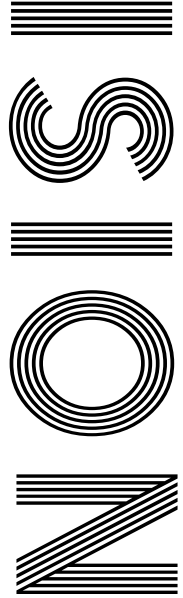


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At the time of print all content in **VISION** was relevant and up to date according to COVID-19 government guidelines

Editor's notes...



Brett Shohet, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION**EppingTheydon. I hope everyone has managed to navigate this second lockdown without too much trouble, as we now come through the other side of it.

The hope is now that families can be with their loved ones this festive season without too many restrictions - no one should be alone at this time of year.

I think life at the moment can be especially isolating for business owners, who are most likely trying to climb over the biggest hurdles they've ever faced. I must say, we local businesses are doing ourselves proud - I'm not saying we're all thriving, but we're surviving, and that's admirable.

As a fellow business owner, I always make myself available for a chat. Whether you're looking for someone to bounce ideas off or merely fancy a general conversation, it's always good to put your heads together and see what others are up to. Network is net-worth, after all.

Times are tough, but it's important to know that we're not alone. In my most difficult moments, I always take a step back and think: we're in a storm right now, and no sailor ever became good by sailing in calm seas. This experience will harden us and make us more creative.

Thank you so much to all our readers and loyal clients - as with every year, you've been fantastic. I hope everyone has a great Christmas.

Brett

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At 77 years young, Joe Biden's journey to the White House has been a long one, but the US Presidential Election winner won't delay in attempting to bring back together a fractured nation.

.....

After a tumultuous four years as the most powerful man in world politics, it perhaps shouldn't have come as too much of a surprise to find Donald Trump refusing to go quietly in the aftermath of a US Presidential Election defeat that left Democrat Joe Biden at the door of The White House... albeit without a set of keys.

Republican Trump's assertion of ballot box fraud in light of what, admittedly, even his fiercest critic would deem a farcical voting process, will mean the intricacies of the November 3 election will play out in the Supreme Court. And yet, where US politics is concerned, we shouldn't be surprised – four years ago all similar accusations of malpractice were shot across the bow by those same Democrats who are now up in arms over Trump's claims. His suggestion was that thousands of new voting papers were added to the mix, that some were in the name of people long deceased, and that many duplicated votes were received after a chaotic postal vote system that allowed individual states to decide their own rules.

When the dust settles, however, 77-year-old Biden will be inaugurated as the leader of the free world. A lifetime ambition, the Pennsylvania-born former lawyer has been at the forefront of politics for well over five decades, having become a senator in January 1973. Re-elected six times, he was vice president to Barack Obama for eight years, and considered running in 2016, but made way for Hillary Clinton.

He is a passionate advocate of raising the minimum wage and investing in green energy, notably in rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement that Trump controversially left. He promotes criminal justice reform and grants for minority communities, and will also look to expand Obamacare, enlarge the free college system, and challenge China's questionable environment and trade practices. And, most notably, he brings with him to the top table of world politics Kamala Harris, America's first female, first black and first South Asian vice president.

Here in Britain we will look on with interest to see if prime minister Boris Johnson can configure the same buoyancy, trust and commercial parallels he enjoyed with Trump. Our long-term alignment with the States on corporate, social and political levels has been essential for the economy, and now more than ever before the government will be seeking reassurance that this can continue under a new regime.

Despite a desperately narrow winning margin, Joe Biden will enter The White House having achieved the most votes ever for an incoming president – more than 77 million. And yet those celebrating the supposed new dawn of American politics should be wary. Putting aside the somewhat ambitious legal claims that will fill the scrolling new tickers over the coming weeks and months, it remains the case that, even in defeat, Trump's vote total was more than any other elected president in history, Obama included. The brand of confrontational, partisan politics that he popularised continues to resonate with America, and with the Senate still under the control of the Republicans, Biden knows he'll have to fight hard to steady the United States' uneasy global reputation.

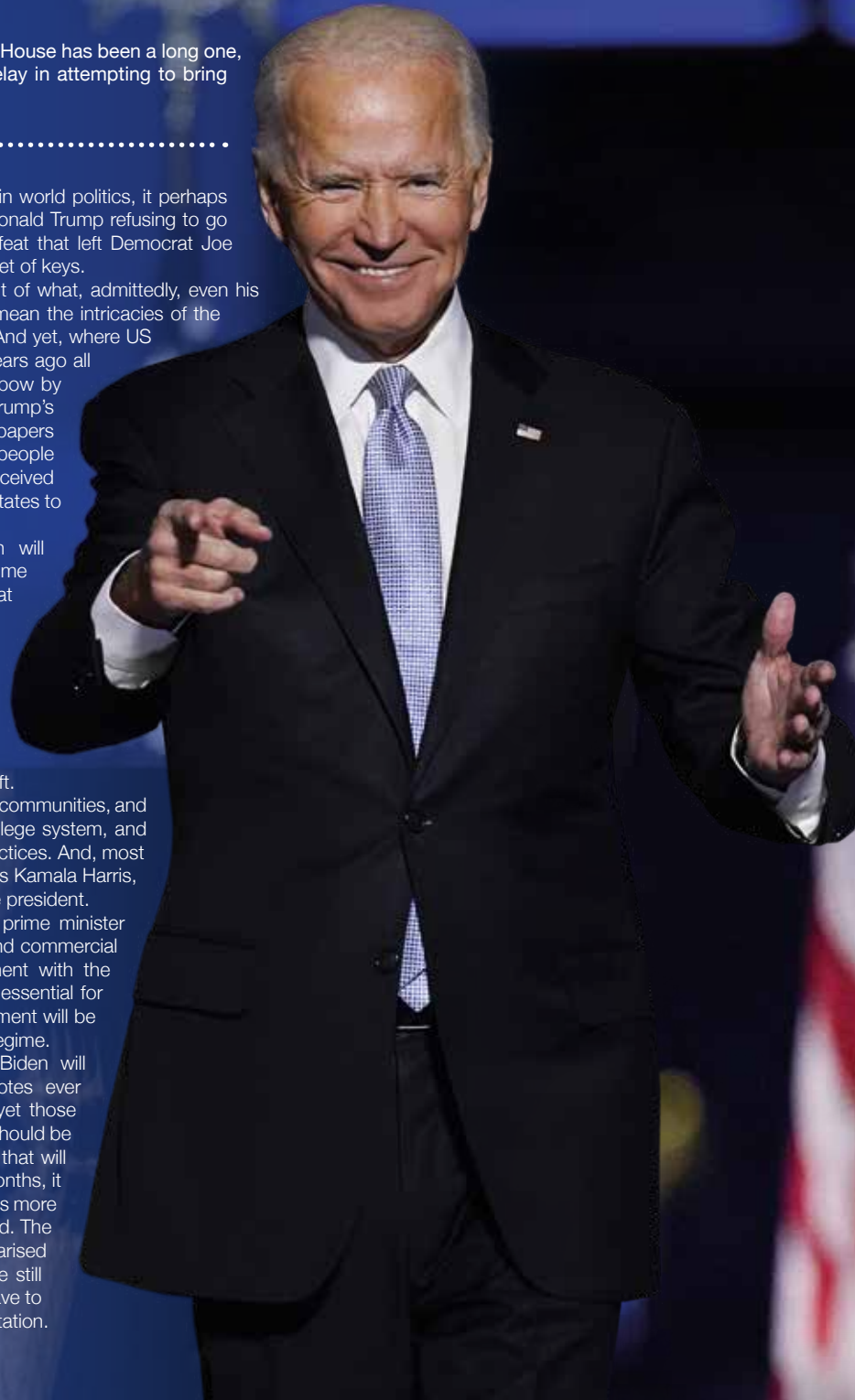


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# BIDEN: his time

# THE WORLD AROUND US

## Part 2

In the second of our environmental series that looks at the key drivers in the health and well-being of the planet, we're looking at the legacy of our rainforests.

At the end of the 1980s, the realisation that the world's rainforests were being removed at an alarming rate truly propelled a green revolution – one that continues to thrive today.

Where eco awareness and the preservation of our planet are now a part of everyday life, the way we embraced the saving of the Amazon rainforests had never before been seen.

The realisation that deforestation was claiming an area the size of 20 football pitches every minute – for the acquiring of timber and repurposing of land for cattle ranching – was profound, but the deafening screams of those early environmentalists are now just faint murmurs. So what has happened to those green expanses?

Sadly, the problem still exists. A quarter of the Amazon has disappeared, probably never to return, while some speculation suggests the remainder may be felled within 50 years if tighter restrictions are not forthcoming.

Globally, one in four people depends directly on forests for their livelihood, and as many as 120 prescription drugs worldwide are derived directly from rainforests.

And yet, there are two sides to every story. Many South Americans will point to the economic necessity of monetising a natural resource, just as the UK has done with oil and gas. Even the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro has called the destruction of these plant- and animal-rich expanses "cultural"; and in a country that has more than 20 million people living in poverty, it's not difficult to see why resistance is strong.

To conclude, it seems that while the days are gone where almost every other charitable programme was driven towards preserving these incredible habitats, it's simply a case of having our attention diverted to other ills. Three decades after we first reached out to our rainforests, the battle to save them lives on.

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# WAYS TO JAZZ UP YOUR Christmas beard



Whether you have designer stubble or a full-on Santa beard, there is no excuse not to get festive when it comes to your facial hair this Christmas. From baubles to bells, sweets to knits, check out these six fantastically festive beard decorations.

**1. Beard Baubles:** If you want a weird and wacky Christmas beard design, then look no further. Mini baubles hanging from your whiskers will ensure you start trending on social media sooner rather than later.

**2. Beard Glitter:** A simple yet highly effective idea, a glitter beard will ensure you are the centre of attention for all the right reasons. Simply apply some glitter glue to your beard and then sprinkle with your chosen glitter. Why not use multiple colours for even more oomph?

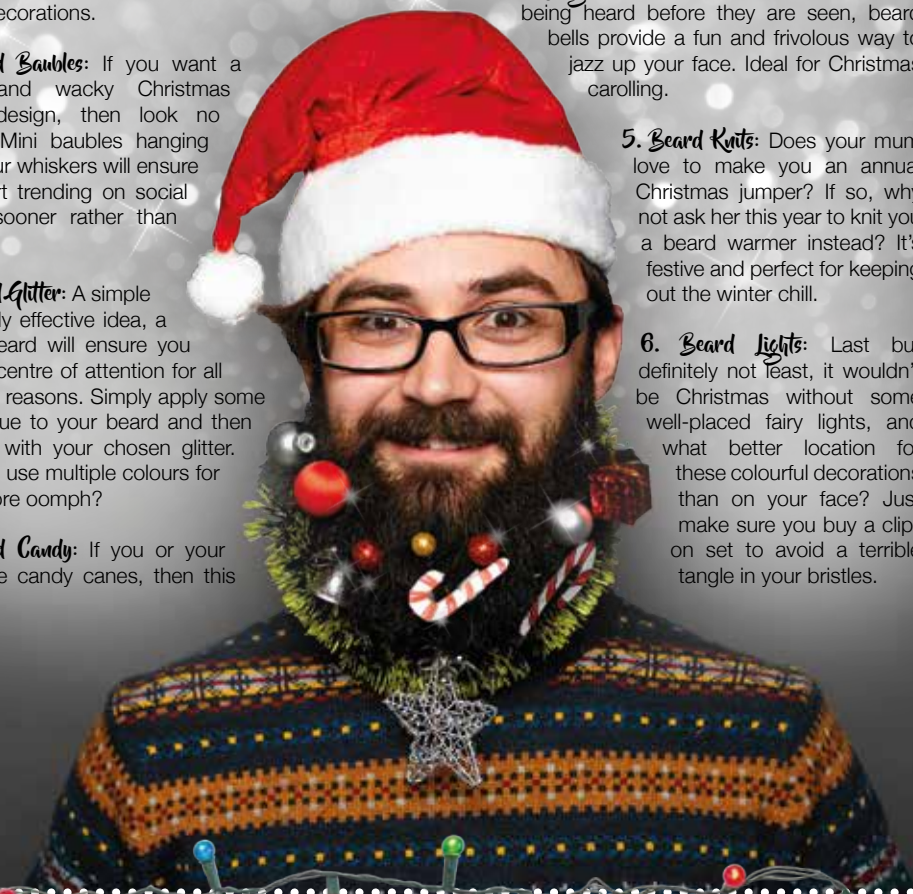
**3. Beard Candy:** If you or your kids love candy canes, then this

is the festive beard design for you. Best for bushy beards, all you need to do is adorn your beard with canes and you are good to do.

**4. Beard Jingle Bells:** For those who don't mind being heard before they are seen, beard bells provide a fun and frivolous way to jazz up your face. Ideal for Christmas carolling.

**5. Beard Knits:** Does your mum love to make you an annual Christmas jumper? If so, why not ask her this year to knit you a beard warmer instead? It's festive and perfect for keeping out the winter chill.

**6. Beard Lights:** Last but definitely not least, it wouldn't be Christmas without some well-placed fairy lights, and what better location for these colourful decorations than on your face? Just make sure you buy a clip-on set to avoid a terrible tangle in your bristles.



# DIY UGLY Christmas Jumper

National Ugly Christmas Jumper Day falls on the third Friday of December each year and offers participants the chance to showcase the worst possible festive jumper they can find. However, why not steer clear of the shops this year and make your own original ugly jumper?

## COFFEE SHOP UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER

If you love nothing more than a Starbucks first thing in the morning, why not showcase your devotion by sticking a coffee cup directly onto your jumper? Start by cutting your cup in half lengthways and gluing it to the lid. Then glue two pieces of felt to the inside of the cup, glue Velcro tape to the felt and to your jumper and attach.

## COUPLES' UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPERS

What could be more cringe than you and your significant other wearing matching garish glittery Christmas jumpers? Using hot glue, stick on sequins that say "Mr" and "Mrs" and then add as much tinsel, glitter and baubles as you can stomach.

## LIGHT-UP UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER

Whatever design or slogan you choose for your DIY ugly Christmas sweater, the addition of Christmas coloured fairy lights will only ever make it more tacky. Simply turn your jumper inside out, decide where your battery holder should go and then sew in your LED lights.

## SNOW GLOBE UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER

One of the more inventive options. All you need is a plastic bowl, a selection of cheap Christmas decorations and a glue gun to create your very own 3D snow globe on the front of your jumper.

## CUTE KIDS UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER

If your children are taking part in national ugly Christmas jumper day, then this DIY Christmas tree jumper is just the ticket. Plus, they can help you make it. All you need is some felt, mini shatterproof baubles, festive beads and hot glue.

Photo credit: ilovetocreate.com, creativefashionblog.com, thesamanthashow.com, brit.co, countryliving.com



# Christmas plants that care and cure

There are several plants that are synonymous with Christmas, from the decorative poinsettia, to the "kiss me quick" mistletoe, to the evergreen holly and ivy. However, did you know that each of these plants has its own healing properties?

**Holly:** Often used to decorate your table for Christmas dinner, in terms of medicinal use, you should only use the leaves of the holly as the berries are poisonous. Holly leaves have been known to treat digestive issues, rheumatism, fever, bronchitis and high blood pressure.

**HOW TO TAKE:** Dry out your holly leaves, crush and add a few teaspoons to a cup of hot water.

**Mistletoe:** Either a blessing, or a curse depending on who you are standing in close proximity to, mistletoe has been used for centuries to treat medical conditions such as epilepsy, hypertension, headaches and the symptoms of menopause.

**HOW TO TAKE:** Only use the leaves and stems as the grains are poisonous. Steep in cold water for 12 hours, strain and drink up to three times a day.

**Poinsettia:** The perfect plant to decorate your home over Christmas, the poinsettia is known for its ability to clean air, and in particular, to remove formaldehyde from insulation, plastic bags and other household items.

**HOW TO TAKE:** Simply place a poinsettia in your home and let it work its magic.

**Ivy:** The leaves of ivy are both anti-inflammatory and anti-rheumatic, plus they contain antioxidant properties. Ivy is also said to help settle your stomach, boost your immune system and increase oxygenation of the body.

**HOW TO TAKE:** The leaves of ivy can either be consumed or applied topically. To make ivy tea, simply soak 4 fresh ivy leaves or 2 tsp of crushed dried ivy in 1 litre of cold water, bring to the boil and then filter immediately.





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# HANGOVER CURES

*from around the world*

When it comes to hangovers, prevention is always preferable to cure, but that is easier said than done, especially with the festive season already upon us. Fortunately, the world is awash with hangover cures – some more palatable than others.

### PICKLE JUICE FROM POLAND

Long before sports energy drinks hit the market, athletes used to drink pickle juice to replenish the electrolytes in their bodies after a workout. This effective, yet slightly disgusting, remedy works in the same way for hangovers.

**Hangover cure rating: 4/5**



### SPARROW DROPPINGS IN BRANDY FROM HUNGARY

A variation on the traditional "hair of the dog" remedy, Hungarians decided somewhere along the line that this hangover cure would work even better with the addition of bird poo. Yuck.

**Hangover cure rating: 1/5**



### VODKA SOCKS CREATED BY ESTONIA

An incredibly bizarre tradition that is highly popular in this northern European country. After too many alcoholic beverages in Estonia, the hungover reach for a pair of vodka-soaked socks. The socks in question should also be soaked in hot water, with

the idea that the wearer will sweat out the booze from the night before.

**Hangover cure rating: 2/5**



### AMERICAN IV DRIPS

This increasingly popular hangover cure originated in Las Vegas, aka Sin City. The premise is simple: clients are hooked up and left to relax and recover as they are tube-fed a selection of hangover-busting vitamins, minerals and nausea medicine.

**Hangover cure rating: 5/5**



### OTHER BIZARRE HANGOVER CURES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE INCLUDE:

- > Raw eels and almonds from medieval England
- > Sheep's brain from South Africa
- > Pork spine, ox blood and cabbage leaf soup from South Korea
- > Green ant tea from Australia
- > Kvass – a fizzy drink made from rye bread from Russia
- > Menudo – a spicy tripe soup from Mexico



## FOUR COMMON

# WINTER AILMENTS

## AND HOW TO TREAT THEM

As well as the common cold and seasonal flu, not to mention COVID-19, there are several ailments that many people suffer with during the cold winter months.

Let's take a closer look at them and their most effective treatments.

### 1. PAINFUL JOINTS

If you suffer with arthritis, you may find that your joints become even more painful and achy in the colder months. Although there is no way to avoid the effects of the cold completely, ensuring you partake in regular exercise, manage your weight and continue to take any prescribed medication can lessen any pain or discomfort you are experiencing.



### 2. COLD SORES

If you are prone to cold sores, you may find that you are particularly susceptible in the winter when your immune system is compromised. Try to ensure you get as much rest as possible, keep your lips moisturised and use a topical treatment when needed.



### 3. ASTHMA

The dry and cold air in winter can make the symptoms of asthma worse by irritating your airways and causing your muscles to spasm, resulting in loss of breath. You can counteract this by limiting your time outside, wearing a scarf when you do go out and always having an asthma action plan in place.



### 4. SINUS INFECTIONS

If you have a weakened immune system, are a smoker or suffer with seasonal allergies, you are more likely to suffer with sinus infections. Symptoms include a runny nose, headaches, pain or pressure in your face and a sore throat. Try placing a warm compress on your face, using a decongestant and breathing in steam from a hot shower.



### TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING HEALTHY THIS WINTER

- > Eat more fruit and veg
- > Embrace natural daylight
- > Wash your hands regularly
- > Stay hydrated



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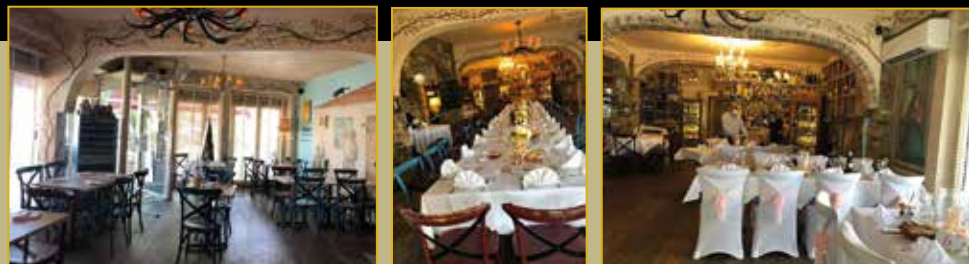
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FOOD & DRINK

# Cooking UP A Treat



FOOD FINESSE WITH POPULAR CHEF JAMES MARTIN

When James Martin bade an extremely tearful farewell to his *Saturday Kitchen* colleagues in March 2016, it was imagined the chef would be turning his hand to new projects after 10 years fronting the popular BBC weekend cookery show.

Of course, as these things often materialise, the popular Yorkshireman reappeared less than six months later fronting a copycat culinary conflag over on ITV.

Regardless, the 48-year-old's switch to commercial TV has also spawned a run of cookery series, reaffirming his place as one of the most popular chefs on television.

Of course, life on the small screen is already a secondary career for Martin, who excelled with wooden spoon in hand from a young age. Indeed, he was almost asked to leave a cookery class at the age of 12 for serving flambéed chicken and mangetout while his prepubescent classmates struggled to create fairy cakes. He went on to study catering at Scarborough College, coming

top of his class for three consecutive years, and was then offered a job working in London with Antony Worrall Thompson, one of the judges for his final exam.

His accomplishments, however, weren't served up to him on a plate – as a Yorkshireman, Martin was taught from birth that “you don't get owt for nowt”. The hard graft paid off, it seems, as he was made head chef of the first Hotel du Vin in Winchester when he was just 22.

Two years later, he began to appear on our screens in shows such as *James Martin: Yorkshire's Finest* and *Ready, Steady, Cook* – his affable nature and dry, self-deprecating humour making him an instant hit with viewers.

From weekend shows to cooking adventures at home and overseas, the chef's fascination with food is unrelenting, as evidenced in his recent return to our screens for *Saturday Morning with James Martin*.

“It's been a great ride so far,” he says, “and the stove is still warm.”



Photo credit: Ken McKay/ITV/Shutterstock

# Let's get Saucy

Even if you pride yourself on making your own roast potatoes and stuffing your own turkey, not many people take the time to make their own sauces for their Christmas dinner.

So, let's change that. Check out these three popular Christmas sauce recipes that are both simple and delicious.

## Easy Peasy Bread Sauce

YOU WILL NEED: 600ml milk | 50g butter | 1 onion | 6 cloves | 6 peppercorns | 2 garlic cloves | 1 bay leaf | 3 sprigs of thyme | 100g white breadcrumbs | 4 tbsp single cream | Pinch of nutmeg (optional)

HOW TO MAKE: Simmer the milk, butter, onion, cloves, peppercorns, garlic and herbs in a pan for 15–20 minutes | Strain and return liquid to heat | Add breadcrumbs and simmer for a further 4 minutes | Stir in cream | Season with nutmeg if desired, and serve

## Super Simple Cranberry Sauce

YOU WILL NEED: 200g white sugar | 4 cups of fresh or frozen cranberries | 250ml water | Zest of an orange | Optional spices – cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice

HOW TO MAKE: Rinse cranberries | Boil water and dissolve sugar | Add cranberries and simmer on a low heat until most of the berries have burst | Grate in some orange zest and add a small pinch of your preferred spice | Leave to cool

NB: Cranberry sauce will continue to thicken as it cools.

## Perfect Turkey Gravy

YOU WILL NEED: 2 chopped onions | 1 large chopped carrot | 1.3 litres stock – preferably turkey, but chicken will do | 3 tbsp plain flour | 5 tbsp white wine | Turkey neck (optional)

HOW TO MAKE: Add the onion, carrot and turkey neck to a pan | Pour in stock and simmer for one hour | Strain to remove the vegetables and meat, then return liquid to pan | Combine flour with white wine and then add to stock | Heat gently until thickened | Season to taste | Leave to cool and chill



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# THE ULTIMATE Champagne GUIDE

**W**ith Christmas fast approaching, what better time of year to find out everything you need to know about champagne? From how to store it, to how long it lasts, to how to pick the best bottle for your celebration.

## How to store

If you can manage to keep champagne in your home long enough to actually have to store it, you need to make sure you are doing it correctly. One hard and fast rule is that you should store champagne horizontally to keep the cork moist, as a dry cork can lead to shrinkage. You should also store bottles in a cool, dark and humid place.

## How long can you store a bottle for?

If you have an unopened non-vintage bottle of champagne, it can typically last for between three and four years. Vintage champagne, however, can last up to 10 years. You will notice that champagne changes as it ages, becoming a deeper golden colour and losing some of its fizz.

## Understanding the labels

If you have ever looked at the label on a champagne bottle, you will know that they are covered in confusing terms that can stump even the most avid wine lover, so let's take a closer look at what they all mean:

- > **Brut Nature** = Zero grams of residual sugar per litre
- > **Extra Brut** = Less than 6 grams
- > **Brut** = Less than 12 grams
- > **Extra Dry** = 12-17 grams
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## SAYING THANK YOU ON Boxing Day

THE ORIGINS OF BOXING DAY, DECEMBER 26, EXPLAINED

Our appreciation of Boxing Day in the modern era is, it's fair to say, somewhat different from how it would have been played out by our forefathers. Nowadays it's a date for hangovers, sporting events, ridiculously early opening hours at clothes retailers and furniture stores, and the continuation of a blizzard of relatives... some welcome, others less so.

The reason we call it Boxing Day remains somewhat shrouded in mystery. It has been celebrated for almost as long as records go back, and certainly the giving of Christmas 'boxes' has a large part to play in the provenance.

One popular theory dates back to the Middle Ages, when churchgoers would collect money for the poor in alms boxes. These were opened in honour of Saint Stephen, whose feast falls on December 26.

Other records reference Roman tributes to the day, though in the 19th century the tradition

of looking after those less fortunate over the festive period certainly came to the fore. The term appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1832, taken on by the Victorians who embraced the giving of gifts and the looking after of established tradespeople, employees and other service providers, as atonement for a driven and at times brutal regime focused on self-preservation and self-improvement.

What can be certain is that Boxing Day is very much a British tradition. It's unsurprising to see the event celebrated similarly in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, but elsewhere, the US included, it's largely regarded as a second day of Christmas rather than a named day in its own right.

This Christmas, perhaps when it's good for us to reflect on what has been a challenging year, perhaps the pure, selfless, charitable tradition of Boxing Day should return to the fore... but remember to go about your goodly deeds with a glass of something warming.

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# Banish the brrr!



HOME & DIY



If you spend all day every day in the winter months longing to return to the comfort and cosiness of your bed, then you may be interested to find out what the best bed sheets are for winter warmth.

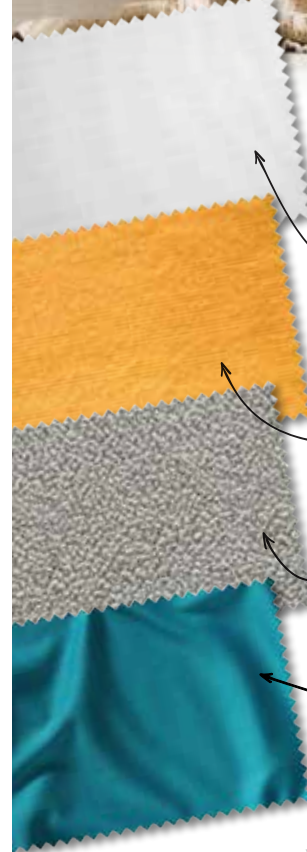
From fleece to flannel, cotton to silk, keep reading to discover what fabric you should choose for your winter safe haven.

**Cotton:** Although you may think that cotton is more fitting for the summer, if you are the type of sleeper who ends up kicking off your covers halfway through the night, then cotton might be the ideal material for you all year round. A natural fabric, cotton is known for its moisture-wicking abilities, meaning it is great for regulating your overall body temperature. If you have sensitive skin, opt for organic cotton sheets which are both breathable and good for the environment.

**Flannel:** Synonymous with warmth, flannel is one of the most popular choices for winter bedding. A cross between cotton and fleece, this fabric is soft, airy and breathable, making it the perfect choice for anyone who loves a bed that is warm but not overwhelmingly so.

**Fleece:** Arguably the warmest material you can choose for your bed sheets, fleece is a synthetic fabric that is ultra-soft and built for insulation. Often used in winter sports gear, fleece is designed to insulate heat in even the coldest conditions, meaning it is ideal for those below-freezing winter nights.

**Silk:** This may be the last fabric that you would think of when it comes to choosing winter bedding, but silk has the unique ability to retain heat while at same time remaining lightweight and smooth to touch. Opt for pure silk bedding if possible as this has moisturising properties; something that your parched winter skin so desperately needs.





# Chic OR UNIQUE

## THE RETURN OF SHABBY CHIC AND HOW TO PULL IT OFF

The revolving circle of décor and design has, over the years, gripped a nation of amateur interior designers. Shabby chic, a style that first came to prominence in the 1980s, is making a concerted return to prominence.

Its invention was as a rebellion to the hard, shiny, ultra-modern, clean-cut image of three decades ago, when yuppies and electronica ruled the roost. The term 'shabby chic' was thought up by fashion journalist Min Hogg.

And the concept hasn't strayed too far since – from distressed furniture to unmatching fabrics and colours, a rustic, rugged essence that's based on comfort and quantity, rather than image and minimalistic posturing.

To achieve the shabby chic look really is to open your imagination, either by pooling existing items or exploring flea markets, thrift stores and antique shops.

Many people think repainting and running a grooved spatula across an old set of drawers is the sum total of shabby chic, but it's about much more than that. Soft background colours flatter furniture and make items the focal point of a room, so think about using whites, beiges or even light greys.

Pastels – baby blues, pale pinks, grainy greys and warm yellows – work best, while that base of brightness means retro, darker shades of wood can match and contrast, be that on tables or chairs. Meanwhile, wicker and throws soften edges and enhance comfort, and wrought iron provides structure.

As far as the walls and surface tops go, flowers, mirrors and pictures using worn frames will assist you in topping off the perfect shabby chic room, with knick-knacks, signs and cushions adding to the mix.

Past that, the only limit is your imagination. And the best thing about shabby chic is that it needn't cost the earth – adding wear and tear to your own items is cheap, if not free.

Photo credit: Spike Powell and Lisa Cohen via idealhome.co.uk

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# DIY Glass art

Nobody likes to look at a big, bare wall, but there are only so many family pictures that one room can take, so why not have a go at this simple, yet stunning, DIY glass wall art? You only need a few basic craft materials and a little bit of creative flair and you are good to go.

## YOU WILL NEED

- > Multipurpose, water-based craft paints (small pots) in your preferred colours
- > Masking tape
- > Glue gun
- > 1 glass picture frame
- > Paint brush – soft acrylic or watercolour brushes work well

## HOW TO MAKE

- > Ensure the glass within the frame is secure; if not, use a glue gun to stick it in place
- > Allow the glue to fully dry before continuing
- > Mask the edges of the frame and use a clean, dry cloth to dust the glass

- > Decide upon your design – you could use your initial, a flower or a simple inspirational quote
- > If using a stencil, position your chosen design under the glass or go freehand
- > Paint your design in layers, allowing the paint to dry between each coat
- > Once your design is fully dry, remove the masking tape and display proudly on your chosen wall

## TOP TIPS FOR PAINTING ON GLASS

- > Always clean the surface before painting
- > Handle the glass carefully to avoid fingerprints
- > Choose the right brush – synthetic brushes can create visible brushstrokes, whereas natural hair brushes allow for more paint to be applied in one stroke and provide a smoother coverage
- > Do not apply too much pressure with your brush
- > Avoid overworking the paint
- > Always blot your brush after rinsing it to eliminate any excess water
- > Clean away imperfections while the paint is still wet, using a wet brush, toothpick or paper towel
- > When the paint has dried, use a razor blade to scrape or trim off any imperfections

## OTHER IDEAS FOR DIY GLASS ART:

- > Use markers to write out your favourite quotes
- > Press flowers (two pieces of glass required)

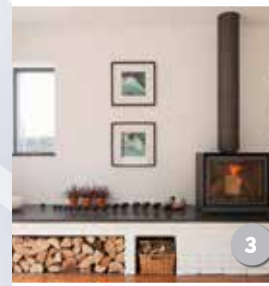
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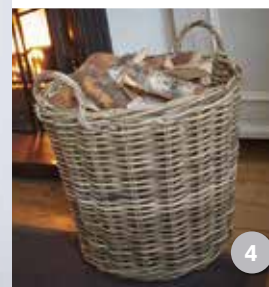
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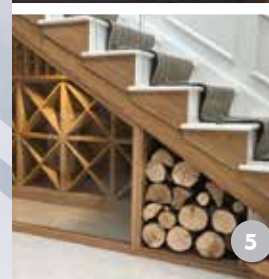
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# Stylish storage solutions FOR FIREWOOD



If you are lucky enough to have a wood-burning fire in your home, then you probably can't wait to start torching some timber and heating it up. However, where are you supposed to keep all your lovely logs?

**1. Fill any gaps:** If you have supporting pillars of wood, or you are using a partial dividing wall to separate two rooms, why not take advantage of any hollow spaces or gaps and fill them with logs? Not only does this look stylish, but it is also a great way of using up an otherwise wasted space.

**2. Pile high:** For those who want to make a statement with their logs, this big and bold solution is for you. Effectively building a feature wall of firewood, you can utilise any unused alcove in your home to create this eye-catching display. This is not advised if you have young children owing to the risk of injury.

**3. Create a cubbyhole:** If you have a wood-burning stove rather than an actual fireplace and you are looking to build a surface for it to sit on, you should remember to factor storage into your design. This multitasking brick stage includes both room for both logs and kindling.

**4. Go rustic:** One of the simplest ways to stylishly store your logs is to use a large, country-style basket. Make sure you pick one that is big enough to fit all your log-burning supplies and is both sturdy and strong. Alternatively, for a more contemporary look, opt for a metal design.

**5. Be sneaky:** If you have an outdoor storage area for your logs, you only need to display a handful in your home, so look for unused space in your property, such as under the stairs or eaves where you can create a bespoke storage space.

Photo credit: shellerness.com, idealhome.co.uk, vanellersheryn.com, aplaceforeverything.co.uk, houzz.com



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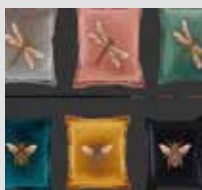
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HOME & DIY

# Time to breathe better



**T**o keep out the cold and to keep energy costs down, buildings have become increasingly airtight, with improved insulation and high-efficiency windows and doors. Although this is good for your bank balance, it is not so beneficial to your health.

Fortunately, there are ways in which you can improve the air quality in your home this winter.

#### KEEP YOUR HOME CLEAN

During the winter, when you are unlikely to have your windows open, dust, animal dander and mould can become a problem. Therefore, you need to stay on top of your cleaning regime. Vacuum at least twice a week, regularly wash your bedding and clear away any clutter.

#### CHANGE YOUR AIR FILTERS

If you have a forced-air heating system in your home, you need to ensure you are changing the filters on a regular basis. This is because electrostatic filters work to trap dust and other airborne irritants rather than

allowing them to circulate around your home.

#### INVEST IN AN AIR PURIFIER

If you struggle with allergies but can't control the source of the problem, for example you do not want to give up a family pet, an air purifier can help to catch some of the irritants that trigger your symptoms. A dehumidifier can also be a great idea if your home is prone to damp as it can help prevent the growth of mould.

#### HAVE YOUR CHIMNEY SWEPT

Wood-burning fires are lovely in winter but they need to be used responsibly. Avoid burning wet logs or coal as these can produce hazardous particles. You should also ensure that your chimney is cleaned at least once a year so that smoke can escape.

#### INSTALL A CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR

Carbon monoxide is odourless and can be deadly. However, even at non-fatal levels it can be dangerous for people with weakened lungs.

As film icons go, there are few to rival James Bond; and as Bond actors go, there are none to rival Sir Sean Connery.

In a year that has been unkind on so many levels, fans of film perhaps felt an added sense of injustice at the end of October when it was announced that Sir Sean Connery had passed away, at the age of 90.

Of course, in many respects, the actor's work was done. Connery was the smooth-talking, sumptuously styled Scot who legitimised, developed and truly delivered 007 into the golden era of film. The first man to step into the secret agent's shoes, with 1962's *Dr No*, Connery, a former bodybuilder who finished third in Mr Universe in the early 1950s, proved to author Ian Fleming that he had the fervour and finesse to carry off the role, having previously been dismissed as "an overgrown stuntman".

It seems perverse that someone who would go on to become so decorated in the indulgence and luxury of 1960s cinema may have been cast aside before it even began, but it's fair to note that the actor's previous engagements had been in rather less salubrious guises, notably in crime drama *Hell Drivers*, fantasy adventure *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* and outward-bound action flick *Tarzan's Greatest Adventure*.

That, within a decade, Connery would have elevated his worth from tracking the movements of a man swinging through the jungle to starring in iconic movies such as *From Russia with Love*, *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball* and *You Only Live Twice*, is remarkable.

What made Connery's sumptuously smooth portrayal of Bond so impressive was that, unlike the modern-day 007s, he interspersed international espionage with an array of other lead roles. Seventeen movies were made across the nine years he portrayed Bond, a sequence that ended in 1971 with *Diamonds are Forever* (although he did agree to reprise the character in 1983's *Never Say Never Again*).

"I got to the point where I felt I had nothing left to prove as far as Bond was concerned," said Connery. "It was a delightful run where the evolution of 007 and everything around him had gathered such pace with every new movie; yet in myself I thought I had probably evolved as much as I had wanted, and it was time to let someone else have a go."

Away from Bond, twice-married Connery flourished in the likes of *Murder on the Orient Express*, *A Bridge too Far*, *Highlander*, *The Untouchables*, *The Hunt for Red October* and as Indiana Jones' father in *The Last Crusade*.

There are the ones that got away too – he turned down the role of Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* despite being offered a \$30million bounty; he also rejected playing Architect in *The Matrix* trilogy. The truth is, Connery, who was knighted in the year 2000, was always focused on how he saw himself – as an actor, and as a person... how else can you explain turning down a direct invitation to join Manchester United by legendary manager Sir Matt Busby.

"I was 23 at the time and although I had the contract offer in front of me, I had long decided that football would take a backseat to acting. I felt I had more chance of doing something special, something unique, in the acting world; I felt I could give more and put smiles on more faces, my own included."

Sir Sean, you succeeded.

# The Ultimate Bond?



Photo credit: py brothers/Shutterstock.com



# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*



## Primary school teacher appears on TV quiz show

A former teacher at Epping Primary School was a contestant on ITV's *The Chase* quiz show on November 9.

Keen quizzier Teresa Moss, who has just retired after 37 years in teaching, described appearing on the programme as "really lovely".

She said: "I was chauffeured [to Elstree Studios] and then we got a few tips from the production team."

"They looked after us really well."

Miss Moss was first auditioned two years ago for the show, which was filmed in October 2019.

Hosted by Bradley Walsh, *The Chase* has a regular audience of between three and five million viewers and has been broadcast since 2009.

A team of four contestants plays against a professional quizzier known as 'The Chaser' who tries

to stop them winning a cash prize by attempting to 'catch' each contestant, thus eliminating that person from the game and preventing the money from being added to the fund.

Miss Moss and her team did not win, even though it was very close.

"We were one question away from victory, but unusually for a teacher, I wasn't assertive enough [to insist on my answer] so we won nothing," she said.

"But it didn't matter because it was a really fun experience."

Miss Moss said that she originally applied for *The Chase* because her sister Sharon is a big fan.

Many of her former pupils have been in touch after watching the show to say how much they enjoyed seeing her.



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Photo credit: St Clare Hospice



# Volunteers needed to become compassionate neighbours

Anyone who would like to support a socially isolated person or someone nearing the end of their life can sign up for online training in January.

The Compassionate Neighbours (CN) project, run by St Clare Hospice with funding from Epping Forest District Council, is offering online training sessions on Zoom from January 5 to January 21.

Volunteers are matched with people who are socially isolated, and the building of friendships through weekly visits or phone calls is encouraged.

One such volunteer, Delia, has been with CN for more than two years. She was matched with fellow

Epping resident Peggy, and during lockdown the pair chatted on the phone.

Delia said: "We never met, but from day one it was like we had known each other for years. I heard about her happy life, from childhood to adulthood."

Peggy sadly died recently, but found the friendship with Delia invaluable, according to Peggy's daughter Debbie.

Debbie explained: "My mum got so much out of talking to Delia and really enjoyed their time together."

For information and to view training details visit [stclarehospice.org.uk/compassionate-neighbours](http://stclarehospice.org.uk/compassionate-neighbours)



# YETTONS

TILES AND BATHROOMS

# New date announced for Christmas Market

Epping Town Council has decided to postpone the Epping Christmas Market until Friday, December 18.

The annual Epping Christmas Market was originally set to take place on Friday, December 4, but has now been rescheduled for two weeks later because of the second COVID-19 lockdown.

The Christmas Market will now be a daytime market only running on Epping High Street from 9am until 4pm. Father Christmas will also be in attendance.

As the COVID-19 situation continues, there will be changes to the look and format of the event from previous years.

The Christmas Market will only go ahead in line with the government's COVID-19 guidelines and with consent for the road closure from Epping Forest District Council.



Photo credit: David Jackman / Everything Local News

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# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*



## Meet the Human Jukebox

A singer from Theydon Bois who was due to start performing on a cruise ship in March has come up with a new way to keep people entertained.

Like so many other people this year, Scott Lucille had to put his plans on hold, so he decided to start his own podcast, the Human Jukebox.

Scott has lived in Thailand for the last eight years, and that's where he was when he got his new job.

He revealed: "It was at the time when the virus started to take hold so they told me to go back to England and Theydon Bois where there was no quarantine. I was supposed to start in March, and then lockdown meant I was stuck here."

Scott came up with the idea for the Human Jukebox while he was playing guitar to his cat one day.

He said: "Every other musician was streaming something on Facebook Live but I didn't want to

go down the same route. While I was in Thailand, someone called me the Jukebox because no request was too big or too small – I'd always try to do it.

Scott's already completed season one of the Human Jukebox, which he describes as an online gig.

He said: "It's an hour of me talking about the current situation and performing listeners' song requests. I also give some facts about the songs and try to keep everything light-hearted."

"I've had a great response – a guy who owns a bar in Thailand where I used to perform says he has it on every Friday."

Scott says he currently has about 250 listeners a week. If you have any questions or song requests for Scott, email thehumanjukeboxpodcast@gmail.com

The Human Jukebox is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Soundcloud.

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## Bomb disposal team deals with 'grenade'



Photo credit: Sue Axon

A bomb disposal team was called to deal with a suspected grenade on Remembrance Sunday.

Police were called to a property in Theydon Bois at 5.50pm on November 8 when a 'grenade' was found in a garage at a property on Hornbeam Road.

A spokesperson for Essex Police said: "We were called at around 5.50pm on 8 November with reports that what was described as a grenade had been found in Hornbeam Road, Theydon Bois.

"A bomb disposal unit attended, made the item safe, and removed it from the area."

## Burglar sent to prison



A man who carried out two burglaries in the Epping Forest area earlier this year has been convicted and sent to prison.

Kent resident Kayne Christian, 24, appeared at Chelmsford Crown Court on Wednesday, October 28, and was charged with two counts of burglary

at addresses in Theydon Bois and North Weald on January 16.

An Essex Police spokesman said: "A 24-year-old man from Kent has been sentenced to 15 months in prison after he was convicted of committing two burglaries in the Epping Forest district earlier this year.

"He was found guilty of both offences and was sentenced to 15 months in prison for each offence, to run concurrently."

## MP pays respects on Remembrance Day

Dame Eleanor Laing, MP for Epping Forest paid her respects on Remembrance Sunday when she laid a wreath at the war memorial in Theydon Bois.

She took part in a small wreath-laying service in the churchyard at St Mary's, which was attended by local councillors and local faith leaders, people attending on behalf of recognised organisations, members of the armed forces, veterans of the armed forces and/or their representatives or carers.


The church choir led the singing of a hymn and the National Anthem.

After the event in Theydon, Dame Eleanor MP shared her thoughts on the event on social media.




She tweeted: "A lovely service in the sunny fresh air at Theydon Bois. The choir sang beautifully."

Dame Eleanor MP also laid wreaths in Epping and Loughton.





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# DR NING ON

In the first instance, an obsession for hobbyists, nerds and those looking to reap havoc around airports for the lucky few jetting off on holidays. Yet how we perceive drones in 2020 is beginning to change, not least in their ability to save lives.

More and more now, search-and-rescue teams are using drones to survey huge areas quickly and efficiently. Predominantly this is because missions – at sea, on mountain ranges or even in remote wildernesses – are dangerous, time-consuming and particularly expensive. They can demand huge quantities of manpower and can be exhausting.

Drones provide an efficient, versatile, unmanned resource that can take on the workload of what could be hundreds of volunteers, and in a way that is much quicker too. Whether across trees, water or rocks, a drone has the range and the ability to get close to the ground in a way that a rescue helicopter would never be able to.

From specific events, such as the recent wildfires across Australia, to flood and avalanche disasters in China, to missing person searches in any location, it's estimated that it takes 25 people 35 hours to

search one square mile for missing persons, compared to the 30 minutes it takes a drone to cover the same area.

It's little wonder the producers of this tech are seeing the value of their companies rocket, with emergency services, the police included, ordering drones in huge quantities in order to make their work easier.

Some drones even have built-in delivery capabilities, enabling urgent blood supplies to be transported to hard-to-reach areas. This was particularly effective with the delivery of 7,000 units of blood – that's 25 per cent of the national blood supply – outside Rwanda's capital city Kigali in 2018, which saved more than a thousand lives.

From geek toys to go-to devices for emergency services, the popularity of drones will continue to ascend.



TECHNOLOGY



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# Holly

DECEMBER BIRTH FLOWER  
OF THE MONTH

If you were born in the same month as Christmas, your birth flower is the festive holly. A popular plant for the season of winter, holly is instantly recognisable by its prickly leaves and ruby red berries. Plus, it's easy to grow and is great for garden security.

## What is the symbolic significance of holly?

In ancient Celtic cultures, the Druids regarded holly as a symbol of fertility and believed it to have magical powers. Today, holly has been adopted as a symbol of Christmas by Christians, with the sharp leaves said to symbolise the crown of thorns worn by Christ and the berries representing his blood.

## What does this birth flower say about your personality?

Those born in December are said to be fiercely protective. Not a fan of criticism, you are naturally defensive and are not afraid to stand up for yourself when required. You also love to make a home feel warm and inviting, both your own and those of your friends and family.

## How to grow holly in your garden

The holly plant is fairly easy to grow and will thrive in both sun and partial shade, although it prefers moist but well-drained soil. You can choose to grow holly on your lawn, in a shrub border or even to make some hedges. Holly does not require much pruning, although if you want to cut some as a festive decoration, do so in early winter before its berries are eaten by birds.

## Interesting facts about holly

- It is evergreen
- It can be grown in pots and containers for up to five years
- The berries are mildly poisonous
- Legend says that holly protects from thunder, lightning and witchcraft
- Real holly plants bloom scented flowers in spring

HORTICULTURE HEROES:

# Diarmuid Gavin

Expert gardener Diarmuid Gavin made his name as the host of BBC teatime hits *Gardeners' World* and *Home Front in the Garden*, but he's been busy tending to different fields of late.

The Chelsea gold-medal-winning designer has tried his hand at ballroom in *Strictly Come Dancing*, proved a degree of culinary expertise on *Come Dine With Me* and made ripples on ITV's celebrity diving bonanza *Splash*.

The 56-year-old's flirtation with mainstream TV perhaps, for a while, threatened to take him away from a professional passion for horticulture that stretches back to the late 1980s.

Indeed, the Irishman has reinforced his commitment to returning to the innocence of the humble garden by refusing to exhibit for the past few years at the Chelsea Flower Show.

"I think with all these things there has to be a practicality to it – there has to be a take-out.

"If I am exhibiting an idea that is preposterously unachievable to the average gardener, then what is the point?"

Diarmuid's reconnection with his horticultural roots has restated the charismatic gardener with what truly thrills him, and his Instagram feed provides an almost daily delve into the passions of our plots.

"People always ask me for advice, and in terms of our own gardens, I'd just advise that people are careful when they plant," he says.

"Plants that are too tender will die very quickly, so spend longer planning and plant later – that's the golden rule... never rush things. Better to be exuberant once rather than spend the same amount by buying lower-priced items twice, because the first lot have died."

At his extroverted peak, Diarmuid produced a Willy Wonka-inspired giant garden that was deemed too big to enter the historic Chelsea Flower Show.

"I have calmed down since," he laughs. "It was way too big... nearly the size of a football field. I knew after that it was time to rein it in."



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PETS



## Festive treats

**A**lthough you may want your pet to be able to enjoy your festive food with you, the majority of Christmas fare is both toxic and dangerous for dogs and cats. However, that doesn't mean they can't tuck into a treat or two over the upcoming weeks.

### Canine Crimbo Cookies

**YOU WILL NEED:** 2 cups wholewheat flour | 1 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt | 1 tbsp baking powder | 1 cup all-natural peanut butter | Water

**HOW TO MAKE:** Preheat your oven to gas mark 5/190°C | Line a baking tray with parchment paper | Mix ingredients together in a bowl to create a dough | Add a little water if too dry | Roll out your dough and cut into your chosen shape | Bake for 15 minutes until brown | Leave to fully cool

### Festive Feline Titbits

**YOU WILL NEED:** 1 small chicken breast | 1 apple | 300g oat flour (you can make this by whizzing up oats in a blender) | 2 eggs | 1tbsp catnip

**HOW TO MAKE:** Preheat your oven to gas mark 6/200°C | Cook the chicken for 25 minutes until cooked through | Leave to cool and then shred into thin strips | Peel and cut the apple and slice into small pieces | Place the apple in a pan and add water until the apple is covered | Simmer for 20 minutes until the apple has softened | Add the chicken, apple, eggs, flour and catnip to a blender and whizz until combined | Roll out the dough to 1cm thick | Cut into your preferred Christmas shape or design | Place on a lined baking tray and bake for 15 minutes until golden | Leave to cool completely

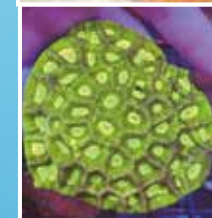
Festive foods you should not give to your dog or cat include: Chocolate | Mince pies | Christmas pudding | Onion gravy | Bones from carcasses | Anything too fatty or salty



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# Ageless Aims

KIDS

## ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL ENTERTAINMENT IDEAS FOR FAMILIES WITH KIDS OF VERY DIFFERENT AGES

Having children across a broad age spectrum can often be taxing when it comes to keeping them all amused and happy, but here are a few ideas that work right across the board, from tiny toddlers to troublesome teenagers.

### Cooking up a treat

Whether baking a cake, preparing a stew for dinner or simply working together to get a few sandwiches on plates, the kitchen has always been a staple for family life (and the odd party).

Cooking creates a true bond among children, not least because they can enjoy the fruits of their labour afterwards.

### Scooters, bikes and trikes

From balance bikes to mountain bikes and any sort of wheeled machinery in between, venturing out on a ride is a great way of connecting our kids with the outdoors. Follow an established route, explore a new area, set up a treasure hunt or simply go off-piste into wooded areas – getting outdoors is great fun.

### An English country garden

What better way to embrace the best playground of them all than by getting the kids involved in tending to the garden? From mowing the lawn to planting, clearing out the shed or even trimming back the bushes, the view from your window will be all the better for a family afternoon in the yard.

### Paint it black

Whether it's throwaway pieces of art on paper or a more serious dollop of paint on canvas to be hung on the wall, being creative makes a fantastic family bond. And because art is subjective, you can tell your competitive brood with absolute sincerity that those Pollock-like splashes of colour that come from your two-year-old are in no way inferior to the Picasso-esque portrait painted by your eldest, the art student.



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TRAVEL

# Walk This way



## SOME OF THE BEST PLACES TO VISIT FOR WALKING HOLIDAYS IN THE UK

In troubled times, there's nothing nicer than putting on a pair of sturdy walking boots and disappearing off into the yonder; and the UK has some of the most stunning scenery ready to be explored.

Here are five very different walking holidays that will help you blow away the cobwebs:

*For art...* Talk to the Welsh about Dylan Thomas and they may well point you around his home town of Laugharne, with spectacular views over the Taf Estuary. His *Poem in October* documents a walk he took on that very route, and now outdoors philosophers can do the same.

*For wildlife and nature...* The wilds of Cumbria offer spectacular views wherever you are, but head to Howgill Fells for a hike that brings you out at the highest waterfall in the UK. Peaceful, breathless and beautiful in every way, it's a wondrous place to relax.

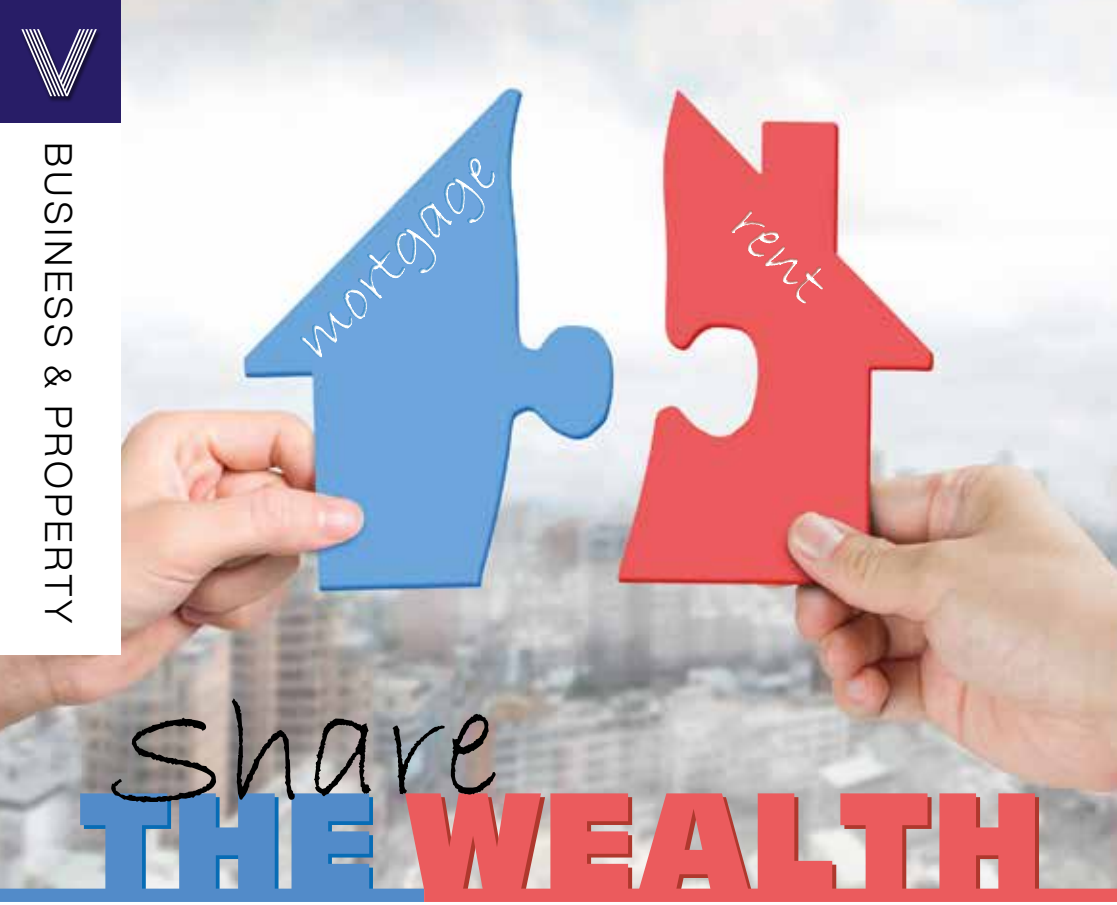
*For foodies...* Cornwall's love of everything homely

and rustic extends through to its walks, with the route along the South West Coast Path greeting intrepid walkers with all manner of villages and enclaves. From five-star restaurants to cosy pubs and comfy cafés, fantastic food is around every corner.

*For geology...* When the Earth was created and rock types were being dished out, Dorset was clearly hogging space at the front of the queue, with the 27-mile route along the Jurassic coast from Weymouth to Swanage providing all manner of stunning ecological features, not least the spectacular Durdle Door.

*For wild winter walks...* If you're brave enough to venture out to the Highlands, then you'll find a variety of walks, low climbs and vistas that are simply unparalleled. With a backdrop of lochs, remote islands, wild forests and icy peaks, there is little clean-air inspiration Scotland cannot provide.





*Why the Help to Buy: Shared Ownership continues to create homes out of houses*

For all its speculation, criticism and conjecture, the housing market represents one of the most stable industries in the UK. Only amid the perils of negative equity in the 1990s did the bricks and mortar of people's fortunes really begin to crumble; yet for large periods outside that time, investment in property has largely been deemed a safe one.

Of course, as a result of this, the market has become much more competitive, and the growing difficulty with which first-time buyers, in particular, are able to get on board means the government's introduction of Help to Buy schemes has gone a long way to guiding people along the footpath to realising those dreams.

The concept is simple – if you cannot afford the mortgage on what would be 100 per cent of a home, Help to Buy: Shared Ownership will allow you to buy a share of the property, which could be anywhere between 25 and 75 per cent of its value.

You would effectively pay rent on the remaining share. This means the initial deposit is smaller and mortgage finance more accessible. On the plus side, owners still enjoy a decent proportion of true investment and, along with that, benefit from rises in market price over time.

The criteria to get involved is sensible. Those applying need to earn less than £80,000/year (£90,000/year in London). Furthermore, you would need to be a first-time buyer, or have owned before while being unable to buy now; or perhaps are in an existing shared ownership arrangement and are looking to move.

Variations to the rules exist for the over-55s and disabled applicants, but for the most part the success of the scheme, which is being repackaged and relaunched for 2021, is evident in the millions of people who have stepped onto the property ladder since its launch four decades ago.



## Office Fox Think Outside the Box

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David Warrington,  
Client Services  
Director

The industry leading office solutions experts, based in St Andrews Street, Hertford, are using their innovative thinking and near-30 years of experience to help businesses navigate their way over some of the pandemic's most complex hurdles.

They're working with the top 20 lenders/banks in the UK to provide attractive finance rates, to terminate or settle existing contracts in place of agile work agreements due to customer volume decreases and will now offer options to decrease costs, as well as make pay as you go terms available.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of Office Fox is their ability to offer bespoke solutions to each individual client – they can review your contracts and see exactly what's going to suit you.

The vast majority of businesses are seeing a significant decrease in volume on telephony contracts, mailing, photocopiers and more. As a consequence, business owners are paying for equipment which is sitting dormant, with fixed contracts in place and seemingly no way out of paying them.



Luckily, Office Fox know exactly how to bring down your needless costs for the duration of lockdown – however long it lasts.

This is an asset which extends to all of Office Fox's services. They describe themselves as 'vender agnostic', meaning they aren't tied to any one manufacturer – this gives them the ability to scan the market openly for each client without being pigeonholed and find them the solutions which fit their individual needs.

So, if you're looking for a helping hand, whether you're an established business looking to cut costs or a start-up searching for the equipment you need to get going, you know where to go.

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In the UK, headlamps are configured to shine to the left, towards the edges of the road and away from the middle. This is to guide motorists away from curbs and ditches, while preventing oncoming drivers from being blinded by our lights.

That means in France, or any country that drives on the right, that same light is actually being shone directly into drivers' faces.

With various advancements in headlamp

technology over the years, new cars are often fitted with a switch control that automatically redirects the headlamps for driving abroad. However, many cars still don't have this function, therefore it pays to know what to do when driving abroad, for both your own safety and that of others.

If manual headlamp realignment cannot be done from the control panel of your car, the most common solution is to buy a set of headlamp unit lenses (or glasses). These deflectors are attached and block out a small amount of your beam, thus keeping light away from other drivers.

These days, it's not a request that headlamps are configured properly, it's the law. 'Do it yourself' beam deflectors – the sort your dad might have made out of black sticky tape in the 1970s – are no longer legal, and deflectors must be operational as soon as you head off the ferry, even in daylight hours.

It's not worth taking the risk when driving abroad... be safe at all times.

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# FIRST DIVISION – DECEMBER 26, 1963

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BURNLEY	6–1	MANCHESTER UNITED
FULHAM	10–1	IPSWICH TOWN
LEICESTER CITY	2–0	EVERTON
LIVERPOOL	6–1	STOKE CITY
NOTTINGHAM FOREST	3–3	SHEFFIELD UNITED
SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY	3–0	BOLTON WANDERERS
WEST BROM ALBION	4–4	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
WEST HAM UNITED	2–8	BLACKBURN ROVERS
WOLVES	3–3	ASTON VILLA

## 'tis the football SEASON TO BE JOLLY

BOXING DAY 1963 – WHEN FANTASY FOOTBALL BECAME REALITY

If there's one thing that's characterised the opening exchanges of the new Premier League season, then it's goals. It seems defence-minded football has been banished to the substitutes' bench and instead our teams are simply aiming to outscore each other.

Though even the likes of Harry Kane, Raheem Sterling, Mo Salah and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang will have to go some if they are to match the achievements of the rugged footballers of old who trotted out onto veritable mud baths of pitches on December 26, 1963.

They wouldn't have known it at the time, but these old-school soccer stars were about to take part in a day of festive football goal gluts, and an afternoon that's gone down in sporting folklore.

In total, 66 goals were scored across the 10 First Division matches. Six sides shared six goals as Chelsea triumphed 5–1 at Blackpool, while

Nottingham Forest and Sheffield United drew 3–3, as did Wolves and Aston Villa.

West Brom and Tottenham trumped that with a 4–4 draw at The Hawthorns, while both Liverpool and Burnley romped to 6–1 home wins, against Stoke City and Manchester United respectively.

Pity those poor fans at Filbert Street and Hillsborough who saw their Leicester City and Sheffield Wednesday sides win by relatively normal 2–0 and 3–0 scorelines (against champions Everton and Bolton Wanderers respectively).

But on a day on which it appears it wasn't just the supporters unable to shake off the large amount of Christmas Day merriment, Blackburn Rovers hit a magnificent eight away from home at West Ham United; and Fulham arguably snatched the ultimate plaudits from a festive flurry of worthy contenders with a magnificent 10 at home to poor Ipswich Town.

Jürgen, Pep, Frank, José... over to you.



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# OCTOPUSH

*Splash of the day*

WHY THE UNUSUAL SPORT OCTOPUSH IS MAKING WAVES

At first glance, the sport of Octopush looks a bit like ice hockey gone wrong, namely that the ice has melted and the playing arena resembles a swimming pool. That's actually because the playing area is a swimming pool, and rather than manoeuvring a puck across a surface of cool, slippery, frozen matter, competitors dive to the murky depths of a pool and attempt to score in their opponents' goal.

While it might be peculiar to label any sub-aqua sport as fast paced, in pushing, protecting and working the puck towards enemy territory, in this game of underwater hockey (to give it its formal title), the pursuit actually offers all the drive and drama of a competitive pursuit played on dry land.

There's also significantly more tactical intelligence at play than you might first imagine - it's all very well

shielding a puck from an opponent as you look for a competitor to pass to, but the need for air means that no one in possession can hang about for too long without having to return to the surface to refuel their lungs.

The other great thing about Octopush is a lack of potential injury. Of course, a mass of swirling, swarming bodies below the surface presents something of a hazard, but the cushioning effect of the water ultimately means any contact with opponents is minimal.

Octopush is rapidly growing in popularity, with more than 100 registered clubs across the UK. It combines agility, strength, stamina and teamwork, and our fascination with sport means we'll even take on characteristics of amphibians if we can savour that, sweet, slightly chlorine-laced taste of victory.

Photo credit: Mark Brakels via vbatnews.com

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# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

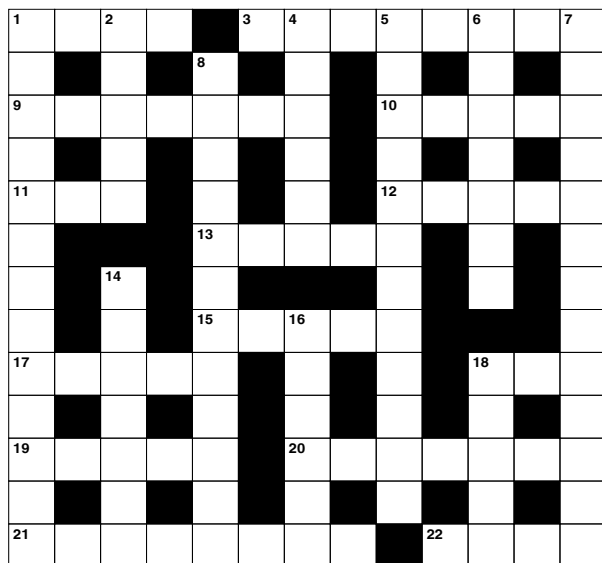
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

## ACROSS

1. Set of playing cards (4)
3. Neck injury (8)
9. Genuine (7)
10. Kick out (5)
11. 17th Greek letter (3)
12. The beginning of an era (5)
13. Enclosed (5)
15. Bird sound (5)
17. Turned to ice (5)
18. Statute (3)
19. Exposes secret information (5)
20. Country whose capital is Reykjavik (7)
21. Longing (8)
22. Refuse to admit (4)

## DOWN

1. Shamefully (13)
2. Showing a willingness to achieve results (3-2)
4. Doglike mammals (6)
5. Planned in advance (12)
6. Sanction (7)
7. Unenthusiastically (4-9)



8. Food shop (12)
14. Proportionately (3,4)
16. Banner or flag (6)
18. Lessen (5)

## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Hummingbirds are the only birds that are able to fly backwards
- ▶ The short-horned lizard squirts blood from blood vessels around its eyes when defending itself. This is because the blood vessels rupture under pressure
- ▶ A giant panda will typically eat for around 12 hours a day
- ▶ Elephant ears help to keep the animals cool by radiating heat
- ▶ Young jaguars are blind at birth. They learn to hunt by living with their mother for two years or more
- ▶ Wolves can go for more than a week without eating
- ▶ A fox can communicate with other foxes by using its tail
- ▶ The bald eagle has a wingspan of around eight feet

## SUDOKU

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



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