

Life *Almanac*

From apple days and classical crescendos to walled-garden wanders and brilliant backstage passes – here's everything clever, cultural and quietly fabulous happening this September.

Noted & noteworthy

September's quiet magic – the pause between the pages

By now, the skies are quieter. The swifts are long gone, and blackberries are fat on the brambles. There's a hush to the hedgerows – like the countryside knows it's winding down. September still brings sunshine, but it's a softer, golden kind. A time to put the kettle on, reach for a cardigan, and breathe in the calm before autumn kicks up her leaves.



WORDS: CAROLINE BLIGHT & EMMA COXON. IMAGES: VARIOUS BRANDS AND SHUTTERSTOCK



Mindful moment

September is the soft start. It's a time of fresh notebooks, new pencils and Sunday roasts making their comeback. There's still light in the evenings, but the air carries a little crispness. Don't rush into routine just yet – savour the in-between.

MUST-WATCH SERIES

History unlocked

The stunning scenery of the islands of Hawai'i provides the backdrop to a period drama with a twist. A labour of love for Jason Momoa who wrote, produced and stars in *Chief Of War*, this nine-episode series based on true events follows warrior Ka'iana (Momoa), as he struggles

to unify the islands before Western colonisation in the late 18th century. With a predominantly Polynesian cast, this is a series Jason has been working towards through his career. 'This is my *Braveheart*, this is my *Last Of The Mohicans*,' he says. 'I love all these cultures, and so this is it for us. This is our chance.'

● **Chief Of War is on Apple TV+ now**



Podcast pick of the month:
Comfort Eating with Grace Dent

It's warm, weird, and often wonderful. Celebrities reveal the oddly specific foods that got them through tough times – and it's strangely comforting in itself. From fish fingers to trifle-for-one, this is a love letter to nostalgia and carbs.



What's on: smart seasonal picks worth leaving the house for

From foodie festivals to backstage secrets, here's where to go and what not to miss.

1 BBC PROMS AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL
Dates: Now until 13 September

Think classical music is all pomp? Think again. The Proms are bold, beautiful, and brilliantly accessible.

Try a late-night prom or themed night. Or live-stream from the sofa with a chilled tippie. bbc.co.uk/proms

2

FLOWER PRESSING AND PRIVATE TOUR AT CHARLESTON, EAST SUSSEX

Dates: 12 August
Press seasonal blooms and create your own botanical artwork in this creative workshop at Charleston. Includes a private tour of the Bloomsbury group's historic home, a delicious locally sourced lunch, and your own flower press. jamjaredit.co.uk



3 THE BIG FESTIVAL, COTSWOLDS

Dates: 22-24 August
Gourmet meets groove on Alex James's farm. Foodies and families flock for artisan nibbles, live music (this year Sophie Ellis-Bextor and Travis) and proper country charm. Take wellies and SPF. thebigfestival.com



5 CHATSWORTH COUNTRY FAIR, DERBYSHIRE

Dates: 29-31 August
A grand estate, breathtaking gardens, cookery demos, vintage funfairs and proper cream teas – the Chatsworth Country Fair is September perfection in wellies and lipstick. chatsworth.org/events

4



OPEN HOUSE FESTIVAL LONDON

Dates: 13-21 September
One weekend. Hundreds of usually closed buildings flinging open their doors. Explore iconic London architecture – from Georgian grandeur to brutalist brilliance. It's like cultural speed-dating with the city. open-city.org.uk

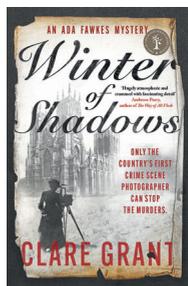


SHELF-CARE:
**3 brilliant books
to dive into**

Because September is for new chapters – and we’re not just talking about the season. Settle into the golden-hour glow with these page-turners.

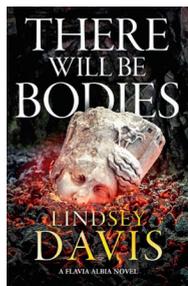
Winter Of Shadows
by Clare Grant
(Black Spring Press Group)

In fog-drenched 1860’s York, a female crime-scene photographer is pulled back into the shadows – alongside the detective she’d rather forget. Gothic chills, buried secrets, and a trail of bodies... *Winter Of Shadows* is dark, daring and deliciously gripping.



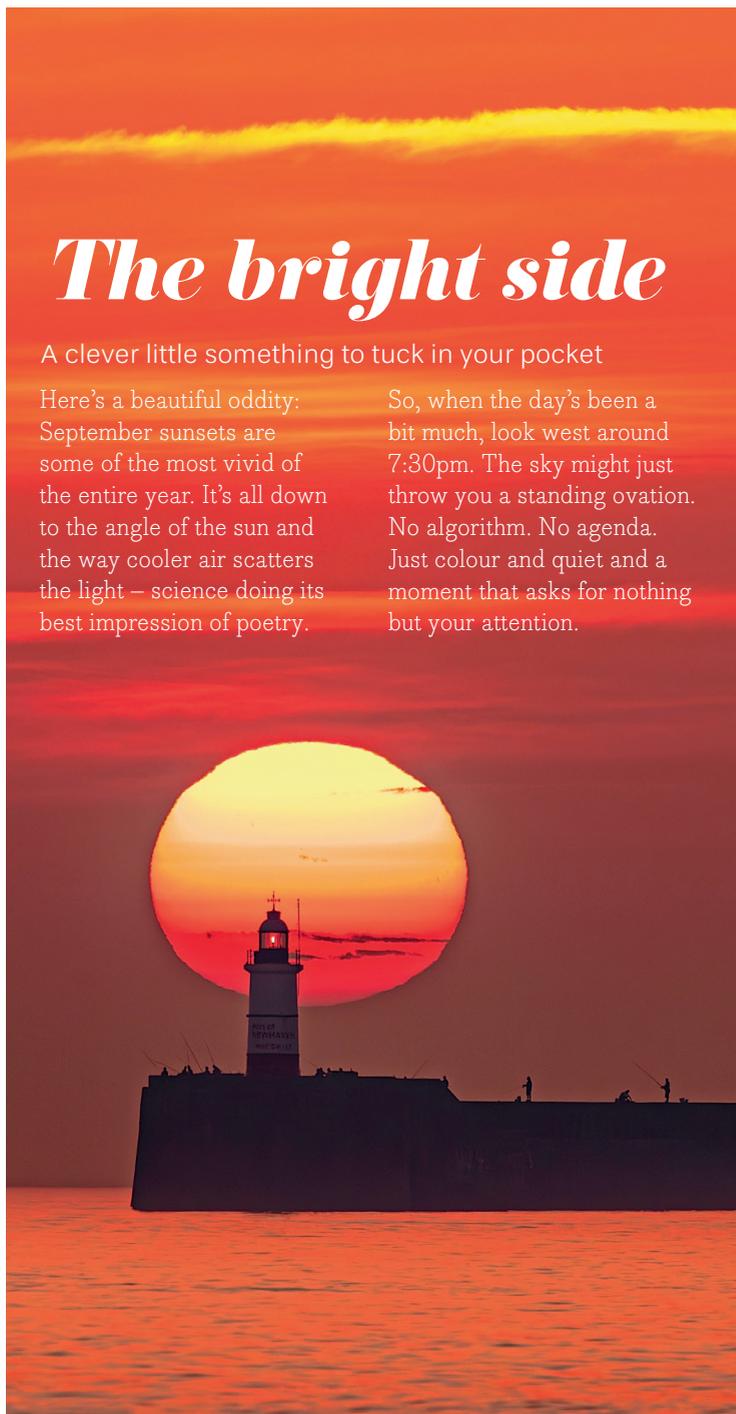
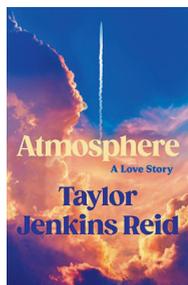
There Will Be Bodies
by Lindsey Davis
(Hodder & Stoughton)

Fancy a murder mystery with togas and attitude? Flavia Albia returns to ancient Rome, sleuthing through secrets, scandal and the odd corpse. Think *CSI: Colosseum* edition – with lashings of wit, intrigue and a heroine who doesn’t miss a trick.



Atmosphere
by Taylor Jenkins Reid
(Hutchinson Heinemann)

Houston, we have a gripping read. A trailblazing woman in NASA’s golden era must navigate love, loss and lunar-sized pressure. Emotional, exhilarating and achingly human, it’s one small step for fiction, one giant leap for your summer book stack.



The bright side

A clever little something to tuck in your pocket

Here’s a beautiful oddity: September sunsets are some of the most vivid of the entire year. It’s all down to the angle of the sun and the way cooler air scatters the light – science doing its best impression of poetry.

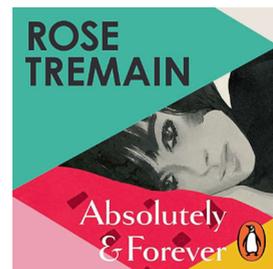
So, when the day’s been a bit much, look west around 7:30pm. The sky might just throw you a standing ovation. No algorithm. No agenda. Just colour and quiet and a moment that asks for nothing but your attention.



AUDIOBOOK SPOTLIGHT

Unmissable listen: *Absolutely & Forever* by Rose Tremain (Vintage)

A sharply observed coming-of-age tale with the bite of vintage Nancy Mitford. Seventeen-year-old Marianne is convinced she’s met the love of her life – until, of course, real life steps in. Witty, wise and quietly heartbreaking, with Rose Tremain’s trademark finesse.



Finding the funny

The greatest showcase on Earth

There really is something for everyone at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe with more than 3,000 shows available over the three weeks it runs. Known for being a hotbed of comedy talent, it's easy to overlook the expansive genres of shows covered. From cabaret and circus to dance and opera, the Scottish city really is an explosion of creative energy everywhere you look. Create your own Fringe experience with a mixture of ticketed, free and street performances and it's almost guaranteed you will get a peek at the next big thing.

- The Edinburgh Festival Fringe runs until 25 August



This month in 1996

When the Spice Girls changed everything

Girl power exploded in September 1996 after the UK release of *Wannabe*. Suddenly, school runs, nightclubs and supermarket aisles were filled with zig-a-zig-ahs. Platform trainers, leopard print, friendship groups as brands – all born here. We didn't know it then, but we were definitely Baby, Scary, Sporty, Ginger or Posh. (Still are, really.)

Stage spotlight

Theatrical triumphs inside and out

Nothing says summer quite like being outside – and this month Regent's Park Open Air Theatre is taking us on a journey to the Scottish Highlands with the musical classic, *Brigadoon*. In the space which has entertained audiences since the early 1930s, this Lerner and Loewe classic has its time to shine, over 35 years since it was last performed in the capital. The plot



has been updated – we are in World War II where fighter pilots Tommy and Jeff have crash landed and are trying to find their way home. Over the hills sisters Fiona

and Jean are preparing for a wedding and chance causes their stories to be brought together.

- **Brigadoon is on from 2 August–20 September**

ON THE BIG SCREEN

All's fair in love and war?

This might be a reimagining of the 1989 film *The War Of The Roses* but it looks set to become a classic in its own right. Chef Ivy (Olivia Colman) and architect Theo (Benedict Cumberbatch)



appear to be the perfect couple, but when Theo's career starts to fall apart, Ivy starts finding success. As the dynamic shifts, the competition between them goes into overdrive and it is clear long-held resentments are still very raw. 'It has been lots of fun, hating each other,' says Olivia, who has been friends with Benedict for years. 'There's something rather therapeutic about getting to be utterly horrible to someone and then having a good laugh about it later!'

● *The Roses* is in cinemas from 29 August

Make a day of it

Printing Workshop & Orchard Stroll at Cotehele, Cornwall

10 September

Take a hands-on, autumn-inspired printing workshop (10:30-13:30) followed by a wander through Cotehele's historic orchard trails. Discover traditional apple trees, enjoy cream tea by the quay, and explore the Tudor house and riverside setting. A perfect autumnal blend of craft and countryside.

● Book at nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/cornwall/cotehele

Good Night, Oscar

Will & Grace alumni Sean Hayes brings his Tony Award-winning performance as multi-talented actor, comedian, composer and pianist, Oscar Levant, to the UK for a limited seven-week run. Fresh from its critically acclaimed Broadway season, the play centres on the very public meltdown Oscar has on a 1958 late-night talk show – which shocked American viewers. Hayes captures the brilliance and eccentricity which made Levant a star but also hinted at the mental health issues which he grappled with. 'We're both classically trained pianists, we both have a sense of humour,' says Sean. 'He directly



suffered from mental illness and addiction, and ever since I was born, I was an observer of it. Everything just seemed to line

up with what I wanted to do to challenge myself as an actor.'

● *Good Night, Oscar* runs until 21 September

WORDS OF WISDOM

'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?'

Mary Oliver, poet



A question worth asking at any age – and especially when September offers us that rarest of things: a quiet, golden moment to reflect, reconsider and maybe, just maybe, begin again.