

Bucket List Starter Guide

A bucket list is a collection of personal goals or desires, which a person strives to complete before they die. The term comes from the idiom “kick the bucket” meaning “to die”. There are many ways to construct your bucket list and also many ways to go about completing your list. Ultimately, the list is for you so you need to construct it and complete it in a way that appeals to you. This starter guide will cover some points to consider while building your list.

List Structure

Open

An open list structure is very easy because there is no set number of items and you can get started immediately. Start by writing down all the bucket list items that immediately come to mind. Once you start writing down items, your bucket list journey has begun. As time passes and you think of new ideas, add them to the list and watch it grow.

Closed

A closed list structure requires a bit more initial research as you want to aim for a specific number of items. This can be difficult because you need to create a list that will still appeal to you in 50 years. The benefit of this structure is that your progress will continually increase as you complete items and eventually you will have the satisfaction of crossing the last item off the list.

- 50-200 Items

Any amount from 50-200 items is reasonable and achievable over the course of a lifetime. Humans are very fond of the number 100 as we use it for percentages, it is the base value of our currencies and appears many other places in our lives. It is a good number for a bucket list and when projected over 50 years it means you will have to complete an average of 2 items per year. This is reasonable and allows for a good split of easy and difficult items.

- 500-1000 Items

Be careful when creating a bucket list with more than 500 items as it can seem quite daunting to complete and can cause you to lose drive over time. When projected over 50 years it means you will have to complete an average of 10-20 items per year. If you do decide to make a list this long it is better to have a majority of the items easy to accomplish and a small amount of difficult ones.

Difficulty

With an open list structure you do not need to worry about the difficulty of each item as much. If it appeals to you then put it on the list and strive to achieve it. A little more thought is required with a closed list structure, as previously mentioned. The ratio of easy items compared to difficult items is dependent on the list length. You do not want to create a list that is impossible to complete in your lifetime but you also do not want to create one that you can complete in 5 years. Be realistic when writing down your goals and have a good mix of easy and difficult items that suits the length of your list.

Inclusion of Previously Completed Items

Including items on your list that you have previously completed is at your discretion. This approach is more popular with someone who is using an open list structure as they are not trying to stay within a specified number of items. It allows them to write down all of the bucket-list-worthy items they have already completed before officially starting their list. This gives them a running total of all their bucket list items. The reason someone who is using a closed list structure may not want to do this is because they are trying to stay within a specified number of items and want them all to be new at the time that they officially start their

list. Alternatively, you can increase the number of items on your list to account for the ones you have already completed (e.g. If you have already complete 10 items then make your list 110 items so that you can still have 100 new items to complete).

Removing or Changing Items

Removing or changing items on your list is also at your discretion. Over your lifetime your preferences and desires are going to change. Feel free to alter your list in any way that you see fit. Everything on your list must appeal to you.

Types of Items

Generic

These are stereotypical items that come to mind as soon as you think about making a bucket list. Examples of these types of items are “walk on the Great Wall of China” or “see the northern lights”. Just because they are stereotypical and will probably be on every person’s list does not mean you shouldn’t add them to you list. The only thing that you need to ensure is that the item appeals to you. Don’t go on an 8-hour hike to see something you don’t care about just because everyone else does.

Personal

These items are the core of what a bucket list is all about. They are the items that matter the most to you on a personal level. They may not matter to anyone else. Achieving these goals will bring you the most pleasure. Examples of these types of items are “write a book” or “volunteer overseas”.

Curious

Have you ever had those things in life that you were always curious about doing, but have never done? This is where they belong. They may not be hard to accomplish but they don’t have to be. The act of putting them on paper and committing to completing them is what this is all about. Examples of these types of items are “eat haggis” or “try escargot”. These items will add a bit of depth to your list and make it interesting.

Just for Fun

These items may not give you a sense of accomplishment like personal items but when you look back on them you will always laugh. These are the items that usually come with funny stories and memories. Examples of these types of items are “swim in a fountain” or “go to a cat café in Tokyo”. It is important to have a mix of these in your list to keep it fresh and not make the list feel like a chore.

With all the information above considered, it is time to start your list! A few ideas are supplied below to get you started so feel free to use any of these that interest you, as well as your own ideas. Do not come up with this list on your own! Ask friends and family for ideas, it is always great to bounce ideas off other people to get other perspectives.

Events & Festivals

- 1) Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2) Full Moon Festival in Vietnam
- 3) Holi Festival of Colour in India
- 4) Yi Peng Festival in Thailand
- 5) Chinese New Year in Hong Kong
- 6) Saint Patrick's Day Festival in Dublin, Ireland
- 7) The Carnevale in Venice, Italy
- 8) Day of the Dead in Mexico
- 9) Mardi Gras in New Orleans, United States
- 10) Burning Man in Nevada, United States

Destinations

- 1) Set foot on Antarctica
- 2) Go to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- 3) Drive the Florida Keys
- 4) Visit the Galapagos Islands
- 5) Holiday in Hawaii
- 6) Enter the Arctic Circle
- 7) Go to Cairo, Egypt
- 8) Travel to Kyoto, Japan
- 9) Visit Athens, Greece
- 10) Explore Tasmania

Experiences

- 1) Watch the ball drop in Times Square on New Year's Eve
- 2) Get a photo holding up the Leaning Tower of Pisa
- 3) Ride a bicycle in Amsterdam
- 4) Dance the tango in Argentina
- 5) Go on an African Safari
- 6) Climb Ben Nevis in Scotland
- 7) Start your own business
- 8) Witness the Northern Lights
- 9) Walk through Buckingham Palace
- 10) Learn to play an instrument
- 11) Go whale watching
- 12) Ride in a hot air balloon in Cappadocia
- 13) Write a book
- 14) Swim in the Blue Lagoon in Iceland
- 15) Learn a new language
- 16) Buy your own home
- 17) Run a marathon
- 18) Go skydiving
- 19) Work as a volunteer
- 20) Go inside the Burj Khalifa
- 21) Scuba dive the Great Barrier Reef
- 22) Do a road trip across North America
- 23) Take a cruise in Ha Long Bay
- 24) Try skiing or snowboarding
- 25) Backpack through Europe

Seven Wonders of the World

- 1) Walk on The Great Wall of China
- 2) Experience the beauty of Petra
- 3) See Christ the Redeemer up-close
- 4) Hike to Machu Picchu
- 5) Explore the ruins of Chichen Itza
- 6) Walk through the Colosseum
- 7) Marvel at the Taj Mahal



Never stop searching for the next adventure!