

**MAY
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2023**



**IN THE
KNOW**

NEWS YOU CAN USE

It's Electrifying! Electric Cars Are Getting Charged Up

As environmental concerns continue to rise, so does the popularity of electric vehicles. Several major car manufacturers, from Dodge and GM to Nissan and Toyota, have produced their own models, making electric vehicles more accessible than ever.

Of course, many benefits of electric cars are well known, such as reduced fuel costs and tailpipe emissions, making EVs more environmentally friendly. But did you know that EVs also have lower maintenance costs? Electronic motors have fewer moving parts and never require oil changes, new spark plugs or filters, making for increased savings.¹

There are plenty of reasons to make the switch from a gas-powered vehicle to an electric one. For many Americans,

however, concerns remain mainly around the lack of convenient charging stations. That's about to change.

In February, the Biden administration announced its Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program aimed at bolstering the EV charging network across the country with 500,000 chargers by 2030.² It's an ambitious goal, helped partly by Tesla's promise to make its charging stations usable by other brands.³ So that electric Ford F-150 you've been eyeing could soon find a (charging) home next to the iconic EV brand.

Sources: ¹ Drive Clean. "Top 5 Reasons to Drive Electric Cars." <https://driveclean.ca.gov/top-reasons>. Accessed Feb. 16, 2023.

² U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. "Biden-Harris Administration Announces Latest Steps to Deliver a National Network of Convenient, Reliable, Made-in-America Electric Vehicle Chargers." <https://highways.dot.gov/newsroom/biden-harris-administration-announces-latest-steps-deliver-national-network-convenient>. Accessed March 1, 2023.

³ James Bikales. Politico. Feb. 15, 2023. "Tesla agrees to open chargers to public amid White House electric vehicle push." <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/02/15/tesla-chargers-public-electric-vehicles-00082875>. Accessed March 1, 2023.



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THAT TIME OF YEAR

Treetop Treats

Growing up, summer was a magical time. It meant campfires and s'mores, fireflies and campouts, and staying up way past your bedtime. Why not recapture some of that childhood magic (mixed with a little grownup luxury) this summer by planning a treehouse vacation?

As odd as it might sound, treehouse rentals have become wildly popular in recent years. From rustic pioneer treetop cabins in Yosemite to cottages in Costa Rica, you can find your ideal treehouse practically anywhere in the world — with the promise of adventure and exploration right outside your door.

Unlike the treehouses of our childhood, with leaky roofs and questionable rope

ladders, treehouse rentals today promise a level of luxury we could never have dreamed of as kids. From gourmet kitchens to indulgent hot tubs, roughing it in the woods never seemed so easy and fun.

Don't believe it? Check out Winvian Farm in Morris, Connecticut, home of an opulent, two-level treehouse set 35 feet above the New England forest floor. With a private jacuzzi, king bed, steam shower, fireplace and more, this is one treehouse you'll have to see to believe.

A treehouse bed and breakfast is another option, such as the Out'n'About Treehouse Treesort in Cave Junction, Oregon, where guests

enjoy a full breakfast every morning. The Out'n'About offers 15 treehouses and a full line of activities, including ziplining, horseback riding and rafting.

Treehouse rentals aren't just for summer, however. If you're looking for a secluded winter hideaway where you can relax and watch the snowfall, a few days at the Adirondack Tree House Retreat in Middle Grove, New York, might be just what you need. Take in the area's natural beauty while roasting marshmallows over a firepit.

Your treetop adventure awaits!

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THE GOOD LIFE

The Little Things¹

Would you rather go on a luxury vacation to an exotic destination or spend a few quiet days at home? Have a big blowout birthday celebration or a small, intimate dinner with family and friends?

For most people, it's not even a question. Society encourages us to seek out the rare, expensive and grand. Bigger is better and more fulfilling, right? According to the advertisers, yes. According to science, not necessarily.

While exotic travels and big celebrations can be fun and bring a measure of joy, they aren't a true indicator of happiness. The science of happiness has proved that the small pleasures in life leave us happier, more fulfilled and more grounded. But why?

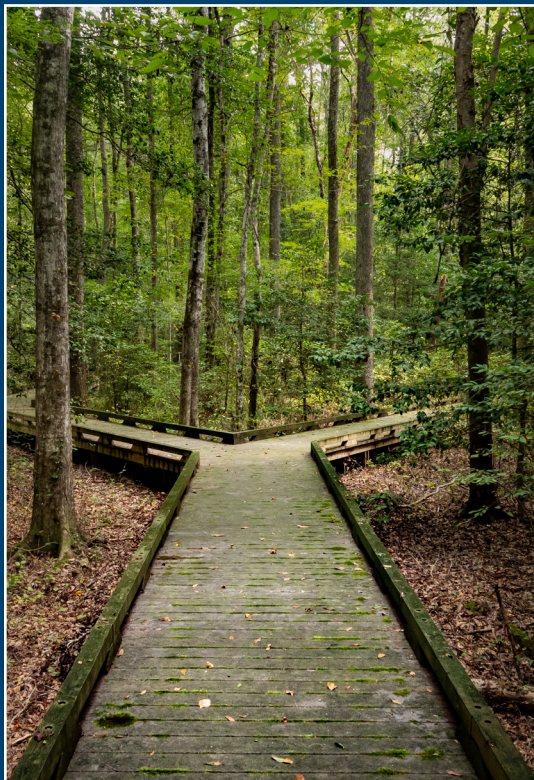
To start with, humans are social creatures. We generally find more joy in meaningful connections with others (and ourselves) than in material



possessions and large-scale experiences. Who we spend our time with is more important than where.

Secondly, we already have an emotional connection to small pleasures because they are familiar (and easy to share). Because they are familiar, they have the strongest capacity to create joy and happiness. The scent of freshly brewed coffee, the riot of colors as the leaves change, a hug from a friend — small joys that fill our daily lives help restore feelings of happiness and positivity and help us feel energized and productive. Most importantly, they are the small joys that add up to a life well-lived.

Source: ¹ Intelligent Change. "Why Small Pleasures Matter." <https://www.intelligentchange.com/blogs/read/why-small-pleasures-matter>. Accessed Feb. 17, 2023.



HOW TO ...

Make Choices

Are you used to grabbing a coin and letting heads or tails decide between your two favorite things? Afterward, do you feel guilty for not being able to make a simple decision? Life is full of decisions, from where to eat to how you should spend your money, but there are better options than letting fate decide if you find yourself struggling to make choices. Take back your fate with these tips:¹

Limit Your Options

If there is less to choose from, you will be able to listen to what you really want. Limit your options to three to five choices and then decide from your smaller list of options.

Trust Yourself

Although it is good to ask friends and family for their opinions, it can overshadow what YOU want. Trust your gut and work through the need to ask everyone else their preferences.

Practice the 80-20 Rule

Routines are a great way to overcome indecisiveness. Focus on ensuring that your routines are consistent 80% of the time and dedicate the other 20% to giving yourself a break if you don't uphold a routine.

Source: ¹Clare Schneider. December 21, 2022. "How to be more decisive." <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/07/1084907897/any-decision-is-better-than-indecision-try-these-tips-to-actually-choose>. Accessed Feb. 24, 2023.



DOLLARS & SENSE

An Ounce of Prevention Is Worth a Pound of Cure

How often do you see your doctor when you're not ill? For most people, the answer is never. As a result, many don't realize they have a problem until it's too late, often with devastating consequences for their health and finances.

It's no secret that the United States has one of the highest health care costs in the world, spending \$4.3 trillion (approximately \$12,900 per person) in 2021 alone — almost double what individuals in other wealthy countries spend.¹ For those in retirement, this can significantly impact your income. In fact, health care continues to be one of — if not the — most significant expense in retirement.

Recent studies estimate that the average retired couple aged 65 in 2022 can expect to spend around \$315,000 on health care expenses. How did it get to be so much? For starters, the average premium for Medicare Part B in 2022 was \$170 per month. The average cost for a semi-private room in a long-term care facility was \$7,908 per month, with a private room averaging \$9,034 per month.² Factor in all the medical-related costs Medicare doesn't cover while prices continue to rise, and it's easy to see how quickly the numbers add up.

Researchers noted, "With out-of-pocket health expenditures eating away at retirement income and Part B premiums on the rise, it is understandable why many retirees likely feel that making ends meet is difficult."³

On the other hand, taking a proactive approach to health care can save you a lot of heartaches — figuratively and literally — down the line. Consider diabetes, the most expensive chronic condition in the United States, affecting more than 37 million people of all ages. For those aged 65 and older suffering from Type 2 diabetes, the cost of treatment is approximately \$5,876 per person each year.⁴

Preventative measures, such as maintaining a healthy diet, getting regular exercise and annual health screenings, are a lot less costly by comparison. While some risk factors, such as family history, can't be changed, the risk for Type 2 diabetes can be reduced by more than 50% when preventative measures are taken.⁵

Taking the necessary steps to detect and prevent disease before it becomes a serious problem can help significantly decrease the overall cost of disease management for individuals and society, including reducing the strain placed on our already overburdened health care system. Preventative measures can lead to fewer emergency room visits, lower costs for health care and insurance premiums and higher quality of life for everyone.⁶

When it comes to your health, prevention is better than cure, no matter how you measure it. There's simply no making up for the time and health lost to illness, time that is infinitely better spent pursuing the things you enjoy with the people you love.

Sources: ¹ Peter G. Peterson Foundation. Jan. 30, 2023. "Why Are Americans Paying More For Healthcare?" <https://www.pgpf.org/blog/2023/01/why-are-americans-paying-more-for-healthcare>. Accessed Feb. 17, 2023.

^{2,3} Trina Paul. CNBC. Oct. 3, 2022. "Medical costs can eat up a sizeable portion of your retirement savings — here's how much you should expect to spend." <https://www.cnbc.com/select/how-much-expect-to-spend-on-medical-expenses-in-retirement/>. Accessed March 8, 2023.

^{4,5} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dec. 21, 2022. "Power of Prevention: Health and Economic Benefits of Diabetes Interventions." <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/programs-impact/pop/diabetes.htm>. Accessed Feb. 17, 2023.

⁶ Rocky Vista Health Center. July 28, 2022. "Top Benefits and Tips for Preventative Healthcare." <https://www.rockyvistahc.com/top-benefits-and-tips-for-preventive-healthcare>. Accessed Feb. 17, 2023.

Shopping Small Can Have a Big Impact¹

From food to clothes to home goods and everything in between, big box stores provide consumers with the convenience of one-stop shopping, usually combined with seemingly great deals and discounts. While the savings can appear hard to pass up, there are several good reasons to forgo the chain and redirect your dollars to your local businesses — including being better for your wallet in the long run.

Support Local Communities

By supporting your local small businesses, you’re also supporting the continued growth of your community. Unlike big box stores that typically receive tax breaks for setting up shop in your community, tax revenue from a small business is cycled back into the community. Big box revenue is sent outside of the community.

Furthermore, because local business owners depend heavily on their communities, they tend to be more heavily invested in supporting their communities. On average, small businesses donate 250% more than large businesses to local charities, nonprofits, youth organizations, local service groups and more.

Service With a Real Smile

Small businesses tend to spend more time ensuring you have a pleasant customer experience. They’re more likely to hire people with proficient knowledge of the products and services they’re selling, and they’re more likely to take the time to get to know their customers and their needs. The very livelihood of small businesses depends on happy customers, and they’re usually willing to go above and beyond to ensure a happy outcome.



Source: ¹Joseph Lustberg. *Forbes*. June 28, 2022. “7 Reasons To Shop Local And Support Small Businesses.” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesfinancecouncil/2022/06/28/7-reasons-to-shop-local-and-support-small-businesses/?sh=41ec116450d1>. Accessed 2.22.23.

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BRAIN GAMES

Str8ts

Game Rules

Rows and columns are divided into compartments of white squares. Use single numbers to complete a straight for each compartment. A straight is a set of numbers with no gaps and in any order. No single number can repeat in any row or column. Clues in black cells remove that number as an option in that row and column, and are not part of any straight.



PLAN A TRIP LIKE A PROFESSIONAL

Warmer weather means colder drinks, long nights with friends and family, and traveling. Traveling is not only good for the soul but also for your health. A trip can relieve stress, lead to creativity and inspiration, and boost overall happiness.¹ With summer just around the corner, it may be time to start planning the trip you have waited so long for. Worry less about planning the perfect trip and get ready to have the perfect trip with these tips.²

FIND WHAT YOU'RE INTERESTED IN

Before worrying about how much to budget for your trip, spend some time looking at your options. Do you want the beach or the mountains? Will you bring your friends or fly solo? Start to map out your options and weigh the benefits and costs of them. Start to research destinations to go to. Remember to pick your favorites because you do not want your itinerary to be packed in a way that you cannot enjoy your vacation.

BOOK EARLY

The worst thing that can happen is finding your dream trip and putting off booking your rooms and flights only to come back and see that they do not have open rooms or seats. There are many places that offer a deposit to hold the room, then require you to pay in full before the trip starts. If your funds are insufficient before your trip starts, put down the deposit and secure your rooms, then pay the balance before you go on the trip.

REMEMBER TO HAVE FUN

Planning and booking a trip can be stressful, but keep in mind why you're going. Whether you have wanted to travel for a while or if you've had the perfect trip on your mind, remember to have fun. Don't let the stress of planning ruin what will be a great vacation.

SOURCES:

¹ Stacey Leasca. Travel & Leisure. Aug. 29, 2021. "5 Ways Travel Is Good for Your Health, According to Experts." <https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/yoga-wellness/ways-travel-is-good-for-your-health>. Accessed March 1, 2023.

² Condominium Travel Club. 2021. "5 Tips for Planning the Perfect Vacation." <https://www.condotrailclub.com/2021/12/5-tips-for-planning-the-perfect-vacation/>. Accessed Feb. 27, 2023.

By Any Other Name ...¹

Your latte has become the center of fierce struggle — specifically, the milk used to create the perfect creamy start to your day or afternoon pick-me-up.

The dairy industry has been crying over spilled plant-based alternatives for years — specifically the “milk” label. Dairy producers claim plant-based drinks dilute the real meaning of the term “milk.”

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) disagrees. According to a federal ruling released in late February, plant-based alternatives are not trying to masquerade themselves as being from dairy animals, and the public is aware of the difference between animal- and plant-based foods. As such, the ruling states that plant-based drinks can keep labeling themselves as milk so long as they continue to label themselves clearly by the plant source, such as “soy,” “cashew” and so on.

However, plant-based beverage makers are encouraged to provide additional nutrition labels noting when their milk is less nutritious than cow’s milk. While the National Milk Producers Federation



was unhappy with the FDA’s ruling on the name “milk,” it did applaud the call for extra nutrition labels — something plant-based beverage producers object to.

Despite growing popularity, plant-based drinks won’t be dethroning dairy milk anytime soon. So, maybe we can just agree that milk is a delicious part of life no matter how you pour it.

Source: ¹ NPR. Feb. 23, 2023. “No cow needed. Oat and soy can be called milk, FDA proposes.” <https://www.npr.org/2023/02/23/1158933295/oat-and-soy-can-be-called-milk-fda-proposes>. Accessed Feb. 24, 2023.

BRAIN GAMES

ANSWER KEY:

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

cut here ✂



RECIPE

STRAWBERRY PRETZEL SALAD

Strawberry pretzel salad is an easy dessert with lots of contrasting textures and flavors. It isn't too sweet, nor too salty, and looks really pretty when you make it in a glass ovenproof baking dish.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups crushed pretzels
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons white sugar
- 1 (8 oz) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 (8 oz) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 2 (3 oz) packages strawberry flavored Jell-O®
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 (10 oz) packages frozen strawberries

HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).
2. Stir crushed pretzels, melted butter, and 3 tablespoons sugar together until well-combined; mix well and press mixture into the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until set, about 8 to 10 minutes; set aside to cool.
4. Place cream cheese and 1 cup sugar in a large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer until smooth; fold in whipped topping. Spread mixture onto cooled crust.
5. Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Stir in still-frozen strawberries and allow to set briefly. Pour and spread over cream cheese layer; refrigerate until set, at least 2 hours.

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- 5 Cinco de Mayo
- 14 Mother's Day
- 29 Memorial Day

JUNE

- 14 Flag Day
- 18 Father's Day
- 24 Armed Forces Day

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