching day is a bit like choosing a piping hot cup of tea for thirst-quenching refreshment – it seems counterintuitive, foolhardy even, but it works. I find being draped from top to toe in flowing fabric much more freeing than having pinching waistbands or stropy strappy tops, and as anyone who's experienced a billowing maxi in full sail on a blustery beach knows, the feeling that you could take flight is exhilaratingly cooling (and with none of the knicker-flashing panic that shorter dresses might cause in the same circumstances).

Perhaps it's that sense of freedom that makes me feel invincible every time I put on a maxi. I swear I walk taller in mine, and I most definitely sashay – I think it's impossible not to with a hem constantly lapping at my ankles. The antidote to workdays spent hunched over a laptop, they're just incredibly easy and fun to wear. No wonder so many holiday suitcases, including mine, are stuffed with them every summer.

My favourite styles have a distinctly vintage feel, with bold patterns and wonderfully ostentatious sleeves, but despite their flamboyance, they are surprisingly undemanding and require



“The charm of these whirly, twirly dresses is how they make you feel”

very little effort on my part. The length lends itself to sandals, trainers or heels; that vast expanse of material, especially when emblazoned with an eye-catching print, doesn't call for any accessorising, though it can certainly hold its own when I add an array of shiny baubles.

Mine have seen me through all sorts of celebrations, visited countless galleries and restaurants, and kept me cool whether I'm busy exploring a city or lazily lolling by a pool. I've learned that a voluminous maxi doubles as an impromptu picnic blanket, fanned out so that friends can plonk their bums without fear of grass stains, and I've discovered that I also make a great hiding spot for shade-seeking cats and my niece's soft toys. I can't remember a time when I've worn one and haven't ended up having an absolute blast.

In one, I feel like a carefree flower child while the sun shines and a glam, go-getting gal by the light of the moon. And that really is the charm of these whirly, twirly dresses – the way they make you feel is just as magical as the way they make you look. Relaxed, confident, supremely comfortable, and able to whip up my own personal breeze if I get too warm – I'm always ready to seek out maximum joy in my maxi. 5





A simple thing...

How's this for a soothing activity? First, take a piece of paper, follow the instructions* and - with a few careful folds - you've got a water-worthy vessel. Then find a pond or lake and send it off, watching the gentle ripples it creates. It's thought that paper boat making dates back to the 1400s and, more than five centuries later, it's no less magical.

*Find paper boat instructions on our blog at: thesimplethings.com/blog/paper-boats

Good things

POSITIVE NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



KEPT IN RESERVE

The landscape of the Brontës is becoming one of 25 new UK nature reserves in a bid to protect wildlife and habitats

The ghost of Cathy Earnshaw haunted the moors of *Wuthering Heights* and now the landscape that inspired the famous novel has been made a National Nature Reserve. The Brontë sisters' home at Penistone Hill Country Park in Haworth is part of the new Bradford Pennine Gateway, itself just one of the King's Series of 25 National Nature Reserves set to be established across the country by 2027.

It's not just about protecting the landscape of imagination. Twice the size

of Ilkley Moor, the new reserve links eight existing nature sites across the south Pennines area and is mostly made up of priority habitats for the UK - peat bogs, heathlands and wetlands. The hope is that endangered wildlife, like adders, curlew, and golden plover, will be able to thrive thanks to greater protection and better-connected habitats and that it will also help to break down barriers for young people accessing the countryside in one of England's most nature-deprived areas.

DRUG BREAKTHROUGH

Researchers in Cambridge have discovered a new treatment that lengthens the lives of women with an aggressive, inherited form of breast cancer. Giving the drug Olaparib to women with certain genes that increase cancer risk before surgery to remove cancerous tissue greatly reduced chances of the cancer returning.



10K

people have been taught to swim by one man, Saji Valassery. After several children drowned in 2009, the Keralan shop owner took action to share the lifesaving skill.



SHE'S ELECTRIC

The world's largest fully electric ship - the 129.8 metre long *China Zorrilla* - set sail at the start of May. Not only is it the largest electric ship, it's the largest electric vehicle ever built and sails on the River Plate between Buenos Aires in Argentina and Montevideo in Uruguay.



NO LONGER HIDDEN DEPTHS

The Ocean Census is helping us to discover the secret species of the seas

The oceans cover 71% of our planet and yet we only know about a tenth of the life that's living in them. Researchers reckon there could be up to two million species still undocumented and, at the current rate of discovery, it'd take 800 years to complete.

But Ocean Census, an alliance of scientists, governments, marine research institutes and others is changing that, redoubling the effort to discover the secrets of the high seas before climate change renders some species extinct.

Two years in, they're already making great leaps, having already recorded 866 new marine species, such as the newly identified squat lobster (*Galathea sp.*), above.

"Too many species remain in limbo for years because the process of formally describing them is too slow," says Professor Lucy Woodall, Head of Science at Ocean Census. "Every new species, be it a shark or a sponge, deepens our understanding of marine ecosystems and the benefits that they can provide."

♥

"This makes EVERY STEP GOING UP EVEREST THE MOST AMAZING THING I'VE EVER DONE. TO KNOW WE SAVED THIS YOUNG LADY'S LIFE IS A CRAZY FEELING"

David Sullivan, founder of Creating Lifesavers on the news that a defibrillator he'd installed on Everest had saved a woman's life – two weeks after he put it there.

Excellent WOMEN

Supporting women in rural Kenya

Throughout **Monicah Yator's** childhood she was hidden by her mother to prevent her from being circumcised. She witnessed her mother experiencing violence in the home and she was the only girl to finish primary school – all the others were married. It put a fire in her belly to advocate for other women. Working in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 2019 she had a realisation. "I thought 'my feminism is not adding value.' Even if I tell women to know their rights and report violence, most of them can't because of poverty.

And that's higher in rural areas."

In 2020, she set up the Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative in Baringo, focused on empowering women through household and organic farming. Today IWGI has reached over 2,000 women and girls and supports 87 farmer

groups, 80% of which are female.

"If we mentor them while still young, they'll grow up strong women," she says, "and if your mother can be strong for you, you'll be strong for others."



GOING CASHLESS CREDITED FOR DROP IN CHILD SURGERY FOR SWALLOWED OBJECTS

Coins were once responsible for around 75 per cent of the items swallowed by children under six in England, but as digital payments become the norm, operations to remove objects from children's airways have fallen by 29 per cent since 2012.

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TIPPLE OF THE MONTH

Saffron paired with citrus is a match made in heaven to create a sunny drink for long evenings

SPANISH DAISY

Serves 1

50ml Saffron infused tequila (see below)

Ice cubes

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 tbsp Curaçao, Grand Marnier or other orange liqueur

2 tsp caster sugar

Splash of soda water

FOR THE RIM OF THE GLASS:

1 lemon wedge

1 tbsp fine sea salt

1 tbsp caster sugar

1 Fill a shaker with ice and mix together the tequila, lemon juice, orange liqueur, sugar and a tiny pinch of salt, then shake well.

2 Rub your lemon wedge along the rim of a chilled cocktail glass. Combine the salt and sugar together on a plate, then dip the rim of your glass into the mixture.

3 Strain into a chilled cocktail glass, top up with a splash of soda, garnish with saffron strands and serve.

Bartender's note: When decorating the rim of the glass try swapping the



lemon for a slice of orange and the salt for a dash of ground cinnamon for a different flavour.

Saffron tequila To make your own saffron tequila, put 2-3g of saffron in a small muslin bag or reusable tea bag, place in a bottle of tequila and allow to

infuse overnight. Taste it and continue to infuse until it tastes as you would like, then discard the saffron **S**

Taken from *The Spanish Pantry* by José Pizarro (Quadrille).
Photography: Emma Lee

M O D E R N ECCENTRICS

Punch and Judy

Words: JULIAN OWEN Photography: JONATHAN CHERRY





IN A WORLD THAT CAN FEEL INCREASINGLY *UNIFORM*, WE'RE **CELEBRATING** THOSE HAPPILY DOING THINGS *a bit differently*. Meet the PEOPLE WHO ARE *seriously PASSIONATE* about their pastimes. PERHAPS THEY'LL **PERSUADE YOU** TO TRY *something NEW*?

Suffice to say, the *Daily Mail* was not keen on Spike Lidington's interpretation of Punch and Judy. 'That's NOT the way to do it!' spluttered the headline, when it debuted last year. One reader succinctly captured the tenor of the comments section: "I'm not sure the country can get any worse."

The trigger for this end of times? Spike – pictured here with Penny Plonk, aka Lucy Barallon – had produced a version of the puppet show in which Punch refrained from clobbering Judy about the head. Cataclysm for some. For others, the logical development of an art form in continuous evolution for the best part of 400 years.

"People are upset I'm changing the 'tradition', but the tradition is for it to change," explains Spike. "If you want to be super traditional, the show would be done with marionettes, not puppets, and spoken entirely in Italian."

Thus, the format of the show performed in Covent Garden on 9 May 1662 by an Italian immigrant, Pietro Gimonde. Witnessed by Samuel Pepys, his diary entry for that day makes it the first recorded appearance of Punch in the UK. But not Judy. Back then, it was customary for Punch to fight the devil, not his spouse. She wouldn't become a leading character until the 18th century, and even then she was known as Joan. Against that

She's behind you! Spike and Penny Plonk are bringing Punch and Judy to a new generation with their updated version of the raucous domestic drama (with crocodiles)

backdrop, we might just think that Spike's new storyline – Punch and Judy joining forces to beat the system, rather than each other – isn't such a big deal after all.

"There's been a lot of debate about whether Punch and Judy is appropriate, whether it supports things like domestic violence," says Spike. "And I thought, 'If the form is going to survive, it needs to be able to address these issues.'" Other recent Judy-updaters, he says, have "aged her down, said 'Oh, she's going to the pub' and made her a more relatable character. I've aged her back up because I wanted it to be that she could be older, and still joyful and relatable."

Spike could hardly be better placed to lead us through the nuances of Punch and Judy's backstory. As the son of Tony Lidington, the lifelong showman and historian of popular entertainment, sitting behind his dad's puppetry booth ranks among his earliest memories. "I used to watch through a little flap, looking up at these two men waggling dollies around. The audience reaction absolutely sold me on the idea of performing puppetry."

The mechanics fascinated him, too. At festivals, "my mum would be begging me to go and see a different show, but all I wanted to do was watch this one that I'd seen a hundred times before."

By then, Spike's own performing career was well underway. "I started dancing on the street in a monkey costume when I was four – there wasn't a lot of getting away from it." His first professional gig came a decade later, following in his father's makeup bag as that white-faced, tears-of-a-clown archetype, the Pierrot.

Following a teenhood of street performance, Spike's thoughts returned to his first love and, as he began »



looking at becoming a Punch and Judy professor (as all practitioners of the form are known), came a moment as serendipitous as a crocodile chancing upon a discarded string of sausages. He was contacted by The Judy Project, Exeter University's exploration of women's roles in puppetry – would Spike be interested in helping make a show addressing questions around Punch and Judy?

“I said ‘That’s exactly what I wanted to do!’” Punch paraphernalia was acquired from retiring professor, John Pole. “He was hanging up his puppets, passing them to the next generation. That very much felt like a moment.”

While Spike's Punch and Judy touches on matters close to his heart, he argues that “everyone who picks up the puppets changes shows to fit their own views. My most important change is that, although Punch and Judy still find each other incredibly difficult, they're in a very loving relationship. The policeman fills his traditional role as a foil, but gets his comeuppance from Judy after he tries to arrest her without much reason.”

The devil, meanwhile, is based on Frank N. Furter, the mad scientist from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. “I wrote him in homage to queer-coded villains of the last century, when the Hays Code [film censorship guidelines] meant you couldn't portray queer people without them being very clearly evil.”

There are other covert signals and symbols – Judy is dressed like a suffragette, Joey the clown wears the non-binary flag colours – but the show's crucial element is as old as the form itself.

“Most importantly, it's still a silly show. There are things that can be read into if you so choose, but the key thing while

Pulling all the right strings: traditional puppetry that's been given a few modern plot twists. Now THAT's the way to do it!

writing was to ensure that each scene is funny.”

That was certainly the majority view when it debuted at the Covent Garden May Fayre & Puppet Festival, timed and located to commemorate Punch's UK birthday. For the most part, says Spike, “it went down very well,” perhaps most gratifyingly with the chairman of the Punch and Judy Fellowship. “He said, ‘there's lots of older generations continuing what they've always done – and that's brilliant – but it's important to have young people coming in and changing the form.’”

“We also ruffled feathers, which felt sort of good – that's what we're trying to do, to have the conversation about what Punch and Judy is as an art form. The moment you say, ‘We're doing it this way because this is how the shows are,’ it's no longer a living, breathing art.” Spike is performing each Monday of the school summer holidays in the garden of The Warren Bridge Inn in Dawlish Warren, Devon. He can also be found at various festivals and events across South Devon all summer. **S**

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Have you heard...?

GATHERING AND SHARING STORIES IS HOW WE FORM FRIENDSHIPS AND UNDERSTAND THE WORLD, SO PERHAPS IT'S TIME TO RETHINK THE VALUE OF GOSSIP

Words **REBECCA FRANK**

A friend leans towards you, looking over her shoulder briefly. “Want to hear some gossip?” she says in hushed tones, pausing to read your reaction. You’re not the gossiping type, but then you’re not the one dishing it... and this conversation feels novel and exciting. Before you know it, you’re leaning in, ears pricked, eyes wide, encouraging her to spill all. While this sharing of stories is an age-old form of bonding and communication between friends, gossiping is often seen as a negative trait. But is there such a thing as harmless gossip?

Kelsey McKinney, author of *You Didn’t Hear This From Me: Notes On The Art Of Gossip* (Viking), believes that gossip plays a vital and healthy role in how we find our place in the world, helping us to form relationships from an early age. “When we seek out and share information through gossip, we’re learning – about our morals and views and how to conduct ourselves in the world,” she says. “Children gossip from the time they learn to talk and recognise other people.”

NATURAL NOSINESS

Eavesdropping, curtain-twitching, peeking into the pages of a secret diary; we all think we wouldn’t do these things but most of us will at some time or other. And the reason we’re naturally nosy, says McKinney, is because we’re curious to seek out information about others to relate to our own life. Once we have the information, we want to discuss it with someone else to work through how we feel, what our views are and whether they correspond with the views of others. “Gossip is a way of searching for the truth. The way we gossip, who we gossip about and how we respond to these stories shows us the person we are,” she adds.

Your first memory or image of gossiping might be teenage girls gathered together, giggling, sharing stories of friends and families, feelings and first sexual encounters. If we didn’t have these exchanges, how would we find out about love and trust, betrayal and rejection, what’s normal and what’s not? “Evolutionary psychologists have suggested that gossip has been very important in human development. It’s said that gossip is the ‘beginning of a moral enquiry about living well,’” says Tiffany Watt Smith, cultural historian and author of *Bad Friend: A Century Of Revolutionary Friendships* (Faber & Faber).

Gossiping certainly isn’t a modern pastime. The word comes from ‘god-sibb’, meaning godparent in old English, a name that was often given to local midwives. ‘God-sibbing’ mainly applied to secret

"Gossip plays a vital and healthy role in how we find our place in the world"

conversations had between women in a birthing room. “Midwives didn’t only birth babies but took care of all kinds of community medical work,” explains Watt Smith. “These female networks of gossips and neighbours were a real source of power,” she adds.

THE POWER OF GOSSIP

While more associated with badmouthing and backstabbing, gossiping has enabled women to inform and protect each other through the ages. Watt Smith gives an example from 16th century London when midwife Mary Freeman was taken to court by her husband, accused of giving him pox, a sexually transmitted disease. “Mary rallied her network of friends, neighbours and women ‘whom she kept in childbed’ to testify her good character in court – and 20 women, a remarkable number for the time – came as witnesses, saving her reputation and damning his.” In more recent times, the #MeToo movement demonstrated the power of women coming together and sharing their secrets, showing how silence can do more harm than good.

Gossip needn’t be unkind, and studies show that most of it isn’t negative. A meta-study published in *Social Psychological and Personality Science* in 2019 showed people spend on average around 52 minutes a day gossiping, only 15% of which is negative. We like to gossip because we’re novelty-seeking creatures and “our brains reward us with little hits of dopamine for newness,” says McKinney.

We need only look back at popular books, films and television to see the continued presence and involvement of gossip. Secret-spilling siblings and feuding families are a common feature of many classic novels while fictional gossip writers have formed the centre of some of our favourite dramas, from *Bridgerton* to *Sex And The City* and *Gossip Girl*. The ‘popular’ girls of *Grease*, *Mean Girls* and other coming-of-age stories make us wince, cringe and giggle just like a piece of gossip should.

While celebrities and people in power have always been a popular focus of gossip, when reality TV came along, we were given normal people to gossip about and to watch gossiping about each other. Currently one of the most popular reality TV shows globally, *The Traitors* offers a lesson in how to and how not to gossip. As we watch them “play, manipulate and create chaos amongst each »

other, we see how gossip is how we decide who to trust and who not to trust,” says McKinney.

FORMING BONDS

Sharing secrets and stories is one of the most bonding things we do with a trusted friend. “Secrets are a friendship’s most valuable and universal currency,” says McKinney. “They have power and when we give them away, we make ourselves vulnerable.” Allowing ourselves to be vulnerable helps us to form closer relationships, but it’s important that you have trust and understanding. Sharing your own secrets is, of course, very different from sharing somebody else’s news, and Watt Smith is keen to stress that even if you’re talking about someone in a positive way, they might not want you to. “There are ways to talk about people which don’t feel like gossip,” she says. “For example, if a friend confessed she was going through a difficult time in her marriage, I might mention (anonymously) a friend’s similar experience if I thought it might be useful to her. But sometimes I have to ask myself, ‘do I think this person would mind me saying this?’ And sometimes we all get it wrong.”

Deliver a piece of gossip face to face and you’re to some degree accountable for its legitimacy, even if it’s not your story. Gossiping in the digital age, however, can be especially dangerous because people tend to behave with less boundaries and because the risk of spreading misinformation is greater. However, Watt Smith says that “the transience of online environments can make it possible to share sensitive information about our own lives or the lives of people close to us that might be hard to share with even some of our oldest friends, and this is very useful.”

If you’re more of a closed book than an open mouth and find it hard to disclose things about yourself, Watt Smith says; “Many of us feel that disclosing details about our intimate lives is a form of transgression for which we’ll be judged. Yet without those conversations it’s impossible to understand that others are going through similar and that we’re not alone or shameful in our experiences.”

Like spending time with a good friend, gossiping should make you feel good about yourself rather than uneasy. Done respectfully and joyously with someone you trust, chatting about the stuff of life can help you find your way in the world just as you once did as a teenager. For the gossip sceptics out there, neuroscientist Sophie Scott advises reserving judgment. “Be less quick to judge something as gossip or frivolous or morally questionable,” she says. “Gossiping might be the most revolutionary thing we can do.” 



Good gossip

- **Sharing happy news** or praise helps to strengthen relationships and makes you feel good whereas repeating negative rumours can easily cause damage.
- **Positive gossip** will serve the good of the listener or group rather than just the gossiper. Consider if it’s information that others will find helpful and not just entertaining.
- **Avoid workplace gossip** unless you’re sharing a valid concern about someone. Office gossip has been proven to create a stressful working environment and can be detrimental to your job.
- **Don’t talk negatively** about mutual friends unless it comes from a place of concern. Friendships involve a bond of trust and it’s in your interest to uphold that.
- **Before you share** something about somebody (regardless of whether it’s good or bad), ask yourself if you think they would want you to be telling their story.
- **Seek out harmless gossip** with a podcast. Try Kelsey McKinney’s *Normal Gossip*, Katherine Ryan’s *Telling Everybody Everything*, or *The Rest Is Entertainment*.

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The mother of all wells and more otherworldly than petrifying, Mother Shipton's Well is shrouded in legend about the prophetess who was born here



GOOD WELL HUNTING

VISITED IN THE PAST FOR REFRESHMENT, HEALING AND WORSHIP, WELLS AND SPRINGS ARE MAGICAL PLACES, SAYS CLARE GOGERTY

There's a well in my garden, which isn't unusual in my village, as a spring runs through it to a substantial brook in the valley below. Many wells and pumps tap into the spring on its journey, and although they were once the main water supply, now they're used to water gardens and fill ponds. My well is inside the house – when the house was extended, it was covered with a thick glass sheet and a new structure, a kitchen, was built around it. It's one of the reasons I bought the house; having it felt lucky, a blessing.

To our modern eyes, this water, rising from below the ground, feels like a marvellous surprise. Our ancestors must have thought it was some kind of miracle. As a result, springs – where water naturally emerges from the ground, overflowing from aquifers below – were regarded as sacred places of healing imbued with supernatural power. Bowls or pools were built to hold the water, or wells to tap into it.

Now, though, they're mostly overlooked and rarely feature in surveys of ancient monuments, despite being some of the oldest sacred sites in the world. Although they've gradually been forgotten and, in some cases, destroyed, it's reassuring to »

Many wells, such as Madron (below) attract cloutie offerings, rags dipped in the well water and tied nearby for luck or healing, while St Winefride's (right) offers full immersion



know that they're still out there, waiting to be found and re-enchanted.

In the UK, springs have been regarded as having supernatural powers since pre-Roman times, playing an important part in rituals, and revered by witches, diviners, healers and the plain thirsty. Water has a long association with fertility and healing, and wells were places of rituals and offerings, given in the hope of good health, love and pregnancy. When the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England were converted to Christianity, previously pagan water shrines began to serve the new religion.

Sadly, many wells have fallen into disrepair; they're still sitting beside churches or hidden in undergrowth at the edges of fields or on street corners, but are

largely passed by unnoticed. Sacred springs with pre-Christianity origins have no written records and are especially tricky to find. Here are some of my favourites from around the UK. Hunt more out on OS maps (look for a blue W or SPR) or on sites like insearchofholywellsandhealingsprings.com.

ST WINEFRIDE'S WELL, Holywell, Flintshire

This is no hole in the ground but a sizeable well with a large pool for total immersion, as well as a chapel, museum and gatehouse. It is, in fact, a well complex that still attracts thousands of pilgrims every year, most hoping for a cure to an illness or affliction. Evidence of past miracles – abandoned crutches no longer needed – deck the walls.

MADRON WELL, Madron, West Penwith, Cornwall

The path through tangled woodland, marsh and briar to this healing well is as magical

as the destination. Many weary feet have walked along it, drawn by the circular well's healing reputation. Cloutie rags* hanging from trees are evidence of these visits.

CHALICE WELL AND THE WHITE SPRING, Glastonbury, Somerset

Glastonbury has two important, yet very different, water sources. Water from the White Spring gushes from the foot of the Tor, sparkling with calcite into a candlelit temple, converted from a Victorian pumping station. Water from the Chalice Well, on the other hand, is red from iron deposits (it's also known as the Blood Spring); it's where Joseph of Arimathea is said to have buried the Holy Grail.

THE WIZARD'S WELL, Alderley Edge, Cheshire

Alderley Edge, a wooded sandstone escarpment that overlooks the Cheshire Plain, is a land wreathed with myths and mysteries. One of the most arresting of these is the Wizard's Well. Water that drips into a small stone trough from the rock is said to have healing properties, but it also

“Wells were places of rituals and offerings, given in the hope of good health, love and pregnancy”

Clockwise from left: The Seven Wells; The Virtuous Well, Trellech, fed by several springs, each said to cure a different woe; Chalice Well and The White Spring



has magical associations. Above it is carved the bearded head of a wizard, inspired by the legend of the Wizard of the Edge. This tells of a wizard (Merlin) who buys a horse to complete his underground army (King Arthur's sleeping knights), waiting in slumber beneath the Edge until they are awakened to save Albion in its hour of need.

MOTHER SHIPTON'S PETRIFYING WELL, Knaresborough, N Yorkshire

Despite becoming a popular tourist spot, the Petrifying Well still feels mysterious and otherworldly. This is largely due to the fantastical shapes made by water dropping over a sharp ledge and 'petrifying' anything that gets in its way under layers of mineral deposits. Further magic is added by the story of the prophetess Mother Shipton. Legend has it that she was born in 1488 in

a nearby cave during a thunderstorm, when there was sulphur in the air and cracks in the ground. Her powers were used to curse her enemies and foretell the future.

ST BONIFACE'S WELL, Munlochy, Inverness

This Scottish well is famous for the cloutie* offerings that festoon the footpath leading towards it. These include underwear, shoes, soft toys and other miscellaneous items. Many are put there in thanks for healing, while others are prayers and wishes for healing or luck to come. However well intentioned, such offerings can become unsightly – especially if plastic ribbons or other non-biodegradable items are used – and affect the natural surrounds of the well.

THE SEVEN WELLS, Bisley, Gloucestershire

This handsome stone structure, built in 1863, is notable for two things. Firstly, the copious amount of water that gushes from spouts beneath five Gothic arches and two side springs into a pond and stone troughs. Secondly, the well blessing ceremony, which has taken place annually on Ascension Day for over 50 years. Following a church service, children bring floral creations to decorate the well while a band plays a hymn. S

Adapted from The Water Remedy: Folklore, Ritual And Wisdom by Clare Gogerty (Calon)

Worth doing well

Customs and traditions to take part in when visiting a well

- **Make a wish**
Coins and pins have long been thrown into wells, to represent a secret desire or longing. To avoid leaving any trace of your visit, instead soak an item in the well water and make your wish.
- **Tell the future**
Young women with romantic worries headed to wells to throw in small objects, often stones, then contemplated the bubbles that surfaced. Each one represented a year to wait until they were married.
- **Seek healing**
Before modern medicine, the sick and injured were drawn to wells by tales of miracles. Treatment could involve drinking from it, walking around it several times or making an offering. Today, think of its effect as the soothing, spiritual kind of healing, rather than more grandiose claims of cures.
- **Dream a dream**
As a well can be seen as a liminal place – a portal between the earthly realm and the 'other' world – it's an obvious place to tap into our own hidden depths, our subconscious. Historically, a way to access dreams was by sleeping beside certain wells.

*The practice of tying cloutie (rags) to trees beside healing wells is said to date back to pre-Christian times. The cloutie is soaked in well water, rubbed on an injury and then hung beside the well. The complaint is said to vanish as the cloth disintegrates.



WHAT I TREASURE

My copy of
The Wind In The Willows
by Chris Mulholland

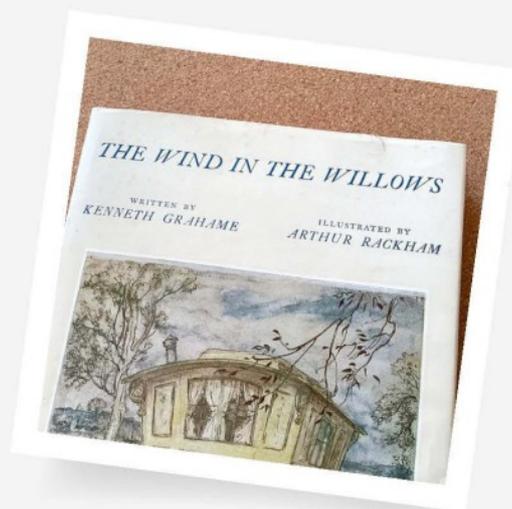
Coming from a large family of eight, theatre trips were not a regular experience for me. Even so, I remember it as if it were yesterday – me, an excited eight year old, out on a school trip, sat in the stalls of the theatre, fidgeting nervously, unsure of what was to come.

The lights dimmed, the audience fell quiet and before me, on the stage, unfolded a tale of four characters who found a place in my heart and remain there still, as vibrant and joyous as then, some sixty years later.

Every year, at least once, I read the book upon which that theatre production was based. Even though I know the story inside out, it never fails to enthral. I've seen several productions over the years – on the stage, in film and television, and even a musical version sung by students from Manchester with the wonderful David Threlfall, sporting a magnificent grey, with white stripe, hair do and a suitably stern voice.

But the book is still my favourite.

So much so that I now collect copies of it. I once saw a first edition in a very posh bookshop in London but, sadly, it proved well beyond my means. My favourite version was discovered and bought from a dusty antique stall in New England and has delightful illustrations by Arthur Rackham.



An unusual find of a quintessentially English tale of country life.

I keep this version out as it's such a joy to look at. The characters, given life by Kenneth Grahame, are still 'larger than life'. However, I like to think that its hidden messages also serve to remind me that good can triumph over evil. Humility and generosity of spirit are traits to aspire to, and, yes, there will probably always be silly, pompous beings who strut upon the world stage.

When faced with life's challenges I ask myself – "What would Ratty do?" Can I ever capture Mole's delight and wonder of the world around us? The sight of ducks

"Every year, at least once,
I read the book and it
never fails to enthral"

reminds me not to forget the simple pleasures of a picnic and messing about by the river.

Imagine my delight when on recently joining a T'ai Chi class I discovered that one of my favourite moves is called 'Wind in the Willows' Maybe Toad could try that as his next hobby?!

It was meant to be! 6

What belonging means a lot to you? Tell us in 500 words; thesimplethings@icebergpress.co.uk.



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COSTUME DRAMA

WHAT WE WEAR TO SWIM IN HAS ALWAYS REVEALED
A LOT MORE THAN A BIT OF SKIN. JOIN US AS WE
DIVE INTO SWIMWEAR'S FASCINATING STORY

Words: **REBECCA FRANK**



W

hen we pull on our cossies to go for a dip, we've come a long way since women's swimwear was first designed for leisure over a century ago. In

the 18th century, women who 'bathed' in the sea did so for medicinal benefits, wearing a loose-fitting wool or flannel gown weighted at the hem to prevent floating. While paddling in the water for pleasure (not swimming) became acceptable in the 19th century, bathing outfits were no less cumbersome, consisting of high-necked, fitted dresses and drawers. There was no hope of slipping in and out of such a garment and maintaining modesty, so horse-drawn changing carriages were used to wheel bathers in and out of the water. No wonder we developed such a fondness for the beach hut...

MATERIAL GIRLS

While women began to swim competitively in the early 1900s (the first female Olympic swim team competed in 1912), swimwear remained highly regulated and modesty was often policed in public spaces. Record-breaking Australian swimmer Annette Kellerman was famously arrested for wearing a knee-length suit on a beach in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1907. The first garments to be marketed as 'swimsuits' for leisure didn't appear until the 1920s. Made from wool, which was already being used in underwear for its health-giving benefits, designs had lower necklines and shorter legs, usually layered with a skirt. Knitting innovator Carl Jantzen promoted the shift from bathing to swimming, as seaside holidays and tanning were gaining popularity. Over the 1930s, swimwear became more decorative and beach style extended to beach 'pyjamas', a wide legged trouser with matching top or jacket, rubber swim caps and sun hats.

The big game-changer came with the invention of Lastex, a stretchable rubber-core yarn. Soon to be followed by nylon, polyester and elastane (Lycra), these synthetic yarns revolutionised swimwear in the 1940s because they stretched to fit, dried quickly and were easy to care for. Early adverts for Nylon show smiling swimmers in swimsuits that 'dry like a breeze'. Slimmer



(Clockwise from far left) Splish splash! 1930s swimmers play in the sea at Hastings; a mobile cabana provides Victorian change space; Marine Modesty: two 19th-century costume designs



Bathing outfits consisted of high-necked, fitted dresses and drawers

straps, halter necks and lower backs allowed for more skin exposure and tanning opportunities and the cut was fitted to accentuate the female body. Synthetic fabrics also gave scope for a full array of prints and colours and soon, magazines and catalogues were brimming with shiny, happy swimsuits and accessories. »

A brief history of briefs

1920s Men bathe in a one-piece woollen outfit called the SpeedSuit

1930s By the end of the decade, men are allowed to swim bare chested and the first bathing trunks are launched, often sporting a natty belt.

1940s & 1950s Men's swim briefs become tighter and shorter. Wool is replaced by synthetic fabric and there follows an explosion in colour and print design.

1960s Designer Peter Travis reshapes the Speedo brand's brief. These new style 'Speedos' that 'celebrated the male form' are frequently banned.

1980s Boxer swim trunks come along, varying in length and fit over the subsequent decades.

1990s Longer, looser-fitting board shorts become fashionable, along with low-cut waist designs inspired by Brazilian beach style.

2020s Boxer swim trunks remain the most popular style for British men, while Speedo-style briefs tend to be worn by competitive swimmers and the body confident on the beaches of Europe and South America.



As swimwear got more risqué, immodesty ruled across Europe

BRING ON THE BIKINI

While the swimming costume was gradually becoming more revealing, the big step in the unveiling of the female body came with the bikini in 1946. Created by French designer Louis Réard, the first two-piece featured a halter style top and high waisted shorts. While facing an initial backlash and a ban from public spaces in many countries (including Miss World after the 1951 competition), the bikini soon became a symbol of Hollywood glamour and Californian beach style filtered through to the mainstream by the 1960s. Brigitte Bardot was the first to wear a bikini on the big screen, while Ursula Andress paved the way for a succession of bikini-clad Bond Girls when she starred in *Dr No* in 1962.

As swimwear got more risqué, immodesty ruled across Europe and the 1970s saw a trend for topless bathing, popularised by French women and the boom in Mediterranean



holidays. Dominating our swimwear market was Marks & Spencer who, in 1969, sold over 100,000 towelling bikinis. The one-piece wasn't forgotten, however, and as bikinis got smaller, costumes also became more daring with high-cut legs, plunging necklines and cut-aways. Think of Pamela Anderson's red one-piece from the TV series *Baywatch*, currently on display at London's Design Museum's Splash!, an exhibition exploring swimming design.

In competitive sport, advancements in swimwear have caused their own kind of controversy. The LZR Racer, created by Speedo with NASA scientists in advance of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, was made from a high tech, low-friction fabric – polyurethane – designed to repel water and reduce drag. After 94% of gold medals and 23 of 25 swimming world records at Beijing were won by athletes wearing the LZR, 'supersuits' made from non-textile materials were banned as a form of 'technical doping'.

SWIMWEAR FOR EVERY BODY

As swimwear got more revealing, it brought with it all the emotions that come with baring your body in public. A positive change in the 21st century has been a shift from the 'bikini body' ideal. More swimwear brands now offer a wider range of sizes and styles for diverse bodies and swimwear preferences. There's a movement to encourage women from different cultural backgrounds to learn to swim (for safety and wellbeing) and an important factor is having access to swimwear that they feel comfortable in. Styles showcased at the Design Museum include the Kenyan Ohana Family Wear brand (pictured opposite, right), which offers modest



(Left to right) From itsy bitsy teeny weeny (black and white) polka dot bikinis to modest but marvellous burkinis, practical one-pieces to pretty sunbathing gear, swimwear in its various forms provides something for us all to take the plunge in



All the accessories

Swim caps – around since the early days of bathing, fell out of fashion with casual swimmers, but very much remained part of pro kit. In 2022, Alice Dearing – the first Black woman to swim for Team GB – helped create swim caps for use with braids, locs or afro hair, in collaboration with SOUL CAP. The caps were banned from the Olympics in 2021 with the claim that they didn't follow 'the natural form of the head'. The decision was reversed the following year.

Goggles – early pairs looked more like eyewear for pilots. Today, they can track data from stroke technique to heart rate.

Sarongs – popularised in western culture in the 1930s by Hollywood actor Dorothy Lamour, known as 'sarong girl'. They had a resurgence as beach wear in the 1990s.

Beach shoes – from jelly shoes to Crocs, we've long loved a beach shoe. Espadrilles, from Catalonia, began appearing in fashion magazines in the 1920s.

Towel capes – once we'd done with changing carriages, our modesty was protected by the drawstring towelling cape. Not too different from the hooded towel of today, just without the surfer/wild swimmer aesthetic.

swimwear embellished in African prints (ohanafamilywear.com) along with swimwear that address challenges for people who are gender-nonconforming (rebirthgarments.com), live with a physical disability (Adaptive Splash Swimwear, girlschronicallyrock.com) or are post-mastectomy (Eno, eno.eco).

Swimwear has had to face up to its own environmental impact, too. "The issue with swimwear, as well as the heavy use of non-recyclable fabrics, is that it's an intimate garment, less likely to be resold and reworn," says Jo-Anne Godden, CEO of sustainable swimwear brand, RubyMoon (rubymoon.org.uk). Her company use ECONYL, a regenerated yarn made of nylon waste like fishing nets, and has developed a low carbon recycling process for textiles used in sportswear. "We use discarded nylon to make recyclable swimwear," she

explains. "It's a circular process that enables us to use those valuable materials again and again." While there's a way to go, the aim is to reduce the disposability of swimwear, encouraging people to buy better quality and less frequently.

Another change is the move to swimwear that bridges fashion and function, such as RubyMoon's swim to gym range, with crop tops, shorts and leggings designed to be worn in the water and on land, so you can hike, surf, swim, play volleyball or sunbathe without having to change. "My aim is to help people enjoy the elements, because we need to be in nature to appreciate it and preserve it," says Godden.

Thankfully, choosing swimwear is becoming much more than just looking good on the beach. *Splash! A Century of Swimming and Style is at The Design Museum, London until 17 August.* designmuseum.org 

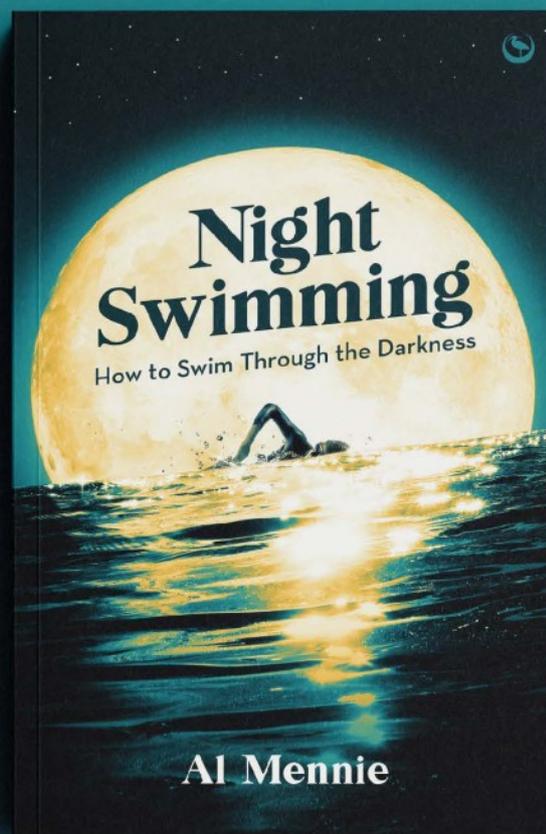
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by Al Mennie

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FLOWERS IN THE HOUSE

Bringing blooms indoors: it's what every home needs



Sea holly

A reminder of days at the seaside, sea holly is an architectural (let's just say it: spiky) addition to a bouquet. It's native to coastlines and sand dunes around the south of England, but the garden varieties make better cut stems, with larger cones of flowers and hues, ranging from pebbly silver to cloudless-sky blue. Sea holly (*Eryngium*) is an excellent dried flower, too - a souvenir that will last well into autumn.

A TROPICAL HAVEN

A CLEVER SHIFT IN THE WAY THEY WORK LETS THIS
COUPLE SPEND HALF THE YEAR SOAKING UP THE
PLEASURES OF A TRADITIONAL-STYLE HOUSE IN BALI

Words: **JEANNETTE JONKER** Styling: **KIM TIMMERMAN** Photography: **FOTOLEMAIRE.NL** Production **INSIDEHOMEPAGE**





Vian and Rahel can open all the doors around their joglo, helping to blur the divisions between inside and out. The lush gardens are a little oasis, bursting with native plants





A lush hideaway where you can walk to the beach or laze on the veranda with a cooling drink, listening to the sound of birds and insects going about their business, sounds like heaven.

For two years, Vian Meijerink and Rahel Voigtländer have been the lucky owners of Joglo Mangifera – named after the large mango tree in the garden – in Bali, where they live as digital nomads, working from here in the winter months and returning to Amsterdam for the summer.

However, this apparent dream life wasn't the original plan. The couple quit their jobs in 2020 to take a trip around the world together, but the pandemic threw a spanner in the works. "We'd got ourselves into the headspace for that trip," says Vian, "so we decided to go to Bali for six months instead." Rahel adds, "I spent some time here for my studies and have holidayed here, too. I always wanted to go back, especially in winter, but I had to persuade Vian because of the heat!" Vian had never considered this way of life, but with remote working, it was suddenly a very real possibility.

TIMELESS AND TRADITIONAL

Determined to stay in Bali, the couple secured remote working jobs and began looking for a house. They came across a joglo – a traditional Indonesian house with a pointed roof. It was built five years ago using reclaimed building materials, including wood from old ships, which makes the house feel like it's been there for many more years. With a welcoming character and just a short walk to the beach, Vian and Rahel fell for its charms.

"A lot of new houses here are made of concrete," explains Rahel. "We'd never seen this before. The wooden elements give it a traditional look. We were immediately smitten and thought it was a gem."

Inside Joglo Mangifera, the central living space opens into the kitchen, flanked by two bedrooms, while two small round windows above the kitchen sink let in natural light. "The wooden structure is also visible on the inside and uses teak," says Vian. "It's such a strong material and, despite the high humidity in Bali, we don't suffer from mould." »

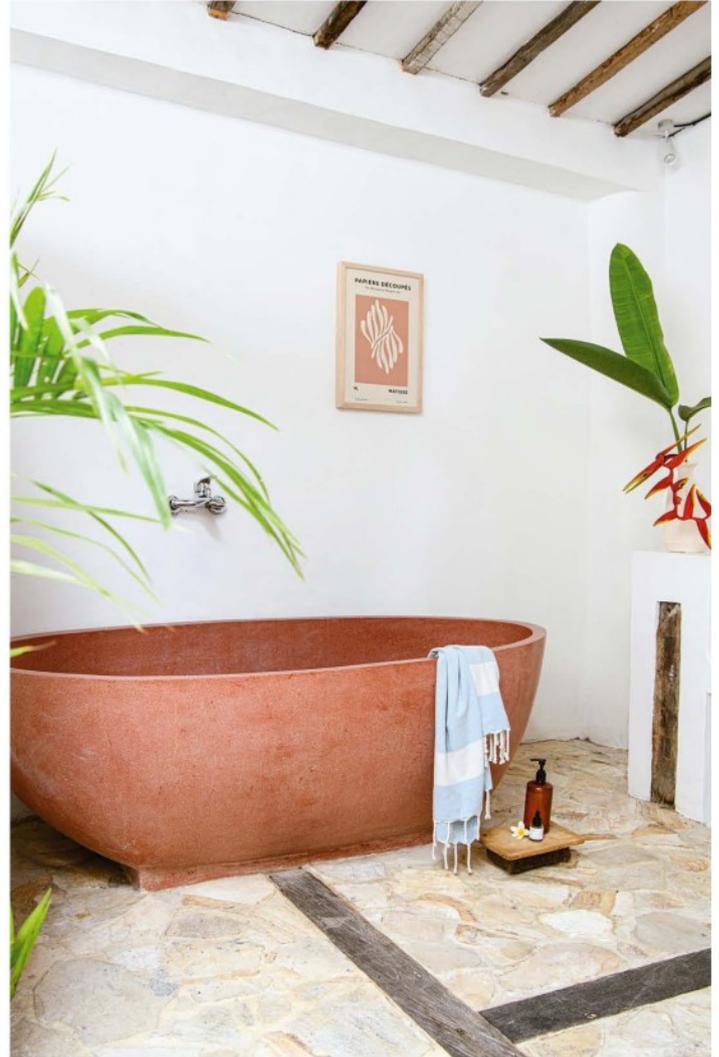
Built from reclaimed materials, Joglo Mangifera looks as though it has been standing far longer than five years. Vian and Rahel were instantly drawn to the hand-painted panels and decorated in light tones to help make these features stand out



Locally-made furniture gives the home a traditional Balinese feel. Meanwhile, thanks to remote working and time differences, the couple enjoy a better balance between work and life.



This cabinet was in the house when they moved in and is ideal for displaying some of their many plants, which the couple believe bring peace to their home



Unlike many joglos, theirs is fully enclosed. “Most are detached, and some have open sides and no doors,” says Vian. “Ours is boarded up, but that provides comfort. It ensures we don’t suffer from insects, and we can keep it cooler.”

The unique hand-painted elements on the wooden walls stood out to the couple, however, the red, green and blue walls weren’t quite to their taste, so they set to work painting them in lighter tones to brighten up the rooms. Furniture and accessories were sourced from local stores and markets, resulting in a modern villa that combines Indonesian ambience with romantic elements.

LIVING OUTDOORS

At the front of the house, the doors can all be opened, making the house one with the garden. “People come to Bali for tranquility and to experience the atmosphere,” says Rahel. “Canggu is quite a busy neighborhood. There isn’t much grass, trees or greenery, so when you enter the garden here it really is a peaceful oasis. We’re able to employ a gardener who advises us on plants that will thrive here.”

Living in Bali for half the year has given

the couple the chance to live in a different way. They get up at sunrise to make the most of the day before the temperature soars and the sun sets at 6.30pm. Rahel starts her workday at around 10am and often works through the evening. “Getting up at 7am gives me three hours to myself before I start work. Sometimes I go for a quiet coffee or a swim,” says Rahel. “In Holland, I always experienced a huge dip in the winter. I found February and March especially difficult. Life here gives me a lot of energy. I start every day with a walk on the beach, because the time difference means I don’t have to start work so early.”

The couple eat breakfast outside but admit the lower cost of living here means the kitchen isn’t used as much as back home. “We actually eat out three times a day because it’s super tasty, fresh and very affordable for us, so we are able to support the shops and restaurants in our neighbourhood. We live much healthier when we’re here than when we’re in the Netherlands.” **S**

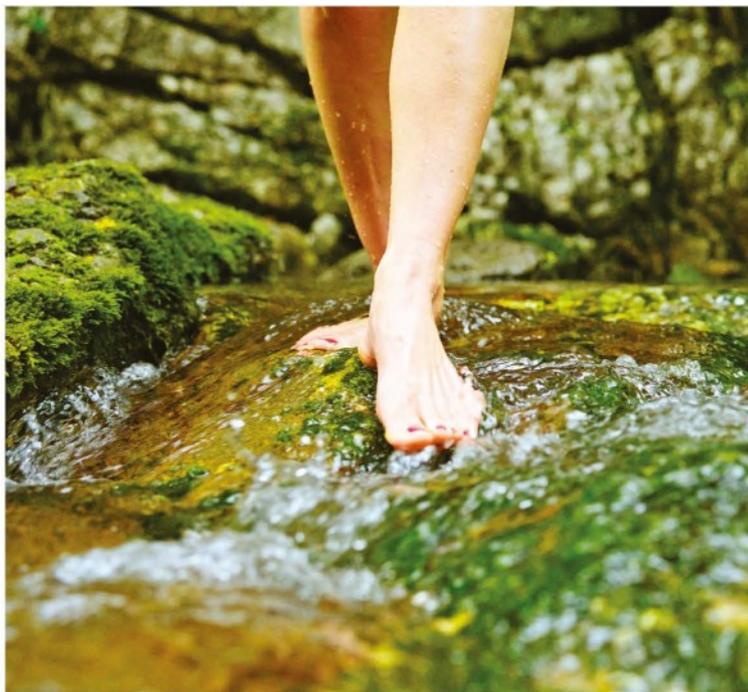
The beautiful red, terrazzo bath was already in place when the couple bought the joglo – they simply painted the walls to give it a neutral backdrop. With such idyllic surroundings, it’s hard to believe that Vian initially needed a little gentle persuading to make the move



RAHEL'S STYLE

- The large red bathtub is made of terrazzo. Lightening the colours on the bathroom walls helps make the red of the bath stand out even more.
- The entrance to the garden and house is as important as what's inside. The path is made of old sleepers and native plants are used all around.
- Plant shops in Bali sell hundreds of different types of plants, so it's easy to fill your home with them to blur the outside with the interior.

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PHOTOGRAPHY: ISTOCK

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TURNING TABLES

PLAYING WITH MOSAIC IS A COLOURFUL WAY
TO GIVE FURNITURE A NEW LOOK AND HAVE
SOME FUN IN THE PROCESS

Project & photography: **GENEVA VANDERZEIL**



MOSAIC SIDE TABLE

Experiment with pattern and shapes to create your own unique mosaic – such as a floral design to bring some more flowers into your home.

You will need:

Ikea Gladom side table (or similar table with a ridge around the edge. You could also try using a tray)
 Petal leaf ceramic tiles (you can get similar from hobby-island.co.uk)
 Mosaic glue
 Grout powder
 Squeegee and sponge

1 First, play around with your pattern to work out what you're happy with. Start at the edge and continue making flowers in different colours and sizes until the whole surface is covered. Fill in the gaps with the green tiles to make the flower leaves. Leave at least 2–3mm between each tile to allow for grout, and make sure the gaps aren't too big either as you don't want large sections of grout.

2 Once happy with your design, glue down the tiles. Starting at the edge, pick up each tile, put a little glue underneath and then gently push down, making sure that the glue doesn't squeeze out the side. Leave for an hour until the glue is set.



3 Next, make up the grout mixture by pouring the powder into a bowl and adding small amounts of water whilst mixing until it reaches the consistency of toothpaste. A rough guide is 150ml of water to 500g of grout powder (make sure to follow the pack safety instructions when making the grout).

4 Once the mixture is ready, apply the grout using the squeegee and smooth it out, ensuring that all of »



SPEND A MINDFUL
AFTERNOON PLAYING
AROUND WITH MOSAIC
TILES TO CREATE A SIDE
TABLE UNIQUE TO YOU

the gaps are filled. Don't worry if there is a little bit of grout on top of your tiles, it will come off.
5 Wait for the grout to dry slightly, then use a damp sponge to wipe away any excess from the top of the tiles – you may have to do this a few times. Allow the grout to completely dry for one hour, then use a slightly dampened cloth to polish the surface.

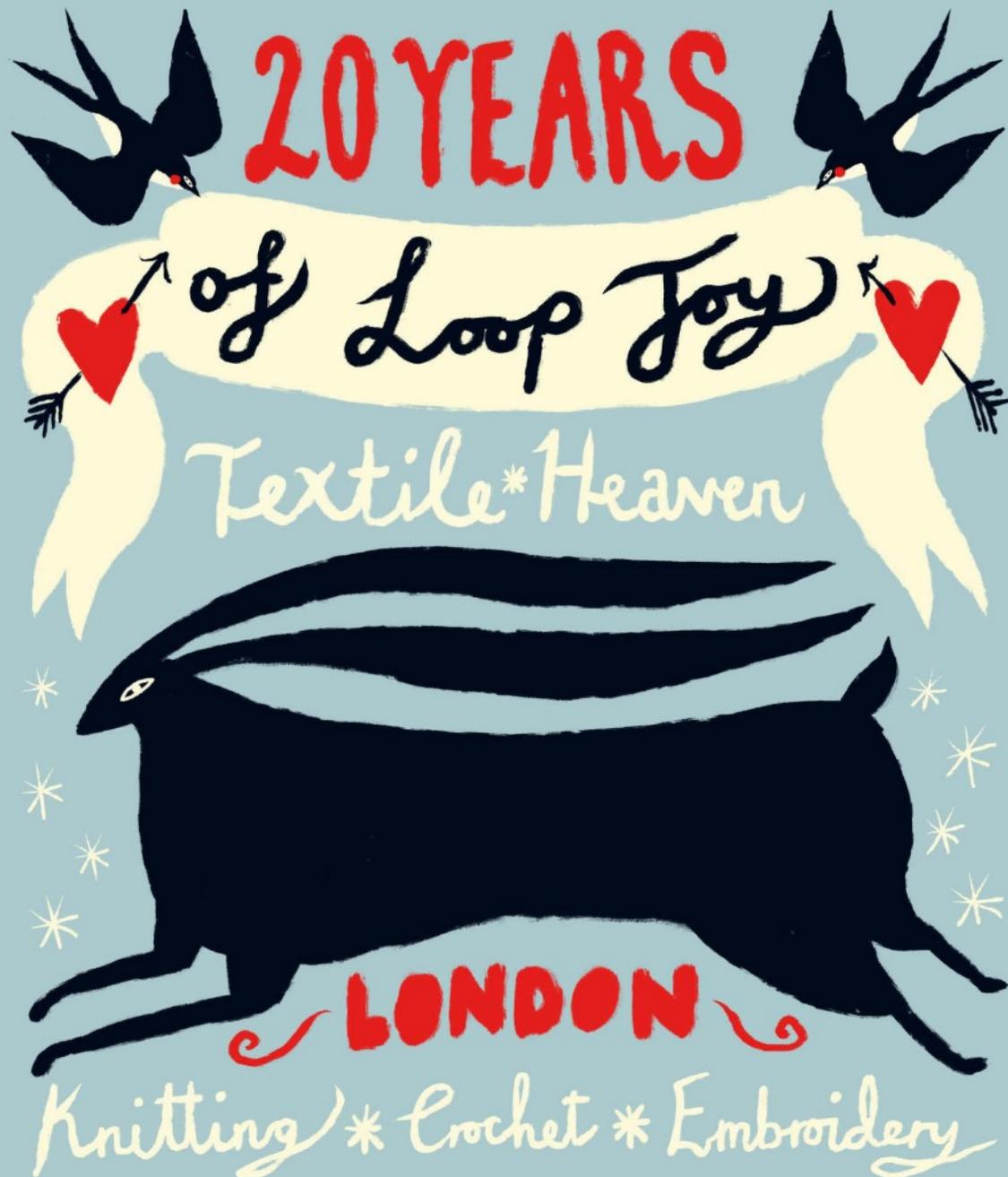
Maker's note: This project needed about 125g of each of the colours used, based on buying 250g bags. To make it a little more affordable, you could halve the number of colours and use a whole bag. If you wanted to make a more traditional mosaic with normal tiles, you'll need a mosaic tile cutter to break them into smaller pieces. 

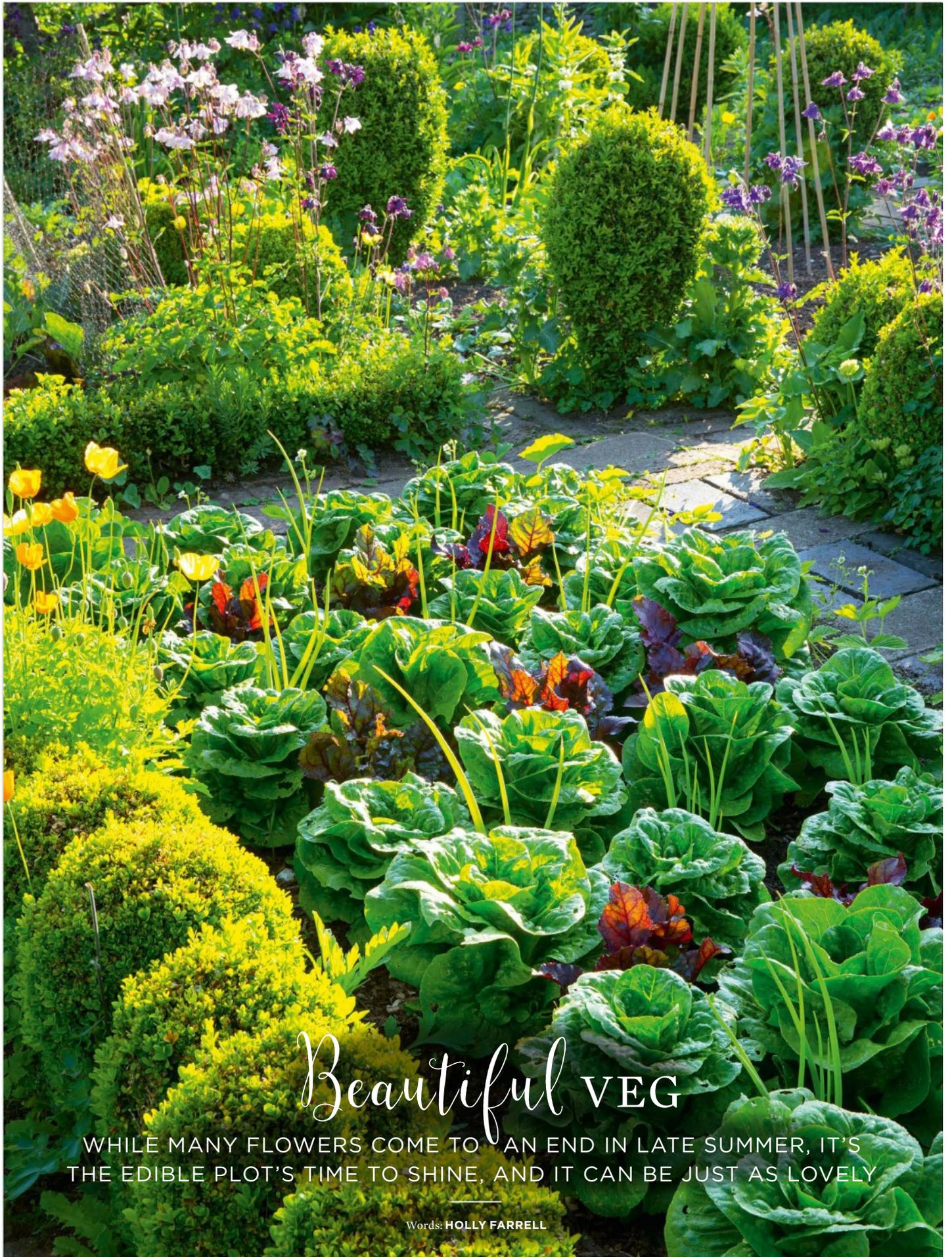


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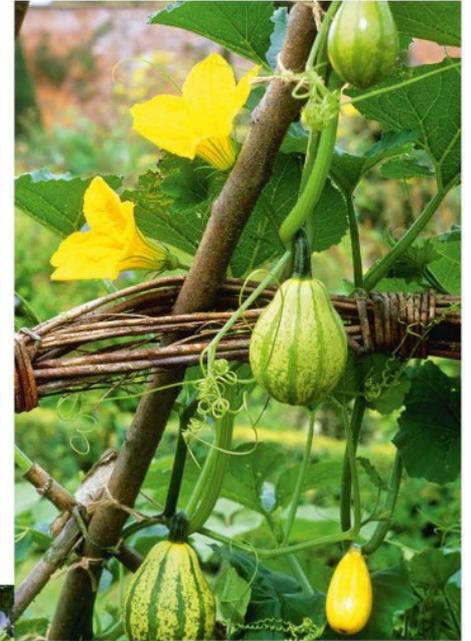




Beautiful VEG

WHILE MANY FLOWERS COME TO AN END IN LATE SUMMER, IT'S THE EDIBLE PLOT'S TIME TO SHINE, AND IT CAN BE JUST AS LOVELY

Words: **HOLLY FARRELL**



Pretty and productive – don't overlook the beauty of vegetables when planning a garden. They bring swathes of colour and texture and even climbing gourds can drip like jewels from a pergola

Right about now, when the rest of the garden might be looking a bit tired, a veg patch is often at its most beautiful. In the run-up to harvest, leaves are large and fruit is ripe. When big 'Brandywine' tomatoes are rubbing shoulders with 'White Lady' runner beans and 'Tromboncino' courgettes, it's hard not to be inspired. Watching a bumblebee buzz into pendulous pea flowers, popping the pods and eating them on a hazy evening: few will actually make it into the kitchen.

Then there's how the plants are arranged, whether in pleasing rows or a more relaxed style, interspersed with flowers... The varieties of veg you grow can ensure your garden is a thing of late summer beauty.

DECORATIVE ARTS

William Morris, the oft-quoted Arts and Crafts designer, said that everything in our houses should be either beautiful or useful: he could have extended that sentiment to our gardens, as plants can be both beautiful *and* useful, and nowhere is that more true than in the veg plot. Morris, working in the late 19th-century, would've been familiar with Victorian kitchen gardens: neat rows of vegetables surrounded by tidily trained fruit trees. This style of growing has a pleasing order and satisfying symmetry, but it's also



“When planning your plot, it's worth seeking out unusual varieties to bring interest to your veg patch”

worth bearing in mind the adage that nature abhors a vacuum (and that well-to-do Victorians had an army of gardeners). It's easy to fall into the trap – especially as a novice grower – of thinking that you have to grow your vegetables in straight lines, but bare soil will soon be colonised by plants you don't want* so why not fill those gaps with plants you do want instead?

Similarly, potagers – named after a rustic vegetable soup – are intricately designed productive beds where thought has been put into the overall design and look. The colours, shapes and textures of the plants are all considered and placed in patterns such as stripes or swirls, while climbing beans and gourds might drape elegantly from pergolas.

A contemporary potager usually has a formal outline of beds divided by paths, some symmetrical upright features such

as obelisks or archways for climbing plants, and each bed is further defined with a hedge of herbs like lavender or rosemary and/or perhaps low-growing fruit trees. Within the beds, annual vegetables will be planted in patterns, such as alternating rows of green and purple lettuces, and edible or cutting flowers and herbs are often also incorporated into the design to increase the visual appeal: a potager is painting with plants.

MIX AND MATCH

Taking ideas from potager-style gardens is not the only way to make your plot pretty as well as productive. Ornamental kitchen gardens have a more informal, flowing feel than a potager, yet everything in them is edible. Fruit trees add height and interest, under which are planted perennial herbs and veg (such as Daubenton's kale), with gaps »

* Although many common weeds are in fact edible.



Veg and plants with vibrant hues or eye-catching foliage add a touch of drama to borders, while the herb garden and veg patch can lend structure and scent to a home-picked posy



will sit happily alongside ornamental shrubs or herbaceous plants in a border. Just make sure you can access them easily so you can harvest your crops! Hanging baskets could incorporate strawberries, while herbs look great in a collection of flowering pots.

PRETTY PLANTS

If you're going to plant veg in your flower borders it makes sense to choose the most attractive. For a summer display in beds or pots, why not grow rainbow chard, alongside edible pot marigolds and purple lettuces? If you're choosing a tree, an edible cherry will give you fruit as well as frothy blossom, or choose a quince, apple or crab apple.

When planning your plot, it's worth seeking out more unusual varieties. Heritage tomatoes, for example, can bring almost all the colours of the rainbow to your veg patch, or choose purple-podded peas such as 'Blauwschokker' instead of green ones and Chinese onion (*Allium chinense*) instead of chives. Consider the foliage, too – the red-veined leaves of beetroot contrast beautifully with the feathery foliage of carrots.

You may even already have edible plants among your ornamental borders: sea kale – a stalwart of the Victorian kitchen garden – is delicious, while hostas, dahlias, daylilies, and young shoots of the ostrich fern are all edible. If you're foraging in your flower borders, check ID carefully: Stephen Barstow's website *edimentals.com* is helpful.

That these plants have been dubbed 'edimentals' shows how blurred the line is between what's ornamental and what's useful. With some thought on what to grow and how, the veg plot becomes a beauty spot. **S**

left for sowing annual vegetables each spring – the latter can be changed each year, leaving plenty of space for experimenting and growing what you love. There's less space for weeds, because the whole bed is full, layered from the trees, through the mid-height perennial herbs and veg, down to a ground cover of low-growing veg or strawberries.

Growing food and flowers together brings benefits other than aesthetic – flowers attract pollinating insects, helping to ensure good yields of your crops, and also predatory insects such as hoverflies who help to keep your plants healthy (adults and larvae eat monumental numbers of aphids every day). In this vein, why not do away with a veg patch altogether? Gaps in existing flower borders can be utilised to plant lettuces, or allow runner beans to scramble through an archway of wisteria? Fruit bushes often have pretty autumnal colour (redcurrants, for example, bear golden autumn leaves after their dripping jewels of berries) and

VEG IN A vase

The pioneering florist Constance Spry would often use vegetation not generally thought of as 'flowers' in her arrangements: brambles and bindweed featured, as did various plants from the veg garden. So next time you're picking for a posy, perhaps try the veg bed instead.

Try using:

- Chard and/or kale leaves
- Pea and/or climbing bean foliage and flowers
- Herb flowers and foliage, such as dill, fennel, oregano/marjoram, rosemary and chives
- Red cabbage leaves
- Nasturtiums
- Fruit tree and shrub branches (in blossom, leaf or fruit)
- Globe artichokes and cardoons
- Sweet potato foliage
- Carrot flowers (leave some roots unharvested to flower the following year)

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CRAFTIVISTS UNITE

Textile Protest
by Julia Triston



→ Fabric and stitches, wool and cotton have all been used to send messages, lend support, protest and commemorate loss;

from the AIDS Memorial Quilt and Suffragette sashes to the Pride flag and slogan T-shirts spelling out 'This Is What A Feminist Looks Like', artists and activists have made political and personal statements. In this resonant, thought-provoking book, textile artist Julia Triston traces this vivid history of protest. Accompanied by beautiful photographs of the works, she describes how 'the visual language of stitch and cloth... have been used to express resistance in its many forms' across movements and campaigns, continents and centuries. Inspiring stuff. (Batsford)

Shopkeeper
of the
month



PHOTOGRAPHY: SAM HARRONS

French connection

A local homewares shop with an international flavour.

→ PASCALÉ may be in Norwich, but its heart is in France. Inspired by the iconic Merci in Paris, PASCALÉ is a beautifully curated homewares and lifestyle shop founded by Pascale Smets, a former fashion designer with an eye for timeless design. The shop brings together a unique selection of meticulously sourced pieces from around the world. Whether it's delicate Swedish porcelain by Mälin Eliasson or small-batch soaps handmade in Paris, pressed flower artworks, hand-

stitched textiles and elegant glassware, every item has been chosen with purpose and care.

"I love anything that makes your table look lovelier or your meal taste better," says Pascale, whose passion for cooking and entertaining shines through in the store's tableware and kitchen collections. "I really like that no two days are the same. I love interacting with customers, telling them about the products, where they came from, and why we love them."

With plans to introduce a thoughtful clothing edit and transform the top floor into a living space, PASCALÉ is a celebration of considered living. pascalestore.co.uk



SCANDI RETRO

The Vintage Way: Creating A Scandinavian-Style Home With Pre-Loved Finds
by Sarah Marie Winther

→ Inspired by her forward-thinking grandmother, who furnished her home with long-lasting and stylish furniture, Sarah Marie Winther has wandered down a similar path. She loves decorative objects passed down by loved ones, searches out second-hand pieces and marries the new with the old in her home.

Alongside her tips and tricks for discovering the best finds and restoring them, she shares 20 homes here – from snug, two-room flats to sprawling villas – and reveals how their owners made the most of the vintage Scandi vibe in homes that blend the experimental with classic chic. (Mitchell Beazley)

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A YEAR OF CELEBRATIONS

OUR NEW ANTHOLOGY



Throughout the year there are punctuation marks, worthy of celebration, be it a quiet noting of the season in some small way or a big, joyous gathering of friends and family. Over its 256 beautiful pages, curated and designed by *The Simple Things* team, our latest anthology is full of ideas and inspiration for food, flowers, decorations, gifts and tableware.

We also celebrate people doing things differently, the corners of our homes that mean the most, and the natural world on our doorstep. This dip-in guide gives you a reason to celebrate anytime you fancy.

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> Taking place 22-25 August across Bolton's town centre, the food festival returns for its 20th year with chef demos, stalls, live music and special events. Entry is free (demos booked separately) boltonfoodanddrinkfestival.com

Birmingham Botanical Gardens Artisan Market

> Discover talented artisans selling a variety of makes from jewellery to home décor, skincare to food, in the beautiful surroundings of Birmingham's Botanical Gardens. Taking place on 2 August, tickets from £5. birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk

Newark International Antiques & Collectors Fair

> This fair is the largest event of its kind in Europe and an absolute must for vintage lovers and antique collectors with up to 1,500 stands. Taking place at the Newark and Nottinghamshire Showground, 7-8 August, entry is from £5. iacf.co.uk



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Maker
of the
month



Beautiful botanicals

Skincare crafted from nature and rooted in sustainability.

→ Tucked on the edge of the Peak District, Lisa Hutchinson handmakes every product at Elsie Moss Botanical with care, conscience and creativity. Inspired by a passion for plastic-free living, Lisa turned her love for handmade soap into a thriving small business with a big heart.

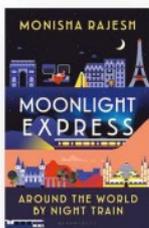
“I love that I start with totally raw ingredients – lumps of various butters and batches of oils – and I end up with

a beautiful product that people love to use,” says Lisa.

Each bar is made using the traditional methods, blending natural butters, cold-pressed oils and pure essential oils to create luxurious soaps and skincare. Every step, from formulation to packaging, is rooted in sustainability. Vegan, cruelty-free, and palm oil-free, Elsie Moss products avoid endangered ingredients and are wrapped in plastic-free, recyclable materials. This commitment has earned Lisa a ‘Plastic Free Champion’ status from Surfers Against Sewage.



Having recently opened a small shop in her workspace, Lisa has big plans for the future: “I’d like to offer workshops teaching people how to make their own products, as well as expanding into home fragrances.” elsiemossbotanical.com



ON A MIDNIGHT TRAIN

Moonlight Express by Monisha Rajesh

→ There’s nothing that travel writer Monisha Rajesh likes better than hopping aboard a train for a whistle-stop turn of an unfamiliar landscape, or returning to places to see them with fresh eyes. Here she takes a series of night trains – The Ankara Express, The Caledonian Sleeper, The Train to the

Midnight Sun – and delights in the magic of waking up somewhere completely different. Along the way, she eats delicious food, makes friends, describes glorious views, grumpy passengers and the thrill of travelling that combines romantic nostalgia with a modern awareness of climate change. (Bloomsbury)



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MY PLOT

Front and centre

URBAN FRONT GARDENS ARE OFTEN NEGLECTED, BUT ROS BALL IS GROWING FLOWERS FOR CUTTING AND ARRANGING BY BORROWING THESE UNDER-USED SPACES

Words & photography: **ROS BALL**

Author and gardener Ros Ball spent most of her career in politics as a journalist and civil servant but, being a farmer's daughter, she was always trying to grow something on the side (including tomatoes in an office on the 6th floor). In 2023, faced with career burnout, she changed direction and began a micro flower farm in under-used front gardens in South London. Follow her on Instagram: @FrontGardenFlowerFarm



The story so far

Although I grew up on a farm, I hot-footed it to the city when I was 19 and have been here ever since. But that doesn't mean I don't strongly connect with my growing roots. During the pandemic, I took part in a cut-flower 'grow-along' on Instagram and loved being able to give people bunches of flowers I grew. After many years struggling with my mental health, in 2023 I studied Level 2 horticulture, changed career and started gardening for a living instead.

Working alongside a good friend who had a flower farm as her side business, I was inspired to start my own flower farm with the limited space I could find. A discussion

with a neighbour who doesn't like gardening led to a mutually beneficial agreement for me to take care of her plot while using it to grow my flowers. I now grow flowers in three front gardens including my own and sell them locally by delivery and at markets.

In one of my neighbours' gardens was a square of lawn, so I cut long rectangles out of the turf for growing; in my own, I have raised beds. I don't think there's any advantage to them being raised for growing flowers, but you do need access from all sides so you can harvest the flowers easily. Nothing should be too far away for you to reach or you would stomp on plants to get to your precious blooms. »

Delivering flowers in her trusty bike trailer, Ros does her best to keep her business as eco-friendly as she can. Her florist on wheels is also a jolly sight, bringing fragrance and colour to her neighbourhood



Every corner of the garden is used, with flowers teeming from raised beds and others nestled in spaces cut into the lawn. They come together in beautiful hand-tied bouquets

Out front

Gardens at the front of houses are often an afterthought for busy city people, and lots of people pave them. However, a beautiful front garden is such a gift to your community. If you can't look after your own, perhaps someone else would like to?

One side of my street receives really good sunshine while the other is north facing, so I grow different flowers on either side of the street. Foxgloves, astrantia, and ladies mantle on the shady north side, and irises, dahlias, sunflowers and cosmos on the sunny side. I garden on organic principles and regularly mulch with compost or leaf mould and leave spent stems standing to improve biodiversity.

Both my neighbours had bare gardens, but in each there was something useful. In one, pink *Skimmia japonica* which is a great shrub for winter foliage. In the other,

a peony and a hydrangea. More plants than you expect can be used for floristry. From my garden, raspberry leaf and rosemary make great foliage.

Simple pleasures

The best aspect of gardening out front is the connections I make with neighbours and people going by. Sometimes local kids run into the garden to look at the flowers, while adults stop to ask about different varieties. I've got to know my neighbours much better as a result. Flowers really make me happy, but when I make others happy with my flowers, too, that's priceless.

My greatest success

My delivery vehicle is an electric bike and trailer, which, in the city, is highly preferable to moving anything by car. I've found a way to carry lots of blooms

“One of the best aspects of gardening ‘out front’ is the connections I’ve made with my neighbours. Kids run into the garden and adults stop to ask about varieties”



Gardening at the front of her house and selling locally has become as much about growing her community as growing flowers for Ros



Word on the street

Ros' front garden pointers

- You may have limited access to water in a front garden, so look to use drought-tolerant plants. Try plant species like yarrow, fennel and verberna.
- If your garden is paved, could you create pocket flower beds by lifting one or more paving stones? Even a tiny bed helps stop rainwater run-off and enhances biodiversity.
- Don't be shy of working out in the front garden, because you'll find people love to see someone caring for their street. It's a great feeling when you have unexpected chats and smiles.
- To get started with cut-flowers, try easy annuals like cosmos, sunflowers, cerinthe and white sweet rocket.

in baskets on the front, side and back. Delivering by bike, using compostable paper and growing organically are all ways that I see my business as being a success in a world facing a climate emergency. Most flowers sold in the UK are flown in and grown using pesticides. You can reduce your impact on the environment by buying from local British growers, like me.

What I've learnt

Growing is an ever-changing practice, which means you never stop learning. It's one of the reasons that I love it. Meeting like-minded people who have a real enthusiasm for the natural world has given me so much joy, while being outdoors has improved my mental health. Growing has given me more purpose in

life. And there are so many things I want to grow now, I can never get bored!

My advice

If you don't have access to your own growing space, or would like to learn more about gardening, find yourself a local community garden where you can get involved. I studied for a qualification at mine and made new friends. Being part of a thriving gardening community has been one of the great experiences of my career change. If you're a more experienced gardener, please feel free to steal my idea and create your own front garden flower farm with a reciprocal agreement with your neighbours. The more locally grown flowers that improve our communities there are, then the happier I'll be. **S**

My place

The corners of our homes that mean the most. This month: *BALCONIES IN BLOOM*

Compiled by: **LIZ BOYD**



Our balcony is a green retreat that changes a little every year, as new plants find their way in.

With its cosy sofa, dining table and lush mix of bee-friendly flowers and trees, it feels like an outdoor living room - and, in summer, we're here almost every day, enjoying family breakfasts or celebrating with friends. For me, it's a place of calm, like a quiet meditation in the middle of the city.

Elisa Decke, Berlin, Germany @drellsky.home



This is the place where I feel most at peace, sitting outside on a comfy sofa, surrounded by plants, animals and birdsong. This free-standing veranda is our mini-escape from all the responsibilities that live inside the house..

Dee Campling, Cheltenham, Gloucester @deecampling



My balcony helps me to feel 'in the moment' because all my senses are engaged. This year's sweet peas filled my home with their scent - I grew them from seed at a time when I was very poorly so, for me, they symbolise resilience.

Anne Kremer, Amsterdam @annesbalconygarden



South facing, this balcony is an ideal sunny spot for reading, or enjoying a quiet morning coffee. Looking up at the clouds has an instantly relaxing effect. My son was born shortly after we renovated this space, so I have lots of memories of him in his bouncer or on a play mat out here.

Frankie Graddon, London @frankiegraddon

“With its cosy sofa, dining table and a lush mix of bee-friendly flowers and trees, it feels like an outdoor living room”



Building this veranda was the first step in renovating our old house, and it was a dream come true for me. I like to spend time out here most days, either before or after work, and I simply enjoy relaxing, listening to the birds, and chatting to my husband (or the hens) with a coffee.

Monica A Saetre, Western Norway @jensgarden



Our balcony's a little sun trap, so I grow salad veg, such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and courgettes, which I cook with right up until the winter months. All the pots are collected from our travels and from car boot sales.
Vicki Greenslade, Cheltenham, Gloucester @veggreenslade



It may only be 3m², but if you think vertically, you can still grow plenty! I let most of my plants grow wild, so we have lots of visiting insects, birds and squirrels. I'll often spend the whole day here, reading, eating, planting and relaxing.
Karin Paszkiewicz, Munich, Germany @theurbangardeness



This is my little oasis among the concrete of the city. It's only a small space but there are over 50 different kinds of plants, from kitchen herbs to hanging baskets. Adding a table and chairs set was the best idea as it's so relaxing to sit amid the greenery.

Kamakshi Rathore, Hyderabad, India @innpursuitofhappiness



This is my happy place, where I come to forget my worries. It started off with a few plants and over the past 10 years has gradually become more full. I've also decorated the area with some of my hand-painted boards to give it a personal touch and lots of extra colour.

Sana Khan, Noida, India @blossomgoodvibes



DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE SPOT IN YOUR HOME?

If you have a wardrobe that brings a smile to your face, a writing desk that inspires, or stained glass that simply lights up your day, get in touch and share your best picture at thesimplethings@icebergpress.co.uk

AND BREATHE.....



make time to relax, unwind, and rest.

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Weekend away

MAKE THE MOST OF THE WARMER MONTHS
BY GLAMPING SOMEWHERE UNIQUE

Words & photography: **JO MATTOCK**

A weekend away in the summer usually means camping. The whole family loves being outdoors, the long evenings and the chance to slow down. We enjoy tending campfires, playing games and toasting marshmallows as the sun slowly sinks. While the weather is good, it's fantastic, but rain can rather dampen the mood. So when we were presented with the chance to stay in a quirky campervan – really a converted horse lorry – it offered a practical solution. There would be proper beds for better nights' sleep, and a proper roof should it rain, but it still enabled us to enjoy all the advantages of camping. Above all, staying in a lorry just sounded fun – and what are the summer holidays for, if not that?



Where we stayed

Polly the Lorry is a former horsebox that now sleeps four people (as long as two of them are under 10 years old). It was made by Arron and Nicki, and sits on their farm in Devon, and its moniker is a portmanteau of their children's names. Photos in the lorry show that the whole family got involved in its conversion, and their ingenuity is evident throughout.

Clever design makes the most of all the available space – there's a double bed over the lorry's cab, the sofa transforms into the kids' bed at night, and a breakfast bar folds down (and two stools fold up) into the kitchen. Quirky little details, like trivets, doorhandles and towel rails made using horse shoes all add to the character.

There's also a horse trailer that's been turned into a bathroom with



a shower, loo and sink, plus an outdoor bath sheltered in an old Shetland pony stable. Then there's a firepit, a wooden deck with a bistro table, and a private woodland with a hammock, bench and view over the surrounding fields and hills. It's all made extra cosy with little luxuries like bath salts, fairy lights, cushions and throws.



What we did

We so enjoyed hanging out at the lorry – the kids particularly liked playing in the cab, the lawn games like swingball and quoits, and meeting the dogs, sheep and ponies that live on the farm – that it was hard to drag ourselves away. There's no other accommodation on site, so we had it to ourselves, which meant it was incredibly quiet and peaceful.

We did, however, visit Devon's north coast, which is about a half hour drive away. At Woolacombe beach we built sandcastles, played in rockpools and flew kites – it's a remarkably windy beach, and almost three miles long, so conditions are ideal. We also went in the sea and introduced our eldest daughter to bodyboarding ("The best thing EVER!"). I caught a few waves myself, for the first time in years, and remembered how fun it is. There are plenty of places in the town to hire boards and wetsuits, and there are surf schools, too.



What we ate

Nicki recommended Barricane Beach Café to us, in the next cove over from Woolacombe Beach. Though small and unprepossessing on the outside – and with a lunch menu of regular baguettes, baked potatoes and ice creams – in the evening, it serves excellent Sri Lankan curries. I had delicious dal, a cabbage-and-potato curry, a beetroot curry, a crunchy raw carrot salad, as well as rice, poppadoms and mango chutney, and we ate on the beach looking out to sea, still in our wetsuits. Locals bring folding chairs and a bottle of their favourite tippie, and watch the sunset with their curry. Lovely – just get here early. We also picked up pasties from Fudgies Bakehouse in Woolacombe, and cooked bacon and eggs (from Nicki and Arron's chickens) on the campfire.



We also liked

The honey from Quince Honey Farm, which is about 10 minutes away from Polly the Lorry. This working farm is open to visitors, who can tour the nectar garden, peek into the honey factory and watch daily beekeeping demonstrations. There's a café and soft play here, too – so it's ideal for all the family – and we really liked tasting the honeys in the shop, and coming home with a couple of jars, plus the best-smelling beeswax candles. We also visited Woolley Animals farm near Winkleigh, where the children fed goats and alpacas, and cuddled guinea pigs.



The best thing

Staying in a converted lorry was just really good fun. We loved reading bedtime stories in the cab, having a bath outside, and toasting marshmallows (excellent ones from Bon Bons Sweets in nearby South Molton). The location is quiet, next to a meadow, and we spotted lots of different species of birds and listened for owls in the evening, before snuggling up in the lorry at night, listening to the rain on the roof. At moments like that, it was more than just a place to stay, it felt like an adventure. 5

Polly the Lorry, from £75 per night. uniquehideaways.com

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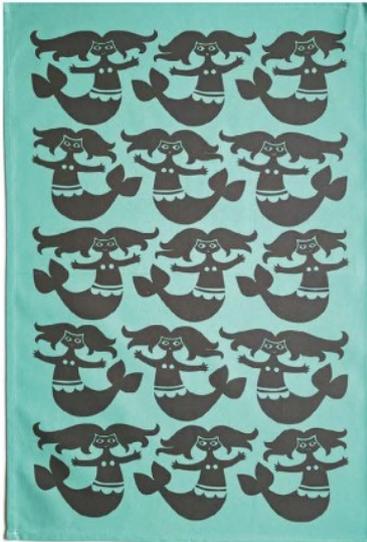
HRIherbalmedicine.co.uk

MISCELLANY

With extra puzzles!

Parasols, pool noodles and portable laundrettes. Plus, a watery word search and time to put your flag knowledge to the test with our quiz

Compiled by IONA BOWER Illustrations KAVEL RAFFERTY



DOWN TO A TEA TOWEL

These mid-century mermaids bring a splash of whimsy to the washing up. The design is a collab between Magpie and Hornsea pottery and is £12.50. From magpie.gifts



WHAT TO DO WITH... A SWIMMING POOL NOODLE

PRACTICAL: Aside from their pool use, they can also help keep your plants healthy. Cut the noodle into pieces a little shorter than plant pot height and stand vertically inside the pot. Fill with compost and water – they help retain water in the soil and improve drainage for whatever you plant.

PLAYFUL: Build a dog raft*. Slit two noodles

down their lengths, squeeze superglue into the open side and slide onto each long side of a camping mat. Repeat with smaller noodle pieces for short ends.

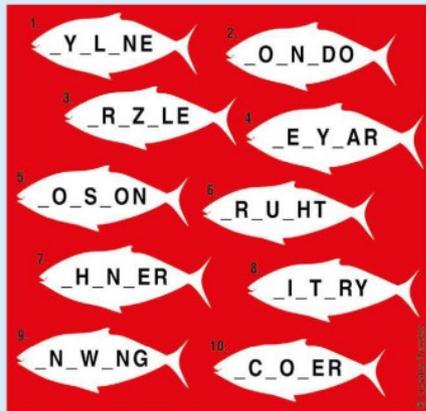
OFFBEAT: Make a floor squeegee. Cut a noodle to the width of your garden rake, slit down its length and slide onto the tines to swoosh water away as you mop the floor.



This sign might look like a man fencing on a jelly but it actually means 'Beware: Water Skiing Area'. The black on a yellow triangle denotes a potential hazard with the illustration depicting the potential danger.

RED HERRINGS

Fill in the gaps with letters to find eight different weather events. Only eight? Yes, two of these are red herrings and will only produce frustration.



(answers on page 125)

“What we do in life ripples in eternity”

Marcus Aurelius

A JOLLY GOOD FOLLOW

@indiarosecrawford

Beautiful knitted scenes and videos of a frog and his friend living their best country lives. (Instagram)

*A nice way to mark National Dog Day on 26 August? We've also got a game to play with your dog on p125.



TRACK RECORD

GROOVEJET (IF THIS AIN'T LOVE) BY SPILLER, WITH SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR

It's March 1999 and Italian DJ Cristiano Spiller was off to a Miami to a music conference. The flight was early so he stayed up all night sampling records for a new instrumental track, including one by Carol Williams called *Love Is You*. He played the CD to his friend (Boris) in his car when he picked him up from Miami airport, and in his tiredness, left it in the CD player. Boris invited him to watch him DJ in a club later that night, called 'Groovejet'. By the time Spiller arrived (fashionably late) Boris had played his track, the crowd had gone wild and the rest is House music history.

But that wasn't quite the

end. In 2000, he added vocals by Sophie Ellis-Bextor (of The Audience, and daughter of *Blue Peter* presenter Janet Ellis) and, in August 2000, it hit the UK number one.

Ellis-Bextor wrote one verse herself, saying, "I didn't like the line 'If this ain't love, why does it feel so good'. I didn't like the dithery mentality. I tried to set the idea that she knew the answer to the question, that it isn't love, it's lust, so it's all about a holiday romance."

If Groovejet comes up in a pub quiz, you should know two facts. Firstly, Groovejet was the first song the engineers listened to on the iPod when it was designed. Secondly, Spiller is the tallest artist to have a UK number one. Maybe THAT'S why it feels so good.



CATS ON MATS

Pip and Nancy, 10 months
"Where the Dickens did they get our names from?"

As nominated by Cecily Miller

Email your dogs in blankets and cats on mats to: thesimplethings@icebergpress.co.uk



How to...

BUILD A HAMMOCK

Fetch yourself a Bounty bar, switch on some wave sounds and then whip up your very own hammock to swing in on balmy August afternoons.

YOU WILL NEED:

Sturdy hammock bed
Strong rope or paracord
Spreader bars
Hooks

1 First, find your hammock 'bed'. A sturdy throw will do nicely, or cut your own piece of fabric to size, based on how tall you are and where the hammock is going. You'll want something robust. Hem the edges to stop it fraying.
2 At each of the short ends of the fabric, fold the fabric over to create a loop for the ropes to go through

and stitch along to secure each fabric loop.

3 Pass a strong rope or paracord through each loop and knot each one firmly to create rings for your hammock to hang from. If you want it to hang flat you can add 'spreader bars' first, available from Etsy and hammock suppliers.

4 Attach hooks to wherever you want the hammock to go (palm trees are nice, but you might have to make do with the garden fence and side of the shed) and hang the hammock up. Test it (very carefully) to see if it will bear your weight.
5 Once you're sure it's secure, hop in (GENTLY!) and swing peacefully in the breeze.

*"Every time you stand up for an ideal
you send forth a tiny ripple of hope"*

Robert Kennedy

Sow and sow

Because from the tiniest seeds, great – and tasty – things can grow

MIZUNA

An easy-to-grow Asian green that will provide mildly spicy, mustardy leaves well into autumn, great for salads and stir-fries.

How to...

Mizuna can grow well in a sunny or a shady spot. Sow it directly into fine soil, or into seed trays – wait until the seedlings have their first set of proper leaves before planting them out in their final place. Mizuna also grows very nicely in pots. Water it well during dry spells.

When it comes to harvesting, you can pick the whole plant, but it might suit you better to just crop the leaves from the outside first and leave the plant growing. It should keep growing new leaves through the autumn, and with a bit of protection from the elements – such as a cloche, or fleece



– or in mild areas, it could continue to grow until the spring.

How about...

Collecting the plants' seeds for next year. Leave a few to flower and once the flowerheads are dry, the seeds are ready to take. Keep them in a dry spot ready to plant again in the spring or following autumn. For some colour in salads, try the variety 'Red Knight' which has a purplish tinge.



► FAB GADGET



SCRUBBA WASHBAG

Essentially a portable washing machine, so you can do laundry wherever you go. Just pop your clothes, detergent and water

in the bag, agitate against the inner washboard for three minutes, then peg your clothes out to dry.

From £32, thescrubba.online

SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains 1 to 9

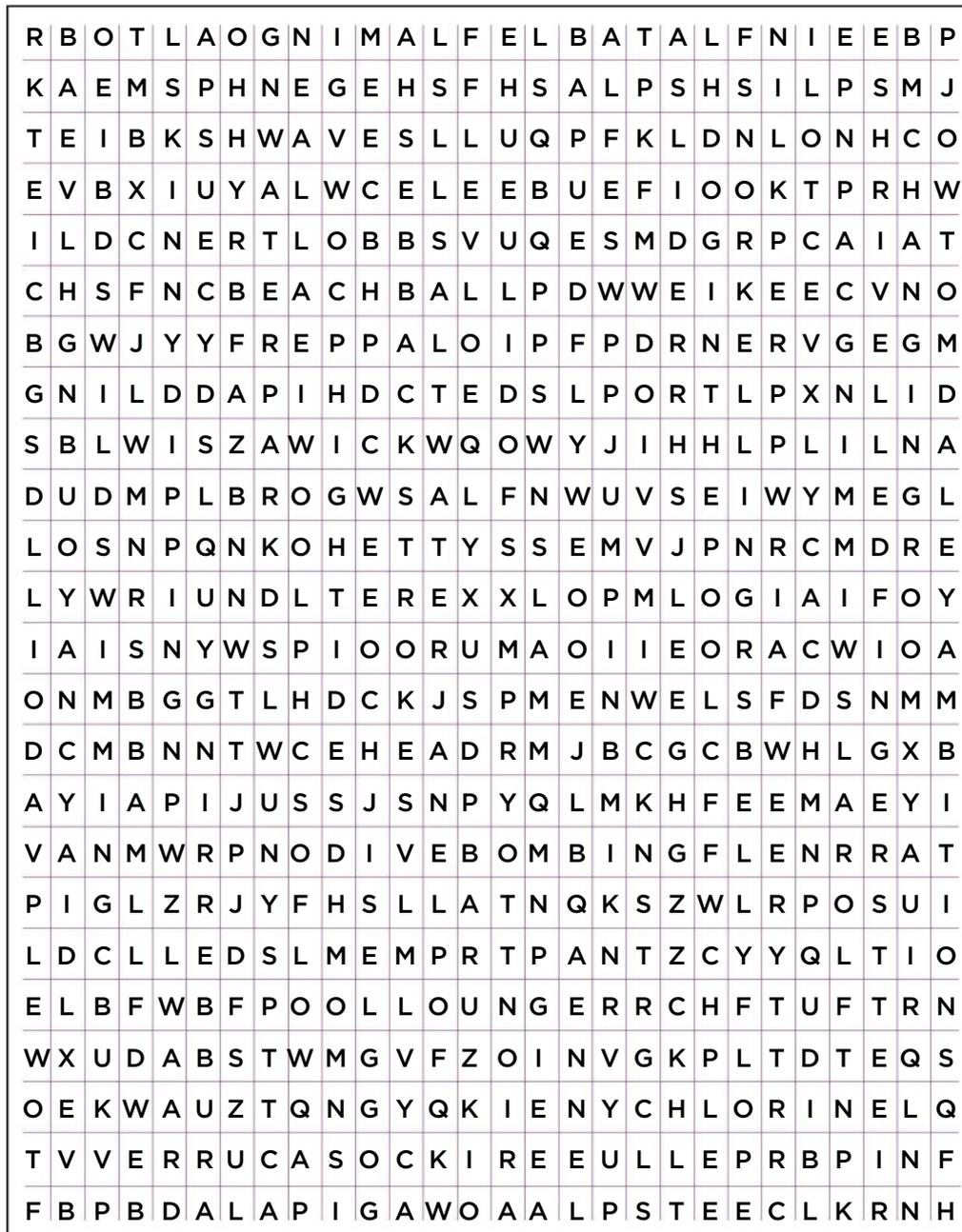
			1			2	
1					9	7	3
2					7		4
	2			5	1	8	9
9	5			4			7
3		7	9	2			1
	9		4				
7		2	3				5
	4				5		

(answers on page 125)

Ripple word search

Find the watery words that remind us of summer

Created by: IONA BOWER



- Backstroke
- Beachball
- Belly flop
- Buoyancy aid
- Changing room
- Chlorine
- Dog in the pool
- Floral swimming cap
- Goggles
- High tide
- Inflatable flamingo
- Jump in
- Lido
- No dive bombing
- One piece
- Paddling
- Pool lounge
- Rubber ring
- Saltwater
- Shrivelled fingers
- Skinny dipping
- Slide
- Snorkelling
- Splish splash
- Tom Daley ambitions
- Towel
- Verruca sock
- Waterpark
- Waves
- Wild swimming

(answers on page 125)

Take THREE

Garden parasols to position yourself under with a good book and a tippie.



TWO TONE

Coral and cream scalloped parasol with UV30 protection.
Best for: Staying shaded for garden drinkies.
£125, notonthightstreet.com



FLORAL FRINGED

Traditional style wood-effect pole with a white and blush pattern on a deep blue fabric.
Best for: Deck chair reading.
£125, coxandcox.co.uk



RENDEZ-VOUS WAVED

One more wave and you'll be overboard with this cheery pink and orange pattern.
Best for: Shady fiestas.
£110, oliverbonas.com

QUICK-FIRE QUIZ

- 1 The Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan this month celebrates the bond between which relatives?
- 2 Which annual event (since 1769) closes this month in Burlington House?
- 3 In 150 BCE, Astronomer Seleucus of Seleucia discovered what interesting fact about the moon?
- 4 What seaside tradition made its first foray into public life in Austro-Hungary in 1869.
- 5 What watery world record was broken (with a score of 88) at Red Bridge near Kane, Pennsylvania?

(answers on page 125)

A FLIGHT of FOLKLORE

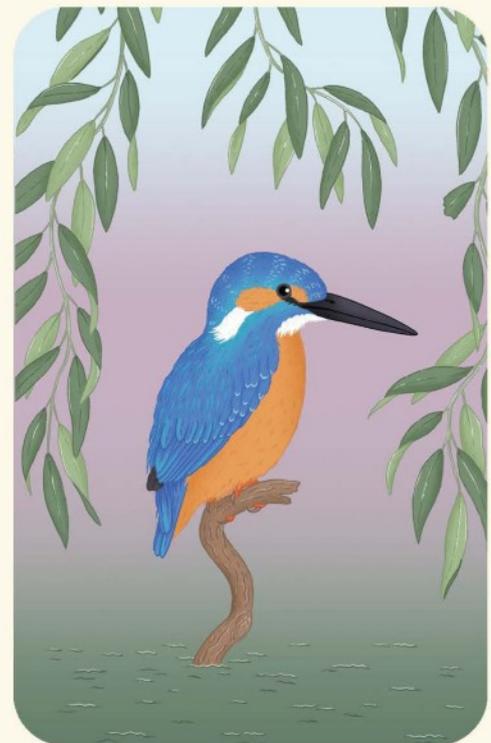
THE KINGFISHER

The colours of the kingfisher are a prominent feature in many tales, with one biblical narrative claiming it was the first bird Noah released from the Ark. As it rose, the sun hit its underbelly and set its breast aglow with burnished light, while the blue of the sky tinted its feathers.

To the ancient Greeks it was synonymous with love, and linked to the story of Alcyone and Ceyx. This husband-and-wife duo were madly in love and would refer to each other as the deities Hera and Zeus, which seemed harmless enough, but angered Zeus greatly as it implied that they thought

they were just as powerful. When Ceyx, who was King of Trachis, took a journey over water to visit the Oracle at Delphi, there was a terrible storm and a thunderbolt hit his boat. Tales claim this was sent by Zeus in a fit of rage, but either way, the boat sank and Ceyx met his doom. When Alcyone discovered that her beloved was dead, she threw herself into the ocean. The gods were so touched by this show of grief that they transformed her into a kingfisher, as they did with Ceyx, and so husband and wife were reunited.

Adapted from *The Folklore Of Birds* by Alison Davies; illustrated by Sarah Wildling (Leaping Hare Press)



A pretty pickle

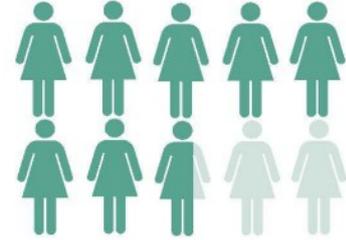


Store CUPBOARD SUMS

Pickled green tomatoes Make now to add crunch to dishes all autumn. Makes 900g. Bring 480ml of pickling liquid (480ml water, 240ml champagne vinegar, 3 tbsp salt and 150g sugar) to a simmer over a med-high heat before turning off and allowing to cool for 5 mins. Thinly slice 455g green tomatoes, place in a heatproof container and pour over the liquid. Once cool, cover and keep in the fridge for at least 2 days before using. They last a few months if refrigerated. *Taken from The Four Horsemen: Food And Wine For Good Times from the Brooklyn Restaurant (Abrams).*

PHOTOGRAPH © 2024 DAVID MALOSH

GOOGLE VOX...



Almost 8 in ten people think nature's important for our wellbeing and economic prosperity.



63% of us say the best thing about time spent in nature is sharing the adventure with a friend.

STEPS

Altering one letter at each stage to form a new word every time, change the word on the top to the word on the bottom.

RODS
MAKE
LIMB

(answers on page 125)

YOGA FOR STIFF BIRDS

BACK ARCH

PIGEON

Eka Pada Rajakapotasana

FROM ALL FOURS, SLIDE LEFT KNEE BEYOND LEFT WRIST. TAKE LEFT FOOT TO RIGHT WRIST. EA: RIGHT LEG BACK, HIPS SQUARED. REPEAT OTHER SIDE.



Taken from Yoga For Stiff Birds by Marion Deuchars (Skittledog)

IDENTIFIER

Know your flags quiz

Whether you are off to foreign climes this summer or holidaying at home, a geography quiz is always good fun. Can you identify the countries represented by each of the flags below?



1.....



2.....



3.....



4.....



5.....



6.....



7.....



8.....



9.....



10.....



11.....



12.....

(answers on page 125)



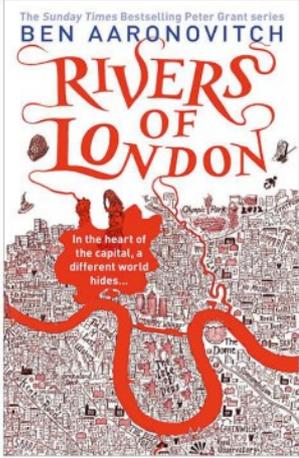
A GOOD READ

"Do you love police crime procedurals? Magic and goddesses? Well observed humour? Of course you do. Ben

Aaronovitch's Rivers of London series is a delight and coming late to them you can binge them all at once."

As nominated by Rachel Fisher

Read a good novel that you want to share? Tell us all about it by emailing thesimplethings@icebergpress.co.uk



► KIT AND CABOODLE



BEEKEEPING FOR BEGINNERS

Take the sting out of getting started by buying a flatpack hive, beeswax coated. You'll want a beekeeping jacket (with face cover) and glove. Also a smoker with fuel to calm the bees when you're fiddling in the hive, hive tools for scraping off wax and propolis, a bee brush for scraping off excess bees, a queen catcher and marking tube so you can keep tabs on hive royalty, and a frame grip and straight needle uncapping fork to help you remove the wax seal before helping yourself to the honey.

EDIBLE IDIOMS



'The cherry on top'

TALK LIKE... YOU'RE ON A FILM SET

Rhubarb: the pretend talk extras do;

Walk in on a banana: walk into frame on a curve;

Hot brick: a fully charged walkie talkie;

10-1: I'm taking a loo break;

Honey wagon: portaloos;

Cowboy shot: from the thighs up;

Martini: the last shot of the day

► NICE FIND

A first pressing of 'Please Please Me' by The Beatles was unearthed at Enfield's Cancer Research shop.

The 1963 album fetched £4,311 for them on eBay. A very pleasing result!



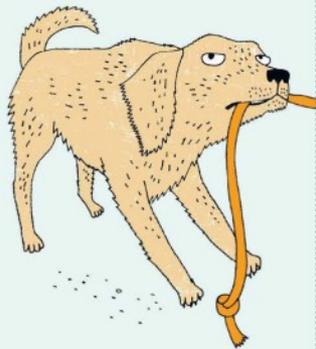
Give the dog a game

Tug games

Playing as equals

Tug of war is a game that comes naturally (we've all seen two dogs pulling at opposite ends of the same stick), but it's also a great people-pet activity that develops trust and strengthens your bond.

Watch two dogs of uneven strength playing tug with a rope toy, and you'll soon notice the stronger one usually self-handicaps a bit to let the game last longer - if they went all-out, it'd be over in seconds. Use the same restraint when you're playing tug with your own dog - if they're stronger than you, put your all into it,



but if they're weaker, moderate the force so you get a longer game.

Soft knotted or plaited ropes make the best tug toys - thick enough to get teeth into but not abrasive on your dog's mouth. Relax or increase the pull and adjust your grip just as your pet does but do any twisting gently - violent pulling from side to side isn't good for a dog's neck.

Taken from *School For Dogs (And Their Humans)*, written by Sophie Collins and illustrated by Charlotte Farmer. (Skittledog)

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

All the answers to all the puzzles, quizzes, teasers and word games in this month's Miscellany

Word search solution

R	B	O	T	L	A	O	G	N	I	M	A	L	F	E	L	B	A	T	A	L	F	N	I	E	E	B	P
K	A	E	M	S	P	H	N	E	G	E	H	S	F	H	S	A	L	P	S	H	S	I	L	P	S	M	J
T	E	I	B	K	S	H	W	A	V	E	S	L	L	U	Q	P	F	K	L	D	N	L	O	N	H	C	O
E	V	B	X	I	U	Y	A	L	W	C	E	L	E	E	B	U	E	F	I	O	O	K	T	P	R	H	W
I	L	D	C	N	E	R	T	L	O	B	B	S	V	U	Q	E	S	M	D	G	R	P	C	A	I	A	T
C	H	S	F	N	C	B	E	A	C	H	B	A	L	L	P	D	W	W	E	I	K	E	E	C	V	N	O
B	G	W	J	Y	F	R	E	P	P	A	L	O	I	P	F	P	D	R	N	E	R	V	G	E	G	M	
G	N	I	L	D	D	A	P	I	H	D	C	T	E	D	S	L	P	O	R	T	L	P	X	N	L	I	D
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D	U	D	M	P	L	B	R	O	G	W	S	A	L	F	N	W	U	V	S	E	I	W	Y	M	E	G	L
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F	B	P	B	D	A	L	A	P	I	G	A	W	O	A	A	L	P	S	T	E	E	C	L	K	R	N	H

Flags identifier

- Austria; 2. Fiji; 3. Ethiopia; 4. Germany; 5. Croatia; 6. Sweden; 7. Finland; 8. Hungary; 9. South Africa; 10. Iceland; 11. Netherlands; 12. Bangladesh

Red Herrings

- Cyclone; 2. Tornado; 3. Drizzle; 4. RED HERRING; 5. Monsoon; 6. Drought; 7. Thunder; 8. Wintery; 9. Snowing; 10. RED HERRING.

Quick-fire quiz

- Brothers and sisters; 2. The Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition; 3. That it causes tides; 4. The postcard; 5. Number of skips of a stone across the water.

Steps

Rods, rode, mode, made, make, lake, lame, lamb, limb.

Sudoku solution

5	7	8	1	3	4	9	2	6
1	6	4	2	8	9	7	5	3
2	3	9	5	6	7	1	4	8
4	2	6	7	5	1	8	3	9
9	5	1	8	4	3	6	7	2
3	8	7	9	2	6	5	1	4
6	9	5	4	7	2	3	8	1
7	1	2	3	9	8	4	6	5
8	4	3	6	1	5	2	9	7

Puzzles provided by Lovatts Crosswords & Puzzles (lovattspuzzles.com)



TREASURE

Gathering

Hanging out at the allotment

Wellbeing

Why we should pick up our pens

Wisdom

Emma Bridgewater

Ideas

Experiment with slapdash

Home Economics

Making good with a glut of tomatoes

Nature

Celebrating rare and British

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ON SALE 27 AUGUST 2025

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FOOD TO SHARE

Too good to keep to ourselves. Try it and pass it on



Herb-stuffed pork skewers with bay leaves

Hailing from Taormina, Sicily, and stuffed with earthy, herby flavours, these are a tasty barbecue alternative to sausages. »





Herb-stuffed pork skewers with bay leaves

Serves 4-6

**1 thick slice and 6 x 5cm squares
of country-style bread**
**100g pancetta, smoked
or unsmoked, diced**
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 egg
2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
**750g pork loin, cut into
12 thin slices**
36 bay leaves
100ml olive oil
**6 wooden skewers (soaked
in water before using)**

1 Soak the thick slice of bread
in warm water for 10 mins
and squeeze dry.

2 Add it to a bowl, along with
the pancetta, garlic, egg, parsley

and a little salt, then mix well.

3 Beat the pork slices until uniformly
thin. Spread each slice with the
pancetta mix and roll into cylinders,
before tying with kitchen string.

4 Preheat a grill or barbecue
and coat the grill rack with oil.

5 Meanwhile, thread each of
the skewers with 2 pork bundles
separated by the bread squares
and fresh bay leaves. Place
the skewers on a baking sheet,
drizzle with oil and season well.

6 Grill for 10-15 mins at a medium
heat, turning regularly so that all
sides are cooked. Serve at once. **S**

Taken from *The Herb Kitchen*
(Ryland Peters & Small).
Photography: Ryland Peters & Small





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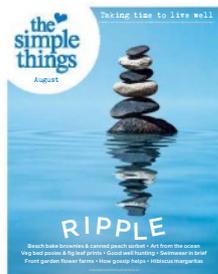
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WHERE WAS THAT?

Good things to eat & drink	Shop: Pascale	100	Beautiful veg	94	
Sunset swim picnic	6	Maker: natural soaps	104	Wishlist	98
Piña colada roulade	17	Front garden plots	106	Balconies in bloom	110
Kitchen therapy	30	Horse lorry glamping	114		
Celebratory ice creams	44			Proudly homemade	
Spanish daisy cocktail	59	Feeling better		Belfast sink pond	21
Herby pork skewers	127	Flying solo	14	Fig leaf prints	33
		Playlist	29	Blackberry jam	36
Good people & places		Poem	42	Mosaic side table	90
My day in cups of tea	18	Why gossip is good	64	Veg plot posy	109
My City: Milan	24	Bedtime story	130	Build a hammock	118
Ocean waste art	38			Pickled green toms	122
Magical living dwellers	43	The comfort of things			
My Living: campsites	49	Maxi dresses	53	... and more	
Good news	56	What I treasure	72	Could-do list	3
Modern Punch & Judy	60	Swimwear stories	74	August almanac	20
Wells & springs	68	Sea holly	79	Miscellany	117
		Home tour	80	Colour therapy	132

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REWILDING

A short story by **FLORENCE KNAPP**

The garden had always been his. She can still picture him bent over a border, his slow turn when she called him in for dinner. Then the creaking way he'd push up to standing, as though each of his fifty-seven years were wrapped around his legs like the rings of a tree.

There had been no signs of an affair. Not in his honest hands. His unhurried, lumbering, garden self. Her husband. She's unsure of the word that defines him now.

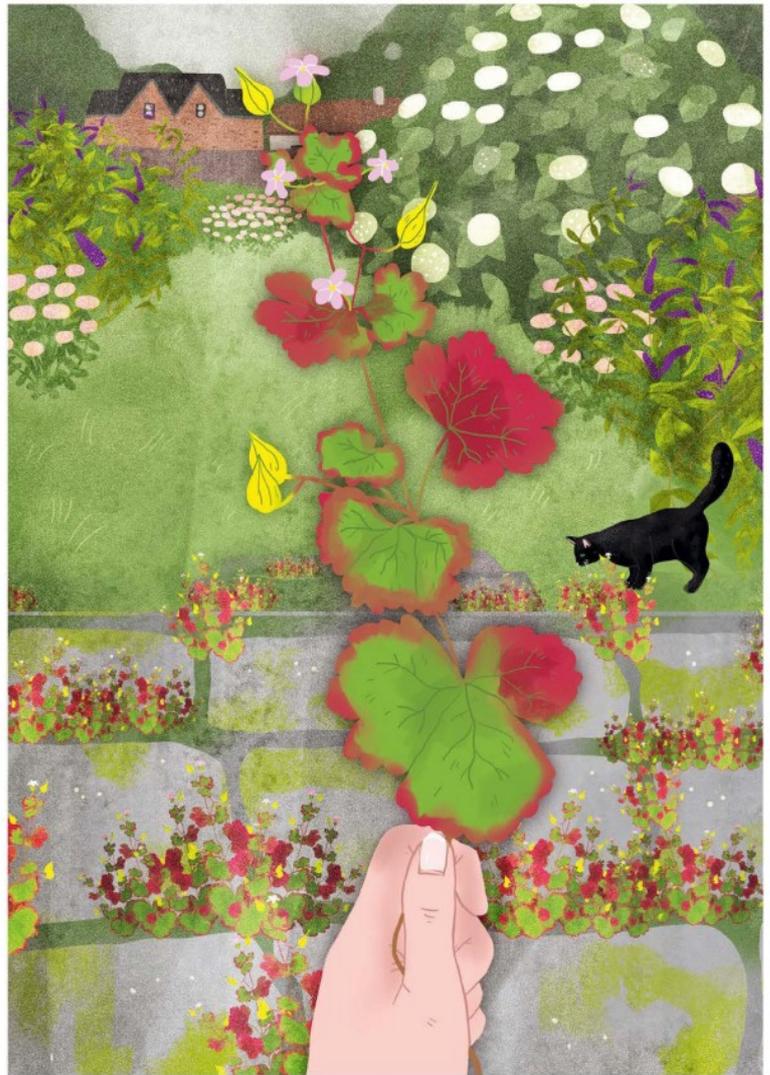
The jobs sneak up on her. The realisation she can't fit another bag in the unemptied wheelie-bin. At night, she lies in bed and feels the dark gulf of being alone. And, because she cannot let herself ache for him, she aches instead for the feeling of security. Of having someone beside her if there's a noise downstairs. If the water tank bursts.

At first, she doesn't notice the weeds dotting the driveway. Or the strange red plant that now creeps across the patio. A few weeks later though, it carpets the steps down to the lawn.

One Tuesday evening in late spring, he knocks on the door, a suitcase she doesn't recognise at his side. For a moment, she imagines he's coming back. But then he says, "I wondered if I could pick up a few more of my things?" Why didn't you call first? she thinks, wishing she was wearing something else. And furious he doesn't mention the overgrown shrub edging its way into the porch. Instead, he has angled himself to one side, as though it has nothing to do with him.

She tries to hold his gaze, but he won't look at her. And she senses the absence of him, as though his body is inhabited by someone else now. She wants to shake him. To say, I know you. I can forgive you. Let me in! But then the cat appears around the side of the house, mews as though being lifted from the vet basket, and darts past. "I don't think he recognises you," she says.

While he's upstairs, emptying the clothes she'd once bought for him from their drawers, she opens the French doors. She needs to look busy when he comes down. So she sits on the back step and begins to prise the weeds from the patio. They tear away easily, softly, without argument. She



opens her palm, letting the foliage spring to life again. Glistening red leaves, lime-green buds tapering to a needle point, tiny pink flowers. They are oddly beautiful. She hears him enter the room behind her and put down his case, feels him standing over her. "Oh yes, *Geranium lucidum*." He's always told her the names of things. "Used to be the bane of my life. You'll need to keep on top of it." She knows he doesn't mean it cruelly, but still, it steals the breath from her. She closes her eyes so he won't see her cry; seals her lips so he won't hear her heart hammering at the closed door of her throat.

He stands for a moment longer, and then she hears him step away, pick up his belongings, and walk down the hall, the front door closing softly behind him.

When she finally opens her eyes, she looks down and sees the jewels in her hands. She sets them on the ground, pats them back into place, encouraging them towards the narrow run of earth. Willing them to regrow. She rises, brushes down her skirt, as a sparrow hopping about in the hedge nearby ruffles its feathers, and takes flight.

Florence Knapp's debut *The Names* (Phoenix) is an emotionally intense novel of hurt and healing, which follows the fate of a family for 35 years, through three parallel versions depending on the name a mother gives her newborn son. Florence's Simple Thing is: "A barre workout first thing in the morning - I find focusing on moving a limb just an inch or two at a time is somehow the most calming thing."

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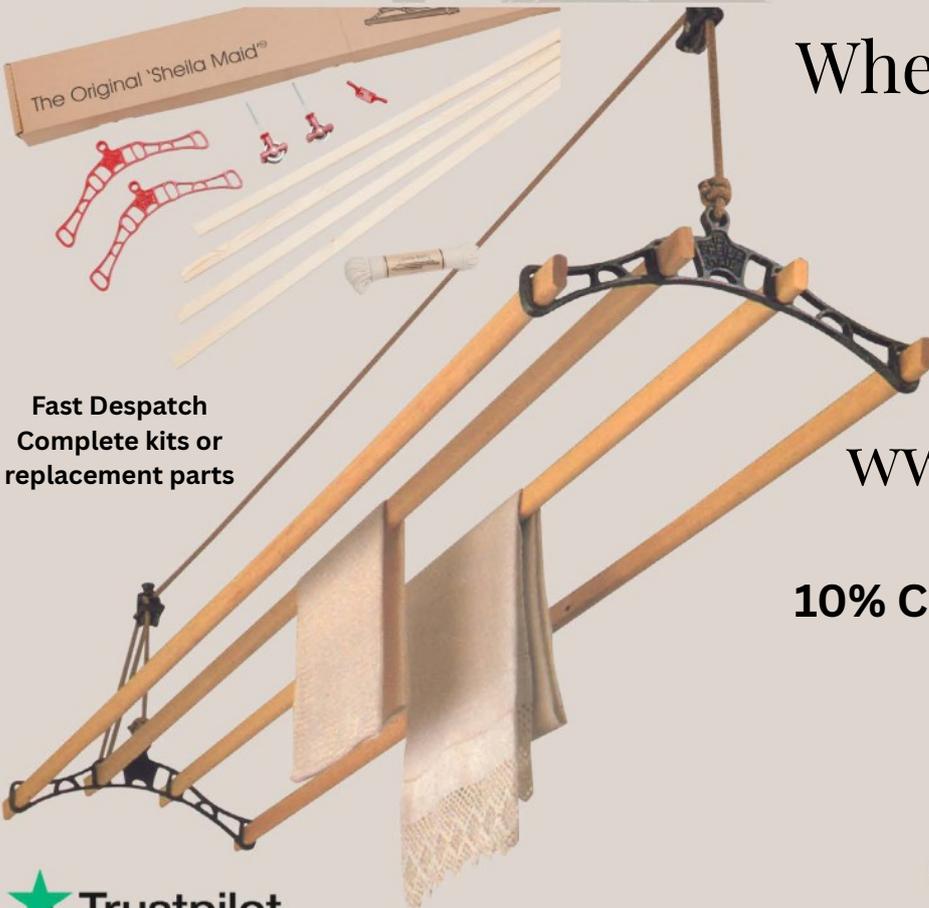
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