

THE CROFT

SIN



LIFESTYLE.

Co-Editors-in-Chief:

Nicole Quy & Emily Fromant

Sub-Editor: Sophie Robertson

Acolet

IT'S A SIN

ENVY/ LUST / PRIDE / SLOTH / WRATH/ GLUTTONY / GREED

TEMPT YOURSELF



Croft/ Emily Fromant

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Editor's Note

-Welcome back to The Croft for our second edition of the year. This time, we wanted to tap into something a little more taboo, and bring a new light to feelings of shame surrounding a range of aspects of university life and young adulthood. Running parallel to what most lifestyle publications would have you self-flagellate for, we wanted to celebrate some of the things you might've become accustomed to chastising yourself for, see our wonderful food section's ode to 'lazy' student cooking.

We're normalising jealousy, and bringing validity and logic to those intrusive thoughts, all whilst providing a more grounding perspective. The mortal vices we are channeling in this issue may not always be commendable, but they are certainly habitual, so, whether or not you revel in the thrill of sinning, or can't seem to shake the pangs of guilt every time your moral compass goes awry, we've worked to bring you a collection of content that re-frames the wicked. Testify.

Nicole &
Emily x

LIFESTYLE.

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Croft/Emily Fromant

TRIAL

Wilfred Kemsley,
*Creative Writing
Columnist*

Just inches from the light.
Here I stand.
Crowds of shadow keep the watchful
stare of judgment close at hand.

Do I dare to take a step?
Or am I...in too deep?
How lost can one become before the
road
becomes too steep?

Am I safer in shadow?
Standing on this borderline?
Do my sins not seem so slight if I may leave
the world behind?

They'll all speak in dammed whispers!
Hushed tones!
What was I taught some time before about
glass houses and stones?

What? A jury of my peers?
That's where I'll be presented?
I couldn't ask a harsher fate for any
enemy I've hated.

What do I stand trial for?
Where do I begin...
The path to hell is lined with every
aforementioned sin.

A crime? Not likely,
Is something worse than law,
How dare I wake each day and try to live.
Whatever for?

Beyond this shadow, In the light
Stands the judge who will inform me
if my right to keep on breathing's been
rescinded by the jury.

This courtroom I've constructed.
The one inside my mind.
Where I hide in darkened corners,
terrified of what I'll find.

If I stepped back and counted
Every error that I've made.
This jury of my many thoughts would
surely send me to the grave.

So inches from the light
Is where I'll choose to bed,
And let my many sins stay festering in the
shadows of my head.

LIFESTYLE.

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LUST

The happy hormone. The reward centre. A neuromodulatory molecule. Whatever name you may know it by, there's no doubt that you've experienced the rush of dopamine that comes with indulging in activities you love. Sex, eating good food, achieving something you wanted, shopping or watching your favorite film, can all release this chemical.

In the age of social media, online shopping and unlimited streaming, we have a constant stream of content readily available to us in various formats. Pornhub. Twitter, Shein, YouTube, Tiktok; stimulation is consistently at our fingertips. It's not like we haven't heard this argument before, that too much time on our phones is bad for us. But this is not the argument I am making.

Truthfully, I think social media is not an inherently bad thing, it has the capacity to connect people and allows for expression. I don't think all porn is evil. The problem I'm addressing here isn't the content; I'm not going to rehash the well-worn, even at times condescending, argument that our phones are point-blank bad for us. That's up to you to decide. For, of course, seeking fulfilment from online content is redundant, but this notion also extends to the real world. Sex, drugs, excessive drinking, and, less obvious, over-exercise, shopping

The problem is that we've become too accustomed to turning to short term dopamine rushes as a means of keeping ourselves content. And why wouldn't we? Quite literally the 'happiness hormone', dopamine regulates our hormone levels and keeps us feeling good. When we're in low moods, wellbeing professionals will often advise us to do things that prompt a dopamine release; go for a run, listen to your favourite music.

Intrinsically, this is not bad advice. And I am by no means suggesting that you shouldn't employ trusted coping mechanisms and seek out the things you love to regulate negative feelings. I'm a big advocate for finding the joy in the ordinary. What we need to be weary of, however, is when we become too dependent on short term rushes for modulating tumultuous feelings. When does picking up become drowning out?

There is a fine line to toe between finding ways to make yourself feel fulfilled, and fuelling an over reliance on short term rushes of endorphins to maintain happiness. This has likely stemmed from the mantra that 'happiness' means a permanent state of business and activity. But this is simply not true.

True contentment is not characterised by a picture-perfect life with an abundance of plans and varying activities, but is rather necessitated by being able to cope with periods of less favorable emotions and learning to feel optimistic, or at the least, stable, about life even during these down moments.

Here is where our devices prove themselves a culprit. Their accessibility means we truly never have to sit with feelings of discomfort or discontent. Not even for a second, if we don't want to. Our phones allow us to tap into an unlimited world of stimulating content, and, whilst seemingly harmless, such apps leverage the same neural circuit as slot machines and cocaine. I'm not saying that using Instagram is as bad as using cocaine on a regular basis to keep you feeling good, but what I am saying is that we are collectively feeding into a pattern of utilising external measures for endorphin regulation instead of processing our feelings, or even simply sitting with them and accepting them as normal and healthy.

Despite what your instincts, or even your desires may tell you, general feelings of sadness, boredom and frustration are valid, normal and HEALTHY. Trying to suppress them by doing something which prompts an influx or surge of euphoria sets you up for a dangerous pattern and an inability to sit with those emotions when you might need to.

True contentment is necessitated by being content with periods of discontent.

Learn to sit with your uncomfortable feelings

LUST FOR LIFE LUST

FOR LIFE

When Dopamine Becomes Addictive

Nicole Quy, *Co-Editor-in-Chief*



Croft/ Bernardo Santos

Feeling blue sometimes is an unchangeable part of human nature; to try and subdue any 'negative' emotions is to prohibit yourself from riding out the result of normal hormonal function and a healthy social life. It's great to want to surround yourself with the things that give you a rush, and only focus on the good in the world, but to take this to extremes, and shun any feelings of sadness or frustration is not only unsustainable but also counterproductive. Do the things you love. Practice what makes you smile. But I challenge you, every now and then, when you begin to feel down, don't reach for your phone to fill your online shopping cart and close the tab - sit with it. Breathe. Ground yourself and remember that you'll be okay.

OR LIFE JUST FOR LIFE

STYLE.

Editor: Ella Crabb

Deputy Editor: Molly Grogan

Digital Editor: Mia Flook

Sub-Editor: Amy Marshall

HAUTE HORROR

Emily Fromant, *Co-Editor-
in -Chief*

Croft/ Ella Crabb

Gothic subculture exploded onto runways in the late 1970s. The dark, edgier looks represented a wave of self-expression. Its tenebrous, seductive nature was unavoidable for designers and the exploration of morbid silhouettes, elements of fantasy, and minimalist designs meant Haute Goth has been a presence on our runways year after year. Often holding the stereotype of being something scary, at times even kitschy, our minds usually wander to Halloween costumes, rather than high fashion runways when thinking of Haute Goth. But it is no stranger to the catwalk. The characteristics of 'Haute Goth' can be summarised into three elements. It's unwavering celebration of identity, change and the pursuit of something new. Haute Goth is a space between art and fashion.

Often designers experiment with abstract silhouettes and extreme runway shows with new combinations being realised through the mismatch of opposite patterns or designs. It harks back to the old, heavily influenced by Victorian and Edwardian attire, whilst also adopting futuristic elements, celebrating both its tradition and the future of the genre. Haute Goth has had many phases in fashion, it is beautiful and bold - but which designers are leading the way?

WHY GO BACK TO BLACK?

Goth couture is seeing a resurgence. This fashion week black was back and brighter than ever before. But why are so many designers gravitating towards gothic styles and black latex? Black is a historical colour. It has stood for protection, power, and rebellion. So perhaps there is a reason behind runways' recent return to the staple colour. Political unease and upheaval are something many of us have heard of or experienced in the last year. It is no surprise designers are seeking out a form of rebellion of their own."

JUN TAKASHI

Jun Takashi similarly uses gothic fashion as a form of storytelling. His intense eye for detail reveals intricate accessories, his eye-ring is a nod to one of *A Clockwork Orange*'s most uncomfortable scenes. His work isn't stereotypical gothic, including colour and geometric patterns. He incorporates graphic print into each of his designs, a love letter to his childhood and of media.

Takashi's FW19 collection (and one of my personal favourites) was full of rebellion. With dark eyeliner, fishnet tights, and a steampunk vibe. Models even flipped off the photographer.

As he has grown as a designer, his recent gothic designs have changed with him. Haute Goth, in its versatile nature, is a metamorphic genre, easily adaptable to the designer's growth.

The meaning of black is so complicated," notes Valerie Steele in *Elle Magazine*, fashion historian and director of the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology. "It's something very pure and strict, something that's very erotic, something powerful. It's not a soft look." The striking Haute Goth is sending a message in 2022 of strength, resilience, and enduring fortitude.

RICK OWENS ALEXANDER MCQUEEN

Nicknamed the "Godfather of Goth Glam", Rick Owens' designs are well known for their futuristic, at times apocalyptic feel.

His work is always sleek and bold with geometric lines; right down to the shows. For Owens, no detail is too small. His work is both brutal and beautiful, and has paved the way for many other designers.

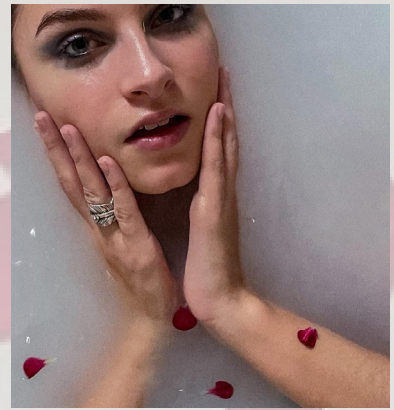
His bold nature goes far beyond his designs, taking center stage on his experimental runways. For Owens, runways are an extension of his art. One year, models carried each other upside down, another they walked through flames.

Alexander McQueen shaped Haute Goth as we know it. McQueen was always fascinated with the gothic and its endless shock value. For McQueen, his love for gothic came from his love of history. Goth couture was a way to express a story. From his first fashion line inspired by the Jack the Ripper case, McQueen used goth Victorian and Edwardian elements to hark back to the past.

But it wasn't all in the past for McQueen as he blends the past and present in a beautiful ode to art and fashion.

MARKO MITANOVSKI

Serbian designer Marko Mitanovski has always fought against fashion's rules. His work takes on an almost inhuman element, blending architecture and fashion in a captivating way, mixing modern structures with fantasy, creating hybrid-esque creatures. Just like his fellow designers, Mitanovski has always been inspired by media and film. His rigid silhouettes are clearly influenced by horror classics.



Croft/ Ella Crabb and Mia Flook

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DECADENT DELIGHT: Dressing Up To Stop Feeling Down

Mia Flook, Digital Editor

DECADENCE, a word characterised by “excessiveness” and indulgence in pleasure or luxury. But should it really be considered a sin if done sustainably?

It's a well-touted economic fact that after every recession, war or dark time, extravagant and excessive fashion flourishes. Lipstick sales rise when wages take a dive. And there's probably a good reason for this. People feel the need to take better care of themselves and look their best when times are hard.

In the 1920s, following the aftermath of WW1, the Great Gatsby style was born, named after the eponymous film and novel character and epitomised by glamour, glitz and diamonds. After WW2, we were met with peak Hollywood and Pin-Up girl fashion: hemlines were coming in, skin-tight dresses were on the rise and necklines were dropping. This trend is epitomised by the icons of the 1950s: Marilyn Monroe and Betty Paige.

And then again, in the deep recession of the 1980s, it was all about bright colour, velour, velvet, lycra.

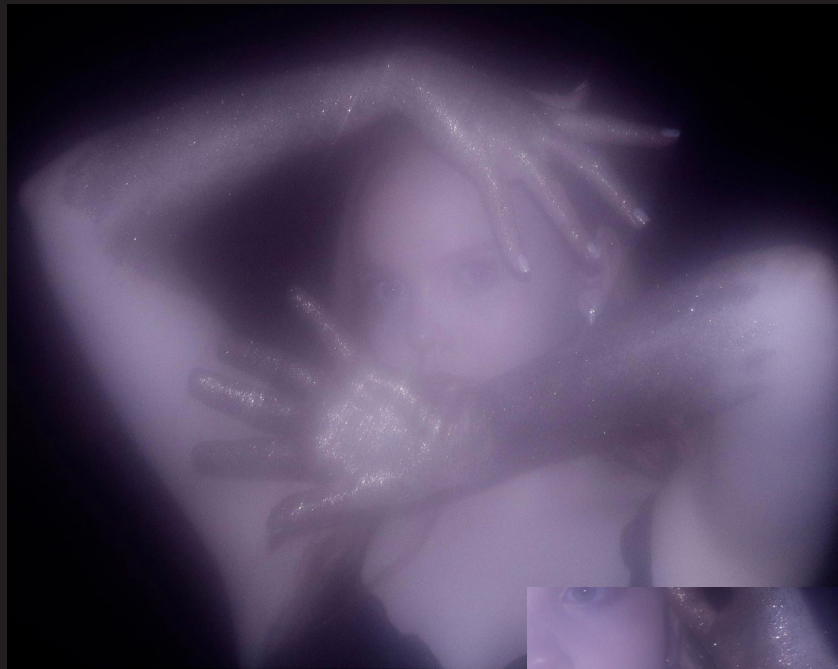
In AW22, emerging from the Covid pandemic, we find ourselves living in a time of social and economic strife and it seems humanity has not changed all that much in how we respond to such issues. So, is it time to indulge and bring a touch of decadence and self-care to your wardrobe?

The loungewear craze that peaked throughout the pandemic is giving way to a stronger, more luxe aesthetic.

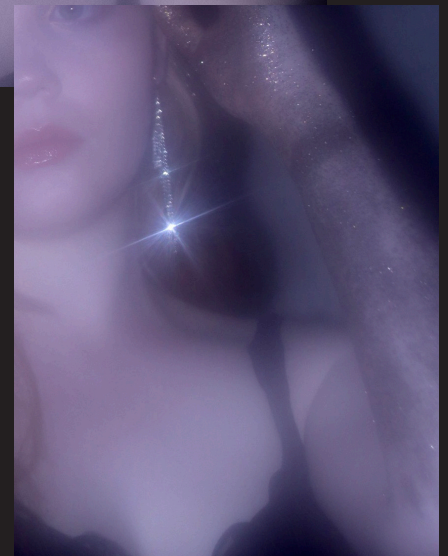
As we delve deeper into autumn and the evenings close in - is it about time to ditch our track suits and delve into the decadent sphere of fashion? Since Covid, people have dived into the world of fashion and self-expression, people care less about their perception and dress how they like. The reemergence of night-life reminds us of the joys of purchasing and piecing together a myriad of different outfits. People are going all out, more extravagantly than ever. But how can we do this in a “sin free” and sustainable way, without the use of fast fashion?

Is there a better place to piece together your new wardrobe and self-indulge than Bristol? With access to hundreds of vintage stores, pop-up stalls, charity shops and kilo sales across the city, you can indulge in your style – it's both guilt-free and environmentally friendly! It's time to start searching Bristol's vintage archives for our next night pieces. Whether you're rummaging around for sequins or taking inspiration from Vivienne Westwood and literally painting and writing on your face - find what works for you! Or, for a more subtle take on luxe, draw on a beauty spot, made famous by Marie Antoinette and the Westwood archive.

The 80s trend is everywhere, too. We have all rocked the high-waisted jeans and crop top fad at least once in our time, but there's so much more to tap into. The 80s mantra “greed is good” - from the 1987 film, Wall Street - maybe doesn't translate as well when living in a world that prefers more modern sensibilities, but we can all still enjoy the excesses of 80s fashion. For a more refined take on 80s, nobody did it better than rock queen Debbie Harry of Blondie. Nail her style by wearing your cute cami dress thrown together with a faux leather jacket that you found in the vintage store. Go big in the glass cabinets under the tills at charity shops, filled to the brim with ornate rings and chunky necklaces to complete the look. The joy of decadent dressing is that it's meant to be fun, a little over the top, and make you feel good. The world - and your wardrobe - is your oyster!

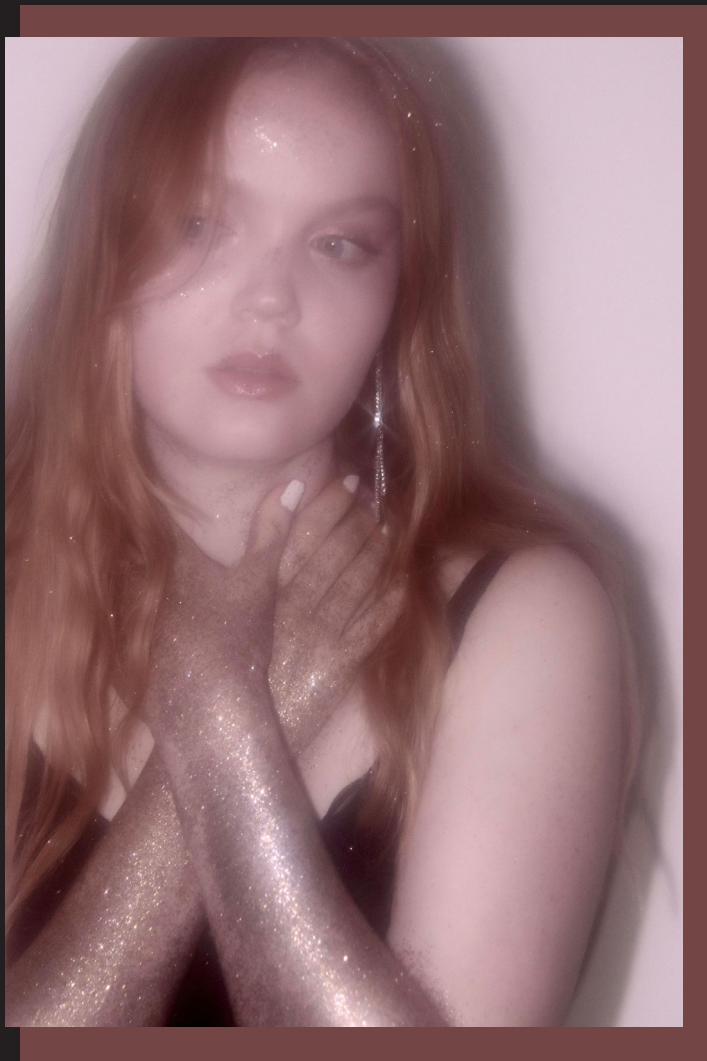


Croft/Emily Fromant



Amy Masrhall, *Style Sub-Editor*

With the new season under way, and winter soon approaching, what better time to have a dust down and reflect on our (sometimes 'sinful') fashion habits. By adopting a thoughtful approach to our clothes and the wider industry in which they exist, we can consider our stylistic sins, and how best to address them. So, what are we repenting for this season?



Croft/Emily Fromant

FOLLOWING MICRO TRENDS

I'll be honest, I used to consistently look to improve and adapt my style to fit with current trends so as not be 'left behind' in last season's wear. But micro trends tend to eat you up and spit you back out before you've even had the chance to wear your item more than once. This fast turnaround of the production of clothing and what we deem currently 'trendy' is not only harmful for our bank accounts, but also the environment and our universal dedication to living sustainably. Whilst the temptation to buy the first item I see on Instagram crosses my mind every now and again, it is important to learn the value of investing in pieces you truly like and know you will wear, rather than what the internet tells you will set you ahead of current trends. Buying clothing to put in a capsule wardrobe (interchangeable items which can be styled abundantly to fit the mood you're in) will help maximise usage of your clothing, whilst rejecting microtrends entirely.

DRESSING FOR OTHERS

Often fashion can feel like it has decided your style for you: 'wear this', 'don't wear that'. The influence of social media can push this narrative and whilst fashion is a great way to collaborate and gain inspiration for personal style, we can find ourselves dressing for others. Often, it is as simple as wearing what we think our peers will approve of. But, at its core, your style should be something you are comfortable and confident in. Though this is sometimes easier said than done, aim to develop your personal style into something which makes you feel positive, rather than aiming to 'fit in', per se. Reflect on how an item makes you feel, not only on how it looks. By adopting this mindset, we can dress for ourselves first and foremost, after all, fashion should be a means to uniquely express your individuality.

AVOIDING UNWORN CLOTHES

I'm sure you know the feeling, having kept a pair of trousers at the back of your wardrobe as a 'just in case' item: I'll wear it eventually, right? If you're anything like me, you will likely have a small collection of clothes gathering dust, having been once loved. You're sure you will wear them again but inevitably they remain forgotten amongst new items. In this case, I encourage you to approach these clothes with a new mindset. Old items can become new again when restyled or upcycled. By pairing unused items of clothing with your newer, developed sense of style, your wardrobe can become a breath of fresh air. Reworking clothes is another fun option, think: 'thrift flip'. Crop a shirt, embroider your jeans, or even make a new item out of old fabrics, the options are truly endless. And if you still feel you are stuck with an item you'd rather not reintroduce into your style: donate!

FOOD.

Editor: Hannah Wright

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Sloth - laziness - one of the seven deadly sins. But is it so very sinful when it comes to how we cook and what we choose to eat? In this issue, our food writers reflect on the ways in which laziness has shaped the cooking of themselves and those they know, and the joy that it can bring.

Dear Communal Cooking, With Love

Isabelle Blakeney's love letter to the time she's spent cooking and eating with her flat - and the time it's saved.

Croft / Isabelle Blakeney

Having grown up in a household where mealtimes were central to family life, communal cooking is one of the few things that I hold to be a sacred practice. Until I left home, the main two rules were: a) if you cook, you cook for everyone, and b) if you're in the house, you eat dinner together. Though in my years of teen angst this rule felt unnecessary and slightly medieval, I'm now glad that it existed. Communal mealtimes, for me, are an act of grounding

and connecting with the people you love. As a student, they help to maintain a routine, and when the budget's tight they can be a great way of saving money. As we get deeper into the Autumn term and everything begins to feel unsettled, to cook and eat together, for me, is to find a moment of peace in an otherwise hectic student routine.

Communal cooking means many things to me. First and foremost, I take it as a past time. I love cooking, and I've been lucky enough to live in a house of foodies, so food is often a part of conversation. Hungover Sunday mornings have been spent collectively flicking through the pile of food magazines that I stole from my parents and dog-eared recipes that we want to try.

As mundane as it sounds, the mutual passion for food makes cooking exciting, and transforms it from a burden to a form of entertainment. Mealtimes as a social activity are an excuse to experiment and indulge in your cooking, whilst allowing guilt-free time for a gossip or catch-up. I've found that on entering my final year at university, my days of clubbing and parties are more or less a thing of the past. In their place, cooking has taken up its space in my social calendar. Inviting people around to cook after lectures has become commonplace and is fast becoming my favourite way to socialise.



To put thought and time into the food you eat lets your body know that you care about how you're fuelling it. In the months of winter sloth, it's easy to let this slip away, but to prioritise food is prioritising yourself. Communal cooking ties you to this priority; when feeding others, or when others are feeding you, you focus on what you're putting into your body, and what you are eating is made with thought and love.

Cooking, for me, is also a love language. Last weekend, I came home from work to my flatmates cooking a Sunday roast. They had divvied up tasks, each party putting time and care into their respec-

tive dishes. As much as I love to cook, there are times when, like everyone, I'm just exhausted. So, to come home to dinner being prepared, and the people I love cooking and talking and laughing was so gratifying to me. Dolly Alderton wrote in her autobiography *Everything I Know About Love* about the small ways in which she is reminded of the love she holds for her friends. Cooking is when I feel closest to this- I learn who's experimental, and who sticks to a recipe- who will use two bulbs of garlic in one dish and who will forget to put any in at all. The very act of cooking encases so much. It incorporates everything that we've learnt about food throughout our lives, so to be able to create and share something that holds so much about yourself, to me, is one of my most treasured acts of care.

So, as we slip further into the winter months, and for me and my friends the depths of our final year of university, communal meals are becoming increasingly frequent in our lives. The ritual of cooking and eating together, though seemingly minor, teaches us so much about one-another, and about ourselves. Ultimately, regardless of the deeper messages that communal cooking holds, it means that we almost always get to eat, in the words of my housemate, 'really banging scran'.



Lazy / Efficient: An Ode To The Student Cook

Maya Glantz reflects on the lazy cooks she's met during her time at Bristol and the shortcuts that make their cooking delicious.

I don't think I could accurately classify myself as a 'lazy cook'. I find that, generally, the joy of cooking lies within the process. No time did I feel this more strongly than in the months preceding my first year of university; the first lockdown, in which testing various labour-intensive recipes allowed for some sense of purpose in the otherwise monotonous day-to-day of those months. However, I knew that upon my arrival at university my approach to cooking was bound to change. The quest for the perfect homemade pitta was not exactly compatible with the 22-man shared kitchen in which I was now making every meal. But that Hiatt Baker kitchen went on to be a kind of culinary education in itself. In no other situation are you as exposed to the intimacy of so many peoples eating habits. The classic uni student diet, and lifestyle generally, often revolve around some sense of efficiency. While for some, the experience of cooking is one that can bring about a sense of calmness, for others food exists purely to fulfil the physiological need, and the faster and easier that need is met - the better. As someone who has lost countless hours to overly-complicated recipes, and left hungry friends wondering why we had to eat a meal that wouldn't be ready until ten, I had a lot to learn in the art of efficiency in the kitchen. There is something to be said of the typical student cook, laziness does not necessarily equate to less delicious food (although the large vats of mushy pasta mixed with tuna never particularly appealed to me), and I learnt to never underestimate the power of a George Forman.

In honour of the 'lazy cook' that is the university student, I decided to reflect on one student, and in fact one meal, in particular that stood out to me as the most successful utilization of laziness.



When I consider the perfect lazy chef, one girl, and her dedication to efficiency, immediately springs to mind. The most iconic student meals; toasties, instant noodles, oven pizzas etc. while undeniably tasty, cannot exactly be commended for their nutritional value. Nor is this a high priority for the average lazy chef, cooking a nutritionally balanced meal sounds like a lot more effort, and exertion of effort is generally at odds with the goals of a lazy cook. However, this is what makes Ellie so unique in her approach to cooking. Minimal cleanup and cooking time were definite priorities, but so was creating a meal that felt healthy and somewhat balanced.

Although this is the attitude she approaches most meal times with, there is one dish, in particular, that is ingrained in my mind as the platonic ideal of the lazy cook's creation. Perhaps this is due to seeing her eat this exact same meal for weeks at a time. And what a meal it is. Three ingredients. One pan. Maximum five minutes. Lazy perfection! The meal begins with what may be the single greatest secret weapon ingredient for a lazy cook - couscous. The fact that this grain can be cooked by simply pouring hot water over and covering it, meaning no pan, no hob, just a kettle and a bowl... game changer. Couscous acts as a perfect base for customization, you can add any variation of ingredients and create an exciting new dish or, alternatively, you could, as Ellie chose to, add the exact same ingredients every time because, if it's not broke, don't fix it! After the couscous has been prepared, we move on to the most strenuous step of the cooking process. Into a pan goes a healthy portion of Quorn pieces (straight from the freezer), a few handfuls of spinach, and seasoning of your choice, though cajun and paprika were the chef's go-to.



Croft / Saiba Haque

This is cooked over a medium heat until the Quorn pieces are defrosted and the handfuls of spinach have wilted down to what looks like about three leaves. The spinach and Quorn mixture is then transferred into the couscous bowl, and the perfect lazy dish is complete! I think this couscous concoction is the perfect example of a truly successful utilization of student laziness. The dish was conceived of within the aforementioned halls kitchen, in which cooking became a sort of assault course, carefully dodging the various mouldy food items and praying no-one was marinating raw chicken in your favourite bowl, so to have developed a 5 minute mess free meal was a true accomplishment, and the fact it was delicious, nutritious and vegan was a real feat.

You may think I am being dramatic in regards to this couscous meal but to offer some context, when I asked another student what his go to lazy meal was, I was met with the answer - 'defrosted Yorkshire puddings and a mug of Bisto'. This meal also goes against the commonly held belief that vegan meals have to be overly complicated and time consuming, or contain some obscure ingredient. But this five minute nutritional yeast free masterpiece serves as a perfect example of how to combine the ideologies of veganism and laziness, two beliefs championed by Bristol's student population.

FOOD.

Editor: Hannah Wright
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Croft / Daniel Newell-Price

The Green-Eyed Monster with Two Thumbs

Charmaine Annabelle Mathew

A micro-influencer covered in designer clothing on her third consecutive getaway to the South of France. Your college friend beginning her new six-figure corporate job. The picture-perfect wedding of your best friend from nursery, who, as it turns out, met her fiancé whilst volunteering at an animal shelter. That is probably all you took away from two minutes of aimlessly scrolling on Instagram and the likelihood is that it has made you feel *some kind of way*.

It is no secret that the digital realm in which we spend so much of our time has added a whole new dimension to the natural, human, emotion of jealousy. With the picture-perfect lives of others shoved down our throats at quite literally any second of the day, it is impossible to not compare our lives to theirs. The jealousy that festers within us creates the perfect breeding ground for comparison culture as, we begin to think “why them, why not me?”. **With every scroll we come across the success of yet another person**, prompting the green-eyed monster to rear its ugly head.

A rather simple solution would be to remind ourselves that the content we consume from others are merely the fragments of their lives that they choose to share with the world. However, this ‘simple solution’ is much easier said than done.

The plethora of media uploaded on any profile has been painstakingly curated and filtered to induce a morphed perception of that individual and their lifestyle. It is mind-blowing that a three-second glimpse into someone’s digital persona can manifest pervasive feelings of insecurity and self-loathing.

Yet this is the experience of most online consumers. The detrimental effects on mental health and the self-esteem issues that result from this practice are apparent, yet the addictive and ubiquitous nature of social media makes it difficult for many of us to detach.

As a regular feature of our day-to-day life, **it has become an obsessive practise to constantly consume the lives of others, the desire to see what he’s up to or where she’s going has become inescapable**. This suffocating habit has been disguised as the norm, or even the expected. Whilst it is in our nature to compare and compete, the unrealistic standards we hold ourselves to as a result of what we see on social media can have serious consequences.

Whilst there are measures that can mediate the effects of social media jealousy, such as reduced screen time and self-reflection, it is unlikely that there is a way to extinguish it completely whilst remaining online. **These one-sided trivial rivalries with complete strangers ensue entirely in our heads** simply because of the pictures they post or the achievements they display. We are all aware of the problem and yet, most of us who feel this way are also guilty of perpetuating the impression of a ‘perfect life’ on our own profiles too. So, is there actually a way to purge the negative impacts of social media and its users? To eliminate the green-eyed monster with two thumbs, scrolling for hours and hours on end? **I doubt it**. Unfortunately, this normalised phenomenon is bound to continue, a disease without a cure, a modern-day endemic. The green-eyed monster with two thumbs will live on inside us for as long as we continue to consume and perpetuate the façade of online perfection.

‘Jealousy

Let's BeReal: Online Authenticity Isn't Real

WELLBEING.

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Deputy Editor: Ursula Glendinning

Digital Editor: Helen March

Sub-editor: Zara Whistler

Abhinay Prashant Talkhedkar

Social media is an envious space. In a world of half-truths and calculated feeds, we are constantly being warned against taking what we see online at face value. Saturated with comparison and editing, social media has become synonymous with the superficial. BeReal claims to be different. A rebel in the online world, this app brands itself as 'anti-Instagram', aiming to eliminate curated posts and simply celebrate authenticity in the moment. It gives its users a 2-minute window to take their picture, at a randomly generated time each day.

Over Lent term of last year, BeReal rapidly gained popularity, transforming it from an unknown app to a staple of everyone's social media experience. This hype around the emergence of BeReal consequently illustrated an overwhelming desire for increased authenticity online.

Alexa:
play
'Jealousy'

However, the user can also delay their upload until such a time that it suits them. **As a result of its popularity, the original intent has been obscured by the seemingly irresistible temptation to post our highlights.** The self-proclaimed 'anti-Instagram' app has transformed into the very thing it was designed to resist. Users deliberately wait to post in order to capture the most exciting part of their day. Ultimately, apps like BeReal, whilst supposedly promoting authenticity, have transformed into curated representations of our realities. Instead of levelling the playing field online, BeReal has created yet another space to experience FOMO and jealousy.

In a documentary-drama presented by Netflix, "The Social Dilemma", Tech scientists discuss influence and manipulation within the online realm. We are confronted with the harsh reminder that "if you are not paying for the product, then you are the product." As the evolution of BeReal illustrates, we are still trying to sell a polished version of ourselves. In such a curated and deliberate market, how can anything actually be real, despite being marketed as such?

In order for social media spaces to accurately reflect reality, if that will ever be possible, we need a complete cultural and mental reset, a sort of **'Big Bang'**, although it does not look like that will be happening anytime soon. In the meantime, it is important to remember that despite marketing, what you see does not reflect reality.

Regardless of whether you post within the allotted time frame or not, a singular snapshot can never capture us as we truly are. Everyone knows that truth is a subjective concept. The 'truth' that you assume to be an accurate reflection of someone's experience can be very different from their reality. Is the real, truthful version of ourselves even one we want to present for the whole world to judge?



Croft / Daniel Newell-Price

WELLBEING.

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“Clear, Moving, and Utterly Free”: Emerging From Online Sloth

Ursula Glendinning / *Wellbeing Deputy Editor*

Until relatively recently, when I wrote about mental health, I frequently referenced the Internet. My regular citation of problematic trends or referrals to high-flying commentary accounts had become integral to my perspective. This world, constructed of bytes and hashtags that my generation has carved out for itself, feels three-dimensional to those who have become emersed in it.

At the beginning of last year, I descended into the depths of break-up fuelled depression from which I struggled to re-emerge. To compensate for the loneliness, I drowned myself in the pseudo-camaraderie and busyness of social media consumption. When I wasn't working, I filled my hours scrolling. However, this wasn't sustainable around March of that year as I moved into a different household, and it was here that I discovered nature literature.

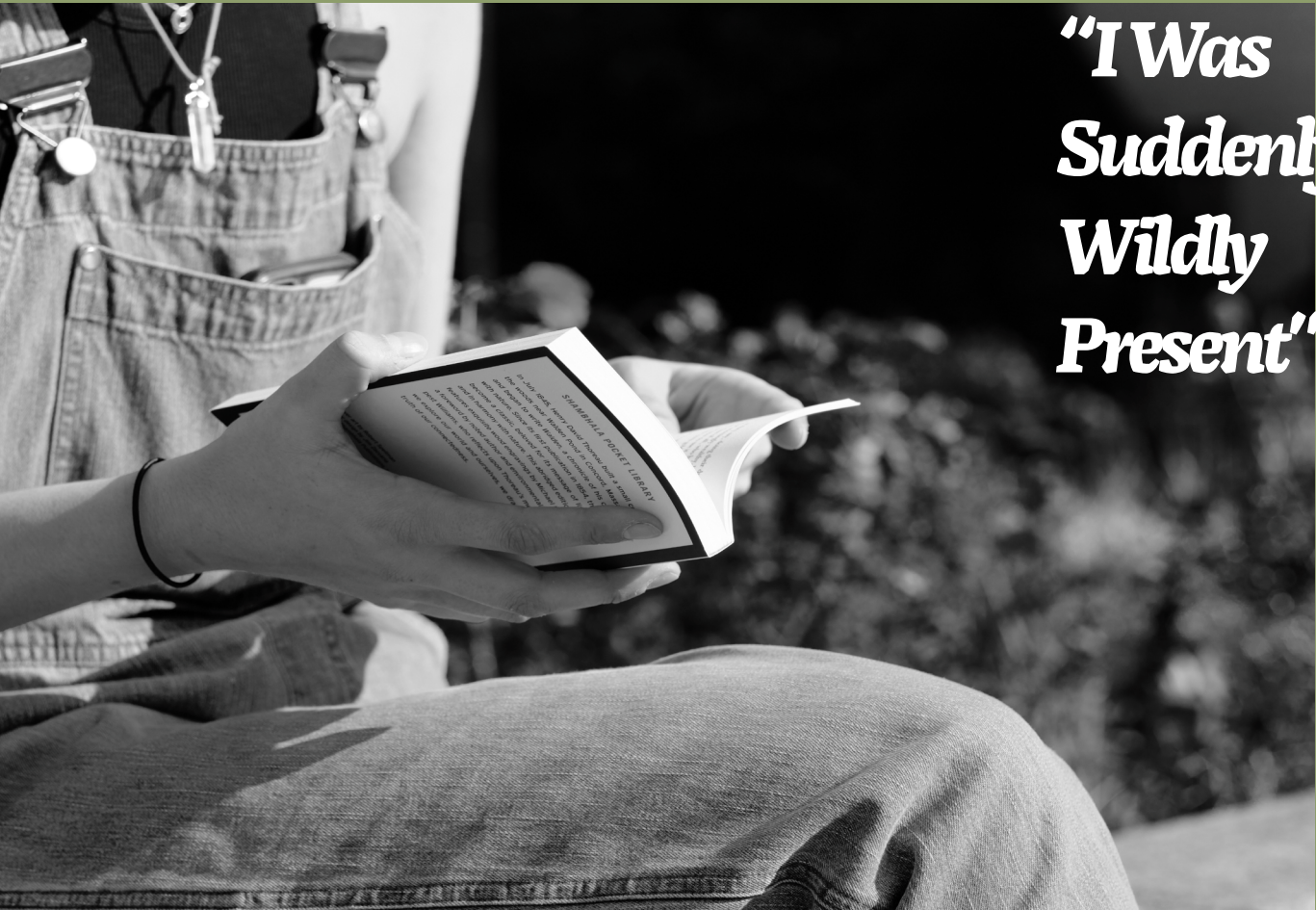
It is hard to talk about the impact of poetry and literature in a way that has not been done before. Jeanette Winterson describes in her memoir 'Why be Happy When You Can be Normal' how she read a segment of T. S. Eliot's poetry, "This is one moment,/ But know that another/ Shall pierc you with a sudden painful joy", and immediately began to cry. My introduction was not nearly as climactic or emotional. I had not been starved of literature as a child, far from it as I had the privilege of growing up in a household among lecturers and academics. I was practically smothered with literature, and I loved it. I ate up all that I could get my grimy hands on. What I mean to say is, my introduction to literature could never be characterised as accidental or emotionally obliterating. It was seamlessly integrated into my childhood, and for that I am thankful but its power was therefore somewhat glossed over.

“The world took on a new vitality”



Croft / Adam Luit

A fascination that began with Elizabeth Bishop's works moved swiftly onto the likes of Robert MacFarlane and Helen MacDonald. This literature had a profound effect on me. Strangely enough, the medium that so many use as a distraction from life brought life back to me. **I was suddenly wildly present. The world around me took on a vitality I had not seen since I was a child.** I recovered a wonder of the natural world that we lose as we grow up and become increasingly engrossed in capitalist and materialist necessity. When I walked, I took my headphones out and spotted buzzards and golden plovers, granted, this was made possible by living in and among vast swathes of moorland. But, even in the local village, I could recognise the trees and plants that frame the post-industrial northern landscape. When you can identify something and give it a name, it moves out of redundancy and into your periphery.



“I Was Suddenly Wildly Present”

Later that year I deleted TikTok (I intend to gradually delete most of my social media) and with it, I believe, my perspective has transformed. Our truths, however they transpire (for they all emerge from something), are informed by, and become interchangeable with our outlooks. Online these truths can be transmitted, sometimes beautifully but online discourse has become a beast in and of itself. With trends such as #NoNuanceNovember and cultural commentary accounts, content consumers feel they are discovering new ways to view the world all the time. It has become easier and easier to find critical takes on microtrends, TikTok poetry, and the effects of mass media consumption.

But by distancing myself from this pseudo-world, I realised something: it does not matter. This is not to say that microaggressions and the cult of fast fashion aren't profoundly affecting our world but rather, we cannot sustainably surround ourselves with self-proclaimed mental health professionals and redundant discourse. I have realized retrospectively that social media reduced me to two eyes and a finger. I couldn't even control what I was going to see next. In stark contrast, naturalist understanding encouraged me to use my whole body.

My immersion into this new world of environmentalism also induced a radical forgiveness I had not been able to see, especially towards myself. Here was a world that demanded constant growth, change, and reciprocity to be sustained. This principle of reciprocity is just as important when understanding human relations. Arguable, you are delusional if you believe that you can exist entirely self-dependent. Hyper-individualistic conceptions of the self, perpetuated by social media therapists (think: 'if they don't serve you, cut them out') have popularised this sentiment. However, through this naturalist lens, the importance of community is made all the more evident.

Through the gloom of growing up, comes a sort of clarity that continues to reconfigure as we experience more of the world. We should neither run from nor cling to these brief apparitions of focus. Our minds and identities are in constant flux. In ones' 20s, one is suddenly made aware of one's fallibility. The first step towards growth is to rid oneself of the fallacy that there are 'good' and 'bad' people. We are all products of our encounters and relationships, and to group people into such black-and-white boxes as young adults is to do a disservice to our capacity to become better. It is easier to conclude ones' imperfections are character-defining and shameful rather than a foundation for our progression. **That is to say, it requires less emotional exertion to wallow in our capacity for darkness than to accept that as a part of ourselves and move on.** As a result of my immersion in nature literature and the environmentalist cause, my shift in perspective has made way for a radical forgiveness and acceptance of people's capacity to change. To write about nature is to engage your entire self- body and spirit. While this priority has prompted a change in myself, I will not hold onto it; there is always more to discover.



CARBON FOOTPRINTS

what it means to travel green

TRAVEL.

Digital Editor Isobel Edmondson

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Writing an article about sustainable travel makes me feel as big a hypocrite as any. I'm currently on my year abroad, in Nantes - and of course I travelled here by plane, followed two weeks later by my (very) heavy suitcase on another plane.

I could try and justify myself by saying that the plane journey wasn't too wasteful, because I'm going to be here for a few months, but I've had no hesitation in inviting my friends to travel the distance just to visit me for a few days. It would be a shame, though, if travel was tainted by overriding feelings of guilt. The good news is that there are ways to travel in an eco-conscious way, and the conversation of how we travel with as small a carbon footprint as possible deserves to be recognised as far more complex than simply offsetting the flights we take.

Discussions around fast fashion have gathered momentum in recent years, and the patterns here could help us set a framework for how we talk about travel. Many of the problems in the fashion industry translate into the travel industry as well: one of the principal ones being over-consumption, particularly when paired with under-use.

In the novel 'Around the World in Eighty Days', Jules Verne imagines a situation in which his characters could - though ambitiously - travel around the world in just under three months. The notion captured the imagination of many and instilled an amount of disbelief. Nowadays, to travel around the world on commercial airlines can take as little as three days, admittedly on a less scenic route than Verne's.

"The environmental impacts of travel deserve to be taken more seriously."

"There has been a monumental shift when it comes to the how and why of travel."

Indeed, the changes seem to echo the criticisms of fast fashion we are now familiar with. It has become normal to take a return trip to a destination several hundred miles away and to only stay there for a weekend, the cost of the trip not quite reflecting the carbon footprint of the flight and its cost to the environment. In the same way, we have become increasingly aware of the gravity

of buying a piece of clothing, the price of which not reflecting the labour costs, and wearing it just once or twice before throwing it away.

On the flip side, arguments that sustainable clothing is not always affordable and that the least well-off are being made to carry the blame of the fast fashion crisis, could be likened to the frustration that families attempting to take cheap holidays feel when they are made to feel more guilty than millionaires in their private jets.

What's more, while we have a responsibility to travel 'green', this seems a drop in the ocean when it comes to, for example, the vast number of ghost flights which took place during covid, a ploy by airlines to avoid having to hand out refunds to passengers who couldn't use their tickets due to travel restrictions. If, after all, the flights took place, passengers had simply missed their flight.

The light in the tunnel is that there are plenty of ways of travelling which are far more eco-friendly. Once you cross the Channel to Europe, for example, you'll find that sustainable modes of travel seem to be more second nature. In major cities, the public transport systems of trams, trains and buses puts the UK to shame. In the Netherlands, bikes rule the roads, and the French platform 'Blablacar' offers car-shares to neighbouring cities.

Of course, getting from one place to another is only the start of the story. Once in a destination country it can be incredibly rewarding to adapt an eco-conscious lifestyle, one which is often more community focussed and respectful of local customs and businesses.

Food markets offer an excellent opportunity to buy fresh produce which is often locally sourced, and it can be a great joy to chat with producers about where they've sourced their products and to ask for tips or recipes in order to be able to make the most of what they sell. Habits which are not only eco-friendly but also community focussed add a new dimension to the word 'sustainable'. It's also really important to consider our impact, as tourists, on the wildlife and natural environment of the places we visit. Doing our research before departing can help us understand how to protect nature in the places we visit, and to appreciate the earth's natural wonders in a way that

doesn't harm. There are plenty of international organisations and local projects which can help us to do this.

Travelling 'green' isn't just about carbon offsetting our flights.

It has to be about adopting a mindset which reorganises the carbon footprint of all of the modes of transport we're used to using, and of the harmfulness of some of our behaviours when travelling. But it's also about recognising that travel can be one of the most significant

motivators to protect our planet, as we experience its beauty and diversity. Not forgetting too that tourism can be one of the principal sources of income for certain destinations and communities.

The concept of 'green', and perhaps slower travel, should be a source of excitement for both our experience of it and the alternative it offers to stomping our way across the globe.

words by Lydia Butt



Croft / Finnuuala Brett

MERIENDA

The Art Of Slowing Down

Before I arrived in Argentina, I expected the country to be filled with lavish steak, good wine and the occasional tango. One particular aspect of Argentinian culture which I did not account for was the importance that the act of the 'merienda' was about to have in my life.

The art of the merendar is not a stranger to many other Spanish speaking and European countries. However, and I may be biased, I strongly believe that one cannot deny the particular beauty of the Argentinian way of doing things.

So firstly, what is the merienda, and what does this word mean? The verb 'merendar' literally translates into English as 'to have an afternoon snack'. As the definition suggests, it takes place in the late afternoon between around five and seven, which could be seen as just before tea or dinner time for some English readers.

In Argentina, the 'merienda' has its roots in the Italian influence upon the country which so distinctly marks and defines many aspects of Argentinian culture, after the wave of Italian immigration to the country in the early 1900s. At around five pm, as the working day for some is just drawing to a close, cafes across the country begin to fill up with Argentinians of all ages. Many settle down with perhaps a coffee and an alfajor, accompanied by

either friends or family, ready for a catch up, or a moment alone to simply reflect upon their day.

Parks often begin to fill up at this time too, as groups of friends descend just before the sun sets with a thermos of hot water and their yerba, ready to share mate, a traditional South American caffeine rich drink. Mate is yet another Argentinian tradition which promotes the art of sharing and the importance of friendship, as the guampa and bombila (flask and straw) containing the mate, which could be tenuously compared to a sort of herbal tea, are passed around among friends exchanging in lively conversation.

If you have got so far as to reach this part of the article, you may be wondering why, out of all the new customs I have experienced in this country, it is this particular aspect of Argentinian culture and tradition which has stuck with me the most.

And yet, the merienda is a particular part of the culture which I am most determined to bring back with me and share with my friends upon my return to England. Ever since I arrived in Argentina two months ago now, I was struck with the different paces and values of life which are held here as a contrast to back home. In England it seems that we are desperate to always be busy, and a moment of the weekday which is not spent racing around is precious time wasted. However, upon doing this it is as if we prioritise living to survive, rather than living to live.

The merienda represents the passion for life that so many people I have come

across in Argentina have, as it allows you to sit back and reflect upon your day with a sweet treat, a friend or two and a good natter. Moments are not rushed in Argentina, this however does not mean that time is wasted, but rather savoured and enjoyed.

My experience up to this point has been incredible, but I will not deny that I have faced many challenges along the way, and who would argue that moving 6000 miles away from home for four months would ever be easy.

However, during the more difficult moments, there have been countless occasions where the only viable solution is to go to a café and enjoy a long merendar, if only to have a rant and enjoy a slice of cake or an alfajor. On the day that the Queen died and relentless forest fires around the city of Cordoba meant that our lectures were cancelled 20 minutes before they were due to start, we decided that the only solution was to merendar.

It is in a similar sense that when I return to Bristol and I feel as if I am drowning in deadlines, I am determined to remind myself to slow down, reflect on my day and overcome the stress by partaking in my own little merendar. It might not taste quite as good in the ASS library or without an alfajor in my hand, but the sentiment behind it certainly remains.

Words By Yasmine Fowler

"The Merienda Represents The Passion For Life That So Many People I Have Come Across in Argentina Have"



Croft / Finnuala Brett

HANG- XIETY

Sobriety is not something we often talk about as students, especially whilst travelling. A pint in the hostel bar is always my first tip for solo travellers. The social lubrications that alcohol offers are not to be dismissed lightly; for those of us that are not naturally social butterflies it gives you the Dutch courage to step outside your comfort zone and talk to new people.

However, those rounds of the local craft beer don't always feel as great the next morning in a hot ten bed hostel dorm room. The hangxiety is multiplied by not being at home in your own bed, debriefing the friends you've had forever about the fun you had, and mistakes you might have made the night before. Although drinking whilst travelling or being away from home can be an amazing way to see a city, or to connect with your new friends, it can sometimes feel like it is integral to having a good time.

Whilst recently exploring Dublin, I found this pressure to be drunk at the heart of so many of the conversations my boyfriend and I had in the city. Our discussion of the pros and cons of drinking for another night running, mimicking many conversations had with close friends at uni. The internal debate over whether another night out was worth inevitably missing the seminar we had the next day and causing our future selves to stress over the money wasted on VK's. Dublin is a

but wonder if I'd have felt differently about it if I had travelled completely sober. It made me think about how much more I could have potentially seen if I'd felt fresh enough to get up and out of the hotel before 10am.

I had similar feelings whilst solo travelling, drinking too much to feel more comfortable and charismatic in front of near enough strangers in the hostel bar. Whilst I successfully made some incredible memories and great friends this way,

I also found myself in some sticky situations when travelling alone.

Although, I don't regret drinking whilst travelling in the past, when it comes from the right headspace it has led me to some amazing stories, like dancing on tables in The Hague or partying on the beaches of Byron Bay. That said, it has become so normalised to associate alcohol with socialising I almost forget the perfectly sober hikes or picnics in the sun, which were just as enriching, if not more so in my experience.

As you can tell, much like many people I haven't figured out all the answers yet.

The reality is the pressure to drink is something so many of us are continuously trying to make peace with.

This Sober October I haven't stopped going for beers with friends, I have just tried to swap mine for a 0% alternative or a soft drink. I think the same can be done whilst travelling, remembering that for every crazy drunken story there can also be a sober hike or picnic on the other end of the scale. Finding the right balance for you can be a journey but finding that balance is so important, both at home and away.

words by Grace Burton

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