



Enjoy this month's instalment of our newsletter. As always, it is packed with links that you may find interesting.

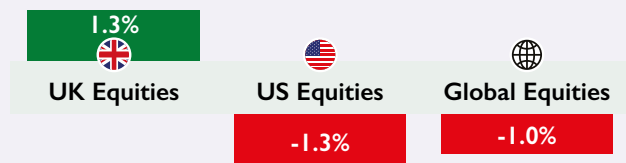
The Stock Markets

FEBRUARY 2025

The key benchmark you should care about is achieving all of your financial and life goals, and not running out of money

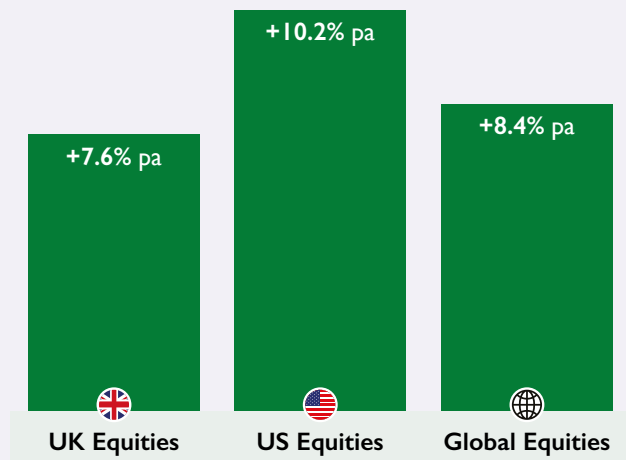
The Unimportant Numbers 1 MONTH

Monthly figures are a distraction from your long term goals.



The Important Numbers 30 YEARS

Investing in the Great Companies of the World has produced life-changing returns for the disciplined and patient investor over the last 30 years, the average length of a two-person retirement.



Source: FE Analytics, Humans Under Management. Returns are based on the total return of the respective indices, which assures all dividends are re-invested. Returns are in local currencies.

Inflation THE REAL ENEMY

FEBRUARY 2025

The number one enemy of the long-term investor is the financial dragon called inflation (the silent but steady increase of prices over time).

An investment in the global share market has consistently provided protection from this enemy. To earn this return, you had to be willing to see your investment value temporarily decline by about -15% on average every year without being panicked into selling.



Sources: FE Analytics, Humans Under Management. For illustrative purposes only.



Watch

Life's Third Act

[View](#)

Listen

How Much Do They Make?

[5 minutes].

We look at what people buy and assume we know what they make - but what if that story we tell ourselves is completely wrong?

[Listen](#)

BEHAVIOR GAP
RADIO



The Third Act

Retirement, as a concept, has evolved significantly over the last 150 years.

When Otto von Bismarck established the world's first modern pension system in the 1880s, retirement was set at age 70 and life expectancy hovered around 45 years. This wasn't a golden chapter of life; it was merely a brief epilogue for the few who reached old age, often in declining health.

Fast-forward to today, and retirement has transformed dramatically. What was once a short period between work and death has evolved into a vibrant life chapter that might span 30+ years of active, healthy living. Yet many of us still follow outdated scripts for retirement, viewing it as life's closing scene rather than its third act (we recommend watching Jane Fonda's 2011 TED Talk, "[Life's Third Act](#)").

In theater, the third act is often where character arcs develop fully and where the most powerful moments occur. Similarly, your retirement represents not an ending but a culmination, perhaps the most significant and fulfilling chapter of your life story.

From Career Identity to Life Director

Transitioning from Act Two (your working years) to Act Three often creates an identity challenge. After decades of being defined by professional roles, many new retirees find themselves asking, "Who am I now?"

We believe this moment of uncertainty presents an extraordinary opportunity. The retiree is stepping away from following someone else's script and into the director's chair of their own life production. This blank canvas provides creative freedom that previous generations could only dream of.

We have countless examples of clients who rediscovered, and built on, previous passions. Many of them describe themselves as more fulfilled than they ever were during their working years.

What passions or interests have you set aside during your busy career years that might be rekindled in retirement? The question becomes not "Who am I without my career?" but rather "Who do I want to become in this new freedom?"

The Four Pillars of Your Third Act

Just as any successful theatrical production requires a solid stage, lighting, script, and cast, directing a compelling Third Act requires establishing four essential elements in your life.

While financial security naturally remains essential (and likely has been your primary focus), research shows that a truly fulfilling retirement stands on four equally important pillars:



1. Financial Wellness: Resources to support your desired lifestyle without undue stress.
2. Physical Vitality: Health practices that maximise energy and capability.
3. Mental Engagement: Continued learning and cognitive challenges that keep you sharp.
4. Social Connection: Meaningful relationships and community involvement.

When we focus exclusively on the financial pillar (as many traditional retirement plans do), we risk creating a well-funded but ultimately unfulfilling Third Act. The most satisfied retirees actively develop all four areas, recognising that wealth truly matters only when it supports a life rich in purpose, connection, and vitality.

Directing Your Daily Purpose

While these four pillars create the foundation for a fulfilling retirement, implementing them in daily life is the next challenge.

The paradox of retirement is that unlimited freedom can sometimes lead to diminished satisfaction. Without the structure that work provides, days can lose their shape and meaning.

We have found that successful retirees create purpose through three essential elements:

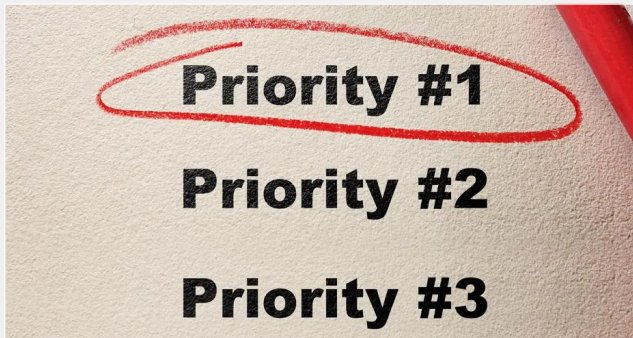
1. Plan: A flexible framework for how you'll use your time and resources
2. Purpose: Meaningful activities that provide direction and fulfillment
3. People: Relationships that offer connection, support, and joy

These elements transform retirement from an endless Saturday into a meaningful progression where each day contributes to your life's larger narrative.

As your financial advisers, we're committed to helping you create financial security and a meaningful Third Act in which your wealth supports the life you truly want to live.

We invite you to begin thinking differently about your retirement today. Rather than asking, "Do I have enough?" we encourage you to ask, "What story do I want my Third Act to tell?"

Read



How To Know When To Reorder Your Priorities - Ask These 2 Questions [4 minutes].

Has anything changed?

[Read the full article](#)

It Was the Best of Times, It Was the Worst of Times (to be an investor) [4 minutes].

Are modern advancements making it too easy to become speculators rather than investors?

[Read the full article](#)

Never Enough [4 minutes].

Examining the human instinct to always pursue more.

[Read the full article](#)

Pure Independence [8 minutes].

The profound connection between independence and personal fulfillment.

[Read the full article](#)



Time well spent [2 minutes].

What makes a day well spent?

[Read the full article](#)

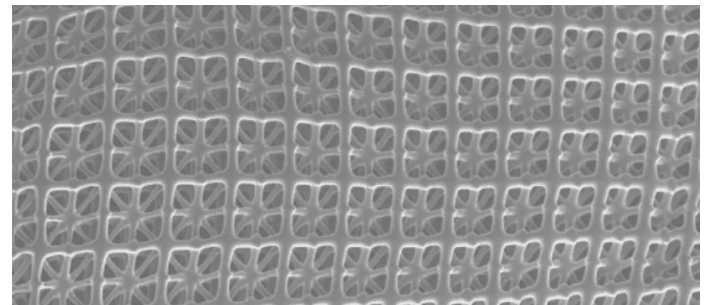
Dealing with Uncertainty [3 minutes].

The harder predictions are to make, the more we want to make them.

[Read the full article](#)

Rational Optimism

The media is not a friend of the disciplined and patient investor. Ignoring the key determinants of lifetime investor returns, the media focuses on short-term returns, market predictions, and negative news. We present the following as an antidote to the onslaught of negative news:



New wonder material designed by AI is as light as foam but as strong as steel

Scientists have used artificial intelligence (AI) to design never-before-seen nanomaterials with the strength of carbon steel and the lightness of styrofoam. The new nanomaterials, made using machine learning and a 3D printer, more than doubled the strength of existing designs.

[Read the full article](#)

New Treatments Give Hope to Some Cancer Patients

Some 480 early-phase and 85 late-phase clinical trials for advanced pancreatic cancer have resulted in five new drug approvals since 2000, according to the American Cancer Society.

[Read the full article](#)



How the XB-1 aircraft went supersonic without a sonic boom

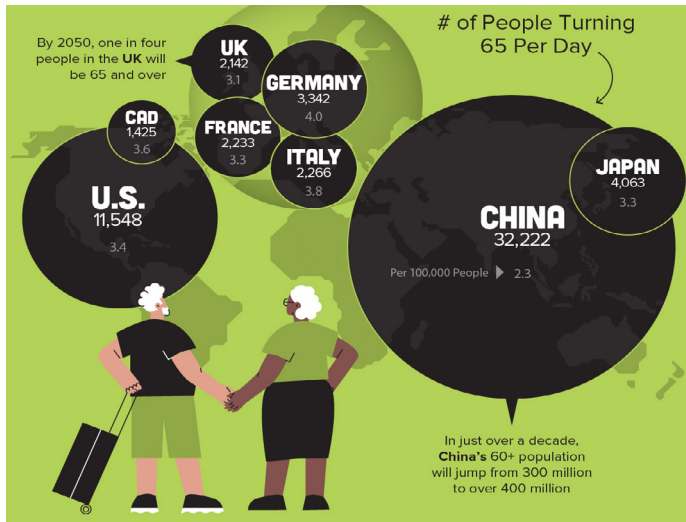
When the experimental XB-1 aircraft broke the sound barrier three times during its first supersonic flight on 28 January, it did not produce a sonic boom audible from the ground, according to US company Boom Supersonic. "This confirms what we've long believed: supersonic travel can be affordable, sustainable and friendly to those onboard and on the ground".

[Read the full article](#)



Visuals

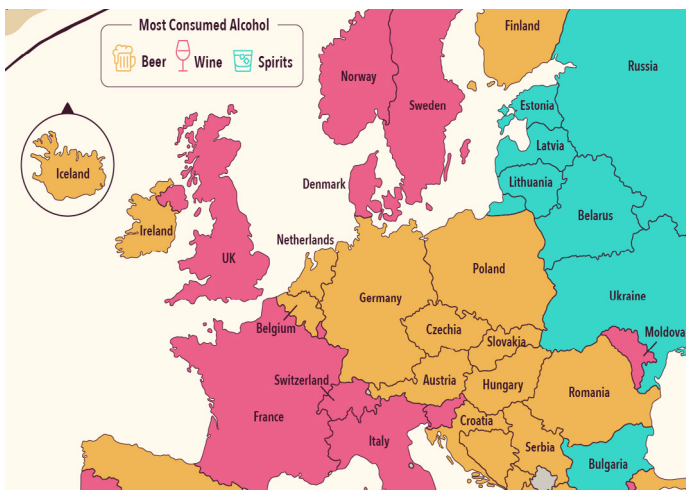
Mapped: The Global Retirement Boom



Between 1920 and 2020, the 65-and-older population in America grew nearly five times faster than the overall population. By one estimate, a record 4.1 million people will turn 65 annually through 2027. In many of the world's largest economies, aging populations are putting increasing pressure on retirement systems amid declining birth rates and mounting debt.

[Read the full article](#)

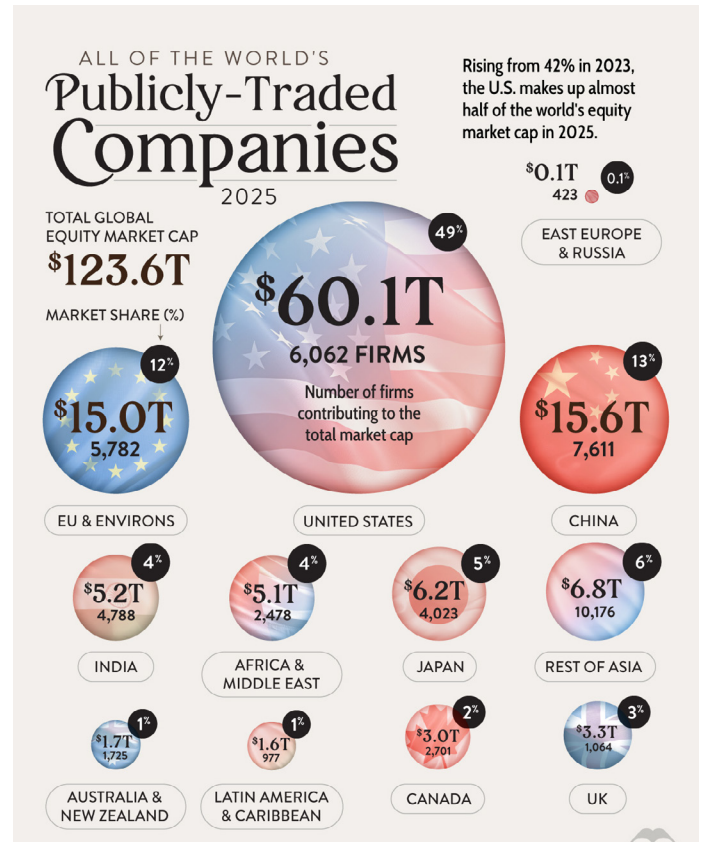
Mapped: Most Popular Alcoholic Drink Across Europe



Europe takes the crown for having the highest share of drinkers in the world. Within the region, alcohol preferences vary significantly. This map visualizes the most popular type of alcohol in various European countries, based on per capita consumption (in liters of pure alcohol) among individuals aged 15 and older.

[Read the full article](#)

The \$124 Trillion Global Stock Market, Sorted by Region



America's dominance of the global stock market is unrivaled, and its share has only grown in the past two years.

The outperformance of the S&P 500 has played a role in America's leading position, averaging 14.8% compound average returns over the past decade. Global equities, represented by the MSCI ACWI (excluding the U.S.) Index, have returned 7% by comparison. This graphic shows the world's publicly-traded companies in 2025, based on data from Aswath Damodaran.

The value of the U.S. stock market is roughly equal to all other regions combined, encompassing 6,062 firms collectively valued at \$60.1 trillion. As of February 14, the market capitalization of the Magnificent Seven—Apple, Microsoft, Alphabet, Nvidia, Amazon, and Meta Platforms—was \$17.8 trillion, making up almost 30% of the entire U.S. stock market.

[Read the full article](#)

We hope you enjoyed this month's newsletter.
Please let us know what you enjoyed, or write back with any of your own news.
As always, we are here for you. See you next month.