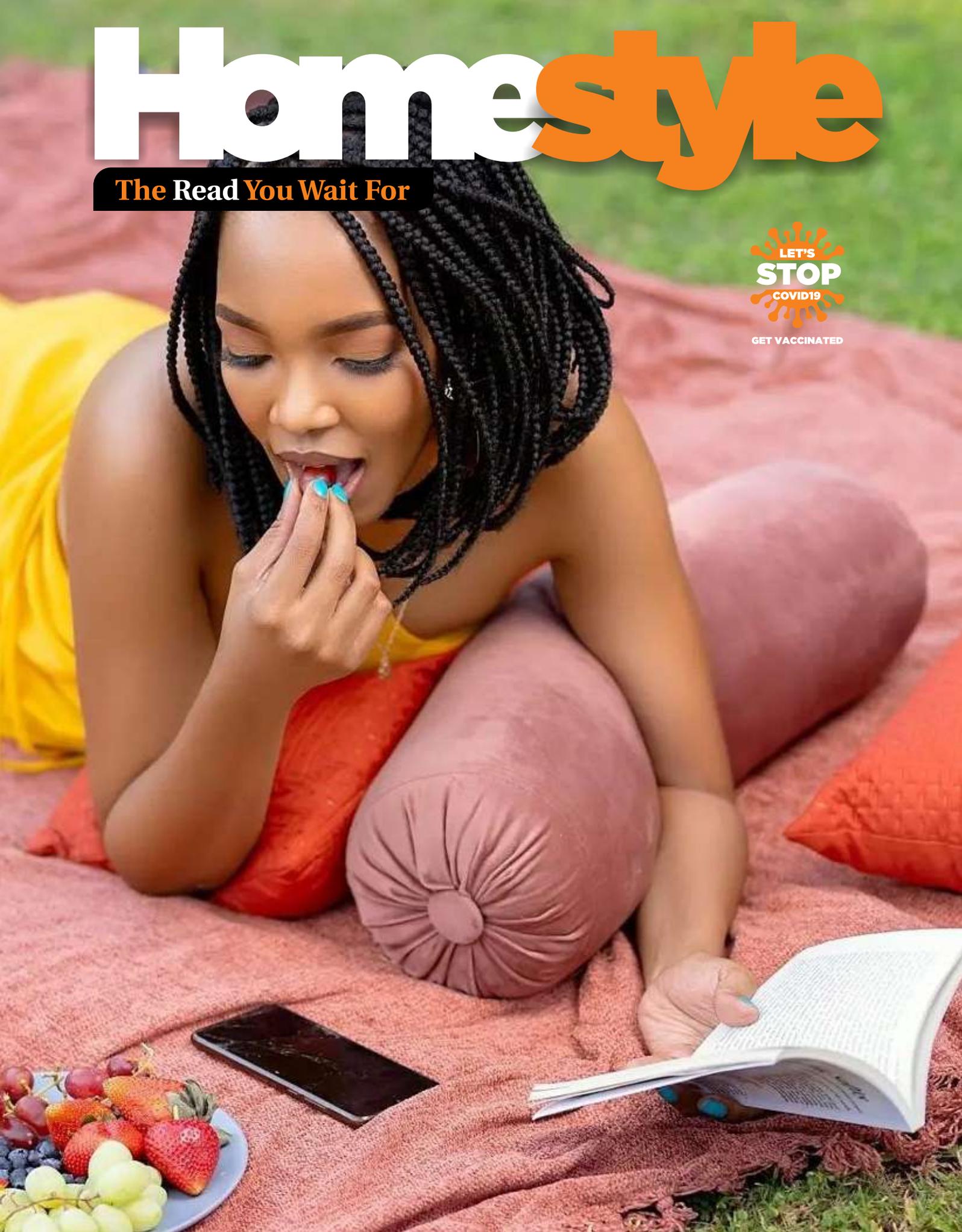


# Homestyle

The Read You Wait For



The  
Unapologetic  
Housewife

7 Tips to  
catch some  
zzz's

Exciting  
upcoming movies  
for 2022

# Hello

**T**wo down and we are in the third. The months seem to be just flying past. It's March. And we unapologetically celebrate women. We set the tone with the unapologetic housewife. There is no perfect role for women. Each one must find the one that she is most comfortable in and refuse to be pushed into a box that just does not fit.

Meet Sanel. A woman who dances to the beat of her own drum. Taking the corporate rule book to the house.

Sleep should be easiest thing to do, right? But unfortunately it does not work out that way for a lot of people. Few of us a blessed with the gift of just rolling over and drifting off to the land of nod. We found a few tips that may be just what helps you get to zzz fast.

Did you happen to follow the Tokyo Olympics? And maybe wondered at the odd mascots that the Japanese seem to love. In my mind it kind of explains anime. Incomprehensible. LOL! Read up on all that in our sport feature of the week.

Love the movies? There is plenty more to look forward to in 2022 and we bring you a preview list so you can select which ones to watch out for.

Covid-19 new infection cases seem to have crept up again over the past few weeks. But thankfully serious illness and fatality rates are very low. All the same, let's continue to take care and protect each other. There is no comfort in low statistics when the one in 10 is you or someone that you love.

**Till next week, be good and stay safe.**

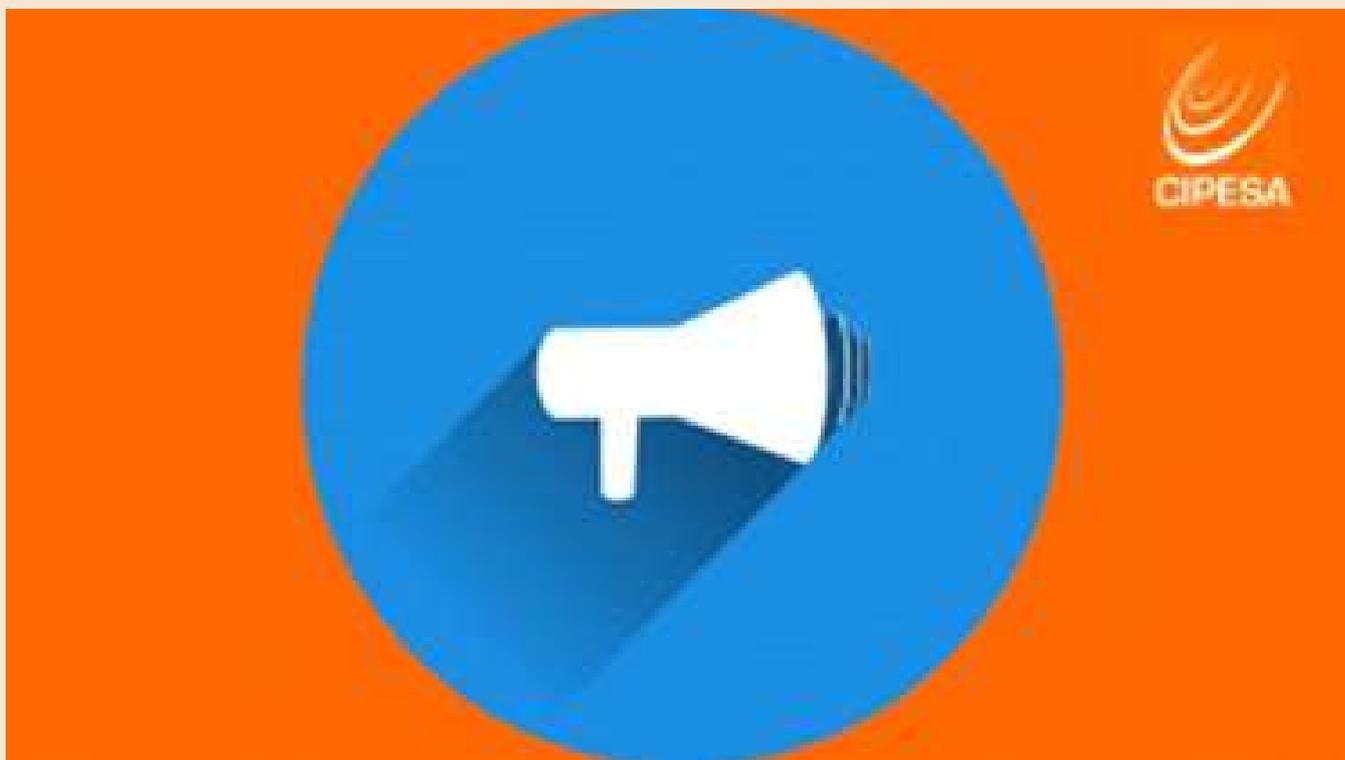
*Monica*

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## Call for Applications: Researching and Communicating Digital Rights in Africa



### Call for Applications

The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) is calling for applications from individuals interested in learning, researching and communicating digital rights for a two-day virtual training.

The training seeks to equip participants with requisite skills as well as serve as a space to build a community of interdisciplinary digital rights researchers and advocates of digital rights in Africa.

The training, scheduled for 24-25 March, 2022 targets human rights defenders, academics, media, activists, technologists, and private sector actors from Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

#### Topics to be covered will include:

- Key issues shaping the digital rights landscape in Africa
- Legal and policy frameworks governing digital rights in Africa.
- Legal research for Internet policy and digital rights analysis
- Survey methods in digital rights research
- Monitoring surveillance, internet shutdowns and targeted malware
- Strategic Communication, Visuals, and Using Research for Advocacy
- Complete the application form
- Deadline for application is Friday, March 17, 2022
- Successful applicants will be notified on Monday, March 21, 2022

CIPESA will cover participants' internet connectivity costs.

For more information, visit:

<https://cipesa.org/2022/03/call-for-applications-researching-and-communicating-digital-rights-in-africa/>



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# How to Fall Asleep Fast: 7 Tips to Beat **Insomnia**



Insomnia is the most common sleep disorder, with up to 30% of adults reporting short-term sleep issues. But if you've been up at night wondering how to fall asleep fast, it might be affecting you even more than you realize.

Failing to fall asleep isn't only frustrating — the anxiety from not being able to sleep can actually make it even harder to fall asleep in the future. So how can you stop this domino effect to successfully catch some zzz's?

## 1. Try The Military Method

The military method is a technique that focuses on muscle relaxation, breathing, and mental visualization. Here's how to fall asleep fast with the military method.

1. Sit or lay down on your bed, slowly relaxing the muscles in your body.
2. Beginning with your face, tense your muscles then allow them to loosen naturally. Begin to take deep, calming breaths.
3. Repeat this process until your entire body feels completely at ease.
4. Push all thoughts from your head for 10 seconds. When your brain feels clear, picture one of the following scenarios:
  1. Peacefully lying in a canoe on a calm lake
  2. Gently rocking back and forth in a completely dark room
5. If the above is unsuccessful, mentally repeat “don't think, don't think, don't think” for at least 10 seconds, and try again.

## 2. Use The 4-7-8 Method

The 4-7-8 method is based on Pranayama, a traditional yoga technique. This method can help ease anxiety and lull you into a state of calm. In the 4-7-8 technique, you focus on counting to distract yourself from feelings of anxiety. Here's how to sleep faster with the 4-7-8 method.

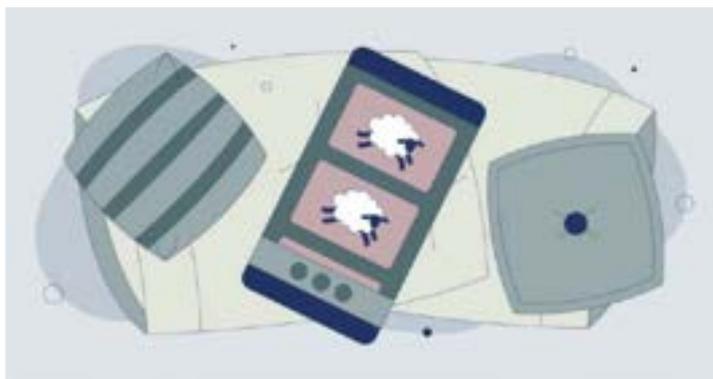
1. While laying down in bed, allow your tongue to relax behind your front teeth, resting on the roof of your mouth.
2. Slowly exhale all of your breath through your mouth, completely emptying your lungs.
3. Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds, then exhale for 8 seconds.
4. Repeat this process at least four times.

## 3. Try to Stay Awake

An unexpected strategy for trying to fall asleep fast is actually to try to stay awake. While it may sound counterintuitive, trying to stay awake can help you lessen the anxiety around trying to fall asleep.

Since falling asleep is an involuntary process, taking your mind off of the task at hand can give your brain the break it needs for you to stop counting sheep.

## 4. Turn Down Your Tech



With the prevalence of modern technology, surfing the internet before bed is more of a given than a question. While it can be tough to turn off your tech, looking at your screen before bed can negatively impact your quality of sleep. Many devices emit a blue light that simulates sunlight — and while this is helpful before your morning coffee, it can do more harm than good when trying to hit the hay.

# How to Fall Asleep Fast: 7 Tips to Beat Insomnia

If you're not able to completely part with your devices for an hour before bed, consider turning down your tech instead. Try listening to music, a calming podcast, or an audiobook for screen-free entertainment while you get ready for bed.

## 5. Try Autogenic Training

Autogenic training is a relaxation method created by Johannes Heinrich Schultz, a German psychiatrist. Based on the principles of hypnosis, autogenic training uses a series of statements to create a calming effect in your nervous system. Here's how to fall asleep fast with autogenic training methods.

1. Lay down and bring focus to your breath, saying to yourself, "I am completely calm."
2. Bring your focus to your arms and repeat to yourself, "My arms are very heavy," then, "I am completely calm," at least six times.
3. Move your focus to your legs and repeat to yourself, "My legs are very heavy," then, "I am completely calm," at least six times.
4. Move around to different parts of your body, such as your abdomen, forehead, and heart, repeating the above phrases at least six times.
5. Once you feel relaxed, begin to shift your attention to your entire body, where you should then feel relaxed and warm.
6. Repeat the above steps until you're ready, at which point you can open your eyes (if you haven't yet fallen asleep) and enjoy the state of calm.

## 6. Do a Body Scan

While a body scan might sound a bit medical-grade, it's actually an easy relaxation technique you can do before bed to promote better sleep. A body scan is a check-in with yourself and your body that you can do by bringing awareness and intention to each part of your body.

Similar to the military method, a body scan focuses on one section of the body at a time until you feel completely relaxed.

However, with a body scan, you move at a very slow rate throughout your body, taking 10 to 20 minutes to reach the tips of your feet.

1. Lay down in a relaxed and comfortable position.
2. Beginning with your head, focus on one section of your body until it feels completely relaxed.
3. Move down to your shoulders, allowing them to relax before progressing down the right side of your body.
4. Once your right side feels relaxed, begin focusing on the left side of your body.
5. After 10 to 20 minutes, check in with your body to see if you feel completely relaxed.

## 7. Take A Warm Bath or Shower



A warm soak has long since been known as a remedy after a long day. But did you know that taking a warm bath or shower is shown to help you fall asleep 36% faster?

Next time you think you might be up counting sheep, step into the tub for a nice and relaxing soak. Taking time for a hot bath or shower can also improve your quality of sleep — even during warm weather. - casper.com

# Meet the Unapologetic **Housewife**



**Lynn Murahwa**

**S**anel is an accomplished blogger helping thousands of mothers to feel comfortable breaking the bias of motherhood. There is no question about it, being a mom is hard work. We know that it is rewarding and the little ones make it all worth it. But truth be told, it can drive you crazy at times, most times.

Society has put an incredible amount of pressure on women to be the perfect woman, a Stepford wife, and so many women feel like failures because of these impossible standards. As we enter March, Women's Month, we meet an inspirational woman who

is not afraid to #breakthebias while helping other women to do the same.

Here is what I can say about the first time I met Sanel, she walking into our office beaming with confidence and excitement and her energy instantly filled the room. Sanel is a South African woman, living in Zimbabwe, a marketer by profession and a full time mom and wife. Like many people have done in the past, I asked Sanel why she would opt to live and raise her family in Zimbabwe, especially when so many of our people are clamouring to leave.

## Meet the Unapologetic Housewife



“I am married to a wonderful Zimbabwean man, who I met in South Africa. From the onset the plan was always to settle in Zim. At first I was a bit nervous, moving to a new country, I didn't know what to expect. Now that I am here, I absolutely love it. It is the perfect place to raise our sons. The people have been so warm and welcoming, everywhere I go and that has made the move so much easier.

“One of the biggest adjustments for me was getting used to the multi-currency system. Having someone ask me how I was paying for a loaf of bread was new to me, and I'm not that great at Maths, so doing all the conversions was so interesting. Zimbabweans are amazing people for doing all of this with ease.

“Moving here has made me more creative. I have started recycling with my gardener and have even started gardening. I never used to garden, but every home here has a garden and that's fantastic. It is the most fulfilling thing in the world to literally pull something out of the ground that you have grown then eat it! The kids have gotten involved too, learning practically about plants.”

The anxiety of moving to a new country coupled with being a stay at home mom would be enough to send most of us into panic mode but Sanel has taken it in her stride, fully embracing her role and all of its wonderful complexities.

“I love being a mom, it is good, it's bad, it's ugly and beautiful but the most important thing is that it is a journey, one that is unique to everyone. It may look simple, especially if you go through my Instagram page but it can be very difficult.

“There are days that I struggle, especially when the helper is not around. I can rush off to the bathroom and cry because I feel so overwhelmed but I made a very conscious decision very early on that this is what I wanted, to be here for my children.”



Housewives are sometimes seen as people who have it easy, I mean what can be so difficult about being at home and playing with kids all day right? However, it is a 24/7 job with huge responsibilities. “I live by schedules and routine, something I took from my workspace. It can be difficult to get into the groove at first, but once the kids know what they are supposed to do, when to do it, it takes a load off you and makes for a smoother process. I even have my own KPI's and set goals just to help me keep track of how things are going in the household. It is important to note though that flexibility is just as important because children need that too,” she added.



# Meet the Unapologetic Housewife



The nostalgia that mothers feel when they reminisce over their former lives often leads to guilt, but Sanel says there is no need to feel guilty because we all miss a time when we had less responsibility and could wake up at any time without having to do a daily meal plan. She even looks back at the time she opted to go for a night out with friends, the same day she moved to a different city. All before buying a bed or getting situated. The night ended in hilarious fashion – on the side of the road in a twice broken down car. Only to get back home well after daybreak and have to share a bed: “I mean, if I have a hectic night I at least want to collapse in my own bed.”

A difficult feeling that many mothers feel, quite early on into parenthood is battling isolation. It is quite common to feel closed off to the world because your entire world has shifted to caring for another human life or lives. Without a support system, it can be daunting and may even lead to depression or resentment. Sanel encourages women in this position to try to find other women who are in the same group as them.

“I struggled to find my clique of friends and that was difficult but eventually I began to mix with the other moms at my sons’ school. When the kids become friends then the parents

automatically do too.

“There are times I miss being in a professional set up, interacting with other professionals on the same level and that is why it is important to not lose yourself. Find something that you are passionate about, that you can do without putting yourself under pressure. I use my Instagram page for just that, it is a space where I can express myself creatively.”

The Unapologetic Housewife page has become a community where women come to discuss motherhood, to vent, to ask for advice and just for the company.

Sanel chose to become a housewife and stay at home mom, well before the children arrived because, “it was important for me to be there during their formative years.” Not all women have this choice but she says that it is all about your attitude towards yourself. Once you accept the fact that there is no perfect mother and that even the roles between partners may not always seem fair, be kind to yourself. Every day is different, what worked like a charm yesterday may be a total disaster tomorrow and that is ok. “Take notes from the learning curves and celebrate every win,” she says. Great advice!

# Homestyle

THE READ YOU WAIT FOR



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# Slow Cooker Beef Stew

Who doesn't love a hearty bowl of rich and flavourful beef stew. It's such a traditional Fall and Winter comfort food. I've been working on slight variations of this recipe for *years* and I have to say, this version is definitely the best ever.

All of the ingredients in this recipe complement each other so well, and the quantities of each are perfect, with no ingredient overpowering another.

This traditional Beef Stew is loaded with tender bites of juicy beef, golden potatoes, carrots, peas, red wine, onions, garlic, and a hearty beef broth. It's the BEST Slow Cooker beef recipe.



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# Slow Cooker Beef Stew

## Ingredients

- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/2 teaspoon celery salt
- 2 1/2 pounds stew meat, see notes
- 3-6 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 Tablespoons cold butter, separated
- 2 cups yellow onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup high-quality cabernet sauvignon, merlot works as well. See notes.
- 4 cups beef broth
- 2 tsp better than bouillon, or 2 beef bouillon cubes
- 2 Tablespoons Worcestershire Sauce
- 3 Tablespoons Tomato Paste
- 5 medium carrots, cut into 1/4 inch cubes
- 1 lb. baby Yukon gold potatoes, halved or quartered
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 large branch rosemary
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1/4 cup Cold Water + 3 tablespoons Corn Starch, Optional
- 2-3 drops Kitchen Bouquet Browning + Seasoning Sauce, (Optional)- Adds an even richer darker colour.

## Instructions

Cut meat into 1-inch cubes, discard any large pieces of fat. Fat marbled into the meat is fine!

Sprinkle beef with black pepper, garlic salt, and celery salt. Toss to coat. Sprinkle flour over the meat and toss again.

Heat 3 Tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the meat in batches, don't overcrowd the pan). Brown on each side for 45 seconds. Add more oil if needed. Transfer to slow cooker.



Reduce heat to medium and melt 1 Tablespoon butter. Add onions and cook for 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Use a silicone spatula to clean the bottom of the pan, removing any brown remnants. This will give the soup lots of good flavour. If necessary, add a splash of wine to help loosen it. Transfer the onions/garlic mixture to the slow cooker.

Add all remaining ingredients except for the peas, corn starch mixture, and 2 tablespoons of cold butter.

Cook on low for 7 1/2 to 8 hours or high for 3 1/2 to 4 hours, until the vegetables are softened and the potatoes are fork tender.



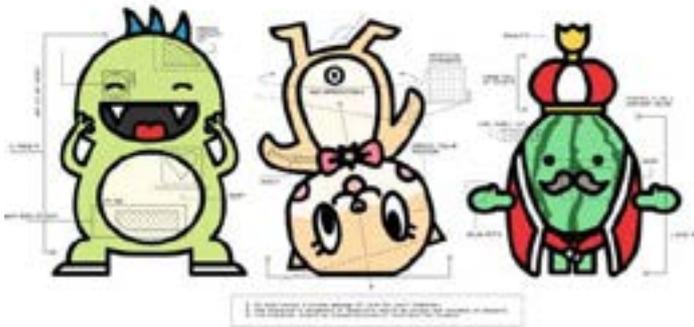
Add the peas during the last 15 minutes of cooking.

**Optional:** To thicken, combine 1/4 cup COLD water with 3 Tablespoons of corn-starch. Slowly add it to the stew, stirring to incorporate. It will continue to thicken upon standing.

Turn off the heat. Remove the bay leaves and rosemary stem. Swirl in 2 tablespoons of cold butter for a smooth, velvety finish. This is a technique that chefs use called "Monter au Beurre". -thecozycook.com

# A look inside Japan's obsession with bizarre mascots

In Japan, mascots are more than a cultural phenomenon. They're a billion-dollar business.



Jacu-jii is a human Jacuzzi faucet who represents the Osaka Waterworks Bureau. A boxing rabbit named Super Hakuto-kun is the face of an express train service. There's Melon Kuma, a terrifying, tourism-promoting fruit-bear hybrid, and Colon-chan, a character with hot pink, intestine-shaped hair, who encourages colonoscopies.

In other parts of the world, mascots are designed to appeal to children and are typically associated with sports and consumer brands. This is not true in Japan, where almost every brand, prefecture, and local government is represented by a mascot, promoting everything from local produce to pachinko (arcade) parlours and generating billions of dollars in the process. And unlike other mascots that exist to stand out, Japanese mascots are made to blend in.

This is the heart of “yuru-chara,” the championing of mascots as part of everyday life. Japanese artist Jun Miura is widely credited with coining the term in 2009, outlining three fundamental components of a yuru-chara mascot:

1. It must convey a strong message of love for one's hometown.
2. Its movements should be unique and unstable or awkward.
3. It should be unsophisticated or laid-back and lovable.

It's a recipe that works for a Japanese audience, a mixture of regional loyalty and self-deprecation in a place where celebration of the absurd flourishes. Though reverence for non-human characters can be traced back to the cultural impact of Kami, the spirits which form the foundation of the polytheistic Shinto religion.

The recent proliferation of yuru-chara began in 2007 with Hikonyan, a samurai cat created by the Hikone city government to mark the 400th anniversary of Hikone Castle. The mascot wasn't just popular — it was a phenomenon. People flocked to see Hikonyan, generating more than \$200 million in tourism spending. Other cities took note, hoping to replicate Hikone's success with mascots of their own. Brands and businesses followed suit.

Though yuru-chara was initially rooted in connecting people to brands, the public's love for the characters themselves soon created a demand for apparel, accessories, food, toys, and just about anything else that could be branded with a mascot's image. Merchandise sales reached a reported \$16 billion in 2012, and fan loyalty has only continued to grow.



## A look inside Japan's obsession with bizarre mascots

Chris Carlier runs “Mondo Mascots,” a popular Twitter account that highlights the best and worst of Japan's mascot culture, which fascinated Carlier when he first moved to Tokyo from Britain. Though Carlier has spoken to many of the people inside the costumes, they never reveal their identities, always speaking in character, and only for short periods. Many of them are full-time employees who spend most of their time making public appearances, he says, especially if they represent a brand or large city. The job is less glamorous in smaller prefectures where characters are often played by “reluctant young town hall employees” roped into the role.

Yuru-chara has had a fair share of international exposure, though people might not realize it. Domo, a fluffy, saw-toothed monster who represents Japan's public broadcaster, Nippon Hoso Kyokai, gained widespread popularity in fledgling meme communities Newgrounds and YTMND as early as 2001. As one of the internet's first identifiable memes, it wasn't long before Domo merchandise flooded the western market, even if people didn't know where the image came from.

During the 2018 World Cup in Russia, Ippei-Kun caught the imagination of soccer fans with tweets full of ennui and existential dread. Ippei-Kun's Twitter account became a must-follow element of the World Cup itself, elevating each of Japan's games and turning them into something wholly special. The juxtaposition of a cute mascot with soul-crushing despair resonated with a western audience largely because of how weird it was, but also how

perfectly it mirrored society.

Carlier says elements of yuru-chara can even be found in the U.S., particularly when it comes to the cult-like following surrounding Philadelphia's sports mascots, which he considers the cream of the crop.

“Gritty or the Phillie Phanatic are as bonkers as any you'd find in Japan,” he says.

Gritty, the Philadelphia Flyers' beloved orange fur-covered giant, is arguably the most popular mascot in American sports. Why? Because he's weird. More than simply entertainment for children, Gritty routinely harasses reporters, fans, and players with his antics and is no stranger to controversy. Even people who would never identify as sports fans still recognize Gritty as part of the city's identity.

While that spirit defines Japanese mascot culture, an existential threat hangs over the long-term future of yuru-chara: the weight of its own popularity. There are so many mascots in Japan, government officials have pushed for a culling of less popular mascots to keep the yuru-chara system alive.

The Yuru-Chara Grand Prix is an annual contest where fans vote for their favourite mascots, which also keeps tabs on the popularity of government-sponsored characters. While it helps justify why certain mascots have value, it also serves to push out those who are underperforming.

It's unclear whether yuru-chara will continue in perpetuity. What is evident, however, is officials are terrified of seeing the culture end entirely given the massive boon to local economies and governments that would otherwise struggle for funding. With the incredible success of yuru-chara comes the understanding that oversaturating the market could cause it to collapse.

For now, yuru-chara thrives in Japan, where everything has a mascot, and every mascot has a purpose — at least until the next big thing comes along. - sbnation.com



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catch fog  
yesterday.  
Mist.**





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## More awesome movies coming up in 2022

Two weeks ago, we looked at some of the 2022 movies we are looking forward to watching but the list is so extensive that we had to break it into two or maybe 3. Here are more movies to add to your watch list.

Lynn Murahwa

Spoiler Free

### Moview Review

Homestyle Rating



#### Sonic the Hedgehog 2

**Directed by:** Jeff Fowler

**Starring:** Ben Schwartz, James Marsden, Jim Carrey, Tika Sumpter, Idris Elba, Colleen O'Shaughnessey

**S**onic the Hedgehog was one of the last big movies to hit theaters before coronavirus lockdowns went into effect, and it became one of the highest-grossing films of 2020. This year, Sonic (Ben Schwartz) is back on the big screen, as Dr. Robotnik (Jim Carrey) returns with a furry pal of his own named Knuckles (voiced by Idris Elba) and Sonic must team up with a new friend (voiced by Colleen O'Shaughnessey) to stop him.



#### Ambulance

**Directed by:** Michael Bay

**Starring:** Jake Gyllenhaal, Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Eiza Gonzalez, Garret Dillahunt

Michael Bay tones down his blockbuster tendencies just a bit (presumably) for this smaller-scale thriller about a pair of thieves who unknowingly rob an ambulance carrying a paramedic and a patient in critical condition. This remake of a Danish film has been in development since 2015, but filming finally got underway in January of 2021.



#### The Bad Guys

**Directed by:** Pierre Perifel

**Starring:** Sam Rockwell, Awkwafina, Craig Robinson, Marc Maron

## More awesome movies coming up in 2022

This latest project from DreamWorks Animation is a heist comedy based on popular series of children's books about a handful of reformed villains who decide to go straight and so some good in the world. In this case, the “bad guys” are Mr. Wolf, Mr. Piranha, Mr. Snake, Mr. Shark, and Ms. Tarantula. It was originally slated for release in 2021, but now remains undated in 2022.



### Legally Blonde 3

**Directed by:** Jamie Suk

**Starring:** Reese Witherspoon, Jennifer Coolidge

We don't know what the story will entail, but we do know that a third entry in the beloved Reese Witherspoon comedy franchise *Legally Blonde* is set to come out sometime in May of 2022. The film has been in development since 2018 and was originally scheduled to open in 2020, but various delays — including, yes, the coronavirus — set it back. We know that Jennifer Coolidge is returning, and the film will be the feature debut of Jamie Suk.

### Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness

**Directed by:**

Sam Raimi

**Starring:**

Benedict

Cumberbatch,

Elizabeth Olsen,

Benedict Wong,

Rachel

McAdams,

Chiwetel Ejiofor,

Xochitl Gomez



Anticipation will be high for this entry in the Marvel Cinematic Universe — the first of three in 2022 — that will directly tie in with the events in Marvel's first Disney+ series, *WandaVision*. and possibly even the animated Disney+ series *What If...?* After some behind-the-scenes shake-ups, director Sam Raimi jumped on board, and judging from the first teaser, it's going to be a wild ride.

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HART

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### DC League of Super-Pets

**Directed by:** Jared Stern

**Starring:** TBD

Back in August of 2020, the DC Fandome event presented our first look at their upcoming animated film *DC Super Pets* — which centres on Superman's equally heroic dog teaming up with a flying cat to stop crime — but we haven't heard much about it since then. The release date was set all the way back in 2019, so here's hoping the film doesn't have to be pushed back due to production delays.

## More awesome movies coming up in 2022

Spoiler Free

### Movie Review

Homestyle Rating



#### **The Bob's Burgers Movie**

**Directed by:** Loren Bouchard

**Starring:** H. Jon Benjamin, John Roberts, Dan Mintz, Eugene Mirman, Kristen Schaal, Larry Murphy

The hit Fox animated comedy about the owner of a small hamburger restaurant and his quirky family is getting the feature film treatment in the form of a musical comedy — something the show is already quite comfortable with. The film was pulled off the release schedule in January and may not come back in time for a 2021 release, but we'll keep our fingers crossed.

—[rottentomatoes.com](http://rottentomatoes.com)