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# A Note From the Editor

Welcome to our February/March Edition.

February is the month of love. It is the shortest month of the year, but the days are getting longer. It is also the month of beautiful flowers.

The last of the snowdrops glisten in gardens, verges and parks. There are plenty of snowdrop festivals around the country where you can enjoy the wonderful floral delights. Red rose is perhaps the most well-known February flower because of Valentines Day. But Valentines Day is not just for couples, single people can also enjoy and celebrate it too. For many February 14th is the day of treating yourself, so why not book in and enjoy a pamper session at a spa, delight in some retail therapy, enjoy a movie marathon. Or why not perform a random act of kindness, write a letter to someone you haven't heard from for a while, pay for a stranger's cup of coffee, smile at bar staff and waiters, ask if the bus or taxi driver is having a nice day.

This year Mother's Day falls on Sunday 15th March. On this day many of us will treat our mums to a lovely card and perhaps a bouquet of flowers, some will make them breakfast in bed, treat them to a special lunch out or afternoon tea. But one priceless gift to mums is the gift of time, spending quality time together enjoying each other's company makes for memories that last a lifetime. A home cooked Sunday lunch is a special treat and shows you love your mum. And a walk in the Spring sunshine lets us catch up and share the important things in our lives.

Getting out and about is what early Spring is all about, out into the countryside, or parks, to a historic site or to the beach, and at the end of this month the clocks are put forward one hour, so the evenings get lighter giving us more leisure time outside!

Here are some dates for your calendar:  
14th February - Valentine's Day; 17th February - Pancake Day; 15th March - Mother's Day; 17th March - St. Patrick's Day; 29th March - Daylight Saving Time starts.

As always, we ask you to please remember to mention Stonestrow Directories when calling our Advertisers.

However you chose to spend the next couple of months - please remember to keep your heart and your business local.

Yours, Stonestrow Publications.

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**Stonestrow**  
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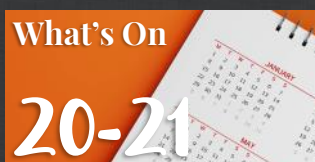
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APR / MAY  
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# Valentine's Day: Date Ideas



*February 14<sup>th</sup> may be the most romantic day of the year, but spending time with your other half ought to be a priority year-round.*

*Here are a few ways to make the special person in your life feel extra-special.*

## CLASSIC DATES

Sometimes you just want to keep it simple. Enjoy a hearty meal in a traditional country pub, for example, or exhibit your cool, nerdy side by watching an independent film at that local cinema which has a bar and posh crisps.

For those feeling really high-brow, why not treat your beloved to a play or musical or simply take a romantic walk in a beautiful park, because feeling comfortable enough to silently stroll is the ultimate couple goal.

## DARING DATES

If things have become a little stale, why not try an escape room challenge (working together to solve puzzles and escape before time runs out), or go on a ghost tour. Adrenaline junkies can try go-karting (because a little racing competition is healthy for a couple), let loose at a trampoline park, or hit the ropes together by indoor climbing - the ultimate trust challenge to prove true love!

## QUIRKY DATES

If dinner dates seem expensive and dull, check out a comedy night instead, because laughter is

vital for a good relationship.

Alternatively, you could get creative at a pottery or painting café, check out an art gallery, have a game of miniature golf, or visit that food market you've always wanted to go to. Exploring and discovering the world with the one you love is a wonderful way to reinforce that special bond.

## OUTDOOR DATES

Get a little wild with your sweetheart. Take a beach walk at sunset, pack a hamper with favourite treats and a bottle of wine, to be enjoyed in the wilderness, stay out late and look up at the stars.

Do something crazy like a hot air balloon ride, or go on a good old-fashioned pub crawl, by foot or by bike, because there is nothing more romantic than the birds and the bees.

## STAY HOME

Finally, whether everywhere is booked up or you simply can't be bothered to leave the house, you can still have a super romantic evening. Maybe you could cook a meal together, have a home spa night with facemasks, massages and a relaxing bath, watch the most romantic films on earth – e.g. Casablanca, True Romance, Titanic – play video, card or board games for some light-hearted fun. Ultimately, love is whatever you want it to be.



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The world of estate agency is a useful guide in how to present a house at its most desirable. Flowers, mood lighting, elegant, classic décor and the smell of freshly baked cookies wafting through. In other words, home. So, if you're wanting to sell a property that requires a lick of paint, think carefully about the palette.

## THE BEST

### Neutral tones

Shades such as white, beige, light grey and taupe are universally appealing. They make spaces look larger, brighter, and allow potential buyers to envision their own furniture and style in the home. This is the no-brainer option, offering maximum neutrality to spark their imagination. However, this can feel ubiquitous in a flooded market.

### Soft blues

Light blue tones, especially in bathrooms and bedrooms, are calming, often associated with cleanliness and tranquillity. The key is to keep it subtle and avoiding anything too kitsch such as maritime themes and seashell toilet seats.

### Greens

Subtle greens essentially bring the outside in. This is particularly effective in urban areas where nature is scarce, and a rich olive shade or leafy hue can create a calming atmosphere. You can also add plants to offer that living element of colour.

### Off-White

While you don't want to be that person obsessing between 'polar bear' and 'frost', off-white shades really do add warmth without being too imposing, creating a homely yet stylish mood. It's also worth investing in good quality paint with a high percentage of pigments and binders for key areas such as hallways and lounges.

## THE WORST

### Bold or dark colours

Deep reds, purples and dark browns can make rooms feel small, gloomy or overly personalised, which may turn off buyers. The key is to create a sunny, calm and welcoming space.

### Bright colours

Vivid oranges, yellows or greens might overpower a space and make it difficult for viewers to imagine the home as their own. Also, buyers may be reluctant to pay the maximum for somewhere they need to do a costly repaint job, so tone it down.

### Unusual colours

Strong pinks, bright blues or quirky accent walls can be a distraction and very off-putting for the average buyer. Remember, the point is not to present your personality, it's to appeal to the broadest market possible. So back off and embrace your most conventional side, because you can unleash the real you onto your next home.

### Black

Why not just leave the chalk body outline and pentagram drawing on the floor? In other words, no. Just no.



# What's On

## **Bentley Heath Country Market**

Date: every Friday / Time: 10am - 11.30am / Venue: Bentley Heath Community Hall Widney Rd, Bentley Heath, B93 9BQ  
We are a farmers market & craft fair all rolled into one. We are open for business every Friday New producers always welcome! 10am-11.30am  
Email [bhcountrymarket@gmail.com](mailto:bhcountrymarket@gmail.com) to receive our weekly order email.

## **Knowle Male Voice Choir**

Date: every Wednesday during school terms / Time: 7.30pm / Venue: Dorridge Methodist Church, Mill Lane, Dorridge

Ask anyone who sings with a choir or sings anywhere, and they will all agree, Singing is Good for You. Practices are followed by a refreshing trip to the local pub immediately afterwards. If you are interested in joining our choir please contact us at [kmvc14@gmail.com](mailto:kmvc14@gmail.com) or for more information visit [www.knowlemalevoicechoir.org.uk](http://www.knowlemalevoicechoir.org.uk)

## **Friends in Retirement**

Date: varies / Time: varies / Venue: Elmdon Heath Community Centre B91 2SF; Hobbs Moat Assembly Rooms B92 8JN; Knowle Village Hall B93 0NH; Bentley Heath Community Centre B93 9BQ; Solihull Women's Institute B91 3DQ; Whar Hall Community Centre B92 0PG  
FIRS (Friends in Retirement) is a charity where groups of people enjoy a range of activities. Yearly membership is £3 and each activity costs anything from £1.20 to £5. Contact us: [www.friendsinretirement.co.uk](http://www.friendsinretirement.co.uk); email [firs.solihull@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:firs.solihull@yahoo.co.uk); call: 07535 669 018

## **Donate your old glasses**

Working with our sister Lions club in Chichester, your old pairs of used glasses are collected, sorted and distributed each month to eye clinics as far as Papa New Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria and Nepal. Don't worry if your spectacles are broken as they will be recycled for their scrap metal and the funds used to support eye-related projects both in the UK and overseas. Knowle and Dorridge Lions Club are being supported by these opticians in B93: Alan Tyler Opticians - Dorridge, Bannister Eyecare - Knowle, Vision Express - Knowle. Just drop your used glasses into them and we'll do the rest! Thank you!

## **Knowle Renew Café**

Date: every Wednesday / Time: 2pm - 4pm / Venue: Guild House, Knowle  
All welcome, no booking required. A shared wellbeing space where you can enjoy a calm cuppa; spend time with a coffee (activities available or bring your own); have a chat with others; join an optional prayer & meditation session. For more information please visit: [www.kpc.org.uk](http://www.kpc.org.uk)

## **Knowle & Dorridge Round Table**

Date: every other Tuesday  
Knowle and Dorridge Round Table 812 was founded in 1963. We are an organisation run by and for Tablers as a hobby. We bring smiles to the local and wider community by helping and raising as much money as we can whilst having as much fun as we can. We're not just about fund raising. We meet every other Tuesday and indulge in various activities like sports, tours and lots of 'ings' such as gliding, hiking, biking, riding, shooting, kayaking, fishing, rallying, karting, off-roading, making, climbing, bowling, cooking or just enjoying the odd pint (or two). Please email to get in touch: [kanddrt@gmail.com](mailto:kanddrt@gmail.com)

## **Rapport Social Group**

Rapport is a, non profit making, social group for unattached adults age 50+ on their own and would like to meet new friends. We have a varied monthly programme of hosted events, including coffee mornings, lunches and evening meals, cinema, theatre and National Trust visits, day trips, walks and pub nights. For more information contact Jenny Brown on 07725 094123

## **Free Digital Training for older Solihull residents**

Various times and Age UK Solihull are offering free digital training for older Solihull residents who would like to improve their digital skills. Group courses and one-to-one support is available, for both beginners and those who already have basic digital skills. The training can help with online shopping, video calling, searching for information, accessing online learning, downloading and using apps, and more. For more information, contact Ashlee on 07397 718 455 or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/digital-champions](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/digital-champions)

## **Knowle Probus Club**

Date: 3rd Tuesday of the month / Venue: The Solihull Masonic Centre, Warwick Road, Knowle  
The Knowle Probus club is a luncheon Club for retired and semi-retired Professional or Businessmen living in or around Knowle. We meet for an excellent three course lunch followed by interesting and informative talks. If you would like to know more go to [www.knowleprobus.org.uk](http://www.knowleprobus.org.uk) or Phone Paul on 07713 94228.

## **Age UK Solihull Weekly Thursday Friends Lunch Club for Over 65s**

Date: every Thursday / Time: 12pm - 2.30pm / Venue: Red Lion Pub, High Street, Knowle  
Run by Age UK Solihull staff and their volunteers. Come along for a hot meal, tea/coffee, social activities and great company. Cost is £8 (£6 for hot lunch and refreshments, £2 for raffle, bingo/entertainment). For more information please call 0121 704 7846 (Mon-Thurs) or email [befriending@ageuksolihull.org.uk](mailto:befriending@ageuksolihull.org.uk).



### **Dorridge Probus Club**

Date: first Thursday of the month / Time: 12 noon / Venue: Copt Heath Golf Club, Warwick Road, Knowle  
We meet for a friendly chat followed by lunch and a talk focussing on members interests and requests. Probus is a friendly, social meeting point for retired and semi retired men. For more details see our website [www.probusclub.net/dorridge](http://www.probusclub.net/dorridge).

### **Drinking cans collection**

Venue: Ale rooms, Knowle  
Please support Ryan's work by dropping off your empty aluminium cans in the blue bin situated right outside the Ale Rooms, Knowle High Street. Ryan from "We Can" collects aluminium drinking cans, crushes them and trades them for money to help buy food to address food poverty locally.

### **Ladies Circle**

Date: Wednesdays / Time: 11am / Venue: Dorridge Methodist Church, Mill Lane, Dorridge B93 8NY  
Ladies living locally meet for a coffee & a chat. Every fourth week there will be singing, speakers or games.

### **Welcome Wednesdays**

Date: last Wednesday of every month / Time: 2 - 3.30pm / Venue: Eascote Park Care Home and Retirement Village, Knowle Road, Barston B92 0JA  
This is a chance meet new people, enjoy a hot drink and a slice of cake, and help raise funds for Age UK Solihull. Everyone is welcome, including carers, older people, and anyone who wants to break up the week and enjoy some company. We ask for a suggested donation of £3 per person to attend, which includes a hot drink and cake. Please let us know if you are planning on coming by calling us: 0121 7047842 (leave a message) or email to: [events@ageuksolihull.org.uk](mailto:events@ageuksolihull.org.uk).

### **Knit & Natter**

Date: 3rd Monday of the month / Time: 2- 4pm / Venue: Bentley Heath Community Centre, Widney Road B93 9BN  
Bring your own project. Just turn up no charge. Contact Dennise on 07899 914 228

### **Knowle and Dorridge Dementia Cafe**

Date: every Tuesday / Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm / Venue: Dorridge Methodist Church, Mill Lane  
The café aims to provide a supportive and friendly environment for individuals living with dementia and their carers. It is designed to be a warm, welcoming space where attendees from the surrounding areas, they can enjoy a variety of activities, socialise, meet people in similar circumstances and find helpful information and resources. Sessions, including refreshments, are £3 per person and will be guided by experienced care professionals and dedicated volunteers.

### **South Solihull u3a**

Date: 2nd Monday of each month / Time: 1:45 pm for 2:00 pm start / Venue: Bentley Heath Community Centre, Widney Road B93 9BQ  
We are a very friendly group of retired or semi-retired people aiming to learn new skills and

make new friends along the way. In addition to the monthly meeting when we usually have an invited speaker, we also have a wide range of over 20 activity groups meeting throughout each month. For further information please visit: [www.southsolihull.u3asite.uk](http://www.southsolihull.u3asite.uk) and contact our Membership Secretary, Richard: [memberships3a@yahoo.com](mailto:memberships3a@yahoo.com) for an invitation to a 'taster meeting'. We look forward to meeting you!

### **Charity Beer Festival**

Date: 6-7th February / Time: 6.30pm / Venue: Knowle Royal British Legion  
Doors open on Friday at 6.30pm with live acoustic music, and on Saturday we'll be pouring from 12 noon as we kick off the Six Nations in style. You'll find a fully stocked bar to suit every taste, along with plenty of food to keep everyone fuelled. Come and help us celebrate the end of Dry January and raise money for local good causes—enjoy a drink and support your community at the same time. Buy tickets online: [www.tickettailor.com/events/knowleanddorridgegroundtable](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/knowleanddorridgegroundtable)

### **Safer Internet Day**

Date: 10th February / Time: 2 - 4pm / Venue: Eastcote Park, Knowle Road, Barston, B92 0JA  
Digital Safety & Scam Awareness for over 65's  
Join us for an informative session designed to help you stay safe online and protect yourself from scams.

### **Gentlemen's Club**

Date: 25th February / Time: 2:30 - 4pm / Venue: Eastcote Park, Knowle Road, Barston, B92 0JA  
Join us to celebrate the Six Nations in true rugby spirit. We'll be marking the tournament with a special screening of Invictus - an unforgettable film about leadership, unity, and the love of the game.

### **Spring Charity Quiz**

Date: 12th March / Time: 7pm / Venue: Eastcote Park, Knowle Road, Barston, B92 0JA  
Supporting the Cameron Grant Memorial Trust, gather your best team and come along for the challenge. Teams of up to 6 and £10 per team.

### **Gentlemen's Club Workshop**

Date: 25th March / Time: 2.30 - 4pm / Venue: Eastcote Park, Knowle Road, Barston, B92 0JA  
Led by Adam, our Gardener. Adam will guide you through creating bug houses and bird feeders, helping to prepare your garden for Spring. All materials are provided, along with Adam's expert guidance.

*While we do our best to ensure the accuracy of our listings, events may be postponed or cancelled without notice. Please confirm with the organiser before making any plans for attending events. For your news, events and group meetings to be featured free of charge on our What's On Page please email Ksenia: [info@stonesthrowpublications.co.uk](mailto:info@stonesthrowpublications.co.uk)*

# Cracking Easter fun

*Easter has a habit of sneaking up on families. One minute it's spring term, the next it's chocolate overload and two weeks to fill. But with a little planning and a willingness to get out and about, Easter can become one of the most enjoyable, sociable breaks of the year for children. Here are six ways to make it memorable in 2026.*

## GO BEYOND THE BACK GARDEN EGG HUNT

Traditional egg hunts are still a hit, but many families are now opting for organised community versions. Parks, farms, heritage sites and local attractions often run Easter trails with clues, activities and prizes. These events add structure, variety and a sense of occasion, as well as giving children something to talk about afterwards.

## TRY A CHURCH OR COMMUNITY EASTER EVENT

Even for families who aren't regularly religious, Easter events hosted by churches can be welcoming, creative and child-friendly. Many offer craft sessions, storytelling, music or child-focused services that explain the Easter story in an accessible way. For our young stars, it adds meaning and a sense of tradition to the holiday.

## MAKE A DAY OF A SPRING OUTING

It doesn't all have to be about chocolate! Easter is one of the first chances of the year to properly enjoy being outdoors again. Zoos, wildlife parks, gardens and countryside attractions often programme special Easter activities. A simple day out – perhaps factoring in a picnic, walk or nature trail – can feel like a proper seasonal marker for children.

## GET INVOLVED IN SOMETHING HANDS-ON

Children remember what they do more than what they're given. Craft workshops, baking sessions, pottery painting or farm experiences give

kids something tactile and creative to focus on. Many local venues run short Easter holiday workshops designed specifically for younger age groups.

## CREATE A MINI EASTER TRADITION

Not everything has to be an event. Families are increasingly creating their own small Easter rituals: a special breakfast, a spring walk on Easter morning, decorating eggs together, or visiting the same café or park each year. It's these repeated moments that can often provoke the most meaningful memories.

## BALANCE TREATS WITH TIME TOGETHER

Chocolate is part of Easter, but so is shared time. Board games, film afternoons, outdoor play or helping to cook a meal together all help children associate Easter with connection, not just consumption.

*Ultimately, Easter doesn't need to be expensive or over-planned. At its best, it's social, seasonal and shared - a chance to slow down, step outside, and give children experiences that feel joyful, grounding and just a little bit special.*



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# Horoscopes: February

## ARIES

(MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Five planets are occupying a pivotal point of your chart this month, all indicate that this the perfect time to make a go of anything that you are ready to change. Stay alert to any opportunities that come your way. The spectacular Saturn Neptune conjunction in your sign on the 20th truly represents dynamic new beginning. Success comes through community projects.

## TAURUS

(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

February opens up some brilliant opportunities and ideas for you to further your career and status. The Aquarian new moon and the start of the Fire Horse year on the 17th are particularly auspicious. The cosmic message this month encourages you to trust in your intuition and have the courage to leave the past behind and welcome any innovative and creative change that comes your way.

## GEMINI

(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

February suggests that your plans for further education and travel will need some reviewing. Take some time to really examine how you feel about where your life is right now, your heart may tell you that you are ready for some major adventures. The pioneering Aquarian new moon and the start of the auspicious Fire Horse year on the 17th both ensure positive outcomes.

## CANCER

(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

The first part of February offers you a great deal of energy as the accumulation of planets in your financial and resource sector invite a review. The auspicious Leo full moon on the 1st suggest some creative solutions will suddenly appear out of nowhere. Saturn and Neptune arriving at the highest point of your solar chart on the 20th indicate major change on the career and status front.

## LEO

(JULY 23 - AUGUST 23)

The Sun and Pluto are strong in your opposite sign during February, and the new moon in your sign on the 1st suggests that this is a great month for making those creative changes that you have been pondering over for some time. The Aquarian new moon and the start of the Fire Horse year on the 17th offers dynamic planetary energy for drive and vitality to follow your passion.

## VIRGO

(AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22)

February offers some big changes in the health and fitness sector of your chart; be on the lookout for some important new information related to your plans. The Aquarian new moon on the 17th is a turning point helping you to reach a positive outcome, perhaps it's time to stand on your own feet and make your own decisions - be mindful and trust your intuition.

## LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)

New and exciting creative opportunities are suggested during February as five planets occupy this pivotal sector of your chart. Romantic encounters are also in strong focus, particularly around the time of the powerful Aquarian new moon on the 17th. The dynamic Fire Horse year begins and partnerships could take on a much more passionate aspect.

## SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

February shines a spotlight on your domestic area and puts you in a rather assertive mood as you strive to take on a more independent approach to your work life balance. The Saturn Neptune conjunction highlights how you operate, suggesting that renewed insight helps you to remain positive. The Aquarian new moon on the 17th offers some radical change.

## SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21)

Five planets in your communication sector all suggest an active and very positive start to this month. With your enhanced resourcefulness it's a good time to make some major decisions concerning your goals for 2026. The exciting Aquarian new moon on the 17th highlights all types of communication and gives you extra powers of persuasion and insight.

## CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20)

Five planets in Aquarius in your financial area ensure that this could be a breakthrough month. Your practical organisational skills will help define and manifest a positive way forward. Confident thinking is the answer and the exciting Aquarian new moon and the start of the Chinese New Year on the 17th looks set to bring some great opportunities your way.

## AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18)

February is your birthday month and the favourable and dynamic new moon in your sign on the 17th ensures that positive change is not far off. The year of the Fire Horse is also offering exciting new beginnings. This is truly an inspirational month, bursting with new ideas and the opportunity to act on them. Your intuitive nature should ensure that you make the right decisions.

## PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)

Saturn and Neptune both leave your sign for good this month signalling that exciting new beginnings are eminent. Lucky Jupiter shines brightly in Cancer, highlighting love, romance and renewed connections. Your powers of communication are looking favourable, pushing you to take full advantage of this chance to usher in a whole new era of confidence and success.

*Christine Chalklin, Inspirational Astrologer and Life Coach*

Take a refreshing new look at the year ahead by booking an astrological reading now. Consultations are available on Zoom, WhatsApp or telephone.

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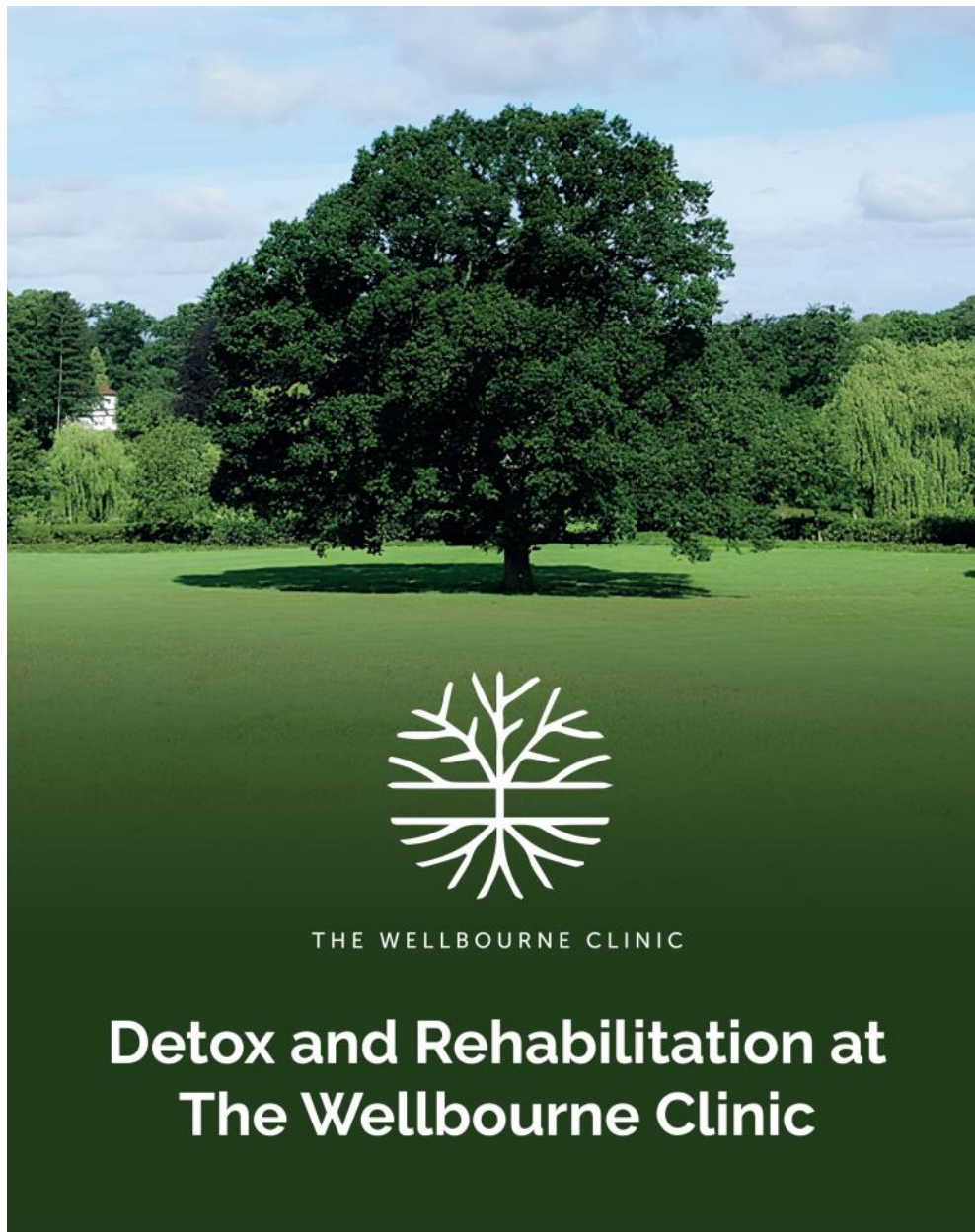
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## Ginger Peanut Chicken

### PREPARATION TIME:

20 mins + soaking and marinating time

### COOKING TIME:

50 minutes

### SERVES: 4

### INGREDIENTS:

#### Ginger chicken

500g chicken, cut into small bite-sized chunks

Thum-sized piece of ginger, grated

3 spring onions, thinly sliced

Zest and juice of 1-2 limes

2 tbsps brown sugar

1 - 1/2 tsp salt

1 tbsp olive oil or avocado oil

2 - 3 cloves garlic, minced

50g chopped roasted peanuts (dry roasted are great)

20g coriander

Pak choi

#### Coconut Rice

250-30g Jasmine rice

1 tin coconut milk

### METHOD

In an oven-proof dish (either non-metallic or stainless steel), mix the chicken with the ginger, half the spring onions, lime zest, brown sugar, salt, and oil. Marinate for 2 hours.

#### For fluffy coconut rice

Wash the rice until the water is quite clear, to remove the starch. This is important because coconut milk is thicker than water, so without washing, the rice will be gluey. Then let the rice soak for an hour.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ 180°C fan / Gas 4. In a large oven proof saucepan combine the can of coconut milk with a can of water and bring the mixture to the boil. Then add the rice. Cover with foil and bake, for 40 minutes. Oven-cooking allows the rice to steam without scorching the base of the pot. After 40 minutes, remove the pan from the oven and leave to rest for 15 minutes. The rice will absorb any remaining moisture and become fluffy.

#### The ginger chicken

Heat a large frying pan or wok to medium-high heat. Add the marinated chicken to the pan (split it into 2-3 batches depending on the size of your wok). Don't stir the chicken too much, to allow it to develop a caramelised surface.

When all the chicken is cooked and caramelised, reduce the heat slightly and add the peanuts and garlic. Sauté for 3-5 minutes until the garlic is fragrant.

Add the coriander, the remainder of the spring onions, and the pak choi. Squeeze lime juice into the pan and season with more salt and pepper as needed.



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