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F O R T L I F E

MONTHLY MAGAZINE | MARCH 2025 | VOL. 38



EDITORIAL

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YOUR ATTENTION**

An Ethical Lens

**Women's
History Month**

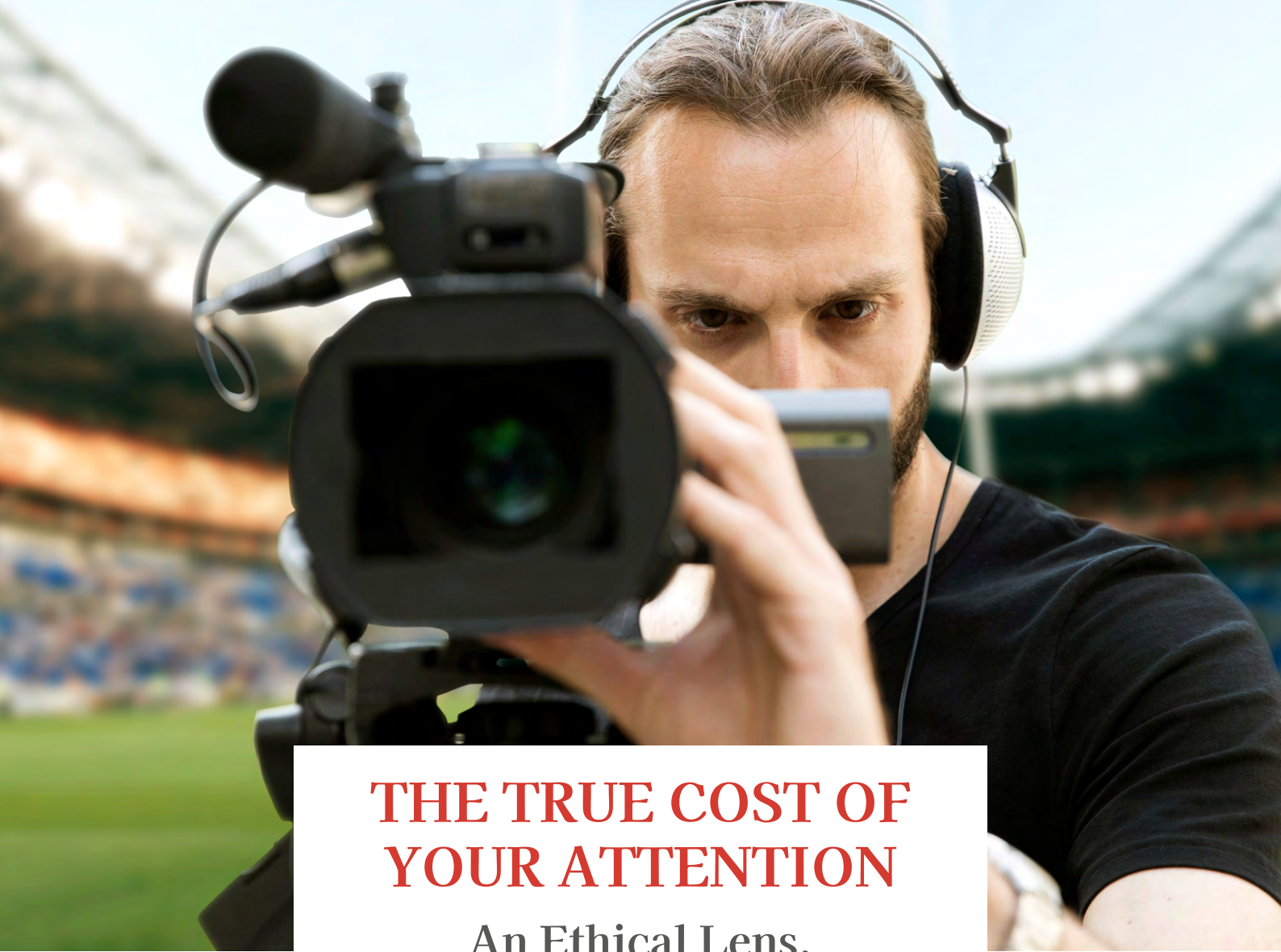
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THE TRUE COST OF YOUR ATTENTION

An Ethical Lens.

*Humanly written by:
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Introduction

Reality television has become a cultural phenomenon, captivating audiences with its unscripted drama yet compelling storylines. Shows like Big Brother, Survivor, The Traitors, Jerry Springer, and Love Island not only entertain viewers, but also rely on intense psychological dynamics to incite conflicting interactions. While these productions claim to reflect authentic human behavior, they're often configured with meticulously designed frameworks, with efforts to elicit specific reactions. When contestants sign up for these

shows and sign contracts acknowledging the “high-stress” or “challenging” situations, these agreements fail to recognize the intense manipulation crafted by the producers. In an interview with Cirie Fields (Yeates, 2024), winner of The Traitors season 1, a game where “traitors” try to eliminate “faithfuls” who aim to expose them, she says “[w]e didn't know the concept [the guidelines and the mental and physical demands of the show] until we were there in Scotland, and that's when it was explained to us that you could be selected as a traitor, and so on”.

This atmosphere of stress and uncertainty caused by the lack of transparency negatively impacted participants' well-being. One notable effect was their inability to rest, as Cirie continues, "[y]our mind would play tricks on you, and you'd be so anxious throughout the night, sometimes you can't sleep". Schuster et al. 's (2024) research on dopamine modulation in social environments elaborates on how highly stressful situations prompt irrational behavior because they block dopamine D2/ D3 receptors, thus depriving participants of the neurochemical support necessary for an effective mental state. For reality TV this is key to success, as these high-stress environments significantly increase the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflict, driving entertainment. This raises a critical social and ethical question: To what degree does reality TV exploit its participants to entertain viewers?

Psychological Stress on Participants

Reality television's appeal lies in its ability to present heightened versions of real-life human interactions. However, behind the high ratings, massive profits, and soaring views, participants often face manipulation from the production teams. Dr. Richard B. Ulrich was board-certified by the Board of Neurology and Psychiatry in 1972 and had a Ph.D. His work as chief editor in *The Psychology of Survivor* highlights how shows like *Survivor* employ tactics that intentionally promote stress among contestants in efforts to prompt dramatic behavior. Contestants are stranded on a remote island and are dismissed from normal comforts, forced to navigate social alliances, and constantly subjected to competition. These strategies not only cause dramatic tension but also place participants



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under immense psychological strain, raising concerns about their long-term health and well-being. "Physical stressors, such as food deprivation, also alter psychological factors such as motivation and irritability, and can increase impulsive and aggressive behaviors" (Moyer, 2007, p. 75), highlighting the extreme psychological impact that reality shows like *Survivor* have on contestants but also simultaneously reveals the motive as to why producers want to generate impulsive and aggressive behaviors: such reactions create intriguing dramatic scenes that keep viewers engaged. By pushing contestants to their breaking point, producers can cultivate moments of heightened tension, conflict, and unpredictability, which are key elements that skyrocket ratings.



What Makes this Controversial?

Now, while it is clear that participants are exploited for ratings in the shows, this topic still maintains its controversy because they willingly sign up for these shows and agree to contracts on their own accord. This raises the question of whether exploitation even exists in these cases, technically. In fact, on the infamous Jerry Springer Show, guests voluntarily called in to participate, exercising their own free will. However, the truth behind the scenes tells a different story. Ex-casting crew member Tobias Yoshimura revealed that producers conducted pre-rehearsals with guests. The goal? “[R]each into [the guest’s] brain and tap on the thing that made them laugh, cry, scream, or fight” –a common practice in reality TV (Jones, 2025). This suggests that while participants may have signed up to be featured on these shows, their emotions, and reactions are deliberately manipulated to maximize drama, thus obscuring the lines between free will and exploitation. Ethically, these practices raise significant concerns about informed consent and exploitation of the uninformed.

This kind of emotional manipulation is particularly concerning because it disregards the potential harm it may cause to guests’ mental state. The American Psychological Association emphasizes the importance of safeguarding mental health, as an unhealthy state can lead to feelings of depression and hopelessness (Weir, 2024), increasing the likelihood of these traits continuing onto the lives of participants, underscoring that even though participants willingly sign up for the shows, they can still face undeniably negative consequences.

Editing with an Agenda

Manipulation extends to selective editing, which exaggerates conflict and reinforces stereotypes. In Big Brother season 26, Tucker Des Lauriers is presented as “the villain” due to his conniving and cutthroat strategy. In order to emphasize this persona, editors made sure to prioritize featuring his strategy rather than his “showmance” (show romance) with another contestant Rubina Bernabe, where he displayed an affectionate and vulnerable nature.

In an interview with Bernabe, she provides insight into how she was able to truly connect with him, explaining that she was lucky to even meet him (Ross, 2024), yet the show focused only on his strategy, misrepresenting his true character. By selectively cutting out moments that might humanize him, the show successfully created the kind of chaotic narrative that drives viewer engagement.

The Dire Consequences of Exploitation

Additionally, the rapid rise to fame followed by sudden public exposure can often lead to a loss of personal identity, as contestants are thrust into spotlights without the necessary support systems. Niall Aslam, a participant on the reality TV dating show Love Island reveals that he was diagnosed with stress-induced psychosis as a result of the show. Explaining that he was “[losing] touch with reality” and even experienced “hallucinations” (Aslam, 2020). This loss of personal identity and mental health challenges tend to go unnoticed until the damage becomes severe. In serious cases, the impacts of reality TV shows can permanently affect participants. The intense pressures, constant public scrutiny, emotional stress, and isolation, exacerbated by the cutthroat nature of competition, can lead to fatal mental health struggles. This was tragically exemplified by Sophie Gradon and Mike Thalassitis’ deaths by suicide, both participants who also appeared on this show (Scully, 2021). Their deaths, occurring within only 20 months of their season's premiere, underscore the long-term mental and emotional threat that reality TV poses on its participants.

The Future of Reality TV

Looking into the future, the continued exploitation of reality TV participants raises concerns about the trajectory of the genre.

As audiences become more educated about the manipulation behind the scenes, there is a growing demand for transparency from reality TV shows and implementing stricter ethical safeguarding measures. Initiatives such as psychological assessments and industry standards for mental health support are gaining traction. Some shows have already taken a step in the right direction; as a result of the tragedies, Love Island, for example, has introduced mental health protocols such as pre-filming psychological assessments, on-set psychiatric doctors, and post-film therapy. In order to protect participants and uphold the integrity of the genre, these reforms must be adopted universally. Without widespread change, reality TV will continue to straddle the line between entertainment and exploitation, harming the well-being of those who participate while simultaneously undermining the credibility of the genre.

Conclusion

Ultimately, using participants in reality TV shows highlights the struggle between keeping audiences entertained and treating people fairly. While these shows provide escapism and intrigue for viewers, they often do so at the expense of participants' well-being. By examining the multiple layers of this issue, these shows can be changed for the better, and it is possible to envision a reality TV genre that prioritizes respect for both its participants and its audience.

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Women's History Month:

Pioneering Women Who Changed Business & Industry

Spotlighting influential women in entrepreneurship and leadership

Throughout history, women have played a pivotal role in shaping industries and redefining entrepreneurship, often overcoming immense barriers to make their mark. From breaking into male-dominated fields to founding successful businesses, their contributions have paved the way for future generations of innovators and leaders.



Visionaries like Madam C.J. Walker, the first self-made female millionaire in the U.S., revolutionized the beauty industry, creating opportunities for Black women in business while promoting economic independence. Estée Lauder, through sheer determination and marketing brilliance, built a global cosmetics empire from the ground up. Their legacies continue to inspire entrepreneurs today, proving that resilience and vision can break any barrier.

In the corporate world, Indra Nooyi, former CEO of PepsiCo, and Mary Barra, CEO of General Motors, have redefined leadership by driving growth and transformation in their industries. Their strategic thinking, innovation, and commitment to progress serve as blueprints for future leaders. Women-led businesses contribute billions to the global economy, reinforcing the undeniable value of diversity and inclusion in leadership.



This Women's History Month, we honor these trailblazing women and countless others who continue to shape the business world. Their journeys remind us that progress is made not just by breaking glass ceilings but by building lasting legacies and lifting others along the way. Let's celebrate their achievements and continue advocating for a future where leadership knows no gender.



Photo by Todd Greene - Unsplash

March Madness & Business:

What Companies Can Learn from Championship Teams

– Business strategies inspired by sports.

March Madness isn't just about buzzer-beaters, Cinderella stories, and underdog victories—it's also a masterclass in strategy, teamwork, and resilience. Just like elite basketball teams prepare for high-stakes competition, businesses can learn valuable lessons from their playbooks. Championship teams succeed because they foster strong leadership, adapt to challenges, and prioritize collaboration—critical elements of a thriving business.

One key takeaway from winning teams is the power of adaptability. In both sports and business, the unexpected is inevitable, and success often depends on how well a team adjusts to changing circumstances. Just as a coach makes real-time adjustments to outmaneuver the opponent, businesses must be agile in response to market shifts, economic changes, and evolving customer needs. The ability to pivot quickly can be the difference between success and stagnation.

Additionally, the best teams invest in player development, just as companies should invest in their employees.

Continuous learning, mentorship, and cultivating a strong workplace culture drive long-term success. High-performing teams, whether on the court or in the office, thrive when individuals are empowered, supported, and given the tools they need to excel.

As businesses navigate their own “championship seasons,” taking a page from the world of sports can be the key to staying competitive, overcoming obstacles, and achieving long-term victory. Whether it’s fostering teamwork, staying agile, or preparing for high-pressure situations, the lessons from March Madness extend far beyond the court.



Photo by Freepik

C for Conquer

Vitamin C and why you need it.

Vitamin C is more than just an immune booster—it's a powerhouse nutrient essential for overall health and well-being. Known for its potent antioxidant properties, it fights free radicals, supports healthy skin, and plays a crucial role in collagen production, keeping your skin firm and youthful.

Whether you're looking to strengthen your immune system, improve your skin's glow, or speed up recovery after workouts, Vitamin C is a must-have in your daily routine.





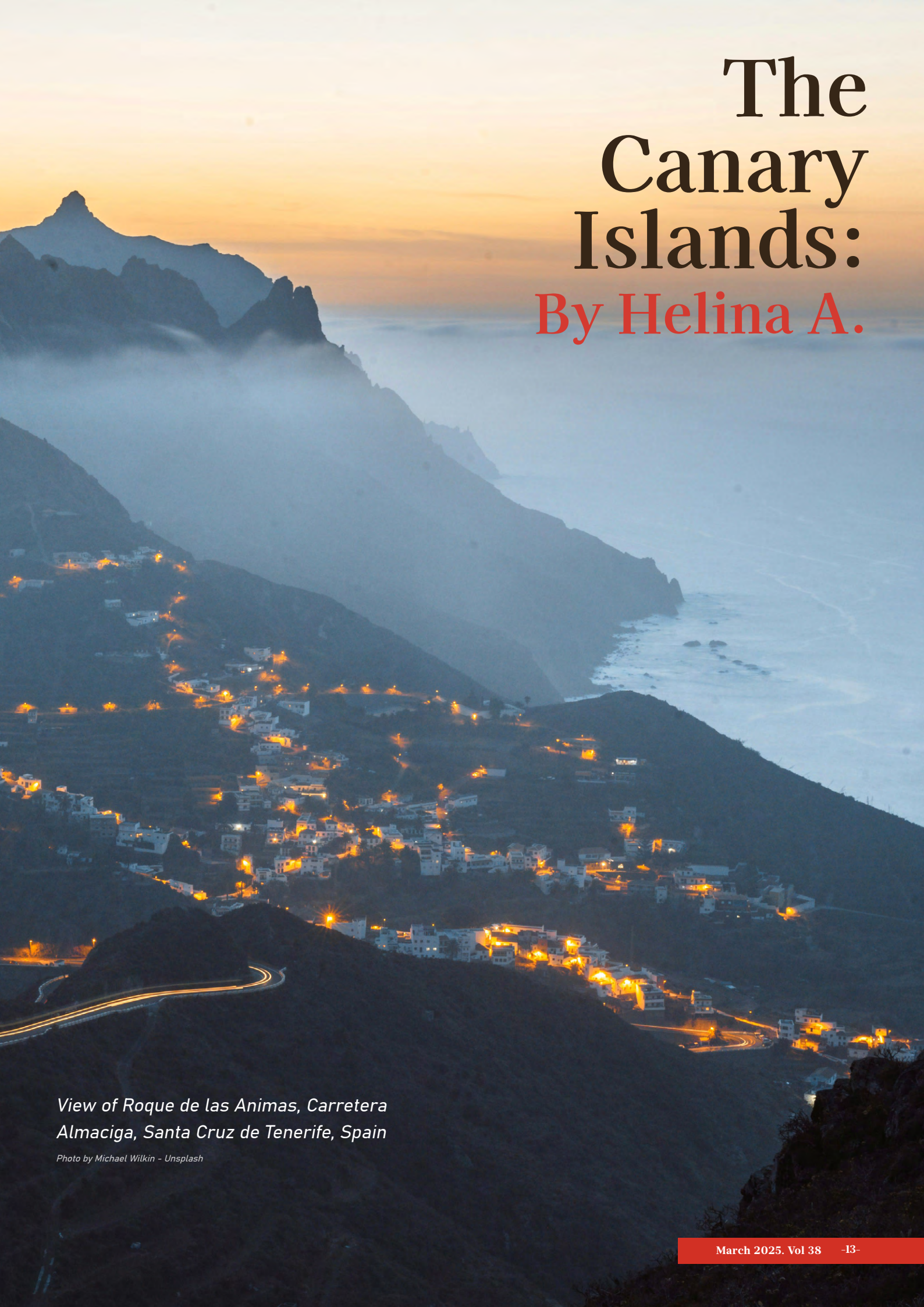
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One of its most significant benefits is its ability to enhance iron absorption, making it particularly important for those with iron deficiencies or at risk of anemia. Additionally, Vitamin C supports heart health by reducing oxidative stress and inflammation, helping lower the risk of chronic diseases.

The best part? Getting your daily dose is simple! Citrus fruits like oranges, lemons, and grapefruits, along with bell peppers, strawberries, and kiwi, are excellent sources

of Vitamin C. For those with higher demands—athletes, individuals under high stress, or those recovering from illness—supplements can offer an extra boost.

Regardless of how you incorporate it, ensuring adequate Vitamin C intake can help you conquer the day with energy, vitality, and resilience. So, the next time you reach for a snack, make it one packed with this essential nutrient—it's your secret weapon for staying strong and feeling your best.



The Canary Islands: By Helina A.

*View of Roque de las Animas, Carretera
Almaciga, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain*

Photo by Michael Wilkin - Unsplash



Photo by Freepik



The Canary Islands, an archipelago off the northwest coast of Africa, are a dream destination for travelers seeking breathtaking landscapes, rich culture, and year-round sunshine. Known for their volcanic beauty, golden beaches, and charming Spanish influences, these islands offer a perfect mix of adventure and relaxation. Whether you're hiking the dramatic trails of Tenerife's Mount Teide, exploring the sand dunes of Gran Canaria, or indulging in the fresh seafood of Lanzarote, every island has a unique charm.



Photo by Canary Ride - Unsplash



Photo by Reiseuhu - Unsplash

Beyond their stunning scenery, the Canary Islands are rich in history. From their indigenous Guanche heritage to their role in Spanish exploration, the islands hold centuries of cultural significance. Strolling through La Laguna's colonial streets or visiting the Cueva del Viento, one of the world's longest lava tubes, reveals the fascinating blend of natural and historical wonders.

For those seeking adventure, the islands offer world-class surfing, paragliding, and whale watching. Meanwhile, the relaxed atmosphere, warm hospitality, and delicious local cuisine, think papas arrugadas (wrinkled potatoes) with mojo sauce, make it an irresistible getaway. Whether you're planning your next vacation or simply dreaming of island life, the Canary Islands are a must-visit destination.

Sunset view in Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria, Spain



Photo by Hert Niks - Unsplash



Photo by Hert Niks - Unsplash

Photos from La Vegueta, Las Palmas, Spain



High-Protein Bagels

A Simple & Nutritious Recipe

Who says bagels can't be healthy?

With a few simple ingredients, you can enjoy a delicious, high-protein bagel that fuels your morning and keeps you full longer. Unlike traditional bagels that can be high in carbs and low in nutrients, this recipe packs in protein and fiber for a balanced and satisfying bite.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Greek yogurt (plain, non-fat or full-fat)
- 1 cup self-rising flour (or a mix of whole wheat and all-purpose)
- 1 egg (for egg wash, optional)
- 1 tsp salt
- Optional toppings: Everything bagel seasoning, sesame seeds, or shredded cheese

Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- In a bowl, mix the Greek yogurt, flour, and salt until a dough forms. Knead for a couple of minutes.
- Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces and roll each into a bagel shape.
- Brush with an egg wash and sprinkle toppings as desired.
- Bake for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool and enjoy!

Packed with protein, probiotics, and essential nutrients, these bagels are a great way to start your day on a healthy note. Enjoy them with cream cheese, avocado, or smoked salmon for an extra boost of flavor and nutrition!



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