

K E R R I E H E S S

joy in the
little
things



Finding Happiness in Style,
Home, and the Everyday



The simple pleasure of... connections

It's okay to unashamedly enjoy your own company just as much as time with others. As someone at the quieter end of the introvert-extrovert scale, I generally prefer time to myself rather than time in large groups. I also know that more intimate catch-ups with my closest friends never fail to light up my soul.

Whether your ideal is going out every second night or every second week, socializing is a crucial component of contentment. I know when I am too busy with work and unable to see or speak with my friends for a few weeks, I feel a little adrift. On the other hand, too much socializing in one week (even if it's virtual rendezvous!) can leave me drained and overwhelmed.

Find your own perfect balance of connecting to others, and you'll feel a wonderful connectivity to something bigger. A picnic with girlfriends will give you a sense of togetherness and a chance to appreciate nature at the same time. A joyful duo! Light exercise with a friend will provide mood-boosting endorphins and allows you to share fresh new perspectives on the various challenges in your lives. And surely listening to someone else's problems also reminds us that we're not alone in our struggles.

If you're in a relationship and can't remember the last time you made a little effort in the romance department, perhaps it's time to get back to dating! Serious dating—the dress-up-and-talk-about-things-other-than-kids-or-renovation kind. Take turns booking somewhere new, or head to a scenic spot for a twilight picnic; even if you also need to book a babysitter or a trusted friend whom you won't forget to spoil later for the favor (those spontaneous pre-children days all too quickly become a distant memory!). Wear something that makes you feel like your sparkliest self, and give yourself and your love a chance to discuss your *dreams* rather than any humdrum reality. Even if your date is on your own candlelit balcony, it's a chance to remind yourselves why you fell in love, before everything else came along.



The simple pleasure of... movement

There is no greater stress reliever than moving more—literally shaking off anxieties or wringing out your worries. And there’s a reason for the expression “meditation in motion”: physical movement is wonderful for realigning the senses, making you feel calm and present. And before you think I’m going to recommend a three-hour high-intensity sweat session, the genius thing about exercise is that it can be so simple that it barely feels like exercise at all. Although if a three-hour high-intensity sweat session is your idea of fun, I salute you!

We all differ in the kind of movement that makes us feel happiest in our own skin. The key is to figure out your own exercise lane, and stick to it by scheduling movement into your calendar regularly and often. Think of it as an appointment with your own well-being!

If you’ve neglected fitness for a while, get back into it with baby steps; start small with a ten-minute stroll or stretch per day. This way you’re much more likely to follow through. When you’re ready, you can increase the number of sessions, their length, or their intensity—or all of the above! Just remember that the point is regularity. According to the experts, it only takes ten repetitions to form a habit.

Moving a little but often also tends to be better than a single hard-core session per week. This, I have to admit, pleases me, as I am one of those people who are generally averse to sweatiness. So I schedule in easy daily movement rituals (ten minutes of stretching in the morning; a fifteen-minute stroll in the early evening) as well as more involved weekly sessions (a couple of yoga classes). I’ve found that this is what gives my body and mind a sense of calm, balance, and—yes—joy.

It took me a few months to come up with my ultimate fitness routine. I had to give myself permission to prioritize myself each day. And I also had to change my mindset from “exercise is hard” to “exercise is time for me.” Try this shift of thinking and the feeling of enjoying exercise may come more naturally. Exercise for pleasure, not pain, and you will want to do it again and again!



daily rituals that delight

As an artist I have been lucky to travel to some amazing and glamorous destinations for work. It's a hard job but somebody... Just kidding! I'm incredibly grateful for these experiences. But the most wonderful thing to have come out of all this travel is the realization that I am actually happiest at home, as a creature of habit, and that some of the simplest daily rituals infuse me with a deep sense of joy.

Even those intrepid types who travel farther and wider than I do will probably relate. We humans are trained to love ritual early on; as babies, we're cosseted with routine, because it's what makes us feel safe and secure. It's little surprise that, no matter where life ends up taking us, so many of us feel most grounded when we can schedule those rites and rituals that make us feel, well, like us.

We all have different habits of happiness. Sipping a certain tea from a certain cup every morning... singing in the shower... doing a face mask on a Wednesday night and a hair mask on a Thursday night... reading thirty pages of a bodice-ripping historical novel every evening... painting your toenails every Sunday morning... The key is to incorporate moments devoted to your favorite little pleasures into your everyday life. Don't think you have to wait until you're on vacation to treat or care for yourself—you deserve joy every single day!

In need of more inspiration? Turn the page for a few small joyful rituals to try...

In the Morning:

- Wake up twenty minutes earlier than your usual time and stretch to your favorite music.
- Before you grab your phone to check e-mails, stop and think of five things you are grateful for. As I've noted above, gratitude is an essential element of a happier life. In this sense you are choosing yourself rather than work as your first priority of the day.
- Stop for fifteen to thirty minutes to enjoy a coffee, tea, or your preferred drink outdoors, to flip through a newspaper, or to go for a stroll. Taking a break from screens will clear your head, soothe your eyes, and reconnect you to the present.



In the Evening:

- Go for a walk before dinner, to the park, or to any place you find relaxing.
- Make cooking enjoyable. Turn on music you love, pour yourself a glass of wine, and concoct your favorite dish. (I always find cooking therapeutic when I make the effort to turn it into a pleasure rather than a chore, and when the focus required allows me to switch off from everything else.)
 - Revel in a candlelit bubble bath, then slip into some silky pajamas and get lost in a good book, be it of the printed or audio kind.
- Before you drift off to sleep, make a mental list of three specific things that made you smile. A second daily dose of gratitude will help offset the moments that didn't work out as planned.





169A

Sweet Blush
SB1-160 / 2-6

Ba
B150-A

Muted Musk
B150-C



Little things that make your heart sing

Yes, many of the best things in life are free... but sometimes it's okay to *buy* beautiful things, too! I have a hunch that you might also have a hankering for pretty things... we humans can't help being hardwired to gravitate toward beauty. Studies show that even babies are instinctively drawn to what they find aesthetically pleasing. And we live in a visual world, one of so much gorgeous art and artisanal creativity... so why fight an urge to appreciate beautiful things?

And you don't have to justify what you like, either. Beauty is always in the eye of the beholder, of course! I've compiled my love list below, but you can enhance your life with any items that, quite simply, make you go *ahhh*...

Pretty teacups

I swear that a cup of tea, even if it's just a regular English Breakfast brew, tastes better when it's sipped from a dainty teacup! There are so many gorgeous ones around at all price points—you can always find old-world floral porcelain cups at an antiques store—and they're a joy to collect. Always have a favorite cup (mine is currently pink with polka dots) on hand, to make your afternoon tea break that much more special.



Fresh flowers

Waking up to a room scented with fresh flowers (of any variety) never fails to make my heart flutter. I also love having a vase of blooms on my desk, where they inspire me while I'm working. I don't get around to filling my home with flowers every week, but I try to buy a bouquet as often as possible, because it's such a lovely way of infusing the home with color and scent.

Silk pajamas

There are out-on-the-town types and then there are homebodies. I definitely fall into the latter category! Either way, a beautiful set of fine cotton or silk pajamas (in other words, the opposite of an old T-shirt and sweatpants!) will make lounging around seem like a special treat. Add a silk robe and fluffy slippers to take it to an even more luxurious level.



Fine cotton sheets

We spend about one-third of our lives in bed, which is definitely a justification for splurging on sumptuous bedding! Whether they're Egyptian cotton or simply the best quality you can afford, beautiful sheets are without a doubt one of life's pleasures. I only own two sets of sheets, both at 1,000 thread count and 100 percent cotton. They were the very best I could buy, and choosing quality over quantity has not only lightened up the linen cupboard, but also ensured that the simple act of going to bed now always feels like a luxury.



Picnics

A picnic in summer is surely one definition of happiness: Feasting on delicious antipasti treats, smothering a crusty-yet-soft baguette with gooey cheese, sipping crisp rosé . . . And all this served up on a red-and-white checkered blanket in a pretty alfresco setting . . . Give me that over a fancy five-star restaurant any day!



French macarons

French macarons are the little pastel jewels of the pastry world. I used to live only five minutes from Ladurée on the Champs-Élysées, and quickly fell in love with the rose and salted caramel macarons. Fortunately macarons are now widely available beyond the borders of Paris, in a head-spinning array of colors and flavors. A perfect addition to your afternoon tea ritual, they're almost too pretty to eat . . . but only almost!





the pleasure of vacations and staycations

Many material things are lovely and covetable (this book is full of them, after all!), but for me there is so much more pleasure to be had in a wonderful experience, and the time to simply switch off and let our minds wander—a time to suspend reality. We don't have to worry about deadlines and bills. We're totally in the moment with ourselves, our family, our friends. And so we make the most of, and savor, every minute. I love the way that, later on, remembering how relaxed and cheerful you felt instantly puts a smile on your face. You can never have buyer's remorse over something that has the power to do this magic trick. Going on vacation or indeed a staycation is like buying beautiful memories that will last a lifetime.

That holiday feeling is all about living in the present moment (so much so that we often forget what day it is!). And with the world's current limitations, the trick—even if you're having a vacation at home—is simply to take yourself out of your usual routine. To tap into that holiday headspace where you can forget about laundry, e-mails, and deadlines. You'll feel that tension in your jaw relax and your shoulders drop naturally—that's the beauty of vacation.



Finding joy and relaxation in your own backyard

As we have all discovered in recent times, it's not always possible to travel far and wide, whether for reasons of time or budget or world events, but there are so many different definitions of a vacation than weeks of exotica-filled adventures. There is, of course, the staycation—the perfect getaway when you can't, well, get away. That might mean in your own backyard literally (more on this follows!) or within a few miles of it. Perhaps it's a weekend away in a bed-and-breakfast on the other side of town, or maybe it's a few days of road-tripping around the countryside or along the coastal road in your own town. The “where” doesn't matter so much as the “why”; the point is to experience life from a different perspective. To escape from any worries of reality, and simply have fun for a while, because it's good for the soul.

Plan your staycation as you would a regular getaway. Once you've locked in your hotel or rental, research the local theater's offerings, and book whatever piques your interest. If theater or musical events aren't in the cards, read up on local cultural events and other activities you can enjoy outdoors. Make sure all of your current work or school projects and to-dos will be sorted well before your departure date, and then set an out-of-office message just as you're about to go (always a joyous task!). Pack what's appropriate for your destination, as well as a fancy outfit. Because what's a holiday without a couple of great nights out?

You could dine at the most raved-about restaurants when that's an option, or indulge in your takeout at a scenic spot, from your favorite restaurant or from somewhere you've never tried but have been wanting to. Or simply aim to try food you don't normally eat. Do you have a go-to vacation cocktail—perhaps a refreshing gin and tonic, or a salt-rimmed margarita? Order it (to go, if need be) to get you in the mood, and toast the fact that you're treating yourself to a few reality-free days.

Enjoy haute cuisine if it's your thing, but don't forget that vacations are also about discovery, about being “out of the office.” Even if you're in your

own city, explore another side of it by visiting a quirky museum or local attraction you've never managed to get to over the years.

And if your staycation is quite literally in your backyard you can make it transporting. If the weather is balmy, set up a tent and some hammocks outside. You can keep it rustic and simple, but if glamping is more your scene, make the decorating part of the fun, filling a fabulous large tepee with gorgeous cushions and throws, and creating extra atmosphere with glittering twinkle lights and glowing candles. Have a picnic basket and cooler brimming with treats, or order in meals to eat as you loll about, listening to a soundtrack of chirping insects and chill music, and remembering that a vacation is as much a state of mind as a place.

The simple act of breaking out of your normal routine will completely change how your mind and body feel. Make a point to sleep in, and not check e-mails (get that out-of-office reply set up!). Have *pain au chocolat* and coffee for breakfast as you might on holiday. Do the things you may not have time to do at home during a typical week, such as taking an afternoon nap or reading on your sunlit balcony. Slowing down and disconnecting makes it easier to notice and take pleasure in what's around you (or to lose yourself in a great book).



ways to treat yourself during time off

Here are some ideas to perk up your days away from work...including when you're staying at home or close by. (You can also enjoy them over a weekend or whenever you can make a little extra time!)

- Sign up for a short course. On anything! Calligraphy or cartography or carpentry! Learning and creating are two of life's greatest happinesses.
- Stash a picnic basket in the trunk of your car, stocked with plates, cups, napkins, cutlery, a bottle opener, and a cute blanket (keep it there even after your days off!). You'll always be ready for a spontaneous alfresco feast—just add bread, cheese, and wine!
- Little is more joy-boosting than spending time with an animal—cuddling a puppy, listening to the delicious sound of a cat's purr as you stroke its fur... If you don't have a furry friend, borrow someone else's for a day or night. Warm and fuzzies, guaranteed!
- Sure, we're happiest when we're healthiest, but sometimes we crave good, old-fashioned comfort food, the kind that made life worth living when we were kids. So don't feel guilty about indulging in your food past during time off...a steaming fondue, a bowl of mac and cheese, a whipped-cream-piled-high banana split...it's all food for the soul!
- Spend time going through your digital photos and printing out your favorites. You'll have lots of happy memories as you look. Store the prints—along with old family photos—in a lovely box on your coffee table. Each “lucky dip” into this treasure chest is guaranteed to bring back gorgeous memories or fascinating stories.

- Fill your living space with greenery, dotting plants in colorful pots throughout your house or apartment. It will connect you to nature as well as enhance air quality and the general sense of artistry in your home. If you can do this before your days off begin, it'll make that time all the nicer.
- If the season is right, nurture a lavender garden, even if it's just in a planter box. It's a lovely little slice of southern France! Plus, the scent will help to both de-stress your senses and boost those feel-good endorphins.
- Buy yourself a beautiful vintage crystal jug and fill it with a scoop of ice and with fresh filtered water every morning, infused with whichever fruit tickles your fancy that day: strawberries, blueberries, lemons, limes... It will look gorgeous on your table, for one! And you'll feel refreshed and uplifted as you sip your way through it during the day.
- Think of the book you loved most when young. Was it *Pippi Longstocking*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Anne of Green Gables*, or *Where the Wild Things Are*? Buy it for your grown-up self and spend an afternoon reconnecting with younger you, and seeing the world as you did when you were wide-eyed with wonder.