

THIS!!!

THE LOCAL NEWS - 33 CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF GOOD NEWS, ASSISTING NONPROFITS AND CELEBRATING LIFE!

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# THE LOCAL NEWS

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Local News / Area Happenings / Opinion / Entertainment / Common Sense & Humor

## The Price of Eggs!



The price of eggs has skyrocketed — here's why they're not coming down anytime soon

NY Post / ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Images by AP

OMAHA, Neb. — Bird flu is forcing farmers to slaughter millions of chickens a month, pushing U.S. egg prices to more than double their cost in the summer of 2023. And it appears there may be no relief in sight, given the surge in demand as Easter approaches.

The average price per dozen nationwide hit \$4.15 in December. That's not quite as high as the \$4.82 record set two years ago, but the Agriculture Department predicts prices are going to soar another 20% this year.

Shoppers in some parts of the country are already paying more than double the average price, or worse, finding empty shelves in their local grocery stores. Organic and cage-free varieties are even more expensive.

Some grocery stores have even limited how many eggs shoppers can buy.

"It's just robbery," said Minneapolis resident Sage Mills, who bought eggs to bake a birthday cake last week. "Eggs used to be kind of a staple food for us, but now you know, you might as well just go out to eat."

### What is driving up prices?

The bird flu outbreak that started in 2022 is the main reason egg prices are up so much.

Anytime the virus is found on a poultry farm, the entire flock is slaughtered to help limit the virus' spread. And with massive egg farms routinely housing more than 1 million chickens, just a few infections can cause a supply crunch.

The problem tends to linger because it takes months to dispose of all the carcasses, disinfect barns and bring in new birds.

More than 145 million chickens, turkeys and other birds have been slaughtered since the current outbreak began, with the vast majority of them being egg-laying chickens.

Cage-free egg laws in 10 states may also be responsible for some supply disruptions and price increases. The laws set minimum space for chickens or cage-free requirements for egg-laying hens. They've already gone into effect in California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, Colorado and Michigan. At a Target in Chicago on Monday, a dozen large conventional eggs cost \$4.49 but a dozen large cage-free eggs were selling for \$6.19.

### Why is the virus so hard to control?

Bird flu is primarily spread by wild birds such as ducks and geese as they migrate. While it is fatal to a variety of animals, those species can generally carry it without getting sick, which offers the virus a chance to mutate and thrive.

The virus can be spread through droppings or any interaction between farm-raised poultry and wild birds. It's also easily tracked into a farm on someone's boots or by vehicle.

Unlike previous outbreaks, the one that began in 2022 didn't die out in high summer temperatures.

The virus found another new host when dairy cattle started getting sick last March. That creates more opportunities for the virus to linger and spread and unlike poultry, cattle aren't slaughtered when they get sick

Continued on pg 2



Our Mic-Cam heard the following

Governor, only you can prevent forest fires!

## Huntington Beach Names Jennifer Carey Deputy City Manager

Jennifer Carey has been named Deputy City Manager for the City of Huntington Beach. Having served as the Acting Deputy City Manager for the last six months, she will continue to work closely with the City Manager and Assistant City Manager to lead and provide professional management on innovative programs and City Council policies that directly serve the community. Additionally, she will now manage the activities and operations of the City Manager's Office Administrative Division and will continue to oversee the City's Office of Communications and Public Affairs.

Born and raised in Huntington Beach, Jennifer was hired by the City of Huntington Beach in 2021 as the Public Information Officer for the Huntington Beach Police Department. In late 2021, she was promoted to the position of Public Affairs Manager for the City. As the Public Affairs Manager, she developed the City's Office of Communications which leads the City's overall outreach and public information efforts. Jennifer was responsible for managing the rollout of the City's new website and branding guidelines; updating the City's social media and press policies; and enhancing the City's digital content with the introduction of livestreaming capabilities and buildout of the HDTV studio. Prior to joining the City of Huntington Beach, Jennifer worked for the City of Long Beach.

Jennifer obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in

Political Science and her Master's in Communication from Arizona State University. She is a FEMA certified Public Information Officer and was named the California Association of Public Information Officials Crisis Communicator of the Year in 2022.

Jennifer resides in Huntington Beach and in her downtime enjoys spending time with family, taking trips with friends, and exploring as many Huntington Beach restaurants and shops as possible. As Deputy City Manager, Jennifer looks forward to collaborating further with City Departments to carry out the priorities of City Council and further enhance the community she loves.



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# The Price of Eggs!

because they rarely die from bird flu.

More than five dozen people have also become ill with bird flu and one person died since last March. Nearly all of them worked around sick animals. Health officials haven't yet found evidence of the disease spreading from person to person.

### What is being done to stop the virus?

Farmers go to great lengths to protect their flocks.

Many poultry farms installed truck washes to disinfect vehicles entering their property and require workers to shower and change clothes before stepping inside a barn. They have also invested in duplicate sets of tools so nothing used in one barn is shared.

Some poultry farmers have even invested in lasers that shoot beams of green light in random patterns to discourage ducks and geese from landing.

Dairy farmers isolate any sick cattle and do additional testing before moving animals off the farm — especially if there has been a nearby outbreak or if the cows are being sent to a meat processing plant. The government is also testing milk. Future vaccines might help, but it's not practical to vaccinate millions of chickens through shots,



Bird flu is forcing farmers to slaughter millions of chickens a month, pushing U.S. egg prices to more than double their cost in the summer of 2023.

and other countries might refuse to purchase meat from vaccinated birds.

Health officials emphasize that any sick birds or cattle are kept out of the food supply. Cooking meat to 165 degrees (74 Celsius) kills bird flu, E. coli, salmonella or anything else. Pasteurization also kills the virus in milk. Raw milk is the only food product linked to illnesses so far.

### How much has the outbreak cost so far?

It is impossible to know how much farmers have spent to seal barns, build shower houses for workers or to adopt other biosecurity measures.

“Over the last five years, my small farm alone has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on biosecurity,” said Minnesota turkey farmer Loren Brey. “But not only that, it’s the time daily that you’re attending to biosecurity.”

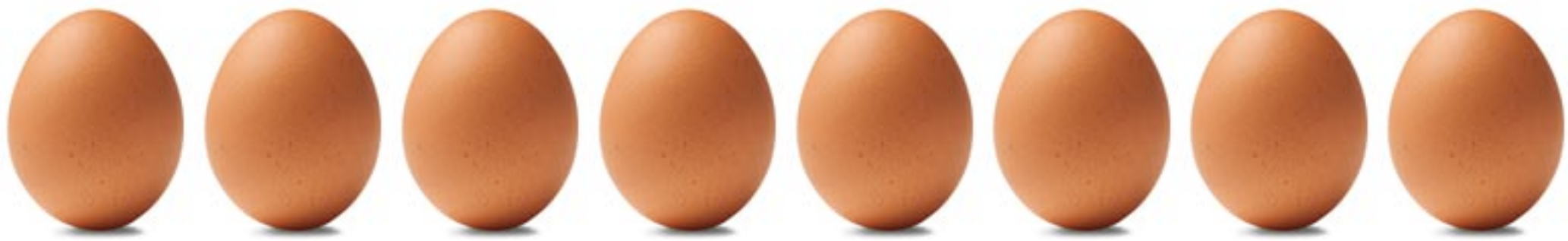
The U.S. Department of Agriculture has spent at least \$1.14 billion compensating farmers for the birds they have had to kill. A similar number wasn't immediately available for how much has been spent to aid dairies.

USDA spokeswoman Shilo Weir said the department also spent more than \$576 million on its own response.

The prices of turkey, milk and chicken have also seen some pressure from bird flu.

Mike Vickers, a manager at Sentyrz Liquor & Supermarket in Minneapolis, said he can't even stock any organic, cage-free or brown eggs right now and is limited instead to selling large or jumbo eggs. He understands the pain customers are feeling.

“It’s the first time in my life that I’ve ever had to be kind of embarrassed on what I’m selling eggs for,” he said. “And it’s not our fault. We’re paying today \$7.45 for a dozen eggs. We’re selling for \$7.59. We’re making \$0.14. That’s doesn’t pay the bills.”



## WOW... 38 OUT OF 50!



NEWSROOM - A new study has ranked California as the No. 38 best state for entrepreneurs in 2025, marking a jump of 11 spots compared to last year's rankings.

American entrepreneurship is booming, with unprecedented growth and generational shifts driving new opportunities. The Treasury Department reports that 430,000 new businesses opened each month in 2024, a 50% increase since 2019. Innovations like remote work, the gig economy, and AI are fueling this transformation, creating entrepreneurial hot spots across the nation.

Simplify LLC released its annual study on the Best & Worst

States for Entrepreneurs in 2025 using the most recent data from the Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Tax Foundation, and the U.S. Senate.

The rankings were determined by analyzing six key categories in all 50 states and D.C.: corporate tax rate, inflation, consumer spending growth, job creation rate, and net migration of educated workers.

### KEY FINDINGS:

•**California:** Ranks No. 38, Up 11 Spots: California's ranking improved thanks to strong job creation (rate of 18.9, up 6.6 points, ranking No. 2) and steady consumer spending growth (2.6%, ranking No. 23, up from 2.4%). However, the state saw a decline in new business growth (-1.1%, compared with 8.6% the year before), though it still ranked No. 19. Worker mobility remained a challenge, with a net loss of 114,782 educated adults, although this was a reduction from 148,905 the previous year, making California the state with the worst worker mobility.

•**10 Best States for Entrepreneurs in 2025:** Washington, Texas, Maine, Nevada, Oregon, Florida, Rhode Island, Colorado, Vermont, Hawaii

•**Leading Sectors for New Business:**

-Retail: Including e-commerce and brick-and-mortar stores.

-Professional, Scientific and Technical Services: Such as legal and accounting.

-Construction: residential and non-residential..



# Top Super Bowl Halftime Performances of All Time

PStacker / RYAN KNUPPEL

The 2025 Super Bowl in New Orleans will feature the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles. While fans will be focused on the game, millions will tune in for the halftime show. This part of the Super Bowl has become just as popular as the action on the field.

This year, Kendrick Lamar will headline the halftime show. He'll be joined by SZA, making it one of the most anticipated performances of the year. New Orleans, hosting the Super Bowl for the 11th time, has a history of big halftime acts, including Beyoncé, U2, and Ella Fitzgerald.

In preparation for this year's show, BangTheBook takes a look at some of the best Super Bowl halftime performances of all time. These are the shows that stood out, made history, and are still talked about today.

## The History of the Super Bowl Halftime Show

The Super Bowl halftime show wasn't always about big-name stars and huge productions. In the early days, it featured marching bands, small acts, and local performers. The focus was on entertaining the crowd at the stadium, not millions of viewers at home.

That all changed in 1993 when Michael Jackson performed. He brought in record TV ratings, and the NFL realized the halftime show could be much more than a break in the game. Since then, the Super Bowl halftime show has become a stage for the biggest names in music.

Over the years, the show has featured pop stars, rock bands, and even cultural moments that go beyond music. From U2's tribute after 9/11 to Beyoncé's powerful message in 2016, the halftime show has become a part of the Super Bowl that fans look forward to just as much as the game.

## Criteria for Ranking Performances

Not all halftime shows are created equal. Some stand out because of the music, the energy, or the way they connect with fans. Here's how BangTheBook picked the best Super Bowl halftime performances of all time:

**Entertainment value:** The show has to grab viewer attention. It's about the songs, the energy, and how the performer keeps the crowd engaged.

**Cultural impact:** Some performances go beyond the music. They create moments people remember for years, like tributes or social messages.

**Stagecraft:** The lights, visuals, and choreography all play a big role. A great halftime show isn't just about singing—it's about putting on a full spectacle.

**Reception:** BangTheBook also looked at how fans and critics responded. Did people talk about it the next day? Did it break records or create viral moments?

With these criteria in mind, here are the best halftime shows in Super Bowl history.

## The Top Super Bowl Halftime Performances of All Time

Can Kendrick Lamar leave an impressionable performance that makes this list in the future? Time will tell. But for now, these performances left a lasting mark on Super Bowl history, becoming just as iconic as the games themselves.

### 1. Prince (2007)

Prince's halftime show is often called the greatest of all time. Performing in the pouring rain, he turned the moment into magic with his hit "Purple Rain" as the finale. The weather, instead of being a problem, seemed to work in his favor, amplifying the emotion of the performance. He also delivered an electric mix of his hits, covers, and an unforgettable guitar solo.

This performance was a reminder of Prince's raw talent and ability to captivate any audience. From his wardrobe to the staging, every detail was flawless. Many fans still point to this show as the gold standard for what a Super Bowl halftime performance should be.

### 2. Beyoncé (2013)

Beyoncé brought unmatched energy to the halftime stage in 2013. Her set included hits like "Crazy in Love," "Halo," and "Single Ladies," all performed with powerful choreography. Halfway through, she reunited with Destiny's Child, which sent the crowd into a frenzy and created one of the most talked-about moments of the night.

Her performance was a masterclass in precision and showmanship. Beyoncé's ability to control the stage, connect with the audience, and deliver an unforgettable

performance cemented her spot as one of the greatest halftime performers in history.

### 3. Michael Jackson (1993)

Michael Jackson's halftime show was a turning point for the Super Bowl. Before his performance, halftime shows were simpler, often featuring marching bands or smaller acts. Jackson's set changed everything. He began by standing still on stage for over a minute, building anticipation before launching into hits like "Billie Jean" and "Black or White."

This performance proved that the halftime show could be a massive spectacle, drawing just as much attention as the game. Jackson's star power and stage presence elevated the Super Bowl into a cultural event, making halftime shows a must-watch moment.

### 4. Shakira and Jennifer Lopez (2020)

Shakira and Jennifer Lopez delivered a high-energy halftime show that celebrated Latin culture. Shakira opened with hits like "Hips Don't Lie," while J.Lo fol-

Prince performed for the Super Bowl XLI Halftime Show between the Indianapolis Colts and the Chicago Bears on February 4, 2007 at Dolphin Stadium in Miami Gardens, FL.



Jamie Squire // Getty Images

lowed with songs like "Jenny from the Block." The duo combined forces for a finale that included vibrant choreography, dynamic stage effects, and a message of empowerment.

Their performance resonated globally, showcasing their talent and cultural pride. With surprise appearances from Bad Bunny and J Balvin, the show brought even more energy to the stage, making it one of the most talked-about performances in recent years.

### 5. U2 (2002)

U2's halftime show came just months after the tragic events of 9/11. Their performance was a tribute to the victims, featuring a backdrop with the names of those who lost their lives. The band played hits like "Beautiful Day" and "Where the Streets Have No Name," creating an emotional and reflective moment for viewers.

The simplicity and sincerity of U2's performance stood out at a time when the country was still healing. It wasn't flashy, but it connected with fans on a deeper level, leaving a lasting impression.

### 6. Madonna (2012)

Madonna brought her signature style to the Super Bowl halftime stage in 2012. She opened with "Vogue," complete with elaborate costumes and choreography. Her performance featured guest appearances from Nicki Minaj, LMFAO, and M.I.A., who added to the show's pop-heavy energy. The stage design and visuals were grand, creating a spectacle that matched her larger-than-life reputation.

Madonna balanced her classic hits with new songs, showing her ability to stay relevant across generations. The performance ended with a powerful rendition of "Like a Prayer," leaving fans with a memorable and uplifting finale. This show is remembered for its creativity and boldness, fitting for a pop icon like Madonna.

### 7. Katy Perry (2015)

Katy Perry's 2015 halftime show was a colorful, family-friendly spectacle that started with her entrance on a giant, animatronic lion. She performed hits like "Roar," "Dark Horse," and "Firework" while delivering an energetic and visually stunning show. The production included pyrotechnics, elaborate costumes, and creative stage effects.

One of the most memorable moments from the performance was "Left Shark," the backup dancer who stole the show with quirky, offbeat dance moves. The combination of humor, visuals, and Katy Perry's infectious energy made this halftime show a favorite for many viewers.

### 8. Lady Gaga (2017)

Lady Gaga delivered a solo halftime performance in 2017 that was both theatrical and emotional. She began by singing "God Bless America" on the stadium roof before literally leaping onto the stage. Her setlist included hits like "Poker Face," "Born This Way," and "Bad Romance," showcasing her range as a performer.

What made Gaga's performance unique was her focus on raw talent and minimal reliance on guest appearances. The show was packed with stunning visuals and powerful vocals, earning her praise for one of the most polished and heartfelt halftime performances in recent memory.

### 9. The Weeknd (2021)

The Weeknd took a unique approach to the halftime show during the COVID-19 pandemic. Performing without a live audience on the field, he used innovative camera work and stage design to create an immersive experience. Hits like "Blinding Lights" and "Can't Feel My Face" were paired with dazzling visuals and intricate choreography.

His use of a mirrored maze and a choir added depth to the performance, making it stand out as one of the most creative halftime shows. The Weeknd's ability to adapt to the circumstances and still deliver an engaging show earned him high marks from fans and critics alike.

### 10. Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige, and Kendrick Lamar (2022)

The 2022 halftime show brought together some of hip-hop's biggest legends. Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg opened the performance with classics like "Still D.R.E.," setting the tone for a nostalgic yet powerful show. Kendrick Lamar, Mary J. Blige, and Eminem each had standout moments, with Eminem's "Lose Yourself" performance being a crowd favorite.

This halftime show was the first to focus entirely on hip-hop, making it a historic moment for the genre. The combination of legendary artists and their iconic hits created a halftime show that resonated deeply with fans of the genre and the game alike.

## The future of Super Bowl Halftime Shows

The Super Bowl halftime show has come a long way from its smaller beginnings, and the future should bring even more exciting changes. This year's headliner, Kendrick Lamar, could set the stage for what's to come.

With a reputation for pushing creative boundaries, Lamar might incorporate cutting-edge technology, such as augmented reality or live-streamed interactive features, to engage viewers in new ways. As streaming platforms and digital tools continue to grow, future halftime shows could become even more immersive, allowing fans at home to feel like they're part of the performance.

Looking ahead, the halftime show's global reach might bring more international artists into the spotlight. Recent years have already seen diverse performances, such as Shakira and J.Lo celebrating Latin culture in 2020.

As the NFL expands its audience worldwide, viewers could see stars from regions like Asia, Africa, or Europe take the stage. Imagine K-pop superstars, Afrobeats icons, or global sensations like Bad Bunny performing on one of the world's biggest stages.

As for future headliners, artists like Taylor Swift, Drake, or even Morgan Wallen seem like natural fits. Each of these performers has the star power and global appeal that makes a halftime show unforgettable. This year, Kendrick Lamar has a chance to raise the bar once again—make sure to tune in.

## Conclusion

There are three things to pay attention to on Super Bowl Sunday. The game, the best Super Bowl commercials, and the Halftime Show.

From legendary performances by Prince and Beyoncé to this year's much-anticipated show with Kendrick Lamar, the halftime stage is where music, creativity, and entertainment come together on the world's biggest platform. Each performance leaves a lasting mark, becoming a part of Super Bowl history and a topic of conversation for years to come.

As the NFL continues to innovate and expand its reach, the halftime show will likely evolve with it. Technology, diverse lineups, and global influences are shaping the future of this iconic tradition. The 2025 show in New Orleans is another step forward, promising a performance that celebrates both the game and the music that brings fans together.

This story was produced by BangTheBook and reviewed and distributed by Stacker.



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Here's yet another car in Ronaldo's impressive fleet as he tops Forbes' World Highest-Paid Athletes 2023 list.

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There are four boxes to be used in defense of liberty: soap, ballot, jury, and ammo. Please use in that order.

# The Weak That Was America: Home of the Free because of the Brave



Dave Garofalo  
Publisher

## INSPIRATION

"Just one small positive thought in the morning can change your whole day"

~ Dalai Lama

### sad truth

A politician is a fellow who will lay down your life for his country.

~Texas Guinan, 19th century American businessman

## DID YOU KNOW

the average person falls asleep in 7 minutes

## Surprising Sports Facts That You Never Would've Guessed



## SPORTS

The Stanley Cup's real name isn't actually the Stanley Cup. It's real name is the Dominion Hockey Challenge Cup.

Winners in the Olympics were not originally awarded with gold medals. Winners were given a silver medal and an olive branch instead.

The silhouette on the official NBA logo is Los Angeles Lakers guard Jerry West.

## GET UP TO SPEED FAST ON THESE NEW CALIFORNIA LAWS TAKING EFFECT IN 2025

By CalMatters

Cannabis cafes and expanded outdoor drinking? An end to a banking fee? More protections for your credit score if you face medical debt? These are among the roughly 1,000 new laws hitting California starting the first day of 2025.

If that sounds like a lot, it could have been much more: California lawmakers introduced nearly 5,000 bills in the most recent legislative session ending this fall, a two-year period that saw nearly half die without a single vote.

In all, lawmakers passed about 1,200 bills in 2024 and Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed 200 of those. And that's the bureaucratic funnel in a nutshell.

Most of these incoming laws are technical, fix previous laws or are narrow in scope. But there are some that affect lots of Californians, or are just plain interesting.

There are the consumer finance protection laws, numerous education-related laws — including one to expand alcohol education that was written by a former lawmaker arrested for a DUI — as well as a law ban-

ning local voter ID rules and another granting a few more days to fight an eviction. Paris Hilton makes a cameo, too.

CalMatters reporters describe some of the noteworthy laws taking effect Jan. 1. Dive in to stay informed about the changes that matter to you — and keep coming back as we add more stories about new laws before 2024 rides off into the California sunset.

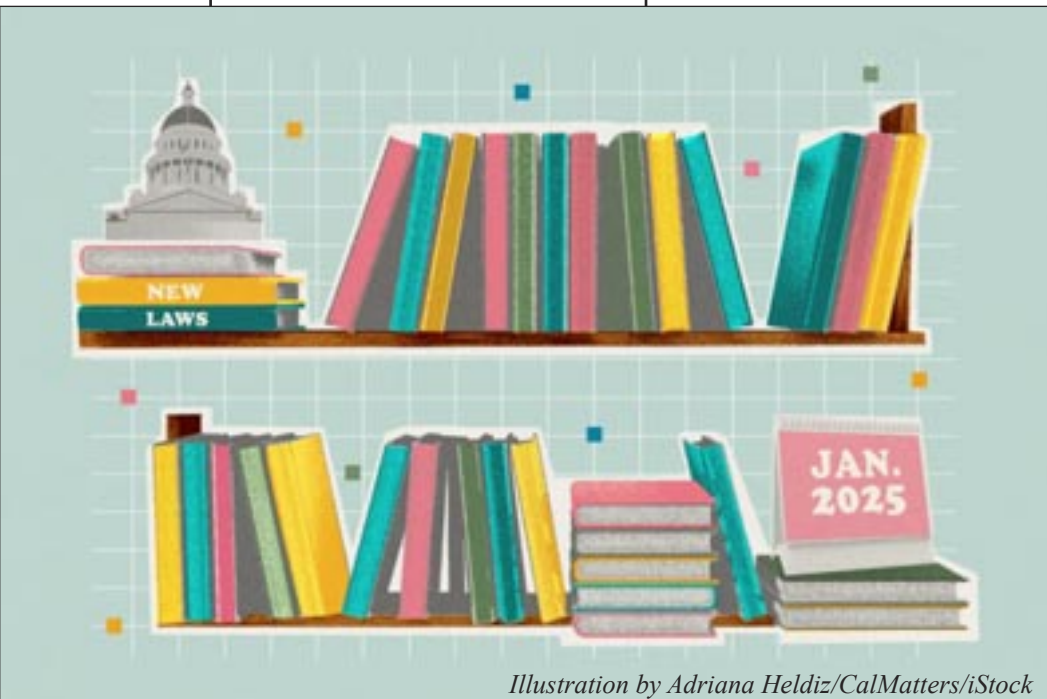


Illustration by Adriana Heldiz/CalMatters/iStock

These crazy, ridiculous, and almost unbelievable statistics will make you question everything



DID YOU KNOW?

THERE IS A ROAD IN FRANCE THAT CAN ONLY BE USED TWICE A DAY, FOR A FEW HOURS. THEN IT DISAPPEARS UNDER 13 FEET OF WATER.

## If Animals

NO MATTER WHAT IT IS



WE WANT IT

COMEDY TALK

We believe and practice being fully involved with the communities we serve.

This is essential in building good will, encouraging growth and above all staying connected in our backyard



# The Greatest Breakfast Sandwich in Every State



© TripAdvisor

## Iowa: Nodo Iowa City

Specializing in all-day sandwiches, Nodo has a breakfast classic for \$4, but also tons of other creative options. Some tantalizing options include grilled banana and peanut butter and a housemade banh mi with tamari-marinated pulled pork

**Sometimes I like to mess with my husband and hide his stuff where he can't find it. Like I put his shoes in the shoe closet, his jacket on the hanger and his keys on the key hook.**

**Me: Please bring me a screwdriver.**

**Wife: Flat head, Phillips, or Vodka?**

**And that was when I knew she was the one.**

## Celebrity Chef Recipes

**We've made 165 recipes from celebrity chefs to find the best ones. Here are the winners in each category.**



Microwaved omelet by Carla Hall.

### Business Insider

- Business Insider put over 160 recipes from celebrity chefs to the test to find the tastiest winners.
- We've tried everything from breakfasts and dinners to desserts and specialty bread.
- Some winning recipes came from Guy Fieri, Ree Drummond, Carla Hall, Ina Garten, and more.

Business Insider put the best recipes from celebrity chefs head-to-head to find the most delicious salads, desserts, bread, beverages, and more. Here are some of the winners, from hearty breakfasts to refreshing cocktails.

## Breakfasts

The most important meal of the day deserves a great recipe. Food writers Paige Bennett and Tiffany Leigh tested scrambled eggs, omelets, blueberry pancakes, and breakfast burritos to see if they were worth the hype.

The winning chef's scrambled eggs had parsley as a secret ingredient!

Read more about the winning recipe and full battle here: I made scrambled eggs using 8 recipes from famous chefs to find the best one.

*Editor's note: This story was originally published in September 2021 and most recently updated on December 26, 2024.*

Out of the many omelet recipes, the best one was microwaved Carla Hall's microwaved omelet only takes a couple of minutes. Paige Bennett for Insider

Bennett had a couple of favorite omelet recipes, but one of her favorites included Carla Hall's microwaved eggs.

Filled with mayonnaise, lemon juice, broccoli, and butter, the end result was fluffy and light. It had a nice balance of creamy cheese and crunchy vegetables.

Read more about the winning recipe and full battle here: I made omelets using 6 recipes from famous chefs, and it surprisingly involved strawberries and microwaves.

**CLICK HERE Watch video to see how to make this recipe!**

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# smallest TOWNS in AMERICA



iStockphoto.com / Wikimedia Commons

In a country that boasts metropolises like New York, Miami, San Francisco, and Dallas, it's easy to forget about the other end of the spectrum — small towns with populations in the hundreds, tens, or even single digits. Tiny towns across America offer a striking contrast to modern hubs; these places, where everyone knows your name and life moves at a much slower pace, hold onto a sense of community and history that often gets lost.

Despite their size, these small towns have rich local traditions, fascinating histories, and unique quirks that continue to attract the curious. Whether it's the allure of natural hot springs, a quirky one-resident town, or a town where everyone lives in the same building, these spots are some of the smallest (and most interesting) towns in the U.S.

## Buford, Wyoming Population: 1 or 2

Billed as "America's Smallest Town," Buford spans 9.9 acres and includes a gas station, convenience store, and a modular home. Once a booming railroad town with 2,000 residents, it now serves as a pit stop for travelers looking for a quick break.

Fun Fact: In 2012, a Vietnamese businessman, Pham Dinh Nguyen bought the town at an auction for \$900,000. Buford is the only place people can buy his PhinDeli Coffee.

## Rare Historical Photos Reveal More Than Immediately Meets The Eye

### Walt Disney takes a final stroll through Disneyland before the gates open in 1955

On Sunday July 17, 1955 in Anaheim, California, Disneyland opened its gates at 2:30 PM, with an array of sights for families across the country to behold. With five themed lands and 18 attractions, the park was, and still is, a must experience place. At the opening ceremony Walt Disney christened his 160-acre park with these words:

To all who come to this happy place: welcome. Disneyland is your land. Here age relives fond memories of the past...and here youth may savor the challenge and promise of the future. Disneyland is dedicated to the ideals, the dreams and the hard facts which have created America... with the hope that it will be a source of joy and inspiration to all the world.



Source: Pinterest

# Vintage Photograph

www.HBLocalNews.com



*First Morning After Sweden Changed From Driving On The Left Side To Driving On The Right, 1967*

## Biggest Boomtowns in Every State



*littlenySTOCK / Shutterstock.com*

*GoBankingRates / JORDAN ROSENFELD*

**Boomtown.** The word sounds like it's describing an explosion — and in a way, it is. Boomtowns are considered the fastest-growing cities in America due to rapid business and population growth. An example of such a place is Woodbridge, Virginia, which saw massive five- and eight-year percentage changes in population at 863.35% and 840.66%, respectively.

But Woodbridge isn't the only boomtown out there. GOBankingRates found one in every state by looking at the one-, five- and eight-year changes in population, occupied housing units and owner-occupied housing units of cities with a population of more than 25,000 but less than 500,000. Find out if you're living in one of America's most thriving cities, and see if your city makes the list.

### Wyoming: Cheyenne

*Change in population:*

*1 year: 0.80%*

*5 years: 2.75%*

*8 years: 6.74%*

*Change in occupied housing units:*

*1 year: 1.09%*

*5 years: 3.06%*

*8 years: 6.84%*

*Change in owner-occupied housing units:*

*1 year: 0.78%*

*5 years: 12.30%*

*8 years: 20.90%*



A Veteran Owned Business

# THE LOCAL NEWS

People and Their Issues - Our Business...

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Inform, Entertain and Challenge all aspects of our lives resulting in our efforts to continue to help build a safe and prosperous and healthy Region to live, work and play in and among our neighborhood, commercial and industrial centers.

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## NATURAL Wonders OF THE WORLD

### MUD VOLCANOES OF AZERBAIJAN

A mud volcano is exactly what it sounds like: a volcano-shaped mud buildup caused by geothermal pressure. It's not a volcano in the

lava/Dante's Peak sense, but it's still amazing cool (and pretty rare). Azerbaijan is home to between 350 and 400 mud volcanoes, more than any other country in the world (and half of the world's total). They're mostly in and around Gobustan (also spelled Quobustan) National Park, about an hour outside the capital city of Baku.



Photo: Denis Sv/Shutterstock



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# LADY GAGA Reveals Whether She Plans to Drop Her Stage Name



Gray Sorrenti

People / MARINA WATTS

What's in a name? Ask Lady Gaga.

In a new cover story for ELLE published on Tuesday, Jan. 28, the "Disease" singer, 38, spoke about her upcoming album *Mayhem* along with her famous moniker.

When asked if Gaga — whose real name is Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta — would ever change her stage name, she expressed her admiration for it.

"No! I love being Lady Gaga. I love being me," she said. "I became a star when I was 20. Everything gets reflected back to you that this persona is what makes you special."

She reportedly took on the iconic name when her ex-boyfriend and music producer Rob Fusari called her Gaga because her voice and style reminded him of Queen's song "Radio Ga Ga."

Elsewhere in the cover story with ELLE, Gaga spoke about working on her seventh studio album, which comes out in March.

"The chaos I thought was long gone is fully intact and ready to greet me whenever I'd like," she said of the process.

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"Part of the message of even the first song on the album is that your demons are with you in the beginning and they are with you in the end, and I don't mean it in a bleak way."

Gaga mused that perhaps there's a way to "make friends sooner with this reality instead of running all the time" as she leans into the darkness with her new music.

In a press release shared with PEOPLE, Gaga said that *Mayhem's* style is similar to "reassembling a shattered mirror."

"Even if you can't put the pieces back together perfectly, you can create something beautiful and whole in its own new way," she told the outlet.

Related: Lady Gaga Says She and Fiancé Michael Polansky Have Spoken About Having Kids and She's 'Ready' to Be Humbled by It

The 13-time Grammy winner previously teased the range of music her upcoming album would have, again mentioning the chaos surrounding it. She told The Los Angeles Times in December that there will be "so many different genres, so many different styles, so many different dreams."

"It leaps around genre in a way that's almost corrupt. And it ends with love. That's the answer to all the chaos in my life is that I find peace with love," she added of the aptly titled record.

"Every song that I wrote, I just kept getting kind of swept away in these different dreams I was having about the past — almost like a recollection of all these bad decisions that I made in my life," Gaga concluded.

*Mayhem* will be available to stream Mar. 7.

Read the original article on People

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## TRUMP SAYS NJ DRONES WERE 'AUTHORIZED' AFTER SUGGESTING BIDEN KEPT PUBLIC 'IN SUSPENSE'

ABC News / STACEY DEC

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said the mystery drones flown across New Jersey in late 2024 were "authorized to be flown by the FAA" in the first press

be better off saying what it is. Our military knows and our president knows. And for some reason, they want to keep people in suspense."

Ahead of his inauguration, Trump vowed to give a report on drones

takenly reported as drones," the joint statement said.

The drone activity, which was first reported on Nov. 19 by the Morris County Prosecutor's Office, caused temporary flight restrictions in New Jersey throughout November and December, notably in Bedminster, New Jersey, where the president has a golf club, and over the Picatinny Arsenal military base. But on Dec. 19, a DHS spokesperson said in a statement that the flight restrictions were "out of an abundance of caution."

"We continue to assess there is no public safety threat relating to the reported drone sightings," the spokesperson said. "In coordination with the FAA and our critical infrastructure partners who requested temporary flight restrictions over their facilities, out of an abundance of caution, the FAA has issued temporary flight restrictions over some critical infrastructure facilities in New Jersey."

Trump says NJ drones were 'authorized' after suggesting Biden kept public 'in suspense' originally appeared on abcnews.go.com.



White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt delivers remarks during her first daily briefing at the White House, in Washington, Jan. 28, 2025.

Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

This photo provided by Brian Glenn shows what appears to be multiple drones flying over Bernardsville, N.J., on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2024.

briefing of President Donald Trump's second administration.

"I do have news directly from the president of the United States that was just shared with me in the Oval Office, from President Trump directly, an update on the New Jersey drones," Leavitt said.

"After research and study, the drones that were flying over New Jersey in large numbers were authorized to be flown by the FAA for research and various other reasons. Many of these drones were also hobbyists, recreational and private individuals that enjoy flying drones," she added. "In time, it got worse due to curiosity. This was not the enemy."

In December, Trump suggested the Biden administration knew more than it was revealing to the public about the drones, which were spotted throughout the East Coast, though Leavitt did not say whether the drones spotted outside New Jersey were all lawful.

"They know where it came from and where it went," Trump said. "And for some reason, they don't want to comment. And I think they'd

"about one day" into his administration while speaking with Republican governors at Mar-a-Lago on Jan. 9 "because I think it's ridiculous that they are not telling you about what's going on with the drones."

However, the Biden administration had on Dec. 16 said in a multiagency statement from the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the FAA and the Department of Defense that though there were indeed drones flying over New Jersey, they constituted a "combination" of lawful aerial activity.

"Having closely examined the technical data and tips from concerned citizens, we assess that the sightings to date include a combination of lawful commercial drones, hobbyist drones, and law enforcement drones, as well as manned fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, and stars mis-



Brian Glenn/TMX via AP, File





# The Importance of Investing in a Local Water Supply



As we move into 2025, Orange County finds itself grappling with an extended dry spell. With no significant rainfall since spring of 2024, it is a bold reminder of the need to prioritize and invest in a reliable, local water supply. Despite the dry conditions, Orange County residents can rest assured that their water needs are well-supported by the Orange County Water District (OCWD) and its sound management of the Orange County Groundwater Basin.

The basin provides approximately 85% of the water used by 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County. OCWD estimates that even with a very dry winter, the groundwater basin will be approximately 90% full. This is a testament to decades of strategic planning and investment. This vital resource ensures that our region has a dependable water supply, even during prolonged periods without rain. However, maintaining this reliability requires continuous planning, innovation, and funding.

OCWD's flagship project in partnership with the Orange County Sanitation District (OC San), the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS), plays a pivotal role in bolstering our local water supply. As the world's largest water recycling facility of its kind, the GWRS purifies 130 million gallons of wastewater into ultra-pure drinking water every day. This process not only replenishes the groundwater basin but also protects the basin from seawater intrusion from the Pacific Ocean, which can harm the

quality of water in the basin. The GWRS serves as a global model for sustainable water management as it creates a new source of water by reusing a once wasted resource, and its benefits are particularly evident during dry times.

In addition to the GWRS, OCWD's commitment to capturing and using stormwater is another critical component of its diverse water supply portfolio. At Prado Dam, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of

less expensive than imported water.

To enhance stormwater capture, the District is looking to further advance Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations, or FIRO, at Prado Dam. FIRO leverages improved forecasting tools to better track storms and atmospheric rivers. This allows dam operators to safely increase storage behind the dam and allows us to put more water back into the groundwater basin.

OCWD is committed to securing Orange County's water future through its leadership in groundwater management and we are always exploring future opportunities to maximize local water supply like groundwater recharge enhancements and sediment removal behind Prado Dam to capture even more stormwater. Through these initiatives, residents and businesses in the OCWD service area, including the cities of Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach, benefit from a reliable local water supply supported by smart water policies and investments in our water infrastructure.

The dry start to 2025 serves as a reminder of the importance of planning ahead. Thanks to OCWD's proactive measures, our groundwater basin is relatively full, and key projects like the GWRS and stormwater capture provide a critical safety net during these times.

I invite you to learn more about your local water supply by visiting [www.ocwd.com](http://www.ocwd.com), and I encourage you to join us for a future GWRS tour, inquire about our speakers bureau program, attend a virtual water webinar, or simply reach out to us with a question!

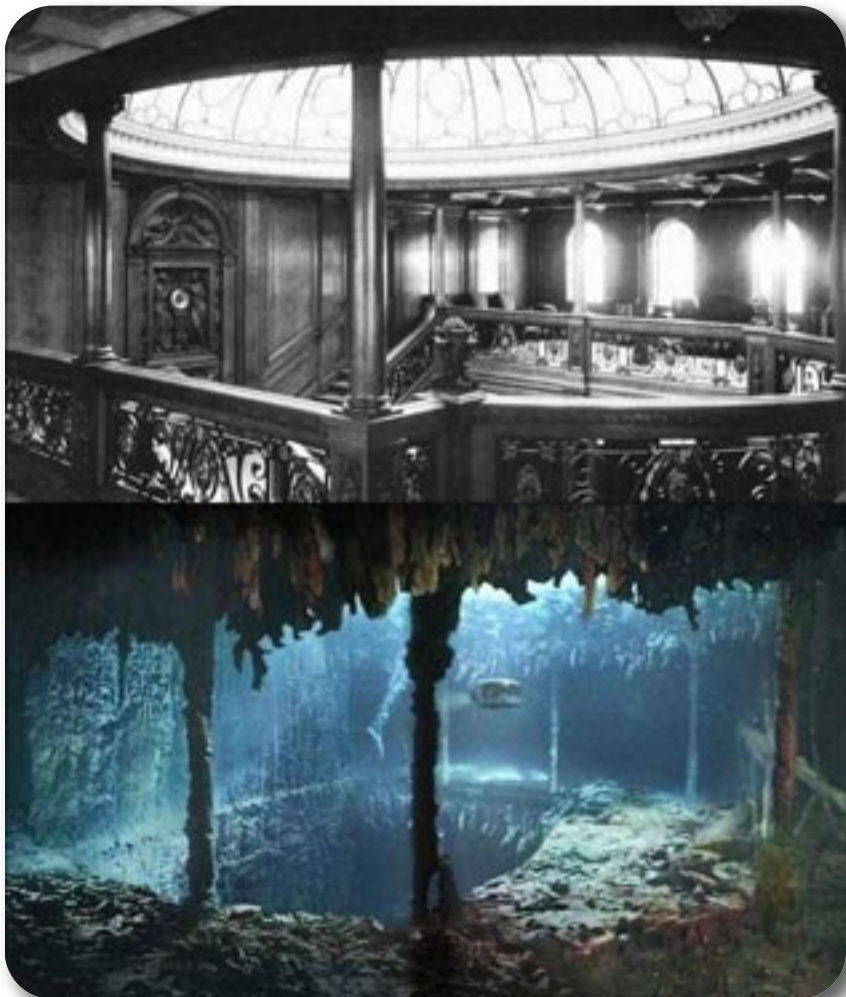
*This Orange County Water District article was provided by Cathy Green, who represents Division 6 of the District. Division 6 includes Huntington Beach and parts of Fountain Valley. Contact Director Green at [cgreen@ocwd.com](mailto:cgreen@ocwd.com).*

The Orange County Groundwater Basin, managed by OCWD, continues to provide a local, reliable water supply for 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County.



Engineers as a flood control facility, frequently sits millions of gallons of Santa Ana River stormwater captured and stored for our use after the winter rains. This pool of water can be strategically held behind the dam and released at rates that the District can capture through its recharge system. Stormwater and local water supply projects are far more reliable and

## Most Iconic Moments in History



### The Grand Staircase Of The Titanic, Before And After

One of the most impressive features of the RMS Titanic and her sister ship the RMS Olympic was the Grand Staircase, located in the forward part of the ship. This ornate stairwell connected the first-class decks with public rooms. No photographs of the Titanic's Grand Staircase are known to exist, and photos such as this one use the extremely similar Olympic staircase to give us an impression of the Titanic's.

Here's how the Grand Staircases of the Titanic and Olympic were described in a promotional brochure of the time:

A STRIKING INTRODUCTION to the wonders and beauty of these vessels is the Entrance Hall and Grand Staircase in the forward section where one begins to realize for the first time the magnificence of these surpassing steamers. The Grand Staircase, sixteen feet wide, extends over sixty feet and serves seven decks, five of which are also reached by the Three Electric Passenger Elevators. It is modeled closely after the style so prevalent during the reign of William and Mary, except that instead of the usual heavily-carved balustrade, a light wrought-iron grille has been employed, a fashion found in a few of the most exclusive great houses of that period. The Entrance Hall and Grand Staircase are surmounted by a glass dome of great splendor, a fitting crown as it were to these the largest and finest steamers in all the world.

Source: Reddit



# On the Vine or Nearby

## What Bartenders Drink When They're Not Drinking Alcohol

We asked industry veterans about their favorite ready-to-drink N/A options.

By Caroline Hatchett Published

Within the bar industry, an increasing number of professionals are reexamining their relationship with alcohol. For Natasha David, former owner of New York City's Nitecap and author of *Drink Lightly*, that meant "taking a little break from alcohol," as she shared on Instagram last fall. For others, it might mean cutting back on shift drinks, drinking alcohol only on weekends, or, increasingly, abstaining completely.

### Serious Sodas

AVEC mixers are designed to be versatile, meant to pair with spirits or be sipped on their own. Nicolas O'Connor, director of mixology at Apotheke, which has locations in New York City and Los Angeles, enjoys AVEC's bold, not-too-sweet Hibiscus & Pomegranate and Yuzu & Lime flavors.

O'Connor also reaches for bottles of Empire Bottling Works Spruce Beer Soda. "I've been drinking spruce beer all my life," says O'Connor. "It's very much like ginger beer, except with spruce. It's an explosion of pine tree flavor, and it's great for wintertime."

For Chetan Gangan Maverick, the head bartender at Chicago's Indienne, Fentimans Cherry Cola is a go-to soda. Brewed with botanicals including ginger, cinnamon, and nutmeg, Fentimans also contains a hit of real cherry juice. It's best chilled and served with ice.

Bittersweet, quinine-infused tonic water is nearly a cocktail unto itself. Demi Natoli, head bartender at Nashville's White Limozen, likes to crack open bottles of Fever Tree Elderflower Tonic on booze-free days. "Refreshing over ice and with lime, it's the perfect N/A beverage to substitute for your average tonic water or soda," says Natoli. "The floral notes of elderflower make this an elevated N/A option."

The Lagunitas Hoppy Refresher essentially is soda water dry-hopped with Citra, Equinox, and Centennial hop varieties. Zach Beeson, a bartender at Bar One Fourteen in Indianapolis, often finds the hyper-carbonated beverage more satisfying than beer. "I will not infrequently order one with classic bar food—say, a burger and fries—because I don't feel too full afterwards," says Beeson.

### Aperitif Hour

First released in 1961, S. Pellegrino's Sanbitter Rosso is a classic non-alcoholic aperitif, lightly carbonated and lovely on its own, poured over a fat cube of ice, or mixed with seltzer for a Campari Soda riff. David has been drinking the tiny, 3.4-ounce bottles since she was a teenager. "When I visit my father in Italy I love to take these with me to the beach and drink alongside a slice of focaccia, and they're an ideal sip after a big holiday feast," she says.

José Medina Camacho, co-founder and beverage director of Adiós in Birmingham, Alabama, enjoys drinking St. Agrestis Phony Negronis, especially in

social settings when he's trying to extend the evening. Natalie Lichtman, bar lead at San Francisco's Pabu, also extols their virtues. "It tastes just like a regular Negroni without the hangover," she says.

Lichtman also loves sipping and mixing non-alcoholic vermouths, including Roots Divino Bianco, which is steeped with Greek lemons and thyme, and Martini offerings Floreale and Vibrante. The latter, according to Lichtman, reads like a classic Italian red bitter vermouth. Drink it on its own, or make a quick N/A Americano with verjus and soda (the brand also sells ready-made N/A vermouth and tonics).

At Clover Hill in Brooklyn, New York, head bartender Edgar Morales mixes non-alcoholic cocktails with Rasasvada (a.k.a. "zero-proof spirit restoratives" as the brand has dubbed its Rose Bergamot, Black Ginger, and Ruby Artemisia beverages). At home, Morales keeps a bottle of the Ruby Artemisia, which is infused with botanicals including artichoke leaf, black lime, chrysanthemum, cinchona bark, green tea, chamomile, grape skins, and ume plum syrup. Morales allows it to chill in the refrigerator, where it's ready to be poured into a wine glass.

By far, bartenders' most loved non-alcoholic aperitif is Ghia. Gangan Maverick enjoys it as a shot, and Beeson credits the aperitif with getting him through Dry January. "Almost all N/A products have a distinct fake liquor quality about them that makes them difficult to consume on their own," says Beeson. "Ghia is one of the only products I've tasted that is nearly indistinguishable from an actual alcoholic beverage."

O'Connor turns to Ghia's ginger- and gentian-forward Le Spritz to curb his amaro cravings. David calls the product a "perfect little can of delight." The brand currently offers three ready-to-drink spritz options—Soda, Ginger, and Lime & Salt—in eight-ounce servings. "I adore these effervescent cocktails, particularly while I'm cooking alone in the kitchen as a treat," says David.

Spread of non-alcoholic beer cans on yellow background, showing Best Day Brewing Kolsche, Athletic Brewing Run Wild, Guinness 0, among others

### Beer, the OG Non-Alcoholic Option

Non-alcoholic beer has come a long

way since Prohibition-era near beer, a category that once helped select breweries limp along during America's driest days. Alex Jump, a bar consultant and director of operations for Focus on Health, prefers Athletic Brewing's Run Wild IPA straight from the can or mixed into non-alcoholic drinks. Owner of The Fox Bar & Cocktail Club in Nashville, Laura Unterberg likes to pair the same beer with late night cheeseburgers, or mixed it into a cocktail with passion fruit purée, Giffard Sirop Aperitif, and ice.

Both bartenders also dig non-alco-

fully and makes you forget that you're not having a regular old stout. As far as taste goes, it's as close to the real deal as I can imagine."

### Wines and Not-Quite-Wines

Bartenders sent us numerous non-alcoholic wine recommendations, including South African Lautus Sparkling; Sovi from California; and Giesen's New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, Premium Red, and Pinot Grigio offerings. But the industry's go-to N/A wine is Leitz, produced in Germany's Rheinhessen region and dealcoholized at a low 84°F to preserve as much nuance as possible.

Jump goes for Leitz canned sparkling rosé, and Carino stocks up on its Pinot Noir, Riesling, and Sparkling Riesling. Medina Camacho is also a fan, noting that the producer has become his new go-to shift drink.

"Lots of time after working a long shift, I don't want an alcoholic beverage but am still looking for a good glass of wine," says Medina Camacho. "Leitz Eins Zwei Zero is one of the few non-alcoholic wines that tastes like what I'm looking for."

In addition to non-alcoholic grape-based analogs, there's also an emerging category of genre-bending wine-adjacent beverages. William Edwards, beverage director of Manhatta

in New York, enjoys a glass of Muri Drinks Co. Yamilé after work when he wants something complex and consequence-free. Produced in Copenhagen, the drink combines multiple ferments (carbonic raspberry-gooseberry mead, smoked lacto-fermented rhubarb, and goldenrod-pink peppercorn kefir) in one bottle.

"It provides a totally unique drinking experience, irrespective of the fact that it's a non-alcoholic beverage," says Edwards. "There are elements of wine—natural and classic—elements of sour beer, and flavors that are so unique [that] they're difficult to wrap your head around, while somehow remaining undeniably delicious and accessible."

Jump and Lichtman also enjoy Proxies (the Zephyr, Sauvage, and Pastiche labels top their lists). Proxies beverages aren't necessarily made to taste like wine, but they have similar structures thanks to the inclusion of grape juice, verjus, teas, fruits, and other botanicals. "These are outstanding to drink on their own or however one would have their vermouth," says Lichtman. "In my experience, this is a game-changing product for a lot of alcohol drinkers."



Liquor.com / Laura Sant

holic brewer Untitled Art. For Unterberg, it's the brand's Gose, as well as its Chocolate Milk Stout (she recommends trying the latter with added N/A amaro or a scoop of ice cream). According to Jump, Untitled Art's Italian Pilsner "is really off-the-charts good."

Also in the craft category, beer consultant Edwin Carino of AmeriCraft-Bier recommends Maine brewer Woodland Farms' line of six non-alcoholic beers, while Lichtman likes Best Day Brewing.

But mega beer brands get props from pros too. Vegas bartender Timothy Baer drinks Samuel Adams Just the Haze non-alcoholic IPA, and also recommends Heinken 0.0 with a splash of tomato juice added. For Julian Flores, the beverage director of Palenque Kitchen in Costa Mesa, California, Guinness Draught 0 is the "one N/A beer above all that keeps the real essence of what beer is alive."

"The same beautiful head that accumulates on our favorite Guinness also occurs here, giving the beer the leg up in texture," says Flores. "The smooth, velvety palate carries through beauti-



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**The Finest Vintage Cars of the 1960's Golden Age**



Flickr Photo by JOHN LLOYD

**1964 Pontiac Tempest LeMans GTO**

The legendary 1964 Pontiac Tempest was the first commercially available muscle car, marketed toward younger generations that wanted a vehicle to "look cool in". Its 215 cu inch six-cylinder engine made it roar like a beast, which was obviously a huge hit among young people.

For those who decided to upgrade their Pontiac Tempest LeMans to the GTO option, they got high-performance 389 CID V8 engines, special GTO nameplates, dual exhausts, dual hood scoops and dash panel inserts.

**These Texas Cities Will Get A Driverless Truck Hub**

**Torc Robotics will open new facility this year as it works toward launching driverless truck operations by 2027.**

BY JAY RAMEY

PUBLISHED: TORC ROBOTICS

Autonomous truck developer Torc Robotics reveals plans for a hub in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, slated to open in 2025.

The company has been validating its SAE Level 4 tech in the past few months and aims to launch commercial operations in Texas starting in 2027.

A number of autonomous truck developers have picked Texas as their home, with the route between Houston and Dallas seeing quite a bit of testing ahead of the launch of operations by multiple carriers.

We've known for a while that Texas has emerged as the epicenter of autonomous truck testing, with a whole cast of startups now experimenting with driverless trucks carrying real cargo.

The rapid rise of the Lone Star State, especially the Houston-Dallas route, as the testing ground for SAE Level 4 driverless trucks has highlighted just how quickly the industry has advanced toward a future where 18-wheelers will operate with no one on board.

Now Torc Robotics, one of the main players in this sphere and a subsidiary of Daimler Truck AG, has taken the first step in establishing a hub for autonomous trucks in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area, aimed at customer freight pilot programs, autonomous testing, and ultimately commercial operations two years from now.

The site itself will occupy 18 acres and will include 22,000 square feet of office space, with the company planning to equip it starting early this year.

"This comes on the heels of the successful product acceptance test validation of our autonomous trucks without a driver in a multi-lane, closed-course, highway-speed environment, further showcasing our dedication to the highest safety and product maturity standards," said Andrew Culhane, Chief Commercial Officer at Torc.

The company currently plans to commercialize its SAE Level 4 tech starting in 2027, after more rounds of testing, and has recently kicked off validation of its autonomous trucks without a driver in the cab on a multi-lane closed road environment.

Texas has welcomed the autonomous vehicle industry, eager to create more jobs in the tech sector.

The tests have been carried out at highway speeds and are intended to preview a scalable product release, testing the systems essentially as

jobs in the tech sector while the trucking industry continues to face a driver shortage.

"This new hub will enable us to better serve our current and future customers, enhance our operational capabilities, and drive forward the adoption of autonomous technology in the logistics industry," said CEO Peter Vaughan Schmidt.

MUCH WORK REMAINS TO BE DONE BETWEEN NOW AND 2027, AND TORC IS BY NO MEANS THE ONLY PLAYER IN THIS FIELD.



they are intended to go into production. This makes this round of tests different from earlier, experimental efforts.

But the path to commercialization is still a long one, even in autonomy-friendly Texas. A commercial rollout will require central control centers for the truck fleets as well, with autonomous trucking companies thereby creating new tech jobs while phasing out some driver jobs.

This is part of the reason why a number of states, including Texas, have welcomed the autonomous vehicle industry, eager to create more

Competitors like Volvo Autonomous Solutions and Waabi have also boosted their footprints in the state, including building a special cargo hub for autonomous trucks in the case of the latter.

It remains to be proven whether by the end of the decade driverless trucks will be a common sight on the route between Houston and Dallas. But it's clear that the robotaxi industry is merely one outlet for SAE Level 4 tech in the coming years—and could even be upstaged by trucks running daily routes in the coming years.

At least if all goes according to plan..

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# FOODS YOU'LL NEVER EAT AGAIN AFTER YOU KNOW THE INGREDIENTS. OR MAYBE SHOULD NOT EAT AGAIN SCARY...

The food market continues to expand at an accelerated rate, with manufacturers and brands adding new products every day. Business is booming, with grocery store sales having more than doubled in the last 30 years in the US alone.

Consumers love to consume products that are tasty and cost-effective, but have we ever stopped to look behind the veil and investigate exactly what's in our foods? From beaver butt secretion to sheep sebum in our chewing gum, there's a lot out there that you won't find advertised at Walmart.

## Coffee Creamer

**Company:** Coffee-Mate

**Market Share:** \$2.884 billion\*

**Ingredient:** Oil

There's a lot to be said for black coffee and a no-nonsense cup of java. If you take your coffee white and typically use creamer, then that's okay too – depending on what type of creamer you use. Some non-dairy creamers are actually a little bit...interesting.

Liquid Coffee-Mate uses water, syrup solids, and soybean oil to achieve the same consistency as milk. So, in short, it's not really creaming your coffee at all, it's just giving it a hearty dose of oil which is what makes it taste so smooth. You wouldn't find that on the menu at Starbucks.

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## Cereal

**Company:** Various

**Market Share:** \$95.9 billion by 2030\*

**Ingredient:** BHT

Preservatives are common in food, we all know that. That's how companies are able to make such huge quantities of food and ship them across the world. That doesn't mean we expect the food to have weird ingredients that are questionable, though.

In 2015, General Mills opted to remove an antioxidant ingredient,

BHT, from its products when there were claims about the safety of the synthetic substance. Just like TBHQ, BHT is a substance typically used to stop frying oil from going bad. Who wants to wake up to a bowl of that?

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## Oregano

**Company:** Various

**Market Share:** \$17.6 billion by 2029\*

**Ingredient:** Aphids and spider mites

Oregano can add some much-needed flavor to a meal, but if you pick it straight from the garden you might want to make sure you thoroughly wash it...then wash it again. You might love oregano, but so do aphids and spider mites.

guys can't get enough of the green stuff, so just make sure you don't have any lingering on your leaves when you chop them up to garnish your next dish. You don't want to serve up something with a side of insects, no matter how much you don't like the person you're giving it to.

©HandmadePictures Those little

## Peanut Butter

**Company:** Jif and others

**Market Share:** \$7.89 billion by 2030\*

**Ingredient:** Rodent hair

Peanut butter is one of the best things to come out of the modern world, but rodents might not think so. They certainly wouldn't eat it themselves, because it can have rodent hair in it. One rodent hair per 100 grams is the limit according to the FDA.

There are plenty of people that would argue one rodent hair is one hair too many, but it's seemingly not that big of a deal. Instead of eliminating them entirely, someone in the world decided it would be better to just allow a few stray ones here and there.

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# Don't Let "Mis-information" Ruin the Best Years of Your Life!

## MYTH ONE

"I've heard I won't qualify for a reverse mortgage because of my limited income."

## MYTH TWO:

"If I take out a reverse mortgage the lender will own my home."

## MYTH THREE:

"There are restrictions on how reverse mortgage proceeds may be used."

## MYTH FOUR:

"Only low-income seniors get reverse mortgages."

## MYTH FIVE:

"If I outlive my life expectancy, the lender will evict me."

## MYTH SIX

"A reverse mortgage will affect my government benefits."

## MYTH SEVEN:

"There are no objective advisors available to seniors trying to decide if a reverse mortgage suits their needs."

## MYTH EIGHT:

"My children will be responsible for the repayment of the loan."

## MYTH NINE

"Reverse mortgage lenders take advantage of seniors."

## MYTH TEN:

"I cannot get a reverse mortgage if I have an existing mortgage."

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# The American Companies That Aren't Actually American Anymore

By Kate Prince/Business

Many brilliant companies – from Apple to Starbucks – have been founded in the United States, starting out as small ventures to become international leaders in their fields. However, the world of business isn't always as straightforward as it looks. Regardless of how well-rooted a company's American history is, it doesn't mean that it will always belong to Uncle Sam.

In fact, many quintessentially American brands are no longer American-owned at all. From Ben and Jerry's to IBM and Holiday Inn, overseas investors have played a big part in keeping these companies moving forward. Without them stepping in, some of them may have ceased to exist altogether.

**I Can't Believe It's Not Butter!**  
**Original Headquarters:** Baltimore, Maryland  
**Purchased By:** Unilever  
**Country:** England

Developed in 1979 by the Maryland-based J.H. Filbert company, I Can't Believe It's Not Butter! is a spreadable butter-like substitute that had done everything possible to fool diners into believing they were eating butter, when in fact, they were not.

By the early 2000s, I Can't Believe It's Not Butter! was even topping margarine in sales in America and showed no signs of letting up. Unfortunately, J.H. Filbert's one-of-a-kind spread was no longer American-owned by that time. The company and all of its assets were acquired by Unilever nearly 2-decades earlier, in 1986.

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**NextVR Inc**  
**Original Headquarters:** Newport, California  
**Purchased By:** CITIC Group Corp  
**Country:** China

Virtual Reality has been at the forefront of technological desires for decades. While several companies are attempting to get a foot in the door, NextVR is already sitting in the conference room with the big



players. And why is that? Because a foreign investor injected a ton of cash into the business when it was still young.

Beijing-based CITIC Group Corp was that foreign investor, and it made a \$20 million gamble on NextVR that paid off big time. Apple bought the VR company in 2020, but it cost the tech giant \$100 million to do so.

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**Sara Lee**  
**Original Headquarters:** Downers Grove, Illinois  
**Purchased By:** Grupo Bimbo  
**Country:** Mexico

Sara Lee is a name Americans have added to their dinner lists since before World War 2. The baked goods company was founded in 1939 in Illinois, and its ownership remained 100% American for eight decades. However, everything changed in 2010, when the Mexican-based Grupo Bimbo paid \$959 million for Sara Lee's fresh bakery division.

Believe it or not, the massive deal was great for both sides. Grupo Bimbo took over an already successful operation, and Sara Lee used the almost \$1 billion it received to focus entirely on its frozen desserts and meat departments.

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**Woolrich**  
**Original Headquarters:**  
**Purchased By:** W.P. Lavori  
**Country:** Italy

Woolrich has been manufacturing clothing so long that its origins pre-date the American Civil War. Amazingly, production in its Pennsylvania location began nearly two hundred years ago. The company is even responsible for suturing clothing for the

President Lincoln-led Union army.

However, times change. And so do the ownerships of most companies. In 2016, fourteen years shy of its two hundredth birthday, Woolrich was acquired by Italian-based W.P. Lavori. The flagship Pennsylvania plant began the process of closing permanently in 2018, and most of the company's products are now being made in China and Southeast Asia.

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# FAMOUS MURDERS THAT REMAIN UNSOLVED

By Thomm Quackenbush

Despite what television would have you believe, not every murder is solved in under an hour. No matter how much effort police put into the cases at the time and amateur sleuths do afterward, some murders will never be solved.

That's not to say that all unsolved murders are created equal. For some, almost everything about the case is unknown: the culprit, the victim's identity, the method, the motive. On occasion, the best the police can tell the public is that someone was definitely killed, but anything after that is nebulous. With other cases, everyone knows who did it, but they managed to get acquitted or gave the police an alibi. In still others, the only reason that witnesses aren't pointing fingers at the culprit is that these fingers will be immediately cut off — along with their heads.

However, for what little good it did for the victims, sometimes being unable to solve a murder drives those left behind to improve the world so that no one else has to suffer the same fate.

## Amber Hagerman: Be alert

**Emergency Alert Details**  
**A CIVIL AUTHORITY HAS ISSUED**  
**A CHILD ABDUCTION EMERGENCY**  
**FOR THE FOLLOWING**  
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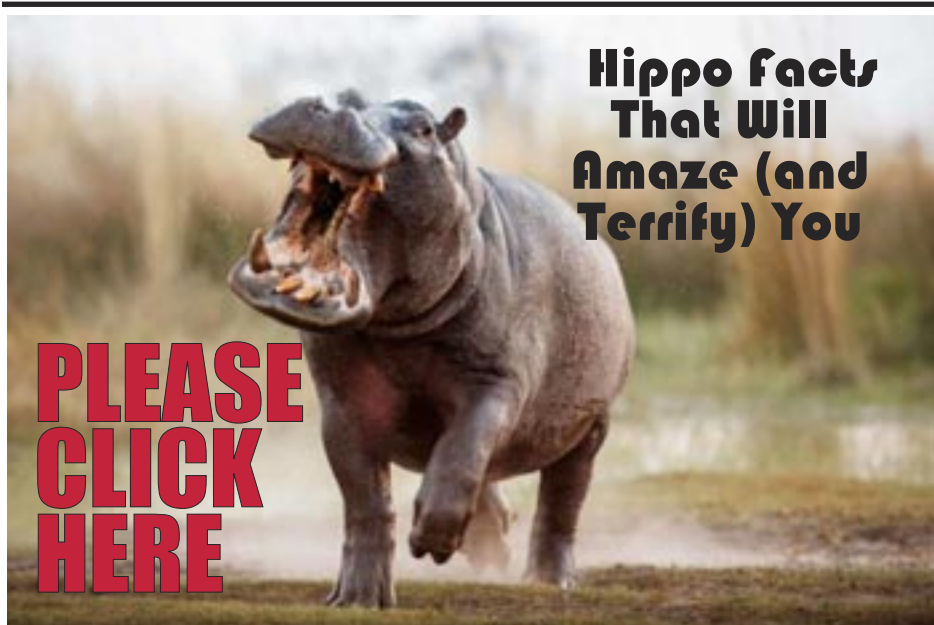
Z22/Wikipedia

Even if you've never heard the name Amber Hagerman, you've likely received an Amber Alert.

According to KIRO 7, on January 13, 1996, nine-year-old Hagerman was abducted shortly after leaving her grandmother's house to ride her bicycle around an abandoned parking lot in East Arlington, Texas. It took four days for her body to be found in a creek bed miles away, her throat slit, according to True Crime Files. The New York Times reported that heavy rains had caused her body to be swept further downstream from where it had initially been sighted.

Despite a \$10,000 reward that stands to this day and more than 7,000 leads investigated, there have been no credible ones. A member of the original task force, Sgt. Ben Lopez, stated, "All this time, we've only had one witness," a 78-year-old neighbor, Jimmie Kevil, who saw Amber grabbed by a white or Hispanic man in a black pickup truck. Police suspect that there might have been other witnesses who declined to speak to them, fearing deportation. Detective Grant Gildon, a lead investigator on this case, checks yearly to see if there is any technology that could crack the cold case.

The police believe that the killer kept Hagerman alive for at least two days. Had people known that Amber was missing and what she looked like, she might have been found in that window. This tragedy inspired the creation of the Amber Alert, and over 1,000 children so far have been saved as a result.



**Hippo facts That Will Amaze (and Terrify) You**

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# 6 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS LEVELS

Everyone wants to lead a stress-free life, but, unfortunately, your professional and personal lives can include a healthy dose of daily stress. How you deal with the stressful situations you face each day profoundly impacts your mental health, physical well-being, and overall quality of life. In this post, you will learn some practical methods for managing everyday stress through self-care practices such as yoga, meditation, breathing exercises, and other activities. Read on to learn more about reducing your stress levels to live healthier and happier lives! Healthy Stress Vs. Unhealthy Stress

## Buy vitamins and supplements

The term 'stress' gets thrown around a lot, but it's important to understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy stress. Healthy stress is often a source of motivation or direction – think of it as encouragement, prompting you to take action or focus on a task. Unhealthy stress, however, is much more detrimental – unchecked, mental and emotional exhaustion can seriously impact your physical health, relationships, and daily life. Managing pressure is about recognizing the difference between the two types of stress and leaving no room for unhealthy triggers in your day-to-day activities. So take stock – listen to yourself and create space where you can be productive and motivated without feeling overwhelmed.

## Healthy Methods To Reduce Stress Levels

Taking the time to identify and manage the sources of your stress is key to living a balanced, healthy life. To help you on your journey, here are some tried and true methods for reducing stress levels and increasing your overall well-being:

### Practice Yoga

Practicing yoga offers numerous health benefits, particularly when it comes to managing stress levels. It can be incredibly effective in helping you to reduce stress, as it focuses on connecting to your breath and calming the mind. Through mindful poses, you can learn how to regulate your breathing and create space for perspective and insight into your emotions.

Yoga also trains you to sense where you store tension within your body and learn how to release it; with practice, this awareness can help you quickly move through everyday anxieties. Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach to stress relief, yoga has been a long-standing technique used by many who could benefit from its de-stressing effects.

### Keep A Journal

Keeping a journal can be another easy and effective way to reduce stress. Writing out your thoughts and making sense of them through reflection can create emotional clarity and help you look at stressful situations from a different perspective. Keeping a journal regularly can be easy and convenient, as it only requires daily time to express yourself on paper.

It offers an opportunity for calm in an increasingly hectic world and can free up creative energy that would otherwise likely be consumed by worry and unhappiness. Start small and use this wonderful practice to cope with daily demands on your time, energy, and emotions.

### Meditate Regularly

Taking time to meditate regularly can help reduce stress levels significantly. It takes commitment and discipline, but the rewards can be remarkable for your mental and physical health. When meditating, you focus on calming your mind and body, which can help you become more aware of any underlying tension and induce a sense of relaxation. Practicing mindful meditation can offer insight into what triggers your stress, enabling you to manage it better in the months ahead. It may take some time before you start getting results, but just making an effort will bring deeper relaxation day after day. With regular practice comes greater clarity of thought and overall well-being. So, why not try to reduce your stress levels by incorporating meditation into your routine?

### Clean Up Your Diet

Nutrition plays a key role in improving mental health – when your body is deprived of the essential nutrients it needs to function, psychological functions such as emotional regulation, behavior control, and cognitive processing can suffer greatly. Eating nutrient-dense meals low in sugar, caffeine,



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If a versatile, easy and economical recipe is just what you need for game day, get-togethers or stress-free evenings at home, these Mini Beef Wellingtons are perfect for you. Enjoy them as a

meal with favorite sides or serve as an appetizer the next time you play host.

Visit [Culinary.net](http://Culinary.net) to find more appetizers, meals, snacks and sides for any occasion.



**CLICK HERE** Watch video to see how to make this recipe!

## Mini Beef Wellingtons

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

### Mushroom Sauce:

1 can (14 ounces) mushrooms  
1 1/2 cups chicken broth  
3 tablespoons butter  
3 tablespoons flour  
1 tablespoon garlic powder  
salt, to taste  
pepper, to taste  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
8 ounces beef tenderloin steaks, cubed  
1 package (17 ounces, 2 sheets) puff pastry  
water  
garlic and herb spreadable cheese  
1 package (2 1/2 ounces) real bacon pieces  
mashed potatoes, for serving

To make mushroom sauce: In blender, blend mushrooms and chicken broth; set aside.

In skillet over medium heat, melt butter and

mix in flour. Slowly add mushroom broth while stirring. It should start to thicken; if it doesn't, add 1 tablespoon flour and stir well.

Add garlic powder and salt and pepper, to taste. Mix in heavy cream while continuing to stir. Remove from heat and set aside.

Heat oven to 400 F.

Cube steaks and place in bowl then cover and mix well with 1 cup mushroom sauce.

Cut each puff pastry into six squares for 12 total. Use water to moisten each corner of squares and bring them together, forming small box shape. Place 1 heaping tablespoon meat mixture into each pastry square.

Place squares on parchment paper-covered cookie sheets and bake 15 minutes.

Spoon spreadable cheese over hot squares and top with bacon pieces.

Serve with mashed potatoes and use leftover mushroom sauce as gravy.

and saturated fats will give your body enough energy to kick-start a healthier lifestyle. Incorporating more fruits, vegetables, and fiber into your diet will help you reach optimal physical health while calming the mind by restoring balance.

With few processed foods on the menu, you'll feel content with fewer highs and lows throughout the day – this can significantly reduce stress levels and give you more control of your emotions. In essence, cleaning up your diet could be beneficial for not just physical reasons but also mental ones too!

### Create A Sleep Routine

Creating and committing to a regular sleep routine is one of the best ways to reduce stress levels. Having consistent sleeping habits will help regulate your circadian rhythm, promoting better rest at night and improved alertness during the day. Additionally, giving yourself an hour or two before bedtime to relax can help increase relaxation hormone levels, allowing the body and mind to prepare for deep sleep. Before going to bed each night, try winding down with calming activities such as reading, taking a warm bath, or yoga to create a strong connection between your nighttime routine and improved sleep quality.

Establishing a reliable sleep schedule may be difficult at first. Still, by investing time and effort into a healthy routine, you could find it significantly easier to manage staying stress-free in the long run. Doing this can also trigger positive emotions that will

benefit mental health in addition to soothing anxieties that keep you up at night.

### Utilize Breathing Exercises

Many people know just how powerful their breath can be – it's the gateway to life! Not only is it physically vital, but breathwork can significantly affect your emotional state. When you focus on the breath and make use of breathing exercises to reduce your stress, you tap into a kind of magic inside you that has been with you since birth. By consciously slowing down and concentrating on each inhalation and exhalation, you allow yourself to relax deeply in body and mind.

A few minutes of conscious breaths can help calm the nervous system, leaving you feeling more centered and content. This gentle practice of mindful breathing allows you to bring a balanced body and mind. In this way, breathing exercises can open up a new realm for stress relief.

### Take Steps To Reduce Stress Levels And Live Happier!

Whether through methods that help with immediate relief, like breathing exercises, or practices that provide long-term benefits, like clean eating and establishing a sleep routine, you can find ways to reduce stress levels in your daily life. Commitment is key here – by dedicating time each day to incorporate these methods into your lifestyle, you'll start seeing the effects of stress reduction sooner than you think! By reducing your stress levels, you're taking an important step towards a healthier and happier life.



# LAST CALL: These Chain Stores Are Closing Locations in 2023

The retail sector can often be fickle, even when the company is loved and established. Some of the titans in the industry have faced tough times in recent years, with even the seemingly infallible ones shuttering locations for good.

From Aldi to Costco, Walmart, and even designer stores, it looks like no one is safe. Business status can change on a dime, but let's see which household names are closing the doors for good in 2023. Will your local store be next – or has it managed to escape the retail apocalypse?

## StubHub

**Year Established: 2000**

**Store Closures: 3**

StubHub was created in 2000—during the dot com boom—as a one-stop shop for people to buy and sell event tickets of all kinds. More than 25% of StubHub's United States-based employees are at the San Francisco office. Likewise, more than 100 other workers call the China and Shanghai City branches their place of employment.

Or, they did, at least. Citing the 2020/2021 global economic crisis as a leading factor in the decision, the eBay owned platform has announced the imminent closures of those 3 office locations.

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## Hy-Vee

**Year Established: 1930**

**Store Closures: 2**

Hy-Vee has provided customers with baked goods, a well-stocked delicatessen, beautiful floral arrangements, wines & spirits, pharmaceutical needs, and a pre-prepared food section with a wide variety of ready-to-eat meals for nearly a century. Its largest current location is almost as big as two football fields, and there are plans for even larger stores in the woodwork.

However, all because new stores are on the cards, that doesn't mean the company is immune from store closures and repurposing. In fact, at the end of 2021, it was announced that two Hy-Vee locations would be biting the dust by spring 2022.

©melissamn/Shutterstock.com

## Jokr

**Year Established: 2021**

**Store Closures: Exiting US**

Like many online grocery delivery apps, Jokr seemed to come up during the pandemic amid the "stay at home" era. More and more people turned to deliveries to avoid going to the stores themselves. However, Jokr's US operations seemingly weren't built to last.

In June 2021, the app announced that it would be ceasing US operations to focus on business in Latin America. The business previously served New York and Boston, with many customers now having no choice but to look for an alternative way to get groceries delivered direct-to-door.

@jokrmexico/Facebook

## Wells Fargo

**Year Established: 1852**

**Store Closures: Over a dozen locations**

Wells Fargo is one of America's longest-running financial institutions, but that doesn't mean it's going to be around forever – at least, not in the way that customers have become accustomed to over the years. Along with Bank of America, Wells Fargo has announced the closure of more than a dozen physical locations.

With the rise of online banking, more and more banks are getting rid of in-person facilities. It might be a bit frustrating for those that prefer doing things over the counter, but in terms of business, it doesn't make sense to keep the lights on when visitor numbers are steadily declining.

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# 'WHY DO WE WANT TO BASTARDIZE OUR GAME?': MLB PLAYERS AND MANAGERS JOIN CRITICISM OF GOLDEN AT-BAT PROPOSAL

JAMIE BARTON, CNN

Picture the scene. It's the bottom of the ninth, the Los Angeles Dodgers are down one with two outs and two men on base. Enrique Hernández is due up, but manager Dave Roberts sits him down and sends star man Shohei Ohtani to the plate instead.

That is the essence of MLB commissioner Rob Manfred's Golden At-Bat proposal, which he floated in late

Phillies reliever Matt Strahm told The Athletic. "Nah, that messes with baseball history too much. I don't like that one. Say you have a guy like (veteran reliever) Craig Kimbrel, who is going to be chasing 500 saves. Then he's got to do it at the end of his career against Aaron Judge and Juan Soto for every save? Nah. That's not right."

Minnesota Twins shortstop Carlos Correa was concerned about what it



Joe Maddon, when he was manager of the Los Angeles Angels, looking on during a game against the Cleveland Guardians at Angel Stadium on April 25, 2022. -

Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images

October during an appearance on The Varsity with John Ourand. The rule would allow each team one chance per game to swap in its best hitter for an at-bat, even if it is not his turn.

"There are a variety of (rule change ideas) that are being talked about out there," Manfred said on the podcast. "One of them – there was a little buzz around it at an owners' meeting – was the idea of a Golden At-Bat."

While Manfred was quick to remind listeners that the suggestion was "in the conversation-only stage right now," that hasn't stopped various figures from around the league from criticizing the proposal since then.

"Our game is not built that way," said Joe Maddon – former manager of the Tampa Bay Rays, Chicago Cubs and Los Angeles Angels – in an interview with The Athletic. "Why do we want to bastardize our game and make it like everybody else?"

"The more we see things, the less impact they have," he continued. "The Trout-Ohtani thing (the final at-bat in the 2023 WBC Championship) was outstanding because you rarely see it. You don't see Halley's Comet every night."

Some have voiced their opposition to the suggestion on the grounds that it would deprive lesser-known players of the opportunity to produce huge, unexpected moments.

"Not all change is great," said former Red Sox first baseman Kevin Youkilis on X. "The best part of baseball is when the guy least expected to get the big hit delivers at the end of the game. A memory that lasts a lifetime for the player and fans."

"The roller coaster ride of emotions in sports is what makes it the best unscripted entertainment."

Others are worried about what it would mean for relievers, who would likely see a hit to their statistics were they facing the world's best every time they took to the mound.

"I wouldn't like that,"

would mean for the healthiness of a pitching staff.

"I can't agree with that one because the relievers are going to be under really, really high stress all the time, and then the injuries are going to go even higher," he said, per The Athletic.

Former Seattle Mariners catcher Chris Howard criticized Manfred for not focusing on what he felt was a more pressing issue – the blackout rules which prevent fans in certain areas watching certain games on TV, to encourage them to attend in person.

"Please tell me the 'Golden At Bat' rule is just an April Fool's joke a few months early," he wrote on X Tuesday. "Someone needs to tell Manfred to stop watching Savannah Bananas games. You want to do something, stop the blackouts."

Meanwhile, seven-time Cy Young Award winner Roger Clemens simply said of the proposal on X: "This can't be real."

Manfred has overseen a controversial period for rule changes as commissioner over the last decade. While the pitch clock, which was introduced in 2023, has generally been met with praise, other ideas like the ghost runner rule – which automatically places a runner on second base at the start of each extra inning in regular-season games – have proved far more divisive.

It remains to be seen whether the Golden At-Bat proposal will ever make it beyond the ideas stage. But if it does, it will likely be Manfred's most contentious rule change yet.

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Minnesota Twins shortstop Carlos Correa hits a single against the Cleveland Guardians on September 18.

Frank Jansky/Icon SportsWire/AP

# GAME DAY SIGNS GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

## Oh Brother

That's one way to surprise a basketball player in the middle of a game! This fan whipped out a sign claiming to be NBA star Dirk Nowitzki's brother, perhaps hoping to distract him during a key moment

on the court.

We're no geneticists, so we can't verify this assertion, but making the statement in this way could certainly bring with it an element of shock. Do they look alike? We're staying out of this one.



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# Cookies, Cocktails & WOMEN

## Quick Chocolate Pudding

Submitted by Samia Published  
 1 teaspoon whiskey (Optional)

**Ingredients**  
 Original recipe (1X) yields 8 servings  
 4 cups milk  
 1/2 cup white sugar  
 1/2 cup cornstarch  
 1/2 cup dark cocoa powder  
 1 (4 ounce) bar semisweet chocolate, chopped  
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

**Directions**  
 Stir milk, sugar, and cornstarch together in a saucepan; stirring continually, bring to a boil. Add cocoa powder, chopped chocolate, cinnamon, and whiskey to the milk mixture; cook and stir until thick, about 5 minutes. Pour into a casserole or baking dish. Refrigerate until cold.



## QUEEN VICTORIA

Queen Victoria was born 24 May 1819. Aged 18 she became Queen of Great Britain and she went on to rule for 63 years – at the time – she was the longest-serving Monarch in Europe. She ruled through a period of British imperialism with the British Empire expanding and she became Empress of India. She came to epitomise an era of social conservatism and economic expansion.



Wikipedia

## Manhattan Cocktail

By Dylan Garret

The Manhattan has managed to remain one of the most popular cocktails in the world for well over a century. A combination of whiskey, sweet vermouth, bitters, and a maraschino cherry garnish, this drink embodies the classic, spirit-forward, and aromatic school of cocktails.

**Ingredients**  
 2 ounces rye whiskey  
 1 ounce sweet vermouth  
 2 dashes Angostura bitters  
 Garnish: brandied cherry (or lemon twist, if preferred)

**Steps**  
 Add the rye whiskey, sweet vermouth, and bitters into a mixing glass with ice and stir until well-chilled.  
 Strain into a chilled Nick & Nora or coupe glass.  
 Garnish with a brandied cherry (or a lemon twist, if preferred).



Liquor.com / Tim Nusog

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## HISTORICAL PHOTOS



The glasses John Lennon wore when he was assassinated 1980



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# EarthTalk®

From the Editors of  
E/The Environmental  
Magazine

Dear EarthTalk:  
What are some  
ways music gear  
makers are going green?

Peter B., Groton, CT

Music gear production, from collecting materials, producing gear and packaging with excessive plastic, has numerous negative environmental effects. Collecting wood has led to overharvesting at an unsustainable rate, an increasingly urgent issue for forests and woodlands. Plastic and metal waste have risen, too. These issues have led many music gear makers to implement sustainable changes.

The good news is that some instrument producers have begun harvesting wood from dead or dying trees to prevent the overharvesting of rich woodlands, while others have shifted toward less-used "alternative tonewoods" like basswood and kaya. To decrease metal waste in sourcing for strings, makers are beginning to purchase strings in the form of rods.



Music gear makers are increasingly incorporating sustainable woods and other green materials into their products these days.

Ian Mackenzie, FlickrCC.

Small changes are also happening in the production are. Manufacturers have replaced traditional materials with eco-friendly options when producing the picks, straps and other accessories. It is now commonplace to find bioplastic or even

alternative wood sources has caused a notable decrease in pressure on certain wood species commonly used for instruments like mahogany, rosewood and spruce. Moreover, changes made in packaging and material collection have reduced the vast amounts of plastic and metal waste from entering landfills or oceans. Exemplified by the color-coded guitar strings, unique innovations have also made an impact, with the director of product management at music instrument company D'Addario, Brian Vance, commenting that color-coding has eliminated total packaging mass by 70 percent.

More can still be done. Companies advocate for government policies cementing environmentally friendly decisions made by manufacturers, or work toward simpler changes by implementing more recycling programs for their customers. Ultimately, strategic efforts have significantly boosted the sustainability of music gear production, proving that these efforts must be continued and expanded.

**CONTACTS:**

*The rise of sustainable guitars, frontiergroup.org/articles/the-rise-of-sustainable-guitars-how-an-industry-is-innovating-to-save-our-forests.*

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*The information contained in this column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Local News.*

## FRIENDSHIP SAID BEST IN PICTURES

### Friendship Goals



shell for guitar picks and vegan leather for straps. String company Stringjoy now has a recycling program, encouraging players to mail back old strings to repurpose the material.

When packaging manufactured goods, music gear makers have begun using paper tape, boxes and envelopes over the traditionally used plastic. Unique innovations have also made packaging greener, such as color-coding each guitar string and its packaging to avoid the environmentally harmful practice of purchasing an entirely new set of guitar strings when only one needs a replacement.

Together these changes have led to a plethora of significant positive outcomes. Increased use of

## Mind Boggling Photos



### Driftwood Art

## Parenting in the WILD



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# Quinn Minute - After the Holidays

by Rix Quinn

Many folks say that after a busy December, January can be a snoozer. So, here's something to ponder: What is Santa Claus doing now?

How about those reindeer? Ever wonder what they do? Me neither.

Donner, Blitzen, Comet and other first stringers have enough seniority to draw vacation pay.

I've heard that the substitutes -- Delbert, Elmore, Hubert, Fester -- often get called at the last minute to fill in for the main guys. This is

called "passing the buck."

Idle thoughts fill the mind of Post-Holiday Man, and make him long for cold-weather diversions.

This leads him to do crazy things, like jump naked into a frozen lake and call it a sport. Or even worse, he will go out to an icy pond, dig a hole, and try to catch frozen fish, which already come packaged at the grocery.

Here are some ways to get over the winter whines. I can't guarantee they work, but I plan to test them... soon as I get back from ice fishing.

1. "If all the world were playing holidays, to sport would be as tedious as to work." -- Shakespeare reminds us we must toil again to pay off credit cards.

2. "Spring is right around the corner." -- Yeah, right. That's what they told Columbus about the New World. But on the plus side, he discovered the Bahamas.

3. "Begin anew." -- This new year gives you plenty of time to re-invent yourself. Last year one of my lazy friends did just that, and succeeded brilliantly.

He rents himself to self-help groups as a "bad example."



## Most Beautiful Female Billionaires

It takes one several years of hard work in business to become a billionaire. Some of the young women presented in this list were lucky to have inherited billions of dollars while others have accumulated their multi-billion wealth from businesses. Interestingly, some of these women are still young in their early twenties and yet they have a personal net worth higher than budgets of some developing countries. The cash that they possess is enough for them to do whatever they want and more despite being born into very rich families.



Nita Ambani

The chairperson and founder of Dhirubhai Ambani International School and the most iconic Indian businesswoman herself, Nita Ambani is the wife of Mukesh Ambani, who is the richest person in India and a business tycoon, with net worth of \$22.3 billion. Recently, she has shifted to the most expensive home of the world, along with her husband and children.

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Moe Kanoudi

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### Restaurants Worth Crowding About

When it comes to restaurants, looks can be deceiving. Great food can come from almost any kitchen, whether the restaurant is fancy or not. It's the unassuming spots that often prepare some of the best fried chicken, maybe because fried chicken is an unassuming dish itself. We examined customer reviews and expert recommendations to find fried chicken joints in every state that offer fantastic chicken in an unpretentious atmosphere. Next time you're in the mood for Southern-style fried chicken, check out these hole-in-the-wall joints, walk-up windows, drive-thrus, truck stops, and gas stations for a bucket of fried goodness — and maybe a side of potatoes while you're at it.

## Kansas: Down Home Family Restaurant Independence

Down Home Family Restaurant is in an adorable country building with a decorative antique pickup-truck-turned-planter out front. They cook up all kinds of down home favorites, but the "chicken fried chicken" is top notch. Munch on it at the wooden slat booths after making a run to the enormous salad and dessert bar that includes deviled eggs, pickled beets and sweet dessert salads.



Peter Q. Yelp

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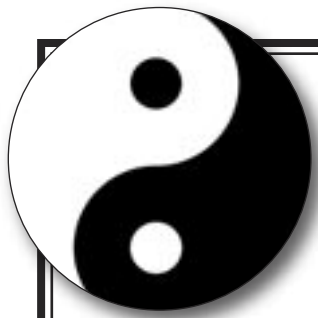
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# ON THE DARK SIDE OR MAYBE THE LIGHTER SIDE...

## CAROLINE KENNEDY CALLS COUSIN, RFK JR., A 'PREDATOR' BEFORE HHS HEARING

ERIN MANSFIELD AND JONATHAN LIMEHOUSE, USA TODAY

Caroline Kennedy, the only living child of former U.S. President John F. Kennedy, in a video posted on social media Tuesday called her cousin, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., President Donald Trump's pick for secretary of Health and Human Services, a predator.

"I have known Bobby my whole life," Caroline Kennedy says in the video, in which she's reading aloud a letter she wrote to senators. "We grew up together. It's no surprise that he keeps birds of prey as pets because he himself is a predator."

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Caroline Kennedy's son, Jack Schlossberg posted the video on X, formerly Twitter. He said his mother had sent it to a Senate committee, an action first reported by the Washington Post. RFK Jr.'s confirmation hearing is scheduled for Wednesday at 10 a.m.

In the letter, she praised her cousin for recovering from substance abuse but said before getting sober, he encouraged siblings and cousins to use drugs and they wound up addicted, ill or dead. She said, broadly, that her cousin had gone on to "misrepresent, lie and cheat his way through life."

"Bobby is addicted to attention and power," Caroline Kennedy says in the video. "Bobby preys on the desperation of parents of sick children – vaccinating his own kids, while building a following hyp-

ocritically discouraging other parents from vaccinating theirs."

She characterized running the Department of Health and Human Services – which includes overseeing the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health – as "an enormous responsibility, and one that Bobby is unqualified to fill."

"He lacks any relevant government, financial, management or medical experience," Caroline Kennedy said. "His views on vaccines are dangerous and willfully misinformed. The facts alone should be disqualifying, but he has personal qualities related to this job, which, for me, pose even greater concern."

RFK Jr. has acknowledged skeletons in his closet and admitted he is "not a church boy." His children's former babysitter, who is about 20 years his junior, accused him publicly of sexual assault. He apologized to her but said he had no memory of the alleged encounter. The case never went to court.

Seventy-seven Nobel Prize winners penned a letter in December urging the Senate not to confirm his appointment, saying his leadership would "put the public's health in jeopardy."

*(This story was updated to add new information.)*

*This article originally appeared on USA TODAY: Caroline Kennedy calls Robert F. Kennedy Jr. a 'predator' in letter.*



## PENTAGON TO PULL MILLEY'S SECURITY CLEARANCE, FOX NEWS REPORTS

Reuters

WASHINGTON (Reuters) -U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth will announce he is revoking the security clearance and personal security detail for retired Army General and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley, Fox News reported on Tuesday cited multiple senior administration officials. Hegseth will also direct a review to consider if Milley should be stripped of a star in retirement based on actions that "undermine the chain of command," Fox News reported on Tuesday.

The last portrait of Milley will also be removed from the Pentagon, Fox News reported. Milley was among the preemptive pardons that former President Joe Biden issued on Jan. 20, his last day in office.

*(Reporting by Caitlin Webber; editing by Costas Pitas)*





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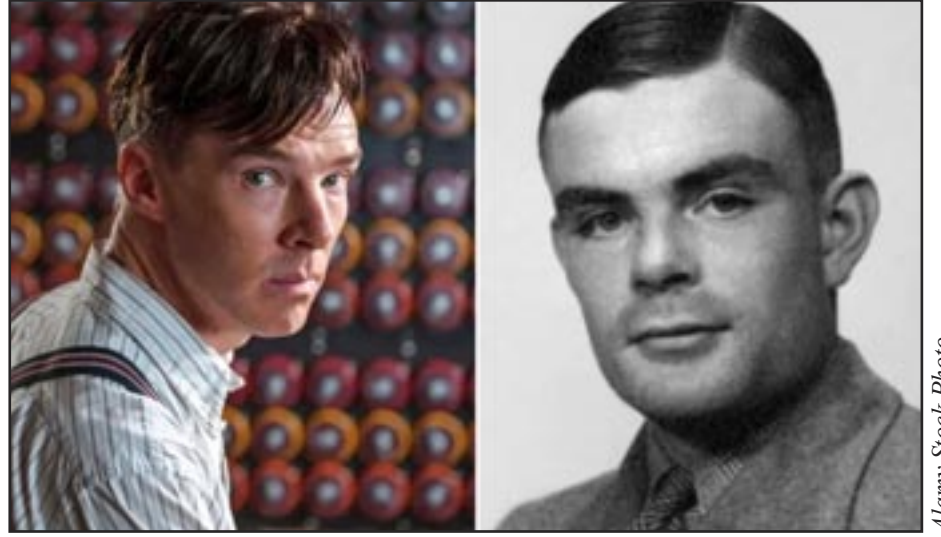
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## These Actors Epicly Played Real People in These Films

Erika Burch

When an actor plays a role, he or she does everything in their power to really get into it, to feel as that person would feel, and to portray those feelings on the film. But what happens when an actor lands a role based on a real person

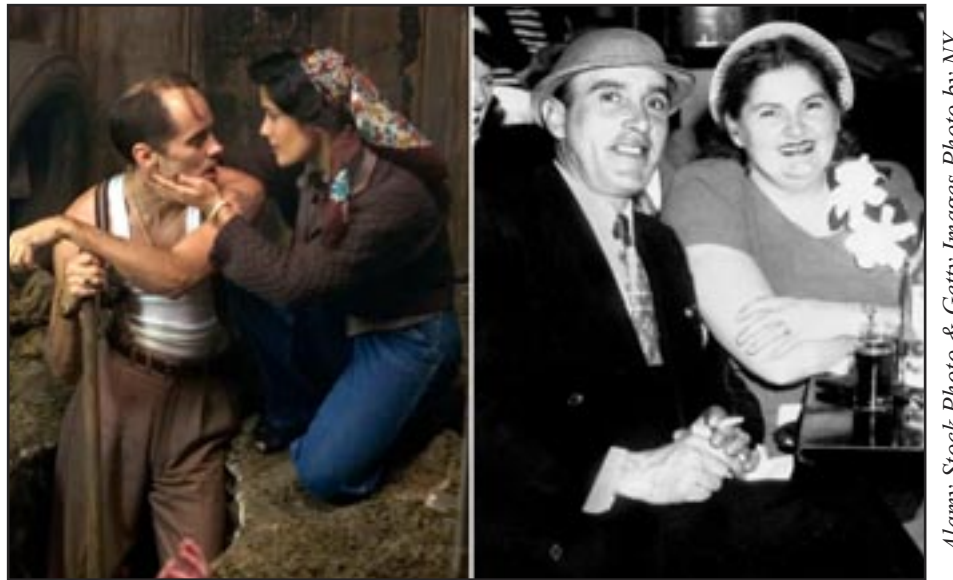


Alamy Stock Photo

### The Imitation Game (2014)

This historical drama stars Benedict Cumberbatch as Alan Turing, a cryptanalyst who worked for the British government decrypting German intelligence messages during WWII. The film follows his endeavors in trying to crack a Nazi code that is regarded to be uncrackable. The renowned code-breaking war hero, essentially pioneered considered computer science and artificial intelligence. As a homosexual, he was also criminally convicted and faced terrible treatment under U.K.'s homophobic law.

Instead of jail time, he opted for hormone therapy and chemical castration. As the final screen on the film reveals, however, after a year of therapy, he committed suicide at 41-years old.



Alamy Stock Photo & Getty Images Photo by NY Daily News Archive

### Lonely Hearts (2006)

Todd Robinson writes and directs this 2006 neo-noir film based on the story of the "Lonely Hearts Killers", Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez. Jared Leto stars as Fernandez, opposite Salma Hayek as Beck, to portray the couple who terrorized the country on a crime spree murdering over a dozen women in the 1940s. While the couple was ultimately convicted of only one murder, they were suspected of being responsible for 20 victims during the spree between 1947 and 1949.

Unfortunately, the movie made less than \$3 million dollars at the box office, not too much more than one of the star's salary alone. John Travolta also appeared in the film playing one of the detectives who is hot on the couple's heels.



Alamy Stock Photo & Getty Images Photo by Hank Olen/NY Daily News Archive

### Seabiscuit (2003)

This 2003 American sports film is based on the 1995 best-selling book by the same name written by Laura Hillenbrand. The movie is directed (and written) by Gary Ross, and centers around a champion racehorse named Seabiscuit, during the Great Depression. The legendary horse was overlooked and completely underestimated and never considered an adequate racehorse. After his unexpected success, he became a symbol of hope and strength during the Great Depression.

The film stars Tobey Maguire, Jeff Bridges, and Chris Cooper, and features Elizabeth Banks. It was nominated for seven Academy Awards, including the award for Best Picture, and Best Writing. The film's cinematography received plenty of its own accolades, including an Oscar nomination, and a win from the American Soci



# The Most Valuable Collectors' Items in History

By Audrey Kyanova

**W**e've all heard the stories about someone stumbling upon a valuable comic or knick-knack in a Salvation Army, or the family who moves into a new house only to find a wine cellar below the floorboards worth a fortune.

Anything from baseball cards or vintage Coca Cola cans to stuffed toys or even ticket stubs from legendary concerts, could be the items worth millions. You never know what items are lurking in your basement or your local thrift store that could be worth big bucks to a collector.

Read on to discover a list of some of the most valuable collectible items of all time. You never know, it might be time to bring out the stepladder and venture into the attic. You could have been sitting on a dusty goldmine for decades, blissfully unaware.

## LEGO Taj Mahal, First Edition

**Maker:** LEGO

**Original Price:** \$299.99\*

**Worth Today:** \$4,450\*

The LEGO Taj Mahal cost around \$300 when it was first released, but it now costs \$4,450 on eBay. The Taj Mahal LEGO set was part of the Exclusive Sculptures set, and it was released in 2008. It contains a large model of the famous World Heritage Site.

The LEGO set was retired in 2020, along with a few other sets, such as the Winter Village Fire Station, Downtown Diner, Volkswagen Beetle, and Volkswagen T1 Camper Van. The LEGO Taj Mahal weighs over fourteen pounds when it's fully assembled, and it has 5,923 pieces in total. It's an amazing feat from LEGO.

©ebay.com



## 1888 Louis Vuitton Explorer Trunk

**Maker:** Louis Vuitton

**Original Price:** \$100-\$200\*

**Worth Today:** \$128,000-\$192,000\*

Louis Vuitton has been around for more than a century, and some of its older pieces, dating back to the late 1800s, have been resold for a lot of money. One example is this rare Explorer Trunk, which the famed label released in 1888.

The Explorer Trunk is covered in brass sheeting, and it has a brass lock and brass corners, both of which Louis Vuitton still uses to this day. The Explorer Collection was intended for adventurers traveling all around the world, who needed a sturdy trunk that could survive a rough journey and inhospitable climate. The Explorer sold at Christie's for \$128,000-\$192,000 in 2019.

@malle2lux / Pinterest.com



## Babe Ruth 1920 Jersey

**Maker:** MLB

**Original Price:** Unknown

**Worth Today:** \$5.64 million\*

Babe Ruth is one of baseball's most famous, beloved players. His rookie cards and other memorabilia regularly clean up at auction, so it should be no surprise that a jersey worn by Ruth himself sold for a record-breaking price back in Advertisement

Ruth's New York Yankees Jersey, which he wore from 1928 to 1930, sold for \$5.64 million at Hunt Auctions. Hunt said it had partnered with Ruth's family, as well as "elite third-party collectors" to snag the jersey, which went on display, along with a collection of the Sultan of Swat's artifacts. The jersey's sale price made it the most expensive piece of sports memorabilia of all time.

@darrenrovell / Twitter.com



# MOST Beautiful ACTRESSES OF ALL TIME

BY HEALTH DISCOVER TEAM

From the golden era of Hollywood to the modern spotlight, American women have left an indelible mark on the world with their timeless beauty. Explore the most beautiful American women, from the Golden Era of Hollywood to the latest pop culture icons and traverse through time to pay tribute to these iconic figures and their beautiful selves!

BY IMDB

## Lana Turner (1921-1995)

Lana Turner had an acting ability that belied the "Sweater Girl" image MGM thrust upon her, and even many of her directors admitted that they knew she was capable of greatness (check out *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946)). Unfortunately, her private life sometimes overshadowed her professional accomplishments.



## Hedy Lamarr (1914-2000)

Hedy Lamarr, the woman many critics and fans alike regard as the most beautiful ever to appear in films, was born Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler in Vienna, Austria. She was the daughter of Gertrud (Lichtwitz), from Budapest, and Emil Kiesler, a banker from Lemberg (now known as Lviv). Her parents were both from Jewish families. Hedwig had a calm childhood, but it was cinema that fascinated her. By the time she was a teenager, she decided to drop out of school and seek fame as an actress, and was a student of theater director Max Reinhardt in Berlin. Her first role was a bit part in the German film *Geld auf der Straße* (1930) (aka "Money on the Street") in 1930. She was attractive and talented enough to be in three more German productions in 1931, but it would be her fifth film that catapulted her to worldwide fame. In 1932 she appeared in a Czech film called *Ekstase* (US title: "Ecstasy") and had made the gutsy move to appear nude. It's the story of a young girl who is married to a gentleman much older than she, but she winds up falling in love with a young soldier. The film's nude scenes created a sensation all over the world. The scenes, very tame by today's standards, caused the film to be banned by the U.S. government at the time.



## Judy Garland (1922-1969)

One of the brightest, most tragic movie stars of Hollywood's Golden Era, Judy Garland was a much-loved character whose warmth and spirit, along with her rich and exuberant voice, kept theatre-goers entertained with an array of delightful musicals.





# OVER-THE-TOP EXAMPLES OF WEALTH AND LUXURY I SAW ON MY FIRST TRIP TO ASPEN, COLORADO

Story & Images / INSIDER / MONICA HUMPHRIES

• When it comes to ski towns, Aspen, Colorado, is as expensive as it gets.

• Real-estate prices are sky-high, and visitors shell out hundreds for hotels and ski passes.

• From a \$51 million mansion to a ritzy dispensary, I spotted luxury everywhere I looked during my trip.

A three-and-a-half-hour drive from my home in Denver takes me to one of the most expensive towns I've ever visited.

I've lived in New York City and traveled to some of the world's most expensive destinations, such as Paris or Zurich. Meanwhile, a trip to Aspen, Colorado, transformed my definition of luxury.

In Paris and New York, five-star hotels and Michelin-star restaurants coexist alongside \$1 pizza and cheap crepe carts. Aspen — for the most part — lacks the latter. Instead, luxury hotels and pricey dinners were practically my only options during my five-day visit.

Every day during my trip, I observed moments of opulence. Some I expected — yes, the mountain estates were shockingly grand, and the town's five-star hotel had glamorous amenities that attract celebrities like Britney Spears and Beyoncé.

There were also surprising moments of extravagance in everyday life. Even purchasing cannabis was a luxe experience.

Sprawling mansions were the first indicator of Aspen's wealthy residents.

From the luxury real estate ads in the Aspen airport to views of mansions from the town's gondola, it was clear from the moment I arrived in the ski town that owning property in Aspen takes a lot of wealth.

In fact, Aspen is the most expensive ski town in the country, with an average weeklong vacation costing \$5,330 for one traveler in 2023.

Blocks away from Aspen's downtown is Red Mountain, a neighborhood known for residents that are so rich it's nicknamed "Billionaire Mountain."

I toured the neighborhood, where famous faces like Walmart heiress Ann Walton and the Bezos family owned property.

Along the drive, I also spotted one of the most expensive homes ever sold in Aspen — a \$72.5-million property bought by Patrick Dovigi, a former professional hockey player and the founder and CEO of the waste management company Green for Life Environmental, according to Aspen Daily News.

As I crawled up the switchback mountain roads, the properties became larger, and the entrance gates grew grander.

The multimillion-dollar homes I toured showcased ultra-luxe amenities.

I embarked on tours of five different mansions in Aspen with luxury real-estate agents Heidi Houston, Doug Leibinger, and Carrie Wells.

The homes ranged from \$13 million to \$51 million and came with extravagant features I could never imagine owning, like wet bars, indoor pools, and 12-car garages.

At the top of Billionaire Mountain, I toured a home with an indoor pool and a secret bedroom.

At the very top of Billionaire Mountain, I stopped at The Peak House, a 22,000-square-foot estate that sold for \$40 million in 2022.

The Peak House is the highest residence on Red Mountain and real-estate agent Heidi Houston pointed out features that earned the property its price tag.

Beyond its sprawling size and grand views, the home had a wine cave, an enormous living room, and a 12-car garage. Plus, the estate also had its own set of uncommon additions. For example, there was an indoor pool and a se-

cret bedroom built for the first owner's mistress.

In the most expensive home I toured, I spotted an oxygen system to help combat altitude sickness.

Aspen Park is a 15,000-square-foot home five minutes away from downtown Aspen. The house sold for \$51 million by real-estate agent Carrie Wells.

On a tour of the home, I spotted two elevators, 10 fireplaces, and a Lamborghini-themed garage. I also discovered unusually extravagant amenities throughout the house. For example, an oxygen system that pumps extra oxygen into the room was placed in the primary bedroom. Its goal is to mimic different sea levels and reduce the effects of altitude sickness, as Wells showed me during the tour.

Dalwhinnie's CEO, Brandon Barksdale, told me that the store was intentionally designed to cater to Aspen's elite. Within my first moments inside the store, I was greeted by scents of warm leather and views of crystal glassware sparkled from nearby shelves.

It's not just cannabis Dalwhinnie sells. Next to its display of edibles, flowers, and concentrates are Rolex watches, cashmere scarves, and jewelry with a \$92,000 price tag.

The town's hotels were also some of the country's finest five-star experiences.

At the time, for \$848 a night, I stayed in The Little Nell, Aspen's only five-star and five-diamond hotel. It has welcomed celebrities like Britney Spears and Beyoncé. Later, during my trip, I spent \$700 for a

rent gear, schedule ski school classes, and even preheat their ski boots each morning so they don't have to worry about cold feet.

Both hotels gave guests access to a fleet of luxury vehicles.

I've stayed at hotels that had free airport shuttles on buses and vans, but I never had access to luxury cars at hotels.

At The Little Nell, I had access to a free electric Audi Q8 e-tron car rental.

The St. Regis Hotel also had a daily Champagne-sabering ceremony.

To celebrate the transition from day to night, each evening, a saber was brought out to the courtyard for a dramatic Champagne popping.

While I missed the ceremony on the first night, I happily accepted a glass of Champagne upon check-in. The ceremony felt overly grand for a daily ritual, but I'm also not one to complain about free bubbly.

In town, water fountains and bike-sharing stations were covered for the cold weather.

Small things in Aspen felt like shocking luxuries that I've never seen in cities like New York or Denver, like covering water fountains and bike stations for inclement weather.

In Aspen during the winter, the bicycle rideshares were closed, the bikes were stored away, and plastic covers were placed on the docking stations.

The same went for the town's water fountains. Each water station in Aspen had a snug cover that protected it from the colder temps.

To me, it seemed like the city of Aspen cared about its infrastructure. In the summer, I imagine the town's resources would

be up and functioning — unlike the broken water fountains I remember from my time in New York.

There were no fast-food restaurants in sight.

Good luck finding a McDonald's, Chipotle, or Subway anywhere in or near Aspen. The quaint ski town takes pride in its upscale food scene, which doesn't include fast-

food chains.

In fact, the town's one and only McDonald's closed its doors in 2016.

The most casual restaurants I visited during my stay in Aspen were The White House Tavern, where sandwiches cost between \$21 and \$26 without fries, and a pizza shop that served \$6 slices.

Leather pants and Louis Vuitton purses were normal flight attire at Aspen's airport.

I arrived at the Aspen-Pitkin County Airport in jeans, a turtleneck, and a pullover sweater. This was much nicer than my typical airport attire of leggings and a T-shirt.

Yet I was by far the most underdressed traveler in the airport. In every corner of the small terminal, I noticed people with designer shopping bags and Louis Vuitton suitcases.

There weren't many name-brand snacks at the airport. My options were limited to \$15 trail mix and marshmallow treats.

The airport had one eatery that sold warm food and snacks. Other than Coca-Cola products, Wrigley gum, and Flipz pretzels, there

were few name brands.

I spent about \$8 on a pack of gum and a marshmallow treat. Although I'm used to airport food being overpriced, Aspen's airport set the bar even higher in terms of prices.

At the food counter, travelers could order an \$18 chicken cordon bleu sandwich, a \$19 portobello rice bowl, or a \$19 pork carnitas burrito.

For snacks, options included a \$15 bag of trail mix, caramel-flavored popcorn, and handmade marshmallow treats from The Crispery.

After five days in Aspen, I tasted how the world's richest people live and vacation.

Between a home oxygen system and room-service dog food, by the time I landed home in Denver, I had cataloged new luxuries I never dreamed of.

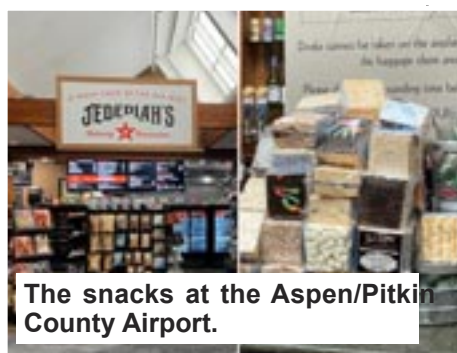
Previous trips to New York City and Paris had moments of indulgence, but in Aspen, I embraced the town's extravagance the moment I arrived.

Read the original article on Business Insider

The author in Aspen, Colorado



The Peak House on Red Mountain, nicknamed Billionaire Mountain, in Aspen, Colorado



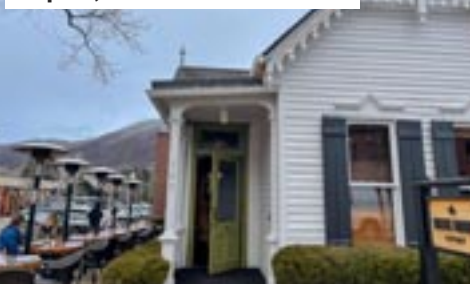
The snacks at the Aspen/Pitkin County Airport.

The St. Regis Resort in Aspen, Colorado

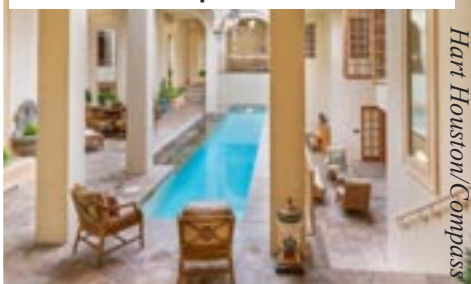


Audi Q8 e-tron

The White House Tavern in Aspen, Colorado.



The Peak House on Red Mountain has an indoor pool.



Doug Leibinger pushes opened a door to a guest room at an Aspen property.



Photos of the author and Red Mountain.



night at The St. Regis Aspen Resort. The St. Regis also has five stars and is known for rich and famous visitors like Kim Kardashian, Kanye West, and Paris Hilton.

With famous clientele and expensive rates came luxury offerings that made me feel a bit like a celebrity, too.

The Little Nell had dog food on the room service menu.

I expected to see designer dogs playing fetch at the parks and lapdogs in Louis Vuitton purses, but I hadn't considered how hotels and restaurants would cater to pups.

At The Little Nell, for instance, dog owners could order the "Canine Delights Daily," which was served in dog-friendly bowls and included carrots, brown rice, scrambled eggs, and the owner's choice of protein.

Workers at The Little Nell also woke up early to preheat hotel guests' ski boots.

Most five-star hotels have a long list of amenities, but one of The Little Nell's biggest appeals is its ski-in/ski-out access and its own designated ski concierge.

The concierge will help guests coordinate ski lift tickets,



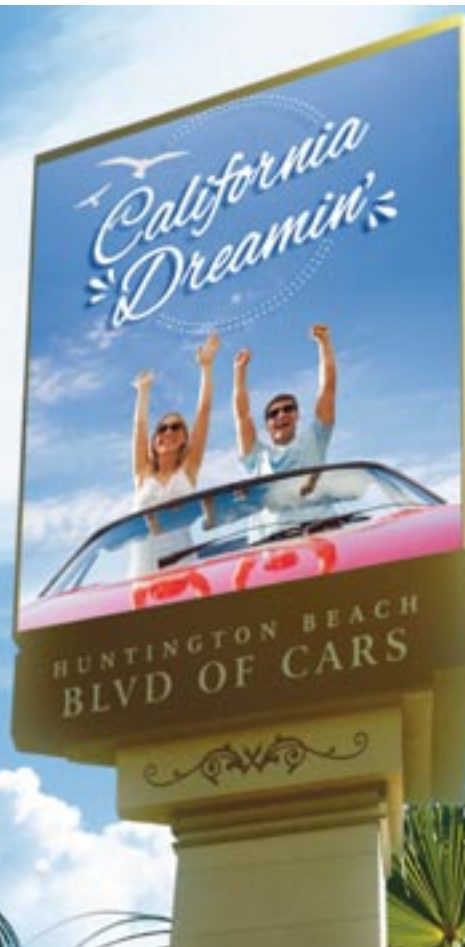
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