

Dive
Deep!



MYSTERIES OF THE DEEP

The myths hidden beneath the surface

SEA

400 YEAR-OLD GIANT SHARKS

And other fishy friends

SHIPWRECK HUNTERS

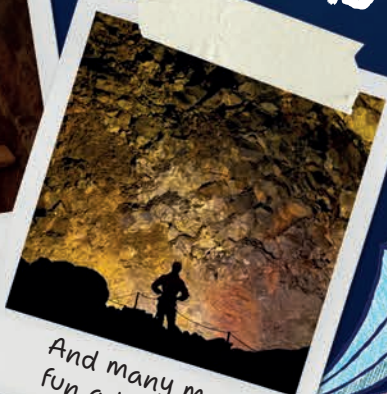
The Endurance's
rediscovery



LAND AHoy!



Meet the great
cave crawlers!



And many more
fun adventures!



Issue 2 June 2026



DIVE INTO ADVENTURE. DEFEND THE ATLANTIS. UNLOCK THE LEGEND.

DISCOVER HIDDEN SECRETS. BATTLE FEARLESS FOES.
PROTECT THE TREASURE.



LEGO ATLANTIS

THE DEPTHS ARE CALLING.
WILL YOU ANSWER?



EXPLORE
ANCIENT WORLDS



DEFEND
THE KINGDOM



UNLOCK
EPIC TREASURES

THE DIVE TEAM



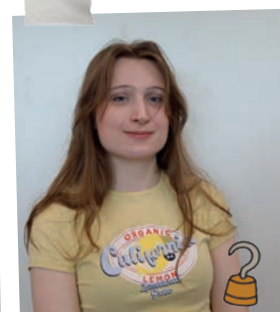
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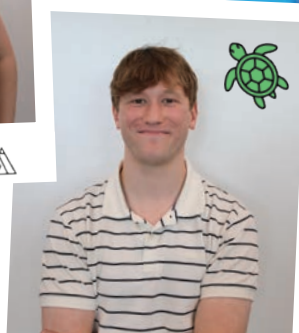
GEORGIA



HAYLEY



HEATHER



WILL



HONGYEZI



JESS



ROBIN



LARA

A letter from us

Dear Explorious
Adventurers,

Grab your goggles and fins, because this time our special edition is taking you deep under the sea. Hop aboard our crew's ship, walk the plank, and dive into the depths of the ocean!

Hold your breath (not really!) and turn to page 17, where you'll meet an amazing real-life one-armed mermaid who swims with whale sharks! Is the water a bit too chilly for you? No worries, we turn up the heat on page 33, where you'll explore the inside of an active volcano. Talk about the ultimate game of "the floor is lava"!

While the deep blue sea is our main focus for these two weeks, featuring

shipwreck hunting, what it was like to live as a Tudor explorer, and crazy immortal jellyfish, we promise there is something for everyone. You'll also get to waddle with penguins in Antarctica, discover the secrets of an Ancient Egyptian tomb, and meet the incredible ice man frozen in time. We had a whale of a time putting these pages together for you, and we hope they inspire you to start creating your own adventures.

Want to join our crew?

- Watch Us: See our team exploring the real world on YouTube @ExploriousMag.
- Listen Along: Hear these stories come to life on the Explorious Podcast on Spotify!

Want to be featured in our next issue? Swim on over to page 28 to see our new winners and join our latest competition. Don't forget to email your awesome submissions to competitions@exploriousmag.com.

Enjoy the adventure,
The Explorious Team

The Dangerous Journey for the Perfect Picture

The Antarctic adventurer that documented a frozen world

pg. 6



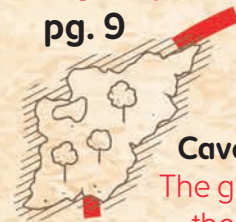
CONTENTS



Meet the Star Mappers, Australia's First Explorers

Navigating with songs and the night sky

pg. 9



Caver Top Trumps

The great explorers of the underground

pg. 10



EXPLORE THE DEEP WITH EXPLORIOUS IN PG. 12-23

The One-Armed Mermaid

Join Nina Joo on her freediving adventures pg. 12

Shipwreck Hunters

Sir Earnest Shkelton's ship uncovered after a century pg. 14

The Not-So-Killer Whales

Meet the misunderstood marine animals pg. 15

Can You Survive Life on a Tudor Ship?

What its like aboard the Golden Hind pg. 16

The Immortal Jellyfish

The fountain of youth of sea animals pg. 19

Greenland Sharks

The 400-year-old sea giants pg. 20

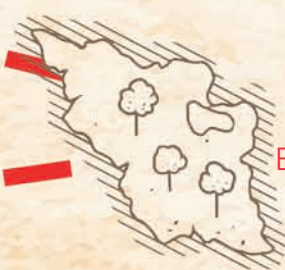
Mysteries of the Deep

The myths hidden beneath the surface pg. 23

Inside the Lost Tomb of Sennenmut

Explore the tomb of the architect to Egypt's greatest Queen's

pg. 8



The Coolest Volcano

Taking you into the World's only volcano you can explore

pg. 28



Competition



pg. 24



Think You Can Climb Mount Everest?

What is it like to scale one of the world's most dangerous mountains

pg. 26

Iceman

Meet the prehistoric Stone Age explorer

pg. 27



More From Us

pg. 30



The Man Who Conquered Scotland

When the love of the outdoors leads to climbing all 282 of Scotland's Munros

pg. 31



Around The World Without Flying

Head in the clouds and feet firmly on the ground

pg. 32

Gymnastics for Astronauts

What does it really take to visit space?

pg. 34



THE DANGEROUS JOURNEY FOR THE PERFECT PICTURE

David Tipling has travelled across the world for his famous photography. He answered Explorers' burning questions about the expedition that skyrocketed his career.



David had spent his life dreaming of photographing Emperor Penguins, and finally, that dream came true when he was offered a place on an Antarctic expedition.

Q: Looking at the beginning of your expedition, take us through your first moments approaching Antarctica!

A: As we started to come up to the pack ice, I got invited up into the cockpit. My first sight of wild penguins was from the cockpit of the plane looking down. We landed on a blue ice runway on wheels. The pilot described it as 'seat of the pants' flying, which didn't help us with nerves! As we came in and you could feel the plane slewing around and looking out the windows, it was just white snow blown everywhere. Eventually it came to a halt and the back of the plane came down, I remember walking out and just the cold hitting me. It was amazing. I've never felt it since. It just hit me this temperature and you're thinking 'God I've got to camp in this'.

Q: This must have been a life-changing experience for you, what was one moment you'll never forget?

A: On the 10th day of the expedition, as this massive storm was starting to relent a bit, we were all sitting having a cup of tea in the main tent and we heard this enormous bang. It was like

a gunshot. We went outside and a little gap in the ice had gone out to about a foot. There were cracks starting to spread. We had these planes sitting on the ice and the pilots started to say: "We've got to go now. We can't lose the planes." So, we ripped up the tents and the camp, stowed everything in the planes, and took off. We were flying around and we didn't have much fuel. It's impossible to land in these conditions. Thankfully, there was a hole in the clouds and we basically dived down through it and landed.

Q: Be honest - did that make you need a nervous poo?

A: Not so much when the ice started breaking up. I suppose I did realise it was a bit of an issue but you didn't have time to think through what might happen. You just had to get on with it. The only time I was really scared was when we were up in the air. So, I was sitting up near the pilots.

Q: That's definitely a wake-up call - what do you remember about living there?

A: We had to build a snow wall around the tents. It was incredible camping in those temperatures. When you had a pee outside your pee basically froze almost before it hit the ground. I was in my 30s, so quite young, and it was all a big adventure. When we got hit by this storm they had set up poles with ropes to help us get around. I can remember thinking, "God, this is a real overkill. We're never going to need that." But actually, we did need them. I can remember waking up when it was at its coldest. I was just white because my breath had been condensing on the top of the tent and then just falling as ice crystals. They made us eat about five and a half thousand calories a day so we ate these big chocolate cakes.

Q: You've mentioned this big storm - can you tell me more about it and how powerful it was?

A: We knew about it but it came a lot

quicker than they were thinking it was going to, and we didn't have time to take anything down. It was a case of hanging on to the tent at times. We had to hunker down. We managed to get to the penguin colony on two occasions, roped together. When we got to the colony on the first occasion there were hundreds and hundreds of penguins; they all clustered together because of the weather. It was fantastic photography.

Q: When it never gets dark, how did you sleep properly?

A: We flipped our clocks. So we photographed during the night from about eight in the evening till eight o'clock the next morning. Then we would have a meal when we got back to camp and slept most of the day. I could put my head down on my pillow and hear the seals that were coming up out of the ice quite close to where we were. You could hear them calling under the ice when they were swimming below you. That was pretty amazing.

Q: Did you ever realise how far you were from the world you know?

A: On the way there we had to stop to refuel. There was a bit of drama because the starter motor on one of the planes wouldn't work. I went off for a little walk just on my own. That was a one of a kind moment for me because I didn't go far, probably no further than half a mile or a mile, but you realise that perhaps you're the first person that's ever walked there.

Q: As a child you would watch birds outside of the classroom window instead of listening - did you imagine that curiosity would lead you to being one of the world's most widely published wildlife photographers?

A: I didn't feel like I was very good at school, but when I picked up the camera for the first time and got into photography, it just felt very natural. I dreamed of writing a book one day but never imagined I would, or the idea of

going and camping down in Antarctica. But you dream, don't you? I suppose I'd dreamt about doing all these things but you just think other people do that, people on the TV. It never occurred to me, you're basically the master of your own destiny. No one else is going to do it for you.

By: Georgia Cook



November 1998



INSIDE THE LOST TOMB OF SENENMUT

INSPIRED BY EGYPTOLOGIST CAMPBELL PRICE'S REAL EXPERIENCES, TAKE IN THE SMELLS, SIGHTS, AND SECRETS ON A JOURNEY INTO THE HIDDEN TOMB OF THE ARCHITECT TO EGYPT'S GREATEST QUEEN.

You duck your head and step into the mouth of the tomb. Behind you, the blazing Egyptian sun burns white on the sand, but ahead there is only a corridor of darkness.

With your flickering torch, you begin to walk downward. The tunnel slopes steeply

beneath your feet, cut deep into the limestone hill more than three thousand years ago. The ceiling is so low you have to crouch. Dust puffs around your sandals with every step, dry as flour.

The passage seems endless, as if you're crawling past 20 double decker buses. You imagine the man this tomb belonged to: Senenmut, the powerful architect that designed giant temples and towering statues for Queen

Hatshepsut, the female pharaoh of Egypt. The torch light trembles across roughly hacked stone walls. Then suddenly, the floor flattens. You stop. Something is painted on the wall

beside you. You raise the torch higher and a face stares back from the darkness. It is Senenmut himself. Only his head and shoulders are painted there in pigment, but his eyes seem strangely alive.



Hieroglyphs curl around him like tiny pictures carved into the rock: his name, his titles, his story.

After the cramped tunnel, the room opens wide enough for you to stand upright at last, but only just. The walls are smooth, carefully carved and covered from floor to ceiling in hieroglyphs. Every inch is filled with symbols, spells, and pictures of his family.

The spells are there for a reason. Ancient Egyptians believed these carvings would transform Senenmut after death, not into an ordinary spirit, but into something almost king-like, powerful enough to live forever among the gods.

You notice a sweet, smoky smell, like old incense and tree resin - the scent of mummification. Even after thousands of years, the perfumes and oils once used to prepare the dead body still remain in the air. As you tilt your head upwards, you see stars. Hundreds of them, golden, painted across a dark ceiling. Senenmut's tomb contains one of the oldest star maps ever made, once used to measure time itself. The torch glow lights up the painted constellations, making them shimmer as though the night sky has come alive underground.

Your eyes are then drawn to the

far wall as you feel watched. It's the Eye of Horus.

Two sharp eyes, dark, and watchful, seemingly staring directly at you from the door. As you inch closer, you see it is a false door, carved from solid limestone, with tiny patterns that look like a wooden bolt.

Egyptians believed this magical doorway allowed the spirit of the dead to travel between the world of the living and the dead. The torch flickers again and shadows leap across the chamber walls. Near the corner of the chamber, the floor drops deeper into darkness. You carefully climb down the claustrophobic shaft. Your torch reveals broken fragments scattered in the dust: pieces of canopic jars (used to preserve organs) shaped like animal heads, scraps of coffin wood blackened by fire, tiny strips of ancient bandages. And there, half-buried beneath rubble, lies the sarcophagus (coffin).

It is enormous. Heavy as a mountain. The lid has been pushed aside long ago, and the mummy is gone; tomb robbers stole the treasures centuries before, burning wooden coffins to melt away the gold covering them. But they didn't steal everything, as you're looking at the real treasure surrounding you. The walls themselves whisper Senenmut's life even after 35 centuries. Under the painted stars and watchful eyes, you remember his story.

By: Georgia Cook

MEET THE STAR MAPPERS, AUSTRALIA'S FIRST EXPLORERS

FOR 65,000 YEARS, AUSTRALIANS NAVIGATED EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS WITH NO MAPS, COMPASSES, OR GPS. INSTEAD, THEY USED SONGS AND THE NIGHT SKY.

When you think of the other side of the world in Australia, what might come to mind is the thought of venomous spiders or snakes, or crocodiles lurking in the water, ready for a tasty human snack! But according to Bob Fuller, an anthropologist (someone who studies humans from the past), the biggest challenge for Australians 65,000 years ago was knowing their surroundings.

"Getting lost was a much bigger problem, especially in the middle of the desert. To survive, you've got to know where the next waterhole is; that's probably much more of a hazard than any animal."

So you might think people would've wanted to stay in one place during this time period. But Bob explained that Australian groups would move all across the country in the summer months.

"People travelled enormous distances. It wasn't unusual for them to walk three or four hundred kilometres."

To navigate these distances, Bob added that over the years, they passed down knowledge of invisible paths called songlines that crisscrossed all over the country.

"They were everywhere. You probably couldn't walk down the street without walking across a songline."

These songlines acted as a kind of musical map that turned the landscape into a story they would sing. By following the songs, people could travel huge distances, remembering where to find safe paths and landmarks! "They're routes that incorporate

stories." This was thousands of years before maps even existed. "They just understood their country just like they could fly." But people needed a way of memorising these songline routes and passing them down to their children. Ray Norris is an astrophysicist (someone who studies stars) and explained that Australians had an amazing knowledge of the night sky during this period.

"The human eye can see about 6,000 stars, and they had a name for every one of them, and most of them a story about it."

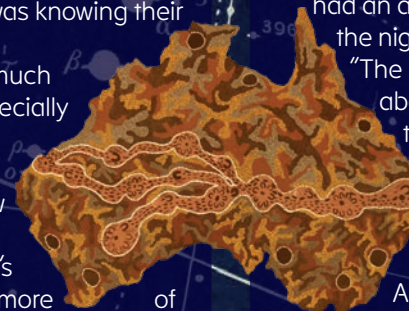
Using this knowledge, Australians would look up to the sky and find a path of stars that matched the songline routes and shared these with each other.

"Each of those stars would represent a place on the land." Ray said they passed, or sang, this knowledge down generationally to the point where star mapping became a crucial part of Australian life.

"They just looked at the sky, and to them the sky was a map, with imaginary grid lines on it. They didn't have to think about it. Star maps allowed Australians to travel all over the country, which has a land size of over 7 and a half million square kilometres.

That's like taking the whole of the UK and doubling it. And doubling it again. And again. In fact, you could fit the UK into Australia 31 times, and there'd still be more room!

By: Robin Hibbs



Geophysics at the step pyramid of Saqqara and Hippo Bowl

EXPLORIOUS' EPIG CAVE CRAWLER TOP TRUMPS

By: Heather Treadon

THE CAVE FINDER CHRIS SCAIFE

Most memorable journey:

Chris was deep inside a cave in India, when he came upon some strange bolts in the wall. Who put those there? The way to find out what was there was to head back to camp and read the diary. Someone had been there in 2019, but without rope, they hadn't managed to go any further... He returned the next day with rope and entered an enormous railway tunnel with cave formations (stalactites and stalagmites) everywhere! He had solved the mystery and was walking where no one ever had before. Then the tunnel stopped. But wait – he spotted a tiny hole in the floor. He crouched towards it, he could hear what he thought was a storm on the other side. So, he headed back to camp, grabbed his tools and dug until the hole was big enough for him to slip through. On the other side? A great big underground river! He spent the next few weeks exploring the secret world he had found.

Complete darkness or complete silence: Darkness

Scariest moment underground in one word: Rockfall

Explorious' favourite quote:

"The sound that water makes in the distance can sound a lot like human voices... it's the way that your mind plays tricks on you."



THE CAVE FINDER

EXPLORIOSITY	92
DEEPEST DEPTH	940m
TIME UNDERGROUND	72 hours

THE BRAVE CAVER POLLY JUDD

Most memorable journey:

Every caver has an underground alarm clock called a 'call out', it's the time you tell people above ground when you expect to be back. On one of Polly's trips, she teamed up with some older, more experienced cavers and followed them deeper and deeper underground. But soon, she was very lost and went way past her call out time. This meant cave rescue had to spring into action. She waited and waited, but soon became very tired and cold – cave rescue had arrived at the other side of the cave! With food and water running low, they had no choice but to turn back. And yet, she wasn't scared, she loved being underground. After 17 hours underground, they arrived back at the entrance. The only problem is they had to climb 30m to reach the exit. Polly was completely exhausted, so the other cavers worked together to pull her out. "It was a lesson in trusting ourselves," she said. "It gave me a lot more appreciation of rescue teams and what they do."

Complete darkness or complete silence: Silence

Scariest moment underground in one word: Bang

Explorious' favourite quote:

"I think people don't expect to see how alien the formations underground are. They can form the most crazy patterns!"



THE BRAVE CAVER

EXPLORIOSITY	66
DEEPEST DEPTH	275m
TIME UNDERGROUND	17 hours

THE MINE EXPLORER BEN SUMPTER

Most memorable journey:

Meet Ben. He grew up near the legendary tin mines in Cornwall, and he's mad about adventure. His most amazing adventure happened right under his feet in a giant cave system called Darren Cilau in Wales. To get inside, he had to squeeze through a teeny tiny hole in an old quarry. It was so narrow that he had to crawl on his chest, almost like wiggling through a sideways letterbox! Once inside, the cave opened up into a massive tunnel as wide as a road, the largest cave passage in the whole British Isles. "It's bigger than a cathedral," he said. Suddenly, Ben sniffed the air. "I think I smell bacon!" he said. Confused, he turned the corner, where he found a group of friendly cavers camping out and cooking breakfast deep inside the mountain. After sharing a cozy cup of tea with his new friends, Ben spent seven exciting hours climbing, walking, and exploring the rest of the cave. Luckily, he made it back just in time for dinner!

Complete darkness or complete silence: Darkness

Scariest moment underground in one word: Thought-Provoking

Explorious' favourite quote:

"It feels like a rocky hug"



THE MINE EXPLORER

EXPLORIOSITY	47
DEEPEST DEPTH	300m
TIME UNDERGROUND	80 hours

THE CAVE DIVER MARTIN GRASS

Most memorable journey:

Martin is now the boss of the Cave Diving Group, but let's go back to one of his first ever cave dives, at the birthplace of British Cave Diving, Wookey Hole. His gear was totally homemade! His wetsuit was made with black glue (his mum was not happy about the mess on the carpet), his diving weights were made from melted down lead on the hob, and strapped onto him with old seatbelts. Once he was ready, Martin dived down something cave divers call a sump – an underwater passage, this one stretched 150m long. He was careful not to disturb the mud on the outside of the passage – it's quite difficult to dive in murky water. Whoosh! He burst through into a large passage at the end of the sump – complete with a gorgeous big green lake! Martin felt like one of the luckiest explorers on the planet. He said, "It's a real privilege cause you really feel, hey, I've done something!"

Complete darkness or complete silence: Silence

Scariest moment underground in one word: Flooding

Explorious' favourite quote:

"Blind white trout... They're odd, because they're not actually white, they're see-through. So you can see all their organs!"



THE CAVE DIVER

EXPLORIOSITY	75
DEEPEST DEPTH	400m
TIME UNDERGROUND	15 hours

THE ONE-ARMED MERMAID

Quiet water, weightlessness, and a different way of moving. Then there's hard work, white sharks, and even garbage to contend with. Nina Joo, the one-armed freediver, takes you beneath the ocean.

Carrying the salty smell of the sea, the wind from Indonesia brushes against Nina Joo's face. At this moment, she has no idea what she will encounter underwater. The ocean changes every day. Right now, the only thing she can rely on is the luck the sea is willing to give her. Relax. Breathe from the belly. Slow and steady. The aim is not to rush, but to let the lungs fill gently with fresh oxygen.

"Down there, everything is quiet." She keeps breathing calmly. "You mustn't let your body feel like it's running out of air. Holding my breath and diving down is a challenge. But the moment I see the colours and life underwater, all my worries just disappear. Do you know what astronauts feel like when they're on the moon?

That weightless feeling?

That's

exactly how I feel under the sea."

Nina has only one arm. So over time, she learned to find her direction with her head, swim with her legs, and balance in the water using the strength of her core (stomach) muscles.

Nina wants to be a freediver and did her first free dive in 2022. Back then, she was still a beginner and could only practise in a swimming pool, no deeper than five metres.

"That first time going underwater, it wasn't exciting. It was mostly... fear," she says. But she didn't give up. With every practice dive, the fear slowly faded away. "You'll find that being brave doesn't happen all at once," she says. "It comes when you practise again and again, and keep telling yourself: I can do it."

"At first, it was easy to feel disoriented," she says. "I go to the gym to make my body more stable. After enough practice, it feels natural, like a fish."

However, at first, not everyone welcomed her. When she first signed up for diving lessons, some instructors turned her down as soon as they heard she had only one arm. "It wasn't that I couldn't do it," she says. "It's just that many people didn't want to try."

"Many people are afraid of rejection," she says. "They're scared to take the first step." That's why she began sharing her story online, and she now has 70K fans. She wanted more people like her to see that you don't need a "standard" body to explore the ocean. You can still dive in.

Red hair, a green tail, Nina grew up watching Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. As a child, she often imagined what it would be like to be a mermaid. So

when I ask why she doesn't use scuba gear and instead chooses freediving, which is more challenging for her, she laughs, her voice light as bells.

"The Little Mermaid is a free diver," she says.

Today, she is fully focused. Suddenly, something hits her leg hard. Nina turns around instinctively, blinking in disbelief. A whale shark moves slowly and calmly toward her. It's a giant, more than ten metres long. The enormous creature is often called the "starry sky of the sea" due to its white spots and faint lines resembling the night sky.

Then a second one appears. And a third.

For many divers, seeing just one whale shark is a once-in-a-lifetime dream. On today's dive, Nina sees seven. Looking closer, she realises the whale sharks are not alone. Around their wide bodies swim small fish, moving lightly beside them. These fish peck at tiny organisms on the whale sharks' skin, feeding on the scraps left behind as they move through the water.

The whale sharks do not seem to mind; they continue forward at the same slow pace. They open their enormous mouths, not to attack, but to feed. Such massive bodies just survive on the smallest of food.

Nina is overjoyed. The whale shark is her favourite sea creature. She tells me that one day, she hopes to see humpback whales.

"Have you heard the saying, 'When a whale falls, life begins'?" she asks. This means that when a whale dies, its body slowly sinks to the deep sea, thousands of metres below the surface. That is a place humans can barely reach, and where life is hardest to survive.

And yet, it is there that the whale's enormous body becomes the beginning of an entire ecosystem. Tiny organisms arrive first, followed by fish, shrimp, and worms. They gather around the whale's remains, living and multiplying.

A whale's death is not an ending. It is a long, quiet act of giving.

"Even when it's gone," she says softly, "it's still feeding so many lives." She loves whales not because they are huge or rare, but because in the ocean, few creatures like them leave everything they have to the world.

The Little Mermaid, Ariel, is kind. Nina is like her in that way, deeply caring about everything in the sea.

"What I can't forget most is seeing things that don't belong there. So much garbage."

Plastic bags. Instant noodle wrappers. Caught between corals. Sometimes, the rubbish traps fish. Sometimes, it's turtles. They struggle, but can't break free, until their bodies stop moving. As she talks, her voice grows quieter.

"The trash is what tourists throw into the sea after eating on the beach. It floats into the deep sea and slowly sinks."

To clean up this rubbish, she sometimes chooses to dive with scuba gear. The gear allows her to stay longer, to remove just a little more of what doesn't belong. A mermaid is the princess of the sea. That means she should also be someone who

protects the ocean, right?

I asked her, if someone wants to explore the ocean like she does, where should they begin? Her eyes lit up, and she smiled.

"Hey, little buddy, you want to dive too? Then you must remember, diving is not an adventure you can do by yourself. You have to go with your mum and dad, and choose a diving centre with professional instructors and safety staff. Don't just follow someone random you find online. That can be really dangerous." "When you're ready," she said, "go and meet the sea. Just remember: take care of it, and it will take care of you. You don't need to be the fastest diver or the bravest adventurer. You just need a kind heart, curious eyes, and a love for the ocean."

By: Hongyezi Zuo

THE SHIPWRECK HUNTER

Hidden under the ice for over a century, Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship was finally found. Dive into the Endurance's rediscovery and learn about a lifetime underwater, exploring the ocean's coolest secrets.

Over 100 years ago, Sir Ernest Shackleton became a legendary explorer when he led expeditions to Antarctica. On a freezing January day, the crew's ship, called Endurance, was trapped in the Weddell Sea ice, and the men spent eight months there until they abandoned the ship in October. Shackleton helped every single member of his crew survive in one of the greatest escape stories in history, but Endurance sank under the ice and was lost forever. Enter Mensun Bound! He has been diving and excavating shipwrecks for 40 years, and in 2017, he became the Director of the Expedition to find Endurance.

The epic discovery

Finding a ship lost under polar ice isn't easy. After a tough attempt in 2019 where their underwater robot drifted away, the team refused to quit. They returned in 2022, using high-tech underwater vehicles called

Sabertooths to bounce sound waves along the ocean floor. Mensun was adventuring on the ice when signs of Endurance were found. He said, "When I got back on board [our ship], there was this huge moment of euphoria on the bridge of the ship and everybody was jumping up and down and punching in the air and slapping each other on the back. "We only had one little light on. The first thing we saw was the ship's rudder lying on the seabed. "Then we elevated the vehicle and I said 'Okay, let's turn the lights on,' and we illuminated the entire stern [back] of Endurance. There was the ship's name, nine letters all arching over the five-pointed star.

"That was probably the most glorious electrifying moment in my entire life. There were just four or five of us in that little control room at the time and we were just completely slack-jawed with amazement."

Mensun expected Endurance to be in an "amazing state of preservation" when they launched the project because there is no oxygen or marine parasites in freezing waters. But nothing could prepare him for what they really saw. Not only was the paintwork there, but the wheel too, one of the rarest sights in shipwreck hunting! "There were two port holes there

and I knew that they were the port holes to Shackleton's cabin [from studying the ship]. And although I couldn't see through the glass, of course you're wondering what else is in Shackleton's cabin.

"I've never known anything like it. We're the first people to see her in over 100 years. This was the legendary Endurance."

For Mensun, the link to the ship was personal. He grew up in the Falkland Islands, where Shackleton stayed on his way to rescue his crew. Shackleton actually stayed in a pub owned by Mensun's family, leaving behind a visitor's book with the crew's signatures and a tiny sketch of a penguin!

Secret treasure, pirates, and sharks!

Being a shipwreck hunter isn't just about cool history, it can be seriously dangerous. Pirates and looters don't just exist within the pages of your books, they are a big part of shipwreck hunters' work. Modern-day pirates use high-speed boats and weapons to steal cargo or money. Mensun said, "It's a problem because once you help yourself to a site, that's it. It's gone forever. It's very difficult to police the sea. They don't understand if they just take things off a shipwreck that they're taking away the history and the story behind it. It always felt like we were in a race."

In 2001, Mensun was working in "the most prolific pirate zone in the world" off the East Coast of Africa. They found gold on the Fort San Sebastian wreck, a pirate favorite!

"It was very scary, we'd have to smuggle it up in our wetsuits. In the end we took up some of the tiles under my bed and I slept on top of it for a long while."

If pirates aren't enough, there are under-the-sea creatures too.



Endurance when they rediscovered it

"I'm not really worried about Great White sharks," Mensun said, "But Tiger and Bull sharks do worry me because they are aggressive creatures of instinct. We're working in zero visibility and they can be in there with us. You just feel the water and sea and a shadow go across your face - that is kind of scary. "There was one time a moray eel wrapped around the neck of one of our divers in the South China Sea. It was really dangerous because if any of them got seriously mauled by that eel then we couldn't bring them back on board."

Because they were diving as deep as a 33-story building, coming up too fast could cause deadly decompression sickness. Luckily, the team used a makeshift spear, and the eel swam away.

Becoming your own explorer

Finding the Endurance took years of determination and teamwork. It proved that real-life exploring is still alive and well! Mensun said, "It's more important now. You can be explorers of the human body, the mind, it's endless. It could be anything. It's not about uncovering maps and planting flags.

"In life, you must never think you can't do something exciting like this. Anyone can do anything if they try. That is the message of Shackleton too, never give up. Always persevere."

By: Georgia Cook

THE NOT-SO-KILLER WHALES

Meet the most misunderstood marine mammals, as Explorious busts four myths about Orcas.

What's an orca? Well, you might know us as 'killer whales'. That's rude! You're often told to be afraid of us, and while there is some truth to our viciousness, we're not the human hunters we're made out to be. Well, I'm here to set the record straight and tell you four facts to get to know the real us.

Our favourite snacks are seals, not people

First things first, we orcas have never ever killed a human in the wild. Think about how many people go swimming, diving, and kayaking. And we've not attacked even one! We'd much rather be snacking on seals. And we can tell the difference, too, through our very own superpower called echolocation. By sending out high-frequency sound waves and listening back to the echo, we can distinguish animals and objects. So don't worry, we're not going to eat you by mistake. In fact, there's even some evidence to suggest we can use this to tell if humans are pregnant! How amazing is that?

We're actually more dolphin than whale

The name killer whale implies we're similar to our big blue relatives. Actually, we're much closer to our dolphin siblings. All the way back in 1758 (that's over 250

years ago), we were classified - by a man called Carl Linnaeus - as part of Delphinidae, or the oceanic dolphin family. He knew what he was talking about, too; he was the master of classification - he even made the system by which we name animals today!

We win the best parenting award every time

Parenting is a big deal for our orca culture! We carry babies for 18-months, then nurse our children for up to two years. And for some orcas, their children remain with their mothers their entire lives! The ones who do leave their mothers usually come back to them later in life. Dads don't look after their own children, because our mums do all the work, but they are great babysitters and companions to younger relatives! Maybe the saddest part is that if a male orca's mother dies (even once he's an adult), he is three times more likely to die the next year. So our mums are everything to us!

We're the real explorers of the ocean

Forget Christopher Columbus, or James Cook - we are the true explorers! We travel up to 100 miles a day. That's around 1,700 football pitches laid end to end! Some of us have been tracked to do extraordinary adventures in short periods of time, of thousands of miles!

By: Robin Hibbs



Mensun searching for endurance on Ice Breaker Agulhas II

DO YOU HAVE WHAT TUDOR

IT TAKES TO BE A SHIPMATE



Sir Francis Drake, Captain of the Golden Hind

Imagine you're a young boy living in Tudor England. Your family can't afford to feed you, so they've done the obvious, and sent you off to sea (sorry girls, you'll have to stay at home). You've already mastered how to shoot a longbow at the age of seven, and you're ready to go. Yes, Henry the VIII really made a law that boys had to know how to shoot a longbow by the age of seven! You feel the wind in your hair, as the ship sways and swings side to side. You hear the whistling on the sails and the creaking of the wood below you. But you'll get used to that feeling now you've started life on the famous Golden Hind boat, run by none other than Sir Francis Drake. He's basically a Tudor celebrity, feared by the Spanish, surprisingly good mates with the Queen, and a normal man who worked his way up from the bottom. He calls himself the Captain General, which means the captain of all captains. He's the big boss.

To find out what life was really like on board, we spoke to two experts. Gary Bradley is the ship captain at the Golden Hinde experience in London, a life-like copy of the original ship. Dr Richard Blakemore works at a university teaching students all about the history of life at sea. They have a pretty good idea about what went on above and below the deck. But the thing is, a crew member like you would have a slightly different

One got a bed, live music, and fresh food the other got hard to see what life was really like aboard the

experience to Francis Drake once you set out to sea!

Sleep

Near the bottom of the ship is your sleeping area for the crew members. Gary says the space is so low he is "hunched over", and only a four-year-old Wcould stand up straight. But what would the crew members get up to in their tiny bedrooms? Gary says: "You just lie down on the floor and you sleep." Of course you'd share this with the animals on board, and the ship cannons. Nice and cosy. Right at the bottom is your food and drinks, barrels of meat and beer (probably a bit too smelly to sleep down there). The level up from the crew is for your officers, and although they have slightly more space, they still don't have the luxury of a bed. Only Drake slept on the top deck. "The captain's private cabin would be like a little shed in the garden," Gary says. Francis Drake was the only one who got a bed. He also was the only one who could sleep for as long as he wanted. Lucky guy.

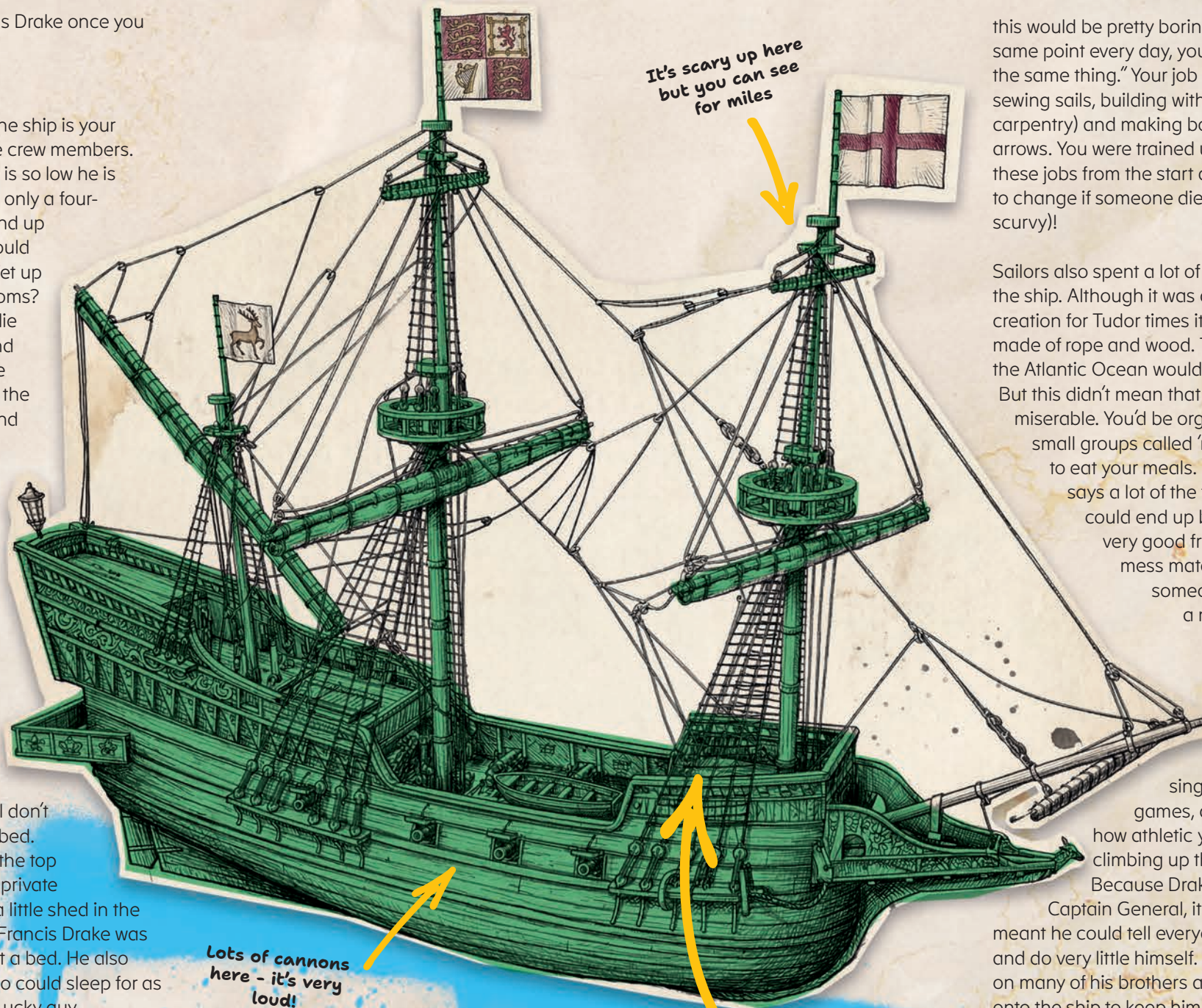
Dr Blakemore has visited the boat remake a couple times. He says: "It is tiny. Every time I go on, it astonishes me that people went around the world on this thing." After all, this ship carrying around eighty men for a couple months

is only just larger than a caravan.

Work and play

On a working day for months at sea, sailors would spend four hours working and then four hours off. Gary thinks

biscuits, no bed, and scurvy. Heather Treaton sat with two experts Golden Hind, and whether you'd want to be there.



this would be pretty boring: "At the same point every day, you'd be doing the same thing." Your job may be sewing sails, building with wood (called carpentry) and making bows and arrows. You were trained up on one of these jobs from the start and only got to change if someone died (likely of scurvy)!

Sailors also spent a lot of time repairing the ship. Although it was a pretty cool creation for Tudor times it was still only made of rope and wood. Trying to cross the Atlantic Ocean wouldn't be easy! But this didn't mean that sailors were miserable. You'd be organised into small groups called 'mess mates' to eat your meals. Dr Blakemore says a lot of the time you could end up becoming very good friends: "Being mess mates with someone was quite a meaningful relationship". Some sailors learnt to read at sea. You might also sing songs, play games, and 'show off' how athletic you were by climbing up the rigging. Because Drake was the Captain General, it basically meant he could tell everyone what to do and do very little himself. Drake brought on many of his brothers and cousins onto the ship to keep him entertained. Also, the more family you brought meant more money in the family pot when (or if) you returned. Some of the crew ended up doing the same, but it didn't mean Drake wasn't a bit cheeky at times! He may have also taken musicians

onto the ship, and not just drums and trumpets to scare the Spanish, Dr Blakemore says musicians entertained the officers while they were at dinner. Music and turtle soup, what's not to love!

So, who had it better?

Drake was a complicated man. Sure, sometimes he chopped off people's heads if they annoyed him, but he also



A young boy with a long bow

fed his crew better than most captains at that time. As for the crew, it may be easy to feel sorry for them, but they were very skilled and brave people solving problems with nothing but rope, wood and laughing along the way. As Dr Blakemore puts it: "They're not stupid. They're just constrained (held back) by what's available to them." So, if you were a young boy stepping onto the boat for the first time, you wouldn't have a bed, but you'd have a front row seat to one of the greatest adventures of all time.

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COLOUR ME! THE IMMORTAL JELLYFISH

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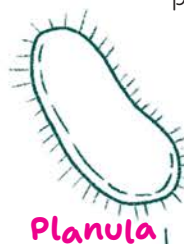
What if you could live forever? These jellyfish don't have to wonder because they are the sea animal version of the fountain of youth. Found in oceans around the World, the *Turritopsis Dohrnii* have the unique power to reverse their age when they are starved, under environmental stress, or physically attacked. So biologically, they are immortal! They start as tiny larvae called 'planula'. They dive to the sea floor, where they attach to hard surfaces such as rocks. Then they change shape into columns of highly branched polyps.

Like a flower, a tiny jellyfish only 1mm in length buds off the

tip of the polyp! It takes them between two to four weeks to fully mature, growing to 4.5mm to 5mm wide. The adult jellyfish is known as a 'medusa', but these little guys won't turn you into stone. They have transparent bodies and no heart or brain, but they do have bright red stomachs. They are carnivores that eat plankton, tiny molluscs, larvae, and fish eggs. Whenever the medusa's life is threatened, it will reverse their lifecycle. They turn back into a tiny blob by reabsorbing its tentacles. Within three days, they return to the polyp stage and the cycle continues!

FUN FACT!

These Jellyfish are hitchhikers! Although they were originally discovered in the Mediterranean Sea and prefer tropical climates, they hitch rides on cargo ships and have spread across the globe!



Planula



Polyps

By: Lara Parsons



Juvenile
Medusa

The polyp devel-
ops branches as it
builds a colony



These 400 year-old the answer to living

By: Jessica Elson

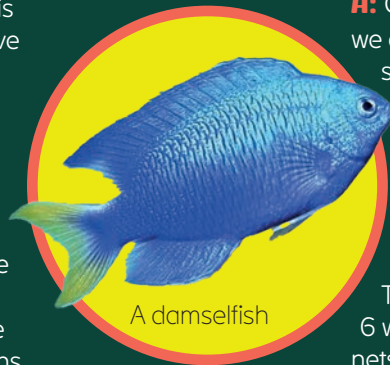
Marine scientist Lily Fogg had been studying fish for over ten years when she made her Greenland shark discovery. We wanted to know what other whacky discoveries and fishy facts she had to share.



Lily Fogg, marine biologist

Q: If you could mix a human eye with any animal's eye what would it be and why?

A: I think the coolest eye to mix with a human's would be a damselfish eye. They can see more colours than humans can. Damselfish are found in shallow coral reefs. The cool thing about them is that they have patterns on their faces, which only they can see - a bit like having tattoos made of invisible ink. They use these patterns to recognise each other, and they can see more colours than some other fish, so they can differentiate between each other. This way, they don't get confused between who is Bob and who is Greg! If you wanted night vision you would mix a human eye with a deep-sea fish's eye, then you could have night goggles. Deep-sea fish eyes actually



A damselfish

adapt to the dark, so their eyes are made differently to fish who live in shallower water. They need to try to catch as much light as they can, because it's really dark in the deep sea.

Q: Which fish do you find the most interesting and why?

A: I think for me it's really hard to choose, but if we are talking about deep-sea fish it would be the barrel fish. They have a completely transparent head, so their eyes can point directly upwards to catch any light they possibly can. Lots of deep-sea fish also have mirrors behind their eyes to catch the light. You've also got dragon fish in the deep sea. They produce red light under their eyes, which is weird because not a lot of deep-sea fish can even see the colour red. We think they use the red light as a torch to hunt their prey without being seen.

Q: The ocean is sometimes too deep for humans to safely dive down. How do you get the fish out of the ocean to examine them?

A: Coral reef fish are easy to catch; we can scuba dive to collect them. We spray the fish with a mixture of cloves (a spice you might have in your kitchen) and alcohol, and it makes them drunk! That slows them down so we can scoop them up with hand nets. For deep-sea fish it's way harder. The fishermen sail around for about 6 weeks, with huge nets, called bongo nets. Then, they have to sort through everything they collected. This takes hours, and not everything they collect is always usable. Sometimes this is because of pressure changes in the water, which can squeeze the fish so

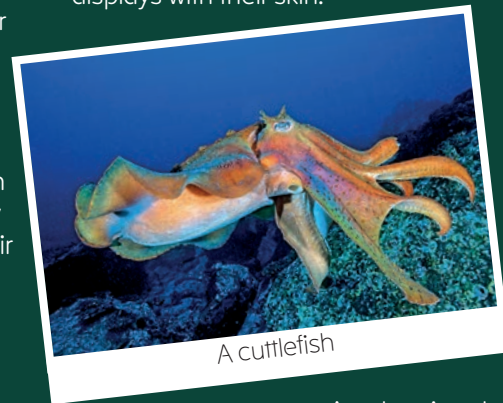


A lattice soldierfish, found in coral reefs

tightly that their eyes can explode!

Q: What's the coolest thing you've seen while scuba diving?

A: Scuba diving can be very peaceful in some places. Coral reefs are really noisy places; you can hear the fish talking to each other and hear the sounds of water and bubbles. Once I was wandering around the bottom of the sand, and looked up and saw two cuttlefish dancing together. I was so lucky to catch them dancing, and they were doing these flashing disco displays with their skin.



A cuttlefish

Another time, I went night diving in Africa, and we were collecting fish. At one point, my buddy hit me on the head with his torch. I was like, "What's wrong?". I looked up and there was a venomous snake in front of my face. I honestly think that was more threatening than being chased by sharks.

Q: Fish are known to be quite smelly. Is there a funky smell in the lab when you're cutting into them?

A: Surprisingly, no! I think the worst it gets is if you're working on some guts or something, but usually by the time I get to them they are treated with chemicals. Sometimes we put eyes in salt solution because salt preserves them - a bit like how the Ancient Egyptians put mummies in salt.

sea giants could be forever!

This deep-sea cruiser is a Greenland shark, the longest living vertebrate on Earth. They can live for up to seven times longer than the average human, in the dim, cold waters of the Arctic deep sea, and scientists estimate that the oldest Greenland shark was alive before Guy Fawkes' Gunpowder Plot! Scientists have always thought that Greenland sharks are blind, because of their age and the fact that parasites live on their eyes, but a new study now shows they were wrong, and that these sharks could be the answer to living for longer.

Most animals' eyesight gets worse as they age, including humans. Unfortunately, sharks can't book themselves into Specsavers, and because Greenland sharks are so incredibly old, scientists always thought they would be completely blind, but they actually have great eyesight.

Scientist Lily Fogg says Greenland sharks have lots of 'rod-shaped' cells in their eyes, which trap and absorb as much light as possible, so they can see - you could think of them like hoovers that suck up light. "You could tell a lot about where it lives from its eyes," Lily says. Fish eyes act like a time capsule for scientists like Lily,

who cut them up so they can see where fish have been and what their environment is like. "Usually, the eye of a coral reef fish that lives in a very bright and colourful environment looks completely different to the eye of a deep sea fish that lives in a really dim, colourless environment," she says. Greenland sharks also have genes that repair cells better than any other shark species. The genes act like a 24/7 pit-crew, repairing the shark's DNA to help it to live for centuries. Because of their super-strong genes, these giant sea zombies are exceptionally resistant to cancer, and very rarely die of old age, so scientists are now studying their DNA to see if we can use it to help make anti-aging medicine for humans.



What would you do if you could live forever? Would you try lots of new things like skydiving, play Minecraft all day, or visit your great-great-grandchildren?

THE DEEP: ADVENTURE TO THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS

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MYSTERIES OF THE DEEP

The ocean is full of wild legends, from ghost ships to singing mermaids. For centuries, sailors returned home from sea with terrifying tales of monsters and unexplainable sights. But what is real, and what is just a tall tale? Amara Keeling dives beneath the waves to find out!

The Kraken

Sailors trembled at the thought of the Kraken - a monstrous, tentacled beast said to crush massive wooden ships like matchsticks.

The reality: The legend is almost definitely inspired by the giant squid. These real-life monsters lurk in the ocean's twilight zone- up to 3,000 feet deep, where sunlight barely reaches. They can grow up to 43 feet long, and females often weigh nearly 600 pounds, the same weight as a grand piano! They are so sneaky that scientists didn't even film a live one until 2004, off the coast of Japan.



Mermaids

For over 3000 years, sailors across the world claimed to see half-human, half-fish creatures sitting on rocks or swimming alongside their ships. Even Christopher Columbus claimed he saw three mermaids in 1493!

The reality: Sailors were actually looking at manatees! These are large sea mammals that can grow to over double the size of an adult human. When a manatee pokes its head out

head out of the water to breathe, it can look surprisingly human from far away. After months at sea with bad food and no sleep, sailors' eyes played tricks on them. Columbus even complained that his 'mermaids' weren't as pretty as the stories said!



The Flying Dutchman

According to legend, the Flying Dutchman is a ghost ship doomed to sail the oceans for eternity. Sailors believed that seeing it floating above the water was a cursed sign that their own ship was about to sink.

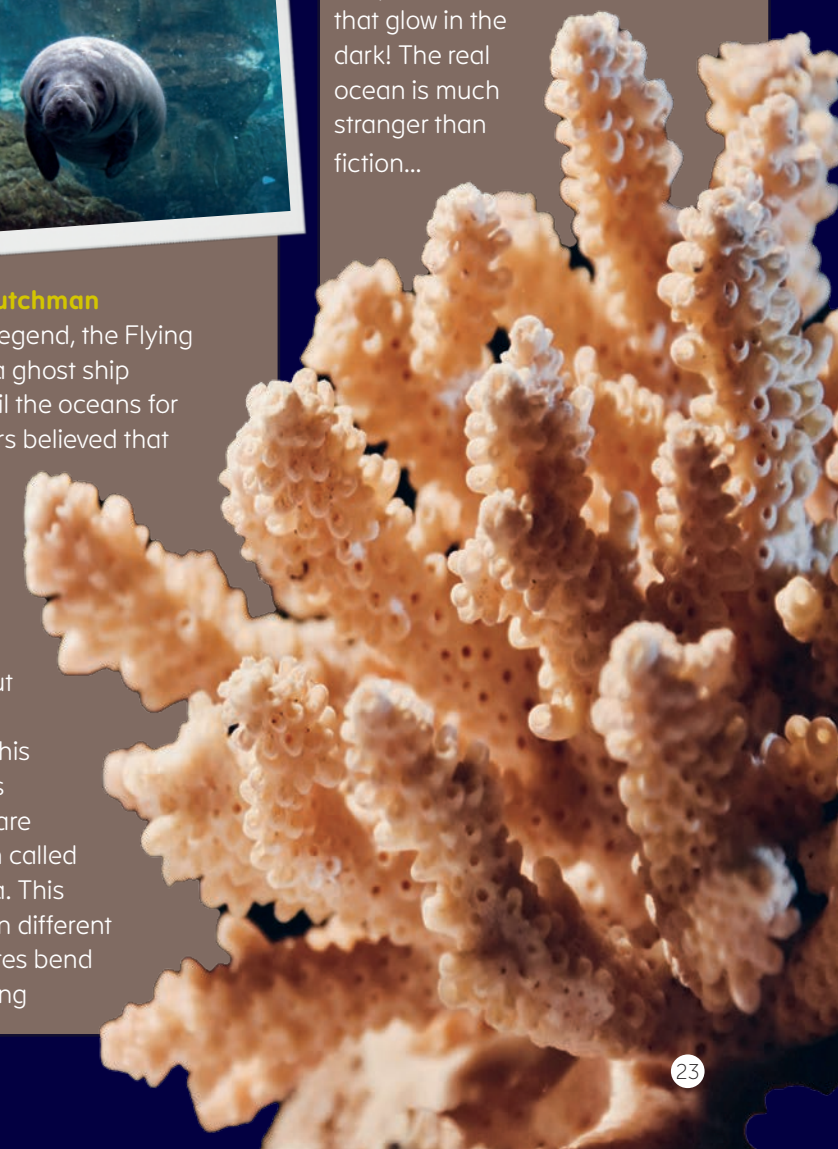
The reality: This creepy sight is caused by a rare optical illusion called Fata Morgana. This happens when different air temperatures bend light rays, acting

like a giant magnifying glass. It can make a perfectly normal ship on the horizon look like it's floating, stretched or even ghostly in the sky!



Did you know?

More than 80% of our oceans have never been explored. Every year, scientists discover bizarre new deep-sea creatures, like fish that glow in the dark! The real ocean is much stranger than fiction...



Competition Winners

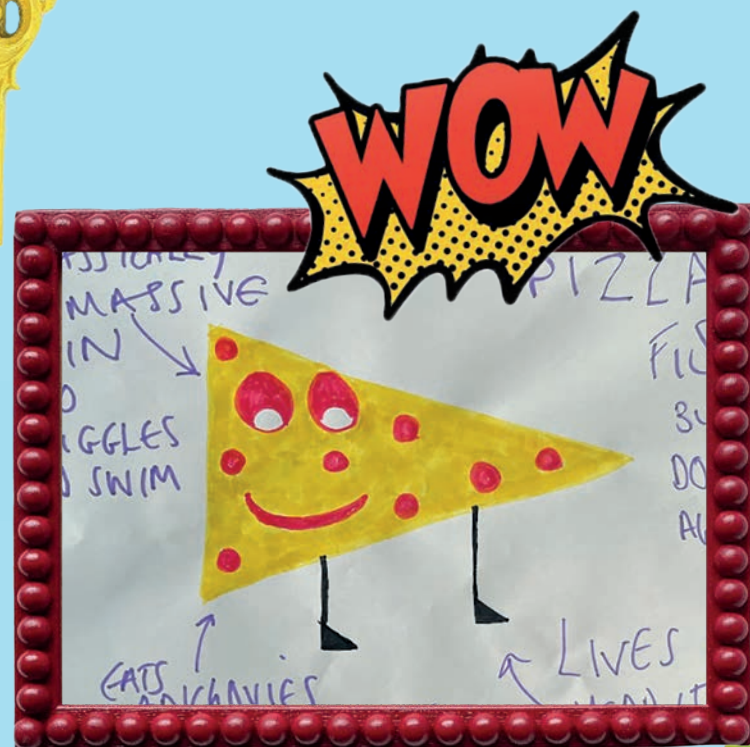
We challenged you to design a whacky sea creature, thinking about where it lives, what it eats and how it moves. You never know, maybe they really are out there somewhere. These were our favourites...



Larry Works, 9 3/4
'Fiona' lives in Lake Como and eats seaweed and pizza



Phoebe Green, 11
'Dr Octo-dog-maid'



Dougal Treaton, 10
'Pizzafish' is basically a massive fin that wiggles to swim

your next challenge...

Now, imagine you are alive before towns and cities were built all over the planet. Create your dream base, it can be anything you like - maybe it has hidden trap doors or secret rooms. Where in the world will you build it and what materials will you be able to find and use? This is the Explorious team's base camp. There is an aquarium in the wall and the bookshelves hold all of our magazine editions. It is underground so it is less easy to find, and so that other people can't get in and attack! We used Minecraft to build our den, but you can draw yours or even make a 3D model if you're feeling crafty.



SUBMITTING YOUR CREATIONS



In order for us to see your secret base, they need to be sent to us on **Facebook** or **Instagram**. Your parents can join these groups by scanning the QR codes below. After that, they can post your drawing on our page.

Make sure you submit your crazy creatures to us before **12pm on 10 June 2026** so you don't miss out on a chance to be featured!



Explorious



Exploriousmag



THINK YOU CAN CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST?

From crossing glaciers on precarious ladders to extensive months of training, climbing Mount Everest is not an easy journey. Maggie Porter explores the most popular route up the mountain and what it really takes to scale one of the world's most dangerous mountains.



Pack Your Camping Bags!

Every Everest expedition begins at Base Camp, a temporary city on a moving glacier with a sea of colourful tents. Alex Nemeth, who summited Everest back in 2018, described it as: "Tents from expeditions all over the world are spread across... hearing different languages and seeing the scale of how many people are involved." But as climbers settle in, there is an underlying sense of adrenaline, knowing the next step means travelling through the Khumbu Icefall, one of the most dangerous parts of the mountain.

Crossing the Khumbu Icefall

Imagine you are walking across a metal wobbly ladder between two ice blocks. The Khumbu Icefall is a constantly shifting maze of giant ice towers bridging huge gaps in the glacier. The danger comes from the glacier constantly moving beneath them. Ice blocks can collapse without warning, which is why climbers usually cross the Icefall very early in the morning when colder temperatures make the ice slightly more stable. During one of Alex's routes, an earthquake destroyed part of the path below her. They had to wait while "Icefall doctors"—a specialist Sherpa team responsible for fixing the route—rebuilt the ladders and ropes. Sherpas are guide teams and carry heavy equipment. Kami Rita, a Sherpa who holds the record for most Everest Summits, described the Khumbu Icefall as "the hardest part" of Everest.

Extreme Preparation

Is PE your favourite subject? You might need a bit more preparation than PE lessons... Eating, sleeping, and even drinking enough water suddenly become some of the hardest challenges. Before attempting Everest, climbers spend years building endurance, strength, and mental resilience. Training includes long mountain hikes carrying heavy backpacks, endurance runs, and hours on treadmills at maximum incline. Some climbers even use altitude tents at home, sleeping in them to simulate the thin air they'll encounter.



The Final Push

Climbers leave camp overnight, stepping into complete darkness as they begin the final push. Imagine the freezer aisle in the supermarket, but even colder and windier. Alex describes the atmosphere as "strangely surreal", with "an underlying awareness that you are in

an environment where humans cannot survive for long." On her summit night, things became even more difficult: "My Sherpa climbing partner became sick and couldn't leave Camp IV... Then my oxygen mask malfunctioned and began suffocating me rather than supplying oxygen properly." At 8,000 metres, small problems quickly become life-threatening. Alex explained that the experience taught her the importance of staying calm under pressure: "On Everest, emotional control is often just as important as physical fitness."

The Summit

After over 10 exhausting hours of climbing the final mile, you finally reach the top of the world. All the sacrifices lead to this moment. You are surrounded by a 360-degree view of the beauty of the Himalayas. All the hard work has paid off. So... Do YOU think you have what it takes to climb Mount Everest?

QUIZ!

Tick what applies to you

- ☐ Could you put on a heavy backpack and walk up and down the stairs for 6 hours?
- ☐ Could you sleep in the freezer overnight?
- ☐ Could you do a maths puzzle while holding your breath?
- ☐ Do you mind if your eyelashes freeze?
- ☐ Could you survive with no TV for 2 months?

1-2: Maybe best to stick to climbing the stairs!
3-4: You're getting close, but Everest would be hard.
5: WOW! Maybe you have what it takes...

THE ICE MAN ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS!

By: Hongyezi Zuo

More than 5,300 years ago, a man carrying a bow, arrows, and a copper axe walked alone into the freezing Alps. Then, he disappeared into the snow and ice. Thousands of years later, he "came back" almost completely unchanged! Today, people call him Ötzi the Iceman. Let's interview this prehistoric explorer from the Stone Age!

Q: Ötzi, what did you wear to climb snowy mountains?

A: I wore a bearskin hat, a goatskin coat, as well as shoes stuffed with dry grass to keep my feet warm. My shoes were actually a little similar to modern hiking boots!

Q: What was inside your backpack?

A: I carried a copper axe, a bow and arrows, and fire-making tools. My copper axe was a very valuable item at the time!

Q: What was your last meal?

A: Deer meat, ibex fat, and grains. Walking through snowy mountains for a long time

uses a lot of energy, so I needed a good meal first.

Q: Can you tell us more about your cool tattoo?

A: That's alright! I had 61 tattoos. They were not just for decoration; they also helped reduce pain.

Q: How did you make fire?

A: I used tinder and something called "tinder fungus" to help start fires. It belongs to the fungus family and is a relative of mushrooms!

Q: Why do scientists think you are so special?

A: Because I am one of the world's best-preserved ancient mummies! Even my clothes, tools, and tattoos. Scientists can study my DNA to learn what people looked like thousands of years ago, what they ate, and what diseases they may have had.

Scientists are still studying Ötzi to uncover more secrets about prehistoric life. Maybe in the future, they will discover even more stories about the famous Iceman.



Frozen in Time: This is what scientists think Ötzi looked like thousands of years ago!

THE COOLEST VOLCANO

TAKE THE LIFT
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Top tip: use the lift!

Alexía shares, "Once, before we started doing our tours, there was a guy who decided to descend into the volcano on a rope on his own. When the guy reached the bottom of the volcano, he unhooked himself without thinking, but the line is of course elastic so it sprung back. There was no way for him to reach it and nobody was waiting for him at the top.

"After some thinking, he started piling rocks together to form a big pile so he could jump and reach the end of the rope. It took him a long time but he managed to reach the rope and got back up to tell this story. Apparently after this he never travels alone."

Don't take an extinct volcano for GRANITE. Especially Þríhnúkgígur (pronounced: Thrih-noo-ka-geegur), which translates to 'Three Peaks Crater'. Located in the Blue Mountains, a vast water reserve in south-west Iceland, you'll find a volcano whose survival remains a mystery.

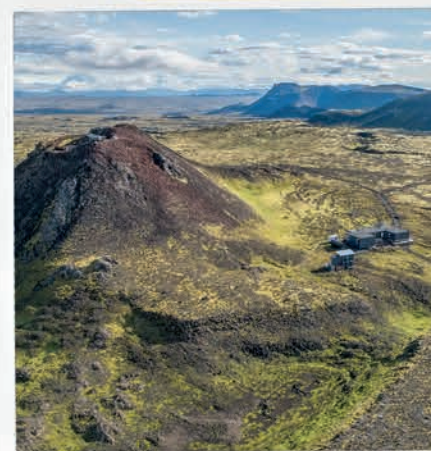
Andrea Líf Ægisdóttir, a team member at 3H-Travel, says, "The volcano itself is really unique. When volcanoes erupt, either they collapse into themselves, or they fill up with magma and it dries so there is no actual cave left." When the Three Peaks Crater last erupted approximately 4,000 to 4,500

The hike to the volcano is the perfect start to the adventure. The mountainous area was formed by multiple volcanic eruptions, with craters and dried lava fields covered in moss stretching across the landscape. If you're lucky, an arctic fox might even run past or say hi! After a three-kilometre walk to the base of the volcano, you'll arrive at the base camp where you are given gear and a nice cup of hot chocolate to fuel your volcano-voyage.

From the outside, the volcano is only around 35 metres high, but the chamber is a 120-metre descent down towards the centre of the Earth. That's over 20 metres taller than Big Ben! Alexía Björg Jóhannesdóttir, a tour guide, says, "It's a special feeling to descend into a dormant volcano, a magical feeling. It's like getting a peek into the Earth itself." The small funnel-shaped opening to the volcano is narrow and it takes a total of seven minutes on the lift to reach the bottom, but each second is filled with awe. Once the cave opens up, the chamber is the same size as three full-sized basketball courts. It would certainly make for the World's best game of 'The Floor is Lava'.

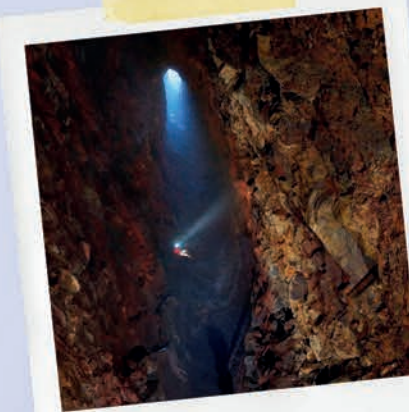
The temperature inside is always 4° celsius, and the air is clean, pure, and crisp. When everyone is stunned into silence, it feels like the world pauses; nothing but the sound of rain can be heard as it seems to fall in slow motion. Alexía says, "Once there was a blind guest in my group and when he had reached the bottom of the volcano he climbed to one side and sat down. His face had the biggest smile I had ever seen. He was experiencing the volcano with his whole body and he was in awe. It showed me that you do not always have to count on your vision to enjoy nature."

Back at basecamp, a warm bowl of traditional Icelandic lamb soup will be waiting for you. It's a simple dish, but meaty, and will give you the strength you need for the hike back.



The Three Peaks Volcano

years ago, the magma chamber emptied instead, leaving the cave miraculously behind. It was first explored in 1974 by Árni B. Stefánsson, who, with just a rope, a headlight, and a couple of friends, was lowered into the volcano. Although, his little torch was no match for the grand cavern, leaving him disappointed. As word of the volcano spread, Árni's brother and two of their friends decided to check it out properly in 1994. Lighting up the walls, they were met with the spectacle of reds, yellows, greens and purples from the minerals and oxidised basalt. All along the walls of the volcano you can see the layers from various eruptions, with formations that you can spot faces and creatures hidden within.



Descending through the opening

Andrea recounts the strangest thing brought down into the volcano, she says, "Last year, a husband asked us to bring this clown doll down to surprise his wife. It was a tradition they had to say they were thinking of each other on their travels, so we put it down there overnight to surprise her the next day on their tour!"

By: Lara Parsons



Vibrant Basalt walls



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THE MAN WHO CONQUERED SCOTLAND



Peter Macdonald in Garbh Bheinn, Scotland, 2011

Peter Macdonald climbed all 282 of Scotland's Munros - not to break records, but because his love of the outdoors took him to the top of all of Scotland's highest mountains.

Some adventures can be completed in a day. Others may take weeks, months or even a year. But how about an adventure that literally lasted an entire lifetime? When Peter climbed his first Munro aged 12, he had no idea that it was just the start. A Munro is a mountain in Scotland over 3,000 feet high, and there are 282 of them. Now aged 83, Peter has stood on the summit of every single one, but he never set out to do that! "If there's any record I might have broken," said Peter, "it will be for the longest time between my first and last Munro!"

Peter's first Munro was Cairngorm, which he climbed on a school trip in 1954, and that trip changed everything for him.

"It was there that I knew I had to be doing more of this - getting out and exploring, climbing, whatever else I could possibly do outside," he

explained.

From then on, Peter often spent his weekends walking and climbing in the Scottish Highlands. He kept a diary of the mountains he reached, but he was not racing to tick them all off like some others do. His mountaineering was just a part of his lifetime of adventure.

His exploration and curiosity took him far beyond Scotland - he went skiing in Greenland, went ice climbing on some of the most dangerous mountains in the Alps, and even used his climbing skills much closer to home by abseiling out of his son's window to unblock a gutter.

"I think that's the last time I was on a rope! It was only a couple of years ago and I don't think my wife was very happy about it," said Peter. "She doesn't think I should be dangling at



Peter climbing Mullach Fraoch-choire, Scotland, 2010

such a height at my age, and she's probably right!"

By the time Peter reached his 60s, he realised that he had already climbed around 200 Munros. He thought having done so many purely through his passion for adventure, he may as well try and complete the rest of them.



Peter climbing his last Munro, Beinn Tulaichean, Scotland, 2025

So slowly he carried on...

In 2010, he topped number 281. There was only one left - Beinn Tulaichean. Some people might have been excited to finish, but instead, Peter waited. He worried that once he reached his final summit that he may have no more adventures.

Peter's chance to climb Beinn Tulaichean, which means Ploughmen's Hill, came last spring when he was 82. His son, Duncan, wanted to climb the same mountain, so they went together. "It was a lovely, beautiful spring day," said Peter. "The fact it happened to be my last Munro seemed totally unimportant!" Some people celebrate their final Munro with a big party. Peter's ending was much quieter but just as meaningful - just a crisp day doing

what he loves with his family.

That is what makes his story special, and also repeatable. It was never about being fastest, youngest or first. It was about enjoying each day outdoors as it came. "There is so much of this world to be explored," said Peter. "You just have to get out and do it."

By: Charlie Macdonald



The journey begins in Egypt!

What is the first thing you think about when you hear 'world travel'? A plane right? A cramped flight. Air that stings your eyes. Aeroplane food that is... edible.

For 31-year-old Omar Nok, flying is not an option.

Travelling the world isn't as important as experiencing it.

He says, "It's not about two specific places, a departure and a destination. I wanted to see everything in between."

Omar grew up in Egypt, barely traveling, but after moving to Germany this all changed. Now he was in

Europe, suddenly travel became easier and he started to explore whenever he could.

As he



Sailing across the Atlantic Ocean



India

No Plane? No Problem!

The man exploring the world without flying.

visited different countries his love for the world grew, and he started to become more

adventurous.

Wanting to see the world, Omar decided to test out a new lifestyle, starting with a three-month period of travel. He thought, "maybe it will be enough, maybe I will feel satisfied. Then the three months passed and I wanted more."

For his next adventure, in 2024, he planned to travel from Egypt to Japan. Why Japan? It was the furthest east on the map.

Omar travelled to a total of 13 countries, taking him over 42,400km in 275 days, that's further than travelling all the way across the world! In each new country, he embraced the culture, saying, "I do what the

locals do. I copied them."

From

transport to food, he experiences whatever is most popular locally. He says, "If I go into a small restaurant, I look around the tables and the people around me. If I see a dish that looks common I ask for one of them."

He loves meeting new people, saying, "Trusting the good in people was a big part of it. You learn that people are willing to help. It heightens your radar for a person's vibe."

Although you have to be careful trusting strangers, without them, Omar wouldn't have such successful travel stories. Finding help and friendships led him to new adventures. He is always stunned by how nice everyone is. He says, "In Afghanistan, hospitality is a code in their culture. They don't see you as a tourist, they look at you like a guest in their country."

On his first night in Iran, he found himself stranded at midnight. Luckily, the kindness of a local man meant he had a warm bed and a full belly that night.

"I was really nervous visiting countries that I knew nothing about," he says, "But when I was there I felt so at ease by their welcoming. I felt invincible because of them."

"I am very confident that the people around me won't let me suffer on my own and they will jump in to help. Whatever difficulties I'm in, I won't be



Making friends in Afghanistan!



alone."

He says we need to rethink how we see the world, "We have more in common than differences and we shouldn't let those differences make us fight, there's so much value in our different cultures."

"No matter what I thought I knew about a place, I do not know it until I get there to see and experience it for myself."

When he finally reached Japan, he found a word that explained everything. When staying at someone's home, he was taught about ikigai. Omar explains, "It's the sweet spot between four things. To do something that you're good at; to do something that you love; to do something that benefits others and society; and something that you can provide for a means of living."

When I thought about it, I realised that travelling was my ikigai."

After completing his challenge to Japan, Omar did not wait around before starting his next adventure. Right now, he is travelling around the entire world without flying, and has gone over 18,000 kilometres in the first 150 days!

The start and end point is Egypt, meaning the dishes he misses most, koshary and basbousa, will be waiting for him when he gets home. But for now, he'll continue to remind us that, no matter where you go, you're never as alone as you think.

By: Lara Parsons



Swimming with sharks in The Belize Barrier Reef



Nafusa Mountains, Libya

Omar's journey so far:

230 Days and 223,000KM in!

✓ Egypt

✓ Libya

✓ Tunisia

✓ France

✓ Andorra

✓ Spain

✓ Cape verde

✓ Saint Lucia

✓ Dominica

✓ Saint Kitts and Nevis

✓ British Virgin Island

✓ Dominican Republic

✓ Jamaica

✓ Honduras

✓ Guatemala

✓ Belize

✓ Mexico



Sri Lanka



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HOW GYMNASTICS CAN HELP **YOU** TRAIN LIKE AN ASTRONAUT!

WHAT DOES IT REALLY TAKE TO VISIT SPACE?

While it might look really fun, being in space can be quite tricky.

Astronauts need good balance, strong muscles and lots of control over their bodies on missions. According to NASA, astronauts spend years training before going to space because living without gravity changes the human body. NASA scientists discovered that without Earth's gravity, bones lose density during long missions, making them much weaker.

Why is space tougher than it looks?

In space, there is almost no gravity.

This means that your body does less work to stand up. This is how astronauts can float! Living in space can also make your balance feel very weird, just like when you spin in circles really fast and suddenly feel dizzy.

That's why before going into space, astronauts

have to properly prepare

their bodies years before a mission. Neil Armstrong, the first person to walk on the moon, trained for a long time to make sure he was ready. One fun way to train like an astronaut is through gymnastics. Explorious spoke to gymnastics coach Alisa

Kotsapas who explained that many skills astronauts need are similar to those developed in gymnastics training.

What do gymnasts and astronauts have in common?

"When you practice gymnastics you are learning how to move your body in different positions and stay steady. Astronauts need to do all of these when there is little gravity."

Why gymnastics is your secret superpower!

"If you are training your balance it can help stop you from falling over. Holding different positions can help your body stay stable. Jumping can also help your legs feel strong and give you the energy you need to jump on the moon. All of these skills together will work as your secret superpower and help you feel ready to take on new challenges. Gymnastics is a great way to get active as you don't need a lot of equipment or a big space. You can practice simple movements almost anywhere."

How can we stay safe when trying these skills?

"Safety is super important when trying anything in gymnastics. Make sure to always warm up to prevent any injuries and check you always have enough space around you so you won't bump into anything. Trying something new can be very scary at first but you can start with very simple movements and take your time. It's okay if it feels tricky at first. Gymnasts and astronauts train very carefully and over lots of time so keep practicing."

What muscles keep astronauts strong and steady?

"Gymnasts do a lot of training for their core to keep balanced and controlled. Your core is the abdominal muscles around your tummy, lower back and hips. Core muscles protect the spine and help you stand upright and keep you stable when you move or jump. Astronauts use these same muscles in space to stay strong when moving and floating around."

Can I be a future astronaut?

Gymnastics is a fun way to get stronger for anyone and maybe even prepare for an adventure in space one day. If you want to try training like an astronaut, check out the interactive video to see if you have what it takes to go to space!

By: Alisha Miah



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