

# Do Something

## Guide to the great outdoors

*Whether you've got an hour to spare or a weekend, it's time to get outside and make the most of spring*



#### ILLUSTRATIONS

*Ben Lamb*

#### SET DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY

*Kyle Bean and Aaron Tilley*

#### An hour

*Cloud spotting, foraging, fire-lighting and a microadventure*

#### A day

*Mountain climbing, 'Close eyes, point, go' and the end of the line*

#### A night

*Moon walking, bat watching, camping and seeing in the dark*

#### A weekend

*Island hopping, waterfalling, nature writing and knife carving*

# An hour

These mini adventures are perfect for busy lives - add a new experience to your daily routine



## Cloud spotting

Whether you're in the office or your garden, learn to predict the weather



### Cumulus

Detached clumps of cloud composed of water droplets that form low and indicate fair weather. Have flat bases and heaped tops, and look a dazzling white in the sunshine



### Alto

Appears as rolls of cloud, or layered patches in the mid-level region. Commonly found between warm and cold fronts, so can precede bad weather



### Cirrus

Detached, wispy, clouds, formed of ice crystals. Wavy appearance is caused by wind movement. Can indicate a change in the weather. Also known as mares' tails



### Cirrocumulus

High patches of cloudlets made up of ice crystals which never cast self-shadows. Usually seen after rain, indicating improving weather



### Cumulonimbus

Known as thunderclouds, have low dark bases and extend many miles up into the atmosphere. Produce brief, heavy downpours, and sometimes lead to hail and lightning

## Lunchtime microadventure

Rather than eating last night's leftovers, use your lunchbreak to set out into the unknown

A lunchbreak is the perfect time to do something different, says the adventurer Alastair Humphreys. "Microadventures take away the usual obstacles, such as expense and time, and suggest a way of enjoying the outside world within the limitations of our home and work life."

The key is to rethink how we view the seemingly ordinary world around us. We imagine a walk or adventure has to happen in beautiful rolling countryside - and of course, it's often hard to find the time to get out there. But even in the middle of towns and cities there are canals, parks, historic buildings, and plenty of wildlife. Rather than wasting a precious hour eating a sandwich at your desk, or sitting down in front of another episode of Doctors, strike out into your local neighbourhood and treat it like a wild landscape. Observe the seasons - are the plants and trees flowering or in leaf? Look up at the sky, and use our guide to identify the clouds. With a bit of practice you will be able to predict what the weather will do next.

Or try a commuter microadventure by taking a different route to the station. Catch a bus instead of a tube, walk down parallel streets. Look at your routine, and force yourself to break it, even if it's just once a week

Alastair's adventures are at [alastairhumphreys.com](http://alastairhumphreys.com)  
**Becky Barnicoat**

## How to build a fire

Cook your foraged lunch in the open air



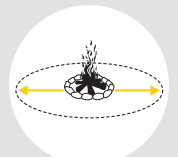
### Find your wood

Divide into three heaps: matchstick, thick as a finger, bigger than a wrist



### Find your tinder

Use natural: eg birch bark, dry grass; or man-made: cotton wool or paper



### Prepare a fire space

Clear a 2m spot, place a raft of dry sticks as a barrier between ground and fire



### Start your fire

Light tinder, add wood slowly (thin first). Add Vaseline to tinder to encourage the flame

## The challenge

### Set out for the horizon

#### KIT

- Watch
- Camera
- Sense of direction

- Look out of an upstairs window and choose a point on the horizon - a church spire, a tree, a block of flats.
- Attempt to reach your destination without using a map - don't worry if you don't reach it, that's half the fun.
- Use your phone, or a camera, to take pictures every 10 minutes, to focus your eye on unexpected detail.



**Share your photos**  
Have you spotted a cloud that looked like something else? We'd love to see it [theguardian.com/witness](http://theguardian.com/witness)

**Win a cloud guide!**  
We have 10 of the Cloud Appreciation Society's Cloud Selectors to give away. Email [do.something@theguardian.com](mailto:do.something@theguardian.com)



## Five wild ingredients

What to forage for from now until the end of the summer



**Alexanders**  
Hedges, waste ground  
All parts edible  
Harvest: March - May



**Fennel**  
Trading estates  
Leaves and seeds  
May - Nov



**Elder**  
Neglected areas  
Heads, cooked berries  
June - July



**Lime (linden)**  
Avenues, parks  
Young leaves  
June - July



**Wild plum**  
Hedges, carparks  
Ripe fruit  
August - October



◀ **Rich pickings**  
The banks of canals are excellent foraging spots

**200**  
species

of edible plants growing wild in major British cities

SOURCE: Forage London

## Stinging nettle pesto

Jon's simple recipe



### Ingredients

25g nettle tops  
2 cloves garlic  
25g grana padano cheese (crumbled)  
25g ground almonds  
8 tbsp olive oil  
Black pepper

### How to make it

1. Wash nettle tops, remove any old or discoloured leaves and shake off excess water.
2. In a food processor, blend together garlic, almonds and 3 tbsp of the oil to form a paste. Add cheese, nettle tops, the rest of the oil and combine to form the pesto.
3. Transfer it into a bowl and season with black pepper. Add more oil if the mixture is too stiff.

Your pesto will keep for up to a week in the fridge if covered with some extra oil.

## Forage for your lunch

*So long, supermarket bags of salad and over-priced herbs, it's easy to find and pick your own, even in the city*

**WORDS** Sarah Phillips

Ipswich doesn't seem the most likely location for a spot of urban foraging, yet my prejudice proves how little I know about the delicacies available in public places for free. I'm here for a lunchtime lesson from Jon Tyler, who has been running edible tours for 20 years. Within minutes, he is on his knees pulling at what look suspiciously like weeds. In fact it is wild rocket. So long, horrible plastic bags of the stuff - why not pick it yourself?

Walking along the River Orwell, the first rule of foraging becomes apparent: don't pick too low and risk

contamination by "dog truffles", as Tyler puts it. I don't let this put me off as he grabs a handful of sea beet - a relative of beetroot - from a spot a great dane could probably reach. Before I know it I am munching away, without so much as a rinse.

Tyler talks excitedly of fig trees and wild strawberry bushes that people pass, oblivious. If someone's fruit tree is hanging over a public path he will ask them if he can pick from it. Mostly they say yes.

It turns out that seemingly everyday weeds are actually quite flavoursome. "Someone told me it tastes like green," Tyler laughs as we munch on mallow, and this is true of most of the delights we sample along the Alderman canal. That blackthorn blossom looks so good you could eat it - and we do.

When foraging, you need to proceed with caution. Tyler advises that plants are safer to start with than mushrooms, especially from March onwards when their flowers give crucial clues as to what they are. "If you're not sure about it you won't enjoy it," he says. Only pick as much as

you need and don't uproot it - as well as spoiling it for others, this is illegal. Nettles lose their sting when crushed, but wear gloves to pick them.

As we stop for an al fresco lunch, it becomes clear that like any kind of cooking, it's not what you have but what you do with it. Luckily for me, Tyler is a superb cook. Mary Poppins-style, he pulls out a camping stove, pans and utensils, and the canalside wall is transformed into a kitchen.

Using leaves from our walk (nettles, cow parsley, fennel), plus a few foraged goodies from his store cupboard, Tyler rustles up a spring herb and jelly-ear fungus sesame pancake, fettuccine with nettle pesto (tangier than basil) and St George's mushroom, followed by blackberry oaties. This is all washed down with some boozy beech-leaf noyau, a recipe from Richard Mabey's Food for Free.

As confused passersby head off for a standard sandwich, I am suitably impressed and inspired ●  
To go on one of Jon Tyler's tours visit [wildforwoods.co.uk](http://wildforwoods.co.uk) or look out for events at [foodsafari.co.uk](http://foodsafari.co.uk)

# A day

*If you've only got 24 hours, try our alternative travel ideas and end up somewhere new and unexpected*



## 'Close eyes, point, go'

*There are so many places you could go to for the day, but how do you decide on your destination? Leave it up to fate*

**WORDS** Rhik Samadder

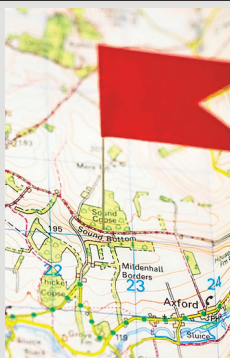
I'm standing in WHSmith at London Paddington holding an A-Z, with my eyes closed. I am about to stick my finger somewhere on a map at random and attempt to get there. The idea of "Close eyes, point, go" is that having an adventure doesn't need to be expensive, or take months of planning. It can start now.

I open my eyes. My finger is pointing at a dry riverbed at the bottom of a copse in Wiltshire, called Sound Bottom. It sounds like a place chosen for comic value, but the North Wessex Downs page of the A-Z doesn't have a non-silly name on it. I could as easily have headed for Goosey, Hell Corner or Compton Beauchamp. Off we go.

My best bet seems to be the 10.18am into Berkshire, which stops at a village called Kintbury near the Wiltshire border. I board the train with Toby, my canine co-adventurer. I'm not someone who likes surprises, so stepping into the unknown like this is pretty nerve-racking. Anxiously researching how to get closer to Sound Bottom, I come across the Kennet Horse Boat Company, which runs horse-drawn barge tours up the Kennet and Avon canal. Maybe they'll let me hitch a ride.

At Kintbury, the river runs right by the station, and I quickly spot the Kennet Valley barge, and its owner Steve Butler. Unfortunately I'm just too early: the boat doesn't run until Easter. Steve invites me into the galley, and makes me a cup of tea on the gas stove. He's so friendly and easy-going. I decide to seek his help. "I'm

► **Bottom's up**  
Rhik's mission was to find his way to Sound Bottom in Wiltshire



looking for Sound Bottom," I tell him, explaining the challenge. "Never heard of it," he replies, which sounds about right. Still, he says he'll try to get me a bit closer in his Morris Minor.

Driving through Ramsbury, a tiny village, I squint at the blurry picture of the A-Z on my phone. I don't really know where we are, or where we're going, and it's sort of exciting. After 15 pleasant minutes of country roads, I realise I can't make a stranger drive me around all day - it's time to make my own way, even if I get lost. I thank Steve profusely, as he lets me out and waves me off.

I find myself on a road with fields gently sloping away to either side. Is this the dry riverbed? Twenty minutes later, we enter a dense copse of trees.



There are horticultural contraptions lying around that look like miniature seesaws. I creep further into the wood. I find a sheet of metal and lift it to uncover a well. It feels like stumbling into a fairytale or a secret garden.

Is this Sound Copse on Sound Bottom? I don't know for sure, but I don't think it matters. I've jumped on a random train, hitched a ride with a stranger, and wandered deep in to the countryside. Embracing spontaneity feels exhilarating and rewarding, even more so for being out of my comfort zone. This morning I was part of the commuter crush, now I'm standing in a mysterious grove with no one around for miles. I do feel like an explorer ● 'Close eyes, point, go' was inspired by Alastair Humphreys

**11,073**  
miles

of coastline  
around the UK  
(excluding islands)  
SOURCE: Ordnance Survey

## What to take on your adventure

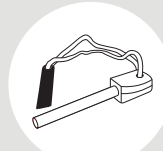
Five kit-list heroes for every explorer, picked by *Outback2basics*



**Silicone teabag**  
Make tea/medicines from foraged wild plants



**Metal cup**  
Brew tea and hot water on the fire directly



**Fire striker**  
It's light in weight, won't run out and works if wet



**Vaseline**  
Great to protect skin and to add to your wet fire-lighting kit



**Ball of jute**  
For traps, fishing, shelter building, endless possibilities

## Endangered songbirds

Watch out for these five before they vanish



**Starling**  
They whistle, warble and mimic



**Robin**  
Often sing at night next to streetlamps



**House sparrow**  
Listen out for a noisy chirrup



**Chaffinch**  
Easy to spot, with an orange breast



**Blackbird**  
Females are brown, males are black

## Go to the end of the line

You see the names every time you travel - next time, miss your stop and keep on going

Bents Green, Cockfosters, Canklow, Droylsden, Hunter's Tryst - the exotic names at the end of the line. For those of us who don't live there, they sound both familiar and mysterious - spotted daily at the far reaches of our bus or train journeys, yet rarely visited.

"The suburbs," wrote JG Ballard, "are far more sinister places than most city dwellers imagine. Their very blandness forces the imagination into new areas." Travel to the end of the line and you might find somewhere unexpectedly inspiring.

As you move from the centre of town out into the suburbs, you move through history. The architecture changes from Victorian to pre-war, to post-war, to modern day. The suburbs aren't chaotic, like cities. They are carefully constructed by town planners. But things don't always go to plan, and so you find empty boulevards, disused buildings and communal gardens gone to seed.

Take time to explore the rail or bus terminus, too. The photographer Craig Atkinson has just published the third part of his visual investigation into Preston Bus Station, capturing its pie shop, barbers, and Brutalist late 60s architecture ([craigatkinson.co.uk](http://craigatkinson.co.uk)). These functional places, which aren't meant to be looked at, are interesting ●

BB



## Climb a mountain

The British Mountaineering Council's favourites can all be climbed in a day



These mountains are all suitable for beginners, and are listed in order of difficulty with the easiest first.

### Conic Hill, Loch Lomond (350m)

Enjoy great views of the island-studded loch with Ben Lomond and the Arrochar Alps beyond. The hill straddles the boundary fault between Scotland's lowlands and highlands; the climb will take two to three hours.  
Nearest station: *Balloch*

### Mam Tor and the 'Great Ridge' (517m)

This is a classic route in the Peak District, taking in a long sweeping ridge and a climb of the superb viewpoint that is Mam Tor. Completing the tour starting at Hope takes four hours.  
Nearest station: *Hope or Edale*

### Pen y Fan, Brecon Beacons (886m)

This is the highest hill in southern Britain, and the altitude means the weather at the top can be severe. Watch out for two bronze age burial chambers. The four-mile trip takes 2.5 hours.  
Nearest station: *Merthyr Tydfil*

### Ingleborough, Yorkshire Dales (723m)

Ingleborough is one of the Yorkshire Three Peaks, (with Pen y Ghent and Whernside). On a clear day, you can see the Pennines, the Lancashire coast and the Lake District. The route from Clapham will take four to five hours.  
Nearest station: *Clapham*

### Snowdon, Wales (1,085m)

The Miners' Track is one of the most popular routes to the summit of Wales' highest mountain. Beginning at Pen-y-Pass car park, the eight-mile route takes six hours.  
Nearest station: *Bangor*

## Share your tales

Are you up for a microadventure? Try our challenges, and let us know how you get on [do.something@theguardian.com](mailto:do.something@theguardian.com)

## The challenge

### A trip to the terminus

#### KIT

- Public transport
- Return ticket
- Eye for the mundane

- Get on your usual bus, tube or train, but don't get off where you normally do - go to the last stop.
- Look at the terminus: notice the architecture, and the people passing in and out.
- Try to find a charity shop. Items are usually better priced, and untapped by city-dwelling fashionistas.

# A night

When the sun goes down, head outside and see the familiar world in a whole new light



## Camp out during the week

Instead of going home after work, spend a night under the stars - then resume normal life in the morning



We are defined by our 9 to 5, but what about the “5 to 9”? Rather than feeling inhibited by our working commitments, I suggest flipping it around, and celebrating the 16 hours each day when we are *not* desk-bound. (I know this is a simplification of “real life”, but humour me.)

So one weekday, why not head out into the wild? Nobody in the UK lives more than 15 miles from somewhere green, pretty, and invigorating to spend a night. Even the Queen, in the very middle of our biggest city, is only a 15-mile walk away from a great camping site by the Great Pond on Epsom Common. Civilians, however, are better off asking the landowner’s permission before pitching up to camp for the night - and make sure not to leave a trace of your visit. There are also plenty of wild campsites around. Find suitable places at [www.nationalparks.gov.uk/visiting/camping](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/visiting/camping)

**Alastair Humphreys**



# 30

years is the average lifespan of a brown long-eared bat

SOURCE: Bat Conservation Trust

## The challenge

### Have a wild night

#### KIT

- Rucksack
- Sleeping bag
- Bivvy bag
- Extra layers
- Non-iron shirt

- After your normal working day, head out into the country to your chosen spot.
- Take minimal kit, and spend the night sleeping under the stars.
- Wake up in time to watch the sun rise.
- Grab breakfast in a local cafe, before catching the train and heading back to your normal life.
- Enjoy the interruption to your routine.

## Bat crazy

The Bat Conservation Trust on four British bats to look out for

Bats are active from April, and UK bat groups hold walks through the spring and summer - see [bats.org.uk](http://bats.org.uk) for info. Or try a bat safari along the river Cam with [scudamores.com](http://scudamores.com).



### Common pipistrelle

*Across the UK*

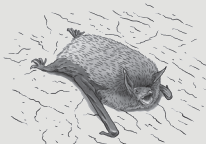
The most widespread of British species. Roosts in the crevices of buildings. Appears 20 minutes after sunset and stays up all night



### Brown long-eared

*Across the UK*

Curls its ears, which are as long as its body, behind it in flight. Found in woodland, parks and gardens. Roosts in barns and churches.



### Daubenton's

*Across the UK*

Flies low over water, searching for insects. Red-brown fur and pink face. Roosts in tunnels, bridges, or buildings.



### Noctule

*England and Wales*

Sometimes emerges before sunset. Flies high in the open, with repeated steep dives when chasing insects, reaching speeds of 30 mph.

## How to see in the dark

Use your new fire-lighting skills to get superpowered night vision



1. Find a strong source of light, such as a campfire - maybe one you've built



2. Cover one eye with your hand for 15 minutes while looking directly into the fire



3. Turn away from the fire and remove your hand from your eyes



4. Vision in uncovered eye becomes considerably stronger, helping you to see in the dark



## Full-moon walking

*Make a journey by moonlight, and listen to the landscape come alive with the yelps and rustlings of nocturnal creatures*

**WORDS** Chris Yates

Full-moon walking - walking at night by the light of the moon - is something I have enjoyed since I was a child. It offers a new and strange perspective on the familiar world, transforming an ordinary landscape into a wilderness. If you choose your landscape wisely, while you may often encounter birds and animals, you will almost never encounter another human being.

I live on the Wiltshire/Dorset border, which is chalk downland and therefore ideal for moon walking - the gentle, grassy contours of the hills make it so much easier to negotiate in the dark than, say, rocky or forested terrain.

The best walks happen when the night is clear and dry, and ideally

under the light of a full moon. Check the weather forecast, and the moon phases, and make sure you plan a safe route for your night walk - one that's familiar and which you have walked before in daylight. It's important to walk on well-trodden ground so that you don't trip over or end up somewhere dangerous.

Remember that in spring the full moon is still high enough to cast a full glow, but by midsummer it rides much lower in the south, creating much larger shadows.

Whenever you venture out at night across heathland, downland or through woodland, you will soon realise that what was a seemingly uninhabited landscape in daylight has become alive with the mysterious rustlings, patterings, squeaks and yelps of wildlife.

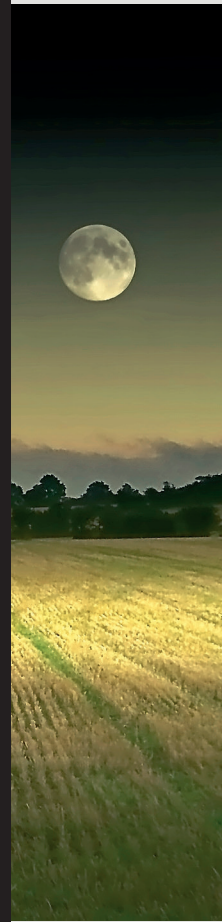
On my last moon walk, just after midnight, close to my local badger sett, I spotted the white stripes of a badger as it crossed a path only yards in front of me. Later, when the moon had sunk towards the west, I saw two roe deer up on a ridge above me, and heard a flock of birds - hidden in the darkness - heading north. Migrant birds will often travel at night, when the air is usually calmer than in the day.

### Moon phases

*The eight stages of the 29.5-day lunar cycle*



1. New moon
2. Waxing crescent
3. Waxing quarter (first quarter)
4. Waxing gibbous
5. Full moon
6. Waning gibbous
7. Waning quarter (last quarter)
8. Waning crescent



# 23

'seas' on the moon

From the largest, the Ocean of Storms, to the smallest, the Serpent Sea

SOURCE: lunarpedia.org



#### ◀ The shining

A spring moon is high enough to cast a full glow - the perfect time to venture out

As I turned for home, the valleys I walked through were filling with a thin transparent mist as the temperature began to dip towards zero. Spring nights can be cold, so dress accordingly when you venture out. Keep moving to stay warm, although it's good to pause for a few minutes while you listen and watch for wildlife.

And, of course, if you want to see or hear anything at night don't use a torch unless it is absolutely necessary. After 15 minutes in the dark, your natural night vision will begin to detect even quite small details in your surroundings.

The best walks are the ones that end with the moon setting and the sun rising, which is much more achievable as we head towards spring and summer. That's why this is the ideal time of year to try your first moon walk.

The shorter nights of midsummer make it possible to watch the waning moon rise in the evening in the south-east, and then, after a little night time ramble, the sun rise in the north-east just a few hours later ●

*Nightwalk: A Journey to the Heart of Nature by Chris Yates is published by William Collins*

# A weekend

*You get 52 a year - that's 2,496 hours when you could be exploring the hidden corners of the British Isles*

## Explore an island

*From Worm's Head to Eel Pie, there are thousands of tiny worlds to be discovered all around the country*

**WORDS** Dixe Wills

I'm looking out over an island of two hills, a scattering of romantically ruined stone cottages, a tumbledown chapel, and a beach on which the prime minister Harold Wilson gave an impromptu press conference in his shorts. Black-backed gulls and common terns fly out over a sea sparkly enough to be the Aegean. Welcome to Samson in the Isles of Scilly, one of Britain's 6,289 islands.

That's right - 6,289 islands, 803 of which are large enough an Ordnance Survey coastline. That's 803 worlds to be explored, not just off the coast but on lakes, rivers and even in the city (such as Eel Pie, on the Thames).

I'd arrived on Samson by leaping off a boat on to the dazzling sands of Bar Point. I've visited scores of tiny islands around Britain and this was the one that most felt like Treasure Island. Indeed, there is real treasure just offshore. In 1798, HMS Colossus sank here, taking Sir William Hamilton's collection of vases, paintings and loot from Etruscan tombs to the sea bed. The sense of freedom is tangible - you can happily explore your new domain until the boat arrives to take you off.

A boat isn't necessary to get to Britain's tidal islands - but don't follow Dylan Thomas's example. He fell asleep on Worm's Head off the Gower peninsula and had to wait until midnight before "the tips of the reef began to poke out of the water and, perilously, I climbed along them to the shore".

The variety of adventures I've had has made me wonder how they could

all be in Britain. I've spent the night in the bailey of a castle (Piel Island, off Barrow-in-Furness); walked out to an island built of rocks from Asia, Africa and the Americas, brought back as ships' ballast (Cei Balast, Porthmadog; breathed in the scent of 110,000 gannets (Bass Rock, off North Berwick, Scotland); and seen the room from which Mary Queen of Scots made a daring escape (Lochleven Castle Island, near Kinross). Who needs the Greek islands when you've got all this? *Daily summer sailings to Samson (and many other islands) with St Mary's Boatmen's Association, Isles of Scilly; 01720 423 999; scillyboating.co.uk*

### **Piel Island** Cumbria

Take the train to Roose (northernrail.

org, 08442 413 454) then the 11 bus operated by Blueworks Private Hire (blueworksp.com; 01539 531 995) to Roa island. The last ferry to Piel sails at 6pm. Book through Steve Chattaway, 07516 453784.

**Inchcailloch** Loch Lomond, Stirling Book into the campsite (lochlomond-trossachs.org, 01389 722600) get to Balloch Central railway station (scotrail.co.uk; 08457 550033), then take the 309 bus operated by McGill's (mcgillsbuses.co.uk; 08000 515651) to Balmaha. A ferry sails from Balmaha boat yard (balmahaboatyrd.co.uk) to Inchcailloch until 8pm in season (otherwise 5pm) ●

*Tiny Islands* by Dixe Wills is published by the Automobile Association

**6,289**  
islands

in and around  
Great Britain

SOURCE: Ordnance Survey



Photograph: Getty





## Appy camper

Great apps for every explorer's smartphone



### Map My Hike

Track your route - all the information is stored and it builds a history of your hikes



### Knot Guide

With demonstrations of 100 different ways to tie a knot, you'll never come undone again



### Met Office Weather

Forecasts for more than 5,000 places in the UK, plus wind information and sunrise/sunset times



### OS Locate

Use alongside an OS map to pinpoint your location using GPS. Doesn't need a phone signal



### US Army Survival

This app has more than 1,400 pages of information on survival in the wild, military-style

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## Guardian Masterclass

Join the naturalist Stephen Moss to learn how to be a nature writer. 17-18 May, London, £399 [theguardian.com/guardian-masterclasses](http://theguardian.com/guardian-masterclasses)

### ▼ Mine's a bailey

You can spend the night in the castle on Piel Island, off the Cumbrian coast



## Start a nature diary

Keep a record of all your adventures, capturing your memories of the animals and plants you see



You don't have to be an expert to write about nature. You just need to be curious. Anyone can watch birds, plants or animals and spot something extraordinary that might change the way we understand them. By writing things down, you can notice patterns and changes. The difference between writing about nature and nature writing is that one is objective and the other personal. Rather than writing about a blackbird, you write about your encounter with a blackbird.

Note the time, date and place, and what you see. Later, add personal details. Crucially, avoid too many adjectives and purple prose. Use a website such as iSpot ([ispotnature.org](http://ispotnature.org)) to upload photos for experts to identify. And start a blog. We write because nature matters, and we want it to matter to others too ●

**Stephen Moss**



## The challenge

### Document your world

KIT

- Pen
- Notebook
- Camera
- Cliche radar

- Choose an outside space to visit every weekend.
- Record observations about the plants, wildlife and weather, including how it feels to be there.
- Pick out the most interesting incident and use it as the starting point for your first piece of nature writing.
- Now post it on the blog you started.

## How to make a knife

Transform an ordinary rock and make your neolithic ancestors proud



**1.** Bang a rock against a hard surface. The higher the pitch, the sharper the blade



**2.** Thin, round rocks will give you the sharpest edge



**3.** Find two other big rocks. Put the blade rock on one and hit with the other, until it splits



**4.** Use the edge of rock as a knife to cut bark, skin a fish or to cut brambles

## A wet weekend in Wales

The home of the UK's best waterfalls is even better in the rain

A rainy spring is the perfect time to explore the hundreds of waterfalls in Wales, many of which are found in the Brecon Beacons national park. Full rivers create the most powerful cascades, so pack your wellies and cagoule and a copy of our itinerary, and pray for bad weather.

### Day 1

Start: Waterfalls Centre, Brecon Beacons national park

Take the path to the river Hepste's Sgwd Yr Eira (Snow Falls). You can step behind the falls, and bathe here in summer. From Sgwd Yr Eira, head towards the Sychryd Cascades on the river Sychryd which is easily accessible, even by wheelchair. Return to Snow Falls, and take path to Sgwd Gwladus (Lady Falls), named after the mythical princess Gwladus, on the Elidir Trail along the river Nedd Fechan. Return to carpark, and drive 45 minutes to spend the night at The Felin Fach Griffin pub (01874 620111, Felin Fach, Brecon, Powys, LD3 0UB).

### Day 2

Start: Cwm Porth carpark, near Ystradfellte. £4 charge  
Walk to Porth Yr Ogof, the largest cave mouth in Wales. The river Mellte flows into it. Return to the carpark, cross the road and join the footpath on the right. You can hear the river Mellte flowing beneath the ground before you see it emerge. Continue along the river, crossing two tributary streams, and then heading uphill to the main viewpoint for Sgwd Clun-Gwyn, the "fall of the white meadow". Return to the path and continue through woodland. Turn right at the sign to view the Sgwd y Pannwr cascades. Continue upstream on the rough path to Sgwd Isaf Clwn-gwyn. It begins as a flight of three rapids, and becomes a staircase of waterfalls. Head back to the carpark. Drive two hours north on the A470 to Pistyll Rhaeadr Waterfall. At 80m, it is the highest single-drop waterfall in the UK - much higher than Niagara.

**BB**