

Letters

Washing tips

Jan 09, p55

I was pleased to see 'green alternatives' considered in your washing machine detergent test.

I have been using soap nuts for years and, while I'm quite satisfied with the results, I have found that the nuts only work

well if I wash at 60°C. At 40°C, I recommend soaking them in hot water for a while or, even better, overnight in cold water.

If I'm doing the washing at 30°C, I use only 'nut stock' – prepared by boiling the nuts for ten to 20 minutes.

PAOLA D'AMBROS, EGHAM



Care at home aids

Feb 09, p47

As a cheap alternative to alarm call systems, a cordless phone with a reasonable range can be kept on the person and used in emergencies. One of my neighbours used her handset to call an ambulance when she had a bad fall.

BETTY MCKEGGIE, DUFFIELD

Satnav map costs

Feb 09, p70

Your satnavs review didn't cover the high cost of updating maps.

I have a Garmin Nuvi 300i, for which Garmin quoted £59.99 for a single update or £99.99 for lifetime updates – this seems very high.

When I bought my satnav, it came with UK maps only. To update these, I have to buy a download covering Europe. I've heard there are free updates online, but haven't found them.

WILLIAM METCALFE
NORTHWOOD

WHICH? SAYS For most standalone

portables, we're not aware you can use maps other than those the manufacturer supplies. This keeps prices higher. Think about your needs before buying a unit and get quotes for map updates.

Rail ticket issues

Jan 09, p28

The new ticket system you covered was aimed at making train travel simpler, but there are problems. Return journeys on anytime tickets must be made within a month and advance tickets can only be bought up to 12 weeks ahead.

I've bought round-the-world return-flight tickets five months in advance and reasonably priced open-return rail and ferry journeys in New Zealand four months ahead. Why can't 'open' rail tickets allow for return journeys within three months of outward legs like National Express coaches offer?

And why can't you buy tickets more than 12 weeks in advance?
KEN ALLCOCK, MALVERN

Ask our experts

Nuisance calls

My wife received a frightening phone call so, having contacted the police, we rang BT. As we only rent the line from BT, it told us we had to go to our telephone provider, Tiscali/Pipex. It told us this was BT's job as it provides the line. Who is right?

MARTIN SUTTON, ARUNDEL

Ofcom, the independent communications regulator, told us there's no rule about who is responsible for dealing with these calls, though you should always inform police. Your telephone provider should have a service for blocking calls from particular

numbers. You usually have to pay for this. Signing up to the Telephone Preference Service should remove you from most marketing and unsolicited call lists, though. See www.tpsonline.org.uk or call 0845 070 0707.

Soya-free bread

It's almost impossible to buy bread without soya in it. Many people have allergies to soya and my understanding is that it's used because it's cheap. Why can't we just have simple bread?

DEBBIE CONNORS, YORK

The Federation of Bakers told us small amounts of soya flour are

added to bread to help produce a consistently high-quality loaf with a good crumb structure.

Because of this, it's hard to find bread that doesn't contain soya flour, but it should clearly be labelled in the ingredients. Independent bakers may not use soya flour in their bread so it's worth trying them. Also, www.village-bakery.com has a list of stockists. Bagged supermarket flour doesn't contain soya flour so you can use this to bake bread.

Overdraft changes

Halifax has notified me that from next month it's changing the way it charges interest on an overdraft



on my current account. It will charge £1 a day for an arranged overdraft up to £2,500, £2 a day for an arranged overdraft over £2,500 and £5 a day for an unarranged overdraft!

As I tend to dip into my overdraft most months, which account would you suggest that I consider switching to instead?
LEONARD WITTLER

Contact us

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Mac software details

Jan 09, p68

Your free software report didn't include security packages for Apple Macs.

While Mac viruses and spyware are virtually unheard of, it's still important for Mac users to have adequate anti-virus software as users can inadvertently spread viruses via email and other means to PC users – and Mac users are as under threat from phishing emails, spam and other scams as anyone.

There are a number of well known Mac anti-virus programs such as Norton Anti Virus and Intego Virus barrier that could have been included. There are also free Mac anti-virus solutions such as ClamXav.

KRISTIAN WRIGHT,
LONDON

WHICH? SAYS Apple's official advice is that you don't need extra anti-virus software, but, if

you want complete peace of mind, it's fine to install it. We tested ClamXAV for Macs as part of our test of free security software test in February (see p17). Apple Macs also come with a very good firewall installed.

The computer pictured in your test of free software appears to be a Mac, and yet the applications mentioned in the article are Windows-only, with the exception of Google Docs. There are free Mac programs that do the same jobs – for example, NeoOffice instead of OpenOffice. Many of them come free as part of Apple's iLife suite.
MICHAEL BROOKE,
CARDIFF



Some banks have recently changed their overdraft charging rates. Best at the moment for people who tend to be overdrawn is Alliance and Leicester Premier Direct Account, charging 0% interest on an overdraft for 12 months, with a £2,500 maximum overdraft limit.

Thinner freezer

We want to replace our freezer. All modern uprights seem to be 60cm or more wide, but we only have 59cm space. Can you help?
SUE LOVE, DONCASTER

None of our Best Buys are less than 60cm in width, but there are plenty of thinner upright freezers that

scored highly. The Beko TZ-DA524, for instance, scored 69% in our tests, just 2% shy of Best Buy status, and is 54cm wide. You can search a huge range of models at www.which.co.uk/freezers and filter the results according to dimensions. If you have trouble logging in, see www.which.co.uk/help or call 01992 822 800.

Ebay scam

My partner bought concert tickets for a Queen concert on Ebay in April 2008 and paid using a debit card registered with PayPal, assuming this gave us some protection. The vendor informed us the tickets would not be sent to

us until two weeks before the October 2008 concert. They never arrived. Ebay and PayPal told us that whilst a protection scheme is available, there is a limited time-period to log a dispute.
PETER TAYLOR

Paypal's buyer protection system applies for only 45 days after the payment. This is important to keep in mind for items that are often sent at a much later date, as is the case here. However, Paypal's protection system doesn't cover intangible items such as concert tickets, so you wouldn't be covered anyway. We've raised these and other concerns with PayPal.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

First Look, Jan 09, p11

The claimed battery life for the Bayliss Eco Revolution media player is 48 hours, not the 20 hours that we reported in this article.

Kettles, Feb 09, p58

We used the wrong image for the Argos Cookworks Signature White Illuminated 422/9492 kettle.

Tumble dryers, Nov 08, p67

The correct telephone number for Bosch is 01908 328 500 and not the number we gave in this article.

First Look, Feb 08, p8

We used the wrong image of the Vax Power vacuum cleaner. We pictured the Power 1 rather than the Power 5, which is part of the same range of models. We apologise for the error.