

# TimeOut

LONDON

**Weirdest**

**Christmas**

**ever**



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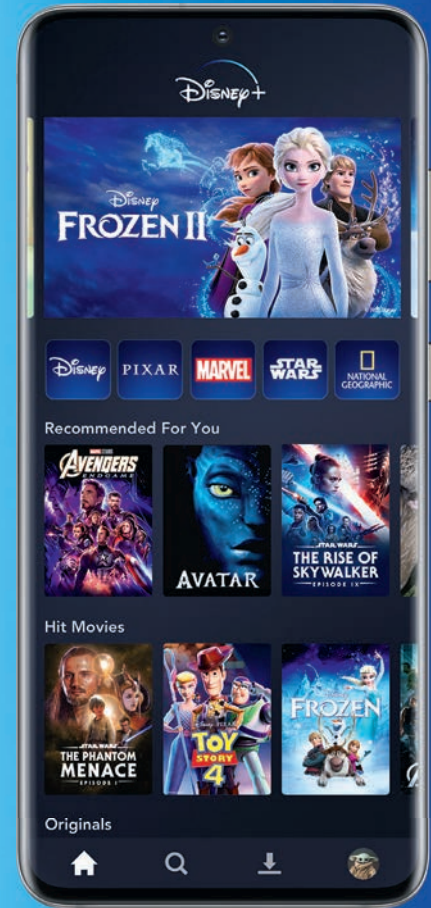
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This issue of Time Out  
in no time at all

## No washing up

Great places for festive eating out.  
Roast Chinese duck for Christmas  
dinner? Why the hell not?

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## Live and indirect

We can't go to gigs right now, but  
there are lots of ways we can help  
London's venues and musicians

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# Hello, London

**Joe Mackertich**  
London Editor  
@j\_mackertich

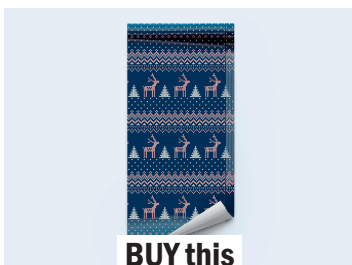


What do I want for Christmas? Probably the same thing as you. A nice arm-full of syrupy, delicious vaccine. Obviously first dibs must be given to those who need immunisation most: the elderly; little children; whoever restocks the Jambon-Beurre shelf at Pret A Manger. But once they've had their fill, I'm there, sleeve rolled, forearm extended, hand twitching unnervingly.

There's a few other things I'd like for Christmas too (anyone averse to shameless sentimentality would do well to look away now). I want London to rise like a beautiful, rain-sodden phoenix. I want every pub that's teetered on the brink of insolvency to have its best year ever. I want people to keep eating and drinking on the streets of Soho. I want club nights and subtitled film screenings that I'm too old and too stupid, respectively, to attend. I want to attend them anyway. I even want Baker Street once again to become a heaving mass of bald heads and tattoos every time there's a football match at Wembley. I miss people. I miss you.

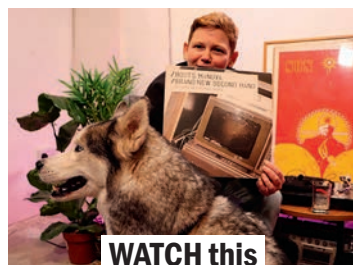
Not getting what you want for Christmas is a rite of passage.  
But this year I'm feeling hopeful.

## THE EDITOR'S ESSENTIALS Three things you have to do in London



**BUY this**

The **Good Gift Wrap**: nice sustainable wrapping paper. Every roll sold helps three homeless people keep warm this winter.



**WATCH this**

Classic Album Sunday interviewed **Kae Tempest** over the weekend about Roots Manuva's 'Brand New Second Hand'.



**SUPPORT this**

**Hackney Laces** is a community-run football club for girls. They do great life-coaching work too, so buy one of their natty totes.

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**NOT FOR RESALE**





Welcome to Page 5G!

# I like the way you **move**

Thanks to 5G, we're already seeing mind-blowing developments in hi-tech health and fitness, from yoga pants that will help perfect your downward dog to very intelligent prosthetics



If you got excited about smartwatches that measure your daily steps, then you better sit down to read this. When it comes to the quest for physical perfection, us humans have never accepted a limit – and with the rise of 5G-enabled technology we're about to see major new developments. Hear the whole story by listening to Samsung's new podcast, 'Whatever Next?', hosted by Dr Hannah Fry and comedian Suzi Ruffell. We've pulled out a few exciting nuggets from the latest episode, which is all about the future of health and fitness.

## Vibrating yoga pants

Wearables are about to become a big deal. 5G allows for near-instantaneous data speeds, which means that sensors in your tech-enhanced yoga leggings could buzz to get you into the correct positions, helping you to perfect that tough warrior pose. And that's not the only place you'll find such wearables woven into clothes: your swimsuit could soon tell you about UV exposure so you can avoid sunburn.

## Prosthetics that can think

For most of us, physical tasks such as reaching for a glass of wine at the dinner table are unconscious; you make a choice to do so, and your arm obeys your brain. But what if a prosthetic arm could read those signals and act in a similar way? On the podcast, the hosts interview Dr Aldo Faisal, professor of AI and neuroscience at Imperial College, about exactly this – and how 5G can enable it to become a reality.

## Exoskeletons (yes, really)

If the first thing you think of is a Marvel superhero, then honestly you're not far off. Scotland-based company Anatomical Concepts is developing the Indego Exoskeleton, which will allow people with injuries or lower-limb paralysis to walk again. Life-changing stuff.

## FANCY AN EXTRA ARM?

Of course you do. As 5G allows prosthetic limbs to be instantly responsive, Dr Faisal found, in an experiment on human augmentation, that the brain can start reading users' intentions much more efficiently than they expected. Within an hour, a test subject was able to eat, drink coffee and paint using an arm for each. Whether the painting was actually any good is another story...

Listen to episode seven, 'Interactive yoga pants', on Spotify, Google Podcasts and Apple Podcasts.

→ Search for the 'Whatever Next?' podcast today!

**SAMSUNG**

# City life

Edited by Isabelle Aron  
@timeoutlondon



## All right, now Christmas is here

The Churchill Arms in Kensington is refusing to let the pandemic get in the way of its famous festive display. We find out why business as usual is so important this year

**LONDON ISN'T SHORT** on seasonal traditions – clinging to the side of the Natural History Museum's ice rink, haggling over turkeys at Smithfield's Christmas Eve meat market, watching swimmers brave the Serpentine on December 25. And one of the first signs of the festive season isn't the John Lewis TV ad, but the Christmas lights switch-on at Kensington boozier The Churchill Arms.

The pub is defiantly sticking to the programme this year. 'We always make a big effort for Christmas and it's a tradition we want to maintain,' says manager James Keogh. 'We've been doing it for 32 years and we didn't want to have one year where we didn't do anything.'

The pub's first display was in 1987, when the building was decked out with 12 fir trees. It's become increasingly elaborate over the years and in 2019, it peaked at 100 trees covered in thousands of twinkling lights. It's earned its reputation as London's most Christmassy pub.

This year, it's going big on lights, with 68,000 bulbs, plus 22 trees and, instead of the usual Christmas banners, 12 NHS flags. The switch was flicked last week and the pub streamed it on Facebook for those who couldn't make it. 'We didn't want to let anyone down,' says Keogh. 'We're keeping up the traditions. We want to celebrate in some way. People need the uplift and the extra festive cheer this year.'

Unsurprisingly, given the shitshow of a year we've had, people's enthusiasm for Christmas seems to have kicked in early. Grosvenor Square restaurant 34 Mayfair put up its 14,000 decorations in October, pubs serving takeaway mulled wine in Lockdown 2.0 did a storming trade and Christmas tree sales are up by 24 percent compared to last year.

Keogh hopes that The Churchill Arms will bring some much-needed joy to Londoners. 'People would be disappointed if we didn't have anything. It's important to the regulars and the customers. We wanted to give something back for all their support, especially through the difficult times this year.' ■ Isabelle Aron

# LIFE HACKS

London professionals on how to...



## Fill your home with foliage

**Amanda Brame** Director of horticulture, Petersham Nurseries

'Bring a little festive drama into your home: fill a container with potted plants such as hellebore Christmas Carol, ferns and indoor paperwhites or hyacinths. Add a few twiggy stems, foliage covered in berries and a pine cone or two.'

**Veronika Kusak** Director, Pines and Needles

'Position your Christmas tree away from radiators and fireplaces. Trees drink more than you do at Christmas: around three pints of water a day. To pep your tree up, give it a slug of lemonade or crush an aspirin and mix it into the water.'

**Nik Southern** Founder, Grace & Thorn

'Wreaths aren't just for Christmas. Make yours last by using dried flowers and foliage on a moss wire-ring base. After Christmas, pop it above your mantelpiece or use it as a table centrepiece. Mix it up by swapping in seasonal flowers all year around.'



**Alice Howard** Owner, Botanique Workshop

'Make "bunting" using leaves, sprigs of holly, slices of dried orange, pine cones, or even foliage you've foraged. Get a long length of ribbon and tie each item along it, spaced out like flags on bunting. It's super-simple and would look lovely strung against a wall or hung over a mirror.' ■

## ASK AN EDITOR

Your going-out problems solved by Time Out editors

**Hettie from Walthamstow asks:** 'I'm finding it hard to get into the festive spirit this year. Where should I go for a Christmassy cocktail to get me feeling merry?'



**Laura Richards,** drink editor

After the year we've had, you're gonna need chocolate. And lots of it. The Spread Eagle is whipping up jumbo hot chocs spiked with your choice of rum, brandy, frangelico or amaretto. Simple, satisfying stuff – and it's vegan-friendly, despite



The Sun Tavern

appearances, as it's topped with a cloud of whipped rice cream. If you don't fancy the hot stuff, Bethnal Green's The Sun Tavern is mixing up a menu of festive cocktails that includes a delectable Terry's Chocolate Orange Negroni (it's mine! etc etc) fashioned from orange-peel gin and cacao nibs. Best of all, the bar is bottling them up as part of its Christmas cocktail Quarantini Kits, available to buy online, so you can feel just as festive at home. And you won't have to crack open that ancient bottle of Advocaat. ■



## KENNINGTON LANE SE11

THE STREET THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Performer *Travis Alabanza* reminisces about the RVT

**AROUND 2015**, I lived near The Royal Vauxhall Tavern on Kennington Lane in Vauxhall. It was around the time that I first started performing in London. I basically lived at the Tavern – I was either there working or watching performances.

Vauxhall became the first place, outside of my home in Bristol, where I felt like I knew the beat of it. I would walk past the Tavern when it was open and I'd stop for ten minutes and have a chat with the security guard or have a cigarette with someone I knew in the pub.

My career grew while living near Kennington Lane. The Tavern is the only venue in London where I've performed so often over the years you can see my growth as an artist.

If you know your queer history, you can throw a penny from Kennington Lane and probably hit a legend. The Tavern is the oldest LGBTQ+ venue in the country and there have been some amazing performers there. Doing shows there was an education for me – when you're not trained as a performer, you learn in the clubs. I miss living there. Kennington Lane was really foundational for me. Long live The Royal Vauxhall Tavern! ■ *Interview by Paula Akpan*

→ 'Overflow' by Travis Alabanza is at The Bush Theatre. Dec 8-22.

Explore more of the city at [timeout.com/thingstodo](https://www.timeout.com/thingstodo)



READY-MADE SUNDAY

# Jamz Supernova's Crystal Palace

The BBC Radio 1Xtra DJ, record label founder and south Londoner on her ideal way to round off the week



Crystal Palace Park Market

- 10am** ● **Explore nature**  
I go to **South Norwood Country Park** most weekends with my dog. It's a big space with a woodland and lots of trails. I go along the lake and the side streams, through the brambles. You can have a good walk in there.
- 11am** ● **Go for brunch**  
It's technically in Penge, but I love the **Blue Belle Cafe**. I've been going there for years with my mum. It's run by a lovely couple. The full english and mackerel hash are my favourites.
- 1pm** ● **Stock up**  
**Crystal Palace Park Market** only launched in September and it's so nice. You can get organic fruit and veg, cheese and meat. Local

breweries sell beer, wine and gin, and there's hot food.

- 4pm** ● **Hunt for trinkets**  
There are lots of independent shops at **Crystal Palace triangle**. I like Mrs Robinson. It sells loads of homeware that you don't really need, like bronze lamps and pineapple ice buckets, but I always end up buying something.

- 6pm** ● **Have a pub roast**  
I think **The Alma** does the best roast in Crystal Palace. I'd have beef, but there are good veggie options too. They don't scrimp on the vegetables or the yorkshire puddings – they're the size of your face. ■  
→ Check out Jamz Supernova's record label Future Bounce at [futurebounce.bandcamp.com](http://futurebounce.bandcamp.com)

## WORD ON THE STREET

Overheard something weird?  
Tweet us #wordonthestreet  
[@timeoutlondon](https://twitter.com/timeoutlondon)

'I once sat on a Christmas ham all the way to Nottingham.'

**'Argh, I need a wee wee!'**

'What race of fish is a scampi?'

**'I'll put my location in your destination.'**

'I'm sweating too much, I'm starting to smell of weed.'

**'Who actually likes prawn sandwiches? They're unsettling in the mouth.'**

'It wasn't around my fanny, I was just fanning around.'

**'Imagine having to curtsy to your mum.'**

'Don't worry about desktop, desktop is dead.'

**'Rishi Sunak was serving beer in my dream last night. What does that mean?'**

'Right, is a scotch egg a substantial meal or not?'

Overheard something weird?  
Tweet us #wordonthestreet  
[@timeoutlondon](https://twitter.com/timeoutlondon)

## LONDON MAKERS

Soap in a can? You betcha. East London-based **KanKan** makes chic toiletries with eco-packaging, including cans and refillable 'forever bottles'. This month, snap up its limited-edition collaboration with London designer Supermundane.

→ The Super Starter, £36. [www.kankan.london](http://www.kankan.london)



JAMZ SUPERNOVA, MAHAMELA, CRYSTAL PALACE PARK MARKET; AZUJ MORALES; KANKAN; ANDY PARSONS



## MOST GOOGLED Why are there so many foxes in London?



**URBAN FOXES ARE** a familiar sight in London. They wake us up with screeches in the night, and getting spooked by an orange streak darting out of a hedge on a tipsy walk home is practically a rite of passage. They've even been spotted in the choir stalls at St Paul's Cathedral. But why does the capital have so many of the red mammals roaming its streets?

'The red fox started appearing in cities following World War I,' explains Mathew Frith, director of conservation at the London Wildlife Trust. 'New transport systems allowed people to work in one place and live in another, and suburban housing was built in once rural areas. Foxes quickly adapted, taking advantage of the food and shelter in these new, relatively large gardens.'

The trust estimates there are around 10,000 foxes living in London at the moment and in certain boroughs they're more



common than in the surrounding countryside. As foxes have become used to sharing their habitats with humans, they've spread into the centre of the city. 'The number of foxes drawn to urban living is thought to have increased significantly in the last three decades,' says Frith. 'There are now very few areas of London where they aren't present.'

But city living isn't without risks: 60 percent of the fox population dies in traffic each year. Despite this, the number of foxes in London seems to remain constant, and London life has its perks. 'There can be more opportunities for food and shelter in cities than in the countryside,' says Frith. Maybe our plucky pals have got a taste now for stale sourdough and vegan fried chicken. ■ *El Hunt*

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# THIS YEAR SUCKED. NEXT YEAR WON'T.\*

\* As long as you subscribe to our newsletter and be the first to know about openings, offers and all sorts of tasty London tidbits. Sign up at [timeout.com/london-signup](https://www.timeout.com/london-signup)

## TimeOut

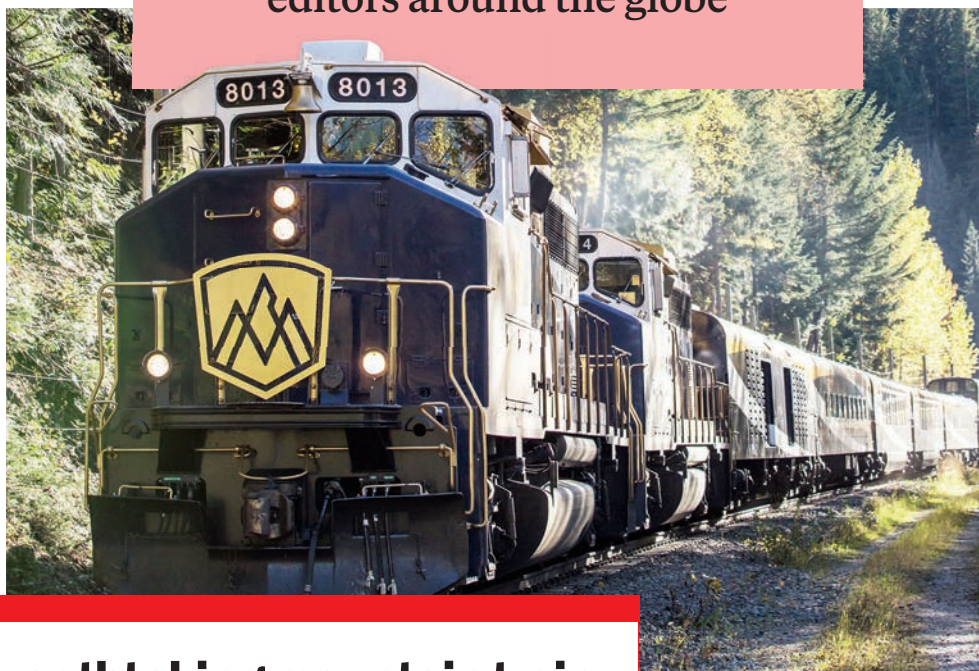


Edited by James Manning  
timeout.com/travel @timeouteverywhere



# YOUR WORLD ACCORDING TO TIME OUT

The best stories from our editors around the globe



## This breathtaking mountain train will make 2021 proper scenic

### USA

It's not every day we're cock-a-hoop at the announcement of a new rail line. But here we are, rejoicing at the news of a new glass-domed train that will take passengers on a two-day trip from Denver, Colorado to Moab, Utah, passing through the stunning Rocky Mountains and stopping at the thermal resort of Glenwood Springs. The latest

venture from operator Rocky Mountaineer (which already operates three famous routes in Canada) will launch next August, with luxury carriages and catering. Fares start at \$1,250: pricy, yes, but if you've got an overdue honeymoon or a big birthday, this is one hell of a way to spend it. *Anna Rahmanan, Time Out USA*  
→ [www.rockymountaineer.com](http://www.rockymountaineer.com)

### WORLDWIDE

## You (yes, you) may have the world's sexiest accent

Britain has bloody loads of accents, from cockney to Weegie to Brumtastic. But whatever 'a British accent' actually means, it's officially very sexy, according to our latest Time Out Index survey. We asked more than 37,000 people in 30-plus countries which accent they found hottest, and British accents took a whacking 25 percent of the vote, beating French and Italian (for real). Most Brits, though, said that Irish accents were the fittest. Call it the Connell Effect. *James Manning*

TRAIN: ROCKY MOUNTAINEER; HONG KONG: TUNG CHEUNG / SHUTTERS TOOK; FACE MASK: TUDLAT / @NEWSFROMTUDLAT

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**UK**  
**Soak the pain away in this actual mulled-wine hot tub**

The sweet, cinnamon scent of mulled wine is a comforting Christmas regular. But what if you could actually bathe in it? Turns out one spa in Cheshire is already on the case: throughout December, Shrigley Hall is offering guests a soak in a scented, wine-filled hot tub, a frankincense massage and a cinnamon body scrub, plus, of course, a snifter or two to actually drink. We're feeling merry already. *Huw Oliver*  
 → [www.spaseekers.com](https://www.spaseekers.com)



**HONG KONG**  
**Hong Kong is the world's most expensive city... again**

You may think London is pricey, with its £6 pints that you can only drink if you also order an £8 scotch egg. But that's nothing in the grand scheme of things. The latest Worldwide Cost of Living report by the Economist Intelligence Unit has named the world's most expensive city right now – or, we should say, *cities*. Paris, Zurich and Hong Kong are all equally spenny, apparently, with London only at number 20. And of those three, HK has already been named the most expensive city once this year, in June's Mercer Cost of Living Survey. So maybe not the place for a budget trip, no matter how much you love dim sum. *JM*



**FRANCE**  
**A Parisian street artist is framing and shaming facemask-discarders**

Like you, French street artist Toolate has been wondering why people are throwing facemasks in the street. Unlike you (probably), he's turned vigilante. Last month, Toolate collected 50 dirty masks, individually framed them and put them up on walls around the city, each with the gallery-style caption 'Voici l'oeuvre d'un connard': 'Here Is the Work of a Dickhead'. It's 4D chess, art-style. *Time Out Paris editors*  
 → [www.instagram.com/newsfrontoolate](https://www.instagram.com/newsfrontoolate)



**MALDIVES**  
**You could live in a Maldives bungalow for a whole year**

New year, new pad? Well, how about the almost comically luxurious overwater bungalows (ie, built on stilts above the sea) of the Maldives? Resort Anantara Veli launched an offer last month for unlimited bungalow residency from January to December 2021, with a price tag that works out at £63 a night – less than a one-bed in the posher bits of London. You also get unlimited wifi, breakfast for two every day and transfers to the capital city, Male, whenever you need. Okay, there may be some visa issues to work out. Also, you have to pay up front and there's no kitchen. But just think: white sand, blue seas and... hammocks! ■ *JM*  
 → [www.anantara.com](https://www.anantara.com)



# Christmassy things that cost a Londoner nothing

Virtual concerts, public light installations, pretty walks and more. This is your guide to getting a big old dose of the festives for free. Illustration *Sebastian Schwamm*

## 1 Do a big bike ride of all the Christmas trees in central London

What's more fun than casting a judging eye over lovely things people have lovingly created to celebrate a lovely part of the year? Not much, really. So, go on, grab a pen and get your most organised friend to make an over-complicated scoresheet. Then head out together on a tour of central London's big-ass and big-budget Christmas trees. Start with Coal Drops Yard's new-fangled terrarium-inspired one (made of 70 glass micro-gardens), then make your way past the chubby Covent Garden 60-footer before finishing in Trafalgar Square, home to the extremely tall

and wonky boy we are gifted from Norway every single year. → Multiple locations.

## 2 Have a brief spiritual moment on the internet

Get in touch with the so-called 'true meaning of Christmas' by tuning into a free live-streamed service from St Paul's Cathedral this year. That's right: God's gone virtual, baby! 'A Celebration of Christmas' will air via the famous cathedral's social-media accounts on December 17 and will be sponsored by the famously holy Lloyds Bank. The lads at big Paul's promise a) words and b) music that'll help you mark this special time of year with all the pomp it deserves. (You'll get a

cheeky free glimpse of the beautiful interior too.) For more religion, less bank affiliation, tune into one of the cathedral's advent services on Twitter through December. → [www.stpauls.co.uk](http://www.stpauls.co.uk)

## 3 Hang around in Harrods for a bit just to feel something

Close your eyes. Imagine thick, glorious boughs of holly, streams of light-reflecting tinsel and shiny presents tied with bows. Imagine the smell of cinnamon, hot chocolate and fresh-cut wreaths. Imagine giant piles of toys, hampers full of luxurious food and... some Burberry-clad child called Milly or Miles screaming for their nanny

to buy them a massive teddy. That's what standing in Harrods or Fortnum's gets you: 100 percent unfiltered Christmas feels, served with a side of awful kids to give you something decent to bitch to your friends about in this gossipless year. It's exactly the little pick-me-up we all need in 2020. Use wisely. → 87-135 Brompton Rd.

## 4 Spend an afternoon in one of London's pretty village bits

Plan a day hanging out in Christmas movie London. The one where Hugh Grant, Keira Knightley and Colin Firth spend a lot of their screen time in December, saying things like 'gosh' and 'goodness'



Harrods



£0.00



and 'oh, that's terribly nice of you'. You know the bits: pretty houses with stucco fronts, stores that sell only wooden children's toys. The best spot for this vibe? Notting Hill. There you'll stumble upon 27 St Luke's Mews, the place where Mark awkwardly declares his love on cue cards in 'Love Actually'. Stop by The Churchill Arms while you're there. It's a pub that's decorated with row upon row of Christmas trees strewn with thousands of lights every year (see p6). Magical stuff.

→ Multiple locations.

### 5 Meet the deer in Richmond Park

Did you know that Richmond Park is one of David Attenborough's favourites? You can understand why: this vast expanse of field and woods in south-west London contains everything from a semi-secret Victorian flower garden (the Isabella Plantation) to a big hill that you can see as far as St Paul's from. But the best thing about it? The red and fallow deer. They've lived there since 1625. That's when Charles I brought his court to Richmond Palace to escape the plague (the OG one) and got the deer to come along too. When you spot them pottering about on a frosty day, it's about as Christmassy a view as London has. No word yet as to whether they're distant relatives of Rudolph and his crew, but we're sure the results of their 23andMe tests will come in any day now.

→ Richmond Park.



## Free Christmas

### 6 Take a walk down London's most Christmassy street

Strolling down Lower Morden Lane in December is like downing a bottle of neat Christmas spirit. The residents of the south London road have decked out their houses in OTT decorations for more than 20 years. We're talking American suburb decorations – big inflatable santas, light-up reindeer, massive baubles. It's got so good at glowing up that people come all the way from bloody Portsmouth to visit. If you want to take a look too, know that the houses are free to peer at but the event is a fundraiser for St Raphael's Hospice, so it's good to cough up a couple of pounds if you can. Probably best not to mention electricity bills to any of the locals either.

→ Lower Morden Lane.

### 7 Peruse pretty snowscapes at the National Gallery

For all the white stuff with none of the tube cancellations, pay a visit to the many snowstorms in the National Gallery's permanent collection. Start with Hendrick Avercamp's cockle-warming 'A Winter Scene with Skaters Near a Castle' (room 25). Then visit room 44 for Camille Pissarro's 'Fox Hill, Upper Norwood', a slushy scene that looks towards Crystal Palace, over the hill, just out of view. End with Caspar David Friedrich's existential 'Winter Landscape' in room 45. It features a gothic church looming over the horizon and a forlorn Tiny Tim figure sat on a rock, having abandoned his crutches to pray for salvation. Ahh, festive cheer!

→ Trafalgar Square.

### 8 Go see the decorations in Piccadilly's arcades

Oxford Street and Carnaby Street might grab most of the London Christmas lights switch-on headlines every year. (And, fair play, they have had the likes of the Spice Girls and Kylie Minogue pop by to do it.) But there are far nicer twinklers to check out in our city. The real treats can be found in the Burlington and Piccadilly Arcades. These glazed streets run off Piccadilly in the West End and have been home to quaintly posh stores for more than a hundred years. Strolling through them now



South Bank

is like stepping into a glossy period drama adaptation of London's past.

→ Piccadilly and Burlington Arcades.

### 9 Plan a day trip to see the firs in King's Wood in Kent

Sure, that Christmas tree you've got in your kitchen-lounge is pretty. Good height, Decent girth. Looks great with those knowing novelty 'Tiger King' baubles you bought from Stoke Newington Church Street to gussy it up. But isn't it sad that, here in London, we only ever see firs in captivity? Every year we cut them off from their roots and drag them into our tiny flats to die alone. Wouldn't it, for once, be nice to see them frolicking (metaphorically) in the wild habitats where they belong? Well, you can, if you go on a day trip to King's Wood in Kent:

1,500 acres of former royal hunting forest, dotted with sculpture trails. It's roughly an hour and a half's drive from London's true centre (M&M's World) and offers hundreds of opportunities to see Christmas trees chilling with their families and friends in the wild.

→ Ashford, Kent.

### 10 Wander along the South Bank

It's one of those things that people who live in not-London imagine Londoners must do all the time. 'Just a little wander down the South Bank, maybe go up the Oxo Tower then dinner at Zizzi!!!' And, to be honest, why don't we? Strolling along the South Bank on a December evening is hella festive. There are the smells of mulled wine and roasted nuts. There's the twinkling of lights on the nearby bridges and their reflections in the Thames. This year it's all even Christmassy-er thanks to 'Winter Light': a series of glowing artworks commissioned by the Southbank Centre.

→ 'Winter Light'. Southbank Centre. Until Feb 28 2021.

### 11 Go to a Christmas market

The pandemic might have claimed office Christmas parties, New Year's Eve and our happiness, but one thing it hasn't swallowed up is window shopping. There's a handful of free-entry Crimbo markets still running this festive season. Perhaps Selfridges' mews-side one (with fairground rides, gift stalls, street food and a 'tunnel of light' installation) might be for you? Maybe you'd rather support local creatives at Pexmas Emporium (a feast of stocking fillers at Copeland Park). If it's raining? Greenwich's indoor night market, running on Wednesdays through December, offers all things handmade and eco-friendly. Whichever you pick, may



Christmas Winter Village at Battersea Power Station



Gratis!



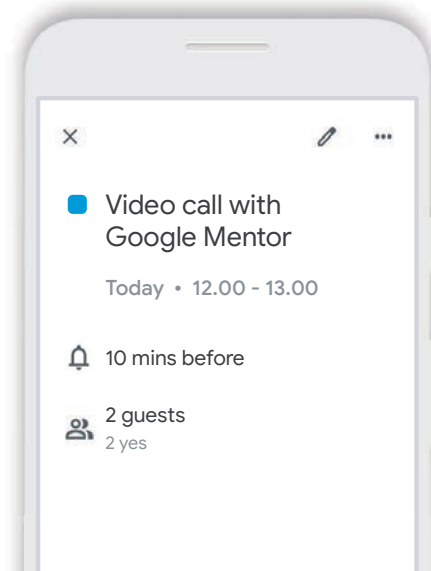


Mahdis Moghadam, owner of Piacere restaurant, London

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## Free Christmas



we recommend taking your richest loved one and pointing out things, saying 'Oh, isn't that nice! I wish I could buy it to put my monstera in!' before running off 'to the toilet' to give them time to buy it.

→ Multiple locations.

### 12 Witness a living advent calendar in Walthamstow

Back in 2015, a community art project was launched in Whitehall Park, Highgate. The plan was for 24 volunteers to turn their front windows into a giant neighbourhood-wide advent calendar. On each day of December a household would illuminate their window with a pretty design. The aim? To make both volunteers and passers-by feel part of a community and less lonely at a difficult time of the year. (A sentiment that's needed in 2020 more than ever.) The project



Advent calendar window

is still running and has been joined by another living advent calendar this year in Walthamstow – with windows due to light up on Winns Terrace, Brighton Avenue, Hove Avenue and Camden Road. See how many windows you can spot.

→ Multiple locations.

### 13 Attend a virtual carol concert

Absolute West End head? Here's a treat for you. The stars of shows like, 'The Lion King', 'Mary Poppins' and more are coming together to put on a virtual Christmas singalong on December 11 for movement disorder charity Naomi's Garden. Meanwhile, you can catch a glimpse of the beautiful Lambeth Palace while streaming its concert 'A Starry Night' on December 15. Expect appearances from the English National Opera Choir and

the Male London Welsh Rugby Choir. Disclaimer: you're going to want to donate some money to the organisers because, while they are free, they are also fundraisers.

→ Tickets for both available via Eventbrite.

### 14 Have a moment of peace and quiet in Croydon

Christmas can be an overwhelming time in a normal year. Add to that the whole pandemic thing and it's no wonder many Londoners are feeling frazzled. Want to counter that? Take part in Peace in the Park at Croydon's Coombe Wood Gardens. It's a season of walking, sharing and guided meditations in the forest with a little tree-hugging thrown in too.

→ Coombe Wood Gardens. Every Wed until Jan 6 2021. Tickets available via Eventbrite.

### 15 Go to a pop-up like it's the old times

What would Christmas in London be without a gaudy pop-up? This year's big ones have been canned. But do not fear. Winter Village is landing at Battersea Power Station. There you can stroll through 100 Christmas trees before having a chill on a jetty by the Thames. Wavy Garms is also putting on its XXXmas PopUp in Walker's Court in Soho. It's an option if you're less keen on firs, more keen on Sports Banger and posh teenagers in vintage tracksuits. ■

→ Multiple venues.



Find fun that costs money at [timeout.com/christmas](https://www.timeout.com/christmas)

BURLINGTON ARCADE: ZUMA PRESS INC./ALAMY; ADVENT WINDOW: BRIGIT COLLINS



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**CALL: 0800 055 79 47**  
**VISIT: [centrepoin\*\*t\*\*.org.uk/help](https://www.centrepoin<b>t</b>.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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# How to keep London music live and kicking

With most of London's nightlife venues shuttered, *Alexandra Sims* shares a handy guide on how to support this beloved part of our city's culture

## Don't just think about it, do something about it



DJ and radio presenter *Sherelle* tells us what we can do to support London nightlife, now and in the future

'The UK music industry is worth a lot of money – £5.2 billion a year – but more than that, live music makes you feel beautiful. There's nothing better than being in a room full of likeminded people dancing to the same sound. People come from all around the world to London nights and events: that's really rare and we have to protect it.

'One of the saviours at the moment is Bandcamp. Every first

Friday of the month, they waive their fees, which means artists get 100 percent of the money from selling tracks or merch. It's a way to support artists whether they're really established or up-and-coming. It's been a huge help for a lot of people. It's meant they can pay their rent, buy food or even just release another EP.

Going to safe, Covid-secure events [when it's allowed] is another way to support artists you love.

'One of the beautiful things that's happened during Covid is people coming together to support their favourite spaces, like The Cause or Five Miles. If you can, contribute to crowdfunding raising money for venues you don't want to lose. I think a lot of people took clubbing for granted before and

now we need communities to come together to make sure music venues don't end up in the hands of greedy property developers.

'Covid has shown we need to make clubbing more inclusive in the future. Amazing London nights like Pxssy Palace and BBZ have been calling for more inclusivity for years, putting on nights that cater for people with disabilities and getting all sorts of uproar from saying Black Lives Matter. It's important to support nights like this in the future. I think we're going to have to rely on the goodness of local communities and collectives to get the music sector back on its feet.'

→ Go to @iamsherelle on Twitter for a list of Black producers, artists and Black-owned labels to support on Bandcamp.



Pxssy Palace

## SIT-DOWN PARTIES

### Squirt

Expect filthy good drag and disco at Little Gay Brother's Christmas party. → Colour Factory. Dec 11-13. From £14.30.

### Craig Charles Funk & Soul Club

A day set from Charles. Plus barbecue – a 'substantial meal' with your order of funk. → Brixton Courtyard. Dec 12. From £10.

### Godfathers of Garage Xmas Party

DJ Norris 'Da Boss' Windross and MC Creed will be spinning two-step and mid-tempo beats. → The Cause. Dec 24. £25-£35.



## Buy good merch

Help your fave venue stay open and look tremendously cool while you're at it. Win-win!

### Face masks VFD

Lyall Hakaraia, the owner of this Dalston LGBTQ+ joint, is hand-stitching a slew of colourful face masks. The profits from every mask bought will go towards the club. Think what a sad place Dalston would be if we lost the famous penis mural in VFD's loos.  
→ From £15. [www.vfdalston.com](http://www.vfdalston.com)



### Zippo lighter The Crobar

Soho's heavy metal haunt announced its permanent closure this summer by tweeting a picture of a tombstone with the words 'Crobar Soho. Killed by landlords. June 2020. RIP'. Say it ain't so, by helping it fundraise for a new venue for it to call home.  
→ £20. [www.crobar.merchdirect.co.uk](http://www.crobar.merchdirect.co.uk)



### T-shirt and poster The Cause

The DIY club is one of a few that carried on partying this year thanks to its huge beer garden. Show your appreciation for its efforts to keep us socialising by buying one of its optimistic tees.  
→ Donation reward. [www.crowdfunder.co.uk/savethecause](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/savethecause)



### Prints The Dublin Castle

Whack one of these brilliant Henry/Bragg limited-edition risograph prints on your wall and wistfully remember what it was like to listen to future rock stars in the buzzing back room of The Dublin Castle. Aah, 2019: the good old days.  
→ £18. [www.henrybragg.com/prints](http://www.henrybragg.com/prints)



### Record Cafe Oto

There aren't many places in London where you can watch gigs by experimental underground artists you've never heard of. Don't let the sun go down on this pioneering spot by supporting its in-house label.  
→ Matana Roberts & Pat Thomas LP. £18. [www.cafeoto.co.uk/shop](http://www.cafeoto.co.uk/shop)



## Go misty-eyed about the worst bits of gig-going

What we wouldn't give to have our old bugbears back. Illustration *Rami Niemi*

**1** The unfathomably long queue for the women's loos. You work out that, given the ticket price, it's costing you 43p a minute to stand in line. \*Cough\* Printworks \*cough\*.

**2** Titchy outdoor smoking areas, overseen by security guards who are constantly shouting about how the shivering masses are not arranging themselves in a manner befitting the regulations.

**3** There's an actual medical condition called Brixton Academy Neck-Crick, brought on by having to repeatedly switch your attention between the stage to your rear and the gaze-avoiding bartenders ahead of you. PLEASE, PLEASE LOOK AT ME, MAN.

**4** Screwfaced, streetwear lads posing in the dead zone between bar and crowd. They're scowling at anyone within a spilling radius of their Off-White Jordan 4s. Seen a gig at 93 Feet East? You've seen this lot.

**5** Tuborg: Carling's sickly, Soviet cousin. Only ever spotted in London's lower-mid-tier live venues, and in rundown Zone 3 cornershops with buzzy fridges lined with mouse poo. Anyway, yep, three of those again please, barkeep.

**6** That bit at the back of Ally Pally's long, flat, endless space, where you're only able to see the show through the raised-aloft phone screen of the person in front of you.

**7** PA systems are invariably either underpowered or overpowered. You're perhaps familiar with east London festivals at which grime MCs perform through what sound like clock-radio speakers.

**8** If you've spent any time at the Roundhouse, you'll know the fidgety frustration of finding



yourself squished behind a huge pillar, your view of the stage entirely obscured. Adding insult to injury, you're likely to be trapped next to a non-stop heavy-petting couple.

**9** Taking their cues from circa-2008 Clarkson are the obnoxious bozos who will loudly deride anyone taking pics or videos on their phones.

**10** A hugely intimidating and morbidly sad cloakroom attendant. Brrr.

**11** More stairs than seems plausible, given the size and shape of this venue, and the number of storeys within it. Each of the 47 staircases is seemingly designed to be as treacherous as possible – and, as a fun bonus, security will yell at you if you linger on one for so much as a millisecond. (Key example? Koko.)

**12** A harrowing ale guff with a 25-person blast radius. A fart almost certainly farted by a sheepish man now feigning head-nodding. *Joe Madden*

### GOOD GIGS THIS MONTH

#### Mystery Jets

The lads from Eel Pie Island will be breaking out nostalgic tracks, as well as new material at this socially distanced, seated show.

→ Clapham Grand. Dec 19. From £23.

#### Live Jazz on the Canal

Mercury-nominated double bassist Rio Kai leads a jazz quartet on Grow Hackney's canalside terrace. Fill your ears with saxes.

→ Grow Hackney. Every Wed and Thu. £5.

#### Chamber Music on Wednesdays

String group Artisti con Brio were one of the first to start welcoming audiences back for concerts this year.

→ Candid Arts Trust. Dec 9. £15.

## Get really into local radio

There's a whole load of top shows happening on indie stations in our city. Tune in

#### The unadulterated dance one

An NTS OG, London DJ **Moxie** (aka Alice Moxom) has had a regular slot on the Hackney online station since it launched. Beaming out the hottest in London dance music the show's success is down to Moxie's expertise. She delivers cutting-edge selections with knowledgeable passion and is a sucker for big vocal hooks, so there's chance for a singalong.

→ NTS. Every Wed, 3pm. [www.nts.live](http://www.nts.live)

#### The one for hepcats

Hosted by Darrel Sheinman (owner of Gearbox Records, a label specialising in previously unreleased jazz), 'Gearbox Kissaten' is inspired by Japanese kissaten: Tokyo coffee shops where people go to sip java and listen to carefully

curated playlists. It's a deep dive into Sheinman's eclectic forager's brain, mining tracks from forgotten corners of jazz, blues, post-punk and folk.

→ Soho Radio. Dates and times vary. [www.sohoradiolondon.com](http://www.sohoradiolondon.com)

#### The one for post-punk purists

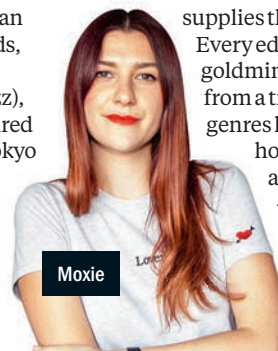
The breakfast show from Peckham-based station Balamii, 'Moonshakin' with Aidan Cowley', is packed full of fuzzy cuts of psyched-out new wave, leftfield and post-punk for you to enjoy with your cereal.

→ Balamii. First Thu of the month, 8am. [www.balamii.com](http://www.balamii.com)

#### The one for brand new music

Nothing beats that feeling of discovering tunes you can show off to your friends and colleagues, and **Shay Sade's** fortnightly show on Brixton-based Represent Radio supplies them in bucketloads. Every edition is a veritable goldmine of future bangers from a trove of worldwide genres like South African house music, UK trap and baile funk.

→ Represent. Every other Sat, 2pm. [www.represent.org.uk](http://www.represent.org.uk)



Moxie

## Live music

# Learn how to stan from a distance

Art Doherty has been obsessed with Charli XCX for four years. They give their three top tips for being a far-away fan

## Channel big night out energy in your flat

Want to have a mad one at home? Grace Goslin, DJ at virtual club night Queer House Party, reveals the best way to do it

**'Change clothes.** If you're at a three-hour Zoom DJ set, get you and your household to try a new lewk every hour. It'll feel like there's three times the number of people in the room.'

**'Wear an iconic outfit.** At home you can wear whatever you want and no one's going to say anything. For me, it usually involves arseless chaps.'

**'Get LED lights.** I bought some in lockdown. I like the purple setting. It gives my room GAY-Late vibes. All that's missing? £3 doubles.'

**'If you're drinking, stock up on lots of booze.** I usually go for prosecco or make Margaritas. Anything to make it feel like you've got a bar.'

**'Pull out some wacky dance moves to get spotlighted at a Zoom party.** A twerk always wins or a collaborative routine with housemates.'

**'A night out should always finish with a hearty meal.** Order a greasy pizza or McDonald's to your house to get that post-club takeaway feeling.'

→ [www.facebook.com/queerhouseparty](https://www.facebook.com/queerhouseparty). Queer House Party is free, but donations are welcome.

### Show up for them

'I stayed up until 3am to watch Charli's album-release party on Zoom. My friends did too and we all dressed up. I was sitting in the living room with my dogs wearing the same crazy metallic eyeliner Charli wears and a sparkly crop top. I dyed my hair blue specially.'

### Open your wallet

'Charli did a Boiler Room set that was a charity fundraiser for homelessness in LA and she brought out an exclusive merchandise range especially. I bought two T-shirts. When she brought out "Vroom Vroom" on vinyl I got a copy of it, too.'

### Get busy on your socials

'A lot of K-pop stans reply to popular tweets with an edited video of their favourite K-pop idol to promote them. Some Beliebers load up Justin Bieber's music on Spotify and play his songs on mute so he gets higher streaming numbers.'

WORDS: ART DOHERTY; INTERVIEW: ANNIE LORD; LIP AND COMING INTERVIEWS: KATE SOLOMON; IMAGES: ART DOHERTY; ANDY PARSONS; MATT WILKINSON; SEBASTIAN KIM; ANEK; BEN JANSO

## Listen to up-and-coming artists

London music heads share how they're discovering new stuff while they're stuck indoors



### Erica Mckoy

Host of Worldwide FM's morning show

'I've gone back to the older ways I would find music when I couldn't get into clubs: digging through Bandcamp and tuning into the radio. If it's new music, I want a voice I can trust; I don't really get that from Spotify algorithms.'



### Matt Wilkinson

Host of 'The Matt Wilkinson Show' on Apple Music 1

'Scrolling around blogs, finding a weird one that a kid in Australia has about their local punk scene. Also playlists: search obscure terms and chances are someone's made a playlist of it.'



### Mnek

Popstar and songwriter

'Always on my social media: if it's not on my Twitter timeline, it's gonna pop up on my Instagram. Or even just by scraping through YouTube and being drawn to the suggestions Google so conveniently throws my way!'



### Tara Joshi

Music editor, gal-dem

'I like leaving SoundCloud on autoplay, listening to radio (especially NTS and foundation.fm) and pretending I'm much younger than I am and braving Tik-Tok. I've got music nerd mates who send me stuff they like too.'



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## Candlelight Concerts

**What is it?** An atmospheric performance of some of the world's greatest classical pieces.

**Why go?** To be blown away by the majestic music of Beethoven, Brahms, Saint-Saëns and more. Plus, you've got the added ambience of one of London's most magnificent churches.

**Wait, how much?** From just £15.

→ St James's Piccadilly. ↻ Green Park. Dec 11.

[www.timeout.com/candlelightconcert](http://www.timeout.com/candlelightconcert)



## Driving experience day

**What is it?** Three, six or nine laps around a racetrack in either a sports car, a muscle car or a supercar.

**Why go?** So you can live every petrolhead's dream and release your inner Vin Diesel in a truly epic motor (we'd recommend wearing a white tank top for the full experience). There are ten tracks available (plus the Top Gear one, for an extra £20).

**Wait, how much?** Experiences start at only £19 for three laps.

→ [www.timeout.com/drivingday](http://www.timeout.com/drivingday)

## Yuu Kitchen

**What is it?** Desserts, small bites, bao and bottomless booze for just £20.

**Why go?** For 90 minutes of flavoursome goodness. We're talking fluffy bao buns, crispy veg and succulent meats, washed down with an endless stream of beer or prosecco. Oh, and if you're somehow still hungry after all that, there are unlimited churros, too. Tasty.

**Wait, how much?** £20 for the whole shebang (it's normally £50, fyi).

→ [Yuu Kitchen. www.timeout.com/yuuneedthis](http://Yuu Kitchen. www.timeout.com/yuuneedthis)

## Body Essential

**What is it?** A one-hour Dermalogica facial in Spitalfields.

**Why go?** Because your face is damned attractive, so we'd say it's earned some proper TLC. Plus, Dermalogica is one of the best in the biz when it comes to skin treatments and products – and this facial will be tailored specifically to the needs of your skin – so you know it'll be good.

**Wait, how much?** £35 all in.

→ [Body Essential. www.timeout.com/bodyessential](http://Body Essential. www.timeout.com/bodyessential)

## Leong's Legend

**What is it?** The glorious return of one of our all-time most-popular offers. Aka, unlimited dim sum and a glass of prosecco for only £22.

**Why go?** It's bottomless baskets of delicious dim sum, need we say more? Probably not, but it would look weird if we stopped now. Erm, so how's your day going? Good? Us too. And the page is done. Dim sum!

**Wait, how much?** Still just £22.

→ [Leong's Legend. www.timeout.com/dimsumdeal](http://Leong's Legend. www.timeout.com/dimsumdeal)

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# CHRISTMASSY Things to do in London

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



PAUL GROVER

Covent Garden is getting a daily dusting of snow this month. But, proceed with caution. Even fake snowfall can do giddy things to a person, just look at this woman publicly pirouetting at the sight of it. **See p27 for more.**

## More major art shows

### **C** Lynette Yiadom-Boakye: 'Fly in League with the Night'

English artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye is a remarkable painter. Thick and rough with the brush, but just precise enough. Her first major institutional exhibition in the UK is a mesmerizing world of portraits. And while they nod to the classics, every character here is imagined and Black. It's like Yiadom-Boakye has reshaped art history in her image, swapped the endless white faces of the portraits of the past for a small handful of Black ones. It's a simple but brutally powerful move.

→ Tate Britain. Until May 9 2021. £13.

### **C** 'Tantra: Enlightenment to Revolution'

Fancy a long tantric sesh at the British Museum? Pull your mind out of the gutter, now. This exhibition uncovers the truth about the tantras, sacred Indian texts from the sixth century that have had a dramatic impact on the major religions of South Asia. Expect centuries-worth of stunning objects, prints, sculptures and paintings.

→ British Museum. Until Jan 24 2021. £15.

### **C** Toyin Ojih Odutola: 'A Countervailing Theory'

For Nigerian-American artist Toyin Ojih Odutola, drawing is a form of storytelling. These new works, exhibited around the 90-metre sweep of the Barbican Curve, form part of an epic series relaying an imagined ancient myth. Become totally immersed in her world, gazing at her mega-sized portraits using pencil, pastel, ballpoint pen and charcoal. They're as delicate as they are beautiful.

→ Barbican Curve Gallery. Until 24 Jan 2021. Free.

## Christmas club nights

### **E** Mariah & Friendz: Queer Xmas

All we want for Christmas is to fill our weary lockdown eyes with glitter, drag and cabaret. Making our dreams come true is drag troupe Mariah & Friendz who are taking it upon themselves to save the season by spreading festive queer cheer in the form of high-octane lip-synchs,

circus and burlesque to the sounds of JLo, Nicki Minaj, Madonna and, of course, Mariah. In line with Tier 2 restrictions, guests must buy a 'substantial meal' before their drinks. But luckily, you'll be able to buy a 12-inch pizza for your bubble for less than a tequila shot.

→ Bethnal Green Working Men's Club. Dec 19-20. £25.

### **E** Squirt

Pump plenty of sanitiser onto those palms, because queer party starters Little Gay Brother's Christmas shindig will be packed with filthily good drag shows, eye-catching looks and perfectly pitched house and disco beats. In line with the times, this is a seated affair and a whip-cracking dominatrix will be prowling between the tables making sure no one crosses that two-metre distance, so watch your step.

→ Colour Factory. Dec 11-12. From £14.30.

## Ruin your Christmas at this devastating art exhibition

### **C** Tracey Emin/Edvard Munch: 'The Loneliness of the Soul'

Tracey Emin lies nude on a bed, weeping and bleeding. Her splintered body is spattered with red, caked in dripping bodily fluids. Opposite, Edvard Munch's women mirror Emin's poses



in soft watercolours, all staring empty into the distance. This exhibition of the Norwegian artist's paintings of nude women alongside Emin's own naked self-portraits is dark, harrowing and almost physically painful. Not a lot of laughs here, but a hell of a lot of feelings.

Munch's images are brutally morose. Every woman he paints is nude, every woman looks somehow broken. In 'Consolation', one cries into her hands while another tries to comfort her. Is it Munch's gaze that makes them all look so completely destroyed or were these women in pain already?

Regardless, you see the echo of their hurt in Emin's stunning paintings. But here the feelings

aren't filtered through someone else's eyes, they're all hers. That's what makes them hit you so damn hard. The great big washes of red, the deep, angry scrawls of black, the blue dripping like tears: she paints herself at her most vulnerable and with proper, exasperated, vicious anger. The whole thing is so incredibly raw and emotional, like walking in on a stranger crying.

And the thing is, these aren't shocking emotions, they're what we've all felt, we just hide them away and crack on with life. But Emin lets them bleed right out of her and on to the canvas. It's all too much, too bloody real.

The bronzes she's made are absolutely terrible, though. And hey, maybe it doesn't need the Munch works, maybe it would have been just as good if it was just three rooms of Emin's feelings. But either way, you leave with the suffocating blanket of Emin's heartache smothering you. It's not pleasant, it's not comfortable, but it is very, very, very good art. ■

Eddy Frankel

→ Royal Academy of Arts. Until Feb 28 2021. £17.

## For scrooges

### **C** Satanic Winter Fayre

Fed up of festive cheer? The Satanic Winter Fayre is taking Christmas back to its pre-Christian roots with this gathering of Saturnalian stalls. Shop taxidermy, dark arts and crafts, tarot, pyrography, witchy vintage



Winter Heights

clothes, and other macabre merch. The organisers say it's suitable for 'well-behaved familiars and imps'. The only satanic panic you have to worry about here is the rush of last-minute Christmas shoppers.

→ Orbital Comics. Dec 10. Free entry.

### **C** Wheel of the Year: Yule

While the rest of us pre-order turkey and drag spruces into our living rooms, witches are busy prepping for Yule: a holiday dedicated to honouring the season of dark and cold and looking forward to the coming of the sun. To learn more about the ancient festival, join this online class from occult bookshop Treadwell's where Wiccan priestess Rebecca Beattie will give the lowdown on how witches mark Yule. It's only a matter of time before you're swapping that sage stuffing for a 'cleansing' sage burning ritual.

→ Dec 14. £20. www.treadwells-london.com

# Christmassy hang-outs

## S Nordic Spirit Wonderland

London's og Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park may be on pause, but there are plenty of other 'Christmas experiences' making a scaled-down appearance this year. This Nordic-themed winter wonderland will have pine trees, open fire pits and 'winter-themed street food' (aka 'stuff covered in cheese'). What makes it Nordic? Well, it'll have wooden cabins made from Scandi materials, and a green projection to mimic the experience of sitting beneath the Northern Lights. Just like the real thing...

→ Vauxhall Food & Beer Garden. Until Dec 31. £180 for six guests.

## C Covent Garden Market

Nordic Spirit Wonderland isn't the only pop-up bringing man-made natural wonders to London. Covent Garden's piazza will get a daily dusting of snow in December thanks to a couple of snow machines pumping out sustainable white flakes. Add to that 115,000 twinkling lights, glossy mistletoe chandeliers and a 60-foot Christmas tree and you've got a scene straight out of 'The Snowman'. It's SO Christmassy it'll even be holding London's first ever mulled wine festival this weekend.

→ Covent Garden Market. Until Jan 3 2021. Snowfall takes place daily, on the hour, from 12 noon-6pm. Mulled Wine Festival. Dec 10-13. Free entry.

## C Winter Heights

As if to make up for all the staples of London Christmas that have been toppled this year, a new winter-ready spot is opening up in London Bridge. The outdoor rooftop bar sat on the top of a six-storey office block will have 360-degree panoramic views of the city, as well as 12-foot pine trees, live DJs, hot cocktails, food from Borough Market and – get this – bottomless fondue. Head along after dark to see the bright lights of the big city lit up around you. Plus, being outside and all, you'll be able to drink and hang out with five other people who you don't actually live with. A Christmas miracle.

→ Colechurch House. Until Jan 3 2021. £17.50-£25.



# Lovely ballads

## S Diane Chorley: 'Ding Dong Merrily Diane'

When Time Out asked Diane Chorley earlier this year why the world needed a return of the '80s nightclub icon and so-called 'Duchess of Canvey' right now, she said: 'Cos it's bleeding armageddon and the world needs a tasty little disco beat.' Well, precisely. Cast the last dastardly nine months out of your mind and fill it with this sequin-filled festive singalong instead, as the Duchess and her band, The Buffet, put on an old-fashioned evening of ballads and sordid '80s nightclub gossip.

→ Clapham Grand. Dec 11. £23.



Diane Chorley

DIANE CHORLEY: CHRIS MASS; GREENWICH MARKET: MIYOLA ROMANOVSKY; SHUTTERSTOCK; LOWER STABLE: JOHN STURROCK

## THREE OF THE BEST

# Xmas markets



## S Greenwich Christmas Market

Greenwich's ancient streets look straight out of a 'A Christmas Carol' come December. Soak it all up while buying handmade gifts and tasty produce at this market in the shadow of the Cutty Sark.

→ Cutty Sark Gardens. Every Sat and Sun until Dec 20.



## N Lower Stable Street Christmas Market

Coal Drops Yard's Christmas market will forgo the usual stocking fillers for books, tees, and zines from Kold Sauce, Quality of Life, XFEL and They Made This.

→ Coal Drops Yard. Until Dec 20. Free entry.



## E Hackney Christmas Market

Bohemia Place's regular market goes fully festive in December selling seasonal treats and gifts with a decidedly east London spin. Think vegan street food, ethical, zero-waste Christmas decorations and craft mulled wine.

→ Bohemia Place. Dec 12-13, 19-20. Free entry.

Ten  
ways  
to

# help people experiencing homelessness this Christmas



Now, more than ever, those without permanent homes need our help...

**A**s the cold draws in and the nights get longer, life becomes even more difficult for those experiencing homelessness. Shelter estimates that a shocking 280,000 people were homeless in England in 2019. Covid-19 also puts this vulnerable population at even greater risk – and could cause more to become homeless. Together with HSBC UK, we'll show you how you can make a difference, whether it's by donating, volunteering or shopping at charities. You'll also find out about how HSBC UK is working to support those experiencing homeless with its No Fixed Address Service.



## 1 Gift some Emergency Chocolate

Treat your sweet-toothed friend to a chocolate bar that helps to fight the housing emergency. Shelter – one of HSBC UK's key charity partners – offers five delicious flavours: hazelnut and almond milk, white and milk, plus two vegan options (extra dark and sea salt dark). Each bar is £5 and all proceeds go back to Shelter, which supports millions of people every year struggling with bad housing and homelessness. Buy yours now at [www.shelter.org.uk/chocolate](http://www.shelter.org.uk/chocolate).



## Advertisement feature

### 2 Take Sadiq's lead

During Covid-19, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, opened hotels across the capital for more than 1,700 rough sleepers so they were able to self-isolate and receive the care they required. Khan also launched the city's first ever Rough Sleeping Plan of Action, and is inviting Londoners to take action to help end homelessness. Go to [www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk) to donate to the London Homeless Collective (which is comprised of 29 fantastic charities) or take a look at the volunteer positions available.

### 3 Treat a young person to a Christmas dinner

Centrepoint offers rooms, training, mentoring and medical care to vulnerable young people – this year it estimates that 23,000 young lives could be at risk. You can help bring a little festive cheer into their lives by buying someone a Christmas dinner for just £10. Visit [www.centrepont.org.uk](http://www.centrepont.org.uk).

### 4 Alert StreetLink to those in need

Spotted an adult sleeping rough in the capital? Tell StreetLink about it and volunteers will find them and offer support. You can do this via [www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk) or by phoning **0300 500 0914**.

### 5 Join The Big Walk

No doubt you've walked a lot more this year – why not keep it up to raise money for Shelter? Sign up to The Big Walk and pledge to walk either 3, 5 or 10km from December 7 to 13. Choose your route, ask some friends to donate, then boom: Shelter is a step closer to ending homelessness. Enter now at [thebigwalk.shelter.org.uk](http://thebigwalk.shelter.org.uk).

### 6 Host a virtual sleep out

Most of us are lucky enough to have not experienced the reality of sleeping on the streets. East London-based charity Providence Row is working to help those who are sleeping rough with its Virtual Sleep Out. You'll pledge to sleep away from your bed (at home) for one night and ask friends and family to sponsor you. Sign up now at [www.providencerow.org.uk](http://www.providencerow.org.uk).

### 7 Join the kindest coffee club in town

Your morning cup of joe could help transform the lives of people experiencing homelessness. Change Please is best known for its coffee carts, which are staffed by people who were homeless. You can also sign up to its coffee subscription, in partnership with Old Spike. [www.changeplease.org](http://www.changeplease.org).



### What is the cycle of financial exclusion?

HSBC UK is working with Shelter and other local homelessness organisations to help those who struggle to open a bank account because they don't have a fixed address. Without a bank account, it becomes very difficult to access government benefits or wage payments – which is why HSBC UK developed the No Fixed Address Service. Since its launch last year, more than 500 people without a fixed address have opened a bank account, and the number is growing every day.

Find out more at [www.hsbc.co.uk/no-fixed-address](http://www.hsbc.co.uk/no-fixed-address).

### 8 Support The Big Issue

This has been the toughest year that this big-hearted organisation has ever had. Help it to keep providing people with much-needed income and a sense of purpose by buying someone a gift subscription. [www.bigissue.com](http://www.bigissue.com).

### 9 Volunteer at Shelter from the Storm

Got some spare time on your hands? London's free homeless shelter – which is funded solely by donations and based in Islington – is looking for volunteers to help serve meals and talk with the guests. [www.sfts.org.uk](http://www.sfts.org.uk).

→ Discover more ways to help at [www.timeout.com/hsbcuk](http://www.timeout.com/hsbcuk)





# Want to be paid to be good?

With ecoATM, you'll not only save your old phone from landfill, you'll be rewarded for doing so

## CHELSEA FAN?

ecoATM has partnered with Chelsea FC to raise awareness of how to reduce electronic waste. It's putting the green credentials of three of Chelsea's finest men's players to the test and asking: 'Who is the greenest Blue'? Find out more on ecoATM's social channels.

Got any phones languishing in the back of a drawer? Sure, you could lob them in the bin (do not lob them in the bin) or try to sell them online. Or, you know, leave them right there as some kind of weird nostalgic museum piece that you can periodically look at and say 'ah, remember Snake?'. But what if we told you there was a better way – an eco-friendly and financially rewarding way, in fact – to go about it all?

Allow us to introduce you to the fine folk at ecoATM. These guys have set up a nifty little service where you can pop your old phones into one of their kiosks and your bank account will be instantly furnished with funds. And of course that's great and all, but the best bit? You'll be saving your old phone from landfill (a massive environmental problem

btw), extending the usage of your device and thereby doing your bit for sustainability. Well done, you.

It's also incredibly easy to do and exceptionally secure. So now you're probably wondering where are these kiosks? Dotted around London, basically. You can find out exactly where on the ecoATM website (as well as get some extra info on the

social channels at @ukecoatm), but put it this way: if you're at a major shopping centre or a big Sainsbury's you're likely to be in pretty good shape. And with Christmas just around the corner, that means you'll be in the perfect place to pick up some extra-special gifts for your loved ones. Or yourself. Why not?

And here's something else to mull over. There are an estimated 55 million unused phones currently in the UK. Look, we're not saying you've got all of them but it's worth a little hunt just to make sure, right? Then all you need to do is take whatever you find to an ecoATM and your environmentally-friendly good deed will be rewarded with money to spend on whatever you damn well please. Plus! Recycling your old blower will give it a new lease of life as well as line your pockets. Boy, are you good.



→ Find out more at [www.ecoatm.com](http://www.ecoatm.com)



## Photo shows

### S 'Unearthed: Photography's Roots'

Dulwich Picture Gallery's first major photography exhibition traces the history of the medium from the 1840s to the present day through images of plants and botany by 41 artists. Featuring more than 100 images, the exhibition encompasses key figures and overlooked artists such as English gardener Charles Jones, whose haunting, incandescently beautiful pictures of fruit and vegetables were posthumously discovered in a trunk at Bermondsey Market.

→ Dulwich Picture Gallery. Dec 8-May 9 2021. £16.50.

### C 'From Here to Eternity': Sunil Gupta

Sunil Gupta has enjoyed a divergent international career encompassing street photography, narrative portraits, early digital image-making and photographic activism focusing on the themes of sexual identity, race, migration and family. An inspirational figure in the LGBTQ+ rights movement, this is the first major retrospective of the Indian-born Canadian artist's work.

→ The Photographers' Gallery. Until Feb 21 2021. £5.

## Cash for a good cause

### E Apocalaughts Now

Join a host of telly's finest panel-show-appearing comic talents, including 'Mock the Week' stars Ivo Graham and Eshaan Akbar, for a (Covid-safe and replete with hand-san) night of comedy to support the beloved Genesis Cinema. If 2020 really is the apocalypse, wouldn't you rather die of laughter?

→ Genesis Cinema. Dec 12. £10.

## Carol concerts

### C Carols at the Royal Albert Hall

Things have had to be scaled back considerably, but the RAH Carol Concert is all systems go – with a masked-up audience. If you can't afford the £57.50 ticket, you can stream it for a fraction of the price.

→ Royal Albert Hall. Dec 18-23. From £57.50 or £16 to stream. [www.royalalberthall.com](http://www.royalalberthall.com)

## ONE UNMISSABLE THING



### Wavey Garms XXXmas Pop Up

See artwork from Sports Banger and a mystery Turner Prize winner at this Soho pop-up by cult streetwear collective Wavey Garms, where you can buy '80s, '90s and '00s gear to support youth homelessness charity Centrepont. If there's one thing we've all learned from our year indoors, it's the importance of owning some popping loungewear.

→ Walker's Court. Dec 9-24. Free.

### C Exeter Lucia 2020 – Bring on the Light

Lately it feels like the sun has given its notice from a job it's always hated and has now completely checked out. That so-called 'brightest star' is putting in what, two, three hours a day? Bone idle. Unacceptable. In Sweden, the dark winter evenings are interrupted each advent on St Lucia's day with a candle procession and traditional songs, and we want in. Exeter's Lucia singers have been beaming up the south west with their December concerts for more than a decade. This year, the whole thing is going online. Atmospheric, mesmeric, with a little touch of folk horror. Perfect.

→ Dec 13. Pay what you feel. [www.facebook.com/ExeterLucia](http://www.facebook.com/ExeterLucia)

### C Festive Family Carols by Candlelight

Remember the days of being mildly annoyed by carol singers? What fools we were. Now we'd pay good money for a bit of 'O Holy Night' or 'The First Noel' action. We wouldn't even crack a smile at the inevitable clobbering of the high note on 'Oh night diviiiiiiiiine'. Allowing your neighbours to stand on your doorstep and sing into your face is definitely not advisable, but St Martin-in-the-Fields church in Trafalgar Square will be putting on some very trad, socially distanced concerts aimed at families. Thanks to Covid, there will be no printed lyric sheets, so you best memorise 'The 12 Days of Christmas' before you leave the house.

→ St Martin-in-the-Fields. Dec 12. £20.



Royal Albert Hall



## Things to Do

### Big outdoor beer halls

#### **E Truman's Social Club**

E17 has no shortage of craft breweries in car parks, but Truman's Social Club has joined the ranks at just the right time. Located inside the old Truman's brewery at Blackhorse Lane, the new beer hall is absolutely enormous – like a deluxe Ikea. On our visit, the place was extremely well set up for social distancing. Everything is ordered via an app and brought straight to your table. There are 20 beers to choose from, as well as deliciously sloppy junk food from Last Night a Vegan Saved My Life. If that's not your bag, there's also a menu of Japanese-inspired dishes from Zero Sushi – we can confirm that the Roller IPA and prawn teriyaki make a very happy match. The best part? It has a heated outdoor beer tent, giving you the green light for out-of-bubble socialising.

→ 1 Priestley Way. Book in advance.

#### **N Camden Winter Beer Hall**

Camden's Electric Ballroom is being transformed into a snowy Bavarian beer hall for this all-new winter pop-up which aims to celebrate the UK's vibrant craft breweries during this difficult time for the industry. Five of the best UK indies will be serving up milk stouts, pale ales and sour beers, alongside the obligatory winter offerings of hot cider and mulled wine. We did say it was a Bavarian beer hall, so lederhosen are very likely, and brass renditions of pop songs are guaranteed. You have been warned.

→ 184 Camden High St. Every Fri and Sat until Dec 19, then every Sat until Jan 30 2021. From £15.

### Virtual gig

#### **▶ Gorillaz present 'Song Machine' Live**

It's been almost 20 years since Damon Albarn's animated band unleashed their first proper single 'Clint Eastwood' on the world. Back then, it felt like a total anomaly, a bizarre innovation that had sprung from the turn of a new millennium. At the time, Albarn said, 'Within a year, I bet the charts will be full of animated bands.' That cartoon prophecy didn't quite come true, but while live gigs remain on pause, the concept of a 'virtual band' couldn't be more fitting. Gorillaz are perfectly suited to the streaming life, which is why they'll be putting on a digital concert to launch their new album 'Song Machine: Season One – Strange Timez'. Band members Noodle, Murdoc, Russel and 2D will all be in attendance, across three time zones, and they haven't aged a bit.

→ Dec 12-13. £15. [gorillazlivenow.com](http://gorillazlivenow.com)



### Arty stalls

#### **▶ DIY Christmas Art Market**

Okay, it's not exactly a classic Christmas market, (there are no little wooden chalets), but this online fair is a very good place to buy presents that make you look like you've made some semblance of an effort. Handmade zines, art prints and brilliantly impractical ceramics will all be there for the taking on the DIY Art Market Instagram stories. It's a very easy way to support a bunch of London artists in one go.

→ Dec 12. [www.instagram.com/diyartmarket](http://www.instagram.com/diyartmarket)

## BEHIND THE MOBOS

### Kanya King



#### **▶ MOBO Awards**

Back in 1996, Londoner Kanya King took it upon herself to create an awards ceremony that would effectively recognise the talent of Black British musicians, remortgaging her house to make the now legendary MOBOS a reality. It's been on hiatus since 2017, but will be making a comeback this week with a streamed show. We caught up with Kanya to find out more.

#### **What can people expect from the online MOBOS?**

'We've got some phenomenal technology that we're working with. In a way we're creating a number of different worlds for different parts of the show, a kind of cinematic world that's set up in real life. It's not like the green-screen content you've been seeing.'

#### **What was that first year like, in 1996?**

'I didn't come from the music industry... I had no money, no contacts. What I had was an overwhelming passion and desire to succeed. I was persistent. When I was told Black music doesn't sell, [that] brands would not want to be aligned to this culture, it's too risky, no one is going to support it, and all that kind of negative noise, I managed to just shut it out.'

#### **You wrote an open letter to Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden after Black Out Tuesday: have you seen any meaningful change since?**

'Never in my lifetime have I seen organisations and corporate companies from around the world be prepared to have that difficult conversation. When I started out, talking about racism, I was ostracised. It was looked down upon. But we're in a different world, obviously, with the internet and social media. For us it's making sure that this is not just talked about when it's in the media spotlight.' ■

→ Dec 9, 7pm. [www.youtube.com/mobotv](http://www.youtube.com/mobotv) and on BBC One.





**N Designer Makers Winter Craft Fair**

A market that involves the term 'designer makers' usually means 'looking at silver jewellery that turns out to be more expensive than you thought but you feel bad and buy anyway'. But come on, it's been a year. Independent business owners and designers are having a hell of a time. The exhibitors here will be flogging ceramics, glassware, textiles and, yes, silver jewellery – and they need your support more than you need the convenience of an Amazon delivery. It all takes place in the folksy music venue Cecil Sharp House, so even if you don't find something you like, you can just enjoy the big, colourful wall mural by English artist Ivon Hitchens.

**E Spitalfields Arts Market**

Man, we miss Spitalfields Market. You pass through for the atmosphere, and somehow emerge in Bishops Square holding a pair of second-hand leather boots and a Climpson & Sons coffee you didn't know you wanted. And, if you visit on the right day, it's a great place to snag an original piece of art. Spitalfields Arts Market takes place outdoors, on Market Street, so you can safely stall-hop through displays of prints and paintings. The next market will be hosted by sculptor Steve Yeates, who creates figures from recycled materials, including glass from a vandalised London bus shelter. You can expect to see a lot of big, bold pieces that are unlikely to fit in an Uber.

→ Market St. Dec 10-13. Free entry.

**S Pexmas**

Peckham's festive market is back for a nine-day residency at the Copeland Gallery. Pick up some very decent gifts from more than 50 traders exhibiting across the two weekends. If you're feeling a little *exclusive*, book a slot for the Pexmas Emporium, a 'shopping experience' where you get a more relaxed browse through

more than 25 boutique stalls, with less queuing. There'll also be a virtual shop featuring the market's best-selling items, for those who can't make it in person. As markets go, it's pretty broad, you can pick up anything from Bloody Mary mix to eco-friendly crackers, but it's also a great place to buy work direct from London artists, like the cheerful prints of Dulwich illustrator Jessica Hayman from Rosa & Clara Designs.

→ Copeland Gallery. Dec 12-20. Free entry. [www.pexmas.com/shop](http://www.pexmas.com/shop)

**Christmas screenings**

**S Cinema in the snow**

If you're expecting little notes of cynicism about the predictability of Christmas cinema pop-ups, you won't find it here. No sir, the snark well is dry. We miss the movies too much to care that we will be watching 'The Nightmare Before Christmas' for the billionth time. Pop Up Screens

moment is almost here. It's events like these that help keep the wolf (and, presumably, Wetherspoons location hunters) from the door of this restored 1950s ballroom. On the bill for this year's grand cinema screenings are, well, most of the films we mentioned ten seconds ago.

→ Rivoli Ballroom. Dec 10-13. From £10.

**Panto time**

**C 'Dick Whittington'**

Can the National Theatre's 'Dick' save Christmas? For only the second time in its storied history, the NT stages a Christmas pantomime, plugging the gap left by the absence of most of London's major pantos, with an updated version of the Lyric Hammersmith's 2018 spin on 'Dick Whittington'.

→ National Theatre. Dec 11-Jan 23 2021. £20-£89.

**C 'Pantoland at the Palladium'**

The London Palladium's annual panto is back on, and will star Julian Clary and Beverley Knight. It might just be the most Covid-secure theatre in the country: Andrew Lloyd-Webber famously dropped £100k on upgrades such as self-disinfecting door handles. Christmas is back on: oh yes it is!

→ London Palladium. Dec 12-Jan 3 2021. £25-£174.



DIY Christmas Art Market

is putting on an ultra festive Cinema in the Snow residency in Copeland Park and is going all out with the Christmas crowdpleasers: 'It's a Wonderful Life', 'Elf', 'Home Alone'. If it means we can go to the pictures again, we'll even sit through 'Love Actually'. What is Christmas for, if not relentless repetition?

→ Copeland Park. Until Dec 20. From £19.50.

**S Rivoli Ballroom pop-up cinema**

It's not officially Christmas until the Rivoli starts blaring 'The Muppet Christmas Carol' into its barrel-vaulted auditorium, and now the

**Digital Dickens**

**C 'A Christmas Carol'**

Catch a very special adaptation of 'A Christmas Carol' filmed inside Dickens's house in Bloomsbury. It's a suitably spooky setting for this tale of one man's struggle to overcome his own selfishness and think of others for a change, something that seems a lot more relatable this year. It's the closest you'll get to spending the night in Dickens's bedroom.

→ Dec 17, 20 and 31, followed by a Zoom Q&A. £15. [www.dickensmuseum.com](http://www.dickensmuseum.com)

# Food & Drink

timeout.com/eatdrink @timeouteatdrink

## Christmas dinners that top your mum's

Got turkey cravings? Indulge in the best festive feasts at London restaurants this year, from decadent sandwiches to full-on banquets

 = Outdoor Seating

### The Bombay bad boy

Here's a festive treat we never knew we needed: mince-pie kulfi. You'll find the fruity, creamy frozen dessert on **Dishoom's** Christmas feasting menu. The line-up is thaals (large communal plates) featuring some of its best-loved dishes, small plates, grills, biryanis, plus a slow-cooked turkey raan. That's a 24-hour barbecued turkey leg served with a spicy cranberry chutney. The menu is available right up until Christmas Eve for groups of four to six people and costs £39 per person. If you're looking for outdoor seating, head to the Shoreditch, Carnaby and King's Cross branches. For a good deal? Check out its newly revamped Covent Garden joint where there's 50 percent off food until the end of January. Really, really good stuff.

→ Various locations

### The one on a lovely festive terrace

Lush greenery, an elegant piazza... stepping into the **Petersham** feels like coding yourself into the Instagram app. And boy, oh boy, have we missed it while it's been shut for the past nine months. But the Richmond favourite is back, reopening its doors as a winter wonderland just in time for the festive season. Wrap up super warm in a blanket with a hot aperitivo while you sit under a sea of twinkling lights and decorations on the patio. Then tuck into La Goccia's Italian Christmas set menu. It's a £75 per person sharing affair: rich pumpkin ravioli, osso buco di vitello with bone marrow risotto and a classic fluffy Italian panettone with marsala zabaione. Just a light meal then.

→ 31 King St, WC2E 8JD.



Spread Eagle



Decimo



**The vegan nirvana**

Non-meat-eaters needn't miss out on Christmas bingeing. No, no: in fact, if you head to 100 percent vegan pub **The Spread Eagle** you can expect a menu so vast it'll leave you unable to walk home. Head chef Gina Hopkins's creations focus on inventive, bold, surprising flavours. There's potted 'faux gras' with toast and pickles. There's beet wellington, with all the traditional seasonal trimmings and an unbelievably rich gravy, which is sure to confuse the meatheads. It's all a very reasonable £30 for three courses (and a glass of bubbly) and there's outdoor seating with heaters on the terrace and in the garden.

→ 224 Homerton High St, E9 6AS.

**The properly luxury option**

The bad news? Chef Calum Franklin's legendary pies won't be gracing the festive menu at **Holborn Dining Room** this year, so Christmas

visitors won't get to indulge in the, quite frankly, iconic potato one. The good news? The menu the plush restaurant is serving more than makes up for it. A baked lobster thermidor tart and rabbit-and-bacon en croûte on starters, while roast Suffolk turkey served with red braised cabbage and cranberry



Holborn Dining Rooms

sauce makes for a fitting centrepiece. Costing £70 per person for three courses and ending with a mighty selection of desserts, this is proper rich-person-well-on-their-way-to-get-gout food. → 252 High Holborn, WC1V 7EN.

**The traditional family-style dinner**

As many of us debate whether to stay put or head home for Christmas this year, one thing that is for certain is that **The Camberwell Arms'** famously plentiful winter menu is back on. Expect classic Christmas stuff. Crispy brussels sprouts,

Sponsored listing

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HAMMERSMITH

**CARBON KOPI SAYS:**

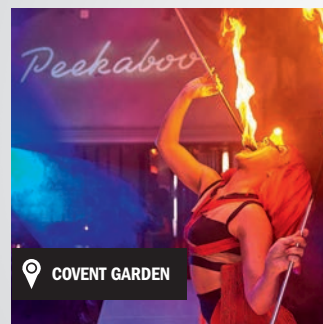
'Get into the Christmas spirit with Carbon Kopi's advent calendar of coffee featuring guest roasters from the UK and abroad, including Wales' Hard Lines and Bath's Roundhill. Our Hammersmith coffee shop will feature a different roaster each day and do a daily giveaway on Instagram of beans from them.' 11 Margravine Rd, W6 8LS.



SHOREDITCH

**BIKE SHED MOTORCYCLE CLUB SAYS:**

'Great news: we reopened on Friday December 4, and will be open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday in December until the Christmas break. Enjoy breakfast, lunch, dinner or just a coffee or drinks beneath our four huge Victorian railway arches. Book now to get your table reserved.' 384 Old St, EC1V 9LT.



COVENT GARDEN

**CIRCUS SAYS:**

'Baby, it's cold outside but things are heating up at Circus with our Christmas Extravaganza! Expect the unexpected as Circus' incredible pan-Asian Christmas menu, including prosecco, is served with a side of amazing and outrageous pop-up circus performances including aerialists, fire-breathers and more.' 27-29 Endell St, WC2H 9BA.



HACKNEY

**NEST SAYS:**

'We serve a multiple-course set menu using one meat at a time, served alongside seasonal vegetables, fresh British seafood and organic and natural wine. In the lead-up to Christmas, we'll be going all out with December's mixed-game menu. Check out the menu or book a table on our website.' 177 Morning Lane, E9 6LH.

SPREAD EAGLE: SAMYA HARRIS; DECIMO: TIM CHARLES; HOLBORN DINING ROOMS: JOHN CAREY

# So where does a top chef eat?

Twisper ambassador Tom Aikens gives us the skinny on his favourite London restaurants

**Y**ou know what's nice? Getting restaurant recommendations from someone you trust. And that's why we've asked Tom Aikens – a man who really knows his culinary onions – to tell us about the London spots he hits when hungry. You're in some pretty safe hands here. But there's another reason why we've got him involved, too.

You see, giving people a platform to shout about the restaurants, bars and hotels they love is key to what a new app, Twisper, is all about. Which is great and all, but here's the really interesting thing: Twisper is dedicated to positive-only reviews. That means instead of poring through negative nonsense from disgruntled keyboard warriors moaning about portion sizes, you'll be able to focus on the good stuff. And let's be honest, those are just the kind of upbeat vibes we need right now.

Alongside a community of reviewers championing their favourite venues is a selection of brands, ambassadors, publishers and influencers doing the same. And to give you a flavour of the kind of things to expect from these expert curators? Here are Tom's top picks. We think you'll like them. (And yes, he has picked his own restaurant but, well, you know, why not?)

'Am I allowed my own restaurant? My team in Belgravia have worked incredibly hard to help me launch **Muse** earlier this year, which paid off: we were awarded 4 AA Rosettes in October. It's always nice to be acknowledged for your hard work and creativity by the industry. It's amazing what we have achieved in such a small amount of time.

Outside of Muse, we kick off with a two Michelin-starred restaurant but **Core by Clare Smyth**

in Notting Hill is relaxed, allowing you to really enjoy a seriously creative menu using the finest British ingredients.

Another favourite is Ben Marks's **Perilla** in Newington Green. He's put together a brilliant menu, the atmosphere is second-to-none and the service? Spot on every time. Whenever I'm up for tapas I head to **Sabor** on Heddon Street. Brilliant fresh fish and regional dishes from across Spain, with fab dining options at the bar or the main restaurant.

Another favourite is **Ikoyi**, near Piccadilly Circus. It has a hugely innovative menu using a vast collection of spices with dishes inspired by sub-Saharan West Africa. I also love a good chicken burger and the quality of food at **Chick 'n' Sours** is exceptional. Casual, fun dining with fresh, super-tasty dishes. That's your lot!'



## GET TO KNOW MUSE MASTERS

Want a front row seat to watch some of the world's best chefs in action? Well, Muse Masters is for you. Aikens's terrific initiative also raises money for Only A Pavement Away – a charity that helps the homeless, ex-offenders and vulnerable veterans to forge careers in the hospitality industry. But the best bit? Twisper will match all money raised. We can totally get behind that.

Find out more at [www.musebytomaikens.co.uk](http://www.musebytomaikens.co.uk).

**TWISPER**  
Experience Positivity

→ Discover more of Tom Aikens's favourite places by downloading the Twisper app today

Find more outdoor options at [timeout.com/outdooreating](https://www.timeout.com/outdooreating)



Dishoom

topped with pickled red onions, thyme and fried breadcrumbs? Hi! Glistening glazed smoked ham? Hello... Rich chocolate cheesecake with spiced poached clementine? Yes, *please*. It can all be yours from £35. And you can even order it all to be delivered to your home on the Big Night app too, if you want the festive fun without the in-communal-space risks.

→ 65 Camberwell Church St, SE5 8TR.

### **The actual Christmas Day extravaganza**

If you're skipping seeing the parents this year and the idea of spending hours cooking a roast on Christmas Day seems incredibly tedious, don't panic. We have one hell of a recommendation for you. End the year on a high with a proper blowout meal complete with sweeping, panoramic views of the city (and outdoor seating if you so desire). The venue? **Decimo** at LA-cool hotel The Standard. You can enjoy the likes of \*deep breath\* wood fire bread with olive oil, Spanish pigs in blankets, jamon croquetas, fried potatoes, muscovy duck with mole, and chocolate mousse to wash it all down for £68 per person. It includes a welcome cocktail and zero washing up.

→ 10 Argyle St, WC1H 8EG.

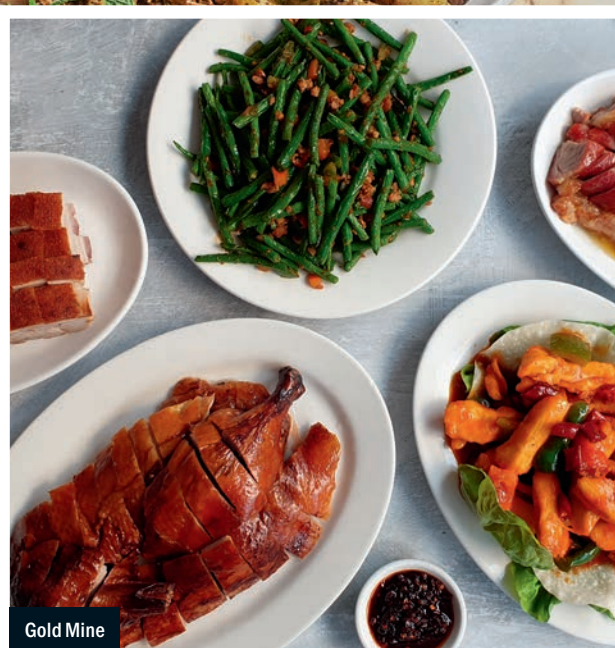
### **The extremely meaty option**

Vegans be gone from here. **Smokestak** is firing up its grill for a toasty festive season. The wood-smoking specialist has just launched a fully enclosed heated winter terrace with a clear roof to allow in as much natural sunlight (or what's left of it) as possible while keeping you dry and sort-of warm. Anyway, we're sure you'll forget about any December chill when the food arrives at this Shoreditch spot. The plan here is incredible Christmas sandwiches, announced one at a time, like streetwear drops but tastier and far less cringe. First up? A smoked gammon, gherkin and sauerkraut special for £9.

→ 35 Sclater St, E1 6LB.

### **The wine-and-sarnie smash**

The geniuses at neighbourhood restaurant and wine bar **Peckham Cellars** have created a Christmas miracle: a festive sandwich that's almost overwhelming in its scale and richness. Take a deep-fried turkey schnitzel, bacon jam, stuffing, brie, and cranberry sauce and wedge between two ginormous slices of bread. Then serve with a side dish of jus to dip it all in. It's £10 and perfect for eating slowly



Gold Mine

while you indulge in a few socially distanced natural reds, either at home with your household or basking in the warm glow of Peckham Cellars' shiny outdoor heaters with a BYO blanket.

→ 125 Queen's Rd, SE15 2ND.

### **And one last idea...**

Not a fan of the classic Christmas roast? Consider going for a Cantonese roast goose or duck this festive season. (It's also a great way to support a small BIPOC independent restaurant that has been ravaged by the pandemic

while you're at it.) Our pick for the best birds in town? **Gold Mine**, a no-frills Chinese restaurant that's known for its signature roast meats, which can be seen hanging in the window. They're available for dine in or takeaway. Our suggestion? Take a bird home (it's £27.80 for a whole roast duck) and replicate Asian banquet vibes in the comfort of your own home. Serve it with roast potatoes, brussels sprouts, pigs in blankets and gravy. Purists can get stuffed: it's Christmas 2020, there are no rules any more. ■ *Angela Hui*

→ 102 Queensway, W2 3RR.

# Love Local

Edited by Kate Lloyd  
timeout.com/lovelocal

AREA  
GUIDE

## The fight to save Chinatown's support hub

This London Chinese Community Centre is crowdfunding to secure its future

**IT'S 40 YEARS** since the London Chinese Community Centre (CCC) arrived in Leicester Court. Open six days a week, it offers Cantonese and Mandarin language classes, calligraphy and dim sum workshops, and provides a space for members to get advice, share meals and keep Chinese culture alive. It's been a vital hub for the Chinese community for decades, especially the city's elderly. Fifty-two percent of members are over 65.

All of this is now at risk.

'We have some funding from the government and council, but it's not enough,' says Beverly Lin, centre manager at the CCC. 'We're reliant on fundraising and the generosity of businesses in Chinatown. Big fundraising activities and charity events such as Lunar New Year, Easter, Dragon Boat Festival and Moon Festivals have all been cancelled or postponed. Nothing is coming in.'

Currently, there are seven full-time staff and many volunteers at the centre. Throughout 2020 they have done vital work: collecting essentials for isolating

senior citizens, offering Zoom lessons and helping those who've lost jobs or homes.

'But who knows what will happen to us if the virus hasn't been controlled,' says Lin. 'There's no way we can carry on doing any activity fundraising when we're limited [by government guidelines] and we're stretched thin.'

Luckily, across the city, people are coming together to fight to save the centre. A crowdfunder has been launched to help pay for staff wages and resources. Plus, Instagrammer Celestial Peach – whose account chronicles Chinese cuisine and the people behind it – has designed a 'congee lovers unite' T-shirt in different colours and sold them to raise funds.

If the centre survives, its plan for the future is to try and become inclusive for all ages and nationalities. Lin is keen to make more of its services available online and doesn't want its impact to be limited to the Chinatown region or only Chinese people. 'Our doors are open to everyone,' she says. So let's help her achieve that. ■ **Angela Hui**  
→ [www.justgiving.com/campaign/ccorguk202](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/ccorguk202)



Chinese Community Centre

## Leicester Square



**James Woroniecki** is founder and director of comedy venue The 99 Club  
→ [www.99clubcomedy.com](http://www.99clubcomedy.com)



### The Spice of Life

'Upstairs has a really lovely crowd and downstairs is a cool music venue with plenty of independent bands and jazz. It's a great shout if you want to go somewhere a bit different for a drink in the West End.'  
→ 6 Moor St.

### The Arts Theatre Club

'They do excellent cocktails and serve them in dinky teapots. I'd recommend the Raspberry Ricket Teapot, a fun mix of raspberries, Chambord and lime. The whole place is candlelit and the DJ booth is an antique piano.'  
→ 50 Frith St.

### Wong Kei

'I've had so many wonderful post-show meals with comedians. Normally, they finish performing late, at around 11pm: they're full of adrenaline, and having some chow mein, wonton soup and stir-fried vegetables is a great [way] to wind down afterwards.'  
→ 41-43 Wardour St.

### The Prince Charles Cinema

'Even though it's in this area of big film premieres, this place shows an incredibly eclectic mix [of movies]. From indie films to old classics and special events like "Mean Girls" quote-alongs and "Harry Potter" all-nighters.'  
→ 7 Leicester Place.

### J Sheekey

'I always order the mussels from this quirky seafood restaurant. It's tucked down a little side street and the entire place looks like you're stepping back into Victorian England - it's been used loads for filming.'  
→ 28-32 St Martin's Court.

### The Tea House

'I'm a big tea drinker and love their wide selection of loose-leaf teas. Normally, I'd go for their assam or ceylon blends.'  
→ 15 Neal St.

### The Hippodrome Casino

'Once we're done with the curfew, if you ever find yourself in Leicester Square at 1am and fancy a lobster dinner, The Hippodrome Casino is the place to go. You can eat your meal watching everyone on the casino floor. There's often live entertainment like burlesque. For now, do the same but at 7pm.'  
→ Cranbourn St.



CHINESE COMMUNITY CENTRE: ANDY PAVSONS; J SHEEKEY: JEAN CAZALS; PRINCE CHARLES CINEMA: TRAVIS LEWIS/SHUTTERSTOCK



Time Out's Love Local campaign supports local food, drink and culture businesses in London. Find out how you can help the places that make our city great.  
[timeout.com/lovelocalondon](http://timeout.com/lovelocalondon)

# Escapes

Edited by Ellie Walker-Arnott  
timeout.com/daytrips

## Enchanting light trails

End this year the right way: bathed in an OTT halo of festive lights with a steaming mulled wine in hand

### WHETHER YOU'RE JUMPING

headfirst into the festivities with a Christmas bubble or keeping your distance from loved ones for a more low-key holiday season, there is plenty of light to be found at this time of year. And yes, we mean that literally. As well as the spangly displays illuminating streets all over the capital, forests, gardens and stately homes around the country are aglow with dangling lightbulbs and the twinkling of a thousand fairy lights. Book a ticket in advance and then get your face right up in those LEDs. You'll feel that mega-watt joy in no time.

### Wakehurst W Sussex

Done Christmas at Kew? The gardens' rural sister site is putting on a similarly impressive display this winter. In its seventh year, Wakehurst's **GlowWild** lantern trail will celebrate the 'hidden heroes' of the plant and fungus world. Spores have never felt so festive.

→ Wakehurst, West Sussex. Until Jan 3 2021. £15, £9 child. [www.kew.org](http://www.kew.org)

### Waddesdon Manor Bucks

Waddesdon Manor and its surrounding parkland will be all aglow for the next month. **Winter Light** brings colourful installations, illuminated trees and a trail of lanterns decorated by local kids on the theme of hope. Don't forget a mask if you think you'll be drawn to the festive market (until December 23) to bulk-buy candles and cheese.

→ Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire. Until Jan 3 2021. From £16, from £8 child [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk)

### Blenheim Palace Oxon

Not even 2020 can dampen the sparkle of these festive lights. Blenheim Palace's **Illuminated Light Trail** will see the grounds glittering with bulbs, and a route leading you through technicolour tunnels of light, past an illuminated lake, to a softly glowing 'fairy fire'. Just the kind of magical vibes we need to lift the darkest part of the year.

→ Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire. Until Jan 3 2021. From £19, from £13 child. [www.blenheimpalace.com](http://www.blenheimpalace.com)



Blenheim Palace

No one needs to hear 'In the Bleak Midwinter' this year







Waddesdon Manor



WADDESDON MANOR: HUGH MOTHERSOLE/NATIONAL TRUST; THURSFORD: GEORGE CUSHING

### RHS Wisley Surrey

Wisley is going big, with its longest ever lights trail, **Glow**. The technicolour display winds a new route through the gardens, accompanied by an uplifting soundtrack. Because no one needs to hear 'In the Bleak Midwinter' this year, okay?

→ Wisley, Surrey. Until Jan 4 2021. £15, £10 child. Check website for resales. [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

### Hyde Hall Essex

Hyde Hall's natural beauty takes centre stage at **Glow**. The estate's

elegant, leafless trees will be lit up in rainbow shades. The route will lead you through the winter garden, past woods and sculptures in simple seasonal finery.

→ Hyde Hall, Essex. Until Jan 3 2021. £12, £6 child. Check website for resales. [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

### Westonbirt Arboretum Gloucs

Santa himself might be in attendance at Westonbirt's festive display. The woodland's illuminated **Enchanted Christmas** trail will lead you all the way to the



Thursford

More jolly jaunts at [timeout.com/UK](http://timeout.com/UK)

'West Pole' (one of the jolly guy's back-up toy-making workshops fyi). Expect elves, talking trees and the famous plant collection to look like a candy-cane forest for the season. → Westonbirt Arboretum, Gloucestershire. Until Dec 21. £16, £8 child. [www.forestryengland.uk](http://www.forestryengland.uk)

### Stourhead Wiltshire

This dreamy National Trust garden, dotted with follies and grottos, is cranking up the festive tunes this winter. After dark, wander past giant baubles, glowing flowers and trees wrapped in lights, for **Christmas at Stourhead**. All with a warming mulled wine to sip as you stroll. → Stourhead, Wiltshire. Until Jan 3 2021. From £19, from £13 child. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

### Leonardslee W Sussex

See out a surreal year with a walk through the otherworldly **Leonardslee Illuminated**, where a huge moon hangs above the lake. After your lunar fix, find lanterns and festive lights in the woods. → Leonardslee Gardens, West Sussex. Until Dec 28. £16, £8 child. [www.leonardsleegardens.co.uk](http://www.leonardsleegardens.co.uk)

### Thursford Norfolk

Everything is illuminated for the **Enchanted Journey of Light** at Thursford: luminous polar bears on glowing glaciers, flamingoes, zebras and deer with the kind of antlers Rudolph would be envious of, all lit up in a Christmassy sheen. → Thursford, Norfolk. Until Jan 10 2021. £18. [www.thursford.com](http://www.thursford.com)

### Longleat Wiltshire

A supersized trail made up of 17 zones, Longleat's **Land of Light** will transport you to a lake in springtime and an icy labyrinth. Add a safari drive-through to find out how the monkeys are spending the season. ■ *Ellie Walker-Arnott* → Longleat, Wiltshire. Until Jan 10 2021. £27.95, £20.95 child. [www.longleat.co.uk](http://www.longleat.co.uk)

# Time In

Edited by Phil de Semlyen  
timeout.com/timein

## Ten Christmas movies for any frame of mind

Happy? Exhausted? *Really* exhausted? Phil de Semlyen picks a classic to stream for every occasion

**WHAT IS A** Christmas movie? They go prezzie-shopping in Hamley's in 'Eyes Wide Shut' but no one's gathering the family round for a festive viewing of Kubrick's psychosexual wig-out. What we can say is that a Christmas movie should feel like an old friend, ready to meet any emotional need. Joy, sorrow, nostalgia, chronic indigestion... here's one for every mood.

### 1 When you feel like a singalong 'Meet Me in St Louis'

Bring out your inner Bubl e – we've all got one – with this musical in which Judy Garland's family faces being uprooted when dad gets a new job, but still sneak in a snowball fight and about 87 songs first. It's a sugar high filled with bangers like 'Skip to My Lou' and 'The Trolley Song'.



'Meet Me in St Louis'

### 2 If you need a laugh 'The Muppet Christmas Carol'

Michael Caine as Scrooge, Gonzo as Charles Dickens, Kermit as Bob Cratchit – just three reasons to love this warm-hearted take on the immortal yarn. It is (believe it or not) one of the more faithful versions of the book. We're pretty sure Dickens was envisaging singing frogs when he wrote it.

### 3 If your spirits need lifting 'The Shop Around the Corner'

This festive masterpiece about a coterie of underpaid, underloved department store clerks (including Jimmy Stewart) combines Ernst Lubitsch's effortless style, zingers and an irresistible romantic subplot.



'Carol'

### 4 When you need to break it to the kids that they're not getting a pet 'Gremlins'

Few Christmas presents come with instructions as ominous as: 'Never expose to bright light, never add water and, crucially, never feed after midnight.' 'Gremlins' is the perfect way to break it to the children that no, they can't have that cute furry critter they spotted in Chinatown.

### 5 When you're in the mood for love 'Carol'

Todd Haynes's romance turns a Patricia Highsmith novel about secret lesbian love into a universal romance featuring chaste glances

across department stores and Rooney Mara in a Santa hat. It's already a Christmas classic in forward-thinking homes.

### 6 When you need a burst of pure evil 'Black Christmas'

This slasher movie gives horror fans the perfect excuse to take things a notch gorier when everyone else has hit the sack. After all, nothing says Christmas like a deranged maniac stalking a snowy college campus.

### 7 When the cheese supplies are running low 'Love Actually'

Richard Curtis's bubbly celebration of love is not for the

The best films to stream at  
[timeout.com/film](https://www.timeout.com/film)



'Gremlins'

lactose-intolerant. That said, Hugh Grant's dad-dancing to The Pointer Sisters, Bill Nighy's snake hips, and Emma Thompson and Alan Rickman's big emotions are guaranteed to give you all the feels.

## 8 For classy childhood nostalgia

'Fanny and Alexander'

Most of us escaped the horrors of bonnets and sailor suits at Christmas, so spare a thought for the dolled-up siblings in Ingmar Bergman's magical seasonal treat. One of the few Christmas movies to win an Oscar, though we'd also make the case for 'Trading Places'.

## 9 When you've already seen 'Die Hard'

'Lethal Weapon'

Shane Black, the king of the fast-quipping buddy movie, is famous for getting Christmas into all his films. But it all started with two bickering cops taking down drug dealers at a Christmas tree lot, very much the dark side of the whole 'white Christmas' thing.

## 10 For a road trip without leaving your sofa

'Planes, Trains and Automobiles'

It's not been a great year for travel, unless you count the 600 trips to the local supermarket and that one ill-fated country walk. Make up for it by watching Steve Martin and the ridiculously lovable John Candy battle their way home for the holidays in a comedy that starts out funny and gradually becomes brilliantly moving. ■

'Love Actually'

## American Utopia

★★★★★

### WHAT IS IT...

A concert film of David Byrne's dazzling 2019 Broadway show.

### WHY GO...

Byrne performs. Spike Lee films it. What more do you need?

→ Director Spike Lee (12)  
 105 minutes. Streaming from Dec 14.



**WE CAN'T GO** to gigs right now, so former Talking Heads frontman David Byrne brings the band to us – with a little help from Spike Lee. The director filmed Byrne's 2019 Broadway show 'American Utopia' and the result – part pop extravaganza, part poetry slam – is a wonder to behold.

Byrne appears in his signature slick grey suit, barefoot, capped with that flourish of manicured white hair, and weaves his many spectacular hits, including the thrillingly anthemic 'Once in a Lifetime', with musings on life, love, what divides us and what ultimately brings us back together.

To assist, he's assembled a spectacular array of musicians from all over the world, all dressed the same as him. Lee nimbly shoots the stripped-back but visually theatrical performance that has a shifting set created by nifty lighting design.

The ensemble's slick moves, choreographed by Annie-B Parson of Brooklyn's Big Dance Theater, complement Byrne's playful lyrics. Byrne holds us in the palm of his hand: I got goosebumps when all the performers take a knee in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, the faces of slain African-Americans projected behind them.

When all's said and done, Byrne hops on his bike and rides off into the twinkling New York night. A magnetic show. The only drawback is that it's such a good gig you really do wish you were there. ■ *Stephen A Russell*

## The Mole Agent

★★★★★

### WHAT IS IT...

A doc following an octogenarian who checks into a care home. Undercover.

### WHY GO...

It's the most unusual – and kindest – film noir you'll ever see.

→ Director Maite Alberdi  
 90 mins. In cinemas Fri Dec 11.



**CHILEAN FILMMAKER MAITE** Alberdi's 'The Mole Agent' doesn't go in for the lazy stitching of talking heads against a grey backdrop that many docs resort to. Instead, feeling a strange affinity with truth-searching private detective Rómulo Aitken, Alberdi hangs out in his office while he recruits an assistant for a surprisingly common case: a client who wants to know if her mum is being mistreated in her nursing home.

Up pops Sergio Chamy, a clueless octogenarian armed only with a smartphone and a willingness to help out. This lonely widower has answered an ad looking for an elderly spy to go undercover in the care home to get the lowdown.

At first, it feels overtly staged – almost like a spy spoof. But the artifice fades and what comes into sharp focus is an insight into the lives of lost souls drifting towards the great beyond. Chamy's arrival causes a stir, not least because he's a handsome chap who does what so many of the mostly female residents' families fail to do: sit with them and listen to their hopes and fears.

Chile's Oscars hopeful, this deeply humane film is concerned with the invisibility of age, and how easily society forgets those who brought us into the world. It's so much more than a whodunnit, and all but the hardest hearts will fall in love with its spirited group of characters who have so much left to give. ■ *Stephen A Russell*

MY STREAMING SALVATION

# Grey's Anatomy

Alim Kheraj on his small-screen happy place



**AFTER WATCHING** all 16 seasons of 'Grey's Anatomy', I'm now convinced I could diagnose a patient with an aneurism or perform open-heart surgery. A medical degree? Pah. Who needs one when you've watched more than 300 hours of a hit medical drama? Some binge watching should probably come with a warning.

It always surprised me that this show didn't receive the attention in the UK that 'ER' did. Set in a Seattle hospital, it follows Meredith Grey and her fellow MDs as they navigate the world of surgery and their incredibly messy love lives. Think 'Casualty' on a Hollywood budget. The early seasons focus on the will-they-won't-they romance between Meredith Grey (Ellen Pompeo) and Dr Derek 'McDreamy' Shepherd (Patrick Dempsey), a neurosurgeon genius who also happens to be Meredith's superior. But for me, it's



the friendship between Meredith and the sardonic, ambitious Dr Cristina Yang (Sandra Oh) that forms the show's bedrock, although all the characters share a bond forged in tragedy and trauma.

And there is a lot of both. 'Grey's Anatomy' hits its characters with divorce, adultery, mass shootings, plane crashes, Alzheimer's, a bomb in a body cavity, a ferry crash, cancer, car accidents, fires, mental illness, death, a tryst with a ghost (kinda) and an unfortunate musical episode during season seven (why did they all sing?). Pair this with the heartbreaking medical cases the doctors deal with and you're left in bits at the end of each episode.

Somehow, all that emotion makes for compulsive but comforting viewing. And with a seventeenth season starting in the UK soon, I can't think of a better time to stream the old episodes. In fact, I started my rewatch last night. ■

→ 'Grey's Anatomy' is streaming on Amazon Prime.

## Killer true-crime podcasts

Time Out writers pick four murderous tales

### 1 The Shrink Next Door

Not all crimes involve a severed head in a forest: some are subtler, more insidious. 'The Shrink Next Door', one of the most shocking – and funniest – stories of manipulation you'll ever hear, is the second kind. It's about a New York psychiatrist who takes his relationship with one patient way, way too far. It's full of swanky country pads and amazing New York Jewish accents, and it will leave you saying 'oy vey' like you really mean it. *Eddy Frankel*  
→ [wondery.com/shows/shrink-next-door](http://wondery.com/shows/shrink-next-door)

### 2 In the Dark

This podcast puts the US justice system in the dock. The first season asks why it took authorities 27 years to solve the abduction of 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling. Season two examines why a Black man, Curtis Flowers, was tried six times for the same crime. 'In the Dark's hallmarks are rigorous investigative journalism and epic suspense. Not only is it addictive, it'll fire you up. *Alexandra Sims*  
→ [features.apmreports.org/in-the-dark](http://features.apmreports.org/in-the-dark)



### 3 West Cork

In 1996, French TV producer Sophie Toscan du Plantier was found murdered outside her holiday home near the Irish town of Schull. Documentary-maker Jennifer Ford and investigative journalist Sam Bungey take a humane look at the impact this crime had on a community, how it changed the area – a weather-beaten idyll – and how an incredible narrative developed around it. *Ellie Walker-Arnott*  
→ [www.audible.co.uk](http://www.audible.co.uk)

### 4 Drunk Women Solving Crime

Miss Marple. Jessica Fletcher. Jane Tennison. Some of the sharpest sleuths in the pop cultural canon have been women. Also, as this anarchic podcast proves, some of the funniest ones. Its half-cut hosts, Hannah, Catie and Taylor, rummage around the finer details of some criminal case like they've just stormed in from the pub. Which they probably have. It's the perfect antidote to all those po-faced podcasts out there. ■ *Phil de Semlyen*  
→ [drunkwomensolvingcrime.com](http://drunkwomensolvingcrime.com)



'Three Sisters'

## What to stream on NT at Home

Culture editor *Andrzej Łukowski* picks four plays to rent on the brand new thespflix

### Phèdre

National Theatre at Home draws heavily on shows previously filmed for cinema broadcast, which have gone out under the banner NT Live, and often been rereleased multiple times. Many of the initial releases will be pretty familiar to the theatre-loving cinemagoer – Tom Hiddleston's 'Coriolanus', for instance. But less familiar and well worth taking in is the first show the NT ever filmed for the cinema: a bombastic 2009 take on Racine's 'Phèdre', starring the mighty Helen Mirren.

### I Want My Hat Back

In some ways the most exciting things on NT at Home are the smattering of more obscure shows that were filmed for the archives, not cinema. The camerawork is less fancy, but of good quality, and your only chance to see some of this stuff ever again. A real gem is Joel Horwood's batshit, hygge-inflected musical version of Jon Klassen's kids' book 'I Want My Hat Back', about a bear's violent quest to track down his errant headwear.

### Mosquitoes

Another archive gem: Lucy Kirkwood's terrific CERN-set tragicomedy 'Mosquitoes' was never filmed for cinema broadcast, which is cinema's loss. It follows two fractious sisters – one a high-flying scientist played by Olivia Williams, the other a boozy fuck-up played by Olivia Colman – as they have an emotionally fraught reckoning at the Large Hadron Collider. Plus their mum shows up. This is a really welcome chance to catch Rufus Norris's production in all its glorious cosmic cacophony.



'Mosquitoes'

### Three Sisters

Inua Ellams's breakout smash 'Barber Shop Chronicles' was a global hit as part of the NT's summer streaming programme, and 'An Evening with an Immigrant' was an IRL success at the Bridge this autumn during the inter-lockdown theatre season. Now here's a chance to see his biggest show to date, a bold reimagining of the Chekhov classic that relocates the story to Nigeria on the eve of the Biafran Civil War. ■

## Why watch theatre at home?

The NT's streaming service joins a growing number of home players

The National Theatre's YouTube channel helped keep us sane during Lockdown 1 by streaming a play a week from its deep vaults, sharing shows originally filmed for its cinema strand NT Live. It wasn't sustainable, though, as it made no money bar voluntary donations. However, its success has spawned a new paid-for streaming platform.

National Theatre at Home joins a small but growing club that also includes Digital Theatre and Globe Player.

Generally, these are shows filmed to be screened – think close-ups, panning shots, etc – that offer a chance to see big names in never-to-be-repeated performances.

What sends NT at Home straight to the front of the pack is that it has far more of them than anyone else: in the last decade NT Live has cornered the UK market for filmed plays – at the National Theatre and beyond. And the player also includes high-quality archive recordings of plays that were never given the event-cinema treatment. These shows rent at a slightly lower rate, but they further broaden the NT at Home repertoire, which should be radically different from month to month.

You've surely finished Netflix and Disney+ – now it's time for the good stuff. ■

*Andrzej Łukowski*

→ [www.ntathome.com](http://www.ntathome.com)

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

# Deep-cut London novels

Film editor *Phil de Semlyen* picks a shelf's worth of under-read stories set in the Big Smoke



**LONDON HAS BEEN** immortalised in the prose of Charles Dickens, Virginia Woolf and Zadie

Smith. But we're not going to insult you – or your bookshelf – by suggesting 'Oliver Twist' or 'White Teeth'. Instead, head for Muriel Spark's **'The Ballad of Peckham Rye'** or **'The Lonely Londoners'** by Samuel Selvon. The former is a dark comedy that flaunts Spark's mastery of character – in this case, the evil Dougal Douglas – while the latter is a daring tapestry of Windrush Londoners that's perfect for anyone who loves 'Small Island'.

Best known for 'Gaslight', Patrick Hamilton digs into the underbelly of '30s London in **'Hangover Square'**. It's set on the 'bleak plains of Earl's Court' and offers a juicy evocation of pre-war London and some nice insights into what pubs were like before any of them did food.



At-war London, meanwhile, is brought to life in Sarah Waters's **'The Night Watch'**. There aren't not too many novels that celebrate queer love or that zip around the city as seductively as the bombs fall. It was nominated for a Booker, so it's maybe not entirely unheralded.

Closer to undeserved obscurity is Norman Collins's **'London Belongs to Me'**, which takes place at the same time in a Camberwell full of larger-than-life, Dickensian characters.

Want to go darker? **'Payment Deferred'**, CS Forester's macabre potboiler, follows a indebted City

clerk who kills a relative and buries him in the garden. As you do. Or as John Christie probably would. The Rillington Place serial killer pops up in Dominick Donald's crime yarn **'Breathe'**, which will have you groping through the Great Smog of 1952 in search of a murderer.

If you've got time on your hands this Christmas, EF Benson's beefy **'Dodo'** omnibus offers plenty of fin de siècle glitz. It anticipates the Bright Young Things of 25 years later. NB: there are no dodos in it so, you know, caveat emptor.

There is a beetle in **'The Beetle'**, though. It was published in the year of 'Dracula' and outsold it by a factor of six, which tells you all you need to know about Richard Marsh's horror tale. It's about an Egyptian scarab-deity that might have crawled out of a Stephen King novel but for the Victorian setting and the odd scene of disturbing insect erotica. And who isn't into that? ■

## Life-altering home coffee wisdom

Perfect coffee with these three ways to filter heaven



**WHEN IT COMES** to that morning cup of joe, necessity has been the mother of invention for many of us. Out has gone the habitual visit to our cheery local barista – hello, Marco! – replaced with a need to duplicate the taste and buzz from the relatively espresso-machine-free surrounds of our kitchens. But before you do anything desperate, like drink instant, help is available.

**1 Pourover**  
One of the best cups of coffee you can get in this city is the pourover at Monmouth – complex, strong, dark, like every mysterious stranger you've ever fancied. It's easy to do at home too, all you need is filters and a pourover cone (experts say you should pour from the kettle in a slow anticlockwise direction). The Hario ceramic V60 is the absolute gold standard. It's probably the most labour-intensive way to make filter coffee, but produces a damn fine cup. Oh, and grind your own beans.

**2 Machine**  
Some people (ie me) don't like faffing around with coffee in the morning; they just want a big pot of the black stuff, no messing, no fuss and quick. That's where a coffee machine comes in. Filter in, grounds in, water in, go for a shower, there it is. The Moccamaster is beautiful and comes in lots of colours, but hotels' supplier of choice Bravor is for people who take their coffee seriously. Also, grind your own beans, seriously.

**3 AeroPress**  
It's the fuffiest of all the ways of making filter coffee but also the quickest, and the AeroPress produces a seriously delicious cup of coffee. Chuck in the usual filter, ground coffee and hot water, give it a stir, and wait just 60 seconds, then drop the plunger and you're setting off some major caffeine TNT for yourself. By the way, I'm not joking: grind your own damn beans. ■  
*Eddy Frankel*



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