

AUTUMN *state of mind*

From cultural days out to cosy nights in, four Red women in the know reveal why there's lots to look forward to this side of Christmas

Words MARIE-CLAIRE DORKING Photographs RACHEL WHITING

THE TRAVEL EXPERT

LAURA MANNERING, 38, lives in London and is a travel writer

This autumn, I'll be...

Kicking leaves in the woods around the village of Penn, near Beaconsfield. I discovered this place last autumn. It's proper old-fashioned countryside and so pretty. Afterwards, I'll have a pint of ale by the fire at the Royal Standard Of England pub (rsoe.co.uk), the oldest freehouse in England.

Hiking up the Golden Cap in Dorset. The nice thing about autumn is that places that are busy in summer are more peaceful. The scenery is breathtaking – dramatic cliffs overlooking the sea. By the time you've finished, you've earned a hearty fish-and-chip supper in the George Inn at Chideock (georgeinnchideock.co.uk).

Enjoying a blustery Saturday-afternoon walk along the promenade in Brighton. Rough seas and heavy grey clouds add to the atmosphere. Afterwards, I'd have a game of air hockey on the pier, before warming up over lunch at Bill's restaurant (bills-website.co.uk). Treacle & Co (treacleandco.co.uk) is another must-do. It's a local coffee shop tucked away in Hove. I found out about it from the owner of Whitburn Lodge (whitburnlodge.com), my favourite b&b down there. I always stay in the cosy attic room, and the homemade breakfasts are to die for.

Flying a kite on Holkham Beach, Norfolk. When the tide's out, the golden sand stretches on forever. It's one of my top three best beaches in the world.

Taking an early evening dip in the Thermae Bath Spa (thermaebathspa.com) in Bath. It's a natural

spa with a heated rooftop pool. As the sun goes down, you'll have a brilliant view of dusk and then the lights coming on all over the city. Jump out of the pool into the cold night air, then down into the spa for an extra-hot steam.

Swapping a Sunday roast for fresh seafood. On the north Norfolk coast, there's nowhere better than Cookie's Crab Shop at Salthouse (salthouse.org.uk). This fishmonger has a rustic outdoor eating area. I have potted shrimp, followed by fresh dressed crab salad, then a school dinner pudding, such as jam roly-poly or treacle pudding. Then The Hoste Arms in Burnham Market (thehoste.com) is great for a cosy drink in the evening.

Sneaking in a micro-break. Bloomsbury Barn, near Axminster, Devon (holidaycottages.co.uk), is a wonderful bolthole. It has a cosy wood-burner and the owners supply fresh eggs and home-made scones, with clotted cream and jam. Further afield, I'd head to Madrid. I'd wander the historic La Latina and settle down in Plaza de la Paja for a Mojito in the autumn sun; or take a long walk under the reddening trees in the Retiro Park. If it gets nippy, I'd head to legendary Chocolateria San Ginés for fresh churros dipped in thick hot chocolate. For a treat, I'd splash out for a night at Casa de Madrid (casademadrid.com), a former mansion near the Royal Opera House that's now a boutique hotel. >>

Read Laura's blog at worldoutthere.net

In season



*Laura
Mannerling*

MADRID

FISH & CHIPS

THE ORIGINAL OF THE BEST

FISH & CHIPS

BEAN BOGGER!

BRIGHTON

BRIGHTON



THE CULTURE QUEEN

Author KATHERINE WEBB, 35, lives in Neston, near Bath with her boyfriend, Luke

This autumn, I'll be...

Taking a trip to the theatre. I want to see dancer Akram Khan perform in his show *Desh*. I saw him years ago, and watching the London 2012 opening ceremony reminded me how great he is. Miriam Margolyes is still touring in *Dickens' Women* this autumn (dickenswomen.com), and I'm keen to catch that, too. And although it doesn't start until next spring, I'll book tickets for the new series of plays at the Noel Coward Theatre (delfontmackintosh.co.uk) – there's an awesome cast, including Dame Judi Dench, Jude Law and Ben Whishaw.

Popping my literature-festival cherry. I'm doing the Guildford Book Festival, October 18th-27th (guildfordbookfestival.co.uk), which will be my first one. I'm pretty horrified by public speaking, so I'm also going to the Cheltenham Literature Festival, October 5th-14th (cheltenhamfestivals.com/literature), as a punter where I'm hoping to pick up some tips. I'd also love to get to the Bath Festival of Children's Literature, September 28th-October 7th (bathkidslitfest.org.uk).

Getting lost in a concert. I love choral music; it's

spine-tinglingly beautiful in a magnificent setting, such as Bath Abbey, where the acoustics are amazing. The Bath Choral Society is performing *Haydn: The Seasons* in October (bath-choral-society.org.uk), and I'm desperate to go.

Whiling away a rainy Sunday at the cinema. I can't wait to see the new *Anna Karenina*. Surprisingly, I've never actually read it – I'm trying to read more classics.

Curling up with a good book. I'm in for a treat with books this autumn; Ian McEwan's *Sweet Tooth* (Jonathan Cape, £18.99); Pat Barker's *Toby's Room* (Hamish Hamilton, £16.99) and Rose Tremain's *Merivel: A Man Of His Time* (Chatto & Windus, £18.99). I'm also curious about JK Rowling's first book for adults, *The Casual Vacancy* (Little Brown, £20). I have no idea what to expect. And the paperback of Helen Dunmore's *The Greatcoat* (Hammer, £7.99) is also coming out.

Whipping up an autumn feast. My favourite weekend recipe is coq au vin – left to simmer for hours, then eaten with roast potatoes and a big glass of red wine. I'm also planning on making a sloe gin – the longer you leave it the better, so if I make some this autumn, by next Christmas it will be perfect.

Warming up with home-made hot chocolate. It's the perfect pick-me-up: you make a syrup out of water, sugar, dark chocolate and vanilla, beat it until it goes gooey, and serve in an espresso cup. You can add cream and, for a real treat, dip in shortbread biscuits.

Getting into the Halloween/Bonfire Night spirit.

I want to rediscover my inner child with a ghost walk around Bath's most haunted pubs and buildings (ghostwalksofbath.co.uk). On Bonfire Night, we'll go to the village for fireworks, then have friends back for baked potatoes and sparklers. I've bought a fire bowl for the garden, and I'll be scouring the woods for bits and bobs to decorate the house. A big bowl of conkers looks seasonal *and* repels spiders, apparently. >>

Katherine's third novel, A Half Forgotten Song (Orion, £5.99), is out now

THE STYLE GURU

Luxury knitwear designer MADELEINE THOMPSON, 32, lives in west London with her husband, Josh

This autumn, I'll be...

Pottering around Marylebone High Street. It's the perfect way to spend a Saturday morning. But I also love the King's Road. Austique (austique.co.uk) and the Shop At Bluebird (theshopatbluebird.com) are two of my favourite boutiques. There's a wonderful noodle place nearby, called the Phat Phuc (phatphucnoodlebar.com), that's especially good for lunch. I love eating alfresco, even in autumn, and here you can sit outside under a cosy canopy. I'll finish the day with a mooch in Liberty, which always feels special.

Brightening my home with wild flowers. Scarlet & Violet in north-west London (scarletandviolet.com) does quintessentially English bouquets that look like they've just been picked. They make me think of walking in the woods. Cochine candles (cochine.com) are another autumn essential for my home. They're very chic and the scents are beautiful.

Going for a Saturday afternoon tramp around a London park. St James's Park, Hampstead Heath and Richmond Park are my favourites, particularly in the early evening; the colours, low sun and cool air are so inspiring. I always wear one of my cashmere scarves and a 'Maddy' beanie for ultimate comfort. Afterwards, I might go to Bentley's Oyster Bar and Grill in Mayfair (bentleys.org) with a girlfriend and have champagne and oysters, while we put the world to rights.

Having an autumn wardrobe splurge. I've got my eye on some Joseph stretch leather leggings and Acne Pistol boots. The leggings will go with one of my oversized 'Nicola' jumpers. I'm also thinking of investing in some Valentino studded patent brogues. And although my eyes are bigger than my budget on this one, I'd love a Stella McCartney coat. Buying my winter coat is one of my autumn rituals. If you've got a beautiful coat, you don't feel so bad when the weather turns colder. Come autumn, I live in my 'Timeless' dress – it's luxuriously warm,



comfortable and elegant; ideal for padding around the house barefoot on a Sunday morning.

Sipping Saturday night cocktails with the girls.

The Arts Club (theartsclub.co.uk) is old-school with a twist, and has a comforting vibe. I usually go for a Cosmopolitan, because they always get the party started, but my husband recently introduced me to the Negroni – made with Campari and gin (see recipe on page 257). It feels like a grown-up drink!

Visiting some foodie favourites. I travel a lot, so when I come home, the first place I head to is The River Café (rivercafe.co.uk). It's light and airy with a laid-back atmosphere. The crab linguine is amazing. I also adore The Ledbury (theledbury.co.uk) in west London, especially on a rainy Sunday. The roast scallops with fennel, liquorice and elderflower is heavenly. For comfort food, it's got to be Bumpkin (bumpkinuk.com). And I also love Medlar on the King's Road (medlarrestaurant.co.uk), which does delicious contemporary British food.

Heading to country hotel Barnsley House (barnsleyhouse.com) in the Cotswolds. I haven't been, but some friends have, and raved about it. >>

See Madeleine's autumn/winter collection at madeleine-thompson.com

THE FOODIE

LEANNE TUCKER, 32, from Kingswear, Devon, is a chef at Café Alf Resco in Dartmouth, and is on the committee for the Dartmouth Food Festival

This autumn, I'll be...

Baking brownies and flapjacks for the Dartmouth Food Festival. It's the festival's 10th anniversary, so there are lots of exciting things going on this year; a great British pudding event 1950s-style, a gala evening at the Dart Marina Hotel, where Tom Parker Bowles is speaking. Wine and coffee tastings, demos with chefs from River Cottage and Rick Stein's restaurant. The festival takes over the whole town, and there's an amazing atmosphere.

Experimenting with autumn recipes. We cater for private parties, so I spend time planning menus. It's all about communal eating. Passing around big bowls of roasted root vegetable quinoa salad or chicken, cider and tarragon stew. One of my favourite autumn dishes is chorizo, chickpea and paprika slow-cooked casserole, or tamarind-roasted vegetables with beetroot and peppers.

Doing brunch. Our café specialises in brunch – a great way to start the weekend. I'd have freshly squeezed orange juice and cinnamon toast, followed by a cooked breakfast, with tomato, bacon, eggs and mushrooms. Our coffee is lovely – the beans are roasted in Newton Abbot, so it's really fresh and we have an old-fashioned lever-arm machine.

Having a special Sunday roast. It's pricey, but The Elephant Restaurant in Torquay (elephantrestaurant.co.uk) is the perfect weekend treat. When you book, they'll tell you the meats available, then roast an individual joint for your table. You can either carve it yourself or they will carve for you. It's a different way of doing Sunday roast. It's on Torquay harbour, so it's lovely to be snuggled inside, while it's lashing with rain.

Taking Saturday afternoon tea. Vintage Tea in Totnes is fabulous (vintageteatotnes.co.uk). There's a shop out the front selling things such as vintage blankets, and out back is a beautiful tearoom. The home-made cakes are amazing, but I'm a massive fan

of their scones. The waiters wear full-length aprons and waistcoats, so it feels old-fashioned formal.

Blowing the cobwebs away. I like to walk out towards Dartmouth Castle and along the coast path to little Dartmouth, then on to Blackpool Sands, where there is a privately owned beach, open to the public. If you get an early start, you can see the sun rise and watch the sail boats.

Taking a Saturday-evening paddle down the river. I did this amazing canoe trip (canoeadventures.co.uk) last autumn. You paddle for an hour up the river Dart, then moor up on the riverbank, where they set up a campfire and serve mince pies and hot chocolate made on the fire. On the way back, we turned our head torches off, so we were paddling by moonlight. It was magical. 🍷

The Dartmouth Food Festival, October 26th-28th (dartmouthfoodfestival.com); cafealfresco.co.uk

SIGN UP FOR RED'S WEEKEND NEWSLETTER FOR MORE THINGS TO SEE AND DO THIS AUTUMN, AT ...

Redonline.co.uk

