

Sainsbury's

Our first interactive issue! 

magazine

OCTOBER 2012

**ONLY
£1.60**
+WIN meals
at our favourite
restaurants

Let's get cooking!

- * Soups and pies
- * Cakes and crumbles
- * Roasts and bakes

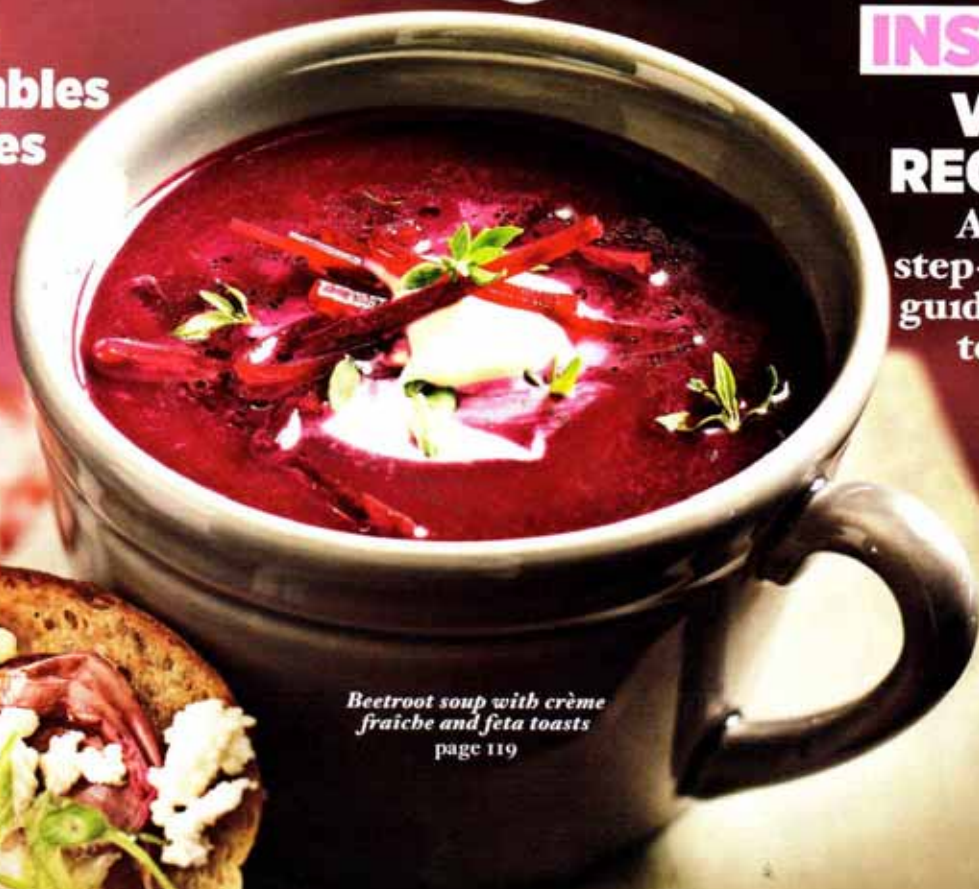
+FREE

Herb plants for every reader*

INSIDE!

**VIDEO
RECIPES**

Amazing
step-by-step
guides from
top chefs



Beetroot soup with crème fraiche and feta toasts
page 119



97+

**INSPIRING REASONS
TO LOVE AUTUMN**

**MORE ENERGY
GLOWING SKIN
BETTER BODY**

Three feel-good gurus make it easy



Wear...
Autumn's
must-have
£30 jacket



Try...
Classic Chinese
recipes with
Ken and Ching



Buy...
The latest
skincare
superheroes

On top of the WORLD

Making it to the summit of a mountain takes guts and determination. Three women who've managed it tell *Jill Foster* about the incredible highs and lows – and what made them want to do it in the first place



Jacqui Thompson, 46, below centre, climbed Kilimanjaro in October 2009, 18 months after her husband, Gary, was killed in Afghanistan while serving as a reservist with the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. Jacqui lives in Nottinghamshire and has five daughters.

I'd never felt so frightened and vulnerable as I did in the weeks and months after Gary's death. We'd been partners for more than 20 years and he had always been there to say: 'It's going to be all right'. For a long time I still expected him to walk in the door.

The RAF Benevolent Fund (RAFBF) was so good to us during this time. Not only did they help me with the immediate financial costs, but they were there to support me emotionally, too. I don't know what I'd have done without them.

When Jana, the wife of Gary's cousin, asked me if I wanted to climb Kilimanjaro, I thought it would be a good way to raise funds for the RAFBF and that Gary would've leapt at the chance. Poignantly, the climb took place around the time of what would have been his 52nd birthday.

When we arrived in Tanzania, I was petrified of letting Gary down. I'd trained by going on lots of long walks, but I was really worried that I might not be able to complete the challenge. I decided to take it one day at a time.

Climbing Kilimanjaro is done gradually, in stages, in order to acclimatise to the altitude. Some of our group suffered terribly from altitude sickness, but the only time it got to me was about halfway up when I began to feel panicky. I had the worst headache ever and dreadful nosebleeds, but it never once ▶

High point, below: Jacqui, centre, at the summit with Jana, right, and Charlie, a family friend



occurred to me to give up. Despite everything, I was enjoying the climb. I met some wonderful people and realised that it was the first time since Gary's death that I'd felt happy.

We climbed for nine days, through different terrain – rainforest, flat and dusty, or rocky and steep and almost volcanic-looking, with breathtaking views.

By the time we'd reached base camp, hundreds of other climbers had joined us, which was a shame. After such a pleasant climb, barely seeing another soul, the route became busy and dirty, but I knew we were only hours from reaching the top.

We set off for the summit at midnight, with everyone wearing headlamps. It was an unbelievable sight – the mountain looked like a Christmas tree, with strands of twinkly lights moving up and down it as the climbers made their way to the top. Some didn't make it – we saw several tired and distressed people being brought back down the mountain by guides. And it was so cold that the three litres of water I was carrying in my pouch froze.

But, after six hours, the sun began to rise. As we approached the summit, I was so elated I could have run and kissed the wooden post marking the top! We all took photos and I couldn't believe I'd actually made it.

On a wooden post I tied a bookmark bearing Gary's photograph and a message about how he was the rock of our family. He'd have been so proud.

Jacqui raised around £6,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund (0800 169 2942; rafbf.org).



Remembrance day, below, from left: Jacqui at her husband's memorial; Gary was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan

'I was so elated I could have kissed the wooden post marking the top'

Nicky Allen, 56, below right, owns Box 2, a shop and mail order company selling clothes for plus-sized women. Divorced, she lives in Wineham, West Sussex, with her dog, Bertie. She has a grown-up son and daughter. She climbed Machu Picchu in Peru in April 2008.

Every year, I set myself a new challenge to lose the few pounds I usually put on over Christmas. Machu Picchu was always on my list of things to do before I die, and, as my children had gone off to university and my marriage was almost over, I needed something incredible to focus my energy. I decided this would be the year to make the journey to Peru.

I looked online for organised treks and came across one run by Breast Cancer Care. I know lots of women affected by the disease, so I signed up. At first, my training involved only brisk walks

on the beach with Bertie but, as the weeks went by, I realised I'd need more intense training, so I signed up for a

climbing weekend in Wales, on Mount Snowdon. I learned so much and it made me realise just how fit I had to get if I was going to climb to 4,000 metres.

When I arrived in Peru the following April, I was so excited. Thanks to the unbelievable generosity of customers, friends and family, I'd raised more than £7,000 in sponsorship, so I couldn't let anyone down.

As soon as we started on the trek, some of the younger girls in our group of eight began suffering from altitude sickness and they were very ill. As you climb higher, you struggle for breath because the air is so thin. The guides say that smokers don't panic as much with altitude sickness because they're used to taking such shallow breaths, but when you're fit and healthy, it can be very disconcerting. It affected me in a different way: I became very claustrophobic. When I zipped up my tent on the first night, I panicked and couldn't bear being



inside. The doctor accompanying us gave me some pills to help combat it and I was fine after that.

Every day we walked from morning until early evening, stopping for lunch, which was prepared by our guides. Our group was very fortunate not to be taken on the most popular route, which can be a bit like the M25. Instead, we used a much quieter path, which took us past hundreds of rows of potato crops and villages; llamas and alpacas on the hillside, and local men spinning llama wool on small spindles as they walked.

Seeing the snow-capped peaks of the Andes for the first time was incredible, but not as magical as meeting a delightful group of schoolchildren, dressed in traditional ponchos, who came to our camp to greet us. It moved me to tears. They were so polite and friendly, and we gave them pencils and crayons. They sang us Peruvian songs and we sang *Old MacDonald* to them (and included llamas on the farm!).

If I'm honest, reaching Machu Picchu was a bit of an anti-climax after four days of climbing. It's spectacular, but it's just how I'd imagined it would be, and full of tourists. But it was an adventure that I'll never forget and I feel so lucky to have done it. ▶



Hazel Kemble, 62, left, with her husband Peter, 74, have climbed mountains all over the world, including, in April 2010, their biggest challenge – Everest Base Camp. The couple run their own business, To The Top (tttgroup.co.uk), from their home in the Lake District.

It's tough at the top: Hazel and Peter at Base Camp, where a rock on the glacier is covered in prayer flags

It's an incredible privilege to stand on the summit of a mountain and marvel at scenery few other people will ever see. I'm constantly amazed by the vast expanses, the variety of wildlife and how the weather can change in an instant. You feel very small indeed, but it's one of the best feelings in the world.

Peter and I were keen cross country runners and got into climbing in the early 1990s. It all started when we were walking in the mountains in Austria and found ourselves getting higher until we reached the snow line. Suddenly we felt vulnerable. We weren't trained to be this high but the views were amazing. When we got back to the UK we did a winter mountaineering course in Scotland and loved it. We were taught how to assess avalanche risk, to gauge whether a snow-filled gully is safe to cross and how to use crampons properly.

A year later we did a similar course in the Alps. A few days into the trip, we were crossing a glacier with our guide and I found myself wondering if our training

would kick in if something went wrong. Seconds later, our guide fell down a crevasse and I immediately hit the deck to secure myself, as we'd been taught. We had no idea if he'd been killed, but then I felt a tug on the rope as he climbed back out. It was a heart-stopping moment, but in no way did it put us off – it just proved that our training was working.

Since then, Peter and I have climbed mountains in the Pyrenées, Alps and Kyrgyzstan. And even a hip replacement in 1999 hasn't stopped me – I was back climbing 12 weeks after the operation.

Two years ago, we decided to climb to the Everest Base Camp, which is 5,364m above sea level. There are paths up through a valley to the camp that are relatively easy, and thousands

'It took us 12 days to climb to Base Camp, where I sat down and cried'

do it every year, but we wanted a bigger challenge. We went on a trip called Everest The Hard Way Trek, and physically it was the toughest thing we've ever done. It's an unrelenting climb, the air is thin and there are boulders so huge you have to go around them, not over them.

It took us 12 days to get to Base Camp, where I sat down and cried. I found it incredibly emotional to think of all the mountaineers who have lost their lives trying to climb Everest. At Base Camp we could see the tents of the climbers who were about to try for the summit, but we weren't allowed near in case we passed on any infections.

Looking up towards the summit was mesmerising, and I admit there was a tiny part of me that wanted to go further, but you have to know your limits.

Unfortunately, on the trek down, I cracked a rib through coughing and had to be helicoptered to hospital. I was sorry not to have made it to the bottom with the others, but I'm so glad we made the climb. ✦

PEAK PRACTICE: AN EXPERT GUIDE

Jonathan Hunt organises group climbs up Kilimanjaro in aid of The Nasio Trust, a charity for HIV orphans in Kenya. He has climbed the mountain three times.

What training should you do for a major climb?
The best training is something you enjoy, such as cycling or running, that can fit

around your life; and take long walks in hilly areas. Endurance is the key, so build up the miles slowly over several weeks.

Does everyone get altitude sickness?
At 3,000m, everyone will feel the altitude to some extent – usually just shortness of breath. From 3,500 to 4,000m, you can begin to feel a little light-headed and experience a loss of

appetite, but these are normal symptoms of acclimatisation. Even people who are super fit can suffer from it.

Can you prevent it?
The key is to take your time and enjoy the journey. If you don't respect the fact that you're 5,000m above sea level, it can really affect you. It's important to drink lots of water – keeping hydrated is

crucial to avoiding altitude sickness. On our climbs, walkers are constantly reminded to drink at least three litres of water per day. It sounds a lot, but it's essential to keep you healthy on the mountain.

Can anyone do it?
Climbing a mountain at altitude isn't for everyone, but you'll never know if it's right for you unless you try. Anyone

who enjoys challenging themselves and being outdoors should give it a go. It can be a life-changing experience.
■ thenasiotrust.org;
climbkilimanjaro.org
charity.com

Want to know more?
This book is a good first step:
The Greatest Guide To Walking & Mountain Hiking by Mark S Elliott (Greatest Guides, £9.99).