



Off Menu – Ep112 – Simon Amstell

Ed Gamble

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast where we take the bread of a guest, pop it into the toaster of chat and grill the until they are charred beyond belief. Hello James.

James Acaster

The bread of the guest!

Ed Gamble

The bread of the guest.

James Acaster

Well done Ed. Why the bread of the guest, do you mean the guest is the bread or you're getting the bread that belongs to a guest?

Ed Gamble

No. On the Off Menu podcast we don't get the guest to send us some bread and then we toast it, that's our other podcast, the Roasty Toasty boys.

James Acaster

Yeah, Roasty Toasty Boys, subscribe!

Ed Gamble

On Off Menu, the guest is our metaphorical slice of bread, we're popping them into the toaster of chat which is again metaphorical and we're grilling them, which is another name for asking questions, until they're charred beyond belief, which is just, done.

James Acaster

Until they're useless.

Ed Gamble

Yeah, useless.

James Acaster

No other podcast can have them.

Ed Gamble

Have to scrape off their bodies into the bin

James Acaster

Yep

Ed Gamble

And even then, even then you can tell they've been charred

James Acaster

Charred beyond belief for the Off Menu podcast. But don't forget to subscribe to the Roasty Toasty Boys. New episodes coming out every Monday. Where we ask the guests, are you Roasty or are you Toasty?

Ed Gamble

They send their bread, and we send back toast.



James Acaster

Yeah, we send toast back to them and they have to guess if we've roasted the toast, or toasted the toast.

Ed Gamble

Or toasted the roast.

James Acaster

Yeah, they send us the bread and we either roast it or we toast it, and we send it back and they've got to make the call.

Ed Gamble

Sorry, I was getting mixed up with our other podcast, the toasty roasty boys where they send us some meat and vegetables of their choice and we try and cook them in a toaster.

James Acaster

We try and make a roast dinner in a toaster. That's every Sunday is the toasty roasty boys and make sure you subscribe to that, listen, we've got loads of great guests on that, we've got Nish Kumar, obviously

Ed Gamble

He does all the food podcasts, yeah.

James Acaster

He'll be booking for everything.

Ed Gamble

Yeah, Rafe Spall.

James Acaster

Rafe Spall's on it. Munya Chuwawa, Victoria Coren Mitchell refused.

Ed Gamble

Yes, she will not be on it. Even though I've heard she takes her own toaster to dinner parties and toasts things in the toilet. Anyway, that's not what this podcast is

James Acaster

this podcast isn't that. This is the Off Menu podcast where you invite a guest into the Dream Restaurant and we ask them their dream, their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink. Not in that order. And this week's guest is Simon, Simon Amstell

Ed Gamble

Simon Amstell. Yes it's Simon Amstell. Comedian, writer, film director, he's a man of many talents James.

James Acaster

So many talents. A great TV host

Ed Gamble

Wow, the problem is, it doesn't come up a lot but whenever James has to say TV host he sneezes. So don't say that again man.

James Acaster

Ooh. I've got some snot on my trousers. A very big sneeze.



Ed Gamble

Right. Simon Amstell is going on going on tour. He's doing a show called spirit hold, you should go and check that out on his website. And we'll talk about some of the other things he's done during this interview I'm sure. But very much looking forward to talking to Simon, however, if he says the secret ingredient that we have pre-agreed upon he will be kicked out of the Dream Restaurant, spirit hole or no spirit hole James.

James Acaster

That is true! And the secret ingredient this week is

Ed Gamble and James Acaster

Cress.

Ed Gamble

I can't believe we've not had it before.

James Acaster

It's awful.

Ed Gamble

Pointless.

James Acaster

I don't like it, I think it looks bad on the plate, it makes everything look bad. It looks like someone's just emptied some grass clippings or something onto the

Ed Gamble

It's too small! I mean that might be one of my main issues with it, it's too small.

James Acaster

Yeah, too small. It doesn't really taste of much.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

Ugh. I mean I can't think of anything really... Also I just think it gets put on everything as a garnish like it's meant to make things look better, and it makes things look worse as we've already established. And cress doesn't go with everything you know.

Ed Gamble

It doesn't go with anything.

James Acaster

Just cos it's flavourless.

Ed Gamble

Egg and cress. Like who would have thought cress could stand up to the punch of an egg? It can't.

James Acaster

No, it can't. There's no point it being in there, it doesn't even add any texture. Visually maybe you've got a bit of chopped up cress in, it gets a bit of green in there, but I'd rather put some chives in there.



Ed Gamble

Yeah, get out, not having the cress thank you. So if Simon says cress he's a goner.

James Acaster

He's a goner.

Ed Gamble

And of course cress is a secret ingredient because we talked about it on the Emily Atack episode James and we realised that we'd never done cress.

James Acaster

Sometimes we get ideas for secret ingredients from the chats we have with other guests, we carry it through to other episodes and, you know, Benito has just said to us off record, I mean I'm sure he won't keep himself in the edit, but that Egg and Cress would be a good nickname for the two of us and I don't appreciate that.

Ed Gamble

I think Egg is doing a lot of the heavy lifting there.

James Acaster

What so he's calling you Egg?

Ed Gamble

Yeah Egg, Egg Gamble.

James Acaster

Egg Gamble.

Ed Gamble

If you say Ed Gamble quickly it sounds like Egg Gamble.

James Acaster

And what, who am I, James Acrester.

Ed Gamble

That's great, Egg Gamble and James Acrester! Oh someone will do a great little mock-up of that, won't they?

James Acaster

Yeah you'd imagine. Will I have cress coming out of my head like a cress head?

Ed Gamble

Yes and I'll just be an egg.

James Acaster

You'll just have an egg as your face. I suppose.

Ed Gamble

Egg Gamble and James Acrester. That's so good!

James Acaster

Oh dear.

Ed Gamble

Oh and James, I'm on tour soon.



James Acaster

What?!

Ed Gamble

I'm going on tour in February 2022 with my show Electric.

James Acaster

Oh, will I ever see you again?

Ed Gamble

Yeah man but probably just over the internet. We'll never see each other in real life again because I'm gonna be on the road baby, I'm a road dawg.

James Acaster

Ah man, I envy all the people getting tickets to that, it's gonna be such a great show. If I was listening to this podcast now I'd pause it immediately, I'd go to edgamble.com and I would order tickets

Ed Gamble

Whoa whoa whoa, don't go there. It's, as much as I value your support and respect, my website is edgamble.co.uk so go and get tickets from there

James Acaster

You couldn't get dot com?

Ed Gamble

No, go and get tickets for my tour: Electric, at edgamble.co.uk. That's very key that.

James Acaster

Who got edgamble.com?

Ed Gamble

I don't know, but let's stop saying that!

James Acaster

It's interesting!

Ed Gamble

Let's stop saying that and we'll just keep searching edgamble.co.uk for tickets for Electric, February 2022 bebe. No no no no no.

James Acaster

Also go to edgamble.com to find out find out who that is or what that website is, we need to know, we've got to crack the case.

Ed Gamble

Never say crack the case when Egg Gamble is involved.

James Acaster

Oh yeah, Egg Gamble, crack the Cress.

Ed Gamble

Anyway, enough of all this, let's hear the Off Menu menu of Simon Amstell.



James Acaster
Simon Amstell.

Ed Gamble
Welcome Simon Amstell to the Dream Restaurant.

Simon Amstell
Thank you.

James Acaster
Welcome Simon Amstell to the Dream Restaurant, we've been expecting you for some time.

Ed Gamble
Wow, what an entrance. We've not recorded one for a while Simon so James has clearly kept his genie powers bottled up, ready to explode there, and you really went for it James, well done you.

James Acaster
Thank you, yeah, I really felt it bursting forth as soon as I did that one. Like a really highly, like the other day actually, I tell you what it reminded me of, my mum has started making kombucha at home and she gave me a bottle of the orange and cardamom one that she made and I drank most of it ages ago and there's just a little tiny bit of it left in the bottom of the bottle and it's one of those ones with the plug stopper on the top and yesterday I was like, well I better obviously just, you know, have the last of this and I unpoped it and, my god, I thought it was going to take my head off, there was so much pressure in there, whatever's been building up. And it was like a gun going off and I was like, holy shit, and that's what I felt like just then bursting out the lamp, I felt like the kombucha that had been extra whatever, fermented. Is that what, would it be fermenting a bit longer? I dunno but that's what I felt like just then, that the plug came off the lamp and I was bursting forth and nearly took Simon Amstell's head off.

Simon Amstell
But it was very enjoyable. I liked it very much.

Ed Gamble
That's the longest story about Kombucha James has ever done before we've really said hello to a guest properly I think.

Simon Amstell
You know, I'm happy to just be here so don't worry about me.

James Acaster
Do you have any stories about kombucha Simon? And before you even think about whether you've got a story about Kombucha, do you think it's longer or shorter than the one I just told?

Simon Amstell
I think it's a bit shorter in that my boyfriend and I do make kombucha but that, that's the story.

Ed Gamble
I think that is a story because that's quite a coincidence that James' mum has been making kombucha, you and your boyfriend have been making kombucha. I think, I don't know anyone else who is making kombucha, this is this is all new to me.

James Acaster
Have you got a specialty? What's your go-to flavour that you've really nailed the most?



Simon Amstell

We just keep it really pure actually, we don't really do anything to it. I like it pure. I told you, this is not much a story, my kombucha story.

Ed Gamble

No we're gonna, we're gonna make it a story. We're doing an hour on your kombucha stuff and that's what's happening. Did you see James' face when you said that you keep it pure and you don't add anything to it and you don't flavour it?

Simon Amstell

I actually didn't, what did he? Do it again James.

Ed Gamble

He was gobsmacked.

Simon Amstell

Oh, that's a good face. Well it's just, I think we're maybe not that advanced, we haven't really got into it, I really like it as it is. What, what's your mum doing? What's she putting in it?

James Acaster

Orange and cardamom. She made another one that was like lemon and ginger, I haven't tried that one yet, I've just tried the orange and cardamom one, it was a very nice surprise. What does it taste like pure though, I've never had it pure.

Simon Amstell

I don't know, I mean I have nothing to compare it to. But maybe I could talk to your mother, could I have your mother's number, if that's not a strange request?

James Acaster

Yep, you're not the first guest to ask for it.

Ed Gamble

I'm just gonna warn you Simon, if you do do, I did a cook-along with James' mum and if you've bought one of the ingredients slightly wrong she will absolutely like ball you out for half an hour, she will shout at you, she'll tell you you've got it wrong.

Simon Amstell

Well I can see where James' trauma/ talent comes from her.

Ed Gamble

She's like Mrs Trunchball.

Simon Amstell

She's very beautiful? What did you say?

Ed Gamble

No I said she's like Mrs Trunchball.

Simon Amstell

Oh I see. And is she also very beautiful?

Ed Gamble

Of course, yes.



James Acaster

Yes. Beautiful Mrs Trunchball, that's my mum. And she put put Ed in the choky for bringing the wrong ingredients.

Simon Amstell

Yeah this is nice. Have you been friends for a long time? This is the sort of, I'm now picturing you as like sort of ten year olds going over to James' mum's house, or James' house I guess it would be because you still live there. What's what's your, what's your relationship, what's going on here? What's happened? How has this podcast happened? I need to know some things I think.

Ed Gamble

We've known each other for many years Simon, and we, we always talk about food and we thought, that conversation is so good the public should be hearing it.

Simon Amstell

Yes.

James Acaster

We were having chats in private and going, 'man, I would love, if I was a member of the public, to be able to listen to this for free'.

Simon Amstell

It's such such a waste if you're having a good conversation in private isn't it?

Ed Gamble

Yeah it's like, if I'm having a nice conversation with my girlfriend as well it's like, what's the point in that? Take a picture of it, put it on Instagram so everyone can see it.

Simon Amstell

Yes, well there's always Pornhub.

James Acaster

Yes, put the photo on Pornhub.

Ed Gamble

Yeah, just a picture of us enjoying a nice meal, pop that on Pornhub.

James Acaster

Simon if you were, if you were on Pornhub.

Simon Amstell

Oh yes, and I should be really, look at me.

James Acaster

Yeah yeah, well no I mean using the service but maybe I mean if you were like

Simon Amstell

Oh my god. There's my ego exposed. 'I should be on Pornhub', not watching it like a viewer'.

James Acaster

But if you were browsing it and one of the thumbnails were some photos of Ed and his girlfriend just doing normal things fully clothed and nothing sexual was on there, would you take the time to watch it?



Simon Amstell

It's unlikely. But it would still be nice to know that it was there, you know. Like it's nice to know that there's hummus in the fridge. You know, you don't necessarily need it that day but it's there, just in case.

Ed Gamble

Just in case, yeah, just in case. Do you think on PornHub, you know how on Youtube if there's anything explicit it gets taken down, do you think that it works the other way around on PornHub?

Simon Amstell

Oh yeah, I think it should do yeah. Warning

Ed Gamble

No nipples.

Simon Amstell

These people are just sat down eating pizza.

Ed Gamble

Now, Simon, you are about to go on tour with your new show Spirit Hole.

Simon Amstell

Yes, I'm doing that from September, would you like to come Ed and James?

Ed Gamble

I'd absolutely, I'd love to come, for sure.

Simon Amstell

There are two, cos you're both in London right? There are two London dates, there's two nights at the Ally Pally and there's the London Palladium, and I'm going all over the country.

Ed Gamble

Are you excited about it Simon?

Simon Amstell

Yes I'm very excited, I think I'm probably more excited than I've ever been about touring and I've been doing a few festivals and a few warm ups and it just feels really exciting to be able to, to be able to do it, right? I mean you must feel the same, I mean it's what, well how did it feel for you when you couldn't do it?

Ed Gamble

Well, I'm very much like you Simon in that I was excited to get back to stand-up and I am enjoying gigs now that I can do them again, and I'm going on tour next year, I'm very excited about it. James?

James Acaster

I'm enjoying the, I'm enjoying the break.

Simon Amstell

Such a polite podcast. This is so sweet, 'James?'.

James Acaster

Still or sparkling water Simon?



Simon Amstell

Still please.

James Acaster

You're drinking still right now, you took a little sip.

Simon Amstell

I actually am. It's actually from a filtered tap but if you have a fancy bottle then I'd take that as well. Although ideally not plastic.

James Acaster

I'm noticing a theme. Pure kombucha, pure water.

Simon Amstell

Hmm, have you seen my skin?

Ed Gamble

Yeah, how much water do you drink a day?

Simon Amstell

Oh, as much as possible. I just, yeah I can't get enough of it, yeah if ever I'm wondering what to do with myself I think, I'll have a glass of water. Then I feel much much better.

James Acaster

But you filter it?

Simon Amstell

We've got a tap that's a filtered tap in this kitchen we've got, yeah.

Ed Gamble

And is that something that was in the kitchen when you arrived or was it the first thing you did when you moved in were you like, 'get that god damn filtered tap in there, I'm not drinking the muck straight from the tap'.

Simon Amstell

Well it was an option in the kitchen shop and we went for it. I don't know if I was adamant about it but when they presented the option I thought, oh yeah, that's a, that's a nice idea. I'm into anything that's, like I'm not a coeliac but if something is gluten free, I'll go for that option instead.

James Acaster

Oh!

Ed Gamble

Really? Even if it's the worse taste wise? So you would go for like a gluten-free bread or a gluten-free pizza just because it's gluten-free, even though that impacts the taste?

Simon Amstell

Well I've had some really good gluten-free stuff and yes I think so. I sort of feel like, if something is advertised as gluten-free it must be better, it must be better. Not taste-wise necessarily but once it says gluten-free. Like if something said bread-free I'd be like, well, I'd better not have any bread then. Not the same with everything, I think I'm actually making some stuff up here to be honest. I think I'm just lying now.



Ed Gamble

It'd good to know that if we ask you a question and then let you just keep talking, you will just start to lie, yep.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, I think I got a bit too into the frivolity of this podcast there and I thought I could provide something about gluten. So that's what I need, I probably need some gluten-stuff and I actually would just, I dunno, I left my own body for a moment. Yeah I'm going to try and retain my integrity now, throughout this podcast.

Ed Gamble

Good to know, moving forward everything will be the truth from Simon.

Simon Amstell

As always, that's my piece. Please come to my show, if you like the truth, come see Spirit Hole!

James Acaster

What's the best conversation that you've ever had during the water course?

Simon Amstell

I feel like the water course is part of this podcast but maybe not part of my life.

Ed Gamble

Yeah, we've definitely put too, too much focus on the water course on this podcast.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, but, I can't really remember exact conversations I've had whilst drinking water but I'm drinking water now and this is going quite well isn't it?

James Acaster

Normally I guess water course is like, you've all just arrived at the restaurant so what are the classics? How you got there, what the traffic was like, how you've been generally, small talk in it, the water course.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, boring

Ed Gamble

The boring stuff.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, well I think, yeah small talk, who has time for small talk? We're all going to die.

Ed Gamble

I love a bit of small talk.

Simon Amstell

But are you aware of your own death Ed?

Ed Gamble

No because I do too much small talk so I really, really put that, put that out of my mind by doing some small talk. I don't want to think about death while I'm having my water.

Simon Amstell

You should because it's coming and you know, you would spend the time more wisely perhaps.



Ed Gamble

Yeah that's true, but then what would I do? If I'm having the water course then I suddenly realise that I'm going to die, surely I'm just chucking the water on the floor and running out of the restaurant?

Simon Amstell

Well it's not that you're going to die immediately, it's just that death is coming, it's coming. And so, you know, what do we think that we're all going to be on, I mean this isn't a good joke for this moment maybe but do we think we're all going to be on our death beds thinking, oh no, I wish I'd listened to one more podcast.

James Acaster

What do you think you will regret on your deathbed?

Simon Amstell

I feel like maybe I will regret not giving everything I could have, in some way. I want to feel like used up by the end of it, that's something Oprah says sometimes, she wants to just be like done, like you did everything that could be done with this particular incarnation of her being, you know. I don't know if that's the correct phrasing that I've used there but she's saying, I just want to be used up.

Ed Gamble

You want to feel like a husk on your death bed.

Simon Amstell

Yeah like, the regret is I could have done... but you want to feel like, I couldn't have given any more. The way you feel at the end of a show maybe where you've left it all on the stage, you're having to lie down at the end of the gig because it was, because you you know, it all just is on the stage now, it's all there. You couldn't have given them one more laugh, that audience, that's, I think that's how I want to feel at the end of my life, I couldn't have like been any more generous or delightful than I was.

Ed Gamble

That's a wonderful ambition I'd say.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, I don't know if I'll get there but it's nice to think about isn't it? And also that I didn't like hold back on anything because of embarrassment or shame, I want to feel like I've extracted all the shame out of myself so that I can be in a moment with another person without feeling like I have to be someone different so that they'll like me, I want to just be there, you know, that kind of thing.

James Acaster

Yeah, that, that's a good, I tend to be a genie a lot of the time, especially on this podcast

Ed Gamble

Well hopefully only on this podcast James.

James Acaster

You can't control when I pretend to be a genie or not. I said pretend there but the listeners know, I'm a real genie.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, I mean we all heard the sound effect.



James Acaster

Yeah yeah, we all heard it. Popadoms or bread?!?! Popadoms or bread Simon Amstell, popadoms or bread?!

Simon Amstell

Popadoms.

James Acaster

Yeahhh.

Ed Gamble

there was a thought process there, sometimes people are straight in with bread or popadoms and you looked around and you sort of, almost like they were in front of you, the options, and you looked at both of them, and you reached for popadoms. What happened in that moment Simon?

Simon Amstell

I think I was thinking about my first course that's coming up, and what I'm going to get from that first course, there's gonna be a crunchy element. And I don't know if I even want the popadoms actually. Also I don't eat much bread so I feel like I don't want, I don't want either of these to be honest, with this meal, but generally, or is this offensive?

Ed Gamble

No. But it's rare, it's rare that anyone passes on anything and I feel like we're approaching a pass on the popadoms or bread course.

Simon Amstell

If it wasn't for this starter that's coming up. Hang on, why is this being offered? There's so many courses, there's too many things.

James Acaster

well you know, usually they bring along a little bread basket don't they, pre-meal. Sometimes if you're in a curry house they'll bring along a load of popadoms beforehand.

Simon Amstell

Oh I see.

Ed Gamble

And also Simon, I want to get to the end of this podcast feeling like I've offered everything I can on this podcast, you know, I want to leave it all out there, so to not offer popadoms or bread or anything else that might be brought at this time. If you want to maybe, if you want to hack the course and pick prawn crackers or something else then you're very welcome, you're very welcome to do that, or indeed pass, this is your dream meal Simon Amstell.

Simon Amstell

Let's let's pass but maybe I'll say, okay I'll have the popadoms but I might, I might take them home.

Ed Gamble

It's the earliest the doggy bag has been employed on the Off Menu podcast.

Simon Amstell

Ah. No I think I'm sticking with that.

James Acaster

I imagine, you often take food home because I'd imagine you don't like waste Simon Amstell, is that correct?



Simon Amstell

Er the second bit's correct although sometimes food is taken home, I think the key thing is not over ordering.

James Acaster

But here's a difficult conundrum for you right, you want to give all that you can in life and put it all out there, but you don't want to over order. What I'm saying is, do you find it quite hard to find the right balance in life Simon? And to like try and go all in, but not too much.

Simon Amstell

I think I'm talking about giving rather than receiving there. And maybe I would cook too much or I would order too much.

Ed Gamble

Yeah, there's not gonna be a moment where you're on your death bed and you think, ah I really should have ordered an extra dish in that restaurant that time.

Simon Amstell

No, that's not gonna be, that's not going to be the thing.

James Acaster

I think I'll think that.

Ed Gamble

Yeah me too, absolutely me too.

James Acaster

I'll think, why didn't I just eat ice cream everyday, why did I care? Now I'm going to die and I'll never get to have ice cream ever again, I'm going to be dead forever and so, in those precious moments when I was alive I should have had ice cream every single day.

Simon Amstell

You would have died earlier.

James Acaster

Yeah but still.

Simon Amstell

And your quality of life would not have been as good, you would have felt sick all the time, your girlfriend would have left you, you know.

Ed Gamble

So in this, hang on, I've got to work out how Simon's envisaged this life here. so James has eaten so much ice cream that his girlfriend's left him?

Simon Amstell

Yeah.

Ed Gamble

What's happened? Why has it become such a hurdle in his life? At what point has his girlfriend gone, I've got to go, this ice cream thing's out of control.

Simon Amstell

Well he's, you know, he's developed illnesses related to the overeating.



Ed Gamble

Yeah

Simon Amstell

And she's said, look, you either need to stop eating, maybe you need to see a therapist, maybe this is an emotional issue you need to deal with that's leading to you, you know, filling a hole within that can't be filled, and you're saying, I just want to eat ice cream all the time, I don't want to look within, and she's saying, well look, you're responsible for your own healing, I have to find somebody who can take care of themselves because I am not a doctor, I want to be a lover.

James Acaster

Wow, do you know what? I thought it was quite a shallow reason for her to leave me and then you did the speech and I thought, well I'm on her side. She's given a very mature reason.

Simon Amstell

You can have some ice cream. You know.

Ed Gamble

yeah

Simon Amstell

And also there's some really good vegan sugar free ice creams available and, you can choose your ice creams wisely, have a great time

Ed Gamble

Yeah

James Acaster

Yeah

Ed Gamble

As a concession to her right, if she says, I think this ice cream's a problem, you could still have ice cream every day maybe but maybe cut down to those little pots that you buy in a theatre.

James Acaster

Maybe. It would be quite a difficult one. Have you got any vegan ice creams you'd like to recommend?

Simon Amstell

Everyone's doing them now. When I was on the west coast of America a few years ago, Ben and Jerry's started doing them and that was a thrilling moment. And my boyfriend and I were there also smoking legal marijuana there for the first time together and having some legal marijuana and then vegan Ben and Jerry's ice cream, that is a nice experience.

James Acaster

Um, you are a drugsman. Do you love drugs? Are we gonna see some drugs on the menu today? Because we've had that in the past.

Simon Amstell

I feel, apart from that occasion that I'm talking about, I feel often, well magic mushrooms particularly are best done on an empty stomach and ceremonially, in a ritualistic way, so it's best to, best to have not eaten much at all, if you're going to embark on a mushroom journey. So no, I think I think I'm just eating on this occasion.



James Acaster

If this podcast was not the dream menu for food but the dream menu for drugs, what would your dream drug menu be if we're going starter, main course, dessert?

Ed Gamble

I mean I'm not really a drugsman Simon, but as far as I know you shouldn't really have loads of different drugs and break them up into a course format.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, I haven't heard from any Shamans that that's the way to go. Also, so I consider them to be meditative if I'm doing them in a healing manner, so for me it's like not, for me it's, well, we could do it this way. Bearing in mind that I'm not a shaman, I'm just an idiot. what are your problems and we'll see if we can find the right medicines for you?

James Acaster

Okay, I, I worry too much and everyone annoys me.

Ed Gamble

Is there a drug for that?

Simon Amstell

You have anxiety and you're judgmental.

James Acaster

Yes.

Simon Amstell

Yes, so magic mushrooms would be good for that.

James Acaster

Lovely.

Simon Amstell

Or, MDMA.

James Acaster

Oh really?

Simon Amstell

You would drop into a comfort with intimacy and an empathy would develop to eradicate all that judgment that you're feeling. And you would, you would be there with the other person who is ideally also part of the MDMA session and you just feel deep love and compassion for them. There you go.

Ed Gamble

Um, I'm lazy and I'm greedy and I stink.

Simon Amstell

Okay, so you hate yourself, alright. Let's see, lazy, greedy, it sounds like you have depression there.

Ed Gamble

So what drugs can I take?



Simon Amstell

I think some magic mushrooms would be great for that as well, of course. Or if you're, or if it's calling to you then mother ayahuasca of the rainforest, if you want something really dramatic or if you feel the need for something incredibly life changing.

Ed Gamble

Ayahuasca's the one, you need to go to Peru to do that one, is that right?

Simon Amstell

Yeah yeah yeah. And they say that she calls to you, you know, I kept hearing this, it was eleven years ago when I went for the first time, you keep hearing this word, my friend was talking about it out of nowhere and then I heard it somewhere else, and then when I got there the shaman said, she has called you all here, you will have received messages and, my boyfriend was more cynical, he kept saying, 'yeah I keep hearing the word skiing, when are we doing that?'

James Acaster

Also, I would imagine that, I mean it sounds lovely but I would imagine that everyone who is there is there because they have heard about it and decided to go there. No one's stumbled into it, sat down and gone, 'I wasn't called here, I just sat down, I didn't even know what this was'.

Simon Amstell

That's true. Maybe it works the same advertising or marketing works, you need to hear about something three times and then you buy a ticket. Well I should say that like all these things that we're talking about should be done very carefully, they're very powerful things and they're not for everyone blah blah blah. And also, a lot of them are totally illegal. Good luck everybody!

James Acaster

We move onto your starter.

Simon Amstell

Okay there used to be a restaurant up until recently called Manna in Primrose Hill that served to share, nachos especial which is nachos. And they were really just lovely, and we could all share them together, they had black beans on them, they had some kind of nut cheese, there was a cashew cheese and various other things sprinkled on top of these nachos. And you know, well you know how you eat nachos, it's like a delicious, fun communal thing. You pick them up with your fingers and then you shove them in your mouth and then somebody else has some and then they're finished.

James Acaster

You strike me as someone who wouldn't be competitive or territorial when it comes to the nachos, you'd be quite philosophical about it all.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, the nachos I'm enjoying sharing. Dessert, less so.

Ed Gamble

So with the nachos, are you deliberately leaving some of the fully loaded ones so that everyone can everyone can get involved in that, or are you going straight for what you consider to be the best nacho?

Simon Amstell

I think I am going for the best one.

Ed Gamble

you're going for the best nacho aren't you?



James Acaster

What's the dream nacho for you?

Simon Amstell

Oh it's just got it all on it I suppose, so it's got all the stuff I was talking about there, and it's got a lot of the nut cheese.

Ed Gamble

Look, I love that there's vegan cheeses out there available, I feel like at some point we're going to have to come up with a better name for it than nut cheese. Because it's not selling the nachos especial, every time you say nut cheese I move further and further away from wanting them.

Simon Amstell

I mean, I think if I was amongst fellow plant-based people rather than you psychopaths, I would I would just call it cheese.

Ed Gamble

Yes of course.

Simon Amstell

You're like people who think it's normal to like go up to a cow, steal it's baby, chuck that in the bin and then suck its tits. That's what you're into.

James Acaster

Yeah.

Simon Amstell

And you can't hear the word nut cheese.

James Acaster

Yeah, no. That puts me off, it's disgusting.

Ed Gamble

Ew, horrible.

James Acaster

I want some cow titty cheese.

Simon Amstell

We're all different, we're all different.

Ed Gamble

Well I watched your wonderful show Simon, it's a few years ago now, was it Carnage, is that what it's called?

Simon Amstell

Oh yeah, Carnage. It's still on iPlayer, I think, I think it's going to be on iPlayer until everybody is vegan.

Ed Gamble

Yeah and it's absolutely phenomenal and I watched it, it really moved me and I thought it was a brilliant idea and well executed and I was like, yep, and I agreed with every point and then I thought, anyway, let's crack on with the meat now shall we?



Simon Amstell

How did you do that?

Ed Gamble

I have absolutely no idea.

Simon Amstell

I made it so funny, I made it so emotive, what how, I don't know how you did that, I don't know what more I could have done.

James Acaster

You know, you heard from Ed earlier, Ed's little description of his problems that he clearly hates himself with a passion so you can at least achieve that. Before he watched Carnage, he quite liked himself and loved eating meat, now you've at least made him completely detest himself for being a meat eater.

Simon Amstell

Alright, well that's the first step.

James Acaster

Yeah now, we've had a comedian on the podcast before called Joel Dommett and he can on the podcast and he chose nachos as his starter and his reason for having nachos as a starter was because you never know how much you're gonna get when you order nachos, as in you never know how big the portion's gonna be, and that was his sole reason for it, and he got a lot of hate on the internet for that being a reason

Simon Amstell

What, he just likes surprises, what does he mean by it?

James Acaster

Yeah, he likes that you order nachos and you never know really how big the portion of nachos will be until it arrives on the table and that was his reason for ordering it.

Simon Amstell

I can see why the hate arrived but I'm now concerned, I didn't know this was going, that there was a possibility of hate as a result of this podcast.

James Acaster

Oh, you will never hear the end of this podcast I'm afraid.

Ed Gamble

I think everything so far has been pretty solid choices, the nachos sound very nice. My only issue with nachos Simon is that all the good stuff's on the top and then quite often you've got three or four layers of dry tortilla crisps underneath. So these nachos, are they layered up or are you just hoovering off the top layer and sending the dry crisps back.

Simon Amstell

I think, I guess the reason that I'm mentioning the nachos from Manna is that they did them so well that there were none of these problems and it's sad to me that the restaurant is no longer there because I've tried to recreate these nachos in my own kitchen and it hasn't gone as well.

James Acaster

I used to love making nachos at the Star Inn in Geddington when I worked in the kitchen there and we would layer them up, so you know, one layer of chips and then chilli and cheese and then chips chilli cheese and just do that, like about three or four times. And they were good. And the ones on



the bottom were the best because they were like really like, you had to eat them with a fork or a spoon, you couldn't just pick them up because they were really limp, just like, they'd been covered in chilli and they you had to just eat them with a fork or a spoon at the end. They were the best ones.

Simon Amstell

Hmm, the limp nachos.

Ed Gamble

Yeah, the limp nachos. I think me and Simon both reacted to that in exact the same way. You described them as the best nachos and you had to eat them with a spoon because they'd gone all limp. It sounds horrible!

James Acaster

Yes, like a bowl of shreddie's at the bottom. I loved it.

Simon Amstell

That's not me, I want a crunch. I feel we may have gone on for too long about nachos because some of this now feels a bit like commentary to some other event whilst we're waiting for some goal to happen or something. Is that accurate?

Ed Gamble

You're worrying about it too much Simon, trust me.

James Acaster

Someone needs magic mushrooms.

James Acaster

Is your main course to share or is your main course just for Simon?

Simon Amstell

There's three options.

James Acaster

okay.

Simon Amstell

One, from Bristol.

James Acaster

Yeah I've been to Bristol.

Simon Amstell

Yeah but as part of the ruse. Ruse isn't the right word, is it a ruse? This podcast.

James Acaster

You would like us to go to Bristol.

Simon Amstell

Yeah I would like us to all go to Bristol if we can, for the main course. But this is only for option one. I would like us to go to Cafe Kino for the beetroot burger. Because it's very delicious. But, there's option, option two is, can we go to LA? Can we go to LA?

Ed Gamble

Yes we can



James Acaster

Yes!

Simon Amstell

I'd like to go to Cafe Gratitude. Which is, I don't know if you've heard of it but

James Acaster

We've been there.

Ed Gamble

We've been there!

Simon Amstell

You've been there!

James Acaster

Together

Simon Amstell

Have you spoken about it on the podcast before?

James Acaster

Guess who we saw while in Cafe Gratitude? you have three guesses, it's a celebrity.

Simon Amstell

Alright, here we go.

Ed Gamble

I think we need to give you a clue that we're in Cafe Gratitude in LA

Simon Amstell

Danny Devito!

Ed Gamble

No, wait, wait for the clue

Simon Amstell

Okay, sorry.

Ed Gamble

It was the most vegan experience possible.

Simon Amstell

Was that the clue? Okay, well, Moby.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Bang, got it in one.

Simon Amstell

Was it Moby?



Ed Gamble

It was Moby.

James Acaster

Yes, it was Moby. There we go.

Simon Amstell

There we go. Oh boy. Oh well anyway, so you know about Cafe Gratitude. I mean you must have spoken about it then because it's such a funny ridiculous place.

James Acaster

I think two people have selected something from Cafe Gratitude on their Dream Menus.

Ed Gamble

Aisling Bea definitely did.

Simon Amstell

Alright, so, let's go to my third option. I mean I think this is the one because this is the easiest because I can just stay at home for it, it's, pasta with grilled aubergine, spinach, pine nuts toasted, walnuts toasted and pesto.

James Acaster

That sounds very nice.

Ed Gamble

And is this right at home, is this something that you make?

Simon Amstell

That's just, I'm just making that and so that's no problem for anyone.

James Acaster

Talk us through it, because people are going to want to make this at home themselves. If this is your dream meal and this is something that you can just make at home, I reckon that people would appreciate the Amstell pasta.

Simon Amstell

Well I don't know if it's that complicated but

James Acaster

Even better

Simon Amstell

I feel like as I explain it people might go, yeah, pasta. You can make pasta. But yeah, you get some pasta from a packet.

James Acaster

Yes, what kind of pasta?

Simon Amstell

Well I would go, I think there's a brand called Garofalo I think we had that. And so you put some of that in a boiling saucepan.

Ed Gamble

What shape is this Garofalo?



James Acaster

What shape is this pasta?

Simon Amstell

Ah, fusilli. So you put that in the boiling water for as long as it says on the packet. Or, a minute less, that would be my tip, a minute less.

James Acaster

Great tip.

Simon Amstell

And meanwhile, while that's going on, you want to get the pesto out of the fridge, or cupboard, wherever it is.

James Acaster

Green pesto?

Simon Amstell

Sackler >!> vegan green pesto. And then, delicious, delicious.

James Acaster

Ah, I love it.

Simon Amstell

And then, after you've done that you want to get out a frying pan and you want to toast some walnuts and pine nuts and while they're going on, you might want to add some spinach into the boiling water so that wilts nicely.

James Acaster

Into the boiling water with the pasta?

Simon Amstell

Yeah, straight in!

Ed Gamble

See this is the sort of, I'm glad we asked you how to do it now because that's the sort of tip that I would never have thought of.

Simon Amstell

yeah, straight in!

James Acaster

Yeah. And how much, cos like it's quite satisfying putting like loads of spinach in something and then watching it shrink. Are you like, a basketball's worst of spinach?

Simon Amstell

Oh, er, somewhere in between a tennis ball and a basketball. What would that ball be?

James Acaster

A bowling ball?

Ed Gamble

Yeah, a bowling ball.



Simon Amstell

A bowling ball of spinach. There we go. And then, I suppose you're just playing the waiting game, and then, when it's one minute less than it says on the packet you get your colander out and then I mean this is very this is very obvious.

James Acaster

No it's not, it's not obvious. You put spinach in the boiling water with the pasta, are you joking!

Ed Gamble

You put the spinach in the boiling water with the pasta.

Simon Amstell

Okay, alright, so you pour then, you pour everything, the spinach and then pasta into the colander, give that a shake, get rid of any excess water, oh I haven't mentioned that I grilled the aubergine during all of this

James Acaster

This is what I was thinking, when's the aubergine's coming into play?

Simon Amstell

Sorry. Before I even boiled the pasta there was some aubergine chopped into nice circles, no more than like a centimetre thick, if that, and they're spread out on the baking tray, a little bit of oil and a little bit of pepper, they go into the oven and maybe maybe grill if you haven't got much time or oven if you have more time. And then, hopefully the timing is good and then you've got your pasta, all the water's gone, and then you put the pasta back in the saucepan, you put the pesto in the saucepan, you put the pine nuts and the walnuts in the saucepan, you put the what did I what did I make?

James Acaster

Aubergine

Ed Gamble

Aubergine, the main bit.

Simon Amstell

Yep! You put the aubergine in the saucepan and then you mix it all together and then you put it in a bowl or two or three or four depending on how many people are there and then you eat it.

James Acaster

I think that sounds great, I'm going to do it!

Ed Gamble

That sounds great, yeah!

Simon Amstell

What they never say at the end of recipes in books is, 'and now you eat it!'.

Ed Gamble

It's amazing how often I forget that bit. Prepare all that stuff and then I look for the last bit and it doesn't tell me to eat it, straight in the bin.

Simon Amstell

There you go, I feel exhausted now. I don't know how those chefs do it. It's amazing.

Ed Gamble

How often are you making the grilled aubergine pasta with pesto, walnuts and pine nuts?



Simon Amstell

I'd say once a week that happens.

James Acaster

I'm gonna do it tonight! I've decided.

Simon Amstell

Do it! Wow, I've really started something here.

James Acaster

I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna go to the shop after this, get the ingredients, that's what I'm having for dinner.

Ed Gamble

James is on the lookout for a new pasta dish because him and his girlfriend go quite into making a different pasta dish and I saw them the other day and I mentioned the pasta dish and they both looked really tired when it came up because they'd clearly been eating it far too much.

James Acaster

We love it but we are ashamed of how much we've been eating it all the time.

Simon Amstell

What what is it? What's the

James Acaster

Chorizo and broccoli pasta, it's a really good way of using up all your broccoli stems, you chop up the broccoli stems, it gives it a real nice crunch and it's got capers in it and garlic and chilli and parmesan and it's absolutely delicious and if either of us haven't had a very nice day, the other one always goes, 'I'll make some chorizo broccoli pasta for you', and then we have that and it is a very, like you say, a very comforting definitely, as soon as I'd heard there was another pasta dish that was comforting I was like, right, I'm going to learn that immediately.

Simon Amstell

I forgot to say, a drizzle of olive oil at the end of the black pepper, that's quite nice.

Ed Gamble

And is that before or after you eat it? Where does that step come?

Simon Amstell

That's just before. The moment before.

Ed Gamble

Yeah okay. I would, I don't want to get those the wrong way around.

James Acaster

I do want to know because otherwise I feel like it's a bit of a cliff hanger, what you would have ordered from Cafe Gratitude?

Simon Amstell

I actually printed the menu earlier just in case, just in case we landed at Cafe Gratitude, because I haven't been there for a long time.

Ed Gamble

You printed out your menu or you printed out the Cafe Gratitude menu?



Simon Amstell

The Cafe Gratitude menu. Partly because I thought it would just make me laugh because all the dishes are called funny things like 'Enchanting', 'Magical', 'Optimistic (new)'. And when you order in this restaurant you have to say, 'I am...', whatever you want. So you have to say, 'I am... community'. And then when they come and bring the dish they say, 'you are community' and so I don't know what I'd have. I think I'd have maybe, the glorious sandwich or the humble entrée and then they have all these lovely sweet things like 'the joyful', 'the opulent' and then there's like coffee's called 'the courageous'.

James Acaster

I am courageous

Ed Gamble

I didn't realise that, I said 'I am black coffee', because I didn't realise there was a different thing, but I wanted to get into it and, we've talked about this before, about how it is so, you're so awkwardly British in that situation, so you have to do with a massive dollop of irony. You have to be like, 'oh go on, I am courageous, what a lot of silly Americans you are'. But you got quite into it didn't you James?

James Acaster

I went straight into, I thought, may as well, when in LA. And I said 'I am...' whatever, 'I am brave', and what I loved is when they do say it back because you say to them, 'I am brave', and they go, 'you are brave' and I really enjoyed that. Yes!

Simon Amstell

Did you have someone come over and say as a suggestion during your meal they were asking people to talk about what they're grateful for today that happened?

James Acaster

No I wish it had. I mean that was at the end of our trip we were, we'd been in New York for a week, LA for a week, we were about to go back, it was the last day. I think if they'd told us to talk to each other about what we're grateful for that would have been, we hadn't fallen out the whole trip but I think that would have been the conversation that made us fall out with each other.

Ed Gamble

Maybe they did come over and say, 'we're thinking you should discuss what you're grateful for', but we were probably all just on our phones.

James Acaster

Yeah, at that point.

Simon Amstell

What are we gonna do about those phones?

Ed Gamble

I love 'em. Get bigger ones.

Simon Amstell

No we've got to, we're addicted, we're addicted to them.

Ed Gamble

Yeah yeah yeah.



James Acaster

That's going to be a mad thing, the death bed thing, it's gonna be so many of us are gonna be there and that regret of what you didn't do is going to be absolutely terrifying for some people, probably myself included. Where you just go, 'oh what the fuck did I do?'. I just stared at my phone for so long.

Simon Amstell

Yes!

James Acaster

Especially like our generation where, you know, any generation that remembers what it was like beforehand and so now we're more scared. Because like little kids seem a bit more chill about it cos it's a part of their life, but we are, cos we're like, 'oh no, I remember what it felt like to actually think about stuff while I was waiting for things and it wasn't that bad actually'.

Simon Amstell

I think the only way out of it maybe is if we, I guess we have to keep the phones now right, they're there, but maybe we could make it so the battery life is three minutes and then to recharge takes a month. That's the only way out of it. It'd be annoying but we'd be free.

James Acaster

So your side dish. Is it something that would complement the comfort pasta?

Simon Amstell

I'm too full with the pasta. Like what would I have as the side dish? I can't, I'm going to have to pass on the side dish.

Ed Gamble

You're the least hungry man we've ever had on this podcast. You've already passed on the popadoms.

Simon Amstell

I had a lot of falafel during the technical difficulties. Yeah I think, but generally pasta is enough isn't it? A side dish, I mean, it's not, olive oil is not a side dish but it is on the side. Can I have olive oil?

James Acaster

You would just like some olive oil as your side dish?

Simon Amstell

Yes, there you go.

James Acaster

Okay.

Ed Gamble

any, any particular type of olive oil Simon? Do you have a favourite olive oil?

Simon Amstell

I don't know, I suppose just the, we get a big, we get a big tin from a local shop here that's like an enormous tin, and then we decant that into a bottle with a nozzle thing. And I don't think nozzle's the right word but do you know what I mean?

James Acaster

A pourer, a plug, like a pourer.



Ed Gamble

A pourer, a pourer. A plug with like a little pouring stem on it.

Simon Amstell

A plug with a little thing in it, with a pouring stem on a cork. Yeah. This is, we still haven't got it right

James Acaster

A bung, what's it called?

Simon Amstell

I don't know. Anyway, so so, it'll be that oil from the shop that we get that oil from. Or any oil, I don't care, just oil.

James Acaster

No I like it, I like the, I'm glad that we asked that because I didn't know that you had such a, I just get a bottle of olive oil and that's eat and then that's on the side, but you have a tin and you put that in a jug and you put a cork stopper in the jug and then you pour it out special every time.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, special.

James Acaster

I like that.

Ed Gamble

Are we talking extra virgin, virgin? I mean you don't see anything other than that these days do you?

Simon Amstell

Not that I'm aware of. You know, just the extra virgin olive oil. I suppose organic, ideally.

Ed Gamble

It's just weird that, I don't know why they need to specify extra virgin and virgin now because you don't see like

Simon Amstell

But you'd be worried if you saw the packaging and it didn't say it, you'd be like, what the hell is this?

Ed Gamble

Yeah yeah.

James Acaster

Who's been fucking these olives?

Ed Gamble

That is god damn dirty, promiscuous olive oil. No thank you.

James Acaster

Olive oil takes me back to the start of the pandemic actually.

Simon Amstell

Oh yeah? Take us there James.

Ed Gamble

Please, we've already been to Bristol, LA and Simon's house, please, let's go to the start of the pandemic.



James Acaster

Well, my ears started acting up for no reason, I didn't know why, they were really blocked and I was like, what the hell is going on.

Ed Gamble

Which has happened to you before, yes?

James Acaster

Yes I've had, oh I've had problems with my ears before, I've had to go to ER in LA when my ears were so painful

Ed Gamble

He went to the set of ER Simon, can you imagine that? He just wondered onto the set and went, 'there's something wrong with my ears.

James Acaster

Yeah, just went in

Simon Amstell

Wow, it must have been so dramatic.

James Acaster

Yep

Simon Amstell

Well do you swim a lot, sometimes it can happen if you swim a lot that your ears go like that

James Acaster

I never swim, I hate swimming.

Simon Amstell

Oh, maybe you should swim more.

James Acaster

I really hate it so that's definitely not that.

Ed Gamble

I didn't know you hated swimming

James Acaster

I hate it, I hate it, I hate swimming!

Simon Amstell

What happened to you when you were a child in a swimming pool?

James Acaster

Good point.

Ed Gamble

Give him a mushroom, get him talking.

James Acaster

Yeah, here we go. Let's do the ceremony and then I'll tell you all about it.



Simon Amstell

When you were a child did you drown in a swimming pool?

James Acaster

Oh, that is it. I did try and drown myself once but that's been well documented, I've talked about that before. I tried to drown myself because my didn't get me the Spice Girls debut album, Spice.

Simon Amstell

Fair enough!

James Acaster

So I tried to drown myself in the shallow end of the swimming pool. But, so maybe that's part of it. When the Kettering Leisure Village opened when I was a teenager, we were very excited, it was a big deal, the swimming pool had a wave machine, a jacuzzi and rapids and I'd go there a lot but, you know, being a teenager so very body conscious, really aware that like my friend who would often go to the swimming pool, he was like already a full man in his, you know, that just all happened for him and I'd feel like a little boy and very, just too, yeah, too body conscious really. So I still feel like that when going to the swimming pool, don't like it, hate it, so my ears are nothing to do with that. In LA it was because I'd been on a plane and it messed my ears up and then I went, but like, they did say that they were too waxy. Start of lockdown they were messing up again and I was like, I don't want to go to the doctors because there's this pandemic. And everything like that, I don't want to go there just for my ears being a bit blocked. So I looked online and it was just like, pour olive oil in your ears, so I just did that all the time, I'd sit there, well lay there, on my bed, on my side, just letting the olive oil just soak into my ears. And actually, that was very relaxing. Talking about having a break from your phone, I would just lay there and I could hardly even hear, it's just this nice muffled almost ASMR kind of noises in my ear, and I would just lay there and let the olive oil just soak up all the wax, or the wax would soak up the olive oil, and then

Simon Amstell

then you'd wash it out.

James Acaster

Yeah, and then you'd wash it out. I mean that bit's gross.

Ed Gamble

Did it work, does it work though?

James Acaster

Yeah, it worked!

Simon Amstell

That's great. I think we might have put people off the pasta for tonight now, but

James Acaster

Yeah yeah

Simon Amstell

But

Ed Gamble

How did you get the olive oiling there because it seems like, Simon, you've got the perfect set up for getting it into your ears.

Simon Amstell

I mean I could come over and clean your ears out no problem.



Ed Gamble

That pouring stem, or whatever it is.

James Acaster

That is true. I used a little, so I already had something else so, I use a little one of those eye dropper kind of things but I just use that in the olive oil.

Simon Amstell

Great, that's great.

James Acaster

This is such a great podcast for tips. I think we haven't had an episode with so many tips in it before. We've talked about tips for doing drugs, tips for making pasta

Simon Amstell

No no no, we've done tips for healing from mental health issues

James Acaster

Tips for healing and taking medicine. Yes yes. Tips for making pasta, tips for unblocking your ears with olive oil. You haven't given any tips Ed, a little bit selfish with your tips for the rest of us

Ed Gamble

No I've not given any tips. What would you like? I can give a tip.

James Acaster

Is there any tips you would like from Ed, Simon? Anything that Ed can help you with? Any tips?

Simon Amstell

I wonder. Well he seems to have won an award in his zoom frame there, I wonder what he won that for?

Ed Gamble

Which one?

Simon Amstell

Or two! Hang on, there's one with a man's head, that's an award is it?

Ed Gamble

That's Greg Davis' head, that's the Taskmaster trophy.

Simon Amstell

Ah congratulations and then that, what about that trophy?

Ed Gamble

And then that's Richard Osman's face, that's for Richard Osman's House of Games.

Simon Amstell

Wow you've really been putting yourself about there, haven't you?

Ed Gamble

Oh yeah, I'll do anything.

Simon Amstell

And winning!



Ed Gamble

That's a skull, just because I like skulls.

Simon Amstell

That's good! That's to remind you of death. And that, the thing behind you does that say 'wear a condom'?

Ed Gamble

Yes!

Simon Amstell

Well that's a great tip, there you go.

James Acaster

That's a good tip, yeah that is a good tip.

Ed Gamble

That's a Joe Lycett painting and it's a picture of a baby in a glass bath and it says 'wear a condom', he's a very talented boy.

Simon Amstell

there you go, I think we did it.

James Acaster

So your side dish is olive oil.

Simon Amstell

With a condom.

Ed Gamble

Would you like the olive oil in a condom Simon?

James Acaster

Yeah

Simon Amstell

Actually you mustn't put olive oil anywhere near a condom because it makes it ineffective.

Ed Gamble

is that true? Another tip!

James Acaster

Oh! Gonna have to know why you know that.

Simon Amstell

Well, because I have sex.

James Acaster

Yes but, oh yeah absolutely.

Simon Amstell

Better known is that you must use a water-based lubricant, an oil-based lubricant would damage the condom. Top tip. Top tip listeners!



Ed Gamble

Yeah, that is a good tip.

Simon Amstell

Enjoy your pasta, enjoy your sex, stay healthy.

Ed Gamble

I think more broadly the tip is: never dip your dick in your side dish.

James Acaster

Yeah.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, that's catchier.

James Acaster

But your dream drink, is it another glass of olive oil?

Simon Amstell

What about the water? I've had my dream drink.

Ed Gamble

Oh no, I knew this was going to happen. Is this another pass? It's another pass. I can't believe this.

James Acaster

What the hell. 'Just some pasta for me thank you, goodbye'.

Ed Gamble

Now Simon, do you remember earlier we said, don't worry, you won't get any hate? Now you've passed on three things, this is, it's feeling like we're approaching

James Acaster

I don't think anyone would dare hate on Simon Amstell, I think everyone loves you too much however you are, at the minute I'm on the verge of starting up an Instagram account and absolutely destroying you,.

Simon Amstell

I'm just trying to, you know, it's important to be able to say no, that's very important. But kombucha, if we're talking about a different drink to water, I would have to say kombucha, no problem.

James Acaster

Your home-made one?

Simon Amstell

Yeah, or your mother's one, to spice things up.

James Acaster

My mother would love to make you some kombucha.

Simon Amstell

Great, I would love to receive it, very much.

James Acaster

She asked me to tell you, don't use it as a lubricant.



Ed Gamble

That does sound like her

James Acaster

That's what she always says when she drops around her home made kombucha.

Ed Gamble

So you're not, are you not a booze man, Simon?

Simon Amstell

No I haven't drunk anything since I was about twenty-five. No, no, just the drugs.

James Acaster

The sweet sweet drugs.

Simon Amstell

Yeah yeah yeah, cos anything, yeah yeah healing. Cos alcohol is a depressant, so if you're prone to a bit of depression, you don't want a depressant going into your body, you want something that's an anti-depressant like magic mushrooms. Well this is an alcohol culture. Kenneth Mckenna talks about like there are different, there are mushroom-y cultures, not that people are doing mushrooms all the time but there's the possibility of them. And here, it's not like people are drinking all the time generally but there's always the possibility of going to the pub and having a drink. So it's like an entirely different situation here. Why have I said all that? I can't remember where I was going with that but basically of course we are the way we are because this country is the way it is. I think you really have to like, you have to go through something like growing up gay to be like, hang on a minute, maybe the culture's wrong because otherwise I'm a pervert. So once you've done that, once you've sort of broken through that barrier then you're looking at everything, then you're thinking, well hang on a minute, should I be doing this because if I'd have followed all the rules I'd be married to a lady called Laura now and deeply miserable.

Ed Gamble

That is the rule, she has to be called Laura.

Simon Amstell

She must be called Laura.

James Acaster

At the start of this year I went the longest I think I've gone in maybe ten or so years like without alcohol, I had three months of not drinking and do you know what, it felt really nice and I made the mistake of telling a t-total friend of mine that I had, oh it's three months of not drinking is pretty good, I feel pretty great, and then he was like right, well in that case I'm gonna, he didn't even run this by me actually, he just did this without asking me, and he sent me one hundred cans of alcohol free beer and I would drink them every now and then and I would have them in the fridge, and they were quite nice for alcohol free beers actually but also during that time I just gradually starting drinking again every now and then anyway and I had the first fifty cans of alcohol free beer over time, I had them as they were, when it got to like can fifty one I thought, I can't have another fifty of these. So I've started adding whiskey to them Simon and I add a shot of whiskey, a can of Coast and then a few drops of lime juice, squeeze a bit of lime juice over the top and in bars if you get like an alcoholic beer with a shot of whiskey in it it's called a boilermaker so I call my cocktail a boilerfaker and it is actually delicious, and I think, quite a good way for people to like have a boilermaker without getting completely trashed because it's not a pint of beer with whiskey in it, it's alcohol free beer with a whiskey.

Simon Amstell

Another great tip, that's another great tip.



James Acaster

It's another great tip and I think it's pretty clever. And it is the best invention that, I think it's the best thing I've ever invented.

Simon Amstell

I guess it's not what Coast had in mind but fuck 'em.

James Acaster

Nope, absolutely not what they had in mind.

Simon Amstell

Simon if ever you were like, you know, it's like, it's January, it's Dry January and you don't want to do a magic mushroom, would you buy maybe a pack of like button mushrooms instead? Just just for the feelings.

James Acaster

Yes, good question Ed, well done.

Simon Amstell

Er, sure. I mean I have, also have just the general mushroom in my life. But Dry January isn't for like people that enjoy psychedelics, that's for people who are like drowning in alcoholism.

James Acaster

So let's go onto your dessert now. Now I know that you're gonna have a dessert because you mentioned during your starter, cos let's face it so far, so far you've had still water, you have passed on poppadoms or bread

Ed Gamble

You're taking the poppadoms home.

James Acaster

Yeah you've taken the poppadoms home but you're not eating them. You've had a starter to share with people so let's face it, you've had like one or two loaded or fully loaded chips. You've had your pasta, you've had a little side of olive oil and you were gonna pass on the drink but eventually decided that you were gonna have kombucha. So we've got plenty of room here for this dessert.

Simon Amstell

Well that's why you know, I've been so wise thus far because otherwise I'd be like, I can't possibly have dessert after all this madness. But now I can have my big slab of chocolate cake with ice cream.

James Acaster

And you look so happy as well.

Ed Gamble

Yeah, so pleased.

James Acaster

You look so happy saying a big slab of chocolate cake with ice cream, really happy with that.

Simon Amstell

Lots of icing, vanilla ice cream will go very well with the chocolate. My boyfriend the other day made a chocolate cake out of courgette somehow. It was the most moist delicious thing I've ever eaten.



James Acaster

What?

Simon Amstell

Yeah! I mean it wasn't mainly courgettes but there were courgettes in it. And it was just amazing and that's what I want for dessert.

Ed Gamble

Do you want your boyfriend's courgette carrot cake, not carrot cake sorry courgette

Simon Amstell

No forget carrots, courgette

Ed Gamble

Sorry I'll tell you what was in my mind though, that people get weird about things like courgette in cake, like ew why are you putting courgette in my cake, but these are people that eat carrot cake without worrying about it, so same thing!

Simon Amstell

Hypocrites!

James Acaster

At the minute Simon, I mean maybe you can empathise with this, Ed is gearing up to go on tour and tour comedy show, and so any territory where his mind goes this could be a routine he starts thinking in comedy routines, so immediately there he heard courgette cake, 'oh people don't like that but then people eat carrot cake so what's the matter with them?' and then he started thinking in a comedy routine and then he got himself confused.

Ed Gamble

James, how bad a comedian do you think I am? That I at any point would consider doing a routine where I say, 'ugh courgette cake, people are weird about that, what about carrot cake, guys guys?'

James Acaster

I mean, I've considered worse things on the lead up to writing comedy shows. I'm not saying it was gonna make the final cut!

Ed Gamble

Nah I might try it actually.

James Acaster

I went on Bake Off Extra Slice when they were doing vegan week and the audience all bring in cakes that they've made, and I'll be honest with you Simon when I was on the way there I thought, well I've really drawn the short straw here because obviously trying everyone's vegan cakes, this is going to be so disappointing. They were delicious and I think there's so much of an emphasis on you know, oh they're not moist enough vegan cakes, that people have really cracked it now and if anything they're the most moist sumptuous cakes, they were great, I couldn't stop eating all of them. Like and I got given quite a lot. And also, because everyone just hangs out afterwards who has made the cakes because they really want you to try theirs as well and I was just sitting there, Nick Hower had already gone home but I was eating all of them.

Simon Amstell

That's great, yeah. I think also we have advanced to the point where I walked past a doughnut shop yesterday that happened to be a vegan donut shop, it wasn't even, it was called Doughnut Time or something in the middle of soho and it must have had like eighty percent vegan doughnuts, and they weren't even, they weren't even telling people!



James Acaster

Did you get a doughnut from there? Because I love doughnut time!±

Simon Amstell

My boyfriend did. My boyfriend got a jam donut and he thought it was bloody delicious.

James Acaster

It's so good. I mean I used to live literally opposite a Doughnut Time. And I lived there for three years I think and I only went to the donut time in my last week of living there because I knew that if I went early doors, that was it.

Ed Gamble

All bets are off.

James Acaster

Cos they're extravagant donuts, they're huge and they've got entire chocolate bars sticking out of them and stuff. I was talking to Ed the other day about how I've never been to Cinnabon because I know that if I had a Cinnabon I would want to go to Cinnabon all the time and so I've never been there.

Simon Amstell

I don't know about Cinnabon.

James Acaster

It looks amazing. Ed's had them. so he'll tell you.

Ed Gamble

Yeah, a big like cinnamon bun basically but they cover it in like icing. It's crazy, they're like, I think one of them is like one thousand calories or something.

Simon Amstell

That's too many calories.

Ed Gamble

It's too many calories for one thing Simon so so yeah, I mean I can't have them very regularly obviously.

Simon Amstell

Do you think the sweet stuff that we're drawn to, it's because we miss our mother's breast milk isn't it?

Ed Gamble

Oh don't ruin it Simon. Great.

Simon Amstell

Maybe that will help.

Ed Gamble

Yeah maybe this will stop James eating ice cream now?

James Acaster

Yeah. I'll stop drinking her kombucha as well now.



Simon Amstell

I think that's what's going on there. There's something very comforting, we feel so safe, we feel so taken care of when we're eating a bowl of ice cream, we feel like nothing else matters. And that must be how we felt when we were being breast fed.

Ed Gamble

But some people aren't, some people aren't breast fed though right?

Simon Amstell

Well they eat with a bottle. Whatever it is, you know, bottle fed, it's basically like, this is all you need, just this sweet sweet milk.

James Acaster

Yeah

Simon Amstell

And then we're like, oh well we can't have that now because that would be strange, it's, you know, odd enough that mum is bringing over all this kombucha, what's she trying to do? But what we can do is we can, you know, find our own sweet things. But too much and nature says, come on now, you're an adult.

James Acaster

Let's get you off the teat.

Ed Gamble

I prefer savoury stuff so what's going on there.

James Acaster

Yeah.

Simon Amstell

You were breast fed enough. There was never a point where it was withheld or you were crying and not picked up. Yeah you were, you had a good childhood. You should thank your mum, next time you see your mum give her a big hug.

James Acaster

Today!

Ed Gamble

She's genuinely in my sitting room now.

James Acaster

Yeah, Ed asked you earlier but I interrupted it, asked if you would like your boyfriend's courgette cake as your chocolate cake dessert?

Simon Amstell

Yeah it was really good. It might be the best chocolate cake I've ever had, so. Oh actually there was another time that was so good that I had to sit down. I was, I was stood up

Ed Gamble

Why were you stood up anyway?

Simon Amstell

I was near my, somebody bought it to my kitchen, it was from, where was it from? It was from a restaurant near where she was doing something that day and then she brought this cake and I was



standing up in the kitchen and I tried a bit and it was like so intensely, I guess it was dark, it was like a dark chocolate cake with a crunchy base, I had to sit down it was so good. And I remember that that being a good one. But I, you have to be careful with this stuff, you know, anything that's like that intense. I remember when I was less good at realising that the fulfilment of stand-up comedy came from the performance itself, I would after a show, maybe you'll relate to this, going on tour yourself, need either a chocolate cake or somebody to have sex with, and I ended up having a lot of chocolate cake. So yeah, you have to really, it's actually good to like, you know, if you're present and you've eaten the chocolate cake and know that you're eating the chocolate cake and you're there for it you know you're like really appreciative of it, I feel there's no, there's no problem there, you're with, the problem comes when you sort of didn't even know you're eating it and then you need another one. That's when you're in trouble.

Ed Gamble

Yeah, and the same goes for the other as well.

James Acaster

For sex?

Simon Amstell

The sex. Oh yeah, you have to be there for the sex, I mean it's difficult not to be there for the sex so it does that to you doesn't it, the sex? Unless you're with the wrong person perhaps.

Ed Gamble

It calls to you.

Simon Amstell

It calls to you.

James Acaster

It calls to you.

Ed Gamble

I just love the idea of you finishing a show Simon and in the back of your mind just going, which one is it going to be this evening?

James Acaster

Which one tonight?

Simon Amstell

Oh dear. That won't happen this time. This time I'll just be fully enjoying being on stage.

James Acaster

And now you have a boyfriend who can make chocolate cake! I mean this is absolutely, you've completely landed on your feet here!

Simon Amstell

oh my god you're right! What a life! I don't even need to do the tour!

James Acaster

Well, I'm going to read your menu back to you now, see how you feel about it. So, for water you wanted still water, popadoms or bread, you want popadoms to take home but you don't want to eat them right now. For your starter you would like the nachos with the nut cheese on it to share with everyone which comes from:



Simon Amstell

Manna, M-A-N-N-A. Which is now closed.

James Acaster

For your main course you would like the grilled aubergine, spinach, pine nut, walnut pasta. Recipe earlier in the podcast if anyone wants to make it, I'm going to make it tonight. Side dish, just a cup of olive oil!

Ed Gamble

Actually, we should have absolutely just torn you apart for this menu actually Simon, it really speaks to just how sort of charming and gracious you are as a guest that we have not absolutely obliterated you for this.

James Acaster

Here's the thing, we would normally obliterate someone for this Simon, don't get us wrong, we would normally obliterate people, but what I genuinely, what I have genuinely found throughout this podcast is that you seem so, just content and genuinely happy that I'm like, oh well what am I really angry about here, clearly this is about me, Simon's got his life sorted but I'm there, I'm drinking booze, I'm eating meat, I'm anxious all the time, why am I thinking that Simon's wrong? Actually I think that what me and Ed think is wrong. And actually you should just have a cup of olive oil as a side. That's genuinely been my experience during this podcast has been to question everything about my life and what I do, in a good way, even though I know I will not change.

Simon Amstell

Ah okay, it was going so well until that last bit! 'Even though I know I will not change'. You should be a preacher, that's really funny.

James Acaster

You would like, homemade pure kombucha as your drink and for dessert you would like your boyfriend's courgette chocolate cake with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

Simon Amstell

Yeah, and what happens now, do I do I just sort of think about that for, do I eat that some other time, does it get delivered to me? What happens?

Ed Gamble

Normally Simon, then like you know it's from sort of restaurants and stuff and people will go to those restaurants or whatever, we wouldn't deliver you the meal but the menu you've picked you could feasibly just go and have right now.

James Acaster

Yeah

Simon Amstell

Yeah, except that I had a lot of falafel during the technical difficulties.

Ed Gamble

Yes, sure. We have perhaps not illustrated quite how bad the technical difficulties were but, it took us about an hour to get up and running.

James Acaster

Usually normally the guest thanks us for, you know, says



Simon Amstell

Oh sorry, hang on, hang on. Hey guys, thank you so much for having me and asking me what my menu would be, or is, and, I can't wait to erm.

James Acaster

Thank you Simon.

Simon Amstell

Well I'll listen to the podcast, I'll write down what I said, and then I'll make it

Ed Gamble

And then you can make it, yes, finally, exactly. Finally there's a, there's a recorded history of how to make that dish.

James Acaster

Write down all the tips.

Simon Amstell

I'm so glad that this was a conversation that was recorded. Imagine if we just got together and said all this, I mean it would just be absurd. I mean it really would be absurd if we did that.

James Acaster

Yeah

Ed Gamble

Simon Amstell, thank you very much for coming to the Dream Restaurant.

James Acaster

Thank you Simon.

Ed Gamble

Well there we are.

James Acaster

Woohoo!

Ed Gamble

Thank you very much Simon for coming in. I loved that episode James it's the most drugs chat that we've ever had.

James Acaster

It was enlightening. I love talking to Simon, I could chat to him for hours. Which we did actually because there were so many technical difficulties, we kept on going in and out, having loads of chats with him that couldn't make the edit because they didn't get recorded or we lost them in the ether of the internet, but, what a wonderful wonderful person to chat to. Loved chatting to him, glad that he didn't say cress, he didn't say the secret ingredient so we didn't have to chuck him out.

Ed Gamble

No, that was lucky. Really like Simon, I think he was really good company, very patient with all our technical difficulties but let's not beat around the bush, shit menu.

James Acaster

Well, yes, because we're recording this outro a few days after we've recorded the episode and I can confirm that I was so excited by his dream main that I made it myself. You know, it was fine.



Ed Gamble

I was surprised that you were so excited by it and that you couldn't wait to cook it.

James Acaster

It sounded delicious the way he described it. And I think I got more excited by the fact that I knew I could cook it.

Ed Gamble

Yeah I think that was it, I think it was the accessibility of the ingredients and you were like I could go now and get all those ingredients and cook it tonight.

James Acaster

Yes, and grilling the nuts up, that's exciting. I was looking forward to doing that and getting some crispy nuts in the pasta.

Ed Gamble

Yeah I laughed at that. Sue me, I laughed at that, I laughed at you saying grilling the nuts up, sure.

James Acaster

Yeah, that's fair enough. You're allowed to laugh at it. Although, that I think grilling the nuts up is the catch phrase for my roasty toasty podcast

Ed Gamble

Yeah please, stop crossing the streams.

James Acaster

We're getting confused now. Keep it roasty, keep it toasty, all our fans we love you the most. That's what we say on the Roasty Toasty podcast.

Ed Gamble

Yeah we do. This podcast is ready cheddy ready for beddy.

James Acaster

Ready cheddy and ready for beddy, the best thing I've ever said on this podcast, the best joke I've ever made.

Ed Gamble

I think your memory might be playing tricks on you there James.

James Acaster

Everyone knows that's my number one joke, that's my catch phrase, ready cheddy and ready for beddy. I'm a genius, comedy genius, I thought of that.

Ed Gamble

Speaking of comedy geni Simon Amstell is on tour, go to SimonAmstell.com to buy tickets for his tour, Spirit Hole. But he's not the only one on tour James, Ed Gamble's on tour as well, me. go and see my show Electric.

James Acaster

Ed Gamble

Ed Gamble

edgamble.co.uk for tickets. It starts in February, February 2022.



James Acaster

edgamble.co.uk and edgamble.com is still a mystery.

Ed Gamble

You could just go on it and have a look.

James Acaster

Not me, the listeners have to crack the case.

Ed Gamble

Right okay, crack the cress.

James Acaster

Crack the cress everybody.

Ed Gamble

And if someone wants to make up like a sort of, like me and James to look like an egg and cress but also sort of film noir detectives with the catch phrase, 'crack the cress' underneath, that would be mighty appreciated.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Well James, in terms of intros and outros that was

James Acaster

Pretty efficient.

Ed Gamble

Pretty efficient, okay yeah sure, pretty efficient, thank you very much! Goodbye!

James Acaster

Goodbye everybody!

