



Off Menu - Ep097 - Munya Chawawa

Ed Gamble 00:13

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast; biting into the sweet flesh of chats and spitting out the pips of truth. Hello James Acaster. *sound of spitting pips* Little bit of a spit there.

James Acaster 00:23

Yeah a little bit of bite. I bit into it and then I spat all the pips. Hello Ed Gamble.

Ed Gamble 00:28

Hello. Hello. I was just, even thinking about eating a grape with seeds in it made me feel sick then.

James Acaster 00:33

Yeah, I don't see the point. Why are there grapes with seeds in them still.

Ed Gamble 00:37

If we've got the technology to grow... Now, here's a stupid question. We grow seedless grapes, right? They've not worked out a way to take them all out before they put them in the bag.

James Acaster 00:46

Well, there's the whole thing isn't it of like, well, how'd you, people said it forever. How do you how do you grow seedless grapes? What do you plant to grow to grow seedless grapes. People have always said that, but I don't think they suck out the pips. Any other way, do they?

Ed Gamble 00:59

That will put me off grapes. If I found out there's a guy sucking sucking out all the pips before he sends them to me.

James Acaster 01:05

I wouldn't like that. No. So I'm not sure really. But then I hate biting into a grape and suddenly there's the pips there.

Ed Gamble 01:11

No thank you. And then you swallow it. you swallow a pip and then you're like, is a bunch of grapes gonna grow my tum tum?

James Acaster 01:17

That's scary.

Ed Gamble 01:18



Yeah. What tree bush or plant would you, if you had to have one grow in your tummy, what would it be?

James Acaster 01:26

Chocolate?

Ed Gamble 01:27

Like a cocoa plant?

James Acaster 01:29

Yeah, that'd be great.

Ed Gamble 01:30

But you imagining it growing full bars of chocolate.

James Acaster 01:32

Well, just growing all the chocolate and then the chocolate falls off and then I digest it all.

Ed Gamble 01:36

Yeah, okay. Yeah, don't have time. I don't have time to go through that. So this is the Off Menu podcast. James. What happens on this?

James Acaster 01:43

We have a guest in the dream restaurant and we asked them their favourite ever starter, main course, side dish, drink and dessert. And this week our special guest is Munya Chawawa

Ed Gamble 01:53

Munya Chawawa. He's an online comedian does a lot of stuff on Instagram does a lot of videos and character and sketch stuff

James Acaster 02:02

Yeah. He was in Dane Baptiste's Bamous show which if you haven't watched that, I don't know if it's still on I player or not, but It's very good. You should watch that as well, he was very funny in it. And we're thrilled to have him in the dream restaurant. However, if he says the secret ingredient that we deem to be a bad ingredient that we don't like. We will kick him out of the restaurant. I'm sorry.

Ed Gamble 02:23

We'll take no pleasure in it.

James Acaster 02:24

Let's make it grapes with seeds in it.

Ed Gamble 02:26

I think we've done that already, James.



James Acaster 02:28

Well just goes to show we haven't changed. We still don't like grapes with seeds in it to this day.

Ed Gamble 02:33

Yeah, exactly. We stand we stand by that. How about James, the one we've agreed on, which is mung beans.

James Acaster 02:39

Yeah, mung beans. I don't like them, I think they stink.

Ed Gamble 02:41

They stink. I don't know. I mean, why would you call something that people are supposed to like that? mung beans. It sounds bad. It sounds like they're disgusting.

James Acaster 02:51

Right. You think onomatopoeically or just like phonetically?

Ed Gamble 02:54

I hear mung which makes me think mingm and ming makes me think minger, and you say something's minging if it's not nice. Minging beans. That's what it makes me think.

James Acaster 03:05

Well, we've made it worse now. I just don't like the way they smell. They smell damp and horrible.

Ed Gamble 03:10

They smell minging. Well, anyway, if Munya says, mung beans and the thing is M-U-N Munya.

James Acaster 03:19

We're luring him in.

Ed Gamble 03:20

We're luring him in there. I say it every time, a guest always picks a food that is the same first three letters of their name.

James Acaster 03:27

That's what most of us our favourite food is. That's why I love jam. You love and you love.

Ed Gamble 03:33

Edamame beans.

James Acaster 03:35

Edamame a beans. And Benito loves,



Ed Gamble 03:38

Bento boxes.

James Acaster 03:40

Bento boxes. It's his favourite food.

Ed Gamble 03:44

We're very good at improv on this podcast. That's that's a good thing about it.

James Acaster 03:47

Yeah, if you like improv, listen to the rest of this episode. We're gonna be firing on all cylinders.

Ed Gamble 03:51

This is the Off Menu menu of Munya Chawawa. Welcome Munya to the dream restaurant.

Munya Chawawa 04:06

Yes. Wonderful.

James Acaster 04:09

Welcome Munya Chawawa to the dream restaurant. We've been expecting you for some time.

Munya Chawawa 04:14

I know. I like to be fashionably late. You know, I like to leave your waiting. It's what A-list celebs do.

James Acaster 04:21

That's true.

Ed Gamble 04:22

Exactly.

James Acaster 04:23

You've met a lot of A-listers, right? Do they keep you're waiting?

Munya Chawawa 04:26

Well, I mean, speaking of celebs I've met, Ed actually prepared me for my first and only stand up gig.

Ed Gamble 04:35

I did and he thought I wouldn't you thought I wouldn't remember this, as if you thought every day I'm being interviewed by someone who's asking me for stand up tips because I'm about to do a stand up gig.

Munya Chawawa 04:43

I just assumed that you might have wiped traumatic memories like this out of your consciousness, but no there it is, as clear as day. Shall I tell you what happened? Because James, you seem baffled.



James Acaster 04:55

I didn't know this happened. And you know, I'm interested to hear what about Ed's tutorial teaching techniques made you quit after one gig.

Munya Chawawa 05:04

I mean, if you know that the plot of karate kid, it's basically that but in comedy form. But essentially what happened is, I was working at a TV channel and I was a producer on the show. So I was writing the scripts, but I also realised I had the power to write myself into the show. So I really wanted to try stand up. But I wanted a situation in which it was completely reasonable that I failed spectacularly. And so I went to the bosses and I was like, guys, how crazy is this? What if we did this idea where some random just learns to become a stand up comedian, in like eight weeks? And then he goes and does a show? Wouldn't that be hilarious? because then if it goes bad, you know, well or badly, it's going to be great TV and they went, that is a good idea. Who could we, you know, who could we do that with? And I was like, I don't know, me. And sure enough, we started to basically get comedians in each week, who would then impart some comedic knowledge to me. Ed came in and I forget what we talked about. It was about charisma, I think. It was about charisma on stage. We had a lot to say about it anyway.

Ed Gamble 06:08

Yeah. Pure chrisma.

Munya Chawawa 06:10

He was teaching me sort of, you know, puff out your chest and this and that. Don't go to overblown just get the perfect medium this that and the other.

Ed Gamble 06:17

Yeah. Because as we all know that the main thing about my comedy is my chest is so puffed out.

Munya Chawawa 06:23

You are the pigeon of the comedy world.

Ed Gamble 06:26

We can't actually sit people in the front row at my gigs, because my chest is so far out over the top of the stage.

James Acaster 06:31

Yeah, walking around like Foghorn Leghorn.

Munya Chawawa 06:33

Yeah. I mean, yeah, the guys were constantly having just to move the tripod to back just because of the peck to lens action that was happening. But anyway, yes. So a few weeks later, I went and did my gig. It was five minutes. So really, the window for me to fail was very, very small. And I'm pleased to say it went exceptionally well. It was a student night. So it's top secret comedy club in Soho. Great night, student night. They were all up for a laugh. And the first guy who went on was this leary Scottish guy,



he had them in the palm of his hand. Second person went on, they were amazing. I was absolutely petrified, because I thought, look, I want everyone to do well, but the third person needs to be shit, please, just so I can then sort of raise the bar back up a little bit. And yeah, sure enough, the third person went on and, you know, made a lot of jokes about some sort of national treasure, maybe Mary Berry or something. And then I came on and started telling jokes about Zimbabwean dictators. And it turns out that was just what was needed to lift the mood. So thanks Mugabe.

James Acaster 07:35

Did you puff your chest out?

Ed Gamble 07:37

Did you remember to puff your chest out? Yeah.

Munya Chawawa 07:39

Absolutely. Yeah most of the gig was actually just looking at my chin for the people in the front row. So Ed, thank you so much, man. I have't been able to say this, but I was waiting for this opportunity.

Ed Gamble 07:49

My abiding memory of the interview was I was quite horrible about your material, actually. I was quite mean to you about the whole thing.

James Acaster 07:59

Ed was like, here's what you got to do. You've got to lose loads of weight and then do loads of material about how you lost the weight. That's what you've got to do. That's what I did.

Ed Gamble 08:08

Where's the chest? Where's the hell is that chest? Puff that out.

Munya Chawawa 08:13

But it paid off. And you know, Ed, I'm just, I can't wait for lockdown to lift so that I can pencil in our next lesson on making sure your knees are at the right angle.

Ed Gamble 08:25

Exactly. But I like that I, you know, I tried to impart some of my knowledge to you to do live stand up. And you responded by doing one gig and then just sort of doing quite a lot of online viral work and not needing to bother with live stuff. Yeah.

Munya Chawawa 08:39

I mean, it's easier to do online because, you know, you're never actually hear whether people laugh or whether there is dead silence, you know, you kind of just, the only indication is kind of like whether people have clicked like on a little red heart. So I feel like that is way less daunting. But I am going to try and do some more stand up when I finish for sure. I just find it terrifying. I find it terrifying. Because once I interviewed another comedian, and he said to me, have you ever tried to stand up? And I said, you know, I didn't one? He said, No, no, you got to do a few, you know, do a few and then you're gonna



find out whether you really like it, if it's really for you. And I said, Okay, well, how many do you suggest? He said, you know, once you've done about 350, you'll know. I thought, i'm not gonna do 350 gigs to find out whether I like something.

James Acaster 09:25

Well, I don't know who this person was that you interviewed. But let me tell you, they do not enjoy stand up and they are trying to draw you into their sad world. They're like, you should do it. Do 350 of them, just stop being a successful viral sensation on the internet. Start doing stand up gigs like me and hate your life. Now Munya, our first question is usually still or sparkling water. And you've already been drinking some water. Is that some water in that little flask you've got there? Are you are you one of those guys who always has a flask of water, carries that around all day long?

Munya Chawawa 09:59

Well, it's a, I'm sure you know, people who use recyclable bottles just seem to sort of plague human existence by constantly screwing that the lid. So that's one of the downfalls of saving penguins. But no, in my recyclable bottle, I just have tap water, which is very edgy of me because I have an extremely sensitive stomach. Really, they say you shouldn't drink tap water because of the stuff that's in it. But, you know, I come from Zimbabwe, where most days it was kind of like pure malaria coming out. So coming to England, and to be able to just drink from the tap without risk of death is actually fantastic. And that's why I drink it from the tap. But in a restaurant, if I had the luxury, I probably would go still. Because I think if you go sparkling, there's just something wrong with you. You might as well lick a plug socket, because there's nothing pleasant about the sort of electrical sensation of sparkling, and you can't, it's not quenching.

Ed Gamble 10:55

Man, you really do have a sensitive stomach. If you think bubbles are the equivalent of licking a plug.

Munya Chawawa 11:03

But listen, what I'm trying to say is, you can't, when you're really thirsty, no one goes, ah I could just have some sparkling water now, because it's you know, it's an emotional battle to get each gulp down. Because of the gas, It's like a one in one out policy, isn't it? Trying to go sparkling water.

Ed Gamble 11:18

So you you think the bubbles represent a one in one out policy with other air in your body?

Munya Chawawa 11:24

Yeah, basically, right.

Ed Gamble 11:25

So you see your body as a nightclub of oxygen?

Munya Chawawa 11:29

I mean, that's my Tinder bio, yeah.



James Acaster 11:31

A nightclub of oxygen.

Ed Gamble 11:34

So the the bubbles are people who want to go in and dance in your body. So you have to kick out some of the other oxygen particles before you can let them in, because the fire regulations.

Munya Chawawa 11:43

Exactly, when you say it like that, Yes, I admit it sounds a bit strange. Essentially, yes. I just feel like tap water. You know, sparkling water people do it to be bougie. But it's not actually a pleasant experience. I mean, what, do you lot drink sparkling water?

James Acaster 11:56

I have done in the past, but like, you know, I wouldn't, When I have drank sparkling water. I wouldn't describe it as an electric sensation.

Ed Gamble 12:05

Or an emotional battle.

James Acaster 12:05

Oh, I havn't been zapped by it before. But I understand for you. It's more of a, it's a bit, It's a bit full on. It's a bit of an electric shock that would wake you up because of your sensitive stomach?

Ed Gamble 12:17

What are the emotions that you go through in the battle? So if you can just transport yourself there now. So you take a sip what what's this emotional battle? What does it consist of?

Munya Chawawa 12:27

Okay, so first of all, it's just the, the tearing, the fear of your throat being torn to pieces by these needlessly erratic bubbles. And then, you know, sinks down into your stomach and you can feel this sort of gurgling sensation. You think you know what is going on? Then it's embarrassment. It's like, Can anyone else hear that? You know? And then it's shame. As the sort of one in one out policy really comes into effect. Yeah, so this is not a pleasant experience for me boys.

James Acaster 12:57

You know? No, none of that.

Munya Chawawa 12:58

When you ask me, even just the word sparkling is, I don't know if you can see, but my top lip is trembling.

Ed Gamble 13:05

So the one the one in one out policy? Yeah, can I just do you mean you do loads of tiny little farts? But one very bubble that you that again?



James Acaster 13:14

Good question, actually.

Munya Chawawa 13:15

Hm, well, sometimes you save them up, because sometimes you've got to look for that window of opportunity. You know, every throat clear from the opposite person is an opportunity. So very much when I sit down for dinner with people I'm asking myself, How much does this person clear their throat? And that's gonna make my night a lot easier.

James Acaster 13:34

So you're waiting for them to cough, and then everyone thinks, that guy coughing smells like shit. He's coughing up shit.

Ed Gamble 13:43

I love that you're waiting for them to cough as well. You're not thinking I'll clear my throat and do it under that. You're like, I've got to wait for them to do it. Oh, God.

Munya Chawawa 13:51

No, no, no, no, I think if you combine it with clearing your own throat, there's a lot going on there. And I feel like you know, it could become more than a fart, which is a worst case scenario. Not that it's ever happened. But, you know, take these kinds of precautions.

Ed Gamble 14:02

It's not one in, everybody out.

Munya Chawawa 14:06

I don't want it to be the case that this nightclub just happens to be operating when it closes and everyone has to rush out. So you know, it's a very strategic process. Why Tom Cruise hasn't made a Mission Impossible film about this, I don't know.

James Acaster 14:19

He just staring at the guy he's having dinner with and preying that he coughs. Please clear your throat, I need to fart so bad

Munya Chawawa 14:26

I was very offended, James, by your assumption James that my farts stink of shit.

James Acaster 14:35

I'm sorry.

Munya Chawawa 14:36

very presumptive of you.



James Acaster 14:38

Well you know, it's pretty common.

Munya Chawawa 14:39

I mean, sparkling water isn't that aromatic though?

James Acaster 14:42

Well, I didn't think you were farting out the sparkling water, I thought it was one in one out basis, so that your the bubbles are going in and different bubbles coming out of your butt that have been ther from other stuff.

Munya Chawawa 14:53

Yep. I don't survive off of like Aero bars or something. I don't survive off of bubbly food.

James Acaster 14:58

So hold on, is it only the bubble food that turns into bubbles and has to leave your body, it's not just other food in general.

Munya Chawawa 15:04

I thought this was a food podcast not a biology exam, I don't know. All I know is,

James Acaster 15:11

It's only Aero bars and sparkling water that would do this.

Munya Chawawa 15:18

God we need to get an expert on the show

James Acaster 15:19

Where do you stand on Aero bars and Whispers and stuff? Do not eat those because one in one out policy?

Munya Chawawa 15:26

Well, there's no electric sensation with Aeros. You know, the whole marketing point is the bubbles melt in your mouth. You know, not the bubbles electrocute you as they go down.

James Acaster 15:34

Yeah,

Munya Chawawa 15:35

So already there's a contrast to sparkling water. So I try not to tarnish all bubbly food items with the same brush. Do you know what I mean?

James Acaster 15:42



That's good of you. Poppadoms or bread? Poppadoms or bread, Munya Chawawa? Poppadoms or bread?

Munya Chawawa 15:48

You know what, I gonna say bread? I'm going to say for two reasons. Number one, I had a traumatic experience with poppadoms where, my dad tried, there's a pattern here. My dad's not a cook, right. Hi's Zimbabwean guy. Zimbabwean food is all right. You know what I mean? Like if you go to Italy, get pasta, go to Spain get paella. In Zimbabwe, the main dish is kind of like this big lump of maize, which you put with a bit of vegetables, a bit of meat. It can taste nice, but you know, it's not the kind of high of culinary perfection. So anyway, my dad one day said, I'm going to make a curry. Now, I mean, the curry itself was basically just chunks of meat floating around and like a brown liquid, but my dad had obviously seen poppadoms before but just didn't know where do you get them? How do you make them? So when I sit down for this curry now, there's just a bowl of quavers in the middle of the table. Just cheesy quavers with this sort of meaty gloop. That was enough to put me off of poppadoms for life.

James Acaster 16:54

Had he made the quavers or did he buy them? Just a packet of quavers and put them in a bowl.

Munya Chawawa 16:58

He bought them, just bought a packet of quavers.

Ed Gamble 17:03

I mean, obviously love that. And I love that it's put you off poppadom. Even though it was just a bowl of quavers.

Munya Chawawa 17:11

Yeah, but just the sensation of this cheesy taste with this curry is just, I don't want to know what a real poppadom tastes like now.

James Acaster 17:21

Was it something for years that would get bought up a lot of the time, that the quavers, or was your dad quite sensitive about it and didn't want to hear, didn't want to be made fun of.

Munya Chawawa 17:28

No, he's very sensitive about that. He was convinced that he would go on to Dragon's Den with these. Basically, you know, this white stuff. I told you, this sadza, which is like this ball of maize. He thought that he had come up with this idea where if you put the pan onto like a searingly hot heat and it starts to burn the outside, that he'd created sort of like a maize-y Malteser and he was like, No, guys, trust me. I'm going to take this on Dragon's Den, and it's gonna be amazing. Like, don't tell anyone about this. Don't tell anyone about sadza balls. I was like, I'm not gonna Dad, don't worry. A lot of my, you know, a lot of my cooking anxiety comes from my dad for sure.

James Acaster 18:09



Was his idea that he would get a ball of maize, put it in a searing hot pan and burn the the outside of it, and that was the product of making Malteser. That's the product.

Munya Chawawa 18:18

Because you're not used to having crispy sadza. So it was the fact that something that we've grown up knowing as soft is suddenly now crispy. And no one was doing that. Yeah. So he'd really reinvented the sadza wheel.

James Acaster 18:32

But is the fact that, I kind of don't mind the fact he's come up with that and called them sadza balls. That's great. But what, what I like is that he thinks he could take a Dragon's Den. It's not a product, it's just something that anyone could do at home. So it's just an idea that here's a suggestion. Why don't get your sadza ball, put it on the searing hot heat and burn it all the way round so it's crispy. And he's gone, I can sell this. He's just selling a suggestion to people.

Munya Chawawa 19:00

Yeah, like any good businessman would.

Ed Gamble 19:02

Presumably on Dragon's Den, he'd be explaining to them what sadza is to start with, right? So they'd have to get over that hurdle and then he'd have to go but imagine it different. Imagine this thing you've never heard of, different.

Munya Chawawa 19:13

Okay, you're not bought into it, I can see. How about a poppadom?

Ed Gamble 19:17

Bring in the quavers.

James Acaster 19:19

Heres a packet of quavers I bought from the shop on the way here. Heres my idea. Give someone a packet of quavers and call them poppadoms. That's my new idea. You would go bread tho.

Munya Chawawa 19:25

I'd go bread. I'm so specific about bread tho.

James Acaster 19:28

It's okay, thats what we like.

Munya Chawawa 19:32

When I have toast, this has caused a big controversy before. So one day I was made some toasts and then I posted it on my Instagram, I was like, this is how we all eat toast right? And the thing is, when I make toast, I don't like the butter to melt into the toast. I like the toast to be cold and rock hard but still



toast, and then to layer the butter as a solid over the top of it. But apparently, that's a war crime. But, you know, that is how I like my toast.

James Acaster 20:00

Not how people do it to be fair.

Ed Gamble 20:02

Firstly, I really like how offhand you are with, obviously, you know, your online more than us. I made some taste and obviously want to put it on my Instagram.

Munya Chawawa 20:12

Now, but this is just a one off. I'm not usually, you know, I don't usually, you know, put such frivolous matters on there. But on this one occasion I was just getting some funny looks from my housemates and I thought, what's wrong with them? And then I put it on there and I thought, wow, okay, this is actually an issue people have. Because really, if your butter melts, you're not tasting the butter.

James Acaster 20:33

That's not true,

Munya Chawawa 20:34

You're just tasting like this, this this sort of liquidy oil. Me, I like to taste the butter. When I was a kid. I actually used to eat butter out the fridge, and my mom had to stop me.

James Acaster 20:43

How old were you when you stopped eating butter out the fridge?

Munya Chawawa 20:46

What was the date yesterday? I was probably about maybe seven

James Acaster 20:51

When Ed was destroying your material, when he was mentoring you. This is the kind of stuff he wanted to hear.

Ed Gamble 20:54

Yeah, yeah, I would love that.

James Acaster 20:56

About your days of eating butter out of the fridge, you would have put that in there.

Ed Gamble 20:59

I kind of agree with the tasting the butter thing. Like, so if I have toast, if I'm really going for it. I will have hot toast, but the butter will be cold and straight out the fridge. So it'll be sort of layers of butter that is melting a little bit but you'll still be able to see a solid bits of butter. I like that.



Munya Chawawa 21:17

I like that too. It's a different tast, innit?

James Acaster 21:18

Best toast I ever had is grilling it under the grill proper, not doing it in the toaster. And the second time when I've flipped it over to do the second side. I put the butter on top of it, then grill it with the butter on it and do loads of butter. Let the butter completely just soak the whole bread and then chomp it up, delicious. And then I taste the butter, I taste the butter.

Munya Chawawa 21:19

But then it's just soggy, isn't it?

James Acaster 21:19

No, it's not too soggy, because it's been under the grill at the same time. So it's still crispy toast. But you got that rich butter, like fried bread I guess.

Ed Gamble 21:35

You also can't have chomp it up as part of your recipe. Chomp it up goes for all of these recipes. You can't go, in my recipe you eat it at the end.

James Acaster 21:59

It's not, Chomping is different innit. Chomp, chomp, chomp. It's a onomatopoeic thing. Not all food goes chomp, chomp, chomp.

Munya Chawawa 22:05

You wouldn't be able to do that though. Because if your bread was grilled, it would be completely sodden in butter. Yeah, so you wouldn't even be chomping you'd be slurping you're toast. You'd be drink drink drinking it.

James Acaster 22:14

Believe me. It's a chomp, guys. Just take my word for it. I was Chomp Chomp Chomping it.

Ed Gamble 22:21

I like chunks. I like chunks of butter.

James Acaster 22:23

Okay, but what do you like what Munya has described their, of having cold toast with blocks of with a layer of cold butter on top of it.

Ed Gamble 22:32

I don't like the cold toast. I'd rather have just bread and toasted bread with the with the chunks of butter.

Munya Chawawa 22:37



Yeah, I'm down for that as well. But cold toast, cold toast feel sad to me. But the reason I have toast, I have to have it toasted is because, you know, as a as a fellow butter-feind, you'll know that when you're trying to put butter onto raw bread. When you try and scrape the butter it rips a hole in the bread. So the toast is more of a procedural thing as opposed to a preference. You know what I mean?

James Acaster 23:02

So you are spreading it.

Munya Chawawa 23:03

I'm spreading it. Yeah,

James Acaster 23:04

cuz I thought you were just slicing it and then laying it on like cheese, like a cheese sandwich.

Munya Chawawa 23:08

No i'm not a maniac. No, no, no, I'll put a slab on and then sort of scrape it evenly across.

Ed Gamble 23:14

Yeah, I think what you're, you're toasting it almost not for the temperature or the taste but for the structural integrity so you can spread the butter on top of it.

Munya Chawawa 23:21

Hmm, that's correct. Yeah.

James Acaster 23:23

I'm okay with that element of it.

Munya Chawawa 23:26

Yeah. Okay, good. I'm glad we found a middle ground.

Ed Gamble 23:28

So is that what you what you want for your bread course here? You want cold toast with a thick layer of butter?

Munya Chawawa 23:35

In an ideal world? Yes. And if not a piece of bread that is completely consumed by butter but there's no rips in the actual fibre of the bread.

James Acaster 23:43

I think we're gonna have to give you the toast because that sounds like it sure is your go to.

Ed Gamble 23:47

It's your speciality.



Munya Chawawa 23:48

That's my cup. That's my happy place.

Ed Gamble 23:49

Is that what you take on Dragon's Den? Cold toas

Munya Chawawa 23:53

Yeah, with a sadza ball crushed in between two pieces.

James Acaster 23:58

Let's go on to your starter. I dunno why I preemptively laughed at it. Everything so far has said more and more about you. And I'm looking forward to learning a bit more.

Munya Chawawa 24:14

So this one is actually, I don't have a life story perhaps behind this one, but I'm going to pick arancini. Risotto inside some breadcrumbs. Whatever.

Ed Gamble 24:23

An Italian sadza ball.

Munya Chawawa 24:24

Exactly,

James Acaster 24:25

Basically you're sticking two fingers up to the old man, as well.

Munya Chawawa 24:30

Don't tell George. George is my dad's name, but my dad randomly changes his, he sporadically changes his names depending on what his mood is. Wait, let me explain. My dad's name. My dad's name was Falot, right? Which for some reason sounds like a measurement of land. Anyway, one day was at this lady's house in Zimbabwe and she went Oh, do you know that Falot means heart operation in, whatever, German or something. From that moment my dad said, no way I'm not being called, I'll not have this in my name. So he changed it to George. He was George for a little while. And then I remember one day being on the way to church and he was like, you know, My son, I really just want to change. And I was reading this picture Bible at the time and I was like, you know, what about Jacob. You know Jacob seemed to be like a right laugh. And he just went Yeah, I'm gonna be called Jacob, and changed his name to Jacob, in all of his documentation, not legally but just wouldn't respond when people were shouting George at him.

James Acaster 25:43

Is he George again now, or is he Jacob still?

Munya Chawawa 25:45



Nah, he's still Jacob? So I'm not going to tell him I did a podcast with Ed and James otherwise you'll be like, oh, Ed, that's a good name. But now, why am I getting distracted? So yeah. Right. So Arancini because I made it recently. I don't like making arancini because you know, you end up with your hands covered in the like this panco breadcrumb crust which you know, as a former eczematic, someone with eczema, you know, dramatic memories for me, but I enjoy eating it. Yeah, only thing is no one ever told me in the book it said you know, you make an arancini balls, it didn't specify the size.

Ed Gamble 26:25

Now obviously this is an audio medium, I just want the listener to know that the size that Munya estimated therec with his hands was about twice the size of his own head. So i'm looking forward to this story.

James Acaster 26:37

So no one told you the size.

Munya Chawawa 26:41

When I went to this market, it was literally last weekend. I went this market and at the market I saw arancini, give me these tiny like golf ball size things I said, you know, is this your arancini? They said yeah, this is the size it's meant to be. Meanwhile, two weeks ago, I was eating these bowling balls full of rice. That was the size they were meant to be. So yeah, I've only experienced true arancini once. But I like the big ones anyway.

James Acaster 27:07

As someone who is like, you know, you do so much stuff online, you would think you would Google this kind of stuff. Your whole life is making videos and posting stuff and it's all like being on top of social media. And that's what your whole career depends on, having your finger on the pulse of the internet. Making arancini, I won't Google what any of this is, i'll just guess it's a bowling ball and I'll eat that. Thats an acceptable size. And then like you go to the market, what that hell is this? I asked for arancini please, not a little taster.

Munya Chawawa 27:38

I tried to do old school, I tried to use a cookery book. So you know, the thing with cookery books is sometimes they don't put a picture into each recipe. You know, so only the chef's favourites. So, you know, I didn't have a reference point. But it looked crispy. It tasted of rice inside, so I thought you know, the size doesn't even matter. You know what mean?

James Acaster 27:56

Yeah, sure. So it's your arancini that you want as your starter. So first of all, what kind of an arancini is it? But also, is it made by you? Or is it the stuff you had at the market or somewhere else?

Ed Gamble 28:07

And also what size? I think is the main question.

James Acaster 28:09



Obviously what size is it? Yeah,

Munya Chawawa 28:11

I'm thinking, you know what? Because want to leave room for my main course. I'm going to have the smaller ones. When you say what flavour do I want it? Would you mean what kind of things you put in there?

James Acaster 28:21

Cuz theres different types that have different things in it and stuff? Ones where,

Ed Gamble 28:25

I think you're right.

James Acaster 28:26

I think it's like you can have different things within it.

Ed Gamble 28:28

Yeah, you could have mushroom in it, there could be ham in it, there could be, you know,

Munya Chawawa 28:32

Okay, I'm gonna have mushroom in it.

James Acaster 28:34

But hold on, but what have you had in the past?

Munya Chawawa 28:39

Like, to be fair, I had dried and wet mushrooms because I didn't know that they were separate things. I didn't know you had to soak the mushrooms for them to be, you know you get these dried funghi or whatnot. Soak them in water, chop them up, put them in, I just skimmed the recipe and it said, you know, get your chopped dried mushrooms and then get your chopped wet mushrooms later in the recipe. So my assumption was, oh, I put in all of them so I just thought double up on mushrooms. Reminds me of my first meal at university actually where I was so anxious about going broke that for my first meal at university I had mashed potato with chips with roast potatoes, because I thought each potato would bring something different to the meal but it didn't. So I'm gonna have mushroom arancini.

James Acaster 29:27

Okay, nice. That sounds fair.

Ed Gamble 29:29

We sort of glossed over that you don't normally like making things with breadcrumbs because you used to have eczema.

Munya Chawawa 29:35

It's the sensation of it though.



Ed Gamble 29:37

So it reminds you of when you had eczema, when you've got bread crumbs all over your hands.

Munya Chawawa 29:40

Yeah. Because it's like, you know your hand all crackly and just, you know just shedding everywhere. Yeah, it's not good time.

James Acaster 29:48

So you get the flashbacks that you have to start having to putting E-45 Put your hands. No, this is just bread crumbs, no. What have I done. I've made it even worse.

Munya Chawawa 29:54

But you know what I mean tho? When you're cooking. I always get a moment of panic when I have to make anything with with dough, because you know you have to work dough? You know when you proper working it. It clings in all your fingers and your webs and stuff. And they're like no no if you do it once it's going to fall off. But I always just had this horrible image of my hand trapped in these doughy handcuffs,

Ed Gamble 29:55

Forever

Munya Chawawa 29:55

well you know, if you keep on needing it. Yeah, eventually it comes clean off. But that was a hurdle I had to get past at the beginning of my dough career.

James Acaster 30:02

So while you were starting to need the bread, there was a point before you've got to the end where you thought. I might be here for the rest of my life stuff. I might never get out of this. You starting to lose. lose faith.

Ed Gamble 30:38

In your, and i quodem, doughy handcuffs.

Munya Chawawa 30:40

Yeah, because you can't move it from hand to hand, every time you try and shake it off. It just, you know, stays.

Ed Gamble 30:47

I completely understand. Whenever I've done dough stuff, you do get that panic where you're like, well, I want to get this off my hand. But if I use my other hand, it's gonna be on that hand. It's like when you stand on a bit of tape. And you try and step off the tape and then is on your other foot.

Munya Chawawa 30:59



Yes exactly. So that was my, that was my panic with dough. So yeah, I would like someone else to make the arancini for me.

James Acaster 31:05

Yeah, so that you're not reminded of your eczema days. Do you want the person making the arancini to have eczema?

Munya Chawawa 31:16

No, I don't want that to be any eczema involved.

James Acaster 31:20

Just be straight, straight mushroom risotto. And breadcrumbs. Are you want little ones that you saw at the market, or the the big one? The marble size ones. No, sorry, my ones were a bit bigger. The golf ball size ones. Yeah, the golf ball size ones. Yeah, if you get you're getting marble ones from someone else, they're your opposite. You know, you found your opposite in the world.

Munya Chawawa 31:41

Well, you say that but actually at school, I actually used to be a marble champion. No, hang on wait, listen. I can't describe how this happened.

James Acaster 31:53

Well you're gonna need to.

Munya Chawawa 31:55

Okay, when I was at school in Zimbabwe, we used to play Pokemon cards. But then one day somebody came into school and said that this kid had burned down their parents house because a Pokemon I told him to do it. So we were all then told that Pokemons are demonic. So we had to all throw our cards in the bin, like our teachers made us throw our cards in the bin. So anyway, the next day someone came in and they had marbles.

James Acaster 32:21

Every single, this the first time I've ever spoke to you. And every single story has a throw away detail, which could be a film in itself. Just to get to why I was a marble champion. A kid in my class burned down his house because a Pokemon told him to do it, and now I don't play Pokemon anymore. Because they were demonic. Anyway.

Ed Gamble 32:49

I keep putting like, everything you say I'm like, well, I'll put a pin in that and we'll have to come back to it. Basically, this whole conversation is just pins that I've not gone back to.

Munya Chawawa 32:59

But anyway, so one day, the next day, someone came in and they just had marbles. And they were like, we were going to start playing marbles. Here's how you play. You've got different, it's a move at a time and your job is to hit the person's marble so you can do like a high bomber which is when you throw it



over the shoulder. You can do like a roly where you you know roll across the floor. And so we started to build up this this community of marbles, and there was different values, so like you had the Colgate which is one where it's like three stripes inside and then you had like the demon eye, the dolphin eye

James Acaster 33:28

I demon eye? I mean that is, come on guys.

Munya Chawawa 33:31

My mum actually banned me from having that in the house but I actually convinced her to allow me to keep it because I had another one called an angel eye so I said to her it will balance out, anyway.

James Acaster 33:43

You, as a kid, managed to convince a grown woman, Like mum, I know you've confiscated my demon eye marble, but I also have the angel eye, therefore it cancels out and I won't go to hell. Here's marble back.

Munya Chawawa 33:58

Yeah, Yeah. It wasn't like a hard stance, she wasn't like throw it out. She just said I don't know how I feel about having the demon eye in the house, and I went Mum it's fine because I got an angel eye. Anyway, listen to my point because basically, you win these marbles by rolling them and whatnot, but what I learned is when people are really arguing over marbles, during, you know, the position of the game, you could actually start to just pinch their marble from under their feet, whatnot, because I they usually keep in between their legs and then roll it. So I'll go around collecting these really high value dolphin eye, angel eye, you know I would steal them, and I actually got to the point of, I only have 10 with me now because I wasn't able to bring all of them, but at home in Zimbabwe I have 668 marbles.

James Acaster 34:46

All stolen.

Munya Chawawa 34:47

Some that I won, some that I've stolen.

Ed Gamble 34:50

Mow. Munya. That is what we'd call burying the lead. That story. That story took so long to get to the fact you've got a lot of marbles, and along the way, there were lots of things that should be stories in their own right.

James Acaster 35:06

So also It started off of you saying I was a marble champion and the reveal is, you weren't you stole loads of marbles from other people.

Munya Chawawa 35:16

As a champion marble stealer.



James Acaster 35:18

Yeah, you stole the other kids marbles. But from what I can gather you didn't play a single game of marbles. You just stole them off other kids and then convince your mom it was okay to keep them because one of them was an angel.

Munya Chawawa 35:30

I, you know, I was good sometimes.

Ed Gamble 35:31

I'm gonna need to know more about the Pokemon arsonist as well.

James Acaster 35:35

What Pokemon was it there told them to burn the building down? It must have been a fire pokemon.

Munya Chawawa 35:39

Yeah Charizard. Yeah, I don't even know they just said look the Pokemon cards, whispered to him to you know, to burn the house. Look, it's very easy to access fire in Zimbabwe, even me actually burned down my neighbor's garden by mistake once.

James Acaster 35:54

Okay, well again.

Munya Chawawa 35:59

I'm going to give you the short version because you know, pushed for time. But anyway, my garden story very quickly is, in Zimbabwe, your garden is not like an English garden where it's a nice, neat lawn. The grass is very long, you know, the high grass. And a lot of the time there's no there's no wall around your house as your garden just goes on forever. So people decide whose gardens which anyway, we know you don't have a lawn mower that can reach that far down the garden, because we're talking acres and acres. So I really fancied my neighbor's mum and she said to us one day, she said look this grass is really it's untamed. You know, what can we do? And I had a cousin called Mike who would visit every summer holidays like most, you know, most people, but he always would get us into trouble. And he said to me, we can burn the grass in a controlled fire. Anyway, what happened is we set light to the grass and then obviously it just all went up in an absolute rage of flames and continue to spread through everyone's gardens. And then we just had to lie to my dad and say you know we don't know what happened. But you know she didn't have any grass left it was all black.

Ed Gamble 37:04

And which Pokemon told Mike to do this? Yeah.

Munya Chawawa 37:08

But you know, we genuinely thought that we could stop, we could just you know curb the fire when we felt it was right but it just got away from us.

James Acaster 37:15



Yeah, yes. Because as he said, we can burn the grass with a controlled fire.

Ed Gamble 37:21

I think that is a thing you can do, but I don't think you then just throw a match at some grass. I think you have to do things beforehand to make sure it stops burning at the right point.

Munya Chawawa 37:29

I know that now. I was just a kid at the time. I was I was not to know

James Acaster 37:32

From what I gather it's because you fancied this lady, fancied your friend's mum and you wanted to cut the grass so that she would maybe see you as a potential suitor.

Munya Chawawa 37:42

Just so that she would, just to get a points. Yeah, point scoring and be like look, I can do macho things even though you know.

James Acaster 37:48

Well you did the most macho thing, you burned down all the garden. What's your main course? Ok, yeah, I've taken too much time. Are you pushed for time?

Munya Chawawa 38:04

Yeah, I have to do another podcast at 4.

James Acaster 38:06

Oh, at 4? lets have a little look now. We've got 15 minutes.

Munya Chawawa 38:12

Alright, so Okay, my main course is going to be oxtail. You know, Caribbean food. oxtail? Yeah, with rice and peas. Right. Very much deprived of this growing up in Norwich, we didn't have any kind of thing like that. So with oxtail is not just the taste of the food, because I love Caribbean food, but it's also just the, the thrill of it. Because the Caribbean takeaways near where I live, the Caribbean ones, they are actually very hit and miss. When they get it right. When they get the oxtail right, it is just a delight for the senses. You know, the meal carries you for days. When they get it wrong. You know, pardon my patois, but you'll be shitting through the eye of a needle for the next few days. So there's something about that gambling, you know, that gambling process, which I also find quite enjoyable.

Ed Gamble 38:58

So you like that?

Munya Chawawa 38:59

Well, yeah, you know, it's just, it's the knowledge that you could have won and you could be fine. And if you are, then it's really a risk that's paid off. You know.



James Acaster 39:09

So you want this to be a risky oxtail that we're giving you.

Munya Chawawa 39:13

No, I don't want it to be a risky one actually, I just don't want to get i'll from eating it.

James Acaster 39:18

Do it to turn out to be good, but that you don't know at the start. At the start it could be a risk but it turns out fine.

Munya Chawawa 39:24

Yeah, that would be perfect.

Ed Gamble 39:25

Because we don't want to take away that that element of risk, because that's clearly a big part of it for you. You'd like ordering it and eating it and then 24 hours later going, actually that was fine that.

Munya Chawawa 39:35

Exactly. Because then it's just, you know, you just feel good, you think Yeah, I had a good meal or like I enjoyed it in its entirety during and after.

James Acaster 39:43

What's cousin Mike up to these days?

Munya Chawawa 39:46

yeesh, cousin Mike. I don't even know, last time I saw him. I had put my my bum through a window. We were sword fighting and I like tried to dodge back from his stick and then I put my my bum through like the glass veranda door.

James Acaster 40:06

Was open and you got it stuck in the gap or did you literally go through a window.

Munya Chawawa 40:11

It just smashed it, it was very thin glass just smashed through. We didn't have, you didn't have double glazing in Zimbabwe, so just smashed right through.

Ed Gamble 40:17

And then that was the last time you saw cousin Mike.

Munya Chawawa 40:19

That was the last time.

Ed Gamble 40:31

Did he just run out when your bomb went through the window and then you never saw him again.



Munya Chawawa 40:35

It was an easy escape route for him, obviously. But yea, I never saw him again. I never even spoke to him again, actually, but I'll check in with him after this, see what he's up to.

James Acaster 40:45

Hi, yeaj, haven't seen you since I put my bum through the window, just wondered how you doing. I was telling, I was telling you a couple of comics about about the time you told me that we could cut the grass with a controlled fire, dya rememebr that. Just checking in..

Munya Chawawa 40:59

But you know, You surely must have met one of these people who you just always when they're around, just trouble. Yeah, yeah. You know, once he actually locked me inside my own room and we had to break the burglar bars to climb out.

James Acaster 41:12

The burglar bars.

Munya Chawawa 41:13

Yeah, yes. in Zimbabwe in front of your windows, they put these you know burglar bars, so you can't get into the windows. So we had to basically I had to become like a welder. Just to try and get out of this room that he locked me in. But of course, it was always my fault. So actually, it's a good thing I don't see Mike anymore because he was old enough to trick everyone that I had done it.

Ed Gamble 41:32

But you say you say that when you saw cousin Mike, there was always trouble, but for him, you were his cousin Mike, in a way. Because you were trouble every time, you know, was he getting in trouble when he wasn't with you? Or was he always just getting in trouble. Cuz you might have been a bad influence. If you think about it.

James Acaster 41:47

You're the one who broke the burglar bars. You're the one who put your bum through the window.

Munya Chawawa 41:50

No, no, no. He would teach bad habits. Like he would say to us, you know when you have a bath, put Vaseline on the base of the bath so that you slip around. And it's really fun. There was a time that I used to put Vaseline at the bottom of the bath and just stand around and pretend that we were surfing. So I didn't invent that, he is the one who came to me and said do this. It's fun.

Ed Gamble 42:16

You did it. Yeah.

James Acaster 42:19



And then carried on doing it for a while to be fair to you. He knew he knew who he was telling. He wasn't going up and tell him that to his dad, was? Thinking he'll love it. Love putting Vaseline in the bath. So did you put Vaseline in the bath and then fill the bathtub with water and then slide around? So it was all in the same time?

Munya Chawawa 42:38

Yeah. Because that's how generally surfing happens. Yes. You know, it's in the water.

Ed Gamble 42:43

So how much longer did you put Vaseline in the bath after cousin Mike told you to?

Munya Chawawa 42:49

I quickly kind of discovered it's kind of dangerous because, you know, sometimes you fall you know nearly hit your head. So I didn't do it too much. But you know, like it was once in a while.

James Acaster 42:59

Once in a while, you do a Vaseline bath and slip a nearly hit your head to think oh, maybe I should stop do it this.

Munya Chawawa 43:05

Next time I come on, I'm going to tell you about the time that I actually did slip out the bath looking at an elephant out the window on holiday.

Ed Gamble 43:12

Well, the thing is, you're going to have to tell us about that now.

Munya Chawawa 43:15

No, no, no, because I need to do the rest of my courses and I only got 10 minutes.

James Acaster 43:18

Listen, if we can't get to the end of your courses. We will have you back on another episode. We've never done a cliffhanger before. I'm happy to have a cliffhanger because you just said that at one point when you were in your vasaline bath, you fell over because you were looking out the window at elephant.

Munya Chawawa 43:40

So we went on holiday to this place. I think it might have been called Teriba. But anyway, the whole novelty of that place is that the animals will roam freely. You know not dangerous animals like you know; lions, crocodiles, just you know, elephants, whatever. Anyway, I was having a bath and I thought well, you know I'm on holiday special occasion, get the Vaseline. Vaseline in the bath and then ran the bath.

Ed Gamble 44:06

Yeah, not the first time that sentence has been said.



Munya Chawawa 44:12

Anyway, one important detail is I'm a very meticulous person. But on this one occasion, I'd gone for a wee before the bath and left the seat up. Okay, so I didn't put the seat back down. So it was just that solid ring round the toilet seat. So anyway, the toilet is very close to the bath. I'm in the bath. I put Vaseline in I've had my fun, now I'm sitting in the bath. So next thing I know my mother says, Oh Munya, there's elephants, there's elephants walking outside. Look, they're all walking like a parade between the holiday homes. So I now get up to look out the bath, to look out the window and look at these elephants. As I stand up. Of course I slip. And when I slip forwards, I go out of the bath and hit my head on the toilet seat, on the on the concrete bit, whatever it is. And then my head swells outwards into this bulge as you can imagine. So, you know, there's this duck egg in the middle of my head. And then yeah, I just spent the rest of the holiday having to explain to people yes, I fell in the bath because he I slipped on the Vaseline when I was looking at elephants and hit my head on the toilet seat.

Ed Gamble 45:14

Didn't even lie about it.

James Acaster 45:16

Did you don't have to, every time you told someone about that, were they familiar with the Vaseline in the bath, that sometimes you put vasaline in the bath and pretend to surf? Or did you have to tell them about cousin Mike and the vasaline in the bath?

Munya Chawawa 45:32

No I just left the Vaseline out because it was just long to explain. I just said I slipped in the bath.

James Acaster 45:37

You slipped in the bath. Bbut in your head, you were thinking because I was covered in vasaline.

Munya Chawawa 45:43

Well, usually I was, you know, I was I can stand in a bath of Vaseline. But it was the speed at which I stood up.

Ed Gamble 45:52

No, no questioning your credentials.

James Acaster 45:54

Yeah, you can stand in a bath that you've vassed up yourself. Right, we come onto your side dish now.

Munya Chawawa 46:10

Nice and simple. You know, if you're gonna have ox towel recipes, you got to sort of stick within the theme. So I would say to some, and it's quite tricky, because I always panic when I need to say this word. I know that I should say plantaine but I'm gonna say plantaine because that's what makes me feel, you know, I would say plantaine.



Ed Gamble 46:26

Absolutely delicious.

Munya Chawawa 46:27

No side stories there.

Ed Gamble 46:31

But the thing is, I don't believe that. I believe that there is at least four hours of side stories there. But you are well aware you need to be somewhere else. And you know that every time you say anything, me and James are gonna look delighted and ask you to expand on it.

James Acaster 46:43

You're in a real tricky position that aren't you, because your professionalism is outweighed the fact that you've lived an absolutely batshit life. So you're trying to keep it as professional as you can so you could go do this have a podcast, when you know that, ahhh, if I say that they're gonna make me tell it.

Munya Chawawa 47:00

No, no, no, but listen to this. I also know professionally, that it's good to leave people wanting more, you know, I want people say, get me back on. So what I will say and I'm not going to tell you the full story now, we'll wait for next time, is, I was once taken to a petting zoo. It was called the friend foundation. You can Google if you want. It was not even a petting zoo. It's just when they found stray animals. And I unleashed a cage of monkeys into the petting zoo. And we actually did use bananas to lure them back in. But I was bitten by one. But that's all our time for now.

James Acaster 47:34

What is that all your tell us for now? What are you talking about?

Munya Chawawa 47:36

No, no, I told you. It's a cliffhanger, I told you. I'll tell you the rest later.

James Acaster 47:39

What we're meant to do now. Just say what you drink? What your dessert? See you later.

Munya Chawawa 47:42

Yes. Just put a pin in it.

James Acaster 47:46

Why would we get you back on, if we do the full menu with you? Yeah, we've got no excuse to get you back on. We can't just get you back on to tell us about the time you unleashed monkeys in a petting zoo.

Munya Chawawa 47:55

Just another podcast.

James Acaster 47:58



If you told us the petting zoo monkey story now. Then, the proper cliff hanger is what's your drink, what's your dessert, and then we've got a full excuse to get your back?

Munya Chawawa 48:07

No, no, I need to tell you a story about the drink, and then you know, by then you'll still be able to, you'll have to get me on just for dessert.

James Acaster 48:14

I've never ever in the years of doing this podcast had a guest make this sort of bargain. Yeah. Negotiate.

Ed Gamble 48:22

I've never done a podcast with anyone who uses the appearance on the podcast to pitch for a second.

James Acaster 48:29

You haven't had them go. There was a story about that, but if you want that you're gonna have to have me on again.

Ed Gamble 48:36

I am tempted now because I've never had anyone go, and I was bit by a monkey, if you want to know more, chat to me later.. Of course I want to know more, you were bit by a monkey.

James Acaster 48:46

Yeah, even though the summary of the story was essentially the whole story itself. I went to a petting zoo. I unleashed a load of monkeys and one of them bit me.

Munya Chawawa 48:55

No, no, no, there's other details, there was a goat as well that I had to avoid. You don't know the extent of the of the goat.

Ed Gamble 49:04

You don't know the extent of the goat.

Munya Chawawa 49:07

But look. So I'm going to tell you my drink now.

James Acaster 49:12

You're moving us on, we can't.

Munya Chawawa 49:14

Yeah. Alright, so my go to drink would be a Mojito. Yeah. Yeah. Nice and simple. Nothing too crafty about that. But I always, now that's the only cocktail I feel safe with. Because the night before the second lockdown before Christmas, whenever it was, okay. There's a bar. I love it. I go to it in Soho. It's a secret bar. I'm not even gonna tell you what it is because I like it when it's empty. So sandwich



between loads of restaurants in Chinatown. It's like the size of a wardrobe. You go in there, and you go upstairs and then the bar opens up. Anyway, they do these amazing cocktails. So I was going there every weekend. You know dumplings, dimsum, whatnot. Brilliant. Cocktails, amazing. So I go there now and I notice on the shelf, there's this row of panda cups that they never use. And I'm thinking to myself, you know, what drink is that because I've tried every drink on the menu. They never give me the panda cup. So the night before we go into second lockdown, we go there. And I see on the menu, a cocktail that says, it says pineapple panda. So of course I go for it because I'm thinking Yes, finally the drink I haven't tried here. So they serve it up to me in this panda now. And I drink, I drink it. I finish it in maybe like four gulps. Yeah, because I'm really, I'm ready to have a good night. And my belly starts hurting. I'm thinking, what's going on? So I speak to my missus. I said, do you get bellyache if you drink without having eaten before? She said, not really. So I just started eating all these prawn crackers. Also known as poppadoms. And then order another one of these drinks anyway, just to pass the time.

James Acaster 50:55

Hold on, the drink that had made you feel ill. You ordered again? Yeah. Okay, carry on.

Munya Chawawa 51:02

It was delicious. But the thing that made it delicious was there was this taste in it that I've never tasted before. And let me tell you,, I've tasted a lot of things. Yeah, but this flavour here. I couldn't put my finger on it. It was like really intense sweet pineapple, a bit bananary, but it wasn't pineapple or banana. All of a sudden I start feeling real bad. Okay, real bad. And I said, gosh, are you sure that you this doesn't happen if you drink without eating? She said, No, no, no, it shouldn't happen. Okay, so anyway, we looked at the menu, well i finished the secone one. We grabbed the menu and we're reading the ingredients, because the thing is, I'm allergic to nuts, right? Looking at the menu, pineapple, mango lique, whatnot. And then just this other weird French word, whatnot. So I think you know, I got to go to the bathroom. So now go to the bathroom. Gabs now says to me, I've just done a Google Translate on this word. And it's French almond syrup. Oh, and I've just down two of these almond cocktails. Anyway, you know, the rest is history but just had to sort of limp home dazed by this Almond poison. You know, the worst bit was they had, it was, you know, it's a Chinese bar. But all the way to waiters are French. So they're just the guys banging on the doors in French outside. Obviously, everyone's turning around looking, waiting for me to come out. So I then had to do the walk of shame.

Ed Gamble 52:29

So you're in there. We're being we're being sick?

Munya Chawawa 52:33

Yeah, all of it.

Ed Gamble 52:34

You were doing all of it. And all of the waiters are banging on the door and screaming at you in french.

Munya Chawawa 52:41

Well they're saying, are you ok.



James Acaster 52:42

You staggered out and everyone could see you and then you went backwards into it. Put your bum for a window and then a monkey bit you on the arse.

Munya Chawawa 52:50

Mike made the cocktail. Yeah. And then you know, so that was my pre lockdown night ruined had to go home straight away. So now I have a policy where if I have a drink with a meal, it's just going to be a mojito because there's no risk? Because I don't know the French of almond syrup.

James Acaster 53:09

Now, we have two minutes left. Do you want to say your dessert?

Munya Chawawa 53:14

No.

James Acaster 53:18

Listen, look. Look, Benito. Benito. I know that you really want to get the desert. But we done so many episodes, and we've never once had someone leave on a cliffhanger before. And I feel like if we force him to say what his dessert is, I don't think it will be very satisfying. But I think it's quite funny to have, I'm not gonna tell. Just have me back on.

Munya Chawawa 53:45

What should we say? Let's do a vote.

Ed Gamble 53:47

I think we should do the dessert.

Munya Chawawa 53:49

Okay, James.

James Acaster 53:51

Well, I'll go along with doing the dessert. My comic instinct at the time you said no was to go on with you not doing it. But now that Benito has said he wants you to do it.

Munya Chawawa 54:01

Okay, i'll whizz though it. So my dessert would be a chocolate bomb. Okay?

Ed Gamble 54:06

A chocolate bum?

Munya Chawawa 54:10

Chocolate Bomb

Ed Gamble 54:10



Do you want it presented in a window?

Munya Chawawa 54:14

Well there is this thing. There's a bit of a tradition with me in the chocolate bomb because I eat this chocolate bomb when I go to this restaurant called The Ivy, you know the Ivy? Yeah, right. But it's a bit of a tradition that happens when I'm a bit tipsy. So, by this point in the meal, obviously you've had the starter, bread, maybe your main and you've had a few drinks. I've had a few drinks. Okay, so I'm at this point. I'm a bit tipsy. Usually around the stage when I'm waiting for the dessert. I'll then go to pee. When I go to pee. If you go in the Ivy toilets, there's these gnomes on the wall. Yeah, tiled into the wall. And it's a tradition. Now. I've never shared this until today. But usually I go in and greet the gnomes whilst I pee and then will come back and eat my chocolate bomb. Because, um, so you know when you're tipsy, you just want to speak to people, you just want to speak to anyone. Everyone's at their own tables. So now it's, you know, it's not conversation. I'll just not at the gnomes. Yeah, and then come out and enjoy my chocolate bomb. So I would only have a chocolate bomb in your restaurant if you have gnomes tiled onto the wall.

James Acaster 55:19

Well yeah, we could do that for you. In your head. If you don't go and greet the gnomes before you eat the chocolate bomb. What will happen?

Munya Chawawa 55:27

I don't know. I've only ever finished the chocolate bomb since I started doing that. Whether it's because you know, I'm taking a bit longer in there. Or what? But before I would always leave at half eaten. Now I can finish it full.

Ed Gamble 55:41

Oh, so you think that might be the magic of the gnomes?

Munya Chawawa 55:44

Yeah. Yeah. Because it's a worst thing when you have a delicious dessert. And you can't finish it all. So you know because then, as soon as you walk out the restaurant the instant feeling you have is, ah, I could have finished that. So I prefer just to get it all done in one sitting.

James Acaster 55:58

So you think that maybe, you order your chocolate bomb and then you go to the toilet or you say hello gnomes. And then when you are walking out of the toilet, the gnomes give you their magic so that you can finish the whole Pudding.

Ed Gamble 56:09

Must be gnome magic..

Munya Chawawa 56:11

I'm not saying, not i'm not saying it's magic, but it's just a superstition. You know, it's like when people, you know, it's like lucky socks, you know. So that's just my version of that. It's a little nod to the



gnomes. But I'm yet to be in a situation where there's someone else in the in the toilet. So if that happened, then I wouldn't be able to say it and then we'll have to see what happens.

Ed Gamble 56:32

Are you saying something out loud to the gnomes?

Munya Chawawa 56:35

Sometimes, but usually is just a nod.

Ed Gamble 56:37

How many gnomes are there? And do they have names?

Munya Chawawa 56:40

Okay, listen,

James Acaster 56:40

Munya, have you ever done the TV show? Would I lie to you? I think you need to get yourself booked on it as soon as possible.

Ed Gamble 56:49

You really do.

Munya Chawawa 56:50

Listen. Just picture it. I'm really, I'm on the verge of being drunk now. Okay, I'm at the urinal. I'm not thinking, it sounds weird when you're saying it sober, but when you're drunk, you're like, yeah, of course I would. You know, of course, I'm just going to say something stupid to these gnomes. So I'm not having a conversation, I'm just going you know, I'm just going in Alright, or whatever. Or just nodding and then leaving.

James Acaster 57:09

If before you've had your chocolate bomb, you don't need the toilet. What are you doing, still go into the toilet just to say hi to the gnomes?

Munya Chawawa 57:16

No, because I will say that up by this point. I'm bursting point on sparkling water. So I need to have a break.

Ed Gamble 57:22

So you were deliberately, at the beginning of the meal, if you need the toilet. The thought process would be, I need the toilet. No, hold that in because you've got to say hello to the gnomes before the chocolate.

Munya Chawawa 57:33



Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. You know, you can stagger these things, isn't it? You know your routine. I know that by the time I've had my main course. I've got enough in the tank just just to go and empty it.

Ed Gamble 57:44

I like the way you're trying to sell this to us is completely normal and get us on side and go, you know, you've got you've got your routine haven't you. Yeah, it's like saying It's like lucky socks. It's nothing like lucky socks.

Munya Chawawa 57:54

You guys must do some sort of thing before you do gigs.

James Acaster 57:57

No, no,

Munya Chawawa 57:58

Nothing? No gesture. No nothing. No song.

James Acaster 58:01

No, I usually just pace around really regretting all my life choices. I think why am I here, and then I go on stage. But maybe I should get lucky gnome.

Ed Gamble 58:12

I had a tradition on my tour two tours ago, where in the interval if I wasn't enjoying the gig, I would write the name of the place on a list of places that I would never gonna go back to again.

James Acaster 58:23

Yeah, yeah. In that case, I do have a tradition and it's the same. Also Ed's main tradition of course, before he goes on stage is just puffing the old chest up for about half an hour, isn't it? Right, I'm going to read your menu back to you now and see how you feel about it. Water, you want Stillwater. Poppadoms or bread, cold toast with a thick layer of butter. Starter, mushroom arancini, golf ball size. Main course, Ox tail, rice and peas. Side dish, Plantaine. Drink, mojito. Dessert, chocolate bond from The Ivy. I would say in all the time that we've done this podcast, there has never been a menu that does not reflect the episode we've just done before. That menu in no way reflects the conversation we've just had.

Ed Gamble 59:06

No clue whatsoever in that menu.

Munya Chawawa 59:08

Everything had a backstory everything had a backstory there.

Ed Gamble 59:12

It's actually a really a really nice menu. But I won't remember it because all I remember is your bum sticking through a window.



James Acaster 59:17

Yeah, and we still don't know the end to the monkey story. Although we do know that it bit you on the head and not the arm.

Ed Gamble 59:25

Thank you very much, Munya.

Munya Chawawa 59:26

Thank you very much. I'll see you soon for the next, for the monkey story. Yeah.

Ed Gamble 59:36

Well, there we have it. I say it was the Off Menu menu of Munya Chawawa, but it's probably the episode where we've least talked about the food James.

James Acaster 59:44

It was the most Off Menu. It was Off Off Off Menu and into his life and the tales. I mean, you know, people say that food can like, you know, spark memories inside of you. Don't we just know it. If Munya was in ratatouille, he would have had a mouthful of that and would have been like, vooooom, into his childhood and we would have seen him setting fire to a garden to putting his bum through a window.

Ed Gamble 1:00:05

I absolutely loved that episode.

James Acaster 1:00:07

I love every single story and I love that he came on. And he deliberately did not tell us a full story so that he could come on again.

Ed Gamble 1:00:15

What a pro, what a businessman.

James Acaster 1:00:18

Yeah, I mean, you see, this guy's gonna go far. Every time he goes on a TV show. He's just gonna go, No, sorry Graham Norton, you'll have to have me on again.

Ed Gamble 1:00:30

He really should be on Would I lie to you every week. I think.

James Acaster 1:00:33

Yeah, he would get on it every week cuz he'd refused to tell them if it was a truth or lie or not. Just say, you'll have to have me on next week. I won't press the button then. I'm not pressing it now, you're not getting me that easily.

Ed Gamble 1:00:44



If you want a flavour of the sort of thing Munya does check out his Instagram, which is @munyachawawa. And I mean, a lot of the posts, I'll be honest, they're only about 10 seconds long. And then he says, tune in tomorrow for the next post. But it's all good stuff.

James Acaster 1:00:59

He's got a lot of followers on there. And for good reason.

Ed Gamble 1:01:03

Were on Instagram as well. James

James Acaster 1:01:05

@offmenuofficial.

Ed Gamble 1:01:06

Same on Twitter, go and check out all our stuff on there. He didn't say mung beans, Manya. Luckily, I mean, we were covering a lot of ground, they might have popped up at some point. Maybe if he'd done a full episode we would have heard about mung beans.

James Acaster 1:01:22

Next time we have him on. We'll ask him about mung beans, and we'll see if he has got the story about them.

Ed Gamble 1:01:27

I'm sure he does.

James Acaster 1:01:28

That'll be interesting.

Ed Gamble 1:01:29

I'm sure him and cousin Mike threw some mung beans at a plane and the plane crashed into their garden or something.

James Acaster 1:01:34

Obviously, there's a lot of people who get mentioned on the podcast who aren't on the podcast, who I then want to get on the podcast and obviously now I want cousin mike on to do an episode.

Ed Gamble 1:01:42

Well we should definitely do an episode with cousin Mike. Willie from Willie's perfect chocolate Christmas. Mitch, obviously. Man, I can't even, we've interviewed Willie. And we had Mitch on via telephone link up. We do need cuz we're like really.

James Acaster 1:01:58

We're steadily doing it. You know, we didn't hear enough of Babs in the Jade Adams episode.



Ed Gamble 1:02:03

She had more, Babs. I mean, we are building up a Marvel style cinematic universe here..

James Acaster 1:02:09

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, one day, one of our dedicated fans will draw up all of the characters that have ever been mentioned in any of the episodes how they link up to the guests, and how they link up to each other. Of course, Willie, links up to Andy Oliver and Joe Thomas.

Ed Gamble 1:02:24

Yeah, oh man. What a treat. Well, it was a great episode. We enjoyed it very much. We'll see you next week for another episode with Munya Chawawa.

James Acaster 1:02:32

Yeah, of course.