

# Social Media - Instant Messaging (Telegram, Matrix, Threema)

Post by “Cassius” of April 17, 2021 at 10:42 AM

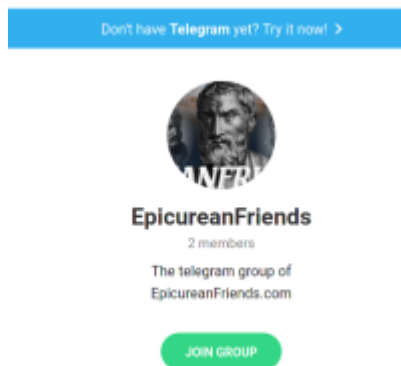
EpicureanFriends account at [Matrix.org](https://matrix.org)

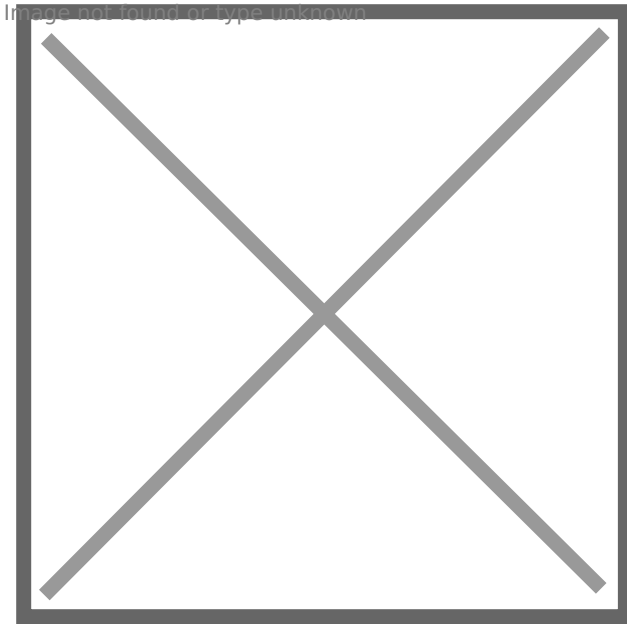
**Update 2-6-22: This account is still there, but I am not signing in very often. I have cooled off toward Matrix for a variety of reasons, mainly that they too seem to be getting a lot of mysterious funding that no doubt has strings attached. They are open source and the security may be there if you run your own server, but at this point they don't make it easy to do that and so using the matrix.org main server probably subjects you to unwanted vulnerabilities.**

---

Post by “Cassius” of July 27, 2021 at 11:43 AM

Here is the link to join the EpicureanFriends Telegram channel. Please be sure to use this link rather than searching within Telegram, because due to the way Telegram seems to work there are some older and now unused channels of the same name. The links below are the best way to get to the right place:





[EpicureanFriends](#)

The telegram group of EpicureanFriends.com  
t.me

**Update 2-6-22: As with Matrix, this account is still there, but I am not signing in very often. I have cooled off toward Telegram just like Matrix, mainly that they too seem to be getting a lot of mysterious funding that no doubt has strings attached. They are not fully open source, nor are they fully encrypted, so they are considerably less secure even than matrix.**

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of February 6, 2022 at 9:43 PM**

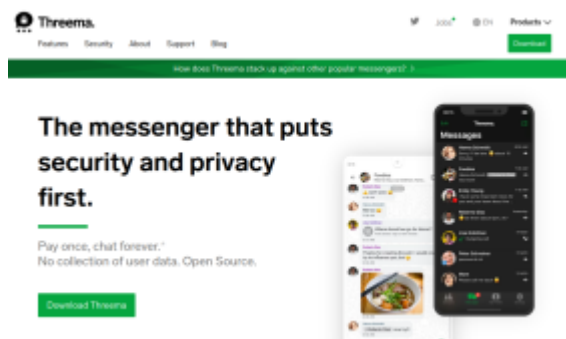
Today at the suggestion of another user here I have started exploring [THREEMA](#) as an alternative messenger. The great advantage that Threema has over Signal, Telegram, Whatsapp, and similar is that it does not require any identifying information like Telephone numbers (which Signal and Telegram require). The "disadvantage" is that there is a four dollar one time (lifetime) fee to join the network. I put "disadvantage" in quotes because I agree with Threema's argument -- that if you aren't paying something for the product, then "YOU are the product" because the only way such companies can stay in business is data mine your information. I also don't consider it a major disadvantage because the cost is minimal, and probably serves the good purpose of making sure that those who join are serious (to the extent

that four dollars is "serious"). Threema is based in Switzerland where the European privacy laws seem to be considerably stronger than they currently are in the USA.

I have set up an EpicureanFriends group on Threema, but consistent with its privacy focus it's no possible to find it on a public directory. Someone who is currently a member has to add you to the group.

I will probably make a post about this on the front page, and if things continue to look good Threema will probably become my main backup alternative to the forum itself. I've been tempted to launch a Telegram channel, but I think in the end that this forum software does most of the communication we need, and if we want a second / backup solution to communicate when the forum is down or in an emergency, Threema makes the most sense.

If you use Threema and would like to be a part of the EpicureanFriends group there, and thereby be part of our emergency backup / instant messenger system, just send me a message and we will get you added. That way if anything ever happens to your account of the forum goes down for a period of time you'll have a way to stay in touch until we are back up.



A comparison of the major messengers [from Threema's point of view is here.](#)

---

## Post by “Scott” of February 6, 2022 at 11:24 PM

Cassius, all of these tools are good. (Tho I would say don't consider the opinion of one of the competitors as the best source for a comparison, as they just might have a bit of bias in their position! ☹️). Signal, the only private messenger that uses open source code & peer-reviewed cryptographic protocols, is IMO the most secure of them, but jeez... EF doesn't really have military level secrets or anything anyway! All of these are good products. Threema should do fine, and not requiring your phone # is a nice touch! But I'm not sure I understand why EF needs an "emergency backup / instant messenger system". What would that do for us? Under

what circumstances would it be needed?

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of February 7, 2022 at 6:50 AM**

First and foremost in case a glitch in the site causes it to go down for more than a few minutes. We've been very lucky so far that the software has been very stable and your humble administrator has avoided some of his more hamfisted acts of technical stupidity.

Secondly, while you are right that we have no state secrets, it's less clear that we have no reason for anyone to dislike us. A large part of our safety has come through obscurity. Hopefully we won't always be so secure, at which point a number of Epicurean beliefs would make it less than popular everywhere and this subject of a malicious meddling.

Third (and this is not emergency backup) I do think some people like instant messengers for the notification abilities the website doesn't have, and the reason for threema is that I think we want to provide users with the ability to contact each other directly but also anonymously (if both agree) and Threema's no personal id architecture seems to suit that best.

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of March 6, 2022 at 9:23 AM**

Continued Technology Planning:

This post is not meant to be a comment on politics, and for the time being I will continue to censor myself or any threads that publicly take sides in some of the existing world controversies. Of course feel free to discuss those privately - just not in the public threads. But as custodian of the forum I have to remain aware of relevant events, and I have to make several observations:

(1) It is increasingly clear that de-platforming of ideas and groups that are not approved by societal elites is the next frontier in modern warfare and social control.

(2) Throughout history, there have been few viewpoints which have been more disapproved by societal elites than Epicurean philosophy.

(3) I understand that Julian Assange and perhaps others on the cutting edge of technological privacy are now recommending "Briar" ( <https://briarproject.org/> ) as the most resilient instant messenger current available. It requires no telephone number or identifying information, and is

free.

(4) I intend to start experimenting with Briar, and I have set up a cassiusamicus account there. I expect this to remain strictly experimental and there is no need for anyone here use it. However if we have other "techies" here who like to keep on top of secure communication alternatives, please let me know what you think of Briar and/or other emerging alternatives.

(5) I would also like to continue to explore backup plans and other disaster response scenarios to get the forum or at least its basic information back online if there is a disruption with our hosting provider, so once again any techies who have ideas on this subject, please feel free to comment in the thread or contact me privately.

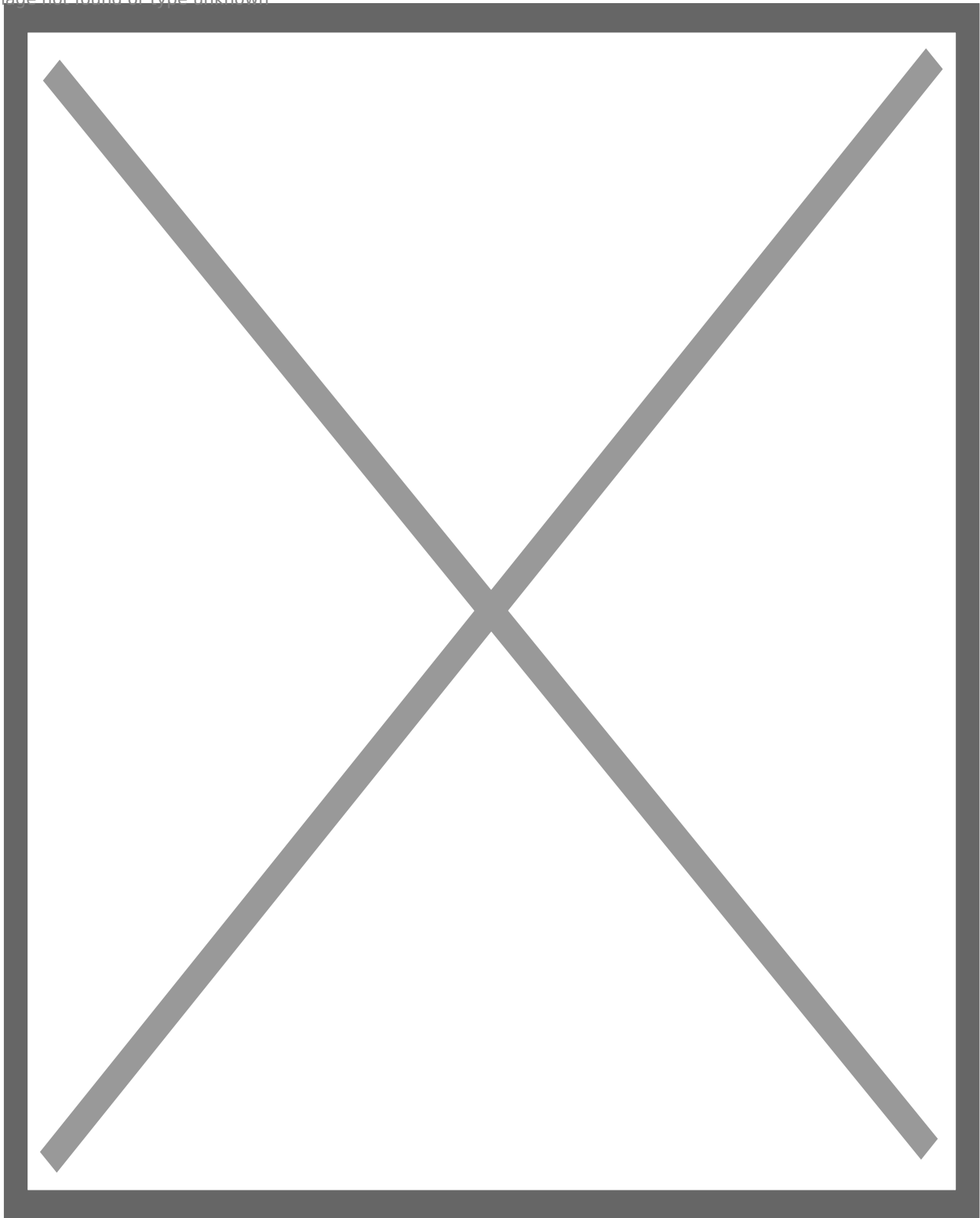
---

### **Post by “Cassius” of March 6, 2022 at 10:56 AM**

Here are a couple of citations for Briar -

<https://www.italy24news.com/News/383972.html>

Image not found or type unknown



[Julian Assange Recommends Ukrainians to Use This App for Communications if Internet Goes Down - Cypherpunk News](#)

On Friday Wikileaks sent out a Tweet saying ; “We contacted Julian Assange in prison. He says that  
www.cypherpunknews.com

---

### **Post by “Joshua” of March 6, 2022 at 12:40 PM**

Suppose I don't want to create profiles on a whole bunch of social media applications that I will otherwise never use; is there a way to simplify all of this, perhaps with RSS?

I suspect there are quite a lot of people like me. We don't want to manage more apps, we don't want more notifications to ignore, we don't want a cluttered email inbox with stuff we've already seen on the website, but we might want that one all-important doomsday notification when the site goes down.

Also, we'd like it to be quite simple 😊

---

### **Post by “Scott” of March 6, 2022 at 12:42 PM**

...and don't forget "free"! 😊

---

### **Post by “Scott” of March 6, 2022 at 12:52 PM**

Briar has some worthy technology, but it does seem very focused on human rights activists, journalists in war situations, etc. It might be so secure it is too restrictive for this purpose. Not saying so, just saying something to consider as we eval.

---

### **Post by “Joshua” of March 6, 2022 at 1:04 PM**

I have several impractical ideas; Big Ben striking 20; blue smoke from the Sistine Chapel; a searchlight signaling the face of Epicurus on the clouds over New York City...

---

### **Post by “Scott” of March 6, 2022 at 1:06 PM**

I'm digging the Epirurus face search light! 👍

(Sorry, Cassius, we're being irreverent! The "kids are running loose in the front yard!!!")

---

### **Post by “Don” of March 6, 2022 at 1:51 PM**

[Quote from Joshua](#)

a searchlight signaling the face of Epicurus

Hey! There's an Etsy idea: a nightlight with Epicurus's picture!

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of March 6, 2022 at 2:26 PM**

I think we can all rest assured that we aren't going to need such a system in the immediate future. Rather I am mainly posting to stir sparks of interest in the geeks among us to plan for the future - which come to think of it is sort of a theme of many of my posts! Division of labor!

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of December 6, 2022 at 9:19 AM**

TaaSart good to hear from you. Sounds like you are tech-oriented. If you have any thoughts about the relative benefits and detriments of communication platforms I would be glad to hear them. Although we have a messaging system here on the forum software, it seems likely that

at some point more of us will want to remain in closer contact, and the technology in this field is constantly changing, which also has to be balanced against how many people are willing to use a particular platform and many other factors.

---

### **Post by “Blank\_Emu43” of July 5, 2023 at 6:49 AM**

Looks like my first comment will be something not about Epicureanism. It will instead be something I actually have a decent amount of knowledge about -- cybersecurity!

Briar is good but it is only available on Android, so iPhone users will miss out.

Telegram is terrible for privacy and security and should be avoided. End-to-end encryption (E2EE) is only available on 1:1 chats, not group, and it uses its own encryption algorithm, which hasn't been tested as much as the Signal Protocol which WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Google's Messaging app and others use. Although its channel feature can be very useful, it's only really needed if you were to have thousands of people.

I can't comment on Matrix as I've never used it. And the Online Safety Bill in the UK may jeopardise them if that is passed. Though I'm sure they wouldn't give in as some of their customers are EU governments and even the UK government.

As you stated [Cassius](#), Signal does currently require a phone number. However, they are adding the option to add a username to message people. You will still need to sign up with a phone number, but you will no longer need to give someone your phone number to contact them. When that feature will be released is unknown. I believe the latest information was this year but I guess we'll see. Would you be likely to create an Epicurean group on Signal whenever that feature is live?

From my research, nothing comes close to Signal. Even Threema has a few problems. Alternatively, you do have [Session](#) which is a fork of Signal which also requires no Personally Identifiable Information (PII), but that is still fairly new and it doesn't have Perfect Forward Secrecy, which Threema also lacks (unless that's changed?). The main feature that makes Session unique is that it uses a Tor-like system where messages are sent to several relays before reaching their destination (similar to the Tor browser). Session is also based in Australia.

Either way, Threema is mostly fine. Even the Swiss army use it. It's just that I like to keep my online accounts and apps on my phone to a bare minimum. Less is more.

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of July 5, 2023 at 7:27 AM**

Thanks for your thoughts, Blank\_emu!

To some extent the issue is privacy, but maybe to an equal extent the issue is avoiding be "deplatformed" or having your existing message base deleted at the whim of someone or some entity that decides it doesn't like you.

I don't see us as a target of that kind of problem anytime soon, but that doesn't mean that having things as best as possible under one's own control isn't desirable.

This is definitely a changing field and it looks like you stay on top of it so please update as you think helpful.

---

## **Post by “Cassius” of August 17, 2023 at 10:03 AM**

This subject comes to mind again due to our recent outage on 8/17/23.

The big issues in choosing an alternate communication platform is something that is actually used by a significant number of people. If people don't have the platform loaded on their telephone then they won't get notifications, and it will take much longer to notify people of outages and get back in communication if something significant takes down the forum for more than a few hours.

I'd be happy to hear latest thoughts from anyone but especially from @EricR , [TauPhi](#), [Cleveland Okie](#), and others who are into the FOSS options. I don't want to tie us to a major platform where we are subject to content-based censorship, even for backup communications. Right now that doesn't seem to be an issue at all, and hopefully it will never be, but let's plan for the future.

Each of the options discussed in this subforum is probably viable and workable, but none stand out to me as the obvious choice. For purposes of backup communication and regrouping if the server suffers a catastrophic failure, it's more important to be easy to remember and easy to get to and easy to use than it is to be super-secret or encrypted. For those who know what it is I am tempted to set up an IRC channel as the easiest and most flexible, but there are many options, including some kind of public xmpp location, which is the protocol which our friend [stpeter](#) helped popularize.

So it seems to me that the main criteria for a backup communication platform would include:

1. Necessary: Free / Open Source
2. Necessary: Easy to remember web address (we can set up a domain to point there too)

3. Necessary: Quick and easy to sign up and use without using a dedicated app
4. Necessary: Allows basic moderation (keeps a list of users and potentially allows them to save an email which could be used as an emergency contact).
5. Necessary: Very simple and does not have a lot of complicated features (unlike Matrix)
6. Necessary: Not a full forum or replacement for Epicureanfriends but just a place to hold a running exchange of users where info about outages etc can be posted.
7. Necessary: Not video or audio - chat only (rules out zoom and jitsi etc)
8. Necessary: Not a high profile service run by google or facebook or twitter or reasonably likely to be under the direct control of a state-sponsored security agency. Every service is subject to that problem, but some more than others, and the more features that a service offers while still being "free" the more it is likely that the security of communications and user data is compromised. Related to this would be - not a service aligned with an overt political or religious agenda (which would also make it more likely to be subject to attack or compromise).
9. Desirable but not necessary: Some ability to provide phone notification to users of new messages. This is the main thing that apps like Telegram and Whatsapp offer, but the problems that come with this probably make it preferable to have an easy simple web domain that can be remembered so everyone knows "If Epicureanfriends is down all I do is go here \_\_\_\_\_"

Another alternative is a simple "mailing list manager" where people can register their emergency contact email addresses, and then when we have a problem we can email that group. But if we go that route we would want some ability for members of the group to contact each other, in case is not just with the server being indisposed but with Cassius himself being indisposed!

---

### **Post by “Kalosyni” of August 17, 2023 at 2:38 PM**

I would guess that probably only a few frequent and/or core members would be interested in being notified whenever the forum is down with an alternative mode of communication. If something were to happen and the forum was down for 3 days, probably some of us would want to communicate. I could begin with compiling a list of active members and then next step would be to verify email addresses.

---

### **Post by “stpeter” of August 18, 2023 at 6:25 PM**

Hi [Cassius](#) thanks for including me in this thread. As you've noted, there are countless chat technologies, each with its good points and bad points. Much depends on what we're trying to accomplish, how many people need to use the system, what security properties we want it to have, etc. If it's simply a backup system for administrators to use for coordination purposes during forum outages, something like Signal seems fine to me. If it's to be used for more frequent communication among a wider array of forum participants, perhaps even as a replacement for the forum, then I'm not convinced that \*any\* of the systems you've mentioned would fit the bill (see <https://philosopher.coach/2023/07/31/the...lic-of-letters/> for related musings). Over time I've become less enamored of what we used to jokingly call "interruptive messaging" (IM). A forum interface strikes me as a healthy balance between immediacy and reflection, plus it's easy to use and doesn't force people to install a new app. Then again, some people only have a smartphone and perhaps the web forum doesn't work so well on a phone. There are tradeoffs on all sides...

---

### **Post by “Cleveland Okie” of August 21, 2023 at 10:17 PM**

Hi Cassius,

Thank you for including me on the thread.

My technical knowledge is perhaps not high enough for me to really chip in, but I like Kalosyni's idea of compiling email addresses for everyone who would like to be included in the emergency network, simply because everyone could easily take part without having to learn another platform and would be something everyone would have access to. I do have Signal on my cell phone, as many people do, and I think that would be a relatively practical option, too.

Proton Mail offers free encrypted email accounts that I would think would be accessible to everyone, so that could be an option, too.

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of August 21, 2023 at 10:27 PM**

Based on recent discussions I think we are probably moving to the idea that the best option is a mix of approaches, with one of them being having an opt-in email list so they of the forum does happen to go down for an extended period that we have a way to reach out to regulars with an explanation and ETA for fixing any problems that do arise. Thankfully there has not proved to

be a pressing need for this, but over time it makes sense to harden the backup systems.

For the moment the most likely event would be a technical mishap with our host that keeps the forum offline for a period, and for that we now have in place [backup.epicureanfriends.com](https://backup.epicureanfriends.com) as a first line place people can check for updates.

---

### **Post by “Cleveland Okie” of August 21, 2023 at 10:31 PM**

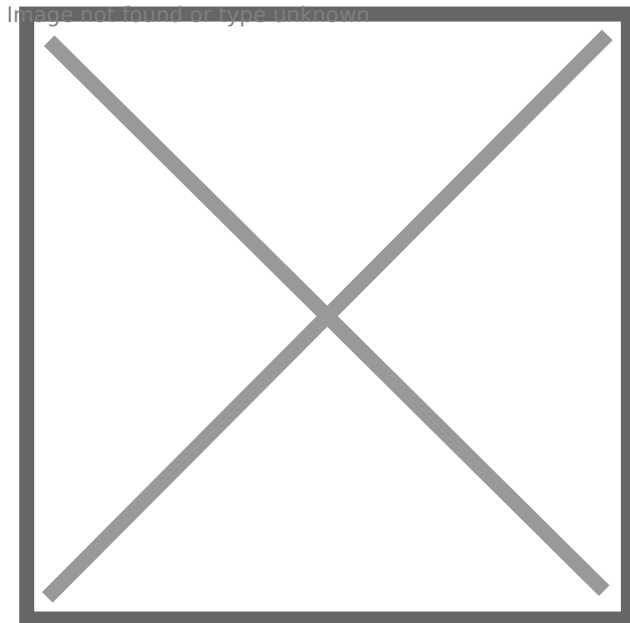
Thanks, Cassius, I have saved the URL for backup epicureanfriends.com and I hope others will take the precaution to save the link.

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of April 17, 2024 at 8:02 AM**

Today we opened a new Telegram channel for use in making announcements about the Forum.

Users of Telegram can find it at:



[EpicureanFriends](#)

Official Telegram channel for EpicureanFriends.com  
t.me

At this point I don't see much reason to plan to use it other than for announcements such as "A new episode of Lucretius Today is now available," or "The forum is down but will be back up soon," etc.

The channel should *\*not\** reveal to other users who is a member, but it is 'public' so that anyone on Telegram searching for Epicurean should be able to find it.

If any users of Telegram decide to join it and have any suggestions on how best to set it up or use it, please feel free to offer ideas! No doubt like anything else it is subject to hacking and misuse, so if anyone sees issues with it please let me know and I will add those considerations to the "pinned" post at the top, which currently points out that the same posting policies applicable at EpicureanFriends.com also applies on the Telegram channel.