

Family First

FREE | ISSUE 1 2024

*Learn
to ice
skate*

Top tips

*to get
your kids
outdoors!*

*Delicious
vegan
recipes*

*Mind-
blowing
science
experiments*

*Winter
birds
to spot*

SAM FAIERS

*on motherhood, her career
and charity work*

*Make Family
Holidays
Cheaper with*

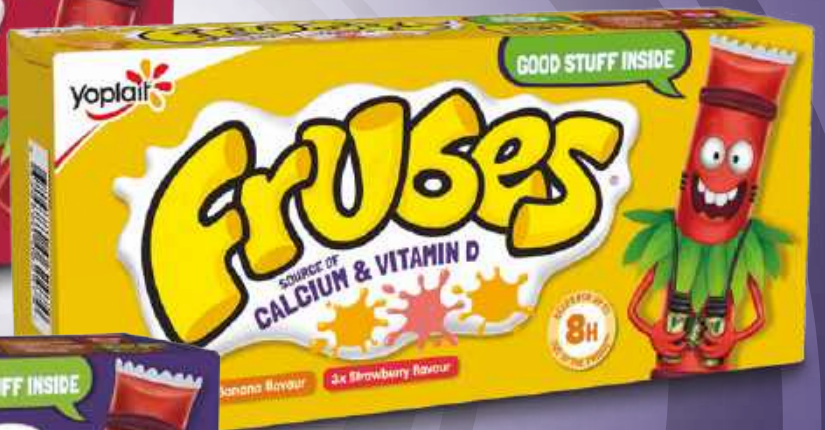
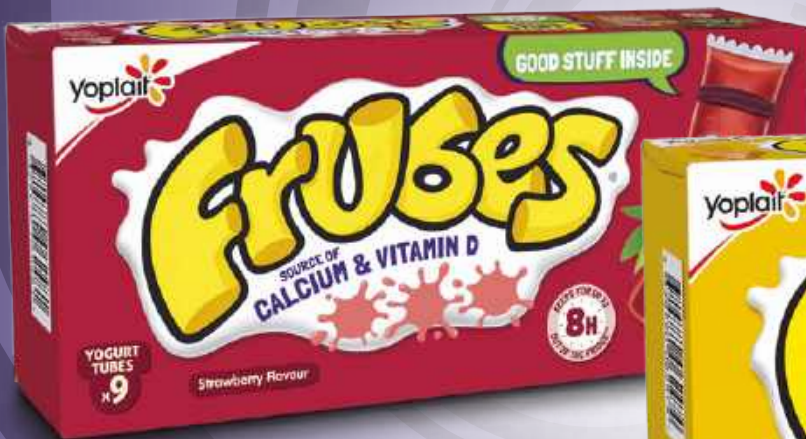
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GOOD
STUFF
INSIDE

Welcome

Happy New Year! We are thrilled to announce that from 2024 onwards, *Family First* magazine will be published four times a year. That's even more interviews, recipes, sports, product roundups, informative articles and so much more. In this issue, we find out how TV star and entrepreneur Sam Faiers juggles her career, home life and bringing up three young kids. While the weather might be cold – and often dreary – at this time of year, we have top tips on how to encourage your kids to play outside from the Good Play Guide, as well as the benefits of playing outdoors whatever the weather. And while you have got your kids out enjoying nature, The Wildlife Trusts

has highlighted some fascinating birds that put on spectacular displays at this time of year. If you are looking ahead to your next holiday, we can thoroughly recommend Falmouth in Cornwall. Check out our review of the Budock Vean Hotel and some of the great family-friendly activities nearby. Lastly, it wouldn't be January with Veganuary, so we have dedicated our Get Cooking section to all things vegan. With articles from the Veganuary charity and The Vegan Society, plus lots of yummy recipes, we show you how easy it is to go vegan and to ensure your kids are getting all the important nutrients they need to grow.

Wishing you all a fun-filled 2024,
Georgina



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We're doing...

mind-blowing experiments with TheDadLab



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We're learning about...

the best birds to spot in winter with The Wildlife Trusts

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We're eating...

delicious vegan meals – and cakes!



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We're going...

on a family-friendly holiday to Cornwall



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We're having a go at...

snowsports, ice skating and swimming

COVER CREDITS:

Photographer:
Chelsea White

Executive Editor:
Lee Gatland

Art Director:
Richard Hejsak

Editor:
Georgina Probert
georgina@sevenstarmedia.co.uk

Sales Team:
01959 543 650
sales@sevenstarmedia.co.uk

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SEVEN STAR MEDIA LTD
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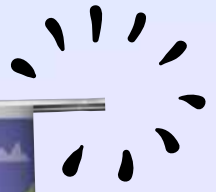


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FOR IMMUNE
SUPPORT



see

mischief makes us

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STEAMER & IRONING WATER

A perfect combination of either Lenor Summer Breeze or Lenor Spring Awakening fragrances to make ironing easier and laundry smell amazing.

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Listen and learn

YOTO

Following the launch of its 3rd Generation earlier this year, Yoto Player is a must-have for kids aged 0-12. The Yoto Player enables kids to safely explore a world of audio, keeping them away from watching a screen and inspiring them to use their imaginations with stories, podcasts and music. There are also soundscapes to accompany imaginary play, baking, yoga and movement cards. It's easy to use by slotting a chosen card into the player – great for encouraging independence. Our three-year-old loves the Sleep Sounds and we love that we can control the Yoto via a smartphone app. *Yoto Player 3rd Generation*; £99.99; cards from: £5.99; Yoto; uk.yotoplay.com

EDITOR'S *picks*

Our hand-picked selection of family-friendly items we wouldn't be without this winter.



WINTER HEROES

POLARN O. PYRET

Our kids love to be outside whatever the weather, so a warm waterproof coat is a must. We love PO.P's Padded Waterproof Coat, which will get little ones geared up for all weather, so they can embrace the elements in style, come rain, wind and even snow.

This 100% waterproof coat promises to fend off the cold and wet weather to keep little ones aged 2-10 dry and cosy – and it comes in a choice of eight colours. The coat has been made with hard wearing recycled polyester fabric with lightweight cosy padding to keep the cold out. Padded Waterproof Coat; £80.00; polarnopyret.co.uk





All things hair

THE LITTLE HAIRSTYLE CLUB

Launched by hairstylist and salon owner, Tammy Reynolds of Britannia Hair & Scalp in Worcester, The Little Hairstyle Club is a monthly subscription box full of instructions and hairstyle accessories for parents with daughters aged between 4-8. The club enables parents to learn how to do their daughter's hair. Every month Tammy curates a new box tied into either seasonal events such as Halloween, Easter and Christmas or themes including Barbie, Mermaids and Pride. Each box comes complete with a step-by-step hairstyle guide, hair accessories, positive affirmations, salon professional hair product, sweet treat, fashion accessory and special gift. *The Little Hairstyle Club*; from £23.50 for a 12-month plan; thelittlehairstyleclub.com



Bring the bling

BLING2O

If you are thinking about taking your kids skiing this winter, they will love these blingtastic ski goggles. Made for children aged 3-16, they are decorated with an array of rhinestones, sparkles and spikes. Not only do they look super cool, the goggles include a compatible adjustable strap to fit all helmets, a double layer foam for the ultimate comfort, REVO lens with UV protection and an anti-fog coating. There are five styles to choose from and each set comes with a microfibre bag and hard carry case to keep them safe while not in use. *Ski Goggles*; £44.99; bling2o.com

DON'T BE A SQUARE

SMARTGAMES

We love a board game in our house and the new Genius Square from SmartGames is just the ticket. Time is of the essence when playing this brain-teasing puzzle game, as players aged 6 plus need to beat their competitor to solve the challenge. The game has more than 60,000 puzzle combinations to crack over five difficulty levels. It can be played solo or against an opponent to fill the grid. The game encourages kids to develop their cognitive skills including concentration, flexible thinking, problem solving and spatial insight. *Genius Square*; £19.99; brightminds.co.uk



HELP THEM THRIVE

NATURES AID

As parents, we all know how difficult it can be to get our kids to eat their vegetables, often making it tricky for kids to meet their recommended daily intake of vitamins and minerals. Step in the super supplements from Natures Aid, covering everything from vitamin D and bone support to omega 3 and iron. From Mini Drops for newborns up to five years and Super Stars for children aged four to 12 years, Natures Aid has a range of vitamins that your kids will love. *Mini Drops*, from £6.95; *Super Stars*, from £5.95; naturesaid.co.uk

fruit, but squashed

slurpable fruit for lunch boxes



this is a
strawberry



we never
add sugar



get stuck
into nature



innocentdrinks.co.uk/kids



this is squashed
strawberries,
raspberries
and apples



little
drinks
big
dreams

Biotiful gut health



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good
bacteria



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To the Retailer: Biotiful Dairy Ltd will redeem this coupon up to the value of £1 for the full payment of one Biotiful Kids Kefir 4x100ml product in accordance with the Customer terms. Biotiful Dairy Ltd reserves the right to request proof of purchase or to refuse redemption of defaced or damaged coupons or those that have not been correctly redeemed as per instructions. Send coupons to Savi Ltd, PO box 6199, Nuneaton, CV11 9HQ.

† Source: Circana, All Outlets, Total Market, value sales share, 52 w/e 11th June 2023

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biotifulguthealth.com



6

top tips to support your child's gut health

Brought to you by children's nutritionist
Lucy Upton and **Biotiful Gut Health**



More than ever, the gut microbiome is in the spotlight as an early life factor that can have a profound impact on children's long-term health.

An imbalance in the gut bacteria (too much unfriendly bacteria) has been linked to diseases such as colic and constipation, and more recently, studies have shown changes in the gut bacteria are also associated with obesity in children.

Below are some simple steps to improve your child's digestive health:

1. Focus on fibre – When last surveyed, the average intake of fibre for children across all age groups in the UK was below recommendations. Fibre is fuel for beneficial bacteria in the gut, so step back and see where you can sneak some extra in. You can find fibre in fruits, vegetables, grains, cereals, nuts, seeds, beans and pulses.

3. Be careful with highly processed foods, there are clear differences in the gut microbiome of countries with diets higher in these foods, compared to those where they are not a regular part of the daily diet.

5. Encourage activity – physical activity is well recognised to support many dimensions of children's health, including digestion, but research has also shown active kids tend to have a healthier gut bacteria. Aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity a day.

2. Include foods that contain live 'good' bacteria for your child's gut.

Like **Biotiful Gut Health Kids Kefir** packed with good bacteria, calcium and made with all-natural ingredients. Perfect for breakfast, to pop in the lunchbox, or as a snack.



4. Prioritise prebiotics too – whilst all sources of fibre are great to include, certain foods are particularly good at feeding the friendly bacteria and the good news is these include foods your child may well already enjoy – oats, bananas, garlic, apples and leeks are all examples of great prebiotic foods.

6. Get in those zzz's – sleep is increasingly recognised as a factor related to gut health, with a relationship evident both ways. The quality of sleep has been linked with the diversity of the gut microbiome and vice versa! For children 3-5 years aim for 10-13 hours a night and for 6-12 years 9-12 hours.

Biotiful gut health



Gut health, made tasty.



Kefir Drinks

Plant-based Kefir

Kefir Spoonable

Kids Kefir

Biotiful Kefir is the simple, natural and delicious way to support your family's Gut Health. With billions of live cultures and no sugar added, Biotiful Kefir supports your family's immunity, everyday.

*Calcium contributes to the normal function of digestive enzymes. † Source: Circana, All Outlets, Total Market, value sales share, 52 we 11.06.23

WHAT'S HOT FOR 2024

Check out our latest travel supplements for winter 2024.



TRAVEL & TOURISM

Are you thinking about booking a staycation this year? Our Travel & Tourism supplement features family-friendly places to visit around the UK. From exploring the nation's forests to creating special moments in South East England and a packed programme of events in Portsmouth, we've got a destination and itinerary to suit every taste and budget.

CHECK OUT THE LATEST ISSUE



<http://tinyurl.com/yn3jums8>



“Inspiration comes from my mum – her love, support and resilience are what I strive to emulate as a mother”



'Learning to trust your gut is a POWERFUL TOOL'

Sam Faiers on all things motherhood, building a successful business and helping children in Africa. Words: Georgina Probert.

Samantha Faiers, 33, shot to stardom in ITV2's *The Only Way is Essex* with her sister Billie. The siblings went on to star in their own reality series *Sam and Billie Faiers: The Baby Diaries* and *The Mummy Diaries*. In 2016, Sam released a parenting book called *My Baby & Me*, all about her experiences as a mum. She met Paul in 2014 and the couple now have three children, Paul (8), Rosie (6) and Edward (18 months).

Juggling family life and a career is something that many of us face, and Sam is no exception. Alongside her TV career, three years ago she launched her own business Revive Collagen. We caught up with her to chat about love, life and work.

that keeps myself and Paul, plus my business team, in sync. I try to embrace the time I get with the kids as much as I can, as they grow up so quickly. For me, it's important to set my priorities straight – children, family, work, and, of course, myself. I always plan my days with dedicated slots for each aspect.

Do you and Paul have many date nights or time away from the children to be a couple?

Sam: Our date nights have transformed into date days, and we've found joy in the simple pleasures like an escape to London or a trip to the spa. Paul recently surprised me for my birthday with a hotel and spa getaway in London.

'For me, organisation is the golden ticket'

Many of our readers are working parents who are juggling their jobs, home life and young kids. How do you balance bringing up three children with your career?

Sam: Balancing isn't always easy and I'll be the first to admit that some days feel like a juggling act. I don't have any hired help, so for me, organisation is the golden ticket. I live by a shared family calendar





Above: Sam and Paul have three children, Paul, Rosie and Edward
Below: Sam with her youngest, Edward



Samantha Faiers (@samanthafaiers)



Sam with her sister Billie

CHARITY WORK

Sam is an ambassador for Project Rescue Children (projectrescuechildren.org), a charity whose vision is "for every child, in every country, to be safe and free from trafficking and exploitation."

Last year, Sam helped to raise £100k for the charity. In a heartfelt post on Instagram, she documented her trip to Uganda,

"We're cherishing the time as a family of five"

saying: "Today has broken me. We visited one of the many slums in Uganda. I'm still in shock at what I've seen. Thousands of people, children and babies live here. The living conditions are beyond comprehension... No fresh water here, they

wash in sewage water & eat only 1 small meal per day. We took some drinks and snacks as a little gesture, the children were so happy, they wanted to show us around, they wanted cuddles and wanted to hold our hands the whole time."

Sam appealed to her 2.5 million social media followers to raise money to build a rehabilitation/rescue centre for babies and children in Uganda up to the age of 18. It will house up to 200 children a year with food, water, clean clothes, a bed and an education.

Can you tell us about your latest trip to Uganda?

Sam: Our trip to Uganda was eye-opening and heart-filling. To see the tangible impact of our efforts and the smiles we brought to the children's faces was beyond words.

THE SAM AND BILLIE SHOW

I've loved listening to *The Sam and Billie Show*. What made you want to launch a podcast?

Sam: Billie and I really wanted to peel back the curtain and give listeners a genuine peek into our lives. The podcast seemed like the perfect platform to chat about everything from motherhood to daily life, in a way that feels like I'm catching up with my sister each week.

With your youngest, Edward, now being 18 months old, do you ever feel broody for a fourth child or will you stop at three?

Sam: Currently, we're cherishing the time as a family of five. But never say never!

You have shared on your Instagram account that Edward really suffered from eczema. Can you talk a bit about how you helped him with this?

Sam: It's been quite the path, we found some natural remedies, which I understand doesn't work for everyone, however for Edward, they have made a world of difference.

How do you decide what to chat about for each episode?

Sam: It's a natural process. We catch up on what each other has been up to and discuss family, dilemmas, and everything in between. It's all about authenticity and having a good chat about topics that are close to our hearts.



Sam's business, Revive Collagen (revivecollagen.com), has recently

celebrated its three-year anniversary. What made you initially want to launch this product?

Sam: Revive Collagen's third anniversary is a huge milestone for us, especially considering the fact that it was launched during lockdown. The decision to create Revive Collagen came from a very personal place; I was battling severe acne after the birth of my second child and nothing seemed to help until I discovered the benefits of collagen. Knowing the profound impact it had on my skin, I felt compelled to share this solution with others. The lockdown, while challenging, actually highlighted the need for self-care and wellness, and it gave me the push to invest my savings into something I truly believed could make a difference.

"I was battling severe acne after the birth of my second child and nothing seemed to help until I discovered the benefits of collagen"



Sam with Amanda Holden, a Revive Collagen brand ambassador

How has the business adapted and grown?

Sam: Over the last three years, we've seen incredible growth in the business. It has been such a rewarding journey, seeing our products help so many women. We started with a single vision and now have expanded our range, ventured into new markets, and are stocked at just under 5,000 stores across the world.

Can you tell us a bit more about the new Menopause range?

Sam: Our new Menopause range is something I'm particularly proud of.

It has been formulated to support women through a significant change in their lives. Understanding the complexities of menopause and its effects on the skin, we've tailored this range to help alleviate some of these symptoms, using a blend of vitamins, minerals and our signature high-quality collagen.

We have three products in the range: Peri, Sleep and Max. Each product is targeted to support each stage of the menopause.

“There’s no one-size-fits-all in parenting”

How do you feel about Revive Collagen launching in the US?

Sam: The launch in the US is a dream come true. Last month, we launched in 1,500 CVS stores and unveiled Chris Appleton – the world-renowned hairstylist and personal hairdresser to JLo and Kim Kardashian – as our global brand ambassador. I'm overwhelmed by the positive response, which just reinforces our commitment to providing a product that truly enhances people's lives.



QUICKFIRE Q&A

What do you wish you had been told before having kids?

Sam: I'd say the most valuable insight would have been to trust my own parenting instincts. There's no one-size-fits-all in parenting and learning to trust your gut is a powerful tool.

What is your funniest parenting memory?

Sam: There are loads, but Rosie loves to dress up and give us performances, which I adore.

Who is your parenting inspiration?

Sam: Inspiration comes from my mum – her love, support and resilience are what I strive to emulate as a mother.



Samantha Faiers (@samanthafaiers)

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MAKE YOUR BIRTH BETTER: THE SECOND TIME

Siobhan Miller, founder of the Positive Birth Company, offers key advice for parents who are preparing for the birth of their second child.



your birth and why. Perhaps your memory of events isn't completely clear or you don't understand why a certain decision was made. Often talking things through and getting answers can be incredibly therapeutic and help you process your birth experience. Speak to your GP or midwife to find out how this works within your NHS Trust. There is no time limit; it's never too late to request a debrief. You can find more resources at thepositivebirthcompany.co.uk/birth-trauma-resources

Sadly we frequently hear from parents who feel disappointed – or even traumatised – after their first birth experience. This can be for a whole number of different reasons; from feeling unprepared and uninformed to frightened and out of control, or, as is often the case, because the experience wasn't as expected and things didn't go 'to plan'.

Understandably, this can leave people feeling apprehensive about giving birth again, or in some cases, absolutely terrified. Perhaps you are someone who is pregnant for the second time and can relate or maybe you're hoping to have another baby, but the prospect of doing it all again is deterring you. If this sounds familiar, read on for some reassuring and practical advice...

Request a birth debrief

A birth debrief is an opportunity for you to go through your birth notes with a professional, who can help you to understand exactly what happened during

“Learn how to make informed choices and navigate your birth experience with confidence, and when to embrace intervention”



Knowledge is power

When it comes to giving birth, we believe that knowledge is power. You might be inclined to bury your head in the sand (especially if the thought of giving birth fills you with dread), but the more you know, the better prepared you will be. Learn how your body works on a muscular and hormonal level and why being relaxed will help. Practice mindfulness tools and techniques so you can stay calm, relaxed and in control. Learn how to make informed choices and navigate your birth experience with confidence, and when to embrace intervention. Know what your options are when it comes to induction, caesarean birth and pain relief. Remember if you don't know your options, you don't have any! So use this time to get clued up!

Hypnobirthing is not just for hippies

Don't dismiss hypnobirthing because it doesn't sound like it's for you. Hypnobirthing isn't like stage hypnosis. In fact, the name is actually quite misleading, as the real focus is on empowering you with up-to-date knowledge and evidence-based techniques that will make your birth better. Hypnobirthing is for all types of birth and provides you with effective tools and techniques that can be used at home, in hospital and even in theatre. You don't have to subscribe to a particular school of thought or be a particular type of person; hypnobirthing is for everyone who is preparing to bring a baby into the world.

Involve your birth partner

If you're feeling nervous about giving birth again, it's quite possible that your partner is feeling the same. So talk to them and involve them in your preparations. It can be helpful for them to understand their role and the practical things they can do to help. And if they are familiar with your preferences, they can advocate for you on the day.

Remember: positive not perfect

It's important to remember that a positive birth isn't one type of birth; all births have the potential to be positive experiences. The mechanics of how your birth happens actually matters little long-term, it's how you

Top tip

It's important to remember that a positive birth isn't one type of birth; all births have the potential to be positive experiences



felt during the experience that matters most, as it's the feelings that last a lifetime. Therefore, it's important to remain open-minded and aim for a positive experience – where you feel informed, supported, calm and confident – rather than a 'perfect' one.

No awkward role play required

Attending antenatal classes doesn't mean spending your weekend engaging in awkward role play with strangers in a dusty village hall. You can now access everything you need to know from the comfort of your own home. Our Digital Packs can be accessed on any device, from anywhere in the world, at any time of day – or night! You can choose to watch little and often, binge watch or even rewatch videos, if you wish to.

The Positive Birth Company (thepositivebirthcompany.co.uk) is on a mission to support you from the moment you start thinking about planning for a baby, to the day they eventually go to school. We do this through life-changing online courses, incredible online communities and access to some of the best minds in the fields of birth, health and psychology. Our resources are affordable and accessible to all, no matter where you are or how busy your life is.

Readers of Family First can get 10% off any of the Positive Birth Company's digital packs. Use the code **FF10** at the checkout

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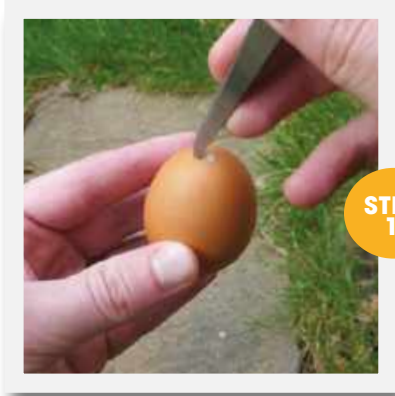
SCIENCE

experiments

THAT WILL BLOW YOUR MIND

Are you looking for some fun activities to do now that the dark nights are creeping in? Online educational sensation **Sergei Urban**, the creative mind behind TheDadLab, is here to talk you through some of his favourite science experiments.

Using everyday household objects, Sergei Urban shows you a simple way to learn some basic scientific ideas while sparking a sense of discovery.



STEP 1

EXPERIMENT 1 THE AMAZING GLOWING DRAGON'S EGG

What would you see if you could light a fire inside an egg? This nifty trick will turn your basic chicken's egg into something much more magical. You should do this experiment in the dark to get the best effect – you will really get to see the egg light up! Remember that only grown-ups should be lighting sparklers because they are hot.

What you need:

- An uncooked egg
- A sparkler ● Matches or a lighter

Step by step:

STEP 1

Use some scissors to gently break a small spot of eggshell at each end. You don't need to make a hole, just weaken it so that it's easier to push the sparkler through. Try to only break the eggshell, not the lining inside, otherwise, your egg will start to leak!

STEP 2

Push the sparkler through from the metal end. Make sure the egg is positioned in the middle so there is a bit of sparkler on each side.

STEP 2



STEP 3

Find a flat, inflammable surface to place your egg on. Carefully light the end of the sparkler and then stand back.

STEP 4

When the flame reaches the egg, do you think it will stop burning? Actually, the flame keeps moving down the sparkler, through the hole in the shell, and keeps burning inside the egg! This makes the egg glow. If you do this experiment at night, you will see the whole egg light up.



STEP 3



STEP 4

STEP 5

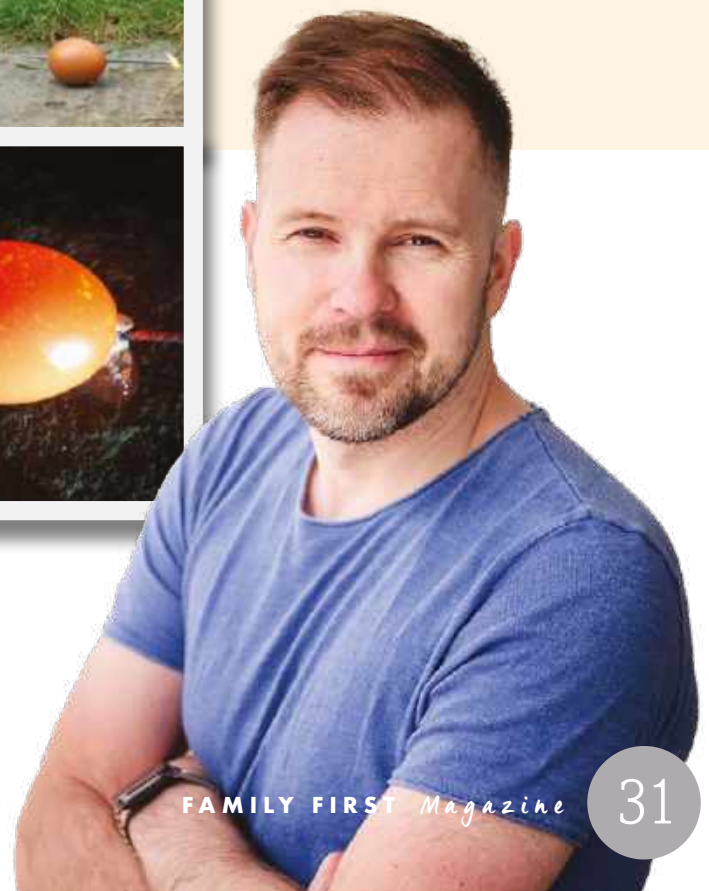
When the flame is inside the egg, it's still very hot. This makes the inside of the egg start to cook and you'll see it spill out at the end. The flame should keep burning and come out the other side. Leave your egg and sparkler to cool down before picking it up.



STEP 5

THE SCIENCE BEHIND IT

The fire needs three things to burn: oxygen, fuel, and heat. The coating on the sparkler is the fuel, the oxygen is in the air, and the heat comes from your lighter. When it reaches the egg and goes inside, you would think it would go out because it loses the oxygen from the air. However, the chemical that is used to make the sparkler coating has oxygen in it, so the fire can get both its oxygen and fuel from the sparkler. This is why it is able to burn inside the egg.



Fun fact

Science activities for early years tap into their curiosity and develop the desire to explore and experiment. This ultimately strengthens their problem-solving and analytical skills.

EXPERIMENT 2
THE IMPOSSIBLE
BALANCING CANS

This is a great trick to share with people because they won't believe their eyes! Using just a little bit of physics you can get a drinks can to balance at an impossible angle. You can even make it spin without falling over! But first, you'll have to investigate to see exactly how much water you need to fill the can with to get the balance just right.

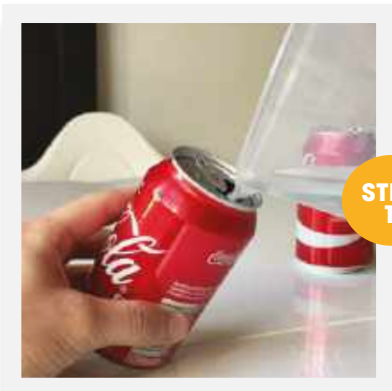
What you need:

- Empty drinks can
- Water
- Measuring jug

Step by step:

STEP 1

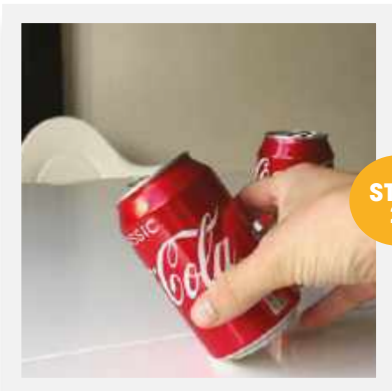
Use your measuring jug to pour a small amount of water into a can.



STEP 1

STEP 2

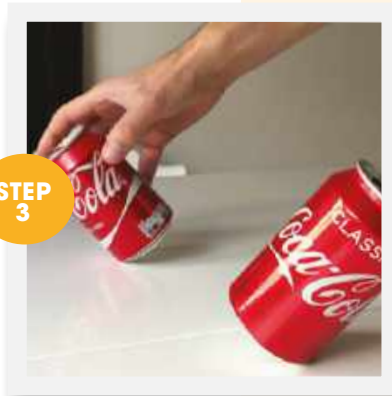
Try to balance your can on its edge. Tip it gently onto its side until it is resting at about a 45° angle. If you do not have the correct amount of water it can tip over – watch out for spilt water!



STEP 2

STEP 3

Try adding more water. When you get the amount of water right, your can will stay balanced to focus the sun onto this spot and see what happens.



STEP 3

THE SCIENCE
BEHIND IT

Every object has something called a centre of mass – this is the very middle point of all the stuff (called matter) that makes up the object. It isn't always right in the middle either, especially if something is heavier on the top or bottom. Think of an ice cream; the cone is long and empty, so it's very light, but the ice cream on top is heavy (and delicious!). Because the ice cream

is heavier than the cone, the centre of mass will be near the middle of the ice cream, not the middle of the whole object (which would be somewhere just under the top of the cone).

An object balances when its centre of mass is directly above the base, even if that base is really small. When you put the right amount of water in the can and then tip it on its side, the centre of mass will be right above the corner. This means that the can won't fall over. However, if you put too much water in, or not enough, it will fall over.



We hope these activities will inspire you to explore more art and science projects with your family. TheDadLab (thedadlab.com) is a trusted resource for STEAM and art activities for children and their parents. You can watch these experiments and more on TheDadLab (thedadlab.com) or YouTube (youtube.com/c/thedadlab).



AMAZING, WEIRD, MIND-BLOWING

Facts For Curious Minds



Sergei Urban, founder of TheDadLab, shares some surprising facts from his new book *Amazing, Weird, Mind-blowing Facts for Curious Minds*. It's packed full of more than 300 strange and wonderful facts about our world and activities to help you explore it.



From real-life super-animals and flying cars to robot rock bands and golf on the moon, find out for yourself just how incredible, strange and mind-boggling our universe really is with experiments and activities to wow your friends and stagger your family with too.

The world around us is full of amazing things: Stars that shine long after they have died, electricity that flies through the sky, and clouds that weigh more than 40 double-decker buses! Here is a sneak preview of some of the wonderful facts you can learn from Sergei Urban's new book (out now).

Did you know?

Every comet is as old as our solar system itself. These masses made of sand, ice and carbon dioxide are simply leftovers from when our solar system came into being 4.5 billion years ago. Most of them, if frozen, would be the size of a whole town!

Clouds may look light and fluffy, but all that water retention actually makes them incredibly heavy. The average cloud can weigh 500,000 kilograms.

Nothing in the universe can travel faster than the speed of light. It moves at about 1 billion kilometres per hour, while the speed of sound is only 1235 kilometres per hour! That's why you see lightning much sooner than you hear thunder, even though the sight and sound come from the same source.

Did you know that thunder is the effect of a shockwave? Whenever a lightning bolt strikes, air rapidly expands and contracts, creating a shockwave that ripples through the sky and creates that thunderous boom.

It may sound impossible but, in theory, a Formula 1 race car could drive upside down in a tunnel at 200 km/h! The immense downforce that is produced by this particular vehicle's aerodynamic design would help it to stick to the ceiling and keep driving forward.

In a surprising feat of physics, a crumpled piece of paper is actually stronger than a flattened piece of paper. The creases in the paper absorb force, and evenly distribute it across the surface, adding to its strength.

Is teleportation possible? Scientists have found a way to teleport very small singular particles on a subatomic level in recent years, using something called quantum entanglement. This technology, however, is a very far way away from reaching a point where it could teleport humans.

While the moon has large craters to show evidence of its many collisions with asteroids, meteors and space debris during its existence, the Earth has also

had its fair share of collisions. However, on Earth, we have tsunamis, soil erosion, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and other natural disasters that slowly erode all evidence of our impacts with space matter. Because the moon has no atmosphere, none of these events can occur, leaving it spotted with large craters.

The largest moon in our solar system belongs to Jupiter, and its name is Ganymede. It's bigger than Mercury and Pluto.

Saturn is the only planet in our solar system that is less dense than water. That means if you put it in a (very, very large) bathtub, it would float.

Theoretically, astronauts could propel themselves through space by exhaling. Breathing out would propel them in the opposite direction, similarly to how air escaping from a balloon would propel a balloon car.

START YOUR ENGINES

Amongst all the great facts, you'll also find practical and fun activities, designed to do together with friends or family. Sergei Urban and his kids have tried and tested and fine-tuned all of them before including them in the book. Now they're passing on the best activities so you can have as much fun at home as they have. Why not try making this balloon-powered car? You can even challenge your friends to a race once you've all made one.



What you need:

- A balloon ● A paper straw
- Some tape or a rubber band
- A toy car (you can build one using LEGO bricks or other materials) ● Lots of lung capacity!

Step by step:

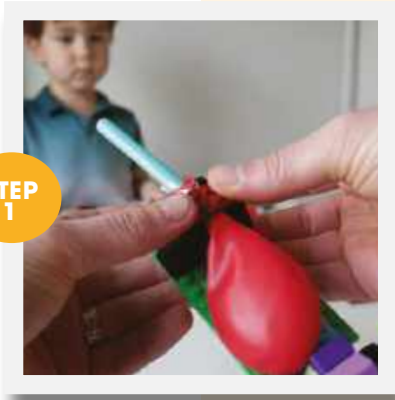
STEP 1

Insert the paper straw into the open hole of the balloon and secure it with tape. Then, place the length of the straw on the body of your toy car, with the balloon at the front end, and use several pieces of tape to secure it.

STEP 2

Blow into the straw until the balloon is inflated and pinch the balloon so the air stays inside.

STEP 1



STEP 3

Now put the car on the floor or table, release the car and watch your little car zoom around, powered by the air.

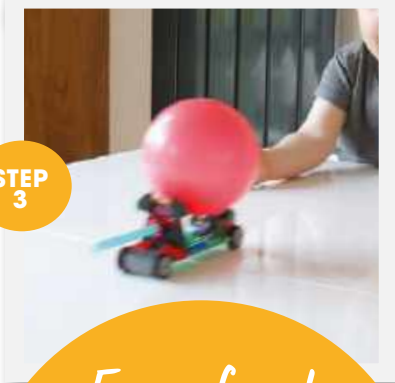
STEP 4

Think about what changes you can make so your car goes further. Adding a bigger balloon or two? Making the car heavier or lighter?

STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



TAKE IT FURTHER

You can explore other ways to move your car. Attach one magnet to your toy car, and hold the other magnet in your hand. Move magnets closer and, depending on the polarisation of the magnets, they will repel or attract and move the car at the same time. Try finding other ways you can propel your toy car forward. Whether you are using rubber bands or attaching sails to your car, I hope you are enjoying exploring physics.



Find more fascinating facts and amazing activities in Sergei's *Amazing, Weird, Mind-blowing Facts for Curious Minds*, out now! (Seven Dials, £14.99)

Get your copy of the book at [qr codes at/book](#)



Fun fact
Science appeals to kids' inquisitive minds as they try to make sense of the world and how things work.

GET UP & GLOW

WITH THE POWER OF OATS, VITAMINS & MINERALS†



A BOWL OF GOODNESS IN
90
SECONDS

† BETA-GLUCANS CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF NORMAL BLOOD CHOLESTEROL LEVELS. ONE 30G SERVING PROVIDES 1.2G OF BETA GLUCAN SOLUBLE FIBRE FROM WHOLE OATS AND OAT FLOUR, WHICH IS 40% OF 3G, THE SUGGESTED DAILY INTAKE. VITAMIN D CONTRIBUTES TO THE NORMAL FUNCTION OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM. CALCIUM IS NEEDED FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF NORMAL BONES, AS PART OF A HEALTHY DIET AND LIFESTYLE.

START YOUR DAY WITH A WARM BOWL OF Ready brek

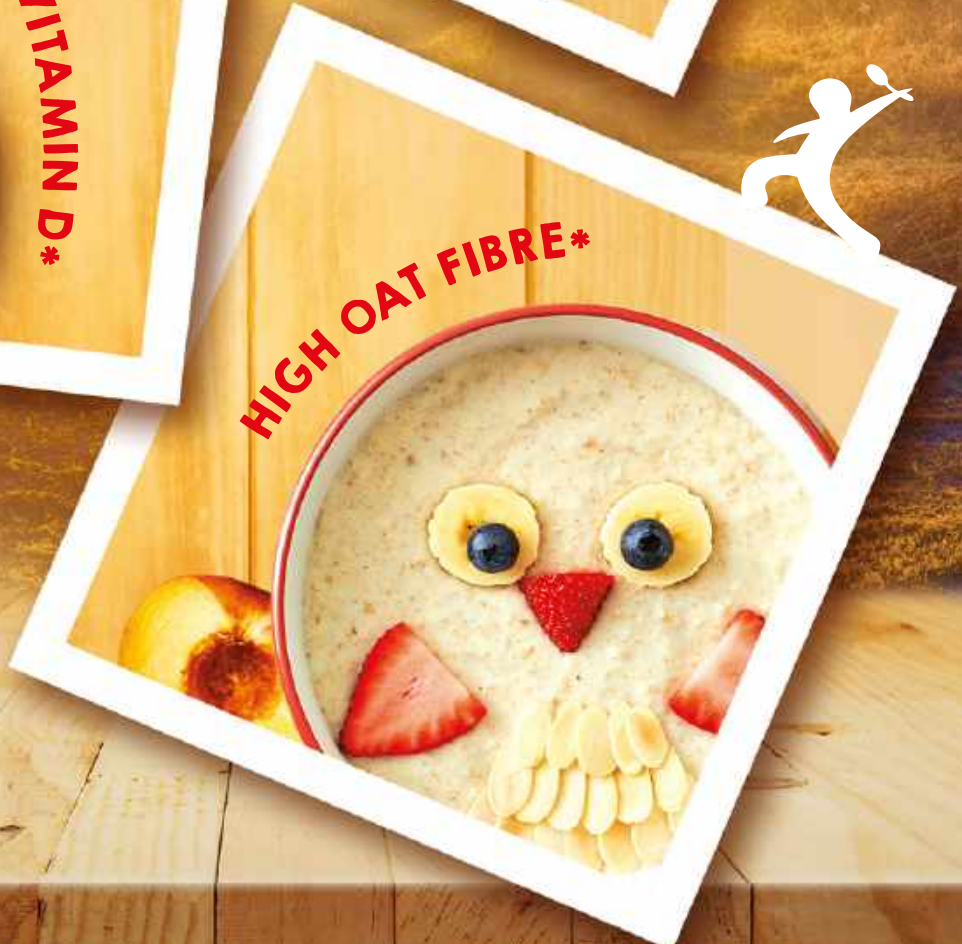
THE PERFECT
BREAKFAST FOR YOU
AND YOUR **FAMILY!**



SOURCE OF VITAMIN D*



RICH IN CALCIUM*



HIGH OAT FIBRE*

QUICK & EASY!
NO ADDED SALT
OR SUGAR



Cosy winter reads

Our roundup of the latest children's books your kids won't be able to put down!

THE BIG DREAMING

By Michael Rosen

Age 0+ | RRP £12.99 | Available from Bloomsbury (bloomsbury.com)



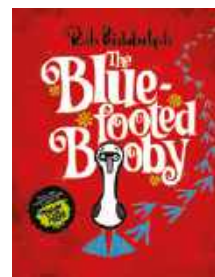
The cold is coming and it's time for Big Bear and Little Bear to get ready for the Big Sleep: for bears sleep all winter long and wake up in the spring. But Little Bear is worried.

What if they run out of dreams during the Big Sleep? And so, Little Bear sets out bravely to find enough dreams to see them through the long winter. On his journey, he discovers dreams of happiness; dreams of homecoming; and dreams of hope. But with the cold approaching fast, will Little Bear make it back home in time for the Big Dreaming?

THE BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY

By Rob Biddulph

Age 3+ | RRP £7.99 | Available from Amazon (amazon.co.uk)



If you are not a birdwatcher, you might not know what a blue-footed booby is! In *The Blue-footed Booby*, we meet a group of birds who are fabulous bakers. When a frangipane tart goes missing

amidst a flurry of footprints, the Blue-footed Booby becomes the chief suspect. But all is not as it seems. This rhyming book is a fun story that teaches children about the perils of jumping to conclusions.

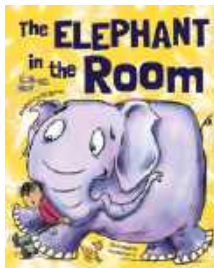




THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

By Ian James

Age 5+ | RRP £8.99 | Available from Amazon (amazon.co.uk)



Henry is having a problem with his friends at school – something a lot of children can relate to. Henry’s mum and dad know something is wrong, but he doesn’t want to talk about it. However, that night, a mysterious and very

hungry visitor appears and, while causing mayhem, teaches Henry an important lesson about dealing with problems. *The Elephant in the Room* aims to encourage children to open up and discuss their feelings, nurturing vital emotional intelligence skills at a young age. Author Ian James, said: “I wrote ‘*The Elephant in the Room*’ to spark meaningful conversations between parents, caregivers, and children.”

BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

By Lisa Williamson

Age 7+ | RRP £7.99 | Available from Guppy Books (guppybooks.co.uk)



Lola and Evie have been best friends forever since they were babies, just like peas in a pod — and even though they don’t end up in the same class, Lola expects everything to stay the same. At home, things are tough because Lola’s parents are divorcing and they’re

having to move the family home. So when the annoying Cleo becomes friendly with Evie, stealing her from Lola, three most definitely becomes a crowd - Lola must learn that not all change is bad.

NEWS HOUNDS: THE COW CALAMITY

By Laura James

Age 7+ | RRP £6.99 | Available from Bloomsbury (bloomsbury.com)



Bunty is the farmer’s dog at Withy Hook Farm and the weather reporter for the *Daily Bark*, Puddle’s best (and only) newspaper for dogs. But when Farmer Val is injured, it’s up to Bunty to keep the farm running. Suddenly, Bunty’s life isn’t as right as rain – it’s a whirlwind, as she rushes

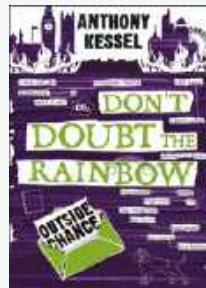
to collect eggs, check on lambs – and deal with a herd of huge cows!



DON'T DOUBT THE RAINBOW: OUTSIDE CHANCE

By Anthony Kessel

Age 11+ | RRP £6.99 | Available from Crown House Publishing (crownhouse.co.uk)



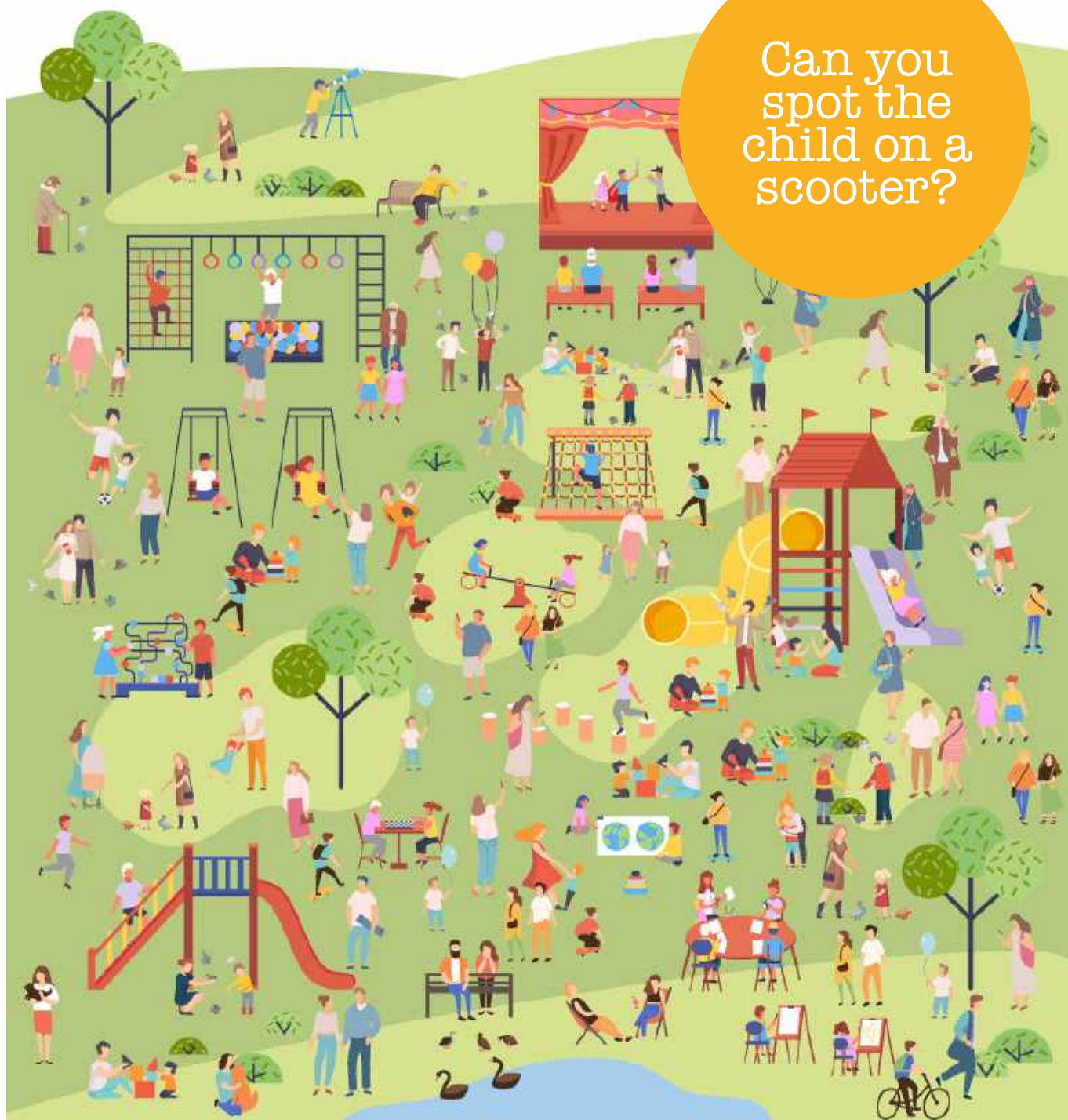
The second in the four-book *Don't Doubt the Rainbow* series, *Outside Chance* is a fast-paced young adult thriller in which teen detective Edie Marble is tasked with solving four very different but equally puzzling mysteries. It has been three months since 13-year-old

Edie solved the case of her mother’s death and became a super sleuth. Now, her reputation is spreading far and wide – everyone wants her help to solve mysteries.

What better way to stimulate your children's brains than to challenge them to complete a set of brainteasers? Only those with the sharpest minds can solve all of the puzzles, so put your detective skills to the test with these brainteasers created by **OutdoorToys**.

Outdoor Toys (www.outdoortoys.com) has grown over the years to become one of the UK's largest stockists of children's toys and play equipment. Proud to be an independent family run business, it has almost two decades of experience selling outdoor toys.

Can you spot the child on a scooter?



LET TIME DO THE FLYING

03:30 alarm.

Trek to the airport.

Bag too heavy. Now wearing 2 coats.

4 overpriced meals.

2 burnt coffees.

Head to the gate.

Queuing.

More queuing.

Bing Bong.

You find your seat.

The armrest war begins.

You land.

Your bags don't.

They never left.

Must we continue?

No.





A way where you...

- Have no luggage limit.
- Check in when it suits you.
- Pay less for more legroom.
- Book as a family, not individually.
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- Dig into the all-inclusive Club Lounge.
- Choose the seat you want at no cost.
- Spot France out of the floor-to-ceiling windows.
- Enjoy the Pet Lounge with your best friend, Clifford.
- Listen to the waves on the eco-friendly P&O Pioneer.

Just. Relax.

It's a no brainer really, isn't it.

Dover to Calais from just £68* one way.
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*All pricing will be subject to a 2024 environmental charge.
This is to cover the EU Energy Trading System and will be applied to all bookings.

P&O 
FERRIES



HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD MAKE FRIENDS

Children's psychologist and professor at Exeter University, **Professor Helen Dodd**, looks at how to help children boost their social skills and the benefits of play.

Find a healthy balance between screen time and socialising

Fewer children are playing outdoors than their parent's generation, with a particularly notable decline in street play. Recent research by housebuilder Redrow showed a third of children have never played on their street, with over a third of parents (36%) saying their child spends too long on social media. Aim for your child to have a healthy diet of different types of socialising and play. It is okay for them to have some screen time, but combining this with time spent playing outdoors in your local area can naturally improve their social skills, which helps in their education and social development.

Use the walk to school to expand their social circles

Making friends when starting a new school year or school is equally daunting for parents and children alike, so look to identify a walk-to-school route where you can meet new faces along the way before they've even stepped into school. You can build relationships and arrange meet-ups with other families through a common interest, which naturally makes it easier

to develop friendships, both for you and your child! Redrow's research also found that over half (52%) of parents made friends with their neighbours after their children played together.

Make time to play outside of school hours

In the back-to-school rush it can be easy to deprioritise socialising and play, and getting outside is one of the easiest ways to work this back into your family schedule. As parents we recognise the benefits of playing outside, one in two say it helps develop social skills, as children meet people they might not usually interact with, and it's positive for their mental and physical health. One of the other benefits, it's free! Find a local park, take a picnic and football, and invite the families you've met on your walk to school or in your street. Not only will it give your children a chance to socialise independently, but it also gives parents the chance to meet potential parent friends.

To read Redrow's new report, 'From Placemaking To Playmaking: Encouraging Community Play Across The UK', visit: <http://tinyurl.com/6vnnvpw4>

Give a child a place

to call home

Fostering can be one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do. It starts with a home and grows into a place where a child belongs.

Change a child's life by becoming a foster carer.



To find out more, call
0800 0277 280 or
scan the **QR code**



Believe in
children
Barnardo's

‘I didn’t really understand what being loved was’ – how Barnardo’s changed Jamie’s life forever

Life today for Jamie is “great”. The 25-year-old from Glasgow has a wonderful partner and a job he loves. But life wasn’t always like this for Jamie. He experienced an incredibly tough childhood. When he was only 12 years old, Jamie found himself being fostered through children’s charity **Barnardo’s**.

“My early life was very chaotic. Unfortunately, my Mum was dependent on drugs and there was alcohol abuse and domestic abuse, and I moved home lots of different times”.

“That led to me entering the care system when I was 11 years old and then I went to a residential placement with my local city council. At first, I couldn’t get a foster placement at all. Being fresh into the care system, nobody would take me because nobody really knew how I would behave or what kind of kid I was going to be. Then, when I was about 12 and a half, I went to my foster placement.”

When Jamie went into foster care with Barnardo’s, his life improved immeasurably, as he explains: “When I went to Barnardo’s, it was life changing. The people in Barnardo’s changed my life. I got matched with a foster place, but at the start I found it challenging because for the first time, I started to get to know myself and who I was.”

“Although I had two lovely foster carers, I’d come from a chaotic background, which made it hard for me when boundaries were put in place.

I rebelled as I was used to chaos. However, they taught me so many life skills; like how to change my bed and wash my clothes. This was all stuff I didn’t know how to do.

After a while, Jamie moved to another Barnardo’s family before finding his ‘forever home’ at 16: “When I moved in with Danny and Jenny, they completely changed my life. They were the two people I called ‘Mum and Dad’ – and how far I have come in life now is down to them.

“With them, I felt nothing was impossible, and they helped me to dream that I could be anything I wanted to be. They always supported what I wanted to do and achieve. They took me on

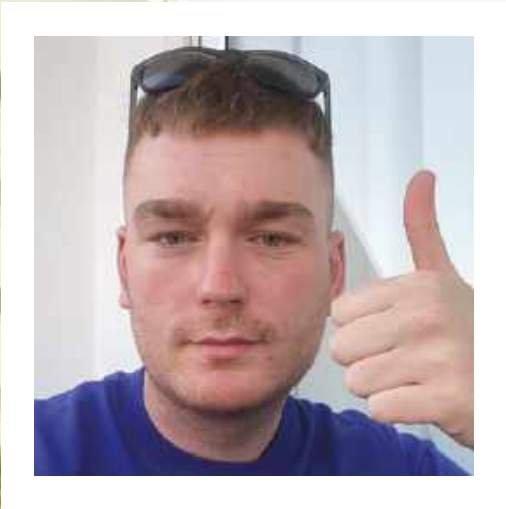
dream holidays and bought me first season ticket for Celtic FC. I eventually left Danny and Jenny’s care when I was 22 years of age.”

“Until the age of 11, I had nowhere to call home because I was in a new place every six months. But Barnardo’s showed me the positivity of being loved, nurtured, cared for and having that sense of anything being possible and somewhere to call home”

Looking back at his time in foster care, there are so many positives for Jamie: “I had three different families and three different ways of

“I felt so well loved and welcome, and part of something at that time of my life, which I never thought was possible”





reward to these kids is massive because they might otherwise have never known what it was like have a place to call home or what it was like to be part of a family. But being a foster carer can provide all of that. For me, I will be a part of two families for the rest of my life.”

Not every child has a loving, stable

home. When life gets tough or unsafe at home, children need a caring adult to look after them until things can get better. Foster care provides that safe, secure and stable environment which these children and young people need. It's giving a child a place they finally feel they belong, a place they can call home. It can be one of the most rewarding things you can do.

Sadly, the cost-of-living crisis is leaving thousands of children in search of a safe, loving and stable home, but a national shortage of foster

carers may mean their dreams never comes true. Barnardo's is calling on more people to consider fostering, to ensure that the right families are there for children when they need them the most.

With more than 100 years of experience in fostering, our expert team provides 24/7 support, access to a dedicated social worker and all the training needed to help make a positive difference to a child's life.

Barnardo's believes that no child should suffer from the rising costs. So our foster carers can focus on what really matters. We offer each of our carers an average financial package of £495 per week, and up to £630 per week depending on the child's age and individual needs.

To find out more about fostering with Barnardo's please visit our website at [barnardos.org.uk/foster](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/foster), or call our team on 0800 0277 280.

“Foster carers can change your life for the better and they maybe don't realise to what extent”

being a family, so for me, foster care made me the man I am today. As a charity, Barnardo's was a place to call home with the amazing people there and the support workers – some of them will be in my life for the rest of my life. The charity was a positive and that reflected in the foster families, I was a part of.”

Having spent more than a decade in foster care, Jamie is exceptionally well placed to offer advice to those who may be considering going down the road of being a carer.

“Foster carers can change your life for the better and they maybe don't realise to what extent.”

“As a foster carer, you're giving up a part of your life, privacy and your own home, but in return, you are giving so, so much. And the



5

TOP TIPS TO GET YOUR KIDS

outdoors!

Rosie Tanner, marketing manager at outdoor adventure company, Land & Wave, shares ideas to help encourage your little ones to get outside and enjoy the outdoors.

In today's world, technology and a prevalent online culture continue to inch the door shut on the outside world for kids, with children spending 56%¹ more time on technology than they do playing outside and just 27% of children playing outside compared to 80%² in the past.

Here are some great ideas to encourage your kids to put down their screens and enjoy the great outdoors.

1 Trial new activities

It can be hard to get kids excited about a quick walk around the block or trip to the beach, especially in the colder months, but taking some time to plan a new activity outside of the norm could be just the trick to pique their interest. If you're looking for some free-to-access options, try joining a local Facebook group where you can connect with other like-minded people trying new activities each month.

Another way to get the kids out and about is to organise family cycling trips or hike a new trail, or even just walking the dog somewhere new. This will help them to start associating the outdoors with fun, quality family time. Some families have a family calendar to plan their fun trips, or, for a bit more spontaneity, you can have a jar filled with trips, ideas, destinations, and activities that can be chosen at random, a really fun way to get you out of the house.

2 Tech break hour

We're hearing about this happening a lot lately, not just for kids but adults as well! There are even special holiday options where you can go specifically for a tech break. Making a promise for yourselves and your children to put the technology down for an hour, including no laptops, no phones and no TV, is a great way for the whole family to get involved and dedicate the hour to some much-needed family time. Instead, use the hour to play your favourite card game or do some baking for a special treat after dinner.

3 Adventure in a safe space

With the busyness on the streets and lack of green spaces compared to when some of us were younger, finding safe places to get outside with the family can sometimes be tricky. Here in Dorset, we are lucky to have the Purbecks and the New Forest right on our doorstep, if you don't have something like this nearby, explore your local park or woodland, and if you're not sure what you have close by you can search online using sites like: fieldsintrust.org

4 Grow new interests

Gardening is not just a great way to get outside and connect back to nature, but it can also be used to teach children about responsibility and accountability. They must take care of their plant, ensuring it is watered and tended to regularly to keep it nice and healthy.

Whether you're growing vegetables, herbs or flowers, gardening is also a good way to give your kids something that they can follow through with and see the progress of their hard work. You can find a selection of easy garden plants to try with your children with a quick online search, such as: '12 of the best easy plants for kids to grow'.

5 Make it a challenge!

Have you heard of the 1,000 hours outside challenge? Or, outside an hour each day challenge or Screen Free Week (takethemoutside.com/111-screen-free-activities/). These are a selection of outdoor challenges that the whole family can get involved with and achieve together. You can even get other families/friends involved and offer a prize at the end for the family who wins, tapping into your little one's competitive nature.

There's a variety of suggested activities you can try during your screen-free time online including, visiting a local museum, going for an ice cream, a nature scavenger hunt, a picnic, kite flying and more. By the end of the challenge, they might just realise how much more time (and fun!) they have when they're not busy staring at a screen.

Find out more about outdoor adventure company, Land & Wave at: landandwave.co.uk

Source:

1: Children spend 56% more time on technology than they do playing outside | Oxford Open Learning (oxfordhomeschooling.co.uk)

2: Children Today 62% Less Likely To Play Out Than Baby Boomer Grandparents (savethechildren.org.uk)





Choose to be safer online. Opt-in to Cyber Safety.™

Trusted by millions of customers.



In today's connected world, you need more than just antivirus.

Norton 360 Deluxe

Norton 360 Deluxe provides powerful layers of protection for your devices and online privacy against cyberthreats - all in a single solution.

Plus, we scan the Dark Web for your personal information and notify you if it's found.

When connecting to Wi-Fi your online privacy has protection with bank-grade encryption from our Secure VPN.



Real-time Threat Protection

Advanced security with antivirus helps protect against existing and emerging online threats to your device, and helps protect your private and financial information when you go online.



Secure VPN

Browse anonymously and more securely with a no-log Virtual Private Network (VPN). Add bank-grade encryption to help ensure the information you send and receive is secure and private.



Parental Control†

Manage your children's activities online. Help them explore, learn, and enjoy their connected world more safely on their PCs or smartphones.



Password Manager

Tools to easily generate, store, and manage your passwords, credit card information and other credentials online - more securely.



PC Cloud Backup^{1,2}

Store important files and documents as a preventive measure against data loss due to hard drive failures, stolen devices and even ransomware.



Dark Web Monitoring[§]

We monitor and notify you if we find your personal information on the Dark Web.



SafeCam for PC²

Alerts you to attempts to access your webcam and helps you block unauthorized access to it.



Smart Firewall for PC or Firewall for Mac

Monitors communications between your computer and other computers and helps block unauthorized traffic.

¹ Cloud Backup, SafeCam, and Notification Optimization features are only available on Windows (excluding Windows in S mode, Windows running on ARM processor). ² Requires your device to have an Internet/data plan and be turned on. † Norton Family/Parental Control can only be installed and used on a child's Windows™ PC, iOS and Android™ device but not all features are available on all platforms. Parents can monitor and manage their child's activities from any device - Windows PC (excluding Windows in S mode), Mac, iOS and Android - via our mobile apps, or by signing into their account at my.Norton.com and selecting Parental Control via any browser. Mobile app must be downloaded separately. § Dark Web Monitoring is not available in all countries. Monitored information varies based on country of residence. It defaults to monitor your email address and begins immediately. Sign in to your account to enter more information for monitoring.

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THREE WAYS TO STAY HEALTHY *this winter*

Experienced GP, **Dr Tom Jenkins**, looks at how we can protect our children and ourselves from common winter coughs and colds.



In the UK, it is reported that on average 175 million cough and cold episodes occur annually, with 20 per cent of people contacting over-burdened

NHS services and GPs for help^[1]. Thirty-five million GP consultations yearly are for advice on how to deal with coughs and colds, resulting in seven million antibiotic courses being prescribed for these common infections^[2].

Even though most upper respiratory tract infections are viral and not bacterial and, therefore, will not respond to antibiotic treatment, the influx of patients to GP services is estimated to cost between 3% and 5% of the annual UK health budget^[3].

Dr Tom Jenkins, GP, says: "As viruses cause the majority of upper respiratory infections, antibiotics will not help in most cases. Unfortunately, a sore

"We can help our body fight off infections by supporting our immune system"



throat, cough or nasal congestion can cause significant distress for some, but there is effective self-care advice that will help soothe symptoms for a more comfortable recovery at home, as well as sensible steps you can take to help reduce your risk of catching a cough or cold in the first place."

1 Be prepared

We can help our body fight off infections by supporting our immune system, ensuring that it is as ready as it can be to respond to a broad range of viral and bacterial challenges that the winter brings.

Get moving – strengthen your immune system by taking regular exercise to keep it fit and ready to fight infection. Just 30 minutes a day of brisk walking is enough to help improve your general wellbeing.

Top up on the 'sunshine vitamin' – our vitamin D levels plummet during winter when sunlight is too weak to stimulate its synthesis in our skin. Better known for



promoting the absorption of calcium for strong bones and teeth, vitamin D also supports the body's immune system. Good dietary sources of vitamin D are fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines, and smaller amounts are found in egg yolks, red meat, liver and cheese. Or try a supplement during the winter to help reduce the risk of respiratory tract infections by supporting your body's ability to fight infections.

Winter savvy food choices – a study found that a deficiency in the vitamins C, D or the mineral zinc, can compromise the immune response, making us more vulnerable to viral infections. For a diet that will maintain a healthy immune system, try these savvy suggestions to boost your winter wellbeing:

Top tip!
Strengthen your immune system by taking regular exercise to keep it fit and ready to fight infection

For food sources of vitamin C, try adding an orange, sticks of red pepper, or slices of mango or kiwis to lunchboxes, and put broccoli and cabbage on the dinner menu. Swap out a meat dish or two in the week and replace with vitamin-D-rich fish or for a budget-friendly alternative, an egg and mushroom omelette for a double vitamin D hit.

Boost your zinc levels by starting the day with zinc-rich porridge oats. Indulge in a snack pack of pumpkin seeds or almonds. Swap out potatoes at some meals for brown rice and experiment with bulking out winter warming soups or stews with barley or buckwheat.

Walnuts aren't just a festive favourite, they are packed full of healthy nutrients. Snack on a handful for a good source of folate, vitamin B6, copper and a source of iron and zinc, which contribute to the normal function of the immune system as part of a healthy balanced diet and lifestyle.



2 School savvy tips for your kids

As many children will spend most of their day at school, it's not surprising that in the confines of a classroom, their breathing, talking, coughing and sneezing may result in catching a cough or cold, but that shouldn't always mean taking a day off school. Being in school is important for your child's learning and wellbeing, and wider development through taking part in extra-curricular sports and school clubs.

Dr Jenkins says: "The NHS advises that it is fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or cold, but if the cold is accompanied by a raised temperature, shivers or drowsiness, the child should stay off school until the fever goes. If your child has a more severe and long-lasting cough, it's important to consult your GP.

It's a good idea to talk to your children about good hygiene when they are at school and encourage them to:

- Ask the teacher to open the windows – classrooms should be well ventilated.
- Sneeze or cough into the crook of their arm or into a tissue to help reduce spreading virus particles to others and remember to throw used tissues away after use.
- Hand hygiene is key again to prevent transmission of the virus from surfaces to your body. Encourage children to wash their hands once they've reached school, before and after eating, and after using the toilets."

3 At home self-care and recovery

Lower a fever – a temperature over 38 °C (100°F) constitutes a fever and is a normal physical response of your body when there's an infection during common illnesses like the flu, as your body fights off the germs. Paracetamol and ibuprofen are effective ways to help relieve a fever. Both are suitable for adults and children under 16, but always check the pack or leaflet for correct age-related dose or ask a pharmacist or doctor for advice.

Keep hydrated – drink plenty of water, fruit juice or diluted squash to avoid dehydration. Relieve a cough – taking a herbal remedy containing pelargonium is recommended by the NHS self-care guidelines as one of four options to relieve a cough. "One of the benefits of

pelargonium extract is that it can help reduce the need for antibiotics, which are often overprescribed and ineffective for viral infections," Dr Jenkins explains. Look for a product that displays THR on its pack, which ensures it is regulated by the UK's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and has met the required standards for safety, quality and patient information. Soothe a sore throat – a spoonful of honey stirred into a mug of warm water can help soothe a sore throat or tickly cough.

Product suggestions

Healthspan's Super Strength vitamin D3 240 tablets (£3.95, healthspan.co.uk) for adults. Suitable from birth, Viridikiid Vitamin D3, 400iu (30ml, £9.70, viridian-nutrition.com and health stores) for a plant-based, vegan form of vitamin D. These orange flavour drops do not contain anything artificial and are sourced according to Viridian's strict ethical criteria, including no animal testing, GMO or palm oil.



Centoreze (21 tablets, £10.95, centoreze.co.uk) is a licensed THR herbal medicine containing a combination of pelargonium sidoides and pelargonium reniforme used to relieve symptoms of upper respiratory tract infections, such as the common cold based on traditional use only. Adults and children aged 12 years or more can use pelargonium to relieve cough, runny nose and sore throat symptoms.

Walnuts grown in the warm climate and rich, fertile soil of California have a deliciously mild and creamy taste. Look for 'Produce of the USA' on packs or try Sainsbury's own brand walnuts, which contain California walnuts (californiawalnuts.co.uk).

Source:

1: UK OTC Analgesics, Cough, Cold and Flu Remedies Market Report 2022, Georgia Stafford, Statista April 2022

2: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antimicrobial-resistance>

3: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/460709/4a_Health_Literacy-Full.pdf



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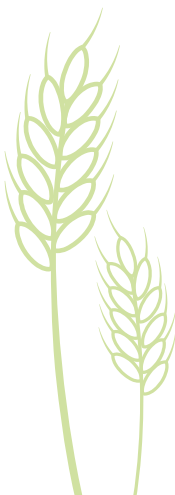


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“Starlings, wagtails and gulls can be seen gathering all over the UK, but some winter bird spectacles take a little more seeking”



Starling © Dawn Monrose

Spectacular STARLINGS AND OTHER WINTER WONDERS

Discover the birds putting on showstopping performances this winter, says **Thomas Hibbert** at The Wildlife Trusts.

Winter is a tough time for wildlife, so animals have to adapt to survive. For birds, this

often involves flocking together. There's safety in numbers and there's also warmth. Goldcrests huddle together on branches at night. Wrens pile into nest boxes, squeezing together to create a feathery bundle of heat – one garden birdwatcher counted 63 wrens in a single box! Tits and other birds will sleep in nest boxes, too. If you have one in your garden, try watching it in the evening to see if anyone goes in for a cosy snooze.

“On autumn and winter evenings, starlings gather in huge numbers”

These are subtle gatherings; you have to pay careful attention to spot them. Some birds are much more obvious. They come together in huge numbers that you couldn't possibly miss. Let's meet a few of them...

A magnificent murmur

One of the most impressive examples of birds flocking together comes from a familiar face in the garden: the starling. On their own, starlings are beautiful birds. They have glossy black feathers that can shimmer green or purple. These are covered in constellations of little pale dots, which up close can look like love hearts. They have cheery, chattering calls and can copy the sounds of other birds and even people. But when you get a lot of starlings together, the result is even more amazing.

On autumn and winter evenings, starlings gather in huge numbers.

They'll eventually settle down to sleep together, but first they have some flying to do! As the sun starts to set, the starlings take to the air in a big flock.



Knot © Chris Gomersall / 2020VISION



They swirl over their chosen sleeping spot, flying round and round. As more and more birds arrive, the flock grows to an incredible size. They swish and swoop, like a big black paintbrush is sweeping across the sky, forming shapes and patterns that last for just a few seconds. You can hear the wind rushing over thousands of wings, creating a soft murmur – which is why this display is known as a murmuration.

Eventually, at some unseen signal, the starlings start to drop down into their sleeping spot. This could be in a reedbed, in trees or on an old building or pier. They'll huddle up tight and spend the night together. In the morning, they'll take off and split up as they head out to find food.

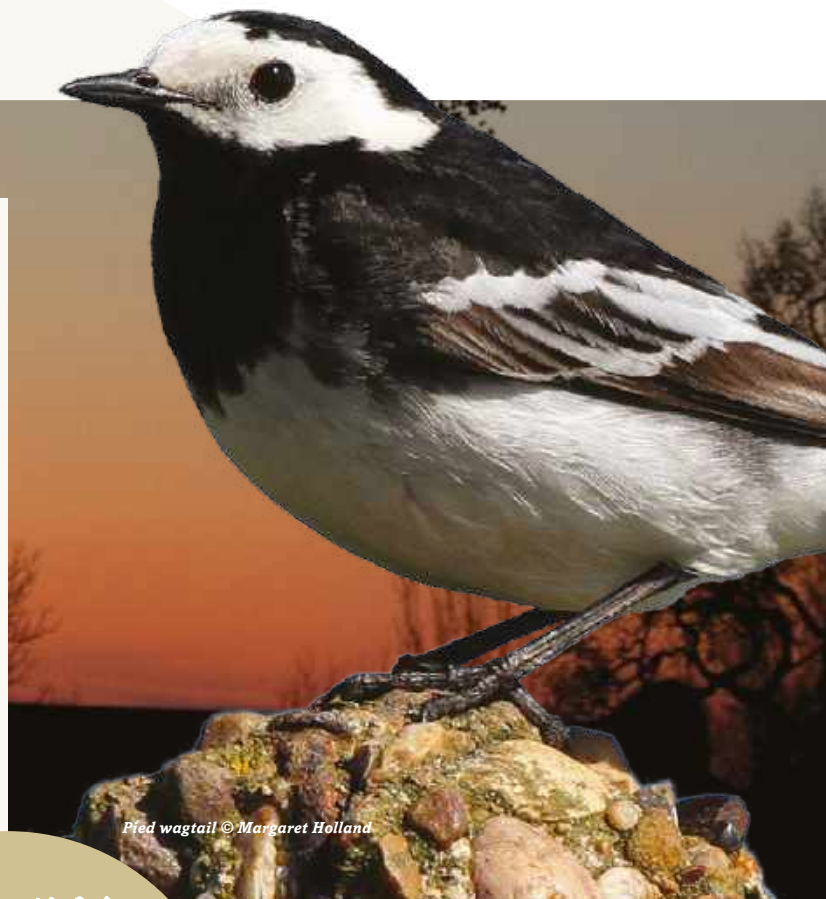
Scientists are still trying to figure out exactly why starlings put on such a spectacular show. Some people think they swirl around for so long to attract more starlings to the roost site. Others think they create these mesmerising displays to confuse predators that might try to snatch them. Whatever the reason, it's one of the most beautiful and spectacular sights you can enjoy in the UK.

Top tips for watching a murmuration

- *Wrap up warm with lots of layers. You might even want a flask of hot chocolate. It can get very chilly.*
- *Get in position at least an hour before sunset, to make sure you don't miss the show.*
- *Take a torch to help you find your way back after the birds have gone to bed.*
- *Look out for birds of prey, like peregrine falcons or sparrowhawks, trying to catch the starlings. When the flock breaks into two, it's often because a bird of prey has flown through it.*
- *Find a murmuration near you at wildlifetrusts.org/murmurations*

Wonderful wagtails

Starlings aren't the only birds that sleep in spectacular numbers. Pied wagtails are a common sight in towns and cities. They're gorgeous little black, grey and white birds that



Pied wagtail © Margaret Holland

Did you know?

Scientists are still trying to figure out exactly why starlings put on such a spectacular show.

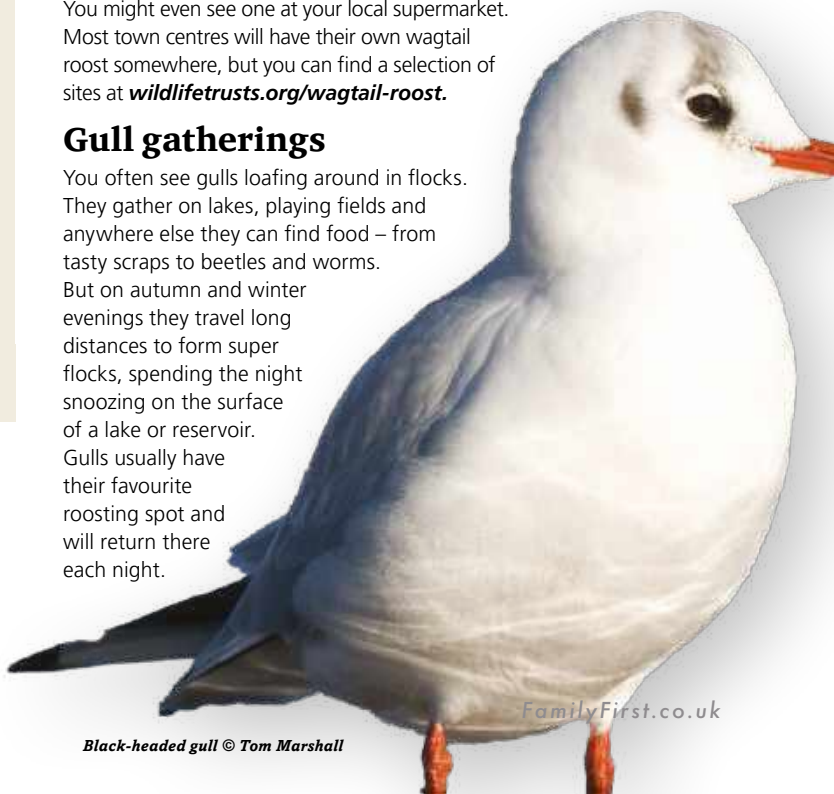
stroll the streets, bobbing their tail. As the evening draws in, pied wagtails start to gather in noisy groups, often on rooftops. Listen out for their bouncing 'chizzik' calls.

When they're ready for bed, they'll flutter into their favourite tree, covering the branches like long-tailed baubles.

The sound is as impressive as the sight, with birds constantly chatting to each other in cheerful chirps. They often choose ornamental trees in car parks and shopping areas. You might even see one at your local supermarket. Most town centres will have their own wagtail roost somewhere, but you can find a selection of sites at wildlifetrusts.org/wagtail-roost.

Gull gatherings

You often see gulls loafing around in flocks. They gather on lakes, playing fields and anywhere else they can find food – from tasty scraps to beetles and worms. But on autumn and winter evenings they travel long distances to form super flocks, spending the night snoozing on the surface of a lake or reservoir. Gulls usually have their favourite roosting spot and will return there each night.



Black-headed gull © Tom Marshall

“Pied wagtails are a common sight in towns and cities”

Murmuration © Danny Green/2020VISION

It's a spellbinding sight as gulls stream through the sky to settle on the water. They create a blizzard of birds, with their white feathers glowing in the gloom. If you have binoculars or a spotting scope, you can search through them as they bob on the water, seeing how many species you can see. There are likely to be a lot of black-headed gulls and herring gulls, as well as common gulls and perhaps some great black-backed gulls. Birdwatchers often visit gull roosts hoping to see rarer species like Iceland gulls and glaucous gulls. These ghostly pale visitors come down from the Arctic in small numbers each winter.

If you can't get to the local roost to see it for yourself, keep an eye on the sky near your house as the afternoon starts to fade to evening. Can you spot any gulls flying over on their way to bed? They often travel in loose v-shaped flocks like geese. Find out more about gull roosts and where to see them at wildlifetrusts.org/gull-roosts

Rarer roosts

Starlings, wagtails and gulls can be seen gathering all over the UK, but some winter bird spectacles take a little more seeking. If you find yourself in the right area, you could enjoy an evening you'll never forget. Winter is a great time for watching birds of prey. There are over a dozen species to be seen, from barn owls to buzzards, eagles to long-eared owls. But it's harriers that are responsible for one of our greatest wild winter wonders.

Marsh harriers live around wetlands, hunting over reedbeds during the day. In winter, as with many other birds, they like to roost as a group. They gather together and swoop above the reeds a few times before finally settling down. Seeing flocks of this great big bird is an unforgettable experience. You might even see a rare hen harrier fly in to join them. Male hen harriers are known as grey ghosts, because of their pale grey feathers – they really do look quite ghostly in the

twilight! Females and young birds are brown and are known as ringtails, as they have dark bands across their tail. Discover the best places to see birds of prey, including a few harrier roosts, at wildlifetrusts.org/see-birds-of-prey

Finding flocks

These are just a few examples of the brilliant bird flocks you could encounter in winter; there are many more to discover. In your local park, woodland or even your garden you might find flocks of tits travelling together. These often include long-tailed tits, which look like feathered lollipops. They're almost always found in groups, constantly calling to each other with high-pitched voices. Their calls can attract other birds to join them, like blue tits, great tits and coal tits – but also goldcrests, treecreepers and occasionally even woodpeckers.

If you visit an estuary, muddy coastline or beach, you might find flocks of wading birds. Many of these are winter visitors from breeding grounds further north or east. They stroll across the mud, plucking out worms and other creatures with their beaks. As the tide comes in and covers the mud, the wading birds get bunched up into massive groups. In some places there can be over 100,000 birds sharing the shore!

Wherever you find yourself outside this winter, fantastic flocks won't be far away. Keep your eyes and ears open to see how many you can discover.

For more information about The Wildlife Trusts, visit: wildlifetrusts.org



Common gull © Margaret Holland



Marsh harrier © Andrew Parkinson/2020VISION



Long-tailed tit © Jon Hawkins-Surrey Hills Photography



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Baby, it's cold outside

Emilia Orviss, Play Champion at the Good Play Guide, looks at the benefits of cold weather play.

As winter wraps us in its cold embrace, it's tempting to hibernate indoors until warmer weather makes an appearance in the spring. However, there are countless reasons why you and your family should bundle up and head outside for some cold weather play. It's a common misconception that children should only play outside when the weather is warm, when in fact cold weather play is not only safe, but also incredibly beneficial for children's physical and mental development. Here's why you should encourage outside play during the winter months.

Boosts immunity

Exposure to cold weather can actually help strengthen your child's immune system. While making sure your child is wrapped up well, cold weather adventures can make them more resilient to common illnesses. Cold temperatures stimulate the production of white blood cells, which increases the body's efficiency at fighting off infections.

Avoid the germs

Children do not catch germs from being outside in cold weather. They actually pick up viruses due to spending more time indoors with others in artificially heated buildings with poor ventilation.



Fosters social skills

Outdoor activities often involve teamwork and collaboration, whether it's organising a winter scavenger hunt or building a snowman. These activities are not only great for encouraging cooperative play, but also help children to develop their communication and social skills.

Boosts creativity

The outside world provides a blank canvas for creativity. Children can let their imaginations run wild as they build forts, invent games and stories, or even experiment with ice and snow.

Reduces screen time

Getting outside is a great way to reduce screen time and encourage children to unplug from electronic devices, promoting a healthier balance between indoor and outdoor activities.

"Children do not catch germs from being outside in cold weather"

This can lead to a buildup of airborne germs and, therefore, increases their chance of getting ill with viruses such as colds and coughs. So getting outside as much as possible during the winter is really beneficial for avoiding many illnesses.

Top up on vitamin D

Most people can produce enough vitamin D by spending time outside even on cloudy days, but we do produce more vitamin D if it's sunny. So the lack of sunshine during the winter months makes it all the more important to get children outside as often as possible to keep their levels topped up. Vitamin D helps their bodies to absorb calcium, which is needed to keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy.

"Getting outside is a great way to reduce screen time"

Enhances physical health

Outdoor play in cold weather involves lots of physical movement to avoid getting too cold. This helps children in many ways, such as developing strong muscles, improving cardiovascular fitness, balance, core strength and gross motor skills.

Supports mental wellbeing

Getting outside at any time of the year can have a really positive effect on children's mental health. The fresh air and natural surroundings can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, while promoting a general sense of wellbeing.

Teaches resilience

Facing challenging weather conditions and adapting to them can teach children valuable life skills, including resilience, adaptability, and the ability to overcome obstacles.



So let's explore some fun outdoor activities children can enjoy during the winter.

Scavenger hunts

Use a scavenger hunt to show your child that there are interesting things to find in nature during the colder months and keep them warm by making the hunt more active. Set off on a walk to the local park and get them to search for things like pinecones, winter berries, holly, and frozen puddles. Tell them to be on the lookout for wildlife such as squirrels, robins and foxes. And keep warm by "flapping like a snowy owl", "waddling like a penguin", and "twirling like a snowflake" etc.





Puddle jumping

The winter brings more rain. Rain makes puddles, and puddles are supposed to be jumped in! Jumping helps to develop balance, strength and agility in little legs. Generally, children don't need much encouragement to get involved in puddle play, in fact a puddle is like a child magnet. Make a game of it by asking them to investigate what kind of jump makes the biggest splash, if they can kick all the water out of the puddle or what happens if they stir the puddle. Just remember to make sure your child is dressed appropriately for this very wet, and potentially muddy, activity!

Obstacle course

A garden obstacle course will not only help to keep your child warm when playing outside, it will also give them a full body workout. Get them involved in the preparation, using any resources you may have, such as tunnels to crawl through, planks to balance on, cones to navigate and 'hurdles' to jump over. Make it more interesting by timing how long it takes them to complete the course, or challenge them to do the course while balancing an egg, or something similar but less messy if dropped, on a spoon.

Outdoor art

If your child enjoys drawing or painting, give them washable pavement chalks or paints to create a masterpiece on the patio, driveway or pavement. Drawing and painting outside will naturally encourage bigger movements than doing the same indoors, which will help your child to develop their gross motor skills and strength in their larger muscles. Products like Paint Pop Paint Sticks are not only suitable for using on paper, they can also be used on objects like leaves, pebbles, wood etc, and so are great for encouraging your child to interact with their natural outdoor surroundings while practising more intricate and controlled hand movements.



Ice bubbles

Bubble solution, that usually comes out during warmer months for outdoor playtime, reacts differently with the air in cold temperatures. On a really cold day, leave the bottle of solution outside for a while so it gets cold. Then to form the bubbles, your child will need to wave the bubble wand in the air, as opposed to blowing it with their warm breath – Glove-A-Bubbles are really fun. It is possible, if you're gentle enough, to catch the bubbles and watch as they ice over in your hand. Unfortunately they won't stay intact for long – as ice crystals form, tiny cracks will appear and the bubbles will pop or break up like the shell of a cracked egg. Make a game of seeing who can make the most bubbles before they pop.



Fly a kite

Winter is a windy time of year, so it's a great time to fly a kite. Not only is it lots of fun, but it will teach your child patience and perseverance as mastering kite control can be tricky and often takes time, but they will be rewarded with a sense of accomplishment when they see their kite soaring in the sky!

Stargazing

Winter is the best season for stargazing – it gets dark earlier, you can see more sky as the leaves have fallen off the trees and there's less moisture in the air, which can obscure starlight. Simply gaze up at the night sky with the naked eye or upgrade with a telescope. Stargazing has many health benefits: not only does it make you feel more connected to nature, but it can also make you feel calm, decreasing stress, anxiety and depression. And with no distractions, it is also a great opportunity for you to bond with your child.



So don't let the dipping temperatures stop your child from playing outside this winter. Remember, with the right gear and attitude, your family can enjoy the great outdoors and reap its benefits all year round.

Dr Gummer's Good Play Guide (goodplayguide.com) is an independent, expert organisation, dedicated to ensuring every child develops the skills they need to thrive during a happy healthy childhood. Founded by child development expert Dr Amanda Gummer in 2012, the Good Play Guide provides independent, expert accreditation for children's products, and is a trusted resource for parents and gift-givers alike.




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EVERYONE is welcome

Scouts discusses how it helps young people shine bright with skills for life.



Every week, Scouts give almost half a million young people aged 4-25 the skills they need for life. Those skills help them in school, college, university, a job interview and even with tricky everyday challenges. At Scouts, young people are also able to hang out with their friends— have fun, play games, work in a team and take on new challenges.

“Scouts have gone on to become Olympians, Presidents and Prime Ministers”

Scouts have gone on to become Olympians, Presidents, Prime Ministers, and have even gone into space. Eleven of the 12 people to walk on the Moon were Scouts. Scout Ambassadors include Ellie Simmonds, Tim Peake, Dwayne Fields, and our Chief Scout is Bear Grylls.

Scouts supports young people in their personal development and helps them to make a positive contribution to society. We help young people shine bright. They develop skills, build confidence and create lifelong connections. Everyone's welcome at Scouts: all genders, races and backgrounds. Regardless of a young

person's physical ability – there's a Scout adventure out there waiting for them.

Core values

Scouts is based on the values of integrity, respect, care, belief and cooperation. We're proud to live by these values and practice them in their day-to-day life. Scouts is divided up into a number of age ranges:

- **Squirrels** – a new provision, launched in September 2021, for 4- and 5-year-olds, with a focus on outdoor play, teamwork and storytelling.
- **Beavers** – for 6 to 8 years and is the opportunity to make new friends and have new adventures.
- **Cubs** – for 8 to 10 ½ years to develop new skills and soar to great heights.
- **Scouts** – for 10 ½ to 14 years, with new challenges and new adventures.
- **Explorers** – for 14 to 18 years, taking a bigger role in deciding what they do themselves.
- **Network** – for 18-to-25-year-olds and you are able to create, organise and take part in events and projects with others in Network.

Did you know?

Scouts are physically active, value the outdoors and have the courage to try new things

Each Scout group is different, but as a whole, Scouts offer more than 200 activities, from abseiling and coding to drama and water-zorbing. Some of the other activities you can expect to get stuck into are typical outdoor activities, such as camping and first aid training, but you are also able to take part in international camps such as the World Jamboree.

Did you know?

Scouts are physically active, value the outdoors and have the courage to try new things.

- Scouts are almost a full (0.9) day per week more physically active than those not in Scouts.
- Scouts are 8.6% more likely to try new things.
- Scouts are 16% more likely to have the courage to take risks and tackle challenging activities.





Scouts gain skills to succeed regardless of academic ability.

- **Scouts are problem solvers. They score 7.6% higher in this area than those not in Scouts.**
- **Scouts score 15.6% higher on independence.**
- **Scouts communicate more effectively, scoring 9.3% higher.**

Scouts are happier, more resilient and more confident.

- **Scouts score 5.8% higher on happiness than those not in Scouts.**
- **Compared to those not in Scouts, Scouts score 4.8% higher on perseverance and grit.**
- **Scouts score 2.7% higher on confidence and self-esteem.**

How to get involved

To find out about joining, visit our website (www.scouts.org.uk) and use our finder tool. They'll tell you more about where and when the group meets. Lots of young people are itching to join Scouts, so you might need to wait for a space to become available. If your local group has a waiting list, parents, carers and other adults might be able to lend a hand, volunteer and create more spaces.

Did you know?

Compared to those not in Scouts, Scouts score 4.8% higher on perseverance and grit

Volunteers welcome too

When it comes to volunteers, we don't just need swashbuckling adventurers to lead expeditions. We also need listeners, tidy-uppers and tea-makers, for as little or as much time as you can spare. If you're a parent or carer who is curious about giving it a go, but don't want to overcommit, why not complete our four-week volunteering challenge? Every hour counts, and everyone's welcome.

Volunteering for Scouts is good for you too; 70% of volunteers said they had improved life satisfaction, while 66% had improved self-esteem since they started helping out. An independent study by the University of Glasgow and Edinburgh found that those who have been Scouts and Guides are 15% less likely to have anxiety at the age of 50 than those not involved in these youth movements.

What about the cost?

Compared to many activities for young people, Scouts is affordable and represents good value. However, we're very aware of the cost-of-living crisis and keep the cost down as much as possible to keep it accessible. The cost of going to Scouts depends on how your local Troop does things. Usually, there's a basic fee covering the cost of the hire and upkeep of the place where you meet and it is collected weekly, monthly, termly or annually. Trips, camps and activities that take place away from the usual meeting place are usually charged separately.

Scouts is a good way to learn lots of new skills through a single membership. Nobody should feel excluded because of money worries. If you're concerned about costs, adults can speak to their local leader in confidence, to see what they can do to help. In most cases, support is available to make sure nobody misses out.

Find out more at scouts.org.uk





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*Bananas for illustrative purposes only.

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Carrot & Banana Baked Oats

Serves: 2

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 40 minutes

You will also need:

Medium ovenproof dish, lightly greased

Ingredients:

- ✓ 200g fat free greek yoghurt
- ✓ 18g Nesquik Banana Milkshake Powder
- ✓ 50g porridge oats
- ✓ 2 large eggs
- ✓ 75g carrot, washed and grated
- ✓ 1 small banana, sliced
- ✓ 20g sultanas

Difficulty: Easy

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C / 160°C / Gas Mark 4.
2. Add the eggs and yoghurt to a bowl and mix until fully combined. Add in the oats and Nesquik and mix again.
3. Stir through half the carrot, banana and sultanas and decant into the ovenproof dish. Top with the remaining banana, carrot and sultanas.
4. Bake in the oven for 35-40 minutes until fully set. Remove and allow to cool slightly before cutting in to two and serving. Enjoy.

Each portion typically contains:

energy	fat	saturates	sugars	salt
1402 kJ/ 332kcal	6.8g	1.6g	25.8g	0.33g
17%	10%	8%	29%	6%

Of an adult's Reference Intake (8400kJ/2000kcal).
Energy per 100g: 586kJ / 139kcal

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A weekend on the Cornish coast

Editor **Georgina Probert** and her husband Tom and daughters Imogen (7) and Florence (3), spent three days of the summer holidays at the stunning Budock Vean Hotel in Falmouth with lots of family-friendly activities and adventures.

Home of pasties, clotted cream and fudge, Cornwall is so much more than its food! With its rugged coastline, beautiful sandy beaches and busy marinas, it is a great place for families to visit.

We spent three nights in Falmouth, staying at the Budock Vean Hotel, which is nestled in the rolling hills of Mawan Smith, with far-reaching views of the stunning countryside.

While the hotel is well-known for its golf course, it has some great features for families, including a large swimming pool, private mooring, tennis courts, kayaking and paddle boarding, beautiful grounds to explore and a fantastic kids menu.

Stay

For our trip, we stayed in a Signature room, which gave us plenty of space to sleep and relax all in the same space. The rooms are beautifully decorated, ours was a smart contemporary style and can be kitted out with z-beds for the kids or cots for little ones. The SuperKing Hypnos bed was extremely comfortable and big enough that when our youngest climbed into bed with us, we still had plenty of

space. The bathrobes, slippers and Elemis toiletries were a lovely touch and made our stay feel really special – despite the kids being there!

As a family, we like to recycle as much as possible, but often find that hotels don't offer facilities to do this. What we liked about Budock Vean is that they have a jute bag in every room that you can fill with items to be recycled, in addition to a normal waste bin. Free WiFi and a flat-screen TV topped off an excellent room with great facilities.

Eat

For our family, mealtimes can be tricky as our kids do not like to sit at a table for a long time. What we loved about Budock Vean is that they offer a High Tea for families with kids under six years old. Families can eat on the terrace or conservatory and there is a special Little BV'ers child-friendly menu. Our daughters loved the pizzas and local catch of the day, battered fish. For families with older children, dinner can be enjoyed in the main restaurant. On our first night, we enjoyed a three-course meal in the main restaurant. The service was top-notch and almost 70% of the food is locally sourced, making it good for the environment and extremely tasty!



“The bathrobes, slippers and Elemis toiletries were a lovely touch”

pampering treatment in the hotel’s Natural Health Spa, which uses top British skincare brand, Elemis, and where each treatment* is preceded by a personal consultation.

The hotel is in a great spot to explore Cornwall’s family-friendly attractions, including the museums, Pendennis Castle and sandy beaches of nearby Falmouth, The Eden Project and The Seal Sanctuary at Gweek to name just a few.

For more details or to book, call **01326-250288** quoting **Family First**.
| For further hotel information, please visit: **budockvean.co.uk**

**Offer (based on two sharing a double/twin Standard room) for new bookings only during the February half term and Easter holidays, 2024, subject to availability of allocated rooms. Upgrades are available for an additional charge. Bookings must be made by 1st April and holidays using this offer but have been completed by 25th April 2025. Spa treatment charges apply.*

Enjoy a family break in Cornwall

Now you can save 10%* on a family break at the award-winning four-star Budock Vean Hotel during the Spring half-term and Easter holidays with children aged under 11 staying free when sharing with two adults.

You will pay just £76 per person for comfortable accommodation and a full Cornish breakfast in the Spring half-term holiday and £99 pp for B&B during the Easter holiday.



The Budock Vean’s excellent leisure facilities include a 15-metre indoor pool with an open log fire, an outdoor hot tub, a challenging golf course, a snooker room with a full-sized table and two all-weather tennis courts.
If you can grab an hour, book a



THINGS TO DO IN AND AROUND FALMOUTH

National Maritime Museum

Based in Falmouth town centre, the National Maritime Museum (nmmc.co.uk) is right on the harbourside. Surrounded by a whole host of coffee shops and restaurants, it was the perfect start to our trip – particularly as the rain followed us from Kent and the whole museum is indoors.

The great thing about this museum is that there's plenty to do for children and adults alike. The museum has several exhibitions, including the history of boat making, as well as a whole host of activities for children. We visited in the summer holidays and our daughters loved the pirate-themed activities.

As we arrived a performance by Illyria was just starting. Considering Florence would not sit still for long, she was enthralled by the 30-minute play, which was set on the deck of a huge pirate ship. The interactive performance, 'A Pirate's Life for Me!' was performed by three "pirates" and it charted the history of how pirates first came to be. There was a lot of historical



"The highlight for us was the main exhibition Pirates, Explore Beneath the Surface"

information provided, but it was given in such a fun – and sometimes gory way – that both kids were really engaged. During the school holidays, there are four performances per day.

We then wandered around the exhibition while the kids searched for cuddly toy seagulls hiding around the museum that had "stolen" some of the pirates' belongings. We checked out the craft station, where the children enjoyed making and decorating

their own pirate ships. The craft activity was included in the ticket price and all of the equipment needed to build and design their ships was provided.

After sitting down and crafting for a while, we headed upstairs and were pleased to find a small soft play, which was, of course, pirate-themed. The kids burned off some steam, while the adults took the opportunity to have a well-earned rest. The highlight for us was the main exhibition 'Pirates, Explore Beneath the Surface', which started with a short 3D video game experience. The exhibition followed the history of pirates, both real and imagined in books, film and TV. It was fascinating to learn about pirates, how they have been portrayed over the years and see some examples of the costumes and kit they used.

We finished off our trip with a go on the indoor boating lake where you could choose a remote-controlled sailing boat and sail it around the water. Something Florence was surprisingly good at!

The museum has a well-stocked gift shop – be prepared to walk out with a cuddly toy seagull and a wooden cutlass! There's also a cafe on the top floor serving cakes, hot drinks and light lunches.



CORNISH

SEAL

SANCTUARY



Did you know?

Each year, the sanctuary rehabilitates more than 70 grey seal pups from local coastal waters

watching the seals swim around under the water and learning all about them. There's

a focus on preventing plastic pollution and caring for the environment, which our girls liked learning about. The sanctuary offers sessions throughout the day where you can learn more about the residents and their rehabilitation, watch them being fed and get up close and personal with them in the underwater viewing areas.

Each year, the sanctuary rehabilitates more than 70 grey seal pups from local coastal waters and brings them into its specialist Seal Hospital. The Seal Hospital has the facilities to look after six poorly seal pups at one time. Once the rescued seal pups' injuries have healed and they have reached a healthy weight, they are released back into the wild. Each seal costs over £2,000 to rehabilitate and by purchasing tickets to the sanctuary you are helping to support the charity.

As well as visiting the sanctuary for the day, you can purchase special experiences, including Breakfast with the Seals, Keeper for the Day, VIP Cream Tea and Tour, Behind the Seal experience, Sanctuary Photography Tour and a Beaver Tour with Pasty and a Pint.



A visit to the Cornish Seal Sanctuary (sealsanctuary.sealifetrust.org) in nearby Gweek is a must if you are visiting this area. The majority of the sanctuary is outdoors, so pick a dry day for this activity. It is quite a long walk uphill to get from the car park to the sanctuary, so be prepared. There are informative signs along the way and that helped to encourage the kids to keep walking.

With two different types of rescue seal – common and grey – as well as Humboldt penguins, a southern sea lion, beavers and paddock animals, it is a great day out for animal lovers. Our kids really enjoyed

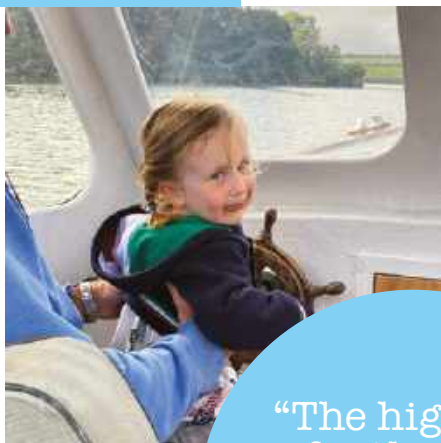




HELFDORD RIVER BOAT TRIP

When we finally got a relatively dry day, we took a boat trip on the Helford River on the 19ft open boat, the Hannah Molly, from the hotel's private mooring. We cannot recommend this enough. Our guide Roger had excellent local knowledge, and it helped that he lived a couple of villages along from the hotel! We passed by Helford Passage, the Ferryboat Inn and Trebah and Glendurgan Gardens before heading upriver to explore Helford Village, the Shipwrights Arms, Frenchman's Creek, Polwheveral Creek and Port Navas village. Roger gave us lots of insights into the history of the area and even pointed out some celebrity houses along the shoreline. The highlight for the kids was both getting a turn to drive the small boat and the views were stunning. There are various boat trips that can be booked via the Budock Vean Hotel or through Helford River Cruises (helfordrivercruises.co.uk).

Before we set off on the boat, we made a stop at the Koru cafe, which is situated right next to Budock Vean's private cove. With a range of snacks and drinks to choose from, we thoroughly enjoyed the pasties – the vegan Keralen cauliflower pasty was mouthwateringly good. Koru (korukayaking.co.uk) is run by Tom and Hetty and offers stand-up paddle boarding (SUP) and kayaking guided



adventures. You have to be at least 12 years old to do SUP and for kayaking children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian and the guide will determine whether the sea conditions are suitable. After just a short chat with co-owner Tom, we could tell that he is very passionate about water sports. The inspiration for Koru came from a guided kayak tour in Abel Tasman on the South Island of New Zealand where the couple realised that the best way to interact with nature was by kayaking. The name Koru refers to a Maori symbol representing the unfurling of the silver fern which symbolises new life, growth, strength and peace.

“The highlight for the kids was both getting a turn to drive the small boat”

Trebah Garden

Before heading home, we visited Trebah Garden (trebahgarden.co.uk), which is a couple of minutes drive away from the Budock Vean Hotel. The gardens are open every day from 9.30am and there's no need to prebook – something we appreciated with the changeable weather during our stay. The gardens are truly a tropical paradise, with all manner of bushes, trees, plants and flowers. The space is huge and you could spend all day exploring. The gardens can be quite hilly in places, but they also have lots of wheelchair-friendly paths that are signed up, so there's no risk of getting stuck. There are several different routes you can take, which are all signed up, but make sure you pick up a map at the reception so you don't miss out on all the sights and multiple vistas of the Cornish coastline.

If you walk all the way down to the end of the gardens, through a wash of hydrangea, you will find Trebah's private shingle beach and you can swim in the clear waters in the warmer months. The sound of the waves lapping at the shore really does entice you down towards to sea. If you are able to walk through the gardens without the kids, it really is tranquil and peaceful.

When we visited, there were trail activities for the kids to fill out as they walked around and there's a fantastic wooden outdoor adventure playground called Tarzan's Camp that's nestled in among the trees, too. Our top picks were the paraglide zip wire and huge cargo net. Tarzan's Camp is designed for children over age five (though our three-year-old wasn't phased by that), but there's also

Fort Stuart, which is a smaller wooden fort for under 5s. As a space to have lots of fun, it includes a slide and sit-on rocking horses and is in a separate, secure area on sand.

Trebah Garden hosts family-friendly events throughout the year, as well as workshops, night tours, exhibitions and events.



Family-friendly beaches

Helford Passage Beach

A small sandy/shingle beach at low tide only. Amenities include the Ferryboat Inn, toilets in the pub, an ice cream kiosk, a passenger ferry service to Helford Village, boat hire and fishing trips.



Maenporth Beach

A sandy beach with fee-paying parking on the beach. Beautiful scenery and shallow waters, rock pools to explore at low tide. Facilities include a beach shop selling fishing nets and beach toys, plus a cafe. Activities include surfing, snorkelling, kayaking, and paddle boarding. Wetsuits and windbreaks are available for hire.



Swanpool Beach

This small cove is within easy reach of Falmouth and is reasonably safe for swimming. There is a coastal footpath leading to Gyllynvase beach. Facilities include a fee-paying car park close to the beach, toilets, a cafe, crazy golf, a bouncy castle and a variety of watersports from Elemental during the summer months.



Gyllynvase Beach

A small but wide sandy beach with rock pools. Activities include paddle boarding, windsurfing and canoeing. Beach facilities include toilets, a cafe/shop and lifeguard cover during the summer months.





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LOVE TO SWIM

New research from **Swim England** has found that swimming is one of the most affordable activities for families and it is beneficial to our health and well-being, too.

New cost comparison research has found a trip to your local swimming pool to be one of the most affordable activities for families and children. With the cost of living rising and putting families at increasing risk of sacrificing valuable leisure time, recently released insight from Swim England shows that casual swimming is actually much more affordable than other family activities. In addition to the extensive health benefits of being active in the water, it is also a great way to keep the family entertained. The latest cost comparisons show that swimming as a family is on average 28% cheaper than bowling, 35% cheaper than cinema tickets and 35% cheaper than crazy golf, among other comparisons. These comparisons also do not include any of the additional costs of food or drink associated with many of the activities that further inflate prices for families.

The swimming sector has released the insight as part of the #LoveSwimming campaign to highlight the affordability of swimming as a family activity – and the importance of leisure centres as a vital community resource.

Quality family time

Research also indicates that swimming is a fantastic bonding opportunity for families, with clear benefits to the happiness levels of both parents and children. Around 70% of families who swim with their children weekly rank it as the best time they have spent together.



“Swimming is a fantastic bonding opportunity for families”

With research indicating that the activity is where families have the most fun together, swimming doesn't necessarily mean going back and forth in one lane. As part of holiday programmes, many leisure centres are offering activities like inflatables, family fun swims and inclusive swimming lessons – providing more choice for all, regardless of age or ability.

Chenize Morgan, a mother who takes her daughter, Nefer (both pictured left), swimming regularly, reflects on how



Creating amazing memories

As part of the #LoveSwimming campaign, more families are being urged to swim casually more often, whether they are a complete beginner or rediscovering their love for the water. Swim England Business Engagement Director, Rebecca Cox, explains:

“This is a hugely important campaign for us, as we want to keep swimming affordable for families.

Our new research reveals just how affordable swimming is compared to other activities and this, paired with the health and social benefits, really proves why swimming is important.

“We all know that swimming is an essential life skill – but for so many across the nation, it is the gateway to creating amazing memories with your family, becoming healthier and happier, and achieving full confidence in the water. This will allow so many more families to not only take part, but to enjoy that vital bonding time and make lifelong memories.”



To find your local pool, visit swimming.org/loveswimming.





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DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF DUBAI: *A Family Oasis in the Desert*



thrill of dune bashing in 4x4 vehicles, sandboarding down golden dunes, and concluding the day with a mesmerising sunset over the desert. Alternatively, families can enjoy a different perspective of Dubai, floating 4,000ft above the Arabian desert from a hot air balloon. Guests will soar above the landscape whilst soaking up the desert breeze and gazing upon the rolling sands, stunning sunrise, Hajar Mountains and wildlife.

A Tapestry of Marvels: Iconic Landmarks for All Ages

Dubai's skyline is a testament to its ambition and vision. The cityscape is dominated by architectural marvels that seem to defy the laws of gravity. One such icon is Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world, offering panoramic views of the city below. Imagine the sheer delight on

As the world beckons with countless destinations, Dubai stands out with the allure of modern marvels, adventure, and cultural richness in the heart of Arabia.

Byond its iconic skyline and luxurious malls, the city unfolds a tapestry of experiences catering to all ages. From the thrilling wonders of the Dubai Parks and Resorts to exhilarating adventures in the desert. Dubai's culinary scene is diverse and vibrant, while family-friendly accommodations ensure the best service and comfort.

"The Dubai Parks and Resorts complex is a one-stop destination for entertainment"

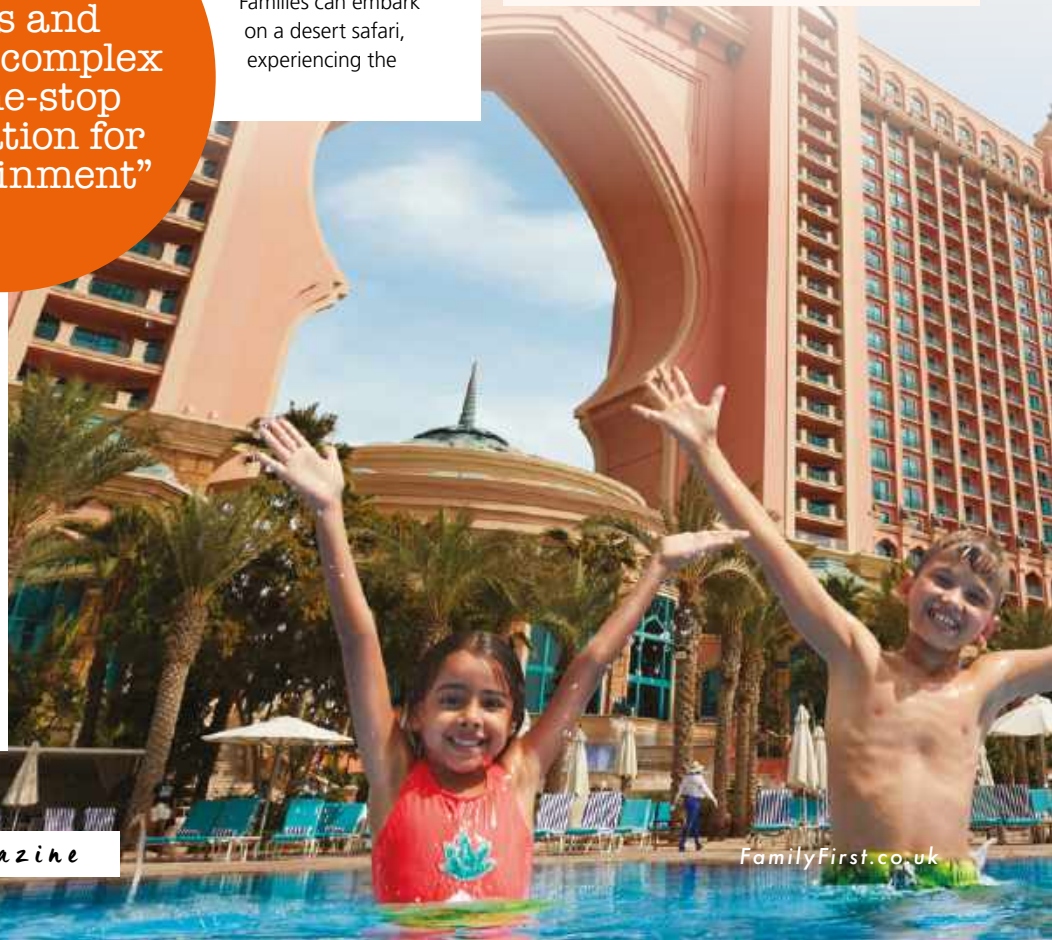
than at one of Dubai's world-famous waterparks. LEGOLAND Waterpark is popular for families, young ones can build their own rafts out of LEGO which they can then take with them to conquer the thrilling slides across the park.

Beyond the city limits, the vast desert landscape beckons with a promise of exhilarating adventures. Families can embark on a desert safari, experiencing the

Adventure Awaits: Theme Parks and Outdoor Thrills

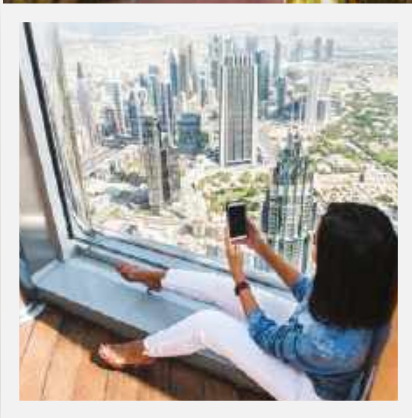
Dubai not only boasts skyscrapers and shopping malls; it is also a haven for thrill-seekers and adventure-loving families.

The Dubai Parks and Resorts complex is a one-stop destination for entertainment, featuring multiple theme parks in one location. Motiongate Dubai, LEGOLAND Dubai and LEGOLAND Water Park promise a medley of rides, shows, and attractions that cater to various age groups. These parks ensure that every member of the family finds something to enjoy. When temperatures increase, what better way to cool off and enjoy some fun time together





“The Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world, offering panoramic views of the city below”



your children’s faces as you ascend on one of the world’s fastest double deck elevators to the observation deck, witnessing the cityscape transform from day to night.

Adjacent to Burj Khalifa lies Dubai Mall, a shopping and entertainment paradise that caters to all ages. The mall is not just a retail haven but a world of experiences. Families

can witness the spectacular Dubai Fountain show, featuring water jets choreographed to music and illuminated by a dazzling play of lights. Inside the mall, the Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo provide an immersive encounter with marine life, captivating young minds and sparking a love for the wonders of the ocean. The mall’s indoor ice rink and KidZania, an interactive and educational centre, ensure that the younger members of the family are entertained while parents indulge in some retail therapy.

A Culinary Odyssey: Tantalizing Tastes for Every Palate

Dubai’s culinary scene is as diverse as its population, offering a gastronomic journey that caters to every taste bud. From high-end Michelin-starred restaurants to bustling street food markets, Dubai’s dining landscape is a testament to its multicultural identity.

Time Out Market Dubai is the first market in the region to offer a hand-selected array of dishes from the city’s most exciting culinary talents, all under one roof. Spanning over 30,000 sq ft, Time Out Market offers a selection of 17 eateries that cover food from across the world. Even the pickiest eater will be satisfied here. With enviable views of Burj Khalifa and The Dubai Fountain, this bustling market promises modern, innovative menus and vibrant flavours.

The lively street food scene at places like Al Seef and Global Village is a treat for families

seeking a more casual dining experience. Let your children explore the flavours of shawarma, falafel, and traditional sweets, creating memories around the shared joy of trying new and exciting foods. Families looking to try out Emirati flavours should head to Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood for some excellent Emirati cuisine or explore the Spice Souk for a sensory journey filled with a dizzying array of dried herbs and spices, offering an aromatic adventure at a fraction of the cost compared to the UK.

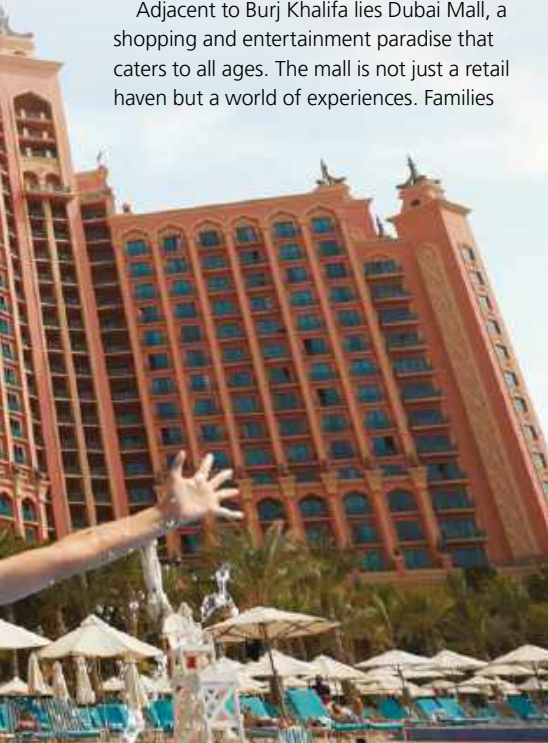
Family-Friendly Accommodations: Where Luxury Meets Comfort

Dubai’s family-friendly accommodations provide a seamless blend of luxury and comfort. JA The Resort stands out with 800 meters of golden sand, offering golf, horse riding, and complimentary stays, dining, and kids club access for children. Park Hyatt Dubai, nestled by the Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club, features two beachfront lagoons, and welcomes children under 13 with complimentary stays and meals. Atlantis, The Palm, a world-famous resort, boasts 105 slides at Aquaventure Waterpark and exquisite Japanese cuisine at Nobu, with children under 14 enjoying complimentary stays. These hotels ensure an unforgettable family retreat in the heart of Dubai.

Resorts along the Jumeirah Beach stretch offer direct access to pristine beaches, ensuring that families can unwind in style after a day of exploration. Or stay in the heart of the city at one of the Rove hotels for great value and quirky stylish rooms.

For families seeking a unique and enriching vacation, Dubai emerges as the perfect destination, inviting families to create lasting memories where the magic of the desert meets the wonders of the modern world.

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- M.W



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Learn to skate

British Ice Skating explains why encouraging your kids to have a go at ice skating is great for their balance, confidence and mental health.

Dancing on Ice is set to glide onto our screens on ITV this month. Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean shine again as the judges on television's best ice show and the nation engages their interest once again in the best family winter sport, namely "ice skating".

Ice skating has so many health benefits, both physically and mentally, and requires a mixture of grace, artistry and flare – like a gymnast with blades on their feet! British Ice Skating's mission is "to inspire a passion for ice skating that is inclusive and accessible for all." It offers two skating programmes: Skate TOTS and Skate UK, which are a great way to introduce kids to ice skating and improve their skating skills, whether they are a complete beginner or more confident on the ice.

Skate TOTS

Skate TOTS is for children taking their first steps on the ice. A fun and playful three-stage preschool introduction to the bare necessities of ice skating. Skate TOTS is the Skate UK introductory programme, developed specially for children ages two to five. Tame grown-up bears can accompany their own precious cubs onto the ice to support them, but Skate TOTS take part in the skating themselves to build their own independence. The programme is designed to encourage children to use their imagination in a fun learning environment and develop physical coordination, as well as build confidence and social skills as they progress through stages one to three.

Skate UK

Skate UK is a new revamped Learn to Skate Programme, which teaches the FUNdamental

skills of ice skating in a safe, active, inclusive, encouraging and, most importantly, fun learning environment. Designed for all ages, Skate UK incorporates the essential A,B,C's of an ice skater's development: agility, balance and coordination. Together with the different learning phases: discovering, developing and consolidating.

The programme is designed to engage a skater's interests, build their confidence and challenge their athletic and technical development in ice skating as they progress through the levels. It comes with an accompanying mobile app, which complements the on-ice lessons, while making ice skating more visible and accessible.

The new Skate UK mobile app is designed to engage/educate the skater's interests with videos, descriptions, focus points and expectations for every skill in each level. This app will help guide the skater step-by-step through the entire programme. The mobile app is free to download for Levels 1-3. To unlock Levels 4-8, there is a small cost of £9.99 per year or £1.99 for a monthly subscription. You can also access the Star programme in Figure, ice dance, pair and synchronised skating for a one-off fee of £14.99. This app will lead skaters through the entire pathway from the very start of their ice journey, while also offering other cool features.



To download the app, please scan the QR code below:



"We want everyone to experience the joy of ice skating"

SHEFFIELD ICE SKATING SEND EVENT

Last December, British Ice Skating co-organised ice skating sessions for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). **Clare Bartle** shares more details from the day.

Big smiles, penguins and, of course, Santa hats were the order of the day as almost 350 primary and secondary school children attended the SEND Ice skating event at Ice Sheffield on 5th December 2023. The event, organised by Links School Sports Partnership in collaboration with Sheffield City Trust, British Ice Skating and Panathlon, was an inclusive event where children with SEND were able to 'get their skates on' and try ice skating in a safe and supportive environment.

The event was also to promote Ice Sheffield's new Learn to Skate programme, which has a dispensation model for people with disabilities, giving them an inclusive pathway on the introductory courses. Participants can use different routes for progression through the instructor pathway and get involved in the sport regardless of their disability.

Keith Hudson, Development Officer for British Ice Skating, believes that the sport can be fully inclusive, saying: "I believe that ice skating is for everybody, no matter what your situation. It's for all disabilities and all ages. This event is about showing children what ice skating is, getting them to hopefully fall in love with it and then providing them with access to a course here that allows them to progress within the sport."

The course is about modifying the activity to suit the participant, moving through eight

levels. At each level, any barrier to participating in a specific exercise can be moved by adapting the activity.

Participants at the event were given leaflets giving free online access to an app, which accompanies the programme and provides video instruction and further information.

According to Tom Daniels, teacher at Seven Hills School, however, it's not just about learning to skate, the day was about "getting the children out into the community and preparing them for a life beyond school, and giving them opportunities to try things that they haven't done before to see if they want to continue with it in the future." Tom also believes events like this teach life skills, such as planning a journey, timetables for transport and timescales, which helps to increase children's confidence.

Twenty SEND pupils came from Nether Green Junior School. Their teacher Charlotte Musgrave explains how the day went: "Just seeing them come out of their shell, from standing at the side of the ice not really knowing what they were doing to going

"Ice skating is for everybody, no matter what your situation"

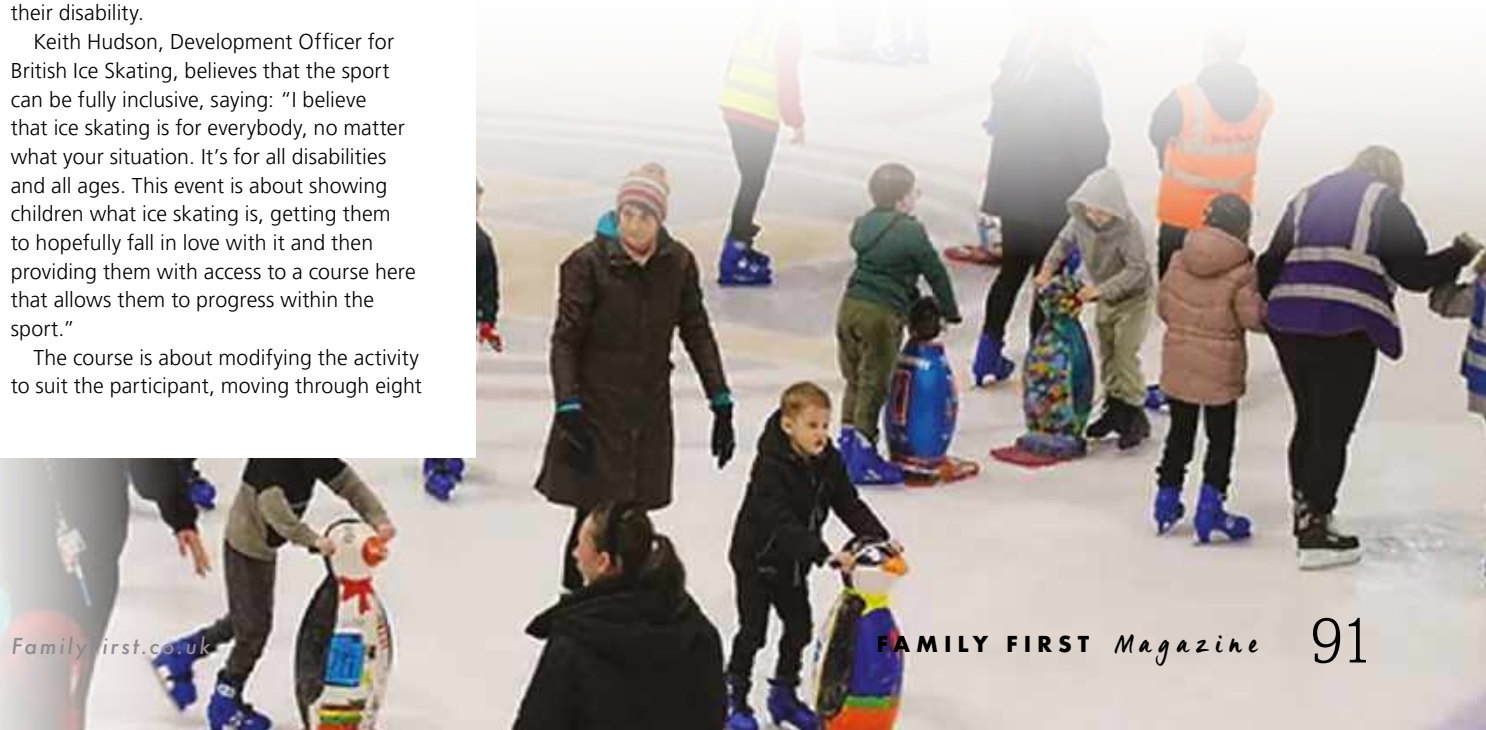
around the ice without any help, and seeing rosy cheeks and smiley faces, it's been absolutely brilliant. The children have been so excited anticipating the day, so I'm so glad it lived up to expectations."

Equally impressed with the event was Sarah Smith from Horizon Community College, who brought 12 pupils. She said: "Some of our children have never even seen the ice before. They started off with the penguins, but by the end, almost all of them had progressed to skating without them. They're literally learning new skills every day, making new friends and growing in confidence."

As Ryan Ruddiforth, Programme Manager at Ice Sheffield states: "They don't have to be amazing skaters, it's about having fun. The aim is for them to enjoy it, experiencing a new activity in a safe space where everyone is a beginner."



British Ice Skating is the National Governing Body for the sport of ice skating in all its forms. Its mission is to inspire a passion for ice skating that is inclusive and accessible for all, by establishing investable programmes that enhance lives, promote inclusion, increase participation and deliver exciting performances on the world stage.





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The support she needs

Founder of We are Girls in Sport, **Caroline Kings**, looks at why wearing the right sports bra is so important to help your daughter enjoy sport.

Did you know that girls as young as nine are starting their periods? Perhaps it happened in your day too, but it's definitely on the rise. If girls are starting their periods younger, that means that puberty, including mood swings, bad skin and breasts, are happening at a younger age. What effect does that have on girls being active?

Girls' sport is receiving greater attention and there are many topics being covered in the press: the colour and style of kit, periods and the impact they have on girls' sporting performance, and the emergence of new role models for girls, to name but a few.

But despite increased awareness and all the good stuff that's happening in the world of female sport, 64% of girls will drop out of sport after puberty. That's too many! Wasted talent, girls falling out of the habit of being healthy and active, and the impact on mental health as well.



Breast development and sport

Breast development can happen slowly for some, while for others, it can seemingly be an overnight change. These body changes, large or small, can impact the way girls approach being active as these statistics show:

- Women in Sport report that 72% of girls in schools feel self-conscious about breast movement.
- 46% of girls avoid exercise due to their breasts, according to the Journal of Physical Activity & Health.
- 66% of girls do not wear a sports bra as researched by the National Library of Medicine.

Many mums know how it feels if we run to answer the phone after a shower, say. It hurts our breasts and more often than not, we'll instinctively support them with our hands as we run to prevent them moving around too much and causing us pain. Now, imagine if your pubescent daughter is doing PE without a supportive bra or no bra at all! Is it any wonder she requests a note to be excused?

Sports bras can make all the difference

Breasts can have a negative impact on a girl being active, but the right sports bra, that's fitted well can actually improve a girl's sporting performance – not just allow them to be active and enjoy exercise without discomfort or feeling self-conscious, but to get better! The problem is that sports stores are not making it easy for young girls to find the right support.



Tips for buying the right sports bra...for any age

Thanks to our friends at The Well HQ who've done all the scientific research you can imagine into women and girls in sport, we have some useful considerations when purchasing a sports bra. Large-breasted women and girls will receive the best support from an 'encapsulation' bra (looks like a traditional bra) or a 'combination' bra

– a combination bra is an encapsulation bra with a compression layer (looks like a crop top). A compression bra on its own is not great for larger breasts and they lose their elasticity quickly, for any size.

Don't worry so much about measuring for size, as we know that these can be unreliable. Some sports bra manufacturers are getting away from traditional bra sizing and using S, M, L, XL anyway. Fit is more important and for that you want:

“Breasts can have a negative impact on a girl being active, but the right sports bra, that's fitted well can actually improve a girl's sporting performance”

- Wide, padded and adjustable shoulder straps
- An adjustable under band will help achieve the best fit
- Underwire will help with support
- A high neckline will help to minimise bounce as will...
- Some padding

For more information from The Well, check out their website (thewell-hq.com), which has a wealth of information. Show that you support your daughter being active by asking her whether she feels as though she has enough breast support when she's exercising. Sports bras are an essential bit of kit so when you go bra shopping, make sure you include the sports section too. Let's keep girls active.

Caroline Kings is the founder of We are Girls in Sport, (wearegirlsinsport.com) the campaign to help girls find a sport they love and stick at it.



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*Source: Euromonitor International Ltd, Consumer Appliances 2023ed, per electric grills category definition, retail volume sales in units, 2022 data



Grilled Crispy Tofu Burrito Bowl

INGREDIENTS

1 tofu block – approx. 300g
2 cloves of garlic, minced
1 tbsp chilli paste
1 lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

For the coating:
50g plain flour, seasoned with salt
80ml cashew milk – other plant based milks can be used
60-80g panko breadcrumbs

For the burrito bowl:
Rice, black beans, sliced peppers, chopped tomato, avocado, coriander

METHOD

- To make the marinade, combine the garlic, chilli paste, lemon juice and seasoning in a bowl and mix.
- Slice the tofu into 4 evenly sized pieces. Lay the tofu down on a plate and top with the marinade, making sure to coat all of the tofu. Cover with cling film and refrigerate for at least 4-6 hours.
- To pane the tofu, put the seasoned flour, plant based milk and panko breadcrumbs into different bowls or trays. Firstly, put the tofu into the flour making sure to coat it fully. Move it onto the plant-based milk and coat again. Finally move to the panko breadcrumbs and coat again.
- Pre heat the grill. Spray the paned tofu with some oil spray and grill for 4-6 minutes until golden and crispy.
- Remove from the grill and top the burrito bowl with the tofu.

Healthy Pizza Pitta Pockets

INGREDIENTS

2 small wholemeal pitta breads	2 slices of pre-cooked lean ham or sliced turkey cut into strips
¼ small onion thinly sliced	50g reduced fat mozzarella
1/4 green pepper, diced	2 tomatoes thinly sliced
1 tbsp tomato puree	2 mushrooms thinly sliced
1 tsp olive oil	1 tbsp sweetcorn
1 tsp mixed dried herbs	

METHOD

- Slit open one side of the pitta breads and spread the tomato puree over the pitta breads.
- In a bowl combine the thinly sliced onions, tomatoes, peppers, mushrooms, sweetcorn, ham or turkey, cheese & herbs together with the olive oil and mix well.
- Divide the mixture between the two pitta pockets and place on a hot grill. Grill for 3–5 minutes until fully heated through and the cheese has melted.



Unlocking the thrills

Snowsport England explains how winter sports, such as skiing and snowboarding, are great for families and can be done all year round.

Snowsport in England is more than just a winter pastime; it's a dynamic and inclusive community that spans across 82 clubs and academies, engaging more than 12,500 individuals. The sport is not confined to a seasonal limitation, with slopes and facilities open all year round and numerous events and races taking place, too. Here, we will delve into the vibrant world of Snowsport, looking at key participation dates, ways to get involved, inclusivity and expert tips.

1 **Participation stats: a flourishing community**

Snowsport in England is a wonderful community to be a part of, with more than 80 clubs actively contributing to the scene. The number of active members is at an impressive count of more than 12,500 individuals. The National School Snowsport Association (NSSA) and English Schools Ski Association (ESSKIA) further amplify the reach of the sport, connecting with schools and colleges nationwide. Overall, the sport has a really balanced participation split in terms of gender distribution, with 6,005 females, 9,793 males,

and 518 individuals with unprovided gender information, showcasing the sport's appeal to a diverse audience.

2 **Get involved: from basics to beyond**

Embarking on your snowsport journey is an exhilarating adventure, and understanding the basics is the first step. Reach out to your local facility, as they offer beginner lessons essential for achieving a standard before tackling the slopes independently.

“Embarking on your snowsport journey is an exhilarating adventure”



Most facilities provide equipment as part of lesson costs, which typically average around £30 per hour, covering lift passes, coaching and equipment.

As you progress, diverse opportunities open up, from enjoying the slopes at your own pace to joining events like the Futures Programme to getting great coaching from Snowsport England coaches, some of whom are former Winter Olympians! Snowsport England's bid to popularise Nordic Skiing includes Roller Ski taster sessions for absolute beginners, available through the Futures Programme at a reasonable cost of £15 per session.

“For those seeking a more community-driven experience, finding or starting a club is the next logical step”

For those seeking a more community-driven experience, finding or starting a club is the next logical step. Resources like the Snowsport England website (snowsportengland.org.uk) offer guidance on locating existing clubs or establishing one of your own. The sport caters to various levels, from regional to national, age-specific, and discipline-focused events, ensuring a tailored experience for every participant.

For those of you wanting to see if your little ones are interested in the sport without having to sign up for a session, you can check out the episode of 'I Can Do It, You Can Too' available on BBC iPlayer. The episode, supported by Snowsport England, shows how a young person entering the sport can pick up a key skill really quickly and have a great time!

As highlighted in the previous section, the journey in Snowsport extends beyond competition. Becoming a coach or facilitating others, as exemplified by inspiring individuals like Malikah Khan, offers alternative paths for involvement. To read more about Malikah take a look on the news section of the Snowsport England website (snowsportengland.org.uk/news).

Witness the excitement in this country by attending events such as NSSA & ESSKIA competitions, Slopestyle Champs, Futures Champs,



English Champs, and the summer race calendar organised by clubs and facilities. Or for those with the travel bug, head over to Bormio in Italy for the English Alpine Championships each February.

3 Inclusive section: parallel lines and adaptive clubs

Snowsport England prides itself on inclusivity, evident in initiatives like the Parallel Lines race series. This open race, suitable for skiers and snowboarders of all abilities, focuses on providing an opportunity for those with disabilities and assisted needs. The series, featuring slalom races, takes place in various indoor snow centres across the country, welcoming individuals with various disabilities – everyone is welcome! Adaptive clubs like Gloucester and Kendal cater to people with physical disabilities, further emphasising the commitment to inclusivity within the Snowsport community.

Embark on your Snowsport journey today, from the basics to competitive events, and experience the thrill of gliding down snowy slopes in the welcoming and inclusive community of UK Snowsport.

To find out more about how you can get involved in Snowsport head to the Snowsport England website: snowsportengland.org.uk or follow Snowsport England on social media @[snowsportengland](https://twitter.com/snowsportengland).



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From beef to beans

With January being the month to give up meat, eggs and dairy, charity **Veganuary** explains how families can adopt a plant-based diet.

Forget fad diet: the vegan food revolution is here to stay. Veganuary has sparked a phenomenon, with millions taking the pledge to try vegan since the campaign launched in 2014. But the question is, does eating plant-based really make a difference? All

signs point to yes!

With a few simple swaps and being savvy in the supermarket, families can still enjoy all their favourite dishes without meat, eggs and dairy. From dairy-free cheese that melts to sizzling meatless burgers, the options have never been more appetising. Even old-school classics like shepherd's pie can be given a delicious meat-free makeover.

What is Veganuary?

Veganuary is the New Year's revolution that's changing the world one plant-based meal at a time. What started as an idea at a kitchen table exploded into a global movement and over the last 10 years, the 31-day challenge has attracted participants from almost every country in the world.

"Families can still enjoy all their favourite dishes without meat, eggs and dairy"



Celebrities like Queen legend Brian May, TV presenter Jasmine Harman, wildlife presenter Chris Packham, 'dragon' Deborah Meaden, Eastenders' Kellie Bright and actor Peter Egan are among the many participants who have made permanent changes to their diets.

By working with businesses, Veganuary has helped to increase plant-based options in shops and restaurants and make them more visible, accessible and exciting. The 'Veganuary effect' has taken the world by storm, with companies like Greggs, Burger King, KFC, McDonald's and Domino's launching drool-worthy vegan options to meet the ever-growing demand.

Those who take the pledge through the Veganuary website receive daily support including meal plans, recipes and encouragement to stick with it. And the best part? There's no judgment – enjoying oat milk in your morning cuppa or a few meatless dinners per week still counts.

Why try vegan?

It's no secret that our appetite for meat and dairy is wreaking havoc on the environment. Many studies have shown that a shift towards plant-based diets can play a significant role



in fighting the climate crisis. Foods like beans, lentils and tofu produce fewer greenhouse gases and require a fraction of the resources and spare animals' lives.

Eating more plants doesn't just help the planet – it can benefit our health too. Studies show vegan diets can reduce the risk of heart disease and

type 2 diabetes. Veganuary participants have reported perks such as lower cholesterol levels, glowing skin, boundless energy and enhanced athletic performance (not to mention better skills in the kitchen).

Don't worry about whether a plant-based diet is safe or not. Health organisations such as the NHS and British Dietetics Association confirm that well-planned vegan diets can meet our nutritional needs at all stages of life.



5 TIPS TO MAKE THE SWITCH

1 Start slowly

If diving headfirst into veganism is too much for your household, ditch the all-or-nothing approach. Experiment with dairy-free milk or try a plant-based meal one evening a week. This approach allows you to explore new recipes and ingredients without feeling overwhelmed. Instead of eliminating all animal products at once, gradually replace them. Every swap makes a difference, so embrace the small steps and find alternatives that work for you.





"Don't let the pressure to be a 'perfect vegan' scare you away from trying at all"

2

Veganise family favourites

Most of us are creatures of habit and eat the same meals week in, week out. And the good news is that eating vegan doesn't mean we have to give up our favourite foods or spend a fortune on the food shop. Many of the products you already buy are probably vegan, from pasta, bread and rice to sauces, gravy granules and snacks.

With a few simple substitutions, you can "veganise" beloved family recipes instead of starting from scratch. Craving spaghetti Bolognese? Swap meat for hearty lentils or sliced mushrooms. In the mood for lasagne? Soya mince works a treat. Even a weekend fry-up is possible with vegan bacon and sausages.

3

Plan ahead

Any change to our routines requires some planning, but

don't let that stop you. Think ahead as much as possible to try and plan weekly menus. You may find a weekly meal planner useful so you know what to shop for and don't revert back to old habits as soon as cravings come knocking.

It's always a good idea to stock up on versatile staples such as fruit, vegetables (tinned or frozen veggies are fine), plant-based milk, tofu, beans, legumes, meat and dairy alternatives, herbs and spices. Cooking large batches of chilli, soups, stews and pasta sauces and storing them in the fridge or freezer can save time and money too.

4

Vegucate yourself

While a balanced vegan diet can meet all our nutritional needs, it's important to brush up on the basics. The most common concerns are protein, calcium, vitamin B12, vitamin C, vitamin D, Omega fatty acids, iron and iodine, but as long as we eat a balanced intake of various protein sources, legumes, nuts, fruits and vegetables, we shouldn't be at risk of deficiencies.

A daily vitamin B12 supplement is recommended and the NHS advises everyone to take a vitamin D supplement in autumn and winter. For more information about plant-based nutrition, check out Veganuary's website ([veganuary.com](https://t.ly/NHVho)), The Vegan Society (<https://t.ly/NHVho>) Those with specific health concerns or dietary requirements should consult their GP or a specialist.

5

Allow mistakes

Don't let the pressure to be a "perfect vegan" scare you away from trying at all. The truth is that everyone's plant-based journey is filled with twists, turns and the occasional slip-up. Mistakes aren't failures – they're part of the ride.

Whether you accidentally ate something non-vegan or simply gave in to temptation, it's not the end of the world. We can only do our best in an imperfect world and what matters most is our intention.

So, are you ready to embrace the plant-powered life this January? Sign up for the free 31-day pledge at [Veganuary.com](https://t.ly/NHVho).

VEGANUARY

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GIVE KIDS A GREAT START

The Vegan Society explains the best way to support your children from weaning onwards when eating a healthy and varied, meat- and dairy-free diet.

Veganism has grown phenomenally over the past decade, with around 0.25% of vegans within the UK adult population in 2014, to 1.35% in 2022. As veganism grows, it is inevitable that more people will choose to raise their family as vegans, so it's good to know that well-planned vegan diets can meet the nutritional needs of every family member.

All parents need to ensure that their children's first foods are nutritious – and vegans are no exception. If you do your research, and plan carefully, you can provide a diet that contains all the essential nutrients needed for growth and development without using animal products.

Early days



In the UK, vitamin D drops are recommended for all breastfed babies from birth. Between

six months and five years of age, supplementation of vitamins A, C and D is recommended for all children who are breastfed or consuming less than 500ml of infant formula daily.

Additional considerations for vegan children include vitamin B12 and iodine, which can be provided via fortified foods or supplementation, such as The Vegan Society's VEG 1 Baby and Toddler vitamin and mineral supplement.

First foods



Whether you're baby-led weaning or introducing soft foods via a spoon, it is important that first foods have no added salt

or sugar. Calcium and riboflavin intakes can be maintained by offering a fortified alternative to milk, although rice milk is not recommended





“Iron-rich plant-based foods should be prioritised, such as beans, chickpeas, lentils and tofu”

for children under 5 due to the levels of arsenic. Vitamin A status can be supported without animal products by providing a rich source of carotenoids daily, such as carrots or sweet potatoes.

Iron-rich plant-based foods should be prioritised, such as beans, chickpeas, lentils and tofu. Iron absorption can be boosted by including a rich source of vitamin C in each meal, such as pepper, broccoli, cabbage or mango. Children’s daily diet should also include a source of essential omega-3 fat from ground linseed, chia seeds, hemp seeds or walnuts. A supplement of long-chain omega-3 fats from microalgae is an important consideration if your child does not consume enough of these types of foods.

“Young children need meals and snacks that provide lots of nutrients for growth”



One to four years old



This period is a time to adjust your child’s diet to a more balanced way of eating, supporting them to carry out healthy eating habits into adulthood. Young children need meals and snacks that provide lots of nutrients for growth, including:

- Lots of healthy fats, such as ground nuts and seeds, nut butters, vegetable oil, avocado and vegan spread.
- Quality sources of protein such as tofu, beans, lentils and chickpeas that are also useful sources of iron and zinc.
- Starchy foods with less fibre than recommended for adults, such as white rice and pasta. This is because a lot of fibre can fill us up quickly, which may prevent little ones from meeting their energy needs.
- Calcium-rich food and drink, such as fortified unsweetened plant-based milk, calcium-set tofu and plain fortified yoghurt alternatives.

If a parent has concerns about their child’s diet, it is recommended that they talk to their doctor about seeing a dietitian for expert advice.



The Vegan Society (vegansociety.com) was founded in November 1944 and continues to hold true to the vision of its founding members as it works towards a world in which humans do not exploit other animals. It is as determined as ever to promote vegan lifestyles for the benefit of animals, people and the environment.



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DELICIOUS VEGAN RECIPIES

Kids and adults alike will love these vegan recipes from *Make it Vegan* by Madeleine Olivia.

Mediterranean Bowl

One of the healthiest diets on the planet is that enjoyed by Mediterranean countries. We can learn a lot from them, especially as they love their veg!

SERVES 2
PREP TIME: 10 MINS | COOK TIME: 30 MINS
Gluten-free, nut-free, soy-free

INGREDIENTS

- 200 g (7 oz/1 cup) couscous
- 200 ml (7 fl oz/scant 1 cup) boiling water with 1 vegetable stock cube
- olive oil, for drizzling
- 100 g (3½ oz) baby spinach
- ½ tin (120 g/4 oz) of chickpeas

- (garbanzos), drained and rinsed
- ½ cucumber, chopped
- 200 g (7 oz) cherry tomatoes or use sundried tomatoes, chopped
- ½ red onion, chopped
- handful of olives, pitted and chopped
- about 100 g (3½ oz) hummus
- pinch of chilli (hot pepper) flakes
- juice of ½ lemon
- handful of parsley, chopped
- handful of vegan Feta, chopped

METHOD

1. Add the couscous and vegetable stock to a large heatproof bowl, cover with a lid or plate and leave to stand for 5–10 minutes. When the couscous is soft, fluff it up with a fork, then drizzle with a little olive oil.
2. To assemble the bowls, add the spinach followed by the couscous, chickpeas, cucumber, tomatoes, red onion, olives and a large dollop of hummus on top. Sprinkle with chilli flakes, a squeeze of lemon juice, the parsley and some vegan feta.



Choc a Choc Chocolate Cake

This cake is filled with chocolate! The more chocolate the better when it comes to dessert for me, and chocolate cake has always been my favourite since childhood.

SERVES 12

PREP TIME: 20 MINS | COOK TIME: 35 MINS

Nut-free, soy-free

INGREDIENTS

- 150 g (5½ oz) vegan butter, plus extra for greasing
- 300 ml (10 fl oz/1¼ cups) non-dairy milk
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons apple sauce (shop-bought is fine)
- 300 g (10½ oz/scant 2½ cups) self-raising (self-rising) flour
- 200 g (7 oz/generous ¾ cup) golden caster (superfine) sugar
- 100 g (3½ oz/generous ¾ cup) cocoa (unsweetened chocolate) powder
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee powder (optional)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- pinch of table salt

For the chocolate buttercream

- 100 g (3½ oz) vegan dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa solids, chopped into pieces
- 200 g (7 oz) vegan butter
- 400 g (14 oz/3¼ cups) icing (powdered) sugar
- 100 g (3½ oz/generous ¾ cup) cocoa (unsweetened chocolate) powder
- pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon non-dairy milk

To decorate

Grated vegan dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa solids or vegan chocolate sprinkles fresh raspberries or slices of strawberries

METHOD

1. Preheat a fan oven to 170°C (375°F). Grease two 20 cm (8 in) sandwich tins (pans) all over with vegan butter, then line the bases with baking parchment.
2. Pour the milk into a medium bowl and add the vinegar. Wait five minutes for the mixture to begin turning lumpy and split.
3. Add all the remaining cake ingredients to a large bowl, pour over the milk and vinegar mixture, and whisk until smooth. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared tins and bake in the oven for 25–30 minutes until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cakes comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tins for 5–10 minutes, then turn onto wire racks to cool completely.
4. To make the buttercream, add the chocolate to a heatproof bowl and microwave in 30-second bursts until melting. Alternatively, melt on the stove in a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl doesn't touch the water. Make sure you keep checking and stirring the chocolate after 30 seconds, so it doesn't overheat. Leave to cool for a few minutes.
5. Beat the vegan butter and icing sugar together in a large bowl with a wooden spoon until light and fluffy. Sift in the cocoa powder and salt, then pour in the melted chocolate and milk and mix until smooth.
6. Spread half the buttercream on top of one of the cooled sponges and sandwich the cakes together. Spread the remaining buttercream over the top and down the sides of the cake. Decorate with some grated chocolate and fresh berries. The cake will store in an airtight container for three to four days.

Fluffy Lemon Sponge Cake

This lemon cake is refreshing, light and fluffy. Vinegar is one of the ingredients I use regularly in vegan baking. But don't worry, it doesn't taste like vinegar once cooked! The bright and zesty lemon flavour is a favourite for me in a cake, and you really wouldn't know it's vegan.

SERVES 12

PREP TIME: 20 MINS | COOK TIME: 30 MINS

INGREDIENTS

- 150 ml (5 fl oz/scant 2/3 cup) vegetable oil, plus extra for greasing
- 400 g (14 oz/3¼ cups) self-raising (self-rising) flour
- 300 g (10½ oz/11/3 cups) golden caster (superfine) sugar
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 250 ml (8 oz/1 cup) water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- zest of 1½ lemons

For the lemon buttercream

- 300 g (10½ oz/2 1/2 cups) icing (powdered) sugar
- 200 g (7 oz) vegan butter or margarine
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 1-2 tablespoons non-dairy milk

METHOD

1. Preheat a fan oven to 180°C (400°F). Grease two 20 cm (8 in) cake tins (pans) and line the bases with baking parchment.
2. Sift the flour into a large bowl and add the sugar and baking powder. Add the water, vanilla and lemon zest and whisk by hand until combined, taking care not to overmix; tiny lumps are fine.
3. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared cake tins and bake in the oven for 30 minutes, or until cooked. Check by inserting a skewer into the centre of the cakes and if it comes out clean, they are done.
4. Leave to cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then carefully turn the cakes out onto a wire rack and leave to completely cool until ready to ice (frost).
5. To make the buttercream, sift half of the icing sugar into a bowl, add the butter or

margarine, and beat with a whisk until light and fluffy. Whisk in the remaining icing sugar, the lemon zest and juice, and the milk.

6. Spread some of the buttercream onto one of the cake halves, then sandwich both cake halves together. Use the remaining buttercream to decorate the cake, then add an extra sprinkling of lemon zest.

Tips

- I used vinegar and baking powder as a substitute for eggs, as well as to help the cake rise – 1 tablespoon of vinegar mixed with 1 teaspoon of baking powder per egg is a good guideline when converting cake recipes.
- The tip for a fluffy vegan sponge is not to overmix. As soon as the mixture comes together, stop! The more you mix, the more the gluten in the flour develops and that's what will make the cake dense.
- I used vinegar and baking powder as a substitute for eggs, as well as to help the cake rise – 1 tablespoon of vinegar mixed with 1 teaspoon of baking powder per egg is a good guideline when converting cake recipes.





Vegan Omelette

Chickpea (gram) flour is a magic ingredient for vegan egg-inspired recipes. It is a staple in Indian cooking and often used for a besan chilla (savoury pancake).

This recipe can be adapted in so many ways by using whatever vegetables you fancy, adding some vegan cheese and serving not just for breakfast, but for lunch or dinner, too. With the addition of kala namak (black salt) it can create an eggy taste. It is also naturally gluten- and soy-free, plus high in protein!

MAKES 1 OMELETTE

PREP TIME: 10 MINS | COOK TIME: 10 MINS

Gluten-free nut-free soy-free

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast
- ¼ teaspoon kala namak (black salt) for a more egg-like flavour or use ordinary sea salt, plus extra to serve
- freshly ground black pepper
- 75 ml (2 1/2 fl oz/5 tablespoons) water
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- small handful of chopped parsley, to serve

Optional

- handful of vegetables, such as mushrooms, spring onions (scallion), broccoli, cavolo nero, peas, spinach, tomato and (bell) peppers, finely chopped
- sprinkle of chopped herbs
- handful of grated vegan cheese
- sprinkle of chilli (hot pepper) flakes

METHOD

1. Mix the chickpea flour, nutritional yeast, black salt (if using) or ordinary salt, and a grind of black pepper in a large bowl. Gradually whisk in the measured water until the mixture has a smooth consistency.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat, then pour in the mixture, gently swirling the pan to spread it out. You can also add a small sprinkle of chopped herbs, grated vegan cheese and chilli flakes if you like.
3. Fry one side until golden brown (you'll know it's done when the edges start to come away and bubbles are forming in the omelette, around 4–6 minutes). Flip the omelette over, add the chopped vegetables, if using, then flip half the omelette over to cover the other side and cook for a few more minutes. Serve with a sprinkling of parsley and extra black salt.

Roast Aubergine with Harissa Yoghurt

Roasting aubergines (eggplants) brings out their delicious, creamy and earthy depth of flavour. Paired with the sweet spice of the harissa yoghurt this enhances the Middle Eastern and North African flavours of this dish. I love this as a main, or as a part of a larger spread or side.

SERVES 4

PREP TIME: 10 MINS | COOK TIME: 55 MINS

INGREDIENTS

- 4 aubergines (eggplants)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 tablespoons plain vegan yoghurt
- grated zest of ½ lemon
- squeeze of lemon juice
- 1 small garlic clove, grated
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts (swap for toasted sesame, pumpkin or sunflower seeds for a nutfree option)
- 75 g (2½ oz) vegan butter
- 1 tablespoon rose harissa paste
- 1 tablespoon chopped mint
- 1 red chilli, finely sliced

METHOD

1. Preheat a fan oven to 190°C (400°F).
2. Pierce the aubergines three or four times, then brush with the olive oil and arrange on a large baking sheet. Roast in the oven for 45 minutes, or until the aubergines are completely soft.
3. Mix the yoghurt, lemon zest, lemon juice, garlic and a pinch of sea salt in a medium bowl. Toast the pine nuts in a small, dry frying pan over a high heat, stirring for a couple of minutes.
4. Melt the butter in the microwave in a microwaveable bowl in 10-second bursts, then stir through the harissa. Set aside.
5. Cut the aubergines in half, opening them up like a baked potato. Arrange them on a warm platter and season the inside of each one with salt and pepper.
6. Spoon the yoghurt mixture into each of the aubergine halves, then drizzle over the harissa butter. Finally, scatter over the mint, toasted pine nuts and sliced chilli, and enjoy.



All recipes taken from *Make it Vegan* by Madeleine Olivia (Hardie Grant, £25), Photography © Clare Winfield (cover © Ali Green)

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Professor **Noel Fitzpatrick** on the three vital pet insurance questions you need to ask.

Our animal companions are part of the family and provide immeasurable support during hard times, but looking after their needs also contributes to monthly bills, including pet insurance. You may ask yourself if you can afford pet insurance, but when times are tough having the right pet insurance may actually help you manage costs more effectively. Pet insurance allows families to budget monthly for veterinary care rather than having to find the money for unexpected bills.

“Pet insurance allows families to budget monthly for veterinary care”

When reviewing your options for pet insurance, it can be tempting to look for a cheaper policy, but it is important to realise that not all pet insurance is the same. In fact, you could actually find that a cheaper policy costs you more in the long run as it may not cover all of the care that your animal needs, leaving you to foot the bill for more of the treatment than you were expecting.

Vets try to do the best for their patients all of the time, but there is no question that restrictive cover can impact the care some families can afford.



Not all pet insurance is the same and it can impact the veterinary care you can afford. Here are three simple questions that I believe every family should ask of their pet insurer before they buy a policy:

- *Are there any additional limits within the vet bills cover?*
- *Do you cover the cost of dental illness and injury?*
- *Will I pay more for claiming?*

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Fostering a child can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience for anyone with a passion for helping others.

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Halima, 32, and Adam, 37, are the pinnacle of a 'modern-day foster carer', fostering a 16-year-old boy alongside their birth children, a nearly 2-year-old daughter and an 8-year-old son.

They began fostering nearly five years ago, offering respite care



first. Halima says, "respite worked very well because we saw ourselves providing this intense, fun, almost holiday experience for a week or weekend, building significant memories for these children."

With the support of the Nexus Fostering team, they made the decision to foster the 16-year-old boy long term. Adam said "Nexus Fostering and our supporting social worker, guided us through this transition, making us

feel empowered about making decisions. Nexus saw what we had within us that we didn't recognise we had".

"The reality is you can read about fostering, but until you are doing it, it's very different," said Halima. "It's such a big process but look at what you get at the end; you get another family member. He's so considerate, he's amazing with our younger children".

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