

inside

Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill

September & October 2026



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inside this issue: | WIN £25 (to enter p29)

Local Community Events | Baking: Strawberry and pistachio cake | Travel Feature: Family first

FREE local community magazine and business directory

What if the best hotel, is at sea?



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Maybe it doesn't need fixed addresses, crowded schedules or familiar expectations.

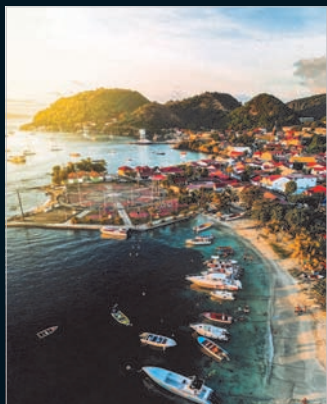
Explora Journeys invites you to consider a new way of travelling. One shaped by the ocean, guided by curiosity, and defined by how it makes you feel. 'Explore the Ocean State of Mind' introduces a new vision of luxury travel – one shaped by space, serenity, and the ever-changing ocean.

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inside Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill



Welcome to the September/October edition of Inside Magazine, the local magazine for Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill.

've never been much of a spring cleaner because as soon as the warmer weather arrives, I'd rather

be outside than sorting cupboards. But then autumn rolls in meaning more time in the house. Coupled with a sense of 'right, back to a routine' as schools go back and holidays are over, I feel the need to declutter.

It's what to do with the stuff I find challenging though. The easiest and quickest thing to do is to take it all to the recycling centre but, having been brought up to value my possessions, coupled with 'green guilt', I can't bring myself to do it.

If it won't sell and it's not the sort of thing that the charity shop wants, I'll advertise it as a freebie on the community Facebook group. I had about 30 baking tins (don't judge me, I'd inherited them) and had so many takers that I felt mean just offering them all to the first respondent. I honestly considered giving a few to each enquirer before I came to my senses and realised just how much work that would be.

Anyway, I'm down to a large mirror, a couple of pictures, a children's bike with flat tyres, a collection of formal clothes which I've tried to sell at least three times and a very cluttered garage much to my husband's irritation. He's given me a deadline to clear it all out before he finds his own disposal method, reminding me daily with the rhyme "Remember, remember the 5th of November"!

Tania Houston

NB. Copy deadline date for our next issue (November/December) is October 16th.

Printed on FSC accredited paper. For every tree felled significantly more are planted. Vegetable based inks are used throughout, which are far more environmentally friendly than oil based inks. Waste paper from the printing and binding process is recycled and goes back into providing pulp for recycled paper products.



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Strawberry and pistachio rapeseed oil cake

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Strawberry and pistachio rapeseed oil cake

Delicious served with crème fraîche or clotted cream and extra strawberries, this baked treat is equally scrumptious with an afternoon cuppa.

Serves **6-8**

Preparation time **20-25 minutes**

Cooking time **50-55 minutes,**
plus cooling

Ingredients

- 200ml Borderfields Rapeseed Oil, plus extra for greasing
- 225g shelled pistachios
- 200g caster sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 150g fine polenta
- 1 tsp baking powder
- A pinch of sea salt flakes
- 250g strawberries, rinsed, hulled and chopped, plus extra to serve
- Icing sugar, for dusting (optional)

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas mark 4. Line the base of a 23cm cake tin and grease the sides with a little rapeseed oil.
2. Put 200g of the pistachios into a blender and blitz until the consistency of ground almonds.
3. Whisk the sugar and eggs together with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy. Add the rapeseed oil, whisking continuously, and then fold in the ground pistachios, polenta, baking powder and salt. Fold in most of the chopped strawberries and then carefully tip the mixture into the prepared cake tin. Roughly chop the remaining pistachios and scatter over the top of the mixture along with the remaining chopped strawberries.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for 50-55 minutes until risen and golden, and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Remove the cake from the oven and leave to cool in the tin before transferring to a plate or cake stand. Dust with icing sugar, if liked, and serve with clotted cream or crème fraîche and extra strawberries.

For more on the Borderfields range of Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oils and Infusions, visit www.borderfields.co.uk.

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Pet-proof your home

Our furry friends cause mayhem indoors! But it's possible to minimise pet damage and its effect on your pocket.

Sometimes even the best-behaved of pets can wreak havoc. One survey from Novuna Personal Finance found that 75% of owners had suffered pet-related damage. Soiled carpets and flooring, chewed furniture and belongings, and torn upholstery featured high on the animal vandalism list.

Naming and shaming

Which animals are the culprits? Cats tend to cause chaos with their claws, with scratched and ripped furniture being a common problem. Dogs can chew your possessions or your soft furnishings, and dig in your carpet. Both can knock over ornaments.

Rodents have a place on the naughty step too – many mouse, hamster and gerbil owners have had to stump up to repair damage caused by their pets, according to the Novuna poll. Gnawing on furniture and skirting boards, and chewing through wires can be an expensive side effect of your little pet escaping.

Ensure you're insured

It's a common misconception that your pet insurance will pay out for damage. It won't. It exists to cover medical expenses and, although it might include third-party liability cover, this will only cover you for damage to other people's property or injuries to a person or other animal.

You can, however, get coverage for pet damage on home insurance. Not all policies cover it, so make sure you check yours and compare policies carefully when you're taking out your home's contents policy. You might want to consider whether you need this as part of your buildings insurance too. You will need accidental damage cover that specifically includes pet mishaps. Make sure you always tell your home insurer you have a pet.

Even if your insurance does cover you for damage caused by your animal companion, it's unlikely to pay out for normal wear and tear or if you've left your pet home alone for many hours.



Prevention strategies

Accidents will happen and it's not always possible to prevent them. But the following measures might help reduce the risk:

- Keep prized possessions out of tail-wagging range or away from clumsy cats
- Train your pet early on
- Give dogs plenty of exercise so they don't have pent-up energy
- Don't leave dogs alone for long periods when they might get bored or anxious
- Leave the radio on when you're out, to reassure them
- Give cats a scratching post to steer them away from wallpaper or furniture
- Opt for scratch-resistant furnishing fabrics and hard floors over carpet
- Have designated areas for pets, with gates and covers where necessary
- Create a sanctuary for your pet, in a cosy corner or with a comfy bed
- Give your dog toys to entertain it and channel chewing urges.



Cases of this life-threatening condition are rising dramatically. But what exactly is sepsis and can it be prevented?

Sepsis is common and on the increase. The condition affects around 245,000 people a year in the UK, on a par with heart attacks, according to the UK Sepsis Trust. Sadly, 48,000 people die from it annually – that's more than from breast, bowel and prostate cancer combined. But doctors argue that better awareness could save thousands of lives.

Here's what you need to know:

What is sepsis?

Sepsis is a medical emergency. It's the body's extreme reaction to an infection, whether that's viral, bacterial or fungal. The immune system goes into overdrive, potentially leading to shock, organ failure and even death. Sometimes people need amputations to save their life. Others may have poor memory and concentration afterwards.

What causes it?

The condition always starts with an infection, such as flu, a urinary tract infection, a skin infection or pneumonia. Covid was a common cause of sepsis in the early days of the pandemic. The very old and the very young are disproportionately affected and people with diabetes or another underlying illness are more vulnerable. Pregnancy also increases the risk. But often it's not known why sepsis strikes some people rather than others.

Why are cases rising?

One reason is that more cases are being spotted, thanks to growing awareness among healthcare professionals. This gives people a better chance of early treatment and survival. Treatment often

includes antibiotics and intravenous fluids. But there are other factors behind the surging figures: an ageing population, people living longer with chronic illnesses, antibiotic resistance, and more invasive procedures carrying a greater chance of infection afterwards.

Can you prevent sepsis?

There no single way of avoiding it, but some measures might help protect you. Have all the jabs you're eligible for, including flu and Covid, and make sure you wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Keep any wounds clean too. Always take the full course of antibiotics and, crucially, act fast if you suspect sepsis.

How can you spot it?

It's easy to miss the signs. They can sometimes be vague or you might just think you have flu. In adults, the signs spell out the word **SEPSIS**:

- Slurred speech or confusion
- Extreme shivering or muscle pain
- Passing no urine in a day
- Severe breathlessness
- It feels like you're going to die
- Skin mottled or discoloured

Children may have a fit, a rash that doesn't go away when pressed, look pale or have blueish or mottled skin, feel cold to the touch and be difficult to wake. Meanwhile, signs in infants might be persistent vomiting, not feeding or not peeing for 12 hours. Go to the GP or A&E if you notice any of these symptoms, and ask the question, "Could they have sepsis?"

Remember, early action could save a life.

For more information, go to www.sepsistrust.org.

SUDOKU

How to Play

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9, **with no repetition!**

That's all there is to it.

You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic - there's no maths involved and no adding up.

*It's fun.
It's challenging.
It's addictive!*

Solution on page 26

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



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Tech talk

READY FOR APPLE AI?

How much you can benefit from Apple Intelligence depends on your device.

This year's big Apple software update is all about Apple Intelligence but you're going to need some pretty hefty hardware to run it. To get the most powerful version of Apple Intelligence, you'll need an iPhone Air or iPhone 17 Pro, an iPad with an M4 processor or a Mac with an M3 processor and 12GB of memory.

That said, less powerful recent devices will still get a version of Apple Intelligence, so you'll be able to use its Image Playground, writing tools and other key features. However, you won't get features such as Siri "expressive voices" or the most advanced voice dictation.



COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY

Smart TV makers are using ads to keep prices down.



The cost of anything electronic has skyrocketed in the last few months due to a global shortage of crucial components, but TVs have bucked the trend. That's because, instead of upping their prices, TV manufacturers are increasingly turning to advertising to make their money. That's why you're starting to see more ads in smart TVs' interfaces. For example, Samsung describes the home page of your TV as "the new front row for brands", and other TV firms are increasing their advertising options too.

If you want an ad-free experience, the best solution is to use an Apple TV streaming device. Apple doesn't currently run third-party adverts on the Apple TV.

SWITCH IT UP!

A smart switch could be a bright solution to a common lighting problem.

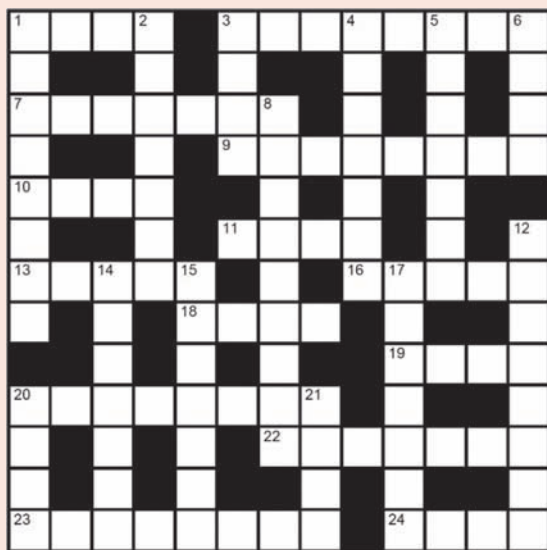
If you like the idea of smart bulbs but have older light fittings that can't use them, Philips Hue has a clever solution – smart light switches. There are two options: the Hue Wired On/Off switch and the Hue Wired Dimmer. They simply replace your existing switches and connect your existing lighting to the Hue app. You can then include those lights in smart home scenes, timed events and more.

It's a good way of adding lights, such as kitchen downlighters, to a Hue system and it's cheaper than buying multiple smart bulbs. The Hue Wired Switch has a recommended retail price of £39.99 and the Hue Wired Dimmer is £52.99.



CROSSWORD

Solution on page 26



Across

1. Insincere talk about religion or morals (4)
3. Determining the total number of (8)
7. Country, capital Quito (7)
9. School of thought (8)
10. Adult male deer (4)
11. Country, capital Lima (4)
13. Tantalise (5)
16. Mrs Simpson, Bart Simpson's mother (5)
18. Caprine animal (4)
19. Wheel shaft (4)
20. Typewriter lever that changes the case of letters (5,3)
22. Small, square cases of dough with savoury fillings (7)
23. Sketchy summary of the main points of a theory (8)
24. Official symbols of a family, state, etc (4)

Down

1. Dark oily liquid used as a wood preservative (8)
2. Lachrymator (4,3)
3. Compact mass (of earth) (4)
4. Quack remedy for ills or diseases (7)
5. Cutting tooth at the front of the mouth (7)
6. Total admission receipts at a sports event (4)
8. Scented liquid used as a perfume (9)
12. Branch of biology that studies heredity and variation in organisms (8)
14. Metal support for logs in a fireplace (7)
15. Image boost (3-4)
17. Shrub that yields coffee beans (7)
20. Soap froth (4)
21. Swerves off course momentarily (4)



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Learning the lingo

By Susannah Hickling

Ever fancied being able to speak a foreign language well? Here are some tips on how to go about it.

Are you back from your holiday abroad, wishing you'd been able to communicate with more confidence? You're far from alone. A YouGov survey last year found that three-quarters of Britons who can't speak a foreign language fluently would like to; the good news is it's not too late.

Languages have a lot going for them. Some command of a foreign tongue doesn't just help us on holiday; it's also much prized by employers and has even been shown to have cognitive benefits. These include improved memory, better problem-solving and slower brain ageing.

Getting started

While it's always an advantage to begin young, many adults who don't consider themselves linguists succeed in becoming extremely proficient in a language, often because they need to use it – for work, love or to live abroad. The key is motivation.

So what's the best way to learn and stay engaged?

Take a course The discipline and structure will help keep you on track. There's never been so much choice: evening classes, intensive courses, online learning, audio courses, teach-yourself textbooks, private tuition. There are apps such as Duolingo too, though it's often better to use these to complement more formal learning.

Learn the 100 most common words

These account for about half of all spoken communication. Learn enough grammar to make sentences with them and keep practising. You can find common word lists online.

Work at it Set aside time every day to drill your chosen language, whether that's out loud or in your head. Learn verbs, make sentences, have pretend conversations. There will be times when you feel you're making little progress, but don't give up.

Set goals It can help to give yourself bite-sized targets, for example: today I'm going to learn how to introduce myself; by the end of the week, I'm going to know how to order food. This is much more manageable than resolving to be fluent by your next holiday!

Immerse yourself If you're learning Spanish, watch Spanish series on Netflix, listen to Spanish podcasts or radio. Find YouTube videos. You'll get used to hearing the language. Try to read magazine or newspaper articles, or other material to suit your level.

Keep talking Talk to the mirror, find a language buddy or conversation class. Better still, find native speakers locally.

Use your phone Technology can really boost your learning. Change the operating language. Use Google Translate and online dictionaries whenever you need a word or phrase.

Make it fun Love dogs or football? Explore topics you're passionate about in your target language. Have frequent holidays in a country where it's spoken. Ultimately, a language is to be lived and enjoyed.

DIESEL DEALS

Six used diesel cars that make sense today.

BMW 3 Series

The BMW 3 Series is one of the best compact executive saloons on the market. It comes as standard with rear-wheel drive, while the precise steering and refined cabin make it entertaining to drive.

The entry-level 318D is fitted with a 2.0-litre turbocharged unit that develops 148bhp and can return a claimed 55.4mpg. The mid-range 320D boosts power to 187bhp and can still achieve around the same 55mpg, while the flagship 330D is hooked up to a 3.0-litre turbocharged engine that produces 261bhp and can manage a claimed 47.1mpg.

Secondhand prices start at £17,000 for a low-mileage 320D, while a 330D can be picked up for £28,000.

Peugeot 208

If you want a good-looking, efficient supermini, the Peugeot 208 is hard to beat. The 1.5-litre BlueHDi engine is strong and capable, developing 101bhp and 249Nm of torque. It can sprint to 60mph in ten seconds and will deliver a claimed 73.6mpg.

Expect to spend around £12,300 for a used example; a GT model can be yours for £13,300.

Seat Leon

The Leon is a practical, economical and great-to-drive family hatchback. It shares the same platform as the Volkswagen Golf, but is a sportier alternative.

There's a 2.0-litre turbocharged diesel engine pumping out 113bhp and returning a claimed 64mpg.

Look to spend £14,500 for a five-door hatchback example in FR trim, while an estate variant will cost £15,995.



Skoda Superb

The Skoda Superb packs one of the largest interior cabins of any car on the market and is effortless to drive, thanks to its light controls, refined diesel engine and smooth ride.

The 2.0-litre turbocharged engine is extremely efficient, managing a claimed 57.7mpg on average.

Prices start at around £18,000 for an estate variant in SE trim, while a hatchback is £19,000.

Volkswagen Golf

You can get the latest eighth-generation model in a frugal diesel powertrain, which uses a 2.0-litre turbocharged setup that can deliver up to a claimed 67.3mpg.

This small family hatchback delivers a comfortable and mature driving experience with nicely weighted steering, good visibility and lots of torque.

A 2022 example is £14,500, while sporty R Line cars come in at £18,240.

Volvo XC60

The XC60 is the best-selling Volvo of all time. It benefits from a premium image, a comfortable interior, lots of standard kit and safety technology.

You can pick up a secondhand example with an efficient diesel powertrain using a 2.0-litre turbocharged setup that produces 187bhp and 400Nm of torque, while doing a claimed 41.5mpg.

Look to spend £23,200 for a 2019 R-Design that's covered 33,000 miles.



Bringing 1066 to life

Thought to have been made in England, the Bayeux Tapestry is paying a return visit after almost a millennium.

Imagine a 70-metre comic strip, stitched in wool nearly 1,000 years ago and depicting one of the most consequential moments in English history. That, in essence, is the Bayeux Tapestry – a breathtaking embroidered panorama of the Norman Conquest of 1066. It's the medieval world's greatest surviving piece of visual storytelling.

Despite its name, it's actually an embroidered cloth and it was almost certainly made in England, probably in Canterbury within a decade or two of the Conquest itself.

The work is traditionally associated with Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half-brother of William the Conqueror, who may have commissioned it to decorate his new cathedral in Bayeux in Normandy. The embroiderers were almost certainly Anglo-Saxon women, renowned across medieval Europe for their needlework skill.

History in the making

The tapestry narrates events from around 1064 up to the Battle of Hastings. It culminates in the death of King Harold – famously shown with an arrow through his eye, though scholars still debate this interpretation – and the English running away. Across 58 scenes and featuring over 600 characters, 200 horses and countless ships, it offers an invaluable visual record of 11th-century warfare, clothing, architecture and daily life on both sides of the Channel.

Its survival is remarkable. It weathered the French Revolution – narrowly escaping use as a wagon cover – and was hidden during the Second World War to protect it from being seized by

the Nazis. The cloth has been in Bayeux since 1077, when Bishop Odo's cathedral was consecrated. It has become one of Normandy's most treasured possessions and attracts millions of visitors.

An English visit

The tapestry will be loaned to the British Museum from September 2026 to July 2027 – the first time it will have been on English soil since it was made. In exchange, treasures from the British Museum representing all four nations of the UK – including artefacts from the Sutton Hoo Anglo-Saxon ship burial and the 12th-century Lewis chess pieces – will travel to museums in Normandy.

The British government will insure the delicate cloth for roughly £800 million under the Government Indemnity Scheme, which supports public access to valuable objects that might otherwise be too costly for museums to insure commercially. The tapestry is expected to travel to London via truck through the Channel Tunnel.

The timing of this loan is partly practical: the Bayeux Museum is closing for a major renovation, and when it reopens in 2027, the tapestry will be displayed on a custom-built, inclined 70-metre-long table in a completely redesigned space. Next year also marks the 1,000th anniversary of William the Conqueror's birth.

The exhibition is expected to be one of the British Museum's most popular events ever. For anyone with even a passing interest in English history, it will genuinely be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



Grant success

Few actors possess quite the distinctive blend of elegance, sharp humour and emotional depth as Richard E Grant.

With his unmistakable voice, expressive features and razor-dry wit, Richard E Grant has carved out a career that feels both delightfully eccentric and deeply human.

Born Richard Grant Esterhuysen in Mbabane, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), he discovered acting and moved to London in 1982. His breakthrough role came in 1987 as the gloriously dishevelled, perpetually inebriated Withnail in cult classic "Withnail and I".

What followed was a career of remarkable variety. He moved effortlessly between period dramas such as "Gosford Park" and "Downton Abbey", comedy, Hollywood productions and independent films.

Back to the boards

This month sees Richard's return to the West End after a two-decade gap, starring in the Noel Coward comedy, "Hay Fever". The show will run for 12 weeks from 22 September at Wyndham's Theatre, London.

"I love the theatre and am thrilled to return to it," Richard said.

Most recently, Richard was seen in the BBC's ten-part period drama, "The Other Bennet Sister", portraying Jane Austen's beloved character Mr Bennet from "Pride and Prejudice". The plot reimagines Jane Austen's classic novel through the eyes of the middle Bennet daughter, Mary.

He reflected: "As a father of one daughter, having five on screen was a delight. The energy is infectious."

Family fortunes

The 69-year-old star has faced heartbreak off-screen. His wife of 35 years, dialect coach Joan Washington, died from lung cancer in September 2021. Richard married her in 1986 and, after the stillbirth of their first child, they welcomed their daughter Olivia in 1989. Olivia made Richard a first-time grandfather this summer.

"Three years after my wife's death, Olivia and her husband asked to come and live in our house with their cat. So, we all live together, and I'm kind of like a concierge. I do most of the shopping and the majority of the cooking because they're both very busy."

All or nothing

Richard's happy family life couldn't be further removed from his childhood. After his mother Leonne walked out, Richard's father began drinking heavily and even tried to shoot him.

Richard confesses to having an obsessive personality – "All or nothing is what I recognise as my character".

He remains effortlessly stylish – often seen in sharply tailored suits and brightly patterned scarves. Whether on red carpets, in memoirs or sharing witty observations from everyday life, Richard E Grant carries himself with theatrical flair and warmth. He's proof that wit, vulnerability and resilience can coexist beautifully.

All episodes of "The Other Bennet Sister" are available on BBC One and BBC iPlayer.

For more information on "Hay Fever" and to book tickets, visit www.delfontmackintosh.co.uk/theatres/wyndhams-theatre.





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A close-up photograph of a hand in a blue shirt dropping a silver coin into a pink piggy bank. The background is a solid blue color.

Money ABC

It's important to help your children become financially literate.

In 2028, England will finally add personal finance to the primary school curriculum but it's still worth giving your child real-world lessons in managing money.

As cash payments become increasingly rare, financial education is arguably more important. The most crucial lesson to teach is that money is not about numbers but about opportunity cost: if you buy one thing, you can't use that money to buy something else. It's a simple lesson but it can be hard to learn and enforce. Ultimately, your child needs to experience the trade-offs of purchasing decisions and sometimes even regret their choices.

Early lessons

With younger children, start out by turning the weekly shop into a financial conversation. For example, ask their opinion on whether brand-name cereals are really better, then ask if they'd prefer to get the own-brand or economy version if that means getting a packet of sweets as well.

There's no perfect amount for pocket money or allowances, but a good starting point is just enough to let them make meaningful but low-stakes decisions. Tying some of the money to household chores can help them think harder when spending their hard-earned money.

Older and bolder

With older children, introduce concepts like savings and interest to their pocket money. Financial experts suggest a three-pot approach where you

split the money equally between cash the child can spend now, cash they must save for a certain period and cash to donate to their chosen charity.

Remember that the first experience many children have of spending is in-app purchases for mobile and console games. Make sure you understand how these work and what limits apply, then ensure your child understands this is still real spending. Before giving older children unsupervised internet access, be certain they understand how to spot financial scams.

Banking for kids

As a general rule, children can usually open a bank or savings account from around the age of six. These accounts must be set up and jointly managed by the parent or guardian, who has complete access to what is happening. They don't usually have debit cards.

Many high-street banks let children open an account in their own right when they are around 11, while features such as online or app access, direct debits and standing orders have older limits. Overdraft facilities are nearly always restricted to over-18s.

Most children's accounts offer a debit card. Don't confuse these bank account cards with prepaid cards. These are cards you can "load" with money, which your child can use in most places that accept debit cards. They often carry monthly fees but some prepaid cards offer much more parental oversight via apps.

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Family first

Discover Europe's top child-friendly cities

Travelling with young children comes with its challenges, so choosing the right destination is essential. Europe is filled with family-friendly cities with attractions and activities that cater to children – from interactive museums, zoos and big green spaces to amusement parks. Here are five of the best.



COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Safe and clean, Denmark's easygoing capital is easily walkable with the option of an excellent public transport system. Often called the "family car" of the city, cargo bikes are also a popular way to travel with children and are available to rent.

There's plenty to keep little ones entertained, with Tivoli Gardens – one of the oldest amusement parks in the world – coming out on top. Children will also love Copenhagen Zoo, home to more than 4,000 animals and an impressive elephant enclosure.



VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Vienna is an often-overlooked family holiday destination. A big draw for families is the world's oldest zoo, Schönbrunn Zoo, which is one of four places in Europe where you can see giant pandas. Then there's Prater amusement park and an incredible multi-level aquarium, alongside a handful of parks – perfect for picnics.

Vienna is magical at Christmastime too, transforming into a maze of Christmas markets, ice rinks and merry-go-rounds, twinkling with fairy lights.



PARIS, FRANCE

Easily reached by Eurostar, plane or ferry, Paris promises an easily accessible and stress-free city break.

A big draw for families is Disneyland Paris, a short hop away from the city. However, within Paris itself, little ones can enjoy going up the Eiffel Tower and burn off energy in its beautiful parks and gardens. The Jardin du Luxembourg is particularly popular with families, with a pond where you can rent and sail miniature wooden boats.



LONDON, UK

While London is a big and bustling city, its excellent public transport network and array of free activities make it surprisingly accessible for families. Spend a day exploring its museums, including the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum – both free to visit.

On a sunny day, London's green spaces beckon. Let the kids loose in Holland Park, with its giant adventure playground, or head to Battersea Park, known for its wooden pirate ship and petting zoo right next door.



BARCELONA, SPAIN

Can't decide between a city or beach break? In Barcelona, you can have both. Let the kids play in the soft sand and calm waters of Barceloneta Beach while you soak up the sunshine.

Within the city itself, a standout attraction for families is the Barcelona Aquarium. Combined with the pedestrian-friendly plazas and gorgeous Parc de la Ciutadella, you'll never be stuck for things to do. Plus, Barcelona's mild Mediterranean climate makes it easy to enjoy the outdoors all year round.

Backyard bliss

By Katherine Sorrell

Turn your outdoor space into an inviting, year-round retreat where wellbeing, relaxation and connection to nature come first.

Garden buildings

For years, we've associated garden buildings with home offices. But there's growing interest in outdoor wellness rooms. The possibilities are extensive, from Pilates or yoga studios and home gyms to reading retreats and calm relaxation areas for meditation and mindfulness, fitted with soft seating and low lighting. Even easier is a timber deck for yoga or a hanging chair in a hidden spot.

Saunas, tubs and more

Traditional acrylic hot tubs are popular, but there's an increasing market for designs that integrate more naturally into the landscape. They may be clad in timber, sunken into the ground or even made from a rugged, natural material such as cedar or stone.

Saunas are another fast-growing sector in garden design. Even in a small plot, you can fit a compact, barrel-shaped design for one or two people. It's also relatively easy to complement a sauna with a cold-water plunge pool.

A quirky option is an outdoor bath, perhaps a traditional roll-top type, which could be plumbed in or placed within reach of a hose.



This yoga studio can be opened to the fresh air while remaining sheltered from the elements, and has 73 size options. G1 garden room, from £23,790, Green Retreats. www.greenretreats.co.uk

Lighting

Good, functional lighting is essential. Aim for warm bulbs set at a low level and try to choose organic materials and shapes for the fittings. Hang string lights through tree branches for a pretty glow.

Water features

A gently bubbling water feature can be a soothing addition to a garden spa. Alternatively, simply add a wall-mounted or free-standing fountain, provided you can connect it to a power supply.

Practical considerations

Use hedging or tall plants to create a natural screen, or add trellis or slatted-timber screens in appropriate places. Hide a hot tub, plunge pool or bath beneath a pergola and plant climbers if you are overlooked. Check whether you will need planning permission for large structures or major landscaping and always involve a qualified electrician where electricity is concerned.

Small touches make a big difference: add a hook or two near a hot tub for robes or towels, and a table near a relaxation area for books or a glass of water.

With curved walls and a front canopy featuring two seats or storage spots, this very special barrel sauna is crafted from slow-grown spruce. Anio sauna barrel, £4,721.54, Tuin. www.tuin.co.uk



QUIZ!

(answers on page 26)

Ears

1. Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear is an 1889 painting by which famous artist?
2. What metalworking tool is also a name given to the bone in a human ear that has the medical name of incus?
3. Who won a 1997 boxing match after his opponent, Mike Tyson, was disqualified for biting off part of his ear?
4. The War of Jenkins' Ear began in 1739 after British sea captain Robert Jenkins allegedly had part of his ear cut off by coast guards from which country?
5. Which of the following is a condition commonly suffered by rugby players from repeated blunt trauma to the ear: a) broccoli ear; b) cabbage ear; or c) cauliflower ear?
6. Which real-life playwright did Gary Oldman star as in the 1987 film Prick Up Your Ears?
7. Which fictional character has a best friend called Big Ears?
8. Which 1986 film begins with college student Jeffrey Beaumont discovering a severed human ear when walking home?
9. In the famous painting Girl with a Pearl Earring by Johannes Vermeer, is the earring that is depicted hanging from the girl's left ear or right ear?
10. In which sport were competitors from England traditionally identified by a tattoo in one ear, consisting of three letters followed by a number or another letter?

JOKES



I've just burned 2,000 calories. That's the last time I leave brownies in the oven while I take a nap.

When I was at school, one of the other children threw a dart at me. That really stuck in my head for some reason.



What did the daddy spider say to his teenage daughter? You spend too much time on the web.



The man who invented the football red card has died. He had a good send-off.

A boy found a magical lamp and rubbed it. A genie appeared and asked, "What's your first wish?"

"I wish I were rich," answered the boy.

"Done," replied the genie. "Now what's your second wish, Rich?"



My friend called me a plagiarist. His words, not mine.

Homely hues

By Katherine Sorrell

As we head into autumn, use beautiful tones of brown to create the feeling of a warm hug in your home.



This feather-filled cotton velvet cushion comes with a fringe trim for an extra touch of glamour. Fringed cotton velvet cushion in caramel, £18, Dunelm. www.dunelm.com ↑



The extra-large format of these dramatic tiles shows off their marble-like patterns, in swirling shades of terracotta, caramel and espresso. Grand Canyon 60 x 120cm porcelain tiles, £67 per square metre, Baked Tiles. www.bakedtiles.co.uk ←



Bring sophisticated comfort to your dining with this carver chair featuring vintage curves, a walnut-stained frame and sustainable, velvet-like upholstery. Hallie wooden carver dining chair in caramel, £229, Cult Furniture. www.cultfurniture.com ↑



Indulgent fabric meets sophisticated silhouette for an alluring combination. French Connection Molten four-seater sofa in Molten Plain Caramel, £1,399, DFS. www.dfs.co.uk ↑

The striking stripes of this minimal, modern lamp are hand-crafted from natural travertine stone and marble, with an opaque, globe-shaped shade for soft illumination. Connely table lamp, £129, Cult Furniture. www.cultfurniture.com →



Enhance your indoors with a scented candle in a chic, coloured-glass jar. Scented glass candle by True Aroma, £3.99, The Range. www.therange.co.uk ←

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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

Crossword page 14

Across:

1 Cant, 3 Counting, 7 Ecuador, 9 Doctrine, 10 Stag, 11 Peru, 13 Tease, 16 Marge, 18 Goat, 19 Axle, 20 Shift key, 22 Ravioli, 23 Synopsis, 24 Arms.

Down:

1 Creosote, 2 Tear gas, 3 Clod, 4 Nostrum, 5 Incisor, 6 Gate, 8 Rosewater, 12 Genetics, 14 Andiron, 15 Ego-trip, 17 Arabica, 20 Suds, 21 Yaws.

Sudoku page 12

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

Quiz page 24

- 1) Vincent van Gogh
- 2) Anvil
- 3) Evander Holy-field
- 4) Spain
- 5) c) cauliflower ear
- 6) Joe Orton
- 7) Noddy
- 8) Blue Velvet
- 9) Left ear
- 10) Greyhound racing (these identify a dog's history)

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October 14th

'A Tale of Two London National Trust Houses' by Ludovic Gardner'.

November 18th

Annual AGM... followed by 'East Anglia Medieval Churches - A Social and Architectural History' by Peter Lawrence.

December 9th

'Essex River: The RODING!' by Janet Seward.
'DO COME!!

January 6th 2027

'The Social History Of Cutlery' by Mark Lewis.

February 17th

RHS Hyde Hall - A Great Essex Garden by Ian Bull. RHS.

March 24th

'LIFE IN UK IN THE 1930'S, INCLUDING LOCAL AREAS BY LYNN JONES

APRIL 14TH

'ARCHITECTURAL GEMS OF COGGESHALL, ESSEX BY DUDLEY MAUGHAN, LIZ HARTLEY AND KAY BRIGHT.

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BANISHING BUGS

A single nasal spray could protect against all coughs, colds and flus, say researchers. A universal vaccine – effective against viruses and some bacteria – has been developed by scientists at Stanford University in the US. So far tested on animals, it primes white blood cells in the lungs, known as macrophages, to act if an infection comes their way. It could end the era of a different vaccine for each infection.



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w: www.al-anonuk.org.uk e: via website

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RPB Fitted Bedrooms 31

Fitted Kitchens & Bathrooms

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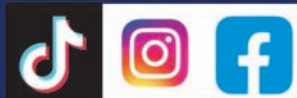
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