

TimeOut

LONDON

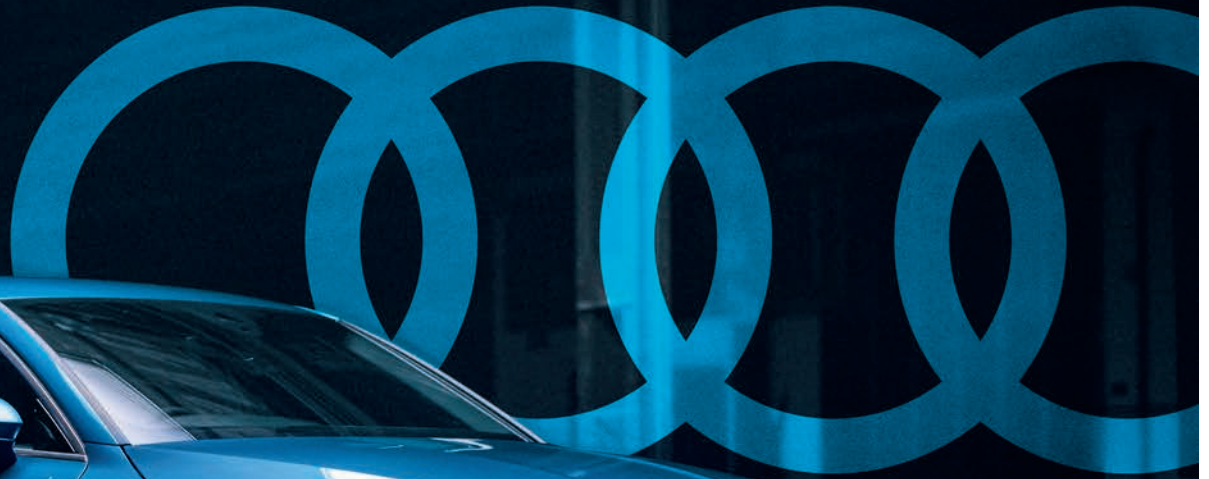
Into the unknown

Enter London's hidden world of sphinxes, sewage and ancient ruins

Clever cogs.

The new Audi A3.

What a time to be an Audi.



Official WLTP fuel consumption figures for the Audi A3 Sportback Range in mpg (l/100km): WLTP Combined 34.4 (8.2) – 282.5 (1.0). WLTP CO₂ emissions: 24 – 187g/km. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Data correct at 02 November 2020. Figures quoted are for a range of configurations and are subject to change due to ongoing approvals/changes. Please consult your Audi Centre for further information. Image for illustrative purposes only. Model shown includes optional extras.

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This issue of Time Out
in no time at all

Have yourself a merry virtual Christmas

Our intrepid correspondent sees if
you can have a festive day just using
the internet and home deliveries

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Cook it yourself

Useless in the kitchen? Not any
more. We test some of London
restaurants' fanciest meal kits

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Right there in black and white

'Mank', David Fincher's paean to
'Citizen Kane' is a five-star marvel

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ILLUSTRATION: DAN EVANS; MEAL KIT: TAKE COUVÉE BY LOGI SALANI; MANK: NETFLIX



Street art

London's visual creatives are
displaying their works outside for
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Hello, London

Joe Mackertich
London Editor
@j_mackertich



Chances are, you're reading this just before everything in London opens up again. What are you most looking forward to? Eating food you didn't cook yourself? Watching a film somewhere that's not your living room? Finally going to the theatre (for those who don't remember, theatre is a form of live entertainment that involves small tubs of ice cream, periods of sustained bowing and LOUD VOICES)?

Somewhat unexpectedly, I'm gagging to get back to my local gallery. I'm not even a particularly arty person (friends have described me as 'incurious' and 'aggressively shallow'), but there's something about surrounding oneself with top-notch visual culture that does the soul a world of good. Either that or going for a pint with my girlfriend and dog (two different beings, by the way). Both activities would be great.

And credit to you lot: Londoners have coped with the last few months admirably. I mean, we've all developed a sort of permanently crazed expression and I'm not sure if anyone's brushed their hair since mid-October, but we held it together, didn't we? Now, excuse me while I go back to rehearsing 'ordering a pint' in my bathroom mirror.

THE EDITOR'S ESSENTIALS

Three things you have to do in London



SUPPORT this

Local Buyer's Club in north London is doing its annual winter toy appeal for disadvantaged children. Get involved.



...AND this

Check out Be Enriched, serving fresh food to chronically underserved areas of south London with their bus!



SEE this

The V&A opens on Tuesday with a recently announced exhibition of children's rainbow drawings made during lockdown. Aww.

TimeOut
LONDON

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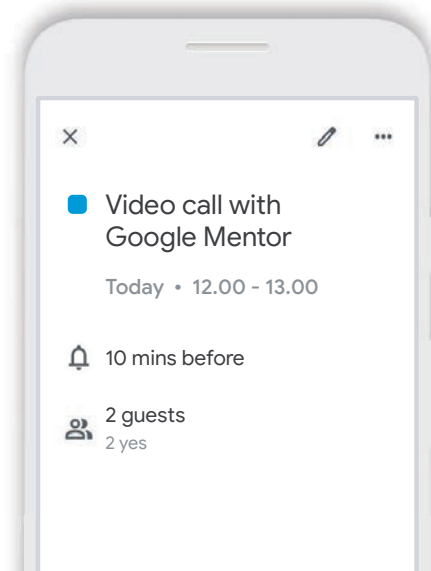


Mahdis Moghadam, owner of Piacere restaurant, London

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City life

Edited by Isabelle Aron
@timeoutlondon



How communities thrived this year

Locals have always come together on Ridley Road, but throughout this year, Londoners have shown the true power of supporting each other on this Dalston street and beyond

WHETHER IT'S WALKING the same local park loop you do every day or getting hooked on fancy pastries from the bakery down the road, Londoners have been getting to know their local areas in intimate detail in 2020. In some ways, our worlds have become smaller, and as a result, something else happened too. Communities across the city have come together to properly support each other. Mutual aid groups have grown into community-run food banks, people have ditched big supermarkets to support indie shops and, against all odds, Londoners have even befriended their neighbours.

That kind of community spirit has always been found on Ridley Road in Dalston, but it

has grown stronger this year. This photo (above) shows local seamstress Elvine Ohlala, wearing clothes she made with material from the market. The image is part of 'Ridley Road Stories', an outdoor exhibition by artist collective Future Hackney. The group's founder, Don Travis, grew up in the area and wanted to document the road's community. 'Ridley Road is an iconic public space. There are no Café Neros, no Costas: it's completely independent,' she explains. 'It's a social space that caters for everybody. It has such a diverse range of cultures, particularly African and Caribbean. I think that is London's essence – a place that welcomes people from everywhere. We need to retain that and to document it.'

Ridley Road's sense of community has become increasingly important in this Very Weird Year. 'It's a space that's become more relevant since Covid,' says Travis. 'People have said to me that it's a space where they feel safe and can meet people from their own communities.' During the pandemic, Ridley Road locals have come together to support each other. 'There's a guy called Abraham who's run a food stall there for years. Throughout Covid, they've had families come to them that can't afford food, and they've given them food baskets,' says Travis. 'To me, that is community. You won't get that in Sainsbury's.' ■ Isabelle Aron
→ 'Ridley Road Stories'. The Red Cross, 92 Dalston Lane. Free.

DO- GOODERS

Four great London causes we want to highlight right now



Washed Up Cards

They say 'When I was furloughed, I started making greetings cards with plastic I found while beach-cleaning on the River Thames. I hope they spread awareness of plastic pollution.' *Flora Blathwayt, founder*

Why we love it Washed Up Cards is helping to clean up the city with cute stationery that proves you *can* make treasure out of trash.

How to help Buy the cards on Etsy or join a beach clean-up event.
→ @washedupcards

Fat Macy's

They say 'We get Londoners out of temporary accommodation and into their own homes, through the power of food.'

Meg Doherty, founder

Why we love it This catering company is a social enterprise that offers training to help people earn money for a rental deposit.

How to help Buy a Fat Macy's hamper.
→ www.fatmacys.org



Spitalfields City Farm

They say 'We're creating opportunities for senior citizens to engage with nature.'

Emma Petridge, education coordinator

Why we love it The farm's campaign tackles loneliness in older

Londoners, helping them get outdoors.

How to help Donate via TheBigGive. Pledges made before December 8 will be doubled.

→ www.spitalfieldscityfarm.org

Munch in Marylebone

They say 'We want to empower women at the Marylebone Project with catering skills and build their confidence through volunteering.'

Ruhamah Sonson, centre team leader

Why we love it This group works with women supported by homelessness charity the Marylebone Project to develop catering skills.

How to help Need to feed a crowd? Order its food. All profits go back into the organisation.

→ munchinmarylebone.org.uk



BINNEY STREET W1

THE STREET THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Comedian *Dane Baptiste* remembers his first stand-up gig

CORKS WINE BAR on Binney Street, off Oxford Street, is where I first stood on stage and told jokes. The comedian Kojo Anim ran an amazing comedy night there. My friend was a regular and said to Kojo: 'Dane loves comedy, I want him to have a set.' Kojo was like: 'Cool, he can have five minutes in two weeks.'

The night arrived. I was trying to be so humble that I waited in the queue to go in, even though I was performing. You don't want to act like you're better than anybody because if a Black audience doesn't like you, you'll know. I got there, and everyone was there: my college friends, my university friends, my cousin's friends. I was like, 'Why is everyone here? I didn't tell anyone about it, so if I fucked it up, nobody would know!'

My set was about dogs, dating and the difference between men and women. It went well. A few weeks later, Binney Street became the first place I was paid to do comedy – £50 for a ten-minute set. It changed my life. Being paid to do something you like? My head exploded. I've been paid more to do comedy since, but that feeling will never be the same. ■

Interview by Bobby Palmer

→ Dane Baptiste's sketch show 'Bamous' airs on BBC Three soon.

THE VIEW FROM YOU

We want to see snaps of your local shops' Christmas window displays

It's been a year of cancellations but Christmas *is* coming and shops all over the city are giving their window displays a seasonal glow-up, like this cute twinkling scene at Columbia Road's In Bloom.

→ Want to share a festive window display from your neighbourhood? Use #timeoutlondon on Instagram or email hello@timeout.com



Post-lockdown longings

Short days, cold weather and banana bread fatigue. Lockdown 2 has been weird, hasn't it? Time Out staff share the one thing they can't wait to do when it lifts



Laura Richards
Digital director

'Screw my shit circulation. I want to wrap my deadened paws around a pint in the cold. Namely, at Greenwich's **Trafalgar Tavern**, with the lapping Thames to distract me.'

→ Park Row.



Kate Lloyd
Features editor

'I'll go to Hoxton boxing gym **Fighter Fit**. I'll be out of shape as I've spent Lockdown 2 eating and lounging, but then I'll feel good again. It will be horrible and I'll love it.'

→ 2-4 Rufus St.



Katie McCabe
Events editor

'It feels odd that I miss doing something alone, but I want to sink into the darkness of a **BFI Southbank** screening room. Watching a film on your own is exhilarating.'

→ Belvedere Rd.



Rose Johnstone
Global branded content editor

'There's nothing like seeing musical theatre live, plastic cup of overpriced pinot grigio in hand. I've got tickets to the popstastic **"Six"** and I can't bloody wait.'

→ Lyric Theatre.



Isabelle Aron
News and city life editor

'I miss going out for dinner: fancy bread and butter, the atmosphere, not being at my kitchen table, the lot. I can't wait to go to **Westerns Laundry**, one of my faves.'

→ 34 Drayton Park.



Eddy Frankel
Culture editor

'I'm getting a big bag of cans and going to watch a bunch of men who aren't very good at football kick a ball around in the cold at **Walthamstow FC**.'

→ Wadham Lodge Sports Ground.

SIX THE MUSICAL: JONAN PERSSON; WESTERNS LAUNDRY: PATRICIA NIKEN; WALTHAMSTOW FC: ANDRZEJ PENNINS; PARKLAND WALK AND MY FIRST PANDEMIC: ANDY PARSONS



READY-MADE SUNDAY

Sara Pascoe's Crouch End

The comedian, podcaster and north London local shares her tips for a chilled weekend in N8



The Parkland Walk

- 9am** ● **Veg out**
The Haberdashery café has loads of vegan options, from porridge to big fried breakfasts. The owner has a sausage dog and when I take my dog in they bring biscuits and water for him, which is adorable.
- 11am** ● **Take a leafy stroll**
The [southern part of] **Parkland Walk** goes from the corner of Finsbury Park all the way to Highgate station. From there you can walk through Highgate Village and go to the Heath if you want to take a longer stroll. It's a lovely, leafy part of north London.
- 2pm** ● **Screen time**
In normal times, **Crouch End Picturehouse** is fantastic. They have

five or six screens so they show all of the lesser-known films as well the big ones. And you can get a big glass of red wine from the bar and fancy popcorn in weird flavours like peppercorn and cheddar.

- 7pm** ● **Have a ruby**
I like the tofu curry at **Tootoomoo**, a Thai restaurant where they do lovely fragrant dishes. They also do incredible (and strong) cocktails.
- 8pm** ● **Get some lols**
The King's Head usually has a comedy club downstairs. It's a small venue but there's a fantastic atmosphere. It's one of the places where I first did comedy, so I have a fondness for it. ■

WORD ON THE STREET

The most ridiculous things we've overheard in London this week

'Don't you think the concept of putting your bins out is weird?'

'Drink that, it will put some hair on your nipples.'

'You don't need to wash flannels, they wash themselves.'

'I'll drink anything that's wet.'

'Highgate has actually become more alive in lockdown. It was dead before.'

'Apparently it's illegal to suspiciously handle a fish.'

'I'd love to marry a Tarquin.'

'I thought S&M meant sex and magic.'

'I can't wait to get my lips around one of Santa's yumnuts.'

'That fart is well sulphur.'

'Her teeth terrify me.'



LONDON MAKERS

Struggling to make sense of this year? East London-based illustrator **Jenni Sparks's** *My First Pandemic* zine might help. It's filled with witty illustrations from her quarantine diary *and* it comes with a free '2020 Can Fuck Off' sticker.

→ *My First Pandemic* zine. £8. www.jennisparks.com

Overheard something weird? Tweet us #wordonthestreet @timeoutlondon

Edited by James Manning
timeout.com/travel @timeouteverywhere



YOUR WORLD ACCORDING TO TIME OUT

The best stories from our editors around the globe



NYC's subway is getting a celebrity soundtrack

USA

Come 2021, there will be new voices telling NYC's straphangers to stand clear of the closing doors. The MTA (New York's equivalent of TfL) and Instagrammer @NewYorkNico are tracking down iconic New Yorkers to record announcements for the subway and bus networks. Nico's wishlist includes Robert De Niro, Jerry Seinfeld and Rosie Perez,

while his followers have suggested Lady Gaga, Sarah Jessica Parker, the Wu-Tang Clan and Larry David. Local legends and unsung heroes could also qualify for the *pro bono* gig. Seriously, someone at London's transport network needs to get Stephen Fry, David Attenborough and Michaela Coel on the blower. *Shaye Weaver, Time Out New York* → www.instagram.com/newyorknico

WORLDWIDE

London is officially really good

This year hasn't put the best spin on city life, but before you pack up and move to darkest Berkshire, check out the latest annual best cities report by Resonance Consultancy. Ranking factors as varied as weather, diversity and number of parks, it ranked the world's top 100 cities to live. And who's that at number one? Only bloody London, taking the top spot for the fifth year running, with New York and Paris trailing behind. See, you moved here for a reason. *James Manning* → www.bestcities.org



LARRY DAVID: S. BUMLEY/SHUTTERSTOCK; ROSIE PEREZ: LEVY RADIN/SHUTTERSTOCK; BENCH: OBJECT STUDIO; AIRPORT: CHANGE EXPERIENCE STUDIO; ARCADE: MERRIMENT CAFE BY LISAKING; PHOTO BY NICOLE REED

Get the latest from cities worldwide at [timeout.com/news](https://www.timeout.com/news)

NETHERLANDS
Someone finally invented a portable social-distancing bench

Damp grass is a real downside of park meets during Lockdown 2.0. So kudos to Amsterdam design firm Object Studio, which has come up with the CoronaCrisisKruk: a nifty little portable bench with a handle that's designed to help you socialise outdoors in a safely distanced way. You can order a customised version online, with profits going to Doctors Without Borders. That's Christmas sorted, then. *Huw Oliver*
 → www.object-studio.com/coronacrisiskruk



SINGAPORE
The world's greatest airport is now also a glampsite

A night at the airport usually means a flight delay or a long layover. But given Singapore's travel restrictions, an overnight stay at Changi Airport (regularly named the world's best) is an appealing way to scratch the old wanderlust. From now until January, Singaporeans can book a luxe tent pitched inside the Jewel Changi airport mall, either surrounded by an artificial jungle or with a view of the world's biggest indoor waterfall. Beats kipping across a couple of lounge seats with your carry-on as a pillow. *Fabian Loo, Time Out Singapore*
 → www.changiairport.com



PORTUGAL
Porto has a thing for terrifying bridges

Last month, the world's longest suspension footbridge opened in Arouca, just outside Porto. It runs for a third of a mile over a vertiginous river canyon... oh, and it's see-through. Should be enough to draw in the adrenaline junkies, right? But now the Porto city region has announced a similar but *even longer* bridge, spanning the River Douro in the Torre de Moncorvo district. You can check out the plans online. Though if you have a fear of heights, maybe give this one a swerve. *JM*
 → www.ponte516arouca.com. www.cm-moncorvo.pt



AUSTRALIA
Melbourne's new 'arcade' is a thing of beauty

Melbourne has lots of shopping arcades. Melbourne has lots of street art. Now a new shopping precinct is finally combining the two. West Side Place is part retail space, part public art gallery, with large-scale, immersive installations from leading Australian artists. That includes Reko Rennie's ginormous mural honouring the Kamilaroi people, Adnate's massive portraits paying tribute to Indigenous peoples around the world and one of Rone's signature artistically dilapidated rooms. They'll be on show for six months before the stores move in. Seriously, why can't all shopping centres be this cool? *Nicola Dowse, Time Out Melbourne*

London's secret wonders

Use your winter of walks to rediscover your city. *Kate Lloyd* and *Huw Oliver* share a guide to London's weirdest, oldest and most magical bits

Outstandingly tranquil

Chill spots you've probably not discovered yet

1 The giraffes

Did you know that if you head along London Zoo's perimeter path in Regent's Park you can see the giraffes for free? Free giraffes, everybody! Peek through gaps in the hedge to catch forbidden glimpses of them flaunting their necks and chomping on leaves, you big perv.

→ Regent's Park.

2 The secret beach by Millennium Bridge

There's a lot of talk about seeing the London skyline from very high up, but what about seeing

it from very low down? Edgy. Cool. So *you*, right? In that case you should probably know that when the tide is out, the river Thames shrinks, revealing strips of sandy beach running alongside the South Bank and under the Millennium Bridge. From there you can gaze up at the centre of London like you're a tiny pathetic mouse.

→ Thames Embankment, SE1.

3 The Wimbledon windmill

All it takes is a few minutes' walk on to Wimbledon Common to feel like you're interrailing around Europe with a load of 18-year-old Australians. That's thanks to a twee black-and-white windmill that's been in the park since 1816 and that looks ever so Dutch. It's got a museum inside but you don't care about that. Go take your Instagrams and begone.

→ Windmill Rd, W19.



ANDY PARSONS



MAKE A DAY OF IT

St Dunstan-in-the-East

Practically in the shadow of the WalkieTalkie and next to a Premier Inn, you'll find a peaceful, ancient place that just doesn't seem to fit in... Since it was bombed-out during the war, the picturesque ruins of medieval church St Dunstan-in-the-East have been overrun by nature, creating an idyllic spot in the City's most business area. Leaves and vines now cling to the Grade I-listed stone arches. Spend a morning reading a book here – we recommend something set in London in WWII, like **'The Night Watch'** or **'The End of the Affair'** – before popping across Tower Bridge for a takeaway mulled wine from **The Vault 1894** (SE1 2UP).

→ St Dunstan's Hill, EC3R 5DD.



St Dunstan-in-the-East

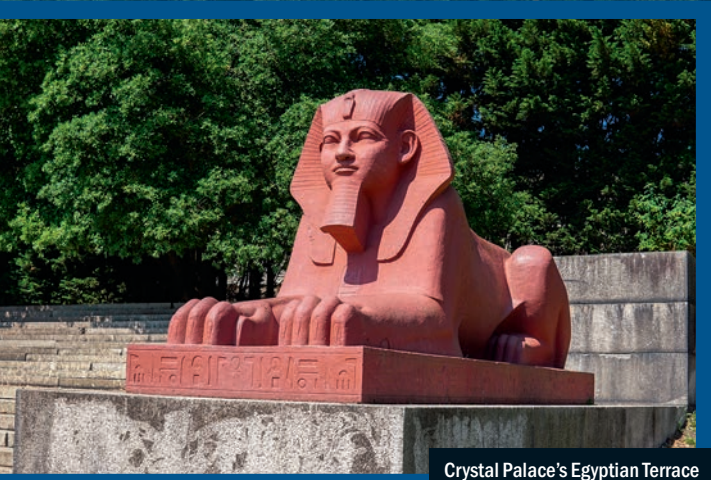
4 Crystal Palace's Egyptian Terrace

Sure, Crystal Palace's wonky dinosaurs are cool but they're also attention hogs: 'Oh waw, my body's not anatomically correct: come laugh at me!' Shut up, dino. True stans of the park will tell you the best bit is at the other end, where you'll find six sphinxes guarding a grand staircase to nowhere. They're the remains of the original Crystal Palace, which burned down in 1936 and they are eerie af.

→ Upper Terrace, Crystal Palace Parade, SE19.

5 Severndroog Castle

Its name sounds like something out of Redwall and it kind of looks that way too: a triangular gothic folly, surrounded by woodland, at the top of Shooter's Hill above Woolwich. It was



Crystal Palace's Egyptian Terrace

built in the eighteenth century by a grieving widow as a tribute to her later husband's greatest escapade: destroying a band of pirates in their Indian fortress of Suvarnadurg (rendered in English as 'Severndroog'). Nowadays, it's a great excuse to do a hill walk.

→ Castle Wood, SE18.

6 Oliver Cromwell's secret island

Wander down the river in Kew, past Legends Boxing Club and The Greyhound pub and you'll come across an island. This wooded spot is rumoured to be a place where Oliver Cromwell once took refuge via a secret tunnel from the riverbank. There's not much fact to back that yarn up. But that doesn't take away from how magical this little lump looks.

→ Kew Bridge.

7 The Spriggan

Finsbury's Parkland Walk was nice to walk down even before the Spriggran arrived. This disused railway track is overgrown with ivy and is very pretty. Then an arts officer decided to turn it into a sculpture walk and commissioned just one artwork – a fairybodyguard crawling out of the wall by Crouch End Station – before they gave up.

→ Florence Rd, N4 3EY.

8 King Henry's Mound

Okay, so let's say you're the king of England and you're

getting your wife executed for treason. What do you get up to when the beheading happens? Quick bev? Trip to Ye Olde Nando's? Apparently, King Henry VIII stood at this spot in Pembroke Lodge Gardens to watch a rocket fired from the Tower of London to let him know the deed was done. Fair play. It remains one of the best spots in the city for seeing panoramic views of the skyline.

→ Queen's Rd, TW10 5HX.

9 Highbury RiverWalk

Duck down a snick by busy Canonbury Road and you'll suddenly land at a riverside so tranquil it feels like 'The Animals of Farthing Wood'. This 2.5km nature path has been around since the seventeenth century; that's when the New River was created: a canal that doubled the water supply to a city that faced major shortages.

→ 52 Canonbury Rd, N1 2HS.



The Wimbledon windmill



Severndroog Castle



EXPERT'S PICK

Lordship Lane's wine palm

'In the centre of the mini-roundabout that connects Lordship Lane to East Dulwich Road there is a magnificent *jubaea chilensis*, otherwise known as a Chilean wine palm (the sap can be turned into a type of wine). These palms are endangered in their natural habitat, a small area in central Chile, and are rarely seen in the UK. But despite being surrounded by cars, this one is thriving. I love it!'

Wes Shaw, head of horticulture at the Horniman

In plain sight

Quirks of London's streets, parks and landmarks

1 Lombard St's old signs

Imagine the pressure. In fact, imagine the freedom. 'Logos' aren't a thing yet, and you've got to come up with an image to front your business on London's banking street. There were once 138 signs here. Only four remain: a grasshopper, an anchor, a cat and a crown.

→ Lombard St, EC3V 9LJ.

2 Pickering Place

Back in 1842, Texas was a fledgling republic taken seriously enough for Britain to let it open a full-on embassy off St James's Street. It was pretty hard to find, mind. Today, you'll spot a sign commemorating the site in Pickering Place, also the spot where London's last duel took place. Bring your Beyblades along and continue the tradition.

→ Pickering Place, SW1A 1EA.

3 Stretcher railings

From afar, they look a bit like, y'know, some pretty conventional railings. Your steel bars. Your mesh. Decent job there. But the fencing around several estates in Peckham, Brixton, Oval and Deptford were originally stretchers used to carry wounded during the Blitz. You'll can spot them by the kinks in the frame, which served as feet to rest them on.

→ Multiple locations.

4 Fake houses near Hyde Park

Tall, graceful and faced with white stucco, they may make look like any other posh London townhouses – but two buildings on upmarket terrace Leinster Gardens are, in fact, impostors: five-foot-thick façades with no agas or 'cinema rooms' behind them at all. When the first Underground line was dug, the houses were demolished to allow smoke from trains out. The District and Circle lines still use the tracks.

→ 23 and 24 Leinster Gardens, W2 3BH.



EXPERT'S PICK

Aerials on the Admiralty

'On a roof in Whitehall is a network of short-wave radio aerials used for communications by the government department which runs the Royal Navy. These little-noticed aerials have been in place for decades, probably since the Cold War.'

Dr Elizabeth Bruton, a curator at the Science Museum

5 Bits of Old London Bridge

Chances are you've perched in one of the two stone alcoves in Vicky Park at some point or another, giving little thought as to how they got there. That would be totally fair enough. But it is weird to think they once stood on the old London Bridge (the one that kept 'falling down'), before they were plonked in east London around 150 years ago for Victorian goths to simply hang and chill and look a bit dejected in.

→ Victoria Park, E9.

MAKE A DAY OF IT

The smallest police station in the UK

Stealthily secreted inside the base of a street light, this is Britain's smallest police station, built before WWII so the Met could keep an eye on troublemaking protesters in Trafalgar Square. Given the obvious Tardis associations, it's tempting to imagine it's perception-smashingly massive on the inside. In reality, it's just one very small room (now literally a broom cupboard), only ever intended to hold a single police officer.

Case of the hunger pangs? Grab a vegan cake and Greek coffee from **Black Box** (WC2H 7JA), just around the corner, or if you're after something heftier, try the sizzling meat dishes at **Café TPT** (W1D 6PN). Once you're home, dig into Dorian Lynskey's epic history of the protest song, **'33 Revolutions Per Minute'**.

→ Trafalgar Square, WC1N 5NU.



Police station, Trafalgar Square

Wisdom of the ancients

Really, really, really, really, really, really old stuff

1 The fossils at St Paul's Cathedral

Don't think you have to run off to the Jurassic Coast whenever you've got a thirst for palaeontology. London's paved streets are actually home to a host of preserved prehistoric creatures. Take the steps at the main entrance to St Paul's Cathedral. Trapped in the polished flagstones, right by the door, you'll find ancient cephalopods.

→ St Paul's Churchyard, EC4M 8AD.

2 The site of London's first coffee house

Back in the 1650s the only way to get a caffeine hit in London was with a trip to a little nook behind Leadenhall Market. There you'd find London's OG coffee house, selling sweet, sweet juice made from beans imported from Turkey. Find the plaque marking the spot and nail a thermos of filter to pay tribute to our most buzzing ancestors.

→ St Michael's Alley, EC3V 9DS.

3 The London Stone

Buried away on the side of a building on Cannon Street you'll find a big lump of rock that a) is very old, and b) apparently has occult significance. Believed to have been in the city since 1100, the London Stone was once thought

to be a 'palladium' – an object protecting the city's wellbeing. It's doing a bit of a shit job at the moment if that's the case.

→ 111 Cannon St. EC4N 5AR.

4 The tomb of the unknown London girl

The bottom of a skyscraper might not be the first spot you'd look for a Roman burial ground, but that's where you'll find the tomb of a teenager who died between AD 350 and 400. Her body was found when an IRA bomb exploded on St Mary Axe in 1992 and reburied in a shiny box when the Gherkin was built.

→ 30 St Mary Axe, EC3A 8BF.

5 Druidic mounds

Fancy vibing with our Celtic ancestors? Well, rumour has it there are four druidic mounds

in town: Tothill in Westminster, the White Mound at the Tower of London, Parliament Hill on Hampstead Heath and Penton in Pentonville. Crawl these humps and think about what London could have been like if the Romans hadn't invaded. (Probably quite bad, tbh.)

→ Multiple locations.

6 A very old statue

One place you're probably not expecting to see an ancient artefact is just around the corner from a Victoria's Secret. But that's where you'll find the lion goddess Sekhmet, dating from 1320 BC. The Ancient Egyptian knick-knack sits perched above Sotheby's. In the 1800s its buyer never collected it and now it's the auction house's mascot. Cute rich people larks!

→ 34-35 New Bond St, W1A 2AA.

MAKE A DAY OF IT

Roman walls

If there's one thing that really got Romans off, it was building walls. When those lads weren't fighting Asterix, they were encircling cities in brick. Londinium was no exception. You're probably aware that back in AD 200 the original boundaries of this city were marked and protected by 85,000 tons of Kentish ragstone but did you know you can still see bits of that big ol' wall now? In fact, you can walk a 3.5km route from Tower Hill to Barbican (via Aldgate and Bishopsgate) to view its remains dotted through the City. And if you do decide to do that, can we recommend a few stop-offs? **Black Sheep Coffee** (EC3R 8DR) for a jolt of caffeine to power you through your stroll, **Birley Sandwiches** (EC2M 1JJ) to pick up a snack to eat at the finish line: some Roman fort ruins at 3 Noble Street.

→ Multiple locations. Search for 'London Wall Walk' and you'll find a Google Map of them all.

London's Roman wall



St Michael's Alley (site of London's first coffee house)



MAKE A DAY OF IT

'The Cathedral of Sewage'

You can understand why Joseph Balzagette might have been a little shitted off. He was an urban-planning god, but almost all his works were out of sight. (They were sewers.) So when he did get to design anything above ground, he ran properly wild. In an otherwise not-that-scenic patch of Bromley-by-Bow, the still-functioning Abbey Mills Pumping Station is his masterpiece. It's ridiculously ornate and topped with a grand cupola that makes you think of St Petersburg. See it on the east London section of the Capital Ring Walk, which runs right past. **The Nunnery Gallery's** café (181 Bow Rd, E3 2SJ) does decent flat whites, and if it's more like dinner time, order a kebab from **Sultan Sofrasi** (73 Parnell Rd, E3 2RU). When you get in, whack on **'Batman Begins'**: the Arkham Asylum scene should feel familiar. → Abbey Mills Pumping Station, E15 2RW.



EXPERT'S PICK

London's whaling secrets

'In Greenwich, there are the remains of the wharves where whaling ships would come back from the Arctic and offload. At low tide around these areas you can sometimes see fragments of whale bones in the mud of the foreshore. In Barnet, there is a hidden example of a whalebone arch – the lower jawbones of a huge blue whale, set into the ground to form a gateway into Whalebones Park. Most people don't even notice them!' *Richard C Sabin, principal curator, mammals at the Natural History Museum*



Abbey Mills Pumping Station

Weird and dark

Grim stuff, gross stuff and a lot of graveyards to be honest

1 Hyde Park Dog Cemetery

Some died of gluttony, others fell beneath the wheels. A certain Balu was even poisoned. This fenced-off Victorian canine graveyard in the back garden of the park's Victoria Lodge brims with sorry tales. They hadn't quite nailed dog names back then – see 'Scum', 'Freeky' and 'King of Pussies'. → Hyde Park, W2 2NB.

2 Bunhill Fields

Ever thought that the City practically stinks of death and decay? Could be all the musty old bankers – or maybe the ancient

Bunhill burial ground. Originally named 'bone hill' after thousands of skeletons were transferred here from the charnel house of old St Paul's in the sixteenth century, this eerie cemetery near Old Street may have been used as a plague pit too. Look out for William Blake. → 38 City Rd, EC1Y 2BG.

3 St George's Nature Study Museum

'A temple of nature in the least romantic centre of the metropolis' – that's how the former guardians of this building in Shadwell described the mini-museum it once housed. Children, unused to seeing wildlife, would come here to goggle at newts. The boarded-up structure is now covered in wire, bent into Biblical snippets; unclear why, exactly. → 14 Cannon Street Rd, E1 0BH.

4 The Hardy Tree

As though ghosts are rising from beneath the surface of the earth, overlapping headstones encircle an ash tree in the yard of St Pancras Old Church. Expanding nineteenth-century railway lines meant that remains from a swathe of the graveyard had to be exhumed. Tasked with relocating the stones? Architect's assistant Thomas Hardy. → Saint Pancras Gardens, NW1 0PS.

5 London's biggest potted plant

Your cheeseplant has nothing on Highgate Cemetery's comically enormous cedar of Lebanon. A huge circle of mausoleums creates the impression of a pot enclosing this tree, which predates the rest of the graveyard by a century. ■ → Highgate Cemetery, N6 6PJ.

WALL: ANDY PARSONS; COFFEE HOUSE: NIS BREHERTON/ALAMY; JACK TAYLOR/GETTY

★

TEST-DRIVING DIGITAL CHRISTMAS

In 2020, you could easily have all your festive fun at home via a computer screen. But should you? *Andrzej Lukowski* finds out what works and what doesn't. Illustration *Dan Evans*

The virtual office Christmas party

Of all the things definitely not happening this Christmas, the traditional office Christmas party is the one definitely not happening the most. However, there would now appear to be an almost endless number of Zoom-based digital alternatives. I rope Phil our Film editor into a guided chocolate-tasting courtesy of Notting Hill chocolatier **Melt** (£45 per person, www.meltchocolates.com). You get nine slabs of chocolate delivered, then a gloriously sardonic 45-minute masterclass from company CEO Andrew Nason, who frames the story of chocolate as a sort of tragic descent from Aztec Eden to Swiss milk-chocolate hell. These sessions have been doing a



brisk trade: as Nason points out, there is something a little depressing – not to mention impractical – about a bunch of workmates just getting tanked up over Zoom, so many companies have been opting for something more wholesome.

How Christmassy is it? It's more like a bonding session than a party. But it's all very pleasant, and

I have no regrets the next day, which is a significant step up on every actual Time Out Christmas shindig.

The Christmas craft kits

There is a 100 percent accurate argument that says I could have just ordered a pre-made wreath and mince pies. But a key point of Christmas 2020 is that we are all going to have a horrifying amount of time on our hands. So kits it is. Exmouth

Market's **Botanique Workshop** (from £40, botaniqueworkshop.com) does a wreath-making set that requires relatively little skill, but quite a lot of time and patience: it's mindful, baby. But we make a genuinely gorgeous-looking wreath. Hurrah! And the mince-pie kit sold by **Poster Bakes** (£12, posterbakes.com) is ultra-unintimidating (the instructions suggest using a wine bottle if you don't have a rolling pin), makes a very fancy pie and raises money for a good cause, with all profits going to The Connection at St Martin's. **How Christmassy is it?** Spending five hours assembling a wreath certainly reminds you that Christmas is around the corner, yes.

The digital pantomime

The London pantomime season, such as it is, will limp on, but it's limited in scale and won't be for all. So why not try a digital alternative? Comedy troupe **Sleeping Trees** (£5, www.sleepingtrees.co.uk) have become a fringe fixture at Theatre 503 and BAC with their zany DIY pantos. This year they've gone digital with the pre-recorded 'The Legend of Moby Dick Whittington', an inspired hour-long mash-up of 'Dick Whittington' and 'Moby Dick'. **How Christmassy is it?** It's really good fun – but without any audience or interaction it feels more like a sketch show than a panto.





Plan more festive fun at [timeout.com/christmas](https://www.timeout.com/christmas)

Minecraft and dinosaurs for ten minutes, which is more substantial than the usual grotto bants.

How Christmassy is it? If you believe in Santa, very. Obviously you don't get a present, but it's worth remembering that all grotto presents are terrible anyway.

The booze, delivered

Mulled wine is one of those things I've always had down as a bit of a faff, but **Shop Cuvée** (£16.99, www.shopcuvée.com) sends me a cracking, punchy bottle that requires zero faffing around with bits: just heat until it's hot enough, and boom! East London brewery **Signature Brew** (£25, www.signaturebrew.co.uk) is doing something called a Pub in a Box – it's basically some beers, but they're very nice beers, and it comes with an endearingly crappily photographed music quiz to do on Zoom.

How Christmassy is it? I'd probably file this all under 'winter drinks' rather than say it embodies the magic of Christmas per se.

The Christmas lunch DIY box

To this Pole, it would seem that a lot of the truisms about Christmas Day being stressful stem from the English insistence on cooking an enormous, esoteric kind of poultry for lunch, for no obvious symbolic or religious reason. But can the new generation of meal kits take the stress out of lunch? The short answer is 'yes'. Jun Tanaka's Fitzrovia restaurant **The Ninth** (£100 for two, www.theninthlondon.com) does a fine example, with a turkey ballotine forming the heart of a box that puts a classy spin on the trad lunch, eg belle de fontenay potatoes instead of roasties. It would be a slight exaggeration to call it stress-free but I fundamentally cook a damn good Christmas dinner in about an hour. If you don't have a masochistic desire to pit yourself against a two-stone goose, it's a terrific shout.

How Christmassy is it? If you subscribe to the idea Christmas lunch is 'supposed' to be hard then it's not very Christmassy at all – and that's a good thing.

THE WINNERS

Fun as it all is, a lot of this stuff has some pretty heavy 'let's make the best of this horrible year' vibes. However, the tree and the lunch box feel like actual game-changers – God bless them, every one! ■

The tree in the post

Even knowing that London-based **Pines and Needles** (www.pinesandneedles.com) is going to deliver me a decorated tree doesn't prepare me for the gloriousness of the reality. The company does everything, and the tree is about a trillion times classier than the manky old artificial number that lurks threateningly in my garage. Yeah, it's a touch spenny (about £200 for a six-footer), but given I work in the same room as the tree and am now essentially flat-bound until I can get that sweet, sweet Oxford vaccine into my veins, I would call it a sensational investment.

A jolly Scottish Saint Nick duly dials in



How Christmassy is it? This is the most Christmassy my flat has ever looked, and probably ever will.

A Zoom call from Santa

I'm actually unclear what Tier 2 restrictions mean for grottos. But clearly there's going to be no sitting on Santa's lap (if that sort of thing is still allowed in 2020, idk). However, there is now a burgeoning trade in Zoom calls from Father Christmas. I plump for **Underbelly's Santa at Home** (£42 for up to six, www.santaathomeofficial.com), which raises money for charities, and a jolly Scottish Saint Nick duly dials in to chat with my wide-eyed two-year-old and five-year-old about

A SPOTTER'S GUIDE TO

London croissants



Aux Pains de Papy

For my money, London's greatest croissant. Exceptional balance between crispy outer layer and velvet-soft interior. Three thumbs up. *Joseph Mackertich*
→ 279 Gray's Inn Rd, WC1X 8QF.

This Christmas won't come with as many parties, but you still deserve the hangover breakfasts. Photography *Andy Parsons*



Caravan

Pastry art. Masterpieces of flour. More width than some of the others on this list, and a darn sight more crunchy, but certainly worth a look. *Kate Lloyd*
→ Multiple venues.



The Dusty Knuckle

Is there a fluffier croissant in London than Dusty Knuckle's? I doubt it. The air pockets in these babies are major. But this isn't a case of size over substance. *KL*
→ Abbot St Car Park, E8 3DP.



Flor

They might be petite, but these little guys pack a punch: they're so rich with butter they're almost juicy. Decent flake and colour on them too. *KL*
→ 1 Bedale St, SE1 9AL.



Jolene

This bakery mills its own flour on site, giving an earthiness to its pastries. Break them apart and you'll find a delicate spider's web of pastry layers. *Alexandra Sims*
→ 21 Newington Green, N16 9PU.



Little Bread Pedlar

Oh boy: LBP's croissants are fluffy, flaky, buttery and soft. Pillowy soft, in fact. Like sinking your teeth into a big, buttery ball of cotton wool. *Alex Plim*
→ Unit 4-6 Spa Business Park, SE16 3FJ.



Pophams

Flakes like a bastard, tastes sweet and creamy. However, I cry a little when the bakery burns them slightly, which does happen occasionally. Still brilliant. *Caroline McGinn*
→ Multiple venues.



Pret

Sure, this might seem like a rogue choice but Pret's offering is not without its charms. A bit raw for most folk? Maybe. But some people are into that. Perverts. ■ *KL*
→ Multiple venues.

Get more dough at [timeout.com/bakeries](https://www.timeout.com/bakeries)



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point**

give homeless
young people
a future

**No home.
And no one
to turn to.**

Will you help us be there for young people at risk?



£20

**Please give £20
this Christmas
to help give a
young person
a hot meal and a
safe place to sleep**

Homeless at just 16, Jen* would walk the dangerous streets at night, trying to snatch a few minutes sleep in doorways, but often too scared to close her eyes. Jen's nightmare ended when she found safety and a chance to turn her life around with a room at Centrepoin**t**.

After a year of crisis, demand for our services has never been greater. Yet it's become harder than ever to raise the funds we need. This Christmas, we must be there to keep young people like Jen safe from harm. We cannot fail them now. But we need your help.

Your gift could be the turning point for another homeless young person.

CALL: 0800 055 79 47
VISIT: [centrepoint**.org.uk/help](https://www.centrepoint.org.uk/help)**

*We use models and change the names of the young people we work with to protect their identity; however all stories are true and as told by the young person. © Centrepoin**t** 2020. Centrepoin**t** Soho, operating as Centrepoin**t**, is a charity registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales under number 292411 whose registered office is at Central House, 25 Camperdown Street, London, E1 8DZ and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under number 01929421.

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LONDON FOR LESS

Food, drink, screenings, pop-ups: don't miss our exclusive offers and discounts

Supper

What is it? £15 to spend on deliveries from the best restaurants in London for £1.

Why buy? How often do you get a discounted dinner from the likes of Nobu, Roka, Fortnum & Mason, Harrods Food Halls, Hakkasan, Hide and Chotto Matte? The answer: very rarely. Take advantage of this one while you've got the chance.

Wait, how much? Just a quid for £15 credit. Tasty!

→ www.timeout.com/supper



Good Hotel

What is it? A night's bed and breakfast for two in this floating London hotel, with loads of extras.

Why buy? It's a ridiculously good deal. As well as the stay, you get two Emirates Cable Car tickets, 10 percent off alcohol in The Living Room and late check-out. And it's redeemable until September 2021.

Wait, how much? This is the best bit – it's only £79 for both of you: that's a ludicrous 70 percent off.

→ www.timeout.com/goodhotel

'Murder on the Underground Express'

What is it? A virtual murder mystery that you can play solo or with your pals.

Why buy? To solve the case, of course. Millionaire Langdon Park has been brutally murdered on the inaugural journey of The Express. Now you're called in (via Zoom) to catch the killer.

Wait, how much? At half the regular price, it's just a fiver per ticket.

→ www.timeout.com/murderexpress

Inamo Hot Stone Special

What is it? The latest offering from this snazzy Soho eatery. You'll get a tapas or sushi dish, a hot-stone main, dessert and a glass of sparkling brut.

Why buy? Because everyone (secretly) loves the novelty of having dinner served on a sizzling hot stone, even if they won't admit it (plus it's great for the 'gram). And it's valid until March 31 2021.

Wait, how much? £24.95. Which is more than 50 percent off, fyi.

→ www.timeout.com/inamohotstone

Bucket Race

What is it? A live and interactive online scavenger hunt that you can do from the comfort of your home.

Why buy? For some good old-fashioned fun combined with modern tech. Through the magic of the internet, you and your mates can compete at some thrilling indoor challenges (like building a sofa fort, aka, the ultimate fun).

Wait, how much? £5 for one ticket, £7.50 for two or £10 for three.

→ www.timeout.com/bucketrace

Delivery deals and online offers to get you through lockdown. Search 'Time Out offers'

Things to do in London

Edited by Katie McCabe and Alexandra Sims
timeout.com/thingstodo @timeoutlondon



JEFF EDEN/RBG KEW

Kew Gardens' Christmas trail is the flashing neon light at the end of the long, dark tunnel we call 2020. Treat your weary lockdown eyes to its laser-filled finale reflected in the Palm House Pond. **Turn to p29 for more.**

Things to Do

Art to see this weekend

C 'Artemisia'

Revenge is a dish best served cold, as the ancient proverb goes, and Baroque superstar Artemisia Gentileschi serves it near freezing, over and over again. Delicious. Her paintings stand up against the greats of her era, full of violence, anger, ambition and skill.

→ National Gallery. Until Jan 24 2021. £20, booking essential.

C Bruce Nauman

Obscene, violent, vulgar, intense and somehow totally mundane: American artist Bruce Nauman's art is a horrifying exploration of life's absurdity. Since the 1960s, he's been doing simple, repetitive, ridiculous things with videos, installations and neons. It's so easy to feel like 2020, with its isolation and boredom and creeping authoritarianism, is an outlier. But Nauman's art is saying don't worry, life has always been this strange, and it always will be.

→ Tate Modern. Until Feb 21 2021. £13, booking essential.

C Chiharu Shiota

Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota creates giant installations out of hanging threads, leaving you to encounter a dreamy world of fabric and colour. This beautiful installation features ships made of strings suspended from the ceiling – viewing it is like stumbling on to some ultra-psychedelic sky marina.

→ König London. Until Dec 19. Free, by appointment.

C Edmund de Waal

It stings the heart, this installation by Edmund de Waal. The ceramicist and author has lined the walls of his room within a room in the British Museum with books by writers in exile. It's shelf after shelf of stories written by people far from home, thinking of home, and it's brutally affecting.

→ British Museum. Until Jan 12 2021. Free, booking essential.

N Trulee Hall

Here are just a few things you'll find at Trulee Hall's multimedia fun house of the 'erotic grotesque': glory holes, discordant music, nightmarish serpents and a psychosexual opera exploring gender and sexuality. It's a mix of video, sculpture and painting and it's all as weird as can be.

→ Zabłudowicz Collection. Until Mar 14 2021. Free, booking essential.

We cracked The Crystal Maze without leaving the house

▶ The Crystal Maze: Dome from Home

No matter how much we've wished it wasn't the case this year, there are certain things that just don't translate to the virtual world. Gigs aren't the same if you're not surrounded by head-banging, and no matter how much you crank up your subwoofer for the latest Boiler Room set, your bedroom will never feel like a sweaty Corsica Studios on a Saturday night.

So you'd be forgiven for thinking that creating an online version of 'The Crystal Maze Live Experience', based on the '90s TV show, would be nigh-on impossible. This is, after all, the escape game that requires bomber-jacket-clad teams to sprint through the old Trocadero on Shaftesbury Avenue, collecting crystals. But where there's a will there's always a way.

'Dome from Home' takes place on Zoom, but this is not the nightmare of squares from the video-chat fatigue days of Lockdown 1.



Once my team have dialled in, we're joined live by maze master Eldritch Musky, who introduces us to this virtual incarnation with a dose of Richard O'Brien-style sarcasm. It's this continuation of elements from the real game that really helps to shake off the reality of being sat on your sofa.

With Musky egging us on, we make our way through the classic Aztec,

Medieval, Future and Industrial zones, and solve mental, skill, physical and mystery challenges to collect virtual crystals. We throw ourselves into bizarre puzzles and treasure hunts around our flats, while keeping up the tradition of screaming unhelpful advice at our teammates through our Zoom windows. The creators have even found a way to recreate the dome of flying golden tickets that doesn't involve you having to lob old sweet wrappers into a Dyson Airblade.

We working-from-home hermits are swept up in the maze delirium quicker than you can say 'START THE FANS, PLEASE!' ■ Alexandra Sims
→ Ongoing. £15pp. www.the-crystal-maze.com

Art trails

Artists Walk

In lieu of public spaces to display their work, London's artists are turning their windows into galleries. Wisteria-covered bay windows in Finchley have been filled with watercolours, Pop art decorates a Hackney council block and ceramics peek from sashes in Crouch End. You can see the transformed houses by following one of the interactive maps on the Artists Walk website.

→ Various locations. Until Dec 14. Free. www.artistswalk.org

The Line

Just like the waterways it follows, the art lining this three-mile trail from Stratford to Greenwich ebbs and flows from view, with works disappearing each year and new installations arriving in their place.

Antony Gormley's string-theory-inspired 'Quantum Cloud', the lonely figure of Laura Ford's 'Bird Boy' and Joanna Rajkowska's huge replica of a blackbird egg are some of the sculptures set against a backdrop of reed beds and ecology parks (and the odd industrial estate). Even if you don't like art, you might spot an estuary-living seal.

→ Plan your route at www.the-line.org.



Trulee Hall

Life drawing

▶ Wild Life Drawing Online: Seals

Need a dose of calm after a fraught lockdown? You could do worse than staring into the dark, soppy eyes of a blubbery seal pup. These sketching classes have live animals as models, and this session will be virtually visiting a Cornish seal sanctuary that rescues and rehabilitates lost, abandoned and malnourished baby ones. After learning the basics of how to sketch live animals, you'll spend an hour drawing the seals from life over Zoom while sanctuary director Jana Sirova tells you all about the flubbery animals. Like most charities, the sanctuary is struggling this year, so 50 percent of your ticket will go towards caring for the pups.

→ Dec 5. £10. Book online at www.wildlifedrawing.eventcube.io

Online film festivals

▶ Together! 2020 Disability Film Festival

It's not a film's star rating that's important at this festival, but its 'D rating'. This celebration of films by Deaf/Disabled filmmakers has gone virtual in 2020. Expect a programme of animated shorts, dramas, international documentaries and multimedia performances all highlighting the lived experiences of Deaf/Disabled people around the world.

Each one has a D rating to show the participation of Disabled people in front of and behind the camera: one D for each Deaf/Disabled person involved in the making of the film.

→ Dec 3-6. Free. www.together2012.org.uk

▶ London Film Week

Not to be confused with the BFI London Film Festival, which took place earlier this year, the third edition of London Film Week is championing new and original cinematic wonders. The hybrid fest will have live screenings at

Everyman Cinema Broadgate and all the titles will be available to watch online. See UK premieres like the first Egyptian film to be awarded the Cannes Short Film Palme d'Or: 'I Am Afraid to Forget Your Face', or documentary feature 'Some Kind of Heaven', following retired Americans living off-grid in a vast retirement home in Florida.

→ Until Dec 7. Prices vary.
www.londonfilmweek.com



Tiny gig

Ⓢ The London Bridge Trio

Kings Place arts centre in King's Cross is a dab hand at socially distanced concerts. It's been putting

on tiny gigs, where musicians play to small, safely separated audiences since the summer. It's letting Londoners experience the tingle of live events again with its December programme of podcast recordings, folk festivals and orchestral concerts. It kicks off with classical outfit The London Bridge Trio who, armed with a violin, cello and piano, will put their own spin on Beethoven and Dvořák's greatest works.

→ Kings Place. Dec 6. £20.

THREE OF THE BEST

Outdoor markets



Ⓢ Brockley

Not just a block of concrete where you drop your motor, Lewisham College's car park turns into a farmers' market on Saturdays. Stock up on fresh fish, pungent cheese and attractively lumpy heritage veg.

→ Lewisham College Car Park. Every Sat 10am-2pm.



Ⓢ Maltby Street

The stalls nestled round the Ropewalk's Victorian railway arches is the place to come when you're having a Nigella moment and need high-end condiments you can't get at Tesco. The street food is pretty decent too.

→ Maltby St. Every Sat 10am-5pm and Sun 11am-4pm.



Ⓢ Stroud Green

If you've gone full cottagecore this lockdown, find your people visiting the stalls at Stroud Green School. It may look straight from a Home Counties village fête, but you'll find adventurous fare here too, like urban farmed microgreens.

→ Stroud Green School. Every Sun 10am-2.30pm.



'Do I look like I take requests?'
'Artemisia'

ARTEMISIA, SELF-PORTRAIT AS A LUTE PLAYER © WOODSWORTH AT THE MUSEUM OF ART; BROCKLEY MARKET; SCOTT CHASSEROT; MALTBY STREET; CELIA TOPPING

Seven things to get straight about homelessness in London

Want to help those experiencing homelessness but don't know where to start? We asked an expert about the misconceptions that surround the crisis



As Londoners, we're all aware of the housing crisis. It's unavoidable. But while a shocking 280,000 people are homeless in England (according to Shelter), it's an issue fraught with misconceptions. Together with HSBC UK – which recently launched its game-changing No Fixed Address Service – we're working to shine a light on homelessness as the festive season approaches.

1 Covid-19 has intensified the existing housing emergency

One of HSBC UK's key charity partners is Shelter, which provides advice and advocacy for people experiencing homelessness all across England and Wales. Shelter hub manager Connie Cullen has observed that the pandemic has not only made thousands of people newly homeless across the UK, but that it's also made some existing issues worse. 'There simply isn't enough housing available for people in London, or often the housing that does exist is unaffordable. The number of Universal Credit claims has risen to more than 3 million since March – a lot of people have lost their jobs or are experiencing the financial impacts of Covid-19 so will struggle to pay their rent in the longer term.'



2 Homelessness isn't just about sleeping rough

'I'd say that's misconception number one,' says Cullen. More than 10,000 people are said to be sleeping rough on the streets of London – but there are many people who Cullen refers to as 'the hidden homeless'. Many of these are families or young people fleeing domestic abuse who live in temporary accommodation which is often unstable and overcrowded; there are more than 62,000 households in this position. 'And because there isn't enough permanent housing, people might wait years in temporary accommodation,' she says.

3 Homelessness can affect anyone

'The housing shortage affects everyone... so homelessness can affect anyone,' explains Cullen. In the private rental sector, landlords can hand out Section 21 'no-fault' eviction notices for no reason whatsoever. These situations are relatively common and hard to fight, and finding a new place to live can prove very difficult, as tenants can be required to pay large deposits up front. 'People are often moving from home to home, trying to find roots, but often they're having to move again and again,' says Cullen.

4 People experiencing homelessness deserve equal respect

The discrimination that people experience when they are homeless can be relentless. Cullen has heard reports of rough sleepers being attacked and even urinated on. 'For children at school, it can be embarrassing for people to know that you're homeless, living in temporary accommodation.' People also often report feeling invisible – which is why it's important to show kindness to people you encounter, even if it's just striking up a quick conversation.

5 There are many barriers to escaping homelessness

It should come as no surprise that being homeless can have a severe impact on your mental and physical wellbeing, which in turn makes it harder to work and seek assistance – but there are other factors that go against people trying to find permanent housing. One of these is the lack of access to wi-fi in temporary accommodation – and another is the difficulty of opening a bank account. 'Lots of things now rely on having a bank account,' says Cullen. 'You need a bank account to be paid by your employer, you need

one to apply for and receive benefits, and you need to pay for things with a card.' HSBC UK is currently working with Shelter to deliver its No Fixed Address Service, which helps people who would otherwise struggle to get a bank account. Since launching in 2019, more than 500 people with no fixed address now have access to a bank account – and the number is growing. 'It's brilliant that this scheme is in place to allow people to open a bank account. You can build on lots of things once you've got a bank account in place,' says Cullen. To find out more about HSBC UK's No Fixed Address Service, visit www.hsbc.co.uk/no-fixed-address.

6 It's possible to end homelessness forever...

'At Shelter, we've got a radical strategy where we try to ensure that there is simply enough housing for everyone,' says Cullen. 'We need affordable, good quality, safe social homes that people can easily access and stay in for a long period. It wouldn't solve everyone's problems, but it would go a long way towards ending homelessness.' Right now, a key part of Shelter's plan is to work closely with local community organisations to help them carry out their work. One is the The Magpie Project, based in the borough of Newham, which supports families with young children in temporary accommodation.

7... and you can be a part of that

London is home to a multitude of fantastic charities, including Shelter, Centrepoint, Crisis and St Mungo's – and you can help them by donating, volunteering and participating in events. Shelter is looking for sign-ups to The Big Walk, a fundraising event which has gone virtual this year and runs from December 7 to 13. To sign up, visit thebigwalk.shelter.org.uk.



Things to Do

Big drag Christmas

Virgin's Glam AF Christmas

Hear what actually went down at the birth of Christ, find out what the Son of Gawd has been getting up to during lockdown and witness some creative reinterpretations of your favourite festive hymns at this truly bizarre and original evening of Christmas cabaret with the sacred Virgin X.

→ Phoenix Arts Club. Dec 13. From £12.

Streamed concert

Liam Gallagher: Down by the River Thames

Our Kid marks his return to live performance with this extremely weird gig broadcast in 360-degree virtual reality live from a barge travelling along the Thames. The loud-mouthed Mancunian will be joined by his full band to perform classics, fan favourites and a few surprises from his solo career and

time with Oasis. There's a catch, though – you'll need a VR headset and a download of the MelodyVR app to see him in action.

→ Dec 5. £16.50. www.liamgallagher.com

Craft work

The Sew Over It Big Christmas Sew

Things can escalate in lockdown. First, you learn that you do actually know how to re-sew a button on your shirt. Then, you're mending old clothes you'd meant to throw away, suddenly you're looking up embroidery patterns just to pass the time and before you know it you're crafting. You're a crafter. Sound like you? Join your people at the Big Christmas Sew, a Zoom class with an endgame of completing a Christmas garland for your house. Boredom has created a new you, armed with a handful of felt pom-poms.

→ Dec 2. £5. www.sewoverit.co.uk

Make Your Own Typeface

Fancy having your very own font, like your fave pop star, or your local council? Try this online workshop from London-based graphic design company Alexandra Lunn Studio,

BEHIND THE SHADE

Monét X Change



'Death Drop'

Since early November, 'RuPaul's Drag Race' star Monét X Change has been holed up in lockdown London waiting for the moment she can break out and rehearse with her fellow queens for their Dragatha Christie murder mystery 'Death Drop'. While she waits, fabulously, in performer's limbo, we catch up with her to talk about London drag and Joe Biden.

What can you tell us about 'Death Drop'?

'Think "Clue" or "Knives Out", but super-campy and with lots of energy. No shade. I love "Clue" but it's a little stuffy... "Death Drop" was really taking the best parts of those, injecting a little drag into it, a little more foundation and contour, and making it fun.'

You did a live stream for the American election recently. How did you feel when you got the news Biden was in?

'It just feels like a new dawning and a new day. It feels like people of colour and queer people, women, indigenous folk, all these people can breathe and sleep a little easier now that this maniac psycho moron is leaving the White House. Now he's saying he's not leaving... Girl, I will literally show up to the White House in six-inch stilettos and drag him out by that goddamn wig on his head if he doesn't want to go. He's leaving: ding dong, the witch is gone.'

What do you feel is different about the London drag scene?

'You guys are so irreverent. I think in New York people are super-duper PC and so worried about how they are perceived. In the UK, you guys live freely, you aren't bogged down by that. Also, in the States, everyone has a fucking broom up their ass... When people need to be called out and people do wrong things you're like "Hey, that's not cool", but for the most part, you guys let artists be artists.' ■ Katie McCabe

→ 'Death Drop' is due to run at the Garrick Theatre Dec 4-Jan 17 2021. From £20.



Hampton Court Palace ice rink

where you'll learn the traditional craft of paper-cutting, get to grips with the basics of typography and acquire the skills needed to create a totally unique typeface. When this is all over, you can unleash a new arsenal of font facts on your friends. Did you know Comic Sans was created for Microsoft in 1994 and is now hated by its inventor? Your pals are going to eat this stuff up...

→ Dec 13 and 15. £25, book via Eventbrite.

Flash garden

W Christmas at Kew

Every Christmas, Kew Gardens goes hard on its light display, littering the botanical trails with bulb-strapped tunnels and trees. It can feel a little pricy for an evening of staring at LEDs (£24.50 at peak times), but this year has seen enough darkness to last a lifetime, and we're ready to be dazzled. The focus for the 2020 installation is the new route through a fully illuminated rose garden, a laser projection at Temperate House and a 'festive classics soundtrack' for a big old light show finale reflected in the waters of Palm House Pond.

→ Kew Gardens. Dec 4-Jan 27 2021. From £19.50.



Real-life Christmas market

Q Selfridges Christmas Market

Selfridges has cooked up some pretty big plans for its comeback on December 2. To tie in with the reopening of its Oxford Street store, it will also be extending outdoors with its first-ever open-air Christmas market. Nine food trucks will pull up to Edwards Mews, round the back of Selfridges, along with fairground rides, stalls selling wreaths, Christmas trees, decorations and gifts, and, weirdly, a 'tunnel of light' – presumably with a capacity of one household bubble at a time. The market will feature food from the recently launched Tramshed Project, as well as hosting the likes of Fundi Pizza and those guys with the giant wheel of cheese.

→ Selfridges, Edwards Mews. Dec 2-31. Free entry.

Ice rinks

W Hampton Court Palace ice rink

Henry VIII was an aristocratic supervillain. One thing he left behind, though, other than his legacy as a misogynistic monster, was Hampton Court Palace. Inside, it's bursting with Tudor pomp, gilded ceilings, friezes, and a gallery with paintings by Caravaggio and Van Dyck. Even if you have little interest in touring Henry's old chambers, the grounds are worth a look, especially at this time of year, when the palace becomes a

backdrop to a 1,040-square-metre ice rink. It's pretty family-friendly (those little penguin and dolphin skate aids are available for children if you book in advance) and for rink wallflowers, there's a café curated by Miss Polly, which means big hot chocolates, fat cookies and homemade brownies.

→ Hampton Court Palace. Dec 5-Jan 17 2021. £16. £11.50 child.

S Queen's House ice rink

If you're feeling the urge to wrap your body in fairy lights and tinsel just to get a tiny morsel of *that Christmassy feeling*, get yourself to Greenwich. The borough might be famous for helping define time as we know it, but more importantly, it wears Christmas like a champ. The decorations are up in the outdoor market, sugary mulled wine is being served from cast-iron soup kettles, and over at Queen's House (Queen Henrietta's former summer villa), there's going to be a massive outdoor ice rink in the grounds of the National Maritime Museum. This year it'll be even bigger, which means more space for social distancing, and spectacular falls.

→ Queen's House. Dec 5-Jan 24 2021. £16, £8 child.



Selfridges Christmas Market

Low-key club nights

E Night Tales: Horse Meat Disco

Horse Meat Disco makes a triumphant (albeit toned-down and seated) return post-lockdown with this date at industrial-style venue Night Tales. Book with your household for some table service on the terrace, soundtracked by niche disco and retro bangers.

→ Night Tales. Dec 3. From £22.

S Hennessy Presents: Open Decks on the Beach Disco

Reckon you're an undiscovered DJ? Stick your name on the list, grab the best bits of your vinyl collection and head down to Brixton Courtyard to show off your supposed skills at this socially distanced hangout. Or just book a table to enjoy cognac kegs, cocktails and street-food snacks from Only Jerkin'.

→ Brixton Courtyard. Dec 3, 10 and 17. Free, book a table in advance.

ONE UNMISSABLE THING



Tate Lates: Night in

Watch Yorkshire brass master Emma-Jean Thackray and Global Roots founder Thristian respond to Bruce Nauman's Tate exhibition with this online stream. Don't miss Marianna Simnett's short film 'The Udder'. It'll turn you vegan for good.

→ Dec 3. Free. www.tate.org.uk

Welcome to...

THE OPTIMIST'S SECTION

Keep your glass half-full with amazing gigs, plays and exhibitions that are *bound* to happen in 2021



'Back to the Future: The Musical'

Theatre

© Andrew Lloyd-Webber's 'Cinderella'

If you've been binge-watching the latest series of 'The Crown' during lockdown, you'll recognise Emerald Fennell from her role as Prince Charles's side chick Camilla Parker Bowles, but the multi-talented actress is also an Emmy Award-winning screenwriter and director, responsible for series two of 'Killing Eve' and feature film 'Promising Young Woman'. She's set to team up with the godfather of musical theatre for this reimagining of the fairytale, starring Carrie Hope Fletcher. Let's hope this prince's marriage doesn't end in acrimonious public divorce... → Gillian Lynne Theatre. April 30 2021-Feb 13 2022. From £19.50.

N 'Hymn'

Following the success of her Almeida directorial debut 'The Writer', Blanche McIntyre returns to direct this new drama about male friendship from acclaimed playwright Lolita Chakrabarti. Starring her husband and collaborator Adrian Lester and Danny Sapani as two strangers who form a bond after meeting at a funeral, this soulful piece ruminates on what it means to be a good father or good son. → Almeida Theatre. Jan 29-Feb 27 2021. £tbc.

© Simon Amstell: 'Work in Progress'

After airing his well-received Netflix special 'Set Free' last year, British comedy's favourite neurotic tests out some new material 'for a possibly forthcoming tour' in this short run at



Stormzy

the Bridge. There are only ten dates and reduced audience capacity, so book early if you're keen for a good Amstell serving of existential angst. Like we haven't all had enough of that this year.

→ Bridge Theatre. Jan 12-23 2021. From £20.

© 'Back to the Future: The Musical'

Well this feels strangely significant: though this all-singing version of Robert Zemeckis's '80s time-travelling classic has been in the works for years and has had try-outs in Manchester, its May 2021 London start date is looking fairly promising. That's not to say 'Back to the Future: The Musical' can't or won't be pushed back. However, delays cost money and there's clearly a significant belief that things will be close to normal again by next spring. In terms of the

BACK TO THE FUTURE: SEAN LEESWORTH/BARNES; STORMZY: CHRISTIAN BERTRAND/SHUTTERSTOCK

show, well, you know what 'Back to the Future' is: '80s high-schooler Marty McFly travels back to the 1950s in Doc Brown's DeLorean and gets up to sundry delightful time-travelling antics including almost having it off with his mum. Only this time, there are big musical numbers to break the tension.

→ Adelphi Theatre. May 14-Sep 26 2021. From £19.55.

Huge gigs

📍 Haim

Haim proved themselves the most accomplished sister trio in the music biz (sorry Las Ketchup) with the release of their brilliant third album 'Women in Music Pt III' earlier this year. After some commendable live-streamed performances this summer, Danielle, Este and Alana will be playing IRL at this sure-to-be-energetic London date in June.

→ The O2. Jun 18 2021. From £30.

📍 Stormzy

After his triumphant headline performance at Glastonbury last summer (remember festivals?) and the release of his second album back in December, the young 'King of Grime' has occupied himself by beefing with various UK grime

stars while waiting for the start of his rescheduled world tour. Catch him vossi bopping at the O2 in April, unless your name is Wiley. Or Chip.

→ The O2. Apr 12-14 2021. From £37.

Exhibitions

📍 Jean Dubuffet

Twentieth-century painter Jean Dubuffet championed what he termed 'art brut', or 'raw art', eschewing traditional standards of beauty for art that 'emanates from our real life and our real moods'.

The first major UK exhibition of his work in more than 50 years, this retrospective explores his lifelong pursuit of authenticity and features rarely exhibited pieces.

→ Barbican. Feb 11-May 23 2021. £tbc.

📍 'Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser'

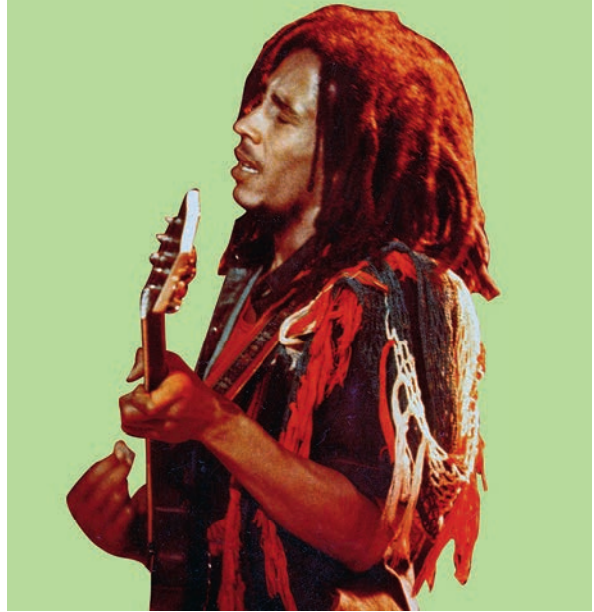
This immersive blockbuster from the V&A charts the evolution of Lewis Carroll's 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' from manuscript to global phenomenon. Fall down the rabbit hole and explore the novel's reinterpretations in art, theatre, fashion and dance, from Salvador Dalí's surrealist paintings to Christopher Wheeldon's ballet adaptation and Vivienne Westwood's Alice-inspired collection.

→ V&A. Mar 27-Dec 31 2021. From £20.



BOOK NOW

A Bob Marley musical is coming to London



📍 'Get Up, Stand Up! The Bob Marley Story'

Tickets go on sale today (December 2) for long-time-coming Bob Marley musical 'Get Up, Stand Up', which hits the West End next May. Fresh from reopening the National Theatre with 'Death of England: Delroy', show director Clint Dyer fills us in on the first blockbuster of the post-Covid era.

Why's it taken so long for a Bob Marley musical to come along?

'They've been trying to get it off the ground for a long time. I suppose because Marley's music is so precious there's a desire to get it right: it's such a prize piece of material that it's been tricky to feel wholeheartedly sure about the timing. It's very precious.'

What's the story you're trying to tell?

'There's so much to talk about: the deep political philosophy behind his music and the way he lived his life. I think what we're trying to do is to use the music to try and harness his ideas and beliefs, not just the story.'

Actor/playwright Arinze Kene is your Bob Marley – why is he the man for the job?

'I've known him for years, he's perfect for it. Over the years he's proven it in what he writes about, his understanding of Black culture, urban culture, and you could just go straight to the fact he sings like a bird.'

Is it exciting bringing reggae to the West End?

'I think I've been handed the most incredible opportunity and I kind of want to blow the doors off, really. To have some full-on reggae with HUMONGOUS BASS I find absolutely thrilling. Believe me, I've got some moves that I know will be a first for the West End.' Interview by Andrzej Łukowski

→ 'Get Up, Stand Up!' will run at the Lyric Theatre. From May 28 2021. Price tbc.



'Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser' at the V&A

ALICE IN WONDERLAND: JOHAN PERSSON; BOB MARLEY: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY

Food & Drink

[timeout.com/eatdrink](https://www.timeout.com/eatdrink) @timeouteatdrink

Extremely posh meal kits

Birthday? Anniversary? One week closer to the vaccine? Give yourself a reason to order a fancy restaurant box, you won't regret it

The veggie take on shawarma

I'm writing this about a week after eating **Rovi's** Celeriac Shawarma Kit and I still can't get over how delicious it was. Honestly, this £38 box was one of the best things I've eaten all year. The kit – made by the Ottolenghi spin-off to serve two people – comes boxed up in very swish reusable jars and recyclable tubs. It has many, many parts. The spiced celeriac, which you pop in the oven for 20 minutes and serve in pita. Bekeila – a citrusy spinach mix – which you heat in a pan and smear on the bread too. Plus all kinds of other bits to layer on (crispy onions, pickles, shawarma mix, fermented tomato and chilli sauce). Assembly is a fun, messy process. (Although I wouldn't recommend following my lead and attempting it on the coffee table because it's the 'biggest surface' in your flat; a dining table is preferable.) The result?

A proper posh restaurant meal in a box. It's complex, spicy, comforting – flawless, to be honest. I couldn't recommend it more. *Kate Lloyd*
→ ottolenghiready.slerp.com

The very posh Indian one

The Four Course at Home Feast from **The Cinnamon Club** really is a feast, consisting of enough delicious food to keep my whole family going for days. The courses are handily colour-coded, making the dishes easy to prepare and put together – most of the food is simply heated in the bag it comes in. Bhel papdi chaat (delightful crispy bits of potatoes) and a platter of huge shrimps would have been plenty on their own, but there was lamb shank rogan josh and dhal to come. Both had levels of richness that made us want a lie-down before we even got to the garam masala Christmas pudding. While not cheap at £50

per person, this is proper fine, filling dining that you can cook in even the tiniest kitchen. *Ben Rowe*
→ www.cinnamonclub.com

The one with après-ski vibes

Since staying in is the new going out, the retro dinner party is also having a moment. What could suit the occasion better than a



Norma

Dinner done early means more time to stare into space. Lovely stuff



Find more home food fun at [timeout.com/diykits](https://www.timeout.com/diykits)

cherry kirsch liqueur and a crisp alpine wine, in case fondue is more about après-ski for you. It makes a cosy event out of staying in.

Laura Richards

→ www.thecheesebar.com

The decadent comfort-food feast

You might know them from their beloved neighbourhood restaurant or famous lockdown wine deliveries, Now the nice people at **Top Cuvée** have found yet another thing to be top at. Meal kits. Their Take Cuvée boxes are a no-choice deal and are made up of three courses of fancy takes on comfort food that'll leave you in a perfect snoozy haze. (Line up 'Home Alone' for after.) In my box I got a thick, creamy soup with moreish cheese scones to start. Then a flaky pie filled with tender chicken and more creamy stuff (served with all kinds of posh restaurant veg) and a salty-and-sweet sticky toffee pudding. It's all packaged in heat-in-the-bag plastic pouches or oven-friendly foil tins so you barely have to dirty a pan. And the instructions are super-easy to follow too. (My only challenge was telling the mash and the soup apart, but that's because I'm an idiot.) Most importantly: it's pretty affordable compared to loads of other meal kits – £35 for two – and it's all wildly delicious. *KL*

→ www.shopcuvée.com

The mega-premium Mediterranean one

Sexy Sicilian-inspired joint **Norma** in Fitzrovia had not long opened when the first lockdown hit. Luckily you can order its comforting Mediterranean fare to your door, including its culinary flagship product: the Feasting Box for Two

kitsch 'fondue-it-yourself' kit from Camden's fromage-loving restaurant **The Cheese Bar** (£28 for two)? It comes with a coolea and Cornish Kern cheese mix ready to melt, plus dippables: potatoes, cornichons and crusty bread. But who's to say you can't get inventive with the contents of your lockdown fridge? You can also order shots of



Rovi

Food & Drink

(£100). Kaboom. A cursory glance at the instructions might cause a bit of trepidation (any mention of a pomegranate dressing will always create panic in my household) but this is all joyously basic. You're just chucking stuff in the oven at different times. The delicate pumpkin came out all nice and caramelised and the huge chunk of lamb shoulder was exactly as tender as you'd expect. Other highlights include extremely fresh bread, a chard gratin and a Negroni cocktail. As the price suggests, there's a ton to get through here, so clearly it's meant as more than 'a bit of dinner'. Got something to celebrate? This treasure trove of tastiness could be the perfect way to mark the occasion. *Joe Mackertich*

→ www.normalondon.com

The really, really meaty one

I reviewed **10 Greek Street** when it opened about a decade ago. I feel old. Back then, I remember being blown away, not just by how good the food was but by its simplicity:

great ingredients and excellent technique, basically. It's the same deal here with the Slow-Cooked Short Rib Kit: two massive hunks of dexter short rib slippery on their bones, confit potatoes, garlicky curly kale, carrots, parsnips and horseradish cream – all for £55. Throw them in some pans and you're done: restaurant-quality food in an obscenely efficient 20 minutes. My only concern would be for those who like to spend a bit more time pottering in the kitchen. Me? Dinner done early meant more time to stare into space considering the pointlessness of existence. Lovely stuff. *Stephen Farmer*

→ www.dishpatch.co.uk

The Michelin-starred one

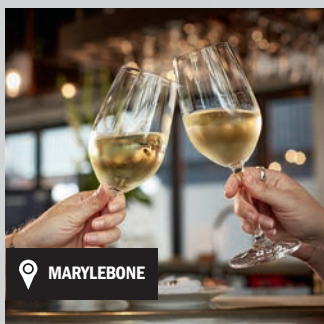
It's safe to say that things like lobster ravioli and chicken supreme with truffle bouillon are not in my regular recipe rotation. That's where the weekly-changing three-course lockdown menu Galvin at Home from Michelin-starred **Galvin La Chapelle** comes in. I tried



Left to right:
Top Cuvée, Cafe
Murano, The
Cheese Bar

Sponsored listing

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MARYLEBONE

28-50 WINE WORKSHOP & KITCHEN SAYS:

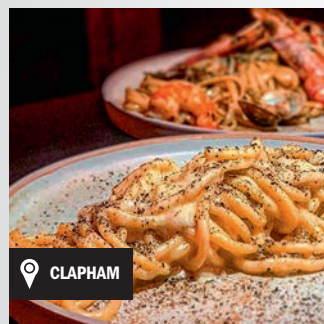
'Christmas 2020 is definitely not cancelled: 28-50 is open on Christmas Day with a super Christmas Menu which includes a complimentary glass of champagne. Enjoy a superb three-course menu in a relaxed, sophisticated setting for just £64.95 pp. Get in touch to book your table now!' *15-17 Marylebone Lane, W1U 2NE.*



MARYLEBONE

THE MONTAGU KITCHEN SAYS:

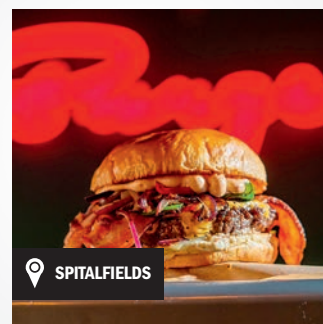
'Enjoy the festive season at home fuss-free thanks to Turkey Me Home. Let expert chefs cook the perfect Christmas meal, with a roast turkey and all the trimmings, available to order and collect from the Montagu Kitchen restaurant in Marylebone until the end of December. From £25 per person.' *30 Portman Square, W1H 7BH.*



CLAPHAM

MBARE SAYS:

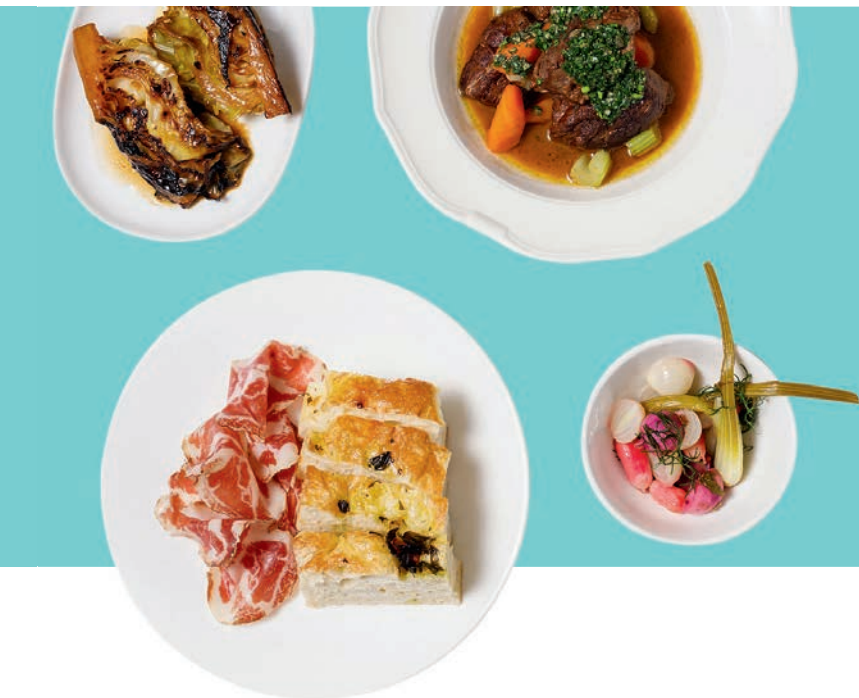
'Mbare is currently operating a delivery and takeaway service. Through Deliveroo and takeaway, we are offering both our brunch/breakfast menu and our modern authentic Italian menu. We also have pasta kits and a selection of Italian wine, secret-recipe mulled wine and of course our signature cocktails.' *127 Clapham High Street, SW4 7SS.*



SPITALFIELDS

CHUCK BURGERS SAYS:

'Chuck Burgers began as an idea to bring our favourite American food back home to the UK. Our menu has been developed using the freshest British ingredients and inspired by secret recipes from our favourite restaurants across the Pond. Delivery is available across E1 via Uber Eats and Deliveroo.' *46 Commercial St, E1 6LT.*



the aforementioned ravioli and chicken, as well as pear tarte tatin for dessert. Each course comes in a plastic takeaway container and instructions for how to assemble it. It's all relatively straightforward to prepare – cook the dumplings, reheat the chicken in the oven, heat the sauce – but wrangling all the different aspects does create a fair amount of washing-up. The portion sizes aren't massive (this is Michelin-starred dining, darling), but it's rich (and very tasty) food, so you aren't left feeling short-changed. If you're looking for a treat meal that you'd never normally cook at home, this is one for you. But be tactical: offer to do the 'cooking' so your lockdown buddy has to wash up. £45 (meat) or £39 (veggie) per person. *Isabelle Aron*
→ galvinlachapelle.slerp.com

The one with 21 parts

Despite consisting of an initially daunting 21 numbered tubs and bags of ingredients, **Arabica's** £45 Middle Eastern meal kit for two (Feast for Beirut) is easy to assemble and totally delicious. The main course, a boil-in-the-bag beef short-rib stew with vermicelli rice, is rich and hearty, and the inclusion of some satisfyingly nutty baklava and a sprig of fresh mint to make tea with is a nice touch. But the mixed meze spread is the star

here: the pimped-up houmous, baba ghanoush with pomegranate seeds to sprinkle, zingy tabbouleh and pumpkin kibbeh are all outstanding, and I'm sure the halloumi would have been if I hadn't killed it by frying it for too long. My bad, meal good. *Sarah Cohen*
→ shop.arabicalondon.com

The Italian party feast

Cafe Murano has various pasta and risotto meal kits that you can order anytime, but every Friday, Angela Hartnett and team rustle up something extra-special. Though the contents are subject to change, the Cafe Murano at Home menu as we received it was a four-course Italian meal sealed up into 11 boxes and pouches that felt like an impressive feat of logistics even before one contemplates the actual flavours. And the flavours were good: focaccia with pickled vegetables for the antipasti, pumpkin and ricotta cannelloni for the primi, lamb's neck stew with braised cabbage for the secundo, and poached pear with pannacotta for pudding. It was delicious, and great value at £55 for two. And while it's not quite the same as eating in a restaurant, I got a possibly slightly weird kick from following the relatively lengthy but entirely lucid preparation instructions. ■ *Andrzej Lukowski*
→ www.cafemurano.co.uk



A guide to finding the lesser-spotted Taylor's beers

Whether you're an avid enthusiast or have more of a general interest in the species, our brewery webshop, timothytaylorshop.co.uk makes it easy to locate our beers roaming wild in their natural habitat. You can order all of our bottled varieties, our classic and award-winning *Landlord* pale ale, our well-balanced genuine Yorkshire bitter, *Boltmaker*; *Knowle Spring*, the full-bodied and refreshing blonde beer; *Landlord Dark*, the rich yet light dark ale; *Hopical Storm* a modern dry-hopped pale ale, the aromatic and hoppy *Cook Lane IPA*, and the dark and warming *Poulter's Porter*. And they'll wing their way to you with free delivery anywhere in the UK.

All for that taste of Taylor's



Love Local

Edited by Kate Lloyd
timeout.com/lovelocal

Chefs' top meat and veg places

In part two of our really good food shops guide, chefs reveal their favourite butchers, greengrocers, delis and fishmongers

Abby Lee Mambow

'Dalston's **Spandeli** is a super-low-key deli which has a real charm. You'll find Spanish wines, cheese, ham, anchovies, things like that. I usually get a sandwich filled with juicy olives, artichokes, a Spanish tomato spread and lots of olive oil.'

→ 246 Dalston Lane, E8 1JG.

Saiphin Moore Rosa's Thai Cafe

'My favourite local is **Hussey's Fruit & Vegetables** in Wapping. I live just around the corner, and they always have the best seasonal fruit and veg to cook with, straight from the farm.'

→ 54 Wapping Lane, E1W 2RL.

Emily Roux and Diego Ferrari Caractère

'Our favourite local shop is **Vallebona**, run by husband-and-wife team Stefano and Naoko. The Wimbledon store only sells the best quality produce and everything is done with so much love. We often

buy top-quality pasta, cheese and charcuterie and would also highly recommend their panettone.'

→ 70a High St, SW19 5EE.

James Cochran 12:51

'East Dulwich's **William Rose Butchers** is one of the oldest in London. (It's been around since 1862.) It's great for high-quality rare-breed meat and there's always a queue on a Saturday.'

→ 126 Lordship Lane, SE22 8HD.

Jacob Kenedy Bocca di Lupo and Gelupo

'**I Camisa & Son** in Soho is a [throwback] to a style of deli that remains, in Italy, the hub of the community. It has a great Aladdin's cave vibe – all you could need from a supermarket, inside a shoebox. I became a real regular when Bocca opened. We'd come by on a daily basis to pick up something we'd forgotten to order. I now buy a panino there for lunch on days when



Turner & George

I'm running too short on time to sit down, or come to pick up odd shapes of pasta for recipe testing.'

→ 61 Old Compton St, W1D 6HS.

Avi Shishandra Pali Hill

'**The Fishmongers Kitchen** in Shepherd's Bush is an absolute favourite. He has a variety of farmed and wild fish from local and tropical waters. You can find fresh mackerel, octopus, live crabs, wild sea bass, lobsters or even tuna and pomfret. Get there before 3pm or they run out of the good stuff.'

→ 119 Shepherd's Bush Rd, W6 7LP.

Matteo and Salvatore Aloe Berberè Pizzeria

'One day, after a run on sunny Clapham Common, we finished outside **Moxon's** and looked in at all the amazing produce and fish on offer. It seemed like a sign from God. It has all you need for a fantastic fish dinner: fresh turbot, great bottles of wine, garlic, parsley and ready-to-eat marinated sardines. Don't forget the French butter. The fishmongers are kind and they are ready to cut fillets for you and keep the bones for a good fish stock.'

→ Unit E, Clapham South Station, SW4 9AE.



Moxons

get our veg from there daily. They're always stocked up with an array of interesting produce from around the world. It's my go-to place when I'm on the hunt for more obscure ingredients in recipes!

→ 13 Terrace Rd, E9 7ES.

Max Venning and Brodie Meah Top Cuvée

'Highbury's **Seasons & Blossoms** is an amazing greengrocer. It's a godsend when we need ingredients to finish a special at the last minute but without compromising on our use of seasonal, organic produce.'

→ 92 Highbury Park, N5 2XE.

Francesco Mazzei **Sartoria**

'I get as much meat as I can from butchers **Turner & George** in Clerkenwell. All of the staff are brilliant and really knowledgeable. If they don't have something specialist in stock that you want, they'll source it for you and it's always the best quality. They usually have to kick me out because I've been in there too long chatting.'

→ 399 St John St, EC1V 4LD.

Nick Fitzgerald **Tacos Padre**

'**Fin and Flounder** on Broadway Market is a shop serious on selection when it comes to fine produce from the sea (and now wine too), and is a cornerstone in east London.

Brendan, Danny and Sam will go to serious lengths to find the best of the best from the depths. They love what they do and a good chat. Take the prices as a guide – there are great bargains to be had once they call you "mate"!'

→ 71 Broadway Market, E8 4PH.

Su Tran **Mien Tay**

'Our favourite local shop is **Billingsgate Market**. It sounds strange but my wife and I go there three or four times each week, more than any other shop. We take the time to talk, deliberating over the brightest-eyed seabass for frying whole with fish sauce and mango.'

→ Trafalgar Way, E14 5ST.

Robin Gill **Bermondsey Larder, Darby's and Sorella**

'**The Ham and Cheese Co** in Bermondsey was recommended by my mate Damiano who heads



Vallebona

up Tutto wine. They have some of the best cheese and cured meats sourced from crazy fanatical farmers, small-batch honey and olive oils. You simply can't source the same quality ingredients from anywhere else. There's always wafts of incredible smells.'

→ Arch 10, Dockley Road Industrial Estate, SE16 3SF.

Nick Buckland **Yard Sale Pizza**

'**Mircey Green Grocery** in Clapton is a great little fruit-and-veg shop. When we first opened our shop we would



AREA
GUIDE



Vegan food with heart in Southwark

The restaurant providing food and care for the community as regeneration ploughs on

'I JUST STARTED it as a joke with my friends,' Beza tells me about her Ethiopian restaurant which shares her name. It began life in 2006 in the bustle of Camden Market before moving to Elephant & Castle as a pop-up in 2016, and then setting up as a restaurant in Elephant Park last year. It's a serious business now.

Beza is bubbly and warm, and more than anything, she cares deeply about the community she's fostered in Elephant & Castle. 'We became family, not friends.' Although she lives in north London, Beza is happy to make the daily commute to Southwark. 'When I reach Elephant & Castle, I feel like this is my home.'

While veganism has skyrocketed in the last few decades in the West, in Ethiopia it's been around for hundreds of years, just under a different name. 'We call it fasting,' she tells me. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is one of the world's oldest religious bodies and during

the fasting months leading up to Easter, no meat or dairy products are consumed. 'When I came here, people kept saying "vegan" and I was like "What is vegan?"' Beza explains. Then she realised it was what she knew as fasting food – and Londoners loved it.

She learned how to cook from her grandmother, who had a plant-based diet, and her restaurant dishes up warm injera flatbread with delicious sides, including lentil, mung bean and split-pea dishes.

But Beza does more than serving up food; she's all about serving the community too, helping those most impacted in 2020. During the first lockdown, she teamed up with Feed the Workers and donated food to the charity Pembroke House. 'My sister, she's a nurse. I saw how tired she was,' says Beza. So she made it her mission to help feed frontline workers, homeless people and people in need of food. 'What is the meaning of living in this world if you don't help each other?'

In September, the central hub of Southwark, Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre, closed its doors for the last time and the iconic hot-pink elephant statue was removed. Demolition for yet another regeneration project in the area is expected to continue into summer next year. It's leaving many traders, who are the backbone of the community, uprooted and looking for a new home. 'I know a few people: that's their lives,' says Beza. 'I feel sad. How are we going to support them?'

This year has already been an incredibly challenging one for traders. 'It's not easy, we've had a difficult year,' Beza admits. But she's still hopeful. 'We have to support each other,' she says, vowing to buy her ingredients locally, 'because if I didn't get it from them, these people aren't going to survive. Everything is give and take. It's nice to support each other.' ■ *Niellah Arboine*
→ Beza, 8a Sayer St, SE17 1FH.

Tibetan Peace Garden
 'Where do I start? I always spent my Sundays after church sitting in this Peace Garden with my dad. The Dalai Lama opened it years ago and he left a piece of his peacefulness here. I took my current partner here on our first date and I think it set the scene of our relationship.'
 → 107a St George's Rd.

Laughland Communications
 'Kevin is the man you need for any technical issues. A local, a man with a million stories, the biggest smile and my most trusted tech whizz.'
 → Unit 17 Castle Square.

G Cafe
 'I love this café so much. There is a lovely Indian auntie that sells biryani in tupperware for £4: big portions and homemade. I always go there for a quick and homely bite.'
 → 70 London Rd. Open for takeaway.

Black Cowboy Coffee
 'The best coffee in Elephant & Castle. John is a legend - full of stories. If you're having a bad day, I promise his drinks and aura will make you feel much, much better.'
 → Elephant Arcade, 50 London Rd. Open for takeaway.

Hoang Phuong
 'This is a go-to takeaway Vietnamese spot. I love it! My big brother is Vietnamese and took me here in my teens - after a long day, all you want is their three-bean dessert.'
 → 4 Hampton St. Open for takeaway.

Casa Colombia
 'One of my favourite Colombian spots in Elephant. They sell empanadas and great coffee and have the loveliest customer service. Elephant wouldn't be Elephant without the Latin community and it's important to spend in our local economy.'
 → Eagle Yard Arch, 141 Walworth Rd. Open for takeaway.

East Street Market
 'Anything you need - food, fish, clothes, bits for the house - this is where you go. As a native Elephant girl, this is a staple market and place in my upbringing.'
 → East St.

Bagel King
 'This is a legendary spot in our community. You will catch every person you ever grew up with here at stupid o'clock. Order your favourite type of bagel followed by a slush. Thank me later.'
 → 280 Walworth Rd. Open for takeaway.

Elephant & Castle

Singer (and lifelong Elephant and Castle resident) Joy Crookes picks her favourite spots in town

TimeOut LOVE LOCAL
 Time Out's Love Local campaign supports food, drink and culture businesses in London. Find out how you can help at timeout.com/lovelocalondon

Escapes

Edited by Ellie Walker-Arnott
timeout.com/daytrips

Woodland walkabouts

Great big forests near London for frolicking around in and being all wholesome this winter

AN IDYLIC WALK in the woods isn't limited to summer picnic weather. We all know that time spent in nature is good for us, and – surprise! – that's especially the case in winter. Mental-health charity Mind says that being in natural light and spending time in the great outdoors are powerful ways to combat SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) as well as any general grouchiness you might be feeling now that the sun sets just after you've finished your lunch.

As soon as day trips are allowed again, these are the places, all within easy reach of the city, to head for woodland walks, tree hugging, all the daylight and sweet, sweet freedom from our flats.

Ashdown Forest East Sussex

This forest inspired the 'Hundred-Acre Wood' in the Winnie the Pooh books. Writer AA Milne lived at Cotchford Farm, on the edge of

Ashdown Forest. Anthropomorphic bears aside, this huge, publicly-accessible green space, just 40 miles south of central London, is a real stunner. Its 6,500 acres are part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and offers wooded hills, open heathland and ace views of the surrounding countryside. And a bridge for playing Pooh Sticks ofc.
→ Free. www.ashdownforest.org

Rendlesham Forest Suffolk

If you like your greenery with a side of the supernatural, Rendlesham Forest is the one for you. You can take the UFO Trail, which wends past sites associated with a famous unexplained light sighting in December 1980. There are also other walking routes, play areas and bike trails for exploring this dense, protected woodland. Oh, and by the way, if you get abducted and probed during your visit, we won't be held responsible.

→ Free. www.forestyengland.uk

Abinger Roughts Surrey

For some perspective on our current world predicament, visit the ancient, gnarly oak trees on Abinger Roughts. Those wise old trunks are more than 300 years old. They also rubbed shoulders with Charles Darwin, who is known to have wandered the Roughts in the 1870s. To get up close with more veteran trees, stroll into nearby Netley Park's 211 acres of woodland, also owned by the National Trust.

→ Free. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Shere Woodlands Surrey

Stick around in Surrey to find more wooded wilderness. The pretty village of Shere (which has mega-festive romcom vibes thanks to its cameo in 'The Holiday') is surrounded by the kind of woodland that feels like it should be much further away from a capital city than it is. You'll find yourself amid beech, cypress, yew and dogwood trees, frosty in winter and buzzing with butterflies come summer. If you're feeling adventurous, the North



Rendlesham Forest

Stretch your legs at
timeout.com/uk



There are legit rural vibes to be found just a little beyond the M25

Downs Way runs right through the heart of the wood: east for Dover, west for Farnham.

→ Free. www.surreywildlifetrust.org

Hatfield Forest Essex

A historic woodland to rival the likes of Epping Forest and Richmond Park, this is considered the best surviving example of a medieval royal hunting ground in Britain. Its history goes back further than that to the Norman Conquest and the Romans, while some of the

trees in the forest are more than 1,000 years old. Soak it all up on one of the many walking routes through the peaceful trees.

→ Car park £8. Pre-booking essential. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Micheldever Wood Hampshire

Famous for its carpet of bobbing bluebells each May, Micheldever Wood is also a great place to get your fix of the natural stuff in the colder months.

The walking routes among the ancient beech trees, home to muntjac deer (sweet-faced little creatures), are a tranquil way to spend a few hours. And it's all just a few miles outside the city of Winchester, if you absolutely *must* have a damned flat white with your nature fix.

→ Free. www.surreywildlifetrust.org

King's Wood Kent

One-and-a-half thousand acres of trees on the Kent Downs, King's Wood is big enough to let yourself get lost in. It's dotted with sculptures crafted from natural materials, some of which are now being reclaimed by the forest. Pick a trail through the trees and with any luck

the only social distancing you'll have to worry about is from the resident deer and adder population.

→ Free. www.forestryengland.uk

Wendover Woods Buckinghamshire

It's no surprise that the Chiltern Hills is an ace place to head to when you want to swap pavements for muddy country tracks. They're at the end of the Met line, and are lush all year round. Try

Wendover Woods for great walking and cycling trails, as well as Go Ape, orienteering and an assault course (which will open after lockdown).

→ Wendover Woods. Free. www.forestryengland.uk



King's Wood

Broxbourne Woods Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire's only National Nature Reserve, Broxbourne Woods is around 600 acres of diverse trees. It's just a little beyond the M25, but there are legit rural vibes to be found here: streams, meadows and paths through the woodland. Haven't really been outside properly since the summer? The 17.5km trail is the one if you need a big, full-day dose of the outdoors. ■ *Ellie Walker-Arnott*

→ Free. www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

Time In

Edited by Phil de Semlyen
timeout.com/timein

FILM OF THE WEEK

Screenwriter's blues

'Mank'



THE DEBATES OVER whether 'Citizen Kane' is the greatest film ever made will rage on. But the greatest film ever made *about* 'Citizen Kane' has arrived. Heck, it might be the best film about any film. David Fincher's latest is a lavish black-and-white epistle to old Hollywood in all its glory, cynicism and wild extravagance. Do you need to be a hardcore cinephile to enjoy it? Not remotely.

The title character is Herman J Mankiewicz (Gary Oldman), the booze-soaked Broadway playwright-turned-screenwriter Orson Welles (Tom Burke) taps up to help write the script for 'Citizen Kane'. He's been lured to Hollywood initially for the money, but increasingly for the chance to play the holy fool in the court of its unscrupulous moguls. Oldman relishes every sly aside and boozy, grandstanding speech in a script (by Fincher's dad, Jack) with plenty of both.

'Mank' introduces its protagonist in 1940 on a literal road to ruin: a car crash has left him bedridden. Welles has ensured the bed in question is on a remote ranch, where a British secretary Rita Alexander (Lily Collins) can keep him away from the liquor long enough to meet his deadline. Then we're flashing back a decade to his early days, spitballing with his fellow writers on the Paramount lot before falling into the orbit of MGM's bully-boy boss Louis B Mayer (Arliss Howard).


Fincher makes it all look, and sound, like a Welles film, with theatrical fades, echoey sound mixing and an homage of a score from Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross. The visuals ape the deep-focus photography of 'Kane' DP Gregg Toland, capturing every conspiratorial exchange in the background of its party scenes.

It helps that, Welles aside, few of the characters here are what you'd

call recognisable, but an on-form cast embodies them without a trace of cartoonishness. Collins's tender scenes with Oldman are a highlight, while Charles Dance's newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst is an altogether different beast from the character he famously inspired: Charles Foster Kane. Citizen Hearst is a vampiric, taciturn presence at the parties he throws at his castle. It's at one of them that Mank finally

– and fatally – overplays his hand.

Burke is wonderful, as ever, despite a dodgy prosthetic nose. Tuppence Middleton is far too young to play Mankiewicz's wife Sara, but she peps up the role of long-suffering spouse. Amanda Seyfried is on career-best form as Hearst's mistress Marion Davies, a savvier customer than, the 'Citizen Kane' character, Susan Alexander, she was rumoured to have inspired.



Utterly furbulous
Amanda Seyfried
as Marion Davies



WHAT IS IT...
David Fincher unpicks the legend and lunacy behind 'Citizen Kane'.

WHY GO...
For Gary Oldman being Oscar-worthy. Again.

Director David Fincher (12A)
131 mins.

But it's Oldman's show. Whether wittily haranguing his hosts at yet another soirée or recoiling from Hollywood's toxic political culture, he's magnetic as a rogue with a mouth that gets him into trouble and a pen that gets him out of it. The last time Oldman played a heavy drinker from the 1940s, he won an Oscar for it. He may even do it again. ■

Phil de Semlyen

→ In cinemas and streaming on Netflix Fri Dec 4.

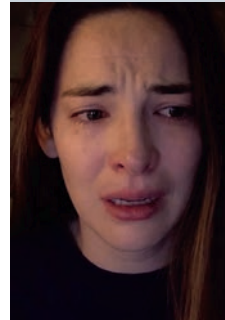
Host



WHAT IS IT...
The world's first lockdown Zoom horror film.

WHY GO...
It's even more terrifying than an actual Zoom meeting.

→ Director Rob Savage
(15) 57 mins. In cinemas and streaming Dec 4.



UNTIL SOMEONE MAKES a film about a haunted sourdough starter, this ingenious horror movie will remain the zeitgeistiest thing to emerge from lockdown. Major props to director Rob Savage and his cobbled-together cast and crew for whipping up something this fresh and freaky while the rest of us were busy trying to keep up with Joe Wicks on YouTube.

The premise has a group of uni mates catching up on Zoom, laughing, in-joking, doing shots and grousing about being stuck inside quarantining as they wait for the star attraction to turn up. She turns out to be a medium who promises to connect them with spirits. She forgets to tell them that taking the piss during the seance could have very grim consequences. They take the piss. It has very grim consequences.

'Host' wears its debt to found-footage horrors like 'The Blair Witch Project' and Japanese shocker 'Noroi: The Curse' on its sleeve, while briskly reworking the formula into a laptop-based horror with big jumps and relatable bits where the wifi craps out. The meat of it unfolds within the familiar parameters of a 45-minute Zoom call, but there's enough creepy atmospherics and nastiness crammed in to leave you drained when the call ends. If you're after a film to give you cold sweats *and* teach you the ins and outs of video conferencing, look no further. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*

County Lines



WHAT IS IT...
A gritty Brit flick inspired by the county lines crisis.

WHY GO...
Conrad Khan is great as a kid lured into a criminal underworld.

→ Director Henry Blake
(15) 90 mins. In cinemas and streaming Dec 4.



THIS DRUGS DRAMA from ex-youth worker Henry Blake packs all the authenticity you'd expect from a filmmaker who knows what he's talking about. It charts the pressures that draw thousands of British teens into the county lines crisis – where big-city dealers get youngsters to traffic drugs into the countryside – through the eyes of brooding 14-year-old Tyler (Conrad Khan).

With his mum (Ashley Madekwe) struggling to compensate for the dad who left, Tyler falls under the spell of a self-proclaimed 'entrepreneur' who drives a Merc, flashes his cash and oozes persuasive menace. Played by Harris Dickinson, he's soon coaxing Tyler to skip school for trainer shopping and a burger. You suspect Tyler knows he's being groomed, but it barely matters: he's being offered an escape. Of sorts.

You're ushered into Tyler's box-fresh sneakers to experience a life of nifty train journeys, hurried deals and squalid trap houses. It's all enveloped in a soundscape of distant shouting, hostile voices and sirens. It's not a comfortable experience – and it shouldn't be.

Khan is terrific, sensitive beneath the sullenness. There's despair here, but compassion too. The grottiest movie l0o since 'Trainspotting' aside, Blake's compositions have eerie beauty. You can't say the same for the life of its young protagonist. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*

More Time In tips at timeout.com/timein

Perfect prezzies for movie-lovers

From Brian Eno scores to a Lego Diagon Alley: 11 festive treats for any budget



1. **Cinephile: A Card Game**. £16.99. www.thehambledon.com.
2. **Lego Diagon Alley**. £369.99. www.lego.com.
3. **Brian Eno - 'Film Music 1976-2020'**. £25.99. www.enoshop.co.uk.
4. **'The Ladykillers' 65th Anniversary Collector's Edition Blu-ray**. £39.99. www.hmv.com.
5. **'Accidentally Wes Anderson'**. £25. www.accidentallywesanderson.com.
6. **'The Big Goodbye'**. £17.65. www.bookshop.org.
7. **'The Mandalorian' Christmas baubles**. £12.99 each. www.geekstore.com.
8. **Cobra Kai T-shirt**. £20. www.lastexittonowhere.com.
9. **Great British Film and TV Map**. £14.99. www.marvellousmaps.com.
10. **Disney Villains postcard box**. £19.99. shop.bfi.org.uk.
11. **'Watchmen': Season 1 Blu-ray**. £19.99. shop.warnerbros.co.uk.

Three arty puzzles

Bring London's galleries to your kitchen table

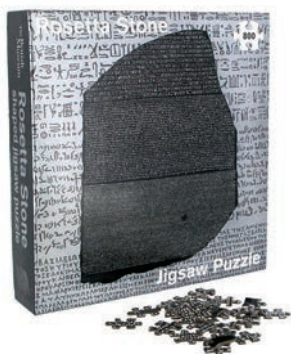
THERE ARE FEW festive joys greater or more soothing than sitting down to a good jigsaw puzzle while semi-tiddled on Christmas port. If you're lucky, you may even learn something through a process of osmosis: as in the case of this trio of London artistic treasures ready for reassembly.

Josef Albers wood puzzle set from Tate

This puzzle is very simple, but that's how old Josef Albers would have liked it. The Bauhaus supremo was an early minimalist, simplifying art down to its barest essentials, so just do this puzzle (£21.99), then do it again. It's called wellness, look it up.

→ Six 25-piece puzzles. shop.tate.org.uk

Josef Albers



Rosetta Stone jigsaw puzzle from the British Museum

Pretend you're an expert archaeologist by doing this Rosetta Stone puzzle (£13). But when you put all the pieces together, you'll realise that you still can't decipher hieroglyphics, you're not an expert archaeologist at all and you should just stick to Netflix.

→ 800 pieces. www.britishmuseumshoponline.org

'The Swing' jigsaw puzzle from the Wallace Collection

'The Swing' is what passed for kinky titillation back in Fragonard's day, so you can enjoy the thrill of being a Rococo perv just like the bloke sneaking a peek up the lady's skirt here, all from the comfort of your dining room table. It's yours for a tenner. ■ Eddy Frankel

→ 100 pieces. www.wallacecollectionshop.org

Podcasts to make you cleverer

Culture editor *Andrzej Łukowski* picks four brain-empowering hits

Start with This

You know a podcast is making you cleverer when it involves homework. This one is the brainchild of the creators of *Welcome to Night Vale*, a creepy pod set in an imaginary US town. Each episode gives listeners something to consume, and something to create (usually a book or TV show in the first instance, and a writing assignment in the second). The object is to help boost your creativity, and the subjects of the episodes are satisfyingly varied, from 'Present Tense' to 'Non-Lovecraftian Horror'.

→ www.nightvalepresents.com/startwiththis

Philosophy Bites

Sure, your Platos and your Nietzsches are still famous long after their deaths, but most philosophies remain pretty obscure. Had any chats about the importance of metaphysics to our understanding of the world? Know what verificationism is? If you listened to this lovable UK podcast, you absolutely would. Hosts Nigel Warburton and David Edmonds invite guests for great intros to the debates, thinkers and thoughts that have shaped our world.

→ philosophybites.com



The New Yorker Fiction Podcast

Merely looking at a copy of the *New Yorker* can make you up to 15 percent cleverer, and the same goes for listening to its flagship podcast. A current staffer reads a short story by a former *New Yorker* writer – often several decades former – and discusses it with the magazine's fiction editor Deborah Treisman. It's entertaining, sure, but it's the delving into the thought processes of a succession of extremely smart Americans – think ZZ Packer, Bryan Washington, Jhumpa Lahiri – that gives it its zing.

→ www.newyorker.com/podcast/fiction

How to Do Everything

NPR's popular podcast wrapped up about four years ago without literally telling us how to do everything. But there's still a treasure trove of knowledge stored in its archive, as hosts Mike Danforth and Ian Chillag solve problems that you hadn't previously realised were problems: from mounting an impassioned defence of weasels, to tips on bluffing your way through a conversation about golf. Its 265 episodes are all standing by to help enhance your brainy parts. ■

→ www.howtoeverything.org

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO Science fiction novels

Don't know your Asimov from your elbow? Let *Eddy Frankel* ease you into the realm of sci-fi literature



MAYBE YOU'VE

always thought science fiction was for weird sweaty nerds, but now that we're deep into another lockdown, you've become sci-curious and you're interested in dipping your toe into the gas nebula of science fiction. So, welcome: we weird sweaty nerds are happy to have you.

Science fiction isn't all spaceships and space battles (though there is a lot of that), and when it's good, it's a proper escape from the real world. But what makes it special is its subject matter. Because while fantasy is all about getting horny for dragons and jousting, science fiction uses space and technology metaphorically – great science fiction isn't just about spaceships, it uses spaceships to tell a story about our time.

Whether it's gender politics, racism, environmental collapse or



capitalism, science fiction is full of fables that tell us about humanity right now, and where it's going.

There are loads of subgenres. Hard science fiction uses actual science to tell its stories, like Poul Anderson's *'Tau Zero'*, about a ship that can't stop accelerating or Arthur

C Clarke's *'Rendezvous with Rama'*. Space opera is more about big, grand tales, like Frank Herbert's *'Dune'* (a simile for the oil industry) or Isaac Asimov's pivotal *'Foundation'* series. Then you've got dystopian classics like Cormac McCarthy's *'The Road'*, and military science fiction like Joe

Haldeman's *'Forever War'*, which is one of the greatest screw-you-to conflict ever written.

And all this before you've even touched on the gender-critical works of Ursula K Le Guin (start with *'The Left Hand of Darkness'*), the afrofuturism of Nnedi Okorafor, Samuel Delany or Octavia E Butler (the *'Dawn'* trilogy is staggeringly good), or the speculative fiction of writers like Margaret Atwood.

My personal faves are the ultra-left-wing anarchist society created by Iain M Banks in his *'Culture'* series (especially *'Excession'*) and Kim Stanley Robinson's vision of what colonising another planet would actually be like in his *'Mars'* trilogy.

But there is so much to explore in science fiction, so many worlds and ideas, and almost all of it is relevant to our world today. Strap in, beam yourself up and throw away your deodorant, you're a weird sweaty nerd now. ■

Three ways to learn guitar online

Make like St Vincent with these handy how-to tutorials



THINK YOU MIGHT have a secret Eddie Van Halen hidden deep within you? Well, you should probably go to a doctor, but after that, you might want to start learning how to play guitar. Here's an easy guide to getting started online.

1 App
Fender Play offers a super easy introduction to guitar (or bass, if six strings feels like two too many; or ukulele, if you have no self-respect) from one of the world's biggest guitar manufacturers. Hey, if it was good enough for Jimi Hendrix, it's good enough for you. It's offering a free three-month trial for new starters, and you'll get to learn songs by your favourite artists in the process. Then you can buy one of its new Player series Mustangs and pretend you're Kurt Cobain too.

2 YouTube
YouTube is full of white guys with boring names, big smiles and acoustic guitars, all gagging

to show you how to finger a D. **Andy Guitar** is the most viewed, with a super-approachable free ten-day guitar course, but you can't go too far wrong with **Marty Music** or **JustinGuitar**. Then give **Rick Beato** and **Paul Davids** a go when you're more advanced. Oh, and it's all totally free, you just have to sit through 10 million ads for Skillshare.

3 Patreon
Social media is full of amazing guitarists – take a bow, Instagram – and most of your faves will probably also have a Patreon where you can sign up for exclusive lessons, and sometimes even one-to-one private tutorials with people like **Rob Swift** and the aforementioned Paul Davids. There are even Patreon accounts for exclusive tablature (an easy kind of music notation) for any genre you want. All the information is out there, so get shredding. ■
Eddy Frankel

SAMSUNG

Galaxy Z Fold2 5G | Z Flip 5G



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TimeOut

LONDON

SAMSUNG



Galaxy Z Flip 5G