



Off Menu - Ep100: Ed Gamble and James Acaster (with special guest genie Claudia Winkleman)

Ed Gamble 00:13

Uh-oh — one hundred, baby!

James Acaster 00:17

One hundred, baby!

Ed Gamble 00:19

100 episodes, James. This is Episode 100 of the Off Menu podcast, and it's going to be a special one.

James Acaster 00:27

We never thought we'd do a hundred— Uh, I never—

Ed Gamble 00:30

A lot of "we", a lot of "we" flying around there when I always knew. No, I didn't always know that we'd do a hundred but you know, I hadn't planned to not do a hundred but as is now in the public's knowledge, we've said it a lot, you assumed we'd do ten and then stop.

James Acaster 00:45

Yeah, I thought that was the drill. Yeah, but I've never been so happy to be wrong. I love it. A hundred episodes — same age as the great Benito! One hundred! People don't know that about—

Ed Gamble 00:55

The 100 year old Great Benito, tiny little old man.

James Acaster 01:00

Yes, well done Great Benito for producing a hundred spectacular episodes, going through the edit.

Ed Gamble 01:05

He doesn't like to be thanked, and he doesn't like people to know that he edits it all with his gnarled 100 year old fingers.

James Acaster 01:13

Yeah. Just flaking skin on to his keyboard at home.

Ed Gamble 01:19

Well thank you, flaky Benito, Benito flakes. Obviously, say Benito flakes. Why would I—

James Acaster 01:24

Obviously.



Ed Gamble 01:25

Why would I say flaky Benito first? It's a food-based pun about Benito having flaky skin! Of course, Benito flakes. But anyway, let's not get waylaid. It's going to be a special episode. I think? I hope.

James Acaster 01:38

When it's 100 episodes, any podcast has to do something special.

Ed Gamble 01:41

True.

James Acaster 01:41

We knew what the obvious thing was to do, and we tried to get around it and think of other things to do because we thought we gotta put it off. Do ours another time. But we couldn't resist. We think that anyone else, the listeners would be annoyed—

Ed Gamble 01:54

Yeah.

James Acaster 01:54

— if we didn't do our menus for the 100th episode, and they'd be annoyed if only one of us did our menu as well. So they'd be like, "What about the other?" and we'll go "Wait another 100 episodes" and that person gets 200 episodes to decide what they're going to have? That's not fair to the first person.

Ed Gamble 02:07

Exactly.

James Acaster 02:07

But we're going dining together, aren't we, Ed?

Ed Gamble 02:09

We're going for a little fantasy dream meal together, James, but it's in a dream restaurant where obviously we get our separate menus. Don't you worry about that. It's probably going to be a long episode because we've got a lot of food to talk about

James Acaster 02:23

Yeah, this is two meals worth here. Two meals worth and I'm relinquishing my powers. I'm not a genie for this episode.

Ed Gamble 02:30

He has no powers but powers, of course, have to inhabit some vessel, so we will be handing James's powers over to the waiter in the Dream Restaurant. We're having a night off. We've searched through the temp agencies and we found who we believe to be the perfect waiter and Maître D' for the Dream Restaurant for one night only. And that is Claudia—



James Acaster 02:53

Winkleman!

Ed Gamble 02:53

Claudia Winkleman! A previous dining guest of the dream menu. Of course, very popular episodes, Claudia Winkleman's.

James Acaster 03:02

Yes!

Ed Gamble 03:02

So it's very exciting for us that she can come back in now as a worker.

James Acaster 03:07

Yes, I think Claudia is going to be such a great host. In that episode, we talked where she hated water. She did loads of sound effects. She was passionate about food. And I know she'll leave no stone unturned when we tell her what our wonderful menus are.

Ed Gamble 03:20

And also, let's not forget: she's just a consummate broadcaster.

James Acaster 03:23

Let's not forget that. Strings to her bow.

Ed Gamble 03:26

So many strings. So no secret ingredient, because there's absolutely no way we're going to get booted out of our own restaurant.

James Acaster 03:31

No thank you. I mean, we'd be idiots to set a secret ingredient for ourselves. I would like to request though that sometime during the night Jayde Adams walks in and gets kicked out instantly.

Ed Gamble 03:41

Yes, of course. Absolutely. That's definitely going to happen. You may not be able to hear that happen in the episode, but trust me it does.

James Acaster 03:47

It does happen at some point. Jayde will come in and go "table for one!" and then get chucked out immediately.

Ed Gamble 03:53

We should just get on with it then I reckon, James. Obviously we're very excited. We're very happy to have made it to a hundred episodes.



James Acaster 03:59

So happy.

Ed Gamble 04:00

Thank you to the listener. We'll do proper thanks after the episode I'd imagine but we're we're very excited to be here.

James Acaster 04:05

Just know going into the episode that we're grateful for you listening to the podcast.

Ed Gamble 04:09

Yes, we are grateful.

James Acaster 04:10

–because then, if we say it now before the episode, they'll probably listen to us with a kinder ear when we say our menus.

Ed Gamble 04:17

We love you. Please listen with kind ears.

James Acaster 04:19

Thank you.

Ed Gamble 04:20

So without further ado, this is the Off Menu menus of

Both 04:24

Ed Gamble and James Acaster!

Ed Gamble 04:27

Presented by Claudia Winkleman.

Claudia Winkleman 04:38

Before I do anything, I'd just like to say out loud: this is quite major. This is not what normally happens. Because I am– I'm honoured. That's what I'm gonna– I'm gonna use that word– to welcome James and Ed to the Dream Restaurant.

04:51

[gong sound]

Ed Gamble 04:51

Oh, thank you very much, Claudia. There we go. Thank you. We're honoured–



04:55

[bird squawking]

Ed Gamble 04:55

–to have you– There we go–

04:57

[bird squawking]

Ed Gamble 04:57

Oh, it's– the Dream Restaurant has a bird in it today.

Claudia Winkleman 05:00

Well, we're in Tahiti.

05:02

Love it.

Claudia Winkleman 05:03

I am a facilitator today because what's happening, just to share, with the group: it's your 100th episode of the best podcast of all time. Let's be honest.

James Acaster 05:12

Correct.

Claudia Winkleman 05:13

And today: you two — this is huge — are going to share your menus.

James Acaster 05:20

Yes. And I've given you, temporarily, the genie powers. I've transferred them over to you.

Claudia Winkleman 05:27

Thank you.

James Acaster 05:28

We did the did the ceremony beforehand.

Claudia Winkleman 05:31

Yeah. I mean, it was a lot. It was a long ceremony. Three and a half hours of humming.

James Acaster 05:36

Yeah, a lot of humming and you were very good throughout. You were very respectful.

Ed Gamble 05:41



Now Claudia, obviously the idea is you use those genie powers to create our dream menus when we ask for them, but obviously while you've got them it would seem a shame to not use them for some other stuff. Is there anything else you'll be using the genie powers for?

Claudia Winkleman 05:53

No, this is what everyone needs to grasp: this is not about me. This is what you two like doing: you like asking questions, you have an opinion about a side dish, or like what spoon would you use with that. Now this is on you two.

Ed Gamble 06:09

You spotted my trick there, Claudia. I'm so— This is— I'm so nervous about doing my dream menu. I've just realised as I'm trying to do it that it's an awful thing to ask someone, to put someone in this position, and we've done it 99 times. So I was trying to ask you what you'd do with the genie powers to try and make this about you rather than us, because I'm terrified.

Claudia Winkleman 06:27

Nothing to do with me, nothing to do with me.

James Acaster 06:28

Tried to deflect straight away.

Claudia Winkleman 06:29

Let me ask you this: at what juncture did you start? Have you always when you've talked to other people thought "that's madness, I'd never choose that"? Have you always, in the back of your head, got your dream menu?

James Acaster 06:40

No.

Ed Gamble 06:40

No, absolutely not. Because I've tried— I've done it— but this is this is what my menu is now, as of this second, but if you ask me tomorrow, it would be different.

Claudia Winkleman 06:51

That's very fickle. That's very fickle and a bit weird.

James Acaster 06:54

Yeah, that's the lucky thing about being the hosts. Fingers crossed, we do another 100 episodes after this. And on #200, we could do another one of these and we can show how we've grown as people. That's what this podcast is really about.

Claudia Winkleman 07:07

Or what would be adorable, is if you had exactly the same.



James Acaster 07:11

Oh, that would be.

Ed Gamble 07:11

Yeah, that would be sweet.

Claudia Winkleman 07:12

If you went: "do you know what? I was right."

James Acaster 07:14

Do you know what? There are some things on this menu... Actually, you said about "have we always had it in the back of our heads?" And if I'm honest, I've always had notes in my phone where I've written down all the things that are contenders.

Claudia Winkleman 07:26

Wow.

James Acaster 07:26

And anytime I have anything that's amazing, I've put it in my Google notes because I thought, well, I'm gonna have to do this one day, clearly. Didn't know when it would be, but I knew the day would come.

Claudia Winkleman 07:35

That's quite erotic. So you're at dinner with your girlfriend and you say: "Hold on a sec darling, I've just had a buttered parsnip with a honey glaze. I'm going to stop you there."

James Acaster 07:43

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 07:44

– and wrote it in.

James Acaster 07:44

Sometimes I've got the parsnip in my mouth and my eyes are closed, I'm in ecstasy, and my hands are still writing down in the notes –

Claudia Winkleman 07:50

– manically –

James Acaster 07:51

– "the parsnip".

Claudia Winkleman 07:53

James, who have you shared this menu with? Did you want to check with anyone? Was it a parent? Was it a friend?



James Acaster 07:59

I did check with my girlfriend. I did tell her. Well, I didn't check with her, actually. She was nosy and wanted to know what it was beforehand.

Claudia Winkleman 08:09

Because you're constantly in Google notes, she thinks you having an affair.

James Acaster 08:12

Yeah yeah, she doesn't believe me. "Well let me see the notes then!"

Ed Gamble 08:15

She knows James, she knows he's definitely not having an affair. Her first thought was he's probably writing that down in a note to remind himself later on.

James Acaster 08:21

Yeah: "he's probably writing down what food he likes or he's remembered an album that he likes from 2016. Absolute loser this guy." But yeah, I did tell her and she didn't, you know, there wasn't a point where she went "what?!" So I think, yeah, that was reassuring. But there is some things on it which, I don't know, there's potential for crossover with Ed's menu here and I would be excited if we get... I don't know if there's a special rule where if we say the same thing, something happens in the Dream Restaurant?

Ed Gamble 08:47

I think we have to kiss? We have to kiss, don't we?

Claudia Winkleman 08:49

No, well, not— Everybody has to stop what they're doing, step away from Zoom and do a roly-poly.

James Acaster 08:55

Okay!

Ed Gamble 08:56

Okay, deal!

Claudia Winkleman 08:58

That's what happens in our house. If something major happens: "All right, guys. Mat out, let's do it." And I'm 49, that's quite something. Ed, is there anything that has made you slightly nervous? What's giving you the wobbles?

Ed Gamble 09:14

Well, I mean, all of it gives me the wobbles, but in a good way. As in: I'll slap my tummy after I've eaten it. But I think, I've maybe... Have I messed with the format? As I went through it, I found our format too restrictive.



Claudia Winkleman 09:29

Goodness.

Ed Gamble 09:30

So I've danced around the—

Claudia Winkleman 09:32

That's bold.

Ed Gamble 09:33

I've danced around the outskirts of the format, but in a way that previous guests have done so I'm hoping it'll be allowed.

James Acaster 09:39

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 09:40

Are you nervous? Because the people who listen to this show, love the show. They love the two of you. They often listen to episodes more than once. Are you thinking about pleasing them? Are you thinking about your fans? The Off Menu people who make memes, I've still got ones coming to me of Mr. Burns. You know, if they go: "well, James has let us down because he's chosen partridge." I mean, are you worried about that?

Ed Gamble 10:07

No. Firstly, I'm not worried about James choosing partridge. I don't know if that's going to happen or not—

Claudia Winkleman 10:11

Correct, nobody would chose partridge, not even a partridge. Well especially not a partridge. Continue.

Ed Gamble 10:15

I think the people who listen to this will be happy with a lot of different outcomes. So if they're just straight up nice menus and they think they sound delicious, they'll be like: "yes, we're on board with that, we like food." If the menu's are awful, they'll enjoy making fun of us on the internet. If me and James really come to blows over something, that's— I think that's the best outcome for them. You know, if the worst thing happens and I do what everyone wants me to do, which I'm not going to say out loud now, James will absolutely lose his mind.

James Acaster 10:45

Well, I'm not sure. I've been thinking about that. I've been thinking about, "what if he does it?" And "if he does it, what am I gonna do?" And in this instance, I'll be so consoled by my own menu —

Ed Gamble 10:58



Right.

James Acaster 10:59

– that it won't affect me as much. Normally–

Ed Gamble 11:00

Okay, I've got some changes to make.

James Acaster 11:02

– the menu that the guest brings to the Dream Restaurant is the only menu I get to hear that day. And when they, you know, do something horrible it really annoys me because I'm like, "Oh, we had such a lovely chat and now all this", but now I get to conjure up my own– Well, Claudia conjures up my dream meal for me so maybe– but I don't know– I still might– I don't know how I'm gonna feel if he does it.

Claudia Winkleman 11:25

Before we enter... Right, I mean, we're here. But before we, let's say we're in the Anteroom, the Lobby. Briefly, what would your dream restaurant look like? Are you on a beach? Are you in a crowded pub? Is there open brickwork?

Ed Gamble 11:39

I think there is open brickwork, you know.

Claudia Winkleman 11:40

Yeah.

Ed Gamble 11:41

I feel like there is open brickwork. I like a, sort of, large, spaced out dining room, but buzzy, I want buzzy. I want, sort of, like hard surfaces, wood floors–

Claudia Winkleman 11:52

Atmosphere.

Ed Gamble 11:53

Atmosphere! But everyone spaced out still. You've got plenty of room, but you can hear the hubble and bubble, but you can't hear what the hubble and bubble is regarding.

Claudia Winkleman 12:00

Got ya.

Ed Gamble 12:01

And exposed brickwork.

Claudia Winkleman 12:02

And exposed brickwork, some sort of plant action.



Ed Gamble 12:05

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 12:06

They often go together. Cool.

Ed Gamble 12:07

Vines. Some vines, I think.

Claudia Winkleman 12:10

Ring–a–ding–ding. Hence the Macaw earlier.

James Acaster 12:12

When you say "exposed brickwork," it makes me think of a brick flashing someone.

Ed Gamble 12:15

Yeah, that's what I want. I want brick dicks everywhere.

Claudia Winkleman 12:17

That's an option. James, What's your dream? You're walking in, you're holding hands, I pull back the curtain: what does it look like?

James Acaster 12:25

Well, see this is where I think I'm actually very unimaginative, because instead of imagining my own perfect restaurant that I've made in my head, I'm just imagining Noma in Copenhagen.

Claudia Winkleman 12:35

Right.

James Acaster 12:35

Because you said that we were in the little bit beforehand, before going in. And that's my favourite experience I've ever... I mean, it's the best meal out I've ever had. And this is no spoilers, because weirdly none of it has made it onto my menu, but it is the best meal out I've ever had. And before you go in, they put you in like a little greenhouse that's, like, got all the stuff they've been working on and growing. And there's a bunch of jars that have fermented stuff in them. And you get given a little drink, some hibiscus drink. And just looking around at all the stuff, getting excited about tasting these flavours. And then you have a little walk as well, and you go past a little burning fire and you get to smell the brunkiness of the fire. And then you go into the main restaurant, and everyone comes out and says hello to you, like you've walked past a pond with some bread and all the ducks come and they're excited. All the staff come up and said hello–

Ed Gamble 13:29

Danish for Hello is quack as well, so...



James Acaster 13:31

They were quacking at us! And then they sat us by the window as well. I think that's what I would like in the Dream Restaurant: is to be sat by a massive window! So it's not even... They have this as well at Tebay Services. The two best places I've ever been for a meal–

Ed Gamble 13:48

Yeah.

James Acaster 13:49

–were Noma and Tebay.

Claudia Winkleman 13:50

Strong link.

James Acaster 13:51

Yeah. I want a huge window that is more window than wall and there to be a pond right by the window. And I can just look out at like the water. And I want to be able to see a sunset at some point during the meal.

Claudia Winkleman 14:07

This is good. I'm there.

Ed Gamble 14:09

So weirdly, when I was thinking of my Dream Restaurant, I was thinking of Kadeau in Copenhagen, but I didn't want to say it because I was worried I'd sound wanky. But now James has done that I'm going to hop on the back of that. Mine is Kadeau in Copenhagen.

James Acaster 14:20

Two tickets to Copenhagen, please.

Ed Gamble 14:22

I mean, absolutely, please. That is the first place I'm going to go when we can go to places internationally.

Claudia Winkleman 14:26

Me too!

Ed Gamble 14:27

Nice. See you there!

Claudia Winkleman 14:28

Yeah! Done. My husband is Danish, he'll be very happy.



James Acaster 14:31

Oh, yeah, that wet-mouthed motherfucker.

Claudia Winkleman 14:36

Dribbling dolphin...

Ed Gamble 14:38

Trying to say "quack quack" and spraying everywhere...

Claudia Winkleman 14:41

Disgusting, massive wet tongue... Nevermind.

Claudia Winkleman 14:47

I've got to ask you a question, if that's all right? And there's going to be sound effects and I'm excited. Still or sparkling water?

James Acaster 14:55

Do you know what, it's so exciting having it asked to us and having Claudia asking us...

Claudia Winkleman 14:59

James, what are you— Do you always go for the same thing? What're you going to have?

James Acaster 15:02

Well here's the thing though. I'm worried because I actually haven't checked with Benito as to whether there's a secret ingredient for this episode. And normally, the secret ingredient is something that Ed and I as the hosts don't like. I know that you hate water. I'm now worried that the joke is: me and Ed get kicked out immediately in doing the water course.

Claudia Winkleman 15:21

No, there is no secret ingredient. That's only for you two to do. No.

Ed Gamble 15:25

I'm relaxed, I'm relaxed.

Claudia Winkleman 15:26

So I'm holding two bottles. Oh, do you like your view of the window with the pond and the 24 hour sunset, sir? What can I pour you?

James Acaster 15:33

Here's the thing. So if I had to choose between still and sparkling water, I'd choose still water and I think I'd be more excited if it had some cucumber in it and—

Ed Gamble 15:47

You appear to be eating in a spa, James.



James Acaster 15:49

Yes, well, I mean: (a) you drink water so... I don't know if you're eating a glass of water Ed, like a madman...

Ed Gamble 15:55

Yeah, but why put cucumber in it? Just makes everything taste like cucumber.

James Acaster 15:58

Oh yeah, that's the point of adding stuff.

Ed Gamble 16:00

Sorry, I didn't– I actually said to myself before this I didn't want this to be a fight because I think James has excellent taste.

Claudia Winkleman 16:07

Let him live. He wants he wants a big pool and some cucumber water.

Ed Gamble 16:11

Okay.

Claudia Winkleman 16:11

And a foot rub.

James Acaster 16:12

It's a very profound point, Ed, to point out that when you add an ingredient to something it then tastes of that ingredient. And I agree that if you add cucumber, it'll taste of cucumber. I like the cucumber when it's sliced really long.

Ed Gamble 16:24

Oh, yeah.

James Acaster 16:25

When they do the diagonal slice.

Claudia Winkleman 16:27

Yeah, yeah. Gotcha. Gotcha.

Ed Gamble 16:28

Why do you prefer that?

James Acaster 16:30

Tastes better. Here's the thing. This is the only one where I was like, everything else on my menu I'm excited about. The water course, I really wanted to– I wanted to nail every single part of this menu.



Ed Gamble 16:42

Yeah.

James Acaster 16:42

And the water course, I was like: nothing's inspired me here. Haven't had a water somewhere that's really blown my mind. And I thought: I know who's hosting this. They might let me do an immediate loophole and just replace the water. I've said what I would have still or sparkling.

Claudia Winkleman 16:57

Yeah. And we know that. And also, it's your show: loophole away.

James Acaster 17:01

But maybe if I crack open a can: Cawston, Cawston, Cawston Press. It's the water course and Cawston is the best.

Ed Gamble 17:12

He's written the song. He can't deny that. He wants a Cawston Press.

James Acaster 17:16

It's got water in it. To be fair, I've gone sparkling really. It's a mildly sparkling soft drink. Rhubarb Cawston Press with app— It's got Apples in it. It's mainly Apple based, but then this is the Rhubarb flavour. I love it. I drink it so much. To me, it's like water. This is what my logic is. I love it so much that it has become a normal flavour to me. I wouldn't really pick it as my dream drink and stuff like that because I just drink it all the time. It's my water is Cawston Press. And so therefore, if I want to be excited about every element in this meal, I would want to sit down in a restaurant by the big window, see the pond, and the waiter just comes over and pours me, pours everyone on the table, a glass of Cawston Press from a jug and walks away.

Ed Gamble 17:58

And everyone goes: "well, this is a surprising start to our meal at Noma."

Claudia Winkleman 18:01

"Rhubarb?"

James Acaster 18:01

Yeah!

Claudia Winkleman 18:03

"I've come all the way to Denmark!"

Claudia Winkleman 18:06

Okay. I think, Ed, if there's no objection, I think that's okay.



Ed Gamble 18:11

Well, Claudia, I can't object because you'll find out why when I give you my choice of still or sparkling water.

Claudia Winkleman 18:16

Oh gosh, here we go. The only thing I want to ask you about the Cawston Press Rhubarb. Is that in a short glass or a tall glass, and does it have ice, and would you be wanting a straw? Just to really—

James Acaster 18:28

That's good.

Ed Gamble 18:28

Got to drill down.

Claudia Winkleman 18:29

I gotta drill. I'd like those details please.

James Acaster 18:30

Ice is a con, so I'm not having ice. You're not gonna get me that way.

Ed Gamble 18:34

No one's— Again, that's a very James Acaster phrase: "You're not gonna get me that way." No one's trying to get you mate. Absolutely no one's trying to get you.

Claudia Winkleman 18:41

Just a chat.

James Acaster 18:42

Everyone's trying to get me on this. I'm not being tricked by the ice.

Claudia Winkleman 18:47

Okay.

James Acaster 18:47

Ice fills up the glass, takes up the space that could be used for Cawston Press. Unless the ice cubes are frozen Cawston Press—

Ed Gamble 18:55

Ooh.

James Acaster 18:56

—which I'd be open to— Actually that's what I want.

Ed Gamble 18:58



Yeah. Yeah, that's what you want, mate.

James Acaster 19:00

Yeah, but I don't want cubes. I'd want the crushed ice that's made of Cawston Press: fill the glass up that with that, pour the Cawston Press on it. That's what I— So there's a jug of Cawston Press in the middle of the table that I can keep on topping up my glass, but it's crushed ice that is made from Cawston Press.

Claudia Winkleman 19:16

But that's going to, that's going to bang into your teeth. Are you using a straw?

James Acaster 19:21

No.

Claudia Winkleman 19:21

No.

Ed Gamble 19:22

I've never seen you use a straw.

James Acaster 19:23

Yeah, I'm not really a straw guy.

Ed Gamble 19:26

He can't purse his lips, Claudia. He has an open mouth all times.

James Acaster 19:29

Do you know what, though? I would use a straw if it was one of those, you know, novelty curly straws.

Claudia Winkleman 19:35

Yeah, 'round the bend, or they said "Happy Birthday".

James Acaster 19:37

Yeah, yeah, I like watching that. That's really fun.

Claudia Winkleman 19:40

Okay.

James Acaster 19:40

So yeah, maybe I'd have one of those straws but—

Claudia Winkleman 19:43

Very happy with your answer. Are you delighted with that? Is that made—



James Acaster 19:45

I'm really happy with it.

Claudia Winkleman 19:45

–the water course more palatable?

James Acaster 19:49

Especially the crushed ice, because I hate ice cubes. But then I remembered, I actually love crushed ice and I think it's really cool. So like, actually I'm really happy with that, especially if it's the same flavour as the drink.

Ed Gamble 20:00

I know what you mean, I think crushed ice is really cool. And I think it comes from when you go over to a friend's house when you're younger and they have that fridge with the ice machine on the front. And I think I only had, like, one friend who had that and I would just spend all day at their house being like, "Crushed ice or cubes? Crushed ice or cubes?" It's so exciting. And crushed ice was the coolest, because you see cubes every day, right?

James Acaster 20:20

Yeah, see cubes all the time. No one cares about them, but also I don't like a cube of ice in my mouth. It sometimes does that little screechy sound and that–

Ed Gamble 20:29

Yeah.

James Acaster 20:29

Yeah, do you know what I mean? Benito looks confused.

Ed Gamble 20:31

'cause you can't purse your lips again so it just falls out, doesn't it?

James Acaster 20:34

Can't purse 'em, just falls out. Everything in this meal is gonna fall out my mouth. That's why I'm next the window.

Claudia Winkleman 20:41

With a bib.

James Acaster 20:41

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 20:42

All right, I'm delighted with that if you are.



James Acaster 20:44

I'm so happy with it. I was worried that— do you know what, I was really worried that I was gonna immediately get told: "no, you can't have that." Not by you, but by Edward Gamble — and then I looked at him and realised: he's done the same thing.

Claudia Winkleman 20:54

Yeah.

James Acaster 20:56

'Course he has.

Claudia Winkleman 20:56

Ed, I've got to ask you then. So I've just put a big jug of crushed rhubarb flavoured fizzy water—

James Acaster 21:03

Ah yes.

Claudia Winkleman 21:03

—would you like still or sparkling?

Ed Gamble 21:05

I'll have a pint of Guinness please. I can have water at home. I'm not going to my Dream Restaurant and kicking off with the water, I can have that out the tap. I'll have two litres of water before I go in to hydrate myself, I'll have easy access to a toilet, and for still or sparkling water: I would like a pint of Guinness, which they still recommend to drink after a marathon as the ultimate hydration tool with iron and other vitamins included. One pint of draught Guinness. I miss it so much. Thank you very much.

James Acaster 21:32

Brought up a marathon immediately.

Claudia Winkleman 21:33

I mean, I feel bad about letting the rhubarb fizzy water. The rhubarb Cawston world, whatever it is, seems to me water that has just of made eye contact with some rhubarb flavouring.

Ed Gamble 21:48

Sure.

Claudia Winkleman 21:48

Guinness? I'm going to ask you your drink later. No problem, that's coming up.

Ed Gamble 21:52

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 21:52



That's like asking for a side dish for water.

Ed Gamble 21:55

It's not. It's still, it's a very hydrating liquid. It's delicious. It's better water essentially. Someone's made better water. Water is still the base of beers and stouts. So there's still water in there. It's still mainly water.

Claudia Winkleman 22:11

I have a question.

Ed Gamble 22:12

Please.

Claudia Winkleman 22:13

Is it not going to fill you up too much?

Ed Gamble 22:15

No.

Claudia Winkleman 22:15

I mean, I don't know what your menu is. It might just be Frisée lettuce and a tiny thimble of— but a whole pint of Guinness, you're going to need to have a lie down.

Ed Gamble 22:24

No, I am extremely greedy. I do drink— I was actually— When I worked in a pub, I was accused by the landlord of drinking Guinness like water, so I don't know whether— I'm gonna add that to my portfolio of evidence. I can swig Guinness, I can knock it back. I could drink four pints of Guinness before I start to feel full. But I would like one pint of draught Guinness, please, for my still of sparkling water course.

Claudia Winkleman 22:47

James, how are you feeling about this?

James Acaster 22:49

Well, number of questions. Feeling a number of ways—

Ed Gamble 22:54

But you respect me massively, obviously.

James Acaster 22:56

Well look, I always respect you, no matter what. But that doesn't mean I like you. Here's what I've done, Ed, here's my question to you.

Ed Gamble 23:05

Go for it.



James Acaster 23:05

Any loophole that I've applied to my menu, my rule for myself was: I'm not doing any new loopholes—

Ed Gamble 23:12

Right.

James Acaster 23:12

— that we haven't had on the podcast before.

Ed Gamble 23:14

Right.

James Acaster 23:14

There are only loopholes that I've let people get away with on the podcast, so that we're playing within the rules. Claudia, when she was on, changed her water to, I believe, a soft drink — so I was like right, I'm going with Cawston Press.

Ed Gamble 23:27

Sure.

Claudia Winkleman 23:27

Ah yes, I swapped it for a mug of macaroni cheese.

Ed Gamble 23:30

Yeah,

James Acaster 23:30

That was it.

Ed Gamble 23:31

So—

James Acaster 23:31

Okay. Well, in many ways the Guinness kind of has to stand.

Ed Gamble 23:35

The Guinness has to stay, especially if it's Claudia running this Dream Restaurant today. And she's trying to tell me I'm not allowed Guinness sat there with a steaming hot mug of pasta.

Claudia Winkleman 23:43

I just wanted to flag it up.

James Acaster 23:46



A water bottle full of pasta.

Ed Gamble 23:47

No, and you're right, you're right to flag it up. I knew it was gonna cause a discussion. But I think we can all agree: it's a great choice and let's move on.

James Acaster 23:55

How about this: when they finish pouring your Guinness—

Ed Gamble 23:57

Yeah.

James Acaster 23:57

—when they're just finishing it on the tap, just getting to the end, draw the head there? What if they wrote in the foam: H₂O?

Ed Gamble 24:06

I mean, I'd be impressed.

James Acaster 24:07

Yeah.

Ed Gamble 24:07

I'd be happy with that. If we're all happy to agree with that.

Claudia Winkleman 24:10

Look, I've got a question for you. So, this is a different day and it's you two talking to a guest.

Ed Gamble 24:15

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 24:15

It's Dean Gaffney. He comes on and he says— Because what happens with loopholes is they occur normally at the end. You know what I mean? You're 90 minutes in, everyone's jovial. Then you go: "Please can my side dish be a tiramisu?" and everyone's like, "Ah, get out of here! Bye, thanks for coming." To go in hard with I'm not having water is bold. And I'm just wondering, if you two are there: Gaffney, whoever it is — I'm obsessed by him — and he asked for that? Where are you going with that? As the creators, as the hosts of the show?

Ed Gamble 24:49

Well, if Gaffney asked for a pint of Guinness: so much respect to Gaffney.

James Acaster 24:53

Yeah.



Ed Gamble 24:53

Of course, because I'd be like, "Oh, damn it. That's what I would have chosen." We've not done my menu yet.

James Acaster 24:58

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 24:58

Fine.

Ed Gamble 24:59

I'd respect Gaffney for choosing a pint of Guinness, if he could argue it like I have. Like there's the marathon evidence. There's the, you know, the actual creation of Guinness. And there's also, let's not forget what the landlord said to me, Claudia at the Raynes Park Tavern.

Ed Gamble 25:11

Well he could drink four pints without even being full.

Ed Gamble 25:13

Well exactly. And I agree— Look, I agree, it's a cheeky choice, but I think we're gonna have to let it fly.

Claudia Winkleman 25:21

Okay, all right. Guys, you have your beverages, you are in open brickwork, you are by a pond. Let us continue. I can't do it the way you do it, because—

James Acaster 25:31

Try. Try and do it.

Claudia Winkleman 25:33

No.

Ed Gamble 25:33

Try and do it, Claudia.

Claudia Winkleman 25:34

I just can't, I'm too old. Both of you, I could be your grandmothers. Sometimes you've just got to know your place.

James Acaster 25:39

I was so kind of, like... I've thought a lot about just this episode. And I thought... this is obviously 'cause of the pandemic, we've had to do it over Zoom. But for ages, it's been this thing where, you know, we might have to record this episode in person — that's how it's always been in my head.



Ed Gamble 25:54

Yeah.

James Acaster 25:55

And that someone will have to try and scare me by shouting "Poppadoms or Bread?" and make me jump. I was like, well we're doing it over Zoom so that's not gonna happen. And then, paranoid as I am, I started being like: what if Benito sorts something out where he pays my girlfriend to jump in and just shout "Poppadoms or Bread?" and I'm not expecting it.

Claudia Winkleman 26:12

I mean, James, look behind you. I'm gonna say it in a calm manner because I've got two baskets as I come over. That's just the situation, they're attached to me. They're attached to my hair. I've created plaits and then they go into two large baskets. One has bread in it. Lovely. Different assortment, your choice. The other one has got poppadoms.

Ed Gamble 26:34

So you're quite weighed down on one side, would you say?

Claudia Winkleman 26:39

It's a good point, but the poppadoms also they have a selection of dips –

Ed Gamble 26:44

Right, okay, that's good.

Claudia Winkleman 26:45

– in quite heavy base ceramic urns. So I'm evened out. No problem. Seesaw has sorted itself out.

Claudia Winkleman 26:54

Ed, I'm asking you: what're gonna have?

Ed Gamble 26:56

It's bread, Claudia, but I'm being very specific about this. Look, I like poppadoms, but I think I only get a hankering for a curry once every six months.

Claudia Winkleman 27:05

That's all?!

James Acaster 27:06

What?!

Ed Gamble 27:06

Yeah, that is all. I'm not really like a–

Claudia Winkleman 27:08



Wow.

Ed Gamble 27:08

–big curry guy. I did get the hankering about two nights ago. Had a lovely curry and very much enjoyed the poppadoms that came with it. But I'm never buying poppadoms outside of a curry hankering.

Claudia Winkleman 27:18

Yeah.

Ed Gamble 27:18

So you know, I rarely have them — I have them twice a year — so I couldn't in good conscience choose poppadoms. Bread I have on a regular basis. I love bread. It's a lifelong love affair with bread. I absolutely love it. We're getting specific with this.

Claudia Winkleman 27:30

Yeah.

Ed Gamble 27:31

I think it's mad when anyone comes on and they don't choose garlic bread, because it's the best bread. I think it's a way of getting an extra side in for me, choosing garlic bread at this stage. And this is another more specific thing: it's garlic bread with cheese and Marmite from Yard Sale Pizza.

James Acaster 27:52

Wow.

Claudia Winkleman 27:52

I mean, I'm on board. Is it plaited?

Ed Gamble 27:54

It's not plaited, no. It's a flatbread pizza situation — so it's basically the pizza dough, garlic butter, Marmite, and then cheese on top. And the way the Marmite reacts. Ah, it's just yeasty and sharp and with the— Ah, with the mozzarella cheese and with the garlic butter. I order a pizza from Yard Sale, but I always order the garlic bread with Marmite and cheese, and I think that's my favourite bit.

Claudia Winkleman 28:18

Is it cut into triangles, or are you breaking off strips?

Ed Gamble 28:22

I think it is actually cut into, sort of— Across ways, it's cut into thick strips, and then one across. So it's sort of, in half and then strips within the halves. And it's never done accurately because it's proper, you know, handmade stuff. They're not getting a machine to do that, so they're knocking it out. So obviously I'm straight in for the biggest bit.

Claudia Winkleman 28:39



Biggest bit but also middle bit — extra cheese — or do you like the slightly charred round the outside?

Ed Gamble 28:45

I like both of those bits. But I normally go for the middle bit with the extra cheese in the middle first, because I'm a big cheesy boy.

James Acaster 28:52

What kind of bread is it?

Ed Gamble 28:54

It's like dough. It's just like flatbread basically.

James Acaster 28:56

Like pizza bread?

Ed Gamble 28:57

Well, yeah. I mean, you know, it's dough.

James Acaster 28:59

I'm very surprised at this.

Claudia Winkleman 29:00

What you're doing here is: garlic bread is often in — I'm going to use a word, the C word — Ciabatta, isn't it?

Ed Gamble 29:07

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 29:07

That's what you have. Or like a french stick—

Ed Gamble 29:09

—or a baguette?

Claudia Winkleman 29:09

Yeah, thank you, a baguette. And then it's sliced and in it goes. And then suddenly, we're in doughball world.

Ed Gamble 29:16

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 29:17

You don't need to comment on them. Where that's a different kind of dough. And that's what you're talking about. But it's laid out flat and is more artisanal.



Ed Gamble 29:24

Yeah, it's like a garlic pizza bread, but it's very thin, very crispy, apart from the middle which is a little bit soggy because there's extra cheese and extra butter, like you say, so there's a range of textures within that. You're going all all around the world there. And it is just phenomenal.

Claudia Winkleman 29:38

Talk to me about the ratio. How Marmitey is it? Or are you just using it for the yeast?

Ed Gamble 29:43

You know the Marmite's there. You can taste that Marmite, but of course it's not thick. It's a thin spreading of Marmite, just for the flavour but you know it's there. The garlic still punching through though.

James Acaster 29:54

Surprised.

Claudia Winkleman 29:55

James, are you immediately — like I am — sitting there thinking: "I can't believe I didn't choose that, because it sounds outstanding"?

James Acaster 30:02

Oh, it sounds outstanding, but I've never eaten it before. It'd be mad if I changed my order to that now.

Ed Gamble 30:09

Are you surprised, James? Why are you surprised?

James Acaster 30:12

We've talked about garlic bread on the podcast in the past, and you said your favourite garlic bread is the baguette sweaty garlic bread. It's the best.

Ed Gamble 30:19

It is but—

James Acaster 30:20

So when you said garlic bread, I immediately imagined that. And then you said with cheese and Marmite on it. I was like, that sounds absolutely brilliant. And then you said it was pizza bread. And I was like, so "Oh, you have a little Marmite and cheese pizza?"

Ed Gamble 30:33

Well, I've always— I think this is my favourite garlic bread. Generally, my favourite form of garlic bread would be the baguette, the sweaty baguette. But this, specifically, I don't think anywhere else does this. So this is only Yard Sale Pizza. And I always had in the back of my mind that I'm choosing this. So I



think maybe when garlic bread has come up recently on the podcast, I've sort of maybe not talked about this deliberately because I knew I was gonna bring it up.

Claudia Winkleman 30:58

Saving it.

James Acaster 30:59

Saving it. Interesting.

Claudia Winkleman 31:00

In a Rolodex.

James Acaster 31:02

It's like, you know, an actor in the MCU. Just doing an interview and thinking: "Don't mention it, don't give 'em any spoilers. Can't do it."

Claudia Winkleman 31:09

Don't give it to them.

Claudia Winkleman 31:12

James, I've got my two laden baskets.

Ed Gamble 31:16

What's this gonna be? I don't know what he's gonna go for.

James Acaster 31:19

I would like to know what Ed thinks.

Ed Gamble 31:21

The thing is, I think you probably talk about poppadoms more than you talk about bread. I know you like bread, sure, we've shared some wonderful sandwiches, but—

Claudia Winkleman 31:29

Adorable.

Ed Gamble 31:30

I think you're possibly gonna go poppadoms here.

James Acaster 31:33

Interesting. So the whole reason why Poppadoms or Bread even exists in the podcast, because people sometimes have a go at us for it. And they're like, "why those two options?" and blah, blah, blah. We have let people choose other things. But like, you know, it's basically anything that you would be offered at this point in the meal. But the reason it exists is 'cause, you know, every time I've been out for a curry, and they've bought poppadoms out, I've been so excited and so delighted that the



poppadoms are here, and I've never really felt like that when they bring the bread out before. Normally when they bring the bread out pre-meal, I'm like: "Oh God, now I've gotta resist eating this now otherwise I'm gonna spoil my meal." And then if it's nice, like: "Urgh, now I'm just going to eat this, and I know I'm gonna be too full later." But with the poppadoms I'm like: "I can't wait to smash them. I can't wait to use all the dips." In general, I like poppadoms more than I like bread. And so I wanted to ask guests this, because I wanted to know who agrees with me. And every time they say poppadoms, you can hear that I'm a bit more happy. I always do a little bit of a celebration, because I'm really happy they've chosen the poppadoms and I like getting to ask the same questions over and over again about the poppadoms. I love it. And the best place I've ever had poppadoms is a place in Edinburgh, where me and my friends we stayed in the same house for three or four years and just a few doors down was Kathmandu Namaste, a great curry house. And we would go there and the poppadoms they do there, while they're in the fryer they fold them up somehow, as they're frying up. So that you get like a little triangle, like a cone. And it's just even crispier than a normal poppadom. And those are my favourite poppadoms in the world.

Claudia Winkleman 33:10

They sound amazing.

James Acaster 33:11

However, I'm going bread.

Claudia Winkleman 33:16

You were describing a love affair, and I was in. Were you in, Ed?

Ed Gamble 33:21

I was in the cone. I was in the middle of the cone. I was naked and I was covering myself in mango chutney.

James Acaster 33:25

Or listen–

Claudia Winkleman 33:26

Yeah.

James Acaster 33:26

But this is the thing: I'm doing loopholes that other people have done and I don't know–

Ed Gamble 33:30

Are you doing a loophole for every course, mate?

James Acaster 33:32

No. I don't know–

Ed Gamble 33:33



Okay.

James Acaster 33:34

Might be. I don't know if anyone's done the loophole: poppadoms and bread before. I don't know if we've let that slide. I don't mind, I don't mind if I'm not allowed it.

Ed Gamble 33:44

I don't know. Especially after your big chat at the beginning about how you're only doing loopholes that other people have done. And you're trying Poppadoms and Bread which you're not sure anyone's done before, and I don't think they have.

Claudia Winkleman 33:53

No, and also the key thing when you shout it is, if you don't mind me saying, the word "or".

James Acaster 33:58

Yes.

Ed Gamble 33:58

Yeah.

James Acaster 33:58

So I don't mind not being allowed it. If I have to choose Poppadoms or Bread, I'm going bread and it's a very specific bread, because there's this one bread that has won me over. And weirdly, as well, the guy who made it he's, you know– I had the meal, it was delicious, and he said to me "big fan of the podcast" and I went "well I'll tell you this mate: I've always thought in my head that I'd always choose poppadoms if I was doing Poppadoms or Bread. That bread you gave me at the start, that has knocked off poppadoms for me." and then he did a little happy dance, that guy did.

Claudia Winkleman 34:27

I bet he did!

James Acaster 34:27

Very happy about it, so–

Claudia Winkleman 34:29

Jovial!

James Acaster 34:30

It was at a pop-up restaurant, next to The Dairy, Ed. In, what's that, Clapham?

Ed Gamble 34:36

In Clapham, yeah.

James Acaster 34:37



It was next door to that.

Ed Gamble 34:38

The Dairy is now shut, by the way.

James Acaster 34:40

Yes, Rest in Peace.

Ed Gamble 34:41

But I believe that they've now opened in Bermondsey, and they called the Bermondsey Larder.

James Acaster 34:45

Definitely go there then, because delicious food. It was open at this point, when I went to the pop-up next door and the pop-up didn't have a toilet so you had to go in The Dairy to use the toilet. Lovely to be in there, lovely to pop in. It was called Alter — A-L-T-E-R — that's how you spell Alter. Tiny little place. And straight away, you sit down. And he gave us, it was basically — so similar to Ed's in a way — pizza bread. So there was these fingers of bread, which were basically like pizza crust that he had made, but like the fluffiest airiest pizza crust, and he had dusted it in this homemade rub or spice. You know, just a mixture of herbs and spices that made it taste exactly like the most delicious pizza.

Claudia Winkleman 35:27

Wow. But it's dry?

James Acaster 35:28

It's dry. So the dusting is just completely dry and it's this pizza crust finger, all covered in this dust that tastes exactly like a pizza with this dip.

Ed Gamble 35:38

I'm looking now, I think that they've now got an actual restaurant as well. Shout out.

James Acaster 35:42

Is it still called Alter?

Ed Gamble 35:43

Yes. So yeah, it's still called Alter. And now on Leman Street in Whitechapel. There you go.

Claudia Winkleman 35:48

When you had a bite of it— I'm just saying this for me, I just need to know a bit more. If I was tasting something that tastes like pizza, I'd be so depressed that there wasn't melted cheese.

James Acaster 35:57

Oh right, yeah yeah yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 35:59



Do you know what I mean? I'd be looking for the SOG.

James Acaster 36:02

Yes, well, I felt like I was in— if Willy Wonka has got a savoury cousin...

Ed Gamble 36:07

He does, yeah.

James Acaster 36:08

I felt like I was in his savoury factory and he'd gone: "This bread tastes just like a full pizza" and you taste it and you go: "It does taste— It's like eating a pizza!" And because you're not tasting all the cheese and the sauce and stuff like that, it's even more of a magical experience. You're like, how am I tasting this when it doesn't feel like it in my mouth? I was disappointed that I had to share the bowl of pizza bed with my girlfriend. I thought, I could just sit here and eat all this to myself. The dip that was with it was very nice. Think it might have been an aioli? A-O-ali? Whatever it's called.

Ed Gamble 36:45

I mean you were definitely closer the first time.

James Acaster 36:47

Yeah, yeah.

Ed Gamble 36:47

Rather than I-O-ani.

James Acaster 36:48

I think there was some sage. Some, you know, crispy sage leaves in there.

Claudia Winkleman 36:52

Can I just say: this has got to be some extraordinary bread to beat poppadoms. That's why I'm taking this deadly seriously. Are you, Ed?

Ed Gamble 36:58

Oh, I am absolutely. I mean, I'm also completely rapt as well because I want to try it so bad. I think James has described it wonderfully. I love that he's transported us to a savoury Willy Wonka's factory, presumably Billy Bonka, and I want to go there and I want to eat those little sticks.

James Acaster 37:13

If I was to like, do my top 100 poppadoms or breads, it would be this number one, and then the other 99 would all be poppadoms.

Claudia Winkleman 37:20

Got ya. I hope he hears this, that you ate one of these, did a star jump and said: "just so you know, if anyone ever asks me: this wins." And it has.



James Acaster 37:31

This wins and I was so happy with it. And you know, it was really difficult. In the notes, I was looking at it and going like, this doesn't represent me because it makes me sound like a Bread Boy and I'm a Poppadom Pal. But I'm going for it.

Claudia Winkleman 37:43

So be it.

James Acaster 37:44

Yeah, I would love to have that bread again.

Claudia Winkleman 37:46

Also after 99, you can change it if you want. I mean, it's now set in stone for the next 100, but—

Ed Gamble 37:53

Yeah, you're a Bread Boy for 100 episodes now. Yeah.

James Acaster 37:56

Also, may I ask: Me and Ed are sitting at the same table, right?

Claudia Winkleman 37:59

'course you are. But you just have different views.

James Acaster 38:02

Yeah, that's fair. That's fair enough.

Claudia Winkleman 38:03

I've created — Ed's side: brickwork, loud, spaced-out, atmosphere.

James Acaster 38:08

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 38:08

You: pond, sunset, huge window.

Ed Gamble 38:12

Lovely.

James Acaster 38:13

Well, I would like to try Ed's as well.

Claudia Winkleman 38:15

Oh, that's lovely.



Ed Gamble 38:16

Oh, yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 38:17

Of course you can.

Ed Gamble 38:17

We can dip into each other's.

Claudia Winkleman 38:19

You're great friends. This is the way of the world. You're in your Dream Restaurant.

James Acaster 38:22

Thank you very much.

Ed Gamble 38:23

Can I say quickly, my Honourable Munchion was: I was going to try and forego bread altogether and have deep fried olives from Spuntino.

James Acaster 38:30

Oh he loves them.

Claudia Winkleman 38:31

I've never heard of a deep fried olive.

Ed Gamble 38:33

So Spuntino is no longer. I miss Spuntino a lot, it's no longer open. It's a Russell Norman restaurant, who runs Polpo and all of those restaurants. I think they do them at Polpo as well, but they're green olives stuffed with an anchovy, breadcrumb, and then deep-fried. And they are the saltiest thing you will ever eat and absolutely phenomenal.

Claudia Winkleman 38:52

Delicious. Also — good with your pint of Guinness, right?

Ed Gamble 38:54

Exactly, perfect with my pint of water.

Claudia Winkleman 38:59

With your still water.

Claudia Winkleman 39:03



Here's a big question. Because I often think this is the most exciting part, right? You're in, you're flirting, you got your Guinness, you got your rhubarb drink. You've had– Both of you have had some pizza. You look across each at other and you go: "Ah, here comes our first course!"

Ed Gamble 39:20

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 39:21

So, James, what would you have?

James Acaster 39:23

Pass.

Ed Gamble 39:24

No, don't you dare do that.

James Acaster 39:25

I'm just joking, Ed, don't–

Ed Gamble 39:26

I can't even take that joke.

Claudia Winkleman 39:28

I panicked.

Ed Gamble 39:28

I'm not even having that as a joke. I would have gone, I would have left. The whole podcast! The whole podcast would be over.

Claudia Winkleman 39:34

Stop it.

Ed Gamble 39:35

I could not do a food podcast with someone who passed on a starter.

James Acaster 39:38

He didn't even laugh!

Ed Gamble 39:39

It's not funny. Because it's not funny.

James Acaster 39:41

He didn't even laugh at my joke. He carried on looking, he didn't even look at the camera. He looked down at his desk and he was like: "No."



Ed Gamble 39:48

Yeah: no, not having it. And if you'd passed, I would have got double starters. And then I would have left the podcast.

James Acaster 39:53

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 39:54

Wow.

James Acaster 39:54

Now, there are some Honourable Munchions here. Shout out to Prawns and Watermelon on the Rich Man's Yacht in Sydney.

Ed Gamble 40:01

Of course.

Claudia Winkleman 40:01

Wow.

James Acaster 40:02

Mae Martin chose it as her starter because she was on the yacht as well. The Rich Man made— well, his wife — she was down in the galley — made us the prawns with the watermelon and the lime juice squeezed all over it. It was absolutely delicious. I loved it. If this was a banquet and not a meal, they'd be on the table.

Ed Gamble 40:20

Because it's the Honourable Munchion, maybe you could see the Rich Man sail past on the yacht on the pond—

40:25

[all talking at once]

Ed Gamble 40:28

[as Rich Man] "You sure you're not tempted?"

Claudia Winkleman 40:31

You lean forward, you're holding on to the brickwork and opening the door, and using one of my bread baskets — now empty — to catch the prawns and watermelon.

Ed Gamble 40:39

Still, it's actually a hair, weirdly.



Claudia Winkleman 40:40

Yeah.

James Acaster 40:42

Yeah, he can be on his boat. Another shout out is the Keralan fried chicken from Cricket.

Ed Gamble 40:47

Of course.

James Acaster 40:48

Now, I absolutely love it. But the only reason it didn't make it in the list is because I've never had actual Keralan fried chicken from Kerala before. And I have to assume that that is the best Keralan fried chicken in the world. And so, what stops me shouting out the fried chicken from Cricket is that I kind of know there must be a better version of that dish out there somewhere, and I really want to try it. And I nearly chose, as my starter, Keralan fried chicken from Kerala, which I've never eaten before.

Ed Gamble 41:14

Yeah, but that's the true dream, right?

James Acaster 41:16

But I ended up going with something that I have had before, and that is the Tomato and Basil 3.0 from Atelier Crenn in San Francisco.

Claudia Winkleman 41:23

Can you just tell us a lot more because, as far as I'm concerned, you've just gone — you've chosen — this is it for another 100 episodes?

James Acaster 41:30

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 41:30

Some tomato.

Ed Gamble 41:31

Yeah, that's very much what I feel like as well, Claudia. I'll be honest.

Claudia Winkleman 41:35

I'd have been open to you just having some tomatoes on the table. You know what I mean? With the flowers, just tomatoes, lemons, like sometimes they have in France? Big knife, some lemons.

Ed Gamble 41:45

Yeah. Now I'll be honest, I'm also gonna cut in and say: I was worried with my menu that I was being too specific and it wasn't necessarily accessible to everyone who was listening to the podcast. And now all of my worries about that have been wiped away.



Claudia Winkleman 41:57

Oh no, James has beaten you on every level: a folded poppadom that we'll never try, some chicken from a... insect? Continue.

James Acaster 42:10

So, if we're kind of in Savoury Wonka-town again... Well, I'm revisiting Billy Bonka.

Ed Gamble 42:14

Thank you.

James Acaster 42:15

So, Atelier Crenn is, I saw it on Chef's Table, the Netflix documentary series. And there was a — I don't know if you remember the episode — it's a French lady and her dad died and she writes poems for every single course... And you go in and it's the most pretentious, maybe the most pretentious episode of Chef's Table. And it's all like: poetry is on the wall, and the menu is written in poetry. It was a very pretentious place.

Claudia Winkleman 42:42

However, what she can do with a tomato...

James Acaster 42:45

What she can do with a tomato... I mean, it came out and they just said: it's Tomato and Basil 3.0. And I thought: "I don't really like tomatoes that much, like tomatoes are okay. I've had them my whole life. I've never gone crazy for a tomato. I don't, I'm not really that bothered." Oh my God, it was like every single— They were small, but when I tell you what was on it, it will sound like it was a massive plate. Like a platter, but it was actually the classic small tasting menu plate. So there's raw tomato on there, sure, but like the best raw tomato you've ever had. Before I say everything on the dish: it was like I'd forgotten what tomatoes... It's like all my life I've been eating bad tomatoes that were just watered down and kind of all right. And then this was like, "this is what a tomato tastes like Acaster — check this out." And it was like the most rich, just satisfying, exciting, vibrant, tomato flavours. It was like I was seeing colours and shapes when I was eating it. It was amazing. One of the things that was on was, like, tomato raisins were on there. They weren't actual raisins. They were tomatoes but made so it was like— had the texture, the chewiness of raisins. They were like dehydrated tomatoes, I guess. Very delicious. There was melon gel. So there was a bit of melon on there, as well. There's melon gel and there's tomato gel. There's tomato confit, the raw tomato. I think there was some foam on there as well, some tomato water, which was again... Sounds delicious. It all tasted different, as well. So it was all like, here's every single—

Claudia Winkleman 44:16

It was a plethora!

James Acaster 44:17

— element of a tomato.



Claudia Winkleman 44:18

Yeah.

James Acaster 44:18

Here's every every, like, there's tomato purée on there. Just like, it was like—

Ed Gamble 44:24

Ketchup!

James Acaster 44:24

— it showed you the full range, every brilliant flavour you could get out of this one thing, and it was mind blowing and the textures were amazing. And I just wanted to keep eating it and eating it, and I didn't expect it at all at the beginning. I was like, "Oh God, they've given us a tomato" — and I knew she was big into tomatoes anyway. The chef, Chef Crenn, she loves tomatoes. And I knew that from the Chef's Table episode but... woo!

Claudia Winkleman 44:49

I just... I get it, you were in San Francisco, you were having a lovely time...

James Acaster 44:53

Tomato sorbet was on there!

Claudia Winkleman 44:55

But just to be clear: your Dream Menu? I just want to say this back to you, just so you can hear it.

James Acaster 45:03

I can hear it.

Claudia Winkleman 45:04

I get it: you were on a plane, you were holding hands, you were having a good time. "We have to go to this place, there's poetry on the walls" but you actually... your Dream Restaurant? This is your best ever? And I was nervous about the fizzy rhubarb beverage, but then you brought me back with pizza sticks. But what you're saying: it's a plate.

James Acaster 45:23

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 45:24

Tomato and melon gel. Tomato sorbet. Tomato water.

James Acaster 45:29

Yeah.



Claudia Winkleman 45:29

I mean, have you had other things?

Ed Gamble 45:31

I'm gonna jump in and defend James here because I've not had that dish but I know exactly what he's talking about — that when you taste something and the chef has worked magic and reduced something to its true components and made it taste the best it's ever tasted. I've had something probably slightly similar, there's a dish at Da Terra in Bethnal Green, where they do like a Tricolore Salad but it's with, like, tomato water and tomato oil and mozzarella and some, like, basil oil as well. And it is, it's phenomenal! You're like, "I've never tasted any tomato like this," and I can imagine—

Claudia Winkleman 45:33

I take it back.

Ed Gamble 45:48

—it's absolutely fantastic. But yes Claudia, you're right when when you do boil it down. James has picked tomato as his starter, yeah.

James Acaster 46:10

Yes, but — here's the thing — your reaction, Claudia, is perfectly valid and is part of why it's so amazing! Because I was like you. I was like, "Oh, come on. I don't want a plate of tomatoes." And then, you're like, "Oh, that's the best thing I've ever had as a starter." And so if you ate it, you would say, "Guys, can I redo my Off Menu episode because I've got a new favourite starter now, because it blew my mind?" And obviously there's basil in there as well because called Tomato and Basil 3.0. So there's that amazing... I mean, you can't go wrong with that combination.

Claudia Winkleman 46:44

No.

James Acaster 46:44

That's a dream team.

Claudia Winkleman 46:45

'Course.

James Acaster 46:45

I would choose tomato and basil over tomato and cheese. I think it's absolutely amazing.

Ed Gamble 46:49

Well, I was defending you, mate. So what're you playing at?

James Acaster 46:53

Yeah, apologies.



Ed Gamble 46:54

Thank you!

Claudia Winkleman 46:54

So, I like the fact that it was this magical moment in time, and it blew you away –

James Acaster 46:59

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 46:59

– and I'm happy for you to have that as your starter.

James Acaster 47:02

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 47:02

You're gonna be hungry though. Because so far you've had [drinking sounds] bit of rhubarb water...

James Acaster 47:08

There it is!

Ed Gamble 47:09

There it is!

James Acaster 47:11

Took you a long time to get there.

Claudia Winkleman 47:13

...a tiny little stick of non-cheese pizza bread with a tiny bit of garlic dip...

James Acaster 47:18

It's a bowl. It's a bowl of loads of sticks of pizza bread.

Claudia Winkleman 47:20

Okay, fine. And then a cherry tomato. I mean, I'm just–

James Acaster 47:23

And then a bunch of tomatoes and a whole load–

Claudia Winkleman 47:25

Okay, sure. Tomato raisins.

Ed Gamble 47:28



You've got to admit, James, you're hungrier than me at this point. Bearing in mind, I've had a pint of Guinness and a pizza.

James Acaster 47:33

Sure, but I'm always hungry. I'm pretty much always hungrier than Ed.

Ed Gamble 47:38

That's true. I don't like to be hungry.

James Acaster 47:41

Also, in previous episodes before — this has mainly happened we've got chefs on — we've let people have a drink for every single course.

Claudia Winkleman 47:48

I don't want to argue with you, it's your podcast.

James Acaster 47:50

I would like with my starter—

Claudia Winkleman 47:51

Tomato soup? Tomato?

Ed Gamble 47:54

You'll notice how I'm not objecting at all.

James Acaster 47:57

Because someone's done the same thing. But we haven't even talked about this, we've not conferred. But—

Ed Gamble 48:04

No, not at all.

James Acaster 48:04

—of course, we've both got a drink. Although this is where Ed might get annoyed me throughout the meal, I'm not sure. My drink with my starter: I would like the South American smoothie from Tropicana in Melbourne.

Ed Gamble 48:14

Oh my god, James. You're talking about going to, like, a high end tasting menu restaurant and eating this delicate tomato flavour and then you're having a tropical smoothie with it?!

James Acaster 48:23

Have you have you tried the smoothie, Ed?



Ed Gamble 48:25

I've not, but it doesn't go with that stuff.

Claudia Winkleman 48:27

It doesn't go with the delicate—

James Acaster 48:28

I'm having it afterwards. I'm gonna eat the starter and then—

Ed Gamble 48:31

No, you need to have it with it. If you want to order drinks with every course, you have to pair them with that course.

James Acaster 48:37

Okay, yeah, I'm fine with that.

Ed Gamble 48:38

That's got to be the rule.

Claudia Winkleman 48:39

He's happy, he wants it. What is in this smoothie? Why is it so magical?

James Acaster 48:42

No one knows what's in it, because they won't tell anyone.

Ed Gamble 48:44

Tomato.

James Acaster 48:46

Tomato and Basil. It's a secret, but it tastes like a giant Raspberry Petits Filous. It's delicious.

Claudia Winkleman 48:53

I love Raspberry Petits Filous.

James Acaster 48:54

It's the best smoothie I have ever ha— But it's also got some flavour that's absolutely incredible that I can't put my finger on what it is...

Claudia Winkleman 49:01

Sugar?

James Acaster 49:02

Oh, there's definitely sugar in it. Sure. I mean, I would hope the chef has put sugar in every single one of my foods that on this list. If any of these dishes don't have sugar on, I'm walking out. Well it's one of



the best drinks I've ever had — I could drink it every day — but as it is, I've only had it twice. When I've been in Melbourne and if you do go to Tropicana in Melbourne, then you've got to get the South American smoothie, not the South American juice.

Claudia Winkleman 49:27

Right.

James Acaster 49:27

I made that mistake once.

Claudia Winkleman 49:29

How thick is this smoothie?

James Acaster 49:30

Pretty thick.

Claudia Winkleman 49:31

Okay — but you're gonna need a straw for that, just going back on—

James Acaster 49:33

I will need a straw for that one and that's fine. Love slurping it up in the straw. It does have a kind of fromage frais-y kind of element to it. It does. I wouldn't be surprised if they're chucking Petits Filous in there. And there's loads of fresh fruit in there as well. They definitely are juicing fresh fruit into it.

Claudia Winkleman 49:50

Have you thought about these as individual dishes, or the whole meal? Because you are in Rhubarb, Tomato, Pizza and now Petits Filous world — and I'm just checking everything's fine...

James Acaster 50:03

Everything's great. This is— This is amazing. I'm having the best night of my life.

Ed Gamble 50:06

This is him at his absolute best, Claudia.

Claudia Winkleman 50:08

Okay, I just wanted to confirm that you're happy—

James Acaster 50:10

Yep, I'm looking out at the pond, I'm waving at the Rich Man.

Claudia Winkleman 50:14

Yeah, shucking a watermelon. Okay, that's your first course: the most beautiful tomato dish you've ever had in your life. And I think we're all convinced, it's amazing. Followed by quite thick raspberry yoghurt smoothie that somebody's gone to get you from Melbourne. Fine.



James Acaster 50:30

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 50:31

Ed, what is your first course?

Ed Gamble 50:32

I am having something that I only discovered fairly recently, but have had it a few times since then. So, obviously meal kits: big at the moment, what with lockdown.

Claudia Winkleman 50:43

Sure.

Ed Gamble 50:43

A lot of restaurants, a lot of people doing meal kits. I am absolutely obsessed with oysters, always have been. I love oysters, but I was always very militant about: always raw oysters, I don't like cooked oysters — until I had this. This is from a food delivery thing called Decatur. They are a, sort of, New Orleans–style thing where they send you crawfish boils or shrimp boils — we can't get crawfish here. But the other thing they do is they send you Oysters with a Pecorino Butter, which you put the Pecorino Garlic Butter on to the Oysters and then you chargrill the Oysters. And I do them on the barbecue and they are phenomenal. They send you so much butter and you put all this Pecorino Butter on to the top. You put the Oysters on the Half Shell on to a very hot barbecue. The butter goes into the fire, it bubbles up, it chargrills the sides. You just cook the Oysters and then you get a spoon and you slurp it out, wipe it around with a little bit of bread and it is phenomenal.

Claudia Winkleman 51:40

Okay.

James Acaster 51:41

He sent me a photo of these.

Claudia Winkleman 51:42

When you were putting your menu together, if you love oysters that much you just knew you had to have them and this is in the best formation...

Ed Gamble 51:49

This is the best way to have oysters. I mean yes, I have some Honourable Munchions: quick shout out to the Tamworth Belly Ribs from Hawksmoor, the Korean fried chicken from Bone Daddies, and just a general Meat and Cheese Platter — those are all things I considered. But I'm going with the Decatur Chargrilled Oysters with Garlic Pecorino Butter.

Claudia Winkleman 52:06



Okay. I mean, both — if you don't mind me saying, not in a bad way — quite fancy. Quite chic. A tomato ensemble.

Ed Gamble 52:14

I do need to add in that I will be having that with a Gin Martini made with Harris Gin with four olives in it. Thank you.

Claudia Winkleman 52:21

Oh my goodness.

James Acaster 52:21

Deep fried olives?

Claudia Winkleman 52:22

So you're hammered, right?

Ed Gamble 52:24

Oh I'm hammered.

Claudia Winkleman 52:25

You've had a pint of Guinness.

Ed Gamble 52:26

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 52:26

Suddenly you're covered in pizza because you've just rubbed it on your torso.

Ed Gamble 52:30

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 52:31

Then you're playing around with some oysters—

Ed Gamble 52:33

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 52:33

—but that makes sense. And you want a martini.

Ed Gamble 52:35

Oh, and I want a Harris Gin Martini. Thank you very much.

Claudia Winkleman 52:37



With four olives. Done. I'm very– I'm happy with you both. What I love is there's absolutely no crossover on any level.

Ed Gamble 52:44

No, there isn–

Claudia Winkleman 52:45

A tiny bit of pizza bread.

James Acaster 52:47

Yeah, course.

James Acaster 52:47

Yeah.

Ed Gamble 52:47

I would also say I'd like– Obviously it's a dream because someone else will be shucking the oysters. You do have to shuck them yourself and I've bought an oyster knife. I think I always knew I was destined to buy an oyster knife.

Ed Gamble 52:48

But I have — every time I've done this — I have spilt blood. So I would like someone else to shuck for me, please.

Claudia Winkleman 53:05

Okay. Well yeah, this is being brought to you in exposed wall area, next to the pond. Don't you worry, it's all being brought to you. How many would you like: 12? Six?

Ed Gamble 53:14

Last time we did it, we — me and my fiance — bought 24 Oysters so we had 12 each. So I will have 12.

Claudia Winkleman 53:21

Okay, and did she love them as well?

Ed Gamble 53:22

Oh, yeah, she loves them as well — otherwise, I wouldn't have bought 24. I would've– Actually I would have done and I would have had 24.

James Acaster 53:27

Yeah, come on. Let's not–

Claudia Winkleman 53:29

What does she think of your whole menu? Is she happy with it?



Ed Gamble 53:32

I showed it to her yesterday and she said it sounds nice, but it's completely different to what she would pick.

James Acaster 53:39

Good news, though — all the more for you. When Ed made those oysters, he sent me a photo of them and the photo did look incredible. Like, that photo was so good I'm surprised it didn't end up on my Honourable Munchions for my starter. It looked delicious, those— the oysters.

Claudia Winkleman 54:01

This is— Like, if I had a trumpet or if I could play the trumpet, I would right now be blowing it because— And if I was there, I'd put the baskets down but I would come out and make some sort of proclamation — because this is the big one. We're farting around. We're having a nice time. You've had a bit of bread. You've had a couple of drinks. You've had a smoothie. You know, everything's fine — but this is it. When you say to your girlfriends or your parents or your siblings or your best friends: we're going out for dinner. Big plate. Main course. Ed, what're you having?

Ed Gamble 54:36

That's what we say. Okay, this was — for me — I think, the hardest one. Although I don't have any Honourable Munchions because I think I needed, for my own sake, when I picked this to reject all other ideas. I had to go with one thing, otherwise I would have spent too long picking it.

Claudia Winkleman 54:55

Also, can I just say one thing before—

Ed Gamble 54:56

Yeah!

Claudia Winkleman 54:57

I get that Honourable Munchions etc. slightly dilute the passion—

Ed Gamble 55:02

Sure.

Claudia Winkleman 55:03

—one might have for their choice.

James Acaster 55:04

Sure.

Ed Gamble 55:05

I gave my Honourable Munchions with the Starter, because one of those things makes it on to the Main, because— Is it a loophole? I don't know. What I've— You know if you go to an American Barbecue restaurant, you can get a platter — you can select all the meats you want, all the sides you want. They



put it on a cool tray. You feel like you're in prison, but it's nice. And you can just— you can dig in. That's what I'm gonna do. And because it's a dream restaurant, I'm grabbing my tray, and I'm selecting my favourite barbecue meat dishes and vegetable dishes from different places that I've been that I love.

James Acaster 55:38

Global tapas.

Claudia Winkleman 55:39

Wait a minute, you're playing pick and mix. That's not a main course.

Ed Gamble 55:42

It is a main course. It's a barbecue meat tray.

Claudia Winkleman 55:46

It's a— Yeah, but suddenly you're throwing in sides?

Claudia Winkleman 55:49

Let me— Yeah, of course, because sides are included.

James Acaster 55:52

You're right, Claudia. You're right. However, again, loopholes within the podcast...

James Acaster 55:57

Get it.

James Acaster 55:58

Ed's gone global tapas and we've let someone do global tapas before.

Ed Gamble 56:04

But this is more coherent than global tapas, because it's still a barbecue meat tray. Still, everything's of the same type. So, let me talk you through it. You can tell me afterwards if you have any issues with it.

James Acaster 56:14

May I say before you say it: I'm so happy you've done this because—

Ed Gamble 56:18

Yeah?

James Acaster 56:19

—this is basically an Honourable Munchion for me.

Ed Gamble 56:21

Ah great, I'm very happy that I could make some of your dreams come true with this, James.



James Acaster 56:25

Thank you.

Ed Gamble 56:25

I would also say, I don't think I've had the best barbecue in the world because I've not been to Texas. If any TV commissioners out there would like to commission me for a travel show where I go and try barbecue in Texas, I'd be very on board with that.

James Acaster 56:37

Solo show? Presenting that on your own?

Ed Gamble 56:39

No, you can come. Okay, so I'm having Beef Brisket and I'm having that from Smokestack in London. That is the best barbecue restaurant in London, ever since Shotgun Barbecue shut, which was on Carnaby Street. Smokestack is phenomenal. I'm having brisket from there. I'm having the Tamworth Belly Ribs from Hawksmoor, they're going on there as well: pork belly — incredible. I'm having the Beef Ribs from Pitt Cue in London. It's now in the City, I think, used to be where Ugly Dumplings was Carnaby Street again. Am I having— No, I'm not going to have the sausage. I'm just going to have the brisket, the pork belly and the beef ribs. And then I'm having a range of sauces including The Rib Man Bacon Holy Fuck sauce. Few vegetables: I'm having the Cauliflower Shawarma from Berber & Q — absolutely incredible. It's a chargrilled cauliflower, and they put this tahini sauce on it. It's amazing. That's going on the tray. And then, I'm not gonna go wild with the sides because that does feel like cheating. But I am gonna have some cornbread and I am gonna have some pickles, including the Pitt Cue Pickled Shiitakes from their recipe book, which I made the other day and they're phenomenal. And on that tray, I'm also having a bourbon: a Pappy Van Winkle bourbon. Thank you very much.

Claudia Winkleman 57:44

I mean, I've got to allow it because it feels cohesive. He wants meat—

Ed Gamble 57:49

Thank you, that's what I was trying to say.

Claudia Winkleman 57:50

— and he wants it on a tray. And that's what he wants. He's probably going to eat it with his hands. I'm not an expert.

Ed Gamble 57:56

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 57:56

You know, he wants to. He's tucking in. He's got open brickwork. There's some ivy trailing down. He's sitting opposite one of his best friends. There's a pond. And he wants a big old tray of meat.

Ed Gamble 58:07



I want the restaurant, as well, to stink of meat, Claudia. I want it to be smoky and stink of meat. I want my clothes– I want to have to throw away my clothes in the bin afterwards.

Claudia Winkleman 58:15

Chuck them in a skip.

James Acaster 58:16

I'm more than all right with this. However, actually– I'm not completely alright with it.

Ed Gamble 58:20

Oh, dear.

James Acaster 58:21

I would like to add something to Ed's plate.

Ed Gamble 58:23

Oh, please.

James Acaster 58:24

Best beef brisket I've ever had was at Pecan Lodge in Dallas.

Ed Gamble 58:28

I'd love to go there. I'm very jealous that you've been there.

James Acaster 58:30

If I may say to the waiter: "Excuse me, can you send that over to the man at the table and tell him it's from me?"

Ed Gamble 58:37

If we can– Yeah because I've not been there, I didn't feel like I could add it to my dream meal, Claudia, but because my dining companion has been–

Claudia Winkleman 58:43

I'm happy for that to be in the middle, yes.

Ed Gamble 58:45

Yes! I've got double brisket!

Claudia Winkleman 58:48

Double brisket!

James Acaster 58:49

The beef brisket from Pecan Lodge was one of my Honourable Munchions. I was in Dallas for two days and I ate there twice.



Claudia Winkleman 58:58

Indicative.

James Acaster 58:59

Because the first time I went there and had the beef brisket. At that point, it was the best thing I'd ever tasted and I was going absolutely gaga. And then, I went there the next day and I had it again.

Claudia Winkleman 59:10

Ed, all I'm saying is the cauliflower— I'm interested in your side dish — we'll come on to that later — but that is a side dish. I mean, just as one of your guests... I took it all very seriously, like... I know we ended up with the mug situation, but that feels... not the cornbread, I'm just saying it.

Ed Gamble 59:29

Look, I kind of agree with you. If we're looking at the tray and we're looking at what's cohesive and what fits: my argument would be that Berber & Q is a fantastic grill barbecue Middle Eastern restaurant, where they cook everything over an open flame — so that's where I thought it fitted. But if you would like me to lose that—

Claudia Winkleman 59:48

No, I can't. I can't do it to you, because of your little face. You suddenly looked about four. I can't. Have it, have more cauliflower. Grill him. Somebody get an open flame.

James Acaster 59:57

Also we've let people in the past do full—

Claudia Winkleman 59:59

Of course.

James Acaster 1:00:00

We've let people do: a full breakfast, a full roast dinner—

Claudia Winkleman 1:00:03

Yeah, yeah.

James Acaster 1:00:03

—for their main course, you know.

Claudia Winkleman 1:00:05

What?!

Ed Gamble 1:00:05

I'm just happy to have given it a shout out, you know. It's— The tahini sauce is just incredible. And also, I've picked Pappy Van Winkle bourbon because it's the Dream Restaurant and it's so expensive, Pappy



Van Winkle. I've only tried it once, in a bar in New Zealand, because they had it and I thought: I'm away, let's splash out. But if you wanted to buy a bottle of Pappy Van Winkle, they only make so much of it every year and it's thousands of pounds.

Ed Gamble 1:00:07

They sell them on— They, like, auction them off. I mean, I'd be just as happy with a Bullet — a Bullet bourbon — but the Pappy Van Winkle for the Dream Meal, please.

James Acaster 1:00:33

Question, Ed?

Ed Gamble 1:00:34

Please, James.

James Acaster 1:00:35

Are you happy if, on this occasion, we change the name to Claudia van Winkleman?

Ed Gamble 1:00:41

I would be more than happy! That bottle would be worth even more, because there's an old man on the front normally — Pappy Van Winkle — and I want to see Claudia on the bottle instead.

Claudia Winkleman 1:00:48

I want an old man who doesn't touch water on the front then. I think that sounds like a very thrilling Main course.

Ed Gamble 1:00:56

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 1:00:56

I think you'd be excited about that. Yes, you've had your pizza and your Guinness, but it's all about— Just you wait, what's coming... Seven people have to carry it in. Brisket away. Here's a bib. Let's go.

Ed Gamble 1:01:08

I've not considered quite how bad I'm gonna feel at this point. I think in my Dream Restaurant, I can't feel full or ill.

Claudia Winkleman 1:01:15

Yes.

Ed Gamble 1:01:16

Because by this point, I'd be on the floor.

Claudia Winkleman 1:01:18



Yeah, I think that's important. Of course. I started with Toast and Marmite, Mac and Cheese. I mean, you've just got to have your very favourite things. So I think that's fine.

Ed Gamble 1:01:26

Yes, exactly.

Claudia Winkleman 1:01:27

James.

James Acaster 1:01:27

Hello.

Claudia Winkleman 1:01:28

You nodded when Ed said this was the hardest one to come up with. Was this the hardest for you?

James Acaster 1:01:32

Really difficult. And I was surprised, I thought Dessert was gonna be the hardest. I bet Ed thought Starter was gonna be the hardest.

James Acaster 1:01:38

But actually, that was fine. Again, it's like, you know, I've had more— I've enjoyed poppadoms more than I've enjoyed bread — and yet bread is what I went for. I've enjoyed Desserts more than I've enjoyed Main course, and yet I probably had— No, it's the other around. I'd say Dessert's my favourite out of the two, but I've probably had better Main courses— I've had so many good Main courses, and it was really hard.

Ed Gamble 1:01:38

Yeah, I did.

Ed Gamble 1:01:58

Wow.

James Acaster 1:01:58

To narrow it down. Brisket from Pecan Lodge is in my notes as a shout out, as are the Skate Wing Tacos from KOL, which me and Ed had together.

Ed Gamble 1:02:05

Yes!

James Acaster 1:02:06

Where they just bring the Skate out, and it is so perfectly cooked that you get a fork and you're just combing the fish off the bone. It just comes off. Just combing it off, and then making the tacos yourself. But what I've gone for — and I think it's a combination of things — if this is ever on the menu anywhere, I'm ordering it. So just as a dish, it's one of my favourite dishes. But also, when I had it at this particular



place, it's just a lovely memory and one of the just nicest dining experiences I've ever had. I would like Beef Wellington from Ron Gastrobar in Amsterdam.

Ed Gamble 1:02:42

Oh yes!

Claudia Winkleman 1:02:42

I think that's a brilliant choice.

Ed Gamble 1:02:44

Yeah, it really is! Beef Wellington crossed my mind as well. But the one... I had a really fun one at Bob Bob Ricard. But generally you're right: Beef Wellington, if it's on a menu you've got to go for it.

James Acaster 1:02:54

I love it so much.

Claudia Winkleman 1:02:56

Why was this one so particularly good?

Ed Gamble 1:02:59

Because he was having a breakdown.

James Acaster 1:03:02

Uh-huh.

Ed Gamble 1:03:02

'Cause you were having a breakdown?

Claudia Winkleman 1:03:02

Very stoned? I love you.

James Acaster 1:03:06

Ed's one is right. Your one is fictional, for a laugh. Ed was actually completely on the nose. But like, it was a nice moment during a bad patch in my life. So like, I'd had a bad... a bad year. An entirely bad personal year. And then I'd gone to Amsterdam at the very— in January, the following year, to hang out with my friend who lived there and also work on some music with him, for some fun. But I was staying with him and his girlfriend. I was very aware that they were not having any time alone, because I was around all the time. So one night, I was like: "Hey, I'm going to go out for a meal tonight. You know, you guys can have me out of your hair for a bit." And I just basically just googled, you know, best places to eat in Amsterdam and this Ron Gastrobar place looked good. Also, I wanted it to be roughly an hour, an hour and a half walk because I wanted to have a proper walk. I hadn't explored enough. Actually I had, I'd been cycling around and I'd fallen off my bike. But I wanted a walk.

Claudia Winkleman 1:04:04



I feel bad.

James Acaster 1:04:05

It was awful. I went around a corner and it was just ice, and the bike just wasn't there anymore. And I was like, "this is really going to hurt". But I had my iPod in my pocket and I really didn't want to fall on my iPod, because I didn't want my iPod to break — so I chose to land on my knees. Just directly on my knees. And then continued to cycle around, and then I was thinking about how much my knees hurt so much I got lost.

Ed Gamble 1:04:30

They don't make iPod Classics anymore, but you can get knees.

James Acaster 1:04:32

Yeah, yeah. Get new knees, can't you? Doesn't matter. Walked an hour and a half to this place.

Claudia Winkleman 1:04:36

In January?

James Acaster 1:04:37

In January. Got there. I mean, one of my favourite meals I've ever had as well, alongside Noma. For just memorable meals, the whole meal. You know, the bread there nearly made it in. Actually the butter, was the best butter I've ever had for the bread. They brought out whipped butter with tiny bits of, like, puffed pork scratchings in the butter. And it was so good, like, you know, I'd probably have that butter on the table for my bread course as well, if I was allowed that.

Claudia Winkleman 1:05:03

That's fine.

James Acaster 1:05:03

I order the Beef— I was really hungry. Ordered the Beef Wellington and the waiter warned me and said, "This is for two. This Beef Wellington is for two." I was like, "Yeah, I'm ordering."

Claudia Winkleman 1:05:14

Quite the year, mate. Bring it.

James Acaster 1:05:15

Yeah. "Believe you, me, sir. I'm having that Beef Wellington." And I did not regret it. It was just the most delicious— And like, Beef Wellington's, like, you know... I think there's something about a Beef Wellington — and I think I've told this story on the podcast before — but when I was first in New Zealand, I was on a tour with a bunch of other comics. And we stopped at this one place to have a meal. And we ordered a Beef Wellington between us all and it was so good. And afterwards, one of us said, "I'd really like another one of them" and most— We were all English apart from one guy who was Australian. And the rest of us were, like, almost fantasising about: "what if we ordered another one? Ah, wouldn't that be a nice world..." and the Australian guy went: "well let's order another one." We were



like, "We can do that? Didn't even cross our mind to do it!" And he just was like, "Yeah, we're ordering another one." And the second one was even better than the first because we were like, "We're living life! We're doing it! We ordered two Beef Wellingtons!"

Ed Gamble 1:06:06

I think that might be an Australian thing, you know?

James Acaster 1:06:08

Yeah.

Ed Gamble 1:06:08

I don't know if I've told this story on the podcast before. The Australian comedian Damian Clark has completely changed my life. When we flew– We were flying to Dubai to do gigs, and it was 10 in the morning and the air hostess came 'round. And went: "Would you like a drink?" And I went, "Oh, no, thank you," and Damo went, "whiskey and coke, please." And I went, Damo, "what are you doing, it's 10am?" And he went, "never say no on a travel day!" It completely changed my life. Now: whenever I'm flying anywhere, whenever I'm doing international travel, I never say no.

James Acaster 1:06:40

And do you always think of Damo, every time?

Ed Gamble 1:06:42

I always think of Damo saying, "never say no on a travel day."

James Acaster 1:06:45

Yeah, like that kind of stuff, when someone else does it and you go: "Of course!"

Claudia Winkleman 1:06:48

Yeah.

James Acaster 1:06:49

"We should be doing that!"

Claudia Winkleman 1:06:50

Yeah.

James Acaster 1:06:50

So, when the person said, "this Beef Wellington is for two," I was like, "You don't know me, mate."

Claudia Winkleman 1:06:55

"What's your point?"

James Acaster 1:06:56



"Tom Gleeson taught me: always have two Beef Wellingtons, so... that'll be two please." And it was the best Beef Wellington I've ever had. The one that I had with the comics New Zealand is a very close second. It was incredible.

Claudia Winkleman 1:07:08

But this one, describe— Rare beef? Crisp pastry?

James Acaster 1:07:12

Perfectly cooked, but— Basically, with a Beef Wellington, I want it that if you took the Beef out of the Wellington: on its own, it would be an incredible steak.

Claudia Winkleman 1:07:20

Yeah.

James Acaster 1:07:20

You don't want it to just be like: where the beef's a secondary thought, it's about the whole dish, and people will just, like, they'll like it, who cares? The steak on its own would have been one of the best steaks I've ever had. There's this amazing beef, rare, delicious. The sauce — and it's always like the surprise, kind of, like star of the Beef Wellington is the sauce. But then, I guess that's where you get a lot of the flavour from, but just the mushroom... I think it's like a mushroomy kinda sauce round the—

Ed Gamble 1:07:44

Duxelles, I believe the word is.

James Acaster 1:07:46

Oh, that was exquisite. So flavorful. That was what I was mainly thinking about on the walk home. And the pastry, perfectly flaky golden pastry on the outside. And I took a photo of it. It was my phone wallpaper for months on end. I just look at it all the time and think about how delicious it was, how much I loved it.

Ed Gamble 1:08:06

Can you believe that the year that James had Beef Wellington as his phone wallpaper wasn't the bad year?

Claudia Winkleman 1:08:12

That's exactly right. No, but it was a magical night. It was the beginning, it was— something new was happening.

James Acaster 1:08:18

Yeah, I felt something new was happening. I didn't order dessert because I was full. That's like, you know, amazing — that one of the best meals I've had, well, I didn't order dessert. But as I left, they just handed me a mini ice cream —

James Acaster 1:08:30



– that I wasn't expecting, just on the way out the door. They're like, there you go. I was like, "Oh my god. Look, my life is really turning round here."

Claudia Winkleman 1:08:30

Oh!

James Acaster 1:08:37

James remembers things like that, like that would have affected James a lot. Being handed a mini ice cream, he would have gone back to his friends and gone: "And they handed me a mini ice cream!" And his friend would have been quite rightly like, "Oh yeah, that sounds nice." And then the next morning James would have got up and gone: "Did I tell you, they handed me a mini ice cream?"

Claudia Winkleman 1:08:54

Can I just reiterate here–

James Acaster 1:08:56

We went to New York. We went to New York beginning of last year and we've been previously. And the previous trip, James spent all day going: "I'd really like a hot mulled cider." Just all day, kept saying that. And then we were in a shop, looking at some coats or something. And the woman who work there came over and went, "Hi, we're doing some hot mulled cider today — would you would you like a mug for free?" and James was like "What?!" But didn't stop talking about it for the rest of the holiday, like just kept going: "Do you remember? Do you remember? I said I wanted cider — and then a woman gave me cider!"

James Acaster 1:09:31

It was in a clothes shop! You've got to understand. We'd been in loads of pubs, where I'd said, "I hope they do hot mulled cider here," and they never did. I was like, "oh, they're never gonna have it." And then we went into a clothing store in the daytime and a lady came up and went: "Would you like a hot mulled cider?" Like this must be a weird dream I've having where I'm getting my location's wrong. But it wasn't! We didn't have to even buy anything from the shop, I just had a free hot mulled cider. Didn't even have to pay for it. And I walked out and I was so happy. I think about that all the time. I think about the free mini ice cream I had. On the walk home.

Claudia Winkleman 1:10:06

Yeah?

James Acaster 1:10:06

I really needed a shit, because I had eaten so much food and it was like, I'm not going to make it home. I knew I wasn't gonna make–

Claudia Winkleman 1:10:13

It's an hour and a half.

James Acaster 1:10:14



Yeah. I was like, there's no way I'm making it to my friend's house. And also — if I do, I don't want to drop this shit in his house. Because I know it's going to be bad.

Ed Gamble 1:10:21

Yeah, that sort of takes away from the nice gesture, doesn't it? Going like, "I'll leave you to have some time with your girlfriend," and then you get back and drop a massive—

Claudia Winkleman 1:10:27

No one wants to go in there.

James Acaster 1:10:29

Massive beefy shit for him. So like, I was like this is gonna be— You know when it's in the chamber, but you can feel it. It's let you know?

Ed Gamble 1:10:36

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

James Acaster 1:10:36

It's going: "I'm gonna be a bad one." And so I went in this pub—

Claudia Winkleman 1:10:39

"Release me."

James Acaster 1:10:40

I was like, "I'll do just a shit in this pub, I don't care." And I walked in and no one was in there, it's empty. But the owner was on the phone and he just watched me walk in, go to the toilet, be in there for longer than it took to have a piss, then come out. So I thought, "Oh, I feel bad now." So I went and ordered a drink and I asked for something local. And he poured me a sour beer — I've talked about this on the podcast before, I think. I'd never had sour beer before and drinking that sour: it was the most refreshing, delicious drink I'd ever had at that point. And it was after this most amazing meal. And then I had this— Suddenly was like, "Oh I love sour beer!"

Ed Gamble 1:11:13

Let's not beat around the bush, an amazing shit.

James Acaster 1:11:14

An amazing shit, an amazing walk, and then sour beer after it was so, so good.

Claudia Winkleman 1:11:21

I've never even heard of sour beer.

James Acaster 1:11:23

Ah, I've not had one that's been as good since. I've had a lot of sour beers since and actually, they're too much for me. The first mouthful's brilliant, and then it's like, "oh no, I can't drink this whole thing. I



feel sick." That one, whatever it was, and I don't even know the name of it. But that one from the pub I had a shit in.

Claudia Winkleman 1:11:42

Your favourite memory.

Ed Gamble 1:11:43

Do you want that with the Main course then?

Claudia Winkleman 1:11:45

I was gonna ask that — because you were allowed bourbon. What are you having with a Beef Wellington? If you say a Tropical Smoothie, I'll burst into tears — so think about this.

James Acaster 1:11:56

I think I do want that sour beer. From the pub. I had other ones written down. Yeah, I'm gonna go for that. I'm gonna go for the sour beer, because I think that whole experience of the Beef Wellington, and then that sour beer on the way home... Those two things were life changing. So yeah, I've got to go for it. That's the dream team.

Claudia Winkleman 1:12:15

If you don't mind me saying: two brilliant, brilliant main courses.

James Acaster 1:12:19

Oh, yeah?

Ed Gamble 1:12:20

I think it's a testament, as well, to James that I would happily sub out my Main course to try his as well.

James Acaster 1:12:26

And Ed's chosen an Honourable Munchion of mine.

Ed Gamble 1:12:28

There you go.

James Acaster 1:12:29

And I've added my Honourable Munchion to his dish.

Claudia Winkleman 1:12:30

Yeah, there you go. You just threw something in. You've got your Beef Wellington, your sour beer, you're by your pond. There's still the Rich Man tossing up watermelon and prawns. You've had some tomato, you've had a tropical smoothie. What do you want on the side, James? What do you want on the side?

James Acaster 1:12:53



This was also quite difficult actually. Honourable Munchions: the vegetarian version of the rice cakes from Mission Chinese in New York. I think Ed would probably prefer the meaty ones, the more smoky ones.

Ed Gamble 1:13:04

The triple cook bacon one.

James Acaster 1:13:05

Yeah, but I prefer the vegetarian one. I think that's one of the best side dishes that I've ever had. This is something else that we've mentioned on the podcast many times this next Honourable Munchion: Wasabi King Prawns from Tao Tao Ju — circa 2016 to 2018, before they changed the sauce.

Claudia Winkleman 1:13:20

Love it. Quite specific and I'm into it.

James Acaster 1:13:23

When they changed the sauce. You know, I mentioned it on the podcast and then the next time I went in, the guy came over to me and was like, "How was the sauce?" I still order the king prawns, because I still live in hope they're going to be as good as they were back in the day. And he asked me how the prawns were. And I said to him, "they were nice. Have you changed the sauce?" And he went, "Aha! Gamble said we changed the sauce." And then he showed me on his phone, the podcast and I realised that he thought that Ed was me on the podcast.

Claudia Winkleman 1:13:46

No, that's hilarious!

Ed Gamble 1:13:46

So at least we can finally iron this out... If the man from Tao Tao Ju is listening, that's James saying you've changed the sauce. I do not believe you've changed the source.

James Acaster 1:13:47

Well, he confirmed they'd changed it to me.

Ed Gamble 1:13:56

Alright. Okay, I believe you changed the source, but I don't care.

Claudia Winkleman 1:13:58

Yeah, you're still happy.

James Acaster 1:14:00

It gets an Honourable Munchion, but it'd have to be 2016 to 2018. But my Side Dish is the Berkswell Pudding from Aulis in Soho.

Ed Gamble 1:14:07



Oh yes!

Claudia Winkleman 1:14:08

Wait, what is it? Talk me through it. Ed's so happy he's fallen off his chair.

James Acaster 1:14:12

I was sitting next to Ed when I first ate it. A perk of doing the podcast — Simon Rogan came on this podcast and then invited us to his Soho restaurant for— It was an evening when they were trying out some new dishes, right Ed? Stuff like that.

Ed Gamble 1:14:24

I think so, yeah.

James Acaster 1:14:25

And you know, me and Ed have been lucky enough to be invited to a couple of those by chefs who have been on the podcast. And often it's like, the guests are a top chef, a top food critic, and then two idiot comedians — who are finishing all of their wine, every single course. And the chef will occasionally sneak us some extra stuff, because we're going absolutely crazy for it.

Ed Gamble 1:14:51

We're basically on the kids table.

James Acaster 1:14:52

Yeah, going "whoa!" and making those noises [unintelligible] And everyone else is like, chin stroking and stuff. Like, heads are spinning. It was a mouthful — just a single mouthful, if you're greedy boys like us — and it was, I guess, a Bread and Butter Pudding but savoury with, like, this cheese? Berkswell cheese?

Ed Gamble 1:15:13

I think it's Berkswell cheese, yeah.

James Acaster 1:15:15

It's amazing cheese through it and the bread is like croissants, right?

Claudia Winkleman 1:15:19

Wow!

Ed Gamble 1:15:19

Yeah, it's like croissant dough type stuff. I mean, it is phenomenal and it's one little cube, and it's very rich. So I think they do one little cube because that's all you need really, if it's part of a big meal, but like James says we're very greedy. So the chef Tom Barnes — shout out to Tom Barnes — had to sneak us an extra portion each across the table, which was difficult because it's very much an open kitchen scenario. So everyone saw him doing it.



Ed Gamble 1:15:20

Yeah, people weren't happy at the end of the meal when they discovered we'd had two of those. They were like, "what?!"

James Acaster 1:15:42

But it sounds delicious!

James Acaster 1:15:47

It melts in the mouth.

Claudia Winkleman 1:15:49

Yeah.

James Acaster 1:15:49

And it is one of those food experiences where— Yeah, like nothing was happening inside my head. It was just me going:

Claudia Winkleman 1:15:57

Holy moan.

James Acaster 1:15:58

It made me close my eyes and out loud vocalise how amazing it was. And I was glad there weren't many people in there, and it was just a few of us at a table because if it was a big full restaurant, everybody would've gone like, "When Harry Met Sally over there on that table? What's going on?" I would have happily — if they said, "and that's all you're having tonight, constantly one after the other we're just gonna bring these out."

Claudia Winkleman 1:16:17

You'd have gone: "fine."

James Acaster 1:16:18

I've have been like, "Yep, sign me up for that."

Ed Gamble 1:16:20

It's got some really weird stuff in it, as well, that you know, I'm sure it all contributes to the taste, but I would never go: "Oh, that's what I liked about it." So it's got birch sap on it. I'm just looking at up now. It's like truffley and it's soaked in like birch sap. And then they grate the Berkswell cheese over the top.

Claudia Winkleman 1:16:36

It sounds amazing. You had me at croissant dough.

James Acaster 1:16:38

Yeah.



Ed Gamble 1:16:39

So good.

James Acaster 1:16:40

Yeah, again, I'd eat that every day. Yeah, if it was available. I'd eat it every day. Once a day — I wouldn't want to like, you know, go too nuts — but it was just so good. And I've only had it that once, you know.

Claudia Winkleman 1:16:51

Which makes it even more special.

James Acaster 1:16:53

So yeah, a lot of these are things that I've had once and I haven't, you know, I haven't been able to go back and have it again. And I really— I just think about it so much and I really want to eat them again.

Claudia Winkleman 1:17:01

Okay.

Ed Gamble 1:17:02

I was very lucky that one of the chefs at Aulis, Oli Marlow, sent me the Aulis home meal kit. And I noticed on the website that an optional extra is to add that Berkswell Pudding. And he brought the meal around, but it was delicious. It was so good. And I opened the bag and there was no Berkswell Pudding in it and I thought for a second about getting him back and complaining — but then I realised it was a lovely gift and you can't really do that.

Claudia Winkleman 1:17:26

"This is all well and good mate, but—"

Ed Gamble 1:17:27

Yeah. "Where's the—"

Claudia Winkleman 1:17:28

So that's a very successful Side Dish, James. And Ed, you'd be happy — maybe I'd bring over enough for both of you.

Ed Gamble 1:17:34

Yeah, please.

James Acaster 1:17:35

I just realised two things. One is that I said I'd never had any of these things more than once, but the Beef Wellington I went back a few days later and got it again. And I brought my friend with me — that was the excuse — and the waiter came over — and it was a different waiter than the one I had before — and the waiter came over and he immediately said, "So, you're the person who had the Beef Wellington to themselves the other day?" So that'd got around the kitchen. Also, with my Side Dish, I



would like a Rosé Smash from Hoppers to drink — a delicious cocktail from Hoppers. It's got Rosé Vermouth in it. And again, one of those inexplicable flavours. I'd really struggle to— I mean, I'd guess it's just the Rosé Vermouth is the main flavour in it, what it tastes like, but I haven't tasted anything like it anywhere else. It's a real, can't put my finger on it flavour. It comes in a lovely cold metal cup, and it's probably the best cocktail I've ever had anywhere.

Claudia Winkleman 1:18:27

Wow.

James Acaster 1:18:27

I really love it. It's delicious. I want that with my Main course. You know, I mean, I'm thinking that, maybe, the Rosé Smash — 'cause you brought up, you know, what would go better with stuff — maybe would have gone better with my Starter. And then maybe, the fruit smoothie I would have with my Side.

Claudia Winkleman 1:18:41

Drink.

Ed Gamble 1:18:41

—the Drink, which — I guess we're having individual drinks with all of the courses and another main Drink that's being brought to us throughout the Meal. Is that right, James?

Ed Gamble 1:18:41

I tell you, what I like about this is I didn't know we were going to do a drink with the Side Dish as well — because then obviously after the Side Dish, we're coming on to—

James Acaster 1:18:57

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 1:18:57

He's going to fall into the pond. Ed?

Ed Gamble 1:18:59

Okay, Side Dish. Again, a fairly recent thing for me. There is a Chinese restaurant in Clapton called Lucky and Joy it is an absolute delight. I've got delivery from there multiple occasions in the last year or so. And one of their side dishes that they're known for, one of their dishes are simply called Sesame Noodles. I've picked this because it packs such a sesame punch.

Claudia Winkleman 1:19:24

Yeah.

Ed Gamble 1:19:24

It's cold as well and I thought a cold side dish might go nicely. They're egg noodles, but with a sort of creamy sesame sauce. It looks very simple. It is very simple, but it tastes absolutely delicious. I love sesame flavour and this is just the perfect side dish for me. But I am going to have it with a little bowl,



on the side, of crispy chilli oil that I can use if I feel like it and it's specifically Lao Gan Ma Crispy Chilli Oil — it's the jar with the lady on the front.

Claudia Winkleman 1:19:51

Okay, I— Do you know what? I've had cold sesame noodles before — I'd forgotten — they were the best thing I've ever eaten. I only had it once in New York and they have it a lot— And they're just freeze— They're, sort of, not freezing cold — they're almost peanut buttery and sesame and just—

Ed Gamble 1:20:07

Yes! Yeah — exactly, exactly. They're so good and I always feel like ordering just that from them, but they have some amazing other dishes. But I do just want to call them up and go, "Send me the biggest vat of sesame noodles you can—"

Claudia Winkleman 1:20:19

Bathful.

Ed Gamble 1:20:19

And I'll maybe add a little bit of chilli oil to it. Just a bathful of those sesame noodles. Incredible. I don't have a great story surrounding it about how I had a hard year. I had a great year, because I was eating sesame noodles.

James Acaster 1:20:29

He's had a lot of great years, Ed has. Again, I'm very happy that Ed has chosen— because, like, I love sesame as a flavour — think it's so good and underrated. People forget it a lot. People forget how good sesame stuff is. And I'm just glad it's made an appearance on Ed's menu. I haven't been able to put it into mine. Yesterday, when I was doing my cook-along with my mum.

Claudia Winkleman 1:20:50

Adorable.

Ed Gamble 1:20:50

Wow.

James Acaster 1:20:50

We used sesame oil and I told my mom a story that I was like— I told her the story about sesame oil and was like, "If the Great Benito was here, that'd get edited out of tonight. She was like, "I hadn't got any sesame oil myself, but the recipe says sesame oil..." So I was like, "I've got sesame oil, mum! Actually, it's funny, you know, when I first moved to London, like, over 10 years ago, I had that Jamie Oliver cookbook and the first thing I learned to cook from it had sesame oil in the recipe. I had to go out and buy all the ingredients and I bought sesame oil and it was the only oil I had in the house for a while."

James Acaster 1:21:21

That was the story, it was me going— Me saying to her, "because, I said it was the first time I'd ever bought oil, mum! So like, I actually thought that sesame oil was, like, that must be the main oil and will



be in loads of my meals. I didn't know that olive oil and sunflower oil were, you know, people liked more... Vegetable oil, you know? Sesame oil's actually quite rare, isn't it?!"

Claudia Winkleman 1:21:41

The brilliant thing about mums is she loves you so much she would have been fascinated by that story, and might have told one of her friends today. "Oh I did a cook-along with James, I'm very proud of him. He's wonderful. After that year he had when he ended up with the Beef Wellington, turned him around... You're not going to believe the only oil he had in his house!"

James Acaster 1:21:58

"James used to think that sesame oil was the main oil? Did everyone know that?"

Claudia Winkleman 1:22:03

"Such a success, you wouldn't know! We're doing a cook-along next week."

Ed Gamble 1:22:06

God, shout out to Roast Brussel Sprouts. Yeah, just general shout out to Roast Brussel Sprouts and shout out to the Xian Bing dumplings from XU in Soho, which is a wonderful Taiwanese restaurant, but they do a little pork dumpling which is almost in like pastry. It's like a pastry dumpling, it's like little pie with minced pork in it, which is phenomenal. And that is one thing I will always double order because my fiancée will always be like, "We've ordered too much food again." I'd be like, "Well, I'm gonna prove you wrong: I'm gonna eat all of this and then I'm going to order more of those."

Claudia Winkleman 1:22:38

"til it comes out my ears."

Ed Gamble 1:22:39

Yes, exactly. And to drink with that, please, I would like a Little Bastard wine.

Claudia Winkleman 1:22:46

What's that?

James Acaster 1:22:47

Ooh.

Ed Gamble 1:22:47

It is a wine. It's by a producer called Staffelter Hof, a German producer. It's Riesling and Muscat blend, I believe. Maybe Sauvignon Blanc in there as well. Me and James first had it at the other fancy chef thing we were invited to, by a wonderful chef called Santiago Lastra who runs KOL, who make those Skate Tacos. And he had a house in Acton, which he turned into an industrial kitchen to test dishes in and would host dinner parties there. And we got invited there and he said, "this is—" It's the first time I'd had natural wine, I think, and he said, "This is Little Bastard wine." I've never tasted anything like it. It's kind of sweet. It's got, like, a lot of stone fruit flavour to it, but it's a Riesling so it's very good with spicy Asian foods. That's why I'm putting it with these noodles and now I'm obsessed with it. Most wines I will have



and be like, "That was delicious, I'll move on and try some other wines." This is a wine I buy on a regular basis. I got Nish Kumar into it. Nish Kumar now buys magnums of it and drinks them by himself.

Claudia Winkleman 1:23:43

Everything's fine, guys. Everything's fine.

Ed Gamble 1:23:46

Everything's fine. It's fairly low alcohol. It's like 11%, like, some natural wines are lower alcohol, which is why I like them because you can properly guzzle them. So I would like a chilled Little Bastard with my Sesame Noodles, please.

Claudia Winkleman 1:23:58

Done!

James Acaster 1:23:58

Again, we were sat in the kids table on that as well: me, Ed, and Professor Green.

Claudia Winkleman 1:24:08

I don't mean to be down on anything, but I feel like you've drunk a lot. So now I'm going to ask you — but this is the restaurant where you can't get too hammered, you can't get too full, you're in your dream restaurant. There's the pond, there's the brickwork. Everything's fine, good atmosphere, spaced out, happiness, sharing site. What is your drink, Ed? I'm asking you.

Ed Gamble 1:24:27

Well, I love red wine. I think red wine is probably my favourite drink. So, we're going with red wine. I am not too specific about grapes that I like. I like a heavier red wine normally. I would probably say a Californian Cabernet Sauvignon is the way to go, because I also think I've had a lot of nice Californian 'Cab Savs', if I may — I will — because they remind me of good times, especially holidays with James actually. Like even, like, we went to America at the beginning of 2020. We went to New York in 2017. And we ate in some nice restaurants and we had some, just some lovely tasting Californian wines. And I don't have a specific one that I want. I just want that. I mean, I like Pinot Noir, I like Beaujolais, I like all that sort of thing — but just a fruity, jammy, oaky, tobacco-y, Californian Cabernet Sauvignon, and I will have the whole bottle to myself. Thank you.

Claudia Winkleman 1:25:22

Done. It's been brought to the table. James?

James Acaster 1:25:27

I'd have been disappointed if Ed didn't choose that, to be frank. If he didn't choose a whole bottle of wine to himself, I would have been like, "right, who you're trying to kid? Come on Gamble." I am going to choose the first alcoholic drink I ever liked.

Claudia Winkleman 1:25:43

Oh this is excellent.



James Acaster 1:25:44

Because I didn't like alcohol at all for a long time. I didn't like getting drunk for even longer. It wasn't until my late 20s when I thought actually getting drunk's fun. But like, I just didn't like the taste of any alcohol. Then, when I was, I think, late teens, early 20s — I could drive — so the very small window of time in my life and I was driving. A bunch of my friends went to Newquay for, like, a holiday and I was going down just for a couple of days, just to see them all. And I went on the day that they went to a cider farm and I don't like cider now. I don't drink cider at all, because it was the first, I think the first alcoholic drink that I was, like, sick from. You know, I got so drunk I was sick and now I can never go near it.

Ed Gamble 1:26:22

I should say: the Mulled Cider in the clothes shop was how the Americans refer to Mulled Cider, as in: not alcoholic, just apple juice.

James Acaster 1:26:29

It was a warm apple juice and I loved it!

Ed Gamble 1:26:32

"Can't believe, the lady came up to me in the clothes shop and I'd been asking—"

James Acaster 1:26:36

Obviously I'm expecting that at my Dream Meal, at some point the lady from the clothes shop does come out and surprises me with the mulled cider.

Claudia Winkleman 1:26:42

She's right here, she's ready.

James Acaster 1:26:44

Yeah. So at any point during the meal, I would like the lady from the clothes shop to come out and just say, "would you like a mulled cider?" And then I can be amazed and tell Ed, "she's here as well, Ed, I'm going to get the mulled cider for free." But we went on this tour of a cider farm and this drink — even though I don't want any cider again, for the rest of my life — I would want this one. Throughout the whole tour they were giving us little samples of different ciders they did there and things like that. And none of it grabbed me, I didn't really care about any of it. And I was quite gutted that I'd visited my friends on the day that they decided to go on a boring tour of a cider farm. And then on the very last, the very last bit of the tour, they said, "and this is our vintage cider." And it was cider that was kept in whisky barrels, so that the flavour of the whisky gets into the cider. And I had the sample and again, just another: "well this is the best thing I've ever had." It's sweet but it's also got this, like the flavour of the whisky was really there. Like you could, it was— It's not like, some stuff that gets kept whisky barrels and you drink it and go: "well, so what I can't taste whisky in it? Why have you even told me that?" The whisky had properly infiltrated the cider. And I love it so much that I then bought a load of bottles of it, more than I could have drank myself because I was like, "well, this drink is so good. I'll bring it back to my family." I was still living with my parents at the time. Went home, said: "I've bought you all bottles of



this vintage cider," everyone went: "we don't like cider." So then I had, like, 10 bottles or whatever. And because at the time I wasn't a drinker, I didn't — you know, like going out and getting drunk and getting on it. So I just saw the cider, like I did any other drink.

Claudia Winkleman 1:28:18

Oh.

James Acaster 1:28:19

And I just had it for breakfast. Like, most mornings with my Weetabix and stuff, I'd pour myself a glass of this vintage cider, which was the most delicious drink I'd ever had. And it was so good, like, you know, really wakes the tongue up in the morning. And I've never been able to have it since, I don't even know what the name of the cider farm was. I don't know what the name of the— I want that specific vintage cider from that cider farm in Newquay. I'm really gutted that I don't know. I've tried to Google it. I've tried to find, you know, I don't know if maybe there's some— Maybe you'll have better luck than me. But it was the first time I ever liked alcohol and I never got drunk on it either. I never drank so much that I got drunk. I would literally just have it like I'd have a glass of apple juice in the morning and then go about my day. I'm annoyed that I didn't keep the bottle, you know. Nowadays I'd probably keep the bottle with a label on it and be like—

Ed Gamble 1:29:11

Oh, take a picture at least.

James Acaster 1:29:12

Yeah. Yeah. Back then it was, I didn't have a camera phone. I would have been mad if I'd got my actual camera and took the photo of that bottle. People would have been like, "what're you doing?"

Claudia Winkleman 1:29:23

Guys, is it alright with you at this juncture— I know you don't often do it at this juncture. I'm gonna read your menu back before you reveal the finale.

Ed Gamble 1:29:31

Sure.

James Acaster 1:29:32

Wow.

Claudia Winkleman 1:29:32

Shall we do it?

James Acaster 1:29:33

Yeah!

Ed Gamble 1:29:33

Let's do it.



Claudia Winkleman 1:29:34

Okay, James, your menu first. Cawston Press Rhubarb flavour in a jug, centre of the table. Crushed ice. No straws.

James Acaster 1:29:42

Yes, please. And the crushed ice is made of Cawston Press.

Claudia Winkleman 1:29:44

There you go. Then you went to a pop up restaurant which didn't have a bathroom. You went next door to something called Dairy, never mind that. You had Pizza Breadsticks that didn't have cheese on, but they blew your mind. On the table — late addition — you would like some whipped butter that you'd had at a different restaurant that made you cry in Amsterdam. You're gonna have the whipped butter — there were bits of pork scratchings. Then, you are going to follow this with what can only be described as a celebration of tomato plate that you had in San Francisco. I don't know what else happened to you that day, what your night time shenanigans were like, but it's lodged in your head as the best thing you've ever eaten and we have to take your word for it. There was tomato sorbet, there was gels. There was tomato in every different shape or form. It suddenly introduced you to the world of tomatoes.

James Acaster 1:30:32

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 1:30:33

With that you would like a Tropical Smoothie, not juice — that's important — that reminds you of a Raspberry Petits Filous, which can only be found in Melbourne. Deal?

James Acaster 1:30:43

South American smoothie.

Claudia Winkleman 1:30:44

There you go. Then you're gonna have a Beef Wellington — where it was delicious, the sauce was delicious, you can have it for two if you want. Bring it to the table! The pastry crisp, outstanding. You'd like that with a Sour Beer — you don't remember the name, but you did have it in a pub you had to stop at, because you were going to soil yourself.

James Acaster 1:31:03

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 1:31:04

Then, on the side, you'd like a— what can only be described as a savoury croissant bread and butter pudding that's covered in sap that was delicious. It's very rich. Let's call it a Berkswell Pudding. You'd like that on the side and with that, if anyone's still with me, you would like, as a beverage, a Rosé Vermouth cocktail that, as you say, is like nothing you've ever eaten before. Then, followed by this. So you've got tomato in there. You've got a smoothie. You've got some crushed ice. You've got some



pizza breadsticks, hold the cheese. You've got the Wellington. You've got the sour beer. You've got the bread and butter pudding, and then two portions, please. And then you'd like a rosé vermouth cocktail from somewhere called Hoppers or Hollies or— Never mind, let's not focus on that. You would then like some vintage cider, which you used to drink with your Weetabix.

James Acaster 1:31:59

Also, at some point during that I'd like to be surprised by a mulled cider by the lady from the clothes shop.

Claudia Winkleman 1:32:04

Yeah, she's coming out regularly. Basically just to take your temperature. Before you reveal your pudding: Ed, are you ready?

Ed Gamble 1:32:12

I'm so ready.

Claudia Winkleman 1:32:13

I've led you to the table. You're meeting your friend. He wants to be next to the water. You want to be in somewhere with full atmosphere, but spread out. Atmospheric. There's open brick. You are going to start with a pint of Guinness, just drawn. Then you are gonna have a big thing of Pizza Bread laced with Marmite and Cheese, and you're going to tuck into that. And I'm happy with that. You happy with that?

Ed Gamble 1:32:40

So happy.

Claudia Winkleman 1:32:41

Good. Then you move into Oysters: they've got a special Pecorino Butter. You are not gonna shuck them yourself. Somebody's going to, come introduce yourself: they are gonna be your personal shucker for the night — it's your Dream Restaurant.

Ed Gamble 1:32:41

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 1:32:42

You can have 12, you can have 24, you can share them with your friend. Go nuts. With your oysters, your plethora of oysters, you are having a Harris Gin Martini with specifically four olives, but you're not hammered. You're absolutely fine. You've had the Guinness, you've had some oysters — they've soaked something up. As if. Then you're moving on to what can only be described as a meat feast: it's a barbecue tray that seven people have to hold. On there: you've got Brisket, you've got Ribs, you've got Pork Belly, you've also got some Cornbread, in case you're not full. And then you've also got some Cauliflower that's been barbecued, open flame, with tahini — which doesn't totally fit, but we'll let you have it because it is yours. With that, you would like the bourbon that costs thousands and thousands of pounds — but just a small glass of it. That's absolutely fine.



Ed Gamble 1:33:40

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 1:33:40

I want to use the word Periwinkle?

Ed Gamble 1:33:42

The Claudia van Winkleman, thank you.

Claudia Winkleman 1:33:44

On the side, you're gonna have some cold Sesame Noodles — because that makes sense. It goes well with it. No, it does. With some crispy chilli oil in a little dish and with that you would like some Little Bastard wine, which is like a wine you've never drunk before. It's blown your mind. You've drunk it. You've introduced it to somebody called Nish who's now drinking magnums alone. I think you should both call him after this. And then, you would like a heavy — yet fruity — but a delicious red wine. Preferably a Californian Cabernet Sauvignon. You've shared it together. You went to New York. You went to LA. This is the situation. Those are your menus. Is everyone happy?

James Acaster 1:34:24

Very happy.

Ed Gamble 1:34:25

So happy.

Claudia Winkleman 1:34:26

Great.

Ed Gamble 1:34:27

I feel like I've made a really good account of myself, for myself.

James Acaster 1:34:31

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 1:34:31

That's the most important thing. You've got everything covered: meat, oysters, Guinness, Marmite bread, cold noodles, two different kinds of wine, bourbon, and why not throw in a martini? Good.

James Acaster 1:34:46

I've got a problem! I'm gonna have to look after my friend tonight after this meal!

Claudia Winkleman 1:34:51

Lockdown has been hard on us all. So what are you, Ed Gamble, having for pudding?

Ed Gamble 1:34:58



Okay, so obviously the worry here is that if I do say cheese board, there's going to be some serious ructions!

Claudia Winkleman 1:35:06

I'm delighted with the cheese board.

James Acaster 1:35:08

How? Are you seriously even considering it?

Ed Gamble 1:35:11

Look—

James Acaster 1:35:11

I can't believe you'd be even torn.

Ed Gamble 1:35:13

Of course, look, I considered having a cheese board for my Starter to get it out the way. But then I thought: no, there's so many other things. I wanted the Oysters and also I didn't want to pick a cheese board straight away because then James would be relaxed. You know, then he's not hanging on tenterhooks.

Claudia Winkleman 1:35:28

And you want to end with cheese. You don't start with Gorgonzola.

Ed Gamble 1:35:32

Exactly — you want to end with cheese. But then, when I was putting together my barbecue meat tray that has to be carried by seven people. I thought: "realistically, what's the worst thing to have after that?" And it's probably a plate of cheese.

James Acaster 1:35:46

Worst thing to have after anything, mate.

Ed Gamble 1:35:48

James, you're about to get your way here, mate.

James Acaster 1:35:50

Sorry.

Ed Gamble 1:35:50

Because so help me god, I will pick a cheese board if you annoy me. Even in this Dream Restaurant where I can't get full, I can't feel sick — I wouldn't fancy—

Claudia Winkleman 1:35:58

A big hunk of Cheddar?



Ed Gamble 1:35:59

A big hunk of Cheddar after a big hunk of Brisket. I just don't think I could do it. It's too much fat, it's too much savoury fat. Obviously, it's a Dessert, I'm gonna have loads of sweet fat instead. This was harder for me than I thought it was gonna be. I have a lot of Honourable Munchions, including one that— Claudia hates the Honourable Munchions?

Claudia Winkleman 1:36:18

I don't, but it takes away the thrill? It's like saying: "I will have sex with you, but do you mind if I just lick the neck of your four friends?" Like you've got to choose who you're having sex with.

Ed Gamble 1:36:26

Right?

James Acaster 1:36:27

Hey, some people are down with that.

Claudia Winkleman 1:36:30

But you go ahead.

Ed Gamble 1:36:31

It's 2021, come on. Including— There's one in my Honourable Munchions, which I think James would have thought I might have picked as my Dessert. But I'm not gonna pick it because I was worried that he was going to pick it — and as everyone who listens to this podcast knows: I hate ordering the same thing as other people on the table. I will often change my order if people pick the same as me, because I don't think that's the point of going to a restaurant.

James Acaster 1:36:53

Well Ed, let me tell you: it's also in my Honourable Munchions and it's not—

Ed Gamble 1:36:57

Oh my god, it didn't make it! So — I mean that is a disaster, because— What should I— No I'm not gonna switch it. Honourable Munchions: the French Toast from Shack-Fuyu, my mum's Rhubarb Crumble with cheap vanilla ice cream, Peanut Butter Pie from Flavourtown, a plate of Colin the Caterpillar but only the faces and asses.

James Acaster 1:37:14

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 1:37:15

Love that.

Ed Gamble 1:37:16



Pizza Express Chocolate Fudge Cake or Carrot Cake — all in my Honourable Munchions. But the winner is the second visit to Hawksmoor in my menu: it's the Peanut Butter Shortbread with Salted Caramel Ice Cream. It is the first time I started going to restaurants properly and really discovered a love for restaurants. I went to Hawksmoor with some friends and I picked that. I don't think I'd really had peanut butter in a dessert very often. The shortbread's incredible — it's got just enough peanut butter, but not super sweet peanut butter like in American desserts. And then the salted caramel ice cream is just an amazing way to top it off. I'm having that for my dessert — and with it, I would like an Espresso Martini.

Claudia Winkleman 1:37:55

Why not? I mean, Ed, I'm so happy with your menu.

Ed Gamble 1:37:58

I would like an Espresso Martini because it's the perfect way to end a meal — especially if you're going on somewhere else or walking home. Just to give you— I think I'm gonna need that boost to get out from under the table at this point.

Claudia Winkleman 1:38:09

Good. I think that you've chosen excellent pudding, excellent. I've never had it, but I'm going to.

Ed Gamble 1:38:14

Thank you. I mean it's fantastic. That's been always been on the menu at Hawksmoor. It's so, so good and I couldn't get through this menu without a shout out to peanut butter. I eat peanut butter every day. I love it.

James Acaster 1:38:24

Yeah. Also I've never— Ed always talks about Hawksmoor, always recommends it. I've still never been.

Claudia Winkleman 1:38:30

I've never been!

Ed Gamble 1:38:30

Oh mate.

Claudia Winkleman 1:38:31

And I hear it's amazing.

James Acaster 1:38:32

I kind of wouldn't want to go without Ed, at this point. I'd want to go and be Ed's guest.

Ed Gamble 1:38:36

Yeah, you're welcome. You're very well.

Claudia Winkleman 1:38:38



When lockdown ends you two should go and post photographs. James, you've had tomatoes, just a bevy. You've had whipped butter. You've had rhubarb drinks. You've had Beef Wellington. You've had rosé vermouth. You've had vintage cider. You've had a pudding made of croissant dough. How is this ending?

James Acaster 1:38:57

If we both have an Honourable Munchion that's the same, can we get it for the table?

Claudia Winkleman 1:39:05

I feel like we've broken so many rules. You, at this point, have both had about 10 drinks each. Do it, if you both — if you really need it.

James Acaster 1:39:12

So I'd like to order the Shack-Fuyu French Toast for the table please.

Ed Gamble 1:39:16

Thank you James.

James Acaster 1:39:17

So that we can both share that. A lot of Honourable Munchions here for me. The headline of the Honourable Munchions would be something I had at Noma and I'm hesitant to say it because I think Claudia is going to go nuts and be a bit angry about this because it sounds—

Claudia Winkleman 1:39:31

I won't.

James Acaster 1:39:32

It doesn't sound like it would taste nice.

Claudia Winkleman 1:39:34

Tomatoes.

James Acaster 1:39:36

Crispy cod skin in white chocolate.

Claudia Winkleman 1:39:39

Oh stop it.

Ed Gamble 1:39:39

James, can I just say, no one expected this? I'm supposed— I'm like the slightly snobby food guy, right? Who talks about high-end stuff a lot and memories of going to Michelin star restaurants. You know, and I worry about that sometimes, especially on a podcast that's supposed to be for everyone to be able to listen to and be able to try the things we talk about. You have basically— There's Michelin stars absolutely coming out your arse on this menu. I'm really, I'm taken aback.



James Acaster 1:40:02

I've got to be honest about what has tasted the nicest that I've had.

Claudia Winkleman 1:40:05

No, I think you do.

Ed Gamble 1:40:06

Look, absolutely you should be. It's just surprised me that you're the guy doing it.

James Acaster 1:40:10

Sometimes we get people on this podcast: food critics — and there's only been two of them — but at some point, they'll always make a point of, like, saying the best food they ever had was something from like, you know, a greasy spoon cafe. And I'm sitting there going, "Horseshit mate, absolute bollocks. You've eaten at the best, most high-end restaurants in the world. There's no way that—" I'm going to call out Grace Dent on this. I think she said chips from a chip shop with curry sauce on it is one of her—

Claudia Winkleman 1:40:38

She's not wrong.

James Acaster 1:40:39

Oh, it's nice! But of the best things that Grace Dent's ever eaten? I was like, "Yeah, okay, pull the other one, Dent." The rest of my Honourable Munchions for this are not as— 'Cause I tell you, that cod skin cooked with white chocolate is amazing. I'd also shout out Smash from Norway, Marks and Spencer's Pineapple Tarts that Simon Rogan told us to have, Banana Jam Pie from Chin Chin, Banana Pudding from Magnolia Bakery in New York, Chubby Hubby Ben and Jerry's ice cream, Trader Joe's Frozen Banana slices, and any giant toasted marshmallow

Claudia Winkleman 1:41:11

I like it.

James Acaster 1:41:12

They're my other Honourable Munchions, but none of these are my Dessert. And I nearly tried to do it that I was having all of them. I nearly tried to do it that I would have the Global Tapas of Desserts, and just have all of them together 'cause I thought desserts are my thing. And again, maybe I was thinking about the listeners too much, Claudia. I was thinking, they really expect me to go big on desserts and maybe I should just choose all of them.

Claudia Winkleman 1:41:34

But that's a cheat!

James Acaster 1:41:34

It is a cheat, and it's also dishonest—



Claudia Winkleman 1:41:37

It's dishonest!

James Acaster 1:41:38

– because I wouldn't want all of them.

James Acaster 1:41:39

No, correct.

James Acaster 1:41:41

I would like: a cake that my flatmates made me in 2018. 2018: I was lucky enough to have a stand-up show of mine on Netflix.

Ed Gamble 1:41:51

He'd had a bad year, Claudia...

Ed Gamble 1:41:52

I'd had a bad year, the year before...

Claudia Winkleman 1:41:54

Back from Amsterdam.

James Acaster 1:41:54

It was the first day that the specials had gone on Netflix, and so we had a little viewing party at the flat and my flatmates made a cake. Oh my God, this cake — I think about it all the time. I couldn't stop eating it all week. Every time I got home, I would have some of this cake and it was so delicious that I didn't care about— My barometer for desserts is that the enjoyment of it has to completely get rid of the guilt of eating it, so that I don't care about the repercussions: I don't care if it's shaving however much time off my life. It's so delicious and I would eat it all the time, because it was that good. It was a triple layer cake although each layer was the same, but it was like, it was chocolate cake with freeze dried raspberries in the batter. In between each layer was a salted caramel cream. On the outside of the cake was a white chocolate ganache.

Claudia Winkleman 1:42:46

What?!

James Acaster 1:42:46

And then that was covered with— On top of that was fondant icing. And then, on the top of it they had very professionally done a microphone in fondant and the Netflix logo in fondant — and it was very impressive. It tasted so good and I would like that with a side of my mother's homemade peanut butter slice cream that she makes, which is her homemade versions of Reese's peanut butter cups in a really, like, double, triple quadruple cream ice cream. Very rich. When my friend Graham tried it for the first time, he had a mouthful and he looked at me and went, "I'm gonna die." So you can feel it clog up your arteries as soon as you eat it. That's what I would like. I would like the whole cake, not just a slice of it.



Claudia Winkleman 1:43:33

No I get it, you like big things brought to the table. You like the big jug.

James Acaster 1:43:36

Yeah.

Claudia Winkleman 1:43:36

You know, you'd like— You want: the whole cake with a server. You can share it with your friend, Ed. You can look out across the pond.

Ed Gamble 1:43:44

Yes.

Claudia Winkleman 1:43:45

What are you drinking?

James Acaster 1:43:45

With Salted Caramel Thick Shake from Sweet Mother's Kitchen in Wellington—

Ed Gamble 1:43:49

Oh my God...

James Acaster 1:43:50

Circa 2014, because I think they changed the recipe to that thick shake later on. But the first time I went to Sweet Mother's Kitchen in Wellington and had the Salted Caramel Thick Shake, again, it was a massive drum of it and I just drank the whole thing 'cause I didn't care if I was gonna die as soon as I drank it, it was so good that it just made all of life worth living. Loved it.

Ed Gamble 1:44:11

Oh, we are so greedy — like, this meal is gonna end with me absolutely shit faced and you just buzzing off your tits on sugar.

James Acaster 1:44:19

As it should.

Ed Gamble 1:44:20

It's perfect, really. We're gonna have to go for a swim in the pond.

Claudia Winkleman 1:44:22

But you're in the Dream Restaurant — so you're not gonna get too full, you're not gonna get too drunk, and you might just have a little tiny bit of brisket. "Thank you so much, ooh just a little sip of Guinness. Oh, thank you. More than enough. I've got lots of things—"



Ed Gamble 1:44:34

No. That's never happened.

James Acaster 1:44:35

Here's something though, Claudia, that I would like to propose before we move on.

James Acaster 1:44:39

Before we wrap up. Ideally, if I'm sitting down with my friend Ed and we're both eating our Dream Meals. At the end of dessert, I don't just want to go home. I would like us to be able to get up from our table. Go over, sit by the fire, maybe. And this is— I'm not saying this just to extend an olive branch to him. I would like to have... Not necessarily a cheese board...

Claudia Winkleman 1:44:39

Please.

Claudia Winkleman 1:45:00

Ooh, this is very romantic. Continue.

James Acaster 1:45:04

But I would like to have something that's like, you know, a charcuterie, maybe? Maybe a bunch of stuff — cheese, biscuits, meats, stuff like that. And I would like to have to drink, again from Noma — this is actually my first thing that's making it on the menu from Noma — is the Coffee Kombucha that I had at the end of the meal at Noma. Again, I hadn't really had caffeine in ages, I don't know if you know that. But like, I— Let me tell you, I had a 7am flight the next morning, and I stayed up all night with Nish, drinking these black coffee kombuchas all night. And I didn't sleep a wink, because I hadn't had caffeine in that long. I have to round off the meal with that drink. It was the most delicious, you know, cold brew coffee, but like with this fruity kombucha, kind of fermented kind of taste there. It was so nice, so delicious. I would like that coffee from Noma and I'd like to sit and watch Ed have a cheese board to himself at the end of the night.

Ed Gamble 1:45:56

Well, if we're going over to the fire, then I'd like to maybe get a little tray of petit fours. Some little sweet treats, some little chocolate truffles, some little crispy, sweet things. I mean, I've had some nice petit four. I can't put my finger on where, at the moment, but James knows the sort of thing I'm talking about. I'd like to bring some of those over for him—

Claudia Winkleman 1:46:15

Miniature eclairs? Yeah.

Ed Gamble 1:46:18

I'd like to have a whisky. Specifically, I went on a wonderful holiday to Japan in 2018, where I proposed to my girlfriend. We had a wonderful time. And we went to a couple of— Well, the night of, actually, we went to the robot show in Tokyo, which is the craziest, tackiest thing I've ever seen in my life. And we drank miniature bottles of champagne — and that is the best tasting drink I've ever had, because I don't



remember being happier. But we then went to an incredible restaurant called INUA in Tokyo and it's very Scandinavian, actually, the way they do things. I think the guys who run it used to work at Noma. We had a mutual friend who's one of the chefs he showed us around the kitchen and then he said, "I'd like to buy your drink to congratulate you on your engagement." And I said, "I'd like a whisky, please." He said, "Well, we do our own whisky here, our own label: Whisky INUA." And he gave me one of those whiskies. And that is just the most comfortable and happy and warm, I think I've ever felt. So I'd like to have one of those, even though I am aware that I am now having that with James rather than my fiancée, so the memory is somewhat altered.

James Acaster 1:47:23

Better. Better, I think.

Ed Gamble 1:47:24

Yeah, better in a way. So I'll have one of those whiskies, please, and I'll give James some sweet treats.

James Acaster 1:47:28

Yes!

Claudia Winkleman 1:47:29

Done. I mean, are you both? Do you feel sated and satisfied with your choices?

James Acaster 1:47:35

More than.

Ed Gamble 1:47:36

I do actually. You know, it was quite a torturous process coming up with it, because you feel like that's it then. But like James says: we can, you know, we can change our minds. And it's not like we have to eat this every day. This is our big—

Claudia Winkleman 1:47:47

This is your special treat.

Ed Gamble 1:47:49

I was starting to feel like, you know when Ross laminates his five celebrities that he's allowed to sleep with? I was a bit worried that I was laminating this, but I'm not. This is not a lamination.

Claudia Winkleman 1:47:58

It's your show, and you get another go. For your guests, it's terrifying — it's deadly serious, because you only get one shot. Next week, you could go: "Do you know what? I'm taking that plate of tomato essence out and I'm just gonna throw in a tuna melt like a normal person." But that might happen. Who knows? You've got all the good stuff.

James Acaster 1:48:20

I feel great.



Claudia Winkleman 1:48:21

Thank you so much for having me.

Ed Gamble 1:48:22

Well, thank you for having us.

Claudia Winkleman 1:48:24

Oh hold on a minute. Sorry, I can just see somebody. What's that? Would you like a glass of warm mulled cider?

James Acaster 1:48:32

Whoa, Ed! I can't believe this.

Ed Gamble 1:48:41

Well, there we go: a couple of absolutely disgusting menus.

James Acaster 1:48:45

What're you talking about, man? They're the best menus we've ever had on this podcast.

Ed Gamble 1:48:48

That is true, actually.

James Acaster 1:48:48

They're delicious.

Ed Gamble 1:48:50

Yeah, really delicious. I mean, and everything you said, I thought I would have that on my menu.

James Acaster 1:48:55

Yeah, I would eat all of your menu. I would eat it. I bet I'd love it.

Ed Gamble 1:49:00

It's a shame, we didn't— We had to do this over Zoom, obviously. Obviously, in my mind, I know you said in your mind that you thought it would be in person. But in my mind, we would do it live.

James Acaster 1:49:10

Yeah, sure.

Ed Gamble 1:49:11

Like, in a theatre or something. But you know, there's time, there's time for all of that sort of stuff. And obviously that was Episode 100 — mine and James's menus.

James Acaster 1:49:20



Wicked.

Ed Gamble 1:49:20

We'll do it again at Episode 200.

James Acaster 1:49:23

Absolutely. Just that's what's going to happen, guys. You keep this podcast going, you keep on supporting us: every single 100 mark episode, we're going to do our menu. Me and Ed are gonna go out to dinner, with a different genie each time.

Ed Gamble 1:49:37

Exactly. Obviously, we will have to do Episode 200 over Zoom as well because of COVID-42.

James Acaster 1:49:43

Yes, obviously that will have happened. Who knows we might have a new producer by then.

Ed Gamble 1:49:51

Hey, you know what? I hope not, because — I'm gonna put this out there — 100 episodes. Oh, the Great Benito really has done a smashing job, hasn't he?

James Acaster 1:50:00

Oh, we don't— I mean, hopefully it's no secret to anyone but if this was just down to me and Ed, we really would have been impressed if it made it to 10 episodes, so—

Ed Gamble 1:50:10

It wouldn't have made it to 10 episodes! Or we might have recorded one but no one would have heard it, because I don't know how to put them on the internet. I don't know how to edit them. I don't know how to tell people about it. We turn up, we chat all the shit you hear — plus more, because a lot of it's cut out. And then, that's all we do. And then a podcast just happens.

James Acaster 1:50:30

To give the listener an idea of how many episodes of his podcast they would have heard if the Great Benito wasn't involved and it was just down to me and Ed, I once went down to Ed's house and we got a video camera and we filmed a bunch of short comedy sketches that were that were based on us being vloggers. Talking about our fan theories of various TV shows, we filmed three episodes in one night. One about Westworld, one about Stranger Things, and I can't remember what the third one was even about. [inaudible] Jamie and Ed Gamble. I had an outfit on and everything. And we filmed it all. Our fan favourite about Westworld was that at the end of series one, when Ben Barnes is on the horse. He's naked on the horse and the horse's butt gets slapped, and the horse guns away with him. Our fan theory about that was that Ben Barnes goes off in the desert and fucks the horse, and then they give birth to Mr. Tumnus and that's how Narnia began. And we filmed all of that in one night and still— And that was like probably three years ago, four years ago, whenever the first series of Westworld was out. Four years ago, I'd say. It has still never seen the light of day, it's not even been edited. It's still on the camera that we used, nothing has ever been done with it. So that is what this podcast would be were it



not for the Great Benito. It would just be a recording of Scroobius Pip on one of our phones that no one's ever listened to.

Ed Gamble 1:51:59

So what we're trying to say is thank you, the Great Benito.

James Acaster 1:52:03

Thank you so much, the Great Benito.

Ed Gamble 1:52:04

And thank you to all of you guys, as well, who listened to it and tweet about it and talk about it. And people seem to really be into it. So thanks for being into it.

James Acaster 1:52:15

Thank you for jumping on all the little silly things we say, making sure they don't get forgotten and building a three-dimensional world, because that's what every podcast needs.

James Acaster 1:52:24

And thank you, of course, to No Context Off Menu who really brings that to life.

James Acaster 1:52:28

Yeah, I love them. Sometimes Ed sends me the screenshots of it. And I'm like, "that guy's done really amazing work."

Ed Gamble 1:52:35

Yeah, because James isn't on social media so I have to screenshot all of my favourite ones. And I send them to James and then he has a little chuckle. So he's got his own form of social media, where people just cherry pick all the best bits and send them to him.

James Acaster 1:52:47

It's great. Hey guys, if you ever think about leaving social media — it's brilliant because you just get it curated for you by all your friends. They send you all the best bits. You just get to see the crème de la crème.

Ed Gamble 1:52:57

I'm starting to think I should balance it a little bit and start sending you, like, troll stuff as well.

James Acaster 1:53:02

Yeah, start sending me: "Look at what this person said about you today. Not generous."

Ed Gamble 1:53:08

But we feel very grateful. We're very happy to have made it to 100 episodes, a lot of podcasts don't make it past one. And, look, long may continue — no plans on stopping.



James Acaster 1:53:16

I love doing this podcast and thank you Ed for being such a great guy, and making me feel nice and comfortable every episode. Even in that one when we were supposedly head to head. I was like, "no way, we're friends. Bad luck."

James Acaster 1:53:29

Yeah, you can't all come to dinner. Although if we do the live show thing. Maybe.

Ed Gamble 1:53:29

Yeah exactly. Thank you, James, for being a good friend, and a wonderful dining companion. And hopefully at some point in the future, we can all get together and have a meal. And I'm saying that to James and Benito, not to you the listener. I like you, thank you for listening. You make me feel successful, but please keep your distance.

Ed Gamble 1:53:53

Yeah. Oh, well, that's a possibility for the future. Once everyone's been vaccinated, etc. Still or sparkling vaccine. And then we can all get together and have a lovely old time at a live show, and all eat the same meal? Do you think you can do that at a live show? Can you?

James Acaster 1:54:10

Yeah, we'll order all the same meal for everybody. And they've all gotta just eat that.

Ed Gamble 1:54:17

Benito's already shaking his head. See, this is the problem. Benito spots logistical issues sometimes. We can't really live our dreams, because he's like, "No, that won't work. You can't have a Deliveroo for 2000 people." That's how many people we're playing to.

James Acaster 1:54:29

Yeah, that's how many it would be 2000.

Ed Gamble 1:54:31

2000 exactly.

James Acaster 1:54:32

I think so.

Ed Gamble 1:54:33

So thank you very much. 100 done. We will see you next week — for 101!

James Acaster 1:54:38

Uh oh — well, I guess we'll be a Dalmatian!

Ed Gamble 1:54:42

Uh oh — pongo!