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WHY VINYL?

Everything Comes Back Around



Vinyl records outsold digital music for the first time ever in 2016. Over the last decade, digital recordings have dominated the marketplace for many reasons, but most importantly, thanks to convenience. Bearing this in mind, why would someone choose to buy a format that's heavier, larger, and indisputably less convenient?

To know the "why" is to know the history of the format. LPs, or long plays, were first introduced by RCA Victor in 1930 and were improved into the records we know today by Columbia Records in 1948. For years, records ruled the marketplace, due in large part to a lack of alternative format options.

Over time, the trend in music media has been to downsize and improve sound quality. The 8-track tape in '64, the compact disc in '82, and the MP3 in '89 are all evidence of this. Soon, records and their associated audio gear were more often found in landfills than on store shelves.

With so many indisputable facts against the format, how did LPs manage to make a comeback?

First and most importantly, vinyl has been embraced by many artists, big and small, due in large part to the nostalgia associated with the format. With more and more big names releasing projects via record, the industry received a much-needed shock to the heart. Second, the aesthetic component — namely the fact that records offer a much larger canvas for album covers, as well as more room for lyrics and inserts — means records can easily serve as centerpieces for décor. Finally, there is an argument for the overall sound quality of records being superior to any competing format, though this is often disputed by enthusiasts of other formats.

While the sound quality debate has yet to be concluded, the war between digital and physical media seems to be over (for now).

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NO MORE PENCILS, NO MORE BOOKS The Surprising History of Summer Vacation



opposed to the modern 180. However, lessons weren't mandatory, and before air conditioning was an option, school buildings would often become brutally hot. Kids would skip out to avoid the untenable temperatures, and wealthier families would flee the city for cooler climes.

The poor attendance during the summer months got some pundits wondering. Was such a long school calendar worthwhile? Not only that, but physicians began to speculate about the repercussions of so many days spent indoors behind a desk.

This, coupled with a push by school reformers to standardize the school schedule, caused officials to gradually shorten the school year, eventually doing away with the summer quarter altogether.

Today, some people wonder whether the three months of no school are a benefit or a burden. Researchers have shown that a "summer slide" occurs during the sweltering months. When students return to school in late August, they often have lost the equivalent of an entire month of learning. For these reasons and others, several nonprofit organizations campaign each year for a restructuring of the calendar, and some private schools remain open in the summer.

Whatever the case may be, the kids aren't worried. They're too busy getting hyped up on sunlight, mentally mapping out their summer schemes, and composing lists of video games to beat. As the song goes, "School's out for the summer," and there's no turning back.

Parents of America, it is, for better or for worse, that time of year again. Yes, summer vacation is here. As movie theaters trot out their latest batch of explosions and public pools fill with an unsanitary clump of human bodies, some of us ponder the origins of summer break. Why do these unruly kids get a three-month break, while most of us sit toiling away at work?

The commonly accepted and oft-quoted theory is that the seasonal school gap has its roots in our country's agrarian past. We imagine rural kids out of the schoolhouse and into the fields, planting rows of crops in the summer sun. But the fact is, the agrarian calendar has little to do with your kids' inevitable summer boredom.

Back in the day, children in agricultural areas were most needed for planting in the spring and harvesting in the fall. The school year reflected that and was comprised of a short winter term and a short summer term.

While schools in urban areas had different schedules, summer was always included, and the school year averaged 240 days a year, as

– Steven Goldstein



4 Drink Hacks to Keep Your Beverage Cool

The sun is summer's greatest ally — and greatest enemy. For every sun-soaked day at the beach, there are sunburns trying to ruin the party. For every excuse to drink an icy beverage, the sunshine's more determined to keep the drink from staying cool.

These hacks will allow you to enjoy the benefits of the summer sun without the side effect of a warm beverage.

First, let's say you just got home from the grocery store where you purchased a 12-pack of your favorite soda. You're thirsty and it's room temperature *at best*, right? Patience is a virtue, but there's nothing wrong with accelerating the process. **Fill a bowl with ice water and add a teaspoon of salt, then submerge a can of soda in the bowl.** This process will cool your drink more than twice as fast as just putting it in the freezer.

This other example requires less work, but it takes more freezer space. And if you're like the rest of us, your freezer is pretty packed in the summer! **Wet a paper towel and wrap it around a bottle or can before you place**

it in the freezer. The contents inside will cool much more quickly.

If you have more time to plan, this hack will keep your drink cold for longer. Ice doesn't fit in a bottle, and freezing your beer or other beverage will get you to Slushy Town in a hurry. **Fill an empty bottle about halfway, put the cap on, and place it in the freezer on its side.** When it's frozen, pour your favorite beverage inside — the ice from top to bottom will keep the contents cool on the go.

Bonus Hack: This has nothing to do with the sun, but is still a neat way to make drinking your beverage easier. If you go fancy and use a straw when you drink from a can, you know how hard it is to get the straw to stay put. **Spin the can's tab around and feed the straw through it.** Now you'll have a well-behaved straw that doesn't shift around when you need it to be there for you.

The sun is hot, and the summer is long. You need the comfort of a cool beverage to help you get through it. Keep cool, wear sunscreen, and have fun!



AFTER HOME IMPROVEMENT Protect Yourself From Post-Renovation Injury

With the arrival of spring and warmer weather, home improvement season has begun. You may have a list of projects you want to complete this summer. When it comes to the bigger projects, you may even need to hire a contractor or professional remodeler.

When it comes to home renovation or remodeling, not all projects go according to plan. For instance, say you hire a contractor to handle a kitchen renovation, and something's not installed correctly. If you're injured, who's liable?

For a do-it-yourself project, liability typically falls on the homeowner. If you tackle a project and you don't know what you're doing, you're liable for any injuries sustained by yourself or anyone in the home (just as you would be liable for damage to the home itself).

If you hire someone, liability is not always as straightforward. There are a few points to consider.

Anyone you hire needs to be insured. This is an absolute must. Never hire a contractor (this includes general contractors, as well as electricians, plumbers, roofers, and so on) who does not have insurance, or if you cannot verify their insurance status.

Verify insurance before committing to a contractor. You might have to contact your contractor's policy provider. Some contractors may offer to add you to their policy as an additional insured party. With others, you may need to make that request. Find out the full details of coverage, from what and who is covered to how long the coverage lasts. Asking these kinds of questions can save you a lot of trouble in the long run.

Verify your contractor's work history. Never hire a contractor if you cannot verify their credentials on top of their insurance. Renovation can be expensive, but you do not want to cut corners when it comes to your contractor. Hiring a cheap contractor can lead to cheap results, which could lead to other problems, including injury.

If you are injured following a renovation and liability is not clear, you should consult an injury attorney. As a rule of thumb, document as much as possible during the renovation, from work contracts to insurance forms to receipts.



HAVE A LAUGH ON US!



KILLER SMILE



EASIEST CHICKPEA CURRY

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick
- Pinch of ground cloves
- 2 (15-ounce) cans no-salt-added chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 3 tablespoons ketchup
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Chopped cilantro (optional)
- Lemon wedges (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large straight-sided skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat.
2. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until dark brown around edges, for about 6 minutes.
3. Add garlic, curry, cinnamon, and cloves and cook, stirring, until fragrant, for 30 seconds.
4. Add chickpeas, ketchup, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil; reduce to a simmer; cover, and cook for 20 minutes.
5. Uncover and increase heat to medium-high; cook until sauce is slightly reduced, for 5 minutes.
6. Serve with chopped cilantro and lemon wedges, if desired.

ENJOY!



TESTIMONIAL



I would highly recommend Steven for any personal injury case where someone has a significant injury.

I had surgery in my case. The insurance company tried to say that the surgery was because of anything but the accident. As soon as they took that position, Steven immediately put my case in court.

Two years later, the insurance company changed their tune and paid their policy limits. Steven is not afraid to go to court, and he is not afraid to go to trial, and they know that. I was extremely pleased with my results.

—Julian Boyce
Queens, New York