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4711 Six Forks Road | Raleigh, NC 27609
M 919-260-1035
dan_cunningham@ucbi.com

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From License to Loneliness: The Dilemma of Retired Physicians

RICHARD PLOTZKER, MD

My email delivered a terse reminder. The board of medicine notified me that they had not yet received my license renewal application, just one month until the expiration of my current license. For a mere $100, I could sit through the required online child abuse reporting course and answer the questions as they arise. My CME is more than ample, as my other state license requires far more and is distributed over specified categories. And then authorize a credit card payment for an additional $425, and I will remain within the fraternity of my home state's laudable physicians.

No go this time. No go two months ago either, when my state of practice license also expired. $360 for that one + $425 for this one + $100 for the mandatory course totals $885. Being retired these past four years, the eligibility for liability coverage for any locum interests I might have once had has long since expired. My DEA registration, a certificate costing mucho dinero has also long since lapsed without renewal, as had my time-limited board certification. My rational self, which generally prevailed with a few lapses in my years of active patient care, tells me that a healthy elder like myself can have a few pretty good experiences to add to my cumulative lifetime memories for $885. The expired certificates can either stay tacked to a bulletin board for lack of any more personally fulfilling replacement, or go into a folder where my hoarding inclinations has filed auto registrations from four cars ago, or recycle now. My heirs, who ultimately will bear the onus of purging their late Dad's stuff, probably already have 1-800-GOTJUNK on their smartphone directory.

Despite a decision to let the two licenses expire without renewal, I still maintained more than enough CME. My subscription to the New England Journal of Medicine provides me a credit or two each week for challenging myself with a research article or two that I would have pursued just out of interest or maybe to sustain my self-identity as a doctor who remains worthy despite no more patient responsibilities. Just read the article, answer the questions, second chances allowed, and log my credit. One state requires patient safety education. This need only accumulated twelve hours over two years, readily available online from premier institutions that open their grand rounds to anyone on a variety of topics that I'd still open even if it came passively to me in a non-medical news feed. That leaves only two hours of opiate training and two hours of child abuse reporting. I can be a sport if it's free. I did not want to spend the money, but I did not want to declare myself lazy for not doing the work. Never a lapse in trustworthiness to do what was expected in my working years, and can fulfill the same commitments to myself beyond my working years.

Come the end of the month, for the first time in more than forty years, I will no longer be a licensed physician. Initially, recruiters added me to their contact list for locum opportunities. I responded to only two within driving distance, but never in an assertive way. My decision to discontinue patient care at the chosen time was purposeful, the date set as a birthday present to myself five years previously. I did wish to remain among other physicians, at least for a while. I would drive to our monthly regional specialty society meetings, taking an appropriate interest in the subject and chatting amiably with the sponsoring pharmaceutical representatives and with whoever occupied my dinner table. COVID brought the meetings to Zoom, and I attended electronically for a while, but it wasn't like being around other physicians.

My medical center established a monthly meeting for late-career physicians, meeting live pre-COVID and Zoom afterward. They even asked me to make two presentations, for which I received small honoraria. But the group being highly dependent on a physician champion, it dwindled on his departure. And I maintain my national specialty society membership. Dues are discounted, annual meeting tuition discounted to reasonable, and travel expenses prohibitive unless it returns to my town. None of these activities offer suitable surrogates for being immersed in the pageant of daily practice, the patients that you see, the colleagues you admire, the residents who challenge you, and even the insurance company service deniers at the other end of the telephone line that you have to try to outsmart.

Numerous studies, from a recent New England Journal perspective on "Social Isolation and Loneliness as Medical Issues" to a massive prospective study of the Harvard College class of 1938, which tracked them for their lifetimes, identify loneliness as a negative determinant of longevity. The ability to stay engaged certainly challenges many a retired physician, me among them. A license to treat patients in the absence of patients does not make a good surrogate, nor do endless talking heads on Zoom, whether for worship, committee meetings, or educational forums. As telemedicine becomes a norm in many practices, even physicians still engaged professionally might have less personal contact with people.
In retirement, finding the hands to shake, fast quips to exchange, clerks to compliment, or attending live meetings takes some effort. Those two licenses nominally keep me in the physician fraternity but from afar. But $885 can be repurposed, allocating it to immersing myself with more people in more public spaces. It seems a much better destination for a senior physician than supporting activities of the state boards. And the CME engagement remains on my personal self-worth agenda too.

Richard Plotzker is an endocrinologist who blogs at Consult Maven.

5 Ways You're Ruining Your Expensive Phone, Laptop, Tablet and TV

BY KIM KOMANDO, KOMANDO.COM

Our devices are significant investments. You need to treat your tech well to get your money's worth. Regular maintenance is one way to stay ahead of the game. **Tap or click for six checkups to avoid a hefty repair bill**.

Based on calls to my show, emails, and questions posted on my website's **tech support forum**, here are five common mistakes that could cost you.

1. You're charging too much

Do you keep your phone plugged in all the time? Apple says that when your iPhone "remain(s) at full charge for prolonged periods of time, battery health can be affected."

Android phone manufacturers, including Samsung, say the same. "Do not leave your phone connected to the charger for long periods of time or overnight." Huawei says, "Keeping your battery level as close to the middle (30% to 70%) as possible can effectively prolong the battery life."

The official word is to keep your phone charged — but not fully charged. Get in the habit of unplugging your tech after it is fully charged.

More tech smarts: **Tap or click for tricks to keep your phone battery in tip-top shape**.

2. You wait too long to charge your laptop

Laptop batteries have a finite number of charge-discharge cycles. If you frequently let your battery entirely run out of juice, it affects the charge-discharge cycle and diminishes its intended lifespan.

Your laptop battery can also lose efficiency in another way. Let's say you regularly charge your laptop from 30% to 50%, or about 20% each time. Well, do that five times and you'll have completed one battery cycle because you've charged your laptop 100% in total.

A good rule of thumb is to keep your battery charged to at least 40% most of the time. **Tap or click here to check your laptop's battery health**.

3. You go with the cheapest option

If you lose your charger or a USB cable gets frayed, resist the temptation to buy the cheapest replacement. The few dollars you save on a low-cost substitute may negatively affect your device's performance.

One-size-fits-all chargers and cable makers don't want you to know that often their products do not have the proper voltage needed to work with your specific device. Why does that matter? Your battery may not get the juice it needs to charge fully. Worse, it may erode the battery's life.

Cheap chargers can be dangerous to you, too. Many generic phone chargers are less likely to meet established safety and quality testing guidelines than their name-brand counterparts, leading to severe shocks and burns.

Spend a little more on getting a replacement charger and cable from the devices' manufacturer or certified third-party makers. **Tap or click for a solid third-party recommendation for iPhone and Android**.

4. You're careless

Today's phones are relatively rugged. They can generally resist water, dust, and a bit of water. But leaving your device in a hot car or the sun can cause severe damage. Not only can it cause the battery to leak or overheat, but it can also cause data to be lost or corrupted.

Extreme cold temperatures also wreak havoc on your phone. Lithium-ion batteries can stop discharging electricity in freezing temperatures, leading to shortened battery life, display problems, and even cracking the display glass.

5. You're a slob

Is your tech sparkling clean or covered in crumbs and smudges? It's not just about cleanliness, either. Dust and dirt can damage computers, TVs, and other expensive electronics.

Here are some essential tools I keep on hand to maintain my devices:

- **Compressed air**: This is especially useful when cleaning tight quarters and inside difficult-to-reach crevices. **If you don't like the waste of regular compressed air, try an electric air duster**.
- **Isopropyl alcohol:** Avoid household cleaning products on your electronic devices. A good rule of thumb is if you would use it to clean your kitchen, it's not appropriate for your computer or electronics.
- **Cleaning wipes:** Try a cleaning wipe if you don't want to mess with alcohol or water. **I buy these all the time**.
- **Distilled or purified bottled water:** Tap water could leave mineral spots and stains.
- **Soft cloths:** Lint-free is your friend; don't use paper towels or tissues that scratch and leave particles behind. If you have 100% cotton cloth, that works, too.
- **Toothbrush:** A soft toothbrush can be used on hard-to-reach areas and spots that need light scrubbing.

A Doctor’s Call

A doctor entered the hospital in hurry after being called in for an urgent surgery. He answered the call asap, changed his clothes and went directly to the surgery block.

He found the boy’s father pacing in the hall waiting for the doctor. On seeing him, the dad yelled: “Why did you take all this time to come? Don’t you know that my son’s life is in danger? Don’t you have any sense of responsibility?”

The doctor smiled and said: “I am sorry, I wasn’t in the hospital and I came as fast as I could after receiving the call…… And now, I wish you’d calm down so that I can do my work”

“Calm down?! What if your son was in this room right now, would you calm down? If your own son dies now what will you do??” said the father angrily.

The doctor smiled again and replied: “I will say what Job said in the Holy Book “From dust we came and to dust we return, blessed be the name of God”. Doctors cannot prolong lives. Go and intercede for your son, we will do our best by God’s grace”

“Giving advice when we’re not concerned is so easy” Murmured the father.

The surgery took some hours after which the doctor went out happy, “Thank goodness!, your son is saved!” and without waiting for the father’s reply he carried on his way running. “If you have any questions, ask the nurse!!” “Why is he so arrogant? He couldn’t wait some minutes so that I can ask about my son’s state” commented the father when seeing the nurse minutes after the doctor left.

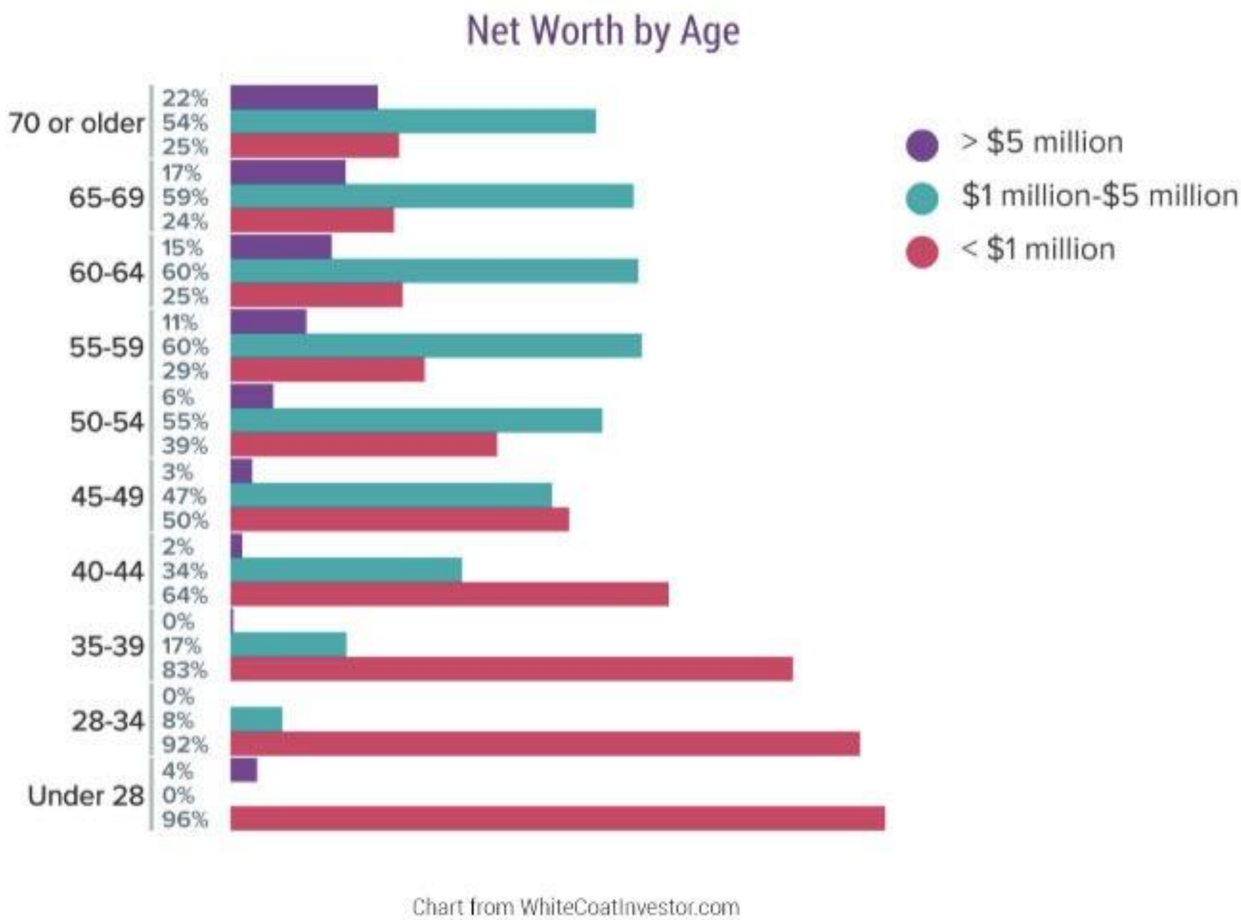
The nurse answered, tears coming down her face: ''His son died yesterday in a road accident, he was at the burial when we called him for your son’s surgery. And now that he saved your son’s life, he left running to finish his son’s burial.

Net Worth by Age for Physicians

by bfadvisors.com

When it comes to wealth-generating occupations, physicians usually make the top of the list. In reality, most early-career physicians are actually HENRYs (High Earners, Not Rich Yet). “High earners not rich yet” individuals have a better opportunity to get on track for wealth in the future because of their six-figure income. However, because they have little to no savings or investable assets, they are essentially the “working rich,” meaning they won’t be wealthy if they stop working.

This is partly because medical careers start later than other professions, after having accumulated large amounts of student loan debt from their education. In fact, according to the latest 2022 Medscape report which surveyed 13,000 doctors, the average physician graduated with $203,000 in debt. Only half of physicians reported a net worth of over $1 million, and not until the age of 55.
Today let’s review net worth by age for doctors through the decades.



Meeting Your Goals

There are several reasons why some physicians of different age groups retire as millionaires, while others are still working into their sixties and seventies. While student debt is a significant factor, many physicians lack the savings and financial knowledge to build wealth through smart investments despite their high earnings.

Most doctors spend at least part, if not all, of their twenties and early thirties in training. The average age of a medical student is 24 when they begin a four-year medical program. This is followed by three years of residency, meaning a doctor will be 31 before they can practice independently.
While doctors experience a significant salary increase in their thirties, they have large debts to pay off. Still, they can expect to have an average net worth of $500,000 if they have managed their finances carefully and have begun investing.

By the time physicians reach their forties, it is very possible to achieve millionaire status, with some physicians even becoming multimillionaires. This trend continues with doctors in their fifties, with 60% of physicians' worth at least $1 million.

By the time doctors reach their sixties, and beyond, they may be looking towards retirement. While 60% of physicians can retire with a net worth between $1 and $5 million, 25% of doctors still have a substantially lower net worth.

When Will You Pass the $1 Million Mark?

The **average age to become a millionaire** is 37. If you're a physician, you may think that benchmark is unattainable, but there's no reason why you can't have a net worth of $1 million or more in your 40s if you invest wisely.

It's never too late to begin saving and investing for your future.

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Tackling the Health Care Crisis with Artificial Intelligence: Combating Physician and Nursing Shortages in the United States

HARVEY CASTRO, MD, MBA

The United States is grappling with a significant health care crisis as physician and nursing shortages impact the nation's ability to provide adequate care to an aging population. A combination of factors contributes to these shortages, with consequences that can be far-reaching. This article will explore the factors contributing to these shortages, their potential impacts, the ongoing efforts to address them, and how artificial intelligence (AI) can be pivotal in mitigating these issues.

Physician and nursing shortage: contributing factors

According to a report from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the United States will face a shortage of 54,100 and 139,000 physicians by 2033.

Several factors are contributing to the growing shortages of physicians and nurses in the United States:

An aging population: The demand for health care services is increasing due to a rapidly aging population, putting immense pressure on the existing health care workforce.

An aging health care workforce: Many physicians and nurses are nearing retirement age, reducing the number of available health care providers.

Insufficient educational capacity: Medical schools, nursing schools, and residency programs struggle to meet the growing demand for new health care professionals.

Burnout and stress: High levels of stress, long work hours, and increasing administrative burdens contribute to burnout among physicians and nurses, leading some to leave the profession.

Geographic distribution disparities: Rural and underserved areas often lack health care professionals, as many prefer to practice in urban or suburban settings.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) projects that the U.S. will need to produce more than one million new registered nurses by 2022 to meet the country's health care needs.

Efforts to address the shortages
Various initiatives are being implemented to address the physician and nursing shortages:

Expanding educational capacity: Increasing the capacity of medical and nursing schools and providing more funding for residency programs can help accommodate the growing need for health care professionals.

Incentivizing work in underserved areas: Financial incentives and loan forgiveness programs can encourage health care professionals to work in rural and underserved regions.

Addressing burnout and workplace stress: Implementing policies that reduce administrative burdens, promote work-life balance, and provide mental health support can help decrease burnout and turnover rates.

Encouraging diversity in health care: Promoting diversity in health care education and the workforce can help attract a broader range of candidates to the profession, addressing shortages and health disparities.

The role of artificial intelligence in combating the shortages
In addition to these initiatives, AI has the potential to play a significant role in addressing the physician and nursing shortages:

Enhanced diagnostic and treatment capabilities: AI-driven algorithms can support health care professionals in diagnosing illnesses and determining appropriate treatments, reducing the workload and stress while improving patient outcomes.

Remote patient monitoring and telehealth: AI-powered systems can help monitor patients remotely, allowing health care professionals to provide care to patients in rural and underserved areas without needing to be physically present. Telehealth platforms, supported by AI, can also facilitate virtual consultations and follow-ups.

Streamlining administrative tasks: AI can help automate time-consuming administrative tasks, such as electronic health record management, appointment scheduling, and billing, allowing health care professionals to focus on patient care and reducing the risk of burnout.

Predictive analytics for workforce planning: AI-powered predictive analytics can assist health care organizations in identifying workforce gaps and anticipating future staffing needs, enabling more effective recruitment and retention strategies.

AI-driven medical education and training: AI can create personalized and adaptive learning experiences for medical and nursing students, improving the efficiency of health care education and better preparing students for their future careers.

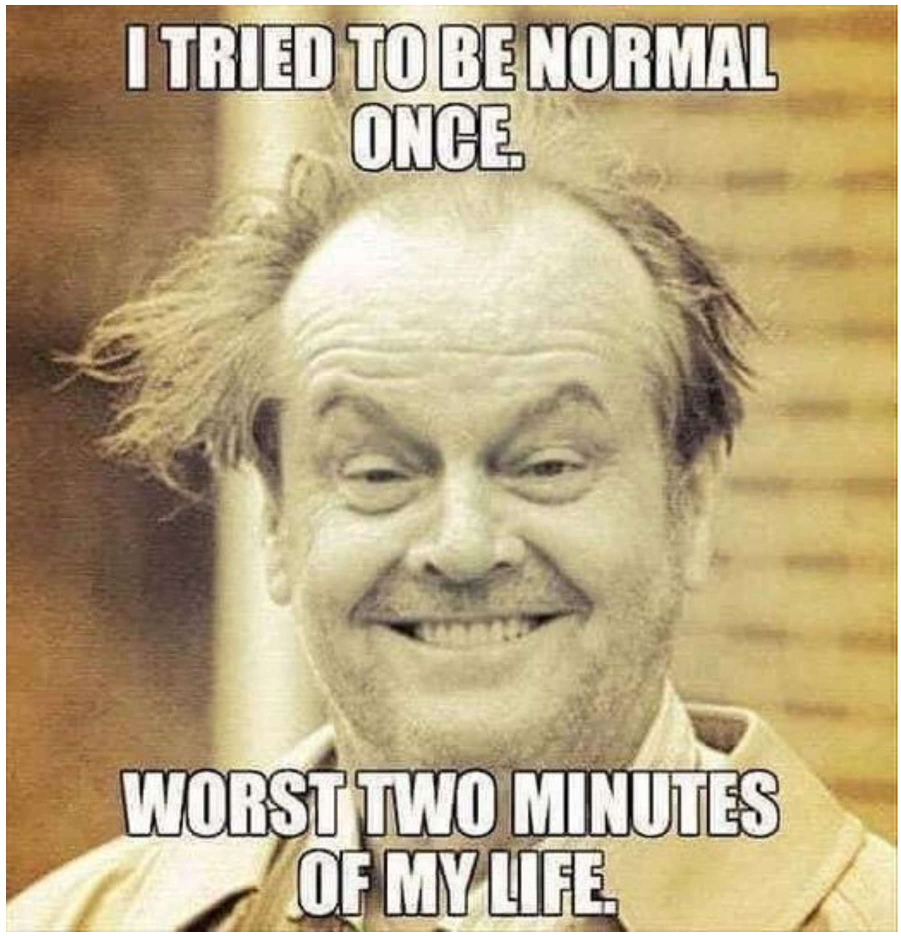
Legislation and cultural changes for AI-medical training for a new subclass of health care workers: Legislation to fund and regulate a health care worker that Physicians, Physician Assistants, and Nurse Practitioners can supervise. These new health care workers, whom I will call Healthcare Expert Leveraging Patient-centered Efficient Resource (HELPER), can enter the workforce to improve patient care. The goal is to allow HELPERs to have AI access to a health care database (BioGPT) and provide patient care at the level of medical assistants.

The difference is instead of the certificate, diploma program, or associate degree takes anywhere from 9 months to 24 months. The training will take less time, allowing HELPERs to enter the market to assist in this health care crisis sooner. This will allow for more Health care workers in the event of the next pandemic.

AI-assisted decision-making: AI tools can help health care providers make more informed decisions by analyzing large volumes of data, reducing the cognitive load on professionals, and potentially improving patient outcomes.

Conclusion

The physician and nursing shortages in the United States pose a significant threat to the nation's health care system. To effectively address these challenges, it is crucial for stakeholders, including the government, health care institutions, and educational organizations, to collaborate and employ a multi-faceted approach. Artificial intelligence has the potential to play a pivotal role in alleviating the burden on health care professionals and improving the overall efficiency of the health care system.



By integrating AI technologies into diagnostics, treatment, telehealth, administration, workforce planning, and medical education, the health care industry can work towards a more sustainable and efficient system that better serves the needs of an aging population. Embracing AI-driven solutions can help mitigate physician and nursing shortages while ensuring that quality care remains accessible.

Harvey Castro is a physician, health care consultant, and serial entrepreneur with extensive experience in the health care industry. He can be reached on his website, harveycastromd.info, Twitter @HarveycastroMD, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. He is the author of The AI-Driven Entrepreneur: Unlocking Entrepreneurial Success with Artificial Intelligence Strategies and Insights, ChatGPT and Healthcare: The Key To The New Future of Medicine, ChatGPT and Healthcare: Unlocking The Potential Of Patient Empowerment, Revolutionize Your Health and Fitness with ChatGPT's Modern Weight Loss Hacks, and Success Reinvention.

How to Build the Perfect Cheese Board

themofernproper.com

If you’ve always wanted to know how to build the perfect cheese board, then today is your lucky day! Step by step, we’ll show you just how easy it can be to wow your guests.

Cheese Boards: Perfect for Every Occasion.

The best thing about making a cheese board is how perfect they are for every occasion. Nope, scratch that. The best thing about a cheese board is that it is a PLATE FULL OF CHEESE.

The second best thing about them is how versatile they are. Yep, that’s better. We bring cheese platters to events such as:

* Picnics.

* Holiday parties!

* Birthday parties! Anyone else rather cake? Just us? OK, moving on.

* Book club!

* Girls night—gotta have something to soak up the rosé.

* Play dates. Goldfish are fine for the under-5 set, but grown-ups deserve a grown-up snack, right?

Basically, the long and the short of it is that a cheese plate is pretty much always a welcome addition to your get together. You can keep it simple or try your hand at making it fancy—we’ll teach you how!

How To Make A Cheese Board, Step 1: Buying the Cheese!

You think you know how to shop for cheese, but you have no idea. Just kidding—you've surely bought cheese before. But buying cheese for making a cheese board is sort of a special thing. For an impressive cheese board selection we recommend heading to a store with a good cheese counter, or maybe even to your local small, specialty cheese shop.

If you don't already know, a cheesemonger is someone who works behind the cheese counter, or in a specialty cheese shop and their job is to care for the cheeses themselves. Artisanal cheeses need special handling and cheesemongers do the work of slicing and packing them, as well as managing their storage and even sometimes aging. A cheesemonger can be very, very helpful in helping you pick good cheeses for your cheese board. Ask about what's in season—yes, cheeses have seasons—and trust their advice. Ask for tastes—a good cheesemonger will want you to taste the cheese to be sure that you're picking cheeses that are in line with your own tastes. And most of all, have fun with it! Cheese shopping is quite possibly one of our favorite "errands" ever.

BUT, even though speaking with someone who knows a bit about cheese can be fun and helpful, it's not 100% necessary. We'll teach you a few tricks that will have you in and out of any regular grocery store in a jiffy with the makings of an excellent cheese board.

Will Your Cheese Board Be Fancy or Simple?

How about both? We think of the makings of our cheese board in categories. You'll want to have:

Cheese! Three cheeses is usually enough, and the most we've ever done is five cheeses (that's a BIG cheese board).

Charcuterie. Cured meats like prosciutto or salami—whatever kind you love.

Something briny! We love cornichon pickles and castelvetrano olives, especially.

Crackers and / or good bread, like a baguette.

Dried or fresh fruit.

Nuts, of course.

Ideally, we like to finish it off with a few spreads—like jam or a fancy mustard—or even just a little honey.

Keep Your Cheese Board Simple:

Buy some cheese and meat. Pair it with crackers, bread, nuts and some mustard, jam or honey. Finally, add a fruit that you already have on hand.

Or, Make It Fancy:

Include all the basics, plus take the time to pick out a few special additions. We like to buy honeycomb and really good olives when making our boards a little bit more upscale.

A Good Cheese Board Starts With Good Cheese.

OK, so back to buying cheese! You're going to want to pick a few varieties for your board. We suggest three (and up to five) cheeses for a large cheese board for a party. When selecting cheeses, you can go a few directions. You could pick a theme—like "goat's milk" or "Alpine-style"— for the sake of comparison. Or, go for high-contrast and select a few wildly different cheeses for the sake of difference. Consider your audience, too. Are you serving the board to a group of adventurous eaters? Maybe consider more pungent, washed-rind cheeses, or some "stinky" blues. Or maybe you'll be serving the cheese board to a crowd you're less sure about? Go for milder, crowd-pleasing cheeses like good-quality goat cheese (in our experience, everyone always seems to love Humboldt Fog), a nice hunk of Gruyère, and a mild, milky brie.

A few of our favorite cheeses:

Soft: brie, camembert, chèvre—anything you can spread works great for this category.

Semi-soft: Fontina, muenster or Gouda.

Semi-firm: Manchego, Gruyère or Comté.

Firm: An aged cheddar or white cheddar is delicious, even a really high-quality Parmigiano-Reggiano can be lovely. Pro tip—pair that Parm with some fancy honey!

Make It Meaty.

For the meat portion of the cheese board—the charcuterie—go with just a couple of varieties (you don't want to compete with the cheese). Typically, we'll start with salami (either sliced thin from the deli, or slightly thicker from a log), then add prosciutto or pancetta. Pro tip: At the deli counter, always ask for a specific number of slices vs ordering by the pound, that way you know you're getting enough.

Crackers and Breads, Oh My!

In the words of Oprah, "WE LOVE BREAD." And so, naturally, we seem to always have a good baguette lying around. We usually purchase them for dinner and there are often little bits of leftovers. If we're making the effort to put a cheese board together, you know that crusty bread is going to make an appearance. Slice it up and serve it side by side with whatever crackers you have on hand. Generally, we assemble a board with a buttery cracker, a very thin mild cracker, and a seedy, grainy cracker.

Extra, Extra Read All About it.

All of the little extras may seem like after-thoughts, but they can go a long way towards making the cheese board feel luxurious and indulgent. You want your cheese board to look abundant! That's kind of their whole aesthetic. So, here's how to finish it off:

Olives & pickles:

No cheese board is complete without a briny treat! Our favorites are picked veggies, olives or cute little pickles! If you are going ultra fancy, you can pick up some large, beautiful capers like these.

Dried or Fresh Fruits:

Grapes are classic, and in the fall you should garnish your cheese platter with concords if you can get your hands on them. They just look PERFECT. But whatever seasonal fruit you have will look lovely. In the winter, try adding dried fruits. They are a sweet and acidic way to brighten up the cheese board and offer a great balance to the rich and creamy stars of the show.

Nuts:

Nuts are a great way to incorporate a little crunch and a whole lot of flavor to your cheese board. We reach for for Blue Diamond Almonds, every time! These Crafted Gourmet Almonds are roasted and seasoned with their skins removed for a smooth texture and unique taste for every occasion. There are four fun flavors to choose from like Rosemary and Sea Salt, Pink Himalayan Salt, Garlic, Herb and Olive Oil and Black Truffle.

Spreads:

Here's where we like to get creative, because you never know what the next winning combo is going to be! Typically honey, mustard and some sort of fruit preserves make an appearance. Whatever you do, except in the case of honey, never pour a jelly or chutney all over your cheese. Let your guests decide how they want to pair their spreads with their cheeses. (This also makes saving any leftovers that much easier.)

Presentation Matters!

Now to put it all together! Pick out a board. This could be a cutting board (never plastic though, please!), a cheese platter, or even a few plates that you put next to each other on the table. Don’t be tied down to having everything on one surface. When it comes to styling your cheese board (yes, this is a thing- trust is!) check out our Instagram feed for inspiration. If you don't have special cheese knives, it’s fine to cut thin pieces of cheese ahead of time, so your guests can just grab and go and then of course leave a butter knife around for the soft cheeses.

Is It OK To Serve Room Temperature Cheese?

Yes! In fact, your cheese will have a lot more flavor if you set them out for 30 minutes before serving it to your guests.

Tools You Will Need:

Cheeseboard

Cheese knives

Little bowls

From Hope to Heartbreak: A Story of Loss in the ICU

TON LA, JR., MD, JD

Ms. Laura was a vibrant and feisty lady with a personality that filled the room. She had been my patient two months ago when she was admitted for an irregular heartbeat and COPD exacerbation. She was a smoker, and despite her heart issues, she had a strong will to live. I had advised her to quit smoking, but it was a habit that was hard to break. When I saw her again in the ICU, she had to be intubated and connected to a ventilator. Her blood pressure was dropping, and I had to start her on various blood pressure drips, including Levophed, epinephrine, vasopressin, and neo-synephrine. I monitored her progress closely, and her blood pressure improved the next day. However, she started developing bilateral pneumonia, and I started her on empiric vancomycin and cefepime. She was a fighter, and I hoped she would make it through.

But the optimism was short-lived. On my day off, a code blue was called for Ms. Laura, and her heart stopped beating. Despite extensive conversations with her daughter on the day of her admission, she wanted her mother to be full code. Chest compressions in the event of her heart stopping, and medications would be given to try to restart her heart. Multiple rounds of CPR were done but to no avail. Finally, her daughter, standing outside her mother's room, told the team to stop, and Ms. Laura passed away. I couldn't help but feel a deep sense of sadness and grief, knowing that despite our efforts, we were unable to save her.

Days later, I received the news that Ms. Laura had grown Pseudomonas in her urine culture, We had treated her with the antibiotics we had started, but it was too little too late. I was wracked with guilt, wondering if we had missed something. But after speaking with my upper level, I realized there was nothing more we could have done. Ms. Laura was simply too sick; no matter what we did, we couldn't save her.

The memory of Ms. Laura stayed with me long after she passed away. She was more than just a patient to me; she was a human being with a story. I remembered her voice, her smile, and her fiery spirit. She begged me to tell her daughter to stop smoking at home because it hurt her lungs. It was a plea that came from a place of deep concern and love. That was the last thing Ms. Laura told me.

In retrospect, I realized that Ms. Laura's story wasn't just about her; it was about the thousands of patients out there struggling about chronic illnesses, fighting for every breath, and holding onto life with all their might. It was about their families, who watched their loved ones suffer and fight for their lives. It was about the doctors and nurses who spent endless hours trying to save their patients, often without success.

Ms. Laura's death made me realize how precious life is and how important it is to appreciate every moment we have with our loved ones. It also made me appreciate the value of empathy and understanding in the medical profession. As doctors, we often become so focused on the science and technology of medicine that we forget the human aspect of it. Patients are more than just a collection of symptoms and lab values; they are human beings with lives, stories, and dreams.

Ms. Laura's story taught me to be more than just a doctor; it taught me to be a healer who sees beyond the illness to the person beneath it. It taught me to listen to my patients, to hear their stories, and to treat them with the compassion and empathy they deserve. Because in the end, that's what it's all about.

Ton La, Jr. is a physician and can be reached on LinkedIn.

The 10 Best Wines You've Probably Never Heard of

By **Vlad Craciun**, luxatic.com

As with everything in life, it's easy to fall for only the things everyone talks about and thinks they're the best. It's the same with everything, including wines. Ask someone about good wines and all they'll tell you is classics like cabernet, pinot, and chardonnay. Everyone knows they're good and almost nobody is willing to break the routine and try something else.

But that doesn't mean you shouldn't look deeper and dig your nose into some special wine names nobody has heard of. Who knows what amazing wine you'll discover? Sure, with thousands and thousands of wineries in the world, it's not an easy start, so we've made the first step. We started looking for some obscure wines made from little known grapes and we came up with interesting findings.

If you're willing to sacrifice what you know about wines and try something new, different tastes and flavors, go ahead and take a look on our list of the 10 best wines you've probably never heard of. You might find your next best wine.

10. Pecorino

Pecorino is an Italian type of grape from Abruzzo abandoned in favor of other grape varieties which produce bigger grape yields. But two winemakers decided to resurrect it and transformed it into one of Italy's wine success stories of the 21st century.

After Pecorino's revival, everyone wants to grow it. The wine obtained from these grapes has a crisp fruity taste which resembles that of a sauvignon blanc. The 2016 Tiberius Pecorino, of which you can find a bottle for $20, is complex, bright and juicy and features lemongrass and fresh fruit flavors while it also adds a nice saltiness and a rich round texture.

9. Primitivo/Zinfandel

The Zinfandel was introduced in California during the Gold Rush and quickly became the most planted vine. The climate and soils aided its growth and the vine flourished. The same vine is called Primitivo in Italy and grows in the Puglia region in the southern part of the country.

The Zinfandel produces bold dark purple grapes and an inky and tannic red wine with a flavor rich in berries and peppery bite. The Primitivo gives out a lighter version of the Californian Zinfandel and gets more of the flavor of the grapes.

8. Spartico

Spartico is a USDA certified organic wine, free of sulfites and pesticides and you can find it at Whole Foods for only $11 a bottle. The wine blends half tempranillo and half cabernet and has a light and subtle sweet flavor, with hints of cherries and strawberries.

Affordable and light, the Spartico fits in perfectly with cheese, Spanish tapas, paella, or some other spicy dishes.

7. Gringet

Gringet is a type of grape which comes from the mountainous regions of eastern France. It's another variety which was saved from extinction thanks to Dominique Belluard. With his vineyards at the foot of Mont Blanc, he's getting a lot of attention for the alpine grape varieties.

One of the must try Gringet wines produced there is the 2015 Domaine Belluard Vin de Savoie Les Alpes, which comes at only $42 a bottle. The wine is delicate and boasts a floral scent, with an elegant and luscious bright white.

6. Bandol

Taking advantage of the position in the southeastern hills of France and the influences of the Mediterranean Sea, Bandol produces some great and recognized wines. It's the Mouvèdre plantings, with their spicy, tannic red wines which boast flavors of licorice and dark berries and then there are the rosés, also made from Grenache, Cinsault, and other local grapes. The latter come with a superb freshness which reminds of Provence and the earthy and herbaceous hints ich add to the structure of the wine.

5. Vynecrest Cherry Divyne

Coming from Pennsylvania, the Vynecrest Cherry Divyne is not even close to what you might expect. Try as much as you'd like, but you'll never guess that this wine is actually made from cherries. Yes, a dessert wine made from Montmorency sour cherries from a Pennsylvanian orchard.

The Vynecrest Cherry Divyne boasts a brilliant red with a sweet tart-like flavor. And if paired with chocolate mousse, vanilla ice cream or poached pears, it'll make for the perfect sweet treat.

4. Ruché

Ruché is a wine made from the Piedmontese grape which was saved by a parish priest who cultivated it in the town of Castagnole Monferrato. Following that, the local vineyard prices went up and everybody got crazy on the Piedmontese variety and the Ruché wines.

Out of these light to medium bodied wines, you should definitely try the 2016 Crivelli Ruché di Castagnole Monferrato. You'll find it for around $24 a bottle, but it will amaze you with its flavors of spices and fruits, with hints of roses and lavender. The wine's lush-red texture is nonetheless impressive.

3. Frappato/Nerello Mascalese

Sicily and its volcanic soils near Mount Etna has given birth to an amazing variety of wines. One that stands apart is the Nerello Mascalese, a rustic Italian wine thought to offspring from the Sangiovese grape. When combined with the Frappato from the southeastern coastline of Sicily, it will give away fresher fruit and floral notes.

Try a Frappato or Nerello Mascalese with some pasta or pizza and you're in for an amazing dinner. These two wines, separate or blended together, fit perfectly with hearty Italian meals, and especially with a lot of salty cheeses.

2. The Prisoner

From The Prisoner Wine Company comes one of California's most coveted and mysterious wines. Released every October 31st and dubbed The Prisoner, this wine comes from a combination of zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon, syrah, petite syrah and charbono. It's inspired by the 'mixed blacks' made by the Italian immigrants who once settled in the Napa Valley region.

The Prisoner boasts wonderful aromas of cherry, espresso and roasted fig and fits perfectly with a steak or your usual fall and winter wine drinking.

1. VORS Sherry

With its story going back thousands of years, in the times of Phoenicians who settled in Spain's Jerez region somewhere around 1110 BC, Sherry is a wine that has always been appreciated. The thing is it's more like a spirit – or a fortified wine – and drinks like one, fitting in wonderfully after a good dinner.

Out of the many Sherry wines around, such as the Fino or Oloroso coming from southern Spain, one stands out more. The VORS – Vinum Optium Rare Signatum (Very Old Rare Sherry), is a wine aged for at least 30 years before it's released. That gives it a wonderful complexity with a nutty palate and delicious notes of citrus and dried fruits.

The Vital Importance of Climate Change Education in Medical Schools

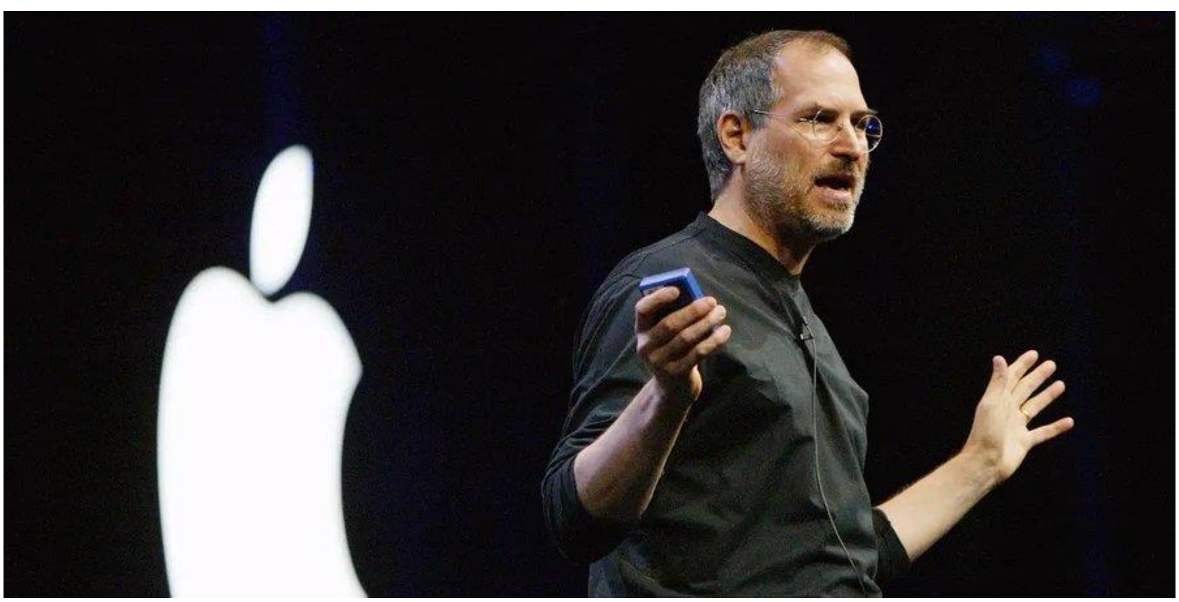
HELEN KIM, MD

I may have less direct patient interaction as a radiologist than in other medical specialties. Still, I have a unique vantage point from which to observe the overall picture of the hospital. I see the prevalence of diseases affecting our patients and their demographics. While working at a children's hospital in the Pacific Northwest, I have repeatedly witnessed the devastating effects of wildfires over the past few summers, interpreting and diagnosing numerous cases of asthma exacerbation and complicated sinusitis, for instance, attributed to climate change. Climate change is here and undeniable. As physicians, we encounter its impacts daily, even if they go unobserved.

It is encouraging to see that the next generation of physicians, the millennials and Generation Z, are particularly passionate about addressing this issue of climate change. They understand that their future patients will be further impacted by climate change and are eager to learn how they can make a difference. Unsurprisingly, the medical students at Harvard Medical School have taken the lead by advocating for the inclusion of climate change in their medical education. This sentiment is echoed by the efforts of Medical Students for a Sustainable Future (MS4SF), a volunteer coalition from 105 medical schools as of early 2023.

As educators of the next generation of physicians, it is imperative that medical schools and graduate medical education (GME) programs do a better job of incorporating the impacts of climate change on patient health into their curricula. This is what the next generation of doctors wants to learn, and our responsibility is to meet their needs and equip them with the knowledge and skills to address this pressing issue. By doing so, we will ensure a better future for us all.

Helen Kim is a radiologist.



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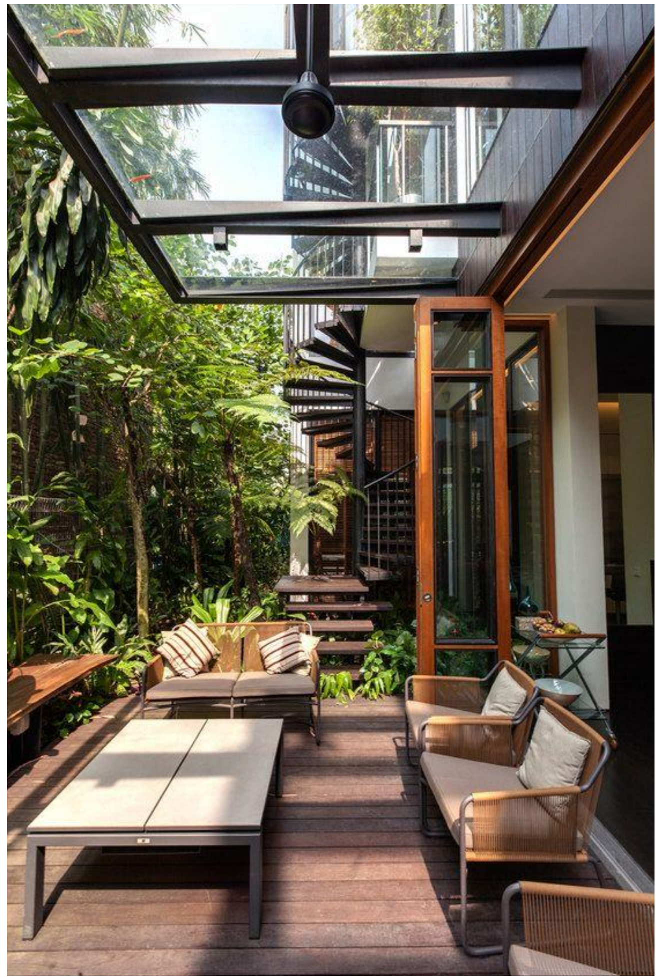
Outdoor Living Trends in 2023

Lifestyleconnected.com



1. Indoor-Outdoor Merge

A top trend to watch for is the full integration of indoor and outdoor living spaces. This includes adding enclosed verandas and partially covered gardens, as well as opening up the home to the garden or patio through folding glass doors.

2. Greek-Inspired Touches

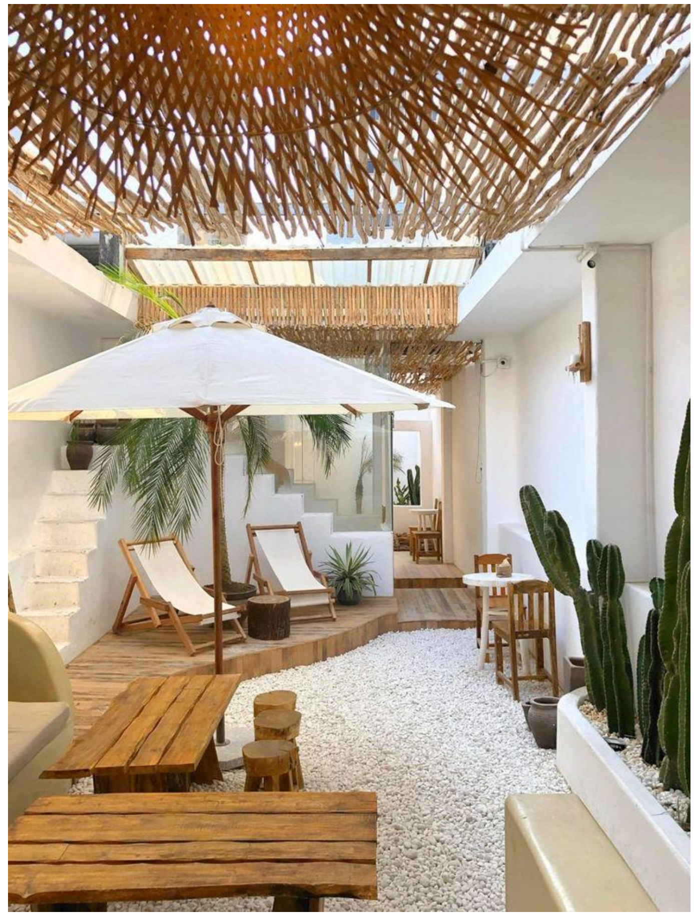
Greek-inspired gardens embody romance and history. Select Grecian statues, columns, formal hedges, archways, gravel gardens, and stone pathways to make your Greek dreams come true. Plant olive trees, houseplants, boxwood, and white roses to provide shade for seating areas.

3. Terra Cotta

Terra cotta, which translates as "baked earth," is a reddish-brown unglazed clay used to make pots and planters. Both the terra-cotta material and color are expected to play a significant role in backyard design in the coming year, adding a Moroccan or Mediterranean sense of style.

4. Upscale Relaxation

People often want to feel like they're on vacation when relaxing in their own backyard since the pandemic. This style is all about upscale relaxation, and it includes high-quality furniture, outdoor rugs, pizza ovens, water features, elaborate firepits, covered outdoor kitchens, and other features.



5. Sustainable Furniture

Consumers continue to prioritize the environment in their purchases, and this trend is expected to continue in the coming year. The sustainable outdoor furniture industry is thriving, with more options such as bamboo, recycled plastic, rattan, and other eco-friendly materials.

Epic Filming Locations Around the World That You Can Visit

by Robert Welborn, vatcaystories.com

Have you ever wanted to be a movie star? Let's face it, who hasn't? Well, whilst we can't help you win an Oscar, we can help you find some cool spots across the globe where you can recreate scenes from famous movies with our list of the 10 epic filming locations around the world that you can visit.

Whilst some of the places featured in this article were built specifically for films and then left for fans to enjoy, others existed long before they were used for filming and, as such, have only grown in popularity since appearing on the big screen.

Make sure to read this article carefully – you don't want to become one of those people dancing in a random fountain in Central Park thinking you're in the intro to *Friends* when in reality, that fountain actually sits in a warehouse in LA! These iconic places are just 10 of the many famous movie locations you should know about.

Christ Church College, Oxford – Harry Potter

I doubt I'm the only one who, even in my mid-30s, still holds out just a little bit of hope that any day now, I'll get my Hogwarts letter. Failing that, whilst you wait for yours you can visit many places in the UK where the eight movies were filmed. Perhaps the most famous is Christ Church College in Oxford. Open year-round, you can get a guided tour of the place for just £10 – an absolute bargain for all budding witches and wizards. For the die-hard fans that always waited on a new Harry Potter movie, put on your Harry Potter glasses, and teleport yourself to your favorite filming scenes.

Martha's Vineyard – Jaws

Looking for things to do in Martha's vineyard? If you're feeling brave, why not go swimming in the waters where perhaps the most famous shark in history, for a few weeks in the 1970s, had a wonderful feast? Located in scenic Massachusetts on the east coast, you can visit these public waters any time of the year. Have a look at Martha's vineyard map to locate more movie locations, such as the Amity Town Hall, also featured in the actual movie.

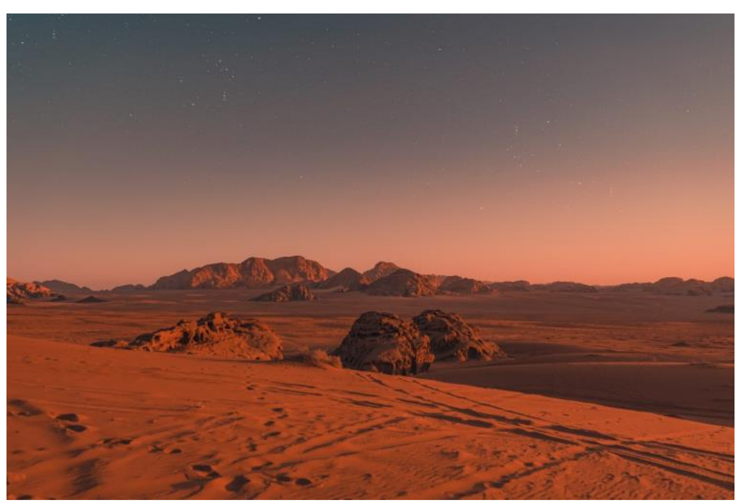
The Duke of Albany – Shaun of the Dead
When it all gets a bit too much, we've probably all considered going to the Winchester, having a pint and waiting for it to blow over. Sadly the pub is gone after being turned into some very nice flats. But you can still visit and get a feel for what [London] may be like when it is overrun with the living undead. Just practise your zombie walk, in case you need to blend in should any actually arrive.

Vatican City – Angels and Demons

Countless films have been made here, with the adaptation of Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons* possibly being the most famous. If you want to see some of the spots in which Robert Langdon found the cues to save the world, then this is where you want to be. Located in Rome, though technically its own country, Vatican City can be accessed nearly every day of the year, with prices starting at £25 for fast-track entry. To best explore the region, take a look at the [Vatican City map] to find out everything you need to know about the ecclesiastical state.

Wadi Rum – Lawrence of Arabia

If you're a fan of the classics, then Wadi Rum, Jordan, is where you want to be. This beautiful red stone area was the location for lots of scenes for the 1962 epic chronicling the life of TE Lawrence. Home to over 150 archaeological sites, the Wadi Rum desert is absolutely stunning and should sit on the to-do list of any film buff.



Ely Cathedral – The King's Speech

Everyone loves Colin Firth – I mean really, who doesn't? Especially after winning an Oscar in 2010 for playing King George IV. If you'd like to practice your public speaking, whether you stutter or not, Ely Cathedral is the place to be. Open seven days a week, the opening hours are fairly short, so be sure to confirm it's actually open before you go! Ticket prices start from $8.50, so it's affordable as well as beautiful.

Angkor Wat – Tomb Raider

When you hear *Tomb Raider*, what do you think? It'll very much depend on your age – the elder among us think of a heavily pixelated woman chasing secrets in a foreign land. Younger generations will probably think of Alicia Vikander fighting for glory. Sandwiched somewhere in between is Angelina Jolie, who had a brief spell as the eponymous Lara Croft. And she was lucky enough to get to film in Angkor Wat, the famous temple in Cambodia. One of Unesco's World Heritage Sites, there really isn't much to say about the place that hasn't been said over and over again. The only thing left to do is visit Angkor Wat temples for yourself.

Caesars Palace – Rainman

Whether you're a budding gambler, a numbers savant, or just a film buff, if you find yourself in Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, you'll find yourself in many of the filming locations for the Oscar-winning *Rainman*. The casino hotel is free to enter – though you must be over 21 – but sadly isn't free to stay in. But you can enter at any time to have a wander around and picture Dustin Hoffman using his incredible maths powers to win big.

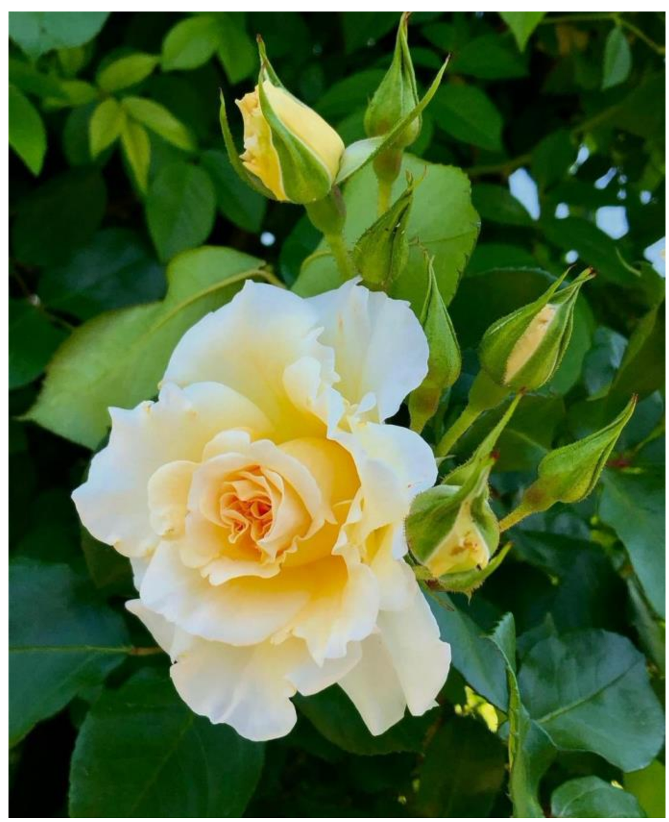
Stairs to the Philadelphia Museum of Art – Rocky

So you watched Sylvester Stallone running up the stairs in one of the most famous movie scenes and pictured yourself doing it. Well, you can have your moment! Take a picture of the 8’6 Rocky Balboa bronze sculpture, a gift from Stallone himself to the city of Philadelphia. After snapping your shots, tackle the 72 stone steps to the top to feel like a champion just like Rocky!

Grjótagjá, Iceland – Game of Thrones

Why settle for a pool when you can enjoy a geothermal spring? This Icelandic tourist attraction, known for being featured in Game of Thrones, can be found inside a lava cave, giving you the ultimate movie experience for free. GOT has multiple filming locations in Iceland, so I’d suggest adding them to your itinerary. Beware; the hot spring is small. However, as it’s open 24/7, you’ll have plenty of time to visit if it gets too crowded.

The Dakota Studios



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