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the village
Breeze

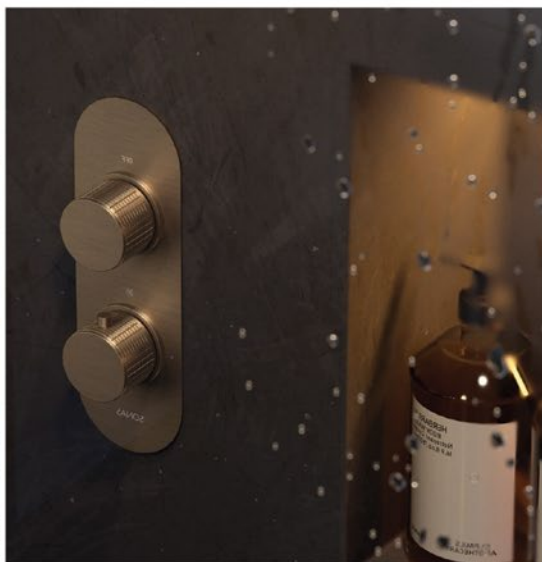


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Letter from the Editor

Hello again and welcome...

On VE Day in June, I heard a radio show reading letters sent from soldiers during the Second World War. Eighty years later, you could still 'hear' the voices and feel their emotion – it was very moving.

Personally, I can't remember the last time I received a letter - it must be at least fifteen years. I mean the sort of thing that is addressed personally to you, is in the sender's own handwriting and is in a white envelope with a stamp on it.

Most of our communication these days are in the form of short messages and calls; instantly disposable and with no depth to what was said. Useful, but not durable.

I think what we have lost with always-on contact is the chance to feel someone's absence and to take the time to tell them how much we love them. And they do not have the touch and smell of a letter, with the personal touch that handwriting brings.

What does that have to do with a community magazine? Not a lot – it wasn't particularly the point of my note this month. But I guess it is a reminder that the written word is both powerful and memorable. TV, radio and social media, particularly for entertainment, are here to stay. But you cannot beat words on paper, whether it's a book, a magazine, or a letter.

PS: I was inspired to write to someone after this musing. The recipient was absolutely delighted and thanked me...with a *WhatsApp* message!

And the thought I will leave you with this month:-

What did the letter say to the stamp?
"Stick with me and you'll go places."

Until next time...

Sheila

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The Village Breeze is a local community magazine and business directory distributed monthly to 8,000 homes and businesses in Appleby Magna, Donisthorpe, Linton, Measham, Moira, Oakthorpe and Overseal.

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The heat and your health

When the weather warms up, it's crucial to stay hydrated.

Did you know, the average person loses around half a litre of water a day in sweat, even in cool conditions? When the weather is hot or you do a lot of exercise, that can be much higher.



Water is essential to our health. It helps with countless functions, from our blood system delivering everything our cells need, to our kidneys and digestive system processing waste, to lubricating joints and eyes, and it gives your skin a healthy glow. In fact, up to 70% of our body is made up of water, and babies have a higher percentage than adults.

Babies, older people – who often don't feel thirsty – and people with certain conditions such as heart or respiratory issues, are more vulnerable to the effects of dehydration.

What happens when you're dehydrated?

Once your fluid levels drop, even just a little bit, the signs of dehydration show quite quickly. You feel tired, struggle to concentrate and may have a headache.

Over time, if you consistently fail to drink enough, you could have constipation and develop urinary tract infections. Your risk of kidney stones increases too.

When summer temperatures rise, there's a chance of serious acute consequences of dehydration. You could develop heat exhaustion, which could lead to heat stroke. This is a medical emergency where your temperature reaches dangerously high levels, but your body cannot cool itself down.

What are the symptoms of heat exhaustion?

- Tiredness
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Feeling or being sick
- Clammy skin or skin rash, excessive sweating
- Fast breathing or heartbeat
- Cramps in arms, legs or stomach
- High temperature
- Extreme thirst

If someone is showing several of these symptoms and you suspect it's heat exhaustion, it's important to cool them down by taking off unnecessary clothes, spraying or sponging them with cool water, and giving them a cold drink of water or a sports drink. If they're still unwell after half an hour, they might have heat stroke, and you should call 999.

How can you make sure you stay hydrated?

Experts recommend between 1.5 and 2 litres of fluid a day. Ideally, opt for water, but squashes, juices and other soft drinks, including tea and coffee, are good too. Avoid alcohol – it's a diuretic, making you pee more and thereby eliminating vital water from your body.

Drink a glass of water when you wake up, as you sweat during the night, and carry a bottle of water with you during the day.

Some vegetables are high in water, including melons, cucumbers, courgettes and tomatoes, making them an ideal addition to your summer diet.



You can tell if you're getting dehydrated by checking the colour of your urine. It should be almost clear. If it's very yellow or dark and strong-smelling, you need to drink more.

Finally, keeping a log is one of the best things you can do. Either keep a written note, or download a hydration app which can also remind you if your intake is looking low for the day.



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Do Look Up

Say goodbye to plain white ceilings and hello to bold colours, patterns and materials.



We're entering the era of the decorated ceiling. This hugely under-appreciated area of our homes has recently started to become more of a focal point – an area employed to introduce style, colour and character.

Past glories

Decorative ceilings have a long and impressive history, all the way back to the elaborate designs of the Ancient Greeks and coffered ceilings (made of a grid of recessed panels) of the Romans. The Baroque and Rococo periods saw extravagant, gilded stucco – in the Palace of Versailles, for example – intricate wood carving and marvellous frescoes. In Victorian times, UK homes often had tinted ceilings with plaster mouldings. Then in the 1960s came Artex, a coating which allowed non-plasterers to create stippled and swirled designs. It went out of favour in the 1980s with the recognition that older Artex contained asbestos.



So, what is possible today?

Make a statement with paint

The dramatic 'colour drenching' fashion means painting walls and ceiling the same shade. In a white or pale room, you could

cover the ceiling in a deeper colour to add unexpected interest. Alternatively, if you have a picture rail, you could paint the area above it the same colour as the ceiling. Using a dark colour lowers the ceiling and creates a cosy atmosphere, while light colours make the room seem more airy.

Murals, trompe l'oeil and paint effects

With a steady hand, lots of patience and some artistic flair, it's possible to paint anything you like on a ceiling, whether that be an abstract design, geometrics, bold stripes or florals. Hand-painted drifting clouds or a starry sky look beautiful in a bedroom or living space.

Paper perfection

Wallpapering a ceiling is tricky and will probably involve a professional. But the expense and effort should be worth it: a ceiling covered in a statement wallpaper is

a glorious thing. In an otherwise plain room, this could be the finishing touch, or it could be a continuation of the walls.

Material change

How about stepping away from plasterboard and installing a ceiling made from rustic timber, tongue-and-groove or wooden slats? Some wood panelling is also acoustic: helpful in an apartment or a busy home. If you're feeling daring, you could consider other materials, such as Victorian-style tin tiles, cork (another acoustic option), glossy ceramic tiles or even tented fabric for a quirky, circus-like feel.





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Garden retail is growing

There's money to be made selling to gardeners – where's best for your project?

According to the Horticultural Trades Association, the combined area of the UK's domestic gardens is equivalent to the whole of Somerset, with about 26 million Brits using their plot of land to grow trees, plants and flowers. It's no surprise, then, that plant nurseries, garden centres, DIY stores and other retailers are all scrambling to serve the needs of green-fingered consumers. In many cases, they're also turning their outlets into a shopping and leisure destination.

PLANT NURSERIES

A nursery is where plants are grown and then sold. They often attract expert and keen gardeners and customers can expect a wealth of knowledge and advice. Often privately or family-run, nurseries are sometimes specialist operations – for example, producing organic plants, trees and shrubs, more unusual perennials or specialising in particular plants e.g. roses.

These retailers pride themselves on quality and on the health of the plants they sell, and prices are often lower, because they sell direct to the public. Small local nurseries tend to be particularly good value. They might not offer an extensive retail or leisure experience, though some nurseries have cafes. But if it's expertise and unusual plants you want, visiting a plant nursery is a good decision.

GARDEN CENTRES

These are one-stop shops, often selling not just an array of plants, but also tools, pots, other gardening products and garden furniture. Some even sell clothes,

handicrafts and cuddly toys. Many have good cafes and restaurants that attract people who've never picked up a trowel in their lives, as well as enthusiastic gardeners. Garden centres offer a popular social experience, with the Horticultural Trades Association reporting that more than two-thirds of British adults visit one every year.

While they're convenient for your gardening needs and can be a pleasurable few hours out, you may not find very unusual plants, prices are sometimes higher and they can be very busy at weekend and holiday times.

DIY STORES

Home improvement stores also often offer a variety of goods for the gardener, from plants to patio slabs to lawnmowers. They're convenient but the plants are all shipped in rather than grown on-site. You can get some good bargains – particularly with multibuy of bedding plants. Staff are unlikely to be knowledgeable and plants might look tired. This can also apply to plants sold by homeware stores and supermarkets, so check them over before buying.

OTHER OUTLETS

You can often get good buys from farm shops, plant sales and market stalls. The advantage of these outlets is that you're buying local and so supporting local businesses and reducing the environmental impact of horticulture.

Finally you can – of course – buy online, which for pre-planted tubs, seeds or dry-root plants can be cost-effective. Nothing beats looking, touching and smelling plants in person though.

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Clairvoyant Claire



I had just completed my studies at Uni and looked forward to returning home for a welcome break by the seaside. But first, there was one thing I had to do.

At the end of the promenade, I saw a small pop-up tent with a painted sign swinging in the light breeze: CLAIRVOYANT CLAIRE – ALL WELCOME!

'You're late, dearie!' called out a croaky voice from within. I fought my way through the beaded curtain hanging over the entrance, and hesitantly stepped inside. *'Sit down, young man! Don't be shy, dearie!'*

As my eyes became accustomed to the dim lighting, I saw a circular table draped in green velvet, with a crystal ball that glowed purple. Spluttering candles cast dancing shadows on the walls of the tent. And then I saw her – an old woman sitting on the far side of the table, dressed head-to-toe in black, her wrinkled face barely recognisable under the black veil.

'Wow! You certainly look the part!' I enthused. *'How did you even know I was coming today?'*

'Clairvoyant Claire knows everything, dearie,' she replied, winking at me. I sat down at the table. No one would have guessed by her Russian accent that she was born in Birmingham. Her guttural voice was straight out of a Carry On film!

The mystic placed her gnarled hands gently on the crystal ball.

'Let me tell you your fortune.'

Okay, I thought. Why not? I'm up for a laugh!

She gazed into the crystal sphere, and her eyes seemed to glaze over.

'I see you've been badly let down recently, dearie.'

It was true – my long-term girlfriend and I had split up only last week. How could she possibly have known that? I'd told no one, except...

The clairvoyant continued: *'I see you did well in your Psychology exams – a 2:1 is excellent! Now, give me your hands.'*

She examined my upturned palms closely, running a knobbly finger along my life lines. She was good – I'll give her that!

'You're going to live a long and happy life,' she predicted. Well, that was reassuring. *'But someone close to you has been very ill recently,'* she added, peering into my face.

I wiped a tear from the corner of my eye at the memory. For a couple of months, my Mum had been very poorly. It'd been touch-and-go for a while, but happily, she was now on the mend – thanks to the NHS.

The old woman returned to her crystal ball. *'You'll soon be going on a long journey to the other side of the world where you'll meet, and fall in love with, a beautiful young girl.'*

I wasn't sure about the "love" bit – but now I've finished Uni, I planned to spend a gap year in Australia.

Finally, I said: *'So... how have you been?'*

The psychic lifted her veil. Her voice changed; the Russian accent gone.

'Not so bad, my love,' she replied, cheerfully. *'Can't complain! Beats working in a charity shop – too much like hard work for a woman of my age.'*

'Well, you were very convincing, I must say!'

'Thank you. Nice to see you, Oscar.' She laughed. *'I enjoyed our little bit of role play.'*

I stood up and kissed her warmly on the cheek. *'I'll come and see you again before I leave on my travels. Take good care of yourself, do you hear? I'll give Mum your love, shall I?'*

I said goodbye, wrestled with the beaded curtain on my way out, and headed off home. Can't wait to tell Mum how well Grandma Claire is settling down in her new job as a clairvoyant.

Yes, the future's looking bright for dear old Granny – that's my prediction!



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Finding food with foraging

If you are new to foraging or haven't tried it before, you might assume that there isn't much beyond a few apple trees and blackberries to be found in the UK. Or perhaps you think that knowing where to find edible and useful plants in the wild is a well-kept secret, only known to experts.



But the truth is that foraging is thriving in the United Kingdom. With a rich and varied landscape, the UK offers an abundance of wild foods throughout the year, from leafy greens and edible flowers in spring and summer to nuts, roots, and fungi in autumn and winter.

IS IT LEGAL?

Under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*, individuals can forage for wild plants, fruits, nuts, and fungi for personal use, as long as they do not uproot plants unless they have landowner permission. Public spaces, footpaths, and common land often provide excellent foraging opportunities. However, certain areas may have restrictions to protect wildlife, so do check.

Foraging is more than just finding food—it's about reconnecting with nature, understanding the changing seasons, and appreciating the hidden abundance around us. It is a long-held tradition, deeply rooted in ceremonies, nourishment, and medicinal practices. From using birch polypore to create natural plasters to brewing hazel catkin tea for colds, foraging has provided both practical and healing benefits for generations in this country.

HOW TO START

Getting started with foraging is as simple as stepping outside and observing the plants around you. With the rise of online communities, courses, and mobile apps, identifying edible and useful plants has never been easier. However, one of the biggest challenges is finding known foraging locations, as this information is often closely guarded.

As with everything these days, there's an app for that! **Foragers Log** is a new mobile app developed in Yorkshire. **Foragers Log** helps users discover, log, and track plants in their local area, providing a shared knowledge base of plant locations, common hazards, and key identification details to make foraging more accessible for everyone.

TAKING CARE

It's crucial to be cautious when foraging, as some wild plants and fungi can be toxic or harmful if misidentified. If you are unsure about your finding, always seek confirmation from experienced foragers, online communities, or

identification apps before consuming it. Even then, if you still have doubts, it's best to err on the side of caution—when it comes to wild food, if you're not 100% certain, don't take the risk.

Start with some easy foraging this year—gather wild garlic from shaded woodlands to make flavoured butter or scones, pick blackberries from hedgerows in summer for a classic British jam, and explore woodlands and fields in winter for common edible mushrooms. And don't forget to contribute to the foraging community by adding your findings to existing forage logs and creating your own, helping others discover nature's seasonal bounty.

Foragers Log can be downloaded from *Google Play* or *Apple's App Store*.



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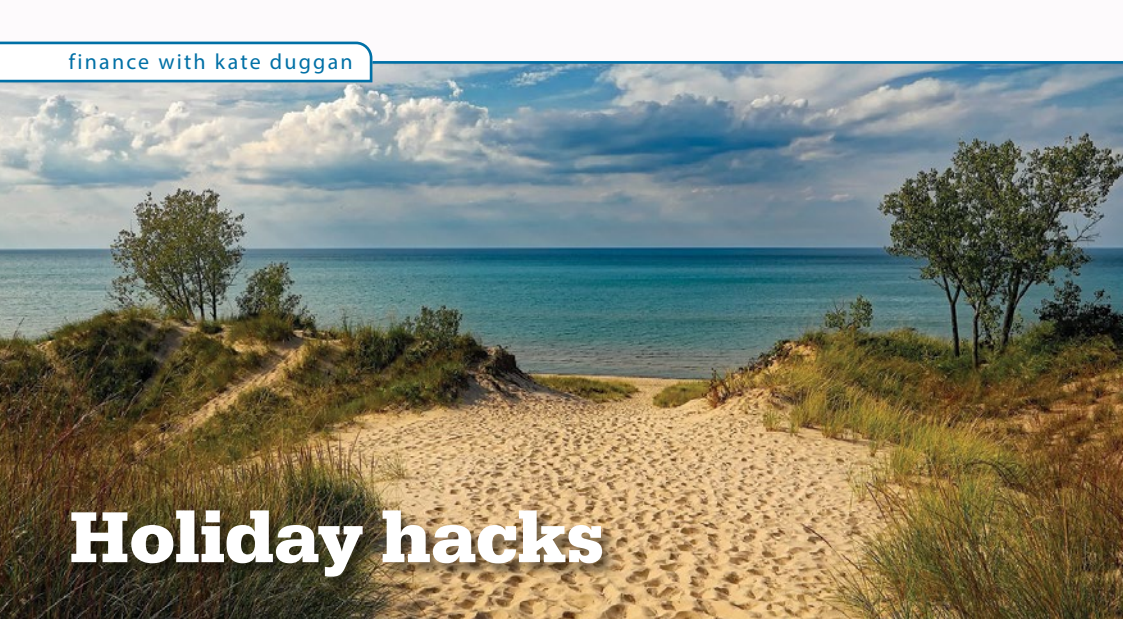
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Top tips for making your money go further on your summer break.

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If you buy currency at the airport without pre-ordering, you could seriously lose out. Instead, plan ahead and compare exchange rates in seconds on moneysavingexpert.com. At the time of writing, TravelFX is offering €1,150 for £1,000, which is €20 more than some other providers.

Loyalty schemes like Tesco Clubcard and Nectar offer exclusive exchange rates for members but still can't compete with the best buys.

Sidestep high bank fees

Most banks charge a fee to use your debit card abroad. You might be able to apply for a cheaper multi-currency card from your bank but consider opening a new account with one of the digital-only banks instead. I have a high-street bank account but transfer holiday money to my Starling account, which doesn't charge fees for overseas spending.

A Currensea card is another good option. It links to your existing bank account but typically has lower fees and better exchange rates.

Alternatively, there usually isn't a fee for spending on pre-paid travel money cards. However, there may be one to top it up while away. Compare exchange rates before choosing a card.

Avoid credit card fees

Most credit card providers charge for overseas spending, so consider taking out a new card for travel. Which? recommendations include the Barclaycard Rewards credit card, which doesn't charge fees for use abroad.

Don't buy currency on credit

If you use your credit card to top up a pre-payment travel card or to buy foreign currency, the transaction could be counted as a cash withdrawal. This can incur a hefty fee.

Make sure your cash is covered

There's usually a limit on how much cash your travel insurance will cover. And if your money isn't locked away, you may not be covered if it's stolen. So, check your policy wording carefully, and consider limiting how much cash you take.

Check your phone plan

Many phone plans have a data roaming package that allows you to use your phone while abroad. However, you'll need to check the country you're visiting is on the list.

If your plan doesn't include data roaming, order the right pass as an add-on before you travel or risk an astronomical bill.

Be very careful using your phone while travelling. Ferries, for example, often have their own maritime mobile networks, which aren't covered by your usual phone package. Last year, I was charged over £70 for using my phone on a ferry between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Pay in the local currency

Finally, you've reached your destination and are ready for a margarita. If you're paying by card, you may be offered the chance to pay in sterling. However, you'll usually get a far better exchange rate if you pay in the local currency. Who wants to pay more for their margarita than they have to?

Could an Onshore Investment Bond be the right choice for you?

Delivering a well-balanced portfolio to provide tax-efficient income & growth is more challenging than it has been for many years.

It is now more important than ever to consider the merits of the available tax wrappers to help you to achieve your personal & financial goals. Onshore investment bonds can be an exceptionally useful solution alongside ISAs & pensions in your financial plans. Investment bonds can hold funds across multiple asset classes enabling them to meet varied investment risk appetites. This makes the investment bond very useful for individuals requiring growth, income in retirement or who are planning to fund long term care, together with the trust, intergenerational wealth transfer & inheritance tax planning that are often associated with them.

Why onshore bonds?

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- Assign the policy to a basic rate taxpayer with the potential to minimise future tax bills
- Have the opportunity for the policy to continue beyond the original policyholders lifespan – when additional lives have been assured from the outset.

Onshore investment bonds are straightforward to administer on an ongoing basis because they do not have to be included in a tax return unless a chargeable event arises.

They are not just for those nearing retirement & can benefit a wide range of clients. People often have more wealth & investable income than they



realise and utilising onshore investment bonds could enable broader tax effective planning.

The ability to achieve investment growth, supplement income & utilise certain trust structures for future inheritance tax planning are just some of the reasons why the time is right for investment bonds to play a more central role in the financial adviser's armoury.

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Review: Cupra Terramar



What does this new crossover bring to a very busy market? Jack Evans finds out.

WHAT IS IT?

Cupra's days of being the rather quirky sub-brand to Spanish firm Seat appear to be well into Cupra's rear-view mirror and today it's offering more cars than ever. But it already has a number of SUVs and crossovers, so what distinguishes the Terramar?

WHAT'S NEW?

As with other Cupra models, the Terramar has a sportier feel overall and that's no bad thing, as looks play a big part in the crossover segment. But underneath its striking exterior sits a tried-and-tested platform. It's a version of the Volkswagen MQB Evo, similar to that used under cars like the Volkswagen Tiguan. As a result, the Terramar has a good – and familiar – line-up of engines.

WHAT'S UNDER THE BONNET?

You can get the Terramar with one of five different powertrains. There's a plug-in hybrid version sitting as the most electrified and it's this which could prove a great option for drivers looking to lower their fuel bills. The one we're testing is a 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine similar to the one in the Volkswagen Golf GTI. With 261bhp, it's one of the more potent – but less efficient – Terramar engine options.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO DRIVE?

There's plenty of adjustability and, despite being a reasonably high-riding car, you can still get your seat low enough. The seats are comfortable and there's a

good range of physical controls on the steering wheel. Switching off annoying driver assistance systems, for instance, takes just two presses of a wheel-mounted button.

It maintains its composure through the bends, too. This 2.0-litre engine feels strong and purposeful, though the level of gearbox lag is an annoying negative. Try to make a quick entrance onto a roundabout, for instance, and the Terramar takes an

age to get going before eventually lurching forward. Putting it into a sportier mode helps reduce this.

HOW DOES IT LOOK?

The Terramar cuts a distinctive look out on the road. Our car was finished in an understated 'Graphene Grey' colour but it's still a car with a good amount of presence.



Our only issue is that – to our eyes – there's not enough distinction between Cupra's vehicles, making it more difficult for each car to have its own identity.

WHAT'S IT LIKE INSIDE?

Like other Volkswagen Group products, the Terramar's interior is dominated by a large main screen. Thankfully it's usable and has plenty of shortcut buttons and menus, though the touch-operated 'bar' for the volume and heating below the screen remains quite tricky to use on the move.

But space and material quality are good. Two large cupholders up front are aided by well-sized door bins. At 540 litres, the Terramar's boot feels a bit under rival offerings but remove the false boot floor and this increases to a very usable 642 litres.

WHAT'S THE SPEC LIKE?

Terramar prices start from £37,605, with these entry-level versions coming equipped with a 1.5-litre mild-hybrid petrol engine. All cars get 18-inch wheels, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and three-zone climate control. Prices for plug-in hybrid versions start from £44,055.



This higher-powered version will cost from £45,095 but brings features such as 19-inch alloy wheels, variable LED headlights and adaptive chassis control. This version will be heavier on fuel, of course, so we'd expect lower-powered versions – and the plug-in hybrid – to prove more popular.



VERDICT

The Terramar's exterior design and smartly finished interior make a big impact. Does it go far enough in establishing itself as something different? Not quite. But as a practical crossover, it's likely to offer more than enough for most.



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It's all Greek...

The Greek Islands have long been a haven for travellers seeking relaxation, sand and turquoise sea but, which one's for you?



SANTORINI **Best for: Envy-inducing photographs**

A postcard of whitewashed houses clinging to rugged cliffs, Santorini never fails to conjure up images of pure paradise. Travel here for Instagram-worthy

sunsets, volcanic beaches and the high-end wining and dining scene – not to mention its archaeological sites. The island gets crowded during peak summer season, so if this bothers you, consider spring or autumn.

CRETE

Best for: Exploring on foot

Greece's largest island is also its most varied – which makes it the perfect destination for exploring the great outdoors. Expect everything from white-sand beaches, lush green mountains to craggy coves and canyons. Samaria Gorge's towering cliff faces and verdant forests are a particular highlight. Crete also has a wealth of archaeological sites, including the Palace of Knossos, which dates from the time of the Minoan civilization.

ZAKYNTHOS

Best for: Seeing Mother Nature

Zakynthos (or Zante) has just about shrugged off its reputation as a party destination, rebranding itself as one of Greece's greenest islands.

The mountainous interior, with its sleepy villages and forested

wilderness, is great for hiking and biking. The island is also a mecca for loggerhead turtles during nesting season and, while the turtle beaches are largely off limits, there are countless coves to explore. Don't miss a visit to Navagio (Shipwreck) Beach, which is only accessible by sea.

SKIATHOS

Best for: Beaches straight out of a brochure

Skiathos delivers above and beyond when it comes to coastal chic. Four of the best beaches – Big Banana, Little Banana, Ampelakia and Koukounaries – are within walking distance of one another. Then there's Skiathos Town, where harbour-view cocktail bars and gourmet restaurants are the backdrop of street parties all summer long.

RHODES

Best for: Educational family breaks

Rhodes offers calm, safe beaches but it's also great for family days out. Take a tour around its ancient ruins and monuments – including the Acropolis of Rhodes. Rhodes Town is also worth a visit, with Roman, Ottoman and Venetian occupations having all left their mark. There are lots of convenient flights from the UK.

CORFU

Best for: Culture and character

A long-time favourite with the royal family (the late Prince Philip was born here), the island boasts everything from white-sand beaches and buzzing nightlife to a historic past and a colourful mix of Venetian, French and English cultures.

Known as the 'Emerald Island', thanks to its lush mountains and scenic walking trails, Corfu truly has something for everyone!



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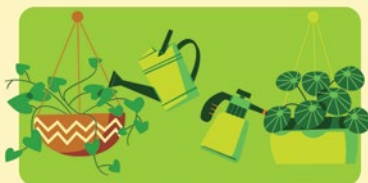


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Recipe extracted from
'LEON: Big Flavours', by
Rebecca Seal
with photography by
Steven Joyce, published
by Conran Octopus,
priced £22.



Apple and Ginger Sorbet

Keep your cool when the heat is on with this oh-so-refreshing sorbet. If you don't have a high-powered blender, you can use an ice-cream machine instead.

Detail...

Serves 4-6

Preparation 25 minutes, plus approx 9 hours freezing

You will need...

- 6 Granny Smith apples, peeled then grated coarsely and cores discarded
- 1 lemon, halved
- 6cm piece of ginger, peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 225ml boiling water
- 225g caster sugar
- 1 tsp finely grated fresh ginger
- 4 tbsp chopped hazelnuts
- Honey or maple syrup, to serve

Method...

1. Line a small baking tray with non-stick baking paper, letting the paper overhang the sides.
2. Place the apple in a bowl, squeeze over a little lemon juice and toss to coat. Tip into the prepared tray and spread out thinly. Cover with another sheet of baking paper, then weigh it down with a board or a couple of small plates. Transfer to the freezer for 3 hours.
3. Meanwhile, place the ginger matchsticks and boiling water in a heatproof jug and set aside to infuse.
4. Allow the frozen apple to soften for about 15 minutes, then spoon it into a powerful blender and discard the baking paper. Strain the ginger infusion, discarding the matchsticks. Add the sugar to the liquid, stirring until completely dissolved, then pour into the blender with the grated ginger. Blitz until completely smooth.
5. Pour back into the baking tray and return to the freezer for 1 hour. Rough up the mixture with a fork and return it to the freezer for 3 hours. Allow to soften for about 15 minutes, then scrape it out of the tray, breaking it up, and into the blender again. Taste, adding more lemon juice if too sweet. Blitz again until smooth, then scrape into a lidded container and freeze completely.
6. When ready to serve, allow the sorbet to soften slightly for 15-20 minutes. Meanwhile, place the hazelnuts in a small, dry pan over a medium heat and toast, stirring often, until they are fragrant. Remove from the heat and quickly pour in the honey or maple syrup and stir to coat.
7. Serve the sorbet scattered with the sticky hazelnuts.

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Year-round appeal

One of gardeners' most common desires is to have 'colour' throughout the year. For many people that means bright flowers. This will also please bees and garden insects.

If you have the luxury of space to fill, annuals might be just the thing. They will provide a splash of exotic appeal that should satisfy the desire for dazzle. There is a downside, however. They are gone when the season passes, leaving a space. Then you will probably do it all again next year.

Choosing plants with multiple-season appeal provides a more sustainable approach and your garden will generally require less maintenance. There are many beauties to choose from. *Here are just a few:*

Amelanchier: snowy mespilus tree

It offers so much throughout the seasons. Spring flowers are like white stars, almost rivalling *Magnolia stellata*. But unlike the star *Magnolia*, *Amelanchier* keeps on giving. There are small, edible black fruits which are loved by

birds, then the most vibrant autumn colour you could wish for.

Cercis: a small, spreading redbud tree

Springtime brings charming pinky-violet flowers which appear on bare stems, outlining the graceful, spreading shape. This is not blousy blossom, but a more subtle explosion of pea-shaped blooms that are filled with nectar for bees and even butterflies. Heart-shaped leaves are a delight all summer long. They turn golden or red in autumn.

Hardy Geranium 'Rozanne', cranesbill

This hardy *Geranium* just continues to deliver, from the first blooms in very early May right through to November or even December. It produces electrifying, violet-blue flowers, forms a pleasingly neat mound to around 45cm high and will scramble outwards. It's easy to maintain and is ready to sprout again every spring.

Erigeron karvinskianus, Mexican fleabane

From spring through to late autumn this plant produces daisy-like pink and white flowers in abundance. Allow it to cascade

over walls and rocks, and soften nooks and crannies.

Veronica 'Georgia Blue', speedwell

This wonderful flowering cushion is ideal for the front of a sunny border or for scrambling over a wall.

Intense blue flowers appear in early spring and continue intermittently until autumn.

Rosmarinus prostratus, trailing rosemary

A miraculous evergreen herb that will continue to bloom throughout most of the year, trailing rosemary is also a magnet for bees. It can, of course, also be used in the kitchen.

Miscanthus sinensis, ornamental silvergrass

This grass not only has spectacular form but also creates movement. It injects appeal later in summer, and also during autumn and winter, when the garden is largely dormant. The foliage is silvery, with swaying plumes of flowerheads.



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We currently look after 3 sites in Measham, meeting on a Monday at 10am, to work until 11.15am or so, when we head to the Age UK Cafe on Measham High St for tea and biscuits. (Own cost : £1)

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TWO MINUTE TRIAL LOFDEN

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3 letters: 14 4 letters: 12 5 letters: 2 6 letters: 2

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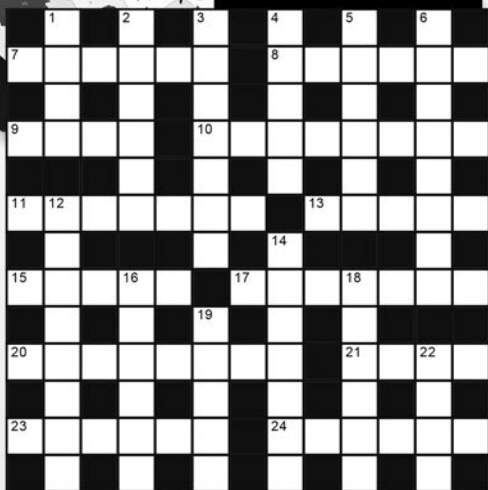
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Coffee BREAK



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 7 Picture house (6)
- 8 Annually (6)
- 9 Successor (4)
- 10 Type of artist (8)
- 11 Space craft (7)
- 13 Loosen (5)
- 15 Perfume (5)
- 17 The mean (7)
- 20 Put into order (8)
- 21 Knitting stitch (4)
- 23 Taken without consent (6)
- 24 Almost (6)

DOWN cont.,

- 6 Permitting (8)
- 12 Precise (8)
- 14 Obvious (7)
- 16 Tidily (6)
- 18 Revoke (6)
- 19 Representative (5)
- 22 Annoy (4)

Each letter in this puzzle is represented by a number between 1 and 26. The codes for three letters are shown. As you find the letters enter them in the box below.

CODEWORD



DOWN

- 1 American coin (4)
- 2 Longs for (6)
- 3 Incorrectly (7)
- 4 Thick sweet liquid (5)
- 5 Occur (6)

SUDOKU



CHILDREN'S PUZZLE PAGE

TENNIS

Can you work out the missing number in these sums?

$$77 - ? = 51$$

$$12 \times ? = 36$$

$$? + 44 = 93$$

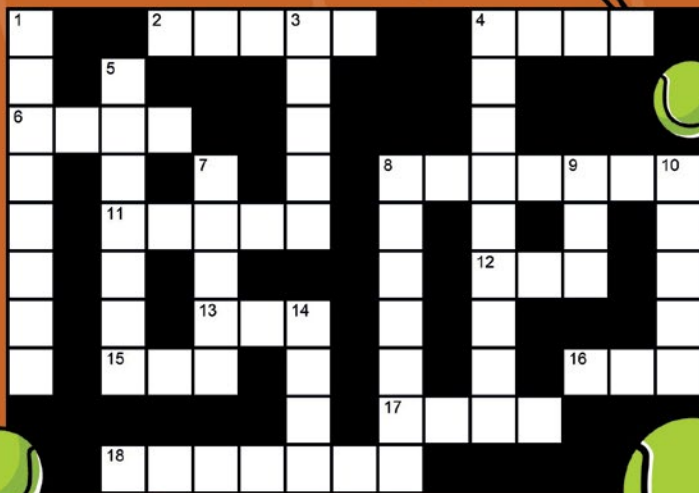
Why
should you
never marry a
tennis player?
*To them, love
means nothing.*

Where do
tennis players
go to dance?
A tennis ball!

Why
don't fish
play tennis?
*They're scared
of the net.*

TENNIS WORDFIT

ACE
BALL
BASELINE
COACH
DOUBLES
FAULT
GAME
GRAND SLAM
GRIP
LET
LOB
MATCH
NET
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SMARTPHONE USERS SAY "AI AI NO"

How popular is artificial intelligence really?

It looks like phone users don't believe the hype around artificial intelligence (AI). Multiple surveys of smartphone users have found that they're a lot less excited about AI than the technology companies are. One survey, of 2,000 people with AI-capable iPhone and Samsung smartphones, found that 73% of iPhone users and a massive 87% of Samsung Galaxy owners felt that AI added little or no value to their smartphone experience.

That's not to say AI isn't useful sometimes. AI-powered photo editing apps can do fun things, for example. But it looks as if most of us don't find AI alluring enough to justify expensive smartphone upgrades.



VIEWING FIGURES

The television of the future is set to be big, bright - and pricey.

Samsung's latest TV, which features cutting-edge RGB micro-LED technology, could be the future of television. It promises the best picture quality and brightness you've ever seen, with lower energy use too. But it'll be too big and too expensive for most of us, because new technologies are initially very costly to produce. Samsung's first model will be a super-luxury 115-inch display, and sets of that size currently cost around £25,000.

The good news is that all TV technologies get much cheaper over time. The first OLED TV sold in the UK cost £10,000; today, you can pick up a better one for £650.



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