



Off Menu – Ep176 – Paul Mescal

Ed Gamble

Welcome to the Off Menu Podcast, taking the ice-cream cone of conversation, filling it up with the soft serve of great humour. Sticking in a flake of friendship and chowing down.

James Acaster

Yes, best one you've ever done. The best one. That is Ed Gamble there, my name is James Acaster, this is the Off Menu Podcast. We run a dream restaurant and we invite a guest every single week and ask them their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink. Not in that order. This week, the first episode of series 9, is Paul Mescal.

Ed Gamble

Paul Mescal, of course, wonderful actor, James. Wonderful Actor.

James Acaster

Phenomenal actor, we all watched a lot of box sets, a lot of TV series and binged TV a lot during the lockdowns. One of the first series that we did at my flat was Normal People, I was completely engrossed in it and completely engrossed in his performance. What a performance.

Ed Gamble

Sexy.

James Acaster

Yes. You were unable to watch it.

Ed Gamble

Yes, because I'd already watched quite a lot of sex-based drama. The first series of Bridgerton and Industry, both quite heavy sexual content. There were a lot of people delivering parcels, a lot of neighbours walking past and I'd already had to shut my blinds, and the last thing I wanted was to pop the blinds open and then whack on Normal People, or indeed whack off Normal People.

James Acaster

Yes. Well, I will definitely make you retell that story to Paul when he comes in the dream restaurant.

Ed Gamble

Oh, good.

James Acaster

I can't wait.

Ed Gamble



That'll be great. It's a double whammy of having to say something embarrassing, which also has the underlying sentiment of I've not watched what you're most popular for.

James Acaster

Yes, which I can't wait. Well, I've seen him in interviews, I saw him win his BAFTA for his role in Normal People and he seems like a very humble, very nice down to earth guy. So, I think he'll be okay with you not having seen it.

Ed Gamble

I think he'll be fine with it and also, I've seen him do one of those LADbible videos where he eats different types of snacks.

James Acaster

That's good, I like those videos a lot. When are we going to do one of those videos?

Ed Gamble

We need to do one of those videos.

James Acaster

We need to, like, you try snacks from Kettering and I try snacks from Buckingham Palace where you were born. I don't know where you were born.

Ed Gamble

London.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

London Snacks.

James Acaster

Yes, so London snacks. Town of London snacks.

Ed Gamble

Normal People might come up, but we're very excited because Paul Mescal is in a new film James, called Aftersun.

James Acaster

Yes, really looking forward to this.

Ed Gamble

It's a stunning debut apparently from Scottish writer-director Charlotte Wells.



James Acaster

It's a coming-of-age story with a poignant, intimate family portrait. The film debuted in Cannes where it was the winner of the French Touch Jury Prize at Cannes 2022 Critics Week.

Ed Gamble

Very exciting.

James Acaster

That's no small feat.

Ed Gamble

That's no small feat.

James Acaster

I'm looking forward to this a lot. I'm looking forward to seeing the film, it does look brilliant.

Ed Gamble

It's available on MUBI.

James Acaster

It's available on MUBI as well.

Ed Gamble

Go and get MUBI and watch it.

James Acaster

Here's the thing, I'm very glad we got Paul Mescal on the podcast.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

However, if he does say a secret ingredient, an ingredient which we deem to be unacceptable, we will kick him out of the dream restaurant, he won't get any dinner. This week, the secret ingredient is, Mezcal.

Ed Gamble

Paul-ed pork.

James Acaster

No, we had a conversation before hand. We said it was either going to be Mezcal or pulled pork.

Ed Gamble

Paul-ed pork.



James Acaster

Paul-ed pork.

Ed Gamble

Both good.

James Acaster

Both good answers.

Ed Gamble

But we can go with Mezcal if you want.

James Acaster

Yes, I think it's an acquired taste. I personally can't really drink much Mezcal now after me and you got whammoed on it with Professor Green.

Ed Gamble

Oh my god, we got absolutely whammoed at Test Kitchen, Santiago Lastra's Test Kitchen before he opened the wonderful restaurant KOL. Here's how whammoed James was Benito, get your ears around this. I went to the toilet, James left.

James Acaster

Yes. Got to wait for him to go to the toilet because otherwise, he'll make me stay. Soon as he went to the toilet, he was gone. Climb into my Uber, the front door opens, 'Where are you going?' 'Bye. Drive. Drive, get the fuck out of here.'

Ed Gamble

I'm very glad you did that because oh boy, that was a big night.

James Acaster

Yes, it only looked like it could get bigger if we had another drink there. It looked like this could turn into everyone staying up all night and I could already feel my hangover headache starting and I was still drunk. So, Mezcal. I'm quite happy to put Mezcal as the secret ingredient because it does bring back bad hangover memories for me.

Ed Gamble

I like it, but that's fine. It fits with his name, doesn't it?

James Acaster

Yes, it fits with his name. I mean, probably highly unlikely.

Ed Gamble

We'll see.



James Acaster

But we'll see.

Ed Gamble

I hope he doesn't pick pulled pork.

James Acaster

If he says pulled pork, we might have to say to him, 'Now Paul, we thought you might choose pulled pork and we nearly made it the secret ingredient.'

Ed Gamble

We nearly had to kick you out there for choosing pulled pork.

James Acaster

Maybe he'll have a Mezcal.

Ed Gamble

This is the Off Menu menu of Paul Mescal.

Welcome, Paul, to the dream restaurant.

Paul Mescal

Wow.

James Acaster

Welcome, Paul Mescal to the dream restaurant. We've been expecting you for some time.

Paul Mescal

This is amazing, this is a dream come true. Here I am.

Ed Gamble

Well, this is perfect.

James Acaster

Perfect if it's a dream come true.

Ed Gamble

You're in the dream restaurant.

Paul Mescal

Exactly, yes.

Ed Gamble



You can make all of your dreams come true now.

Paul Mescal

That's the plan.

James Acaster

How many dreams that you've had have already come true, and how many do you think you'd still like to come true?

Paul Mescal

This is the main dream. This is the flagship dream.

Ed Gamble

Good.

Paul Mescal

This is the flagship dream.

James Acaster

It's good to be a flagship dream, I've never been a flagship dream before.

Ed Gamble

I bet you have.

James Acaster

Yes, I probably have but not come true.

Ed Gamble

I bet you're loads of people's flagship dreams.

James Acaster

Yes?

Ed Gamble

Tweet beneath here.

Paul Mescal

The flagship is actually a reference to the Tim Key episode.

Ed Gamble

Listen to this.

James Acaster

Oh, that is good.



Paul Mescal

Remember that?

James Acaster

You've out done us already.

Paul Mescal

Yes. I mean, I'm prepped and ready to go. That's why I did this, remember?

James Acaster

That's very good. You did that to us and I thought, 'That's nice.' I thought you were just being nice.

Paul Mescal

No, I was referencing Tim Key.

James Acaster

Referencing Tim Key's episode. That's good.

Ed Gamble

Not realising that after we record an episode our brains just dump it immediately, Paul.

Paul Mescal

Good to know.

Ed Gamble

But that won't happen with yours, don't you worry about that. Yours is going to be the only one that I save.

James Acaster

I always remember who ordered trifle, but that's about it. I don't really remember anything else.

Ed Gamble

So Paul, don't give it away now but if trifle is your dessert, then you can do the point to us and then we'll know.

Paul Mescal

Trifle?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, and I'll be like, 'What layer do you want to be?' Thanks for listening, Paul.



Paul Mescal

I love it, it's my favourite podcast.

James Acaster

Yes.

Paul Mescal

Hands down.

Ed Gamble

It means a lot.

James Acaster

That does mean a lot.

Ed Gamble

You've taken that in, haven't you?

James Acaster

Yes, but we haven't had a guest come on and say that yet.

Paul Mescal

No, it just is.

James Acaster

It's a big deal.

Paul Mescal

I listen to it all the time, it's such a comfort. It's fantastic.

Ed Gamble

This is my flagship dream.

James Acaster

It's Ed's flagship dream.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Mad. Now, all we need is for the cast of *Saved by the Bell* to come in here and we've all had our flagship dreams.



Paul Mescal

Yes, I feel like that's a bigger dream for all of that cast to come through the door.

Ed Gamble

All of them coming in.

Paul Mescal

I don't think they'd all fit.

Ed Gamble

No, and some of them aren't with us anymore. So, that would be crazy.

James Acaster

Rest in power.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

But, hopefully.

Ed Gamble

I've met Slater, put that out there.

James Acaster

Wow, I've not met any of them. It seems unfair.

Paul Mescal

I have not either.

Ed Gamble

Bad luck guys.

James Acaster

If they rebooted it, Paul, and set it in Ireland.

Paul Mescal

Or anywhere.

Ed Gamble

Any accents, well, you can do accents yes.

Paul Mescal

Yes.



James Acaster

Well, you can do any accent, yes. But I would like it set in Ireland.

Paul Mescal

Okay.

James Acaster

Who do you think you would play out of the original line-up?

Paul Mescal

I don't know Saved by the Bell.

James Acaster

Wow.

Paul Mescal

I was just going along with your flagship dream and being yes, and?

Ed Gamble

I felt that.

James Acaster

Did you?

Ed Gamble

I really respected you for doing it. As soon as James went with a more protractive question, I was like, 'Paul's in trouble here.'

Paul Mescal

Oh no.

James Acaster

What were the flagship TV shows when you were a kid?

Paul Mescal

I watched a lot of Winnie the Pooh growing up. Yes, so that would be a flagship dream if Winnie the Pooh came in with Tigger. I'd lose my fucking mind.

James Acaster

Dude, have you ever been to the real Hundred Acre Wood?

Paul Mescal

No.



James Acaster

You've got to go there. You've got to go.

Paul Mescal

Okay.

James Acaster

I went during lockdown twice, two Sundays in a row.

Paul Mescal

Wow.

James Acaster

I went because it was so good the first time and I wanted to go back again. Then we went again. Actually, I went three times because I went when my mum and dad visited.

Paul Mescal

Three Sundays in a row?

James Acaster

No, that was a later one, there was a bit of a gap. I went three times and it is one of my favourite places in the world now Hundred Acre Wood. It was my phone background for a while.

Paul Mescal

Nice.

James Acaster

You got to go, man.

Paul Mescal

I will go, I will go.

James Acaster

If you're a Winnie the Pooh fan.

Paul Mescal

Yes, Winnie the Pooh and then, like, Dexter. The Cartoon Network stuff.

Ed Gamble

Not Dexter the show about the murderer?

Paul Mescal

No. Dexter, the animation.



Ed Gamble

I know the one you mean, Dexter's Laboratory.

Paul Mescal

Dexter's Laboratory, it had Ed and Eddy. That stuff. I'm pointing, again.

Ed Gamble

Which character from Winnie the Pooh would you play in a live-action remake?

Paul Mescal

Probably Eeyore, stick to the sad stuff.

Ed Gamble

Yes. I guess, you can really show your range with Eeyore, right?

Paul Mescal

Yes, I feel like he's the dramatic centre of Winnie the Pooh.

Ed Gamble

Yes, he really is.

Paul Mescal

I feel like I tend to play a lot of sad characters, so I feel that would be the casting, that would be where I'd be.

James Acaster

So, the Internet would put out there when they discovered there was going to be a live-action Winnie the Pooh, all the fan casting would be you as Eeyore.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I was in the Tigger group at nursery, so I'd probably take Tigger.

James Acaster

You were in the Tigger group?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

I feel like James would be Tigger.



James Acaster

Yes, thank you.

Paul Mescal

I feel like you'd be Pooh.

Ed Gamble

Pooh.

Paul Mescal

Yes. I reckon it's a great cast.

James Acaster

Yes, he would be actually.

Ed Gamble

I do walk around at home with no trousers or pants on, so that's absolutely perfect.

Paul Mescal

Don't we all?

James Acaster

Yes, with a little pic. Oh, we're all Pooh in it. We're all Pooh in it, every now and again. I want to see that now, I want Spike Jonze to do it like he did *Where the Wild Things Are*.

Paul Mescal

Yes, amazing.

James Acaster

I want him to make it like that.

Ed Gamble

You'd be a great Tigger.

Paul Mescal

You've done *Cinderella*?

James Acaster

I've done live-action, no big deal. Don't make a big deal out of it, please. But, yes. Absolutely, I've done it. That was in many ways live-action and animated because my character was animated, to begin with and then (TC 00:10:00) live-action.

Ed Gamble



Didn't it win best film of 2021, didn't it?

James Acaster

It was in the Oscars. It was in the Oscar montage.

Paul Mescal

It was in the mix. That's the best bit.

James Acaster

Yes, in the montage.

Ed Gamble

Guys, we got the montage.

James Acaster

We got in the montage.

Ed Gamble

Nothing else.

James Acaster

Specifically, me. I was in that montage played at the Oscars, then someone slapped someone and no one talked about the montage after that.

Ed Gamble

Oh, mate.

Paul Mescal

Ah, yes.

James Acaster

That overshadowed it, it was the worst year to have been in the Oscar montage.

Paul Mescal

That headline initially was James Acaster features in the Oscar's montage. Then what happened happened.

Ed Gamble

As soon as that slap landed, just everything changed.

James Acaster

No one cared anymore.

Paul Mescal



No.

James Acaster

Did you see Cinderella? Did you watch it?

Paul Mescal

I haven't seen Cinderella.

James Acaster

On your watchlist though?

Paul Mescal

Yes, it was the number one film of 2021.

James Acaster

It was good.

Paul Mescal

So, I just need to get to that.

James Acaster

It's very good, similar to Normal People actually.

Paul Mescal

Yes, I think it's in the same genre.

James Acaster

It is, very similar.

Paul Mescal

Fantastical, yes.

James Acaster

My character is.

Paul Mescal

Yes, exactly.

Ed Gamble

We should talk about Aftersun.

James Acaster

Yes, we should do.



Ed Gamble

Your new film, Aftersun.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Very exciting. Indie film?

Paul Mescal

Yes, firmly in the indie film category.

Ed Gamble

But it's just won loads of awards today.

Paul Mescal

It just got nominated for five Indie Spirits today.

Ed Gamble

Amazing, congrats.

Paul Mescal

Yes, it's really exciting for, like, a small film. It just helps it along.

James Acaster

So, I always imagine that for an actor, the coolest thing is to be in a successful indie film.

Paul Mescal

Yes. I don't know. It's the films that I like going to see the most, so to be a part of one that is doing that to a certain extent this year is, kind of, exciting. Yes.

James Acaster

I'm getting vibes from it, like, Lost in Translation if it was a father and daughter. That's what I'm getting from it.

Ed Gamble

James is basing that on the press shot that's sat in front of him.

Paul Mescal

The one photo on the table.

James Acaster

I read the blurb. I read the blurb which actually doesn't sound anything like that, but you know.



Paul Mescal

That at all. But the photo, I'll go with you on the photo.

James Acaster

The photo looks like the end of Lost in Translation.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It doesn't really, man. How old is your co-star in this?

Paul Mescal

She is 12, she turned 12 on set and she's just a blackbelt actor. Like, she's amazing.

Ed Gamble

Wow. Did you turn up being like, 'I'm going to have to really take her under my wing here and talk her through the process,' and then she was brilliant?

Paul Mescal

I didn't really think about it until I was, like, sat on the plane and then I was like, 'What if she's bad?' Because it's just pretty much the two of us for the whole film. But I didn't think about it until I sat on the plane and then it was a long four-and-a-half-hour flight where I was like, 'This could be rough.' Then once we started working together I was like, 'Woah.' It's the first time I've ever worked with a child and they have this, like, access to fun and play that it's just really eye-opening.

James Acaster

When a kid is, like, really good at acting do you reckon they have to cram in as many films while they're a kid still?

Paul Mescal

Yes. A friend of mine, Saoirse Ronan, you, like, see that she has navigated being a child actor and all the way through to being one of the biggest film stars in the world. So, I don't know, you look at somebody like Frankie and I imagine she's on every list on the planet now. Just hoping that the industry looks after her, it's like, well, fingers crossed that happens.

James Acaster

I would have turned up on set, if it was just me and a kid and that was the whole film. I'd be like, 'Cool, I'm definitely going to be in charge of this, I can bully them.'

Paul Mescal

That was my initial plan and then I decided-

Ed Gamble



Then she bullied you.

Paul Mescal

Yes, she bullied me. Yes.

James Acaster

It's a safe space if you want to admit that she was a bully.

Paul Mescal

Yes, I'm going to give an exclusive that I was bullied on set by a twelve-year-old, and she's bullying me to say nice things about her in public.

James Acaster

Knocking on your trailer door, 'Mescal, get the fuck out of here. You better say, read it out to me again. Blackbelt in acting, that's what you're going to say.'

Paul Mescal

Yes. 'What the fuck was that scene?'

James Acaster

Would you consider yourself much of a foodie?

Paul Mescal

Look, this podcast, as I've said, is my favourite podcast. But it kept me up at night because I listen to people's menus and I'm like, 'Wow, they're some fancy people eating some fancy food.' I feel like that has started to happen to me in recent years, like, eating fancier food. So, I'm going to say yes, but on the cusp of being a foodie, but very much wanting to be a foodie.

Ed Gamble

You're taking the first steps on your foodie journey?

Paul Mescal

Yes, exactly.

Ed Gamble

That's good, we like to catch people at that point.

James Acaster

Yes, this is actually the best point. You're not jaded.

Paul Mescal

Not jaded by nice food.

James Acaster



Not like goddam Jay Rayner and his jaded palate. He didn't appreciate anything anymore, he now thinks that rubbish food is good. He's gone all the way around full circle thinking the shit eclairs his dad brought home were nice.

Paul Mescal

I mean, shit eclairs are the best eclairs.

James Acaster

Yes, fair enough.

Ed Gamble

So, before you took your first steps on this foodie journey, did you appreciate food or was it just, like, a get it in?

Paul Mescal

It oscillated between I played a lot of sports growing up and a lot of that was just about getting food into you so that you had enough energy. But a lot of my favourite foods are, like, comfort foods. Like, big portions of food, like chips.

Ed Gamble

I love that your first thought was, 'Right, we'll (ph 15.22) need the size of what the food is.'

Paul Mescal

Yes, size first.

Ed Gamble

Big portions of food.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Big portions of, for example, food. Chips.

Ed Gamble

Yes, (talking over each other 15.33) and then chips.

Paul Mescal

Yes and then potatoes.

James Acaster

The original food.

Ed Gamble



Chips.

Paul Mescal

Big hunks of meat.

Ed Gamble

You can't go wrong with that, to be fair.

Paul Mescal

No, it's a classic (talking over each other 15.42).

James Acaster

What sports were you playing growing up?

Paul Mescal

I played a lot of Gaelic football and rugby growing up.

James Acaster

What's the difference with Gaelic football?

Paul Mescal

And what?

James Acaster

And football.

Ed Gamble

Snooker.

Paul Mescal

Snooker, well. Gaelic football, you can, like, pick the ball up in your hands.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

There's a lot less, kind of, jumping around and pretending to be hurt.

James Acaster

Yes. Well, the other sports in Ireland, you've got ones where you fucking fling things at people's heads that could kill them.

Paul Mescal

Yes, we run around and hit each other with sticks.



James Acaster

Insane.

Paul Mescal

Yes. It's like Quidditch, kind of, except firmly on the ground.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

No one's got ideas above their station.

Paul Mescal

No. They're, like, 'See that flying shit? That's not for us.'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

(talking over each other 16.22) keep it grounded. So, yes, it's, like, a kind of mixture between rugby and soccer but it's an amateur sport but it's Ireland's national sport and it's very parochial and you play for your parish and you represent your town and it's all pretty hardcore.

James Acaster

Would you look forward more to pre-Gaelic football food or post? Because when I used to play rugby, very briefly, I would very much look forward to my Mars bar and a Mountain Dew.

Paul Mescal

Oh, do you remember the Jaffa Cakes at half time? Or did you ever get, like, sweets at half-time?

James Acaster

Not for me, I was usually subs bench for the whole of the first half.

Paul Mescal

Just munching on the Jaffa Cakes.

James Acaster

I'd get a little bit-,

Ed Gamble

Just looking at a Mars bar going, 'I can't wait for the final whistle to go.'

James Acaster



'Daddy says I can't have it until the final whistle.'

Ed Gamble

'Good game, guys.'

Paul Mescal

'Why you eating that Mars bar?'

James Acaster

'You got kicked out the team weeks ago.'

Ed Gamble

We got orange slices at half-time.

Paul Mescal

I mean, that was, like, the budget version, right?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

And then, if you were, like, playing a final or a semi-final, it would be, like, Jaffa Cakes, Mars bars, Fruit Pastilles. Fruit Pastilles or Fruit Pastilles?

James Acaster

Pastilles but I love (talking over each other 17.26).

Ed Gamble

Yes, I'm going with Pastilles from now on.

James Acaster

I love hearing Fruit Pastilles.

Paul Mescal

Fruit Pastilles.

James Acaster

Like the band Bastille.

Paul Mescal

It's because I'm on my burgeoning, like, fancy food journey.

Ed Gamble

Yes, exactly.



Paul Mescal

It was Pastilles before, now it's Pastilles.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I like that the first step on the foodie journey is simply changing the names of things that you were eating before.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Fruit Pastilles.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Paul Mescal

Sheeps. I'm trying to think of other funny ones to do.

Ed Gamble

Lamb.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Start pronouncing the B in lamb.

Ed Gamble

Got to pronounce the B now.

James Acaster

Well, we always start on the food podcast with-, the food podcast? Why'd I just call it that?

Ed Gamble

Well, it is the food podcast.

James Acaster



To be honest, it's because it's how I refer to it to people outside of this room because I don't want to just say to everyone, 'Off Menu,' like I assume everyone knows it. So, I'll say, 'The food podcast I do with Ed,' so, I could've nearly said that to you just now.

Paul Mescal

That's also, like, a massive flex though, just being like, 'We are the-,'

Ed Gamble

We're the food podcast, yes.

Paul Mescal

(talking over each other 18.22) the food podcast.

James Acaster

We are the food podcast though. List the other ones, they are shit.

Paul Mescal

I can't.

James Acaster

Yes, I can't.

Paul Mescal

I don't know them.

James Acaster

I think they're all pretty bad.

Ed Gamble

I listen to a lot of them and there are some good ones out there.

James Acaster

They're shit, Ed. We always start with still or sparkling water. Do you have a preference?

Paul Mescal

I'm going to not do either of those.

Ed Gamble

Okay. This is rare.

Paul Mescal

I know. If I'm allowed to.

Ed Gamble



Oh yes, of course.

Paul Mescal

Because, like, I've heard it all. It's like, 'Sparkling feels a little bit fancier and it feels like a treat and I want to treat myself,' but if I actually want to treat myself, what I want to go for is Mexican Cola. I want that throughout the meal, all the time. Like, Coke is my favourite thing. Like, that's the cornerstone of my menu, is Mexican Cola. Like, I had it recently-, or not recently, a year ago in LA because they have it everywhere there and I was like, 'This is eye-opening.'

James Acaster

So, why is it the best?

Paul Mescal

It's made with, like, cane sugar or something, that's the difference in the ingredient and it normally comes in a glass bottle and it feels a little bit special and I don't know, I just love it, it tastes better.

Ed Gamble

I've never had it before but people are, like, absolutely-,

Paul Mescal

Oh yes.

James Acaster

Really?

Ed Gamble

Like, they're so into it.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It's got a cult following, this Mexican Cola.

Paul Mescal

Totally. Are you, like, fizzy drinks people? Yes.

James Acaster

Yes. Well, the other day, Ed told me not to drink fizzy drink. We were offered fizzy drinks at that Comic Relief photo shoot and I said, 'Yes,' and you went, 'No.' And I was like, 'You don't want a fizzy drink?' He went, 'It's bad for your teeth, James,' like you were the first person who knew it.

Ed Gamble

Did I?



James Acaster

Yes, you told me off.

Paul Mescal

It's supposed to be horrendous for you.

James Acaster

You said, 'Don't do it, it's bad for you.'

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

You told me.

Ed Gamble

When did I say that? I didn't say that.

James Acaster

At the Comic Relief photo shoot, you told me, 'It is bad for you,' and then I made fun of you because you smoke again (TC 00:20:00) now.

Ed Gamble

I don't, I vape now.

Paul Mescal

I'm trying to give up smoking.

James Acaster

Oh, you've got down to vaping, that's very quick.

Ed Gamble

I vape now.

Paul Mescal

Nice.

Ed Gamble

Tell you, you'll love this, I've been smoking a cola-flavoured vape. There you go.

Paul Mescal

If I were a vaper, that would be my go-to.



Ed Gamble

Yes. I've tried the cherry cola and the cola but the (talking over each other 20.14). If they release a Mexican Cola vape though, you'd be into that, right?

Paul Mescal

That'd be, like, number one. I would start vaping if they brought out Mexican Cola.

James Acaster

Would that make you quit smoking?

Paul Mescal

Like, I've been able to give up smoking for periods of time but I'm always looking for the excuse to start again. Like, I'm always like, 'God, I hope something fucking bad happens, so, I can just start smoking.' Yes, so, I'm smoking again, read into that what you will.

Ed Gamble

I'm like that with food as well though.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Honestly, like, I'll try and eat healthily and then I'll be like, 'Oh, it feels like a takeaway night. What event can I hang this takeaway on? Is it good? I'm having a takeaway. Is it bad? We're having a takeaway.'

Paul Mescal

Takeaway.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes, absolutely. So, something happened, I can't even remember what it was, recently, something happened, it was stressful and then I thought, 'This is the perfect excuse to eat an entire tub of Ben & Jerry's.' And I was so happy walking to the shop, 'I'm glad that bad thing happened.'

Paul Mescal

Yes. Do you guys have addictive personalities?

Ed Gamble

Oh yes.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I'm vaping constantly now.



Paul Mescal

Vaping, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, totally.

Paul Mescal

Do you not miss cigarettes?

Ed Gamble

I smoked for ages and then gave up for eleven years and then, for some reason, a few months ago, had a cigarette. In my mind, I was like, 'I think I'm just going to be the sort of guy who has one now and again and then I'll have a pack at my house and then when people come over for dinner parties, I can say at the end, "Would anyone care for a cigarette?"'

Paul Mescal

That's so chic.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's so chic, right?

James Acaster

Fucking hell.

Ed Gamble

Obviously, that's not true because I put the pack in my house and two days later, I'd smoked them all, standing in the garden in my pyjamas. I'm like, 'Oh god, this is not good.'

Paul Mescal

Winnie the Pooh style, no trousers on, no pants.

Ed Gamble

I was Poohing it. Just had a pack clamped between my butt cheeks, just pulling them out one by one, yes.

James Acaster

'Let's go boys.' For some reason, I'm picturing your penis as a cigarette, in all of this, little smoking cigarette at the bottom.

Paul Mescal

Same.

James Acaster



Yes, it's there as well.

Ed Gamble

How far has it burnt down in your mind?

James Acaster

Oh, not far, Ed. It's a big block. It's, like, one of those ones on those long sticks. Don't worry.

Ed Gamble

Yes, definitely addictive personality, for sure, yes.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Not me.

Paul Mescal

Not you?

Ed Gamble

No?

James Acaster

Unless it's ice cream and sweets and then (talking over each other 22.22).

Paul Mescal

And then it's yes.

Ed Gamble

100% yes.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes, anything. I've tried to cut down on, you know, the desserts and stuff.

Paul Mescal

I mean, if you're going to cut down on that, like, what's life for?

James Acaster

Yes, thank you. That's what I said to Simon Amstell and then he told me something that made me feel stupid.

Paul Mescal

Which was?



James Acaster

That if you're not in the moment while you're eating those things, then what's the point? And that you should spread them out. And, of course, if you do eat too much of those things, life isn't very long anyway and I was like, 'Shut up, Simon.'

Paul Mescal

Shut up, Simon.

James Acaster

Which made me feel bad, so, I went and bought a tub of Ben & Jerry's.

Ed Gamble

Yes, you've got to.

James Acaster

This Mexican Cola, it's coming out of the top, what size glass is it?

Paul Mescal

I, kind of, want it from the glass bottle.

James Acaster

So, you want us to just keep the bottles coming?

Paul Mescal

Just keep the bottles coming, yes. And probably with each meal, if we're at a dream restaurant, so, my belly's not going to get full of Coke. So, like, as it's empty, just have it there on the table and I just like the glass bottle but if it's sitting there for too long, I'd just like a glass of ice on the side, that I could just top up, if the glass got too warm.

James Acaster

And you want the bottle before anything else?

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

So, it is your water course?

Paul Mescal

Just sit there in a restaurant, by myself, just sipping on a Mexican Cola.

James Acaster

Yes, while you're waiting for (talking over each other 23.36).



Ed Gamble

What about a big ice bucket with, like, loads of bottles in?

Paul Mescal

Yes, that's cool, that's chic.

Ed Gamble

Yes and then you can just keep pulling them out.

Paul Mescal

Yes. Cracking them out with my teeth.

James Acaster

Like Coors.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Coors Light.

Ed Gamble

Ah, not the band, The Corrs?

James Acaster

They were never in an ice bucket. As far as I know, they've never been in an ice bucket together.

Paul Mescal

I think you're right.

James Acaster

And I think they were irrelevant by the time people were doing the Ice Bucket Challenge.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

So, they never got a look-in there.

Ed Gamble

Be a good album cover for The Corrs.

James Acaster



Doing the Ice Bucket Challenge?

Ed Gamble

No, all of them in an ice bucket.

James Acaster

All of them sitting in an ice bucket, Jim with a big ice cube on his head.

Paul Mescal

(talking over each other 24.09) alternative.

James Acaster

Yes. Did you do the Ice Bucket Challenge when that was a thing?

Paul Mescal

I did, yes.

James Acaster

You did it.

Paul Mescal

And I did the-, do you remember where you had to, like, drink a pint of crazy shit?

James Acaster

I don't remember this actually.

Paul Mescal

No, it was for charity.

James Acaster

Cumin?

Paul Mescal

No, there was the cinnamon one. I've done them all. I've done the cinnamon challenge, the Ice Bucket Challenge but then there was this one that you had to, like, pour or fill up a pint glass. I'm Irish, so, we're a bit looser with our charity call-outs. Like, we saw the Ice Bucket Challenge and we were like, 'That's fucking tame.' And then a friend of mine did, like, beetroot, milk, eggs, crushed up garlic in a full pint, nailed it and then you had to call out your friend.

Ed Gamble

Like a dirty pint sort of thing?

Paul Mescal

Like a dirty pint.



James Acaster

And do they drink the exact same thing (talking over each other 24.59) to make another pint that was disgusting?

Paul Mescal

You would have to make another pint that's disgusting and then you had to be braver. Like, so, you had to be like, 'Well, you're not going to be coward that comes in and just does a pint of milk and a couple of eggs.' You had to go above and beyond.

Ed Gamble

Yes, what a coward that would be.

James Acaster

What a coward.

Paul Mescal

What a coward, yes.

James Acaster

What did you put in your one?

Ed Gamble

Fire.

Paul Mescal

Like, yes, actual flames. Lit it on fire.

James Acaster

A severed human foot.

Paul Mescal

Yes. I can't remember, I think the eggs is something that people just immediately go like, 'Ugh, that's, kind of, disgusting,' so, that went in. I think there were some, like, carrots, there were some-

James Acaster

Yes, sounds nice.

Paul Mescal

It's, like, bulky. You needed to show the glass and it looked like shit.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Or, like, a foam on the top, like a scum.



Paul Mescal

Yes but I feel like that is peak, like, toxic masculinity.

Ed Gamble

Oh, totally.

Paul Mescal

Just being like, 'Watch this.'

James Acaster

Yes.

Paul Mescal

'Watch me inflict pain on myself.'

James Acaster

That's the coolest. That's why I love being a man.

Paul Mescal

Yes, it's really cool.

James Acaster

Best thing ever.

Ed Gamble

Eat the (talking over each other 25.59).

James Acaster

Poppadoms or bread? Poppadoms or bread, Paul Mescal? Poppadoms or bread?

Paul Mescal

I'd always thought I'd be ready for that. Yes, that was a very good one.

Ed Gamble

James is getting so good as this thing.

James Acaster

Only when I know they've heard the podcast before, I really have to think in advance, 'What do I do here?'

Paul Mescal

Yes. Yes, that was good.

Ed Gamble



Surprises me as well, Paul, you know?

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Got you that time, man.

Ed Gamble

Yes, got me.

Paul Mescal

So, it's no for poppadoms for me. It's going to be a, like, sourdough-, do you know the restaurant BRAT in Shoreditch?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

They do this, like-, I think it's a-,

James Acaster

Oh, man, I know exactly what you're talking about.

Paul Mescal

The sourdough bread with anchovies on top?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's so good. I'm so glad this has got a shout out.

Paul Mescal

Yes. It's the best piece of bread I've ever eaten.

Ed Gamble

Yes. And they do everything in, like, the-, flame grill it and stuff.

Paul Mescal

Yes and it's a little bit burnt on the top with the saltiness of the anchovies. I can't remember, do they give, like, olive oil and butter and stuff as well?

Ed Gamble



I think it's just all on there already, man, yes.

Paul Mescal

All on there, yes.

James Acaster

The butter. I mean, if you just get bread and butter there, the butter that they send out is phenomenal as well.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

I think I'd probably ask for the butter as well. Because I wasn't a big, like, anchovies fan but again, on my foodie journey, I've begun to accept it as something that I like in my life. I just think it's a perfect bread course. And I mean, like, why would you choose poppadoms over that? I mean, do you know what I mean?

Ed Gamble

There's a time and a place, right?

James Acaster

Depends on the poppadoms, depends on the poppadoms.

Ed Gamble

But, I mean, you've picked one of the absolute best breads.

Paul Mescal

Yes. Yes, it's a great bread.

Ed Gamble

Oh, it's so good.

James Acaster

It's great.

Paul Mescal

And it's a great restaurant as well.

James Acaster

Great restaurant.

Paul Mescal

There are no misses on that menu, I don't think.



Ed Gamble

I'd say you're pretty far along a foodie journey if you're shouting out BRAT in the opening course.

Paul Mescal

Yes, it's just downhill from here.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

That's the start and that's where I'm at in my journey, the rest is just McDonald's.

James Acaster

Just a pint of carrots (talking over each other 27.36) for the rest of it. I mean, yes, do you know what? It's always fun when someone says a thing I've actually had, from a specific place. Very exciting. Last time I had that bread, yes, it's impossible to eat that bread and not think, 'Maybe I'd have this on my dream menu,' obviously.

Paul Mescal

Yes but when you poke it, do you remember, like, if you poke it, it kind of deflates? Like, it kind of goes (hissing noise 27.59).

Ed Gamble

Do you poke all your food?

Paul Mescal

Just to check it out, yes. It was just with suspicion, just like, 'Is it? Yes, what's the texture?' But am I right? Like, because it's (talking over each other 28.10).

James Acaster

It puffs up (talking over each other 28.11).

Paul Mescal

It just, kind of, puffs out and then it goes, like, (hissing noise 28.12).

Ed Gamble

Yes. (talking over each other 28.13). It's, like, a flatbread that's all puffed up.

Paul Mescal

Yes, it's delicious.

Ed Gamble

Like a, sort of, pitta style.



Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Like a fresh pitta.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes. Okay, so, yes. So, the bread and butter there, at BRAT, is also amazing.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Because that's what I thought we were talking about.

Ed Gamble

Yes?

James Acaster

I know the one you mean now.

Paul Mescal

I've had both and they're both-,

Ed Gamble

They're both.

Paul Mescal

Like, I would love for the restaurant to make a mistake, right? And they go like, 'Could I get the-', (inaudible 28.36) making my brother (ph 28.36), 'Just get the anchovies and bread.' And then they bring out the bread with the butter and then we're like, 'Oh no, sorry, I thought I said the anchovies thing,' and then I get both.

James Acaster

Yes.

Paul Mescal

But I think in the dream restaurant, I don't have to do that. Could I just ask for both things of bread?

James Acaster



But is that what makes it feel great though? Is that they've made the mistake and now you get both?

Ed Gamble

Would it not feel great if you ordered both?

Paul Mescal

Yes, you're right. You're dead right. No, I think it would be, like, if my plan, the plan that I concocted, worked, I'd feel like a champion.

Ed Gamble

I tell you what, something similar actually happened to me the other day.

Paul Mescal

Nice.

Ed Gamble

I went to ROVI which is the Ottolenghi restaurant.

James Acaster

Yes, lovely (ph 29.07).

Ed Gamble

And I just sat up at the bar, I had something to do later, so, I was like, 'I'm going to go for a solo lunch.' Sat up at the bar, ordered a couple of small plates and then they arrive, very nice and then the waiter came over with two more plates and went, 'The chef apologises that they didn't have any poppadoms.' And it was just all the bread they did.

Paul Mescal

Oh, like, that's the ideal.

Ed Gamble

I mean, it is ideal but also, it was a lot of bread (inaudible 29.32).

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It was, like, pitta breads with tahini dip and then sourdough with butter. I was just sat there like, 'This was supposed to be a light lunch before I had to go to a meeting,' and I just had to eat about eight loaves of bread.

James Acaster

'I'm trying to stay away from gluten. I'm on a low-carb diet.'



Ed Gamble

And also, one of the dishes I'd ordered was the celeriac shawarma, which has a pitta with it as well.

Paul Mescal

Okay, yes. So, not ideal but, kind of, ideal? Like, on a different day, it's a dream.

Ed Gamble

On a different day. To be fair, I'd also had two glasses (TC 00:30:00) of wine, so, I obviously didn't care about the meeting.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

I had a similar thing recently. I was in an airport bar and I ordered a Bloody Mary.

Paul Mescal

Oh, why did you do that?

James Acaster

Delicious.

Paul Mescal

No.

Ed Gamble

I don't know whether your life is cool or really sad.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

I'm trying to figure out what was really sad about that.

Paul Mescal

Just a Bloody Mary.

James Acaster

You don't like Bloody Marys? Would you drink that in your pint challenge?

Paul Mescal

Like, tomatoes.

James Acaster



You don't like tomatoes?

Paul Mescal

I have a fear of tomatoes.

James Acaster

Well, my story can wait. Let's hear (talking over each other 30.29).

Paul Mescal

No.

Ed Gamble

Put a pin in that, James.

James Acaster

I would like to hear about the fear of tomatoes, please.

Paul Mescal

Well, it's a fear of tomato, like, Heinz Ketchup and Easi-singles.

James Acaster

Yes.

Paul Mescal

So, I used to go to a childminder after school and she was lovely but then, like, one day, she decided, for a snack, that she would put an Easi-single out, spray fucking Heinz Ketchup on it, rolled it up and went, 'Here you go,' and I was like, 'No, thank you. I'd rather not have that.' And she thought I was getting cheeky and then she slapped me.

James Acaster

Oh.

Paul Mescal

It was actually pretty dramatic. So, then I told my mum and, like, I never saw that childminder again but it has taken me a second to go back to Easi-singles and ketchup. Ketchup, like, the cheap ketchup, I still can't do.

James Acaster

Can't do it.

Paul Mescal

Can't do it. I can do, like, the kind of relish and that stuff and Easi-singles, I mean, that's just a shit snack. Like, imagine giving someone (talking over each other 31.28).



Ed Gamble

Oh, it's a terrible snack.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Terrible.

Ed Gamble

(talking over each other 31.30) cheese and ketchup cigar.

James Acaster

Yes, I mean, why are you doing that?

Ed Gamble

No, thank you. Yes.

Paul Mescal

'Ooh, look at this. Have this.'

Ed Gamble

'Eat this.' No, thank you.

Paul Mescal

No. Whack.

Ed Gamble

Wham.

James Acaster

Anyway, I also ordered a quesadilla.

Paul Mescal

Yes? That's nice.

James Acaster

And he made me my Bloody Mary. Haven't paid for it yet, waiting. Some other people order, they all get their food before me, I'm waiting there. I'm drinking my Bloody Mary while I'm waiting for it. I realise they've forgotten my order and I just left, free Bloody Mary.

Paul Mescal

Very good. Is that your cocktail of choice?



James Acaster

No but it was the morning, so, in my head, that's a morning cocktail.

Paul Mescal

Morning thing.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

So, that was fine.

Ed Gamble

Is it a similar story to the one I told?

James Acaster

Yes, it had similar stuff. We got free stuff.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It feels like I was brought some bread because of the podcast, very lovely gesture from the chefs at Ottolenghi's ROVI.

James Acaster

Very lovely gesture from the airport staff.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

I got my free Bloody Mary.

Ed Gamble

And you stole a Bloody Mary.

Paul Mescal

Mary, yes.

James Acaster



Is it stealing if you drink it in front of them?

Paul Mescal

I feel it's morally questionable.

James Acaster

Did it in plain view. It's like your one, Paul, when you stole the bread from BRAT.

Paul Mescal

Yes, mine is also morally questionable. It's, like, I planned to get both of those things, it was a trick.

James Acaster

Yes and then you eat it in front of them.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Also, I didn't feel bad because, like, he made four people Bloody Marys at the same time and the other three, he was making conversation with them, he really got on with them. He didn't give a shit about me.

Paul Mescal

No.

James Acaster

So, I was like, 'That's what you get.'

Paul Mescal

Serves him right.

James Acaster

That's what you get. Now, that's my Bloody Mary and you aren't getting the money. Similar stories.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Everything alright, mate?

James Acaster

Look, I got a free Bloody Mary, I don't know about you but my life's great.

Ed Gamble



Do you want both breads, then?

Paul Mescal

Yes but the priority would be the anchovy-,

James Acaster

You've ordered the anchovy one, we've brought over the bread and butter.

Paul Mescal

By accident.

James Acaster

By mistake.

Paul Mescal

Yes, by mistake.

James Acaster

We've let you keep it and brought the right one out (talking over each other 33.24).

Paul Mescal

And I'm just sipping on my Coke, just, like, happy as Larry.

Ed Gamble

Oh, you're loving life.

James Acaster

This is a very good start.

Ed Gamble

Yes. I'm there, mentally. I can feel it.

James Acaster

Emotionally, I'm there.

Ed Gamble

Yes?

James Acaster

Yes, know the feeling of getting that freebie, while you're drinking your favourite drink. This sounds great.

Paul Mescal



And the bread course is always, I think, the most exciting because it's the anticipation. It's like it's about to happen.

Ed Gamble

When you're hungry and you're ready to go and that first bite of bread.

Paul Mescal

Yes, it's great.

James Acaster

Your dream starter. Here we go, the meal proper.

Paul Mescal

Yes, so, this is, kind of, in the comfort category. So, at Christmastime, my mum normally goes bananas and, like, loses the run of herself and fills the fridge up with stuff that nobody in the family really eats and is constantly sending my dad out for more things that none of us eat. And there's no space in the fridge but there is one thing, she makes this broccoli, potato, onion soup, which I know doesn't sound particularly-, but it's just-, to me-, I would eat buckets of it.

James Acaster

Great.

Paul Mescal

I would literally go through it for a shortcut and it's, like, one of the things that I anticipate most about Christmas, is this soup. It's, like, salty, hearty. And then, like, I'd have more bread, I'd have O'Donnell's brown bread with Kerrygold Butter. I probably wouldn't even use a spoon, it would just be, like, spooning it off with the bread.

Ed Gamble

With the bread, yes.

Paul Mescal

Yes. I know I'm walking into a tricky situation with the amount of bread.

Ed Gamble

No but like you say, this is your dream and if you want to put in the loophole of not getting full, we allow people do that.

Paul Mescal

Yes, I'm going to go with that.

James Acaster

I think, at this point, we're at a stage where any guest from Ireland who has not chosen Kerrygold Butter at some point, is probably going to be in trouble when they go home.



Paul Mescal

Or not Irish. Pretending to be Irish.

James Acaster

Yes. I get suspicious now.

Ed Gamble

Yes, when we got through that bread course without Kerrygold, I was like, 'Oh, better watch your passport.'

Paul Mescal

He's going to get (talking over each other 35.21).

James Acaster

It's not looking good. It's not looking good for you, man.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Okay, it's a soup course.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Someone's going to have to start queuing at the non-EU part at the airports.

James Acaster

Yes. And what's the bread you just said then? Sorry, you were going to say, 'Talk us through something.'

Ed Gamble

Talk us through the soup.

James Acaster

I actually like getting talked through stuff, so, I'll defer to Ed's question.

Ed Gamble

Yes, talk us through the soup.

Paul Mescal

So, there's double cream.



Ed Gamble

Right.

Paul Mescal

(inaudible 35.44), now we're talking.

James Acaster

Never have I seen him get on board with something so quickly.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I'll take it. One bowl, please.

James Acaster

Just one ingredient in. Double cream? (talking over each other 35.51).

Ed Gamble

So, that's it, is it? Great, bring it on.

Paul Mescal

Yes, warm double cream.

James Acaster

Dipping bread into double cream and loving it.

Paul Mescal

With Kerrygold Butter.

James Acaster

Yes, (mw 35.59).

Ed Gamble

Dropping cream on my naked thigh. 'Ed, stop Winnie the Poohing it, you're eating soup.'

James Acaster

'You're going to put your cigarette dick in that cream. That'll curdle.'

Paul Mescal

I mean, it would be the perfect thing to put it out with.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster



Yes. (talking over each other 36.13) double cream.

Ed Gamble

Oh no.

James Acaster

Sorry. (talking over each other 36.17) straight on the dick. 'Well, I had to do it.'

Paul Mescal

Oh Jesus.

Ed Gamble

You're just eating dinner with me and you just hear (hissing noise 36.23).

James Acaster

'Oh fuck.'

Paul Mescal

'Oh fuck.'

Ed Gamble

'Has anyone got a lighter?'

James Acaster

'Don't give it to him. Don't give him the lighter.'

Paul Mescal

'Not again.' Yes, there's double cream, there is potato, broccoli and onions and there's probably some other stuff in there.

James Acaster

A stock of some sort, maybe?

Paul Mescal

A stock, a vegetable stock, I think but it's just pretty-, like, it's thick, it's not a gentle soup.

James Acaster

Are there chunks in it?

Ed Gamble

Yes, I was thinking, how chunky is it?

Paul Mescal

It's a little bit chunky, like, the potatoes.



Ed Gamble

You know they're there.

Paul Mescal

Yes, you know they're there.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

They're not hiding.

Ed Gamble

I'd be very interested to hear what you think a gentle soup is.

Paul Mescal

A gentle soup would be, like, a Baxters or a Cream of Tomato?

Ed Gamble

Oh.

James Acaster

A broth, to me, is a gentle soup.

Paul Mescal

Yes or, like, a chicken noodle soup without the noodles.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

Do you know that, kind of, brothy-,

Ed Gamble

Yes, chicken soup.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, chicken soup.

Paul Mescal



Yes, it's chicken soup. Yes.

Ed Gamble

But this is like a-

Paul Mescal

This is, like, a meal. Like, it's a full-on-

Ed Gamble

This is a soup that'll slap you in the face. Sorry to bring back bad memories.

James Acaster

Oh, I'm so sorry.

Paul Mescal

Not again.

James Acaster

How long has this soup been family tradition every Christmas?

Paul Mescal

It's a new thing. I think it's one of those-, like, my mum tries so much stuff and 95% of it fails but this is just one that has really worked.

Ed Gamble

I really feel for your mum in this situation, by the way.

Paul Mescal

No.

Ed Gamble

Because she's buying new stuff every Christmas, trying out new recipes and you're all just going, 'Just make the fucking soup, Mum, please.'

Paul Mescal

She goes absolutely, like, buck mad. Like, goes crazy. When I came back last Christmas, the fridge was just full of cheese and we're not a big cheese family. Like, I like a board of cheese but she didn't know that a charcuterie board was called that, so, she called it, 'Now, I got you a chuterie (ph 38.20) board and it's lovely.' I love my mum dearly but, like, pronouncing things is not her forte.

James Acaster

Okay, Pastilles.

Ed Gamble



The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

Paul Mescal

I'm my mother's son (talking over each other 38.34). The appelle (ph 38.35).

James Acaster

The appellay (ph 38.36).

Ed Gamble

The appellay doesn't fall far from the tray.

James Acaster

I love it. What was on the-

Paul Mescal

Chuterie. The chuterie board, it was, like, some Brie. I'm not a fan of, like, the stinky cheeses. Like, Brie's pretty mellow, right?

Ed Gamble

Pretty mild.

James Acaster

Yes, it can be.

Paul Mescal

Like, that's my go-to. Like, Cheddar, I'm, again, beginning my foodie journey, so, it's like Brie, Cheddar, little bit of relish, just tonnes of crackers.

James Acaster

Grapes hanging out there, maybe?

Paul Mescal

No.

James Acaster

No?

Paul Mescal

No.

Ed Gamble

No, that was a straight no.

James Acaster



Absolutely not.

Paul Mescal

No.

James Acaster

Well, that sounds great. I love a Christmas tradition, like, food, that you look forward to each year.

Paul Mescal

And we don't eat it during the year, otherwise, it's just a Christmas thing.

James Acaster

It would ruin it.

Paul Mescal

Yes, it would.

Ed Gamble

Do you foresee a year where your mum's experimenting so much that the soup isn't there when you get there?

Paul Mescal

I just won't allow it.

Ed Gamble

You just won't allow it?

Paul Mescal

I'd be like, 'Mum, no.'

Ed Gamble

What happens if you turn up for Christmas and you look in the fridge, there's no soup there?

Paul Mescal

There's no soup. Well, I wouldn't want it to be in the fridge, I'd want it to be hot.

Ed Gamble

But it'd probably start in the fridge, right?

Paul Mescal

Yes, probably right. But this year, there probably won't be a soup. We're not going to be at home this Christmas, so, there will be no soup.

Ed Gamble



Oh, I think you just realised that live on the podcast, didn't you?

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

I saw the joy leave your eyes.

Paul Mescal

I'm actually really sad about that.

James Acaster

Yes, any enjoyment you were getting from being on this podcast has just vanished.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Oh my god.

Paul Mescal

I'm going to leave now and talk to my (TC 00:40:00) mum.

Ed Gamble

Do you see yourself making the soup?

Paul Mescal

I've tried it once and it's not the same.

James Acaster

Well, that's good. Yes, that makes up for everything else that your mum has attempted. So at least, like, she's nailed this.

Paul Mescal

She's smashed this, yes.

Ed Gamble

Big tureen full of it? Do you want loads of it or just a normal bowl?

Paul Mescal

I like, like, a little-, a bowl that I can just keep topping up.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes. So you can have a bigger bowl next to the ice bucket.



Paul Mescal

Bigger bowl that I'm just ladling in.

Ed Gamble

Grabbing a coke, slamming in some more soup.

Paul Mescal

Fucking teeth ripping off the caps, coke in one hand, like a pile of bread in the other, smashing it into the soup.

Ed Gamble

This is fantastic.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

What was the type of bread again?

Paul Mescal

It's like O'Donnell's, it's a brown country style bread.

James Acaster

Who's O'Donnell?

Paul Mescal

O'Donnell. He's a good friend of mine.

Ed Gamble

Chris O'Donnell.

Paul Mescal

I don't know, it's just a brand of, like, supermarket brand bread.

James Acaster

I imagine there's, like, a bloke called O'Donnell on the packet. But is there not?

Paul Mescal

No, there isn't. It's like a barn with crops and stuff around it. He wanted his anonymity.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes. He's in that barn though, right?



Paul Mescal

Yes, he's in the barn.

James Acaster

He's in there somewhere. He's in the crops. Amongst the crops.

Paul Mescal

It's like Where's Wally? Where's O'Donnell.

James Acaster

If you find O'Donnell, you get free bread for life. 'There he is. I see him. Oh, no, just seen what he's doing in the crops. Oh, dear.'

Ed Gamble

'We're not getting O'Donnells anymore.'

James Acaster

'I wish I'd never found O'Donnell. Oh, no.' That would be mad, if that's, sort of, one of the 'Where's Wallys?' Was. Scan the whole page. 'Oh, Jesus Christ.'

Paul Mescal

Oh, Wally.

James Acaster

'No, look away. Look away, look away.'

Ed Gamble

'Oh, Wally. You've let yourself down.'

James Acaster

'He's Winnie the Pooh'd it.'

Ed Gamble

Least he's got his top on.

James Acaster

That would be funny, if Wally was just walking along doing his normal pose where he's just waving at you, but he's just completely Winnie the Pooh'ing it.

Paul Mescal

Throwing cream onto his, like, cigarette penis.

Ed Gamble

Cigarette penis?



James Acaster

One of the other characters is chucking a pint of double cream on it.

Ed Gamble

I think Wally would have a stripy dick though, right?

James Acaster

He would.

Ed Gamble

Probably.

James Acaster

He has to have.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

He has to.

Ed Gamble

He has to.

James Acaster

Or he has to have it matching his walking stick. One or the other. Who knows? Little curvy at the end, with a little handle at the end of it.

Ed Gamble

And glasses.

James Acaster

Yes. Who knows? Look, let's leave it up to the listeners. You tweet us. Tweet the Great Benito, let him know what you think Wally's dick looks like. Is it stripy, or is it like a walking stick?

Ed Gamble

Yes. I know a lot of artists listen to us as well. If you want to do a little drawing of what you think Where's Wally's dick looks like.

James Acaster

Where's Willy? How have we not said that yet? How did it take us that long? Your dream main course.

Paul Mescal



My dream main course. This is the one that I'm most nervous about, because I feel like it's too simple, but it is just the main course that I want, is a spaghetti carbonara that I had in a restaurant in Puglia. I've always loved carbonara, but I've never had it in Italy. Like, it was always the thing that I would get in restaurants in Dublin and London, and it's different. It was just the most simple, kind of, perfect ingredients, the right portion size, the pancetta was just salty deliciousness, and the restaurant that we were in was this cave in Puglia with sunset and bats were flying around and I was like, 'This is pretty perfect.'

James Acaster

Incredible.

Ed Gamble

Oh, man. I've never heard, 'Bats were flying around and it was perfect' in the same sentence.

Paul Mescal

But they were like small bats, and they were kind of far away. They weren't just going like, 'Got you.' They weren't saying 'Pancetta,' either.

James Acaster

Massive sweeping down bats.

Ed Gamble

'This is delightful.'

James Acaster

'Paul, I don't know why you're enjoying this, we need to leave.' Now, if memory serves, Joseph Quinn had a lot of food from Puglia.

Ed Gamble

He did.

James Acaster

Including pasta. Do you want to be eating your pasta dish with Joseph Quinn?

Ed Gamble

Because he can fight those bats off.

Paul Mescal

He can fight the bats off.

James Acaster

He can fight those bats off. He's (talking over each other 43.57)

Ed Gamble



He couldn't actually, in the end. Spoiler.

James Acaster

That was his undoing. That might be the end of your pasta course, holding him as he dies.

Ed Gamble

He could be playing outside the restaurant.

Paul Mescal

And then he would just come in for some pasta, he sees the bats and he's like, 'Oh, fuck no, I can't be here.'

James Acaster

'Oh, shit.'

Paul Mescal

Dude, I met Joseph recently, and he's a legend. So yes, I think I'd like the rest of my meal to be by myself, but because of the kind of serendipitous nature that we both wanted pasta from Puglia, maybe we just both checked into the-

Ed Gamble

Cave.

Paul Mescal

Dream restaurant at the same time. We're like, 'Oh, wow, hey.' Just for that course.

Ed Gamble

That's nice, isn't it? When you bump into someone and you both realise how long you want to spend together socially, and there's just an agreement, an unsaid agreement, of 'We'll just sit here and have a chat, and then we'll both go and do our own thing.'

Paul Mescal

And it's normally accompanied with, like, a nod. Like, 'That's enough.' I think that's the sign of, like, being an adult, is picking up on the social cues to be like, 'This interaction has gone on for the perfect length of time.'

Ed Gamble

'It's over now.'

Paul Mescal

'And it is complete.'

James Acaster



I think if you and Joseph Quinn had pasta together, a certain demographic on the internet would lose it's mind. Fair to say?

Paul Mescal

Maybe.

James Acaster

Fair to say that when you guys met for the first time, like you just said, all those people without knowing it suddenly got a feeling deep inside. Something shifted in the force. Something's happened. 'Oh my God, has it finally happened?'

Ed Gamble

When Joe Quinn did this podcast and we put the photo out, someone commented below the photo saying, 'This is too many soft boys for one photo.'

Paul Mescal

How did that make you feel?

Ed Gamble

Great.

Paul Mescal

Great?

Ed Gamble

Great.

James Acaster

I felt pretty good, because I knew that I was the only one who wasn't a soft boy.

Paul Mescal

But I wouldn't say any of you are soft boys.

James Acaster

I'm pretty cool.

Ed Gamble

Would you like the pasta in a 'Bat of cheese?' That's a very specific reference to another episode.

James Acaster

Yes. You're supposed to do the double point. Do the double point if you're going to say 'Bat of cheese.'

Paul Mescal

Oh who said that? Who said the 'Bat of cheese?'



James Acaster

Paul Chowdhry.

Paul Mescal

Paul Chowdhry. Yes, yes.

James Acaster

Wanted his food in a bat of cheese.

Ed Gamble

The bat of cheese.

Paul Mescal

And didn't he also say that he doesn't drink and then ordered an alcoholic-

Ed Gamble

A hot toddy.

Paul Mescal

Yes, hot toddy.

James Acaster

A hot toddy, that he'd had quite recently, I think, from memory.

Paul Mescal

He's a constant surprise, that man.

James Acaster

Yes.

Paul Mescal

I think in honour of the food podcast, I would go for having a bat of cheese.

Ed Gamble

A bat of cheese, yes.

James Acaster

So, which on this podcast is Pipistrelli di Halloween. So would you like a Pipistrelli di Halloween?

Paul Mescal

Of course.

Ed Gamble



We can throw one in on the top, because this actual pasta sounds amazing. This sounds so good. Because people get really annoyed as well when carbonara gets served here and they put double cream in it, right? But it's not in Italy.

Paul Mescal

It's not.

Ed Gamble

It's like, maybe, an egg yolk?

Paul Mescal

An egg. Yes. Like, I just remember feeling like-, or, feeling? Like, tasting everything. It wasn't, like, it wasn't 45,000 calories. It was like a really delicious-

Ed Gamble

Fresh.

Paul Mescal

Fresh, like, they just do food right there. You know?

James Acaster

It gets called, like, 'Golden carbonara' or something, doesn't it? Because it's with the egg yolks and stuff, but it's actually just carbonara how it's meant to be.

Ed Gamble

Got the golden carbonara?

James Acaster

Yes, in recipe book sometimes.

Ed Gamble

That sounds like a trophy in a Wallace and Gromit film or something.

James Acaster

Yes, 'Wallace and Gromit and the Golden Carbonara.'

Paul Mescal

Starring James Acaster in the new live action.

James Acaster

'Come on.'

Ed Gamble

You'd be great in a live action Aardman film.



James Acaster

'Come on now.' Yes? Could be a mouse or a tiger. That's my range.

Ed Gamble

Do you want a man to come over and crack black pepper on it?

Paul Mescal

I'm not a big fan of black pepper, I think I-, excuse me. I just burped. Like, I'd probably go for more-,

Ed Gamble

We leave burps in, by the way.

Paul Mescal

We keep certain things out, but I mean-,

James Acaster

We do a super cut of all the burps. At the end of each year, Benito puts them all together and they play the Off Menu theme tune.

Ed Gamble

The last Irish person we had on was burping throughout, and they all stayed in. Alison Spittle.

James Acaster

Oh yes.

Paul Mescal

Oh, that was (talking over each other 47.56)

James Acaster

She loved burping. Spittle's a burper.

Ed Gamble

Yes, she's a burper. So no black pepper.

Paul Mescal

Maybe more Parmesan. Just fire it on. Yes.

James Acaster

Sounds great. I love a simple pasta dish. So Joseph Quinn utilised the little loophole of saying that was a pasta course, and then he had a main course after. So you're not going to do that.

Paul Mescal

No, I think that's my main. I'm very content with that.



James Acaster

Yes.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Did you make any noises when you were eating this carbonara?

Paul Mescal

It was a lot of like, 'Oh, oh, my God. Oh, my God.'

James Acaster

Yes, that's good.

Ed Gamble

Would you use that in your acting? Say you're in a scene where you're eating an amazing meal, would you imagine the carbonara when you're eating it? Would you go method with the carbonara?

Paul Mescal

It's like smell the fart acting, it's like, 'Oh, my God.' Like at the end, something like a really important moment, revelatory moment for a character. 'Oh my God. Oh my God.' I'm just thinking of pasta.

Ed Gamble

Yes, 'Oh my god. Can I get more Parmesan?' 'No, sorry, Paul. You said Parmesan out loud. Cut.'

James Acaster

I would think about, like, food memories if I had to do a sex scene, because I think about really delicious food and how I felt about it, but then that's not going to be sexual. Because I wouldn't want to be in a sex scene and go, 'I'm going to have to draw from sex.' Because then worst thing could happen and that's it. My life's over.

Paul Mescal

And then somebody's throwing cream on your penis.

James Acaster

Got cream from all angles and it's not nice. So I think I would want to think of delicious food I've had so that my face is showing absolute pleasure and ecstasy, but everything downstairs is completely chilled out.

Paul Mescal

Yes. Chilled, yes. It's just happy as Larry.



Ed Gamble

When I was doing a sex scene, I have to say, 'Can we get an ashtray?'

James Acaster

That was one of the things that was deleted from Cinderella, actually.

Ed Gamble

Sex scene?

James Acaster

The mouse was having sex and then I turn into a human half way through.

Paul Mescal

(TC 00:50:00) They changed the PG rating.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Paul Mescal

Yes, it was pretty bad.

Ed Gamble

And what was the reaction of the person that you were having sex with in the scene?

James Acaster

Well, remember I was a mouse at the beginning so it was another mouse. So, they exploded. They died.

Ed Gamble

It's in the director's cut.

James Acaster

I love her. And then they cut that out of the film, they were, like, 'It was too real.'

Ed Gamble

Not real.

James Acaster

My reaction, my acting was so good. I was thinking of favourite foods while I was doing that scene. At the beginning I was thinking of cheese because that's a mouse's favourite food and then I was thinking of ice cream when I was a human.

Ed Gamble

Method acting.



James Acaster

Yes, I'm very method. We won't ask you about shooting sex scenes because I'm sure you've been asked it a million times.

Paul Mescal

I mean, I'm always thinking about food during sex scenes. Yes, it's an exclusive. That's what I think about.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Well, my next question was do you twizzle or suck but it was relating to the pasta.

Paul Mescal

Oh my goodness. Oh my God. Do I twizzle or suck. I haven't mastered the spoon fork technique so I'm probably just dropping my head to the plate and going, like, just shovelling and then sucking it in. Inhaling it and saying, 'Oh my God.'

James Acaster

Talk with pasta hanging out his mouth.

Paul Mescal

That's why I want to be alone for this. Dignity out the window.

Ed Gamble

Turn your head away Joseph Quinn.

James Acaster

Yes. Joseph Quinn back to back for this.

Paul Mescal

Yes. Exactly. Hearing each other murmur through each other's backs.

James Acaster

Passing a (inaudible 51.45) to Halloween over your shoulder. 'There you go Quinn, help yourself.'

Ed Gamble

It's not real, it's not real Joe. Put the guitar down it's not real.

James Acaster

Right, your dream side dish.



Paul Mescal

Yes. So, it's chicken wings and it's from a specific place called Elephant and Castle in Dublin but it's Elephant and Castle circa the 2010s. The chicken wings are not the same anymore. My voice sounded emotional there.

James Acaster

You've gone so deep into this.

Ed Gamble

I understand if you are emotional. There's a lot of places that I feel this way about.

Paul Mescal

They're just skimping. They had it, it was there. The perfect chicken wing. I was eighteen, nineteen, my first couple of trips into Dublin, going out for a meal, chicken wings and chips and it was just lathered in this beautiful buffalo sauce. No blue cheese dip, no celery. They were there but I don't go for that. Just firing them into me.

James Acaster

Buffalo sauce is so good.

Ed Gamble

The best. Yes.

James Acaster

Especially the first time you have it, you're, like-,

Paul Mescal

Yes. If I may, I'd have the double fried chips. The really crispy brown, almost burnt but you know that kind of-, when it's been sitting in the oil for a long time and then just scooping up the buffalo sauce with the chips.

Ed Gamble

Yes, this is great. They come on a plate together in Elephant and Castle, right?

Paul Mescal

There's a big basket of wings and they do the half portions and I probably will go for the half portion and then just a little, like, a round holder of chips.

Ed Gamble

A little holder.

James Acaster

A round holder.



Paul Mescal

It's kind of criminal though, do you know when you go to a place that you're, like, 'I know what it is and I know what I want,' and then they've changed the menu or something or they've just changed the amount of buffalo sauce that they put on the wings. The margins of that must be minimal.

Ed Gamble

Yes. If that what they've changed then? Have they changed the amount of sauce or is it that they've been buying the wings from a different place?

Paul Mescal

The wings are smaller, there's less sauce, they're not distributing it properly over the wings at the top. So, you're getting dry wings at the top now and the good ones are too small at the bottom.

Ed Gamble

Devastating.

James Acaster

Devastating.

Ed Gamble

Horrible. Paul, I knew I had something meaning to ask you, if you would still recommend that people go to Elephant and Castle in Dublin because otherwise he's going to get messages and he hates the fans.

Paul Mescal

He hates the fans.

Ed Gamble

He hates the fans of the food podcast.

Paul Mescal

Yes. I mean, Benito seems pretty jaded.

Ed Gamble

Yes. He's the Jay (mw 54.22) of producers.

Paul Mescal

Do you know what I feel like I want to help Benito out but the truth is with great power comes great responsibility and there is a responsibility to say that-, okay, this is what I would say. If they go back to the good old days, go in your droves. Fix whatever needs to be fixed and leave Benito alone. Yes. That's what I would say.

James Acaster

But this is great power, you know, because this will get back to them and maybe they'll change it.



Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

And maybe people could go still, now, order the chicken and then just make sure you say to the staff, 'Could do with a bit more sauce.'

Paul Mescal

Yes, that would be ideal.

Ed Gamble

A bit dry on the top.

James Acaster

Bit dry.

Paul Mescal

And a bit small.

James Acaster

Bit dry, bit small. Just like Benito.

Ed Gamble

If they did change them back to the 2010s heyday, would you like them to be named after you?

Paul Mescal

That would be too great an honour, I would name my first born after the wings, after them.

Ed Gamble

Not Elephant or Castle.

Paul Mescal

Both. Elephant and Castle Mescal.

James Acaster

You had twins.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Elephant and Castle.

Paul Mescal



But even if I didn't have twins, if it was just my first child. It would be Elephant and Castle.

Ed Gamble

Elephant and Castle.

Paul Mescal

That's all their first name. That's not a first name and a middle name.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Next child, Buffalo.

Paul Mescal

That kid will be pretty relieved they got called Buffalo. They're going out with Elephant and Castle as well.

James Acaster

On the day that we booked you for this I walked behind you in the street.

Ed Gamble

When?

Paul Mescal

The day that you booked me?

Ed Gamble

You do that with all the guests. It's pretty weird. Where was this?

James Acaster

You got to scope them out. It was Hackney. I was on my way to go and see a gig at Earth, walking over there and three people were walking in front of us and it got to the point where we were, my girlfriend and I, we were walking too close to these people. And I'd told her earlier in the day, I was, 'We've booked Paul Mescal,' excited about it, told her. We're walking to the gig, too close to these people, we've got to overtake them. And then she goes, 'Is that Paul Mescal,' and I went, 'You're just saying it, it's in your head because I told you earlier about him.' He's right in front of us. And I was going to be, 'Oi mate. We booked you for the podcast today,' I didn't know you even listen to the pod. So, I didn't want to do that and then you go, 'Yes, cool man,' and then the next day, Benito is, like, 'Guess who just cancelled us.'

Ed Gamble

You've got to stop doing those jokes.



Paul Mescal

If we bump into each other in the street let's say hello.

James Acaster

Yes, we'll say hello from now on.

Ed Gamble

I feel like if we didn't now that would be really weird.

James Acaster

Yes, now that would be mad.

Paul Mescal

I'll do the thing that you said before the podcast started where you went up to somebody and they pretended to not know you.

James Acaster

They pretended to know me.

Ed Gamble

We should talk about it.

James Acaster

Stanley Tucci. We've had the Tucc on the pod and he goes out, it was the last series, this is the first episode of this one but, like, yes. I was in Atlanta on tour at the desk, checking into the hotel. Turn around, the Tucc is there.

Ed Gamble

I would say it was a fortnight since we'd recorded the episode.

James Acaster

Yes, probably two days. So, I'm, like, I can't believe it, he's looking at the floor. And I go, 'Stanley,' like that. Like he's an old friend I haven't seen. 'Stanley,' because I can't believe that we're in Atlanta in a hotel. He looks up at me.

Ed Gamble

He's not acting.

Ed Gamble

There's no recollection.

Paul Mescal

There's no even desire to perform. There's no, like, 'Oh.'



James Acaster

It's just completely-, and I had to go. The whole front desk had stopped and watched this as well and they know Stanley Tucci.

Ed Gamble

Yes, they know the Tucc.

Paul Mescal

The Tucc, yes.

James Acaster

They're, like, 'We wanna check the Tucc in, what's this limey holding up the queue for.' And then you have to do the undignified thing, in front of loads of people who don't know the podcast, going, 'It's me from the food podcast.'

Ed Gamble

'The food podcast I do with Ed.'

James Acaster

Yes, 'The food podcast that I did with Ed,' and then he was very nice. It's, like, 'Yes, you guys. Yes.'

Ed Gamble

It was out of context right? So, it would have been weird.

James Acaster

Yes, it was so out of context, he didn't expect to see me in an Atlanta hotel but then he did tell me to get some rest and I hadn't told him that I was tired. That did feel a little bit-,

Ed Gamble

Did you get rest?

Ed Gamble

Yes. When the Tucc tells you to get rest, you go and get rest.

Paul Mescal

You do what you're told.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

You've got to go for a Tucc snooze.

James Acaster



Tucc has seen me twice in my life, that's all. So, if he thinks I look tired then that means I must look significantly more tired than the fortnight ago when he saw me.

Ed Gamble

What if he says that to everyone when he meets at the end, he's, like, 'Okay, get some rest. Nice to see you.'

Paul Mescal

That's a power play. That's a real power play. Imagine just everyone you meet, going in the end, like, Doritos in the shop or something and you're just chatting to the cashier, and you're, 'Thanks for that, get some rest.'

James Acaster

Get some rest.

Ed Gamble

I think if that was your thing it would only be a matter of time before people started talking about it with each other and going, 'Did he tell you to get some rest? He told me that.' And you'd be found out pretty quickly.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I was trying to make you feel better by saying that he said that because I bet you looked great, James.

James Acaster

Yes, thank you. There was a certain actor I heard about who did a thing where they used to turn up at auditions and they would turn up a bit late deliberately and then they would have a story where they had on their way there, they had fallen off a bicycle and they had hurt themselves and they would say sorry that this happened to me on the way here. And they made the mistake of pulling it twice on the same person.

Paul Mescal

I've heard this story as well.

James Acaster

Who then was, like, 'That's weird because I heard that-, I heard you did that last time.' And then they're, like, 'Oh damn.'

Paul Mescal

Can you imagine though? You would just want the ground to open up and swallow you. But it serves you right.



James Acaster

Serves you right. Don't lie.

Paul Mescal

Don't lie.

Ed Gamble

So what was the benefit of that though? To make people remember you.

James Acaster

'Wow, you still came to do audition. You, like, fell off your bike and you had this room but you still came. This is a good guy.' So, kind of, like, endear yourself to them.

Ed Gamble

Because I guess auditions are all about trying to stand out in the sea of auditions, right?

Paul Mescal

Auditions can just be awful experiences and I don't think there's a way-, I think there's like a weird alchemy of what happens in a good audition that is like a form of magic that, I'm just like, 'I don't know how that happened,' but most of them are-, I hear it's like worse auditioning in LA. It is the thing that you see in the films where it's like everybody looks the same and they're all wearing the exact same clothes and they go in and they say, 'Give me the money.' Or it's some, sort of, shitty line.

James Acaster

I'd say give me the money.

Ed Gamble

Worst month of my life. Learning so many lines. Went into one audition. There was a dog in the room. It fell asleep. Just watch a dog fall asleep as I was reading off the lines.

Paul Mescal

Did you not learn the lines?

Ed Gamble

I've learnt the lines. I've learnt the lines. The show has been cancel since, which is always a win.

Paul Mescal

Serves them right.

James Acaster

Your dream drink. Now, we've already had, kind of, your dream drink that's throughout the whole menu, but have you got a different?

Paul Mescal



Yes. I like an alcohol beverage. So, this was actually tricky for me because it's, like, the classic, like I love a whiskey sour, I love an old fashioned, but there's one cocktail that I've had recently. Do you know that new hotel, the Nomad hotel?

Ed Gamble

Yes, I've heard of that.

Paul Mescal

It's in Covent Garden, and they do this cocktail called the Sergeant Pepper and it is just stunning. It's in a little, like, small, little glass. It's jalapeno, kind of, Tequila based, but with coriander, pineapple, and it's green and really cold and just spicy and sweet. Just keep them coming.

Ed Gamble

Great. I love the sound of this.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Actually, at that Atlanta hotel, there was a guy, the cocktail who's incredible, the barman there, and on the last day, I just said, just make me whatever you want, you're really good, so just go for whatever, and he made me a similar thing, it was tequila and a jalapeno, pineapple thing.

Ed Gamble

Carrots.

James Acaster

Carrots, two eggs.

Paul Mescal

That's what you get in Ireland. (talking over each other 01.02.24) whatever you want.

Ed Gamble

This is for charity.

James Acaster

Yes. (talking over each other 01.02.32) now you've got to nominate someone. Okay. I've gone up to room seven. (inaudible 01.02.41) I told you to get some rest (inaudible 01.02.42). Yes, because I had a similar drink recently, I'm there now, as soon as you described it.

Paul Mescal

Yes. And it's just it's the perfect amount of spice that you're like, 'Fff,' like it kicks your mouth around a little bit, and then you've got the sweet of the pineapple. I think there's a bit of coriander or something in it.



Ed Gamble

I'm going to have to go and get one.

Paul Mescal

There's also got a lovely bar in that hotel. It's like a little, like, library bar. Also one of the honourable mentions was they have this burger there that I was like, it was really close to getting onto the-,

Ed Gamble

What's in the burger?

Paul Mescal

It's just, like, there's a mustard seed, kind of, sauce that they put on over the top, but it's just a perfect big cooked burger with bacon and cheese and this mustard sauce that they have for both the burger and the fries that go with it. Actually, the fries I would love to have from the Nomad hotel.

Ed Gamble

So, that's on your side dish with the wings?

Paul Mescal

That's on my side side with the wings, actually with that mustard seed sauce.

James Acaster

Always good for a place to get a double shout out, I think that happens rarely, unless you're Anthony Head and everything comes from the Ivy.

Ed Gamble

That guy loves the Ivy.

James Acaster

That guy loves the Ivy, which is crazy because it basically tastes like a Bills. This sounds delicious though.

Ed Gamble

Yes. That sauce sounds great.

Paul Mescal

So, yes. And I'm not a big mustard-, that's a new thing for me. They're so good. It's a nice complement with the cocktail. And I would like that cocktail throughout the meal as well. Like, not just at the-, I assume that's what it is, it's like, you get the cocktail (talking over each other 01.04.19).

Ed Gamble

Yes.



James Acaster

I think some people listen to the pod and think, 'Well, I don't wait that long until I get my God damn drink.'

Ed Gamble

It's made up, it's (inaudible 01.04.28).

James Acaster

(inaudible 01.04.30) from the Nomad, I got a bit excited Benito, do you know why Benito (inaudible 01.04.36). Because in Disneyworld there's a place called Nomad Lounge at Animal Kingdom, and they do great cocktails.

Ed Gamble

Do they?

James Acaster

Yes. Oh, it was good. It was delicious.

Ed Gamble

They do great Nomad Lounge at Animal Kingdom do they?

James Acaster

The Nomad Lounge, yes, in Animal Kingdom. You go there and you get some delicious cocktails. It was one of the things that got recommended to us by Molly, and we went there and had some delicious cocktails.

Paul Mescal

Disneyland is spectacular. It is. I can't argue with you on that, and I don't intend to. I went there recently with friends and you could just be there for days. It's magic.

James Acaster

Yes. It was life changing. And I will definitely go back and I will go to the Nomad Lounge when I go back.

Ed Gamble

To be fair, I had one of the best Manhattans I've ever had onboard a ship at DisneySea in Tokyo.

James Acaster

There we go.

Paul Mescal

There we go. I sat at the front on Splash Mountain and regretted it.

James Acaster



Oh yes, yes.

Paul Mescal

I did the toxic thing. I was like, 'I'll sit at the front.' Soaked. I got churros after it though.

James Acaster

Yes?

Paul Mescal

Yes.

James Acaster

Would you go on Splash Mountain if it was full of double cream instead of water?

Paul Mescal

I mean, it would probably change the consistency of the ride. It would probably be like you just hit the bottom and just get stuck.

Ed Gamble

What if it was your mum's soup? A water ride with your mum's soup instead of water?

Paul Mescal

That would be gross because it would get all cold and get all bacteria-y.

Ed Gamble

You'd still have a little taste of it wouldn't you? I can't go on water rides, not with my dick.

Paul Mescal

It doesn't fit.

James Acaster

I go on water rides with my dick. Got (talking over each other 01.06.19) off. We're getting to the dessert now. I feel like you're going to bring it home. You said earlier on you're not a cheese fan (ph 01.06.34) so that makes me feel good about this.

Paul Mescal

No. I do have a big sweet tooth. Like, it is, my cocktail is sweet. Like, I would say buffalo sauce is, kind of, like, there's a tangy-, so, for dessert, it's a concoction, it's two desserts that I've had that I make, it's a dream thing that I haven't actually had, but that I'm putting together.

James Acaster

Great.

Paul Mescal



And I was reminded by it, I flew across to America recently and British Airways do this chocolate fondant, like, lava cake. And it reminded-, so, I don't want that, but I want a similar, do you know those cakes that are barely standing up that when you touch them it all breaks apart and the chocolate oozes out. So, that's the centre of the dish. And then I want a skillet of, like, kind of, half-baked thick cookie dough, so it's cooking on that and the chocolate cake is quite hot and it's barely staying together. And then you poke, fire on a load of double cream (talking over each other 01.07.41).

James Acaster

(talking over each other 01.07.44) and double cream.

Paul Mescal

So, the chocolate and the cookie dough is hot, but the cream is cold.

Ed Gamble

When you said you had a sweet tooth I didn't expect that. (talking over each other 01.07.57)

James Acaster

(talking over each other 01.07.57) captain, my captain.

Paul Mescal

Like, yes, it's definitely the heaviest dish of the day. And I want a big portion. Like, I want to not be able to finish it. I don't want to be-, because dessert is my favourite thing. I hate when you go to a restaurant and people are like, 'Will you do dessert?'

Ed Gamble

Yes, that's why we're here.

Paul Mescal

But it depends on the people you're with.

Ed Gamble

(talking over each other 01.08.23).

Paul Mescal

(talking over each other 01.08.23) I'm fine, don't want dessert.

James Acaster

Sold yourself out, like Peter denying Jesus.

Ed Gamble

Exactly. That's what I was thinking as well actually.

James Acaster

(talking over each other 01.08.31).



Ed Gamble

The skillet is a great introduction to the dessert I think. Cookie dough on a skillet, it feels proper (talking over each other 01.08.39) on the table.

Paul Mescal

So, you're putting the cookie dough in and it's cooking as you're eating it, but I don't want it to get crispy, I want to be like, the texture is very soft and molten, and then when you hit the cookie dough, it's just a bit goeey. It's like when you get a good brownie. I don't want it cakey, I want it dense and sticking to your mouth. You know, I'm not in for the cake brownie kind of feel.

Ed Gamble

Always so disappointing. When you get a cookie or a brownie and you'd go for the bend on a cookie, you want that goeey, and then it snaps and you're like, 'What a waste of time.'

Paul Mescal

Yes, throw it out.

Ed Gamble

Total waste of time.

James Acaster

Where's the best place you've had cookie dough? So, I find, so, a skillet, I know what I would do, is that I would order a skillet of cookie dough very excitedly, and I don't think I ever been able to finish such a thing, it's delicious, but I find it very filling very quickly. Obviously one of the best things that ever happened to me, I've definitely said this on the podcast before, was in a Leeds shopping centre when my tour manager and I were queuing up for what we believed was fro-yo and it turned out to be a cookie dough stand.

Ed Gamble

That's the accidental thing again though isn't it.

Paul Mescal

That's perfect.

Ed Gamble

Because you'd gone in with good intentions and you can't help what's happened, so you just need to go with it.

James Acaster

(talking over each other 01.09.48) the cookie dough, and it was warm, it was a nice slab of it, just walked around with it.

Ed Gamble



Why did you think it was fro-yo?

James Acaster

Because the way that they-

Ed Gamble

Was it called co-do and you misread it?

James Acaster

And also were deliberately walking around looking for a fro-yo place (TC 01:10:00) because we were both pulling (ph 01.10.03) heads and we're like, 'We've had too much dessert every day man, let's just get a fro-yo today and be good boys.' That's it, we had a Nandos and the fro-yo machine was down. And we were like, 'Well, I've got a taste for fro-yo now.' Walking round the shopping centre, saw this place, it basically, all the photos were of what looked like fro-yo, but it turns out it's hard to photograph cookie dough because it's quite two-dimensional and flat, so it just looked like the shadow of the fro-yo, and actually what it was was cookie dough with a massive soft serve ice cream on the side of it.

Ed Gamble

Paul, I think you were very generous there when you were listening to that story because you used the phrase got you when James said the shadow of the cookie dough, and I don't think anyone got that.

Paul Mescal

I didn't get it.

Ed Gamble

(Laughter)

James Acaster

Did I said shadow of the cookie dough? Shadow of the fro-yo.

Ed Gamble

Shadow of the fro-yo.

Paul Mescal

It sounds like an album title.

James Acaster

The cookie dough looked like the shadow of the fro-yo (talking over each other 01.10.54).

Ed Gamble

So, it was fro-yo?

James Acaster



No, well, we thought it was fro-yo but it was soft serve ice cream. But that big mountain of soft serve ice cream, and then underneath it was this slab of cookie dough. But the way we saw it was just that that wasn't a slab of cookie dough, that was just a shadow cast by the fro-yo that we assumed was there. So, when we ordered this fro-yo, that's what we thought we were going.

Ed Gamble

So, what did you say to the guy?

James Acaster

Pointed to the picture, and said, 'I'd like that.' Because they were all called something that wasn't even cookie dough related, it was like, 'I'll have the Alabama please,' or whatever it was called. 'I'll have the spring time joy,' whatever it (talking over each other 01.11.33). And then they-

Ed Gamble

I can't see a cookie dough being called spring time joy.

James Acaster

No, probably not.

Ed Gamble

It depends.

James Acaster

It depends. And then they brought them out. And we were like, 'Oh, we've just ordered cookie dough and soft serve ice cream.'

Paul Mescal

And was the cookie dough warm?

James Acaster

So good. Warm. Really delicious, walking around, very pleased with ourselves while also being like, this is exactly what we didn't want to happen.

Paul Mescal

If you look, it's hard to get bad cookie dough. So, like, I find it hard to answer where I would get it from, because I think cookie dough again, when it's done right, simple ingredients, it's just delicious. I think the key would be the chocolate lava cake. And again, like, Marks and Spencers do a good one, it's one of the other things mum gets at Christmas. That's a staple. I feel like I've really gone in on my poor mum.

Ed Gamble

(talking over each other 01.12.21).

James Acaster



(talking over each other 01.12.21) do you know which question I'm going to ask now based on that? I suppose, it's not a question you would ask

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

Based on that. I suppose, it's not a question you would ask.

Ed Gamble

What?

James Acaster

What if your mum made a chocolate lava cake and in the middle was the soup, and the soup comes out.

Ed Gamble

That is a weird (talking over each other 01.12.35) I didn't think of that question.

Paul Mescal

I didn't jump to that. I would be, like, I appreciate you for attempting-,

Ed Gamble

She's an architect if she manages that.

Paul Mescal

Yes. But as in they would be together, right?

James Acaster

You tap that skin of the chocolate lava cake and (talking over each other 01.12.55).

Ed Gamble

That's disgusting.

Paul Mescal

That's vile, like I don't want that. But if it could (talking over each other 01.12.59) be isolated, like, if it could be the chocolate lava cake is in the middle and it looks like it's all part of the same thing, when I'm like eating around and I'm eating my soup which I love, and I'm looking at the chocolate lava cake and I'm like, 'I'm going to be having you soon.' So, I'm eating away, and then I can lift, when I've finished all my soup, I can lift the chocolate lava cake out, pierce, all comes out, pour on the cream, shovel it into my face.

Ed Gamble



So, just to get this straight, you don't want to touch the chocolate lava cake and then your mum's soup comes spilling out of it.

Paul Mescal

Yes, no, no, no, I don't want that.

James Acaster

What if your mum made-

Paul Mescal

Thanks for that James. (talking over each other 01.13.37)

James Acaster

It looked like a bread roll. So, it's bread, a very thin layer of bread, and when you poke it, the soup comes out.

Ed Gamble

That was genuinely going to be my next question.

Paul Mescal

I don't think I'm into this whole, like, foods looking like other foods because I've been deceived before when recently, we were at this fancy dinner at an awards show thing, and they brought out thing that looked like-, I was starving, and they brought out this thing that looked like an apple kind of salad, like little garnishes around it. And I was love, 'I love apple.' And I made a mistake where I put my fork into it and I thought it was like-, oh it was poached so it was soft, and put it, and it was pate. And I can't do pate, it's just disgusting and I was deceived.

Ed Gamble

Especially not surprise pate, right?

Paul Mescal

Yes. Nobody wants surprise pate.

Ed Gamble

A whole spoonful of surprise pate.

Paul Mescal

No. And it sticks to your mouth. And you're at a fancy dinner so you can't be like, 'What the fuck is this?'

Ed Gamble

I just got an image of you say there at the awards ceremony, the only person enthusiastic about the food, everyone else is so jaded nibbling over that and you go, 'I love apples. (talking over each other 01.14.40) applays (ph 01.14.40).'



James Acaster

I ate potpourri at a Sri Lankan restaurant once. (Laughter)

Ed Gamble

I don't think we've heard this.

James Acaster

Well, I didn't think of it until now when Paul said he'd been stuck (ph 01.14.54) in the past, I was like, 'Oh yes, I remember that, that reminds me of when my entire family went to the Gurkhas together, actually I don't think it was Sri Lanka, anyway, we went to the Gurkhas.

Ed Gamble

Nepalese probably.

James Acaster

Yes. Nepalese. Yes. That's it. That's right. Went to the Gurkhas and there was some potpourri at the end of the table, and as a whole family actually, we all agreed we weren't sure.

Ed Gamble

But you had to test it.

James Acaster

What it was. And I was like, 'Well, it looks delicious,' I went in, had a mouthful and went, ' Don't eat it. It's floral.'

Ed Gamble

Oh man.

James Acaster

I'm going to read your menu back to you now, see how you feel about it. Water, you would like an ice bucket, a Mexican cola. Popadoms or bread? Sourdough bread and butter, with anchovies from Brats (ph 01.15.41). And you'd also like the bread and butter brought out by mistake and then they bring out the anchovies and (talking over each other 01.15.47). Starter, mum's broccoli potato with onion, odons (ph 01.15.49) brown bread and Kerrygold butter. Main, spaghetti carbonara with parmesan from Puglia and on the side a little (inaudible 01.15.58). Side dish, chicken wings with buffalo sauce from double fried chips from Elephant and Castle from Dublin circa the 2010s. And the double-fried chips you would actually like from the Nomad hotel. Drink, Sergeant Pepper also from the Nomad hotel. Double shutout, almost unheard of. Dessert, a skillet of half-baked cookie dough with a chocolate lava cake on top and double poured over and then everything all erupts into each other and you get to enjoy it.

Ed Gamble

Amazing.

James Acaster



That is a good menu.

Ed Gamble

That's a great menu.

Paul Mescal

I'm very happy with that. A lot of anxiety in the lead up to this for me.

Ed Gamble

That's what we like.

Paul Mescal

Yes, pressure.

Ed Gamble

We like everyone to be really on edge before they come in.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Feel nervous.

Paul Mescal

I can breathe again.

Ed Gamble

Here's what I'm interested in trying, the soup, which I'm never going to get to try.

Paul Mescal

Never know.

Ed Gamble

Yes, could pop over.

James Acaster

Christmas.

Ed Gamble

And the cocktail.



Paul Mescal

The cocktail, yes. But if you're going to go to the Nomad, do the burger and the chips as well, do it together in the library bar. Perfect.

James Acaster

If you ever get invited over for Christmas, Ed, if ever happens with any of our guests and you get invited for Christmas and I don't, I'm going to feel pretty.

Paul Mescal

No, no, you both are invited.

Ed Gamble

I can eat the cheese as well.

Paul Mescal

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I'll get through that fridge for you.

Paul Mescal

Yes, please do. (talking over each other 01.17.15)

Ed Gamble

The first ten minutes that charcuterie board is going down, I'm eating loads of cheese. (talking over each other 01.17.18) I think we should fill this up with soup.

Paul Mescal

My mum would lose her mind if more people came, we'd have to get another fridge.

Ed Gamble

Paul, thank you very much for coming to the dream restaurant.

Paul Mescal

Thank you very much for having me.

James Acaster

Thank you Paul.

Ed Gamble

Well, there we are, what an amazing way to start the series James.

James Acaster

Yes, a delicious menu, a wonderful guest.



Ed Gamble

Wonderful guest.

James Acaster

What more could we ask for.

Ed Gamble

The perfect guest.

James Acaster

Yes, wonderful guest who knew more about the podcast than we did. God bless him. That's what I love.

Ed Gamble

So friendly, so funny, knew his stuff, is trying new foods.

James Acaster

Trying new foods, expanding horizons, and just, like, one of the menus that, yes, if someone said to me, 'This is on the menu tonight, I'd eat all of that.'

Ed Gamble

Absolutely.

James Acaster

I'd love it.

Ed Gamble

Fantastic stuff from Paul. Thank you very much Paul for coming on. And thank you for not saying Mescal. Although, James, he came pretty close.

James Acaster

Tequila. It was pretty close, it was in the family, you know, and after the record we did say to Paul that Mescal was the secret ingredient, and he said, they did a Mescal version of that cocktail at the Nomad as well that you can get and he had to decide between the two and just went with the tequila one. So, it could have very well been our next guest who got chucked out the restaurant. And I'm not sure what the reaction would have been like, that would have been definitely one of the days where I was very glad to be off social media if we kicked Paul Mescal out of the dream restaurant.

Ed Gamble

I think just the reaction from him would have been bad.

James Acaster

Yes.



Ed Gamble

To not get to say his dessert that he spent so long thinking about.

James Acaster

It would have been bad for me as well to not hear a dessert. Because at least with Jade, it was the dessert. So, we at least got to hear someone describe her pudding.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

But if I haven't got to hear that lovely description of a dessert, I would have been quite sad on the journey home tonight.

Ed Gamble

But think you very much to Paul. We're very excited about the rest of the series as well. Just you wait and see who we've got coming up.

James Acaster

Yes. And, hey, if you loved that episode with Paul Mescal, you need to get on MUBI and watch Aftersun asap, I can't wait to watch it. I'm very, very excited. I haven't been excited about a film for a while because I gave myself viewing fatigue during the lockdowns, and it takes a lot now for me to be like, 'I can't wait to watch something.'

Ed Gamble

Buzzing for a film.

James Acaster

Very much looking forward to watching it.

Ed Gamble

It's not called Aftersun asap by the way, it's just Aftersun. Aftersun asap is what I scream on every holiday I've ever been on.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. Ed is like a big tomato.

Ed Gamble

I'm a big tomato. I'd scare the shit out of Paul Mescal if he saw me on holiday.

James Acaster

You would. It would be horrible for him to see you.

Ed Gamble



Yes. Running after him going, 'Paul, Paul,' he doesn't recognise me. Get some rest.

James Acaster

Get some rest.

Ed Gamble

We'll see you next week for another dream menu. Thank you very much for listening. Bye bye.

James Acaster

(inaudible 01.19.59) dream of food. (TC 01:20:00) (music plays 01.20.00-01.20.11)