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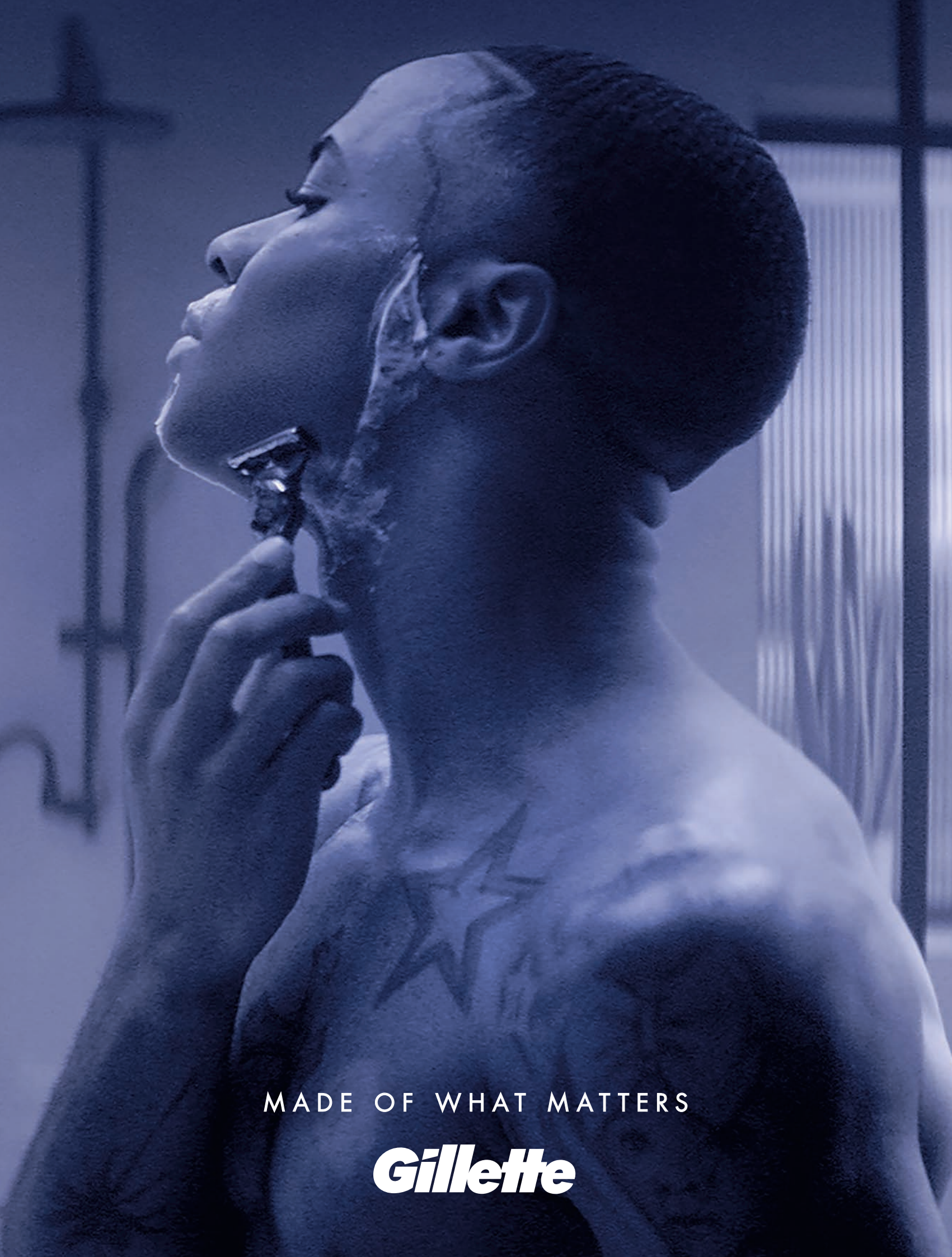
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Inside

This week's Time Out
in no time at all

'Endgame'-changer

Daniel Radcliffe tackles Beckett at
The Old Vic. And he's seriously funny

PAGE 73



Pasta perfected

It might not be a looker but
Londoners queue round the block
for Padella's pici cacio e pepe

PAGE 12



Bartenderness

Where do the pourers in the pub
take their dates for a drink? Aurora
at The Four Thieves shares a tip

PAGE 33



Ardour on the dancefloor

Valentine's falls on a Friday this year, so sack off
the wine and roses for some top club nights

PAGE 65

Need some half-term hacks?

Keep the kids entertained *and* educated with the
help of our school hols special

PAGE 48

↓ FEATURES AND REGULARS

11 City Life 16 My London Story Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium 22 The truth about flatmates 33 Pub dating etiquette 40 Exclusive offers
42 Things to Do 48 Kids 61 Film 65 Music & Nightlife 71 Theatre & Dance 76 Art 79 Food 83 Drink 85 Escapes

Hello, London

Joe Mackertich
London Editor
@j_mackertich



I have, in my life, cohabited with a great many people. Tall people, small people, noisy people, people who were so quiet as to barely exist. Think of an adjective, and the chances are I've lived with someone with that defining character trait.

When I see them lined up in my mind's eye, a phantom army of fallen flatmates, one thing stands out: the diversity. I have shared a fridge with the French, cooked with a Korean and drunk in silence with Finns (as far as I can tell, this is Finland's national sport). My beef-shin ragù has been forced on men and women from Eritrea, Taiwan and Italy. I've bickered over cleaning rotas with Ghanaians and been kept awake by Japanese house parties. I might never rack up enough air miles to be considered a man of the world, but I *am* a man of London. Truly the next best thing.

Each of my flatmates taught me something about the city I still occasionally take for granted; they all helped me be a better Londoner. Apart from that Korean guy, who used to go missing for days on end. He was just a pain in the arse.



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THE EDITOR'S ESSENTIALS Three things you have to do this week



EAT this

How long has **Caravan** had that pork belly kimchi pancake on the menu? Why did you all keep it from me? It's *fucking* great.



SEE this

'**Buddhism**' at the **British Library** is nearly done. An intelligently curated collection of compelling objects. I came out in a good mood.



DRINK this

As is customary, I went to watch QPR lose a couple of weeks ago. I can report that **The Princess Victoria** is still one of W12's best boozers.

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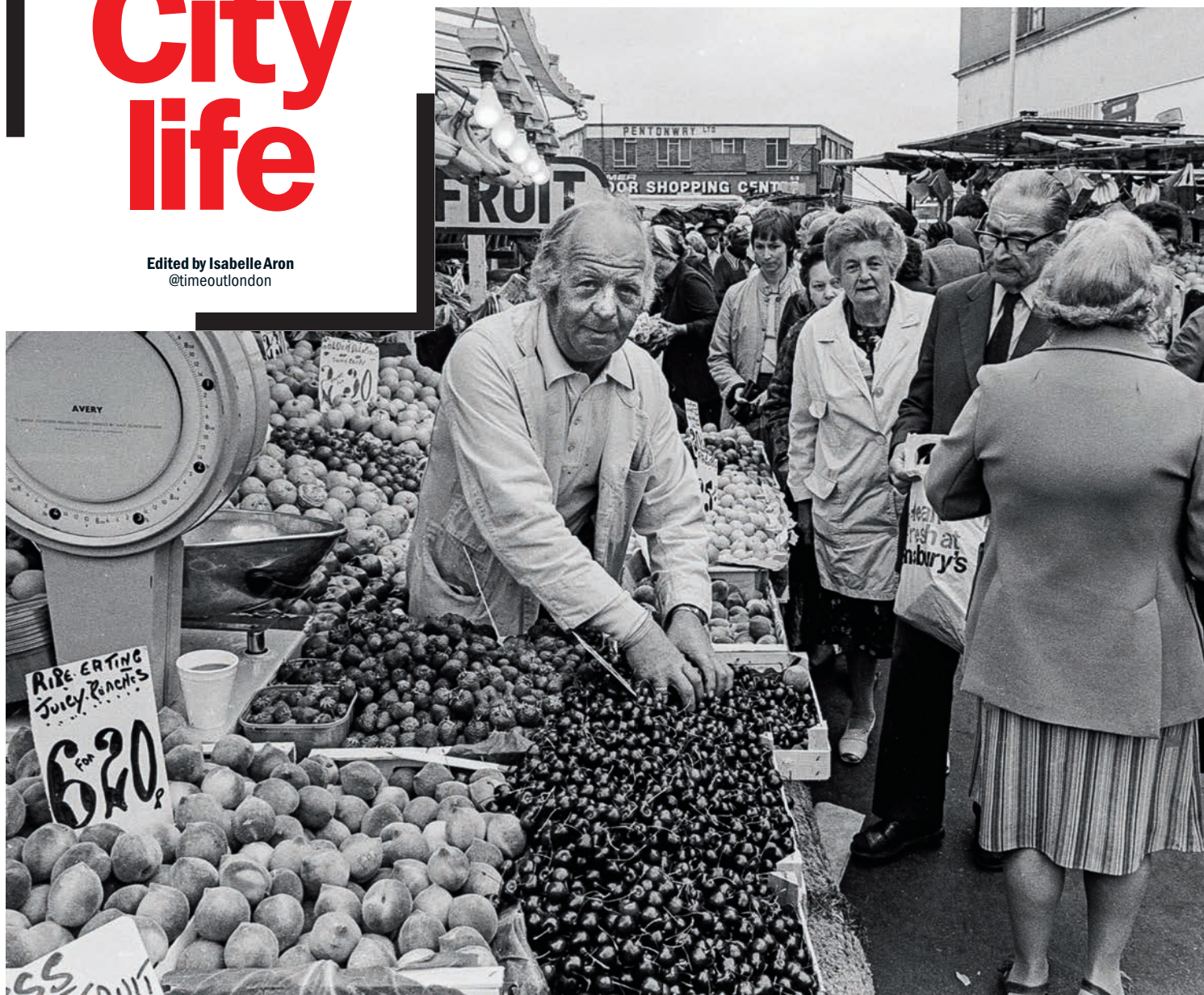
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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

City life

Edited by Isabelle Aron
@timeoutlondon



The East End, caught in time

What did life in Hackney look like 40 years ago? We chat to photographer Neil Martinson about the story behind this 1981 snap of Ridley Road Market

HACKNEY HAS CHANGED a lot since the 1950s. Gentrification is rife in the east London borough, but these archive photos by local photographer Neil Martinson show that not everything is different. This picture of Ridley Road Market (above), for instance, shows a scene you might still see on that road today.

Martinson began documenting the area in the '70s. From nurses campaigning for a fairer wage outside Bethnal Green Hospital to families running errands, he captured all aspects of everyday life. Five decades later, he's published his photos in a new book, 'Hackney Archive'.

'At the time of the photo, times were tough in Hackney,' explains Martinson. 'The largest

factory, Lesney, was facing closure, with hundreds of women losing their jobs. There was cut-throat competition in the rag trade and conditions were poor. Ridley was always jammed with people looking to buy cheap food and clothes.' But it wasn't just about doing your weekly shop – Martinson says it was the focal point for the community. 'Street markets have always been an important part of London's history and culture. Ridley Road was a meeting place – a place to demonstrate and be seen.'

As a child, he found the market intimidating. 'I'd go with my mum to do her weekly shop. Back then I found it a bit scary, lots of shouting and shoving, but my mum gave as good as she took.'

The stall in the photograph is still going today. Back then it was run by Bill Julian (pictured) and it's still in the family. 'Bill Julian's family have had their fruit and veg stall in Ridley Road for around 100 years,' says Martinson. 'His granddaughter Kiely now works on the stall. I took her photo recently as I've been revisiting these places.'

Martinson doesn't live in London these days, but when he comes back he always visits this corner of the capital. 'I relish the energy and diversity of Hackney,' he says. 'It's a place of constant change – not always for the better – but there is a resilience there.' ■ *El Hunt*

→ 'Hackney Archive: Work and Life 1971-1985' by Neil Martinson is published by Hoxton Mini Press. £17.95.

HYPE DISH
DISSECTION

Padella's 'beautifully beige' pici cacio e pepe

What goes into the London plates that everyone bangs on about

BOROUGH MARKET RESTAURANT

Padella is famous for two things, in no particular order. One: its never-ending queue, which snakes around the street. Two: its gloriously cheesy, effortlessly viral cacio e pepe pasta dish. And yes, the two are inextricably linked. As the pasta

supremos were gearing up to open their new Shoreditch branch this week, we sat down with chef-owner Tim Siadatan to find out what goes into the capital's most covetable comfort food. ■ *Bobby Palmer*
→ Padella, 6 Southwark St. ☉ London Bridge. From Thu Feb 13 also at 1 Phipp St. ☉ Old St. Pici cacio e pepe £6.50.



RIVINGTON STREET EC2

THE STREET THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Comedian *Romesh Ranganathan* recalls his awful first gig

ON RIVINGTON STREET

in Shoreditch, there was a place called the Comedy Cafe. It's closed down now, but that's where I did my first proper gig. It was 2009 and I was a teacher. I didn't know there was an open-mic circuit. I just called up and said: 'Can I do a gig?' The guy said you had to have done 30 gigs. I lied and said I had – and he booked me.

I wrote my material during a free period on the day of the gig. I finished writing it on the train. But it turns out, you really need to prepare. I ate shit for the entire set. I didn't know anything – mic technique, set structure, timings. I ran over so much that they started flicking the lights off and on to get me off stage. Then I started riffing about the electricity bill. It was horrendous.

I couldn't get back on at the Comedy Cafe for two years. I'd love to say that when I did go back, I absolutely ripped it, but it was fairly middling.

I still can't walk down Rivington Street without thinking about that night. But even though I totally died on stage, it made me want to do it more. I also realised how much I needed to work on my set. That gig set me on a path. ■

Interview by Isabelle Aron
→ Romesh Ranganathan hosts Hip Hop Saved My Valentines at Omeara. ☉ Borough. Sat Feb 15. £20.

The pasta

'It's hand-rolled at our Borough Market bakery. All the bakers roll it as a collective, every day. We've tried making it with machines, but it's just not as good.'

The sauce

'The key to any unctuous, sauce is pasta water. If you combined the cooked pici, cheese and butter without it, it would split and be nasty. The water helps the fat melt properly.'

The cheese

'Traditional cacio e pepe uses only pecorino, but we use a Neal's Yard Dairy aged parmesan too. They use it for cheese plates and think we're mad for putting it in a sauce.'

The price

'We love fresh pasta and no one was really doing it at this price point. Here, you have the cacio e pepe with a bottle of sparkling water for less than the price of your Pret lunch.'

The colour

'People love this dish because it's oozy, cheesy and feels good in your mouth. People are bored of perfectly filtered Instagram shots – this is beautifully beige.'



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MOST GOOGLED

Why is Tower Bridge blue?



THERE'S PLENTY OF Tower Bridge trivia out there. Did you know that it once started opening when a bus was driving over it? And remember when Fergie (the singer, not the royal family member) mistook it for London Bridge in her music video? But here's the real question: why is it blue?

Architectural paint historian Patrick Baty knows a thing or two about palettes. When Tower Bridge was given a fresh lick of paint in 2009, he investigated the bridge's earlier colour schemes and found that, when it was originally built in 1886, it was a fetching shade of 'mid-greenish blue'. Over the years, the London attraction has also been dark green and a chic shade of grey.

But how did it get the blue steel look it wears now? The current colour scheme dates back to 1977. 'The bridge was painted blue, white and red in preparation for the Queen's Silver Jubilee' explains



Baty. When it had a £4m overhaul 11 years ago the team decided to stick with the longest-standing hue.

If you're holding out for a bright pink Tower Bridge in future, there's bad news. For starters, painting a major landmark is a big undertaking; zhuzhing up the bridge requires 22,000 litres of paint, so it's *slightly* more involved than just popping to B&Q. And according to Baty, getting even a subtle makeover approved 'is not easy'. He explains: 'You have to provide evidence to support the change of colour.' That requires a 'full analysis of the paint' and explaining the benefits of a potential facelift. We're guessing, 'It would look good on the 'gram', wouldn't really fly. ■ *El Hunt*

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MY LONDON STORY

'I founded Europe's first women-focused sex shop'



WHEN KY HOYLE went to Soho in the early '90s to explore the sex shops, she found nothing that catered for female pleasure. She decided to take things into her own hands and launched Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, the country's first sex shop specifically for women. Since then, she's spent the last 28 years developing a safe space where women can explore their sexuality, learn about their own bodies and ask positive questions.

I started Sh! in 1992 after a trip to Soho. As a young, liberated woman, I wanted to explore my sexuality. I was shocked at how intimidating and alienating the shop I went into was. I ended up going to so many, thinking the next one would be different, but there was nothing for women.

There was so much hate around sexuality at the time. In the early '90s, the government banned the teaching of LGBTQ+ life and the Aids epidemic was still prominent. The tabloids were saying things like: 'Don't sit on a public toilet seat or you'll catch Aids', so there was a stark difference between that and anyone who was vaguely conscious. It really felt like 'us' and 'them'.

There's a huge pressure on women in terms of how they look and the kind of pleasure they should feel. It's only recently that things are changing.

We were the first ever women-focused shop in Europe. For a long time, our policy was that men were only welcome as guests of women. We were trying to level the playing field and make sure that any woman who walked into the shop felt comfortable. We stopped that recently because, of course, trans men and women are welcome and gender is so fluid.

ANDY PARSONS



I never had a business plan. I just always thought that women needed to be empowered to explore their sexuality. Now, we run lots of classes in the shop to help with that.

I started the shop on £700. Then I had the problem of finding stock. Most things in the warehouses were just 18 inches of throbbing Mr Big John, but it was in one of those warehouses that I found the Rabbit. In the late '90s, *Cosmo* asked us what toy we'd recommend for women, and we said the Rabbit. This was before anyone had heard of it. The next day we had 600 orders.

I couldn't find many toys that weren't dick-shaped or huge so we started making our own products. I moulded the first lot on my breakfast bar: silicone is a sensitive material that's dependent on the environment, so a lot of them went wrong and ended up being dog toys at the start, but now we've got it right.

We've been open for 28 years but in the grand scheme of things, that's not very long. We've got to battle centuries of not having permission to own our sexuality. We're still fighting.

Talking to people is so important. One woman came in with a list of products. We gave her a cup of tea and got her to relax and it turned out her husband had said she was boring and wanted her to pep things up. She said she just wanted a cuddle. We told her to go away and think about it. We didn't make a sale that day but that wasn't the point. ■ *Interview by Lisa Wright*

→ Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium. ⊕ Old St.

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CITY ENVY

Great things that we love in other cities

Glasgow's money-free swap centre

SHOPKEEPERS DON'T GENERALLY accept swaps in place of cold, hard cash. You'd get laughed out of Tesco if you tried to 'pay' for your Pot Noodle by offering to put up some shelves. But at Swap Market, a space in Glasgow, money will buy you... absolutely nothing. It's a community-run stock exchange with a points system. Punters rack up credits for donating things or offering to teach specialist skills. These can be traded for items, workshops or classes

given by other members. It empowers people with empty pockets but a head full of knowledge or practical expertise: in recent months, members have benefited from free Arabic and

Russian lessons, climate-change talks and tech masterclasses. Sometimes the best things in life really are free. ■ *El Hunt*
→ www.swapmarket.info



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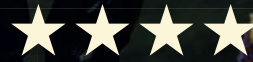
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It bus be love



Fancy getting loved-up in London this February? Here are some of the best ways to do so – all discoverable by bus...

Hey, Valentine! Believe it or not, there's something romantic about bus-hopping. Whether you're fond of twinkling lights or watching the sun set lazily over the Thames, catching a bus can be a lovely way to really see London out of your window. Plus, buses run around the clock, are wheelchair-accessible and are great value for money thanks to TfL's £1.50 Hopper fare, which lets you save cash (or splash more on your date). Here are six affordable activities to try with your Valentine, best travelled to by bus. Extra romance points if you score a seat at the front of the top deck.



1 Get lost in a maze at Hampton Court Palace and Gardens

There are endless reasons to make the journey to Henry VIII's delightfully over-the-top palace: the impressive architecture shaped by consecutive dynasties, the opulent Tudor chapel that is still used today, and, of course, the jaw-dropping royal maze.

→ Bus stop: Hampton Court Palace. Bus numbers: 111, 216, 411 and R68. £4.50 maze entry (or included with £10.65 palace ticket).

2 Cuddle up for a romantic movie at the Rivoli Ballroom

South of the river lies a lovingly restored 1950s art deco ballroom with a pop-up cinema. In keeping with loved-up February, the venue will be showing 'The Notebook', 'Pretty Woman' and 'Romeo + Juliet'. We're already feeling a bit weepy...

→ Bus stop: Crofton Park. Bus numbers: 122, 171, 172 and N171. £10.

3 Take in the beautiful views at Hampstead Pergola

North London's gorgeous and secluded Hampstead Pergola is a favourite of local artists – and it's not hard to see why. The wild flora is pretty as a picture, and you get uninterrupted views of the London skyline. Take a moment to relax below the pergola, which is festooned with wisteria.

→ Bus stop: Inverforth House. Bus numbers: 210, 268 and N5. Free.



4

Fall in love over interiors at Leighton House Museum

Former home of the Victorian artist Frederic Lord Leighton, this Holland Park beauty (which is only open on weekends) was created by award-winning architect George Aitchison. Every inch of the space has been adorned; be sure to keep your eyes peeled for the astonishing collection of sixteenth-century Islamic glazed tiles.

→ Bus stop: Kensington High St/Earl's Court Rd.
Bus numbers: 9, 23, 27, 49, C1, N27 and N28. £9.



GET THERE FOR LESS!

When embarking on your four-wheeled adventures, it pays to remember that you'll save big when travelling during the wonderful world of off-peak.

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Fare shown is for an adult off-peak pay as you go journey not going via Zone 1 on Tube, DLR and most London Overground services.

Travel into Zone 1 from £2.40

Fare shown is for an adult off-peak pay as you go journey from Zone 2 into Zone 1.

5

Gaze across the city with the Emirates Air Line

Sometimes a journey can be a destination in itself. Begin your ride at North Greenwich, where you'll board the UK's first urban cable car and take to the skies for a 0.7-mile ride. Want to really up the romance factor? Book a Champagne Flight in a private cabin and soar above the Thames in style.

→ Bus stop: North Greenwich. Bus numbers: 108, 129, 132, 161, 188, 422, 472 and 486. From £3.50. Champagne Flight: £28 per person.

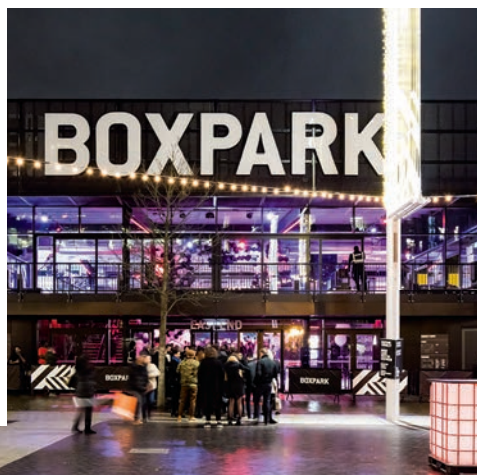


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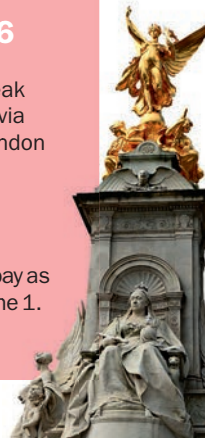
Catch a free gig at Boxpark Wembley

The capacious events space in London's latest Boxpark hosts everything from comedy events to creative workshops and, of course, loads of live music and parties. Rock up on V-Day for a huge, free 'Massaoke' session: that's next-level karaoke, with a live band where everyone sings along together. Date night sorted.

→ Bus stop: Wembley Park. Bus numbers: 83, 92, 182, 206, 223, 297 and N83. Free.



→ Find more off-peak itineraries at timeout.com/off-peak





Hammersmith



INTERVIEW ANNIE LORD

'Til a rent hike do us part

For many Londoners, the most important relationships aren't with pals and partners... they're with flatmates. Read on for love, hate, secrets and revelations. Portraits *Rob Greig*

The house-hoppers

Chantelle (far left) and Jacinta, both 28, have moved flats together five times over the past year

Jacinta 'The first place we moved into wasn't great. You'd be in the shower and suddenly the water would turn freezing cold.'

Chantelle 'And the rent included bills, so the landlord would keep the boiler locked up so that we couldn't adjust the heating. We were shivering.'

Jacinta 'We eventually got two rooms in a four-bedroom place. But one day a pipe burst in the ceiling above my room. My bed was soaked.'

Chantelle 'They had to redo the roof so we had to move again. We ended up moving five times in one year.'

Jacinta 'It's been so stressful.'

Chantelle 'But now we live in a lovely place. It's just us two and we're much happier. We know when the other one needs space. Like if Jacinta is on her period I'll give her a wide berth.'

Jacinta 'I don't think I could have coped without Chantelle. She's been the most consistent thing in my life.'





Croydon

The odd couple

Eco entrepreneur Alex, 31 (right) and City boy Ravi, 30, have wildly different lifestyles, incomes and political values

Alex 'Ravi works long hours and relies on takeaways for his dinner, but I'm always in the kitchen trying to make cheap meals. Ravi's culinary skills are... *limited*.'

Ravi 'It's because I'm often working late!'

Alex 'You can tell the difference on a night out, too. I'll have a couple of beers and head home, but Ravi will drop £100 on dinner and stay out late.'

Ravi 'Things have just worked out differently for us. Alex

has put all his spare cash into building his business.'

Alex 'We still split bills evenly. Ravi's very much a City boy, but I know he works long hours for his wages.'

Ravi 'I voted for the Tories in the general election, because I wanted to pick a party with a strong stance on leaving the EU.'

Alex 'The fact that we voted differently doesn't harm our relationship – we agree to disagree. I voted LibDem because I wanted us to stay in

the EU. But Ravi and I have never argued over it.'

Ravi 'If we're watching the news and something about Brexit or politics comes up, then we'll chat about it between us. We have differing views but there's no tension. At the end of the day, he's my best mate and I love living with him.'

Alex 'We've been through a lot together, including break-ups. We've seen each other at our best and our worst and we're always there for each other.'
Alex runs OneNine5



What happens when a good flat goes bad?

John and I were friends for ten years before we became flatmates. We found a flat that I loved from the start. It's quiet and the rooms are big and airy. It's also close to central, as well as next to my favourite yoga studio.

It all went wrong when John got a new girlfriend half his age. Immediately I felt like a gooseberry. They'd have loud sex all the time, so I began staying out with friends late into the night to get away from it.

With her, everything is a drama – she's always arguing with someone. As she's 20 years younger than me, we don't have much in common, and I don't want to be drawn into her histrionics – I had enough of that years ago. But John seems blind to it.

I feel like I'm living in their love nest, and a few weeks ago, when I was hoovering the living room, I found a pair of her knickers underneath the rug. The fact that they're having sex in the living room when I'm out makes me feel like I don't belong in my own home and that's horrible.

When I've tackled John about it, he tells me that I'm the one with the problem. I don't want to leave the flat, because I don't think I'll find one this nice. So for now, I'm hanging on in there, and praying they move out together, but the wait is killing my soul. *Names have been changed.*

Help, I'm in love with my flatmate!

Got the hots for the person across the hall? Relationship coach *Jo Barnett* has this advice

First, question if the feelings are genuine. If you're spending a lot of time with someone, you could confuse a friendship with love. Look at it objectively: do they have the right qualities for someone you'd want a relationship with? Do you have similar interests? If you still want to pursue a relationship, you could use humour

to test the water. Say: 'It's funny, we get along so well that I wonder if we should go on a date!' The slower you can build things the longer it's going to last – don't immediately move into one room. If they don't feel the same, accept it and focus on friendship. Try not to take it personally, and don't ignore them or make it awkward.

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^Approximate travel times for Crossrail taken from Royal Arsenal Woolwich. Source: www.crossrail.co.uk

The shelterers

Mohammed, 37, (right) moved in with Guy, 61, and wife Julia, 57, after fleeing Sierra Leone



Mohammed 'At the moment I am not allowed to get a job, so I am grateful to Guy and Julia because if it wasn't for them I'm not sure whether I would have somewhere to stay.'

Guy 'We met through the charity Refugees at Home. There are several points in the asylum application process where refugees can suddenly find themselves without a place to live and the charity was created to fill that gap. A lot of refugees end up sleeping rough.'

Julia 'We watch a lot of TV together. Last week it was "The Crown", it led to an interesting conversation about the monarchy.'

Guy 'Since Mohammed has moved in with us, we have learned a lot about the political situation in Sierra Leone. We find ourselves much more interested in other cultures.'

Mohammed 'Where I lived before I was eating a lot of meat and oily foods. But because Guy and Julia are vegetarians, I eat a lot of vegetables now. Wherever I end up I will take that with me.'

Find new places to make pals at [timeout.com/friends](https://www.timeout.com/friends)

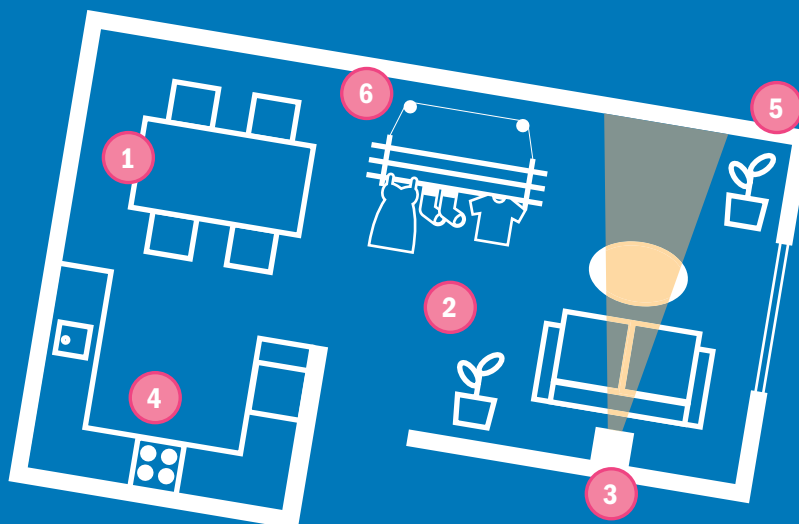
The perfect shared flat

Could rethinking your space be the key to easy living? Architect *Suzanne O'Connell* spells out how to design an argument-free flat

1 Every shared flat needs a dining table. A low one, where you sit on the ground, Japanese-style, will make a small flat feel bigger.

2 It's about keeping it simple. At my place, we don't have much furniture – a table and one couch, so there's more open space for things like yoga.

3 You don't need to have a TV. Ideally, have a projector or a moveable screen that is taken out for specific programs or films so that the TV doesn't dominate the space.



4 Try to find a kitchen that opens into the living space so that the cook can speak with flatmates while cooking. Ideally the sink and oven should be far apart so there is enough space for two people.

5 'You can never have too many plants!'

6 If you have to hang laundry in the communal space, get a ceiling mounted system that can be hoisted up. *Suzanne runs The Decorators, a design collective with a psychology focus.*

INTERVIEWS ANNIE LORD AND ROSE JOHNSTONE

Crisp winter mornings sparkle under a layer of frost, adorning trees and pavements alike with glittering white, and steamy clouds of breath billow from the mouths of commuters on their way to work. But as we head further into the season and the weather takes a turn, problems can arise across the rail network.

When the mercury plummets, even the lightest shower of rain or dusting of snow can freeze and become compacted on the rails, turning into dangerous ice. Not only does this freeze around the electric rail and create an insulating effect preventing trains from drawing power and being able to move with any speed – in the worst cases, it prevents them from being able to move at all.

When winter weather strikes we run snow-and-ice-busting trains around the clock to

keep you moving. These special trains are kitted out with anti-icing fluid, which works in a similar way to salt gritters on the road, preventing our electric rail from freezing in the first place. And they apply an adhesion gel to the tracks so that trains can get grip.

BREAKING THE ICE

We also fit certain points along the tracks with heaters and NASA-grade insulation to further prevent ice build-up, particularly in places where trains change direction to other lines. That's right, the battle against snow and ice has become

space age.

To try to keep disruptions to your journeys to a minimum, we may have to make some changes to our timetables when bad

weather hits. Some services will be less frequent, and some stations may close, but this allows us to complete all the work needed to keep you moving, albeit a little slower than usual to keep you and our staff as safe as possible.

We know you've got places to go this winter.

When the mercury drops, our snow-and-ice-busting trains will work around the clock to keep you moving.

**Find out more at
southeasternrailway.co.uk/winter-weather**



Holloway

'I never see my flatmate'

Waitress Candice, 30, and business manager Rafael, 28, work shifts that mean they never see each other

Rafael 'I work in retail while Candice works evening shifts as a waitress at Hawksmoor. Often, by the time she gets back from work I'm asleep and in the morning when I'm getting ready for work, she won't actually be up yet.'

Candice 'Though I miss Rafael, I like living somewhere where I get a lot of time to myself. We both work in central London and we're both dealing with

customers all day, so it's nice to come back to a quiet, empty house.'

Rafael 'When I haven't seen her for a while I worry about her. Although I always know when she's been in because she leaves half-filled water cups and make-up brushes everywhere.'

Candice 'It can get hard, but there are ways to show you care even if you're absent. After I

didn't see Rafael for two weeks I bought him a plushie and a card; another time I got him cookies.'

Rafael 'I've lived in busy houses and I didn't like it. People make small talk in the kitchen even when it's obvious neither of you are in the mood for socialising. It didn't feel like home. Wherever Candice is feels like home... even if I don't see her much.' ■

Help, how can I tell if my potential housemate is a psychopath?

Psychologist *Dr Paula Banca* says that if you see these signs you shouldn't sign the contract

You can ask questions to find out about their personality – do they go out with other people or are they always at home? Are they comfortable living with people from different cultures? – but they could be lying. It's more about how they interact. That's why the face-to-face interview is really important – if you're talking on the phone

or online, you can't really find out if they're lying or not. If they're a psychopath, they probably don't know how to socialise very well. Look out for signs of discomfort, like taking a long time to reply, not looking you in the eyes or moving a lot. Also, references are really important. No references is a very bad sign.



Secrets I keep from my flatmate

Time Out readers reveal the things they can't tell their cohabitee

I poisoned her goldfish.

I've done dressing-up sessions in her wardrobe.

I use his washing pods whenever he leaves the tea towels dirty.

I have a bet going on how quickly they'll break up with their partner.

I use their butter and have never bought my own.

I had sex in the living room when I was on my period.

I actually think their farts are funny.

I wanted the downstairs room so I could hide my night-time visitors; I wasn't taking one for the team.

I read her diary.

I judge their food shop. Hard.



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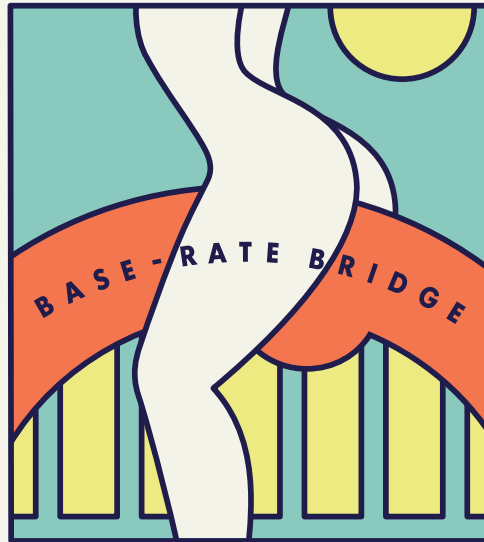
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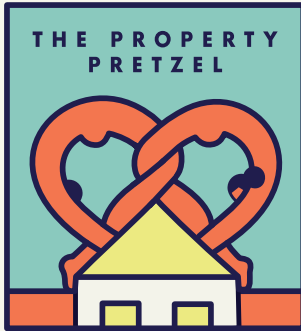
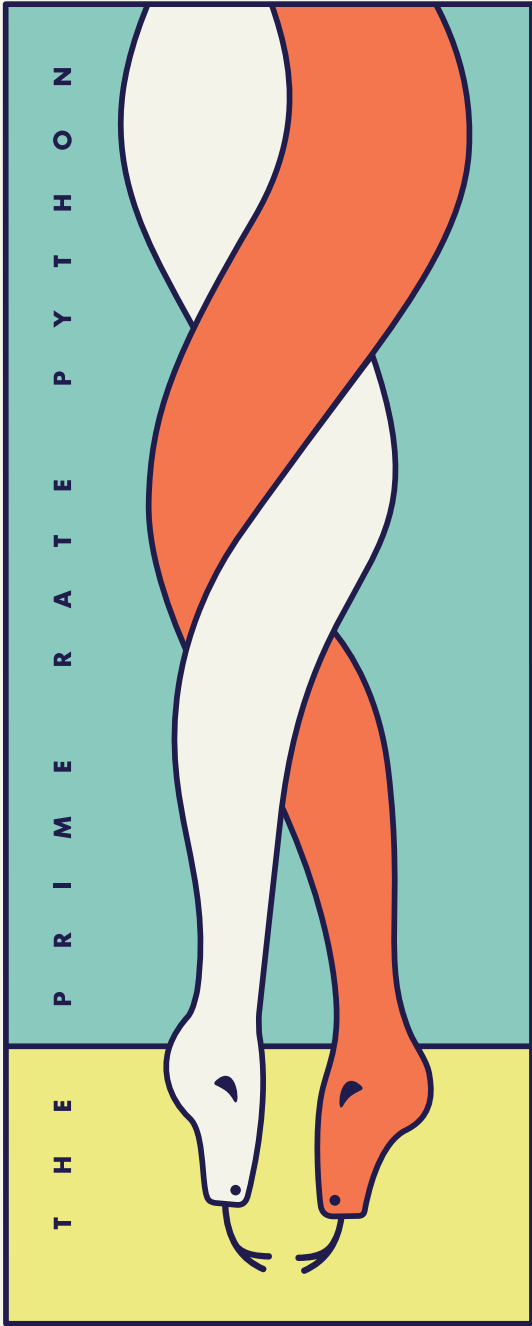


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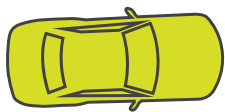
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Thinking of taking your crush to one of London's finest boozers this Valentine's? Read this first, we beg you

Before we start...

Pub-lover *Megan Nolan* makes the case for dates over pints



I USED TO take all my first dates to a bar in Peckham, the kind staffed by exquisitely cheekboned 19-year-old art students wearing dungarees and boiler suits. The bar had a good happy hour, which was why I chose it, but the seats were fashionably angular and utterly agonising, the soundscape a nightmarish deluge of Boiler Room deep

cuts. Eventually I wised up and shifted the setting of my nervy overtures up the road to The Nags Head, a vanishingly rare thing in Peckham: a real pub, not a gastro experiment. And it was wonderful. Instead of astringent margaritas, we drank creamy pints of Guinness, and settled in to the ancient upholstery which sank smoothly enough that our

keens leaned together and my body flood with warmth. On a Friday night, Alex, the star of the weekly karaoke night, was belting out 'Me and Mrs Jones', and I bent over and kissed the man who would become my boyfriend. Bars are a site for looking and being looked at, but pubs are for really talking, really listening and the fleeting flushed moments that attend.



Listen to the experts

Bartenders reveal the places they take dates



Ross at The Sun Tavern

'The Grapes in Limehouse is really cool, Ian McKellen owns it. It has an outside bit that backs on to the Thames and it's super-quirky. Anywhere that feels a bit special is good.'



Yanna at The Prince of Peckham

'I'm not romantic at all. I just want to get drunk, so cheap drinks are a must. Having a pint in a low-key pub is my idea of a dream date, somewhere like The Montpelier [in Peckham] or The New Cross House.'



Aurora at The Four Thieves

'There's a pub in Acton called The Aeronaut. They have a huge circus tent at the back with performers. It's dinner and a show, so you get to have an experience rather than just going out for drinks.'



Emma at Heathcote and Star

'On a first date I want good cocktails, good shots and good food. There's a really nice pub in Wanstead called The Manor House. It has a nice atmosphere and they make you feel welcome.'

CHOOSE YOUR TIME

CAREFULLY

What your weeknight pub date's ETA says about them

5:00PM

'I don't have a real job.'

6:15PM

'I want to meet you as soon as possible after work. I will run if I need to. I scrolled through your entire Instagram and now I'm sure: you're the love of my life.'

7:00PM

'I'm a normal person who knows that 7pm (7.30pm, maybe) is the only acceptable time to meet for a pub date.'

8:30PM

'I'm either a banker or someone who goes to the gym after work even when I have plans. Either way, you should be impressed and intimidated.'

9:30PM

'I am meeting you for sex and sex only.'

11:00PM

'You know the Croydon Cat Killer? It's me.'

Have a supper strategy

It's responsible to soak up pints with a slap-up meal, so pre-empting the hapless plod for a romantic table is the move of a modern-day Casanova. Do so by picking a boozier in a prime dining neighbourhood; somewhere like **The Sebright Arms** in Hackney (31-35 Coate Street), where you have The Laughing Heart and Morito

within arm-in-arm ambling distance. **The KPH** (139 Ladbrooke Grove) is a safe shout for west Londoners. It's on the doorstep of Portobello Road's more budget spots like Honest Burgers and Kensington Park Road's Orasay, if you're out to impress. Bermondsey and Borough's streets are littered with restaurants of pedigree, including

tapas joint José. For here, pick **Simon the Tanner** (231 Long Lane) as your beery date-night basecamp. And then there's Green Lanes. Start at **The Salisbury** (1 Grand Parade) and if things go well, you can take it up a notch at one of north London's finest Turkish establishments. Nothing tests a relationship like a shared mezze board.



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In a December 2019 independent study of 227 premium lager drinkers, 55% preferred Carlsberg Export versus Stella and 55% preferred Export
versus Peroni whilst in each case 8% expressed no preference. Please see www.carlsberg.co.uk/export-2020 for verification details.



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So, you probably wouldn't know that most drinkers prefer the taste of Carlsberg Export to Stella and Peroni.

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PROBABLY THE BEST  BEER IN THE WORLD

**MATCH
CRISPS TO
YOUR WINE**

Cheap vino Instagrammers War on Terroirs share their essential tips



Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc with Original Hula Hoops

'What's more OG than savvy B and Hoops? NB It's essential to put the crisps on the tips of your fingers and stare at your partner while eating them sexily one at a time.'



La Vieille Ferme Cotes du Ventoux Rouge with McCoy's Flame Grilled Steak

'While steak and red wine might feel a bit Gregg Wallace for V Day, just look at how he licks a spoon. He knows what's up.'



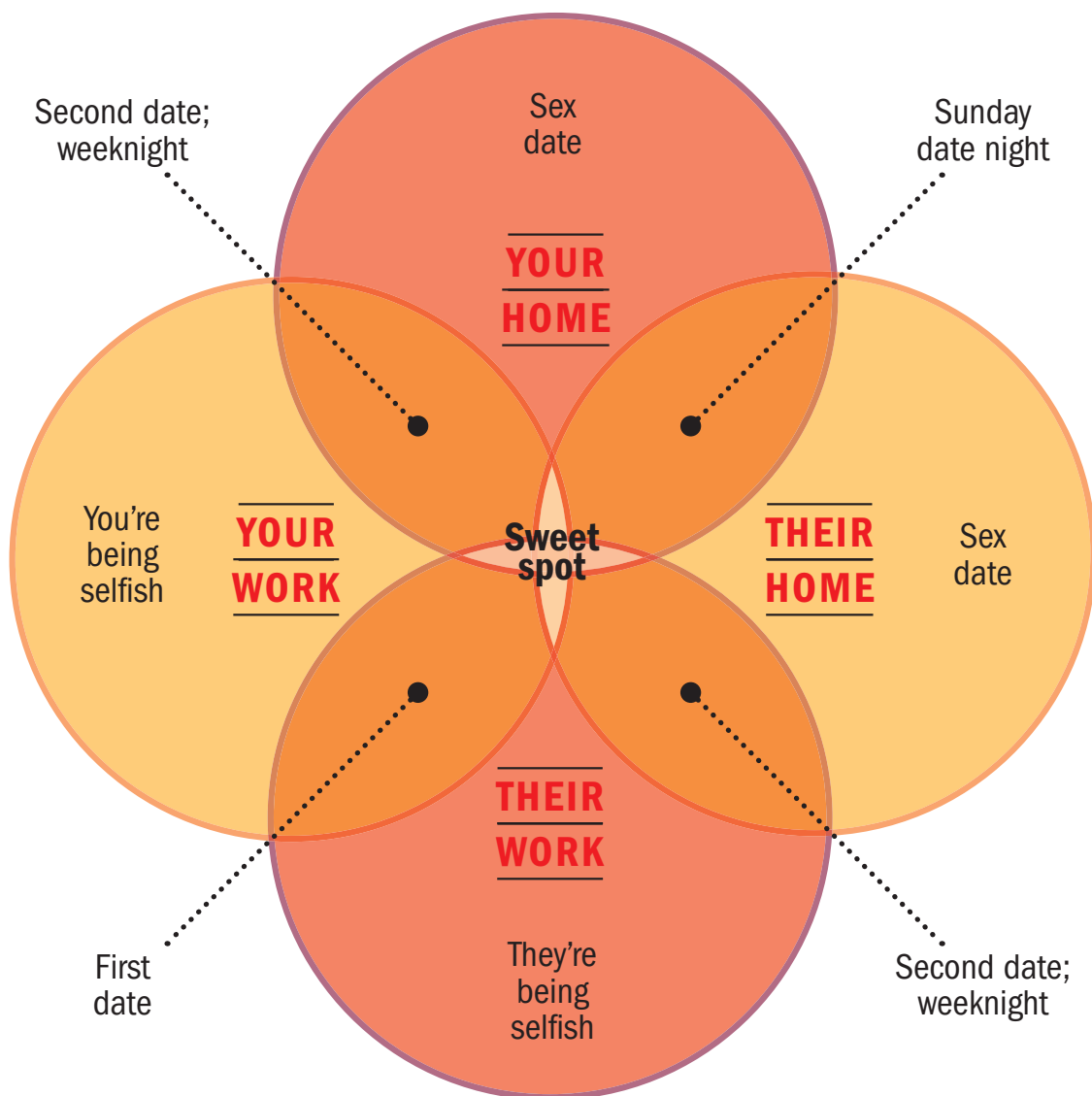
Veve Clicquot Brut Rosé NV with Burts Firecracker Lobster crisps

'This is definitely throwing money at the problem, the problem being that you forgot to make a reservation at Sexy Fish and need solutions.'

→ [instagram.com/waronterroir](https://www.instagram.com/waronterroir)

'Where we meeting?'

The eternal question, finally answered in one handy diagram



Plan some conversation safety nets

Even when you've got the hots for each other, first date convos can dry up at an alarming rate when you're a bag of nerves. Give love a little nudge at a pub with added extras made to break the ice. Battersea's **The Four Thieves** (51 Lavender Gardens) has all the bells and whistles and Pac-Man to save a sinking date – it's a pub with a whole arcade room. Or keep 'em on their toes at Leyton's **The Heathcote and Star** (344 Grove Green Road), which does pool and ping-pong by the hour. If you're more of a traditionalist, grab a battered sofa and battle it out over bar billiards and boardgames at **The Royal Albert**



(460 New Cross Road). Having said all that, perhaps you're a lover, not a fighter. In which case, why not get conspiratorial over the jukebox at **Bradley's Spanish Bar** (42-44 Hanway Street), which is operated by old pound coins you get at the bar (if you ask nicely)? Or make fun of the artwork on the wall of Guy Ritchie's gaff **The Lore of the Land** (4 Conway Street) – paintings can be moved around at the landlord's whim through the use of a sophisticated magnet system (how the other half live!). With these discussion points, the chat will be flowing as rapidly as the sauv blanc.

WORDS: CONVERSATION SAFETY NETS: LAURA RICHARDS; PHOTOS: WINE AND CRISPS; ANDY PARSONS



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DELTA

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Don't flap over seats...

When it comes to pub dates, never be fussy about seats. Grimy booth, wonky chairs, picnic bench: it doesn't matter, as long as you're sat down. Every minute you're not is a curse upon your night. Spend half an hour wobbling in a stuffy crush of City workers, clinging on to your coat, a gym bag and a pint at the same time, and you'll need to get a defibrillator because – and we're sorry to tell you this – your romance will soon be dead.

...but sell your gran for this one

This spot in Farringdon's **Jerusalem Tavern** is the absolute best pub table to take a date to.

HAVE THE OPTION OF A LATE ONE



Things are hotting up, are they? Want to keep the flame burning without waking your flatmates? In which case, pick a pub with a late, late licence.

The Axe (18 Northwold Road) keeps Stoke Newingtonites up until 1am on weekends and has plenty of craft beers and bar snacks to sustain you. Over in Whitechapel, they're kicking on until 2am on Fridays and Saturdays (or midnight during the week) at **The Culpeper** (40 Commercial Street) and there are even hotel rooms above the pub. **Tooting Tram and Social** (46-48 Mitcham Road) is a bit more of a party spot: set in an old tram shed, it's full steam ahead to 2am on weekends. And **The Prince of Peckham** (1 Clayton Road) is the biggest night owl of them all: well attuned to south-east's raucous date-night needs, it stays up until 12.30am midweek and as late as 2.30am on Friday and Saturday nights. The jerk chicken and party tunes make it a red-hot spot that definitely trumps whispering over tinnies back at yours. ■

Watch out for unexpected company

Your date's going great. Couple of drinks, a few laughs, and your hand just accidentally brushed theirs. Except, uh-oh...

Your mum just walked in
Assume the crash position. Your date is going to hear about that time you 'married' the family cat, and there's simply no averting it. *Muuuuuum!*

Your ex just walked in
Lean coquettishly toward your date and repeatedly cycle your expression through The Three As:



amused, amazed, aroused. (It's worth practising this in the mirror beforehand.)

Your boss just walked in
Do your best to leave them with the uneasy impression that your date is, in fact, a big-deal headhunter who you are trying to pass off as a date. Promotion ahoy!

Your friends just walked in
'You know what's fun and romantic? A forward-roll race!' And then you roly-poly towards the exit at speed.

MARGOT ROBBIE

MARY ELIZABETH WINSTEAD

JURNEE SMOLLETT-BELL

ROSIE PEREZ

CHRIS MESSINA

ELLA JAY BASCO

ALI WONG

AND EWAN MCGREGOR



JAMIE EAST, THE SUN

MATT MAYTUM, TOTAL FILM

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HEY U GUYS

BIRDS OF PREY

AND THE FANTABULOUS EMANCIPATION OF ONE HARLEY QUINN



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CHRIS MESSINA AND EWAN MCGREGOR MUSIC BY DANIEL PEMBERTON SUPERVISORS SEASON KENT AND GABE HILFER EDITED BY JAY CASSIDY ACE EVAN SCHIFF PRODUCTION DESIGNER K.K. BARRETT
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MATTHEW LIBATIQUE, ASC. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS WALTER HAMADA GALEN VAISMAN GEOFF JOHNS HANS RITTER DAVID AYER BASED ON CHARACTERS FROM DC WRITTEN BY CHRISTINA HODSON
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What is it? All-you-can-eat dim sum and a glass of prosecco at a Chinatown classic.

Why go? Didn't you read the first bit? It's 90 minutes of unlimited dim sum – we're talking pork and crab xiao long bao, spicy duck dumplings and prawn rolls. Plus, the offer is available all week long.

Wait, how much? Just £22. That's less than half the normal price.

→ Leong's Legend. ⊕ Leicester Square. Until Apr 13.

www.timeout.com/leongslegend



The London Classic Car Show

What is it? Tickets to the largest classic car event in the capital.

Why go? Following years of success, this show has moved to a bigger, better home in Olympia London. Race to Kensington for a massive display of motors plus talks from industry experts.

Wait, how much? While the cars might be beyond your budget, tickets are 30 percent off – just £19.

→ Olympia London. ⊕ Kensington (Olympia).

Feb 21-23. www.timeout.com/classiccars

Awakn

What is it? Four innovative fitness classes in state-of-the-art studios.

Why go? For a next-level luxury gym experience. Sure, there's fancy deodorant in the bathrooms and all that jazz, but what's really impressive is the mega use of sound and light to kick workouts up a level.

Wait, how much? With 71 percent off, this discount is bigger than Arnie's guns. You'll pay just £24.

→ Awakn. ⊕ Canary Wharf. Until Jun 25.

www.timeout.com/awakn

Laki Kane

What is it? A romantic cocktail-making experience for two in a tropical Upper Street bar.

Why go? To shake things up this Valentine's Day. Find someone you fancy and learn to make a classic cocktail together in ten easy steps. And you'll get a bottle of fizz to share, in case you mess up your mojito.

Wait, how much? £35 for two. That's 50 percent off the regular price.

→ Laki Kane. ⊕ Highbury & Islington.

Until Dec 30. www.timeout.com/lakikane20

Lates at the Boulevard Theatre

What is it? After-hours shows at a revolving theatre. Choose from comedy, cabaret, live jazz and more.

Why go? For a huge helping of culture with a tiny price tag. Whatever floats your stage-shaped boat, it's probably happening at the Boulevard.

Wait, how much? Bag a ticket to any of these performances for a tenner.

→ Boulevard Theatre. ⊕ Piccadilly Circus.

Various dates. www.timeout.com/boulevardlates

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Things to Do

Edited by **Katie McCabe**
timeout.com/thingstodo @timeoutlondon

Take your pick of LGBTQ+ date nights

She's sick of the straights co-opting Valentine's, so **Grace Goslin** is out to make this February the queerest yet.

Illustration *Marie Boiseau*

AH YES, QUEER dating in London. The pool of potential matches spans far beyond the realms of the countryside village where I grew up, but navigating that pool can be daunting. But worry not, among the chaos, there are beacons of hope. The confused teenager who moved to the capital four years ago would be ecstatic to see the fully fledged dykonicon woman I have morphed into, and I have London's LGBTQ+ nightlife to thank: club venues, parties and people who have created spaces for queers (single or otherwise) to meet and thrive. Whether you're looking for someone to shack up with after a club night, or just tired of trawling through dating apps, there are plenty of queer events on Valentine's weekend where singles can meet their match. Go forth, my LGBTQ+ friends and make this heteronormative holiday your own.

The actual dating events

Oh Queer Cupid

This might just be the triple threat of Valentine's nights out. Buckle up for speed dating, comedy and partying. They even hand out goodie bags. What better way to get over yourself and meet new people than to be thrust into a fleeting five-minute conversation that resembles a real-life Tinder swipe? Oh Queer Cupid is about forming friendships as well as potential romance and it's one of the few dating events that doesn't enforce a gender- or sexuality-specific structure. It's just about meeting, chatting, and having a blast. Joy!

→ The Apple Tree. ☹ Chancery Lane.
Sat Feb 15. £8 for the speed dating and comedy events, but the party is free 7pm-1am.

Fancy a Femmes

Calling all femme lesbians, and bisexual women – we are out here, we're visible and we are ready to date. Billed as 'London's number one lesbian dating event' (by, er, the organisers), Fancy a Femme will see women pack out the bar in a private section of The Megaro hotel in King's Cross. Swanky and sexy – it definitely beats a low-key Sunday roast.

→ The Megaro. ☹ King's Cross. Sun Feb 16.
£19.95.

Amore Love

Amore Love has created a connection-based Valentine's night geared towards polyamorous couples and queer people of colour who are over 25. The speed-dating event has made its mission to set up people who are most compatible. One for the romantics, this buys into the hopeful notion of love at

first sight, or at least, attraction at first sight. You have to register in advance, so get clicking if you want to make a match.

→ 65 Gresham St. ☹ St Paul's. Wed Feb 12.
£15-£20.

Lez Love: The Valentines Masquerade Ball

In the spirit of Valentine's: lez get it on. For this lesbian extravaganza, it's all about thinking kinky. Whether it's the 'dress to seduce' dress code,





the padded red walls of the venue, or that this night is set to be filled with extreme frivolity (confetti canisters and all). Just some of the surprises include a kissing booth, a clairvoyant to ease your dating woes, a candy station, a graffiti wall of love and a string of erotic dance performances. If that all sounds a little much, stick to the dancefloor, where DJs will be serving up bops until the early hours.

→ Bar Langley, ☉ Covent Garden, Fri Feb 14. £15.

There's enough room to make out to Charli XCX

The proper raves...

PopHorror Anti Valentine's Ball

If the smell of price-hiked roses coming from Sainsbury's on February 14 makes you sick, head down to The Royal Vauxhall Tavern's pleasingly cynical V-Day ball. Find your imperfect match in a speed-hating session, enter the damaged-goods tombola and get your best screamo 'Since U Been Gone' voice ready for the drunk power ballad singalong.

→ The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, ☉ Vauxhall, Thu Feb 13. £12.

Outhaus: I Feel Love – A Big Queer Valentine's

Nobody throws a party quite like the queers, and Outhaus has gathered

all the essential components that make an incredible LGBTQ+ night out and are prepping to throw them right in our faces. We're talking drag queens, go-go dancers and disco tunes galore. Shimmy your way to Colours Hoxton this Valentine's Day – who knows who you might meet on the dancefloor? Alexa, play Donna Summer.

→ Colours Hoxton, ☉ Old St, Fri Feb 14. £7.

The legendary venues...

The Chateau

In the depths of Camberwell there is a venue which, from the outside, looks nothing more than a homage to London Prides of years gone by. But, come night-time, the humble south-east bar transforms into the campy sweatbox that is The Chateau. Whether it's the small size of the space, the cosy seating area or the crowd's willingness to mingle, making friends and setting dates is all part of the fun. And trust me, there's enough room to make out to Charli XCX and throw some shapes to Gaga.

→ 29-33 Camberwell Church St, Denmark Hill Overground.

VFD Dalston

An east London cult classic venue, where inclusivity is always at the forefront, VFD is a hub for grassroots queer ventures that pools a plethora of open-minded punters. Many a cute queer match has been made there, and its modest size and independent programming makes it the perfect dates spot. ■

→ 66 Stoke Newington Rd, Dalston Kingsland Overground.

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*Festival line up varies in each location and is subject to change. Please see the website for full details.

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

Friday



Hendrix Flat Late: Bold as Love

Jam with a pro blues guitarist, dance to NTS Radio DJs and watch psychedelic go-go dancing at this late in Jimi Hendrix's old London crash pad. The things those walls must have seen...

→ Handel & Hendrix in London. Ⓞ Bond St. Fri Feb 14. £25.

STAY UP Orchids After Hours

Visit Kew's orchid-filled hothouse after dark to sip on cocktails and wedanguwuh, an Indonesian tea that's packed with antioxidants.

→ Kew Gardens.
Ⓞ Kew Gardens.
Until Mar 6. £18.

DISCOVER Valentine's Vice

Need an antidote to Valentine's mush? Look at filthy treasures from the Institute's Erotica and Pornography Collection while drawing models in full kink costume.

→ Bishopsgate Institute.
Ⓞ Liverpool St. Fri Feb 14. £5.

Saturday



DRINK Love Beer London

Try beers from 90 breweries while raising money to help drinks industry employees at this charity hop fest.

→ Two Tribes. Caledonian Rd & Barnsbury Overground.
Thu Feb 13-Sat Feb 15. £12.

BRING IT Angels Vs Devils Mini Vogue Ball

Show off your angles and curves at a ball from seasoned voguer Jay Jay Revlon. Rusty? Arrive early for a voguing bootcamp.

→ Stanley Halls. Norwood Junction Overground.
Sat Feb 15. £10.

RA Late: Barcelona Modernisme

Think avant-garde cabaret and taverna singalongs and you've got the vibe of this art late themed on 1900s Barcelona.

→ Royal Academy. Ⓞ Green Park. Sat Feb 15. From £35.

Sunday

The Larry David Festival

Climb into the cantankerous mind of the writer behind 'Seinfeld' and 'Curb' at this day of lectures and screenings, and watch David's rarely seen 1998 film 'Sour Grapes'.

→ Moth Club. Hackney Central Overground.
Sun Feb 16. £20.



Pretty, pretty, pretty good ideas at timeout.com/thingstodo

LISTEN Dead Poets Live: Emily Dickinson

See the nineteenth-century writer resurrected through a dramatisation of her letters and poems.

→ Coronet Theatre.
Ⓞ Notting Hill Gate.
Sun Feb 16. From £25.

EXPLORE East End Radical Walking Tour

Hear stories of great London anarchists, like the Jewish workers who protested against Oswald Mosley, on an unusual tour of Hackney's history.

→ Meet at Aldgate East station.
Sun Feb 16. Free.





The extremely cheesy option
 Nothing says romance like melting a big hunk of mouldy cow's milk and feeding it to your significant other (more for yourself if you're scraping solo). Start off this **Raclette Evening** with an aperitif and nibbles before moving on to the Franche-Comté headliner. Cut through the richness with some green salad, grilled veggies and pickles, and sip Jura wines. V-Day is meant to be packed with this much cheese.
 → Middle Lane Market. Hornsey rail. £38, includes food and drink.

The freestyle wine tasting
 Are you truthful enough to visit an 'honesty' wine bar? In a concept borrowed from Berlin bars like Weinerei, at **Vinery London's** pop-up you can sample top-tier wines and calculate your own bar tab at the end. The price you pay depends on what you think the night was worth (and how much you drank). So try not to over do it. Nobody wants to end their date doing a runner.
 → Benk + Bo.   Aldgate East. £7.50 entry.

Last-minute Valentine's

Did February 14 slip your mind? Sack off the set menus and head to one of these great events. Better late than a horrendous break-up...

The night at the museum
 Couples salsa dance classes can be cringeworthy, but not all of them take place under a gigantic skeleton whale. At the **Natural History Museum Late** you can learn the basic dance steps in the spectacular, echoey Hintze Hall, surrounded by mammal bones. If you have two left feet, skip the salsa to learn about crustaceans at the You're My Lobster science station or listen to a talk

called The Strange World of Animal Sex. Not exactly first-date material – but if you've planned a first date for Valentine's Day, no one can save you now.
 → Natural History Museum.   South Kensington. £35.

The grand movie sesh
 If you're one of the five or six people who has yet to see **'Romeo + Juliet'**, do it in OTT style at a

screening inside the **Rivoli** – one of the last remaining 1950s-style ballrooms in London. For those who reached adulthood when they saw Leo puffing on a cigarette in that Hawaiian shirt, now is your chance to relive that experience. Shakespeare, Baz Luhrmann and an exquisite London setting – what a star-crossed combo!
 → Rivoli Ballroom. Crofton Park rail. £13.

The fancy evening of art
 Take a break from staring into each other's eyes and crane your necks to see the big baroque artworks of Sir James Thornhill on the ceiling of the **Painted Hall** in Greenwich. The venue is using February 14 as an excuse to launch its first late, so you can drink prosecco while looking at *trompe l'oeil* paintings that feature actual cherubs. It's a little on the nose for Valentine's, but this dreamy space is not known as the 'UK's Sistine Chapel' for nothing. ■ **Katie McCabe and Angela Hui**
 → Old Royal Naval College. Cutty Sark DLR. £30, book in advance.

  THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

TO DO

The best events in your area

C Central N North S South E East W West

WATCH

E Chris Morris Lecture + Screenings

Take a deep dive into the surreal world of the controversial comedian behind 'Brass Eye', 'Nathan Barley' and 'Four Lions', and hear writer David Stubbs discuss Morris's original blend of black humour after watching some rare clips of his work.

→ Moth Club. Hackney Central Overground. Mon Feb 17. £20.

C 'The Room' with Tommy Wiseau

'The Room' may be regarded as one of the worst films ever made, but the ever-inventive Prince Charles Cinema has turned Tommy Wiseau's bizarre creation into a bona fide cult London night out. Bring armfuls of plastic spoons to fling at the screen and come in good voice to scream out the best lines and loudly react to every weird moment. Before the screening, Tommy will make an appearance and take part in a Q&A session. 'Oh, hi Mark!'

→ Prince Charles Cinema. Leicester Square. Tue Feb 11. £15.50.

JOIN IN

C Leake Street Live

Make your mark on the walls of Waterloo's colourful street-art gallery at a free graffiti workshop led by artist Sophy Robson (aka SoFLY). Live music will soundtrack the spraying and you can refuel at Leake Street's collection of bars and restaurants.

→ Leake Street. Waterloo. Thu Feb 13, then weekly. Free.

S Body Casting Workshop

Plaster your hand, lips or even a boob for posterity at this women-only body-casting workshop. Display yourself proudly at home.

→ Studio 73. Brixton. Sat Feb 15, Mar 7 and Mar 21. £25.

N The Big Craft Swish

Want to update your sewing and sticking kit (or get rid of ill-advised crafty purchases)? Drop off any unused materials lying around at home at this swish and pick up new paraphernalia donated by other makers.

→ Cecil Sharp House. Camden Town. Sun Feb 16. £5.

LEARN

N Cliterature: The Vagina Museum Book Club

Discover feminist reads (new and old) at this monthly meet. February's book for discussion is 'Her Body and Other Parties'.

→ Vagina Museum. Camden Town. Tue Feb 11. £3.

EXPLORE

E Taste the Wild: Wild Food Walk

Take full advantage of nature's larder on this spring foraging walk, where you'll be schooled in how to safely pick leaves and berries to turn them into a smoothie.

→ Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. Mile End. Sun Feb 16. £30.

C Black History Tour of the British Museum

See the artefacts in London's iconic museum through a totally new lens on this tour highlighting the African treasures it holds. Get a comprehensive lowdown on the Bronzes of Benin, the Egyptian galleries and much more.

→ British Museum. Russell Square. Sun Feb 16. £10.

EXCLUSIVE

Take a chance on this one-of-a-kind Abba experience with 44 percent off tickets to 'Abba: Super Trouper the Exhibition' at The O2.

TIMEOUT.COM/ABBAEXHIBITION



Body Casting Workshop

The elements of chemistry

Michael Faraday Prize Lecture given by Sir Martyn Poliakoff

Join Youtube star Sir Martyn for a whirlwind tour among the chemical elements.

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THE ROYAL SOCIETY



Kids

Edited by Laura Richards
timeout.com/kids

Culture clubs

Get them doing the good stuff nice and early at these half-term workshops inspired by the arts



Art

Spare the kitchen table and have the kids cut, stick and collage at the Royal Academy of Arts instead. **Paper Pushers** is a drop-in workshop that ties in with the gallery's 'Picasso and Paper' exhibition, which charts the great Spanish master's fascination with a material humble enough for any half-term rainy-day activity. At these free sessions, families can learn collage techniques and make pop-up books and mini stage sets like the ones created by Pablo – so it's worth having a nose round the exhibition first for inspiration.

→ Royal Academy of Arts. ⊕ Piccadilly Circus. Feb 21. Free.

Comedy

No sniggering at the back – it's all about audience participation with **The Mighty Kids Beatbox Comedy Show**. Already an Edinburgh

Festival sell-out, this show (part of Southbank Centre's **Imagine Children's Festival**) is a mix of beatboxing, belly laughs and silly sounds, with prizes for those brave enough to show off their very own noises or a knock-knock jokes to the crowd. Showing confident little ones

how it's done is world champion mouth percussionist Hobbit, alongside Jarred Christmas, who you may or may not recognise from CBBC's 'The Dog Ate My Homework'.

→ Purcell Room, Southbank Centre. ⊕ Waterloo. Feb 21. £12, £9 child.



Dance

If your sprog is a card-carrying member of the can't-sit-still brigade, get them along to **Creative Contemporary at The Place**. The performance centre close to Euston trains artists for the stage, but it also encourages dinky dancers to run off some of that half-term energy. There are two-hour sessions in the studio for ages 5-7s, with the 8-11s doing three. A longer class allows older kids to dance the day away – literally. You can wait in the wings (or pop to the shops), ready for a mini performance at the end. Jazz hands never looked so cute.

→ The Place. ⊕ Euston. Feb 18-19. From £15

Film

Not only can you settle in for a flick at the Barbican's **Family Film Club**, you can dissect it together afterwards. While this cinematic gathering runs every Saturday, there's a bonus workshop after the

PAPER PUSHERS: JUSTINE TRICKETT; CHOPIN: NICK LUTTER



'Chopin and the Dragonfly Who Brought the Spring'

credits roll on the last Saturday of each month. Half-term is bookended by two screenings: **'Shaun the Sheep: Farmageddon'** and **'Amazing Animations'**, a back-to-back bonanza of bite-size shorts from the **London International Animation Festival**. It's the smart way to steer them clear of Netflix.

→ Barbican Centre. ⊕ Barbican. Sat Feb 15 and Feb 22. £3.50.

Music

Aware of the Mozart effect? Test the theory with another brain-boosting composer. **'Chopin and the Dragonfly Who Brought the Spring'** is a classical concert where babies and preschoolers can sing, dance and play their way through 35

Jazz hands never looked so cute



'Fox and Hare' at Amazing Animations

minutes of musical storytelling. If they choose to interpret Chopin's waltzes by rolling around on the floor, that's totally cool. If they come out spouting mathematical theories instead, you're welcome.

→ Kings Place. ⊕ King's Cross. Sat Feb 15-Sun Feb 16, Feb 22-23. £8.50, £6.50 child. Southbank Centre. ⊕ Waterloo. Feb 19-20. £9, £6.75 child.

Theatre

Who says highbrow and half-term can't go hand in hand? There's no place like **Shakespeare's Globe** for bringing the stage to life. While holiday workshops sold out at super speed, you can still sign up for a **Family Tour** and take a look behind the scenes. Or bring budding thespians to the **National Theatre** – workshops on **Improvisation and Theatre Games** and **Creating Folk Tales with the Herd** offer hands-on experience and a cheeky glimpse behind the curtain for am-dram aficionados. ■

→ Shakespeare's Globe. ⊕ Blackfriars. Sat Feb 15-Feb 23. £17, £10 child. National Theatre. ⊕ Waterloo. Mon Feb 17-Feb 19. From £6.



By Katie Gregory
Who is planning one hell of a highbrow half-term.

TIME OUT MEETS

Le Gateau Chocolat



THREE MORE SHOWS TO SEE AT IMAGINE

'Erth's Dinosaur Zoo'

A no-brainer for parents with dino-loving sprogs, this puppet-based show for ages five-plus introduces a young audience to a menagerie of Australian dinosaurs.

→ Queen Elizabeth Hall. Sat Feb 15-Feb 21. £16, £12 child.

'Slime'

There's bucketloads of real slime in the sticky, surreal adventures of Slug and Caterpillar as they try and reach the last leaf in the garden. For ages two to five.

→ Royal Festival Hall, Blue Room. Sat Feb 15-Sun Feb 16. £14.

Michael Rosen: 'The Missing'

'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' icon Michael Rosen tackles a more serious subject as he reads from his new book, an attempt to explain the Holocaust to kids. For ages ten-plus.

→ Queen Elizabeth Hall. Feb 23. £12, £9 child.

FEBRUARY HALF-TERM SEES the return of the gloriously sprawling Imagine Children's Festival to the Southbank Centre. This year, cabaret legend Le Gateau Chocolat is presenting his first kids' show, 'Duckie', an alternative take on 'The Ugly Duckling' for ages four-plus.

Why adapt 'The Ugly Duckling'?

'It's a story that is powerful enough to carry some of the themes I wanted to explore and a myth with a "happy ever after" ending that I wanted to subvert. Who decided that someone or something that was divergent from the norm was ugly?

"Duckie" says: you were never ugly to begin with. You, however you come, are enough.'

Is it a story about yourself?

'It's very much my experience. I use the scaffold of the show to explore themes of bullying, racism, homophobia, body positivity... But in doing so, I try to engage with anyone who's felt othered or marginalised.'

In what ways do you approach a kids' show differently to a 'normal' show?

'There aren't many of my shows

that kids couldn't come and see! I wanted to make a family show robust enough to hold kids with buffoonery and clowning while imparting an important message, and hold the parents' attention as well – in the brilliant way that we Brits are so good at doing with panto.'

How do kiddie audiences compare to cabaret audiences?

'Kiddie audiences are difficult because they haven't learned the art of censoring or societal filter. If they lose focus or get distracted, they let you know immediately. It has been a crash course in refining the art of storytelling and not taking a single beat for granted.'

'Who decided that someone or something was ugly?'

You're a bass-baritone. Are kids startled when they hear your singing voice?

'It's fun, right? But not really, no. You have to draw them in and build trust so that you can take them on this adventure. Startling them jars them out of the story. Kids teach you so much about the art of storytelling.'

Andrzej Lukowski

→ 'Duckie' is at the Purcell Room. Sat Feb 15-Tue Feb 18. £14, £10.50 child.

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Get strangers to entertain your kids (for free)

HEAR ME OUT. Getting strangers to amuse your kids for free isn't about telling a street entertainer that you don't have any change or cornering a clown. It's about finding a group of Londoners with a hobby that your kids enjoy.

In my son's case, this is skateboarding. For several years, he has loved going to see the South Bank's finest skaters attempt ollies, slides and kickflips at the **Undercroft** skatepark. Warm or cold, one skater or dozens, it doesn't matter. We head there, he watches in awe and then I drag him home for dinner. Job done. Wallet never even opened.

But what if your children aren't into skateboarding? Well, you could soar to **Blackheath Common**, where members of the **Blackheath kite flying Meetup** group take to the skies from 2.30pm to 6pm most Saturday afternoons (your kids can even borrow a kite and get involved). Or make tracks to **Hyde Park**, where London's roller skaters do their



thing beside the Serpentine and around the Albert Memorial. Or go barking mad at the **Battersea Park French Bulldog Meetup** or the **Hyde Park Sausage Walk** (that's for dachshunds, not actual sausages). Each takes place once a month.

And if none of these take your kids' fancy? Take a trip to **Ikea**. I'm serious. Flatpack furniture shopping might not be anyone's idea of a good time, but each of London's big Ikea stores has a crèche featuring books, toys and a ballpit, and they all offer at least 45-minutes of free childcare for kids aged between three and eight (Ikea Croydon, Greenwich and Wembley extend this service to kids aged between three and ten). That gives you time for at least three lampshade-related arguments and/or a slice of Daim cake. ■ *Stuart Hood*

Find more free things to do at timeout.com/freewithkids



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17-23 FEBRUARY 2020

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THREE OF THE BEST

Family-friendly vegan spots



Purezza

All humans of all ages love pizza, and Purezza's are melty marvels sporting so much flavour you won't be missing the dairy. An entirely plant-based menu also offers lasagne and salad, for those who don't do dough. Plus there's gelato – but only if they eat their crusts. Check Purezza's website ahead of a visit for special kids' offers.

→ 45-47 Parkway, NW1 7PN. ☺ Camden Town.



Seven Dials Market

This food hall offers two no-booking options: either sit in at one of the mini restaurants – Club Mexicana's 'pork' tacos are banging (as are the grown-up margaritas) – or head downstairs (don't worry, there's a lift) and nab one of the communal tables, before sending children to the surrounding food stalls on a gourmet vegan treasure hunt.

→ 35 Earlham St, WC2H 9LD. ☺ Covent Garden.



SpiceBox

Its colourful little shopfront does a good job of hiding SpiceBox's big, bright dining room, but even a considerable gaggle can settle in to share loaded onion bhajis, jackfruit jalfrezi and impeccable garlic naans. Afterwards, you can all fight it out over the banana chai dosa waffle with Biscoff sauce. ■ *Ashleigh Arnott*

→ 58 Hoe St, E17 4PG. ☺ Walthamstow Central.

More kid-friendly restaurants at
[timeout.com/kidfriendly](https://www.timeout.com/kidfriendly)

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A Unicorn Production

THE BEE IN ME

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Roland Schimmelpfennig
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UK music festivals for all the family



Camp Bestival

WHILE YOU MIGHT not fancy exposing the little ones to Deathfest, there's a whole world of weekenders that not only cater to young people, but actively encourage their attendance. Since 2008, Dorset's **Camp Bestival** – the younger sibling of Rob da Bank's sadly defunct grown-up event – has been mixing great music with child-friendly favourites. This year looks to be no different, with the likes of Fatboy Slim and Groove Armada lining up beside Dick and Dom, Mr Tumble and more.

At **Womad Festival**, kids under 13 go free, and there's a whole 'World of Children' to explore (think workshops, play areas and a special teen tent). And **Latitude** will try to reclaim its 2018 UK Festival Awards Best Family Festival crown this July by providing a programme of kids' arts and activities, while big kids can don their parkas for Liam Gallagher.

Looking for something a little closer to home? With sedate Sunday fest Citadel not taking place this year, you might have to venture outside of London, but Hertfordshire's **Standon Calling** is less than an hour away by train. Primal Scream have been confirmed as headliners, and the festival offers an on-site babysitting service.

And if none of that's big enough, save your pennies and cross your fingers for **Glastonbury's** second-wave ticket release on April 19. You're sure to make some pretty impressive memories at the world's greatest music festival. ■ *Lisa Wright*

→ Camp Bestival. Lulworth Castle, Dorset. Jul 30-Aug 2. £200, £40-£135 child. Womad Festival. Charlton Park, Wiltshire. Jul 23-26. £240, £145 teen, under-13 free. Latitude. Henham Park, Suffolk. Jul 16-19. £226.80, £15-£156.60 child. Standon Calling. Standon Lordship, Hertfordshire. Jul 23-26. £149, £5-£139 child. Glastonbury, Worthy Farm, Somerset. Jun 24-28. £265, under-13 free.

Get the latest festival news at timeout.com/festivals

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V&A

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TO DO

The best family-friendly events around London this half-term

C Central N North S South E East W West

ESSENTIAL EXHIBITS

C 'Marvellous and Mischievous: Literature's Young Rebels'

Be inspired by the bravery and defiance of characters like Matilda and Oliver Twist in the British Library's family-friendly exhibition. → British Library. ☉ King's Cross. Until Mar 1. Free.

S 'Permian Monsters: Life Before the Dinosaurs'

Go back to a time before every kid's favourite critters ruled the earth: 252 million years back, to be precise. This deep dig into the Permian

period shows off skeletons, models and animatronic versions of the beasts and insects that ruled then.

→ Horniman Museum. Forest Hill Overground. Sat Feb 15-Nov 1. £8, £4.50 child.

S 'The Sky Tonight Live'

Brian Cox wannabes can get up close with the constellations and take a fascinating look at the night sky in the Royal Observatory's planetarium.

→ Planetarium, Royal Observatory. Greenwich DLR. Mon-Fri 4.15pm, Sat, Sun 11.45am, 2pm, 4.15pm. £9, £4.50 child.

W 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea'

Delve into the world of Judith Kerr's wonderful children's classic at this fiftieth-anniversary

exhibition. See Kerr's childhood drawings, learn about her experience of escaping Germany as Hitler came to power, step into scenes from the book and tuck into tiger-y treats.

→ Osterley Park and House. ☉ Osterley. Until Mar 1. Free with entry to Osterley Park and House. £9.60, £4.80 child.

C Wonderlab at the Science Museum

Daily demonstrations and an explosive chemistry bar at the learning-filled favourite help teach kids why science matters. There are also touchy-feely tours of the exhibits that will leave little heads spinning.

→ Science Museum. ☉ South Kensington. Daily. £9, £7.20 child.



'Permian Monsters: Life Before the Dinosaurs'

COURTESY GONDWANA STUDIOS

Advertisement feature

Four reasons why a cruise is great for a family holiday

All aboard! Here's why you should see the world by ship



READY TO GET AWAY?

Win a seven-night cruise in the Mediterranean for two adults and two children under 17. To enter, head to www.timeout.com/cruise20

Ahoy! We've joined forces with MSC Cruises to show exactly why you and your brood should take to the seas for your next trip. Broaden your horizons (and see a few of them), because MSC Cruises can help to find you a sweet cabin, with the right itinerary, for a price that won't make your eyes water.

1 Explore stress-free

Forget waiting around in endless airport security queues and for late, stuffy trains – instead, have a blissful nap by the pool while you travel to your next destination (up to seven places in seven days) or gaze at the sea view from your balcony.

2 Stay entertained

It's not always easy to keep your cherubs from making mischief, but MSC Cruises have round-the-clock entertainment for kids, no matter their age. That includes a fully-supervised Chicco Club, Lego experiences, young and teen clubs, and the all-new web series dedicated to teens, 'Cabin 12006', which they can watch on YouTube before even boarding!

3 There's something for everyone

Not only can you keep your kids amused in free-of-charge clubs, MSC Cruises' ships also have amenities that adults can enjoy. We're talking theatre shows, Cirque de Soleil at Sea, sports classes, a virtual-world games arcade and even Balinese-inspired spas. Aaand relax.

4 Save those pennies

Booking in advance means that you have access to drinks, excursions and restaurant packages for prices that won't break the bank. Plus under-twos go free and kids under 17 get a discounted rate (or go free on some cruises). Kerching.



→ For more information visit www.msccruises.co.uk



KIDS GO FREE

Half term family fun

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

At London Transport Museum, Covent Garden

15-23 February 2020



Family activities and challenges inspired by the signs and symbols found on London's transport network.

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17-21 February 2020
10.45am, 11.45am, 1.45pm, 2.45pm and 3.45pm



Free entry

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ALFRESCO ACTIVITIES

S Frogs vs Toads

No, it's not a new underground fight club. Check out Battersea Park's latest resident, the Fea flying tree frog, before learning all about the differences between frogs and toads. There will also be amphibian-themed activities throughout the day.

→ Battersea Park Children's Zoo. Battersea Park Overground. Feb 20. £9.95, £7.95 child.

W London Puddle Jumping Championships

Pack a pair of wellies and a change of clothes for the ultimate drenched day out. The London Wetland Centre's 'championships' see children tackle a puddle-filled obstacle course - with prizes for the winners.

→ London Wetland Centre. Barnes rail. Sat Feb 15-Sun Feb 23. £11.70, £7.11 child.

W Orchids Festival

Kew Gardens' celebration of the orchid returns for its twenty-fifth year, this time with a focus on the plant life of Indonesia. For half-term, an interactive experience will teach kids about entomologist and explorer Evelyn Cheesman and her discovery of one of the rarest blue orchids in the world.

→ Kew Gardens. Kew Gardens Overground. Until Mar 8. £16.50, £4.50 child.

E The Wildlife Walk

Take a break from the screen and get back to nature on this peaceful walk around lush Rainham Marshes. Can't tell your mallard from your moorhen? No need to turn to Google for help.



Knight School

Just ask one of the knowledgeable RSPB tour guides.

→ Rainham Marshes. Purfleet rail. Walks take place first Wed, second Fri, third Sun of the month. £5, £2 child.

TIME TRAVEL

C Knight School

Send them for a different kind of lesson over half-term at the Tower of London, where kids aged five to 12 can don mini chain mail and help protect the historic fortress. Knight School takes kids back to the Wars of the Roses, letting them run wild with swords (don't worry, they're made of wood). And it's included in Tower admission.

→ Tower of London.
 Tower Hill. Sat Feb 15-Feb 23. £24.70, £11.70 child.

MOVIE MAGIC

S Collective Cinema: Wallace & Gromit

'The Curse of the Were-Rabbit' gets a screening in an ornate church in south-east London, with seating in the pews and tunes on the old organ ahead of the film. There are beers from Brockley Brewery for the grown-ups.

→ St Augustine's Church. Honor Oak Park Overground. Feb 22. £10, £5 child.

FULL-ON FUN

C Augmented Reality Sandbox

Trippy technology is used to teach little ones about the mighty River Thames. They can get to grips with it in this imaginary pit, using AR to shape sand with their hands and alter London's landscape in the process. And there's none of the cleaning up for you afterwards.

→ Museum of London.
 Barbican. Thu Feb 20. Free.

C The Imagination Station & Digital Kids

Rev up those brain cells as engineers lead kids through a masterclass in vehicle design and ask them to ponder a question: how might we all get around in the future?

→ V&A. South Kensington. Sun Feb 16-Feb 21. Free.

C Mend Your Old Clothes

Greta stans can get even more engaged with the world around them at the RA's one-off workshop to tie in with its 'Eco-Visionaries' exhibition. Four installations addressing climate change before learning sewing techniques from top designers to make do and mend in your own home.

→ Royal Academy of Arts.
 Piccadilly Circus. Feb 18. £18.

'The Lobster'

Film

Edited by Phil de Semlyen
timeout.com/film @timeoutfilm



CINEMATICALLY SPEAKING, Valentine's Day isn't for everyone. Sometimes you need to swerve the honeyed romantic visions of Nora Ephron (great as they are), hit pause on 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' and get stuck into something gritty. Something where the people don't necessarily live happily ever after. Where that scrap of the Titanic definitely *doesn't* have room for two.

If you're having that kind of Valentine's week, **'The Lobster'** is the perfect antidote. Yorgos Lanthimos's dark comedy is set in an alt-reality where Colin Farrell is given 45 days to get a romantic partner or find himself turned into an animal. It's a funny, vinegary comment on the pressure society puts on people to couple up that's mirrored by Netflix gem **'Atlantics'**. In Mati Diop's terrific magical realist romance, a young Senegalese woman is ushered

Movie love without the schmaltz

There's more to *amour* on the big screen that cheesy romcoms. Try these non-romantic romantic films

into a joyless marriage after the love of her life leaves by sea. It'll put those unanswered texts into perspective.

Long before Tinder, **'Swingers'** offered a sorta road map to the often deeply awkward realities of men dating. Jon Favreau and Vince Vaughn goose around LA trying to impress women (aka 'beautiful babies') in flagrantly pre-#MeToo fashion. It may not be to everyone's liking, but as a depiction of being young,

dumb and... well, mainly just dumb, it takes some beating.

On the female side of the equation, Spike Lee's debut film **'She's Gotta Have It'** shows true love as definitely bottom on a young Brooklynite's list of priorities. Flipping things again, **'Weekend'** demonstrates how connection can arrive like a hurricane then slip away again just as quickly.

The next one – and bear with me here – is Nicolas Roeg's **'Don't Look Now'**. It's almost no one's idea of a date movie, yet there's something deeply affecting in its depiction of a loving relationship under pressure.

The sex scene is an all-timer too, with a deeply English attention given to the important getting-dressed-afterwards part that so many Hollywood films forget about.

There are many, many more unsentimental looks at love to discover, from **'The Apartment'** and **'Punch-Drunk Love'** to **'Blue Valentine'** and **'Take This Waltz'**. But for the ultimate anti-Valentine's viewing experience, **'Closer'** has your back. A film that manages to make Jude Law, Natalie Portman, Clive Owen and Julia Roberts close to undesirable, it's a tart deconstruction of desire and dysfunction in the big city. It should be sexy – there's so much shagging going on, it's basically Tetris with penises – but in the end you'll be so exhausted by the idea of interacting with another human, let alone falling in love, that a night in with your slippers won't seem so bad. ■



LOBSTER: DESPINA SPYROU; CLOSER: CLIVE COOTE



By Phil de Semlyen
Who may have forgotten
how Tetris works.



Clockwise from above left: Mia Goth and Anya Taylor-Joy and (below) Johnny Flynn.

FILM OF THE WEEK

Guess who's back?

Emma.



THERE'S A 'BRIEF natural nudity' warning on this new adaptation of Jane Austen's 'Emma', but do not fear: this beloved tale of misguided matchmaking hasn't been spiced up with unseemly games of naked croquet or teatime orgies. Instead, preparing to be dressed by his manservants after a muddy walk, Emma's old friend and potential love interest Mr Knightley (Johnny Flynn) disrobes matter-of-factly. The camera doesn't dwell on his bare bum, but it certainly doesn't look away bashfully either. It signals that this take on the book comes with just the slightest edge. Yes, it's still a studiously family-friendly period comedy, but with the occasional buttock thrown in.

This statement scene is, perhaps, a clue that 'Emma.' is the work of a female director. Autumn de

WHAT IS IT...
The return of Jane Austen's matchmaker as Regency England's answer to Tinder.

WHY GO...
Josh O'Connor is hilarious as a tipsy Mr Elton.

→ Director Autumn de Wilde (U) 125 mins.

Wilde purposely displays male nudity before female, and she takes a refreshing interest in the reality behind the pomp and circumstance that dominated upper-class life in the 1800s. While the romance in 'Emma.' is not the main point, it's only when stifling ceremony is abandoned that true love can really blossom. There's a terrific scene when Emma (Anya Taylor-Joy) and Knightley convulse into rare giggles, and another when they let their guard down behind a strategically placed screen.

Known for her witty fashion films and music videos for the likes of Rilo Kiley and Beck, de

Wilde puts a subtly contemporary stamp on 'Emma'. Alexandra Byrne's costumes revamp the Regency look with shoulders as sharp as Emma's withering looks, modernising Austen's most dangerously fashionable heroine. There's a message here for the Insta generation: a modern-day Emma would probably be considered an influencer as she smirks her way round the village of Highbury (not that one), dispensing wisdoms about the importance of status, and making rash judgments. Taylor-Joy is perfect in the lead role, supported by, among others, Mia Goth as her naive young friend Harriet, Flynn as an unusually earthy Knightley and Bill Nighy as Emma's

father, Mr Woodhouse, prone to fretting about draughts in an amusing fashion.

Where this adaptation falls down is both in the pacing and structure – it feels more like a long series of sketches rather than tight narrative – while Isobel Waller-Bridge's jaunty score tiptoes towards grating during a few of the weightier, emotional bits. As with most Austen adaptations – from the faithful 'Emma' with Gwyneth Paltrow to the looser, 'Clueless' with Alicia Silverstone – the best part is the witty jousting of Austen's text and a story that explores the learning curve between arrogant youthfulness and adulthood. Did we really need another

adaptation? Probably not. But if this energetic, fitfully funny version introduces the story to a new generation, heck, bring on a new 'Sense and Sensibility' too. ■
Anna Smith



Jane Austen bingo

Tick them off as you watch!

THE TEN BEST POP-UPS AND FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

10 Je t'aime, moi non plus

Gainsbourg. Birkin. Depardieu. It couldn't be any more Gallic if it had a Gitanes hanging out of its bouche.
→ Barbican. ⊕ Barbican. Fri Feb 14, 8.45pm. £12.

9 True Romance and Romeo + Juliet

The Tarantino-scripted classic and Baz Lurhmann's '90s Shakespeare remix.
→ The Exhibit. ⊕ Clapham South. Feb 11-16, various times. £8.

8 Possession

Andrzej Żuławski's intense psychological horror about a spy and the wife who wants to divorce him.
→ Lexi Cinema. Kensal Rise Overground. Fri Feb 14, 6.25pm. £10.50.

7 Sleepless in Seattle

Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks are here to romcom your Valentine's Day to giddy new heights.
→ Prince Charles Cinema. ⊕ Leicester Square. Fri Feb 14, 6.20pm. £12.50.

6 Rafiki

This LGBTQ+ love story hails from Kenya and packs a mighty wallop in its depiction of gay love in a repressive Nairobi.
→ Deptford Cinema. Deptford Bridge DLR. Sat Feb 15, 7.30pm. £6.

5 Booksmart

Mark thy calendars: Olivia Wilde's anarchic gem of a high-school comedy is back on the big screen this week.
→ Everyman Crystal Palace. Crystal Palace Overground. Thu Feb 13, 7.30pm. £10.

4 Brief Encounter

Lips have never been stiffer than in David Lean's moving tale of stifled romance. There's a free glass of fizz with every ticket.
→ Regent Street Cinema. ⊕ Oxford Circus. Fri Feb 14. £15.

3 My Beautiful Laundrette

True fact: Daniel Day-Lewis spent six months as a washing machine to prepare for this film. Catch it on the Southbank.
→ BFI Southbank. ⊕ Waterloo. Fri Feb 14, 6.10pm. £13.75.

2 Casablanca

Picturehouse is playing this classic Bogart-and-Bergman romance across London on Sunday. Anyone booing is a Nazi.
→ Various Picturehouse cinemas. Sun Feb 16. £8.



A public dance

The camera goes all handheld and modern



Plinky-plonky score

Whimsical matchmaking and romantic mishaps ahoj



Marriage of convenience

A sister is lined up for a vexatious match



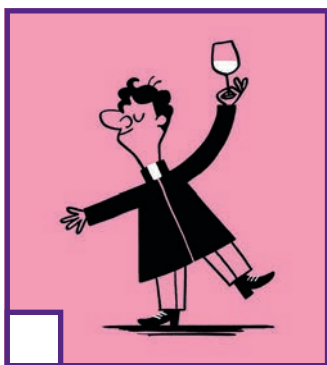
A country estate

A beautiful pad that just missed out on being Downton Abbey



A bit with a pond

Hunky man gallantly strips down to his pantaloons



A comedy reverend

Must have a silly voice – paging Tom Hollander

1 'Ghost'-themed pottery class

Squelch, stroke, slide and spin while recreating cinema's sexiest supernatural scene at a pre-screening pottery class. It's what Swayze would have wanted.

→ Cineworld Greenwich. ⊕ North Greenwich. Fri Feb 14. £35.



LONDON ON SCREEN

The Notting Hill pad in 'Alfie'

The location 29 St Stephen's Gardens, W2.

The scene Love rat Alfie (Michael Caine) stomps home from the pub and lets his girlfriend Annie (Jane Asher) know he doesn't like the steak-and-kidney pie she just prepared. 'Where's the Spam?' he barks, hurling it at the wall. Annie runs out of Alfie's dingy flat and life.

Then One of London's earliest Victorian squares, St Stephen's Gardens once boasted a flower garden for its rich residents to relax in. However, by the time 'Alfie' was filmed there, it had been tarmacked over. 'The area had been in decline for decades,' explains architectural historian Edmund Bird, something he attributes to the expansion of the 'noisy and dirty' Great Western Railway in the latter half of the nineteenth century. St Stephen's Gardens was grotty and unfashionable, making it the perfect home for a leech like Alfie.

Now Half a century on and it's a desirable address once again, with the gardens fully restored. 'The wheel of fortune has turned full circle,' says Bird. According to Zoopla, a two-bedroom flat there currently goes for around £1.5 million. Just watch out for pie stains on the wall. ■ *Thomas Hobbs*



1966



2020

When Lambs Become Lions



BOOK NOW

Sundance London returns

WHAT IS IT...

A complex look at both sides of the Kenyan ivory trade.

WHY GO...

For the hard-hitting storytelling (and the baby zebra).

→ Director Jon Kasbe (12) 76 mins.

THIS INVOLVING DOCUMENTARY about poaching in Kenya opens with an ominous shot of smoky flames reaching skywards across an African plain. Powerful and provocative, it hints at the environmental themes of a film that never settles for easy moral judgements.

Our two protagonists are X, a cocky ivory dealer, and Asan, a young wildlife ranger who loves his badly paid job but finds himself in trouble with his pregnant wife when the government falls behind with his wages. The wrinkle? The men are cousins. If Asan catches X killing an elephant, he will have to shoot him (and presumably have some explaining to do back home).

It's a thorny moral scenario that director Jon Kasbe blurs further by showing these two men united by a common goal: to do whatever they can to support their young families. As time passes and money becomes scarcer, the choices they make bring them closer and closer together.

Kasbe spent four dangerous years making 'When Lambs Become Lions' and he has been rewarded with some thrilling moments. His cameras take in an elephant hunt with poachers and they are smuggled into cars to catch nocturnal deals with ivory buyers. The revelations and dramatic fireworks that ensue are startling to witness. Taking those risks has paid off in a doc that feels more like a thriller. And the twist at the end is a doozy. ■ *Greer McNally*



Picturehouse Central

Love indie cinema? We have good news for you, then, because Sundance Film Festival: London is back this May. Expect to see UK premieres of a selection of films from last month's Sundance in Utah. Weekend passes are on sale now.

→ Sundance Film Festival: London is at Picturehouse Central.
 ⊖ Piccadilly Circus. May 28-31. Early bird pass from £65.



Music & Nightlife

Edited by Oliver Keens
timeout.com/music @timeoutmusic



Disco Freaks: Love Is in the Flare

Screw romance, let's dance

Avoid the horror of yet more Netflix or restaurants packed with gross couples... Valentine's Day is on a Friday this year. God COMMANDS you to go out dancing

Friendly Fires Present Club Inflorescent: Valentine's

Bangin' indie-dance band Friendly Fires will be DJing at this perfect Hackney Wick space, joined by some unannounced special guests. The venue has said it's 'bringing in plenty of plants and greenery' to transform the warehouse-like space, so this should be a lush in more ways than one.

→ Mick's Garage. Fri Feb 14.

Boyz Nite Out: Valentine's Disco

If you've recently said 'Bye Bye Bye' to your bae, why not spend Valentine's night with a gaggle of drag kings singing '90s and '00s boyband classics? After the show finishes, DJs will keep the party popping until 2am.

→ Bethnal Green Working Men's Club. Fri Feb 14.

Fleetmac Wood: Sea of Love Disco

The club night specialising in remixes and edits of Fleetwood Mac bangers celebrates Valentine's

Day with a plastic-free party. It's donating £1 from each ticket to marine conservation charity Sea Shepherd, so you can feel virtuous whether you're loved-up or prefer to go your own way.

→ Troxy. Fri Feb 14.

Disco Freaks: Love Is in the Flare

You'll definitely feel love at this disco-centric Valentine's Day party in Peckham. The Disco Freaks crew will be playing copper-bottomed classics by Donna Summer, Sister Sledge and Chic, plus '80s funk and rare groove. This disco inferno will rage until 5am.

→ CLF Art Cafe. Fri Feb 14.

Yung Filly Presents: The Yeahhh Man Valentines Day Party

The comedian and BBC Three presenter hosts a sure-to-be-poppin' club night in London Bridge. DJs will be dropping hip hop, reggaeton, bashment and trap, and the dress code is 'sexy

swag' all the way, so don't be surprised if things get a little – to quote Nelly – hot in herre.

→ Omeara. Fri Feb 14.

Valentine's Day with Egyptian Lover

The West Coast electro showman and total lothario brings his stellar live set to Camden. Whether you're coupled up or flying solo, this party will bring the seductive vibes.

→ Jazz Cafe. Fri Feb 14.

He.She.They x Harpies: London Fashion Week AW20

Inclusive collective He.She.They teams up with LGBTQ+ strip club Harpies for a sexy party celebrating queer folks in fashion. This one's definitely an antidote to dull V-Days: they've said the performances could 'entail anything from a nudey opera singer to a PVC nun doing unholy things with communion bread'. ■

→ Metropolis. Fri Feb 14.



FESTIVAL NEWS

Wilderness has Loyle Carner, Foals and Supergrass

WILDERNESS IS CONSISTENTLY one of the UK's best festivals, and the Oxfordshire weekender has announced a tasty line-up for its tenth anniversary year. **Loyle Carner**, **Foals** and **Supergrass** will be headlining at Cornbury Park this summer, joined by genre-hopping 'Milkshake' purveyor **Kelis**, neo-soul queen **Joy Crookes**, mesmerising electro trio **Elder Island** and fast-rising Irish pop-rock band **Picture This**.

Divine dance duo **Bicep** will deliver a live set and those champions of soundsystem culture, **David Rodigan & The Outlook Orchestra**, will be bringing the grooves.

But as ever, Wilderness isn't just about spot-on sounds. **Letters Live**, the cult performance strand where unannounced actors like Olivia Colman



and Benedict Cumberbatch read out epistles by distinguished cultural and political figures, will be returning to Wilderness, as will the festival's famous long-table banquets. **Fergus Henderson** and **Trevor Gulliver** of **St John**, **Richard Corrigan** and **Skye Gyngell** will be hosting those this year, so you won't leave the three-dayer hungry.

Let's hope the chefs don't use up all the veg, though. **Gayzpacho with Jonny Woo** is a completely unique slab of alt-cabaret mayhem where half-naked blokes getting covered in tomato sauce. Don't feel too sorry for them – they can clean themselves off afterwards with a spot of wild swimming in Wilderness's Lake Majestic. ■

Nick Levine

→ Wilderness at Cornbury Park, Oxfordshire on Jul 30-Aug 2.

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GIGS AND CLUBS

Reading and Leeds Festival

Though synonymous as a haven for rock, metal, punk and all manner of black-clad guitar antics has been earning a reputation for megawatt US rap headliners like Kendrick Lamar, Eminem and Post Malone. But this year, it's a UK takeover, with international grime ambassador Stormzy (right) bringing his gospel-tinged street anthems to the August bonanza. He's joined by Rage Against The Machine (left), who return to their adoring British public for a spittle-flecked shoutalong like no other. Liam Gallagher – who outed himself as a headliner in November – is the festival's third bill-topper. Below them, lashings of UK rap from AJ Tracey, M Huncho, Aitch, Slowthai and D-Block Europe, plus Fontaines DC, Gallows and Fever 333.

→ Richfield Avenue, Reading and Bramham Park, Leeds.
Aug 28-30.



TYLER, THE CREATOR		DISCLOSURE		KHALID		ROBYN	
JORJA SMITH		ANDERSON . PAAK & THE FREE NATIONALS		FKA TWIGS		HOT CHIP	
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MABEL		GOLDLINK		GRIME MC FM		CHARLI XCX	
LOGO DICE		DJ HARVEY		MICHEAL BIBI		DENIS SULTA B2B MELLA DEE	
LITTLE SIMZ		SNOH AALEGRA		TIERRA WHACK		CELESTE	
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SANTI		CHANNEL TRES		GEORGIA		JOY CROOKES	
ARLO PARKS		FRED AGAIN..		WUH OH		MASON COLLECTIVE	
LAVA LA RUE		L DEVINE		MIXTAPE MADNESS TAKEOVER		DANCE SYSTEM	
CHE LINGO		PUMA BLUE		LUKE UNABOMBER		PA SALIEU	
CICI		PXSSY PALACE		HOT BLOOD		JAMES ORGAN	
ANNIE MAC PRESENTS		FABRIGLIVE		HOMOELECTRIC		RINSE FM	
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Nimmo

Totally delightful, soul-enhancing poppers play Hackney's funnest gig spot as part of a tour to promote latest album, 'The Power'.
→ Moth Club. Mar 13.

Sink The Pink: Let's Get Physical

The latest party from the glitter-spewing LGBTQ+ club crew has an '80s workout video theme. So basically, there will be drag Jane Fondas.
→ Troxy. Mar 21.

Hospitality Returns to the Dock

Drum 'n' bass lovers assemble: Camo & Krooked, S.P.Y, Congo Natty, Metrik and more will be performing at this multi-stage d'n'b fest.
→ Tobacco Dock. Apr 10.

Lucy Dacus

The indie singer-songwriter from Virginia has booked her first ever London headline show at one of the city's most atmospheric venues.
→ Union Chapel. May 1.

George Clinton

After 50 years of tearing the roof off this sucker, legendary Parliament-Funkadelic band leader says goodbye with a UK farewell tour.
→ O2 Forum Kentish Town. May 23.

Despacio

An added date for James Murphy and 2manydjs' fantasy club project
→ Roundhouse. May 23.

We Out Here Festival

After a stunning launch year, Gilles



Meltdown

The iconic Grace Jones is curating this year's arts and culture fest at the Southbank Centre, and her first batch of bookings doesn't disappoint. Solange, Skunk Anansie and Lee 'Scratch' Perry are all confirmed, and will be joined by revered Malian singer Oumou Sangaré, Senegalese superstar Baaba Maal and the legendary Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Look out for more announcements soon.

→ Southbank Centre. Jun 12-21.

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Music & Nightlife



Waterworks

Exciting one-day festival alert! You might wonder what's with the empty field? Well, it's the site of a bold new festival from the people behind Percolate, Love International and Gottwood that's coming to Lee Valley Waterworks in August. It's a new London site, which is fun: a secluded nature spot in Leyton surrounded by water and tree-lined borders. Five equal-sized, non-hierarchical stages will host the best of the UK: Andrew Weatherall, Ben UFO, Pearson Sound, Objekt, Saoirse, Craig Richards, Novelist, Call Super and Shanti Celeste. Hugely thrilling stuff.

→ Lee Valley Waterworks. Aug 22.

Peterson's WOH fest returns, giving a much-needed weekender to the throbbing mass of jazz, alternative funk and cosmic dance fans. Archie Shepp, Ezra Collective, Underground Resistance, Joy Orbison and many more are confirmed.
→ Abbots Ripton, Cambridgeshire. Aug 20-23.

UK Deathfest

America's Maryland Deathfest is one of the best extreme music festivals in the world, and now it's having its UK debut. Early announcements include legendary death metal and thrash bands Autopsy and Nuclear Assault, so

call your chiropractor, because you're about to headbang your neck into a smithereens.

→ Electric Ballroom, The Underworld and The Black Heart. Aug 22-23.

The Black Crows

The Southern rockers are commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of debut LP 'Shake Your Money Maker' by playing it in full. And they're promising 'all the hits' too – nice.

→ 02 Academy Brixton. Oct 12.

Suede

Eyeliner at the ready! Brett Anderson and the gang are playing their classic 1996 album 'Coming Up' in full.

→ Alexandra Palace. Oct 24.

Buy tickets at timeout.com/gigs

Theatre & Dance

Edited by Andrzej Łukowski
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TIME OUT MEETS

Stephen Schwartz

The legendary songwriter behind 'Wicked' has a new show in town.
Portrait *Ed Miles*

STEPHEN SCHWARTZ IS one very proud dad. Proud of his musical offspring: as a songwriter he's helped create mega-hits like Disney movie 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame' and West End longrunner 'Wicked'. And proud of his literal progeny: his son Scott is directing his new show, the stage version of 1998 Dreamworks animation 'The Prince of Egypt'.

'As a parent who works in showbiz, you never really want your child to go into it,' Schwartz senior says. 'But he's had a passion for it since he was six years old.' His working relationship with his son is built on more than nepotism, though. As Schwartz explains, his son's a seasoned director in his own right. 'When Disney wanted to do a stage version of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame", they said "Listen, we want you to work with Scott on this, would that be difficult for you?"

'As a parent who works in showbiz, you never really want your child to go into it'

Fortunately Schwartzes Jr and Sr get on like a pyramid on fire, because their latest collaboration 'The Prince of Egypt' is an epic task, demanding a chariot race and the parting of the Red Sea. Schwartz seems quite taken with the kitsch-free approach of 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child' – 'It's so magical!' – so he's opting for something similarly stripped-back: 'No spoilers, but it involves a great deal of choreography.'

As a weighty Biblical story of warring brothers Moses and Ramses, 'The Prince of Egypt' didn't match the box office success of its perkier cartoon contemporaries like

'The Lion King'. But Schwartz is adamant that it deserves a bigger audience. 'The themes are very contemporary: minorities struggling against the system in a world that seems to be on shakier ground than we once knew.' It sounds decidedly more grown-up than other animations-turned-live-musicals, like



Disney's forthcoming 'Cinderella'. And that's deliberate. Schwartz uses his family-friendly, fantastical settings to reach at complex, adult themes. 'So many people have told me "The Prince of Egypt" was their favourite movie as a kid. I'm always surprised. Why? It wasn't particularly aimed at children.'

Perhaps his songs appeal to kids because they're both insanely catchy and they glow with his faith in the value of friendship and kindness. 'Look,' he says, 'I don't think art changes the world, because if it did then we'd live in a better world. But it can change individual people's point of view, like "Angels in America" did with gay issues.' He might be writing about a chlorophyll-hued witch in 'Wicked',

but he reckons that 'all of us have that lonely green girl inside us, so we can empathise with her. It's the same with "The Prince of Egypt". Ancient Egypt is a metaphor, we can see ourselves and our world in it.' And that's the germ of seriousness underneath his shows about warring witches, medieval peasants and Biblical brothers: 'People today seem to be less and less willing to put themselves in someone else's shoes, so anything we can do to expand empathy is worth doing.'

→ 'The Prince of Egypt' is at the Dominion Theatre. Until Sep 12.



By Alice Saville
Who hopes they do 'Hunchback' next.

UNMISSABLE THEATRE THIS SPRING

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“Clever and complex vision of black Britons.”
THE GUARDIAN

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STRATFORD EAST



Death of England



NEVER MIND 'Death of England', it's the death of poor old Rafe Spall that worried me for most of this 100-minute monologue from writer Roy Williams and writer-director Clint Dyer. Spall Jr begins the show at waaaay beyond full tilt: hoarse of voice, unsteady on his feet, he looks like he's about to collapse in the first five minutes and he

never slows down, not for a second.

It's a remarkable if not always exactly enjoyable turn: raddled on booze, coke, grief, rage and self-loathing, his character is mercurial, infuriating and frequently incoherent in a play defined by its searing amphetamine jolt.

'Death of England' concerns race, racism and belonging, and it is quietly radical that two black writers have crafted a play about white Englishness.

In terms of nuts and bolts, it's a drama about Michael, a loud,

lairy, but ultimately desperately sensitive Essex boy who is reeling from the death – and also the life – of his father, a much-respected pillar of the community and also a Brexit-supporting racist. Michael desperately craved his approval but also subliminally recoiled from much of what he stood for.

There are twists that might seem contrived in a more sedate drama. But they fit in with the speedy mania of the show, as we're sucked headlong into Michael's badly malfunctioning life and his attempt to understand his dad's values and forge his own.

Without giving too much away, the moral can be summed up as 'people are very complicated, racists included', which is perhaps not a totally revelatory point. Defined by Spall's full-bore performance, 'Death of England' gives off more heat than light. Still, two black theatremakers taking such an empathetic view of the more, ah, troubled end of the white English psyche is clearly something that comes with its own power, and this play has enough heart, soul and outright guts to rise above the humdrum. ■ *Andrzej Łukowski*

WHAT IS IT...

Rafe Spall performs a full-tilt monologue on the nature of Englishness.

WHY GO...

The manic energy of Spall's performance will keep you up for a week.

→ National Theatre, Dorfman. ↻ Waterloo.
Until Mar 7. £26-£61.

Endgame



FOR SOMEBODY WHO'LL for ever be known as a wizard, Daniel Radcliffe is a pretty formidable clown. And if his stage career tends to feel like a reaction to his Harry Potter-bestowed fame, then he's found his perfect match in Samuel Beckett, whose weird, technically precise works give him something meaty to commit to, without feeling anything like a conventional star vehicle. And he's found a foil in the marvellous Alan Cumming, who is happy to turn in the sort of flamboyantly scenery-chewing audience-pleaser of a performance that Radcliffe is clearly wary of.

Following a rare outing for Beckett's obscure short 'Rough for Theatre II', the main event is 'Endgame', a grotesque study in mutual need in which Radcliffe plays the resentfully servile Clov, who exasperatedly serves the whims of Cumming's blind, atrophied Hamm. He's a physical marvel, sliding bizarrely down a stepladder as if he



WHAT IS IT...

Daniel Radcliffe and Alan Cumming in an existential night of Beckett.

WHY GO...

The boy wizard done good with a cracking comic performance.

BOOK...

Buy tickets at [timeout.com/tickets](https://www.timeout.com/tickets)

→ Old Vic. ↻ Waterloo.
Until Mar 28. £8.50-£150.

has no idea what a stepladder is or what it's supposed to do.

Radcliffe's clowning and Cumming's showboating make for a funnier-than-usual take on Beckett. But the work is robust enough to handle it. Director Richard Jones makes difficult theatre entertaining and relevant: not a guarantee with Beckett, who insisted that posthumous revivals be exactly as

he directed, meaning they can tend to the museum-piecey. Morbid and strange as these plays are, both are about lives that have fallen through the cracks of society. In 'Rough for Theatre II', two ghostly civil servants observe a man about to commit suicide. In 'Endgame', Hamm and 'family' are so isolated from the real world that they've descended into bizarre co-dependent rituals.

I don't think Beckett is trying to make any great social comment. But in these endless years of austerity, it's easier to appreciate the underlying humanity here.

Radcliffe is clearly not interested in the sort of Big Acting roles that Hoover up awards. But he's parlayed his Potter fame into the sort of work that he loves, and he's damn good at it. ■ *Andrzej Łukowski*

The Haystack



THREE OF THE BEST

Vault shows this week

The weirdest and most wonderful new shows from the underground Waterloo festival



Coming Out of My Cage (And I've Been Doing Just Fine)

Yes, seriously, it's an audience interactive show investigating the phenomenon that is The Killers' debut single 'Mr Brightside', which hasn't left the UK charts in 16 years.

→ Tue Feb 11-Sun Feb 16. £14-£15.



Role Play Gourmet

'Saturday Kitchen' meets Dungeons & Dragons in this high-concept interactive show from Paul Flannery, the brains behind 'Knightmare Live'. Earn XP points and progress up a skill tree as you learn to cook. Premium tickets include a meal.

→ Tue Feb 11-Sun Feb 16. £15-£23.



Jollof Wars

Which West African country makes the best jollof rice? It's a debate that's caused the odd diplomatic incident, and it's dramatised in this show about a Nigerian chef and her Ghanain fiancé exploring the nature of food patriotism.

→ Fri Feb 14-Sun Feb 16. £7.50.

WHAT IS IT...
A drama about a GCHQ operative who meddles in the life of a woman he's spying on.

WHY GO...
It's gripping like a Sunday teatime thriller.

→ Hampstead Theatre.
↻ Swiss Cottage.
Until Mar 7. £18-£37, £10-£25 concs.



AL BLYTH'S FIRST full-length play takes aim at the UK surveillance state. 'The Haystack' starts off like a 2010 episode of 'Spooks' and ends the first half like a creepy Richard Curtis romcom, before, thankfully, pulling back into sharper territory just in time for the finale.

GCHQ analysts Neil and Zef are drawn into a project to uncover who has been leaking embarrassing government secrets about arms deals to *Guardian* blogger Cora Preece. They do too good a job. Cora's contact, a Saudi princess in fear of her ex-husband, ends up dead in suspicious circumstances. As Cora spirals in the aftermath, Neil keeps monitoring her through her phone and laptop. When it looks as though she's going to end her life, he breaks all the rules and meets her under a made-up name.

Blyth's speeches about the loneliness of our digital age are really window-dressing for an older genre – 'spy falls in love with target' – mixed in with paranoia about state intrusion into our lives. Still, there's something enjoyably '9pm, BBC Two' about Roxana Silbert's production, particularly in the twisty-turny final scenes where Neil is confronted with the fundamental abusiveness of his behaviour. Rona Morison's raw performance as Cora creates complexity that isn't always there on the page, even if Oliver Johnstone's Neil – leaning heavily into haplessly adorkable – is never as ruthlessly interrogated by the script as he should be. ■ *Tom Wicker*

The Taming of the Shrew



WHAT IS IT...
Michelle Terry and Paul Ready star in Shakespeare's problematic comedy.

WHY GO...
Well you've certainly never seen a 'Shrew' quite like this.

→ Shakespeare's Globe.
↻ Blackfriars. Until Apr 18.
£7-£62.



THERE'S PROBABLY A German word for the precise feeling of frustration you get watching Globe artistic director and world-class Shakespearian actor Michelle Terry sitting on stage, *not* playing one of the Bard's thorniest parts. Especially since her husband, Paul Ready, is Petruchio: it was not unreasonable to expect that she might play his warring partner Kate.

Maria Gaitanidi's befuddling version of Shakespeare's problem(atic) play is apparently designed to explore the text's 'mythic' potential. Hmm. That doesn't make it any less hard to figure out quite why they alighted on Melissa Riggall to play Kate. The character is variously described as wild, loud, angry; Riggall sounds more like she's delivering a particularly earnest stanza on 'Poetry Please'. She has neither hatred for Ready's Petruchio nor any subversive, sexy spark. And while I'm not someone who thinks this play is too misogynistic to be done these days, I do think that in 2020 you probably want some kind of read on Kate's submissive final speech rather than her just delivering it tonelessly out front.

Gaitanidi's painfully plodding production lacks basic clarity: the narrative doesn't come across crisply, and the heavy doubling doesn't help matters. Liam Bunster's set adds various platforms around the auditorium, offering new playing spaces, but ones that also literally get in the way – there is often not even a clear view here, never mind vision. ■ *Holly Williams*

NEW SHOWS

THE HOTTEST THEATRE OPENINGS THIS WEEK

WEST END

Dances at a Gathering/ The Cellist

The Royal Ballet performs Cathy Marston's new examination of musical genius 'The Cellist', alongside a classic work by Jerome Robbins.
→ Royal Opera House.
⊖ Covent Garden.
Mon Feb 17-Mar 4. £3-£75.

Leopoldstadt

This new drama from fabled 82-year-old playwright Tom Stoppard is set in Vienna's Jewish

quarter. Patrick Marber directs.
→ Wyndham's Theatre.
⊖ Leicester Square.
Until Jun 13. £15-£125.

Luisa Miller

Fast-rising director Barbora Horáková stages Verdi's opera of doomed love.
→ London Coliseum.
⊖ Charing Cross.
Wed Feb 12-Mar 6. £10-£125.

Musik

Frances Barber's washed-up diva narrates her downfall in this one-woman musical, with new Pet Shop Boys songs.
→ Leicester Square Theatre.
⊖ Leicester Square.
Until Mar 1. £22.50-£49.50.

Nora: A Doll's House

Henrik Ibsen's proto-feminist classic 'A Doll's House' gets a radical makeover from playwright Stef Smith.
→ Young Vic. ⊖ Waterloo.
Until Mar 21. £10-£43.

Upstart Crow

David Mitchell makes his West End debut playing William Shakespeare in Ben Elton's stage version of the sitcom.
→ Gielgud Theatre. ⊖ Charing Cross. Until Apr 25. £15-£152.50.

The Visit

A walloping decade after his last play, 'Angels in America' playwright Tony Kushner adapts Friedrich Dürrenmatt's 1956 tragicomedy. Lesley Manville and Hugo Weaving star.
→ National Theatre, Olivier.
⊖ Waterloo. Until May 13. £15-£89.

OFF-WEST END

Far Away

Caryl Churchill's brilliantly surreal exploration of conflict,



'Nora: A Doll's House'

staged by Lyndsey Turner.
→ Donmar Warehouse.
⊖ Covent Garden. Until Mar 28. £10-£40.

The High Table

Temi Wilkey's debut play follows Tara's struggle to get her Nigerian family to come to her same-sex wedding.
→ Bush Theatre. ⊖ Shepherd's Bush Market. Until Mar 21. £10-£25.

I, Cinna (the Poet)

Tim Crouch's show for older kids is inspired by Shakespeare's unluckiest character. Ages 11-plus.
→ Unicorn Theatre.
⊖ London Bridge. Until Feb 29. £10-£18, £10-£12 under-18s.

TOP-SELLING TICKETS

AT [TIMEOUT.COM/TICKETS](https://www.timeout.com/tickets)

1 Endgame

Daniel Radcliffe stars in Beckett's apocalyptic classic.
→ Old Vic. Until Mar 28.

2 Uncle Vanya

Chekhov's masterful drama.
→ Harold Pinter Theatre. Until May 2.

3 The Comedy About a Bank Robbery

Heist-based hilarity.
→ Criterion Theatre. Until May 3.

4 Hamilton

Mega-catchy hip hop musical.
→ Victoria Palace. Until Aug 1.

5 The Book of Mormon

The lewd, crude hit show.
→ Prince of Wales. Until May 30.

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Bag tickets to Al Blyth's explosive debut play 'The Haystack' at the Hampstead Theatre for less than half price. Tickets from £15.

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Art

Edited by Eddy Frankel
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'A gorgeous exhibition of hideous paintings'

'British Baroque: Power and Illusion'



THOUSANDS OF HEAVY-JAWED faces stare back at you from the walls of this exhibition. And almost every one has the same set of worrying, misshapen, distended features. Royal inbreeding, it's no joke.

This is the big-chinned art of the British Baroque period: the art of power, dominance and shagging your cousins. From the restoration of Charles II in 1660 to the death of Queen Anne in 1714, art in this country was used to codify and reinforce the power of royal rule. And it was totally ridiculous. As you walk into the show, Charles II, with his face like someone melted

WHAT IS IT...
Saucy courtly paintings from the seventeenth century.

WHY GO...
It's full of drama, intrigue and sex, like the best Netflix series ever, but on canvas.

→ Tate Britain.
↻ Pimlico. Until Apr 19.
£16, £15 concs.

sits in flowing pink robes, flanked by cherubs. He's a mound of pastry-like curls in a marble bust, he watches over a Greek goddess in a ceiling painting. Pompous, over the top, ridiculous, but lots of fun.

The next room is filled with portraits of people from his court, painted by artists like Jacob Huysmans and Peter Lely. It's all fat men in wigs and women with translucently white skin. One image shows the Duchess of Mazarin as the goddess Diana, one boob out as she gestures to her black slave boys in collars. Yikes.

But there's an air of desperation to the power on display here. All these paintings



are attempts to show strength and wealth in a protestant Britain where royal power was waning.

So they get more showy and ostentatious. There's a room of *trompe l'oeil* optical illusions; paintings of doors that look like real doors; portraits on canvas made to look like they're on wood. It's the Baroque equivalent of buying designer jeans with ripped knees.

The show then takes you through the architecture of the Baroque – huge domes and opulent gardens and interiors – before showing you incredibly bored-looking court beauties in a series of portraits by Godfrey Kneller and Michael Dahl.

There's not a lot of great art here, but it's a hypnotising show: a gorgeous exhibition of hideous paintings. The thing that elevates

BEST OF THE BEST

The exhibitions you have to see in London right now



it is the way it makes the rich and powerful people look so silly. The monarchy uses art to show how beautiful, wealthy and influential it is, but the only real takeaway is that inbreeding is regrettable, and power is temporary.

By the last room, the monarchy has lost its grip and political parties have come to the fore. Sovereignty has shifted, but its

face hasn't changed much. The politicians commission the same ridiculous, pompous paintings as the monarchy. Call it royalty, call it parliament, it doesn't matter: it's all power, and it's all ugly. ■



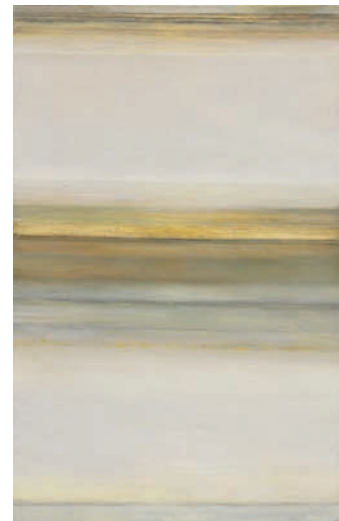
By Eddy Frankel
Who likes baroque, but prefers batechno.



France-Lise McGurn: 'Percussia'

Perfectly executed paintings of imagined figures which sprawl off the canvas and spread across the walls. Totally lovely.

→ Simon Lee. ☉ Green Park. Until Feb 22. Free.



Hedda Sterne

Infinite horizons and seascapes by a brilliant but forgotten artist. Paintings to totally lose yourself in.

→ Victoria Miro Mayfair. ☉ Oxford Circus. Until Mar 21. Free.



'Picasso and Paper'

Works on paper by the world's most famous painter.

Of course it's good. He could make art out of mashed potato and it would still be brilliant.

→ Royal Academy of Arts. ☉ Piccadilly Circus. Until Apr 13. £18-£22.

Jordan Wolfson: 'Artists Friends Racists'



IN POSSIBLY THE most Jordan Wolfson move ever, the American artist has made a new work that might physically injure you if you get too close. Made up of spinning LED filaments – halfway between a cooling fan and a weed whacker – the whirling strands in front of you spit out endless holographic images, but they could slice off your hand too if you're not careful.

The installation's no less threatening from further away. The fans sync and unsync, displaying visions of animated love hearts and puppies, robot experiments, American police cars and 9/11 rescuers. Words come crashing down and split apart: 'artists', 'friends', 'racists', 'anxiety', 'stress'. The fans hum loudly. It's a tense, creepy, uncomfortable room.

Wolfson has blended memes, animation and contemporary angst about police surveillance, callout culture and the AI singularity into one, big, coagulated mess. It's art about a data-driven world,



WHAT IS IT...
LED-fans spinning uncomfortable narratives.

WHY GO...
This is gross art for a gross world.

→ Sadie Coles HQ.
⊖ Oxford Circus.
Until Feb 29. Free.

about outward appearances and pretentious fakery. It's nihilistic and negative. In a world that looks to art and artists for meaning, rebellion and progressive ideas in the face of growing right-wing extremism and a dying planet, this art is actively saying 'So fucking what? Who cares?'

The other works here are pictures of Wolfson as a kid mounted on big brass plaques. He's elevating his own cute childhood to the level of renaissance sainthood. Because he can.

Wolfson's art might not be helpful, useful, or worthy, and it might not be trying to change the world, but it does a really good job of reflecting the world. It's violent, snotty, uncomfortable, arrogant. That's 2020 for you. ■ Eddy Frankel

'Radical Figures: Painting in the New Millennium'



PAINTING, SCHMAINTING.

All anyone cares about these days in galleries are immersive installations, videos and conceptual interventions. So a show of just boring old painting is quite a bold move.

There's some incredible stuff here. Tala Madani's humiliating paintings of fat little men and a mother made of faeces are vicious and brilliant. Michael Armitage paints unsettling scenes mined from news, the internet and African myths. They shimmer with colour and pulsate with uncomfortable threat. A man eats his own chest and a couple drifts happily at sea in Dana Schutz's big-eyed, exaggerated, thick paintings. Nude bodies twist and bend and contort like elasticated Francis Bacon figures in Christina Quarles's excellent pictures.



But Daniel Richter has one good painting and infinite bad ones; Sanya Kantarovsky leaves me cold; and Cecily Brown's frazzled semi-abstracts feel oddly out of place in a show about figurative painting.

The thing is, there are countless artists taking countless different

approaches to painting out there. So why these ten artists, why these paintings, why these styles? It just feels a bit random.

It doesn't work as a proper look at contemporary painting. But it does work as a show of good contemporary art. ■ Eddy Frankel

Find more shows to see at [timeout.com/art](https://www.timeout.com/art)

WHAT IS IT...
Figurative painting from 2000 onwards.

WHY GO...
Painting's good. Always has been, still is.

→ Whitechapel Gallery.
⊖ Aldgate East. Until May 10. £9.50, £7.50 concs.

JORDAN WOLFSON: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; SADIE COLES HQ; TALA MADANI: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; DANIEL RICHTER: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; DANIEL RICHTER: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; DANIEL RICHTER: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; DANIEL RICHTER: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; DANIEL RICHTER: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Edited by Tania Ballantine
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Food



RESTAURANT OF THE WEEK

Welcome to halloumi heaven

A VEGGIE RATHER than vegan restaurant? Bit outdated, no? But wait, Bubala is more than just vegetarian. It does small plates. Middle Eastern small plates. Now you're talking. And if that wasn't BOT (bang on trend) enough, it's also a bijou but buzzy Spitalfields spot with only 30 seats: a handful of designer-ish tables and a counter you can perch up at.

It's the kind of place where complete strangers (not the staff) will turn to you to tell you what's good. 'You have to try the halloumi,' said the chap to my left, leaning in with a slightly frightening fervour. 'It's amazing.' He was right. It was. Two huge honey-drenched half moons arrived on a little white plate, their sides crusted with a deep, dark, golden brown with just a little of their original paleness peeking through, like they'd spent a scantily

clad week aggressively sunbathing. Better yet was how they tasted, the intense saltiness mirrored by a mellow nectar syrupiness. The mouthfeel of the chew and the crunch, that moment when you lick your lips to sweep up the last of the honey.

There were three other dishes you'd want outside the stage door for. First, the brutally, beautifully charred laffa flatbread, which you should order at the start, so you can eat it with everything. Or the thick, lavish

slices of fried aubergine, heaped with zhoug (z-hoog), a fragrant paste of coriander-spiked chilli which, made well – as it was here – can turn

a Middle Eastern dish from good to head-turningly gorgeous. Third, that vegan go-to: falafel. Falafel can be dry or bland, these were neither. Cutting through an outer crust exposed a soft, crumbly, clove-scented inner belly. They also came with tahini (sesame dip), but didn't need it. Top marks.

Bubala



WHAT IS IT
A Middle Eastern veggie small plates joint in Spitalfields

WHY GO
The halloumi. Chewy, crunchy, salty, sweet.

→ 65 Commercial St, E1 6BD. ↻ Aldgate East.

Also memorable: a vegan sprout salad (better than it sounds) and latkes made from layers of confit potato in the shape of giant chips.

The only real slip-ups were the pumpkin dip and the houmous. Two beginner's dishes, these were deeply unspecial. More seasoning, please. But the service, from both our waiter and the chef at the counter, was sunny and enthusiastic, and the rustic-chic space, with its unplastered walls, stylish woods, dark tiles and designer lighting, is easy to love. Bubala is the kind of place to convert an ardent meat-eater. So go on, be converted. ■ **Dinner for two with drinks and service: around £90**



By Tania Ballantine
Who always talks to strangers. Sorry, Mum.

LOVE AT FIRST BITE



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The Buxton



PLUSH GOURMET PUB The Buxton channels the vibes of a Brooklyn bar: perfectly pitched jazz music, countertop library-lamp-style sepia lighting, and all sorts of arty-looking people. And the cooking? Mostly brilliant.

We sat at the bar counter, overlooking the neat mini-kitchen, while head chef Jamie Evans, plucked straight from sister venue The Culpeper, handed us our amuse-bouches: two dinky espresso cups filled with soothing pumpkin soup. Homemade gnocchi was another winner. Braised, hand-cut nuggets with tender pieces of skin-on squash and pretty purple kale, all coated in a lush sage butter sauce and liberally doused with parmesan. Comforting, addictive and, even, a bit dirty.

Elsewhere, an expertly cooked main of sea bass with mussels came in a light fregola-filled broth, while the pork chop was as juicy as



it gets. And to finish, my favourite: two freshly fried and salt-dusted doughnuts in a small brown paper bag, one pumped full of homemade raspberry and fig jam, the other with lemon curd. Like food critic Anton Ego in Pixar's 'Ratatouille', I was carried back to my childhood, when my mum would return from Tesco with a five-pack of the doughy gems. Emotional stuff. And, obviously, far better than the

bog-standard sweet treats of my memories (sorry, Tesco).

There were niggles, though. The celeriac remoulade with the chop was drowned in mayo, making it sickeningly rich. And, the panna cotta wasn't set. So, room for improvement, but I'd happily go back. I keep welling up over those doughnuts. ■ *Ella Braidwood*
Dinner for two with drinks and service: around £90.

WHAT IS IT...
A gourmet pub and hotel near Brick Lane.

WHY GO...
For those doughnuts. A seminal moment for dough.

→ 42 Osborn St, E1 6TD.
⊖ Aldgate East.

EXCLUSIVE

25 percent off dinner with live Motown music and an hour of bottomless drinks at 'Soultown'. Tickets from £29.

TIMEOUT.COM/SOULTOWN20

Maremma



WHAT IS IT...
A Tuscan restaurant in Brixton.

WHY GO...
For the homemade pasta. Like, all of it.

→ 36 Brixton Water Lane, SW2 1PE. ⊖ Brixton.

TUCKED AWAY DOWN a Brixton sidestreet, Maremma is a cute neighbourhood restaurant filled with friends, couples and some charming waiters. The cooking here draws inspiration from the coastal area of Maremma in sunny Tuscany and from Italy more generally.

The best of the menu was the homemade pasta, like the pumpkin cappellacci (pasta dumplings), which walked a delicate line between sweet and savoury. The soft, mild squash was a peerless match for the warming pool of butter-and-sage sauce, adorned with the crispy fried leaves of the herb and crumbled amaretti biscuits. A plate of fresh pappardelle with wild boar ragù was equally good: the sauce-licked ribbons of pasta interspersed with tender chunks of meat.

Later, a piece of nicely charred, succulent swordfish arrived spread in a rosemary-and-anchovy sauce. But the accompanying rapini, a kind of broccoli famed for its bitter taste, didn't work: its sharp flavour clashed with the rest of the dish. Elsewhere, the puntarelle salad was more pleasantly bitter, but overshadowed the delicate cured venison.

Desserts of tiramisu and semifreddo were good but there was nothing really game-changing going on. Maremma may still be a tad rough around the culinary edges, but do go if you're local, and want great pasta and bags of cosy atmos. ■ *Ella Braidwood*
Dinner for two with drinks and service: around £100.



BUXTON: VEELEEVENS; MAREMMA: JADE NINA SARRHEL

Pasticceria Marchesi



WHAT IS IT...
A London outpost of a historic Milanese pastry shop.

WHY GO...
For the panettone. People: it's *posh*.

→ 117 Mount St, W1K 3LA.
⊖ Bond St or Green Park.

WHEN VISITING MAYFAIR'S Pasticceria Marchesi – the sweet, petite designer dessert boutique owned by the Prada group – you should forget everything you think you know about panettone. Available all year round, like in Italy (not just for Christmas, like here), Marchesi's version, made with a sourdough starter in a recipe that's over half-a-century old, is one of the café's signatures. It was good enough to make you love panettone even if you've never even liked it before: the sweet Milanese bread was fluffy and delicately perfumed with gems of candied orange peel and sultanas plumped in booze. Another signature, the vanilla-custard-based torta aurora, had that same impossible weightless quality while also being lavishly decadent. The hot savoury dishes that you can buy at lunchtime also excelled, though they do start at £18 (we liked the golden saffron sautéed risotto, with its Milanese-style crisped edges).

But while we were braced for Mayfair prices, the bill truly exceeded our expectations, and not in a good way. A cup of coffee starts at £6 (we were told it's by Illy, which is lovely, but hardly special – you can buy it in most supermarkets). A single candied chestnut smaller than a golf ball costs £6.50 (good but not nearly-seven-quid good) and wedges of cake kick-off at £11. Still, for seriously superior all-year-round panettone, you may just think it's worth it. ■ *Nicole Trilivas*
Dessert for two with coffee and service: around £40.



Isla at The Standard



WHAT IS IT...

An all-day modern European restaurant on the ground floor of The Standard hotel.

WHY GO...

For a room that's a real head-turner.

→ The Standard, 10 Argyle St, WC1H 8EG. ↻ King's Cross.



ENTERED THROUGH a shimmering, sequin-lined walkway, Isla is a well-designed thing of beauty. There is a furry wall that you want to stroke, slick mid-century decor, and thriving plants. It's like being on the set of 'Mad Men'.

The food is pleasant enough but doesn't live up to the room's suave appearance. The sea bass ceviche was the best of everything we ate, with thin slices of ripe grapes and a spot of genius: pink peppercorns emitting pops of heat, instead of the traditional chilli. Also good: a majestic-looking broccoli with garlic yoghurt (though it wasn't charred as promised).

But there were lots of flaws. A small plate of pickled crudités was overpowered by cheap-tasting vinegar. There were similar issues with other dishes: frisée salad was doused in an overwhelming dressing and a basic cuttlefish bolognese was too herby for the few bits of mollusc to shine. The cacao ganache for dessert was tasty but came served with parsnip ice cream. Did the rogue combo work? Nope.

But Isla scores points for being inclusive (there are loads of veggie and vegan options) and if your aim is to escape the chaos of King's Cross – for a meeting with 1950s ad execs, say – there are few better-looking places to do it. ■ *Ella Braidwood*
Dinner for two with drinks and service: around £130.

THREE OF THE BEST

Fitzrovia restaurants



Kitchen Table



It may be (very) spenny, but the food at this rustic-industrial counter kitchen is pure class: a no-choice line-up of meticulous dishes, each more dazzling than the one before.

→ 70 Charlotte St, W1T 4QG. ↻ Goodge St.



Passyunk Avenue



Cheesesteaks are the inevitable focus at this Philadelphia-themed dive bar and restaurant. They're brilliant: moist, peppery and laden with cheese.

→ 80 Cleveland St, W1T 6NE. ↻ Great Portland St.



Rovi



With loads of veggie dishes on offer, this small-plates joint from celebrity chef Yotam Ottolenghi is something special. Get the Lincolnshire prawn crumpet and the tempura stems.

→ 59 Wells St, W1A 3AE. ↻ Goodge St.

EXCLUSIVE

TASTING MENU AT SEA CONTAINERS



Not only will you get to tuck into a three-dish tasting menu at the popular riverside restaurant, but you'll also enjoy a cocktail with panoramic views of London's skyline at the rooftop bar 12th Knot. £25, exclusively with Time Out.

TIMEOUT.COM/SEACONTAINERS20



Ts&Cs apply.

Find more fantastic feasts at timeout.com/fitzrovia

WORDS: THREE OF THE BEST – ELLA BRAIDWOOD
PICTURES: ISLA – DAVID CLEVELAND; ROVI – ILSY GROVER

Drink

Edited by Laura Richards
timeout.com/bars @timeouteatdrink

The KPH



IF YOU CHOOSE to drink in Notting Hill, you will have come to terms with £6 pints. That's something I hadn't prepared myself for at The KPH (Kensington Park Hotel), the legendary local of both The Clash and seedy postwar necrophile John Christie, who was supposedly a regular. But the pub – now a Henry Harris establishment – has had the sort of gastro revamp campaigners feared would happen as a part of the area's so-called 'social cleansing'.

The upstairs has been converted into boutique rooms and a smart dining space, but the ground floor

stays dedicated to drinks. It's had the kind of makeover that strips away the history (and to an extent the personality), but is hard to hate since it's so good-looking – my companion described it as 'New Orleans chic'.

Twelve keg and three cask lines hold those pricy pints, although I didn't really mind paying the

extra for the good stuff, a jar of The Kernel's Export India Porter. Brilliant bar snacks – from terrine to taramasalata – gave a taste of the fancy things going on upstairs.

Its edgier vibes might have been neutralised, but music lives on, with a jazzy quartet starting on dreary Norah Jones covers before picking

up the pace with Sister Sledge and Stevie Wonder. Some of a gaggle of locals – from a generation that clearly still knows how to drink – even got up to groove for a bar or two. Maybe the millennials are priced out at The KPH, but those oldies seemed happy that their old haunt is still swinging. ■ *Laura Richards*



BAR OF THE WEEK

WHAT IS IT...
An iconic west London pub gets a gastro facelift.

WHY GO...
For a smart session soundtrack by live tunes.

→ 139 Ladbroke Grove, W10 6HJ. ☎ Ladbroke Grove.

DRINK THIS

Rosé Before Brosé

It would be a horrible cliché to drink pink on Valentine's Day. Maybe worse on Galentine's Day (Thursday February 13) – a celebration of female friendship created by right-on fictional feminist Leslie Knope (Amy Poehler) from TV's 'Parks and Recreation', and now a bona fide date in the calendar. We'll allow it for this wine at Vagabond because, a) there's never a bad time to drink Provençal rosé, and, b) we like the label, okay, designed for the bar by illustrator and activist Venus Libido. And if you can't be shallow in February, when can you? ■

→ Available in Vagabond wine bars Londonwide now. Glasses from £8.95, bottles £39.



Fugitive Motel



WHAT IS IT...
A retro-looking all-day Bethnal Green bar.

WHY GO...
For an Americana-drenched outing – cornhole and all.

→ 199 Cambridge Heath Rd, E2 0EL. ☎ Bethnal Green.

LIGHT, BRIGHT AND a little bit California: decoratively speaking, Fugitive Motel is a breath of seabreezy air along the dingy stretch just down from Bethnal Green station. Light spills into a space filled with cacti, concrete and a timber-framed bar and, once darkness falls, a retro neon sign illuminates the place. Less uplifting was the service, with drinks slammed down on the bar abruptly and sighs given in response to fairly straightforward requests (like, 'Can I have a pint, please?'). So much for world-famous American hospitality.

You can make your own fun at Fugitive Motel, though. It shows big-screen sports in the saloon bar, and there's shuffleboard and cornhole if you fancy getting physical. I suspect many a good date night has already unfolded here. Bar snacks suit sharing, too – the pizza toppings showed that variety really is the spice of life, even if the sourdough base was a little bit more chewy than I like it. And I'd avoid the zucchini fries, which were cut too finely to withstand a bout in the fryer.

The best bit – aside from its dreamy décor – is the drinks range, with a heap of emerging low- and no-alcohol brands in the fridge, and interesting London, US and German craft beers on tap. And that's alongside a kegged Espresso Martini: finding that on tap in London is like hitting the drinking jackpot. ■ *Laura Richards*



Find more hot new hangouts at timeout.com/bars



River Great Ouse, Ely

Step to it!

Winding coastal walks and gorgeous green hikes are only a train ride away

Escaping London and discovering some of the country's most glorious walks can be nothing short of spellbinding during winter days. Thameslink services run to some of the UK's most picturesque destinations, including Cambridge and Brighton. And, with investments worth millions of pounds made across stations on the Thameslink and Southern networks, getting out and about by train has never been easier. Here are five weekend walks to try. Don't forget the Kendal Mint Cake...

Cambridge via Grantchester Circular

Begins Cambridge University
Ends The Orchard Tea Garden in Grantchester
How far? 9.3 miles, five hours
How tough is it? 1/5
Distance from London by train 48 mins from King's Cross to Cambridge
What should I look out for? Starting at the impressive thirteenth-century campus

buildings, amble alongside the River Cam, and then be sure to take a detour to the Cambridge University Botanic Gardens where verdant treasures and heritage trees await.

Brighton to Newhaven

Begins Brighton Pavilion
Ends Newhaven Fort
How far? 9.5 miles, three hours
How tough is it? 2/5
Distance from London by train 52 mins from Victoria to Brighton
What should I look out for? Following the kitschy delights of Brighton Pavilion, expect majestic yachts at Brighton Marina, tranquil clifftops with views across glistening waters on your way to Saltdean and a visit to Rottingdean café Molly's At The Beach.

East Grinstead to Wivelsfield

Begins Forest Row village
Ends Wivelsfield village
How far is it? 12.6 miles, four hours
How tough is it? 3/5



Royal Pavilion Garden, Brighton

Distance from London by train 52 mins from London Bridge to East Grinstead

What should I look out for? As you descend into the valley and beyond the Weir Wood Reservoir, there's a rich woodland tapestry full of wildlife, streams and flora. The 450-acre Chailey Common, a protected site of scientific interest, is an awe-inspiring portrait of mother nature.

Eynsford Circular

Begins and ends Eynsford Castle
How far is it? 13.4 miles, five and a half hours
How tough is it? 4/5
Distance from London by train 46 mins from Victoria to Eynsford
What should I look out for? Highlights include Darent Valley, Lullingstone Castle and Lullingstone Roman Villa. Oh, and sure, the countryside is great – but you also need to visit Eagle Heights, one of the UK's biggest bird of prey centres.

Ely Circular

Begins and ends Ely station
How far is it? 11.2 miles, three and a half hours
How tough is it? 1/5
Distance from London by train 1 hour 9 mins from King's Cross to Ely
What should I look out for? The second smallest city in England, Ely is home to incredible sights like the River Great Ouse and Ely Cathedral, an Anglo-Saxon monastery which was destroyed and re-founded during the Norman Conquest.



ThamesLink /

Escapes

Edited by Ellie Walker-Arnott
timeout.com/daytrips



A weekend in

St Albans

Yes, it's close to where you already are. No, that's not a bad thing

ST ALBANS IS full of Londoners. An easy 20-minute train journey north of the capital, this buzzy Hertfordshire city has long been a fave with people moving out of central London. But commuter-belt credentials aside, there's a host of stuff for the lazy daytripper to explore, like its huge cathedral and crumbling Roman walls, as well as a stellar line-up of indie restaurants, brunch spots and a foodie-magnet market.

Eat this

For a cracking coffee and a budget-friendly brunch, head to locals' favourite **Hatch**, which stays open for dinner at the weekend. Tuck in to duck hash or sweetcorn fritters. Room for pud? Get in line at **The Waffle House** for authentic, fluffy mouthfuls in a Grade II-listed watermill.

Drink this

Quaff wines by the glass at bijou drinking hole **The Bishop's Cave**. The friendly staff will pair your plonk with a personalised selection of cheeses. After something stronger? Savour a small batch or two next door at **Gin Cave**.

Watch this

Upgrade your trip to the flicks at **The Odyssey**, a fancy indie cinema, built in the 1930s with bags of art deco style. Think super-comfy seats, table service, and several bars serving drinks and... cheeseboards. The line-up is a mix of big blockbusters and art house films.

Buy this

Raindrops on Roses raises the bar when it comes to charity shops. It's full of carefully curated, sustainable stock and locally made gifts, and all the proceeds go to cancer charities. If you're after an edible take-home, plump for an Alban Bun. The original hot cross bun is sold at **St Albans Cathedral café** every Easter.

Explore this

Tick off the city's historical highlights on a circular walk. Start at the mighty **Cathedral**. Keep going to **Verulamium Park**, named after the Roman city on which it stands – via a stop-off at **Ye Olde Fighting Cocks** pub – down to the **Roman walls** and back via the **Verulamium Museum**. ■ *Katie Gregory*

→ Get there: 20 minutes by train from London St Pancras International; around an hour by car.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING

Go full magpie at **St Albans Market** – it's on Wednesdays and Saturdays, plus there's a farmers' market on the second Sunday of the month. Shop for knick-knacks, then follow the pong of goudas and gruyères all the way to The Cheese Wheeler. Because you haven't had enough cheese yet, obvs.

WAKE UP HERE

Sopwell House



A couple of miles south of St Albans, nestled in acres of countryside, Sopwell House majors in seriously swanky retreats. A grand Georgian manor, it's home to probably the most sophisticated spa you'll ever see. Don your fluffy robe and slippers then float between marshmallowy outdoor daybeds, mist-shrouded hot tubs and zen-like gardens. Rooms are plush, modern and very easy on the eye, while two restaurants serve up all kinds of cuisine. But none of that really matters. You'll basically be living in the spa. *Katie Gregory*
→ St Albans, Hertfordshire.
www.prideofbritainhotels.com
From £141 a night.

More easy peasy excursions at timeout.com/daytrips



Heads up

Prospect Cottage is under threat

A SMALL VICTORIAN shack with an incredible shingle garden, Prospect Cottage sits in the shadow of a nuclear power station. It's in bleak and beautiful Dungeness (the only place you're likely to see a desert tumbleweed in the UK) and it was once home to the artist, filmmaker and LGBTQ+ activist Derek Jarman.

Since Jarman's death in 1994, this wooden house has become a place of pilgrimage – it is considered a piece of art in itself. But now, after the death of his partner, campaigners,

including Tilda Swinton, are trying to raise the £3.5million needed to buy the cottage and its contents so they can be preserved for the future.

If the sizeable sum isn't raised by March 31, the cottage risks being sold privately, meaning its contents could be dispersed and the place's artistic legacy lost. A fund has been set up to save Jarman's time capsule, with rewards like limited-edition artist prints in return for donations.

■ *Beth Doherty*

→ Find out more and donate at www.artfund.org

OFF THE GRID

A former artist's studio in a field



HAVEN'T LEFT LONDON in a while? A stay here might come as a bit of a shock. The Straw Bale Barn on Beacon Hill is in the middle of a field. It doesn't have a driveway. It's that rural.

Inside, the barn, which used to be an artist's studio, is like a bric-à-brac store: paintings and plates on the walls, shelves of books, and easels. At night, you ascend to a comfy kingsize in the eaves.

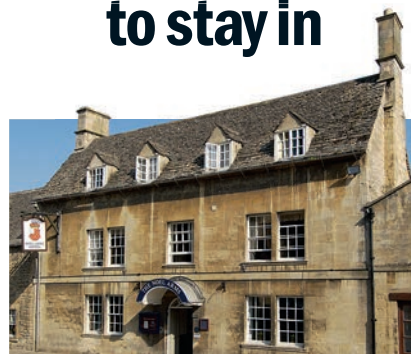
The place is not so rural that you don't have phone signal. There's a pub a short off-road walk away. Finding your way back in the dark is certainly an adventure. Take a torch and be prepared to get properly lost.

This is not a luxe place to stay. It's dusty, rustic, remote and... can we stay for ever, please? ■ *Rosie Akenhead*

→ Bicester, Oxfordshire. From £120 a night. www.canopyandstars.com

THREE OF THE BEST

Historic pubs to stay in



The Noel Arms Gloucestershire

Located on Chipping Campden's honey-coloured high street, the fourteenth-century Noel Arms is one of the Cotswolds' oldest inns – Charles II is said to have stayed here. Dover's Bar is largely unchanged since the '30s, when Graham Greene lived in the village as a struggling young writer.

→ From £99 a night. www.bespokehotels.com



The Acorn Inn Dorset

The lively heart of the tiny village of Evershot, this sixteenth-century coaching inn appears as The Sow & Acorn in Thomas Hardy's 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'. Little has changed since, with exposed beams, low ceilings, oak panelling and roaring open fires.

→ From £105 a night. www.acorn-inn.co.uk



The Lord Crewe Arms Northumberland

Built in 1165 as an annexe to Blanchland Abbey, for centuries this building offered refuge to visitors. It later became The Lord Crewe Arms, where local miners relaxed after a shift, and is now an appealing hotel, with cosy decor, fantastic food and an atmospheric crypt bar. ■ *Sophie Hines*

→ From £129 a night. www.lordcrewearmsblanchland.co.uk

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A man with short hair and tattoos on his arms is sitting on a wooden bench in a locker room. He is wearing a white soccer jersey with dark shoulder accents, white shorts, and white socks. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The locker room has wooden lockers with metal handles in the background.

WHEN WE SHOW OUR BEST SIDE
WE DON'T JUST PLAY THE GAME,
WE CHANGE IT.

MADE OF WHAT MATTERS

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