

19.06.2026

FRIDAY

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**FATHER'S DAY
SPECIAL**

Great escapes,
gifts and
gatherings

The *family* formula

From humble beginnings to business success,
the Sajan brothers share life lessons that shaped
them and the next generation

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Friday is published and printed by
Al Nisr Publishing LLC

LET'S TALK

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Fathers and football fanatics

Every four years, football takes over the world. During the more than month-long FIFA World Cup, office talk is dominated by the beautiful game, group chats become battlefields, and people who have not watched a match in months suddenly have strong opinions on tactics, referees and penalties. No sport creates collective joy quite like football. Across the UAE, families, friends and entire communities will spend the coming weeks cheering for their teams, celebrating victories and recovering from heartbreak.

Some will support the countries they call home. Others will adopt a team along the way. Brazil, Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Egypt and the Netherlands seem to have no shortage of fans wherever you go in the UAE.

I have always supported Portugal for reasons that will surprise no one. Cristiano Ronaldo introduced many of us to football and helped turn casual viewers into lifelong fans. Alongside Lionel Messi, he shaped an era that many football fans may never experience again. Whichever side you are on, this World Cup feels like a final opportunity to celebrate two players whose talents have defined modern football. Argentina supporters, please be kind. Football is always better when admiration outweighs rivalry.

Football frenzy aside, the spirit of fatherhood, family and values that connect generations run through this issue. In a fitting tribute to the edition's Father's Day theme, our cover story features one of the UAE's best-known business families. For Rizwan and Anis Sajan, success has never been measured by business alone. As their sons take on greater responsibility within the Danube family, they reflect on leadership, sacrifice, family bonds and the lessons passed on from one generation to the next.

Elsewhere, Bollywood actor Ronit Roy tells us why fatherhood remains the most meaningful role of his life, we explore the evolution in sartorial sensibilities among dads, what Cristiano Ronaldo can teach ordinary men about fitness after 40, and the practical advice every dad should know on skincare, sunscreen, beard care and better sleep.

You will also find Father's Day experiences across the UAE, World Cup screenings and fan zones, football-inspired recipes, and a gift guide curated just for daddy dearest.

Enjoy the football, celebrate fathers and make time for the people you love.

— Krita Coelho, Editor

WE'RE LISTENING...

More arts, more culture

As a regular reader of *Friday*, I would love to see more coverage of the UAE's vibrant cultural scene. While the magazine does a wonderful job covering lifestyle and entertainment, greater attention to live music performances, concerts, local bands and upcoming art exhibitions would be greatly appreciated. The UAE hosts an impressive range of creative events, and a dedicated guide would help readers discover and support them.

Ayesha Rahman

Beyond the familiar

I enjoy *Friday's* food features and would love to see more unusual recipes. There are so many lesser-known dishes from different cultures that deserve attention. Featuring unique flavours would make the food pages even more interesting.

Neesha Menon

Spotlight on local design

While the Eid Al Adha fashion feature (*Friday*, May 22) was interesting, I would love to see more coverage of Emirati fashion. The UAE is home to many talented designers whose work reflects local culture while embracing contemporary trends. Featuring Emirati designers, their latest collections and the stories behind their creations would give readers a deeper appreciation of the country's growing fashion industry.

Fatima Mansoori

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GALLERY

Life through your lens, our pick of your best pictures



Devobroto Das captures a sea of roses framing a traditional Bhutanese bridge, bringing together the country's natural beauty and architectural heritage



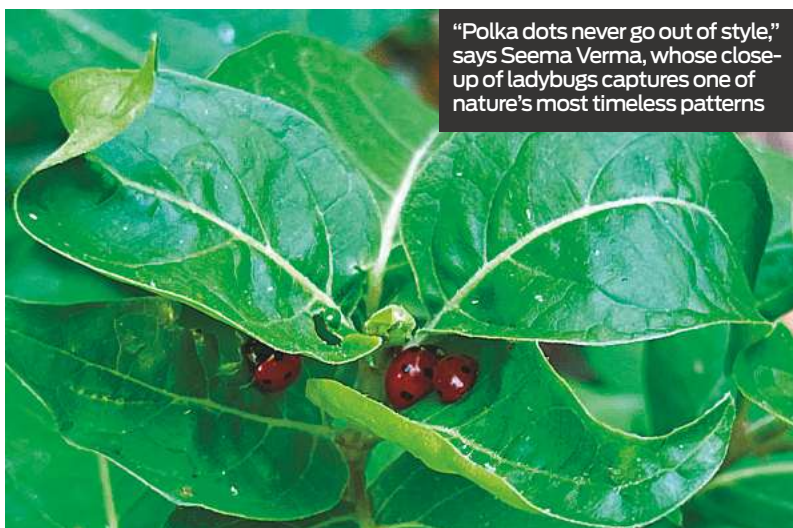
SEE YOUR PIX IN OUR GALLERY...

Would you like to have your pictures featured in Friday? Email high-res (300dpi) copies of your best photographs to us at friday@gulfnews.com. Please include a short caption indicating where and when you took the picture and your thoughts about the image.

Captured after a rainy night some days ago, this tranquil seascape is Nitin Verma's reminder that clear skies often follow unsettled weather



Sophia D'Souza captures a quieter moment in Karama, where a patch of green offers a welcome pause from the rhythm of city life



"Polka dots never go out of style," says Seema Verma, whose close-up of ladybugs captures one of nature's most timeless patterns

DADS DESERVE THE DAY

Celebrate Father's Day with a morning of family wellness, relaxation and dining at Novotel Dubai Gold District. Families can enjoy a complimentary yoga session, fathers receive free rooftop pool access, and guests can tuck into a special breakfast at The Spicery for Dh40 per person. Fathers also receive 50 per cent off their total bill at participating restaurants and bars across the Dubai Gold District and Dubai Deira Cluster of Hotels.

When: June 21, 2026, 7am-10.30am

Where: Novotel Dubai Gold District, Dubai

For more details: Call 055 473 5384



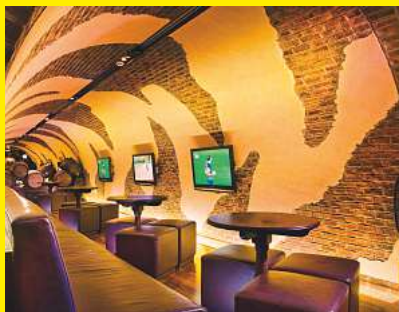
SUNDAY LAUGH SESSIONS

End the weekend with an evening of stand-up comedy. The event features emerging comedians, open mic performances, crowd interaction and occasional appearances by popular comedy acts. Guests can enjoy special offers including 30 per cent off food and beverages and 40 per cent off spirits throughout the evening, making it an ideal outing for friends, families and comedy lovers.

When: Every Sunday from June 21, 2026 onwards, 7pm-9pm

Where: Topsy Tikka, Four Points by Sheraton Bur Dubai

For more details: Call 056 414 2213



GIFT BETTER HEALTH

Skip the usual Father's Day gifts and treat dad to a wellness boost with Health Serve's special offer. Fathers can enjoy 20 per cent off energy and immunity booster IVs, male wellness tests, preventive health check-ups and home healthcare services, all delivered in the comfort of their own home. The limited-time promotion is designed to encourage proactive health and wellbeing.

When: June 20-22, 2026

Where: Home service across the UAE

For more details: Visit Health Serve or call 04 357 7657 to book an appointment

OMAR KHAIRAT LIVE

Legendary Egyptian composer and pianist Omar Khairat makes his Abu Dhabi debut with a spectacular orchestral performance featuring some of his most celebrated compositions and film scores. Expect an evening of cinematic music, sweeping melodies and emotional storytelling as one of the Arab world's most acclaimed musicians takes to the stage. Tickets start from Dh206.

When: June 20

Where: Etihad Arena, Abu Dhabi

For more details: Visit Etihadarena.ae



FILIPINO FAMILY STAYCATION

Filipino nationals across the UAE and GCC can enjoy 60 per cent off stays at LEGOLAND Hotel Dubai this June. Families can experience themed LEGO-inspired rooms, interactive play areas, nightly entertainment, creative workshops and family-friendly activities. To redeem the offer, guests must use promo code PH128 and present valid proof of Filipino nationality at check-in.

When: Valid until June 28

Where: LEGOLAND Hotel Dubai, Dubai Parks and Resorts

For more details: Visit Legoland.ae



MUSEUM MUMS MEET-UP

Mothers are invited to connect, learn and recharge at this weekly gathering hosted by Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi and Tribe Mama. The sessions feature afternoon tea, parenting discussions led by certified mindset parenting coach Nadia Szczesiak, and conversations on topics ranging from AI and social media to emotional resilience and family values. Children can enjoy a dinosaur-inspired movement class and soft play activities while parents take part.

When: Every Tuesday, June 23 to July 7, 2026, 3pm–5pm

Where: Nayzak, Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi

For more details: Visit [Mamatribe-uae.com](https://mamatribe-uae.com)



EMIRATI MUSIC EVENING

Experience an evening of music and poetry as the Cultural Foundation's Jalsat series welcomes Emirati musician Abdulrahman Aljunaid. Blending contemporary sounds with the UAE's rich cultural heritage, Aljunaid will perform timeless Emirati songs and pay tribute to national icons including Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and Jaber Jassem. Tickets start from Dh106.

When: June 26, 2026

Where: Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi

For more details: Visit CulturalFoundation.ae

SUMMER FAMILY ESCAPE

Beat the heat with a family day out at Times Square Center. The indoor destination offers creative workshops, STEM activities, robotics, board games, indoor adventures, fitness sessions, shopping and family-friendly dining under one roof. Children can explore hands-on learning at StuDIYo Lab and RoboLand, while parents enjoy wellness experiences, local markets and unique retail concepts. From painting sessions and comic stores to Chillout Ice Lounge and family restaurants, there is something for every age group.

When: Daily from June 19, 2026 onwards

Where: Times Square Center, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai

For more details: Visit TimesSquareCenter.ae



Solitaire Jewels unveils Dubai's popular diamond engagement ring styles

If there is one diamond shape defining how modern brides choose their engagement ring in 2026, it is the oval diamond ring. Global industry data shows oval-cut diamonds now account for one in four engagement ring purchases — nearly overtaking the round brilliant for the first time in history. In Dubai, Solitaire Jewels says the shift has been even sharper.

“Two years ago, round diamonds led our engagement ring enquiries by a wide margin,” says the founder of Solitaire Jewels, whose private boutique is in Gold & Diamond Park, Dubai. “Today, more than one-third of the brides who walk in — or reach us on WhatsApp — ask for an oval. It elongates the finger, it photographs beautifully, and at equal carat weight, it looks visibly larger than a round. Once a bride sees that difference on her hand, the decision makes itself.”



In response, Solitaire Jewels has launched several new oval diamond engagement ring designs across its collection — from classic solitaire settings with baguette side stones to elegant marquise-band designs, all crafted in

18-karat gold. Every centre stone is a GIA-certified natural diamond, a distinction the brand considers non-negotiable.

“We only use GIA-certified natural diamonds because GIA is the most trusted grading laboratory in the world,” the founder explains. “When a bride wears a GIA-certified stone, she knows exactly what she has — the cut, the clarity, the colour are all independently verified. And unlike lab-grown alternatives, a natural diamond holds its value. It becomes something she can pass down, not just wear.”

The new oval collection is available at Solitaire Jewels' boutique in Dubai, and at its Kuwait location in Zahra Complex, Salmiya. Clients across the GCC can also access the brand's Design Your Own service, selecting their preferred oval diamond and setting remotely or in person at the boutique.

GIFT GUIDE



Cross Accessories and Writing Instruments, POR, available at Jashanmal



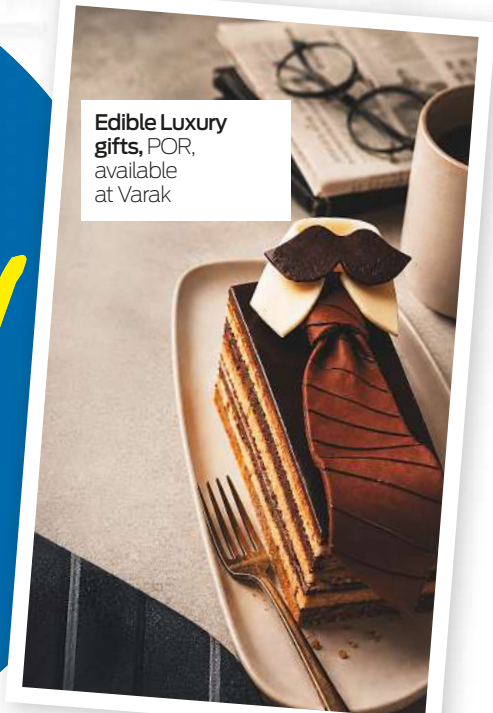
KJ Serums Ultimate Skincare Gift Set for Men, Dh1,007, available at KJserums.com



Sage — The Luxe Brewer Thermal, Dh1,299, available at all leading home appliances stores

Wrapped
and
ready

Skip the predictable presents and surprise dad with something he'll genuinely appreciate



Edible Luxury gifts, POR, available at Varak



Acer Aspire Spin 14 Intel Core Ultra 5 Home Laptop, POR, available at all leading electronic stores



Soundcore by Anker Liberty 5 Pro Max True Wireless Noise-Cancelling Earbuds (Black), POR, available at all leading electronic stores



Coffee Cups with Moka Pot, POR, available at Curate Home



World Cup Historical Mini Ball Set, Dh1,199, available at Adidas



Whales Offset Drawstring Swim Shorts, POR, available at Vilebrequin



SanDisk FIFA World Cup 2026 USB Type-C Flash Drive 64GB, POR, available at all leading electronic stores



Nice Beard! Gift, Dh250, available at Lush



G Shock GMB 2100, POR, available at all leading watch stores and online



Spa Ceylon Frankincense Men's Skin Care Set, Dh195, available at Spaceylon.ae



Squeeze The Day Shower Gel, from Dh65, available at Lush



Sampler Tea Set, POR, available at sy'a



Date Snacks of Mixed Flavours, POR, available at Rashtions



Father's Day Edit, POR, available at Burberry

THE LEGACY LIVES ON

For **Rizwan** and **Anis Sajjan**, the journey was never just about building a business. As their sons take on greater responsibility within the Danube family, they reflect on fatherhood, leadership and the values that continue to shape the family across generations, while speaking to Krita Coelho

LESSONS THAT LAST

On most days, conversations inside the Sajjan household begin where many families end: with business. Deals are discussed over breakfast, strategy follows them to the office, and ideas continue long after working hours. Yet beneath the story of the Danube Group lies something far more personal. At its heart is a father who lost his own father at 16, a son raised to understand responsibility early, and a new generation now learning these lessons around a family dining table.

For Rizwan Sajjan, the story begins in a modest lower-middle-class home where money was scarce but ambition was not. His father worked as a supervisor and insisted that his children attend a convent school despite the financial strain. Wanting to keep up with his classmates, the young Rizwan sold crackers, milk and anything else that could earn extra income. The lessons that stayed with him came during quiet evenings at home. He recalls massaging his father's shoulders after work while listening to stories from the office.

"Those conversations were full of lessons," he says. "They remain fresh in my mind even today." When his father died, childhood ended abruptly. Rizwan studied, worked at a steel firm and explored small opportunities while carrying responsibilities most teenagers never encounter.

A turning point arrived when an uncle fulfilled a promise and offered him a job in



Kuwait. Rizwan remembers receiving the letter on his eighteenth birthday. The salary was almost three times what he could earn in India, allowing him to support his mother, brother and sister.

"As the eldest sibling, I was responsible for my brother, sister and mother," he says. "The money I earned allowed me to give them a more comfortable life."

Long before being a father, he had already become a father figure. That later shaped how he raised his son, Adel Sajjan.

Adel laughs when people describe him as someone who grew up with a silver spoon. His memories tell a different story. At 13, he spent summer holidays working in Danube's building materials yards, wearing a shirt and tie in Dubai's heat. "I was earning about Dh500 a month, which felt like a lot of money for a 13-year-old," he says.

By the time he graduated, he had years of practical experience behind him, and

some life lessons. "The first is that there is no shortcut to success. Hard work beats everything," Adel says. "The second is innovation. My father's favourite saying is that you should do something new every day."

For Rizwan, the greatest satisfaction is not the success of the company but the person his son has become. "What makes me proud is how balanced he is," he says. "He is focused on his work, his family, health and friendships."

The admiration runs both ways. Adel describes his father as one with the Midas touch. "I've never met anyone who can sell the way he can," he says. "He could probably sell a comb to a bald man."

Their relationship operates across overlapping roles of father, son, mentor, colleague and business partner. "One disadvantage of having your boss at home is that the conversation never really stops," Adel says.

Rizwan laughs at the observation. "Danube is our family and our family is Danube," he says. "I had it, Adel has it, and the next generation will have it too."

That next generation is already learning those values. Adel and his wife Sana are raising three children. When one of Adel's sons wanted another toy, father and son created a miniature business instead.

"We created a small farmers' market at home," he says. "He bought fruit from the supermarket, sold it to family and friends at a small profit, then learned he could buy cheaper at the wholesale market."

The six-year-old quickly began understanding cost, pricing and profit margins. For Adel, fatherhood has deepened his appreciation of the man he grew up watching.

"I genuinely feel like the luckiest son in the world," he says. "I get to learn from him every day."

PHOTOS BY ANAS CHERUR

A BOND MORE THAN BUSINESS

Spend time with Anis Sajjan and his sons, Azhar and Sahil, and one theme emerges repeatedly: family. Long before titles, boardrooms and business strategies entered the picture, there was a family determined to stay together. That commitment continues to shape how one of the UAE's best-known business families lives and works today.

For Anis, the story begins with loss. He was eight when his father died, leaving his elder brother, Rizwan Sajjan, with responsibilities far beyond his years. "My brother was only 16 when he suddenly had to shoulder the responsibility of the entire family," he says. "Even today, almost 50 years later, he remains the father figure of our family."

Watching Rizwan put family before himself left a lasting impression. Today, the brothers lead different parts of the Danube business and spend less time together than they once did, yet Anis says the bond remains unchanged. The greatest lesson he learned from Rizwan was the importance of keeping the family together, a value that now defines his own relationship with Azhar and Sahil.

Ask him what makes him proudest about his sons and the answer has little to do with business achievements. "The greatest gift I feel I have given my sons is the bond they share with each other," he says. "Their unity is the biggest gift I have given them."

That emphasis on togetherness runs through every part of the family's story. While both sons now hold important roles within the Danube Group ecosystem, Anis



measures success through character as much as professional accomplishment.

At work, Anis describes himself as a leader rather than a boss. Family ties do not exempt anyone from accountability. "If they make a mistake, they come forward with an explanation or an apology," he says. "They take responsibility for their actions."

For Azhar and Sahil, those expectations were established long before they entered the workplace. Azhar recalls growing up

with a father who was deeply involved in every aspect of their lives. "He is still overprotective," he says with a laugh. "Even today, I will get a call at midnight asking, 'Where are you?'"

One childhood memory remains especially vivid. During a business trip to China, Anis received a call from his young son saying he missed him. Despite having meetings remaining, he shortened the trip and returned home. "Family has always come first for him," Azhar says.

Every school day, Azhar and Sahil would call their father during lunch at the office. Looking back, Azhar says those conversations mattered more than he realised. The lessons Anis passed on were equally practical. Both sons speak about his insistence on understanding every detail of the business. "Trust but verify," says Azhar. "Know your numbers, understand your business, and have accountability."

Sahil echoes the philosophy. He says his father taught him to stay involved, appreciate colleagues and never assume he is the smartest person in the room. "One lesson that has always stayed with me is to hire people who are better than you."

Their working relationship has evolved naturally because business was never separated from everyday life. "There has never really been a transition," says Sahil. "Business conversations can happen anywhere."

All three believe communication is what keeps both the family and the business strong. As the next generation brings fresh thinking into the business, the family's values remain unchanged. Azhar has helped build brands such as Casa Milano, while Sahil believes innovation works best when combined with the principles established by previous generations.

For Anis, success still comes back to family. When asked to describe Azhar and Sahil, he pauses briefly before offering an answer that carries the pride of a father more than the assessment of a businessman. "Every father's dream."

SAJAN BROTHERS

The power of family unity

The success story of Danube Group is deeply intertwined with the journey of two brothers, Rizwan Sajjan and Anis Sajjan. It is a journey shaped by adversity, ambition, family values and an unwavering belief in partnership.

But for Anis, Rizwan has never been just an elder brother. “When people ask me about my father, it always brings a smile to my face,” says Anis Sajjan. “I lost my father at a young age, but I never felt that void in the traditional sense because Rizwan was always there for me. He became my guide, my support system and, in many ways, a father figure.”

Their journey was not without hardship. In 1990, the Gulf War forced the Sajjan family to leave Kuwait and return to India, leaving behind the life they had built. “The Kuwait war changed everything for us,” Anis recalls. “We had to start over from scratch. It was a difficult time, but it taught us resilience and the belief that no matter how hard life gets, you can rebuild.”

After the setback, Rizwan moved to the UAE in search of opportunity, while Anis built his early career in sales in India. Eventually, Rizwan called his younger brother to Dubai with a vision to build something together. “He believed Dubai was growing rapidly and wanted me to join him,” says Anis. “We started with very little, but we shared one dream, to build something meaningful and lasting.”

That dream became Danube Group. What began as a small trading company has grown into one of the UAE’s most recognised home-grown business groups, with interests across building materials, real estate, home improvement and other verticals. “The success didn’t happen overnight,” says Anis. “We built it step by step. Our focus was simple: create a strong foundation in building materials and make Danube the number one name in the region.”

As the business expanded, their roles evolved. Rizwan strengthened the core business and later led the group’s entry



For Anis Sajjan, Rizwan has always been more than a brother — a guide, mentor and father figure

into real estate through Danube Properties. Anis focused on building Milano, which developed into a recognised regional brand in bathware, sanitaryware and home solutions. “Earlier, we were more like father and son,” Anis reflects. “I was younger then, and we spent long hours together in Jebel Ali, building everything from the ground up. Today, our responsibilities have grown and our routines have changed, but the trust, respect and love remain the same.”

For Anis, unity has always been their

greatest strength. “The biggest lesson we brothers have passed on to our sons is our unity,” he says. “It is heartwarming to see that same bond among them, the sharing of knowledge, the respect they have for one another and the way they support each other.”

Anis adds, “In business, we have often seen that when the first generation does well, the real challenge comes with the second generation. But we truly believe, and are confident, that our sons Adel, Azhar and Sahil will carry this legacy forward with the same unity, values and dedication with which Rizwan and I built it.”

For Anis, those values were shaped long before Danube was founded. They were forged during a period when Rizwan had to step into a role far beyond his years after their father passed

away. “I was the eldest in the family, so after my father passed away, the responsibility naturally fell on my shoulders,” Rizwan recalls. “As the eldest sibling, I was responsible for my mother, my sister and my younger brother.”

A turning point came when an opportunity took him to Kuwait at the age of 18. “I was struggling to earn Rs5,000 or Rs6,000 a month in Mumbai, and suddenly I was offered a salary of Rs18,000 a month. It felt like winning a lottery,” he says.

The move allowed him to support his family and ensure his siblings could pursue their education without worrying about finances. “It taught me discipline, resilience and the importance of putting family first,” he says. “It would have been easy to focus only on my own future, but I always felt responsible for making sure the entire family moved forward together.”

For Anis Sajjan, Rizwan Sajjan is both brother and father figure. For the Sajjan family, the values that helped one young man hold a family together continue to guide a business empire and the generations that will one day lead it. ■



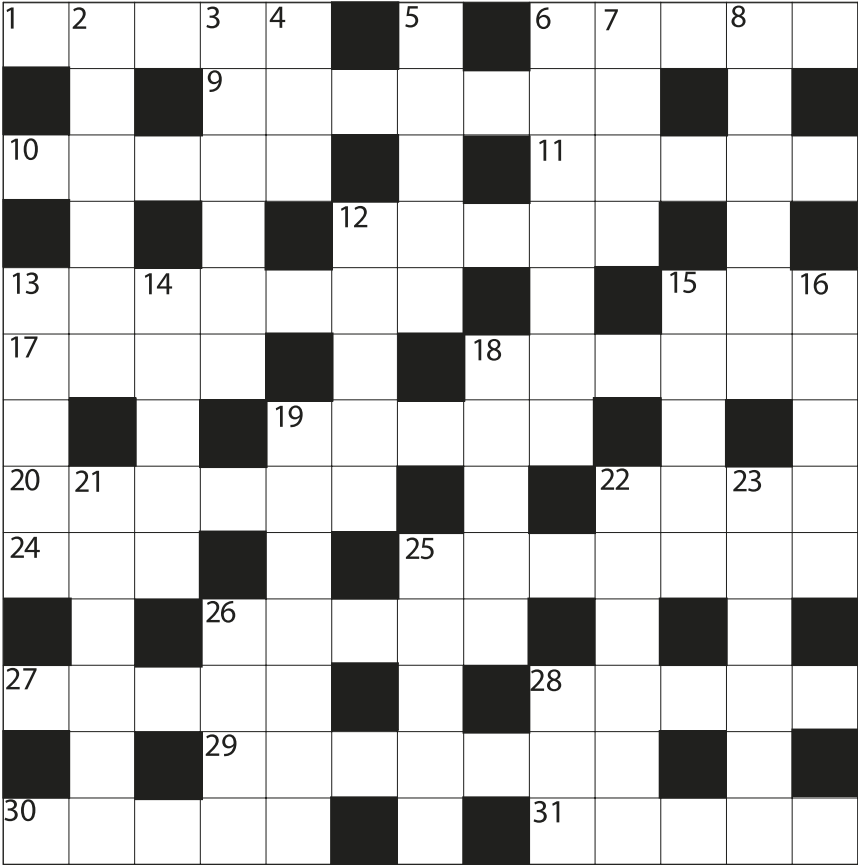
Raised on the same values that built a family and a business, Sahil, Adel and Azhar represent the next chapter of the Sajjan story

CROSSWORD

CRYPTIC PUZZLE

ACROSS

- 1 Plain woman repeatedly left out (5)
6 A desire to get a letter (5)
9 Union men? (7)
10 Composer of a piece about some prizes (5)
11 Fear of the man with the gun? (5)
12 Dance with uncle before the seaman returns (5)
13 A Shakespeare character's firearms? (7)
15 East-Enders' queen, or just a little boy (3)
17 Does he do nothing but sit back? (4)
18 Can it be red hot? (6)
19 Witches once to be found around mid-Devon (5)
20 To have a late night is upsetting to pups (4,2)
22 Bother about the Americans being in fearless extremities (4)
24 In time, you'll need a new one (3)
25 Lovers of cruelty? (7)
26 People having fun with politics? (5)



- 27 It involves shooting at 'flying saucers'! (5)
28 Long to say yes to sailors? (5)
29 Evertonians with taste? (7)
30 Bit of a boulder, not in a top position (5)
31 Something hard for the butcher to use? (5)

DOWN

- 2 To the Spanish, I see, it means draw forth (6)
3 Throws out or discards without right (6)
4 Much used by pilots (3)
5 Certain cashers accommodate old people (5)
6 Like those entertaining nights with Sinbad the Sailor (7)
7 She is a bit of a lady (4)
8 Tony's cup? (6)
12 Could it sail from Oslo, on the quiet? (5)
13 I pose with aplomb (5)
14 He may be simple, but the real one is "Pure" (5)
15 Figure to get a new suit with the dance in mind (5)
16 In which moves are made to attack royalty (5)
18 To get out of debt, do something about income (5)
19 Official artist in court, possibly (7)
21 Absorbed, but deceived (4,2)
22 The very best handwriting is out of the way (6)
23 Play the lead for one short day, then have a lean time (6)
25 Coldly formal due to silly tiffs (5)
26 Chap from Lampeter (4)
28 The right answer? (3)

EASY PUZZLE

- 1 Clan (5)
6 Coerce (5)
9 Assembled (7)
10 Shoe part (5)
11 Shade of brown (5)
12 Ships (5)
13 Past (7)
15 Ready (3)
17 Curved building (4)
18 Liquid container (6)
19 Petty officer (5)
20 River (6)
22 Fruit (4)
24 Domestic fowl (3)
25 Gathered (7)
26 Passageway (5)
27 Location (5)
28 Swamp (5)
29 Natural surroundings (7)
30 Sadness (5)
31 Distributed (5)
7 Poems (4)
8 Hand tool (6)
12 Besom (5)
13 Severe (5)
14 Deride (5)
15 Blemish (5)
16 Lukewarm (5)
18 Beast (5)
19 Flavouring (3,4)
21 Cashier (6)
22 Martial art (6)
23 Small mammal (6)
25 Magic spirit (5)
26 Pain (4)
28 Insane (3)

FRIDAY'S MAY 22, 2026, CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

CRYPTIC PUZZLE

- ACROSS:** 1, Actor 6, Po-N-ds 9, F-action 10, G-ruff 11, Plonk 12, Bully 13, Ca-bare-t 15, D-I'm 17, All-y 18, P-raise 19, P-lays 20, Chorus 22, Fido 24, (s-)Had(-e) 25, Politic(-ian) 26, Pla-I-n 27, Tab-OO 28, Atlas 29, Outp-ace 30, Fault 31, Trees
- DOWN:** 2, Cereal 3, Off day 4, RAF 5, Stout 6, Poplar's 7, On-ly 8, Dennis 12, (hell's)Bells 13, Cat-Ch. 14, Blood 15, Digit 16, Medoc 18, P-ylon 19, Pull-out 21, Havana 22, Fitter 23, Dilate 25, Pippa 26, Pool 28, A-Ct.

EASY PUZZLE

- ACROSS:** 1, Asked 6, Cower 9, Demigod 10, Cabin 11, Nears 12, Dents 13, Demoted 15, Ant 17, User 18, Hoards 19, Drool 20, Cherry 22, Boar 24, Ear 25, Defends 26, Libel 27, Spain 28, Pilot 29, Centred 30, Greed 31, Teeth
- DOWN:** 2, Scales 3, Editor 4, Den 5, Fired 6, Control 7, Odes 8, Errand 12, Decry 13, Dunce 14, Meter 15, Argon 16, Tsars 18, Hovel 19, Drained 21, Hamper 22, Beside 23, Adroit 25, Delta 26, Lice 28, Pet

Solutions will be given in the next issue of Friday

THE LONG GAME

After nearly four decades in the spotlight, actor **Ronit Roy** tells Krita Coelho why fatherhood has shaped him more profoundly than any role he has played on screen

For nearly four decades, Ronit Roy has occupied a rare position in Indian entertainment. He has been a film hero, a television phenomenon, a character actor, an antagonist, a courtroom icon, a streaming-era performer and, through every reinvention, an actor who has managed to avoid becoming trapped by any one version of himself. In an industry obsessed with novelty, Roy's career has unfolded with remarkable durability. He remains busy, sought after and creatively engaged at an age when many actors begin looking back. Roy seems more interested in looking ahead.

That outlook becomes apparent almost immediately when he is asked about longevity. Most actors have a theory about survival, but Roy does not. "I do not know. I do not have the answer to that question," he says. "I have never consciously tried to stay relevant. I have simply kept learning about my craft."

It is a disarmingly simple answer from a man whose career has spanned the rise of satellite television, the dominance of daily soaps, the resurgence of character-driven cinema and the streaming revolution. Roy's explanation has little to do with strategy and everything to do with curiosity. He speaks about learning from theories written decades ago and absorbing influences from younger actors around him.

"Maybe watching younger actors perform has a subconscious effect on you," he says. "I never really had a fixed style of acting, so when I work with the current generation of directors, producers and



actors, I tend to go with the flow."

The statement offers a useful clue to understanding Roy's career. Flexibility has always been one of his strengths. From his early film appearances in the 1990s to the television success that transformed him into a household name and the acclaimed performances that followed in films such as *Udaan*, Roy has consistently avoided creative rigidity. His characters may differ

dramatically, yet there is a sense of complete commitment in each performance.

Today, as audiences discover him across multiple platforms, Roy remains grateful for the simple fact of being able to work. "It has been nearly 40 years, and the future still looks very promising," he says. "There is great work coming up, and I am thankful to God for that."

If there is one theme that repeatedly surfaces in Roy's reflections on acting, it is complexity. He is no longer interested in straightforward heroes or easily defined personalities. The roles that attract him are those that reveal themselves gradually. "The roles that excite me most are the ones where there is more to discover," he says. "What excites me is finding the conflict and complexity within that person."

He points to father figures as an example. Roy has played fathers countless times across films and television, yet he rejects the idea that these roles are interchangeable. "I have played a father in many films, yet every father has been different," he says. "Every character on screen is a living character."

The challenge lies in uncovering the contradictions that make people feel real. For Roy, difficulty is more of an attraction than an obstacle. "When a character is extremely complex, it becomes difficult to play, and that difficulty is what excites me."

Work and the people

That search for complexity has found a natural home in the streaming era. Roy is currently immersed in OTT projects and speaks enthusiastically about the



opportunities they provide. Yet his criteria for choosing work are not what one might expect. He spends less time evaluating the platform and more time assessing the people involved. “I am mainly doing OTT work these days,” he says. “More than the project itself, I look at the people behind it.”

He places enormous value on vision, competence and creative integrity. “The right people can elevate a substandard project,” Roy says. “I prefer to place my faith in people who know what they are doing, who are clear about their vision and who genuinely want to make good cinema and tell meaningful stories that entertain audiences.”

The emphasis on people appears repeatedly throughout the conversation. Roy speaks about collaborators with genuine affection. When asked whether he prefers films, television or digital content, he dismisses the premise entirely. “It is never about the medium,” he says. “It is about the work you are doing within that medium.”

He describes the pleasure of sharing scenes with talented actors, working with directors who encourage exploration and finding producers who create a supportive environment on set. “If you have good actors opposite you, it becomes even more enjoyable,” he says. “If you are working with a director who allows you to explore, regardless of the medium, it becomes even more exciting.”

The philosophy reflects a career shaped less by hierarchy and more by collaboration. Roy does not appear interested in ranking formats. He is more interested in the quality of the experience. Away from the camera, Roy’s life is built around a structure that sounds almost old-fashioned in an age of constant visibility. He speaks openly about discipline and sees it as a natural extension of the life he has chosen. “Yes, I am very disciplined,” he says. “Maintaining discipline is not difficult for me because I lead a very simple life.”

His priorities are clear. “I do not have too many friends and I rarely go out,” he says. “My life revolves around my fitness, my prayers, my work and my family, my wife and my children.”

There is no performative quality in the way he describes his routine. He speaks about balance as something practical rather than aspirational. Fitness, faith, family and work form the framework around which everything else is organised.

That grounding has proved valuable during periods of both success and disappointment. Roy’s perspective on fame carries the weight of experience. He has



Despite the constant demands of celebrity, Ronit Roy’s life revolves around family. Seen here with his actor brother Rohit, their mother and family members

You can play a father before becoming one yourself, but until you have actually lived that experience, it remains an act of imagination.”



witnessed extraordinary popularity and difficult professional phases. The fluctuations no longer surprise him. “There is a saying: This too shall pass,” he says. “The highs of life pass, and so do the lows. Change is the only constant.”

His approach to success is strikingly modest. “I do not take success too seriously,” he says. “Success is not solely because of me. Many people contribute towards it, and I am only a small part of that process.”

The same philosophy applies when things go wrong. Roy believes in addressing problems when solutions exist and moving on when they do not. “If I can solve a problem, I do,” he says. “If there is no solution, I let it be, close that chapter and move forward.”

The next chapter

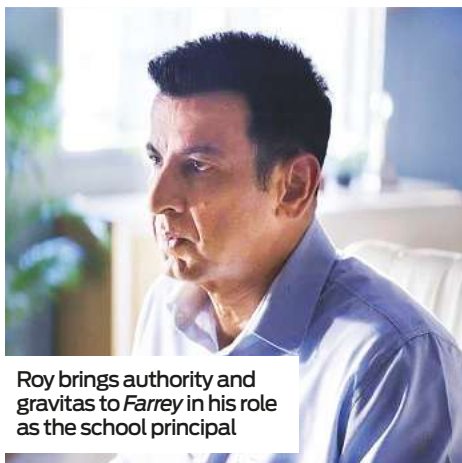
This year promises to be another busy one. Roy has already completed several projects and is enthusiastic about what audiences will see next. “I recently shot a show for Amazon,” he says. “It is directed by Priyanka Ghose and produced by Siddharth Roy Kapur Films.”

The actor recalls enjoying the experience immensely and expects the series to arrive later this year. He is also shooting a Netflix project and preparing for another collaboration with Amazon. “God has been kind,” Roy says. “There is a lot of exciting work happening, and I am looking forward to audiences seeing it soon.”

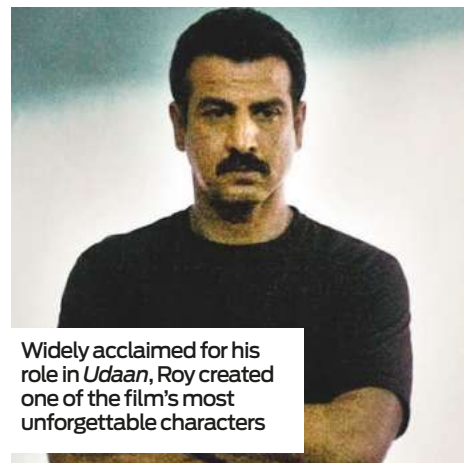
For a Father’s Day issue, however, the most revealing part of the conversation arrives when the discussion turns to family. Roy has played fathers on screen for years.



A still from *Ugly*, which showcased Ronit Roy at his intense and uncompromising best



Roy brings authority and gravitas to *Farrey* in his role as the school principal



Widely acclaimed for his role in *Udaan*, Roy created one of the film's most unforgettable characters

Becoming a father himself transformed those performances in ways that only lived experience can.

"An actor always draws from personal experiences," he says. "You can play a father before becoming one yourself, but until you have actually lived that experience, it remains an act of imagination."

Fatherhood gave those emotions a personal reference point. "Once you become a father, you carry those emotions within you," he says. "You understand what it means to have a child."

The impact extends beyond acting. "Being a father has helped me not only in my roles but also as a person," Roy says. "Becoming a father, and trying to be a good father every day, contributes immensely to your growth as a human being."

When asked about the most rewarding aspect of parenthood, Roy's answer centres on watching his children become themselves. "My two children are my two biggest projects," he says.

I prefer to place my faith in people who know what they are doing, who are clear about their vision and who genuinely want to make good cinema and tell meaningful stories."

The phrase carries warmth and pride in equal measure. He speaks about values, ethics, discipline and character. He never wanted his children to fit a predetermined mould. He wanted them to grow into good human beings. "The greatest reward is seeing them grow into good human beings," he says. "I want my children to do better than I ever did."

Not child's play

Guiding children, he believes, is an ongoing responsibility. There is no master

lesson delivered at a single moment. "Educating, advising and guiding your children is not a once-a-week exercise," Roy says. "It is an everyday process."

He believes parenting requires constant attention and understanding. Every stage of a child's life presents new challenges, new questions and new opportunities for guidance. Sometimes children seek advice directly. Sometimes they do not. The role of a parent remains unchanged. "Every day they will encounter situations that you may have experienced before," he says. "They may or may not come to you for answers, but your guidance is always there whenever they need it."

Parenthood has also altered his understanding of happiness. As life becomes centred around children, priorities shift in subtle ways. "I realised that material things bring me more happiness when I buy them for my children than when I buy them for myself," he says. The observation is delivered without sentimentality. It feels like a conclusion reached through years of experience. "That is what fatherhood has taught me," Roy says. "It is often more fulfilling to do something for your children than for yourself."

Learning a lifelong process

Perhaps that sentiment also explains something about Roy's remarkable longevity. Careers in entertainment are often measured through awards, ratings, box-office figures and social media metrics. Roy's perspective feels rooted elsewhere. His focus remains on the work, the people he works with, the family he returns home to and the discipline that structures his days. The industry around him continues to evolve. Platforms change, audiences shift and new generations arrive.

Ronit Roy keeps learning, keeps working and keeps moving forward. Four decades into a career that has already exceeded most expectations, he still sounds like a man who believes the most interesting chapters may be waiting just ahead. ■



With wife Neelam

Dressing the modern dad

New fathers
figuring out
weekends
on the go,
to seasoned
dads refining
comfort into
elegance,
menswear in
2026 is less
about age
and more
about ease,
confidence,
and
repeatable
choices that
actually work
in real life



Something has changed in menswear. The idea of a “dad wardrobe” doesn’t sit in a separate corner of life, waiting for weekends or school runs. Clothing is following the rhythm of modern fatherhood instead. Days stretch, plans change, and outfits have to move through all of it without feeling like they belong to different versions of the same man.

What makes this interesting right now is how practical dressing has begun to look intentional again. Nothing feels styled or forced, just naturally put together because the pieces work well with each other.

The new dad uniform (20s–30s)

This is the phase where time feels tight and unpredictable at the same time. One minute it is work calls, the next it is a stroller outside a café, and somewhere in between there is an attempt to feel human again.

Clothing starts acting like a system here. The best wardrobes rely on pieces that can move through different parts of the day without needing a full change.

Oversized tees are everywhere, but the ones that work keep structure at the shoulder and fall clean through the body so they never drift into loungewear. Utility overshirts end up doing most of the work because they fix an outfit quickly without much thought. Chinos and straight denim become the base of almost everything, replacing anything too tight or overly detailed. Sneakers move towards simplicity, usually leather or canvas in muted tones that sit easily with everything else. Bags become part of the outfit rather than something carried separately, often crossbody or compact backpacks that sit close and move easily through crowded days.

The real win here is clothing that does not need attention once it is on.

The midlife reset (40s–50s)

This is where wardrobes either settle into habit or start to feel more refined without any dramatic change in direction. The difference usually shows up in fit and restraint rather than new categories of clothing.

Shirts return to focus, especially linen and cotton versions that sit comfortably on the body and hold their shape through long days. Blazers appear in softer construction, unlined or lightly structured, the kind that work across offices, dinners, and everything in between. Polo shirts feel sharper when the collar sits properly and the fabric has enough weight to carry itself. Trousers begin doing more of the visual

work, especially when cut clean and paired with simple footwear, whether those are minimal sneakers, or loafers that feel relaxed rather than formal.

Colour palettes settle into something more grounded at this stage. Neutrals, muted blues, soft greens, and earthy tones replace anything too loud or seasonal. The wardrobe starts feeling more connected, where individual pieces sit easily together without effort.

The classic layer (60+)

At this stage, style feels settled in the best way. There is a clear sense of what works, and less interest in change for its own sake.

Cotton shirts in soft shades form the base, often worn open at the collar or



STYLE NOTES

Fit first, always: Clothes that sit properly on the shoulders and skim the body carry more weight than new clothes. The difference shows in how the outfit reads.

Neutral palettes more than simplify: Beige, navy, olive, stone and soft greys make repetition easy without the wardrobe feeling repetitive.

Shoes set the direction: Clean sneakers bring ease into the outfit. Loafers add polish without stiffness. Boots add presence without needing additional layers.

A strong jacket changes the season: A well-cut blazer or overshirt does more than several average options. It becomes the piece everything is built around.

Denim works when it looks deliberate: Straight cuts and darker washes move across more situations. The cleaner the line, the more places it fits.

Accessories should disappear into use: A watch that feels natural on the wrist. A bag that carries everything without becoming the focus.

Repetition a part of the system: Pieces earn their place when they return often. Clothing that only works once usually does not belong in rotation.

comfort without bulk. Trousers sit in relaxed straight or pleated cuts, offering ease of movement while keeping shape. Footwear stays understated, usually leather loafers or minimal sneakers that blend into the outfit rather than lead it. Jackets become lighter and more functional, chosen for how they sit on the body rather than how they appear on a hanger.

What stands out here is familiarity. Nothing feels experimental. Everything feels familiar in the best way, as if it has already been tested over time and simply stayed because it works. ■

The Ronaldo effect

What Portuguese football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo can teach ordinary men about fitness after crossing the age of 40

Most men spend their forties negotiating with age. They accept a little weight gain, a little stiffness and a gradual decline in energy as part of the deal. Cristiano Ronaldo has spent the same decade challenging that assumption. At 41, the Portuguese forward continues to compete at the highest levels of professional football, carrying a physique and physical output that would be impressive in an athlete ten years younger. The lesson is not that ordinary men should attempt to live like Ronaldo. Few people have access to elite trainers, nutritionists and recovery technology. The real value lies in the principles behind his longevity. Those principles are surprisingly accessible. The fascination with Ronaldo's fitness intensified in 2025 when performance-tracking company WHOOP estimated his biological age at 28.9 years. Ronaldo himself expressed surprise at the result. The figure generated headlines around the world. It also highlighted a larger point. Chronological age and physical age are not always the same thing. Lifestyle, training habits and recovery practices can influence how well the body functions over time.

Strength is the foundation

If there is one habit that sits at the centre of healthy ageing, it is strength training. Research consistently shows that muscle mass begins to decline from the late thirties onwards. Scientists from Sweden's Karolinska Institutet have found that

strength and fitness begin decreasing from around the mid-thirties, with the rate of decline accelerating later in life.

Ronaldo has never treated strength work as a side activity. Weight training remains a core part of his weekly schedule. Reports on his current programme describe a combination of resistance training, sprint work and functional movement designed to preserve power and muscle mass.

For ordinary men, the takeaway is straightforward. Muscle is a long-term investment. Strength training helps preserve mobility, supports metabolism and reduces the physical decline associated with ageing. Professor Leigh Breen, Professor of Translational Muscle Physiology at the University of Birmingham, tells *The Guardian* in a 2025 interview that exercise remains highly effective well beyond middle age despite the natural loss of muscle that accompanies ageing. "The idea that exercise becomes pointless past a certain age is simply wrong," he says. "Everyone responds to structured exercise."

The goal after 40 is not bodybuilding, but maintaining strength for everyday life.

Recovery a performance tool

Many men focus on workouts and ignore recovery. Ronaldo treats recovery as part of training.

Speaking on the WHOOP Podcast in May 2025, Ronaldo explains that recovery has moved to the top of his priorities as he has grown older. The interview attracted worldwide attention when WHOOP estimated his

biological age at 28.9 years. Sleep, he believes, underpins everything else in his routine.

Sleep sits at the centre of that philosophy. Ronaldo calls it his most important performance tool. "Sleep is the most important tool that I have," he says. "To be consistent in the time that I go to bed and the time that I wake up."

That emphasis is supported by sports science. Sleep is where muscle repair, hormonal regulation and cognitive recovery take place. Recovery also reduces injury risk and improves exercise performance. Will Ahmed, founder and CEO of WHOOP, tells S&P Global in 2025 that people often place too much importance on daily fluctuations instead of long-term

trends. "The future of healthcare is going to be measured," he says, arguing that recovery, sleep and performance data can help people make better long-term decisions about their health.

Body composition over weight

The number on a scale tells only part of the story. Ronaldo is reported to maintain exceptionally low body fat levels while preserving significant lean muscle mass. His physical profile allows him to generate speed, power and endurance despite his age.

For ordinary men, chasing a target weight is often less useful than improving body composition. A person can weigh the same at 45 as they did at 30 and still carry far more fat and significantly less muscle.

Strength training and sensible nutrition help preserve lean mass while managing fat gain. Researchers increasingly describe skeletal muscle as a key metabolic organ because it influences blood sugar control, energy expenditure and healthy ageing. A 2025 *Time* report examining the benefits of strength

Sleep is the most important tool that I have, to be consistent in the time that I go to bed and the time that I wake up."

training highlights growing evidence linking muscle mass to metabolic health and physical independence later in life.

The mirror often reveals more than the scale.

Mobility keeps the body moving

Footballers spend their careers moving through demanding ranges of motion. Ronaldo continues to place significant emphasis on flexibility, mobility and movement quality. This matters because ageing is not simply about losing strength. It is also about losing movement.

Dr Peter Attia, physician, longevity researcher and author of *Outlive*, encourages people to think beyond today's workout and focus on the physical abilities they hope to retain later in life. His concept of the "centenarian decathlon" asks people to train for the everyday activities they want to be capable of performing in their seventies, eighties and beyond. That mindset places mobility alongside strength and endurance as a pillar of healthy ageing.

Consistency beats intensity

One reason Ronaldo remains an outlier is that he has maintained elite habits for more than two decades.

Most people search for dramatic fitness solutions. Ronaldo's career suggests that consistency is more powerful than intensity. Training three or four times a week for years will produce better results than a month of extreme effort followed by inactivity.

This principle appears repeatedly in sports science research. Exercise benefits accumulate over time. Studies on healthy ageing consistently show that people who maintain regular physical activity preserve more muscle, cardiovascular fitness and mobility than those who rely on short bursts of intense effort.

Nutrition supports the process

Ronaldo's nutrition habits have long been discussed in football circles. His approach centres on high-quality protein and controlled portions.

The broader lesson is not dietary perfection. It is nutritional discipline.

Professor Breen, tells *The Guardian* that nutrition remains a key factor in helping older adults achieve results comparable to younger individuals. "Adequate protein, plus carbs and healthy fats, fuel your exercise, accelerate your recovery and support how your body adapts," he says.

Avoiding injuries is a skill

Many fitness journeys after 40 are interrupted by injuries. Ronaldo's longevity is partly a result of his ability to stay available. That requires intelligent training, proper recovery and careful workload management.

Ageing athletes cannot train exactly as they did at 25. Ronaldo understands this. Recovery receives greater attention. Training is adjusted. Performance is monitored. Regular men can apply the same principle. Progress comes from sustainable training. A missed week caused by injury does more damage than a slightly lighter workout.

Ronaldo's philosophy remains remarkably simple. Speaking on the WHOOP Podcast, he repeatedly returns to the value of consistency and self-care. "If you take care of your body, it will take care of you," he says.

The real Ronaldo effect is about treating fitness as a long-term project. Strength training, sleep, mobility, nutrition and consistency remain effective long after youth. Ronaldo's greatest achievement may not be the goals he scores today. It may be the reminder that ageing and decline are not the same thing. ■



WORDS BY KRITA COELHO PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK/INSTAGRAM



New grooming rules

**Skincare, sunscreen, beard care and better sleep.
The practical advice every dad should know**

Fatherhood has a way of streamlining life. Mornings become busier, schedules become fuller and anything that feels unnecessarily complicated tends to fall away. Grooming is often one of the first things to be simplified. Fortunately, dermatologists and grooming experts have spent the past year making the case for routines that are shorter, easier and far more realistic to maintain.

The consensus is refreshingly straightforward: a handful of good habits will take most men much further than an overflowing bathroom cabinet.

Start with a simple skincare routine

The skincare industry may thrive on serums, masks and endless new launches, but many dermatologists are moving in the opposite direction.

Dr Marisa Garshick, a board-certified dermatologist in New York and clinical assistant professor of dermatology at Weill Cornell Medicine, told *Allure* that she had seen growing interest in simplified routines as people experienced irritation from using too many products. “For this reason, simplified routines work well,” she said, noting that consistency becomes easier when routines are less complicated.

For most men, that means a gentle cleanser, a moisturiser and sunscreen. The goal is to establish habits that can survive a busy weekday.

Sunscreen deserves a permanent place

If dermatologists could persuade men to use one product every day, sunscreen would win comfortably. Daily SPF protects against sun damage, pigmentation and premature

ageing. It also happens to be one of the simplest additions to a grooming routine. Dr Mona Gohara, a board-certified dermatologist and associate clinical professor of dermatology at Yale School of Medicine, told *Prevention* that “using a daily moisturiser with broad-spectrum sun protection with an SPF 30 or higher is the best anti-ageing and health advice I can give you.”

For fathers spending weekends outdoors, whether coaching football, attending sports events or simply enjoying time with the family, sunscreen remains one of the easiest grooming habits to adopt.

Work with your hair, not against it

Hair thinning affects millions of men, yet the biggest mistakes often have little to do with hair loss itself. Many men choose hairstyles based on photographs instead of their own hair type, texture and density.

Aika Flores, the Los Angeles-based celebrity groomer whose clients include Nick Jonas and Josh Hutcherson, told *GQ* that men frequently use products that do not suit the hair they actually have. “They’re just using the wrong product for how their hair actually behaves,” she said.

For men experiencing thinning hair, shorter textured cuts generally create a fuller appearance than longer styles that separate easily and expose the scalp. The same principle applies to styling products. Fine hair tends to respond better to lightweight sprays, mousses and gels than heavier pomades and clays. A good barber can often make a bigger difference than an expensive product.

Beard care starts with the skin

Beards remain popular, but many men still overlook the basics. The beard itself

often receives plenty of attention while the skin underneath is ignored. Dryness, irritation and flaking usually start below the facial hair rather than in the beard itself.

Regular cleansing, moisturising and trimming help keep facial hair looking healthy. Maintaining a clean neckline and cheek line also creates a more polished appearance.

Length is largely a matter of preference. Maintenance is what separates a well-kept beard from one that simply grows unchecked.

Fragrance should evolve too

Many men find a fragrance they like in their twenties and never revisit the subject. Grooming specialists increasingly encourage a different approach. A fragrance can be treated much like clothing, with different scents suited to different settings.

We have recently seen reports highlighting a growing preference among fragrance experts for building a small collection rather than relying on a single signature scent. Fresh citrus fragrances tend to work well during the day, while woods, spices and richer notes often feel more appropriate in the evening.

The key is restraint. Fragrance should enhance your presence, not announce your arrival.

Sleep remains the ultimate grooming tool

Every dermatologist eventually arrives at the same point – that sleep matters.

Poor sleep is often reflected in dull skin, puffiness and under-eye circles. During sleep, the body carries out many of the repair processes that help skin recover from daily stress. ■

Money lessons that stick

Why financial literacy starts long before a first pay cheque, and how childhood experiences shape lifelong money habits. By Akshay Sardana

Spend ten minutes watching a group of children trading Pokémon cards and you will see a functioning market in miniature. One card has suddenly become desirable because a YouTube creator mentioned it. Another has fallen out of favour. A child refuses to trade because he is certain the value will rise. There are negotiations, second thoughts, regrets and triumphant exchanges. No one has used the words “liquidity” or “sentiment.” Yet the essentials are there.

Most parents equate financial education with teaching children how to count money. That builds familiarity but it does not build judgment. The difference between the two is what shapes how adults eventually earn, spend and invest.

It is ironic that we spend thousands on private schooling, yet some of the most important financial lessons are happening on the living room floor. The encouraging news is that the window for building that judgment is wide. Childhood, adolescence and early adulthood each offer different entry points.

Start with behaviour, not balance sheets

Before investing strategies or savings plans, children need a filter for decision-making. One of the simplest is learning that not every purchase deserves to be made.

The smartest purchase is often the one that does not happen. Children raised in a world of targeted ads, influencer recommendations and instant payments rarely encounter friction around spending. Introducing pause, comparison and delayed gratification gives them something far more valuable than early investing knowledge. It gives them emotional control around money.

This does not mean austerity. It means awareness. Trading cards, gaming economies, personal budgets and negotiating chores for pocket money all provide natural laboratories where children experience value, trade-offs and patience first-hand.

Making your own “home office”

Once mindset begins to take shape,



structure becomes powerful. Many families focus exclusively on saving and investing for children, but there are less obvious ways to prepare them financially.

One example is linking effort to earned income earlier than most households consider. This does not require formal employment or business ownership. It can be structured through family projects, supervised entrepreneurial experiments or legitimate contributions to existing family ventures where appropriate. Earned income means a pension contribution can be made on a child's behalf from an extraordinarily young age. In many jurisdictions, a child with no other income pays little to no tax on that salary, making the family unit more tax-efficient.

The deeper point is structural. They enter adulthood with years of employment history, a contribution record and the habit of receiving and managing a regular income. Most 22-year-olds are starting from zero. Your child will not be.

The key is authenticity. Payment tied to real contribution helps children understand the rhythm of earning rather than simply receiving. When children experience earned income early, they do not just build savings. They build identity. They begin to see themselves as contributors rather than dependents.

Credit awareness and protection are two areas introduced too late in most households. In countries where credit scoring matters, financial reputation builds slowly, and understanding how it is established and damaged helps young adults borrow with clarity. Similarly, introducing protection, not just accumulation, reframes insurance from

something reactive to something foundational.

Teaching ownership instead of consumption

Perhaps the biggest psychological shift comes when children move from seeing money purely as spending power to seeing it as ownership. A weekly allowance typically teaches consumption cycles. Exposure to ownership teaches patience.

Watching a savings account grow, tracking an investment over time, or understanding how a family asset is maintained introduces a longer horizon.

Some families replace part of traditional allowances with participation in small investment decisions. Others involve children in discussions about maintaining property, running small ventures or supporting charitable causes. The objective is not sophistication, but familiarity.

It is rarely too late

Parents often assume they should have started earlier. That anxiety is common, especially among those who did not grow up having open financial conversations themselves. Most adult financial stress does not come from lack of intelligence. It comes from lack of early exposure.

Yet adolescence remains a powerful phase. This is when independence begins to feel real. This is when social comparison increases. And this is when financial habits start attaching to identity.

Financial literacy rarely arrives through a single decisive lesson. It develops through repetition. Through seeing how adults make decisions. Through experiencing small successes and manageable mistakes.

The goal is not to raise expert investors before adulthood. It is to raise individuals who approach money calmly, who understand risk without fearing it, and who recognise that wealth is as much about behaviour as it is about income. The next time your child negotiates a trade at the kitchen table, resist the urge to intervene. You may be witnessing the earliest version of their financial character forming.

- The writer is CEO, Continental Group, a leading financial services provider and insurance intermediary

Father's Day celebrations worth sharing

From mountain escapes and family feasts to wellness retreats and friendly competitions, discover memorable ways to celebrate Dad across Dubai and the UAE this Father's Day



JA Hatta Fort Hotel

JA HATTA FORT HOTEL

Celebrate Father's Day with a memorable mountain retreat surrounded by the stunning Hajar landscape. Families can enjoy up to 35 per cent savings on room rates, complimentary stays for children under 12, archery and airgun shooting experiences, Dh100 spa credit, and complimentary mocktails for dads on June 21.

Offer: Father's Day mountain staycation with family experiences and dining benefits

When: Until September 30, 2026

Contact: 04 8099 443 | reservations.hfh@jaresorts.com

THREE CUTS STEAKHOUSE & BAR

Treat Dad to a premium steakhouse experience featuring a 500g striploin steak served with two sides, two sauces, and two drinks. Perfect for families looking to celebrate over quality food in a stylish Palm Jumeirah setting.

Offer: 500g striploin steak, sides, sauces



Fin & Bone

and drinks for Dh330

When: June 21, 2026 from 5pm

Contact: 04 420 1113 | reservations@threecuts.co

FIN & BONE

For foodie fathers, this hands-on Pie & Sausage Roll Masterclass offers the chance to learn the art of crafting savoury classics from scratch. Participants create and take home freshly baked pies and sausage rolls, while learning from the venue's head butcher.

Offer: Interactive Pie & Sausage Roll Masterclass from Dh160

When: Wednesday–Sunday, 12pm–8pm throughout June

Contact: 04 881 0015 | info@finandbone.ae



Topgolf Dubai

TOPGOLF DUBAI

Team up with Dad for a fun-filled Father & Child Tournament featuring challenges, prizes, medals and family bonding. Participants also receive a discount on food and beverages after the

Three Cuts
Steakhouse & Bar

Pierre's TT



CQ French Brasserie



competition.

Offer: Father & Child Tournament for Dh250 per team

When: June 21, 2026 | 10.30am–12.30pm

Contact: sevn.ly

TOAD IN THE HOLE

Celebrate with a traditional British-style Father's Day roast featuring Wagyu rump, lamb shank and vegetarian options. Dad dines free with a table of four, while the family enjoys complimentary Topgolf gameplay.

Offer: Father's Day roast from Dh125 per person

When: June 21, 2026

Contact: sevenrooms.com

THE STRAND

Gather the family around a classic Sunday roast with choices including roast beef, chicken, salmon, lamb shank and plant-based options. A relaxed setting and generous portions make it an ideal Father's Day outing.

Offer: Sunday roast from Dh99

When: June 21, 2026 | 12pm – 9pm

Contact: 04 430 2221

THE BEAM BY NICK ALVIS

Enjoy a leisurely European-style brunch with a three-course menu and complimentary pint for fathers. Dad dines free when accompanied by 4 or more paying guests.

Offer: Father's Day brunch from Dh350 per person

When: June 21, 2026 | 1pm – 4pm

Contact: 055 123 3697 | resbook.leroyalmeridien@lemeridien.com

CQ FRENCH BRASSERIE

Dads can indulge in the popular Gentleman's Menu featuring hearty mains paired with premium beverages. Available daily throughout the second half of June, it offers plenty of flexibility for celebrations.

Offer: Gentleman's Menu for Dh275

When: June 15 – 30, 2026

Contact: 055 491 0097

The Bolt Hole Backyard BBQ



The Strand



PIERRE'S TT

Enjoy an elegant Father's Day weekend celebration with a complimentary welcome beverage for fathers and the option to experience a refined five-course tasting menu overlooking the waterfront.

Offer: Complimentary beverage for fathers; tasting menu from Dh590

When: June 19–20, 2026

Contact: +971 56 511 3356 | pierres.dubai@ihg.com

FIRST CLASS PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Celebrate the most important father figure in your life by entering a social

media competition. Participants can share a photo and a short tribute for the chance to win a two-night family staycation.

Offer: Win a two-night family staycation

When: June 19 – 21, 2026

Prize Announcement: June 24, 2026

Contact: Instagram: First Class Property Management

HILLHOUSE BRASSERIE

Create lasting memories with a family-friendly Father's Day workshop where children can design personalised keepsakes and Lego-style figures. Complimentary grooming gifts add an extra touch for dads.

Offer: Father's Day family workshop

When: June 20, 2026

Contact: 800 666353

THE DUCK HOOK, THE BOLT HOLE & HILLHOUSE BRASSERIE

Enjoy a classic Sunday roast complete with special drinks offers, complimentary express massage chair experiences and grooming vouchers, making it a well-rounded Father's Day treat.

Offer: Sunday roast from Dh125 and three draught pints for Dh99

When: June 21, 2026

Contact: 800 666353

Where football fever takes over

World Cup screenings, fan zones and match-day deals bring tournament excitement to venues across the UAE

COOPERS PARK ROTANA ABU DHABI

Watch every goal, save and dramatic finish on big screens while enjoying special beverage promotions and the "Predict the Score, Win the Pour" challenge.

Offer: Six selected beverages for Dh125, beer towers from Dh159 and prediction contests

When: Throughout the FIFA World Cup 2026

Contact: 02 657 3325 | coopers.park@rotana.com

NALU, HUDAYRIYAT ISLAND, ABU DHABI

Nalu Match Days brings live screenings, sharing platters and exclusive beverage offers to Abu Dhabi's football community.

Offer: FIFA sharing platter for Dh169 and beverage packages from Dh200

When: Until July 19, 2026

Contact: 02 419 8509 | 058 628 8399 | surfabudhabi.com/nalu

BRIDGEWATER TAVERN

Experience every FIFA World Cup 2026 match in a stadium-inspired setting complete with a tunnel entrance, live entertainment and match-day favourites including burgers, wings and loaded fries. Fans can also extend the excitement with exclusive overnight stay packages.

Offer: Live screenings, match-day menu and World Cup stay packages from Dh550++ per night

When: Throughout

Bridgewater Tavern



match-day menu.

Offer: Live screenings, complimentary beverages for ladies during selected fixtures and loyalty rewards

When: Until July 19, 2026

Contact: @the.coterie.group

AMAYA, THE DUBAI MALL

Watch the world's biggest football tournament against the backdrop of Burj Khalifa and Dubai Fountain while enjoying signature dining, shisha and a vibrant match-day atmosphere.

Offer: Live screenings with à la carte dining and shisha

When: Until July 19, 2026

Contact: 04 587 1000 | 058 682 6787 | amayaintl.com

FOOTY CENTRAL, EMIRATES GOLF CLUB

Follow every major fixture across giant screens and LED displays while enjoying crowd-pleasing dishes, group packages and a chance to win flights to New York.

Offer: Complimentary entry or group packages from Dh1,200 for six guests

When: Until July 19, 2026

Contact: 04 417 9999 | events@dubaigolf.com

Amaya, The Dubai Mall



GOOSE & GANDER

Enjoy every match across 17 large screens with special food and beverage promotions, exclusive hotel stay

packages and discounts for fans wearing team jerseys.

Offer: Cod and chips with a house beverage from Dh110 and stay packages from Dh199 per night

When: Throughout FIFA World

the FIFA World Cup 2026

Contact: 04 414 0000

CHARLIE'S PUB

Catch every match in a lively setting with dedicated screenings, special beverage offers and a curated World Cup food menu designed for match-day gatherings.

Offer: Bucket of six bottled beverages for Dh200, selected pints from Dh40 and combo deals

When: Throughout the FIFA World Cup 2026

Contact: 056 414 2213

THE COTERIE, IBN BATTUTA MALL

Festiball at The Coterie Clubhouse by Stella Artois brings live screenings, DJs, drummers, interactive entertainment and a dedicated



Coopers Park Rotana
Abu Dhabi

Cup 2026

Contact: 050 318 8117 | gooseandgander.me**HORSE & HOUND, AL HABTOOR POLO RESORT**

Catch all the action in a fully air-conditioned fan zone featuring giant screens and special match-day dining offers.

Offer: Burger, fries, popcorn and a beverage combo for Dh99**When:** Throughout the FIFA World Cup 2026**Contact:** WhatsApp 056 545 8391**HBAR, THE H DUBAI**

Never miss a kick-off with 24-hour screenings, late-night match-day bites, breakfast trays for dawn fixtures and an exclusive Watch & Stay package.

Offer: Around-the-clock screenings and overnight packages with beverages and valet parking**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** 04 501 8620 | hbar.dubai@h-hotel.com**CHALCO'S CANTINA**

Watch every game live at Dubai Marina while enjoying authentic Mexican bites, drink deals and a lively fan atmosphere.

Offer: Mexican bites from Dh35, beer buckets from Dh125 and shots from Dh25**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** 052 112 8923**TOPGOLF DUBAI**

The Yard transforms into a high-energy fan zone with giant screens, spot prizes and gameplay vouchers included with paid viewing packages.

Offer: Premium packages from Dh100 per person, fully redeemable on food and drinks**When:** Through the duration of the FIFA World Cup**Contact:** topgolfdubai.ae/ultimate-topgolf-fan-zone

HBar, The H Dubai

**DEIRA CREEK**

Watch every televised fixture while enjoying prediction games, half-time promotions and classic British pub fare.

Offer: Match-day promotions, score prediction challenges and beverage specials**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** 04 205 7033 | 056 548 8238**SAVANT6, SO/ UPTOWN HOTEL DUBAI**

Enjoy live screenings, early morning breakfast service and dedicated match-day menus in a relaxed social setting.

Offer: Savant6 platter from Dh99, hops from Dh39 and bucket deals from Dh129**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** 04 820 8888**THE CROFT, DUBAI MARRIOTT HARBOUR HOTEL & SUITES**

Catch every match on indoor screens while taking part in the Predict and Win competition for a chance to win a Dh10,000 bar tab.

Offer: Beverages from Dh17 and tournament-long prediction competition**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** 04 319 4000**UBK, MÖVENPICK HOTEL JUMEIRAH LAKES TOWERS**

Watch every match live in a vibrant setting known for big screens, comfort food and an unbeatable sports atmosphere.

Offer: Live screenings throughout the tournament**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** 04 438 0064**FIVE IRON GOLF DUBAI**

Combine football, food and entertainment with live screenings, simulator experiences and private viewing bays.

Offer: Live screenings with private simulator bays for groups**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** 04 396 6867 | fiveirongolf.ae**ZENON DUBAI**

Experience every match across immersive digital screens with premium dining, outdoor terrace screenings and luxury lounge viewing.

Offer: Live screenings with à la carte dining and premium shisha experiences**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** 04 837 7222 | reservations@zenonrestaurant.com

Chalco's Cantina



Topgolf Dubai

**VOX CINEMAS**

Enjoy front-row seats to every FIFA World Cup match across the region with flexible viewing passes and themed food combos.

Offer: Tournament passes from Dh45 and food combos from Dh25**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** voxcinemas.com**LOCA UAE**

Enjoy every match in a Mexican-inspired atmosphere with curated World Cup menus and tournament promotions.

Offer: Live screenings with match-day specials throughout the tournament**When:** Until July 19, 2026**Contact:** Dubai: 052 801 5352 | Abu Dhabi: 054 995 9319**THE PUB ENGLISH BAR, RADISSON BLU HOTEL DUBAI**

Footy Central, Emirates Golf Club



Nalu, Hudayriyat Island, Abu Dhabi



Dad's match-day feast

Six recipes for fathers who take football seriously

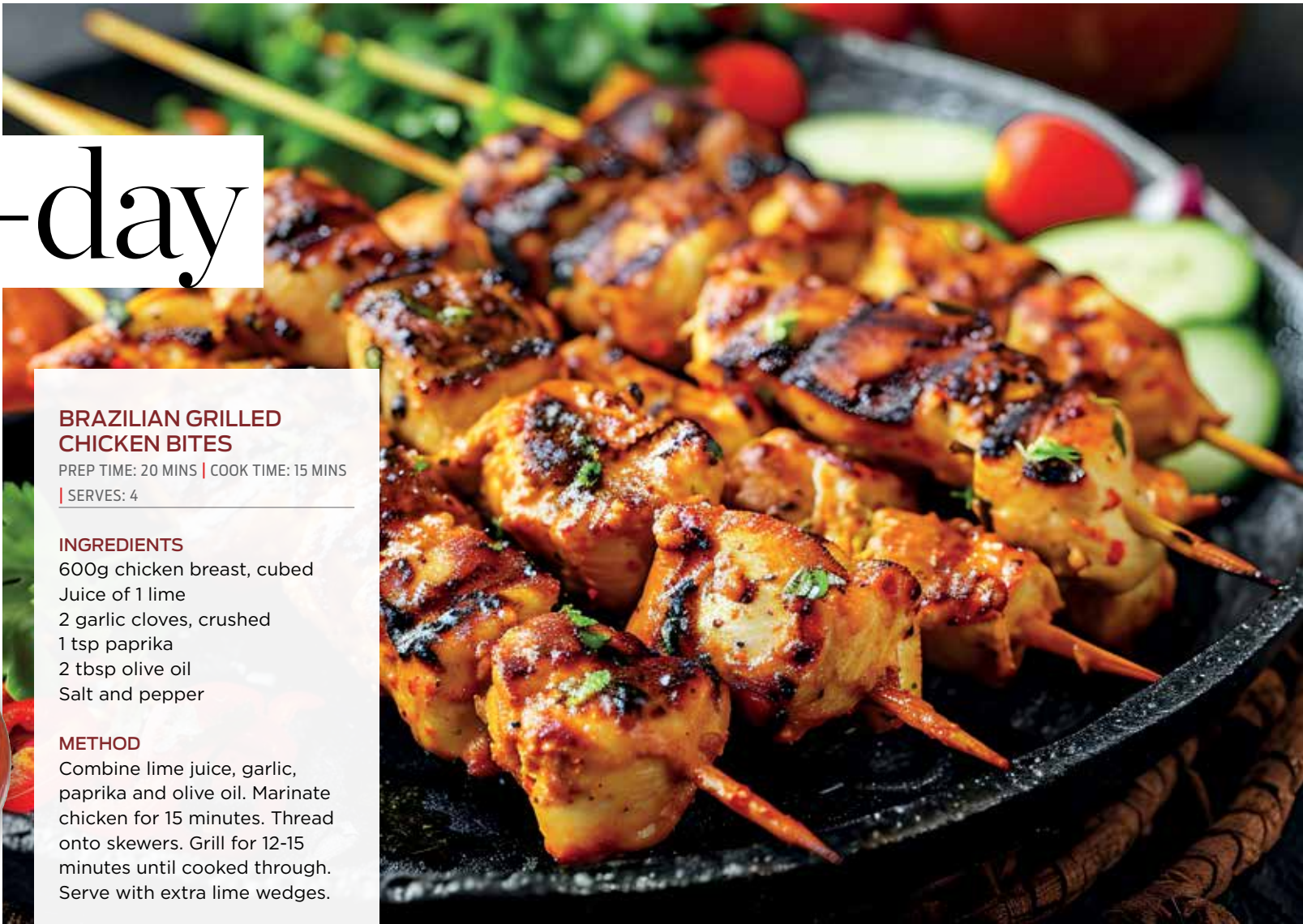


SPANISH PATATAS BRAVAS

PREP TIME: 15 MINS | COOK TIME: 35 MINS |
SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS
800g potatoes, peeled and cubed
3 tbsp olive oil
Salt
Sauce
1 tbsp olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 tbsp tomato paste
200ml tomato sauce

METHOD
Toss potatoes with olive oil and salt. Roast at 200°C for 35 minutes until crisp. Meanwhile, sauté garlic in olive oil. Add paprika, tomato paste and tomato sauce. Simmer for 10 minutes. Spoon sauce over potatoes and serve immediately.



BRAZILIAN GRILLED CHICKEN BITES

PREP TIME: 20 MINS | COOK TIME: 15 MINS
SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS
600g chicken breast, cubed
Juice of 1 lime
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tsp paprika
2 tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper

METHOD
Combine lime juice, garlic, paprika and olive oil. Marinate chicken for 15 minutes. Thread onto skewers. Grill for 12-15 minutes until cooked through. Serve with extra lime wedges.

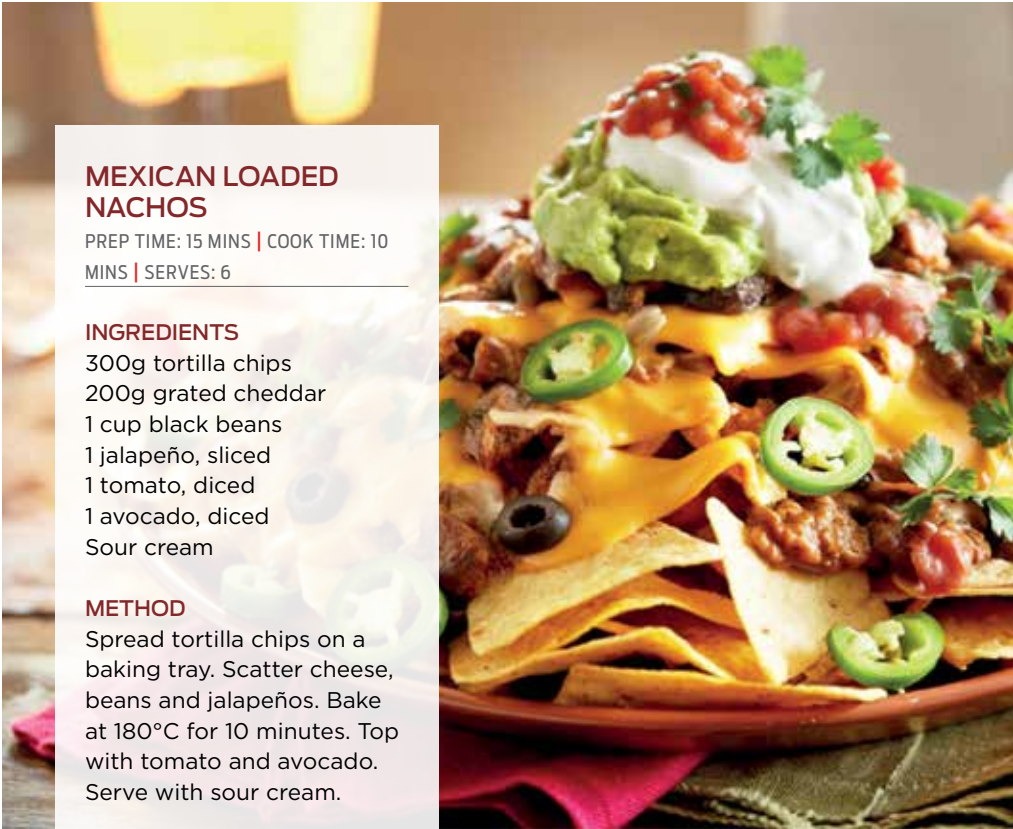


GERMAN BRATWURST SLIDERS

PREP TIME: 15 MINS | COOK TIME: 15 MINS | SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS
4 bratwurst sausages
8 slider buns
1 onion, sliced
1 tbsp butter
2 tbsp mustard
Pickles, sliced

METHOD
Grill sausages until cooked through. Sauté onions in butter until golden. Slice sausages in half lengthways. Spread mustard on buns. Fill with sausage, onions and pickles. Serve warm.



MEXICAN LOADED NACHOS

PREP TIME: 15 MINS | COOK TIME: 10 MINS | SERVES: 6

INGREDIENTS
300g tortilla chips
200g grated cheddar
1 cup black beans
1 jalapeño, sliced
1 tomato, diced
1 avocado, diced
Sour cream

METHOD
Spread tortilla chips on a baking tray. Scatter cheese, beans and jalapeños. Bake at 180°C for 10 minutes. Top with tomato and avocado. Serve with sour cream.



PORTUGUESE CUSTARD TART BITES

PREP TIME: 20 MINS | COOK TIME: 20 MINS |
SERVES: 12 BITES

INGREDIENTS
1 sheet puff pastry
250ml milk
2 egg yolks
60g sugar
1 tbsp cornflour
1 tsp vanilla extract

METHOD
Cut pastry into circles and place in a mini muffin tray. Heat milk gently. Whisk egg yolks, sugar and cornflour together. Gradually add warm milk and return to heat. Stir until thickened. Fill pastry cases and bake at 220°C for 18-20 minutes until golden. Cool slightly before serving.



ARGENTINIAN STEAK SKEWERS WITH CHIMICHURRI

PREP TIME: 20 MINS | COOK TIME: 12 MINS |
SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS
For the skewers
600g sirloin steak, cubed
1 red onion, cut into chunks
1 red pepper, cut into chunks
2 tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper
For the chimichurri
1 cup parsley, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
80ml olive oil
Pinch chilli flakes

METHOD
Thread steak, onion and pepper onto skewers. Drizzle with olive oil and season generously. Grill for 10-12 minutes, turning occasionally. Mix all chimichurri ingredients together. Serve skewers hot with chimichurri spooned over.



Surviving *football fever* in the UAE

Dodging football debates, midnight matches and passionate predictions is now an acquired reflex, says Sankar Sri Pillai

Every four years, I discover what it feels like to be a vegetarian at a barbecue festival.

The FIFA World Cup arrives, and suddenly the entire nation transforms into one giant stadium. Offices become fan zones. Cafés replace background music with match commentary. WhatsApp groups that once discussed deadlines, school runs and dinner plans now overflow with tactical analyses, injury updates and heated debates about formations. As someone who cannot tell the difference between a false nine and a false alarm, I enter survival mode.

At home, the warning signs begin weeks in advance. My family starts discussing match schedules with the seriousness usually reserved for flight bookings and wedding invitations. The living room furniture is rearranged for “optimal viewing angles”. Snack inventories increase dramatically. There are chips, dips, wings and mysterious beverages that only appear during major tournaments.

The television, usually shared democratically among family members, becomes occupied territory.

“Who are you supporting,” someone asks. I make the mistake of answering honestly. “I don’t know who’s playing.” The silence suggests I have confessed to not knowing my own blood group.

Soon, I develop coping mechanisms. I learn to nod wisely whenever someone mentions a team’s midfield strength. I master neutral phrases like, “That was unexpected,” and “This group stage is really competitive.” These sentences work remarkably well because, apparently, every result during the World Cup is either shocking or completely predictable.

The real challenge begins at work.

Normally rational colleagues turn into part-time sports analysts overnight. Morning meetings start with discussions about last night’s match. Productivity graphs fluctuate depending on whether a favourite team won or lost.

Those who stayed up watching late-night games arrive looking sleep-deprived but strangely energised.

“Did you see that goal in the 87th minute,” a colleague asks excitedly.

I haven’t.

Instead, I spent the evening watching a crime documentary and sleeping at a

sensible hour. But admitting that feels socially risky. So I respond with my trusted formula: “Absolutely unbelievable.”

This answer works because football fans often use the same phrase regardless of whether the goal was brilliant, controversial or completely avoidable.

Office conversations become linguistic obstacle courses. Everyone speaks in abbreviations and references I don’t understand. VAR. Pressing. Counterattack. Expected goals. At one point, I genuinely thought xG was a new social media platform.

Then come the social gatherings. World Cup invitations are cleverly disguised.

“Come over for dinner,” friends say casually. What they really mean is, “Join us for four hours of emotional chaos centred around a giant television screen.” I arrive to discover everyone wearing jerseys, waving flags and discussing permutations involving goal differences. The atmosphere resembles a stock market during a financial crisis. People celebrate, despair and negotiate wildly within minutes. Someone inevitably turns to me. “Who do you think will win?” This question terrifies me. Supporting the wrong team could trigger a lengthy lecture involving player statistics dating back to 2014. I usually choose the safest response possible. “I just hope it’s a good game.” Apparently, this is the football equivalent of diplomatic immunity.

Yet, despite my complete lack of sporting knowledge, something unexpected happens during every World Cup. I find myself drawn to the excitement. The collective joy when a team scores. The friendly rivalries. The spontaneous celebrations echoing across the UAE long after midnight. Even non-football people like me cannot completely resist the energy.

By the final week, I know a few player names, understand basic tournament rules and have accidentally developed opinions about penalty shootouts. I still don’t understand the offside rule, and at this point, I suspect nobody truly does.

But perhaps that’s the beauty of football season in the UAE. You don’t need to love the game to enjoy the experience. You simply need good company, a sense of humour and a reliable collection of neutral responses.

And if all else fails, just say, “The referee got that one wrong.”

Trust me, everyone will agree. ■

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