

ASIA

SINCE 1922

# Reader's Digest

**RD  
TALKS**  
OUR STORIES  
AS PODCASTS

# 100

## YEARS

**OUR CENTENARY  
ANNIVERSARY**

**'The Little Magazine'  
Celebrates**

[PAGE 72](#)

**Silent Signs You're  
Eating Too Much Protein**

[PAGE 86](#)

**DRAMA**  
**Inside The Thai  
Cave Rescue**

[PAGE 102](#)

**Rubik And His  
Amazing Cube**

[PAGE 66](#)

**24 STEPS  
To Delete  
Your Online  
Footprint**

[PAGE 26](#)

Bangladesh Tk190 . Indonesia Rp45,000 . Korea W7000 . Thailand B155 . HK\$36 . Sri Lanka Rs475 . NT\$158 . Pakistan Rs395

FEBRUARY 2022  
ISSN 0034-0383



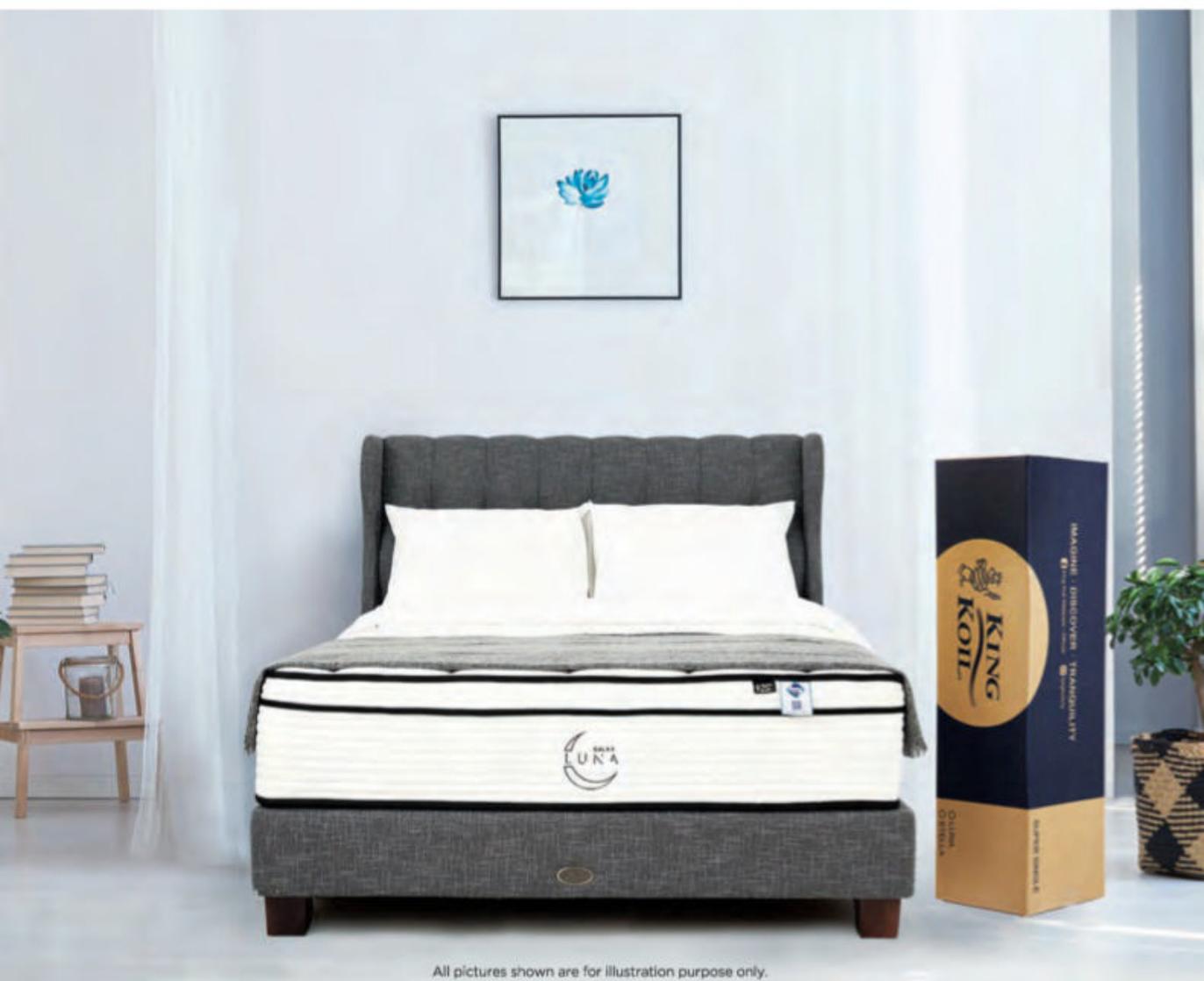
9 770034 038003

SINGAPORE \$9.90  
MALAYSIA RM 15  
PHILIPPINES P 199



# KINGKOIL GALAX ROLL PACK MATTRESS

IMAGINE • DISCOVER • TRANQUILITY



All pictures shown are for illustration purpose only.

Please contact us for more information:

**KINGKOIL BEDDING (MALAYSIA) SDN BHD** (255276-P)

Tel: 03 3122 1866 Email: [cs@kingkoil.com.my](mailto:cs@kingkoil.com.my)

[www.kingkoil.com.my](http://www.kingkoil.com.my) [kingkoilmalaysia](https://www.instagram.com/kingkoilmalaysia)

King Koil Malaysia - Official

# CONTENTS

FEBRUARY 2022



66

## Features

26

### TECHNOLOGY

#### Delete Your Internet Footprint

With a few clicks, you can reduce your online trail and take control of your privacy and digital data.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

36

### INSPIRATION

#### The Biker With A Big Heart

Their son's posthumous organ donation saved another young man's life. So the recipient cycled 2300 kilometres to thank them.

A.C. SHILTON FROM  
BICYCLING MAGAZINE



36

44

### EARTH'S HEROES

#### Shark Encounters

Motivated by the need to protect sharks from overfishing, a former teacher came up with a transformative idea.

LAM LYE CHING

52

### FOOD ON YOUR PLATE

#### I Am A Coconut

Once cracked open, the sweet flesh and sweet water of this fruit are a tasty tropical delight.

KATE LOWENSTEIN  
AND DANIEL GRITZER

### ON THE COVER:

HIGHLIGHTS FROM A  
CENTURY OF READER'S  
DIGEST - PAGE 72

60

### PARENTING

#### Secondhand Screen Time

When parents spend too much time on their phones, does it have negative effects on their children?

BOBBI DEMPSEY

66

### ENTERTAINMENT

#### Meet Ernő Rubik

Mastering this twisty and colourful cube can be fun - and frustrating. The inventor of Rubik's Cube shares how he devised a puzzle that became a global sensation.

ALEXANDRA ALTER  
FROM NEW YORK TIMES

FEBRUARY 2022

# CONTENTS

94



72

**100 YEARS**

## Highlights From A Century Of Reader's Digest

We look back at some of the memorable events that have made the magazine one of the world's best-loved publications.

THE EDITORS

80

**HUMOUR**

## What's The Point Of Table Manners?

Who was responsible for rules such as 'Don't put your elbows on the table' and other table manners? We go right back to cavemen days to find out.

FELICITY LEWIS FROM THE BOOK *EXPLAIN THAT*

86

**HEALTH**

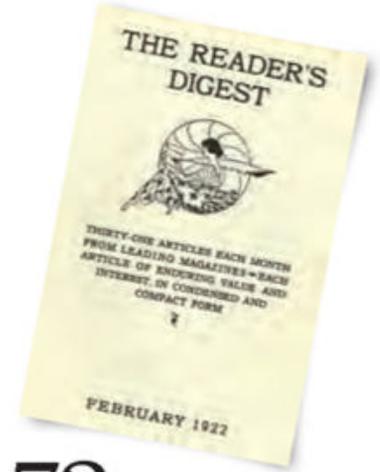
## 6 Silent Signs You're Eating Too Much Protein

While protein is essential for a healthy diet, it can be a balancing act between too little and too much.

LINDSAY TIGAR



86



72

94

**TRAVEL**

## A Fairytale Train Journey

The elegant Danube Express wends its way past storybook villages and palaces from Istanbul to Budapest.

MAGGIE SHIPSTEAD FROM *TRAVEL + LEISURE*

102

**BONUS READ**

## The Boys In The Cave

A rescue of 12 boys and their soccer coach trapped deep inside a flooded underground cave in Thailand seemed almost impossible. But still the world waited - and desperately hoped.

MATT GUTMAN FROM THE BOOK *THE BOYS IN THE CAVE*

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



## Departments

### THE DIGEST

- 18 **Pets**
- 20 **Health**
- 24 **News From The World of Medicine**
- 115 **RD Recommends**

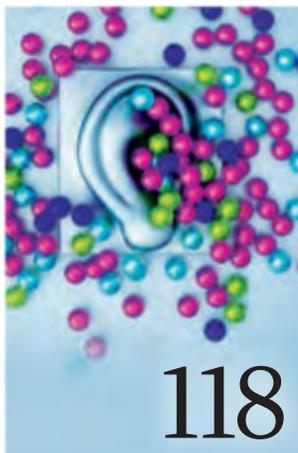
### REGULARS

- 6 **Editor's Note**
- 8 **Letters**
- 12 **My Story**
- 16 **Smart Animals**
- 56 **Look Twice**
- 79 **Quotable Quotes**
- 91 **Tell Me Why**



### HUMOUR

- 50 **Life's Like That**
- 64 **Laughter, The Best Medicine**
- 92 **All In A Day's Work**



### THE GENIUS SECTION

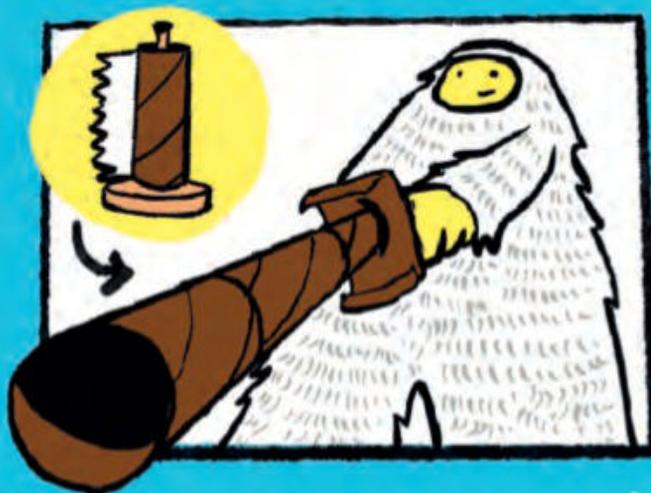
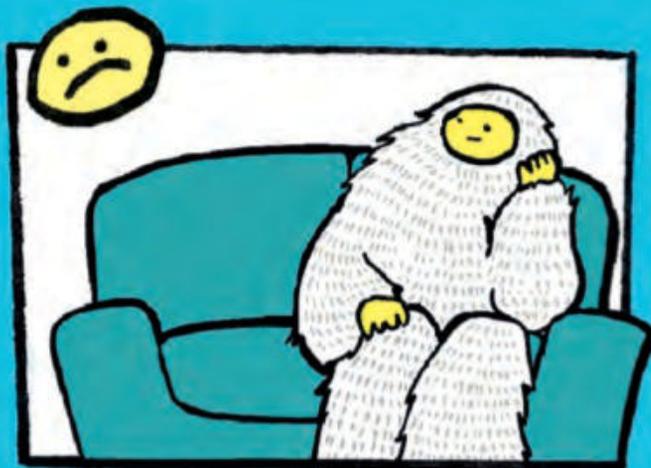
- 118 **Are You A Tinglehead?**
- 122 **Puzzles**
- 125 **Trivia**
- 126 **Puzzles Answers**
- 127 **Word Power**



## HAVE YOU VISITED THE READER'S DIGEST FACEBOOK PAGE LATELY?

Constantly updated, our Facebook feed offers stories, videos, advice, humour, quotable quotes, cartoons, quirky photographs and more.

**FOLLOW US**  
[@ReadersDigestAsia](https://www.facebook.com/ReadersDigestAsia)



HIMALAYA  
VAJOMBA

# WHEN ADULTING GETS TOO HARD, GIVE UP.

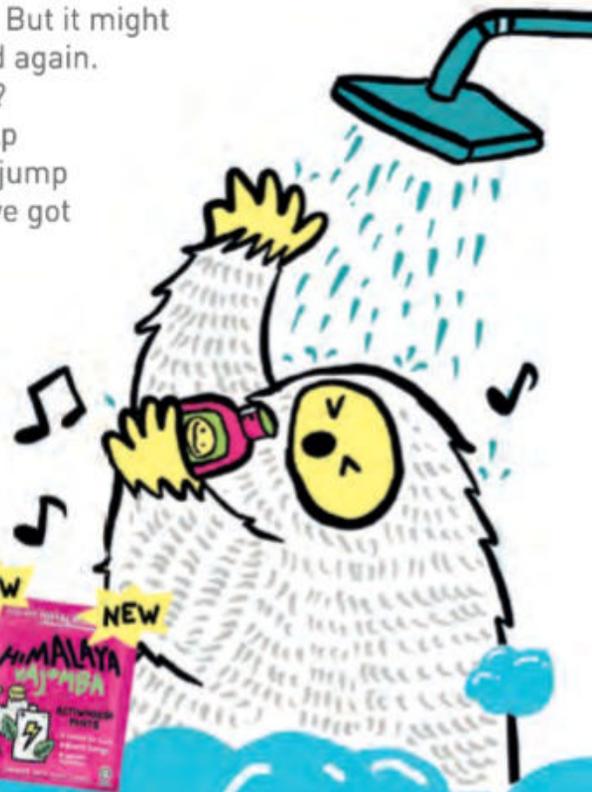
Remember when you used to pretend the floor was lava? Remember when you used to have sword fights with kitchen rolls? Remember when you used to believe a cardboard box was a house? Then a sports car. Then a boat. Then a cave. Then a bed. Then a rocket. Then a time-machine. All the toys in the world, but this wonderful ordinary cardboard box was extraordinary to you. You would sit in there for hours, and hours playing grown up. And now that you are one, you're boxed into the reality of adult responsibility. Oh, the cruel irony.

When you were 13, you couldn't wait to be 30. You thought you'd be rolling in money by now, but the only thing that's rolling is life – on the floor – laughing. That fun-loving kid you used to be is now buried under a pile of dirty laundry that needs to be done, a stable job you work hard to keep, and bills you need to pay. Adulting is hard. So, give up once in a while. That fun-loving kid is still in there somewhere.

wRiTe A sEnTeNcE LiKe tHis 'CoS iT's FuNkY. Read upside down 'cos you wanna be silly. Yell into a fan 'cos it makes your voice sound funny. Build a blanket fort 'cos it's the best thing ever!

Being an adult doesn't mean life has to be boring. But it might mean you'll need an extra boost to play like a child again. Why don't you give Himalaya Vajomba Candy a try? It's a candy made with Himalayan salt that will help rehydrate your aging body, and give you energy to jump into every puddle you see on a rainy day. And, we've got new flavours too – Himalaya Actiwhoosh Mints and Himalaya Honey Lime Mints.

So, get yourself a pack or two and see where your inner child takes you. There's a whole world of fun waiting for you. Start by pretending that this article will self-destruct in 3... 2... 1...



## EDITOR'S NOTE

### *Milestones And Insights*

#### **THE EASE WITH WHICH ONLINE SCAMMERS**

can manipulate your private digital identity is terrifying. 'Delete Your Internet Footprint' (page 26) details 24 simple steps we can all take to keep our identities and finances safe. With as many as one in four people falling victim to identity fraud, this article is definitely worth a read.

This issue has insights into well-known people and events, such as the man whose invention we all recognise ('Meet Ernő Rubik', page 66).

The publicity-shy architect shares how his love of geometrical shapes led him to invent the 3D puzzle that the world knows as Rubik's Cube. While our Bonus Read tells the story of the 2019 Thai rescue, 'The Boys In The Cave' (page 102). The complexity and risk involved in the rescue to save the 12 young Wild Boar soccer players and their coach is as shocking as it is heroic.

This month marks a very important milestone for Reader's Digest globally. It was one hundred years ago this month, on February 5, 1922, that the first edition of Reader's Digest magazine was published. To mark the occasion, we have prepared a timeline which we hope you will enjoy (page 72). Over the next 12 months, we'll also be featuring special 100th Anniversary articles, each one giving a modern perspective on the core values that have made the little magazine so unique.

The publication owes its success to you, our readers. From everyone here at Reader's Digest, we thank you for your endless loyalty, support and enthusiasm over the past ten decades.

Happy reading,

LOUISE WATERSON Editor-in-Chief



ILLUSTRATION: JUSTIN METZ

# ASIA Reader's Digest

Vol. 121  
No. 708  
February 2022

**EDITORIAL Editor-in-Chief** Louise Waterson

**Managing Editor** Zoë Meunier

**Chief Subeditor** Melanie Egan

**Art Director** Hugh Hanson

**Senior Art Designer** Adele Burley

**Art Designer** Annie Li

**Senior Editor** Diane Godley

**Associate Editor** Victoria Polzot

**DIGITAL Head of Digital Content** Greg Barton

## ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

**Group Advertising Director, Asia Pacific**

Sheron White

**Mobile:** +61 421 897 140 **Tel:** +61 2 9004 4407

**Email:** sheron.white@readersdigest.com.au

**National Account Manager, Singapore  
and Malaysia**

Rifdi Akmal Ramlee **Tel:** +6018 373 5994

**Email:** Rifdi.Ramlee@readersdigest.com.au

**Advertising Sales, Philippines**

Maricarl Garcia **Tel:** +63939 9248158

**Email:** Maricarl\_Garcia@rd.com

**Advertising Sales, Malaysia**

Helen Corry **Tel:** +6 012217 3260

**Email:** helen.corry@rd.com

**Advertising Sales Manager, Singapore**

Wendy Bayani **Tel:** +65 8200 3422

**Email:** Wendy.Bayani@rd.com

**Advertising Sales, Taipei**

Andrew Tsao

**Tel:** +886 935 833 866 **Fax:** +886 277367388

**Email:** atsao@triumphal.com.tw

**Advertising Sales, Hong Kong SAR**

Fibee Chun **Tel:** +852 97202063

**Email:** fibee.chun@theppnetwork.com

## CUSTOMER INQUIRIES

**Online** [rdasia.com/customer-care](http://rdasia.com/customer-care)

**Contact Us – Singapore** (65) 6955 8633

or [friends@readersdigest.asia](mailto:friends@readersdigest.asia)

**Contact Us – Malaysia and rest of Asia**

+65 6955 8633\* or [friends@readersdigest.asia](mailto:friends@readersdigest.asia)

**Administration Office** Direct Publishing Asia PTE

LTD, Singapore Post Centre, PO Box 272,

Singapore 914010

\*International call rates apply

## Published under licence.

Reader's Digest publishes 12 issues a year.

PUBLISHED BY DIRECT PUBLISHING ASIA PTE. LTD., COMPANY NUMBER: 200607506M © 2021. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. REPRODUCTION IN ANY MANNER IN WHOLE OR PART IN ENGLISH OR OTHER LANGUAGES PROHIBITED. PROTECTION SECURED UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL AND PAN-AMERICAN COPYRIGHT CONVENTIONS. PRINTED BY TIMES PRINTERS PTE LTD, 16 TUAS AVE. 5, SINGAPORE 639340. MCI (P) 014/12/2021. ISSN 0034-0383. MALAYSIA KDN PPS 1910/08/2019 (026008)



**SUBSCRIBE NOW!**  
[WWW.RDASIA.COM/SUBSCRIBE](http://WWW.RDASIA.COM/SUBSCRIBE)

**ORDER NOW:**  
LAST CHANCE! THE DRAW CLOSES  
ON MARCH 31, 2022

FOR DETAILS AND TERMS & CONDITIONS  
GO TO [WWW.RDASIA.COM/CONTESTS](http://WWW.RDASIA.COM/CONTESTS)  
Lucky draws to include entries from new, renewal  
or gift subscriptions. Multiple draw entries for  
multiple years subscriptions.

# LETTERS

## *Reader's Comments And Opinions*

### **Jokes That Stand The Test of Time**

Some of the jokes, sayings, anecdotes and fillers in the January Classics issue made me laugh so hard I couldn't catch my breath. I usually recycle the issue or give it to someone else, but this one I am definitely going to keep. I plan to read a few of these jokes every so often to put a smile on my face – and maybe even pass them on. These days humour is a valuable commodity and should be shared.

AMANDA JACKSON



### **Enduring Gifts**

Nowadays, when making a recording is as easy as pressing a button on a smartphone, how utterly inspiring to read that in 1955 three little children – not even teenagers yet! – saved a princely sum of money to secretly make a gramophone record of

themselves singing for their parents. Could there be a more touching Christmas gift? Patricia Scott's (My Story, December) vivid reminiscence shows it's still cherished 66 years later. What a beautiful reminder that while gifts can be conveniently store bought, a creative act like this is forever.

Let us know if you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 10 for how to join the discussion.

I'll remember this story the next time a birthday, anniversary or Christmas comes around.

LYLE CHAN

**Bridge As A Brain Booster**

'Brain Games That Really Work' (November) resonated with me. Years ago, after returning from an overseas trip, I began forgetting things. My husband took me to the emergency room, and four days later I woke up from a coma with a diagnosis that required me to exercise my brain. I tried to read but couldn't understand what I was reading. So my bridge partners had me count points in aces, kings, queens and jacks. And it worked! I just became a Gold Life Master in bridge.

CAROL SZAZYNSK

**WIN A PILOT CAPLESS FOUNTAIN PEN**

The best letter each month will win a Pilot Capless Fountain Pen, valued at over \$200. The Capless is the perfect combination of luxury and ingenious technology, featuring a one-of-a-kind retractable fountain pen nib, durable metal body, beautiful rhodium accents and a 14K gold nib. Congratulations to this month's winner, Sagar Sreenath.



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



**PACKAGE IT UP**

We asked you to think up a clever caption to this photo.

Struggling outside the box.

LES HEWITT

I am not a shopaholic, I am helping the economy.

KAWTAR TANI

I'm going to start living in the present.

MELISSA BUTTON

This is the last time I'll use click and collect!

JUDITH CAINE

**Congratulations to this month's winner, Judith Caine.**



**CAPTION CONTEST**

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win

**\$100. To enter, email**

**[asiaeditor@readersdigest.com.au](mailto:asiaeditor@readersdigest.com.au)**

**or see details on page 10.**

### Origins Of Chess

Thanks for putting together a compilation of some interesting and insightful articles in your November edition. However, after reading the quiz article 'Checkmate', I was left wondering why there was no mention of India, the place where this board game originated and its original name *chaturanga* (meaning four sides).

SAGAR SREENATH

*Editor's Note: Thank you for raising this interesting point. Dating back to the sixth century, chaturanga was played on an 8x8 grid and featured pieces similar to modern chess although the exact rules are unknown. It is believed the rules for moving queens (then called counsellors) and bishops (then called elephants) were more limited.*

### Minor Miracles

'No Ordinary Day' (Everyday Miracles, December) was a timely reminder that good things happen in the world every day. Sometimes things occur that are so incredible they can't be considered anything short of a miracle. The quick and caring thinking on the part of ordinary people in the two stories – a school teacher and a sailor – turned them into miracle workers who helped change the lives of others.

SUSAN HAMILTON

## CONTRIBUTE



READERSDIGESTASIA

### Anecdotes and jokes

**\$50–\$100**

Send in your real-life laugh for Life's Like That or All in a Day's Work. Got a joke? Send it in for Laughter is the Best Medicine!

### Smart Animals

**Up to \$100**

Share antics of unique pets or wildlife in up to 300 words.

### My Story **\$250**

Do you have an inspiring or life-changing tale to tell? Submissions must be true, unpublished, original and 800–1000 words.

### Here's how to reach us:

**Email:** [asiaeditor@readersdigest.com.au](mailto:asiaeditor@readersdigest.com.au)

**Write:** Reader's Digest Asia  
Editorial Department  
Singapore Post Centre  
PO Box 272, Singapore  
914010

**Online:** [rdasia.com/contribute](http://rdasia.com/contribute)

Include your full name, address, phone number and email.

**Letters:** We may edit letters and use them in all print and electronic media.

**Submissions:** All submissions become our property on payment and subsequent publication in the magazine. We may edit and fact-check submissions. **We cannot return or acknowledge material not accepted for publication.** For terms and conditions, go to [www.rdasia.com/terms-and-conditions/submission-guidelines](http://www.rdasia.com/terms-and-conditions/submission-guidelines). Figures refer to US dollars.

# SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

SAFE | EXPERIENCED | PROFESSIONAL



Partner with us as we forge ahead to become the most trusted oil palm planter's investment opportunity in Asia Pacific.



## KEY INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHT:



- Approved as an interest scheme by the Companies Commission of Malaysia.
- Investment duration of 8 years.



- Fixed contractual returns are paid quarterly on 31st Mar, 30th Jun, 30th Sep and 31st Dec.



- 100% repayment of invested capital at maturity. Proven track record.

Office : + 603 7831 9999

For more information, visit [www.eastwestone.com](http://www.eastwestone.com)



MY STORY

# A Whole Lotl Love

*A story of two axolotls*

BY Lisa Ikin

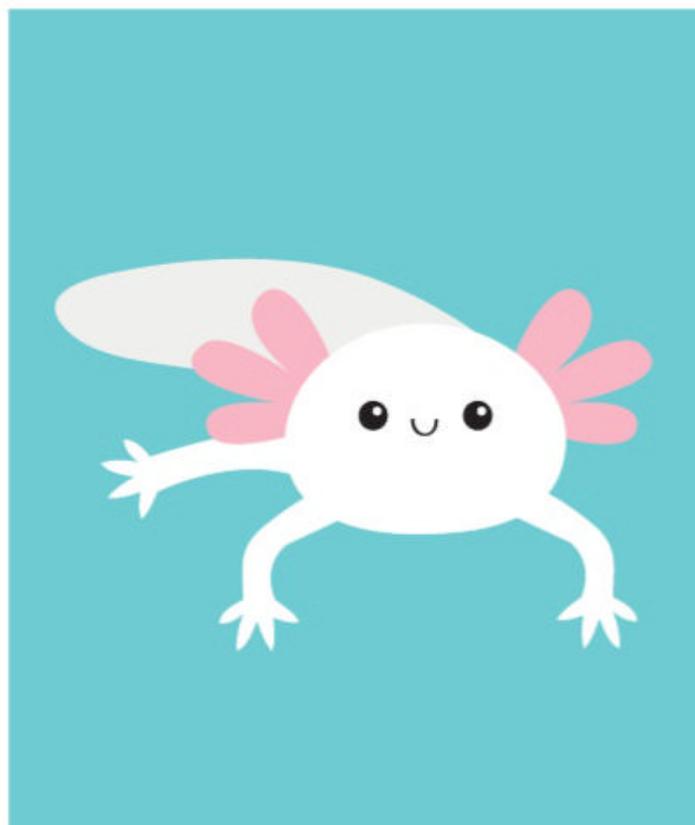
**A**XOLOTLs, otherwise known as Mexican walking fish, are very peculiar creatures indeed. *Ambystoma Mexicanum* are neotenic; they retain juvenile traits right through their adult lives and never leave the water like their amphibious cousins. They are naturally occurring but rarely seen in Lake Xochimilco and Lake Chalco in the southern Mexico City neighbourhood of Xochimilco. The most common place you will see an axolotl is in a home fish tank.

I have owned and (accidentally) bred axolotls for over eight years. My interest in these four-legged amphibians began in 2011 when I inherited two ageing axolotls,

Jet and Rusty, from a teaching colleague. Following their passing, I observed an appropriate period of mourning and the following year purchased an albino axolotl.

'Muesli Aristotle' arrived at Quintilian Primary School in January 2012. She was named by a group of nine year olds who couldn't settle on just one name. One school holiday, when Muesli was at home with me for the long break, I discovered an axolotl looking for a new home on Facebook. In return for a carton of Hahn Premium beer, I had a friend for Muesli. I named it quite fittingly 'Hahn' and plopped it in the tank with Muesli.

I watched with interest as they circled one another, and I made the





appropriate “oohs” and “aahs” as they brushed against one another in the tank. “*Friends!*” I thought. Blissfully unaware of what was to happen next.

The following morning, I noticed sacs of white jelly deposited on the bottom of the tank and noted that Hahn had been responsible for these slimy gifts. I also saw that Muesli had turned bright pink and was gliding around settling on each sac before moving onto the next.

Curiosity took over and I decided

---

Lisa Ikin is a freelance writer and primary school teacher from Perth. She teaches science and volunteers for wildlife organisations in her spare time. Axolotls are still very much a part of her life.

to leave them to their own devices to see what would happen.

The next morning, Hahn was sitting gazing disinterestedly at the plastic plant while Muesli appeared agitated and had started laying thousands of frog-like eggs! As I madly googled what to do with baby axolotls it quickly became apparent that this was not going to be a walk in the park. Not only did Google suggest that I would have to remove the slippery eggs, but I had to hand raise them! Axolotls, it turns out, are not very parental and will eat their eggs and young. No wonder they are all but extinct in the wild.

I removed Hahn from the tank and placed him in quarantine. He had more than made his presence felt. Pondering what to do with the imminent axolotl babies, my calculating entrepreneurial mind sold each one for \$50 and then spent the resulting fortune on a tropical holiday.

More googling revealed that newly hatched axolotls needed to be fed live food. All websites pointed towards the farming of brine shrimp (sea monkeys to the uninitiated). Brine shrimp were a whole other kettle of fish – literally. “They need salt water, and the saltwater needs to be aerated,” said the kind man in the aquarium shop as he handed me a vial of brine shrimp eggs. He also gave me a list of instructions on how to get the water just the right type

of salty. I gave him a sideways look and said, "Can't I just go and fill up a bottle at the beach?"

"That would work," he nodded.

Armed with seawater, an aerator and some brine shrimp eggs, I set up a bubbling contraption on my kitchen bench and waited. Fourteen days after the first batch of axolotl eggs were spawned, I started to see tiny tadpole-like creatures emerge from their gel sacs and dart about the tank. The brine shrimp did the right thing and turned into dancing, microscopic shrimp. As the baby axolotls grew, I had to change their water twice daily and feed them at the same time. This was achieved with a kitchen sieve and a lot of splashing. Along with trips to the beach to harvest sea water, all was progressing swimmingly. That was until the babies reached the size of goldfish and started to eat each other's limbs. They are not known for their good eyesight and snap at anything that moves. Luckily, they regenerate their limbs and body parts. As I said, very peculiar creatures, indeed.

I knew that if my tropical holiday was to become a reality, each juvenile would have to be housed in a separate enclosure if they were to maintain all their limbs. No one was going to want to pay \$50 for a legless

axolotl. Back to the aquarium shop, where I had already spent a small fortune, to purchase a third tank and more aerating filters.

My kitchen bench was beginning to look like something from a sci-fi movie, alien life forms sitting in ice-cube trays and takeaway containers. My family was getting used to making their breakfast in a small corner of the bench.

## MY KITCHEN BENCH LOOKED LIKE SOMETHING FROM A SCI-FI MOVIE

When the juveniles reached the age where I could advertise them for sale in the local pets page, it seemed that every axolotl breeder was doing the same. A price war ensued.

One for \$30, two for \$40. Buy one axolotl, get one free!

I sold some, probably enough to break even. The likes of the people who answered my ads are a whole other story; it turns out axolotl owners are slightly quirky. Who would have guessed?

Hahn was rehoused, and Muesli now has one of her daughters as a companion. The skills I learnt from this experience are countless but the lesson is: don't count your axolotls before they hatch. R

---

**Do you have a tale to tell? We'll pay cash for any original and unpublished story we print. See page 8 for details on how to contribute.**

Safi.



## Most Trusted Female Skincare, Perfected for Asian Skin

World-class formulation  
developed by the largest  
Halal R&D facility in the world,  
Safi Research Institute.



Safi research institute

Science. Beauty. Natural

Shop Now



## SMART ANIMALS

*Provide both companionship and amusement*



### **Polly And Pussuss**

KERRIL COOPER

When my friend Renee arrived at my door one afternoon with a Huntaway border-collie rescue dog, the deal was that the dog could stay for a trial period of two weeks to see how she got on with my much-loved, but unwell, elderly ginger tomcat, Pussuss.

As the dog walked into the room, she turned her head away from the cat as if to say, “What cat?”

The cat, who in his younger days got on very well with dogs, totally ignored her, too. Within the day, I knew that this was the dog for us

and we renamed her Polly.

Ground rules were established and we all soon settled into a routine. Pussuss had complete freedom to move wherever he wished throughout the house whereas Polly had restrictions.

My bedroom was the cat’s sanctuary. Polly was not allowed into the room under any circumstances. She would often stand at the doorway when I was in

---

**You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 8 for details on how to contribute.**

my bedroom but never put a paw across the threshold. She seemed to instinctively know that the cat was unwell and let him be. This was a shame as both cat and dog were very social animals and under other circumstances would have been great friends.

However, eight months later, the sad time came when Pusspuss passed away. That evening, after Polly had been outside, she walked in the house, stopped, and looked at me long and hard.

Then, for the first time since her arrival, she turned right, went into my bedroom and got onto the bed. She gave me a knowing look that said *this is my place now*, and settled down to sleep. Needless to say, it has been her spot ever since.

## The Barking Cockatoo

WARREN FREHSE

During a recent day trip from Melbourne to Warragul in regional Victoria, I was amused to see an elderly lady in a park pushing a walker with a carefully balanced cockatoo riding on its front bar. The lady, wearing a large sun hat and sunglasses, appeared to be taking an afternoon walk in the sunshine.

I walked up to her and enquired whether taking the cockatoo out for a ride was a regular trip. She replied enthusiastically, "Oh yes!" and went on to tell me that her cockatoo was 35 years old and that



they both enjoyed their daily stroll. The way she spoke made me think to myself that this cockatoo was not only her pet but also a friend.

When I eagerly enquired whether the cockatoo could talk, she looked proudly at her bird who suddenly let out a loud barking sound. I couldn't believe what I'd just heard.

"I hope you don't mind me saying," I told her, "but this sounds awfully like a dog!"

She explained that the cockatoo lived alongside her pet dog for many years and imitated him wonderfully.

I must admit, I have never heard a bird bark so loudly or as precisely as a dog.

**PETS**

# Caring For Goldfish

*Avoid these five common mistakes new owners make*

BY *Dr Katrina Warren*



**Our regular pet columnist, Dr Katrina Warren, is an established and trusted animal expert.**

**THE HUMBLE GOLDFISH** can make a lovely pet for children and adults alike, with over 100 varieties in different colours, shapes and sizes. While goldfish are relatively easy to keep, there are a few common errors that often result in their early death. Veterinarian Dr Katrina Warren shares her top tips.

**KEEPING GOLDFISH IN A BOWL** It is a mistake to put goldfish in a small 'goldfish bowl'. You'll be wondering why they die within a couple of months. These bowls do not have a big enough surface area for the fish to obtain adequate oxygen. As goldfish require large amounts of oxygen, the best way to provide this is to have a large, rectangular tank fitted with a filter. This will aerate the water and help to keep the tank clean.

Goldfish grow quickly when they have good living conditions, and they need space to swim. They also produce a lot of waste and if the tank is too small, it can become harmful.

**NEW TANK SYNDROME** This occurs when people set up a new tank and pop the fish in without settling the tank to provide the right conditions. In a brand-new tank, there are not enough beneficial bacteria to eliminate toxins, so your tank should be left for a few weeks before adding your fish. During this time, you should

do what is called ‘cycling the tank,’ which involves using a kit available from aquatic shops to test ammonia and nitrate daily before adding any fish. This allows time for bacteria to establish to break down waste and for the level of nitrite and ammonia to drop to a safe level. Fish should be added gradually so the tank can adjust to the new additions.

**OVERFEEDING** This will pollute your tank as excess food will rot, producing ammonium which is toxic to goldfish. Goldfish should be fed twice a day and only given the amount of food that can be eaten in two to three minutes. Supervise children at feeding time as they will often be too generous with the amount of food. To adequately provide for their nutritional needs, goldfish should be fed a good-quality commercial food. Avoid cheap fish food that has a lot of fillers. You can also supplement a goldfish mix with brine shrimp.



**Colourful goldfish need a clean tank and ample room to swim around**

**OVERCROWDING** Goldfish are social and should be kept in groups, but they produce a lot of waste and need a lot of space otherwise the water will quickly become polluted. The bigger the tank, the better.

**MIXING FISH** Goldfish are a cold-water fish, so they can’t live with tropical freshwater fish. Other fish often target their large fins, and goldfish may eat fish that are smaller than their mouth size. There are not many fish varieties compatible with goldfish, so it’s easiest to have a goldfish-only tank. If you do keep mixed varieties of fish, be sure to consult with an aquarium expert to ensure you find suitable tank mates.

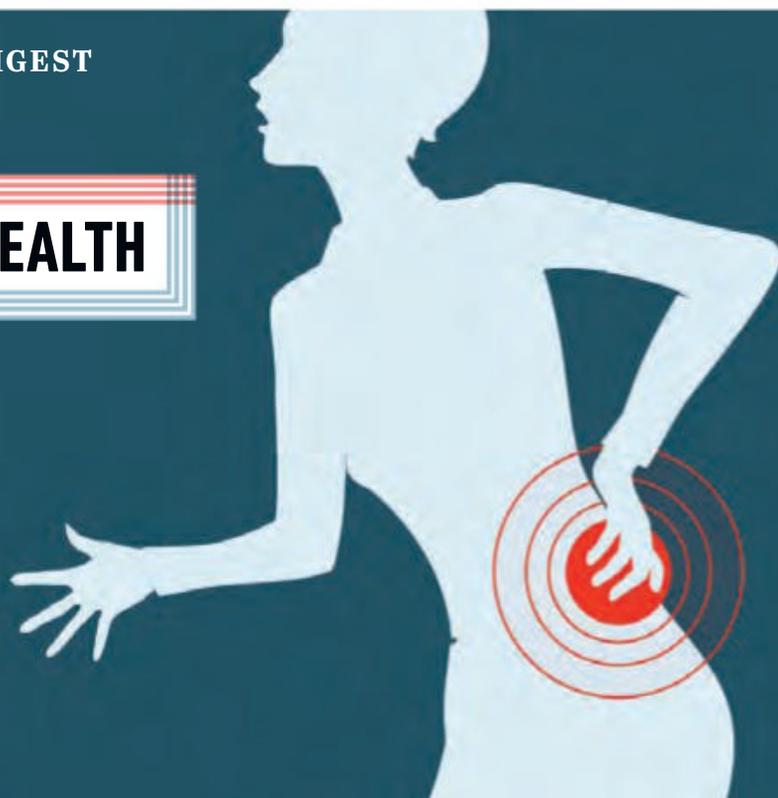
## HOW LONG IS A GOLDFISH’S MEMORY?

There’s a common myth that goldfish only have a three-second memory, but scientists have proven this is not true.

There are many studies that show goldfish can remember things for weeks, and sometimes months. As an example,

when goldfish are fed on one side of a tank, they will quickly learn to go to that side of the tank around feeding time.

## HEALTH



# ICE Or HEAT For Back Pain?

*Experts weigh in with the best remedies for back pain, including using ice and heat together*

BY Denise Mann

Exactly when, how, and for how long you should use ice or heat for lower back pain is a source of debate, and there aren't always hard-and-fast rules. Back pain strikes up to 80 per cent of people at one point in their lives. Lower back pain can be short-lived – lasting four to 12 weeks – or chronic, in which it persists for 12 weeks or more.

There is a laundry list of potential causes of lower back pain: advancing age, underlying disease, overdoing it, a big or minor slip. And it can affect your vertebrae, joints, muscles, tendons, ligaments and discs. The cause of your lower back pain and the structures damaged both play a role in whether you'll choose ice or heat during recovery.

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

**COLD THERAPY** In general, apply cold to your back when the pain is acute, such as straight after an injury. This will help for the two days following your injury, according to the US Arthritis Foundation. Cold can also be helpful if your back aches after exercise.

“Lowering the body temperature will help constrict the blood vessels, reduce swelling, decrease inflammation, and cause a numbing effect,” says Dr Gbolahan Okubadejo, a spinal and orthopaedic surgeon.

You can use a ready-made ice pack or make your own. Apply cold for about 10 to 20 minutes a few times throughout the day. Be sure to protect your skin by wrapping the ice pack in a towel, don't leave the pack on too long, and check your skin to make sure it's not numb.

**COLD, THEN HEAT** Sometimes, cold alone isn't enough. In those cases, switch to heat once the inflammation has cooled, about two days later. “Use cold first and then apply heat for acute back pain,” says Dr Okubadejo. “Do this for 48 hours after injury to relax muscles and soothe painful areas.” The warmth stimulates blood circulation in your lower back, which in turn brings healing nutrients to the injured tissues, says Dr Okubadejo. He suggests using heat therapy intermittently for several hours or days to improve tissue healing.

Use a heating pad or a hot water

bottle and mind the temperature to avoid burns. Apply heat in short bursts – no more than 20 to 30 minutes at a time.

**HEAT THERAPY** When your back pain is chronic, heat therapy may be best. “Try continuous, low-level heat for chronic back pain,” Dr Okubadejo says. He suggests wrapping a heated blanket around your lower back. A heating pad is a good option for certain symptoms of back pain, such as the painful muscle spasms that can occur with some sprains and strains.

Muscle spasms cause your muscles to involuntarily tense up, says Dr Jordan D. Metzl, a sports medicine specialist. Heat can loosen up the muscles, he says.

**WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR** If your back pain persists, or gets worse, see a doctor to find out what is going on, Dr Metzl says. Your doctor can run tests to find the cause of your back pain and suggest additional treatments such as prescription or over-the-counter medications, steroid injections or physiotherapy.

Ice and heat aren't usually meant to be stand-alone remedies for lower back pain, adds physiotherapist Dr Jake Magel. Other treatments may be needed to relieve your pain. “Generally, it's an active approach with the goal of getting you back to your regular activities as soon as possible,” he says.



# New Hope For IBS Sufferers

BY *Julie Cook*

## **THESE THREE NEW APPROACHES**

promise relief for the between five to ten percent of people living in South East Asia who have experienced irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). A common disorder that affects the large intestine, IBS symptoms include abdominal pain, diarrhoea or constipation.

**TRY AN ANTIBIOTIC** In a recent study, 40 per cent of participants who took a two-week course of the common antibiotic rifaximin, had symptoms such as diarrhoea and stomach pain disappear, with relief lasting more than two months. For some sufferers, the benefits may persist far longer, says research leader Dr Mark Pimentel. "It's the most comprehensive treatment we've seen in drug trials."

## **CHECK FOR OTHER EXPLANATIONS**

Nearly two thirds of people diagnosed with IBS have had gallbladder-related problems, gastroenterologist Dr Saad F. Habba discovered last year. Others had lactose intolerance or colon inflammation. All three conditions, whose symptoms mimic those of IBS, can be treated.

"If your doctor says you have IBS," advises Dr Habba, "push them to investigate further."

**USE YOUR BRAIN** Simple strategies like muscle relaxation and controlling worry significantly improved symptoms in 80 per cent of patients in a trial conducted by Dr Jeffrey M. Lackner. "By changing how we respond to stress," says Dr Lackner, "we can affect IBS symptoms."

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

# Mindful Eating and Living

[www.signaturemarket.co](http://www.signaturemarket.co)

Living well begins with eating well – That’s exactly what Signature Market brings to the table of their over 300,000 strong customer base all over Malaysia. Co-founded by Edwin Wang and John Cheng in 2014, they strive to make healthy living affordable and accessible for everyone, wherever you may be. Shop with peace of mind from a diverse selection of over 300 natural and organic products that keep your physical, mental and spiritual well-being in check.

healthier



With quality being of top priority to this wellness brand, they don't compromise on the use of only natural ingredients, staying away from any preservatives. This means a shorter shelf life of their food products but it also ensures maximum freshness. On top of that, their products are freshly baked upon order using a brilliant slow-baking technology that retains the nutrients in each product. Here's to a happier and healthier you!



fresh

W  
E  
L  
L  
N  
E  
S  
S

[www.signaturemarket.co](http://www.signaturemarket.co)



News From the

## WORLD OF MEDICINE

### THE BENEFITS OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

For many people, owning a dog or cat can significantly alleviate depression, anxiety and loneliness, according to research into the benefits of emotional support animals. Although these animals aren't trained to do anything that regular pets don't do, they hold therapeutic significance for people who struggle with their psychological health. In a recent University of Toledo study, patients identified at risk of social isolation who adopted a dog or cat from a shelter reported faring better, on average, 12 months later. The research could lead the way towards new thinking about how emotional support animals can assist in managing mental health issues.

### OVER-CAFFEINATING COULD RAISE GLAUCOMA RISK

If you have a family history of glaucoma, a leading cause of vision loss, then you may want to go easy on the caffeinated drinks, suggests a

study published in *Ophthalmology*. Among subjects with a strong genetic risk for glaucoma, a habit of drinking more than three cups of coffee per day (or the equivalent amount of caffeine from other sources such as tea or energy drinks) raised the likelihood of developing the eye disease.

### PREDIABETES MAY AFFECT DEMENTIA RISK

High blood sugar is associated with vascular dementia (VD), which is caused by subpar blood flow to the brain. Research suggests that this applies not only to diabetes, but also to prediabetes - which raised the risk of VD by 54 per cent.

### RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS AND MIGRAINE LINK

Two large Korean studies have concluded that these two conditions raise your risk of the other. Both are treatable with medications, so if you have rheumatoid arthritis and start noticing signs of migraine, or vice versa, visit your doctor.



**Holistic Way®**  
Health in Harmony...

Yeo Yann Yann  
Golden Horse Award Best Actress  
Holistic Way Ambassador

**"Holistic Way keeps me  
healthy - inside out."**

Your Trusted Multi-Award  
Winning Brand



Influential Brands®  
**TOP BRAND**  
2021 & 2022  
HEALTH SUPPLEMENT



9863 2188

6425 4100

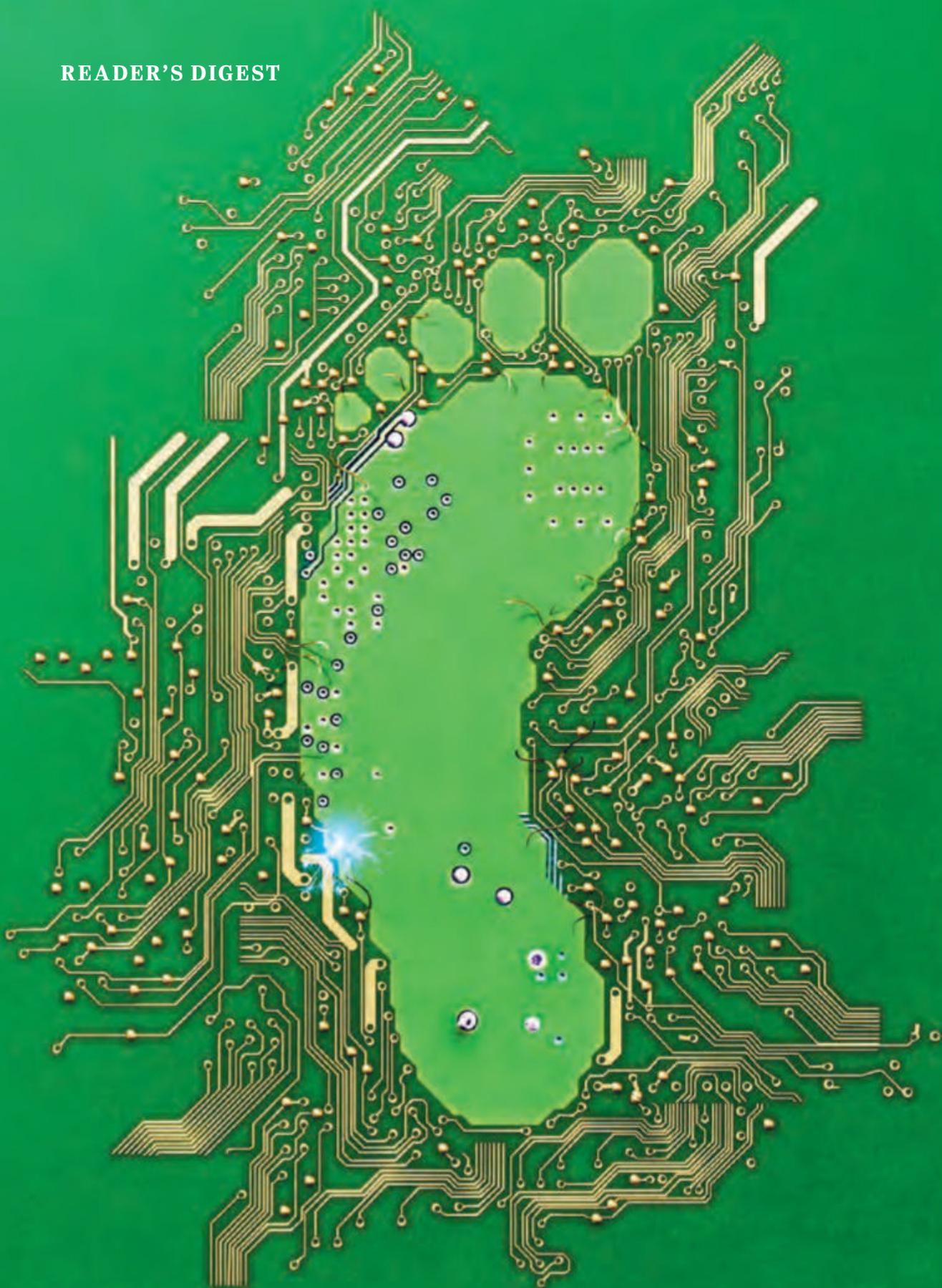
[www.holisticway.com.sg](http://www.holisticway.com.sg)

holistic way | holisticwaysg | 全益康



Available at:  
Guardian Health & Beauty, Unity, Watson's Personal Care Store, Airport  
Pharmacy, BHG, Metro, Mustafa Centre, Nature's Farm, (Y) and Welcia-BHG







TECHNOLOGY



# DELETE YOUR INTERNET FOOTPRINT

*While having an online presence is useful, it can become equally dangerous, especially if you've got personal data or passwords stored online*



BY *Chris Hoffman*

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Justin Metz*



As the saying goes: the internet is forever. Once you've put something online – a credit card number, a silly photo, an angry comment on social media – it can come back to haunt you.

But what are the risks, really? “There are two worst-case scenarios,” says Thorin Klosowski, an expert in privacy and security. “The most obvious one is a security issue. Everyone’s email address and basic details are leaked somewhere online, and if you reuse passwords, that means a nefarious person will have an easier time getting into your accounts.”

Identity theft is a tangible threat in South East Asia. Seven per cent of Malaysians said they know their identity has been stolen and used by a fraudster to open an account, while a further 12% believe it is likely to have happened, according to a Ficos survey.

“The second worst-case scenario is more primal: embarrassment,” says Klosowski. “Many of us store our most intimate thoughts in a digital notes app, draft emails we never send, or pour out our private feelings into a direct message to a friend. This is the type of thing that can get leaked online, either through a provider being negligent or through your own misunderstanding of the often-confusing privacy settings in

the software and services.” With these sorts of slip-ups, the stakes can be high.

But you’re not powerless. You can stand up for your privacy and begin to take control, starting right now. Here’s how:

## 1 Mix Up Your Passwords

If you always use the same password, no matter how carefully crafted it may be, it’s probably already out there. While large-scale breaches of public records are big news, we don’t always hear about the smaller-scale breaches, which are frequent. They occur when criminals purchase leaked databases of usernames (usually email addresses) and passwords on dark web marketplaces. Then the crooks try these combinations, hoping to access people’s other accounts. So use a strong, unique password for every account.

## 2 Use a Password Manager

How can you possibly remember all your passwords? You can’t. But if you enlist the help of a password manager, you need to remember just one password – for it. For a small annual fee, services such as 1Password or Dashlane will manage the rest, creating strong passwords and automatically filling them in for you. Bitwarden is a good free option. Or use the free manager built into your browser or phone.



### **3 Find Out Whether Criminals Have Your Information**

Visit [haveibeenpwned.com](https://haveibeenpwned.com) to see whether your email address, phone number or passwords are included in any leaked databases available to criminals. Be aware, however, that the leaks on HaveIBeenPwned are just the tip of the iceberg of what criminals have access to.

### **4 Delete Old Accounts**

You probably have a lot of online accounts you no longer use, and they might contain personal information. Delete them. Don't leave details you

## **Delete Your Internet Footprint**

may have shared sitting around so they can be discovered by criminals – or misused if an unscrupulous company one day buys and abuses your data.

To learn how to delete an account, perform a web search such as “delete old email account.” You can also visit [justdelete.me](https://justdelete.me), which has instructions for deleting different types of accounts. Or go right to the company; check its online support pages or contact customer support and ask for account deletion.

### **5 Download Your Data**

Deleting an account doesn't mean you lose everything you had on that particular site. For example, you can easily download all the data associated with a Facebook or Google account and do whatever you want with it. Just be sure to keep backup copies of everything you consider important.

### **6 Find Old Accounts**

You probably don't remember every online account you've ever created. To find old accounts you might want to delete, search your emails for terms like ‘welcome’, ‘verify’, ‘your account’ and ‘free trial’.

### **7 Delete Old Emails, Too**

Do you really need to keep old emails forever? They contain a lot of personal details that could be useful to identity thieves.

## 8 Search Your Usernames Online

Head to a search engine and search for your name, as well as any user names you've gone by online. The results show you where your name appears on the public web. In all likelihood, your social media profiles will pop up in the results. That means they will also show up for other people who search for you.

## 9 Hide Social Media Profiles From Search Engines

Want to wipe these personal details from the internet? You can make your social media accounts vanish from search results by visiting each site that came up in your initial search and changing the privacy settings. Each site works a bit differently; for guidance, search for 'privacy settings' and the name of each site. While you're cleaning things up, you can also remove comments you've posted, delete accounts, or ask websites to take down your personal information.

## 10 Control Social Media Privacy Settings

You may also want to restrict who can see what you post on social media sites. For

example, on Facebook you can limit who can find you, who can see what you post, and what Facebook shares about you with other companies. A good guide to Facebook privacy settings can be found at [consumerreports.org/privacy/facebook-privacy-settings/](https://consumerreports.org/privacy/facebook-privacy-settings/).

## 11 Delete Old Social Media Posts

Facebook was created back in 2004. By now, the university students who shared their party photos on the social media service in its infancy are in their mid-30s. Fortunately, Facebook



has a Manage Activity tool that lets you delete or archive posts older than a certain date. Instagram allows you to delete or archive individual posts. Only you can see the things you've archived on either platform.

Twitter has no built-in way to delete old tweets, but third-party tools such as TweetDelete can delete them, either automatically or based on specific criteria that you set. The tool can even remove your likes on other users' tweets.

### 12 Opt Out of People Finder Websites

Beyond social media, countless 'people finder' websites host databases full of personal information. This includes names, addresses, ages, phone numbers and even court records. You can opt out, but you'll have to do it from each service separately. Be warned that companies may opt you back in, so you may have to opt out more than once.

Services such as PrivacyDuck and DeleteMe promise to do the work for you, but they cost hundreds of dollars a year and don't cover every one of the people finders, so they may not be worth it unless you are a public figure or are actively being harassed.

### 13 Search with DuckDuckGo

To limit the data gathered on you in the future, use the more private search engine DuckDuckGo. Make

it your default search engine on all your devices by going to [duckduckgo.com](http://duckduckgo.com) and clicking the 'add' button. Unlike Google and other big-name search engines, DuckDuckGo doesn't track your searches and link them to you, so it won't show you targeted ads or personalised search results, either.

### 14 Tell Google to Stop Tracking You

Even if you want to keep using Google, you can activate more privacy settings to keep the internet giant from tracking all your web searches - which it does automatically if you're logged in to Google (while using Gmail, for example). Even YouTube, which is owned by Google, tracks a history of the videos you watch. But this tracking is optional. You can tell Google to stop collecting your data in the future and to delete whatever it has already collected.

To pause collection and delete previously collected data, visit the My Google Activity page. To get there, click on your Google profile photo, go to Manage Your Google Account, and, in the left navigation panel, click Data & Privacy. Then, under History Settings, click My Activity and turn off any activity you don't want to save.

### 15 Limit Who Has Your Location History

Something else Google may track about you, unless you tell it not to, is your location history. Depending on

your settings, Google may store this information forever, building a database of your movements.

Google can gather this information via smartphones with its Android operating system or if you install the Google Maps app on an iPhone and give it location access.

Here's how to stop it: on the My Google Activity page, select the option to pause collection of your location and delete your collected location data or tell Google to automatically delete it.

## 16 Configure Your Browser for Privacy

Browser cookies are small pieces of information that websites can store in your browser to track you. Chrome is moving away from cookies and toward a technology called 'FLoC', which will essentially make the browser track your search history and report your general interests to websites so they can feed you ads based on your perceived interests.

There are ways to limit this tracking, with ad blockers and browser extensions that protect privacy. But you can be tracked in other ways, including by your IP address, a number that identifies your internet connection online. (Every device on your home network likely shares the same IP address.)

One way to conceal your IP address is with a VPN, or virtual private network.

## 17 Use a VPN

A VPN creates a secure tunnel to the internet, acting as a conduit between you and your internet service provider by encrypting your connection. With a VPN, your internet service provider can't see what websites you're accessing, and the websites you're accessing can see only the VPN's IP address, not your IP address.

If you've ever worked remotely, you've likely used your company's VPN. The privacy that VPNs provide is attractive.

When choosing a VPN, do some research, look up independent reviews, and be sure to pick a trustworthy one. Operating a VPN costs money, so many free VPNs are untrustworthy and may even sell your data to make a profit. A good VPN generally charges a subscription fee, often just a few dollars a month.

## 18 Go Incognito

A VPN isn't a magic bullet. It's just one piece of the puzzle. Let's say you connect to a VPN, visit Google's website, and sign in to your Google account. Now Google knows who you are. Even if you don't sign in, websites can check your browser cookies to link your VPN activity to your previous browsing.

Use your browser's private-browsing mode to better protect your privacy while using a VPN. To go incognito on Chrome, click on the File menu in the upper left corner and

select New Incognito Window. On Firefox, choose New Private Window.

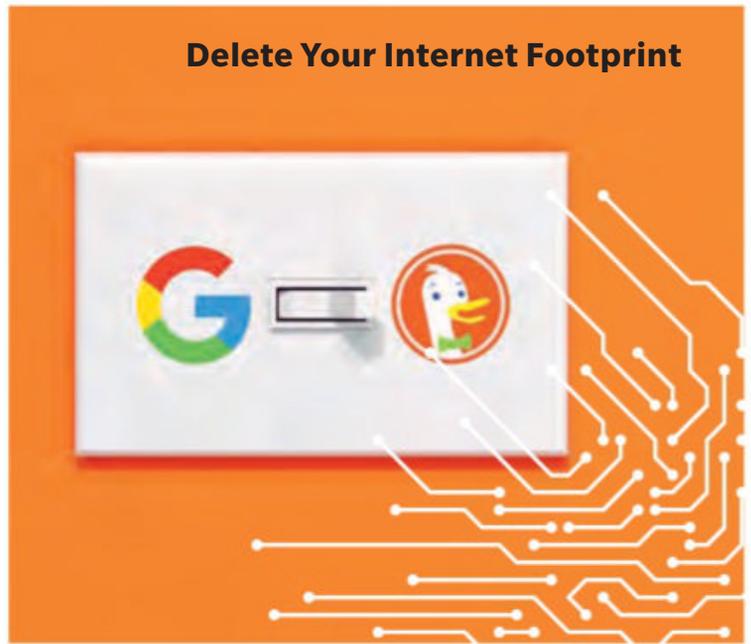
## 19 Switch to Privacy-Friendly Apps

Just like websites, the apps on our phones collect data about us. Until recently, finding out how various app companies use that data meant reading long and tedious privacy policies. But now it's getting a bit easier thanks to new features such as privacy labels in Apple's App Store, which tell you what type of data an app collects before you install it. There are usually multiple apps for the same purposes, so choose those that collect less data.

## 20 Seek Out End-to-End Encryption

For improved privacy online, seek out services that use end-to-end encryption. With this type of security, your data can be seen only by you and the people you communicate with. Apple's iMessages use it, for example (iMessages are text messages between two Apple users, indicated by blue chat bubbles – as opposed to green text messages, which indicate a non-Apple user). Sites that employ end-to-end encryption often say so in order to advertise their enhanced security. One communication app

## Delete Your Internet Footprint



that uses end-to-end encryption is Signal. Owned by a non-profit and popular with activists worldwide, it works on both Apple and Android products.

## 21 Take Advantage of Apple's New Privacy Features

Apple has been a leader in introducing privacy features, and recently the company added even more with the newest operating systems, namely iOS 15, iPadOS 15 and macOS Monterey. Most of these features require iCloud+, an additional paid iCloud storage plan. The included iCloud Private Relay service functions similarly to a VPN: it routes your Safari browsing traffic through an anonymous server. Websites will know the general region you're in but won't see your unique IP address as you browse.

When signing up for accounts or newsletters online, the Hide My

## READER'S DIGEST

Email feature in iCloud+ lets you create randomised unique email addresses that forward emails to your real email account. Senders can't see your real email address, and you can deactivate a randomised email address at any time – perfect for avoiding spam.

### 22 Protect Your Mail

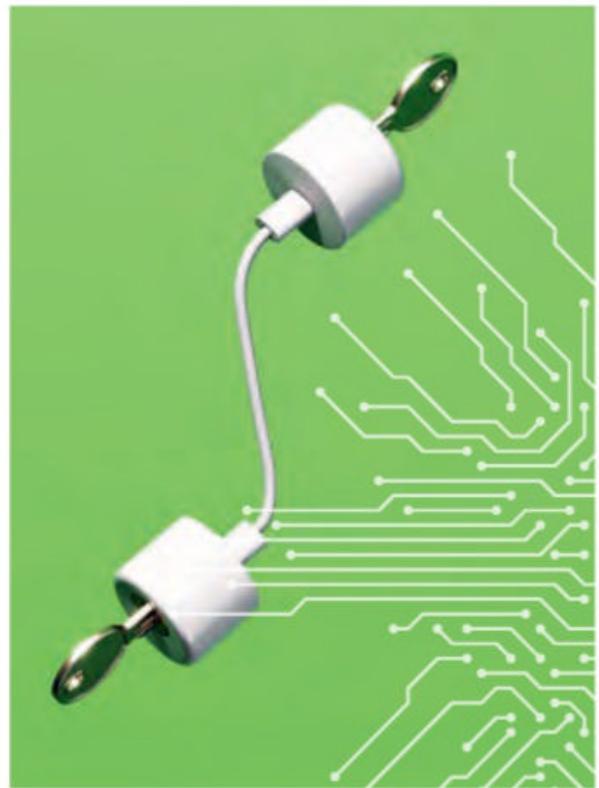
Even if you don't pay for iCloud+, be sure to look for the Mail Privacy Protection feature that pops up the first time you open Apple's Mail app. It will block tracking pixels, preventing people (and advertisers) from seeing when you opened their emails. When you load images in emails, Apple will hide your address from trackers.

### 23 Remove Saved Payment Details

Don't save your payment details on online shopping sites. True, this makes it easier for you to buy the things you want, but it also makes it easier for criminals to gain access to your accounts and buy things as you. As a compromise, you may want to keep a credit card stored on sites you shop often but not on sites you use only occasionally.

### 24 Be Careful About Sharing Info

Think twice before sharing any personal details anywhere online. At the time, sharing a tidbit may seem



inconsequential, but remember, personal details such as your birthday or the city you were born in are just the sorts of facts you should guard carefully, as they are often the answers to your security questions.

Worse yet, should a criminal get hold of your birthdate and the city you were born in, suddenly it becomes easier to guess your other private identity details.

Concerns about online privacy aren't just concerns about privacy on the internet, they're about privacy in every facet of our lives. All of this is a lot to fully comprehend. But knowing the scale of the problem and taking these very doable steps is a good start. **R**

*Writer Chris Hoffman is the editor of HowtoGeek.com.*

ONE PERSON  
**\$140**  
 PER NIGHT

# Let's GO. AUCKLAND

EXPLORE **ALL YOU POSSIBLY CAN.**  
 TRAVEL DEAL

TWO PERSONS  
**\$155**  
 PER NIGHT

FAMILY PACKAGE  
**\$175**  
 PER NIGHT

Travel Period: By 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022



**FREE**

*Family Fun*  
 (Max 2 Adults & 2 children)

- PLATED Breakfast • Unlimited WIFI access •
- Late check out at 12 Noon •
- ONE Free parking except Friday and Saturday @ \$30 per car per night (Subject to availability) •



**CALL: 09-9250777**  
[www.aucklandcityhotel.co.nz](http://www.aucklandcityhotel.co.nz)

T&C apply - Subject to availability and black-out dates apply

# Let's GO. PAIHIA

EXPLORE **ALL YOU POSSIBLY CAN.**

Travel Period: By 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022



**TWO PERSONS \$140 PER NIGHT**  
 ( Sunday to Thursday )  
 On STANDARD ROOM

**TWO PERSONS \$155 PER NIGHT**  
 ( Friday to Saturday )

**FAMILY DEAL \$175 PER NIGHT**  
 On PREMIER ROOM  
 Ideal for 2 adults, 2 children

**FREE**

- PLATED BREAKFAST -
- ONE CAR PARKING
- UNLIMITED WIFI ACCESS
- LATE CHECK OUT @ 12 NOON -

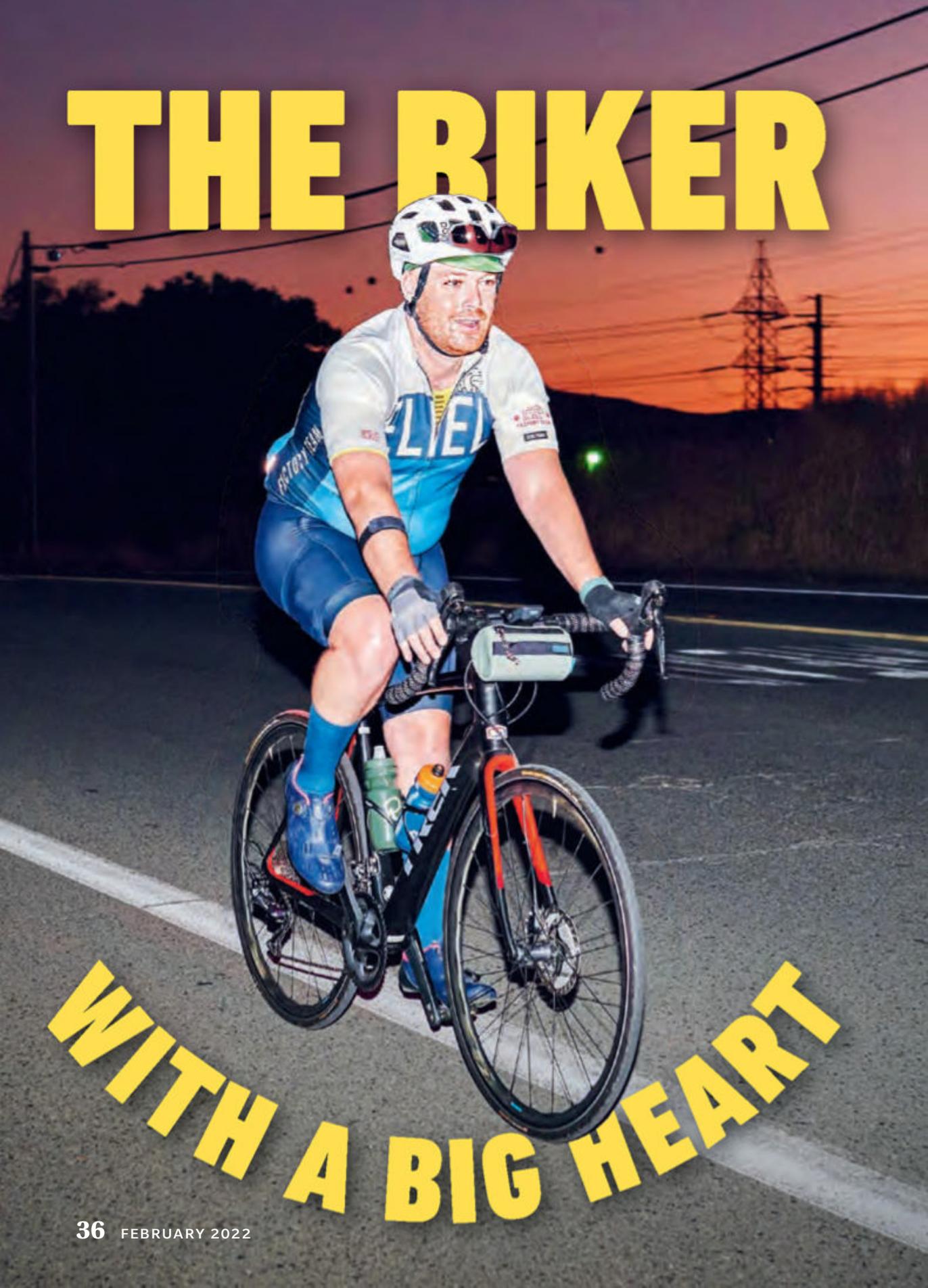
T&C apply - Subject to availability and black-out dates apply



DIRECT BOOKING ONLY:  
**CALL: 0800-744-442**  
[www.paihiapacific.co.nz](http://www.paihiapacific.co.nz)



# THE BIKER

A male cyclist is shown in profile, riding a road bike on a paved road. He is wearing a white and blue cycling jersey with 'LIVE' printed on the front, blue cycling shorts, a white helmet with green accents, and blue cycling shoes. The background features a sunset sky with orange and purple hues, a power line tower, and a dark treeline. The overall scene is captured in a cinematic style with dramatic lighting.

WITH A BIG HEART

INSPIRATION

# Her son's organ donation saved his life. So he rode 2300 kilometres to meet her

BY *A. C. Shilton* FROM **BICYCLING MAGAZINE**



**Mike Cohen, left,  
with Christine and  
David Cheers**

# IT TOOK SEVERAL

drafts to get the letters right. To distil her boy's life into the two dimensionalities of words on paper. To paint a picture of someone full of energy and love, so that the beneficiaries of his death, the recipients of his organs, would know just how lucky they were.

Three weeks earlier, the thread that held Christine Cheers's world together had been ripped away. On February 21, 2018, someone on the other end of the phone had said the words that bring parents to their knees: "There's been an accident."

Her son, James Mazzuchelli, 32, a flight surgeon with the US Navy, had been injured in a helicopter training mission at a military base in California. If she wanted to see him while he was still alive, she needed to get on the next flight from Florida.

James was still breathing when Christine and James's stepfather, David Cheers, arrived at Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla, California, the next morning. Machines were keeping him alive, and the doctors told Christine that what she was seeing was likely his future – that her scuba-diving, world-travelling, overachiever of a son was never going to wake up. He would never breathe on his own. He would never smile at her again.

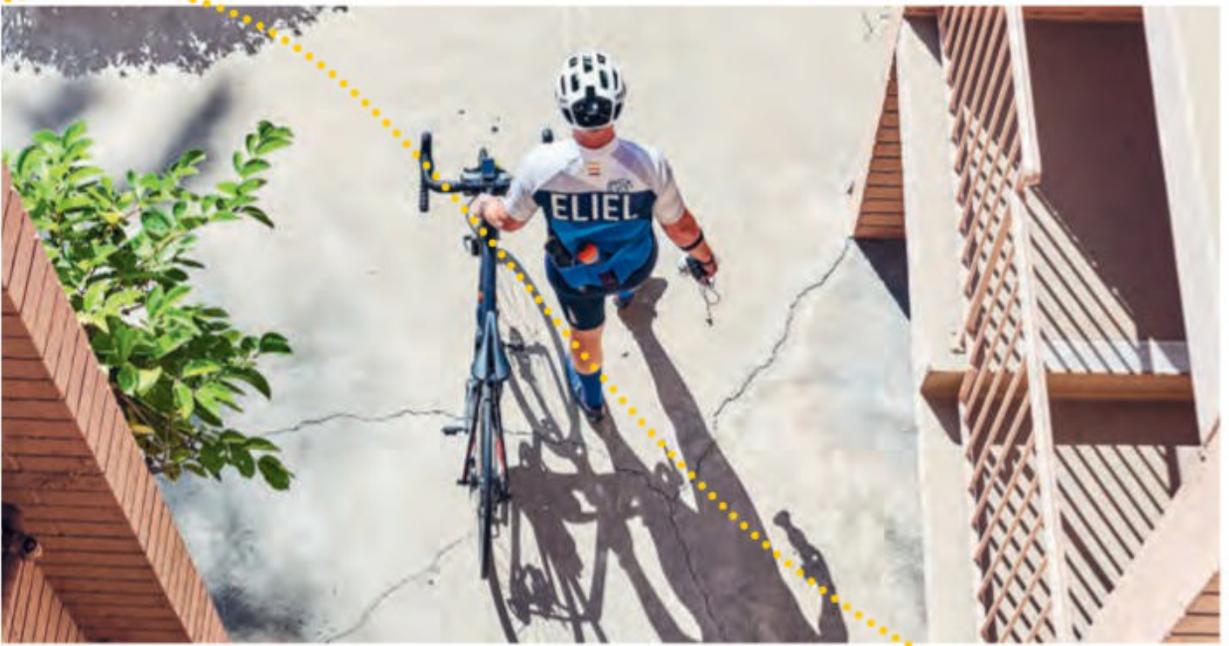
It was time for Christine to honour the spirit of a man who had switched from studying commerce engineering to medicine because he wanted to help people. It was time to make her very worst day a stranger's best one.

Christine told the hospital to begin the organ donation process. These few words, as hard as they were to say, would soon ripple outwards, allowing a man to return to work, a military veteran to regain his health, and an ailing cyclist to get back on his bike.

**MIKE COHEN WAS JUST 18** when he'd been diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukaemia in 2004. Doctors warned him that the treatment protocol could cause lasting damage to his heart. At the time, surviving cancer seemed like the more pressing concern. He took his treatment seriously, doing the radiation and chemotherapy and even moving from New York to San Diego, California, for his last year of chemo because his oncologist felt that mild weather would be easier on his body. The risk had paid off – two years after his diagnosis, he was cancer-free. As soon as he was healthy enough, he was hiking or riding his bike.

To celebrate his sixth year without

PHOTOS: (PREVIOUS SPREAD, LEFT): JOHN FRANCIS PETERS; (RIGHT) CHARLOTTE KESL



**Mike setting out on his cross-country journey**

cancer, Mike decided to ride his bike cross-country to New York. From the start, it was a grind.

What he didn't know during that ride was that his heart was beginning to fail, and in the years that followed, his health continued to deteriorate. Even on days he didn't ride his bike, he always felt tired. Then one evening in 2017, he started having chest pains.

His brother, Dan, rushed him to hospital, where doctors discovered a clot the size of a golf ball lodged in his left ventricle. They tried blood thinners, but the clot wouldn't budge. Soon hospital staff were preparing him for open-heart surgery to install a left ventricular assist device (LVAD), which would do the pumping that his heart couldn't accomplish.

The implanted LVAD required constant access to an electrical outlet, which meant Mike was literally tethered to the indoors by a cord that

ran out of his abdomen. Even with an emergency backup battery pack, "You couldn't go out in public because you couldn't trust that someone wouldn't knock into the cord," he says. His old active life seemed like a thousand lifetimes ago.

Doctors had told him the device could work for eight months or eight years. Six months later, though, Mike was in hospital with another clot. His heart was failing. He would need a new one.

Heart transplant priority lists are tricky. You have to be sick enough to truly need the new organ but not so sick you can't withstand the lengthy surgery or the immunosuppressant drugs heart transplant patients take to sustain the new organ. Mike fit those parameters and was at the top of the list.

Now he just had to hope he survived the wait for a new heart.

## READER'S DIGEST

On the plus side, Mike's blood work showed the clot had dissolved enough that he could safely go home. As he packed his bag on February 24, a nurse walked in. "I have good news and bad news," she said. Mike asked for the bad news first. "You're not going home today," she said. The good news? They'd found him a heart.

The next morning, Mike woke up in a hospital bed with a new heart beating in his chest. He took his first steps around his hospital room just five days later. "The old heart was like a two. With the LVAD my energy was like a five," he says. "This heart is a ten."

After two weeks, he began cardiac rehabilitation, where he started with slow walking on a treadmill. Across the room he spied a stationary bike. He knew he wasn't ready yet, but it became a beacon. And two weeks later, with his doctor's permission, he threw a leg over and soft-pedaled.

**CHRISTINE CHEERS** wasn't leaving the hospital until every last one of her son's organs left the building.

She and David watched hospital employees carry coolers from the operating room: his kidneys, pancreas and liver went to various recipients. His corneas went to an eye bank; tissue and bone went to tissue and bone banks. That left his heart.

"That was the one I cared about most," Christine says. As a

serviceman and doctor, James embodied the ideals of bravery and altruism. "James had such an amazing heart," she says.

When a hospital representative delivered the news that James's heart was headed out of the hospital, David and Christine watched as the cooler was taken away.

In the ensuing weeks, Christine descended into a grief so deep that climbing out seemed impossible. Her lone consolation, she knew, would be to find out that James's organs had helped people. That the recipients were doing all right. So she wrote

**James Mazzuchelli loved adventure, serving in the Navy and helping others**



each recipient, at least the four she knew of, a letter.

The part Christine wanted to get right was the one about what organ donation had meant to her son. How glad he would be that his heart and kidneys and tissue were helping others. She didn't want the recipients to feel guilty about the heft and gravitas of the gift they had received.

**TWO MONTHS AFTER HIS SURGERY,** Mike Cohen got a call from the organisation that had coordinated the transplant. There was a letter for him. When he got it, he unfolded the type-written pages and took a breath.

Christine described her son's love for serving his country and the fact that he considered everyone a friend and never judged a soul. He was selfless, she wrote, had a quirky sense of humour, and was a brilliant and gifted doctor. She described his love for scuba diving, snowboarding and motorcycles.

As he read Christine's letter, Mike began to understand just how special his new heart was. Eager to know more about James, Mike googled him. They had a lot in common. They were both athletic and practically the same age. James was 32 when he died, while Mike had turned 33 on the very day of James's accident.

He learned James was buried in Jacksonville, Florida.

Back in rehab, Mike had hatched a plan to take another cross-country

trip as soon as his doctor said it was OK. The end point of that ride now came into focus. He wanted to pay his respects in person. It seemed fitting to make the journey by bike – to show just how transformative his new heart was.

He took his time before responding to Christine: a week to process her letter and another week to compose his own. He wanted to accurately express how grateful he was for James's heart and how determined he was to keep it beating for years to come. He communicated his desire to stay in touch with James's family, if that's what they wanted.

Of the four letters Christine had sent, she got a response to two. The first was from the man who got one of James's kidneys and his pancreas. He thanked her, saying how the organs had changed his life – that he could go back to work and provide for his family. But his letter subtly hinted that the thank-you note was all the contact he wished to have.

Mike's letter was a balm for a wound that Christine felt would never heal. And so began the emails and texts, which proved comforting to her.

**BY SEPTEMBER 2018,** Mike was back riding and building up his mileage. His doctors ultimately gave their blessing for the cross-country ride he was planning for the following year.

He would take the trip slowly so he wouldn't overstress his heart and



**Left: Mike recovering from the operation.**

**Right: Mike and Seton (left) on the road beside the RV that trailed them**

immune system: four hours riding a day max, keeping his heart under 150 beats per minute – doctor’s orders.

Mike recruited his brother Dan – who had become certified as a medical assistant so he could care for Mike after his first open-heart surgery – to tag along in an RV as support. Then Mike asked his friend Seton Edgerton to ride with him. The trip would start from the cardiac ward at the San Diego hospital that treated Mike and finish at James’s grave. They figured it would take just under two months.

They would cycle most of the way and ride in the RV only on the busiest highways. When Mike announced on social media that he was riding to his donor’s grave site, the Cheers family decided they would meet him there.

**IT WAS ONLY DAY ONE** of a 2300-kilometre bike trip and, as with his first cross-country trip, his heart was not

cooperating. Perhaps he hadn’t eaten enough or hydrated properly. Whatever the cause, it didn’t really matter. What mattered was that he had to keep his heart rate under 150 beats per minute, but the steep Cuyamaca Mountains east of San Diego were sending it sky-high.

Seton had rigged Mike’s heart-rate monitor so he could see the readout on the computer attached to his bike’s handlebars.. He watched helplessly as the beats-per-minute shot up. Both men were thinking to themselves: *This is just the first day. Should we even be attempting this?*

But on they rode, across Arizona and then on to Texas. Mike and Seton rolled along in matching blue jerseys, the struggles of that arduous first day behind them as Mike’s heart rate settled down. Still, somewhere in the desert they took a wrong turn and ended up slogging through deep

PHOTOS: (LEFT TO RIGHT) COURTESY MIKE COHEN; JOHN FRANCIS PETERS.

## The Biker With A Big Heart

sand. In the first 1600 kilometres, they got 24 flat tyres between them.

**FROM FLORIDA**, Christine and David followed along on social media, worrying about traffic and dogs and all the things that can befall a rider in the middle of nowhere. The few times that Mike and Seton had to detour onto an interstate highway, Christine winced at the thought of trucks whizzing by those boys – and that heart. If it had been her son, she might have called him and scolded him. But Mike wasn't her son; he was a stranger with her son's heart.

On November 20, 2019, Mike and Seton pedalled the last few kilometres. As Mike got closer to the cemetery, he grew nervous, unsure what kind of emotions may be attached to meeting strangers who had already come to mean so much to him. Christine and David Cheers were at the grave site early. They wanted some time alone with their son before Mike arrived. Then Mike and Seton coasted into the cemetery.

Mike got off his bike, handed it to Seton, and walked straight to Christine. At a loss for words, he managed a quiet "Hi."

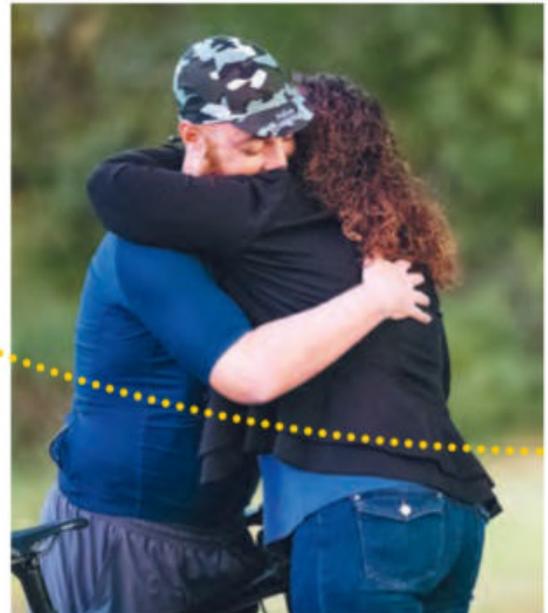
In that moment, Christine felt a deep sense of calm, as if she'd known Mike her entire life. They folded into a deep hug. Then came the tears. They weren't tears of grief. They were tears of relief, from a mother who knew she'd done right by someone

she'd deeply loved, and from a grateful man who'd been accepted by the family whose worst day was his best.

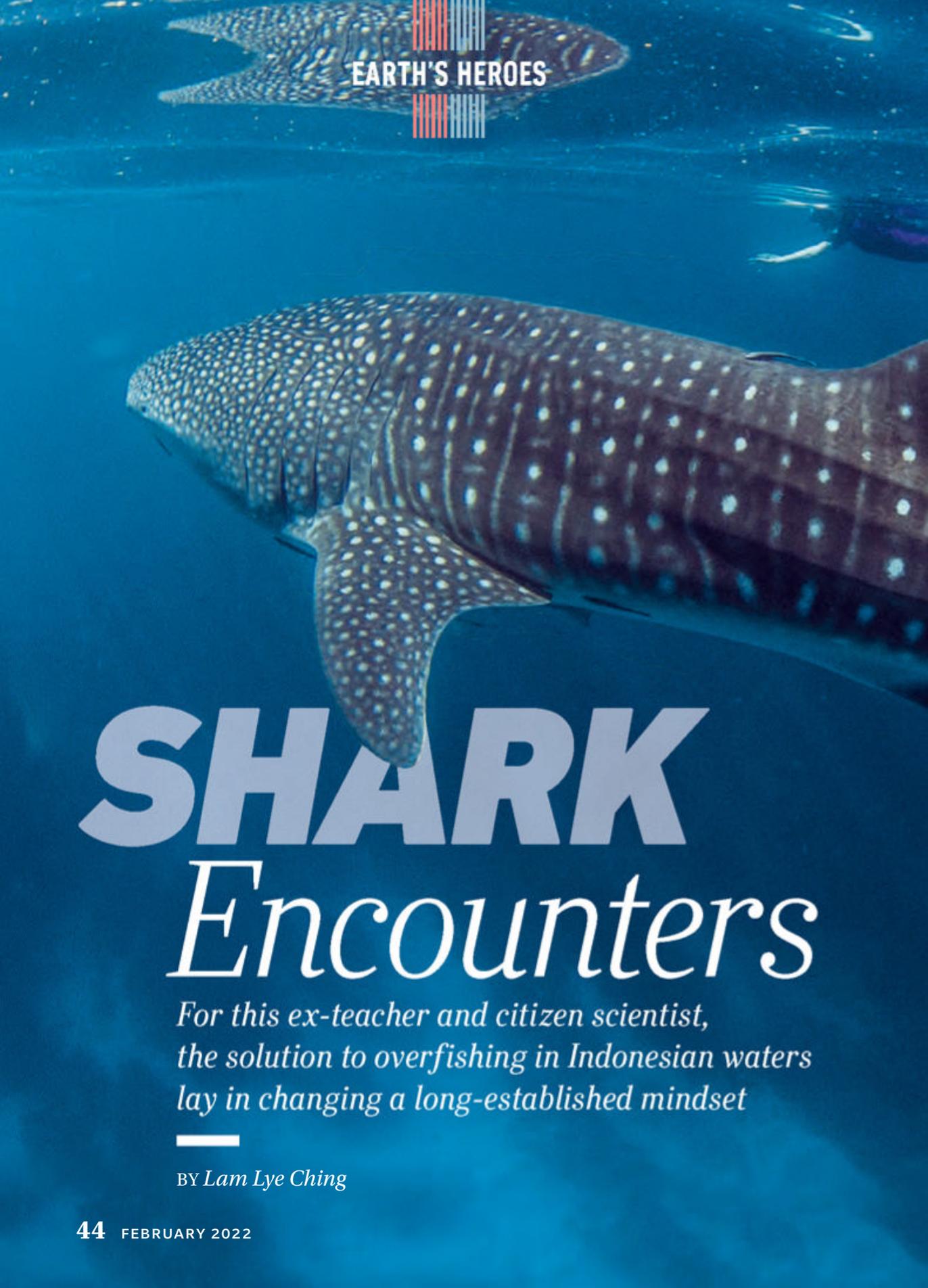
Together, the two then walked the few steps to James's headstone. Mike squatted down and took a deep breath, feeling the strong pulse of James's heart in his chest. Silently he told James how thankful he was for his sacrifice and how sorry he was they'd never get to be friends. He promised to take care of his heart.

Someone ran back to the RV to grab the stethoscope from Dan's medical kit. Christine slid the cold metal head underneath Mike's blue jersey and listened. And there it was, loud and clear. The best part of her son, still very much alive. **R**

FROM *BICYCLING MAGAZINE* (JANUARY 24, 2020),  
© 2020 BY HEARST MAGAZINE MEDIA, INC.



**"I wanted Christine to know that James's heart was in a safe place," says Mike**



EARTH'S HEROES

# SHARK *Encounters*

*For this ex-teacher and citizen scientist,  
the solution to overfishing in Indonesian waters  
lay in changing a long-established mindset*

---

BY *Lam Lye Ching*



Unlike great white sharks, whale sharks eat mostly plankton and are harmless to humans

**B**ack in 2011, Kathy Xu's brother invited her to visit Exmouth in Western Australia, and go to Ningaloo Reef to see its famous whale sharks. She jumped at the chance. Although Kathy had taken a diving course when she was studying history at the National University of Singapore, she had only been to local waters, and seeing a shark in the wild was definitely on her wish list.

The trip to Ningaloo Reef changed Kathy, who at the time taught history at a secondary school.

She was so inspired by the beauty and grace of the whale sharks that she teared up in her snorkel mask. "I was screaming with excitement inside, while still trying to keep calm and enjoy the moment with the 15-metre-long whale shark," she says. The connection she felt with the slow-moving, plankton-eating creatures was intense.

A year later, several Facebook posts popped up in her newsfeed lambasting fishermen in Lombok, Indonesia, for needlessly killing sharks. Curiosity led her to pack her bags and head to the fishing port of Tanjung Luar, Indonesia's largest targeted shark fisheries, to see for herself.

Located in East Lombok, in West Nusa Tenggara Province, Tanjung Luar is home to one of Indonesia's largest shark markets. Sharks are cut up into parts and fins, meat, cartilage, bones, skin and teeth are traded. Most prized are the fins, which fetch high prices on the international market. Indonesia is the largest exporter of shark fins in the world, according to the US-based MarineBio Conservation Society.

Between 2012 and mid-2013, Kathy took five trips to Lombok, sitting at the fishing port market and talking with the fishermen over coffee to find out more about their lives.

"Listening to their stories about

shark fishing, I realised that social media only shows one side of the shark fishing industry, through a very privileged lens," she says.

Shark fishing is risky and involves hard, physical work. It can take many days for fishing fleets to track and locate sharks, which means the fishermen are forced to go further and further away from the shore, often breaching international water borders. This can lead to arrests, and forfeiture of their livelihoods and freedom.

It became clear to Kathy that the fishermen have intimate and expert knowledge about their local seas, the sea life and reefs, yet their motivation to fish, much as it had been for generations, was driven by

the need to provide for their families. The pride they felt for the local sea life wasn't restricted to fishing. Once they heard Kathy was a snorkeller, they urged her to visit the coral reefs near the fish market that were ideal for recreational snorkellers like her. That's when she struck up a deal.

"I told them I would pay them money to take tourists out to see these snorkelling havens." The men could see the potential in the idea and agreed. A new sustainable tourism venture was born, one that would help the fishermen, and potentially the sharks as well.

*It was a chance to give the fishermen an alternative and sustainable livelihood*



**The Dorsal Effect founder Kathy Zu is also involved in marine conservation efforts**

With no business background, Kathy made the decision in 2013 to quit her full-time teaching job. She wanted to focus on building an ecotourism business that could help save the depleting shark population in Lombok waters. At the same time, it was a chance to give the fishermen an alternative and sustainable livelihood so they could stop hunting sharks and being dependent on the low prices paid by shark traders for their risk and hard work.

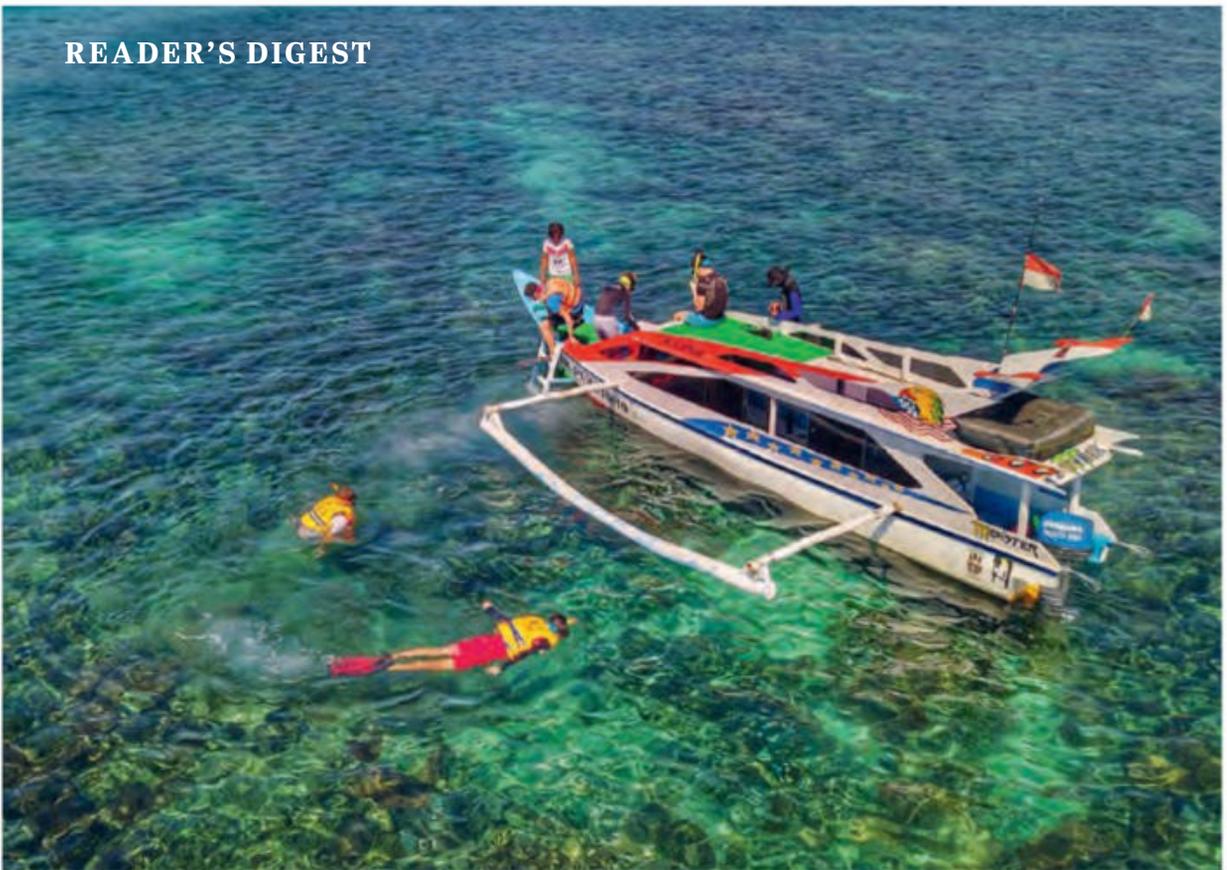
## **ECOTOURISM**

And so, Kathy's business, which she named The Dorsal Effect, was born. The word *dorsal* means back and a shark's dorsal fin is usually its biggest fin. But the business's name also refers

to the impact Kathy hoped it would make at the 'back end' of the shark fishing industry. Her business objective was to curb the depletion of shark numbers, but not at the expense of the fishermen, who would now have a new source of income.

Despite making a business pitch video showing how 100 million sharks are killed each year (about 3.17 sharks per second), and the realities of the shark fishing industry, Kathy struggled to find investors to fund her business. Then, in October 2013, she won the Young Social Entrepreneurs competition funded by the Singapore International Foundation (SIF) and was awarded S\$10,000 dollars. She put all the money into the business, buying snorkel gear,

PHOTOS: (PREVIOUS SPREAD) GETTY IMAGES; (THIS PAGE) COURTESY THE DORSAL EFFECT, FACEBOOK



**Former shark fishermen share their knowledge with tourists and snorkellers**

life vests and equipment, as well as paying for boat repairs and refurbishments for the fishermen. She was also selected for a four-week shark survey programme in the US, which was attached to the Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory.

By September 2013, The Dorsal Effect was ready to launch its first boat trip. Divers paid US\$120 for a one-day excursion to explore places that were not even listed in a Google search yet, with local fishermen as their tour guides.

“The fishermen in Lombok go on shark fishing trips that stretch up to ten to 20 days each and they make

only between US\$50 and US\$100 per trip,” says Kathy. She says that many of them go into debt because they need to buy bait and other supplies.

After a promising start, the business then struggled to attract sufficient tourists. So Kathy pumped most of her savings into the business and reduced her staff to just one fisherman tour guide. She also resumed teaching part-time at schools and a polytechnic in Singapore. Then in 2014, Kathy and SIF made a three-minute documentary titled *Hunted by the Dorsal Effect*, showing the reality of the shark market in Lombok. It attracted over one million views and boosted business.

PHOTO: COURTESY THE DORSAL EFFECT, FACEBOOK

### MAKING AN IMPACT

What keeps Kathy going are the changes she sees in people. “I’ve been amazed at the small transformations I’ve seen in the fishermen,” she says, “many of whom have been set in their ways for years.”

Like Suhardi who, after seeing tourists picking up litter from the ocean, also became an enthusiastic garbage collector. He went from throwing cigarette butts into the ocean to an ocean advocate who now deep dives to pick up the rubbish he sees on coral reefs. Then there are the school children who tell their parents about what they learned about sharks on their tours and how eating shark fin soup impacts the shark population and ecosystem.

Kathy also assists marine scientists and Wildlife Reserves Singapore, which focuses on protecting biodiversity in Singapore and Southeast Asia with their data collection and ongoing surveys of shark populations. Kathy goes to Singapore’s Senoko and Jurong fishing ports, which handle about 30 per cent of the country’s seafood imports, to gather data on the sharks and stingrays that come from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the surrounding straits.

There she collects information on the types of sharks, recording their size, commercial value, and gender, as well as talking with fish traders to find out where the fish are caught, which parts are sold and for what purposes.

In 2019, while she was doing field research with a conservation consultant, they found a female *Rhynchobatus cooki* or clown wedgefish at Jurong Fishery Port. Imported from Indonesia, the species, which is a relative of the shark, was widely believed to be extinct as it hasn’t been seen for more than 20 years. The new discovery gave scientists hope that the clown wedgefish is not extinct and argued that an in-depth study for conservation purposes should be undertaken.

Kathy dreams that one day people will come to realise that everything in the environment is interconnected – even sharks. “I love the grace of sharks and decided that I wanted to change the negative opinion people have from the media,” she says. “By encountering a shark in its natural habitat respectfully, maybe there could be more compassion and empathy towards marine wildlife and people could see we are all interconnected.” 



### Running On Coffee

A Finnish company has created ‘performance’ trainers made from used coffee beans and recycled plastic bottles.

A new kind of coffee kick, anyone? [WWW.THEGUARDIAN.COM](http://WWW.THEGUARDIAN.COM)

## LIFE'S LIKE THAT

### *Seeing the Funny Side*



#### **All Work And No Play**

Our son's friend's dad telephoned our house and asked to speak to his 11 year old who was over to play.

"Hello, Dad," said his son.

"I want you to come home AT ONCE," we could hear his dad say, "I need help with your homework!"

SUBMITTED BY MICHA BRYN

#### **Licking His Lips**

On the odd occasion, my partner Lee makes his own sandwiches for work. The other day I got the bread, butter

and peanut butter out along with two knives. When he decided to take over, he asked why I had got two knives out. I explained it's so that I don't get peanut butter in the butter and vice versa. "Oh," he replied, "I usually use one knife and then lick it each time."

SUBMITTED BY JANE WHITAKER

#### **Missed The Point**

Right before I got my COVID-19 vaccine, the nurse went through a series of questions. One question made me pause: "Are you a painter?"

I excitedly replied, "Why, yes! How did you know?"

As the conversation continued, I realised she'd actually asked, "Are you a fainter?"

SUBMITTED BY CECILIA TAYLOR

#### **Running On Repeat**

If you hear me telling the same story twice, just let it go. I only have six memories - and they all take turns.

@JZUX

#### **Off Message**

My husband realised our son had left his mobile at home, so he texted him to tell him. It was only when our son got home that evening and

checked his phone messages that my husband realised how stupid he had been!

SUBMITTED BY AMBER JACOB

### Fish Out Of Water

I promised myself a tattoo for my 50th birthday. I chose two beautiful fish leaping from the sea. After the first fish, it had hurt so much that I had to call a halt. I was really lucky that the tattoo artist decided to start with the fish. I can't imagine how I would be able to explain the splodgy blue puddle on my shoulder blade.

SUBMITTED BY SUSAN KENNEDY

### Hot Air

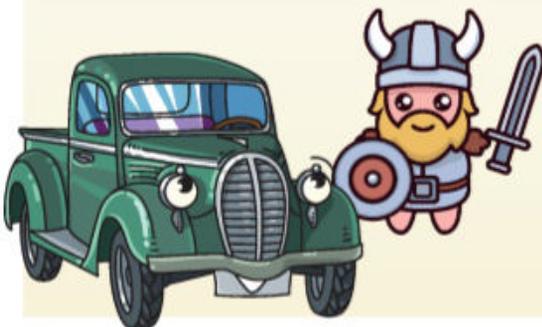
Humidity is just a fancy way of saying even the air is sweating.

@DARLAINKY

### Classic Conveyance

Our neighbour, Joe, has a vintage car and while we were chatting to him one day, we were trying to get him to reveal just how old it was.

"Put it this way," he confided, "It's been insured against fire, theft and Vikings!" SHULA CLARKSON



## THE GREAT TWEET OFF: FEBRUARY 14 FOR PARENTS

Ahhh, Valentine's Day. Flowers and chocolate. And for some, children.



This Valentine's Day, say the three little words she's longing to hear:

"You sleep in."

@COPYMAMA

**Me:** Do you want me to pick up some Valentine's chocolate for you and the girls today?

**Wife:** Absolutely not.

**Me:** Seriously?

**Wife:** It'll be on sale tomorrow.

@XPLODINGUNICORN

**Me:** What are we doing for Valentine's Day?

**My husband:** Raising three kids.

@NOT\_THENANNY

I'm chaperoning a Valentine's Day date for my 15 year old and his girlfriend so I made her garlic pizza for dinner. Genius Level: 100.

@JENNYPENTLAND

*I Am The*  
**FOOD ON  
 YOUR  
 PLATE**



# *I Am A Coconut...*

## *A Killer Nut? Not Even Close*

BY *Kate Lowenstein  
 and Daniel Gritzer*

In 2010, then US President Barack Obama paid a visit to the Gandhi Museum in Mumbai, India, where palm trees full of me dotted the grounds. The former president knew me well; coconuts were a part of life in Indonesia, where he spent his boyhood.

A later video of him in Laos, coolly sipping my sweet water straight from my green shell as if he'd done it a thousand times, became a popular meme.

Yet, before his visit, Indian authorities methodically removed every last sign of me from the premises. Why? They were afraid he would be taken out by one of me falling on his head.

Let's get this out of the way: my reputation as the 'killer fruit' of countless innocents was then and still is a myth. A repeatedly misinterpreted 1984 study greatly exaggerated the number of deaths I cause by 'beaning', and the vicious rumour spread. Today, the only things about me 'to die for' are the sometimes too-delicious foods you humans make with me, such as macaroons, piña coladas, rich curries and custard tarts.

A decade ago, health nuts briefly gave me a halo because some of my saturated fats, called medium-chain triglycerides, may raise beneficial HDL cholesterol. But ask a heart doctor today and they'll tell

## HOW TO OPEN COCONUTS

- **To open a 'hairy',** use a clean screwdriver and find the softest of my three dimples.

- Push the screwdriver into said dimple, wiggling it around to make the hole larger.

- Invert me over a bowl and let my water drain out.

- To separate my flesh from my shell, place me in a 200°C oven for 20 minutes or until cracks appear on my outer shell.

- Then, using a meat cleaver or hammer, hit the shell repeatedly along the cracks (keep fingers well away!).

- When it breaks into large pieces, wedge a spoon between my shell and my flesh to separate.

- **To open a green coconut,** lever the flower-top section off with a knife. Then insert a coconut-opening tool around the hard core and twist to remove. Insert a reusable straw and drink my sweet nectar or invert over a cup.

- Then, unless you are handy with a machete, it is probably best you use a blunt tool to break me open and remove my gelatinous flesh.



- Firstly, take me outside – as this can get quite messy.

- Place me upside down on a hard surface.

- Using something large and heavy, like a saucepan, strike my pointy end with moderate force. Turn me slightly and repeat. Continue turning and striking until the green husk cracks open on both sides.

- Pull me apart with your hands and scoop out my flesh with a spoon.

you that coconut oil will raise your bad LDL cholesterol as much as it'll raise HDL. Death by coconut, indeed!

You have other wrong ideas about me, too. I never look brown and hairy on the tree, despite what cartoons might have you believe. In my whole form, I'm smooth and green, yellow, orange, pink and even sometimes red. And you may think I'm a nut, but I'm actually a drupe (a fleshy fruit with a single seed in the centre), like a cherry, apricot or peach. And even if you

already knew that botanical factoid, you're likely mistaken about what part of me you're eating.

Picture a young coconut, the green things that get hacked open with a machete so that you can drink the water within. That green part is my skin, and the fibrous beige stuff hacked through is my flesh, essentially an inedible husk. Inside that is the shell of my seed, within which you'll find the nutrients of my endosperm. When I'm young, that

## READER'S DIGEST

endosperm is mostly water – the sweet, vaguely nutty juice that is bottled and sold worldwide.

As I grow, solids start depositing on the inside surface of my shell until little water is left and there's lots of firm white jellylike flesh, ready to eat. So the brown hairy 'coconuts' you see in the supermarket aren't me. They're my seeds.

My older self is by no means worse than my younger self, I simply have different ratios of coconut water to flesh. Before making your selection, know what you want to do with me. 'Hairys' often still have water inside, if this is what you want, pick me up and give me a shake. If you hear liquid sloshing around inside, there's water there. Less sloshing means a higher flesh-to-water ratio.

I have been grown in warm, tropical coastal locations, such as India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Indonesia, for more than 4500 years.

Besides my long-lasting source of food and water, my fibrous flesh is used to make rope, mats, mattress stuffing and fishing nets. My shell can be turned into charcoal for fire or used as a bowl or musical instrument. My leaves are used for thatching roofs and making brooms and baskets, while my trunks are used for building houses, boats and drums. My tree's roots have an array of folk medicinal uses and produce pigments that become dyes – and their frayed ends have even been repurposed as toothbrushes.

Is there no end to my uses? No wonder coconut-rich cultures not only survived but thrived. **R**

## SOFT AND TENDER COCONUT MACAROONS

- Preheat oven to 175°C and line a tray with baking paper.
- In a bowl, mix together 400 g sweetened flaked coconut with 150 mL coconut cream, 150 mL evaporated milk, ½ tsp vanilla extract and a pinch of salt until thoroughly combined.
- Beat two large egg

whites until stiff then fold into coconut mixture. (It's OK if the eggs mostly deflate during folding.)

- Using clean hands, form the coconut mixture into golf-ball-size mounds.
- Arrange on the prepared tray. Bake, until macaroons are deep golden brown all

over, about 35 minutes, rotating the tray halfway through cooking.

- Let cool on the tray, then transfer to an airtight container and store at room temperature.

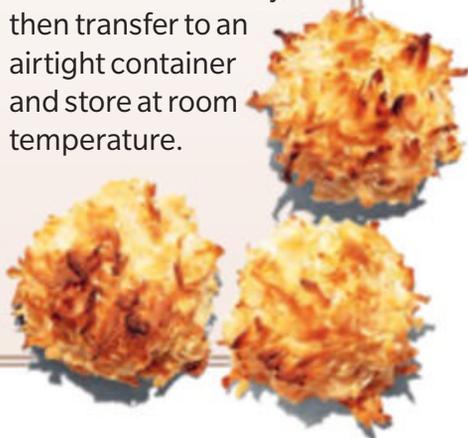


PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



Coconut Water

Coconut Jelly

Coconut Flesh



Omar & Hana  
FAVOURITE TASTE



100% COCONUT



Scan me!



### Just Forget It, Let's Shake It!

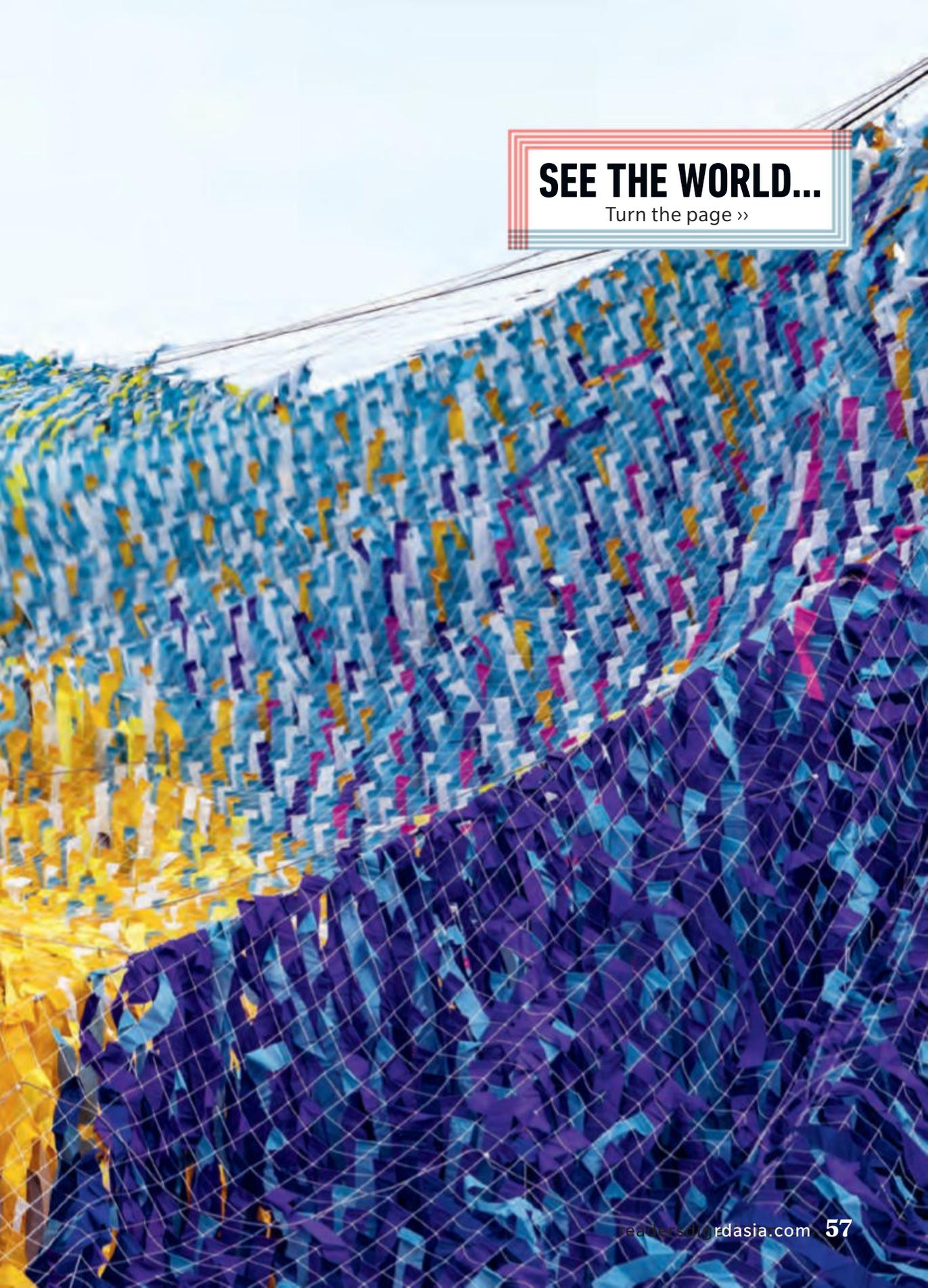
Discover the authentic coconut flesh, with the refreshing taste of coconut water topped with coconut jelly for indelible sweetness. With 10 flavors to choose from, you can enjoy the calming ocean breeze on your couch.

#malaysianfavouritetaste #omarhanafavouritetaste

As seen on :







**SEE THE WORLD...**

Turn the page »

## ...DIFFERENTLY

### IN BERLIN, 30,000 WISHES

lined *Straße des 17. Juni* (17th of June Street) to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the fall of its infamous Berlin Wall. People from around the world were invited to place their hopes and wishes on colourful ribbons. The ribbons were then interlooped with others to form a 150-metre-

long flying carpet which seemed to float weightlessly over the street right up to the Brandenburg Gate.

The idea behind the week-long installation, called *Visions in Motion*, came from American artist Patrick Shearn, and was the signature attraction during events marking the anniversary in November 2019.

PHOTOS: PAUL ZINKEN/DPA





# Secondhand Screen Time

*Paying attention to your kids' electronics use is smart, but there's another gadget-related danger that needs to be on your radar*

—  
By Bobbi Dempsey

Many parents are vigilant about their kids' use of electronic devices and set strict limits for them. Of course, they want to protect their children from the potentially harmful effects of too much screen time, as well as other potential dangers they can encounter on apps and online platforms. But there's another device-related danger that parents may be completely overlooking – and it might be hurting their kids just as much as traditional screen time.

It's been dubbed 'secondhand screen time'. And yes, it's meant to mirror the danger we know about secondhand smoking. With secondhand screen time, kids are indirectly exposed to screens being used by someone else close to them.

"Generally, we are talking about children who are cared for by adults who spend a significant amount of time on devices and the negative consequences that can occur when they experience screens being such a dominant part of the adult's life and activities," says Dr Nicole Beurkens, a clinical psychologist and the brand ambassador to Qustodio, a parental control app designed to manage kids' online activity and keep them safe.

"Some of the specific concerns involve the addictive nature of devices and how watching parents use devices constantly from a young age can make kids more prone to addictive behaviour with devices as they grow."



## READER'S DIGEST

This can also lead to behaviour-related problems. Research shows that children have a tendency to exhibit more acting-out behaviours when parents spend excessive time with their devices, explains Beurkens.

“Often, this is the only way kids can get a parent’s attention, even though it typically ends up being negative attention.” She says that excessive device use, especially in the presence of a child, also sends the message that the device and activities on it are more important than the child. This can lead to a breakdown in the parent-child relationship, as well as self-esteem and other emotional issues for the child.

So, how much screen time is too much? It’s important for parents to be conscientious about placing limits on electronics, both for themselves and their children. The American Academy of Paediatrics has issued guidelines for screen time and children from infancy through the teen years, says Beurkens.

The guidelines suggest that young children should have very little exposure and only high-quality programmes they view with an adult. As they get into the preschool years, the general guideline is one hour per day of high-quality programmes. Children in elementary school should not be spending more than two hours of their leisure time on devices and should have a balance of other activities they engage with. As children

get into the preteen and teen years, the focus should be on prioritising non-screen-time activities and using devices in free time as opposed to constantly.

When parents are engrossed in something they are watching on their phone or other devices, they also may not realise that a child nearby may be paying attention to what’s happening in the background. This means they may be exposed to violent or mature content or fast-moving images that are overly stimulating for young brains. This can cause an increase in anxiety and sleep issues, as well as make it more difficult for kids to unwind and settle down when it’s time for bed.

### **FOCUS ON QUALITY TIME**

“A child’s cognitive, communication, social and emotional development happens via their relationships with parents and other care providers,” says Beurkens. When devices consistently get in the way of the quality relational experiences children need, their development can suffer, she says. This doesn’t mean that parents should never use devices when a child is present. Beurkens says this means parents need to be aware of how often they are fully engaged with their child without devices and make sure they offer quality interaction and attention.

Letting your child know that they are your priority and will get your

full attention when needed is always important.

Secondhand screen time is an issue parents need to be aware of regardless of their child's age, says Beurkens. "In terms of brain development, the impact of excessive parental device use is probably more pronounced from infancy through early childhood, as this phase of development is where the consistent engagement with parents is most necessary for proper cognitive, communication, social and emotional development."

### SETTING AN EXAMPLE

You also may be confusing the messaging you send to your kids with a "do as I say, not as I do" approach. "We can tell kids that it's important to curb their device use, but if their experience with parents from infancy is watching them use devices frequently, they are much more likely to follow that model," says Beurkens.

Managing a child's use of electronics can take effort. But trying to cut down on your own screen time

may be even more challenging. For adults, this issue can be trickier because devices are often a necessary component of people's work, as well as personal tasks and activities, says Beurkens.

### ACTIONS TO TAKE NOW

There are manageable steps you can take now to reduce your screen time. One of the simplest is establishing certain times and places where devices won't be used, says Beurkens. "For example, device-free mealtimes are important for many reasons, and this is an easy way to curb use. Other ideas include not using devices when having a conversation, or when playing games with the kids." Turning off notifications is also helpful.

You can use technology to your advantage in monitoring your own screen time. There are many apps for managing and monitoring children's use of devices, and some parents find they benefit from using these on their own devices, she says. 

---



### As Kids See It

**At a pre-school gymnastics 'competition', my three year old was posing with her trophy. Suddenly, she tripped, and the trophy crashed, breaking in half. Everyone gasped, expecting tears. She picked it up and said, "Look! Now I have two trophies!"** @MARVINALLEN

**My two-year-old son calls beards and moustaches "face grass".**

@PAREENE

# LAUGHTER

## *The Best Medicine*

### Anything For A Quiet Life

There is an order of monks that is sworn to silence. But each year, one monk is allowed to say two words. The day arrives and a monk stands up and says, "Porridge lumpy."

The abbot then declares the session over. The following year, another monk stands and says, "Porridge fine."

A year later, it's a third monk's turn. "I quit," he says.

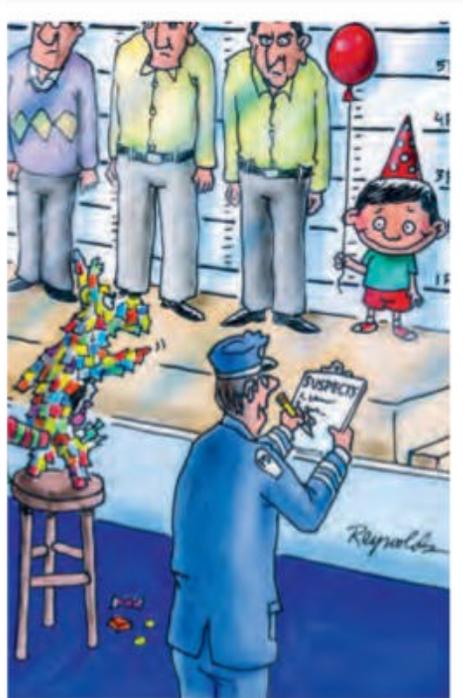
The abbot is shocked. "Why?"

The third monk replies, "I can't stand the constant bickering."

SUBMITTED BY ERNEST FREEMAN

### Here Comes The Pun

- Just so everyone's clear, I'm going to put my glasses on.
- A generous army general walked into a bar and ordered everyone around.
- I lost my job as a stage designer.



I left without making a scene.

- Fran and her friends named their band Duvet. It's a cover band.

### Higher Court

A lawyer dies and goes to heaven.

"There must be some mistake," the lawyer argues. "I'm too young to die. I'm only 45."

"Forty-five?" says St Peter. "No, according to

our calculations, you're 135."

"How'd you get that?" the lawyer asks.

St Peter replies: "We do it by billable hours now."

LAUGHFACTORY.COM

### Unwelcome Mat

I recently passed the house I grew up in while driving, so I stopped and asked if I could go in to look around. The owners said no and slammed the door on me. Parents can be so rude!

SUBMITTED BY LUKE HAMMETT

### Safety Risk

Hot-air balloons are terrifying. It's just a tiny wicker basket in the sky attached to a flamethrower. I first have to take off my shoes in order to board a flight, but I can fly around on patio furniture?

RYAN HAMILTON, COMEDIAN

### Wake-Up Call

A teacher is droning on and on when he notices that a student sitting all the way at the back of the classroom has fallen asleep during his lecture.

"Hey!" the teacher yells to the girl sitting next to the sleeping student. "Wake that kid up!"

"You're the one who put him to sleep," she calls back to the teacher with a shrug. "You wake him up!"

LEARNENGLISH.DE



### LABOURERS OF LOVE

I've come across so many of the same people on dating apps over the years that I've started to see them as co-workers.

ANNE SUNDELL, WRITER

It's crazy to think that my boyfriend existed and had a life before we met. How did he live without me for all those years?

@ISABELASERAFFIM

### WINDOW ON THE WORLD



As a couple who had just moved to a new neighbourhood ate breakfast, the wife looked out the window and saw their neighbour hanging clothes out to dry. "That washing isn't very clean," she said.

Her husband looked but remained silent.

For the next month, every time their neighbour hung her clothes out to dry, the wife made the same comment.

Then one morning, the wife was surprised to see clean washing on the line.

"Look!" she said. "Our neighbour finally learned how to do laundry!"

"Nope," the husband said.

"I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows."

STARTSAT60.COM

### First And Foremost

I went to see the doctor about my short-term memory problems. The first thing he did was make me pay in advance.

MEMESBAMS.COM

### Weather Watch

Tonight's forecast: dark; continued dark tonight, turning to partly light in the morning.

GEORGE CARLIN, COMEDIAN

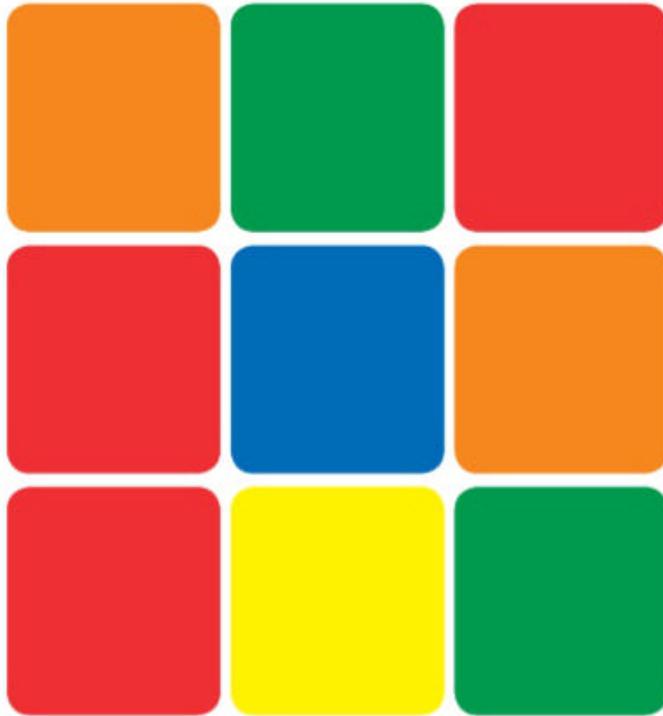
A close-up portrait of Ernő Rubik, an elderly man with grey hair and blue eyes, looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a dark blue jacket over a black turtleneck and a light-colored sweater. In the upper left corner, a hand is holding a Rubik's Cube, which is partially visible and out of focus. The background is a plain, light color.

**Ernő Rubik, the  
inventor of the  
Rubik's Cube**



ENTERTAINMENT

# MEET ERNO RUBIK



*He devised one of the world's most popular and enduring puzzles – and he's still learning from it*

---

BY *Alexandra Alter*

FROM **NEW YORK TIMES**

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

**T**he first person to solve a Rubik's Cube spent a month struggling to unscramble it. It was the puzzle's creator, an unassuming Hungarian architecture professor named Ernő Rubik. When he invented the cube in 1974, he wasn't sure it could be solved. Mathematicians later calculated that there are 43,252,003,274,489,856,000 ways to arrange the squares.

When Rubik finally did it, he was overcome by "a great sense of accomplishment and utter relief." Looking back, he realises the new generation of 'speed-cubers' (Yusheng Du of China set the world record of 3.47 seconds in 2018) might not be impressed.

"But, remember," Rubik writes in his recent memoir, *Cubed*, "this had never been done before."

In the nearly five decades since, the Rubik's Cube has become one of the most enduring, beguiling, maddening and absorbing puzzles ever created. More than 350 million cubes have sold globally; if you include cheap copies, the number is far higher. They captivate computer programmers, philosophers and artists. Hundreds of books, promising speed-solving strategies, analysing cube design principles or exploring their philosophical significance, have been published.

Cognitive scientist Douglas Hofstadter wrote in 1981 that the cube "is an ingenious mechanical invention,

a pastime, a learning tool, a source of metaphors, an inspiration."

But even as the Rubik's Cube conquered the world, the publicity-averse man behind it has remained a mystery.

Rubik, 77, is lively and animated, gesturing with his glasses and bouncing on the couch in his living room, running his hands through his hair so that it stands up in a grey tuft, giving him the look of a startled bird. He speaks formally and gives long, elaborate, philosophical answers.

"I'm very close to the cube," Rubik said during a Skype interview from Budapest. Sitting in a home he designed himself, he fiddled with a cube absent-mindedly as we spoke. "The cube was growing up next to me and right now, it's middle-aged, so I know a lot about it."

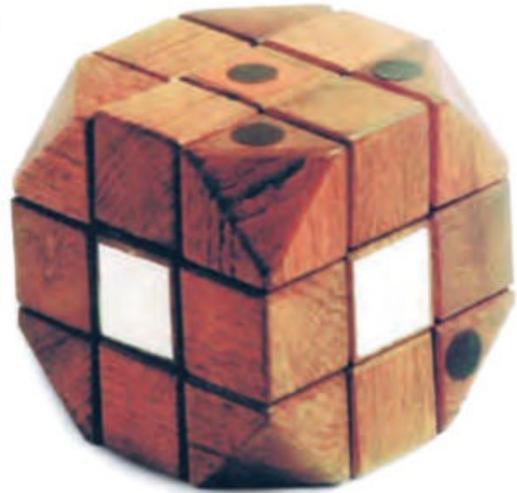
Ernő Rubik was born on July 13, 1944, in the basement of a Budapest hospital that had become an air-raid shelter. His father was an engineer who designed aerial gliders.

As a boy, Rubik loved to draw, paint and sculpt. He studied architecture at the Technical University of Budapest, then attended the College of Applied Arts. He became obsessed with geometric patterns. As a professor, he taught a class called descriptive geometry, which involved teaching students to use two-dimensional images to represent three-dimensional shapes and problems. It was an odd and esoteric field, but it prepared him to develop the cube.

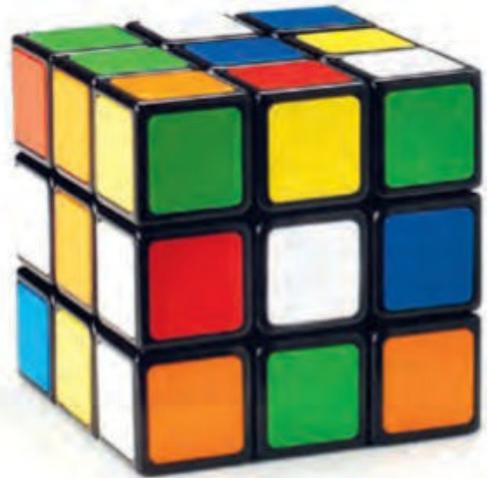
**IN THE SPRING OF 1974**, when he was 29, Rubik was in his bedroom at his mother's apartment, tinkering. He describes his room as resembling the inside of a child's pocket, with crayons, string, sticks, springs and scraps of paper scattered across every surface. It was also full of cubes he had made out of paper and wood.

One day - "I don't know exactly why," he writes in his book - he tried to put together eight cubes so that they could stick together but also move around, exchanging places. He made the cubes out of wood, then drilled a hole in the corners of the cubes to link them together. The object quickly fell apart.

Many iterations later, Rubik figured out the unique design that allowed him to build something paradoxical: a solid, static object that is also fluid. Next he decided to paint the faces of the squares yellow, blue, red, orange, green, and white to make



**Top: Rubik's initial design was made of wood. Bottom: He later added colour to make the squares' movement visible**



their movement visible. Rubik gave it a twist, then another turn, and kept twisting until he realised he might not be able to restore it to its original state. He was lost in a colourful maze, and had no clue how to navigate it. And there was no way back.

After the cube became a global phenomenon, there would be



**Ernő Rubik, right, at the 1982 Rubik's Cube World Championship in Budapest. The contenders included, from left, Zoltan Labas of Hungary, Guus Razoux Schultz of the Netherlands, and Minh Thai of the US**

erroneous accounts of Rubik's creative process, that he worked on the cube day and night for weeks. In reality, he went to his job, saw friends, and worked on solving the cube in his spare time, for fun.

After he cracked it, Rubik submitted an application at the Hungarian Patent Office for a "three-dimensional logical toy". A manufacturer of chess sets and plastic toys made 5000 copies. In 1977, Rubik's *Buvös Kocka*, or 'Magic Cube', debuted in Hungarian toy shops. Two years later, 300,000 cubes had sold in Hungary.

Rubik got a contract at an American company, Ideal Toy, which

wanted one million cubes to sell overseas. The company had Rubik attend a New York toy fair in 1980. The shy architecture professor wasn't the most charismatic salesman, but the company needed someone to show that the puzzle was solvable.

**SALES EXPLODED.** In three years, Ideal sold 100 million Rubik's Cubes. Guides to solving the cube shot up the best-seller lists. "There's a sense in which the cube is very, very simple - it has only six sides, six colours," said philosopher Steve Patterson. "In a very short period of time, it becomes unbelievably complex."

PHOTO: RUBIK'S BRAND

At first, Rubik didn't have a salary from the toy company, and for a while, he saw little of the royalties. He lived on his professor's salary of \$200 a month. Rumours began to spread that he was the richest man in Hungary, or that he had lost all his money to unscrupulous sidekicks. Neither was true.

Rubik started to feel trapped by his creation and was unnerved by the attention. "I'm not the person who loves to be in the spotlight," he said. "That kind of success is like a fever, and high fever can be very dangerous."

Almost as quickly as the craze started, it sputtered out. Cheaply made counterfeits flooded the market, and demand fizzled. Rubik started his own design studio in Hungary and began to work on new projects, including puzzles called the Snake and Rubik's Tangle.

In the 1990s, a new generation of

enthusiasts discovered the cube. New speed-cubing records were set, as were records for solving the cube underwater, while skydiving, while blindfolded, while juggling. The World Cube Association now hosts more than 1000 competitions each year.

**RUBIK HIMSELF** wouldn't make the cut. He can solve the cube in about a minute, but he's not interested in speed. "The elegant solution, the quality of the solution, is much more important than timing," he said.

These days, he spends his time reading science fiction, playing table tennis and gardening.

Rubik is not done with the cube. He still reflects on its possibilities – not an improvement to its design, but on its potential applications.

"I see potentials which are not used yet," he said. "I'm looking for that." **R**

FROM NEW YORK TIMES (SEPTEMBER 16, 2020),  
© 2020 BY NEW YORK TIMES



### Paws Over That TV Remote

Your four-legged companion no longer has to put up with joining you on the sofa for a binge-watch series – dogs now have a range of their own pooch-friendly TV content to enjoy. DogTV, a new TV network created specifically for four-legged friends, launched in several countries in November last year. Created after three years of research, the channel airs scientifically tested sights and sounds designed to alleviate separation anxiety, loneliness and stress. Each episode is around the length of a dog's attention span – three to five minutes – and has themes like stimulation and relaxation as well as exposure to things such as car rides and doorbells. SKY NEWS



## *From The Editors*

**T**his month, Reader's Digest celebrates a remarkable milestone: its 100th anniversary. Since starting in February 1922, every issue has been packed with useful information and inspiring stories. Over ten decades, Reader's Digest has become a global powerhouse, and today, with 24 editions in 47 countries, it remains one of the world's most-read, best-loved publications.

Just before the founder, DeWitt Wallace, launched this "little magazine", he said: "The Digest will have but one mission: to interest and at the same time to widen one's outlook, to increase one's appreciation of things and people, to enlarge one's capacity for enjoyable association with fellow men, to lubricate the process of adjustment to this world."

This timeline highlights some of the many historical milestones of Reader's Digest, including mention of the most impactful articles we have published.

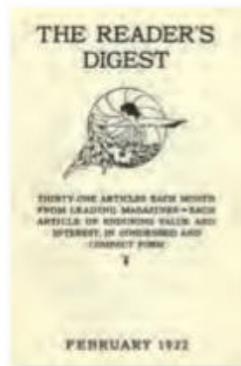
*Here's to another 100 years!*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Brian Stauffer*



## Highlights from a century of *Reader's Digest*

**1922** DeWitt and Lila Acheson Wallace publish 5000 copies of the first issue of Reader's Digest, "The little magazine", in New York. It has 64 pages and 31 articles, all condensed from other publications.



**1929** Circulation reaches more than 200,000, and the magazine also becomes available at newsstands.

**1930** Reader contributions are requested for regular departments, many focused on humour.

**1924** RD's first anti-tobacco article appears: 'Does Tobacco Injure the Human Body?'

**1933** The first original article, 'Insanity - the Modern Menace', by Henry Morton Robinson, is published.

## READER'S DIGEST

**1935** RD's first high-impact public service original article, '—And Sudden Death', is published. It's about the preventable carnage of car accidents. The *New Yorker* called it "the most widely read magazine article ever published anywhere."

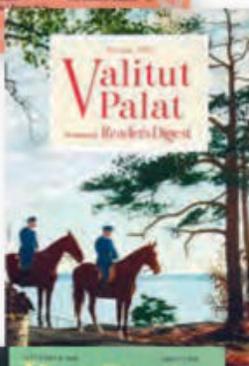
**1936** Paid circulation reaches two million, and editorial staff has grown to 32. An alarming article about a quickly spreading disease is published: 'Why Don't We Stamp Out Syphilis?'

**1938** The British edition is launched. It's the first international Reader's Digest.

**1939** Lila Wallace selects the pegasus as the company's symbol. Circulation is nearly three million and the first two-colour illustration is published in November.



**1940** The first foreign-language edition – the Latin American edition – launches, marking the beginning of international expansion.



**1942** The first issue of the Portuguese-language edition is translated and printed, then shipped to Brazil and Portugal.

**1945** The world is still officially at war when the Finnish edition launches in June. It sells out all 50,000 copies in a week.

**1946** Around the world people are hungry for information, and Reader's Digest's international expansion is speeding up. Australian, Danish and Japanese editions are launched.

**1947** The Norwegian, Belgian-French, French, Swiss-French and French-Canadian editions debut.

**1948** Reader's Digest begins to use four-colour illustrations. Now the English-Canadian, South African, German, Swiss-German and Italian editions are published.

**1950** The New Zealand edition is launched.

**1952** The magazine begins attracting big-name writers: James Michener, who had recently won the Pulitzer Prize for *Tales of the South Pacific*, joins as roving editor. 'Cancer By the Carton' connects smoking with lung cancer, provoking a furore; it is the first time a US magazine had covered this topic in such depth. It would contribute to the largest drop in smoking since the Depression.

**1954** A young Alex Haley joins the Reader's Digest staff. He would write several features – and then become one of the world's most famous writers when *Roots* was published in 1976, a project sponsored by Reader's Digest.

**1955** US circulation passes ten million a month. Its cover price is still 25 cents, as it was in 1922.

**1956** The Lila Acheson Wallace Fund is established. It invests in programmes in the arts, adult literacy and urban parks.

**1957** The Dutch edition is launched. Work begins on a landmark book – *The Longest Day*, about D-day – funded by Reader's Digest and written by Cornelis Ryan. Researchers in Paris, Stuttgart, London and New York produce more than 16,000 interviews and create hundreds of detailed maps. The book is published two years later.



“In my long and troubled journey to complete *Roots*, I owe an undying debt to Reader's Digest. Without its help and encouragement, *Roots* could not have been written with the scope that it has. The magazine's support enabled me to make repeated trips to Europe and Africa. Without it, I could not have afforded the travelling and, consequently, could not have explored my roots.” – ALEX HALEY

## READER'S DIGEST

**1965** The Chinese (Traditional) edition of RD launches in Hong Kong and Taiwan, with an Asia (English language) edition in South East Asia.

**1967** Worldwide monthly circulation totals 28 million copies.

**1968** RD continues its fight against smoking by publishing 'What the Cigarette Commercials Don't Show' in January. It sells more than nine million reprints. In 1971, cigarette advertising on radio and TV is banned in the US.

**1971** An anti-pornography article, 'The Report That Shocked the Nation,' generates requests for more than 25 million reprints – the most ever.

**1973** The Wallaces, now both in their 80s, retire.

**1976** The restoration of artist Claude Monet's house and garden with its famous lily pond in Giverny, France, gets underway, thanks to Lila Wallace's support.

**1981** Reader's Digest founder and long-time editor-in-chief DeWitt Wallace dies at age 91.

**1984** Lila Acheson Wallace dies at age 94. An advocacy piece against drinking and driving, 'I Still See Him Everywhere', fires up a discussion about driving under the influence of alcohol. It's the sixth RD article on the subject since 1980.

**1987** RD's first report on AIDS, 'The Plague That Knows No Bounds', is published.

**1988** The British edition marks its 50th anniversary by planting

**1985** RD's art collection goes on its first world tour, followed by a second in 1988. It exhibits in Mexico City, Amsterdam, Hong Kong, Sydney, Lisbon, Stuttgart and Auckland. Among the works are those by Renoir, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Picasso and Modigliani.



In October 1985 the pages of *Reader's Digest* gave a preview of its art show. Featured were works by Renoir, Modigliani, Degas, Braque, Lachaise and Picasso.

PHOTO: (CROCUS CARPET) GETTY IMAGES

**1986** British Reader's Digest unveils a commissioned portrait of Queen Elizabeth II to celebrate her 60th birthday. Word comes back from Buckingham Palace: "She likes it - very much." The portrait is in the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery, London.



1.5 million crocus bulbs to create a Crocus Carpet at London's Kew Gardens, where they continue to bloom to this day. The Queen congratulates RD on "a half century of responsible and entertaining journalism."



**1991** The Soviet Union is dissolved, and RD launches the Russia edition, bringing the magazine to 40 editions in 16 languages. This kicks off a rapid expansion into former Soviet countries.

**1994** The ten-billionth copy of Reader's Digest is published in the US.

**1996** Reader's Digest European editions launch the European of the Year award, annually celebrating individuals who help transform the lives of others.

**1998** Reader's Digest introduces its new design, which includes removing the contents from the cover.

**2001** Reader's Digest India publishes 'The Good Doctors of Sittilingi,' about a doctor couple who set up low-cost medical care in a rural area. Its publication results in a major boost in donations and improvements to the area's health care.

## READER'S DIGEST

**2004** 'My Story' launches in the Australia, New Zealand and Asia editions. The reader-contributed section continues to be one of the most popular parts of the magazine.

**2008** Reader's Digest launches in mainland China under the name Puzhi Reader's Digest. Later in the year, RD launches the Asian of the Year award to celebrate individuals across the Asian continent who embody the values of Asia, and who help to shape the region's future.

**2010** The British Reader's Digest launches its 100-word-story competition to celebrate creativity. The competition runs in Australia, New Zealand and Asia in both the English and Chinese editions, enjoying enormous success.

**2011** The European editions publish a five-part advocacy series about internet safety, demanding stronger international laws to protect children and young people.

**2018** In Australia, New Zealand and Asia, the RD Talks podcast series is launched, with articles on inspiration, drama, heart and crime. Today the podcast has more than 140,000 downloads.

**2020** The Chinese-language edition, published in Taiwan and

**2007** In the first episode of the hit TV series *Mad Men*, set in a 1960s New York advertising firm, the characters are trying to solve problems caused by Reader's Digest reporting on the tobacco and advertising industries.



Hong Kong, changes its format to a horizontal layout, receiving praise from Taiwan's Ministry of Education and is endorsed as "excellent reading material" for school students.

**2022** In February, Reader's Digest celebrates its centenary. Reader engagement and love of the brand, whether accessed via print or online, remains among the strongest of any publication in the world.



## QUOTABLE QUOTES

*I have decided to stick to love; hate is too great a burden to bear.*

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,  
HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST



**ALL THAT YOU ARE IS ALL THAT I'LL EVER NEED.**

ED SHEERAN,  
SINGER

*When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.*

PAULO COELHO, AUTHOR

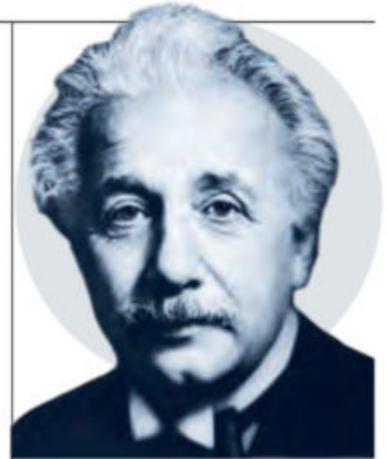


**YOU ALWAYS GAIN BY GIVING LOVE.**

REESE WITHERSPOON,  
FILM ACTRESS

*In truth a family is what you make it. It is made strong not by number of heads counted at the dinner table, but by the rituals you help family members create, by the memories you share, by the commitment of time, caring and love you show to one another, and by the hopes for the future you have as individuals and as a unit.*

MARGE KENNEDY,  
PLAYWRIGHT



**You can't blame gravity for falling in love.**

ALBERT EINSTEIN, SCIENTIST

# *What's The Point Of* **Table Manners?**



# *Don't put your elbows on the table, don't talk with your mouth full. Who made up these rules, and what are they for?*

BY *Felicity Lewis*

FROM **EXPLAIN THAT** EDITED BY **FELICITY LEWIS**

It was once said, in some families, that one should always be prepared to dine with the Queen. It wasn't as if Her Royal Highness might drop by for dinner during a surprise tour. It was more that one should know how to handle oneself – and a dizzying array of cutlery, glasses and goblets, dinner rolls and butter pats, troublesome foods and fellow guests – should one crack it for an invite to a fancy formal do.

Nowadays, dinner with the Queen is less likely to be on our minds, but table manners still matter. Attitudes to them vary. Adhering to them is a sign that you value “the whole food, eating thing”, says a Melbourne hairdresser whose parents migrated from Mauritius, a former French and British colony.

They are a way to show respect, particularly for one's elders, says a chef who grew up in Malaysia.

They help to build relationships, says an etiquette expert from the US.

They can be an ‘*Upstairs, Downstairs*’ morality, designed by the elite so they remain “the cherry at the top of the tree”, says a Catholic priest who grew up in working-class Melbourne.

And yet every family follows table manners in its own way, from those who pepper their urbanity with the odd broken rule – “Whoops, I may have just passed the port to the right!” – to those whose etiquette follows their moods – “I'm only saying this with my mouth full because it just can't wait.”

Even in families where no one mentions elbows, there are always behaviours at play when sharing meals. There are many common threads to the rules, even as differences in table etiquette across cultures have long vexed diplomats, traders, travellers and other citizens of the world.

So, what are the rules when it comes to table manners? Who thought them up? And why can't you

put your elbows on the table? Where did table manners come from?

The custom of families meeting for meals goes back two million years “to the daily return of protohominid hunters and foragers to divide food up with their fellows”, writes Margaret Visser in her fascinating classic *The Rituals of Dinner*. From her home in the south of France, Visser says, “I start the book by saying there’s no such thing as a society with no table manners. And that’s why I started with cannibals, because even they have table manners – very strict ones that make a big difference between eating an animal and eating a person.”

Table manners express “all kinds of usually unconscious prejudices”, she says. “You can find out a huge amount about any society by watching them eat: who’s higher than you, who’s missed out, who’s not invited.”

**SOME OF THE RULES** are codified. *The Book of Rites*, a group of texts attributed to Confucius, declares that mealtimes separate savagery from civilisation, writes Jonathan Clements in his intriguing story of Chinese food, *The Emperor’s Feast*. Clements quotes the ancient book to illustrate what being ‘civilised’ might have looked like in the fifth century BCE: “Do not roll the rice

into a ball; do not bolt down various dishes; do not swill down [the soup]...”

Centuries of Islamic dining etiquette were drawn on by Muhammad Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi of Damascus in his 16th century *Table Manners*, notes historian Helen Pfeifer in her article ‘The Gulper and the Slurper: A Lexicon of Mistakes to Avoid While Eating with Ottoman Gentlemen’. Ghazzi warns against dining types such as the annihilator (*al-mukharrib*) who leaves “only scattered bones in his wake”, the trickster (*al-muhtaal*) who slyly piles meat on his neighbour’s plate and then eats it all when his neighbour politely refuses, and – shudder – “the one who leaves greasy traces” (*al-mudassim*).

Sociologist Norbert Elias puts a thousand years of European manners under the microscope in his 1939 study *The Civilizing Process*, studded with gems that make us chortle only because we modern adult diners simply know what kinds of behaviour are beyond the pale.

The 13th-century German poet Tannhauser offers this, for example: “It is not decent to poke your fingers into your ears or eyes as some people do or to pick your nose while eating. These three habits are bad.”

By the 13th century, courtesy (how to behave in court) was gaining

**IF YOU WANTED  
TO BE DELICATE,  
YOU USED THREE  
FINGERS TO PICK  
UP YOUR MEAT**

---



**Formal table etiquette includes using a complex array of cutlery and dishes**

currency with a warrior nobility in Europe, writes Elias.

The kingdom of Provence and the city-states and principalities now known as Italy were trendsetters. The Islamic rulers of southern Spain, from 711 until the late 1400s, were no slouches when it came to refined courtly dining, either.

The English caught on and, by 1392 poet Geoffrey Chaucer was poking fun at ‘curtesy’ in *The Canterbury Tales*. We meet a nun whose “upper lip was always wiped so clean/That on her cup no speck or spot was seen/Of grease, when she had drunk her draught of wine”.

When William Caxton set up a newfangled printing press in England in 1476, it was no surprise that a book of manners was among the first titles he cranked out.

*Caxton’s Book of Curtesye* (1477)

speaks unabashedly of belching and farting at the table – “Beware no breath from you rebounde” – as does Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *On Civility in Children* (1530), which warns that fidgeting in your chair gives the impression you are trying to squeeze out a fart.

Such talk of bodily functions is typically medieval in its directness, notes Elias. Life was a visceral affair. If you wanted to be delicate, you used three fingers to pick up your meat and you refrained from offering a half-eaten hunk to someone else, even if you liked them.

But Erasmus’s nuanced advice hinted at a change in the wind – the impression you made mattered. Power was shifting from feudal lords to a new kind of aristocracy for whom delicacy and civilité were at a premium.



**The picnic was a deliberate transgression away from stuffy table manners**

**BUT IN THE COLONIES,** manners were more relaxed, right? “I was brought up to have table manners,” says celebrated chef and author Tony Tan, who grew up in coastal Kuantan in Malaysia, eating Indian, Chinese and Malay cuisines with chopsticks, hands, spoon and fork. The Federation of Malaya became independent of the British in 1957. Tan’s parents ran rest houses for the British where his mother cooked roast chicken and trifle.

One of Tan’s earliest memories is of watching Indian road workers eat lunch. “They unbundled their bag of food. They were eating with their fingers, and I was salivating.” Seeing the little boy looking peckish, a woman rolled some rice and curry into a ball and flicked it deftly into his mouth. “I burst into tears because it was so hot, chilli hot ... It was like the pain and the ecstasy of

it all: too hot to eat but so beautiful to swallow.”

It was into this pungent cultural mix that a Mrs Windsor (no connection to the Queen) arrived to instil “Britishness” into the locals.

“All I can remember was very heavy, red velvet curtains and all the cutlery was being laid out on the table,” says Tan. “What is a fork? Knife? Serving knife? All those things that put the fear of god into all of us. And then we’ve got to start eating from the fish knife to the oyster fork. And that was really very daunting, particularly for an eight or nine year old who’d never actually ever eaten an oyster in his life – those horrible, squiggly-looking things! And I was just thinking, *Why is she wearing stockings, because they are just so hot?*”

Tan, who went on to train as a chef in Paris and London, is an expert in Asian cuisines from Cantonese to

## What's The Point Of Table Manners?

Malaysian, which he teaches at his school in country Victoria – but the etiquette, particularly of his Chinese heritage, has remained.

He says, “You’ve got to invite your elders to start eating, or say, ‘We are now eating’ so the elders can say, ‘Go ahead’. It’s a sign of respect to people who are older than you. And so, when people don’t do that anymore, they lack manners and they lack good upbringing.”

An otherwise well-mannered doctor whose family migrated to Melbourne from Brunei in the 1970s says he stopped calling his elders to the table as a teenager without even thinking about it as he absorbed mainstream suburban life, but his sister still does so at family meals.

In a socially mobile colony, it is manners more than a family coat of arms that “reveal to us the lady and the gentleman”, declares the *Australian Etiquette: The Rules and Usages of the Best Society in the Australasian Colonies* in 1885. “Manners and morals are indissolubly allied”, it contends, “and no society can be good where they are bad.”

Naturally, it is “the duty of Australian women” to ensure the development of this “moral fibre”.

Colonists are advised to practise their table etiquette at home, even when eating alone, lest they become “stiff and awkward” when

out. Among the many little points to be observed: “If anything unpleasant is found in the food, such as a hair in the bread or a fly in the coffee, remove it without remark.” (It’s hard to imagine anyone today keeping quiet about a fly in their macchiato.)

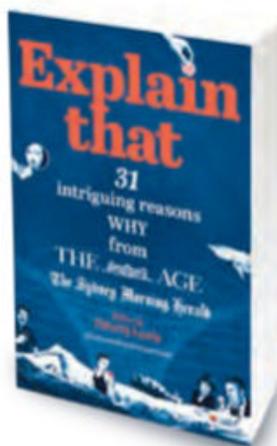
As Barbara Santich points out, “Sometimes you’ve got to look at the books as trying to correct a situation, not necessarily reflecting [it].”

Free from the strictures of British deportment, colonials did relax some of the rules. “The picnic became terribly, terribly popular in Australia,” she says, “much more so than in England. The weather had something to do with it but it was also symptomatic of an attitude: we can be a little bit more free and easy, and possibly egalitarian – we can do our own thing. The picnic was, in a way, a deliberate infringement of table manners.” Barbecues do away with some of the rules, too, says Visser.

“Even having a table means we choose who we’re going to feed, so the barbie is a wonderful way of breaking that down.” They also dissolve the hierarchy that comes with sitting at a table, although she suspects not entirely, noting how it tends to be the men who do ‘the fire’.

**R**

**This is an extract from *Explain That* edited by Felicity Lewis (Penguin), available now.**





# 6 *Silent Signs* *You're Eating* *Too Much* **Protein**

*Here's how to know when powering up  
with protein has gone too far*

BY *Lindsay Tigar*

**P**rotein is easily one of the most important nutrients to get into your daily diet, but it's possible to get too much of a good thing, especially if you're on a high-protein diet like Atkins or Paleo.

## ***Critical part of our diet***

We need protein to feel full, have energy, build and repair muscle, process nutrients and boost immunity,

among other vital roles. "Protein is made up of amino acids that are the building blocks of body tissues, including muscles, blood vessels, hair, skin and nails. It's also involved in the production of enzymes and hormones that help the body to function normally," says dietitian and nutritionist Kaleigh McMordie.

Why are these amino acids so important? According to McMordie, there are some amino acids that the

## READER'S DIGEST

body can synthesise, but others, called essential amino acids, we need to get through our diet. Animal protein sources, such as meat, fish, milk and eggs, contain all nine essential amino acids. Most plant-based protein sources don't have the full complement of amino acids in the exact right amounts – although there are some exceptions, such as soybeans. “That’s why it is important to include a variety of protein sources in order to get all of the essential amino acids, especially for vegetarians,” McMordie says.

If you're a regular exerciser, protein is especially important, says dietitian and nutritionist Keith Akoob. “Protein not only builds muscle, but it also repairs and maintains muscle,” he says. “Muscle cells, like all living tissue, have a life. They eventually need to be replaced, so repair and maintenance are critical roles for dietary protein.”

### **How much do we need?**

There are many elements to consider when determining just how much protein you need on a daily basis. For example, you need to take into account how often you exercise and how your body's digestion is functioning.

That said, there are some overall guidelines. In Australia and New Zealand, the RDA (recommended dietary allowances) for adult men is 52 grams of protein per day. For adult women it is 37 grams per day. For those aged over 70, 65 grams of protein for men



### **YOU'RE OFTEN IN A BAD MOOD**

Maybe you got into a fight with your partner or you're anxious about a presentation at work. But if you keep waking up on the wrong side of the bed, you might want to consider your protein intake.

“When we are eating too much protein, we are often not eating enough carbs, like in low-carb or high-protein diets. And our brains actually run on sugar from those carbs,” Immer says.

The easy solution: recognise when you swap out too many carbs for protein, then even out the difference. Reach for complex carbohydrates such as fruit, yoghurt, brown rice and whole grains. Limit overly refined carbs, which can make you sluggish.

## 6 Silent Signs You're Eating Too Much Protein

and 46 grams for women is recommended. These are rough estimates and Ken Immer, president at Culinary Health Solutions, notes: "Most often, we hear about recommending protein in specific gram amounts per day. However, that can be misleading because it should be closely tied to your total kilojoule needs, rather than just an arbitrary number."

He says that there is a wide range of recommendations when it comes to the ideal percentage of kilojoules from protein with ten per cent being the absolute minimum.

Conversely, experts aren't certain of the maximum amount, but too much protein is linked with kidney disease, constipation and cancer risk.

### **You've got brain fog**

That afternoon slump is real. Feeling fatigued as the day rolls on might have you reaching for coffee or a snack. But it could be the amount of protein in your system that's causing your eyes to glaze over.

"Brain fog, in general, is possible from too much protein, as a sugar deficit for the brain can cause your brain to actually shrink," Immer explains.

Overeating protein means that you might be displacing your carbs.

This is risky, says McMordie, because "carbs are the brain's main source of energy, and without enough, it will be hard to concentrate."



### **YOU'RE GAINING WEIGHT**

It's true that having a high-protein diet can satisfy your hunger, but if you go too far, you might find your scales tipping over as well. "That's especially true if you're eating excess animal protein or downing protein shakes. Meat often means extra fat and also kilojoules. And many protein shakes have added sugar to make them taste better," McMordie says.

Over time, too many excess kilojoules, no matter from fat, sugar or protein, will cause weight gain, she says. To shift your meals in a healthier direction, aim for balanced meals. As a general rule, half of your plate should be fruit or vegetables, one quarter should be protein, and one quarter should be starch or whole grains.



## YOU'RE ESPECIALLY THIRSTY

One indicator that you might be consuming too much protein is a constant desire for water. In fact, too much protein can cause mild dehydration. "The dehydration is caused by your kidneys working overtime to remove the excess protein as well as the nitrogen waste from metabolising the protein. So you urinate too much and eventually can wreck your kidneys altogether," Immer says.

To the rescue? More water, of course, and lightening up on the protein. It's important to pay attention to this sign, as kidney stones can also be caused by a high-protein diet. "Depending on other factors, when you put your kidneys into overdrive, the risk of kidney stones increases for those who are already prone," he says.

## You're a little backed up

Having dependable, reliable digestion cycles will make you feel healthier overall and minimise any potential stomach issues. However, if your protein intake is too high, you might struggle to stay regular.

"If you replace too much of your diet with protein, you may be lacking fibre from grains and vegetables," McMordie says.

"Without it, you may experience digestive problems and constipation." Aim for 25 grams of fibre daily from food like whole grains, vegetables and fruit. Adding in a daily probiotic – or eating naturally probiotic-rich foods – may also help keep your digestion on track.

## You've got dragon breath

You've noticed that when you laugh, not everyone laughs with you. And your colleagues are pulling back when they have to sit near you in meetings.

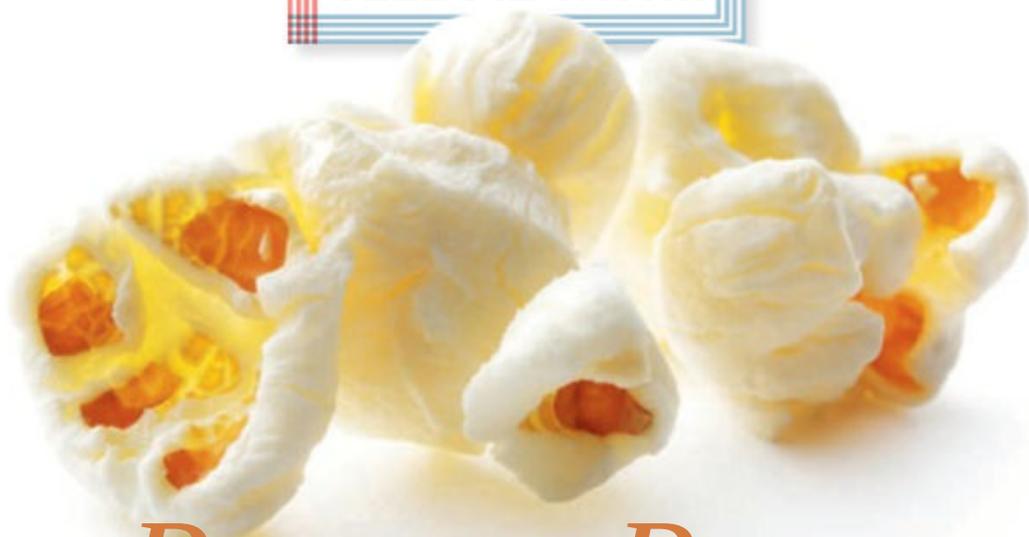
What's up?

Bad breath was a common complaint of those on the Atkins diet, and for good reason.

A lot of meat doesn't just give you meat sweats, it gives you a stinky mouth too.

"Your brain and body like to run on carbs, so when you don't eat enough carbs, your body starts to use fat as fuel, producing ketones. They can make your breath smell like nail polish remover," McMordie says. **R**

## TELL ME WHY...



# Popcorn Pops

*Who knew the humble corn kernel was such a contortionist?*

BY *Brandon Specktor*

**T**he big bang may still befuddle us, but scientists have taken a giant leap towards understanding the smaller (and arguably more important) bang that happens in your microwave. Thanks to a team of French researchers, we now have the most complete picture yet of popcorn's seed-to-snack transition.

Inside every popcorn kernel's shell, there's a tiny droplet of water surrounded by a mesh of mostly starch. At 100°C, the water turns into steam and mixes with the starch to create a hot, doughy mass. Pressure builds in the hull until finally, at 180°C, it bursts.

In the next 15th of a second, a

lightning-fast circus act occurs: a 'leg' of fluffy starch emerges from the fractured hull, kicking up a few centimetres in a gymnast-like spin. Water vapour bursts from the hull, just like it does when you uncork a Champagne bottle, emitting that signature popcorn pop. The hull continues to bloom as it flips and cools, finally converting that hot vapour and starch into the popcorn fluff we know and love.

At the end of the show, each inside-out kernel is about twice as large, and one eighth as dense, as it was pre-pop. Whether you should cover your popcorn in butter or olive oil is for you to decide.

## ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

### *Humour On The Job*



**“Oh, but it’s fine for you to grade papers?”**

### **Piece It Together**

**Client:** I put these documents in the fax machine, but they didn’t come back out.

**Me:** That’s the paper shredder.

**Client:** Oh! Can you set it to reverse? Those papers are important.

*From Clients from Hell*

### **Off The Cuff**

A security guard at a Wisconsin warehouse was so bored one

morning around 2am that he began fiddling with his handcuffs, eventually slipping them on his wrists. He soon discovered he’d left the keys to the cuffs at home.

Suddenly, his dull night became very interesting.

After calling the police, who freed him, he hid the cuffs from himself so he wouldn’t be tempted to pull the same trick again.

WREG.COM

## Rules Of The Road

My brother-in-law, a new volunteer firefighter, was riding in the fire engine for the first time when he felt the need to offer the driver some advice.

"I think you should pull over," he said. "Don't you hear the siren?"

A more experienced colleague patiently explained, "That's us."

SUBMITTED BY ERNEST ECHELBARGER

## NAME DROPPING?

### *More Like Name Breaking*

I was bemoaning to a friend how my last name, Loyer, is frequently changed to Lawyer by spellcheck.

"I can top that," said the anaesthetist named Bause.

"Spellcheck insists on calling me Dr Abuse."

SUBMITTED BY MILTON LOYER

Though my last name is not long, it can be confusing. So when a receptionist asked for it, I tried simplifying matters by saying,

"It's the first four letters of 'suggest'." She smiled.

"And how do you spell that?"

SUBMITTED BY DEB SUGG



## I HATE OFFICE LINGO

– AN ODE

*When you say  
ping me*

*I want to ignore you.*

*It's true.*

*Bio break too.*

*It makes me cringe.*

*And if I'm being honest*

*I don't care about your ducks  
or the row they're in.*

*I don't know what net-net  
means unless it's being said by  
an excited tennis announcer.*

*Come to think of it  
let's not circle back  
or drill down*

*or take a deep dive  
or take it off line*

*or level the playing field  
or create action items  
and honestly I don't care*

*if this won't scale  
and may I add that  
going forward I would  
like to park this project.*

*And this job.*

*I quit.*

*Now.*

*Sorry.*

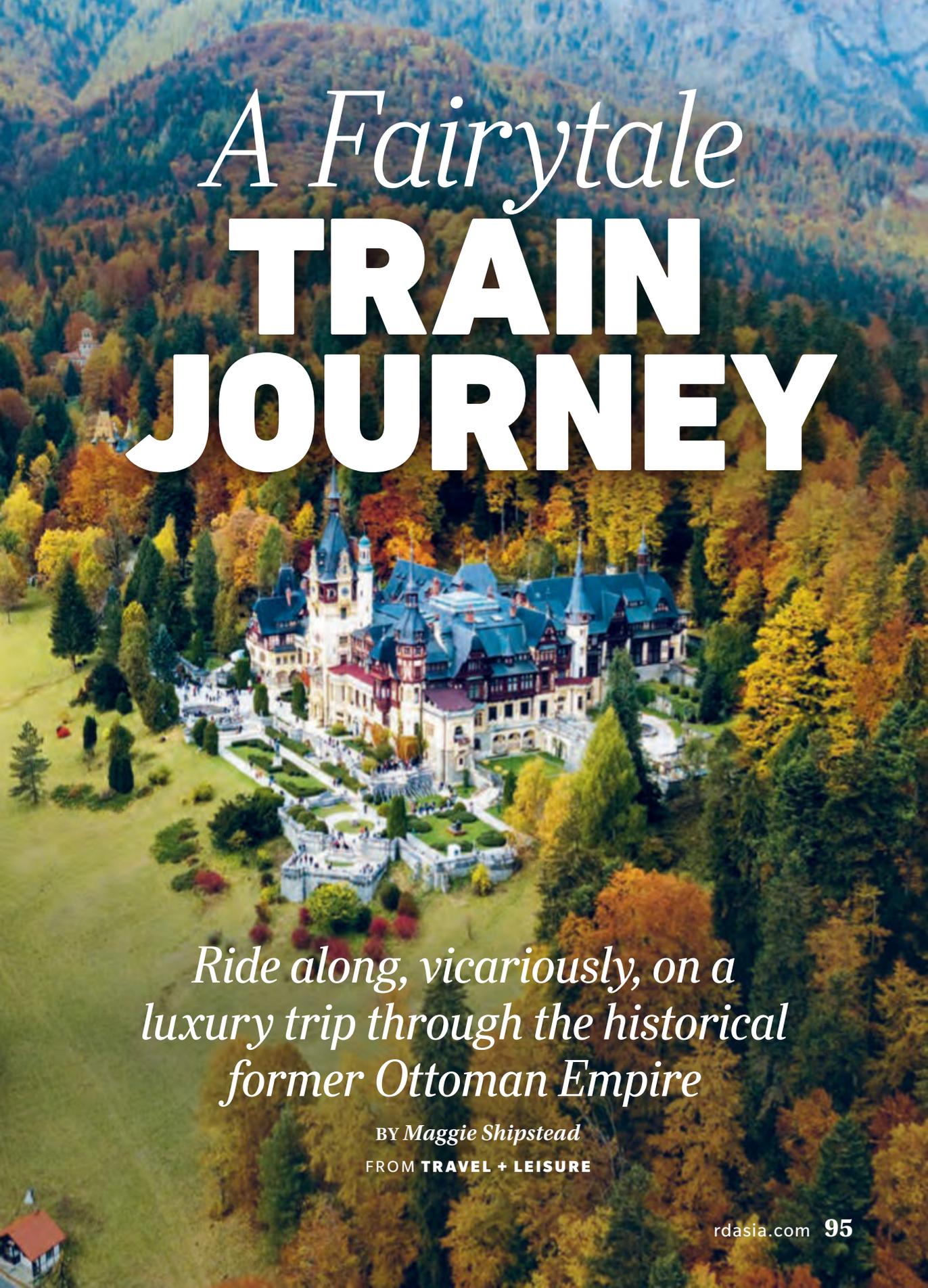
*I have a hard stop.*

JOHN KENNEY IN LOVE POEMS  
FOR WORK (PUTNAM)

**This page: The *Danube Express* evokes the charm and luxury of a bygone era.**

**Opposite page: Nestled in the Carpathian Mountains is Peleş Castle, built near the end of Romania's royal era**





# *A Fairytale* **TRAIN JOURNEY**

*Ride along, vicariously, on a  
luxury trip through the historical  
former Ottoman Empire*

BY *Maggie Shipstead*  
FROM **TRAVEL + LEISURE**

**T**rains take you behind the façade of a place and show you fleeting, random glimpses of ordinary life, sometimes beautiful, sometimes gritty.

Travelling from Istanbul to Budapest on a luxurious private train called the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* in 2019, I looked out on storybook medieval villages and gloomy Communist housing blocks; smoke-stacked industrial suburbs and endless fields of sunflowers. Bystanders took videos of our cream-and-blue carriages, which were restored in the style of a glamorous *fin de siècle* sleeper train.

Sometimes the train's throwback elegance made me feel like a visitor from another era; sometimes the scenery gave me a sense of travelling through another time. Once, somewhere in Romania, beside a highway humming with boxy Cold War-era

**Handbags for sale at Istanbul's Grand Bazaar**



Trabants and the latest German luxury cars, I glimpsed a man driving a horse cart down a dirt lane. *One person's now, I thought, is another person's then.*

For four days, the train carried me and my 17 fellow passengers across 1600 kilometres, through Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. And here's what blew my mind: every scene we saw, every metre of railroad we clacked across, fell inside the boundaries of what was once the Ottoman Empire. For more than 600 years, sultans ruled a vast multinational, multilingual territory, and our itinerary took us from its heart to its northern edge.

Every day the train stopped for walking tours, and the Ottomans popped up constantly in the guides' narration. The reconstructed fortress we visited in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria? A bulwark against the Ottoman Turks until 1393, when they burned it down and took over. Budapest's public baths? An Ottoman legacy. The defensive towers in the 12th-century Transylvanian citadel of Sighișoara? One guess who they were built to defend against.

**WHERE ELSE** could the trip begin, but Istanbul? Everyone describes the city – the Ottoman capital from 1453 until the empire's dismantling in 1922 – as amazing. But, for some reason, I'd never felt an urge to go. As soon as my car from the airport crested



**Above: The steep town of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. Below: The *Danube Express* on its journey through what was once the Ottoman Empire**

a hill, though, and the labyrinthine metropolis unfolded below, minarets needling up like cactus spines and the Bosphorus strait reflecting a purple-pink dusk, I got it. Amazing.

First there's its sheer size: Istanbul is home to more than 15 million people. It's a grand jumble of tiled roofs, expansive waterfront promenades, and maze upon maze of narrow, Byzantine alleys. Then there's its thrilling geography, spanning Europe and Asia with the Bosphorus in between, a location with strategic and commercial advantages so irresistible that it has been continuously inhabited for almost 3000 years. Fortifications, monuments and archaeological



finds crop up pretty much every time someone puts a shovel in the earth.

After a night in a hotel, my fellow *Danube Express* passengers and I set out on foot for a guided tour. The Ottoman Empire's essential qualities of immensity, longevity and complexity were driven home by our first stop, Topkapi Palace. This was the sultans' dwelling place from the mid-15th to mid-19th century and their seat of power over a gigantic swath

of territory that stretched from present-day Algeria to Iraq, and Croatia to Saudi Arabia.

Topkapi's structures are long, low and decoratively understated – at least when you consider the sultans' extreme wealth. They surround gardens now plain but once paradisaical, abounding with tulips and roses, peacocks and gazelles. Our guide pointed out the mismatched columns outside the Imperial Council's chamber; made from granite and marble from far-flung Ottoman lands, they were intended as subtle reminders of the immense power of the men meeting within.

The guide then led us to the harem, where the sultan lived with his family, female servants and, notoriously, a fluctuating population of female concubines. Only a small fraction of its more than 300 rooms are open to the public, but I still felt disoriented and claustrophobic as we walked through multiple tiled chambers and twisting corridors. At one point we emerged into an open courtyard where latticed windows looked out across the water towards the city, at a wider but unreachable world.

**AFTER TOPKAPI**, we visited three other big attractions: Hagia Sophia, a hulking sixth-century Byzantine church turned mosque; the Blue Mosque, a mass of domes and minarets; and the Grand Bazaar, an immense covered market that felt like

a video game in which, instead of enemies, men offering deals on rugs popped out from all directions. All these places were compelling and important, but they were also crowded, and the day was hot. By the time we boarded the train in the early evening, the health app on my phone said I'd walked at least 11 kilometres.

I revelled in my glassed-in shower stall as the *Danube Express* slid out of Sirkeci station. In my roomy, wood-panelled cabin, I could sit by one picture window and drink a cappuccino, or recline beside another on a pillow-strewn sofa, which an attendant converted to a fluffy bed each night.

The next carriage was the bar car, where white-gloved waiters circulated with drinks. A man played jazz standards on a keyboard and sometimes a saxophone. The dining car was next, a vision of white linens and gleaming, elaborate place settings. As I dined on Parma ham draped over rockmelon, mushroom Wellington, lemon cake, and then fruit and cheese, I thought unavoidably of Hercule Poirot and the *Orient Express*. Indeed, the *Danube Express* invokes a kind of nostalgia for travel so bygone that the vast majority of us only know it second-hand from period pieces.

I had imagined the trip might attract die-hard train buffs, and though a handful of our well-travelled group had already taken the swanky



**Drawing on tenuous historical and literary connections, the romantic and spooky-looking Bran Castle in Transylvania has been rebranded as Dracula's Castle**

*Trans-Siberian Express*, most seemed drawn less by the train itself and more by the ease of our cruise-like itinerary. Being conveyed from place to place without having to repack or carry bags or manage logistics is no small asset in places such as rural Romania, where tourism infrastructure is on the rudimentary side.

**NEXT MORNING** I woke in Bulgaria. Outside the window, wispy fog and the green Balkan Mountains had replaced Istanbul's sprawl. In the night, the train had click-clacked northwest across the shifting frontiers of former empires, fought over for centuries – today all but forgotten.

A little after 9am, we reached our first stop, the medieval fortress city of Veliko Tarnovo, which is stacked so steeply uphill from the winding

Yantra River that, according to our guide, a local joke is that directions are given in terms of up and down, not right and left. We checked out an equestrian monument to the rulers of the Asen dynasty, who had overthrown the Byzantines in 1186, and then the Tsarevets fortress, which had failed to stop the Turks.

In the nearby village of Arbanasi, we visited the 16th-century Church of the Nativity, a low stone structure that looked like a meeting hall for hobbits. The inside, which was densely painted with saints in red, gold and green, gave me the giddy feeling of a holy kaleidoscope. An illustration that took up most of one wall showed a man ascending to fortune and glory before tumbling into ruin and hell. A lesson for empires, perhaps.

As we reboarded the *Danube*



**Budapest marks the end of the journey**

*Express* that evening, it dawned on me that I wouldn't be spending much time on the train. I'd imagined leisurely hours reading in my cabin, but soon learned that on journeys like these, night-time and early mornings are when the distances are covered. Daytime was for walking tours, which were always interesting and, since our visit coincided with the tail end of a heat wave, always characterised by the search for shade.

**HOW'S THIS** for a sightseeing marathon? The next day we disembarked at 7.45am in the Transylvanian alpine town of Sinaia to visit Peleş Castle, re-boarded for a quick trip to the city of Braşov, took a bus to Bran Castle for dinner, and returned to the train after 11pm, at which point I collapsed into bed. Half a dozen passengers, all decades my senior, adjourned to the bar car for a nightcap. Heroes.

Castles in modern times present

a quandary. They are impractical dwellings and no longer serve defensive purposes, but letting them decay would be a shame. So admission must be charged and curiosity cultivated. We visit to connect with the past, to marvel at the idea of living in such vast structures. Peleş Castle was built mostly in the 1870s as a summer palace for Carol I, who became

Romania's ruling prince in 1866 and, following its formal recognition as a country, its first king in 1881, which honestly seems a little late to launch a monarchy.

Nestled in the Southern Carpathian Mountains, Peleş is a 160-room fantasia done in a catch-all style known as neo-Renaissance. From the outside, it looks like an over-the-top Bavarian hunting lodge, timbered and spired; inside, it's a showcase of embellishment, with once-futuristic features like a cinema and a central vacuum system. Final touches were added in 1914, a mere 33 years before the Communists would seize all royal property. Touring Peleş's public rooms, I felt an odd melancholy for its builders, who had been oblivious to the looming end of their gilded era.

Bran Castle, too, excites the imagination, but more for marketing reasons than for anything related to historical fact. It was built in the second

half of the 14th century as a fortress to defend against invaders, including the Ottoman Turks.

In the 1970s, enterprising travel companies promoted the castle based on a tenuous connection to Vlad the Impaler, a 15th-century Wallachian prince with a predilection for skewering his Ottoman enemies on stakes. He is widely believed to be the inspiration for Bram Stoker's fictional vampire in his book *Dracula*. Disappointingly, Stoker never came to Transylvania, and there is no concrete evidence he based his bloodthirsty Count Dracula on the historical Vlad the Impaler.

Bran is now known as Dracula's Castle, a tourist-trappy label reinforced by the stalls, clustered at its foot like a feudal village, selling plastic fangs and glow-in-the-dark wolf T-shirts.

Despite this, Bran is one of those attractions that transcend cheesiness. Perched on a rocky bluff, it's arresting and romantic and genuinely spooky-looking. Inside are appealing, whitewashed living spaces. Squeezing up a narrow stone staircase, we emerged into a high room where a long table was waiting. French doors opened onto a balcony overlooking the castle's towers and courtyard: the setting for a private dinner. A string quartet played while we dined and chatted about travel, as tour mates tend to do. No bats flew off into the twilight, but sometimes a meal and a breeze are enough.

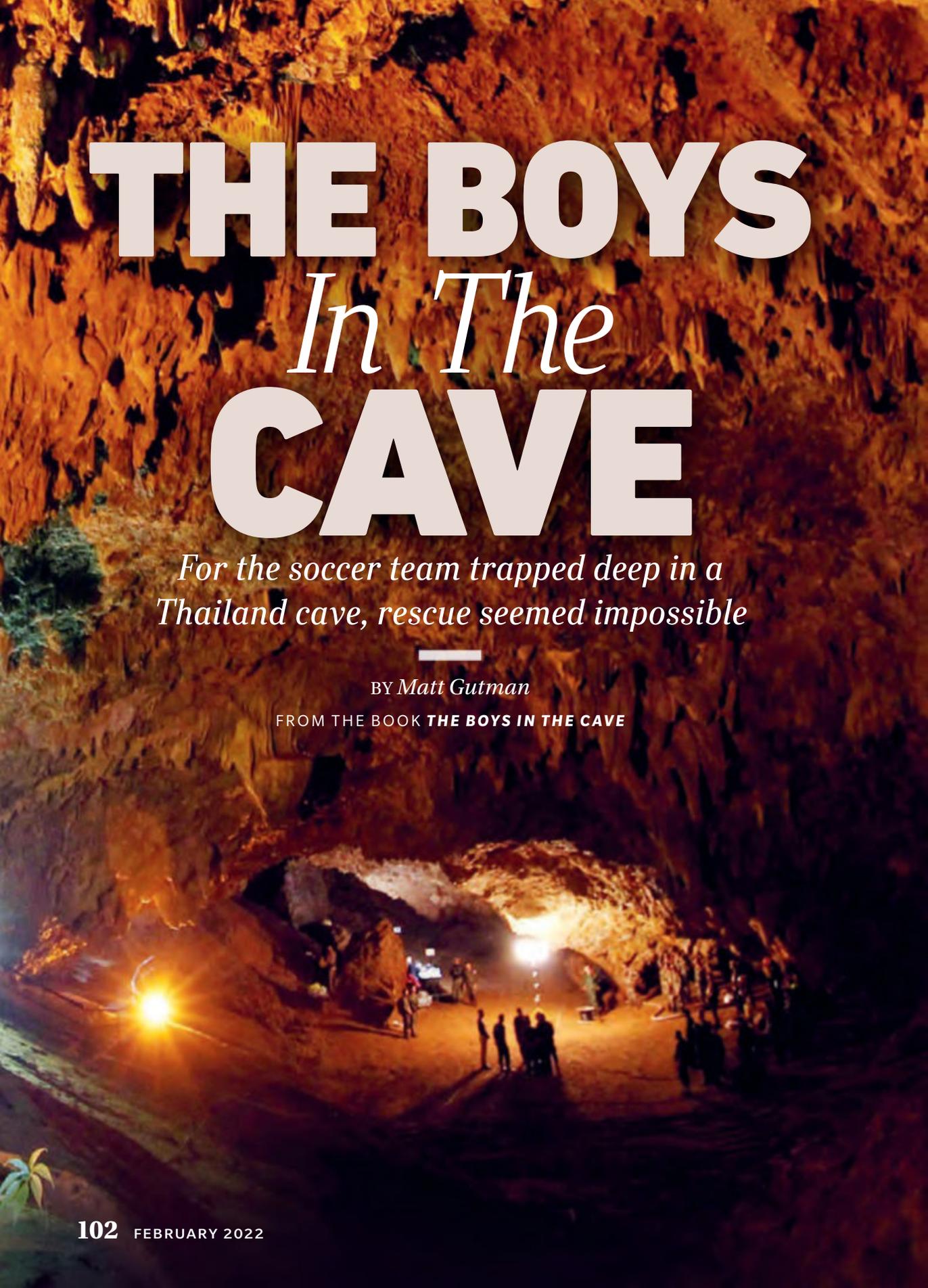
On the last day, I woke to find that Romanian cornfields had given way to the Great Hungarian Plain, a vast expanse of grassland that occupies the eastern half of Hungary. We stopped for one last excursion, which involved sampling the local schnapps and watching a traditional horse show. In Budapest, we disembarked the *Danube Express* for the last time.

**THAT EVENING** I sat beside the river drinking a vibrant orange Aperol spritz under a sunset the precise colour of an Aperol spritz. Barges passed. Young women sat chatting on the embankment with their legs dangling over the edge.

Like Istanbul, Budapest is an ancient city. The Romans, the Huns, the Visigoths, the Magyars, the Ottomans, the Hapsburgs, the Nazis, the Soviets – they all had a hand in shaping it. The city's spires darkened to silhouettes, and it struck me how crazy it is, really, how touching, that the human belief in the permanence of cities and borders and ways of life persists despite ever-accumulating evidence to the contrary.

Someday, travellers might take trips designed to spark a sense of nostalgia for our era. Someday people might look on our mighty projects and laugh. Someday – and this is certain – we will be the ancient ones. **R**

FROM *TRAVEL + LEISURE* (DECEMBER 11, 2019),  
© 2019 BY MAGGIE SHIPSTEAD



# THE BOYS *In The* CAVE

*For the soccer team trapped deep in a  
Thailand cave, rescue seemed impossible*

---

BY *Matt Gutman*

FROM THE BOOK **THE BOYS IN THE CAVE**



**BONUS READ**



**TITAN, 11**



**DOM, 13**



**MARK, 13**



**MIX, 13**



**PONG, 13**



**BEW, 14**



**ADUL, 14**



**TERN, 14**



**NICK, 15**



**NOTE, 15**



**TEE, 15**



**NIGHT, 17**



**COACH EK, 25**

**S**aturday, June 23, 2018. The 32°C air in Mae Sai, Thailand's northernmost town, was like a hot damp towel wrapped around the Moo Pa ('Wild Boars') soccer team, but they cycled to the pitch anyway – they always did.

If head coach Nopparat Khanthavong was the team's general, assistant coach Ekapol Chantawong – 'Ek' – was his friendly lieutenant. With his smiling eyes and chirpy voice, at age 25 he was more like a big brother to the kids. Having spent much of his childhood in a monastery, he had learned Buddhist discipline, meditation and kindness.

Ek often took his players to Tham Luang cave at the base of Doi Nang Non mountain after practice. A half-hour bike ride away, it was a refuge from the heat and, especially appealing to Ek, the phone signals upon which the boys were hooked. So at noon the group headed there. It was the first time for Peerapat Sompiangjai, nicknamed, as many Thais are, with a shorter name: 'Night'. He planned to be home by 5pm for his 17th-birthday celebration.

Entering the cave they passed a sign that read, in Thai and English, 'DANGER! From July to November the cave can flood'. Coach Ek, who led the way, wasn't worried; it was still June and the monsoon rains that would flood

the cave's channels hadn't started yet. Behind him were Night; 15-year-olds Note, Nick and Tee; Bew, Adul and Tern, all age 14; and 13-year-olds Dom, Pong, Mark and Mix. Giggling among them was the littlest guy, ironically nicknamed Titan, aged 11. With Ek, they were 13 in all.

The mouth of the cave was large enough to fit the Taj Mahal. Mud stains some six metres up showed the high-water mark of previous years' floods. About 1.6 kilometres in they turned left at a T-junction. They wanted to reach Pattaya Beach – a sandbar named after a Thai resort town – more than half a kilometre further in. The boys, marching fast, encountered small passages they had to stoop down and squeeze through. Titan, who was also experiencing the cave for the first time, found himself afraid of the dark and the creepy shadows cast by their torches. But he didn't dare tell anyone.

There wasn't much to see at Pattaya Beach, but the Wild Boars were happy to have an adventure to celebrate Night's birthday. Coach Ek checked his watch; they'd been in the cave about an hour. They headed back.

But before they reached the T-junction, instead of the stagnant water they had crossed on the way in, they found deep, fast-moving water. Ek pulled a rope from his bag, tied it around his waist and instructed three of the bigger boys: "If I yank twice, pull me back. If I don't, you can come too."

## The Boys In The Cave

Ek dove down, but the darkness, depth and current defeated him. He yanked twice. Night felt a surge of panic as he helped haul in his coach.

It was now about 5pm. The scared boys hadn't eaten in hours. Worried they would panic, Ek told them something he didn't believe himself - that the water would probably recede by morning. "You'll see," he said. "Why don't we find a place to sleep?"

They retreated to the high sandbar of Pattaya Beach, which typically remained above water during the floods. Ek gathered the boys for their usual Buddhist prayers, chants he hoped would soothe them, before they clumped together for sleep. But the boys' sobs echoed off the walls.

### The Rains Arrive Early

Though the Wild Boars didn't know it, the monsoon rains had arrived early. And parents grew alarmed when their sons didn't return home. At 10pm, a local team of rescuers was called in and a few parents made their way through the deepening mud to the cave entrance, near where the boys' bikes stood parked. The ranger wouldn't allow them to go in, so they shouted into the entrance: "Night! Bew! Titan!"



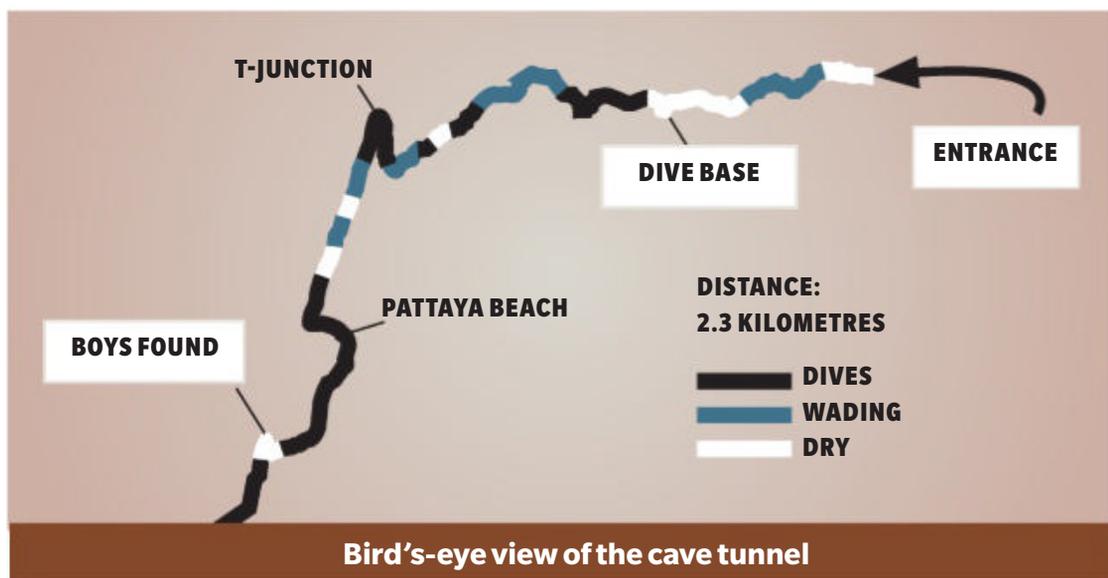
**Beneath Doi Nang Non mountain are a number of underground water courses, including Tham Luang cave**

The only answer came from the cave: echoes bouncing the names back.

At 7am on Sunday, June 24, rescuers entered the cave. Among them was Vern Unsworth, a 63-year-old British caver who lived in Chiang Rai, who came to the cave after receiving many phone calls overnight. He knew this place better than anyone. Over several expeditions, he and his friend Rob Harper had created a new, extended survey of the cave system, replacing one from the 1980s.

At the T-junction, Unsworth stopped in his tracks. The bowl that he'd seen so many times was now completely under water. He'd been told there was water, but didn't expect this much. There was nothing he could do so he returned to the mouth of the cave.

That second night, the boys were pushed further into the cave system



by rising water. In what would later be called Chamber Nine, about 2.3 kilometres from the entrance, the muddy ground slanted sharply up towards the cave wall. A flatter area served as living and sleeping quarters. Whenever a boy started to cry, the others would hold him and try to cheer him up. They were cold, hungry and scared, and Ek helped them stay calm with regular prayer and meditation. They had no food but the stream below gave them water. Tee held his mouth open under a stalactite and swallowed drop after drop until he felt full.

This was only the start of a more than two-week ordeal.

### Where Were The Boys?

Days went by and still nobody knew where the boys were, or if any had survived starvation, hypothermia or drowning. Thai SEALs – the navy’s

elite force – had failed to find them. A thousand troops and helpers gathered outside the cave, and the world watched news reports, hoping for a miracle. But as waters rose, the military suspended rescue attempts. On June 28, the fifth day after the boys entered the cave, an expert in water management, 32-year-old Thanet Natisri, began an operation to divert water on the mountain above the cave with pipes and pumps so that it didn’t seep into the cave. It made the difference; the tunnel became navigable.

On day ten, Monday, July 2, a pair of the world’s best cave divers would attempt to find the boys. Vern Unsworth had drawn a map of where he thought the boys could be, and the newly arrived Brits – Rick Stanton, 57, and John Volanthen, 48 – committed it to memory. Then, for three hours they finned against the current, breathing heavily into their regulators and

MAP: COURTESY OF MATT GUTMAN/HARPER COLLINS

carefully unspooling a thin guide line behind them. Basic diving protocol, the line was their link to the outside world. They were further into the cave than any of the rescuers before them could get.

Stanton checked his air gauge; he had consumed about a third of his supply, which meant they had to turn back soon. Cave divers use a third of a tank on the journey in and a third on the journey out, and reserve a third in case of trouble, like getting lost or stuck. Death can result from equipment failure, flash floods, slamming headfirst into rock and panicking.

They passed Pattaya Beach, which water had swallowed up. Unsworth's guess had been that the boys had taken refuge a few hundred metres beyond in a room that offered high ground.

Stanton and Volanthen were veterans of multiple cave rescues; some were successful, but more often they found corpses. To their knowledge nobody with zero provisions had survived this deep into a cave for this long. They figured that, sadly, wherever these boys were, they weren't alive.

Stanton made a mental note to tell Volanthen they need to turn around soon. Then he surfaced, took off his mask and sniffed. Along the way,

when the men had noticed air spaces above, they would bob up and take a sniff, their noses supplying information their eyes couldn't. This time, there was the distinct smell of either human excrement – or decaying bodies. “Hey, John,” he said in the dark. “We've got something.”

Then, voices. As they drifted towards the sound, they saw a beam of light flick on and scan the water.

### “When Will You Be Back?”

Moments earlier, Coach Ek had heard something: men's voices. The boys stopped cold as Ek asked everyone to hush. Silence. Then the voices again.

The boys were unsure if what they were hearing was real. They so zeal-

ously conserved their torch batteries that they'd mostly been in complete darkness. They knew by their digital watches that ten days had gone by. Oxygen was dwindling, and sleep came fitfully; they longed for food, their parents, their beds.

Too tired to move, Ek whispered to 13-year-old Mix to go to the water's edge with a torch to check it out. “Hurry. If it's a rescuer they might pass us.” Now the boys saw two creatures that looked like spacemen with hoses attached to their mouths, and

**THE RESCUE  
DIVERS FIGURED  
THAT, SADLY,  
WHEREVER  
THESE BOYS  
WERE, THEY  
WEREN'T ALIVE**

helmets bristling with lights. The semi-submerged figures were talking. Mix froze with fear. Adul, 14, took the torch from Mix, and called out in Thai, "Officer! Officer, hello! Over here!" The voices didn't answer.

Adul, stupefied that they had been found, was doubly confused when he realised the men were speaking English. He crept to the water's edge. He could speak some English, but right now could only muster a "Hello!"

The divers first surfaced about 45 metres away. By 20 or so metres out, their headlights illuminated a couple of the Boars. "How many are you?" shouted Volanthen. "13!" came the reply. "Brilliant," said Volanthen. They were all alive.

He added: "Many people are coming" – though that promise would later haunt Stanton and Volanthen with the sting of guilt. The more they came to understand the boys' predicament, the less optimistic they felt.

"I am so happy," Adul told them. "We are happy, too," replied Volanthen. They went onto the sloping mud bank and stayed about 20 minutes. Stanton inspected their living quarters, the three-metre-long 'escape tunnel' they had been digging, and the sleeping area they had levelled out. When one boy asked with a hint of

desperation when they'd be back, the men responded, "We hope tomorrow."

"We are hungry," said the boys, lifting their soccer jerseys to reveal bony ribs. The divers hadn't expected to find them alive and had no food for them. Stanton took stock of the group. The little ones and the coach seemed lethargic and frail, but some of the bigger boys looked surprisingly energetic.

As the men prepared to leave, each boy came over and wrapped skinny arms around them. In a country

where physical contact among strangers is unusual, where hands pressed together in front of one's face takes the place of a handshake, the embraces showed the enormity of the boys' relief and gratitude.

As news spread that the Boars had been

found, cheers rang out at the camps of soldiers and volunteers that had sprung up around Mae Sai. In the park-ranger hut the boys' parents high-fived and hugged.

The next day, seven Thai SEALs made the perilous journey, bringing space blankets, medical supplies and energy gels to the boys; four of the men stayed behind with them. A day later, Volanthen and Stanton delivered military ration packs. It was the first food the boys had seen in 12 days.

With food in their bellies, the boys'

**THE BOYS  
HUDDLED  
TOGETHER ON  
THE SANDBAR  
TO SLEEP, THEIR  
SOBS ECHOING  
OFF THE WALLS**

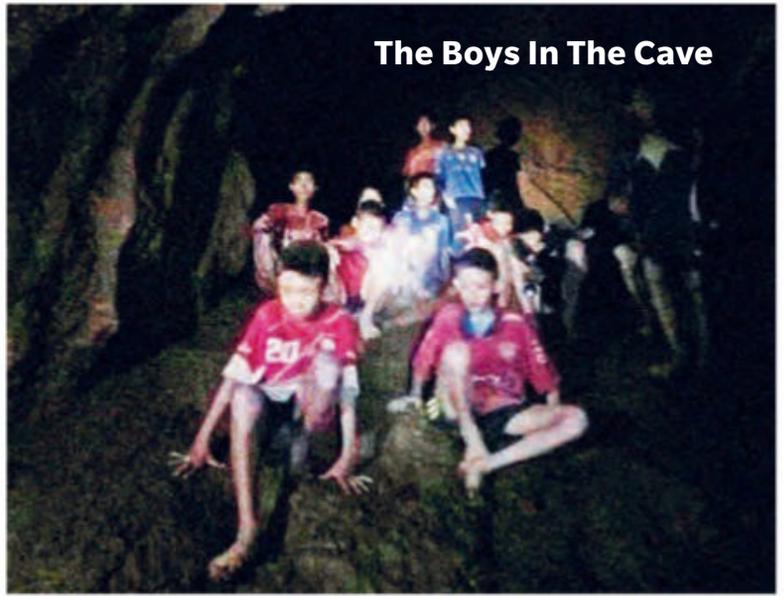
## The Boys In The Cave

vigour returned. To pass the time, they played checkers with the SEALs using clods of dirt and rocks as pieces.

An American military pararescue team, called in from their base in Okinawa, Japan, was placed in charge of rescue-plan logistics. One option – leaving the boys in the cave for months, until after the monsoon season – was dismissed when an oxygen reading in the boys' chamber showed just 15.5 per cent; it meant there was no way the boys could survive that long.

Volanthen and Stanton knew that only a handful of cave divers in the world could survive the round-trip journey as they had; they suspected bringing the boys out could be impossible. A plan was then decided: the Boars would be sedated. Otherwise, if a boy panicked, he and his rescuers could die. The linchpins of this effort would be two Australian divers who were also medical experts, veterinarian Craig Challen and anaesthetist Richard Harris. In all, about a dozen divers, working in shifts over three days, would be needed to swim the 13 out: four on each of the first two days, and five on day three.

Two of the lead divers flew in from Britain: Jason Mallinson and Chris



**This photo captures the moment when cave divers discovered that the group was alive**

Jewell. On Friday, July 6, the pair delivered food and wet suits to the boys. Hours later they arrived back at camp with notes from the boys to their families, possibly their last communication. Eleven-year-old Titan had written, “Mum, Dad, don’t worry, I’m OK, please tell Yod to prepare to take me to eat fried chicken. Love you.”

### **A High-Risk Mission**

Before the rescue could begin, hundreds of air tanks had to be hauled to points along the extraction route. Flexible plastic stretchers called Skeds, which wrap around a casualty like a taco, were dropped off in Chamber Three; the boys would be put on them for the last treacherous stretch before the cave entrance.

On July 6, Saman Gunan, a square-jawed ex-Thai SEAL, was ferrying air tanks in the sump between Chambers Three and Four, his last dive

## READER'S DIGEST

of the day. His dive buddy turned around to find him unconscious. He couldn't be saved. No one knows exactly why, but he had run out of air. Gunan's death unnerved everyone.

On Saturday, July 7, the day before the rescue was to start – and two weeks since the boys had entered the cave – Harris and Challen made their way to Chamber Nine to examine the boys and calculate how much sedative each one would need. Some had symptoms of chest infection, but they and their coach seemed relatively healthy, if rail thin. The doctors also brought letters from the boys' families. "Dad and Mum are waiting to arrange your birthday party," Night's parents wrote. "Please get out soon, and stay healthy."

Harris would administer a sedative so each boy would be calm before setting off. Then at dive time they would get two injections: ketamine to knock them out and atropine to dry up their mouths and lungs so they wouldn't choke on saliva. It was likely that each boy would wake up a few times during the three-hour extraction as the medication wore off, and would need to be re-sedated by their diver. So each diver was given a crash course on how to administer a new shot of anaesthetic.

Despite the meticulous planning, the rescuers knew that some casualties were likely. There were just too many things that could go wrong.

Without fanfare, at 10am on Sunday,

July 8, the lead divers – Challen, Harris, Stanton, Volanthen, Mallinson and Jewell – slipped into the water at Chamber Three, spaced a few minutes apart. Harris would stay in Chamber Nine all day. Mallinson had volunteered to be the first to lead a boy out.

When they reached Chamber Nine, Note was readied for the trip. Harris administered the shots, and after Note lost consciousness, Harris and Mallinson zip-tied his limbs to prevent them from getting injured or entangled, and strapped on a positive-pressure face mask. It would feed air continuously to ensure the boy kept breathing while comatose. Harris tested the mask seal by dunking the boy's head into the water. But Note had stopped breathing. Then, an eternal 30 seconds later, bubbles flowed from the side of his mask, indicating exhalations.

With an oxygen tank now secured around Note's waist, Mallinson gripped the two straps on the back of the boy's inflatable vest and started kicking, following the guide line. The first section was the longest – a 20-minute, 320-metre swim. Towards the end was a choke point; Mallinson had to contort Note's body to get him through it.

Note's head, facing down, inevitably struck unseen rocks. His bare feet dangled low and scraped the sharp rocks and gravel on the tunnel floor. But Mallinson's mission wasn't necessarily to bring the boy out uninjured;

it was to bring him out alive. His sole focus was the mask's seal. If it became dislodged, Note could drown. Soon after the two emerged in Chamber Eight, Volanthen, who had been behind them, arrived with Tern. They were followed 20 minutes later by Jewell with Nick. Then one by one each diver and boy entered the sump at Chamber Seven and kept going.

### “There’s Nothing We Can Do”

Back at Chamber Nine, Harris dosed the day’s last boy, Night, with ketamine. For a few moments he stopped breathing – then came a slow breath. Stanton nosed into the canal with the boy, watching carefully for the bubbles that indicated breathing. Some 50 metres out, he shouted back to the doctor: “He doesn’t seem to be breathing much!” Night was taking maybe three breaths a minute.

Harris shouted back, “There’s nothing we can do, keep going!”

With four boys on their way out, Harris now set off. Arriving in Chamber Eight just after Stanton, he saw that Night was blue and cold, barely breathing. Harris lay cheek-to-sand and cradled the boy’s head, trying to keep his airway open. *This is going really badly*, he thought. But then Night began to take sporadic breaths and

soon his breathing stabilised – in fact, he was coming to. Harris knocked him out with another ketamine jab, and Stanton resumed their journey.

Ahead, Mallinson, the first diver, was leaving Chamber Seven when he felt Note twitch – he was coming to. In neck-deep water, he pinned Note against a wall while trying to get the ketamine from his bag, but when he found it, the syringes popped out, slowly floating away. Mallinson managed to grab one, and injected Note.

The last and most challenging choke point was a narrow vertical squeeze from Chamber Four to Chamber Three. Visibility was poor, and feeling their way was even more difficult when holding both the line and a boy.

Mallinson had memorised the squeeze. He pulled Note upright, stuffed him through the narrow opening and slid in behind, careful not to let go of the boy. It was one of the darkest parts of the dive, and Mallinson hoped his battered ward was still alive.

When they arrived at Chamber Three, the second-last one before the entrance, Note was unresponsive. A Thai doctor stationed there assessed his vitals.

“He’s alive!” came the call. There was a burst of cheers from

**HARRIS  
CRADLED THE  
UNCONSCIOUS  
BOY’S HEAD,  
THINKING: THIS  
IS GOING  
REALLY BADLY**

surrounding rescue-team members.

Now some 1000 metres more had to be covered to get Note out. First he was strapped into a Sked, which was harnessed to a newly built rope-and-pulley system that would enable the boys to be lifted over a series of boulders. After that, the Sked was carried by another team for more than 60 metres around stalagmites and boulders. Then, Thai SEALs manoeuvred the stretcher via another rope system down a 45-degree slope to a para-rescuer, who carried the boy to Chamber Two.

On the final stretch, another Thai SEAL team hauled Note through 365 metres of chest-high water, and then ran him to the cave entrance. There, he was exposed to his first rays of natural light in more than two weeks.

As the boys – first Note, then Tern, Nick and Night – emerged, ambulances moved them away from the Tham Luang cave and they were helicoptered to a hospital in Chiang Rai. At that point, even their parents weren't aware of the rescue. But it wasn't long before the news leaked: four of the boys were out, and they were all alive.

While the world was learning about the divers' incredible feat, Mallinson and the rest of the exhausted team were busy preparing for the next day's

dive, when they'd try to bring four more boys to safety. Nobody could stop yet – there were dozens of empty tanks to refill and ropes to tension.

### An Unlikely Feat

The human shuttle continued for two more days. On the second day, Nick, Adul, Bew and Dom were brought out without a single incident or scare. Harris told a rescue planner, "Man, this has never been done before. We're actually succeeding at mission impossible."

But they all knew they couldn't be complacent. There was a new threat: the forecast was for more rain on the third and final day, possibly five centimetres. The rescue would be suspended if there was too much; it could overwhelm the

**THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
RESCUE TEAM  
HAD WORKED  
TOGETHER TO  
ACHIEVE THE  
IMPOSSIBLE**

pumps that were continuously extracting water. But if that happened there was no telling how long they'd have to leave the remaining boys, Ek and the four Thai SEALs in Chamber Nine.

Next morning – Tuesday, July 10 – there was a break in the rain. It was now or never. They started an hour ahead of schedule. When the divers passed the T-junction they were relieved to see no clear water in the current – Thanet's diversion system outside was still working.

Later that day, the last boy, Pong,

was carried from the cave and taken to hospital, where he, his teammates, and their coach would remain under observation for a week. Then, the four SEALs made their way out.

As the rescue teams emerged from Tham Luang cave to huge crowds, cheering and shouts of “Heroes!” and “Thank you!” drowned out the rain. The boys’ parents cried tears of joy. It was over.

Just hours later, the monsoon rains totally sealed off Tham Luang cave.

Only the divers and doctors really understood how unlikely this rescue was. They had done something unprecedented: extracted 13 unconscious human beings through more than two kilometres of jagged, flooded tunnels without a fatality. Military and civilian, Thai and international, the rescue teams had achieved the impossible. The mission had met its objective: the Wild Boars were going home.

Several weeks later, the boys rode their bikes up the hill to Coach Ek’s small temple dormitory to celebrate Titan’s 12th birthday. It was nearly 9pm when the boys cheerily bid Ek goodbye and pointed their bikes downhill towards home – betraying not a speck of fear. They were, after all, the Moo Pa. 



**Members of the Royal Thai Navy and international volunteers heading into the cave**

*In 2019, the King of Thailand granted royal honours on 75 Thai and more than 100 foreign rescuers who took part in this remarkable feat. The King honoured SEAL Saman Gunan with a posthumous promotion and sponsored his funeral. Craig Challen and Richard Harris were jointly named 2019 Australian of the Year. The four British divers – John Volanthen, Rick Stanton, Chris Jewell and Jason Mallinson – received gallantry medals from Queen Elizabeth II and Vern Unsworth was appointed an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire). A Hollywood film called Thirteen Lives (directed by Ron Howard and starring Colin Farrell as John Volanthen and Joel Edgerton as Dr Richard Harris) is set to be released in 2022.*

EXCERPTED FROM THE BOOK *THE BOYS IN THE CAVE* BY MATT GUTMAN, © 2018 BY MATT GUTMAN. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS.



FIND THESE UNIQUE READS AT

*RDasia.com*



**FOOD + HEALTH**

**12 foods naturally high in magnesium**

Reported to improve sleep and digestion, these tasty magnesium food sources provide a daily dose.

**CULTURE + RELATIONSHIPS**

**Valentine's Day**

With February 14 traditions plus stories to make your sweetheart giggle, there are plenty of ways to celebrate.



**TRAVEL**

**The luckiest places in the world to visit**

These lucky fountains, temples and buildings may be your golden ticket to your biggest wishes being granted.



ReadersDigestAsia

**PLUS** SIGN UP TO OUR FREE NEWSLETTER FOR MORE HOT OFFERS, TOP STORIES AND PRIZES!



## Nightmare Alley **Psychological Thriller**

**I**s he beast or man? asks carnival worker Stan Carlisle (Bradley Cooper) to the gathered audience. With a talent for manipulating people with a few well-chosen words, the ambitious carny [carnival worker] hooks up with Dr Lilith Ritter, a corrupt psychiatrist (Cate Blanchett). She is even more

dangerous than he is, and together the pair swindle people out of their money.

Based on the novel by William Lindsay Gresham, *Nightmare Alley* delves into the shadowy world of a shoddy carnival filled with confident tricksters. Also starring Toni Collette, Rooney Mara and Willem Dafoe.

---

COMPILED BY DIANE GODLEY

---



**CYRANO** Musical/Romance/Drama

**T**his is an epic reimagining of the 1897 play about a tragic love triangle. Cyrano de Bergerac, a brilliant poet and swordsman, is played by Peter Dinklage (Tyrion Lannister from *Game Of Thrones*). Bergerac falls in love with his beautiful cousin and good friend Roxanne (Haley Bennett). Although he dazzles his audience with his wit and swordplay, he believes his appearance renders him unworthy of Roxanne's affections. In the meantime, she falls in love with Christian (Kelvin Harrison, Jr.) who uses Bergerac's romantic poetry to woo her.



**Ambulance** Action/Thriller

**A**n American adaptation of the 2005 Danish thriller, *Ambulance* dishes up plenty of car chases and shooting action. Decorated war veteran Will Sharp (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II) is desperate for money to cover his wife's medical bills – who is in a life-or-death situation. When he asks his adoptive brother Danny (Jake Gyllenhaal) for help, the career criminal offers him a job in LA's biggest bank heist. The getaway goes spectacularly wrong and the brothers hijack an ambulance with two people on board. The ambulance is tailed by police on the ground and from the air in a high-speed pursuit across the city.

PHOTOS: (CYRANO) PETER MOUNTAIN ©2021 METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER PICTURES INC.; (AMBULANCE) ©2021 UNIVERSAL STUDIOS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



## Podcasts

**RD Talks: Case Of The Paint-Spot Murders**

Sometimes the smallest remnants of forensic evidence and tiny clues left behind can help solve crimes. In this case, detectives were baffled by two vicious killings until they found minute specks of grey.

**The Dropout: Elizabeth Holmes On Trial**

How did the world's youngest self-made female billionaire lose it all in the blink of an eye and face criminal charges and gaol time? And why was her 'revolutionary' medical testing technology allowed to put patients at risk?

**Maintenance Phase****Maintenance Phase**

We are bombarded with health information, often from dubious sources. This well-researched programme by Audrey Gordan and Michael Hobbes analyses everything from popular diets to health scams and exposes junk science behind health fads.

**Sherlock Holmes**

Sit back and immerse yourself in some exciting mystery investigations. Featuring the brilliant detective Sherlock Holmes and partner Dr Watson, this collection introduces listeners to classic tales such as *A Scandal in Bohemia*. Search for Sherlock Holmes on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

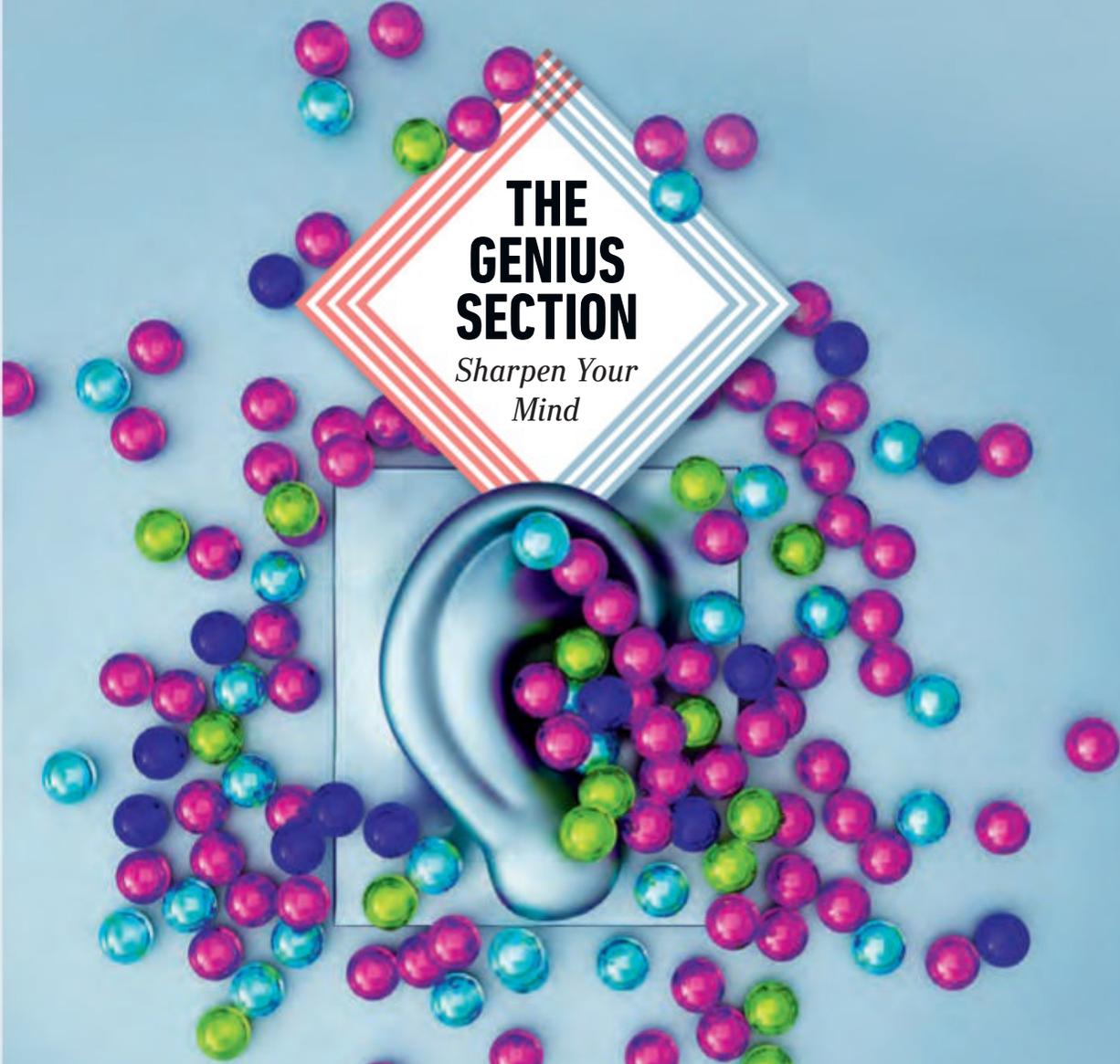


## Audio Book

**HOW TO GET PODCASTS** **To listen on the web:** In a search engine, look up 'The Dropout', for example, and click on the play button. **To download:** Download an app such as Podcatchers or iTunes on your phone or tablet and simply search by title.

**TO LISTEN TO RD TALKS GO TO**

**[www.rdasia.com/podcasts](http://www.rdasia.com/podcasts)** and click on the play button.



**THE  
GENIUS  
SECTION**

*Sharpen Your  
Mind*

# Are You A **TINGLEHEAD?**

*Up to 60 per cent of people experience an intriguing tingly feeling in their head in reaction to certain sights and sounds. We investigate the phenomenon of ASMR*

---

BY *Helen Foster*

“It feels like tiny bursting stars that begin at the base of my neck and then move up and over my head,” says Judy Bennett. “At first, I thought there was something medical going on – like a nerve problem – but then I heard about ASMR and had a major *OMG that’s what happens to me*. Now I use it all the time to help me fall asleep as it leaves me feeling really relaxed.”

ASMR stands for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response “and it’s a pleasant feeling some people experience down the spine or across the head upon exposure to certain triggers,” explains Professor David Alais who studies audiovisual perception at the University of Sydney. “It first started being talked about around ten years ago, after a single internet poster asked if anyone else felt the same warm, fuzzy feelings they did – and hundreds of people replied.” Next thing someone came up with a name for it and a new global phenomenon was born.

What sets off the ASMR reaction varies between individuals, but the most common sounds include whispering or soft talking, gentle tapping, crisp kind of crunching sounds and crinkling paper. Some people also experience tingles from rhythmic sights like folding laundry or hair being brushed. “It’s taken science a while to

catch up with people’s experiences, and we still don’t know exactly what’s going on, but we do know it’s real as it shows up during brain scans,” says Professor Alais.

ASMR expert Professor Craig Richard from Shenandoah University in the US is the scientist behind many of those brain scans. “The specific areas of the brain that activate when someone is experiencing ASMR highlight a likely involvement of reward chemicals like dopamine and oxytocin,” he says. Professor Richard says oxytocin is known as the love hormone, and the behaviours that trigger its release – touching, bonding and close personal connection – are

## SOUNDS INCLUDE WHISPERING OR SOFT TALKING AND CRUNCHING

similar to those that trigger ASMR. “Oxytocin is known to stimulate feelings of relaxation and comfort,” he says.

Alpha wave activity in the brain also increases during an ASMR reaction and heart rate falls – by an average of 3.14 beats per minute, according to research at the UK’s University of Sheffield. Levels of skin conductivity which measures psychological and physical arousal in the body also drop. These responses are similar to what happens during meditation which could explain why so many people feel calmer after watching ASMR, and why it might help trigger people to sleep.

However, not everyone who watches an ASMR video gets these reactions so researchers are working hard at building a picture of those who do. Professor Richard estimates that 20 per cent of people experience it strongly, and another 40 per cent have a milder response.

A study from teams at James Cook University in Singapore and Goldsmith's University in London, for example, found that ASMR experiencers tend to score highly on feelings of empathy, concern and fantasising. "We know it's also likely to affect those who are better at monitoring their internal feelings and who find it easy to get very absorbed into a task," says Professor Alais.

"But we also think there's actually a slightly different connection pattern in the brain of those who experience ASMR," says psychologist Natalie Roberts from Sydney's Macquarie University. "The parts of their brain involved with empathy and emotional connection are just a little more active and they have a more blended response to a trigger than other people do," she says.

In other words, when an ASMR experiencer hears their 'special' sound, more parts of the brain switch on in response than normal and this leads to reactions that spread far beyond just hearing the sound.

Because of this potential difference

in the way that people's brains respond to ASMR stimulus, experts say that it's unlikely that non-responders can learn to experience it. "You might find the videos relax you or that you enjoy them, but you won't get the tingles which are the clear signifier of a true ASMR experiencer," says Roberts.

This hasn't stopped millions of people giving it a go, though. ASMR is now the fifth most searched for term on YouTube (of all time) – to compare, singer Justin Bieber is only at number 24 – and you'll find over

13 million ASMR videos on the platform to pick from. And it's also moving offline too: in the US, you can physically visit Whisperlodge, an ASMR live-experience run by Singaporean Melinda Lauw who says she had

### IT'S UNLIKELY THAT NON- RESPONDERS CAN LEARN TO EXPERIENCE IT

---

a "weird liking for certain sounds" from childhood. Even Tourism Australia has harnessed the trend with its Australia 8D advertising campaign using locally generated ASMR sounds such as wombats crunching in snow to promote the country. The campaign, which ran in countries including Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea, was seen by over 200 million people.

However, if you do discover it works for you, don't abuse your power. "Our preliminary data shows that about 30 per cent of people who experience ASMR lose the ability for a brief period

of time,” says Professor Richard. “And loss was most commonly associated with watching too many videos.” Most people regained their tingles after a 1-2 week break, leading Professor Richard to speculate that “the loss of

sensation might be your brain’s way of saying ‘psst, take a break and do something else for a while.’”

Hmm, if only that worked for the rest of the internet, we’d probably all get a lot more done! **R**

## ASMR ACCOUNTS THAT MAY SOOTHE YOU

If you’re intrigued to discover whether you respond to ASMR, here are a few accounts to try the experience. Note that even if you are an ASMR experiencer, not every video or presenter will work for you. And, even if you don’t get the tingles you might feel more relaxed or find it easier to sleep after watching – which can’t be bad.

### Sleep Whispers

This podcast is run by Professor Craig Richard and he says people using it usually fall asleep within five minutes:  
[Sleepwhispers.com](http://Sleepwhispers.com)

### Gentle Whispering

Russian expat Maria is one of the biggest ASMR stars on YouTube with over 2.1 million subscribers. Find her at:  
[youtube.com/user/GentleWhispering](http://youtube.com/user/GentleWhispering)

### Lauren Ostrowski Fenton

If you want calming meditation alongside your ASMR triggers,

then join the 167,000 people who subscribe to this Melbournian’s channel at:  
[youtube.com/c/LaurenOstrowskiFenton](http://youtube.com/c/LaurenOstrowskiFenton)

### Jane ASMR

South Koreans currently come second in the worldwide table for people searching for ASMR videos and Jane ASMR is one of the most popular Korean creators with over 15 million subscribers. Her videos focus on chewing sounds which is interesting as many ASMR experiencers also have misophonia – a dislike of the sounds

made by people, like chewing:  
[youtube.com/c/Janeasmrr](http://youtube.com/c/Janeasmrr)

### Jimmy Hazelwood

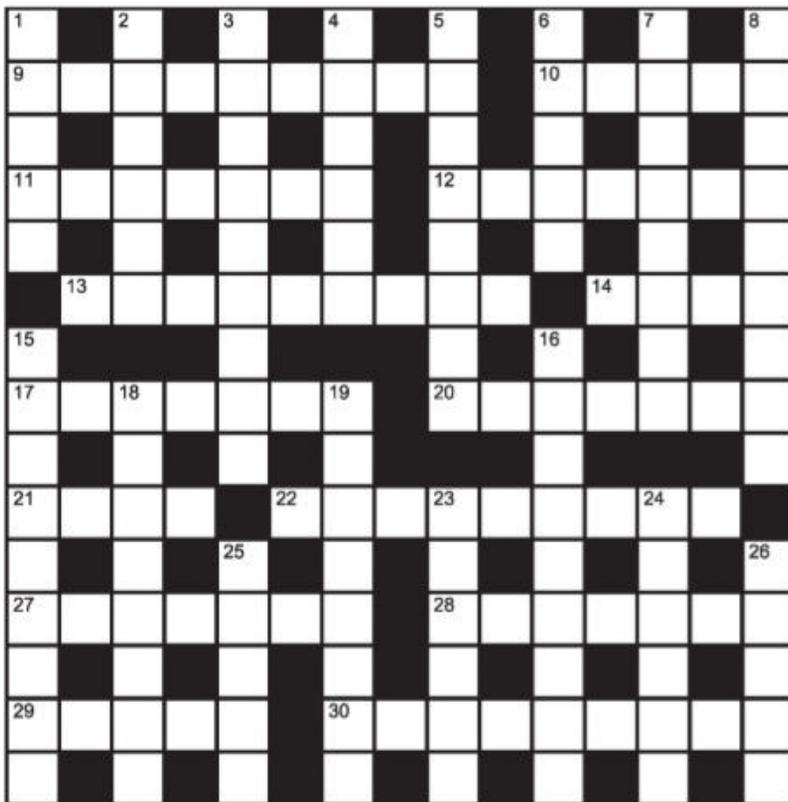
New Zealand is the tenth biggest searcher for ASMR content, and Jimmy’s calming Kiwi accent will make you feel right at home. Pick from guided meditations or quirky unboxing videos:  
[youtube.com/c/JimmyHazelwoodNZ](http://youtube.com/c/JimmyHazelwoodNZ)

### Dong ASMR

Singapore-based YouTuber Dong Li discovered ASMR when he couldn’t sleep and now combines ASMR with comedy. It must work as he has over 422,000 subscribers on his channel:  
[youtube.com/c/DongASMR](http://youtube.com/c/DongASMR)

# PUZZLES

*Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 126.*



## Crossword

Test your general knowledge.

### DOWN

- 1** Dam across the Nile (5)
- 2** Second-largest continent (6)
- 3** Timidity (9)
- 4** Old word for a young woman (6)
- 5** Continues obstinately (8)
- 6** Telecommunications device (5)
- 7** Emotional outburst (8)
- 8** Downcast (9)
- 15** Luxurious car (9)
- 16** Northern Russian city (9)
- 18** Superficial (4-4)
- 19** Rep (8)
- 23** Stir to action (6)
- 24** Something unusual (6)
- 25** Animal (5)
- 26** Absence of light (5)

### ACROSS

- 9** Strangle (9)
- 10** 'Steady state' astronomer Sir Fred H---- (5)
- 11** Creatures (7)
- 12** A member of the Senate (7)
- 13** Deliberate destruction of property (9)
- 14** Career golfers (4)
- 17** Six-legged creatures (7)
- 20** Superficial area (7)
- 21** Short death notice (4)
- 22** Not here (9)
- 27** Makes sorrowful (7)
- 28** Regulate (7)
- 29** Essentials (5)
- 30** Genuine (9)

# Puzzle Answers

PAGES 126

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

## Sudoku

**HOW TO PLAY:** To win, you have to put a number from 1 to 9 in each outlined section so that:

- Every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numerals (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- Each of the outlined sections has all nine numerals, none repeated.

### IF YOU SOLVE IT WITHIN:

**15** minutes, you're a true expert

**30** minutes, you're no slouch

**60** minutes or more, maybe numbers aren't your thing

**BRAIN POWER**  
brought to you by



**"Write, Erase, Rewrite"**

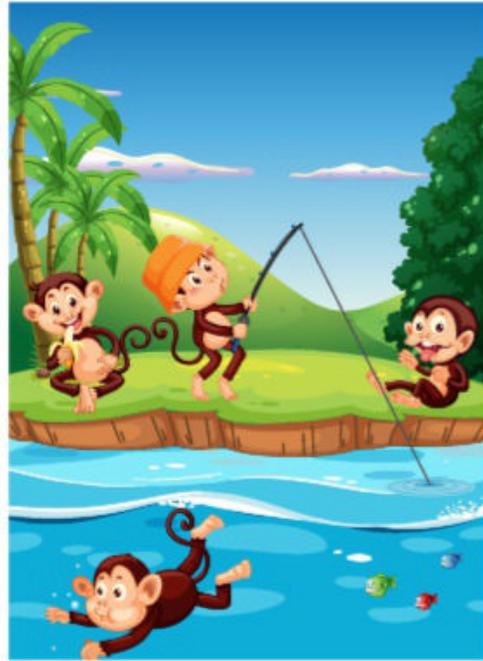
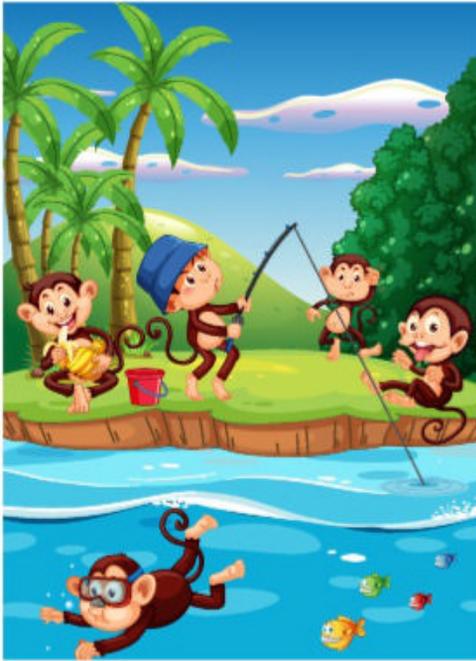
# FAMILY FUN

## Puzzle Answers

PAGES 126

### Spot The Difference

There are ten differences. Can you find them?



☹	☹	3			☹				☹
					☹			3	☹
		3		4					
		6	☹	5		3		4	2
	☹								
				2			☹	☹	2
☹		☹		☹	☹	2	☹		
	2		4						2
	2		☹	☹			☹	9	
☹				3	1				

### Contact

#### How to play:

Draw a line from each number to an outlet. Each line should pass as many empty squares as the number indicates. No square remains empty, and no outlet remains unused.

#### Example:

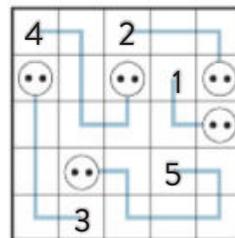


ILLUSTRATION: (MONKEYS) VECTEEZY.COM

# TRIVIA

## Test Your General Knowledge

BY Samantha Rideout

- 1.** Even during a power outage, food-crop seeds would remain safely frozen in the Global Seed Vault, located where? **2 points**
- 2.** What is generally considered to be the first science-fiction film? **2 points**
- 3.** What major sports tournament requires players to dress in white, to minimise the visibility of sweat marks? **1 point**
- 4.** What collectible plastic-brick toy sets can sell for thousands of dollars and have even become targets for thieves? **1 point**
- 5.** On average, how much time passes between two high tides? **1 point**
- 6.** Anne Bonny and Mary Read were notable 18th-century women because of their occupations as what? **2 points**



**14. Who wrote the Winnie-the-Pooh books also featuring Christopher Robin, Tigger and Piglet?**  
**2 points**

- 7.** Residents of Chumbivilcas, Peru, celebrate Christmas by challenging each other to what? **1 point**
- 8.** Every human has wisdom teeth. True or false? **1 point**
- 9.** What's the biggest wild cat native to the Americas? **1 point**
- 10.** Rank the following territories in order of size from large to small: Tasmania, Switzerland and Java Island (Indonesia)? **1 point**
- 11.** Which of the following countries does not recognise dual citizenship: China, Turkey or Denmark? **1 point**
- 12.** Name the mountain in Malaysia accorded UNESCO World Heritage status? **2 points**
- 13.** He inspired the idea of 'short man syndrome', but roughly how tall was Napoleon Bonaparte in reality? **2 points**

**16-20 Gold medal    11-15 Silver medal    6-10 Bronze medal    0-5 Wooden spoon**

**ANSWERS:** 1. Svalbard, Norway. 2. Georges Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon* (1902). 3. Wimbledon. 4. Lego. 5. Roughly 12 hours and 25 minutes. 6. Pirates. 7. Fist fights. 8. False. Increasingly, people are born with no wisdom teeth under the gums at all. 9. The jaguar. 10. Java Island 128,297 km<sup>2</sup>; Tasmania 64,519 km<sup>2</sup>; Switzerland 41,284 km<sup>2</sup>. 11. China. 12. Mount Kinabalu. 13. 1.68 to 1.70 metres, which was average in France at the time. 14. A.A. Milne.





## WORD POWER

### *Baby Talk*

*Babies can start building their vocabularies at eight months old. How many of these terms are in yours?*

BY *Rob Lutes*

- 1. echolalia** – A: jerky hand movement in infants. B: repetition of speech by a child learning to talk. C: infant’s joyful response on hearing music.
- 2. bantling** – A: young child. B: one-piece sleeping garment. C: baby bed with side rails.
- 3. bassinet** – A: baby safety gate. B: bond between mother and infant. C: baby’s wicker cradle.
- 4. colic** – A: infant’s fear of abandonment. B: intense and frequent crying in an infant. C: cereal for babies.
- 5. Apgar score** – measure of: A: infant intellect. B: physical condition of a newborn. C: health of mother after birth.
- 6. quintuplet** – A: each of three children born at one birth. B: each of four children born at one birth. C: each of five children born at one birth.
- 7. fontanelle** – A: dimple in cheek. B: sippy cup. C: space between bones in an infant’s skull.
- 8. babymoon** – A: holiday taken by a couple before the birth of a child. B: eve of newborn’s birth. C: newborn’s first birthday.
- 9. helicopter parent** – parent who is: A: distant. B: dangerous. C: overprotective.
- 10. object permanence** – A: understanding that objects exist when out of sight. B: toddler’s refusal to share. C: infant ability to keep muscles still.
- 11. postpartum** – A: following childbirth. B: relating to social-media images of newborn. C: describing the birth of twins.
- 12. motherese** – A: mother’s euphoria after delivery. B: simplified speech used for babies. C: maternal instinct.
- 13. au pair** – A: person who helps with child care in exchange for room and board. B: stroller that holds two babies. C: swaddling blanket.
- 14. neonatal** – of or relating to: A: newborn children. B: parenting. C: one’s birthplace.

## Answers

**1. echolalia** – B: repetition of speech by a child learning to talk. Liz noticed baby Pia's echolalia when she started repeating everything her big brother said.

**2. bantling** – A: young child. The family reunion had a youthful spirit, with many bantlings running about.

**3. bassinet** – C: baby's wicker cradle. Jackson stepped closer to the white bassinet and peered in wonder at the sleeping child.

**4. colic** – B: intense and frequent crying in an infant. Suffering from colic, the baby rarely slept for more than an hour at a time.

**5. Apgar score** – B: measure of the physical condition of a newborn. Bev was relieved to receive her tiny daughter's perfect Apgar score of 10.

**6. quintuplet** – A: each of five children born at one birth. The five boys are the first set of quintuplets born in the village.

**7. fontanelle** – C: space between bones in an infant's skull. Bharath felt a fontanelle near the crown of his daughter's head.

**8. babymoon** – A: holiday taken by a couple before the birth of a child. They spent their babymoon walking the beach and contemplating parenthood.

**9. helicopter parent** – C: parent who is overprotective. Janet watched the helicopter parents chase their kids around the room.

**10. object permanence** – A: understanding that objects exist when out of sight. Having developed object permanence, baby Zara knew her toy was behind Daddy's back.

**11. postpartum** – A: following childbirth. Helena was impressed with the local hospital's postpartum care.

**12. motherese** – B: simplified speech used for babies. Nana soothed the crying infant with motherese.

**13. au pair** – A: person who helps with child care in exchange for room and board. Fiona loved exploring Paris while working as an au pair for a well-to-do French family.

**14. neonatal** – A: of or relating to newborn children. Born premature, Khalib spent six weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit before being allowed to go home with his mother.

---

### VOCABULARY RATINGS

**5–8:** Fair

**9–11:** Good

**12–14:** Word Power Wizard

PILOT

FRESH FROM  
THE OCEAN.\*



Ocean  
Plastic

オーシャン プラスチック



(0.5mm) Blue Ink



**SUPER GRIP • G**

スーパーグリップG

Made in Japan

\*Made from  
plastic trash + recycled  
in the ocean plastic





# THE MOST POWERFUL AND DURABLE MODEL IN ITS RANGE



Minimalist-styled, compact yet all-round performer is the most economically-friendly and competent air purifier of its range. Packed with great features and performance, novita PuriClean™ Air Purifier A11 is definitely a must-have for your home and office!



## 500 M<sup>3</sup>/HR HIGH AIRFLOW RATE



*Rae Yun*  
Rae Yun (Mumpreneur)  
With her kids, JJ & Nicco



### A11 FEATURES

-   
**Brushless Dc Motor System**
-   
**Moving Average Pm2.5 Display**
-   
**Air Quality Sensor Light**
-   
**3 Programmed Modes**
-   
**PuriPro® Filtration System**

**novita**  
AIR • WATER • BODY