

October 2026

Issue 162

Almería Living

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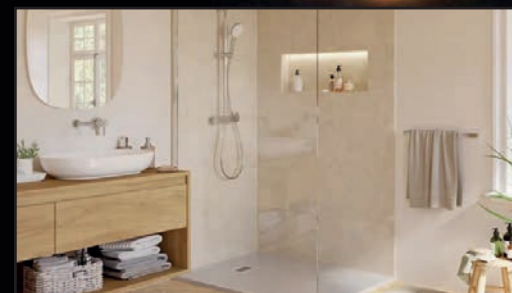
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Welcome to the October 2026 issue of Almería Living!

I don't know what makes this month so special, but I have always loved October. Perhaps it is a combination of the weather and the shorter daylight hours - the chance to start enjoying a good book while snuggled in a blanket or the appreciation of the subdued lighting emitted by dancing candle flames.

Not having much time for gardening, I tend to keep lots of houseplants but I have recently started a propagation frenzy and, touch wood, finding it pretty successful. If anyone has cuttings or prunings to spare please keep me in mind - I love a challenge and experimenting!

This month's bank holiday on 12th October is very important to all Hispanic countries, particularly for Spain. Also known as Christopher Columbus Day, Día de España celebrates Spanish heritage, culture, and the historical connection with the Hispanic world.



Tick Tock - it's October clock change time!! Don't forget the clocks go back an hour at 03.00 on Sunday morning (25th). I don't mind this one so much as we do get an extra hour in bed!!

In this issue

I would like to welcome Felicity to my team of scribes, who brings us a really lovely short story - read more on page 48 & 49. I am always very grateful for the support of our scribes - if you have a story to tell or maybe a vocation to share, why not send it to us for possible publication.

My thanks, as always, to our advertisers, who continue to support our magazine and reap the benefits of doing so. Local businesses rely on our trade so please try to use them whenever you can.

We hope you enjoy your read this month. Please don't forget to tell our advertisers that you saw them in the Almería Living.

Take care and stay safe. Talk again in November.

Karen (Ed)

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Residencia to TIE Exchange & TIE Renewal

Do you know when your TIE is due to expire?

Quite amazingly, July 2025, marked 5 years since the introduction of the TIE card for UK nationals, who were resident in Spain with either a green A4 or credit card size certificate. It was part of the Brexit withdrawal agreement.

Many people took the opportunity to exchange right away, and these are the people this article is mainly calling out to in the first instance. There are a lot of people who have already renewed but many have still not. Renewal is essential.

A TIE is valid for either 5 or 10 years depending on how long a person had previously held the green paper residencia. Usually, when a 5-year card is renewed it will become valid for 10 years and instead of indicating temporary residencia it will state ‘permanente’ and like all photo ID it will need to continue to be renewed every





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10 years.

The green paper residencia has no expiry date so it has that in its favour however, the benefits of the photo card as a form of ID and for travel purposes, especially with the introduction of the EES (Entry/Exit System) at Border controls, far outweighs the pain of having to renew it after 5 or 10 years.

The exchange and renewal processes are the same and require 2 trips to the Foreigner's Office in Almería or National Police Station in Roquetas de Mar or El Ejido, wherever the appointment can be obtained. For those living outside the Almería province, there are similar facilities, and they are all listed on the Ministry of Interior's website, which is where the first appointment is obtained.

The process will require a current passport with at least three months of validity so that is the next document to check to see when it expires and get it renewed as soon as possible if necessary.

For the exchange process, the original green residencia must be presented at the appointment. If this has been lost or stolen over the years, then a police report will be required instead.

As well as the passport and residencia/TIE card, it will be necessary to take a Padron certificate and small photo as well as the application form and tax form prepaid at the bank.

Obtaining an appointment is the most crucial element of the process, especially for those renewing their TIE. Despite national information, Almería does not like to renew a TIE until it is at least one day after expiry.

In order to obtain a fingerprint appointment in Almería, a digital signature is required or try registering with a local company who provide the exchange/renewal service.

The first appointment will require you to have fingerprints taken and all documents handed in. The second appointment, usually some 6-8 weeks later, will be to collect the card. Both appointments must be attended in person with original documents.

Those of you who are here with TIE cards issued as part of the visa programme are not affected by these procedures.

As usual, if you would like any help or advice regarding the renewal or exchange process, please contact the team at C.A.T. Services.

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Spanish Provinces

There are 50 provinces in Spain, each with its own capital city which usually, but not always, carries the same name as the province. In September we journeyed to Palma de Mallorca and now our next of Spain’s provincial Capitals takes us back onto the mainland



Jaén in Jaén

of castles in the world outside the Levant. It boasts no less than 237 fortresses due to its important strategic position during the Reconquista.

The imposing Buralimur Castle, located in the town of Baños de la Encina, is considered one of the oldest surviving Arab vestiges in the region. It originated as a 10th-century Umayyad fortress, flanked by fourteen defensive towers (including the Keep, which dates from the Christian era and was begun in 1225).

Remarkably, Buralimur has largely escaped sieges, natural disasters, and ill-conceived restorations; today, it is regarded as the best-preserved fortress from the Caliphate era and one of the most intact Andalusí monuments. The castle stands atop a hill in Baños de la Encina, overlooking vast olive groves and the Sierra Mágina mountains. With over a thousand years of history, this magnificent fortress has borne witness

The province of Jaén is the third biggest province of Andalucía with an area of 13,484 km2 and it borders the provinces of Ciudad Real, Albacete, Granada and Córdoba.

The highest point in the province is Pico Mágina in the mountain range of the same name. It is 2,165 MASL and has a prominence of 1,135 m.

Jaén is one of the lesser-known provinces of Spain, mainly due to its lack of coastline and beaches, which makes it a less attractive destination to sun and sea tourists.

Nevertheless, the province has a lot going for it, and it is becoming an increasingly sought-after destination for rural and cultural tourism, which has seen a dramatic rise in popularity over the last few years,

Jaén is home to no less than four natural parks apart from many other protected natural areas. In fact, the Parque Natural de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas is Spain’s biggest natural park and the second biggest in Europe.

The province is also the home to the largest concentration



to significant events spanning the last ten centuries.

In Jaén you will also find two Renaissance cities, Baeza and Úbeda, which were both declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO in 2003. Úbeda is the larger of the two with over 33,000 inhabitants; Baeza has 15,000.

The cities of Úbeda and Baeza, separated by less than 10 kilometres, retain the enchantment of 500 years ago. They stand as the finest examples of the Spanish Renaissance. Surrounded by olive groves with the Guadalquivir River at their feet, both cities preserve the original street layouts of times long past.

As opposed to the typical white Andalusian villages, the buildings are stone clad and placed along narrow winding streets that open out into impressive plazas or lead to small,

charming corners.

One of the most impressive plazas in Úbeda is the Plaza Vázquez de Molina—considered one of the most beautiful squares in Europe—an open space where the most outstanding Renaissance monuments stand, such as the Funerary Chapel of El Salvador del Mundo, the Church of Santa María de los Reales Alcázares, and the Palace of Juan Vázquez de Molina.

And as if all that was not enough to claim fame, the province is the world’s largest producer of olive oil! It boasts more than 66 million olive trees on 550,000 hectares and it produces on average 600,000 tonnes of olive oil a year. This is almost 50% of the total Spanish production, and 20% of the world production.

Continued on page 8





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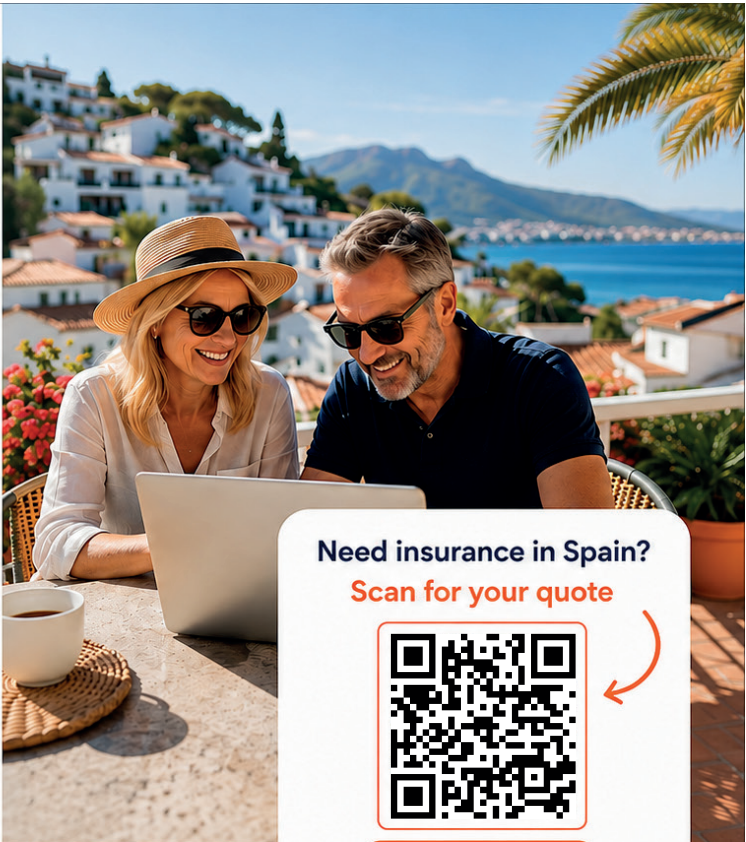
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..... Continued from page 7

The province of Jaén is home to 618.143 souls, 112.235 of whom live in the capital of the same name.

The city of Jaén has another name, a very apt nickname: the World Capital of Olive Oil.

The city is a capital little known by travellers who pass it by on their way to the coast. But they lose out on one of the most interesting historic quarters in Andalucía. At the foot of the Santa Catalina mountain nestles the old Arabian Jayyān, as they called Jaén. It was constructed on the site of the old Roman and Visigoth towns, which again had been constructed on top of an old Iberian settlement.

The city is surrounded by fertile farmland planted with olives. Towards south and southeast you can see the mountain ranges of

Sierra de Jaén and Sierra de Jabalcuz. To the north the plain of the River Guadalbullón opens out and the river passes close by the city.

Olive oil production and distribution are the largest contributors to Jaén's economy, but also the services sector, administration and production and distribution of other food stuffs play an important part. Furthermore, income from cultural tourism is growing.

Some of the most important and famous sights the city offers are the Assumption of the Virgin Cathedral, the castle and the Arab baths.

The plans for the cathedral were conceived in the 16th century as a replacement of the Gothic cathedral that had occupied that space earlier. The construction took several centuries, but in spite of this, the original plan was followed to a T, and the result is the impressive building that dominates the Jaén cityscape.



The castle actually consists of three parts: Alcázar Viejo (the old fortress), the Santa Catalina Castle and the Abrehui, the most recent addition. The three fortresses formed one large walled citadel which was used both as a fortification and living quarters. It was last populated in the 17th century, since then it has been empty.

The Arab baths are situated underneath the Villardompardo Palace. With a surface of 450m2 they are the largest conserved Arab baths in Spain. They were originally constructed on the site of an old Roman bath. More than 55,000 people visit the baths every year.

The winters in Jaén are mild and the summers very hot and dry. The largest amount of rain falls toward the end of autumn.



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Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 82

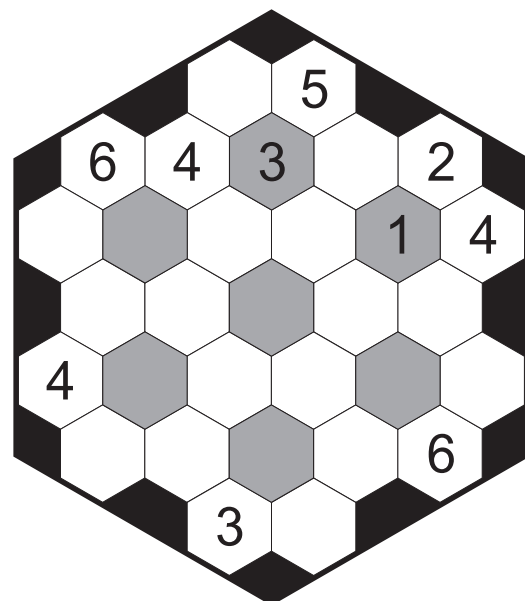
Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces. Every row of each 9x9 cube must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must every 3x3 square.

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

Rosetta

A Rosetta is made up of a centre coloured hexagon encircled by 6 white hexagons. To complete the puzzle, fill in all 7 Rosettas with each number between 1 and 7 in no particular order while ensuring that:

1. No number is repeated in a horizontal row
2. Each number from 1 to 7 is represented in the 7 grey hexagon cells



Samurai Sudoku

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

Andrajos from Jaén



As usual, our food of the month has humble origins, and it was originally a dish for folk of lesser means.

The name 'andrajos' means rags, and this refers to the 'pasta' which is cooked directly in the stew and resembles pieces of fabric.

Although the pasta gives the dish its name, it was mainly intended to add bulk.

It is a typical autumn and winter dish, warming and filling, and it is based on rabbit which may not be cheap to buy today, but rabbits were free, when the dish was first made, if you could find them and kill them.

As is the case with the majority of traditional Spanish dishes, time is not of the essence, and you can taste that in the final result! Making andrajos takes quite a bit of preparation time, and what better way of spending a cool autumn afternoon than making yourself busy in the kitchen!

To start off, you gently fry some strips of red pepper in olive oil until they start taking colour. Add a head of garlic cut across the middle. Brown everything well and reserve.

¡Buen Provecho!

Brown seasoned pieces of rabbit in the same oil, pour in white wine and when reduced, add one grated onion.

On another thing, let the garlic, some spearmint and two bay leaves infuse over medium heat in a large pan of water.

When the onion starts going brown in the pan with the rabbit, add peeled, deseeded, grated tomato and let it keep bubbling until it starts drying up.

Add the water from the diffusion and let everything cook while you prepare the 'rags'.

Mix flour with salt and water until you obtain an elastic, pliable dough. Divide it into smaller portions and, with a rolling pin, flatten them to a thickness of about ½ cm.

Cut them into a crisscross pattern with a sharp knife or a pizza cutter.

Drop the pieces individually into the stew and let them cook for about 20 minutes, stirring from time to time. They will tend to rise to the surface, so press them down a couple of times.

Turn off the heat and let your rag stew rest for about five minutes before serving it steaming hot in large bowls.

Although this may not be the prettiest dish on the block, I guarantee you that it is a proper filling winter warmer!

Buen Provecho!

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Cooking with Nina



Happy October!

I don't care if the weather stays stupidly hot, I'll still start cooking autumn food now. So there!

Aubergines are still in season in early autumn, so I've done a couple of recipes with that attractive and delicious fruit, and then there was a recipe that just happened when I found myself with NO ONIONS!! Shock horror!

And finally some rather lovely meat patties with spinach, so I reckon I've achieved a nice variety this month.

Read, cook and enjoy!

Spinach Patties

These meat patties with spinach are quite a treat – and my newest best friend, dill, turns the accompanying vegetables in a white sauce into a fresh and different side dish.

I thoroughly enjoyed it all!

Ingredients for two:

- 250g minced meat
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 50g fresh spinach, coarsely chopped
- Lemon juice
- Salt and pepper
- Butter and oil
- 100g carrots, sliced
- 150g cauliflower, divided into small florets
- ½ bunch green asparagus, wooden end broken off
- 400ml stock
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 75ml cream
- Some corn flour dissolved in a drop of cold water
- Dill, chopped
- Parsley, chopped

Mix the minced meat with half tsp salt.

Melt a little butter in a frying pan and add the shallot. Cook for a minute before adding the spinach. Cook until it just withers. Put it on a chopping board and chop it finely.

Add it to the meat with lemon juice to your taste and freshly ground pepper. Mix well.

Shape the mix into 4 equal patties.

In the same pan as before, heat up a drop of oil with a knob of butter and fry the patties for about 15 minutes, turning regularly, until they are done.

In the meanwhile, bring your stock to the boil together with the mustard, and drop in the carrots. Cook them for three minutes before adding the cauliflower florets.

Cook Them for a couple of minutes (I'm doing this al dente, if you want your veggies soft, cook them for longer) then add the asparagus, bring to the boil, add the cream and thicken the sauce with the cornflour and cold water.

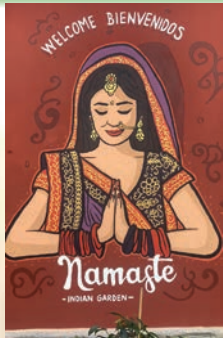
Finally, mix in your chopped herbs and adjust the flavour with lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Serve with potatoes of your choice – I enjoyed mine plain boiled.



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What? No Onions?

I was all set, the other Sunday, to make a lovely chicken casserole following an interesting recipe my sister had shared with me.

But horror of all horrors – when I came to prepare the ingredients, I had no onions!! Never mind, I thought, I'll use onion powder. And guess what? I didn't have that either!

So I had to produce a tasty stew without onions, which I would normally consider an impossibility! But far from it – my stew was delicious!

Ingredients for 1-2 (depending on how much you eat)

- 150g boneless chicken (breast or upper thigh)
- 150g mushrooms, sliced
- 150g cherry tomatoes
- 75g red pepper, cubed
- 2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- 200ml chicken stock
- 100ml cream
- Olive oil, salt and pepper
- Fresh basil, chopped
- Worcestershire sauce

Heat the olive oil in a deep frying pan and brown the chicken on both sides. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

Add another slug of oil and throw in the mushrooms and red pepper. Cook, stirring, until the mushrooms start taking colour. Add the garlic and cherry tomatoes, and cook for five minutes, stirring from time to time.

Return the meat to the pan, pour in the stock, cover, and let it bubble gently for 10 minutes, uncovered. Careful that it doesn't boil dry. Add the cream, bring back to the boil.

Stir in the basil, add a dash of Worcestershire sauce and season to taste with salt and pepper.



This lends itself to any variety of potatoes, pasta or rice. I had mine with spaghetti, yum!


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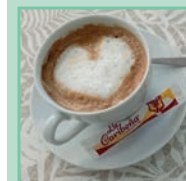


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Pork Chops with Aubergine

This is a wonderfully tasty dish, and if you are into beef steaks, they would lend themselves equally well!

I used bruschetta to flavour the sauce because I had an open pot that wanted using, but I'm sure you'd get the same result with chopped dried tomatoes.

You can have this with any pasta you fancy; I had the lovely idea of frying some gnocchi and stick them in – they were out of this world!!!

Ingredients for two:

- 2 pork chops or steaks
- 1 tbsp each, oil and butter
- 100 g aubergine, cubed
- 1-2 tbsp bruschetta
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 150 g broccoli florets
- Handful baby spinach
- 100 ml white wine
- 150 ml cream
- 100 ml chicken stock
- 50 g parmesan cheese, grated
- Salt and pepper
- 250 g gnocchi

Cook your pasta – either fry the gnocchi for 12 minutes in olive oil, or if using other pasta, follow the instructions on the packet.

Heat oil and butter in a large frying pan and fry the meat for 2-3 minutes on each side. Set aside.



In the same pan, fry the aubergine and garlic. Add the bruschetta or dried tomatoes, followed by the white wine. Cook for a minute loosening the sediment from the bottom. Pour in the stock and cream and bring to the boil. Add the broccoli and cook for 3 minutes.

Add the parmesan cheese in portions and let it melt before each addition.

When you have used up the parmesan, add the spinach and adjust the seasoning.

Return the meat and add the pasta. Mix and heat everything through and serve just like that!

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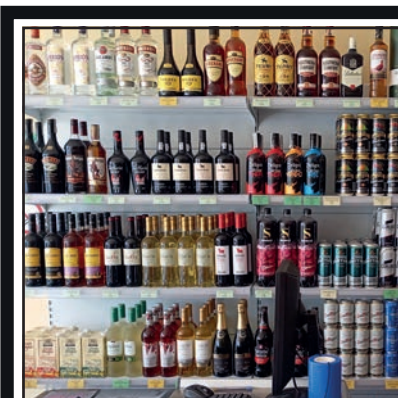
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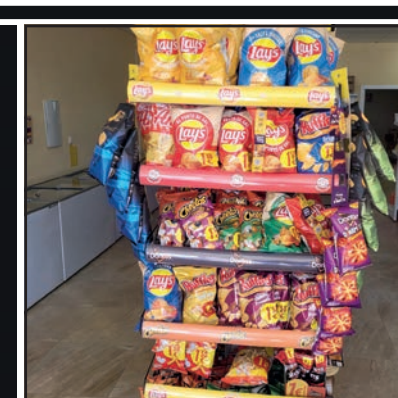
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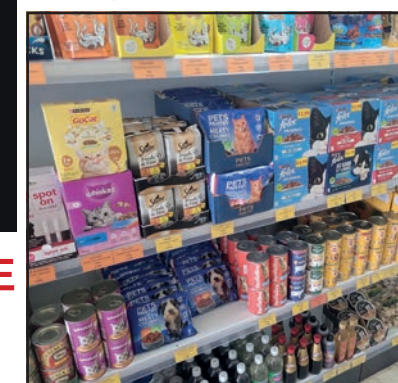
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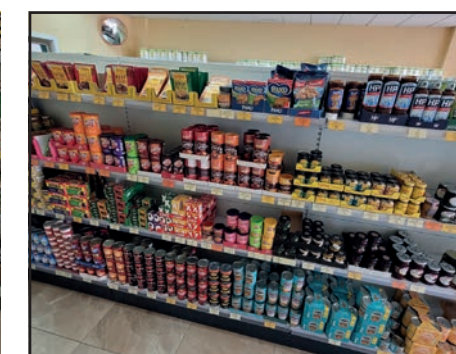
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Stuffed Aubergine

I adore stuffed vegetables. Stuffed red peppers are my favourite, but stuffed aubergines come in a very close second! No matter how often I have aubergines, they still seem quite exotic and exciting to me, not sure why.

I've made the stuffing a little bit dry this time and compensated by serving them with baked half tomatoes and tzatziki.

It was deeeelish!!

Ingredients for four:

- 200g bulgur, cooked as per instructions
- 4 medium-size aubergines
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 500 g minced beef or lamb
- 5 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tsp smoked paprika (pimentón de la vera)
- 1 tsp ground cumin

Halve the aubergines lengthwise and scoop out the flesh, leaving a ring of about 1 cm inside the peel. Chop the flesh finely.

Heat 2 tbsp oil in a deep frying pan and brown the meat until it crumbles. Add garlic, onion and aubergine flesh and cook for five minutes.

Add the salt, pepper and spices and cook for another couple of minutes.

Turn in the cooked bulgur.



Place the aubergine shells on a baking sheet and fill them with the meat mixture. Sprinkle over the oil.

Bake in the oven at 200°C for about 30 minutes until golden.

Serve with tzatziki and baked tomatoes, and maybe a little bread, if you fancy!



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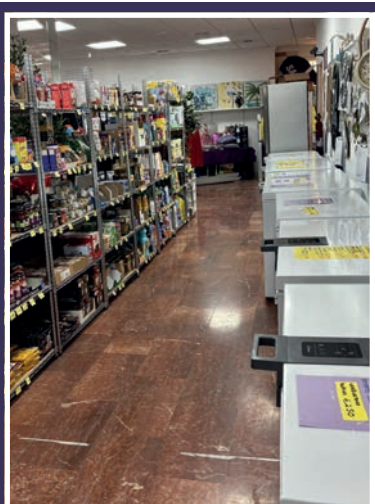
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Jason's Meat Free Recipe: Beans on toast Caprese style

Beans on toast? Really?

Well, let me share something that might not be quite what you're expecting. I have adapted this from a Riverford recipe, and having made it a few times, reckon that you'll be convinced that there is life beyond the version that comes from a tin. Don't get me wrong, there's always a place for beans on toast, the 'normal' way with some grated cheese and/or a fried egg on top, but this one gives a nod to the fact that summer food is starting to give way to the more robust fayre of the autumn. It also makes for a great brunch/lunch/light supper.

- You'll need (for 2)
- 250g cherry tomatoes, halved
 - 1/2 a medium red pointy pepper thinly sliced
 - 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped, or sliced thinly
 - 1/2 large jar of white beans (drained)
 - 2 large slices of sourdough or other 'rustic' bread - toasted
 - 1 ball of mozzarella torn into rough pieces
 - 8-10 torn basil leaves
 - 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil (plus a little for drizzling over at the end)
 - Balsamic or red wine vinegar, to taste

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salt & pepper, to taste

(optional) a shake of smoked paprika or a few dried chilli flakes, to taste

Warm the oil in a pan over gentle heat. Then add the finely sliced pepper and tomatoes, with a pinch of salt. Cook for a few minutes until the tomatoes begin to soften and break down a bit. Stir in the garlic and cook for a few minutes more and then add the beans. Cook until the beans are completely warmed through and the tomatoes are fully tender, stirring every now and then to stop anything catching. Have a taste and if you think it would benefit add a small glug or two of vinegar, I prefer balsamic, as it's sweeter. Also season at this point if you think it needs it. Turn off the heat but leave it on the hob while you make the toast.

Once the toast is done, plate up and divide half of the mozzarella between the plates. Spoon over the beans and then top off with the remaining mozzarella and the basil leaves. Drizzle some oil over them and grind over some black pepper (and/or a sprinkle of chilli flakes, or, my favourite, smoked paprika). Works well with red, white or beer, depending on your tipple.

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Two Almería Towns Breach Spain's Legal Nitrate Limit. Is Yours on the Watch List?

Official water-quality data shows two Almería municipalities currently exceeding the legal nitrate limit, and a wider ring of towns sitting just below it.

According to Spain's national water-quality data (SINAC), tracked by independent outlet DATADISTA, two of Almería's 103 municipalities, Huércal-Overa and Lubrín, currently exceed the legal nitrate limit of 50 mg/l, as of September 2026

They're not isolated cases. Six more towns including Viator, Adra, La Mojónera, Vera, Vélez-Rubio and Lucainena de las Torres, sit at SINAC's "critical point": nitrate levels sustained above 30 mg/l. Below the legal line, but on the watch list.

Nitrates aren't a local quirk. They're one of the most common groundwater pollutants across the EU, caused largely by fertiliser and livestock run-off seeping into aquifers. Almería's intensive agriculture, combined with heavy reliance on borehole and well water, makes the province prey to this risk. Spain was even taken to the EU Court of Justice in 2024 for failing to meet the Nitrates Directive.

Here's the part that should give any household pause: nitrates have no taste, no smell and no colour.

Water can look and taste completely normal while also being well above safe levels. The current legal maximum is 50 mg/l, but public health researchers are now pushing for a far stricter

ALMERIA PURE WATER

precautionary limit of just 6 mg/l, mostly because of the risks nitrates pose to infants and pregnant women. Under that proposed threshold, several more towns across the province would fall into the "monitor closely" zone, even while remaining technically legal.

Legal doesn't mean risk-free - and a municipal average doesn't tell you what's coming out of your own tap.

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Pets Corner

Is Your Cat Drinking More Water?

It may not be just because it's hot.

Diabetes mellitus can also affect our cats. And it often begins so quietly that it may go unnoticed at home.

A cat that starts drinking more, urinating more frequently, asking for more food or, on the contrary, losing weight without any change in its diet may be showing signs that something is not working properly.

Tiredness, a less well-groomed coat or even weakness in the hind legs may also appear. These changes can be gradual and easy to attribute to age or minor changes in routine.

**“Drinking more. Urinating more.
Eating more... yet losing weight?”**

Don't ignore it.”

What does excess weight have to do with it?

A lot. Feline diabetes shares important features with type 2 diabetes in people. Excess fatty tissue promotes insulin resistance: the body needs more insulin to help glucose enter the cells. Over time, the pancreas may no longer be able to compensate, and diabetes can develop.

That is why maintaining a healthy body weight, regular activity and an appropriate diet is not simply a matter of appearance—it is also part of diabetes risk reduction.



A check-up can reveal what we cannot see

Regular veterinary check-ups allow us to assess body weight and body condition and, when indicated, perform blood glucose testing, urinalysis and other evaluations. They are particularly important for adult and senior cats, overweight cats and those with additional risk factors.



If diabetes develops, nutrition matters

Treatment does not simply consist of giving insulin. Nutrition is a fundamental part of diabetes management. Many diabetic cats may benefit from diets that are lower in carbohydrates and relatively high in protein, tailored to their individual needs. For overweight cats, controlled weight loss can improve insulin sensitivity and support better diabetic control.

But a diabetic cat should never be put on a diet abruptly. When treatment begins, ensuring reliable food intake is a priority. If weight loss is needed, the veterinarian can establish a safe, gradual plan and monitor progress.

There is also something many families do not know: some diabetic cats can enter remission, meaning they may no longer require insulin for an extended period. Early diagnosis and appropriate management can improve the chances of achieving good diabetic control and, in

some cats, remission.

Don't wait until your cat looks ill to have them checked

A cat may appear perfectly healthy while its body is already asking for help.

A timely check-up, a healthy weight and an appropriate diet can make a significant difference.

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Snip Snip!



I've always been a great believer in neutering animals that are not meant for breeding. You basically do them a big favour, as the unwanted surplus of hormones will only cause misery and frustration to both males and females. And, indeed, to their owners!

There are several cat charities that catch stray cats and neuter them in collaboration with local vets. Some of these schemes are funded by the public authorities, because the sad fact is that there are many more cats in the world than there are kind homes to welcome them, and many stray kittens lead a miserable life for a few months and do not survive their first year.

By Nina

If you adopt a cat or a kitten from a charity, they are often neutered already, and if not, they usually ask you to promise to have it done.

The only real drawback of having a cat neutered is that it will need to be under general anaesthetic for the operation, which always constitutes a risk. However, for a healthy, strong cat, this does not usually present a problem.

Unless complications arise, you will have your cat back home the same day as the operation is carried out.

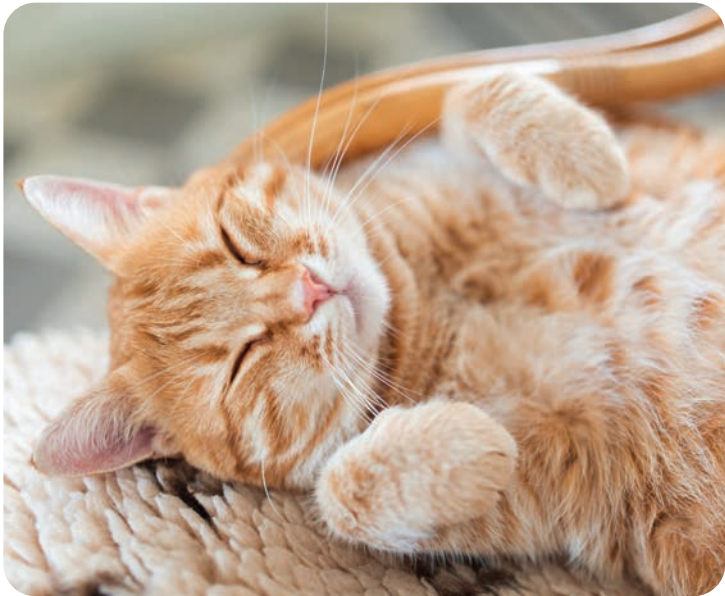
For females, the neutering is a little more involved than for males. The vet removes the womb and ovaries, and unless you pay extra for having it done with laser, this involves an incision and stitches, and the cat may have to wear a cone or an inflatable donut collar for a period of time, until the operation wound has healed.

The boys, on the other hand, have an easier deal. A small incision is made, and the testicles are removed from the scrotum. Normally just one stitch suffices after the intervention, and a cone is not usually necessary, unless he really worries the wound.

Neutering a male cat saves him no end of bother! If you do not have it done, he will live his life dominated by his hormones, and he will stray to find females in heat, often staying away from home for long periods.

He will regularly be fighting other male cats, risking nasty bite or scratch wounds. He is also exposed to the risk of cat AIDS or cat leukaemia, both of which are transmitted through bites and sexual intercourse.

Due to this hard life, unneutered male cats do not live as long as their neutered counterparts.



Also female cats have a calmer, happier life if they are neutered.

They usually come in heat around February-March (in Spain), even if they have not yet had their 1st birthday, and if they are not mated, the heat will repeat at intervals of 2-3 weeks all through spring and summer – and sometimes even into October.

A female can easily give birth to two litters in one season.

In years gone past, many people gave their female cat a contraceptive pill once a week, but vets do not recommend this anymore, as many cats on the pill developed cancer of the mammary glands.

If you do not neuter your female cat, or put her on the pill, the periods of heat, which last 4-7 days each, will be a noisy, stressful time for both you and your cat. She will meow loudly and constantly, roll on

her back, rub against everything and do anything possible to escape and get out to find a boyfriend.

It is not nice for the owner, and even less so for the poor cat who doesn't get to follow her (very strong!) instincts.

And just like male cats, if you let her out, she runs the risk, apart from pregnancy, of catching cat AIDS or leukaemia.

However, one problem that can be generated by neutering, and this goes for both males and females, is overweight.

Scientists reckon that the metabolism rhythm of a neutered cat is only about 80% of that of unneutered cats.

But there is no end of dry food for cats that is designed especially for neutered cats to avoid this problem, and with the right diet and care, you neutered feline companion will live happily with you for up to two decades – and sometimes even more!



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A Brief History of Spain....part 14 By Mike Woolnough

Charles IV is now on the throne. It was not a good time to have a lover of drinking, eating enormous meals, hunting and general slobbish behaviour on the throne. Nor did he have any interest in running the country, so he delegated that to his close friend, Manuel de Godoy. Godoy also happened to be his wife's lover!

Charles came to the throne in December 1788 and less than five months later the French Revolution began. Europe was about to become a dangerous place! Powerful countries like, Britain, Russia and Prussia were competing to fill the power vacuum created by French disarray. The incompetent Godoy managed to get Spain embroiled in a dispute with France with the result that French troops occupied northern Spain

In March 1808, virtually 42 years to the day after the night of the long clippers, the mob was rebelling again. This time it was a bit more important than the length of a cloak. Spain had been humiliated, part of the country was occupied and Godoy was to blame, they wanted his blood!

To avoid the mob, Godoy hid for 36 hours, rolled up in an old carpet, in the attic of his house. In order to save Godoy's skin, Charles decided to abdicate in favour of his even more slobbish son,



Ferdinand VII. However, a few weeks later, Charles had a change of heart and wanted the throne back. Ferdinand was not keen on this idea, so they decided an independent arbitrator was needed.

Continued on page 28

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..... Continued from page 27

So, Charles, his wife Maria Luisa, Ferdinand and with Godoy in tow they met up in Bayonne, France with their chosen arbitrator, Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon had a novel solution to the impasse, he despatched Charles and Maria Luisa to Rome and told them to remain there, Ferdinand was to remain in France, in case he might be of use someday and Napoleon's brother Joseph would take over as King of Spain! (Godoy, followed his lover to Rome!)

Well, that went well! The people wanted change, but did not get what they expected. They ended up with a French King! Pepe Botella (Joe Bottles) as they called him on account of his fondness for a tippie or two, was loathed, despite well intentioned attempts at reform, from the start. Only a few weeks after his arrival there was a popular uprising of the people; the day is immortalised in Spanish history ~ Dos de Mayo~, the second of May 1808 saw the peasants pour into the towns and killing anyone vaguely resembling a French soldier.

Unsurprisingly, the French response was ruthless. Goya, who hitherto was a painter of genteel subjects, used his talents to document the horrors of war. (82 engravings under the general title, "The Disasters of War") The, undeclared, war for independence waged on.

Most Spanish did not recognise the central government and Spain was effectively ruled by local juntas. A group of liberals seized the chance to modernise the country and at a meeting in the Church of San Felipe Neri in Cadiz in 1812 they drew up a new constitution which called for a united Spain, a constitutional monarchy (as in Britain) and an elected parliament or Cortes.

By 1812 the French were losing their grip in Spain and needed a way out. Their solution was that Ferdinand might prove useful



after all and in 1814 they wheeled him back in with the idea that he would be a constitutional monarch and would carry out the reforms that Joseph had tried to bring in along with the other elements of the Cadiz constitution. Sadly, Ferdinand was to prove to be the worst King to rule Spain. He hadn't been long in the job before he dissolved Parliament, revoked the constitution and sent any liberal that had had a hand in it into exile along with about 12,000 more that didn't. Of course, he had plenty of support – all those who resisted change, notably the aristocracy and the church who, of course, hated liberals. For most of the 19th century children learning their catechism would be asked what kind of sin is committed by someone who votes liberal? To which they were expected to answer, "generally a mortal one"!

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The Napoleonic Wars (aka The Peninsular War) finally came to an end courtesy of General Wellington, who helpfully drove the French out of Spain. Spain had been under French rule, which made it an enemy of Britain and as a result a naval blockade had cut Spain off from its colonies. Unable to trade with the mother country they sought markets elsewhere, chiefly the USA. They also had to fend for themselves. The coming of peace did not encourage the colonies to revert to control from Spain and they began to pursue a battle for independence. Needless to say there was no way that Ferdinand was going to allow them to do that. A battle ensued between Spanish soldiers supported by loyal colonists and the rest. Fighting a war thousands of miles from home is never easy and it was not long before one large territory managed to declare independence.

On 9th July, 1816 the country that would come to be known as

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Argentina was born. Further north a revolutionary war had been in progress since 1808 and would continue to rage until 1826 when Spain finally conceded defeat. The result was not one country, but several. Most of the remaining Spanish speaking countries of S. America are a result of this revolutionary conflict, amongst them Venezuela and Bolivia, named in order of the man who had led them in the fight, Simon Bolivar. In Central America a revolt had begun in 1810 and was originally put down. A local priest, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, took up the fight and, eventually, in 1822 Mexico secured its independence. The rest of Spain's Central American colonies were not far behind.

Back home, Ferdinand continued to lead the country backwards. But for some, it was not far back enough or quickly enough. These people looked for someone to give their movement credible leadership. They found it in the King's brother, Don Carlos and henceforth became known as Carlistas. When Ferdinand died in 1833 there was, quite literally, a punch up over his death bed. On one side was Don Carlos and his supporters with the rest of the family on the other. It was not long before the punching became gunfire which soon escalated into the first Carlist civil war. Basically, it was about who should rule, backward looking Carlos or Ferdinand's three year old daughter backed by the liberals. Much of Carlos' support came from the Basques who believed Carlos would give them back their old rights and privileges. The war lasted for 7 years and there were further skirmishes in the 1850's and again in the 1870's. Nothing was achieved though and Isabella II was Queen.



The contrast with Britain's queen, Victoria, was considerable. Isabella was over sexed and was described as having all the grace of a dancing hippopotamus. It was decided to get her married to avoid the strong possibility of "the heir arriving before the husband," as one courtier put it! The person chosen was her cousin, Francisco of Assisi. When his name was put forward Isabella is reputed to have said, "If he's a man I'll marry him!" Generally speaking her subjects found her an embarrassment, referring to her as 'esa señora' - that woman! Her 35 year reign was notable for the amount of time she spent dancing (badly), gorging herself and having countless affairs. Her mother was not a lot better. In 1854 she had to flee the country following some financial dodgy dealing involving a new railway company. (Yes, Spain was slowly dragging itself forwards despite many attempts to pull it in the other direction!)

By 1868 enough was enough and there was a military coup. Spain was about to become a republic!

My inspiration for these articles comes from "SPAIN, an amazingly short history" by Bob Fowke. Published by Travelbrief Publications. ISBN 0-9548351-0-7

THE NEWCOMER

The Alcoholics Anonymous meeting was just about to start. It was held in an old, drafty Church Hall and the group of 8 or 9 people were seated in a semi-circle facing Josh, the Group's leader. They were from all walks, old, young, one or two smartly dressed and others, not so much.

The door to the room creaked open and a young female face peered in. "Is this the AA meeting?" She asked with a slight Scottish accent.

"It certainly is," replied Josh standing up, "please, come in, join us and welcome."

She took a vacant seat at the end of the row. "I'm Josh and you are?"

"Amy", she replied, "sorry I was late."

"Not a problem Amy." He turned to the Group. " Ok, who would like to start today? Rob, how about you? We've not heard from you before."

Rob was mid 30's, slim build with hair prematurely greying and dressed in jeans and a hoody. "Erm...ok," he began nervously, with a Cockney accent. "It started for me when me old man run off when I were 6. There was free of us and Mum was really pushed to keep us together, working free jobs but in the end she couldn't and we ended up separated in Foster care. Never saw me bruvver and sis agen until I left school. "There was a soft murmur of sympathy. Rob continued. "Me Foster 'ome weren't great like. I wasn't abused or nuffin' but I never 'ad enough to eat, second 'and cloves the kids at school made fun of. The Foster parents were still getting the dosh though" His voice broke. "Never 'ad no cuddles or treats and they used to drink. Not enough to get real nasty but, well, yer know what I mean. I used to sneak down at night and raid the fridge, not that there was ever much food, but I'd swig some of their left-over booze. I liked it and

By Vic Davey



it took the edge off you know an 'elped me to sleep."

Tears began to fall. "It's ok," said Josh quietly,"we've all been there. Do you want to carry on?" Rob nodded as someone handed him a tissue....

"Cut a long story short, I left school with nuffin'.... was bunking off too much I s'pose. Couldn't get a job, ended up on the streets, started nickin' stuff like, from shops and Supermarkets, mostly booze, got caught o' course and just got out last month. So that's about it. Me Probation Officer told me to come 'ere, so 'ere I am....."

A ripple of applause rang around the group. "Thank you for that Rob," said Josh. Amy raised her hand.

"Yes, Amy, do you want to tell us your story?"

"Well, I'm here because I thought it was the Art Appreciation Society! I'm in the wrong bloody meeting!"

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Don't Distress!

I'm sure many readers of this magazine will still recall with fondness (or with difficulty!) the nineteen sixties. It was a decade of huge change and immense opportunities,a time of great excitement. I was nineteen and I and two friends were heading south. One of these friends was pregnant but, heyho! we were going to take care of her.

It wasn't the bright lights I was aiming for. It was a kind of hope and aspiration which I couldn't articulate but which seemed to me at that time to be lacking in and around my small Tyneside town.

The year was 1965; a proviso stipulated by my parents was that we stay in the same flat my sister had rented three years previously when doing her midwifery at Queen Charlotte's. The landlady was a Miss Drakeup, and her flat was in Putney in the attic of one of the Victorian, three storey buildings in Clarendon Drive.

At the end of this road, on the river, was a nightclub where it was alleged Profumo had met Christine Keeler. Oh! The notoriety was heady.

This was the sixties and Mary Quant was everywhere - although she hadn't arrived in Newcastle before I left. There cocktail dresses, stiletto heels and bouffant hair still ruled supreme.

Indeed I had brought down with me a dress my mother had made for me. It was a purple velvet material with a hem three inches below the knee. That dress came in for a lot of stick from my new trendy friends. Fortunately, at my first job with ICL, I met Hilary. She was something else!

We were sharing an office of predominantly male systems analysts and programmers. My abiding memory is of her staring at me, saying very loudly "Oh my God", then coolly displaying one very long leg and refastening her suspenders in front of the whole office

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By Aileen Cleave



- tights had yet to make an entrance.

She took me under her wing. Within three short weeks my hair was cut in the short style popular at that time. We visited a small, dark boutique just off Kensington High Street called Mary Quant and my clothes rose alarmingly high above the knee, while my shoes were the round toed flats of the era. London was the centre of the world in the sixties and I, with my new image, felt on top of that world.

I should mention that our pregnant friend had disappeared almost immediately and went to live in Notting Hill, apparently no longer pregnant.

Hilary and I shared several flats and one of the best was in Putney Heath Lane. It was here that I celebrated my 21st birthday. We had about 16 friends coming to our party and so I took myself off to shower while my flat mates busied themselves preparing for our company.

I remember showering. I remember wondering where everyone had gone when I eventually emerged. The flat appeared to be empty, my wardrobe was definitely empty - except for one hanger with a note attached and something hanging from it.

The note read:

"Oh Aileen don't distress

At least we've left your favourite dress".

And there it was, my home-made purple cocktail dress, the only thing I had to celebrate my 21st birthday.

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GOING GREEN

By Jason Lowther

Spain's Marine Protected Areas

This month I'm writing about marine protected areas (MPAs). In

short, MPAs are what are known in the trade as area-based management tools. In other words, they are geographically located 'somewhere' and limited to that defined area. In that space, certain rules are applied with a view to the delivery of both conservation, and perhaps surprisingly, fisheries benefits. Spain has designated literally hundreds of MPAs around its coastlines and further out to sea. As I've written about before, these can include deep areas where seamounts rise from the deep seabed, seagrass forests, and coral communities. Keeping it (relatively) local, the focus is on some of the most important MPAs along the coasts of Murcia and Andalusia, which host some of Spain's most important marine protected areas so as to safeguard this rich natural (and sometimes cultural) heritage.

These protected areas are more than just conservation projects. They represent a growing recognition that healthy seas are essential not only for wildlife but also for fishing communities, tourism, and the cultural identity of southern Spain. Taken as a whole these competing uses and demands on the spaces offer a fascinating window into the challenges and successes of twenty-first-century marine conservation.

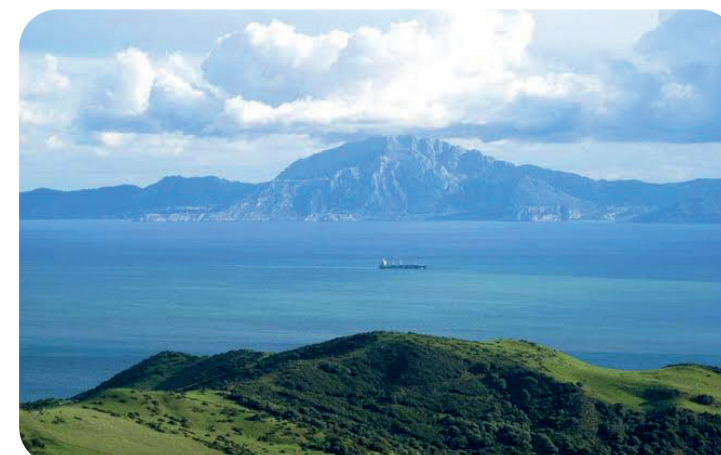
The seas in proximity to Murcia and Andalusia occupy a unique geographical position, where the Mediterranean Sea is influenced by the Atlantic Ocean, particularly around the Strait of Gibraltar. This mixing of currents creates exceptionally diverse marine ecosystems, supporting species found nowhere else in Europe, as well as expanses of more common species. The region contains extensive distributions of *Posidonia oceanica*, a Mediterranean seagrass often described as the "rainforest of the sea".

These underwater meadows provide nursery grounds for fish, shelter for invertebrates, and feeding areas for turtles. They also lock away significant amounts of carbon, making them increasingly important in efforts to combat climate change. Locally, Oceana, an Environmental NGO focused on marine conservation, and the Banco Santander Foundation, have previously worked on a successful imitative near Roquetas de Mar. In Murcia, efforts have been made in conjunction with the Mar Menor restoration and via the Cartagena Port Authority's seagrass reforestation project, which started in 2021, and is generally seen as having made a positive contribution to conservation.

The sea off the coasts of Murcia and Andalusia, also plays host to major migration routes used by dolphins, whales, turtles, and seabirds. Protected areas therefore help conserve not only local ecosystems but species that travel across entire oceans.

Perhaps the most famous marine protected area in Murcia is the Cabo de Palos and Islas Hormigas Marine Reserve. Established in 1995, it covers waters around a small group of rocky islets known as the Hormigas Islands, located just off the coast near Cartagena. If you like to go scuba diving or snorkelling, perhaps you've been there. If not, you should.

With its gin-clear waters and a whole stack of marine life to marvel at, it has gained a reputation as one of the finest diving destinations



in Europe. You can see some truly iconic sights in amongst the shoals of fish, like big groupers and barracudas, which would otherwise have been fished out of existence.

What makes Cabo de Palos particularly important is its success as a conservation model. The significant fishing restrictions within the reserve have allowed fish populations to recover and the many species that

call it home to thrive. Many scientific studies from all over the world, from the Caymans to the Canaries, Chagos and beyond have shown that fish inside protected zones tend to be larger and more abundant than in surrounding waters.

Many marine biologists regard the reserve as one of Spain's most successful examples of how conservation can benefit both biodiversity and local fisheries.

Further along the Murcian coast, moving west towards Aguilas, lies the protected landscape of Cabo Cope and Puntas de Calnegre. This part of the coastline is not as developed as other areas close by, possibly as a result of its rugged geography, but it reaps the benefits from that in terms of the mainly unspoilt terrestrial and marine habitats. The Cabo Cope, itself a protected nature reserve, gives way to rocky shores, underwater reefs, and seagrass meadows which create ideal conditions for marine biodiversity.

The area supports numerous fish species, crustaceans, and molluscs while also providing an important habitat for migratory birds. It is not as protected as the Cabo de Palos, there are less restrictions placed on the fishing efforts there for example, but it is a gem.

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It gives the impression of 'wildness', and a sense of what much of the Mediterranean may once have looked like before mass tourism changed everything.

Into Almeria, and if one marine protected area can claim to be the crown jewel of southern Spanish marine conservation, it is the Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park. The Cabo, as we affectionally call it round ours, is rightly famous for its dramatic volcanic landscapes, more aptly described sometimes as moonscapes, with precipitous cliffs, hidden coves, reefs, and striking rock formations. It is genuinely one of my favourite places and where I'm always in my 'happy place'. That said, the real magic is beneath the waves. There, as with along the coast, extensive seagrass meadows support a rich variety of fish and invertebrates. It's not totally off limits for fishing, but local fishers have long used relatively low-impact fishing methods, and conservation measures have sought to maintain these traditions while protecting marine ecosystems. This balance between cultural heritage and environmental protection is often presented as a model for sustainable coastal management.

The far western end of Andalusia contains one of the world's most remarkable marine environments. Here is the narrow passage linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Atlantic Ocean: the Strait of Gibraltar, with a highly restricted MPA, the Parque Natural del Estrecho, comprising a series of small marine spaces of extraordinary interest. Virtually all forms of fishing, including recreational, are prohibited in these areas, and even entry by boat, mooring or anchoring are heavily regulated. According to site descriptors, the areas have minimal or no capacity to withstand human activities that would transform the environment. Conservation organisations and the Spanish authorities have noted that the area supports some of Europe's most important populations of cetaceans, including pilot whales, sperm whales, and several dolphin species. Taken together, the overall MPA itself is not huge, covering only about 20 square kilometres, but by providing a haven for migratory wildlife, including many bird species, it performs a vital function in helping in the conservation of the many species that would otherwise be under pressure from shipping, pollution, and unsustainable fishing practices.

The final MPA included here is the Alboran Island and the Alboran Sea. It is again in the most restrictive category and is one of Spain's most remote and fascinating marine protected areas. It is centred on Alboran Island, which is a tiny volcanic island (the top of one



of the seamounts that I have previously written about) located more or less halfway between Spain and North Africa, in Spanish territorial waters, and is governed by the province of Almeria. Although the island is tiny, and is restricted to military personnel, its location in the Alboran Sea is more than just strategic. The seabed is home to coral communities, sponge gardens, and habitats used by numerous fish species. It is also important for marine mammals, and the island itself for resting seabirds.

The protection that MPAs offer to a diversity of species above and below the water is crucial in their survival. Faced with numerous challenges, marine environments need all the help they can get. Climate change is perhaps the most significant long-term threat. Rising sea temperatures are affecting Mediterranean ecosystems, causing stress to seagrass meadows and other sensitive habitats. Marine heatwaves have become increasingly common, raising concerns about future biodiversity loss. Alongside climate change, pollution remains another serious issue. Plastic waste, agricultural runoff, and coastal development all place pressure on these marginal ecosystems. Sometimes the effects are felt from problems originating far beyond their boundaries. Finally, overfishing, or illegal fishing, also continues to be a concern in some parts of the Mediterranean. While protected areas can help fish populations recover, effective enforcement is essential. Conservation organisations frequently argue that designation alone is not enough; protected areas must also be actively managed and monitored. You may have come across the idea of so-called 'paper parks', which is those areas that are designated in law, but are not effectively protected. In those sorts of circumstances, the protection promised is rarely achieved.

That said, the MPAs that are in place along the coasts of Murcia and Andalusia represent some of Spain's most significant conservation achievements. Places such as those outlined above demonstrate that environmental protection can coexist with fishing, tourism, and local economic development, and should give us some cause for optimism, which sometimes feels in short supply. Our segment of the Mediterranean coast isn't just a lovely place to live. It is a living, breathing ecosystem of extraordinary complexity and beauty. As climate change, pollution, and increasing human activity create their own pressures on marine and coastal environments, and the communities which are sustained by them, the marine protected areas of Murcia and Andalusia can hopefully continue to play a crucial role in safeguarding some of Europe's richest and most fascinating underwater landscapes for generations to come.

The brown bear is the largest terrestrial animal on the Iberian Peninsula. It has an extremely robust body, and the weight of the males exceeds that of the females by some 25 – 30%.

The specimens of the Spanish populations of brown bear, which can be found in the Pyrenees and the Cantabrian Mountains, are the smallest in the world; the males weigh about 180 kilos, the females between 130-140. Having said that, their weight varies enormously over each year, and from year to year, depending on the amount of food available.

The Iberian brown bear measures between 90 cm and 1 metre from front paw to the shoulder, and the length from head to tail is about two metres.

The colour of the Iberian specimens varies from pale cream to dark brown, but they all share the very dark, almost black, paws and yellowish points to the tips of the fur. The ears and the point of the nose are black.

Bears are plantigrade creatures, i.e., they walk on the whole of the soles of their feet, like humans. They are also one of the few animals that are able to stand on two feet, although they only do this in certain situations, like when they fight over females, or feel threatened. They normally walk on all four paws.

Bears mainly live off fruits and the most digestible plant parts (sprouts and soft leaves), so their habitat needs to have plenty of all kinds of fruits, and also be extensive enough for these large animals to move about as they please, have quiet areas to rest in and safe shelters for their hibernation.

In years gone by, the brown bear inhabited most of the Spanish mountain ranges and, although there are still abundant fruits to be found there, the persecution by man and the lack of quiet places have driven the bear population out so that nowadays the only places in Spain that they can still survive are the large deciduous forests of the Cantabrian Mountains and the Pyrenees in northern Spain.

The ideal habitat for the brown bear is between 1,100 and 1,400 MASL although there are suitable areas on the northern slopes down to 500 metres, and often they venture up to the meadows and grasslands at over 2,000 MASL.

The Brown Bear



The brown bears' claws and general anatomy point to the typical carnivore, but in reality they are very unusual meat eaters. Their diet is almost entirely vegetarian, and in fact their molars have modified with time to be more rounded and have a larger surface, more appropriate for a plant and fruit based diet, and pointed incisors handy for grazing and cutting roots and stems. Nonetheless, their jaws still have the strength to demolish prey as large as a deer.

Almost all of the bear's life revolves around the search for food. Even the hibernation is brought on by the lack of proper alimentation in winter. An adult bear can lose as much as 40% of its weight over winter. Its diet consists of 85% vegetable matter (acorns, chestnuts, beechnuts, berries, hazelnuts, tubers, plant shoots, etc.), and the last 15% consists of carrion, insects, honey, birds, eggs, and hoofed animals.

The brown bear is not often seen in the wild here in Spain; however, they sometimes approach those villages of Asturias that boast honeycombs, and meadows or groves with berries. It is more common to just spot their pawprints and other marks that they leave behind.

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When the mating season starts, the males begin marking their territory in the forest. Claw and bite marks and debarking can be seen at over a metre and a half above the forest floor, all used by the males to advise others that this territory is already taken. They also rub their fur against the trees to leave them impregnated by their smell.

Normally, bears sleep on small 'bunks' consisting of twigs and grass over small depression they dig in the ground; or they make the bunk directly on the flat ground. Sometimes they sleep in their winter caves or hollow trees.

For the long winter hibernation they use covered caves or hollow oak trees. The hibernation usually lasts from January to March, although it depends on how severe the winter is, and the availability of food. In the time up to hibernation, the bears eat as much as they possibly can in order to build up fat reserves.

Bears have always had a bad reputation, and their aggressions are usually exaggerated, which has led to a general persecution in Europe, and a sharp fall in numbers. The truth is that bears only charge when they feel threatened, or they think their cubs are in danger. Most times the charges are for show, and they rarely lead to an actual attack.

The bear has the lowest birth rate of all vertebrae. The females reach sexual maturity between three and a half and five years of age. They only reproduce every three years, and give birth to between one and three cubs.



Bears are solitary creatures that only live with others during the mating season in summer. Brown bears are polygamous, and they mate several times during the season. At this time, the males extend their territory and they roam in order to check out and hopefully conquer the available females. Often several males compete over the same female, and if the initial intimidation does not end with a winner, they get into gruelling fights.

Once the male has conquered his mate, they form a temporary pair and stay together for a time, sleeping, playing and play-fighting, before separating and carrying on with their solitary lives.

The gestation period is about seven months, and the cubs are born in January and February during the mother's hibernation. The cubs have almost no fur when they are born, and

they weigh about 500 g, are blind and have no teeth. Once they leave the lair, they are almost covered in fur and they sport a characteristic whitish collar which disappears with time.

When they are three and a half months old, they start looking for alternatives to their mother's milk. They keep suckling until they are a year old. They develop quickly and leave the lair definitively at the end of spring. They stay with their mother until they are 18 to 22 months old, at which time she abandons them. The cubs then stay together for about another year.

At the turn of the millennium, the brown bear was on the verge of extinction due to the loss of habitat and illegal hunting. The Spanish population counted less than 80 specimens.

However, a dedicated and intensive protection and recovery programme has turned the tide, and at the end of 2022, a census showed that the population has multiplied over the last two decades, and the number of brown bears living in the wild in the Cantabrian Mountains has reached 350, and the population of the Pyrenees was over 50.

The population has stayed stable at these figures over the last four years.

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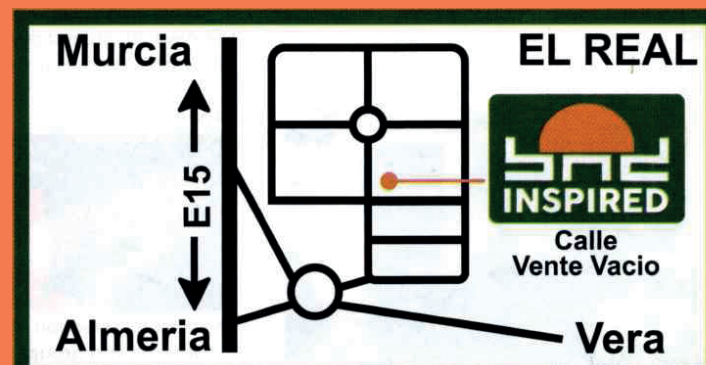
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A Place in the Sun

STEPPING STONES - WE NEED TO CARE FOR THE CARERS

By JD Dickerson



Fanny with her late husband

It's very difficult and exhausting when you become the sole carer for a loved one. It is easy to become isolated and alone. Now do it in a foreign country, where family are thousands of miles away and the nearest people don't speak your language.

This is the situation that Fanny Davies found herself in, approximately 16 years ago.

Fanny realised she needed help and support while struggling to care for her husband after doctors diagnosed him with Alzheimer's.

She placed an advert in a local magazine and brought together a group of people who originally met for coffee and a chat. Stepping Stones was born, with a simple but very important message - We need to care for the carers.

Stepping Stones now meet every Thursday morning from 10.45 am until 1 pm at the Evangelical Church in Turre. Coffee and a chat are now followed by entertainment and lunch. There is no charge to attend meetings, although Stepping Stones asks for a donation of 5 euros towards costs.

Members share experiences and advice and comprise carers, their dependents, past carers, and those struggling on their own. It's a place where people can come together, relax and, for a few hours, feel that they are not facing everything alone.

There are quizzes, games, and plenty of chats and laughter. Experiences are shared, tips and advice offered. Sometimes a few words from someone who has been through something similar can make all the difference.

Stepping Stones depends totally on funding from local people and businesses. These donations allow Stepping Stones to organise occasional coach trips and meals out, as well as providing help towards some of the financial burdens faced by members of the group.

Talking about Stepping Stones, Fanny Davies says, "It may only be one morning a week, but I know from personal experience that Stepping Stones can be a lifeline.

When caring becomes overwhelming and you reach the point where you feel you simply cannot continue on your own, knowing there is somewhere to go, and people who understand, can make such a difference."

Fanny can be contacted on 677 683 385 or you can visit the group's Facebook page - Stepping Stones Carers Support.

In the group photo, you can see Fanny Davies receiving a donation of 82 euros from the Mojácar Rummikub Group. If you are interested, you can contact Louisa on 0034 711 015 110.



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Time after Time

Mackenzie Crook's idea for Detectorists came, it seems, from an episode of Time Team. His show is, of course, about two very likeable eccentric amateur metal detector guys and their male bonding hobby, searching for treasure in England's green and pleasant lands. Mackenzie Crook's girlfriend in the show looked very familiar and then I saw who her Detectorists TV and real mum was. It was Diana Rigg. My Avengers Pin up girl. Mrs Peel and her daughter Rachael Stirling in the same show. Priceless. Diana Rigg was also The Queen of Thorns in the TV show Game of Thrones, so she knew a bit about antiquity.

In 1992, The Hoxne Hoard was found in a field by a Detectorist guy looking for a lost farmer's hammer. The Hoard, a treasure chest filled with 14,865 Roman coins and 200 gold and silver luxury objects, valued at £1.7million and now in the British museum, along with the missing farmer's hammer which started the whole adventure. And I suppose the guy did a gold dance.

Under the UK Treasure Act, if a detectorist finds something legally classified as "Treasure" (usually gold/silver over 300 years old or coin hoards), they are legally required to report it. A museum gets the first right to buy it, and the fair market value is split 50/50 as a cash reward between the detectorist and the landowner. Which is fair enough.

The whole-Time Team thing got me thinking about history and timelines and just what exactly is this thing we refer to as time. Is it real? Is it a thing? Lance, in the show, played by Toby Jones, said Detectorists were a type of Time Traveller which could be as good an explanation as any. A type of guardian of time. But I'm sure Dr Who, in his multidimensional Tardis Police box, would have something to say about that.

By Tom Fynes



The physicist John Wheeler once said: "Time is what keeps everything from happening all at once."

Before Albert Einstein, Sir Isaac Newton thought time was absolute, ticking away at the exact same rate everywhere in the cosmos. Einstein proved him wrong with his theories of Relativity. We now know that time is elastic and stretches or squeezes based on two things: speed and gravity. This phenomenon is called Time Dilation.

In the Danish novelist Solvej Balle's books, On The Calculation of Volume, the hero of the books, Tara Selter, is trapped in a never-ending time-loop. The 18th of November. This is very unlike the movie Groundhog Day with Bill Murray.

Tara Selter is an antiquarian book dealer, buying and selling rare books. The title On the Calculation of Volume acts as a metaphor because Tara is stuck in a single day, time has essentially stopped "flowing" forward lineally. Instead, time has taken on a physical shape, a volume or a container, that she has to map out, calculate, and learn to inhabit. Her situation was possibly due to her acquiring some old Roman coins.

The specific Roman coin that the protagonist Tara Selter buys on November 18th and which subsequently becomes a central part of her research throughout her time-loop, was a Roman coin called a sestertius.

It wasn't a gold coin but it was brassy looking and could've passed for gold. One sestertius, back in the day, would get you a loaf of bread, a litre of vino or admission to the public baths for a whole month.

Tara can move around within the day, which is always and forever the 18th of November. She can also go travelling, which she does. She rents apartments and then stays in them, knowing they are empty on that time-loop day forever.

As long as she avoids the Landlord, who will have forgotten he has rented out the room to this stuck in a time-loop traveller. It does take a bit to get your head around her very peculiar situation.

My wife asked what I was reading and I tried to explain it was about a woman who was stuck in the same day that looped over and over.

She explains everything to her husband about what has happened to her, and the next day he, of course, cannot remember a thing she has told him, so she has to do it all over again.

My wife's response was, "That sounds pretty normal. What's so odd about that?" No sisterhood sympathy there to be had, for the poor time-looping Tara Selter.

In H. G. Wells book The Time Machine, the only way he knew he was going forward in time was the changing of women's fashion, which is also true for the movies. Men are still running around in the same suits, but the women's fashion and hair styles change rapidly and thereby date the period.

The multiverse says there is a different timeline breaking off with each decision you make. So, there is a timeline where you did marry that Italian girl or boy you met on that exchange summer holiday, one where you are extremely wealthy and a timeline where you are extremely poor.

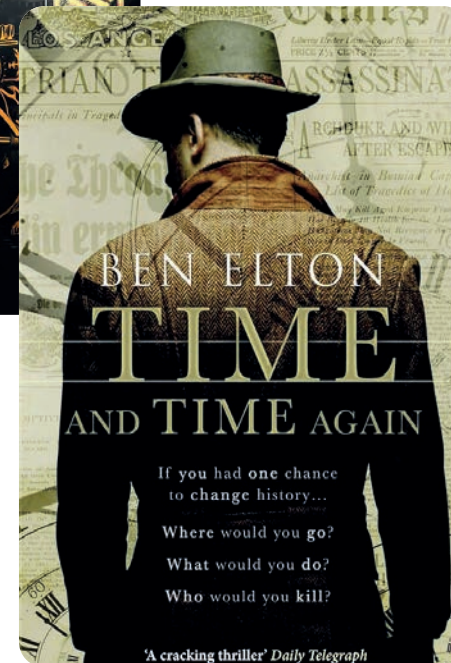
So, time travel maybe a possibility but you will be travelling to another timeline. So, cause and effect would not matter. You could do anything in this timeline and it would have no effect on your own. Could you run into yourself, well yes but you would be hoping that other self is off travelling in another timeline.

This travelling back in time can be very confusing and exhausting, so spare a thought for our own Dr Who. He seems to have cracked it even though with the whole universe to time travel in he does seem to end up in Victorian England a lot of the time.

In the Ben Elton book, Time and Time Again, someone keeps going back in time to Sarajevo and changing the future by stopping the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. Which is meant to prevent The Great War, but results in our timeline getting worse as each new time traveller's change is applied.

So this will never work Mr Fawltz.

One very odd and extremely weird fact about the assassination of



Archduke Franz Ferdinand... The number plates of the Gräf & Stift open-top luxury car that Archduke Franz Ferdinand was riding in when he was assassinated was A III-118.

So, the plate can be read as Armistice, 11 November 1918, the exact date World War I came to a close.

A = Armistice

11 = 11th day

11 = 11th month (November)

18 = 1918 (the year the war ended)

A spooky coincidence, or was some joker sending us a message from the future? The actual car, complete with the A III-118 plate and the bullet holes from Gavrilo Princip's gun, is still on display at the Museum of Military History in Vienna, Austria.

This is something we will keep coming back to. Time after Time.

The great Seneca once said: "It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it."

But then again, for a more modern piece of wisdom, as my son always told me when he was a student at Bournemouth University, "A weekend wasted, is never a wasted weekend."



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Home Run

Calvin sits alone beside the road. The traffic roars past, oblivious. Calvin thinks for a moment and realises there’s a simple explanation. After he and Daddy went for a wee, Daddy must have forgotten to put him back in the car. Daddy will remember soon. He’ll notice the car’s too quiet. If he doesn’t, Mummy will. No need to worry.

He waits for ages, but the car doesn’t return. It’s getting cold. Calvin shivers and concludes that Daddy and Mummy haven’t forgotten him. It’s his fault for being noisy in the car. They’re always telling him off about it. He tries to be quiet, but it’s difficult, when he’s excited about taking a trip.

Calvin decides to walk home. When he gets back, maybe Daddy and Mummy won’t be angry anymore. Even if they are, perhaps he can calm them down, by being on his best behaviour. Sometimes that works.

He knows busy roads are dangerous. Luckily, there’s a wood alongside. Calvin decides to walk through it, in the opposite direction to Daddy’s car. He crunches through paper-dry leaves and squelches through mud. The pale evening sunlight intermittently warms his back.

There’s a tiny shock of cold each time he returns to the shade. He sees signs that others have passed this way. A crisp packet glints, incongruously silver. It’s empty, which is a shame, as he’s hungry.

Calvin spots an empty glass bottle and recognises the smell rising from its open mouth. When Daddy and Mummy drink from bottles like this, they become even louder than Calvin in the car. At first, they seem happy. Later, they fight. Calvin puts himself to bed, just to avoid them.

The shadows lengthen and the sun slips away. Calvin had hoped

By Felicity Radcliffe

to be home for dinner, but the walk is longer than expected. He perseveres, but as the trees and bushes merge into amorphous blackness, he knows it’s no use. He’ll have to sleep in the woods. As he curls up small, Calvin feels grateful this happened when he was five. He wouldn’t have coped if he were younger.

Calvin wakes early. He’s tired, and achy from the damp ground, but he’s relieved to discern once again the outlines of the trees. The world smells fresh, yet pungent, as if reborn overnight out of decay. Beyond the wood, the traffic still roars. Calvin stands up and heads for home.

The terrain changes. The ground slopes uphill and the bushes thin out. Calvin spots a gravel path ahead and takes it. He prefers the leafy woodland carpet, but knows gravel means people. Soon he emerges from the wood, blinking in the glare of an open sunlit space. Below is a green swathe, criss-crossed with paths. An oval pond reflects the scudding clouds. Beyond are buildings. Lots of them.

Calvin recognises this place. He dimly remembers Daddy and Mummy bringing him here, but might have doubted himself, were it not for the smell. The all-pervading, wheaten sweetness, exhaled from factory chimneys, convinces him he’s home.

A milder version of the smell lives in their kitchen at breakfast. On a good day, Mummy opens the packet, puts two biscuits in her bowl, then adds milk. If Calvin has been good, she puts a biscuit in his bowl. Daddy doesn’t like the biscuits. He shouts at Mummy if she serves them to him. He prefers bacon. Calvin does too, but he eats his biscuit to please Mummy. He’s desperate to see her.

Calvin charges downhill, towards the town. Soon he’s panting for breath but keeps running until he’s among the houses. The traffic noise has receded; the roads here are quieter and safer. Unfortunately, they all look the same. So do the houses. Calvin gasps his way down one street, then the next, searching in vain for the rusting, broken pram in his front garden.

Eventually exhaustion forces him to stop. His chest heaves as he struggles to recover. Then he hears a voice.

‘Calvin? Is that you? What are you doing out this early? I’d better take you home.’

The man scoops Calvin into his arms and strides away briskly. As



he turns a corner, Calvin’s body floods with relief. There it is, a few houses down. The pram. Calvin squirms and tries to free himself, but the man holds him firmly.

He walks past the pram and rings the doorbell. After a few seconds, Daddy answers.

‘Hello, mate! Is this your Calvin? I found him wandering the streets.

He must have got out.’

Daddy stares at the man, then at Calvin. At that moment Calvin realises he must have done something really naughty, because Daddy doesn’t look pleased to see him.

‘Yeah, it is – but he didn’t get out. We took him to the animal shelter. Missus said we couldn’t afford him no more. He must’ve escaped. Give him ‘ere - I’ll take him back. Tell ‘em to lock him up proper this time.’

‘It’s alright, pal. I’ll take him for you.’

‘You sure?’

‘Absolutely. No drama. Catch you later.’

Daddy shuts the door, and the man walks away. Calvin wriggles and cries in his arms. The man bends his head and whispers in Calvin’s ear:

‘Don’t fret, little man. I’m not taking you to the shelter. I don’t reckon you were there in the first place. Your Dad’s not gonna win an Oscar for his acting, is he? Besides, no pets escape from the shelter and even if they did, it’s miles away. You’d never have found your way back.’

The man gently strokes Calvin’s head.

‘My kids have been nagging us for ages to get a dog, so I regard this as a sign. Fancy coming home with me, Calvin? I’ll explain to your Dad next time I run into him.’

Calvin falls silent.

‘Think you could cope with being spoiled rotten by two little girls?’

Calvin’s tail thumps against the man’s side.

‘I’ll take that as a “yes”. Come on, then. Let’s go home.’





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Little Jack Horner!

Little Jack Horner
Sat in the corner
Eating his pudding and pie
He stuck in his thumb
And pulled out a plum
And said
'What a good boy am I.'

That has always puzzled me. Giving it some thought I think this is probably what happened:

Mrs Horner, sweating profusely from her labours, wiped her face on her arm, kicked the door on the range shut and stood back to admire the plum pie she had just baked, resplendant on the kitchen table.

It was a magnificent pie, a pie to be proud of. It would definitely impress Aunty Edna, and that was hard to do.

Just then her son Jack, drawn by the irresistible aroma of pie, wandered into the kitchen.

Still admiring her pie and without looking round she snapped at Jack 'Shut the door and wipe your feet.'

She didn't need to look, she knew that Jack would have brought a generous amount of countryside in with him.

'Cor mum, that's a good pie. Can I have some?'

'No, certainly not! That pie is for tomorrow's tea. Aunty Edna's coming round.'

Jack didn't say anything. Aunty Edna, as far as he was concerned, bore a startling resemblance to a toad except that toads were prettier, didn't poke you with the point of their umbrellas, and were more fun.

'Now don't you dare touch that pie! I'm just going into the pantry for a minute to fetch some mince. I'm going to make some lattice savoury tarts, Aunty Edna likes them.'

Jack giggled. He liked watching Aunty Edna eat. Her teeth and her mouth moved at different speeds, and he was never quite certain which would finish first.

As his mother departed temptation overcame him. He approached the pie stealthily, lifted it very carefully off the table and settled in the corner with the pie in his lap.

Cautiously he picked off a tiny bit of crust, small enough that no-one would notice, he hoped, and delved into the body of the pie.

He had just located a nice big plum when he heard the pantry door slam.

With the lightning reactions of an experienced pie thief he came out of the corner and replaced the pie on the table.

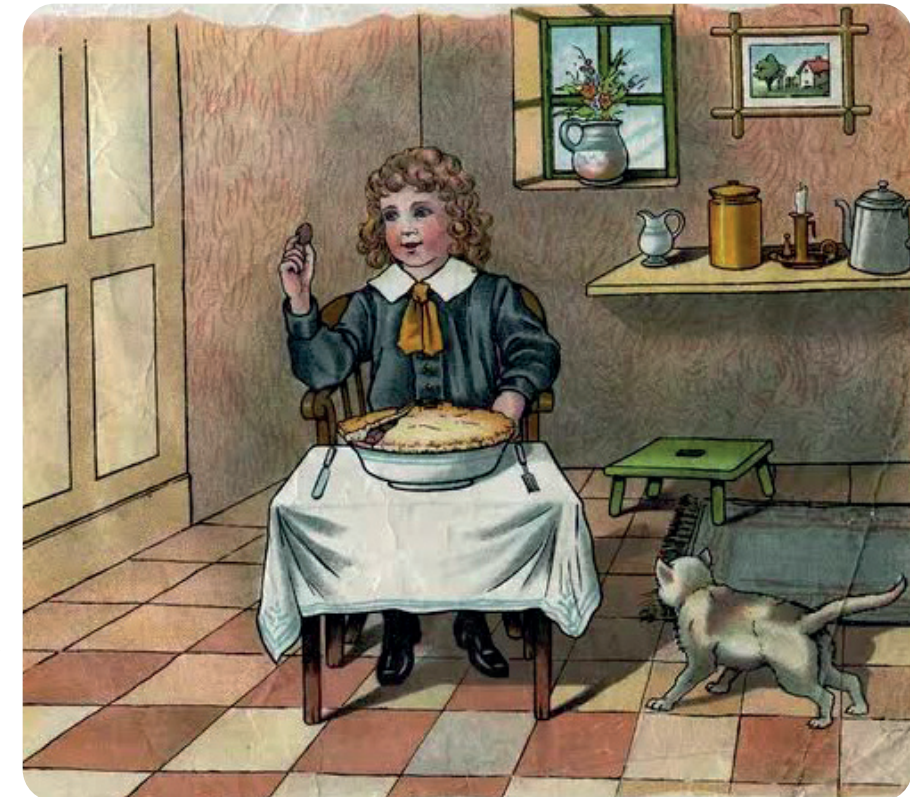
The plum, however was firmly wedged on his thumb.

He hid his guilty hand behind himself, and with heartmelting virtue exclaimed 'What a good boy am I!'

His mother took in the scene in the blink of an eye. She picked up the rolling pin. 'Jack, I'm going to kill you! You've ruined that pie! What am going to give Aunty Edna now?'

It was perhaps not the best answer Jack could have given, but in the heat of the moment he suggested 'A bag to go over her head?'

By Jos Biggs



With a howl of desperation she bore down on him with the rolling pin. Jack, being small and nimble, squeezed out under her arm and set off full pelt down the road, the incriminating plum still firmly wedged on his thumb.

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Blanca Fernández Ochoa

Spain's First Female Winter Olympics Medal Holder

Back in August 2019 Spain lost one of her most emblematic former top athletes: Blanca Fernández Ochoa, slalom skier par excellence.

She was born in Madrid in 1963, the first daughter in a flock of eight children. Her father was the janitor in the Spanish Skiing School, and his job awakened in the whole family a vivid interest in the sport.

Blanca's brother Francisco – better known as Paquito – won gold for Spain at the 1972 winter Olympics, the first ever Spaniard to obtain a winter Olympics medal. The Spanish sports authorities turned their eyes to the rest of the siblings, to see if there were any other potential medallists in the flock.

At the age of 11, Blanca was sent off to a skiing camp to try to turn her into a top skier. What had up until then been a hobby became the

centre of a life that was a far cry from what she had wanted.

In an interview with the El País newspaper in 2014 she said, 'I remember my childhood as being very hard. I was selected for the promising Spanish team and when I was 11 I was sent to board in a high school in the Arán Valley [which was centred round winter sports]. I had a bad time far away from my parents, my home and my friends. I cried a lot until I got over it and started to live.'

She said that she did not like neither skiing nor the cold, but nevertheless she became a skiing champion, partly thanks to her own willingness to do what was required and work hard to reach a goal.

In the winter Olympics in Calgary, Canada, in 1988, she was on the brink of winning the gold medal when she lost control over her inner ski and fell. All of Spain watched her tears of anger and disappointment and cried with her.

However, in 1992 she took revenge against fate and became the first ever Spanish woman to win a medal in the winter Olympics, when she won bronze in Albertville in



France.

Shortly after that she announced her retirement from competition sports as she had by then had enough of competing at a high level and wanted more time for the other things in life.

She said that she was burnt out, and now skiing became for her a sport she could enjoy with her friends and her children, and sometimes she would help companies with incentive programmes. But nothing more.

When she was 28, Blanca had married the Italian ski instructor Daniele Fioretto whom she'd met at a skiing school when she was 14. However, the marriage soon broke up and they went their separate ways.

She later married David Fresneda who would be the father of her two children, Olivia and David. However, once more the marriage did not work out and she separated from her husband on less than amicable terms.

From then on she dedicated her life to her two children who are both successful rugby players; her daughter was on the international girls' rugby team when she was 7 and was hoping to participate in the Olympics in this sport.

On 23rd August 2019 Blanca announced that she was going hiking 'in the mountains to the north for a few days' and her family were not to see her alive again.

A few days later her daughter reported her as missing and an extensive search was kicked off. After four days' search with helicopters, police, volunteers and dogs, the lifeless body of Blanca was found with a bad injury to her head, the consequence of a fall.

The death of one of Spain's darlings was widely lamented, and hundreds of family, friends and fans followed her coffin to the cemetery to offer her a last Adios.



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Thursday 26th November

Sunday 13th December

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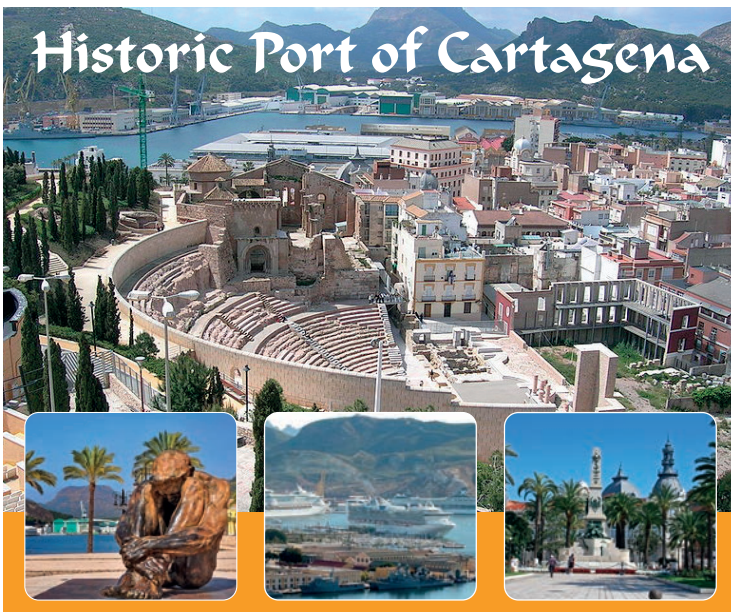
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20th October '26

An opportunity to visit this historic City and Naval Port ~ so much to see and enjoy. Visit the museums, the Roman Amphitheatre, stroll the promenade or take a boat trip around the busy harbour. Why not take the time to relax & enjoy a leisurely lunch.

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa *Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand*



Shopping Trip

Thursday 5th November

Visit the Nevada Shopping Centre one of the largest in the region & get that Christmas Shopping started

Leaves La Alfoquia 08.30
Leaves Granada 17.00

Other pick-ups include
Albox, Arboleas, Mojácar & Turre

21€
per person



16th ~ 19th November 2026

Staying at:

4* Hotel OH Campo
Spain - 800m from border

Price Includes:

Coach travel
Three nights in 4* hotel
Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

* Price based on 2 people sharing a room
Single supplement upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



9th ~ 11th or 14th ~ 16th December 2026

Staying at:

4* Hotel Soho Boutique Equitativa

Central to lights

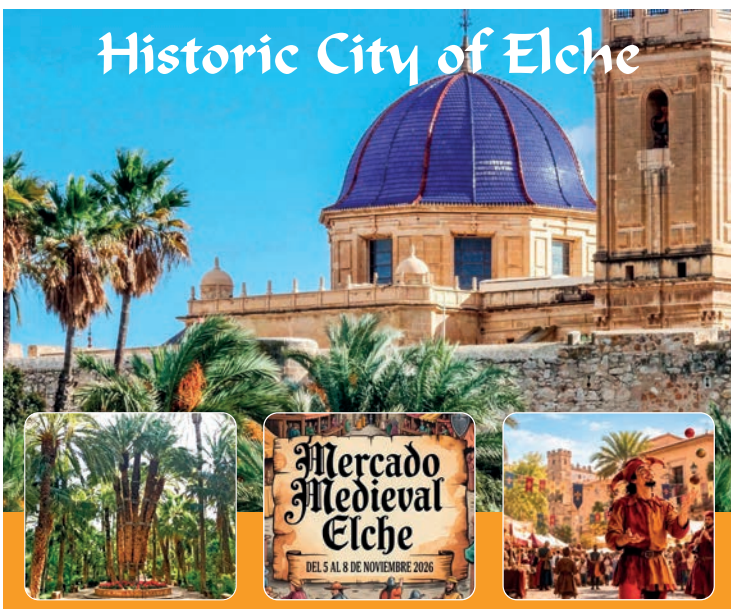
Price Includes:

Coach travel
Two nights in 4* hotel
Breakfast - days 2 + 3

* Price based on 2 people sharing a room
Single supplement upon request

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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



From
20€
per person

7th November '26

An opportunity to visit this historic City and the extensive Palm Grove, a World Heritage site, that is home to the multi-stem imperial palm tree and many thousands more.

The Medieval Market will also be in full swing so a chance to soak up the atmosphere of times gone by.

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa *Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand*



9th ~ 11th November 2026

Staying at:

4* Soho Boutique
Central Old Granada (near Cathedral)

Price Includes:

Coach travel
Two nights in 4* hotel
Breakfast - days 2 + 3

* Price based on 2 people sharing a room
Single supplement upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



23rd ~ 27th December 2026

Staying at:

4* Hotel Ambassador Playa II
Standard room

Price Includes:

Coach travel
Four nights in 4* hotel
Full Board includes wine and water
Gala Meal (25th)

* Price based on 2 people sharing a room
Single supplement upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



23rd ~ 27th December 2026

Staying at:

4* Hotel Presidente
Room with pool view

Price Includes:

Coach travel
Four nights in 4* hotel
Full Board includes wine and water
Gala Meal (25th)

* Price based on 2 people sharing a room
Single supplement upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand





1 Night
*145€
per person
based on 2
people sharing

25th ~ 26th January 2027

Staying at:
4* Hotel Levante,
Balneario de
Archena, Murcia

Price Includes:

Access to the Thermal Spa
Pools & Jacuzzis ~ 2 days

One night in 4* hotel

Lunch - day 1

Evening Meal - day 1

Breakfast - day 2

Optional Extras:
Access to the Balnea
Thermal Circuit
Massage Treatments
Lunch - day 2

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



15th ~ 17th March 2027

Staying at:
4* Soho Boutique
Central Old Granada (near Cathedral)

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Two nights in 4* hotel

Breakfast - days 2 + 3

* Price based on 2 people
sharing a room
Single supplement
upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



10th ~ 13th May 2027

Staying at:
4* Hotel Soho Boutique Congreso
Prime location in city centre

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Three nights in 4* hotel

Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

Visit to Alcalá de Heneres

* Price based on 2 people
sharing a room
Single supplement
upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



31st May ~ 3rd June 2027

Staying at:
4* Hotel Cetina Palacio de
los Salcedo ~ Baeza

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Three nights in 4* hotel

Visit to Úbeda

Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

* Price based on 2
people sharing a room
Single supplement
upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



5 Nights
*605€
per person

FULLY BOOKED

5th ~ 10th April 2027

Staying
at:

4* Hotel Rio Badajoz (1)

4* Hotel Florida ~ Lisbon (3)

4* NH Luz de Huelva (1)

* Price based on 2 people
sharing a room
Single sup upon request

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Five nights in 4* hotels

Evening Meal - day 1

Breakfast - days 2, 3, 4+5

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



3 Nights
*351€
per person

19th ~ 22th April 2027

Staying at:
4* Hotel Sercotel Los Llanos
central location

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Three nights in 4* hotel

Visit to Alcalá de Júcar

Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

* Price based on 2
people sharing a room
Single supplement
upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



3 Nights
*322€
per person

14th ~ 17th June 2027

Staying at:
4* Hotel María Cristina
Toledo

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Three nights in 4* hotel

Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

Visit to Aranjuez

* Price based on 2 people
sharing a room
Single supplement
upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



4 Nights
*541€
per person

NEW

12th ~ 16th September 2027

Staying at:
4* Hotel Alay
central location

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Four nights in 4* hotel

Visit to Castillo de Colomares

Half Board

* Price based on 2
people sharing a room
Single supplement
upon request

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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



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*377€
per person

Cuenca

3 Nights
*tba€
per person

20th ~ 23rd September 2027

Staying at:
4* Hotel Eurostars Acueducto Segovia

Price Includes:
Coach travel
Three nights in 4* hotel
Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4
Visit city of Avila

* Price based on 2 people sharing a room
Single supplement upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:
Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

4th ~ 7th October 2027

Staying at:
4* Hotel Torremangana Central Cuenca

Price Includes:
Coach travel
Three nights in 4* hotel
Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4
Visit to Ciudad Encantada

* Price based on 2 people sharing a room
Single supplement upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:
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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

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Here are more proposed mini breaks being arranged by Parra Travel for 2027/2028

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Granada ~ November

Malaga (Christmas Lights)

Benidorm ~ Christmas

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El Escorial & Valley of the Fallen

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Sleep Disorders

What are sleep disorders?

Sleep disorders are a group of conditions that affect the ability to sleep well on a regular basis. Whether they are caused by a health problem or by too much stress, sleep disorders are becoming increasingly common.

In fact, more than one-third of adults report getting fewer than 7 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. More than 70% of students report getting fewer than 8 hours of sleep on weeknights.

Most people occasionally experience sleeping problems due to stress, hectic schedules, and other outside influences. However, when these issues begin to occur on a regular basis and interfere with daily life, they may indicate a sleeping disorder.

Depending on the type of sleep disorder, people may have a difficult time falling asleep and may feel extremely tired throughout the day. The lack of sleep can have a negative impact on energy, mood, concentration, and overall health.

In some cases, sleep disorders can be a symptom of another medical or mental health condition. These sleeping problems may eventually go away once treatment is obtained for the underlying cause.

When sleep disorders aren't caused by another condition, treatment normally involves a combination of medical treatments and lifestyle changes.

It's important to receive a diagnosis and treatment right away if

you suspect you might have a sleep disorder. When left untreated, the negative effects of sleep disorders can lead to further health consequences. They can also affect your performance at work, cause strain in relationships, and impair your ability to perform daily activities.

Continued on page 60

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..... Continued from page 59

What are the different types of sleep disorders?

There are many different types of sleep disorders. Some may be caused by other underlying health conditions.

Insomnia

Insomnia refers to the inability to fall asleep or to remain asleep. It can be caused by jet lag, stress and anxiety, hormones, or digestive problems. It may also be a symptom of another condition. Insomnia can be problematic for your overall health and quality of life, potentially causing: Depression, difficulty concentrating, irritability, weight gain, impaired work or school performance

Unfortunately, insomnia is extremely common. Up to 50% of adults experience it at some point in their lives.

The disorder is most prevalent among older adults and women.

Insomnia is usually classified as one of three types:

- Chronic, when insomnia happens on a regular basis for at least 1 month
- Intermittent, when insomnia occurs periodically
- Transient, when insomnia lasts for just a few nights at a time

Sleep apnea

Sleep apnea is characterized by pauses in breathing during sleep. This is a serious medical condition that causes the body to take in less oxygen. It can also cause you to wake up during the night.

There are two types:

- Obstructive sleep apnea, where the flow of air stops because airway space is obstructed or too narrow, and
- Central sleep apnea, where there is a problem in the connection



between the brain and the muscles that control your breath.

Parasomnias

Parasomnias are a class of sleep disorders that cause abnormal movements and behaviours during sleep.

They include: Sleepwalking, sleep talking, groaning, nightmares, bedwetting ,teeth grinding or jaw clenching,

Restless leg syndrome

Restless leg syndrome (RLS) is an overwhelming need to move the legs. This urge is sometimes accompanied by a tingling sensation in the legs. While these symptoms can occur during the day, they are most prevalent at night.

RLS is often associated with certain health conditions, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Parkinson's disease, but the exact cause isn't always known.

Narcolepsy

Narcolepsy is characterized by "sleep attacks" that occur while awake. This means that you will suddenly feel extremely tired and fall asleep without warning.

The disorder can also cause sleep paralysis, which may make you physically unable to move right after waking up.

Although narcolepsy may occur on its own, it is also associated with certain neurological disorders, such as multiple sclerosis.

What are the symptoms of sleep disorders?

Symptoms differ depending on the severity and type of sleeping disorder. They may also vary when sleep disorders are a result of another condition.

However, general symptoms of sleep disorders include:

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Daytime fatigue
- Strong urge to take naps during the day
- Unusual breathing patterns
- Unusual or unpleasant urges to move while falling asleep
- Unusual movement or other experiences while asleep
- Unintentional changes to your sleep/wake schedule



- Irritability, anxiety or depression
- Lack of concentration
- Weight gain

What causes sleep disorders?

There are many conditions, diseases, and disorders that can cause sleep disturbances. In many cases, sleep disorders develop as a result of an underlying health problem.

Allergies and respiratory problems

Allergies, colds, and upper respiratory infections can make it challenging to breathe at night. The inability to breathe through your nose can also cause sleeping difficulties.

Frequent urination

Nocturia, or frequent urination, may disrupt your sleep by causing you to wake up during the night. Hormonal imbalances and diseases of the urinary tract may contribute to the development of this condition. Be sure to call your doctor right away if frequent urination is accompanied by bleeding or pain.

Chronic pain

Constant pain can make it difficult to fall asleep. It might even wake you up after you fall asleep. Some of the most common causes of chronic pain include: Arthritis, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, inflammatory bowel disease, persistent headaches, continuous lower back pain. In some cases, chronic pain may even be exacerbated by sleep disorders. For instance, doctors believe the development of fibromyalgia might be linked to sleeping problems.

Stress and anxiety

Stress and anxiety often have a negative impact on sleep quality. It can be difficult for you to fall asleep or to stay asleep. Nightmares, sleep talking, or sleepwalking may also disrupt your sleep.

How are sleep disorders diagnosed?

Your doctor will first perform a physical exam and gather information about your symptoms and medical history. They may also order various tests, including:

Polysomnography (PSG)

This is a lab sleep study that evaluates oxygen levels, body movements, and brain waves to determine how they disrupt sleep vs. home sleep study (HST) that is performed in your own home and is used to diagnose sleep apnea.

Continued on page 62

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..... *Continued from page 61*

Electroencephalogram (EEG)

This is a test that assesses electrical activity in the brain and detects any potential problems associated with this activity. It’s part of a polysomnography.

Multiple sleep latency test (MSLT)

This daytime napping study is used in conjunction with a PSG at night to help diagnose narcolepsy.

These tests can be crucial in determining the right course of treatment for sleep disorders.

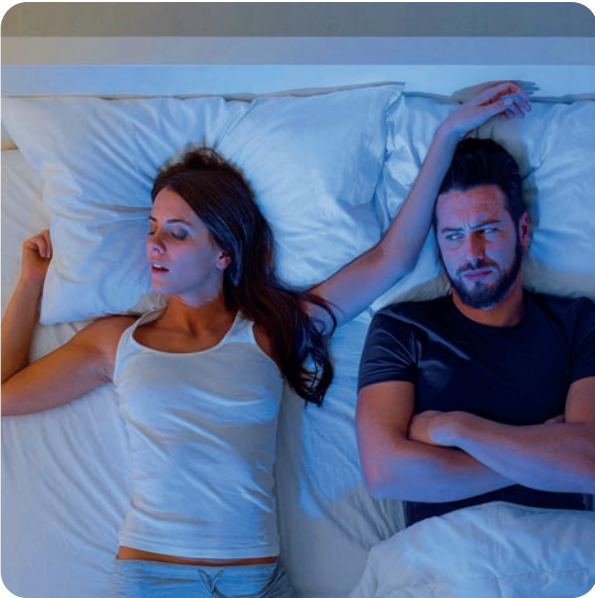
How are sleep disorders treated?

Treatment for sleep disorders can vary depending on the type and underlying cause. However, it generally includes a combination of medical treatments and lifestyle changes.

Medical treatment for sleep disturbances might include any of the following: Sleeping pills, melatonin supplements, allergy or cold medication, medications for any underlying health issues, breathing device or surgery (usually for sleep apnea), a dental guard (usually for teeth grinding).

Lifestyle changes

Lifestyle adjustments can greatly improve your quality of sleep, especially when they’re done along with medical treatments. You may want to consider: Incorporating more vegetables and fish



into your diet, and reducing sugar intake, reducing stress and anxiety by exercising and stretching, creating and sticking to a regular sleeping schedule, drinking less water before bedtime, limiting your caffeine intake, especially in the late afternoon or evening, decreasing tobacco and alcohol use, eating smaller low carbohydrate meals before bedtime, maintaining a healthy weight based on your doctor’s recommendations.

Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day can also significantly improve your sleep quality. While you might be tempted to sleep in on the weekends, this can make it more difficult to wake up and fall asleep during the workweek.

What is the outlook for someone with a sleep disorder?

The effects of sleep disorders can be so disruptive that you will likely want immediate relief. Unfortunately, long-term cases can take a bit more time to resolve.

However, if you stick with your treatment plan and regularly communicate with your doctor, you can find your way to better sleep.

Sleep is an important part of your overall health and quality of life.

How well you sleep affects how well you feel when you’re awake.

Both the length and quality of your sleep are important. Most people spend nearly a third of their lives sleeping, and this is necessary for good productivity and health.

Too little or too much sleep can have adverse health effects and impact your quality of life. Plus, some chronic conditions that cause altered sleep patterns may get worse from lack of sleep, which could result in a shortened life expectancy.

But it is possible to get your sleep back on track or improve the quality of sleep you get each night.

Keeping Well in Later Life – Vitamins & Minerals - Vitamin A

If you read labels for content and quantity – and I hope you do – you will have seen that ‘?’ ingredient is ‘?’% of the RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance). The RDA is set by the government of the country where the product originates from and differs in each country round the world. Often if a government realises that the country is eating less of a particular food they will reduce the RDA to make it seem that people are eating healthily. The optimum amount is what your body needs each day; this will include whatever you get from your food. The supplementary range is what Patrick Holford (Institute of Optimum Nutrition) recommends we take to maintain optimum health. Some vitamins (A,D,E,K.) are fat soluble and they can be stored in the body, others are water soluble and get flushed out, so it is important that the vitamins and minerals that you take are of the best quality.

Let’s start by looking at vitamin A

Why do we need vitamin A?

- ~ Antioxidant
- ~ Healthy internal membranes
- ~ Needed for a healthy skin
- ~ May protect against many forms of cancer
- ~ Essential for night vision
- ~ Immune system booster
- ~ Protects against infections

Deficiency signs for vitamin A are:

- ~ Acne
- ~ Dry flaky skin
- ~ Poor night vision
- ~ Cystitis
- ~ Frequent colds
- ~ Frequent infections
- ~ Dandruff
- ~ Mouth ulcers
- ~ Diarrhoea
- ~ Thrush

You may not have, or get, all of them. Please don’t think because you have any of them you need to rush off and obtain that vitamin.

The next list shows what foods contain vitamin A in reasonable



By Joy Picot



quantities; they are listed in descending order of content. You will find that these foods appear for many of the vitamins and minerals.

Beef liver	Veal liver	Carrots	Watercress
Cabbage	Squash	Sweet potato	Melon
Pumpkin	Mangoes	Tomatoes	Broccoli
Apricots	Papayas	Tangerines	

How much do we need each day?

- RDA - Recommended Daily Allowance (EU): 800mcg
- Optimum Daily Allowance: 2,500 mcg, this includes content from foods
- Supplementary Range: 1,000-3,000mcg
- Best supplement form is Retinol as animal source or natural Betacarotene or Retinyl palmitate as vegetable source.

Things that aid absorption

Zinc	Vitamin C	Vitamin E		
These are best taken as part of a Multi-vitamin with food.				
Things that hinder/prevent absorption				
Heat	Light	Alcohol	Coffee	Smoking

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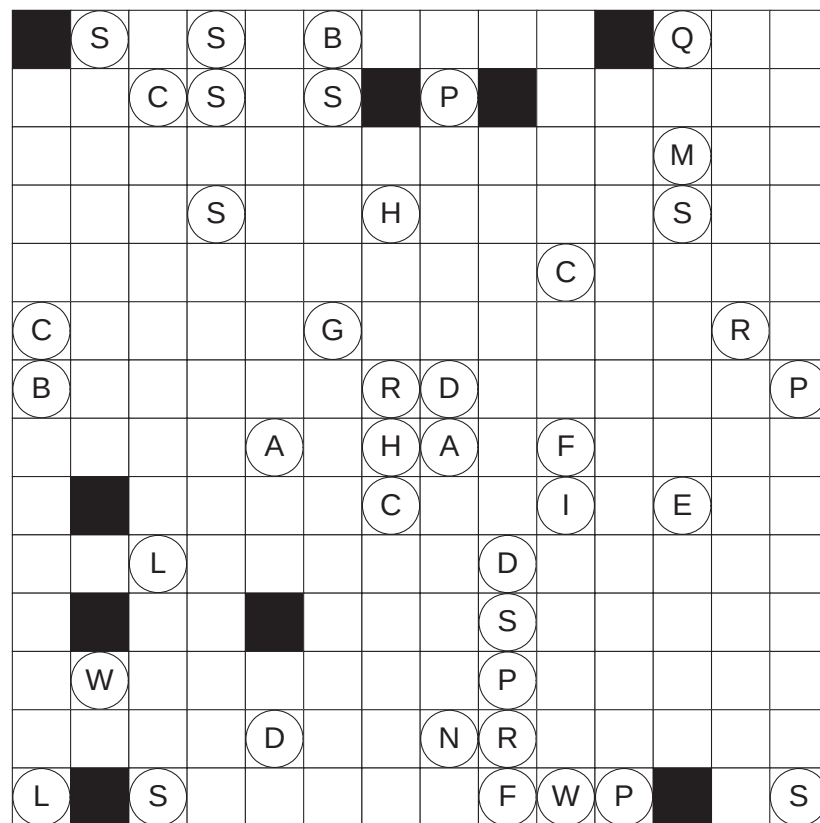
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Puzzle Time

Reverse Word Search



Puzzle solutions on page 82

Each of these circled letters is the first letter of one or more of the words on the given word list.

Your task is to fill in the grid completely using only the given words. No word will repeat itself. Words can be positioned the same as in a regular word search – horizontally, vertically or diagonally, reading frontwards or backwards.

Remember, any starting letter may be used by more than one word at the same time!

Aliases	Freak	Relish
August	Gulls	Repress
Bleat	Healthy	Rotes
Bursts	Hurry	Shaggier
Busts	Idled	Shallows
Casts	Leans	Shelled
Cater	Legally	Stake
Cello	Meadow	Strung
Charge	Neurotic	Style
Crass	Pinkest	Subgroup
Dance	Poplar	Submits
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High or increasing PSA levels in your blood usually suggest problems such as infection, prostatitis, enlarged prostate or in some cases, prostate cancer.

If you're 50 years or over, even if you have no symptoms, it's important to have an annual PSA test.

You need to start testing earlier, at 40 to 45 years if:

- You have a family history of prostate cancer
- You're Black or Sub-Saharan, or have Black, Caribbean or Sub-Saharan ancestry

A PSA test is a simple blood test. A blood sample is taken from your arm, and sent off for lab testing.

If you haven't already had a PSA test this year, don't delay - Early detection is key.

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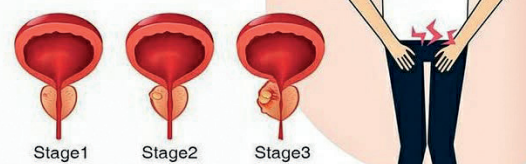
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Complications of

Prostate cancer

Complications of prostate cancer become more prevalent when the disease advances beyond the prostate gland. At this stage, the cancer is more likely to lead to various complications, including:

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- Infertility
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Trades & Services

Home Improvement Projects for Autumn

The best weather might be over, but that doesn't mean you have to pause your DIY projects and renovation plans. October is an ideal month to tidy up after the long summer and turn your attention to getting your home ready for winter. We've rounded up some great home improvement projects for Autumn, that will leave your outdoor spaces organised and your home comfortable and cosy.

Clean the Exterior of your Home - This is the ideal time to clear, tidy and clean the exterior of your home. The main growing season is over, so start by clearing any dead plants, flowers or fallen leaves. You could also use this time to prepare the soil for any winter crops you might be planning, or for planting spring bulbs.

The roofline of your home should also get some attention. Mud, dirt, fallen leaves and debris should be removed from your fascias, and guttering with a pressure cleaner and don't forget to also take the time to check for cracks or problem areas.

Update Your Windows - Badly fitting windows are one the main causes of energy inefficiency in homes, so this is a great time to check yours are performing well. Of all the home improvement projects for Autumn you could work on, this is one of the most important.

Look at how the seals on your windows and doors are holding up. If the sealant has become cracked or you can detect any drafts, it's time to remove it and reseal using high quality sealant or caulk. This is a job you can easily do yourself - it can be time consuming but is worth it in the long run.

If the window frames themselves have become loose or cracked, it could be time to look into having the whole unit replaced before the bad weather arrives. Opt for double or triple glazed windows for maximum energy efficiency and warmth.

Install Great Storage - The cooler weather makes it the ideal time to turn your attention to the inside of your home, and work on those projects that have been put off in favour of outdoor jobs.

Using this time to update the storage in your home is a great idea. Boxing in awkward areas can provide extra cupboards and create a more streamlined look and installing shelves into alcove spaces will give you somewhere to keep books, magazines and other items.

Making sure you've got the right tools for the job will make your interior woodwork projects a breeze. A range of saws, planers and



drills will help you tackle anything, and leave you with a perfect, professional finish.

Touch up Interior Paintwork - The weather has cooled off, but it's still warm enough to tolerate open windows without feeling the chill. This makes it the perfect time to tackle the interior paintwork around your home.

Spot touch ups are the quickest way to maintain beautiful walls; simply fill any cracks or chips, sand lightly and recoat the entire wall. Alternatively, opt for a completely fresh style with new colours for a bright winter look.

Wood repair - After the dampness of spring and the heat of summer, autumn tends to be a good time for exterior wood repair to your fences, porches or wooden pergolas. This home improvement project doesn't pack the visual punch of a full house paint, but it can easily save you money in other damages and repairs in coming years.

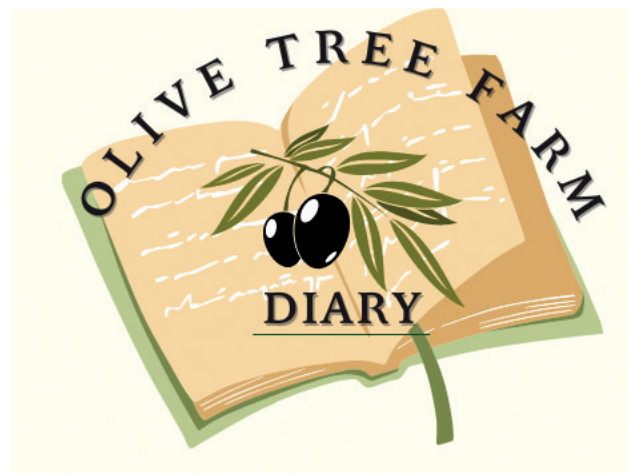
Anytime wood is damaged in or around your home, there is a potential for damage to compound. For example, neglecting wet or rotted wood on your front porch can lead to sags and breaks later, or even allow moisture inside. If you live in an area that tends to experience a dry autumn, this is a good seasonal window to repair and seal your home before the wetter winter weather.

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Olive Tree Farm is waving goodbye to September before we fully even realised its arrival! As always, each month brings us a lot to do, a lot to plan around, and many last-minute tasks as animals and children rarely give notice of their sudden whims.

Our young Mrs Duck, who we had raised by hand in the house, was sitting on a hidden clutch of eggs in the border surrounded by a protective barrier of plumbago towards the end of last month, giving us little time to plan and prepare a safe location for when the ducklings were ready to hatch.

We had estimated — due to her disappearing acts over the last few weeks before we found where she'd been going — that we had roughly 2 weeks to go until the Big Day, and boy did we get that right!

However, naturally, with the return of the school year, swimming pools in need of restoration, and all the other things we had lined up, we did actually miss the boat a little on getting something ready before their arrival.

As it is, what happened instead was us emerging from the front door one morning to hear the tell-tale gentle peeping sounds of new life.

We knew we didn't have an immediate worry on our hands, as the ducklings are always very tired during those first 24-48 hours, and were not likely to do any exploring while mum waited for the other ducklings to hatch.

In the end, though, nine babies emerged, and Mum had had enough of the nest and was ready to bring the babies out into the world to stretch their excitable little legs.

I encountered the small family unit making their way towards me on the path, so it was all hands on deck as I shouted Ben and the kids to quietly help me surround them and guide mum somewhere safe, knowing the babies would follow.

It was certainly made easier by the fact that our Mrs Duck is very tame, and had no doubts of our intentions. We've had plenty of angry mama ducks in the past thinking we were posing a threat, whereas this time around we could even get a hold of the young without hearing so much as a peep.

Now mum and all nine of her babies are in the aviary, as that was the safest place we could think up on such short notice — the budgies don't seem to mind, thank goodness!



Later, Rooster (the border collie pup we took in a couple of months ago) brought us two more eggs from the nest, two hatching eggs that mum duck had run out of patience for.

Thanks to our Good Boy, we tucked them safely into an empty terrarium that was already equipped with heat and lights, and waited for them to emerge. It's fortunate for them, really, that we also keep a variety of reptiles.

Ember the bearded dragon was still in her outdoor, Summer enclosure, so she certainly didn't offer any complaints about us borrowing her winter home.

Unfortunately, Mum won't accept these two as hers — and ironically we find ourselves coming full circle and ready to hand-raise another pair of ducks closer to hand.

As for the farm, we also have a duck up there sitting on her own clutch of eggs. We appear to be going baby mad once again!

Rooster, our loyal, ever-present, and now duckling-saviour pup, has been making life so much easier for us on the farm. He is very attuned to the way things work now, and when something is amiss, he is certainly going to draw our attention to it. He is also very in tune to the proper routine.

“Come on, girls!” is all Ben has to say now as he calls the goats home from outside of the farm's fencing, and Rooster is racing out, his paws pounding like horse hooves on the hard earth, and turns Molly around, the cheekiest of goats. She always presents like she

will do as she's told, right up until the last moment where she will turn and sprint where she pleases. Rooster has her well sussed now.

His turn is even faster, and one shoulder nudge later is all that is needed to convince the silly girl to switch direction and come home.

It is safe to say there's rarely a quiet moment at Olive Tree Farm, and I do wonder hesitantly but with childlike wonder what next month is going to bring us.

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed the news of the month, and join us again in the next for all our farm-life updates!

You can follow the progress of the family and farm on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/OliveTreeFarmSpain/

You can also find our YouTube channel, just search for Olive Tree Farm! We will be adding new videos soon as we dig into some projects, so subscribe now so you don't miss any.

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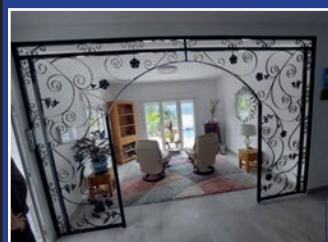
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What have the Millennials ever done for us?

History, as the old saying goes, is written by the victors.

There is quite a lot of truth in that. Kings commissioned flattering accounts of their reigns, governments quietly lost inconvenient documents and conquerors were rarely shy about explaining why their particular conquest had been an entirely reasonable and beneficial thing to do. But at least the old historians had something to work with. A document existed. A book existed. A painting existed. A building, battlefield, coin, gravestone or pottery fragment existed. Sometimes the official version of events could be compared with the physical evidence and found wanting. The Romans might tell us one thing about themselves. Archaeology might quietly tell us another. And yet here we are two thousand years later, still digging up their stuff and trying to work out what they were up to. Which raises an interesting question.

What will somebody two thousand years from now find when they start digging us up?

Assuming, of course, they can find us at all. We have probably created more historical material than any civilisation before us. Every day produces billions of photographs, videos, conversations, articles, emails, recordings and observations. Almost anybody with a Smartphone can document an event and publish their version of it to the world. That ought to be wonderful news for historians. The



old problem was that history was controlled by whoever had the pen. Now practically everybody has a pen, even people who need to wear slip-on shoes. Unfortunately, we have also put most of those pens in something called "the cloud". The cloud suggests something vast, fluffy and eternal, floating above us and keeping our memories safe. It isn't. It is, in fact, a collection of increasingly unpopular buildings full of computers, connected to electricity supplies, cooling systems, networks, software, passwords, companies and people who occasionally send us emails explaining that our account has been inactive for 18 months.

The Romans had stone. We have Terms and Conditions. Romans left roads, aqueducts, coins, pottery and buildings scattered across Europe. We are leaving terabytes of information on servers. We have separated information from physical permanence. A book can sit on a shelf for centuries. A photograph can spend fifty years in a drawer and still be capable of surprise. A digital photograph can be copied a million times without losing quality but every copy still requires something capable of reading it. That something needs power, software and hardware, the right file format and, increasingly, somebody who remembers the password.

Imagine discovering a USB stick in an archaeological dig two thousand years from now.

"Look! An ancient ceremonial artefact."

"No, it's a memory stick."

"What's on it?"

"I don't know."

"Can you read it?"

"No."

"Can you find a computer?"

"No."

"Can you find who made it?"

"No."

"Then how do you know what it is?"

"I don't."

"Excellent. Put it next to the Raleigh Chopper."

The problem becomes more serious when we consider how much of our everyday history exists only online. What did our ancestors think about the great events of our time? What arguments were taking place in obscure forums? What did people say about wars, elections, pandemics etc before the official histories were written? What jokes were people making? What did they misunderstand? What did they get surprisingly right? We have recorded all of this, but recording something isn't the same as preserving it. Websites disappear, online services are closed and servers are replaced. File formats become obsolete. Then there is the rather larger question of what happens if the infrastructure itself fails. A library that burns is an obvious disaster. We know what has been lost. A digital archive that disappears may leave nothing behind to tell us that it ever existed. That is a rather different kind of historical loss. It creates invisible holes, and the future historian may have no idea that the holes are there.

Imagine someone five hundred years from now trying to reconstruct our own era. They find some government archives, books and newspapers. They find photographs, buildings, vehicles, machines and objects in museums. Perhaps they even recover fragments of the internet. But what they discover will depend entirely upon what



survived, and that creates a peculiar historical trap. The surviving record can begin to look like the complete record. If a government archive survives while thousands of independent accounts disappear, the government archive inevitably becomes more important to future historians. Not necessarily because it was more accurate, but because it is there.

The old problem of history being written by the victors could therefore return in a rather unexpected form. The victors might not have destroyed the evidence. They might simply have been the ones whose servers survived. Perhaps that is the real danger of digital history. Not that everything will disappear, but that enough will disappear to make what remains misleading.

And now we have another complication.

We can manufacture convincing digital material with extraordinary ease. Documents can be forged. Audio can be manipulated. Videos can be edited. Stories can be invented. The difference is that modern technology makes it remarkably easy. Future historians may therefore have to become detectives as well as historians: Where did this photograph originate? Was it altered? When did it first appear? The important question may no longer be simply, "What does this document say?" It may be, "Can we prove that this document existed when it claims to have existed?" The Information Age has given us an extraordinary abundance of information, yet abundance doesn't necessarily make history easier to preserve. Victorians worried about losing knowledge because there wasn't enough of it. We may eventually have to worry about losing knowledge because there is too much. Perhaps the answer will be surprisingly old-fashioned. Print some of it. Keep physical photographs. Preserve important documents. Maintain libraries. Keep objects. Create archives in different places and different formats. Most importantly, have someone impartial decide what deserves to be preserved. Because deciding what to save is, in its own way, deciding what future generations will know about us.

Make sure that at least some of our history doesn't depend upon a server somewhere quietly humming away in a building that is one day deemed "unviable". After spending decades turning everything

into digital information because it was faster, cheaper and more convenient, we may eventually discover that the most reliable backup is a piece of paper.

Which brings us back to the Romans.

Monty Python asked, "What have the Romans ever done for us?" The list grows rather quickly: Roads, aqueducts, sanitation and so on... The joke works because the Romans left physical evidence of what they did. Their roads are still under our excuses for roads. Their buildings are still standing in places. Their coins turn up in fields. Their rubbish survives remarkably well. They didn't have a cloud. They had bricks, pottery and, apparently, a rather impressive ability to lose sandals. Perhaps future archaeologists will have a similar conversation about us.

"What did the 21st-century humans leave behind?"

"Well, they had the internet."

"What's that?"

"Never mind."

"Anything else?"

"Yes. They left several billion photographs."

"Excellent."

"Unfortunately, they're all on a server."

"Oh."

There is something profoundly strange about that.

We may be the most photographed, recorded and documented generation in history. Yet future historians could discover that much of our apparent abundance was surprisingly fragile. Perhaps they will know what governments and companies got up to, who fought wars, but will they know what ordinary people thought? Will they know what made us laugh? Will they know what frightened us or what we aspired to? Those are the things that make an age human, and perhaps those are precisely the things most likely to disappear.

So maybe the great historical challenge of our age isn't simply deciding what is true. Perhaps it is making sure that enough evidence survives for somebody in the future to decide for themselves. We have spent thousands of years trying to preserve our memories. The Egyptians carved them into stone. The Romans built monuments. Medieval monks copied manuscripts by hand. The Victorians filled libraries.

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but given the nature of the internet, it leaves us very exposed.

Data on the internet, be it video, email, WhatsApp, voice, is converted into packets of data, allowing it to be sent and delivered via multiple paths, depending on availability, cost and lots of other criteria. That is great, but means that all the data, is available for analysis by parties possessing the technology and desire.

We are being forced to move to a cashless society, where all our banking, medical data and transactions are placed upon the Internet. This data can sit within point-of-sale terminals in shops, hospitals, all connected to the internet via Internet service Providers (ISPs) and routing equipment.

The ISPs, if desired can look at your PC and view the websites you are connected to and sell the data on. "So what" you may say, but the government will also be able to view this data, in detail should it wish. Simplistically, you buy via Amazon, 2 boxes of wine a month, beer, whiskey and so on.

You go for your medical checkup one day and the doctor says to you, sorry, we will not be covering your complaint as it is caused by too much alcohol. Even your internet connected TV feeds back your viewing habits. Buy a new LG TV? And you need to create an LG account, whereupon you have just fitted a spy in your front room. Other manufacturers are doing a similar thing.

Why has the cost of a TV dropped over the years? Hidden programs within the TV like Automatic Content Recognition, capture your viewing trends and send the detail off to marketing data centres. Let's say you are using your TV as a PC monitor. You open your banking app, your password spreadsheet etc. In theory, that screen could be copied. With the closing of terrestrial TV, your viewing will be forced via the internet, so subscription will be an even bigger issue.

The majority of your finances are carried out electronically. Payments, banking, pensions and so on. There will come a time in the near future where your financial wherewithal will be coming under even more severe scrutiny.

Continued on page 74

It is interesting to see how our communications have changed over the years. Up until let's say the '90s the main way of communication was via the telephone. Telephone networks were based on multiplexed trunk circuits that run up and down the country, where lots of simultaneous calls were sent over single circuits of one type or another. These were broken out locally at the telephone exchange and the connection from there to your landline fixed phone via a pair of wires. You could also connect a facsimile machine over these wires to send documents and pictures.

Private lines were available which allowed businesses to have fixed links between offices for example. All this worked around a TDM network, time-division-multiplex system. This system was an independent network, fully battery operated with license agreements in place with the government, stating it would be fully supported, even in times of conflict and war.

In the late '90s, 2000s, a directive was put in place whereby all telephony would be switched to the Global Internet backbone, I.P technology. Your telephone calls now run across the same platforms as your emails, TV streaming etc. Not a bad thing in some ways,

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THERE IS ALWAYS A SOLUTION AT REVOLUTION



..... Continued from page 72

We already see that you are limited to what you can withdraw in the way of cash and have to go through hoops to get a grand out for your pocket.

Then we come on to the reliability of the internet. This starts from the local providers connecting the router and PC in your house or business to the web. It amazes me that the number of failures is as low as it is, given the haphazard way the local installations have been set up. These all feed into a small number of carriers, run by the big players, normally government owned and managed. From a failure point of view, we saw how the Iberian power outage took away all communication.

Luckily this was down to a capacity issue and a “blackstart” of the

grid was possible, restoring power within 30 hours to most places. But it took several days for the banking data centres to be back running. How would it feel if you were without services for a week let’s say? No fuel, no food, water pumps stopped, medical services brought to their knees.

Our security runs on data flow. This data goes through equipment, most of which is manufactured in China. It is well documented that “backdoor” access to data and router equipment is written into the software, enabling data to be hived off should it be deemed by hostile parties. We have seen military systems being hacked. Ships, planes, missile systems and the NHS crash a few years ago.

We rely on a network of satellites, orbiting above the Earth and cables running under the sea, linking continents. These are used for communication, TV, internet and other monitoring activities. Cables can be cut by hostile parties or by a trawler fishing boat. It has been proved that Russia has been making attempts to alter the GPS accuracy. Okay, you may end up in next door’s swimming pool, but a bomb delivery system ends up compromised?

I am not being all doom and gloom, but it is interesting to see how we are being “managed”. The more we rely on this fragile communications platforms, Hackers will try and take advantage, one step ahead.

Long live the Ham Radio community. In times of crisis, in the agreement, local radio equipment can be called into use to support the public. This will keep working when the Internet is dead. I keep my equipment in a ready state. I’ll look after you.

Arthur C Clarke saw this coming, tens of years ago. Bet that’s cheered you all up!

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Is your local market listed?
 If not please let us know



Safe Driving Tips

Driving regularly, as long as you are fit and safe to do so, will help you to maintain your driving ability. The following tips may help. If you have difficulty with any of these issues, consider taking a driver assessment or some refresher driver training.

Fitness to Drive

Although experienced drivers are generally safer and better than less experienced ones, our driving ability changes as we get older. We are all personally responsible for making sure that we do not drive when we are not fit to do so, and that we report any condition that affects our ability to drive safely to the relevant authority. It's also important to have regular eyesight tests.

Your car must be in a safe and legal condition. It must be properly taxed, have a valid ITV (if / when required) and should be serviced regularly. You must be insured to drive it.

Don't forget to carry out regular safety checks on your car. Any loads or luggage should be securely restrained in the boot and loose items should not be left on the seats or dashboard as they would be thrown



about if you have to brake sharply or have a collision.

Continued on page 78

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..... Continued from page 77

If you tow a trailer or caravan, make sure that your driving licence entitles you to do so.

Plan Journeys

It's helpful to plan journeys, especially long ones or when you're going to an unfamiliar area. Google Maps are a great tool for this and many new vehicles have preloaded maps on their computer.

Try to avoid driving at night, if you find it more difficult to see in the dark and try to avoid the busiest times of the day, if possible. If you find particular junctions and roundabouts difficult on a route you often use, see if you can change your route to use traffic light junctions instead.

We are most likely to feel sleepy in the early hours of the morning and mid-afternoon, so if possible avoid driving (especially long journeys) at these times, or when you are feeling tired. There's also a higher risk of falling asleep at the wheel on long, monotonous journeys on motorways and dual carriageways.

Check traffic and weather reports before you set off and be prepared to postpone your journey in very poor conditions. If you do need to drive in difficult weather conditions, ensure that you and your car are ready for what might be ahead. If the weather is very hot, keep a bottle of water in the car.

Seat Belts and Child Seats

Always make sure that you and your passengers wear their seat belts on every journey. Children must be carried in a child car seat that is suitable for them and securely fitted in the vehicle.

Distractions

Safe driving requires concentration, so avoid unnecessary

distractions, such as using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone, smoking or eating when driving. Plan rest breaks where you can check messages and have a snack.

If you carry pets in your car, remember to restrain them properly. An unrestrained cat, dog or other pet can distract the driver and could cause serious injury to themselves and others in a car crash.

Observation

Good, all-round, observation is a key safe driving skill. As well as looking ahead, check your rearview and wing mirrors regularly. Be particularly careful to check for pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists. You need to be able to turn your head left and right and to be able to look over your shoulder. If you find this difficult, consider whether any specialist adaptations or accessories would help.

Anticipation

Being able to anticipate what other road users are about to do (for example, pull out of a junction, change lanes, a pedestrian stepping into the road) is also a key skill. It requires good observation and taking note of vehicle indicators or riders' arm signals, as well as road signs and markings, and the road position of other vehicles. Of course, someone may change position without indicating, so be prepared for that.

Signals

Give signals in good time to indicate what you intend to do rather than what you have already done. Use your mirrors and check all around to check it is safe before giving a signal and starting your manoeuvre.

Continued on page 82

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The Benefits of Car Sourcing: A Smarter Way to Buy

Car sourcing has emerged as a smarter, stress-free alternative to traditional car shopping. Rather than spending countless hours browsing dealerships and websites, more buyers are turning to sourcing specialists who do the legwork for them. This personalized approach offers a host of benefits, especially for those seeking value, convenience, and peace of mind.

1. Expert Guidance

Car sourcing services are typically run by automotive professionals with extensive industry knowledge. They understand market trends, vehicle values, and dealer tactics, giving you an edge when it comes to finding the best deal. Whether you're after a specific make and model or just want the best car for your budget, a sourcing expert can help you make an informed decision.

2. Time-Saving Convenience

Searching for the right car can be overwhelming. Car sourcing removes that burden by handling everything from vehicle research and price comparisons to arranging inspections and negotiating with sellers. It's an ideal solution for busy individuals who value their time and want a hassle-free experience.

3. Access to Better Deals

Thanks to established networks and trade connections, car sourcing professionals often have access to vehicles not yet advertised to the public. This means buyers can tap into a wider selection of high-quality options, often at better prices than those found at retail dealerships.

4. Quality and Transparency

Reputable car sourcing services prioritize customer satisfaction. They vet every vehicle thoroughly, ensuring it meets high standards of quality, mileage, and service history. This level of transparency gives buyers greater confidence and reduces the risk of hidden issues down the line.

5. Tailored to Your Needs

Unlike traditional dealerships that push in-stock inventory, car sourcing is completely tailored to your preferences. Whether you're after a specific colour, trim, or feature set, the process is entirely personalized to ensure you get exactly what you want.

Car sourcing offers a streamlined, reliable way to buy a vehicle that aligns with your lifestyle and budget. With expert advice, access to exclusive deals, and a personalized approach, it's no wonder more people are choosing this smarter route to car ownership.

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Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 82

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

Easy

Regular Sudoku

Every Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically.

Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

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

Medium

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8						9						
10												
11								12			13	
15		16										17
18										19		
20												
						21						

Across

- 1 Spicy oriental rice dishes
- 5 Attempt
- 8 Coach
- 9 Inhabitant
- 10 Ras Tafari (5,8)
- 11 Continent
- 12 Militia groups
- 15 Opportunities
- 18 Grilled
- 19 Extraterrestrial
- 20 Lettuce starter
- 21 Blue bloods

Down

- 1 Quilt part
- 2 Greener vegetation
- 3 Took unique identifiers
- 4 Holy
- 5 Remarkable
- 6 Proportions
- 7 Top baseball team
- 11 Pro's
- 13 First
- 14 More savage
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T's & C's apply

..... Continued from page 78

Speed

Drivers who travel at higher speeds have less time to identify and react to what is happening around them, and it takes them longer to stop. If there is a crash, it is more severe, causing greater injury to the occupants and any pedestrian or rider they hit. Drive at a safe speed for the conditions, and always stay within the speed limit.

Many drivers unintentionally exceed the speed limit, often without realising it, because modern cars are so powerful and comfortable they give little sensation of their speed. If you find it difficult to stay within speed limits, these simple tips may help.

Driving too slowly (well below the speed limit in free flowing conditions) can cause frustration for other drivers, who may tailgate you or overtake when it's not safe. If you find yourself in this situation, find somewhere safe to pull over and let other traffic pass. On roads with two or more lanes, use the inside lane.

Of course, if traffic conditions require it, travelling below the speed limit is the right thing to do.

Space

Leave enough space between you and the vehicle in front so you can stop safely if it suddenly slows down or stops. In normal conditions leave a two second gap between you and the vehicle in front, but at least double this is on wet roads and increase it even more in icy conditions.

On dual carriageways and motorways, keep to the nearside lane in normal circumstances, except when overtaking or the lane is for turning traffic or you are going a different way from the nearside lane. When you do use an outside lane, avoid "lane hogging" and return to the nearside lane as soon as it is safe to do so.



Junctions

Identify junctions early and reduce your speed as you approach. When waiting to turn into a junction or driveway, keep your wheels pointing straight ahead. This way if you are hit from behind, your car will be pushed forward, rather than into the path of other traffic, which might happen if your front wheels are turned in the direction you are taking.

Vulnerable road users

All drivers need to be especially aware of vulnerable road users (pedestrians, pedal cyclists, motorcyclists, horse riders, children) as they can be seriously injured, even in a minor collision. The key things are to keep a good look out for them, watch your speed and give them time and space.

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OPEL ASTRA GS 1.2Gasolina 130cv 34.500km YEAR 2024 17.300€	NISSAN JUKE N-CONNECTA 1.0Petrol 115cv 22.900km YEAR 2024 21.500€	SEAT IBIZA REFERENCE 1.0Petrol 80cv YEAR 2021 11.700€
RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESS 1.5DCI 95cv 67.000km YEAR 2021 11.900€	CITROEN JUMPY FURGON 1.5BHD 100cv 27.000km YEAR 2020 18.500€	SEAT ARONA ECOMOTIVE STYLE 1.0Petrol 115cv YEAR 2020 15.800€
PEUGEOT 208 ALLURE HYBRID 110cv 12.200km YEAR 2025 17.900€	CITROEN C3 C-SERIES 1.2Gasolina 85cv 68.000km YEAR 2023 10.900€	MITSUBISHI ASX KAITEKI 1.6Petrol 120cv 56.000km YEAR 2019 16.900€

English Speaking Staff
Avda Lepanto 32, ALBOX - Tel: 950 430 999
info@peugeotalbox.es - www.peugeotalbox.es

No Deposit Finance Available
*Subject to status

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info
607 626 905

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Hybrids
Vans and cargo vans

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Removals

24H TAXI SERVICE

AirPort Transfers

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www.starrentacar.es

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

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

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

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

1	5
6	4
3	5
1	7
4	6
3	2
3	6

Puzzle Time Solutions

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



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Mojácar



Great Residential Area: 4 Beds. 4 Baths. Swimming Pool. Large Integral Garage. Sea View. AC/H throughout. Lots of Terraces all with good views. A property with Huge Potential.

DV1482

790.000€

Bédar



Stylish 4 Bed, 3 Bath Villa, Car Port. Excellent Views. 5 min. drive to the village. Shaped Swimming Pool. Lots of terraces and garden area. Central Heating. Air-Conditioning.

DV1589

525.000€

Cabrera



House of Distinction: 4 Beds. 3 Baths. Large Infinity Swimming Pool. Independent Garage. Stunning Views. 3 Floors each with the WOW factor. So many extras including under-floor heating.

DV1596

899.950€

Bédar



Spacious Country Residence: Main House 3 Beds & 3 Baths. Guest Annex with 1 Bed & 1 Bath. Excellent Views. Private Pool. Car Port. Gas CH, Lots of Outside Space & lots of Storage.

DV1597

399.950€

Mojácar



La Parata: Detached Villa on One Level. Large Corner Plot. Super Country & Mountain views. Driveway. 2 Beds. 2 Baths. Room for a Pool.

A1601

350.000€

Mojácar



El Palmeral: 3 Bed. 1.5 Baths. Townhouse. Front Terrace with Awnings. Back Terrace Sun Trap. Communal Pool with nice Gardens. Off Street Parking. New Kitchen & Bathrooms. AC/H.

LV883

269.000€

Vera



Valle del Este Golf Resort: Los Olivos II. 3-Storey Townhouse with Lots of Outside Space. Communal Pool. Allocated Parking. Golf Course Views. Spacious Accommodation.

LV882

185.000€

Mojácar



Terrazas del Golf: Excellent Golf Property with Far Reaching Views. 2 Beds. 2 Baths. Super Huge Terrace. Allocated Underground Parking. Store Room of 17m2.

A1556

179.950€

Mojácar



Atalaya de Mojácar: REDUCED 3 Beds. 2 Baths. Huge Terrace with Superb Sea Views. Open Plan Living Area. Allocated Parking Space & Storeroom. Indoor and Outdoor Swimming Pools.

A1554

285.000€

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