

4★ ROME AND VENICE TWIN CENTRE

6 nights from **£299**
Per person on selected departures



SELECTED DATES FROM APRIL-DECEMBER 2019
VENTURE ROUND ENTICING ITALIAN CITIES

Home to 900 enchanting churches, this Italian capital is a treasure trove of history and its main highlight is the Colosseum - the largest amphitheatre in the world. Stop at Michelin-starred restaurants, such as La Terrazza where rooftop panoramas of the city's most iconic landmarks await.

- WHAT'S INCLUDED**
- Return flights from UK airports
 - 3 nights bed & breakfast stay in Rome
 - Train transfer between Rome & Venice
 - 3 nights bed & breakfast stay in Venice



5★ NILE CRUISE AND STAY

11 nights from **£499**
Per person on selected departures

SELECTED DATES FROM APRIL-DECEMBER 2019
ALL-INCLUSIVE HOTEL STAY & FULL BOARD CRUISE

Labranda Royal Makadi is an elegant 5-star hotel situated on the stunning Makadi Bay, overlooking its own pristine private beach. You can spend your day either relaxing in one of the three pools, competing on the tennis court or even snorkelling on Makadi Bay. This unique resorts adopts an ultra-all-inclusive concept with unlimited house beverages and delicious delights.

- WHAT'S INCLUDED**
- Return flights to Hurghada
 - 4 nights All-inclusive stay at the 5-star Labranda Royal Makadi
 - 7 nights full board stay at the 5-star MS Presidential Commodore Cruise
 - All in-resort transfers



Sail the Nile River onboard the MS Commodore Nile Cruise and experience the greatness of Egyptian hospitality while visiting some of Egypt's most fascinating sites. Guests will enjoy the facilities and services available such as restaurant serving buffet breakfast and lunch and a set meal for dinner. The bar and deck offer the idyllic setting to relax and enjoy a drink while enjoying the scenes of the Nile. Other facilities include a swimming pool, evening activities, table tennis, various shops, and room service just to name a few.

Call **0800 368 6726**
or visit **www.jetlineholidays.com**

Prices are subject to availability and change. Offer and prices can be withdrawn at anytime without any notice. Prices are per person based on two sharing a room. Book with confidence we provide financial protection for your money when you book with us. The Jetline Holidays terms and conditions apply. ABTA protected J1693, agent for ATOL Holder 6153 - all flight-inclusive packages are ATOL protected. Calls cost 7pence per minute plus your phone company's access charge.



Gardening club

with DAVID DOMONEY

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Q&A

Keep your tools in tip top shape and come rain or shine, they'll provide shedloads of assistance - and equip you for every gardening occasion

Having the right gardening gear is vital when it comes to cutting your workload in half. After all, they are there to aid you - not fail you and ail you.

Save me from the excesses of spring

How can I protect plants from the unpredictable spring weather?

Jim, Sidcup, Kent

DAVID: Weather damage caused by fluctuating temperatures can cause brown leaves, wilting and leaf drop. Watering will stop soil temperatures rising too quickly and organic matter, like mulch, around the roots will stabilise the plant if temperatures fall.



TAILORED TOOLS

Garden equipment can get somewhat overlooked but, if an artist is only as good as their tools, so is a gardener.

When taking on a new project, get quality products that are right for the job and robust enough to last. They should be ergonomically designed for both comfort and regular use.

Your local garden centre can give advice, if you're unsure, as there are specific tools for kids, adapted equipment for disabilities and lightweight options for ease of mobility.

Longer handles are great at preventing injuries, especially when using hoes to dig up perennial weeds.

It'll mean you're not stooping over and will make removal more accurate, so you don't accidentally disturb delicate root systems.

Getting the right fit will add so much value to the time you spend in the garden, but it will also stop you from overworking. Back-breaking

“Maintain your garden toolkit and it'll be your greatest asset

Be patient, plotting can take 2 seasons

How should I prepare derelict land for growing produce? Will, via email

DAVID: When taking over a new plot, like an allotment or garden, clear any brambles, weeds or woody material, remove any debris and dig over the soil - adding in organic matter. It's always best to improve the soil quality, but it may take a couple of seasons.

TIP of the week

Wipe the leaves of houseplants with damp cotton wool to get rid of pore-blocking bacteria and dust. Less dust means more access to light for a healthy plant.

GET IN TOUCH

For loads more hints and tips on gardening visit daviddomoney.com or follow me on Facebook at @DavidDomoneyTV or on Twitter @daviddomoney



Get a grip on tools

work will become a breeze if you replace any equipment that has fallen into disrepair.

If you're worried about waste, recycle them into stylish features - I've seen all sorts from disused rakes used to hang other tools and wooden handled spades for gate posts.

CLEAN AND PRISTINE
Maintain your garden toolkit and it'll be your greatest asset, repaying you with years of sturdy service and saving you money down the line.

Think of cleaning tools as a routine check-up, like servicing your car engine. Use soapy water and either a wire wool brush or a crumpled-up piece of tin foil to dislodge dirt.

Lightly rub over the surface of the metal in circular motions, making sure not to damage the surface.

Get into the habit of cleaning down your tools after each use. For contaminated plots or diseased plants, take extra care by using Jeyes fluid or Citrox as a disinfectant after pruning or digging - get this at garden or home stores, then rinse well and follow the instructions on the packet.

Once tools are spotless they'll need conditioning, so treat with general-purpose oil to provide a protective

damp floor, where they'll also be a trip hazard. You can fashion yourself a tool wall out of key hooks or fill a bucket with coarse sand to prop up tools so they're ready to grab. Pop them in the sand head first and the grit will clean mud from the surface, keep them sharp and they'll remain dry to stop

STORAGE SOLUTIONS

Once you're finished giving your tools a facelift, hang them up to dry. Try to keep them away from the

rust from forming. Protecting and prolonging the life of your favourite tools has been done for generations and you can pass this down too.

CAREFUL CUTTING

Stop pruners becoming sticky by cleaning them with mineral spirits or

water-displacing sprays like WD-40. You might be able to take small-bladed secateurs apart for better access.

When purchasing pruning tools, look for brands featuring a safety lock for safe storage, like Kent & Stowe's 2 in 1 Ratchet Anvil Secateurs - see kentandstowe.com for more info. Fully

functioning tools will take better care of the plants too. Pruning tools that are clogged up with plant sap may become blunt and crush delicate plant stems.

Sharp blades give a clean cut to help you grow like a pro by speeding up the healing process, reducing damage and encouraging healthy new growth.

STAYING SHARP

Use a whetstone or file to sharpen - it's not just the obvious cutting implements that need attention. Much like kitchen knives, keep anything with a cutting edge safe to prevent accidents.

For spades and hoes, work slowly and evenly along the edge without making them too thin.

Gardening gloves are tools too - instrumental in helping grip or adding protection for your hands, so buy a pair to fit the function and it'll make such a difference.

In short, look after your tools and they will look after you.

■ Catch me at the Ideal Home Show on March 22, 23, 28 & 29 and April 4 & 5. Go to idealhomeshow.co.uk for bookings and get two for the price of one tickets using the code **TAL241**.

film. Although many stainless steel tools are unlikely to rust, it does depend on the quality of the metal.

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Heroes at centres of excellence



BOND Steve chats to Beaver Scouts

At the heart of our annual Cultivation Street competition, sponsored by Calliope®, is a large network of people passionate about making their local environment a better place to live.

The Garden Centre Ambassadors scheme is key to this - assembling and encouraging highly-skilled garden centre staff who are enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge, to help and better advise their local community.

Our 2018 Ambassador of the Year, Steve Purton, said: "It felt amazing to win. It's lovely people appreciate what we're doing. Garden centres aren't just another soulless retail outlet and the



Cultivation Street scheme proves it." Steve, of Dobbies at Milton Keynes, Bucks, is a fantastic example of the inspiring work done every day by garden centre staff around the country.

We are proud of how this community offers support and comes together with a shared interest in gardening, nature, and love of the outdoors.

We understand how important it is for gardening projects to have a point

of contact local to them, where they can find advice and support.

Many experienced ambassadors have gone beyond this to create strong bonds with local communities, providing exciting workshops, talks, gardening supplies and equipment.

Steve added: "With all the schools and clubs we help and teach, you really feel like you're giving something back to the children and adults in the local area. It's about the people growing too."

For info and a chance to grab free Calliope geraniums in our Calliope My Life contest, see cultivationstreet.com or follow #calliopemylife.

OFFER of the week

Euonymus fortunei "Goldy" is a fantastic dwarf evergreen shrub that will really brighten up any border or patio display.

It has a compact habit and produces dense foliage that starts green but quickly changes to a bright golden yellow.

Height and spread: 45-60cm - 9cm pot-grown plants supplied.

You can buy one Dwarf **Euonymus Goldy** for **£8.99** or buy four for **HALF PRICE** at **£19.98**.

To order by debit/credit card call **0843 922 5000** quoting **SMTG010** or send a cheque made payable to **Garden Offers**, using a blue or black pen, to: **Euonymus Goldy Offer (SMTG010), PO Box 64, South West District Office, Manchester, M16 9HY** or visit mirrorgardenoffers.co.uk.



TOP BUY



This Salladskal vertical plant stand from Ikea would work indoors or out but is particularly useful for a balcony or patio if you're strapped for space. Built like a ladder, it has five trays for growing different-sized plants and is self-assembly. It comes in hard-wearing painted metal so it's an attractive feature in itself. I found it for **£35** via ikea.com