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**ON**  
**TEST**

If you're planning to hit the great outdoors over the Easter weekend, the right footwear will be essential. **Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones**, self-styled 'Black Farmer' and boot fan, gives five pairs the runaround



**1. The North Face Men's Chilkats Walking Boots - John Lewis, £75**

Treat your feet and hike in heaven with these North Face Chilkats walking boots. Warm and insulated, these boots have a full list of features to ensure that your feet will be kept blissfully unaware of the temperature outside. Turn the boot over and you see its North Face Winter Grip™ rubber outsole, an expertly designed tread that locks on slippery surfaces far better than other all-weather soles.

**WILFRED SAYS**

These are serious, heavy looking boots. But they are fantastic. They look bulky, but are warm and comfy like slippers - not a bad description of foot heaven. My feet feel warmed and loved. These boots have the highest support around the ankles, so you know you are protected. Great value for £75. Can't get over how warm my feet feel.

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**2. Scarpa ZG10 GTX - Cotswold Outdoor (0870 442 7755), £140**

This is 21st-century protection for feet but with a traditional leather upper. The ZG (Zero Gravity) 10 has been designed to withstand anything from Scottish bog-trotting to exploratory trekking in the Karakorum.

**WILFRED SAYS**

I like the extra lace loops on these, which hold your laces tight - but the laces look a bit fragile and you don't want them to snap.

Very comfy. Look bulky and heavy duty but feel as light as trainers.

Good for strolling. I wouldn't pay this much for them though - it's not really in the serious walker's league.

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To apply for The Black Farmer Scholarships, visit [www.theblackfarmer.com](http://www.theblackfarmer.com)

**3. Brasher, Hillmaster GTX - Cotswold Outdoor, £100**

Restyled from last year, Britain's best-selling three-season hill-walking boot - and at this price, no wonder! The water-resistant full-grain leather is backed with an abrasion-resistant Gore-Tex lining for total waterproofness and breathability. With a comfortable suede cuff.

**WILFRED SAYS**

Nicest to look at - and not over the top. They're good for a few miles' hike, made for the gentle walk. You could stop off in a smart pub for a lunch wearing these and not feel messy. It has the feel of a trainer - but if you stepped in a shallow puddle, you'd get drenched because the ankle support is shorter than all the others.



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**4. Raichle Mountain Trail XT GT - Snow and Rock (0845 100 1000), £140**

A more advanced backpacking boot for demanding expeditions. The full-grain leather adds superior comfort and durability. The Vibram sole delivers increased support while the lining ensures a high level of waterproofing and breathability. The stiffened insole is more stable on uneven terrain.

**WILFRED SAYS**

These look professional, for the serious walker tackling all-weather terrain. My feet definitely feel protected - this pair is the heaviest of the lot.

They feel a bit like ski boots though; my feet aren't flexible in them. It is reassuring to know that

if I was lost, these boots would look after my feet.

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**5. Salomon Mega Trek 6 Light - Snow and Rock, £100**

This lightweight solution for the regular hiker offers comfort and stability without being excessively bulky or heavy. Its uppers are a mix of waterproof split suede leather for good support and durability and woven textile for reduced weight and enhanced comfort.

**WILFRED SAYS**

These are nice and light - the lightest of the lot. Perfect for a few hours' gentle strolling, they live up absolutely to the lightweight expectation. The boot doesn't overwhelm your foot and it's not too bulky. But I don't think these would be suitable for harsh-weather walking. They may be seriously lovely, but perhaps a little overpriced.

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**TOP TIPS**  
**PERSONAL SHOPPER**

Walking and trekking boots come in leather and fabric. Sohail Azhar, of trekking company TravelPak, says the climate in which you trek should help you decide the material to choose.

■ "In the UK, you will be better off with a fabric boot with a Gore-tex waterproof lining, which will allow your feet to breathe and will dry quickly if your feet get wet. If trekking abroad in hot, dry conditions, choose leather for more enduring and naturally breathable protection.

■ Always go for ankle support and break in your boots by walking around in them at home to let your feet settle in. Lots of specialist outdoor manufacturers will take your boots back if they still don't feel comfortable after being broken in.

■ Don't wear more than two pairs of thin liner socks to avoid getting blisters. Trekking socks already have a double layer in them, so try both options to see what works for you.

**W**ilfred Emmanuel-Jones, otherwise known as the Black Farmer, is a self-confessed boots man. 'Love boots. Love them. I'm passionate about decent footwear.' He is not exaggerating - Wilfred has just spent £2,500 on a pair of new shoes, though he insists it's not a frivolous spend. 'I only have about three pairs of shoes and boots. I wear them for years until they are literally unwearable.' We picked the right man, then, for a Five on Test on walking boots.

Born in Jamaica, Wilfred moved to Birmingham with his parents when he was four. He left school with no qualifications and was kicked out of the Army, but had one ambition: 'I had this dream of having my own land, my own farm. My father used to have an allotment in Birmingham, and that became my oasis in a concrete jungle. I never let go of my dream and realised that to succeed I would have to be ruthlessly ambitious.'

Through unrelenting persistence, Wilfred landed a job at the BBC, became a producer and director, set up his own marketing company and made enough money to buy his dream farm in Devon. This gave birth to the Black Farmer food brand, which produces prime quality farm-reared meats.

An advocate of country living, Wilfred has set up scholarships (the Black Farmer Scholarship for ethnic minorities and the Black Farmer Rural Entrepreneurs scheme) to give inner-city teenagers the chance to live and work in the countryside. 'I am

alarmed at the massive gap between rural and urban living,' he says. 'There are so many kids struggling, but all they need is a break. You don't need to be born with a silver spoon to be able to achieve. The scholarships are for anyone who knows they could achieve more.'

Now the Conservative candidate for Chippenham, Wilfred modestly shrugs off his success. 'There's nothing exceptional about me, I'm not brilliant - I just had a dream. I am proof that you can fulfil your wildest ambitions.' With that, he dons his Panama hat and strolls off home in his RM Williams boots.

**Interview by Huma Qureshi**