



Off Menu – Ep 230 – Nisha Katona

Ed Gamble

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast, shredding the carrot of conversation, shredding the cabbage of the internet, mixing it all up together in the mayonnaise of good times, you've got yourself a pod-slaw.

James Acaster

Oh, it's the best pod-slaw in town. That's Ed Gamble, my name is James Acaster. We are the proprietors of a dream restaurant and every single week we invite a guest in and we ask them their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink, not in that order. And this week, our guest is, Nisha Katona.

Ed Gamble

Nisha Katona. Nisha Katona, a wonderful chef, wonderful broadcaster, a fellow judge on Great British Menu.

James Acaster

One of Ed's other friends from his other life.

Ed Gamble

Yes, one of my other buddies.

James Acaster

Feels weird.

Ed Gamble

She's absolutely-

James Acaster

Bit jealous.

Ed Gamble

Brilliant.

James Acaster

I'm a bit jealous.

Ed Gamble

She runs the Mowgli restaurant chain, which we both love.

James Acaster

Yes, love it.



Ed Gamble

So, very excited to have Nisha in the studio today. Also, we have a lot of fun with Nisha on the show and she's bonkers.

James Acaster

On Great British Menu?

Ed Gamble

Yes. She's a proper laugh.

James Acaster

Yes, so she's bonkers.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And we already know what you and Kerridge are like.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And Andi Oliver to be fair.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

This is everyone on Great British Menu now.

Ed Gamble

This is the final piece of the puzzle. Apart from, like, all the brilliant crew and stuff and all the chefs who've been on.

James Acaster

Who should we have on from the crew?

Ed Gamble

We could have Big Chris.

James Acaster

Yes?



Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I've heard about Big Chris.

Ed Gamble

Big Chris the camera man.

James Acaster

Yes, okay. Well-,

Ed Gamble

Yes. We'll have him on.

James Acaster

If enough people tweet Off Menu asking for Big Chris, if we get 1,000 tweets requesting Big Chris come on the pod, we'll invite him on.

Ed Gamble

Right.

James Acaster

1,000.

Ed Gamble

We're not doing that, because we will.

James Acaster

We won't get 1,000.

Ed Gamble

We will mate.

James Acaster

How many people listen to this every week?

Ed Gamble

We're not having Big Chris on the podcast. Nisha is a brilliant chef, she's a proper laugh. She also writes fantastic cookery books. She's got 30-minute Mowgli, she's got Meat-free Mowgli, and she has a new book available called Bold.

James Acaster

Bold. Big flavour twists to classic dishes.



Ed Gamble

Yes, so looking forward to talking to her about that. But hopefully she gets to talk about it if she doesn't say our secret ingredient.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, of course. Nisha says the secret ingredient, an ingredient which we have deemed to be unacceptable, we will be forced to kick her out of the dream restaurant.

Ed Gamble

And the secret ingredient this week is kangaroo meat. Meat.

James Acaster

Kangaroo meat.

Ed Gamble

Kangaroo meat. Kangaroo milk or-,

James Acaster

Not the hair.

Ed Gamble

Not the hair. Kangaroo hair. Although I wouldn't like that either.

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

Never had kangaroo actually James.

James Acaster

I've not had it, I don't think I would want it.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

And I know that as a meat eater then that is probably quite hypocritical, it's a bit like, oh that seems bad kangaroo.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but they just look, sort of, mythical don't they? So-,

James Acaster

Yes, it just feels a bit pointless to eat a kangaroo.



Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Probably pointless eating any of them.

Ed Gamble

You know what? If it was offered to me I probably would try it, but that's the secret ingredient this week anyway.

James Acaster

Yes. I'd be polite.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I'd eat it but I wouldn't order it.

Ed Gamble

No, no thank you. So, let's hope she doesn't order that. So, let's get on with it. This is the Off Menu menu of Nisha Katona.

James Acaster

Nisha Katona.

Ed Gamble

Welcome Nisha, to the dream restaurant.

Nisha Katona

I'm very glad to be here.

James Acaster

Welcome Nisha Katona to the dream restaurant, I've been expecting you for some time.

Nisha Katona

How amazing to be here. Honestly, this is a massive deal because this is the podcast that all my, kind of, cool members of my family listen to.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Who are they? Who are the cool ones?



Nisha Katona

Okay, in fairness, there's one cool member of my family and I've got one cool person in my social group. But it is like a cult thing isn't it? I mean, they religiously listen to every word of it and then they repeat what you've said back to me ad nauseum.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

So, it's a big deal.

James Acaster

Do they make us sound funny?

Nisha Katona

Do you know what, they do, it's about the bants, isn't it?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

We say that don't we?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

You know, googled that before.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Bants.

Nisha Katona

But I did text you and say, 'Expect no humour.'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

This is what really worries me. So no, it's a massive deal, so thank you very much for having me on.

Ed Gamble

Well, who are the cool people you know that like it?



Nisha Katona

Okay, there are two.

Ed Gamble

Shout them out.

Nisha Katona

Lucas Twigger.

Ed Gamble

Lucas Twigger.

Nisha Katona

Thomas Batley.

Ed Gamble

Thomas Batley?

Nisha Katona

Naeem Biswas.

Ed Gamble

Naeem Biswas.

Nisha Katona

But when they approached me, they said, 'Are you actually kidding? You need to pull out of this gig.' Basically.

James Acaster

Really?

Nisha Katona

Because you're so essentially dull.

James Acaster

But you're a chef, restaurateur-,

Ed Gamble

A judge on the best food show on television.

James Acaster

And they're going to tell you that you're not suited to this food podcast.



Nisha Katona

But you have funny people on this. You have some epic, epic guests, so honestly, I do, I'm quite humbled to be on. It's a really weird thing you know, because I've only just started, in fairness, I've only just really started doing TV so I'm not, kind of, famous in that way, so I'm still at that level where people see you in the street. And I don't know if you remember getting to that point where people see you in the street and they think they know you from their social life.

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

So, they go, 'Oh my God, where've we met? Where've we met?'

Ed Gamble

How do you deal with that?

Nisha Katona

So, once, I've learnt a lesson. I was in a hospital, went to visit my uncle, anyway, and a nurse came up and she said, 'Are you a doctor here?' I wish, my dog's crying sorry. No, don't shout, be quiet, don't. Just sit down. And she said, 'Are you a doctor here?' And I said, 'No.' And I sort of, knew that she'd seen me on This Morning or whatever, GBM, she said, 'What is it? Are you a nurse?' I said, 'No.' And she said, 'Physiotherapist, what is it?' And at that point, I thought, 'I'm going to say it, I'm going to sound like an arse here but I'm going to say it, and I said, 'I do a little bit of TV,' and she said, 'No, it's definitely not that.' And I've never, ever, ever repeated that again, so, you just play along and I just say, 'I've got one of those faces.'

Ed Gamble

I had it at a wedding the other day. One of the other guests came up to me and went, 'I swear I know you from somewhere.' I went, 'I'll be here all day, you've got time to work it out.' She didn't work it out.

James Acaster

Joe Lycett text me the other day, letting me know that there was someone at Birmingham City Airport looking forward to coming to see me doing a show in Kettering and he knows that because they came and told him they were looking forward to seeing him do a gig in Kettering and that their girlfriend's a big Off Menu fan, and then came back later and said, 'Sorry, she's going to kill me if I don't get a photo.' Got a selfie, he told me they got a selfie together and then he said, 'He's sent that to his girlfriend and he'll be back in about ten minutes to explain to me what's gone wrong.' Did that. Sent me a photo of the two of them doing the thumbs up, it had gone wrong. I sent him back a photo of me doing a thumbs up, and the guy had his photo taken with the photo of me with the thumbs up.

Nisha Katona

No, it just gets worse and worse.



James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

I can't believe that still happens to you two. You know, at what point does, it's a strange thing. I might diminish before then.

James Acaster

Yes?

Nisha Katona

Yes.

Ed Gamble

What do you mean diminish?

Nisha Katona

Just in terms of the amount of TV that I do. So, I do GBM and I do This Morning, you know, but I'm running restaurants as well, so you've got to pick your battles a bit.

Ed Gamble

Quite busy.

Nisha Katona

A little bit, yes. And so maybe I do less, I don't know. But what's great is just doing the bits that you like. You know, just doing TV and things that you like. I think you've got to start really being judicious about it.

James Acaster

Yes, sure. Goose is very curious about everything that's on the table.

Nisha Katona

Do you know she just-,

James Acaster

Now I'm sat on the floor.

Nisha Katona

Shall we put her out, do you think?

James Acaster

No, it's pretty funny to have her in here, actually.



Nisha Katona

Okay good. Yes, it is like having a primate in here. So, she's got the chicken strippers out of my bag.

James Acaster

Went into your bag, pulled out a whole box of chicken strippers.

Nisha Katona

Yes. So, I'm going to give her another chicken stripper.

James Acaster

Really? She just had one and it didn't really help. She still went back in your bag and-,

Nisha Katona

It didn't.

James Acaster

I'd say it's made her worse when she was before when you gave her the chicken stripper.

Nisha Katona

The sad truth is, it's helping her bowel mobility, Benito. So there'll come a point where-,

James Acaster

Benito.

Nisha Katona

Where she-,

Ed Gamble

So, we're getting the dog full of chicken strippers to help her bowel mobility, and we're in a small closed studio.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Well, it's going to be a first for Off Menu but I can't wait for it to happen.

James Acaster

All of us choking on guffs.

Nisha Katona

So, do you ever have dogs in here before?



James Acaster

Yes, Toast.

Ed Gamble

Toast. Benito's dog.

James Acaster

We'll have him here.

Ed Gamble

Has been in here. But yes, he can't sit still at all.

Nisha Katona

Really?

Ed Gamble

I mean, neither Goose to be fair.

Nisha Katona

Do you find it distracting?

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

Well, in a nice way.

James Acaster

Nice for a change, you know?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

To have a dog.

Nisha Katona

If you're not distracted, I'm not going to be distracted.

Ed Gamble

Great.



Nisha Katona

So, this is amazing just talking food, it's such a rare treat isn't it?

Ed Gamble

Love it.

James Acaster

For you? Aren't you talking food all the time?

Nisha Katona

Well it's funny because, so yes, so I build restaurants is what I do, and the menu is mine and I think it's really important not to keep changing it, so there'll be the odd thing that changes or I tweak. And what I tend to do is if there's a dish that isn't selling, it's dead interesting, I put it out on social media. So, I built this on social media, and I know you think this is hilarious but it will literally, my social media is all me, pictures of the dogs, pictures of the goats, pictures of whatever, can you hear her whinging? And so there was a dish, for instance, a cabbage dish, that wasn't selling, and it's an amazing dish. The way that Indians cook cabbage is so clever. Anyway, so I put it out to social media, cabbage dish isn't selling, can you tell me why? Is it because it's not nice or what is it I'm doing wrong with this? And the audience came back and said, 'English people would never pay to eat something with the word cabbage in in a restaurant. So, I've changed the name to tangled greens and suddenly the sales went up.

Ed Gamble

Oh wow.

Nisha Katona

It's so interesting, you know, just having that really instant relationship with your audience. Same with omelettes. So kathi wraps you'll know what a kathi wrap is, where it's a chapati with an Indian omelette, masala omelette with onions and chilli, dead, dead nice, and it wasn't selling and again the feedback came back, 'Keep it on but just don't use the word omelette on your menu,' so it's that kind of tweaking. As a result-

Ed Gamble

So, the tangled greens is actually cabbage?

Nisha Katona

It's cabbage, yes.

Ed Gamble

Oh, I'm never fucking eating that again.

Nisha Katona

What the hell did you think it was?



Ed Gamble

Cabbage, absolutely disgusting.

Nisha Katona

For God's sake, do you think that cabbage does not photosynthesise?

Ed Gamble

Disgusting.

Nisha Katona

It's a green my love, it's a bloody green.

Ed Gamble

I can't believe you're selling cabbage in your restaurant, what a rip off.

Nisha Katona

Do you know how, oh my God, it's so good though, that's the thing.

Ed Gamble

No, it is really nice.

Nisha Katona

Yes. You don't have to pretend to like it.

Ed Gamble

I love it.

Nisha Katona

You don't.

Ed Gamble

We love your restaurants.

James Acaster

Yes, if you ever take chat bombs off the menu, you are in trouble.

Nisha Katona

You're sweet to say that.

James Acaster

I am going to be furious.

Nisha Katona

Really. You are very sweet to say that. Honestly, I built it for the chat bombs.



James Acaster

Bombs away.

Nisha Katona

Bombs away. Because they're really pernicious little buggers. So, when you make a chat bomb, it will retain its shape for eight minutes and then it deliquesces. It just disintegrates. So, can you see building a commercial enterprise on the basis of something so exacting was a real challenge, and you can see why people don't really do them in restaurants. So, in India you get them on street corners and they're sold, you know, a rupee and you get one. So, they hand you one of these bombs because it's going to dissolve soon. So, we have to do it, obviously, so we've got one dedicated chat chef. You come in, place your order, immediately that's made, immediately brought to your table so you can get them in and get the crunch, you know. You probably don't want to talk about restaurants, but starting an Indian restaurant, and you realise-

Ed Gamble

We definitely do, that's something that's quite high on our list of things to talk about.

Nisha Katona

But it's the food, so you know that curry house way of eating, which is fantastic. But those meat dishes that you can cook, like a big meat curry, and it keeps for a week, and in fact on day three is when it's at its very best, because when anything's got chopped garlic or onion in it, it gets better and better. But it's when you start introducing meat-free stuff, it's a lot more fragile. And so, building restaurants on the basis of stuff that's freshly made every day, things like that cabbage dish, you can't keep it until the next day, it's got to be made and then served and all of that. So, it was a tricky one, you know, approaching how you do this, and you've got to be busy, that's the horrible irony, is you've got to be busy to make it work.

James Acaster

Had a meal in Rome once where they did, like, chat bombs, similar things, and I was really excited to have one, and this is probably one of the worst meals I've ever had. It was a bad place. It was really weird. Really friendly waiter though, but the bombs, they just filled them with-, because you know when someone said pour liquid in them, I don't know if you do it at Mowgli but they put a little liquid in them and it was just like mouthwash. I wasn't expecting that taste, so I put it in and thought, 'Well that's disgusting, and I've got to eat a whole load of them.' It's really bad, and then whatever I had for my main course, I can't remember what it was, it wasn't very nice, but I was so hungry that I just finished it, and the waiter came over and he went, you shouldn't ever hear this in a restaurant. He came over and went, 'And you've finished it, that's cool.' Really bad.

Nisha Katona

That's really bad.

James Acaster

And then at the end I got a cocktail and it was the same mouthwash as the golgappas. It was the same thing.



Nisha Katona

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Oh my God.

Nisha Katona

Yes. Gosh, you've got good knowledge, they're golgappas though, that's a whole different thing. So, it wasn't that tamarind-

James Acaster

Are they different? Golgappas and chat bombs are different things?

Nisha Katona

Yes, so golgappas have got the liquid in. They've got a tamarind liquid. They're dead cool but they should be dead, i.e. they're a cool concept aren't they? You've got this crisp outer shell and it is a tamarind, mint, sweet and sour liquid that you pour in and pop it in. So, I started Mowgli with, they're called pani, which means water, puri, on the menu. And remember, this is no indictment on anywhere in the country but I started Mowgli, what, nine years ago in Liverpool, when Liverpool was getting the dirty burger movement. So, it was a real risk, and that was just a bridge too far. You know, something that goes into your mouth, pops and it's liquid, it's a bit pustular isn't it? You know, so you've got to read your audience and so I pulled them. I might reinstate them but I think we've just got a little bit of a way to go before-, your reaction's pretty typical. Okay, you were offended by the taste of the, kind of, Listerine interior, weren't you?

James Acaster

No, I've had them elsewhere, delicious, with the liquid in, absolutely amazing. It was this particular place. Trust me.

Nisha Katona

Really?

James Acaster

Trust me.

Ed Gamble

But you're saying that with the liquid it's a bit pustular.

Nisha Katona

With the liquid it's a bit pustular.

Ed Gamble

But you put, like, yoghurt into yours, right?



Nisha Katona

We do, but there's a little bit-

Ed Gamble

That's more pustular to me, and I watch Doctor Pimple Popper.

Nisha Katona

It's very, very Doctor Pimple Popper isn't it?

Ed Gamble

Yes, and I love that.

Nisha Katona

I think you're anchored, oh my gosh, I'm supposed to not be making this food sound horrendous, but you're anchored by the chick peas.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

I think by virtue of the fact that you've got a bit of rubble going on in there, it's not just pus.

Ed Gamble

I've seen Doctor Pimple Popper videos with little bits of rubble coming out as well.

James Acaster

Also, I think it's nice that you do a different spin on it. But there's a difference. I can think, that's where I go to get that particular thing, is Mowgli. I couldn't really go anywhere else to get something that's like the chat bombs that you have at Mowgli.

Nisha Katona

Yes, we trademarked the word, when I started it, trademarked the word chat bombs because you're right, every person makes them differently. Every street corner's got a different permutation of ingredients that goes in it. Is that the only reason you go there? Is that the only dish you have?

James Acaster

Yes, I don't know what else you do.

Nisha Katona

Oh for God's sake, you're breaking my-

James Acaster

So, I'll go with a full round of chat bombs myself and don't sit me on a fucking swing.



Nisha Katona

Do you not like the swings?

James Acaster

I was on the swings once and I lasted two minutes, I was like, 'Sorry mate, I can't do the swing. I can't do this.' And every time I go into a Mowgli and someone's sat on the swing I'm like, 'Unlucky, you're on the swing.'

Ed Gamble

The swings are very popular. By the way listeners, in every Mowgli there's a swing. Has a swing seat?

Nisha Katona

I think there are only one or two that don't have swings.

Ed Gamble

Yes, so swing seat. They're not for us, Nisha, the swings are for the hunns.

James Acaster

Yes, they're for the hunns.

Ed Gamble

You're getting the hunns in, they're sitting on the swing, they're putting it on Instagram, you know what you're doing.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes.

Nisha Katona

Do you know what's dead interesting? Across the country, the swing seats sell out. So, if you want to book, people want to book the swing seats across the country. The only city where people complain about going on the swings is Glasgow, and we cannot work out why that is.

Ed Gamble

Really?

Nisha Katona

Really interesting.

James Acaster

Because they're legends.

Nisha Katona

Because they're legends aren't they yes, you approve of that don't you?



James Acaster

Not doing it for the gram.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

I love, God, for me, because the reason I put them in is so I design every single Mowgli, every brick of every Mowgli and behind my grandmother's house in Varanasi, there is a broken down temple, you know, it's all broken down brick. It's got vines, it's got monkeys, and we used to go down and play amongst this, and you're swinging off the vine, you know, it's very Jungle Book, although this has got nothing to do with the Jungle Book, because of course that came to us didn't it? And so it's that feeling of swinging, it makes you feel, James, like a little girl.

James Acaster

Well that's lovely.

Nisha Katona

I tell you.

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

You don't want to feel like a little girl, perhaps.

James Acaster

I guess I didn't on that particular evening. I was-, I didn't want to feel like a little girl, but, you know, food was lovely.

Nisha Katona

Yes? Thank you very much.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes, and I don't just get-,

Ed Gamble

The cheese on toast. Bit of that.

James Acaster

Do you know what? I try something different every time.

Nisha Katona

You try something different every time, yes, yes, yes, no, it's really good of you to even go.



James Acaster

I was in Liverpool recently and I was there for a week and I went to Mowgli twice.

Nisha Katona

Yes, so I'm building outside of, you know, I've got one in Charlotte Street.

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

And so I'm at the juncture now where I think, 'Okay, do I do more in Liverpool? Do I build a bit more of a, sort of, London empire?' And for every one Mowgli I build in London, it means there are two outside of London you can't build. Because the rents here are extortionate, here being London. You know, recruitment's harder. So, here in London, 90% of front of house staff, or back of house and front of house hospitality staff were European. Then we had Brexit didn't we? Didn't we. Whereas the rest of the country were only 17% European, so there are so many reasons why I can't keep building.

James Acaster

Forget London though. It's great, I like, as a touring comic, I really like the fact that Mowgli was around the country and I couldn't get it in London. Because I'm on tour, I can look forward to, 'I'm going to get a Mowgli at this place, I want to go there.' So, I ain't never going in that Charlotte Street one.

Nisha Katona

Don't be saying that.

James Acaster

I've been there, that's where they sat me on this fucking swing.

Nisha Katona

Is that right?

Ed Gamble

Nisha's got a lot of restaurants, an increasing amount of restaurants. There's a running joke on Great British Menu where every time we have a lunch break or something, go away for an hour, we go back into the judging chamber, Tom Kerridge will always go, 'What you been up to, Nisha? Opening another three fucking restaurants?'

Nisha Katona

He's a cheeky bastard. It's the same old trope every time. So interesting, you know, because I mean, obviously, you watch Ed on Great British Menu, so we're this new judging panel. Oh gosh, do you watch it?

James Acaster

Yes, yes, every now and again.



Ed Gamble

Yes, he checks in.

James Acaster

Yes yes.

Nisha Katona

Do you just check in every so often, yes?

James Acaster

Yes, I'm bad at watching a full series, but like, when I'll see, 'Oh it's on,' and I'm in, I'll watch it.

Nisha Katona

It's because your best mate's on it. You know, would you not tune in for that?

James Acaster

Yes, I'm very happy for him.

Nisha Katona

Yes, yes, yes, yes. But it was a funny one wasn't it, when we started? Because the three of us are so different. We couldn't be more different could we? Could we in terms of every thing about us. Age, stage.

James Acaster

Ed's got stuff in common with Kerridge.

Nisha Katona

In the testosterone?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

What else?

Ed Gamble

I'm a proper manly man.

James Acaster

I think you've got similar relationships to food. When we interviewed Kerridge you had a lot in common.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I think so.



James Acaster

That was before you did Great British Menu.

Nisha Katona

Was that before GBM really?

Ed Gamble

Oh it was years ago we had Kerridge on this. Yes.

Nisha Katona

Yes, yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, right, let's talk about your new book, Nisha.

Nisha Katona

Oh very sweet of you.

Ed Gamble

You've got lots of books out, of course.

Nisha Katona

I've got books, yes.

Ed Gamble

Meat-free Mowgli.

Nisha Katona

Yes, Meat-free Mowgli, 30-minute Mowgli.

Ed Gamble

30-minute Mowgli. And now Bold.

Nisha Katona

Now Bold is dead exciting because it's got a beautiful cover and the colours of the cover match my bangles that I wear all the time. All the time. All the time. But more importantly, it's a bit, it's classy James. I don't often do classy.

James Acaster

No?

Nisha Katona

Oh God love, no. It's classics. It's classics with a really interesting ingredient, which is pretty much the way I cook. So, you know, the crucible, in which my culinary habits and skills have been formed, yes.



Well, you know, I was born in this country, raised by two Indian parents, obviously, and so when English food did get through our door, it was immediately adulterated. So do you remember Findus crispy pancakes? Are you too young for that?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

So, they'd come in but my mother would flip them open, bit of garam masala inside, flip them back shut. There was never anything that wasn't in some way pimped. This is not about this, actually, I'm not doing Bold justice. Bold is, the recipes are just really exciting.

Ed Gamble

One of the recipes isn't Findus crispy pancakes with garam masala.

Nisha Katona

Can I tell you how tempted I was to do that?

Ed Gamble

You should have done.

Nisha Katona

That is totally authentic, those lamb grill steaks that were made from sweepings up from the abattoir floor. You know, a little bit of masala paste on those, those would go under the grill, that kind of thing. Typical Indian pimping. But this is not that. This is, gosh, things like oh my gosh, pineapple and anchovy croquettes and things like that, just those combinations of flavours. And I think what happens is, when you have been raised in such a subversive way when it comes to flavours and ingredients, your whole approach to food is boundless. So, you just think in this really naïve open-minded way. So, I'm constantly experimenting with things that stick, flavours that work together, a bit flavour thesaurus-y in that way. And that's what Bold is. It's being brave enough to, it's kind of, that trust me on this. You know, add this to this. So that's Bold, but the Mowgli books are out there as well and that's kind of, the whole reason that I moved into food, is there writ large in those books, because I was never a foodie. I was raised to be a barrister or a doctor. My brother's a doctor, you know, that's what happens, my parents are doctors. You've got to be a doctor otherwise nobody will marry you or whatever, or you'll have no-, so if you're not a doctor you'll fall off the face of Britain is honestly what we think, or what we thought. So, I was a barrister for twenty years, a child protection barrister. But what I realised as I started to cook Indian food is it's dead exciting, is that all Indian food is predicated only on three spices. And two of those never change. It's this real Archimedes moment. So, the two that never change are turmeric and chilli. So, every curry has got turmeric and chilli in it. Tell me if you're going to doze off, just give me some warning.

Ed Gamble

Nisha no, this is good stuff.



Nisha Katona

Do you want another Diet Coke?

James Acaster

It's good stuff, don't you worry about it.

Nisha Katona

Okay. But depending on the genre of ingredient, that third spice changes. So, for instance, with the cabbage, brassicas, you would use mustard seed, turmeric and chilli. With, say, root veg, you would use cumin, turmeric and chilli. So, suddenly you realise that there are these very distinct rules, that are time-tested and flawless, that have been passed down, and so I became quite evangelical about teaching this. It's this three-spice formula, and that's how I started the books, and that's how I started as a barrister. I was teaching ten years while I was still a barrister. And then this entrepreneurial thing bites, where you think, 'Okay, could I flog food that isn't the way that Indians actually eat at home? Not, kind of, the curry-house fare, but how we eat when the curtains are drawn, and you're getting out that geriatric cabbage from the back of the veg rack, and what you do with it, and how virtuously light and fresh and all of that.

James Acaster

That's amazing. I didn't know you were a barrister and then did this complete pivot. That's pretty-

Nisha Katona

It's mad.

James Acaster

Did you recognise that's pretty impressive? Like, that's rare.

Nisha Katona

I tell you what's-, honestly, what's impressive is that I think I've lived this long and retained continence, that, I think is impressive, because I'm old. That, I think is impressive.

Ed Gamble

Do you want me to tell the story?

Nisha Katona

I find it very hard to keep continence when I'm with Ed and Tom.

Ed Gamble

We were in the reception of a hotel, and I can't remember what Nisha was laughing at, we probably didn't even know, she absolutely lost it laughing, and then she wet herself in the reception of a hotel.



James Acaster

That was such an inspiring story. Being a barrister and then realising the three-spice rule and completely changing your entire life, and Ed's just responded with the fact that you once pissed yourself in a hotel.

Nisha Katona

Do you know, James, do you know what it was? It was simply Ed saying, 'Nisha, where's your room?' Sending me to my room because I'd had a late night. It got to the point, and it still does at GBM, that even if I'm in the same room as him, I find it very hard to control my continence, it's just the way he moves.

James Acaster

How many times has this happened?

Nisha Katona

Do you ever find him this-,

James Acaster

No.

Nisha Katona

I find him so funny, James.

James Acaster

How many times has this happened?

Nisha Katona

Honestly, I think I struggle a lot when I'm with Ed. All he has to do-, I remember he just walked into a room and pushed the door open in his Ed Gamble-y way, and I really lost continence again.

James Acaster

Pissed yourself again?

Nisha Katona

Yes, a little bit, a little bit, do you know what I mean?

James Acaster

Because he walked into a room?

Nisha Katona

Just because he walked into a room. And that's a gift isn't it? That's like an Eric Morecambe thing, surely that was what it was like being Ernie Wise?



Ed Gamble

You are the only person who reacts like that to me, Nisha.

James Acaster

Yes, I think Ed's found the person he wants to write his obituary. 'All he had to do was walk into a room.'

Nisha Katona

It really does.

Ed Gamble

Real Eric Morecambe.

Nisha Katona

He's so bad, because every time we get a comedian on, or anyone on as a guest, I do spend a lot of time saying, 'Don't you think Ed's dead funny?'

Ed Gamble

She tried to get me in the new series of Inside No. 9 when we had Steve Pemberton on.

Nisha Katona

I did.

Ed Gamble

'You should put Ed in your show.'

Nisha Katona

I did.

Ed Gamble

Steve, please, don't listen to this woman.

James Acaster

That should have been your response when he said, 'What room are you in?' you should have said, 'Number nine.'

Nisha Katona

I should.

James Acaster

That could have been the episode.



Ed Gamble

No, but obviously, I'm so sorry to interrupt the inspiring story of someone who's doing fantastic work as a barrister, and then is now doing fantastic work within the world of food, but you did once piss yourself in the lobby of a hotel.

Nisha Katona

I did. It wasn't a fully fledged, do you know what I mean? It wasn't a deluge.

James Acaster

A fully fledged deluge of piss.

Nisha Katona

I did need the loo. I did have to then run to the loo.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Obviously, it was enough that they knew it. They knew it had happened.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Haven't we got good chemistry on that?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

I think we've got good chemistry on that programme, haven't we?

Ed Gamble

Yes, we were a very good team together, I think.

James Acaster

Give me some tips. I've been trying to get chemistry going with this fucker.

Ed Gamble

Wet yourself a little bit.

James Acaster

I didn't know I had to piss my pants in front of him in order for him to get onboard.



Nisha Katona

It was weird because I'm, sort of, sitting there like this dowager aunt between the two of you.

Ed Gamble

I don't know where you got that from.

Nisha Katona

I am. Just am and-,

James Acaster

What are you talking about?

Nisha Katona

I am talking about that honestly being the-,

James Acaster

I cannot imagine that.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Honestly. So, first of all, I think it's really amazing that they chose me. That, honestly, I was really honoured by that, because this is-, I'll tell you the thing about it is it's always been very Michelin starred, kind of, food. It's very haute cuisine. Very, very Western classical. Hasn't it?

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes.

Nisha Katona

I mean, that's what you think of. The truth is that's not the way this nation eats anymore. So, it's pretty broad-minded of them to get someone in whose expertise is more world. You know, so I go around the world, I mean, literally around the world learning how to cook, because I'm obsessed with it. So, first of all, I was very appreciative of that.

James Acaster

It wasn't really kind of them to get you on, because by the sounds of things you're overly qualified for the job.

Nisha Katona

I'm overly qualified for family law. This is a bit different. It's not really what's going on.

James Acaster

I think they would say they're lucky to have you.



Nisha Katona

No.

James Acaster

Before you there was, like, those old dead guys.

Nisha Katona

They were amazing, and they are such nice guys. They were amazing. You look at that, and you think, 'Okay, that's what it is to be a true foodie,'

James Acaster

The oldest men in. the world.

Nisha Katona

you know. Then the dynamics. Didn't it take a little while for us to just work out how we intersected a little bit?

Ed Gamble

Yes, you always say this. I thought we hit the ground running personally.

Nisha Katona

We didn't. We completely didn't, because basically I thought first of all I've just got to say whatever Tom says.

James Acaster

What, copy Tom?

Nisha Katona

Copy Tom, really.

James Acaster

Okay, making fun of your own restaurants.

Nisha Katona

Then try and get Ed to like me more by I'd just ask him about tattoos as I did ten minutes ago.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I did notice you doing it.

Nisha Katona

'Had any new tattoos, love?'

Ed Gamble

You say, 'Tattoos.'



Nisha Katona

'That's lovely.'

Ed Gamble

Anyone who says tattoos I know isn't really interested, yes, yes.

Nisha Katona

What are you meant to say?

James Acaster

No, I think everyone else in the world says, 'Tattoos.'

Nisha Katona

Oh, tattoos.

James Acaster

Not tattoos.

Nisha Katona

'Have you any new tattoos, Ed?' I would say.

Ed Gamble

Have you any new tattoos?

Nisha Katona

'Have you seen anything on the films recently?' I would say to get him to like me.

James Acaster

Yes, I mean, I'm pretty sure he likes you.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I liked you instantly, Nisha.

James Acaster

Yes. Well, we'll start with still, or sparkling water as we always do?

Nisha Katona

Here we go. Gosh, I forget about that. I forgot I was here for this.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Nisha Katona

How bloody exciting is that?



James Acaster

I could tell. I could tell you forgot.

Nisha Katona

Do you know what I mean?

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Nisha Katona

Still, or sparkling water, Ed, what would you have?

Ed Gamble

No, we're not doing that.

Nisha Katona

No. It's about me. So, can I tell you, honestly, I feel quite strongly about this. I don't like still water very much, because-, so I used to go to India a lot when I was very little, a lot, a lot, a lot. I spent a lot of time with very, very bad diarrhea. Very bad diarrhea because I used to drink the water that came from whatever, the buckets in the village that were kept-, the water was kept then in a clay pot, because they thought that cooled it, but what it in fact did, it just made the water evaporate down into the microbes. So, I literally would come back and I was often hospitalised. It was that bad. So, for me still water smacks of that stuff that you put in drip bags in hospital. It's like interstitial fluid. It's just it's the stuff that you would squeeze out of a dressing, a wound dressing, not a dressing gown. Well, both actually. Do you know what I mean? I've no fondness for still water.

James Acaster

No, that's the most disgusting description of still water we've had on the podcast ever.

Ed Gamble

I know.

Nisha Katona

You know.

James Acaster

It's the worst we've ever had.

Ed Gamble

We've asked that question so many times, and you start to think, 'We've had all the answers we're going to have.'

James Acaster

Yes.



Ed Gamble

It reminds you of interstitial fluid that someone's squeezed from a wound dressing.

Nisha Katona

It's a little bit like that. Do you know, like, they say that a durian fruit smells like an old wound dressing?

James Acaster

Yes, stinky fruit.

Nisha Katona

Stinky fruit, yes. That's the definition. I always think of just still water as, you know, it's the stuff of drip bags. It's the stuff you mop up, you know. It's a nursing term I think, still. Then sparkling, you see now the thing with sparkling, can I tell you this? I am very careful about my teeth, James. I'm a very careful person when it comes to my teeth, because I think-, I used to think dentists get paid-, you mum's not a dentist, Benito, is she? No. By the filling-,

James Acaster

Good check. My mum does, or my dad.

Ed Gamble

No one is related to any dentists as far as I'm aware.

Nisha Katona

No one's related. Now I love them, and I think they're fantastic, but there was a point, I was raised to believe that they were paid by the filling, so you don't go to the dentist. So, I'm really-, and I hadn't had a filling until I was 35, or whatever. So, really careful about my teeth. Now, have you seen the Malham granite pavements? Do you know what I'm talking about?

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

No, obviously not.

Nisha Katona

In Malham, north of England.

James Acaster

Not from the moment you walked in.

Nisha Katona

Yorkshire. They're called the granite-, what's it called, the granite paves? Are you googling it? Basically, carbonic acid, that is what it does it rock.



James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

So, pure sparkling water in my view just completely erodes teeth. You're going to end up with, you know, Elizabeth I teeth drinking pure sparkling water. So, I find it too acidic. I just find it, kind of, fuses your frontal lobe to your eyebrows. It just strips your mucus membranes out. I just find it too acidic. So, I like to go half and half.

Ed Gamble

Yes, so that's true, by the way.

James Acaster

You take the two things that you don't like, and put them together.

Nisha Katona

Well, do you know, you have to be polite, don't you? I put the two. I have to say, when I put the two things together they're perfect. You're getting that lovely palette cleansing, you know, you're getting that little bit of acidity. Just a little wake me up, but it's also hydrating you. I don't drink a lot of it.

Ed Gamble

That is true. I have witnessed that happen.

James Acaster

You've witnessed the half and half.

Ed Gamble

When a runner comes in and says, 'Would you like some water, still or sparkling?' and Nisha says, 'Yes, I'll have half and half, please.'

Nisha Katona

I think half and half's a thing though, isn't? Surely, people do that?

James Acaster

It's the first time maybe we've had that on the podcast. I mean, maybe someone else has said it at some point, but not as a thing they already do. I think they probably, like, maybe riff it and gone, 'Let's go for half and half.'

Nisha Katona

Really?

James Acaster

I think you're the first person who that's your pre-existing preference.



Nisha Katona

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Especially, the first person who wants half and half, and half of the drink they want is something they refer to as something from a drip bag, and the other half is something they've seen rot away a pavement.

Nisha Katona

Yes. This is the corner that you dwell in, honestly, in this world. That's it, you're cornered. Those are two things that you're offered. They don't offer you the nice stuff, do they? Whatever that might be.

James Acaster

What would you like?

Ed Gamble

Yes, what would you prefer?

James Acaster

This is your dream meal, what would you-,

Nisha Katona

Am I doing the drinks now?

James Acaster

Well, what would you rather they offered you at the start of the meal here instead of still, or sparkling water?

Nisha Katona

Do you know what? Do you know what? Can I talk about what I'd like by way of drinks, because right now I'd love-, I'm going to have a slurp of my oat latte. One second.

James Acaster

Yes, go for it. Yes. You don't have to maintain eye contact with me while you're drinking the latte, but fair enough. Really intense eye contact there whilst slurping latte through a straw. Iced latte.

Nisha Katona

It's coming out of my nose now, iced latte, because of you, James.

James Acaster

Yes, funnier than Ed. Funnier than Ed Gamble.

Ed Gamble

Yes, well, liquids are coming out at some point.



Nisha Katona

It really is.

Ed Gamble

At that point of the meal, when they offer you still or sparkling water, other people have selected other things, right?

Nisha Katona

Have they?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Other people have said, 'No water,' just passed on it. When we did our dream menus, Ed and I, Ed had a Guinness at this point, I had Cawston Press.

Nisha Katona

That's a cracking drink.

James Acaster

Yes, it is, isn't it?

Nisha Katona

That is a cracking drink, because, you know, there's no added sugar to that.

James Acaster

Oh, I know.

Nisha Katona

You're keeping your teeth intact.

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

And you're giving your mouth a party.

James Acaster

It's only lightly sparkling.

Nisha Katona

And it's only light. There's not too much. And it's lovely. It's the taste of all those childhood sweets in a drink that's going to be kind to your dentition.



James Acaster

Preaching to the choir. I'll tell you what, if you poured a Cawston Press on a block of granite it would say, 'That you very much.'

Nisha Katona

I think it would.

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

I think you're going to get crocuses there. Do you know what I mean?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Oh dear lord.

James Acaster

Could grow a few-,

Nisha Katona

Oh, heaven. Can I tell you what I love?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Do you know Ducksoup in Soho?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I've still not been, but, yes.

Nisha Katona

Please go because of the drinking vinegars that they do there. Have you had the drinking vinegars?

James Acaster

No, I haven't.



Nisha Katona

They are so good, James, my gosh. Have you been?

James Acaster

Benito's nodding. He loves it.

Nisha Katona

There's nothing like it, is there? Isn't it so-, why has it taken us to 2023-,

James Acaster

Don't speak to him.

Nisha Katona

For this-,

James Acaster

He'll edit it out.

Nisha Katona

Why has it taken us to 2023, Ed Gamble, for us to get to drinking vinegars in restaurants? Because they are so good. Do you know, there are some drinks, and you'll appreciate this being a Cawston Press fan, where you drink it and you feel your, I don't know, like your cells are putting their arms out and hugging whatever you've just put in your body? Do you know what I mean? You get it with some food, but with crisp drinks there is nothing like it, and that's what these drinking vinegars are like in Ducksoup. So, they can be fruity. They could be strawberry. They could be cherry. They could be whatever it might be. And I think it's essentially something like apple cider vinegar with some, kind of, a fresh fruit. It could be rhubarb, whatever. So, I don't think it's kombucha-based. They're not kombucha-based things. They are just drinking vinegars. So, drinking vinegars is what I would love to go for.

Ed Gamble

That sounds amazing, yes.

Nisha Katona

Yes, really, really good.

James Acaster

We'll have that instead of water, absolutely.

Nisha Katona

It's going to-, you know, because-,

James Acaster

From Ducksoup, from the Ducksoup drinking vinegars?



Nisha Katona

Can I go with that as an opening gambit-

Ed Gamble

Yes, absolutely.

Nisha Katona

Just in terms of drinks?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And do you get, like, a few of them? Is that how they bring them out, or do you just get one?

Nisha Katona

Well, no, no, no. We're not messing around here. This is not a little taster, 'Let's wean you into the idea of them.' This is served in a tumbler, like a-, old-fashioned. Do you know what I mean? With a nice-, this is a drink, and you will enjoy it. And it is so very good, I can't tell you.

James Acaster

Lovely.

Nisha Katona

But it's better than that whole water with the crushed ice, and lemon, and all that.

Ed Gamble

It sounds it. I love this. What flavour do you want? Is there a flavour that you particularly like?

Nisha Katona

Do you know, I like an artificial cherry flavour, because you just shared your Pepsi Max Cherry maximum-taste drink with me.

Ed Gamble

Do you want cherry-flavoured drinking vinegar?

Nisha Katona

A little bit of that, that would be smashing, or plum. I love a plum drink.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Nisha Katona

You know, those plum wines you get in Japanese restaurants.



James Acaster

Yes, very nice.

Nisha Katona

Very nice.

James Acaster

Really good.

Nisha Katona

So, I'll go a plum drinking vinegar, if that's alright, to start off?

James Acaster

Plum drinking vinegar.

Nisha Katona

Do you know what I mean?

James Acaster

From Ducksoup.

Ed Gamble

What a way to start.

James Acaster

Papad, or bread?

Nisha Katona

Oh, smoke.

James Acaster

Papad, or bread?

Nisha Katona

Bloody hell.

James Acaster

Sorry, papad, or bread? No, I'm sorry to say, Sindhu Vee told me that I've got to say, 'Papad, or bread?' and not, 'Poppadom, or bread?'

Nisha Katona

Yes, so stupid.



James Acaster

She told me that, but then Nish Kumar's mum contested this with Sindhu and was, like, 'Absolutely not. I grew up saying poppadom.' Then the two of them had a very long discussion. I don't know what they agreed on. I said at the live episode that I would say it in an episode, I'd say, 'Papad, or bread?'

Nisha Katona

Yes, this is the thing, is that word is so ludicrous I can't take it. It's just such a stupid word, 'Poppadoms,' means nothing to me. It's just a silly word. It's like taking a bread from the subcontinent and adding the, 'Doms,' to it. It just is a silly word. As Sindhu would say, 'We say papar.' So, who was it, Nish's mum that said, no, we say poppadom?'

James Acaster

Nish's mum said, 'I grew up saying that. What are you talking about?' Then they went off, and they had a long-

Nisha Katona

Did she grow up in Croydon? Where did she grow up, in Croydon? Where did she grow up?

James Acaster

Move to Croydon.

Nisha Katona

Birkenhead, did she, yes?

James Acaster

Did you know that she moved to Croydon?

Nisha Katona

No, I didn't.

James Acaster

That's where they actually-

Ed Gamble

Yes, they did, yes.

Nisha Katona

You're actually joking.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes.

Nisha Katona

You couldn't make it up, could you?



James Acaster

I actually don't know, because I know that Nish's dad grew up in care. I don't know Nish's mum, where-

Nisha Katona

Where she's from originally.

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Poppadoms I've never, honestly, I've never heard Indians say poppadoms, but that might be my tribe of Indians. So, we says papar. That's not the reason that I would choose bread, and I will choose bread.

James Acaster

Your microphone is pointing at your larynx.

Nisha Katona

I've taken my earrings out. I've taken my earrings out.

James Acaster

Larynx, is that a word?

Nisha Katona

Do you want me to put my hair up as well, for God's sake?

Ed Gamble

Speak into the microphone.

Nisha Katona

Is that my facial hair? Is it my facial hair on the sponge?

Ed Gamble

You were doing this, Nisha. You were speaking like this.

James Acaster

Yes, it was into your neck.

Ed Gamble

It's going to sound like you've got one of those things for people who smoke too much.

James Acaster

Is that what the characters on South Park does, funny character?



Ed Gamble

Into the ember. So, you don't say-

Nisha Katona

So, poppadoms, I would go bread. No, we don't say poppadoms. We say papar. The thing about poppadoms-

James Acaster

I'm even saying that wrong.

Nisha Katona

Papar.

James Acaster

Yes, I wasn't saying that.

Nisha Katona

Do you know what, there are so many-, you cannot-, honestly, this is what it's like to be Indian. You can never get it right, because there are so many languages, there are so many whatever, but for me that whole-, and I'll tell you what it is, honestly, James. So, as a little Indian growing up in this country, people would shout that at you across a playground. Do you know what I mean? You know, you spent your whole time dodging stones, or the word, 'Poppadom,' or whatever it might be. So, suddenly it's not a whether of the appetite, nor are those, kind of, steel dubbbers of doom. Do you know what I'm talking about? Those little metal canisters that smell of halitosis, and horse sweat? Do you know what I mean?

James Acaster

No, I don't. I thought I knew what you meant.

Nisha Katona

Yes, with the onions.

James Acaster

The little metal canisters?

Nisha Katona

Yes, the chutneys, the chutneys.

Ed Gamble

The little- the thing you can-

Nisha Katona

They spin. You spin it, yes. You take the lid off.



Ed Gamble

A mini lazy Susan type thing.

Nisha Katona

Yes, you know, and suddenly it smells like your GP's breath, no.

James Acaster

I quite like them.

Nisha Katona

They're lovely. I'm sure they're lovely, but the thing about fresh onion, you need fresh onions. It's never as fresh as you want it to be. So, I will go bread, if you don't mind? So, papars, they're lovely I'm sure, not really that interested, because I want the chewy, stretchy bread thing that you have. So, can I just tell you a little bit? So, I was brought up by two Hindus. I was brought by a Hindu. My father was a Hindu priest. So, the way that your food is formed, your food taste is formed, is about all that has been forbidden for the whole of your childhood. So many things are forbidden. So, as Hindus you're primarily, because my father was a priest, you're primarily completely meat free. It's not just that, it's the way that Indians eat. So, they believe that things like garlic, and onion are passion, or heat giving, and so those are forbidden. So, if you become a window in India, here's the thing, you can never again have garlic, or onion, or even meat, or fish. Fish is a bit different. You shave your head. My grandmother had her head shaved. You wear white for the rest of your life.

As a widow, you know, everything is about what thou shalt not do. One of the other things that we don't have is that whole baking culture, you know, we don't. So, we make flatbreads on a pan, but the oven was used to store tins of stuff, you know, you put your roasting tins in the oven. You don't bake in the oven. So, that whole thing about having bread, and the elasticity. We don't have anything in our culture that's got that, kind of, slithering elasticity to it, that bounce, because meat, for instance, has got to be, you know, it's cooked until it's dead twice. It's cooked until it's really done. You'd never have a pink chop. You'd never have scallops, or squid necessarily, unless you lived in certain areas in the coastal regions. So, all these things that are chewy, and gelatinous, and a bit elastic, I am totally drawn to. I was never allowed to have chewing gum, or bubble gum. So, I used to look, you know, like in Elf the film, I used to honestly, I swear, look with envy at those blobs of bubble gum on the pavement.

James Acaster

You didn't eat them?

Nisha Katona

I didn't eat them. I was very tempted though.

James Acaster

Yes, because I thought that was where it was going.



Nisha Katona

James, I was really-, and do you know what? In my memory, I felt like I did. In my memory, I'm saying it now, is this live TV?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Yes. So, I must have been about six, or seven, but I banned these things. I remember the taste of bubble gum. I think I'd seen some, and I'd pulled it off like Will Ferrell, and eaten it. It was heaven. My God, it was heaven. Benito's eyes.

Ed Gamble

So, you're saying- are you saying that you did do that?

Nisha Katona

I'm saying that as a young child I remember doing that. Honestly, I've summed up-,

Ed Gamble

So, we've gone from, 'No, I didn't do that,' to, 'Yes, I definitely did that.'

Nisha Katona

Do you know, Ed, can I tell you what-

James Acaster

'I think water is disgusting.'

Nisha Katona

James, it's so-, it's so bad, but this is why you don't forbid things to children. Honestly, this is seriously, because nor was I ever allowed-, I've not to on to my bread yet. So, shut me up in a minute, you know, but nor was I ever allowed to eat beef, or anything with any beef goods. So, therefore, I'd never had a Yorkshire pudding.

Ed Gamble

Do you remember biting a live cow at the time?

Nisha Katona

So, I got to uni, and then I'd have steak every single day. It's all of that. So, it was whatever was forbidden for me I would go crazy with. That's why bread is such an amazing thing, because it's that elasticity. The bread I'd go for, if I can go for a couple, but basically I'd like a basket. I'd like Brazilian cheese bread.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



Nisha Katona

Oh, my God, do you love it?

Ed Gamble

I absolutely love it, yes. I went to Brazil once, and that's pretty much all I ate.

James Acaster

I didn't know you went to Brazil.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Many years ago.

Nisha Katona

Are you just making that up?

Ed Gamble

No.

Nisha Katona

To get James to like you?

Ed Gamble

No. James likes me already.

Nisha Katona

Likes you already, yes.

Ed Gamble

Well, likes me the most he's ever going to like me.

Nisha Katona

Yes.

Ed Gamble

We've hit the ceiling there. So, yes, there's no point trying any harder.

James Acaster

I could feel like your mum.

Ed Gamble

The pao de queijo, right.

Nisha Katona

Exactly.



Ed Gamble

Oh my God.

Nisha Katona

It's so good.

Ed Gamble

You think you get a bread roll. The first time I had it it blew my mind. You think you've got a bread roll. You tear the bread roll open. It's quite a thin amount of bread really, isn't it? Then it's just got the fat bit of cheese in the middle.

James Acaster

Panda k-hole?

Nisha Katona

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Queijo. I may be saying it wrong.

James Acaster

I thought we were talking about a panda with a big problem.

Nisha Katona

I'm going to get it on my messages, because one of my friends is Brazilian, and she was telling me how to say it, because she did a message to me. This is how you say-, are you ready? 'Pao de queijo.'

James Acaster

Wow, you had that-, I mean-,

Nisha Katona

'Pao de queijo.'

James Acaster

Just so the listener knows, there wasn't any editing there to speed up that process. Nisha just brought it up immediately.

Nisha Katona

Yes.

James Acaster

Her friend saying that.



Nisha Katona

Yes, and then I've gone on to, you know, 'How are we going to fix the bathroom mirror?' Honestly-,

James Acaster

Yes, listen to your WhatsApp.

Nisha Katona

That's my WhatsApp messages. Do you know what's interesting about it? It's tapioca, or cassava flowers, so there's no flour. So, I don't know what you had where there was a cheesy mass in the middle, but it is entirely elastic, isn't it? It's unleavened. The place to try it, honestly, James, try it, so in Seven Dials there's a new little cevicheria opening, you know, ceviche. So, it's Brazilian. They do them there, these little round ones. I remember I used to, at the age of fourteen, fifteen, that was a long time ago, I'm not being facetious, it was a long time ago, but Neal's Yard used to have these little different, sort of, food stalls. One of those had Brazilian cheese bread. I would come down, I kid you not. We had friends in London in Crouch End. At the age of fourteen I would come down for two things to London. One was to go and buy this Brazilian cheese bread. It was like cheesy, bready, chewing gum. Oh God, it was heaven, so good. The other was to go to Harrods and buy biltong. You know biltong?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

You know, dried South African beef, because it was the only place you could get those things. Again, it's like having a, kind of, dog chew. It's like having a beefy dog chew. So, that would be my bread. I'd also-, could I also have-,

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

In the bread basket, because this is important, Irish soda bread.

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Irish soda bread. Are we-,

Ed Gamble

Love it.

Nisha Katona

It's barely bread. It's so crumbly. It's held together by the Holy Spirit I think. It crumbles like communion. The only thing that can hold it together is the masses of cold butter that you put on it.



Ed Gamble

Yes, I love it.

Nisha Katona

So, so good, and it's got that lovely milky, cuddly aroma to it.

Ed Gamble

Stout-y flavour, and, yes.

Nisha Katona

It's it's really like a dream restaurant, the inside of a croissant.

James Acaster

What, just the inside?

Ed Gamble

I know what you mean.

Nisha Katona

Do you know what I mean?

Ed Gamble

I absolutely know what you mean.

James Acaster

I'm not sure.

Nisha Katona

You know-,

Ed Gamble

With, like, there's a crispy bit on the outside right, and then there's the pillow-y, stretchy bit on the inside.

Nisha Katona

It's that yellow, buttery. So, if you're lucky you get one, you pull the end off. Do you know what a sfogliatelle is? It's like an Italian pastry that looks like a lobster's tail.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

I think you pronounce it sfogliatelle.



Ed Gamble

Okay.

James Acaster

Oh, yes.

Nisha Katona

They stuff it with ricotta. Yes, so you get the end of the croissant that's like that. So, crispy, but then you get that ribbon of stretchy yellow. That would be my dream if we could have a dream, you know, bread basket, I'd have that.

Ed Gamble

Middle of the croissant.

Nisha Katona

Yes.

James Acaster

Okay, absolutely.

Nisha Katona

You want, you know, the end of the croissant to cut your gums, because it's alright to cut your gums on pastry. It's not alright to cut your gums on something like sourdough. I've got no fondness for the sourdough, and I know I should. I know I should, because I think that puts me into the, sort of, culinary middle-classes, but I ain't ever going to get there, Ed. Do you know what I mean? I'm just never going to get there. It's so weird, you know, in my head it's like I'm that little Indian in brown corduroys, facial hair, or whatever, on a Chopper bike. Do you remember those? You two are too young.

James Acaster

I do know what a Chopper bike did. You've lost me the-, what are you talking about?

Nisha Katona

So, what I'm saying is in terms of culinary-, in culinary terms it's like we were there, and you'd look at, you know, the way that people were eating around you, and this appreciation of things like, whatever it might be, good breads, baked goods, wines. They'd have parents that were exposing the people around us to these amazing things, and we were going home to bhajis, and Bell's Whisky, or whatever it might be, Johnnie Walker Black Label. It was the height of elegance for us back then. So, there are so many things that are just, sort of, unreachable for me. They're these ladders that I, kind of, look up, and sourdough is at the top of one. I've got to get there, but I do not appreciate the bleeding gums, the broken molars, the smell of thrush that comes from them. Just not with it.

James Acaster

That doesn't sound like-,



Ed Gamble

You're saying you don't want to go for the culinary middle-classes, but, you know, five minutes ago you told a story about going to Harrods to buy biltong, right?

Nisha Katona

I know, it makes no sense, does it?

James Acaster

It just seems that really you don't like sourdough, because you don't like how it tastes, or smells.

Nisha Katona

I really-, do you know the thing is-,

James Acaster

It is attainable to you. You just don't really like it.

Nisha Katona

Okay, strip all of that cultural reference away. The truth is just, yes, I don't appreciate it, and I need to, because it is so good for you, and it so good, and it's such a worthy bread.

Ed Gamble

I love this bread basket that you've got though.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Brazilian cheese bread, inside of a croissant, Irish soda bread.

Nisha Katona

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Brilliant. Great.

Nisha Katona

Are you going to shout, 'Poppadums, or bread?' again, or is that done now?

James Acaster

That's done now. I've done it.

Nisha Katona

Yes, great. Do you shout anything else?



James Acaster

No. I might do, if you, like-, you know, if you make me angry at any point.

Nisha Katona

How would you make you angry?

James Acaster

By choosing a savoury instead of a dessert at the end.

Nisha Katona

Something to be said for a nice cheese board though, isn't there? Gosh, let's see where we go with this. Dear God, I'll hold on to my seat, blimey, James.

James Acaster

Well, listen, I think I'm alright. You used to eat chewing gum off a railing. So, I think you're going to choose a dessert.

Nisha Katona

Yes, I don't even think it was a railing. I've got a horrible memory of sitting on this pavement in Skelmersdale, which is where I was raised.

James Acaster

I mean, it's getting more, and more specific each time you return to it. You definitely did it.

Nisha Katona

So, can I tell you? I was telling this story to someone, because it does mean a lot, because it's that whole chewing thing, you know, and how drawn I am to things like that. They said, 'You must never, ever tell anyone that you did that,' and here I am-,

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

With a microphone in front, but I was very young. I remember being very young, and then I remember thinking that is why you don't prohibit things. You know what I mean? There's a lesson in it.

James Acaster

Yes, I hope Benito can put together just a little edit to go out on its own of the progression of this story. Of, 'I didn't do it,' 'I may have done it,' 'I did do it,' 'It was in this specific place,' 'A friend told me not to tell you this.'

Your dream starter? Let's get into your dream menu proper.



Nisha Katona

Oh, my gosh. Can I tell you my dream starter?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

It's a pasta course, but that's fine, isn't it?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

So, it's, kind of, a bit of a chase of a culinary dragon for me this. It is pasta is ricci di mare. So, it's pasta, spaghetti with sea urchins. Have you had this?

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

No.

Nisha Katona

Haven't you?

Ed Gamble

I've had sea urchins.

Nisha Katona

Yes. Do you love sea urchins?

Ed Gamble

I'm not sure.

Nisha Katona

Yes, I know exactly what you mean, because they can be a little bit iodine-y, can't they?

Ed Gamble

They can be a bit iodine-y, and I don't easily get creeped out by the way things look, but I'd say that's on the top end of me getting creeped out by how things look.



Nisha Katona

Yes. I totally get that, and this is very strange. So, this was about fifteen years ago. It's a very Sicilian thing. My husband is a classical guitarist, and he was playing a concert in Sicily. So, he played this concert, and we went for a meal as you often do with the organisers. There was this pasta dish served, and it was simple. So, all it is is spaghetti, not an angel hair, but a fine spaghetti, and it's sea urchins, and it's a little bit of garlic, and I think it's olive oil. You don't mess with it much more than that. So, a bit of salt. You don't then put chilli flakes on, or anything like that. It's really simple. The flavour of that, I can't tell you, because it was nutty. So, it's a little bit nutty. It tastes of the sea though, and it's a tiny little bit, kind of, sweet is too strong a word, but it was completely all things that you would want on the palate. What's interesting though, Ed, it didn't have that iodine-y flavour. It doesn't have that slight medicinal edge that it can have, you know, sea urchin. I have gone back, because I do this, and I'm sure you do this, but I will go back to a country just to find that food again.

Very sweetly Channel 4 sent me out to do a Taste of Italy, which was a whole programme on Italian food, which is amazing that they chose me again. Honestly, I really do mean that. It was incredible to do that. And went searching for this ricci di mare, and I've never tasted it as good as that again. I mean, do you have culinary dragon that you chase? Have you tasted something that you've tried to get again, and it's never been the same?

Ed Gamble

Quite often I've found that things aren't the same just because it's not that night.

Nisha Katona

Really, do you think so?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Even, like, the environmental factors matter so much, I think. I don't think there's anything that I'm, like, hunting down like that.

James Acaster

If I go back to the exact same place it usually doesn't let me down, but if I'm trying to find a certain dish in, you know, if I have it somewhere it's incredible, and then if I ever see it on the menu and order it again it's never quite as good, because it's at a different restaurant, different location, or whatever. They don't quite do it as well, and you're trying to find it as good as that.

Nisha Katona

Yes.

James Acaster

I think I've had stuff like that.



Nisha Katona

Yes. This was, I mean, this was extraordinary. You have it again and it is amazing, and I would really, really, honestly, I'd recommend it. If you see it on a menu-

Ed Gamble

Yes, it sound amazing.

Nisha Katona

I'd really recommend it. There is just something about the way that it moistens the spaghetti, and, you know, they become like slippery mermaid tails. This spaghetti, it's just this immersion into everything that's nutty, and sea like. Oh my gosh, really good. Can I do an honourable munch-ion?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes. Really pleased with yourself for saying that.

Nisha Katona

So thrilled.

James Acaster

About saying, 'An honourable munch-ion.' You look so chuffed with yourself then.

Nisha Katona

Please, I don't think I'll be able to enunciate that as well. So, an honourable munch-ion, is the green prawn ceviche at Speedboat Bar.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

You pointed me to it the other day.

James Acaster

Oh, yes.

Nisha Katona

It is so good, yes.

James Acaster

That, right, I've had that really recently, because, again, Ed probably has given the same recommendations to everyone apparently.



Ed Gamble

No, you went there before me.

James Acaster

Oh.

Ed Gamble

You did.

James Acaster

That green prawn ceviche was absolutely incredible.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Yes.

James Acaster

That was my favourite thing of the night, and we had a lot of good things that night. Also, I was in a really lucky part of the table. There was a big group of us, and in my corner there were some people who just didn't like prawns, not up for them. So, I was cleaning up.

Nisha Katona

That's fantastic. You do want to dine with people who don't like food very much. That's the best way of eating, isn't it?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Oh, it's fantastic. That is a really-, I think anything, you know, raw prawns, we need to do more with raw prawns, you know, Botanebi, or whatever, these giant prawns that you get in sashimi, and sushi places. There is nothing sweeter, you know, there's nothing fishy about them. They are absolutely gems. They're gorgeous. That's a really treatment of them. So, that's my honourable munch-ion.

James Acaster

Really hot as well.

Nisha Katona

They were hot.



James Acaster

Nice and spicy, but really flavourful.

Your dream main course?

Nisha Katona

Can I tell you what I love? What I love, and I don't know if I'm allowed?

James Acaster

You can tell us. You can tell us what you love, yes.

Nisha Katona

I do love a Chinese hot pot.

James Acaster

Lovely.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Do you know? I mean, just treasure trove lovely. So, the restaurants that I go to for these, one London restaurant is Pang Pang. So, Pang Pang is on Upper St Martin's Lane. Please, honestly, I highly recommend it. It's really weird, because you walk past it, and it's, kind of, blue neon inside. It's, kind of, got a bit of blue neon going on, and it's got some. It looks a little bit oligarchical, which always puts me off. So, go in and order the fish head hot pot, and do not be put off. I am just speaking to you as though no one is listening, because this will put a lot of people off food I think potentially. This is truthfully heaven food wise. So, one is the fish head hot pot in Pang Pang.

James Acaster

Yes. Have you been to Café TPT in Chinatown?

Nisha Katona

No, I haven't. Should I be going there?

James Acaster

Really amazing hot pots. Their aubergine and pork mince hot pot.

Ed Gamble

I didn't have the hot pot when I went, but that place is great.

James Acaster

Yes. Just two days ago I went there and got the hot pot, delicious.



Nisha Katona

Tell me something, are you saying that they put aubergine and minced pork in the soup itself?

James Acaster

Yes, it's in the hot pot.

Nisha Katona

In the soup?

James Acaster

In the hot stone hot pot bit that they bring over.

Nisha Katona

Really? So, we're talking about a big bubbling vat of soup, different flavours you can get?

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Nisha Katona

So, these are the soups like in Haidilao. Have you seen that in Leicester Square?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Been there, love it.

Nisha Katona

Yes. So, you can choose your soup base, but what's so incredible about it is it honestly is all things to all people. I mean, I'm preaching to the converted here, but I'm just going to. So, what particularly for me I love is the fact that you can get all these-, it's all of those textures, and it is- so, you get things like the threads, which is they're sweet potato, or they're mung bean noodle bundles that you drop into this soup. You get that really elastic, playful texture. It's like a Fisher Price activity centre for the mouth. You get sweet potato noodles that have got that elasticity. You get squid tentacles. Seaweed that goes in and then expands. The black fungus. All of these incredibly fresh ingredients. Then you can order the greens. So, you get bundles of, you know, spearhead looking spinach, and crown daisy, just greens that you don't get in a British supermarket. What a privilege to taste these things, you know what I mean, because I wouldn't know what to do with them. So, you're presented with these things. You drop them in to the soup. So, the soup base can be bone marrow. It can be a bone base. It can be a mushroom base, It can be whatever, a Szechuan base. They've always got goji berries in, and they've got Chinese dates in. It's just such a luxurious addition to these soups.



Ed Gamble

I love it. Just the interactive nature of it as well. Particularly, the thing I like at Haidilao, which is the minced shrimp balls that you then dip in, and cook, and leave it there for a bit, and then just-, yes, I get the, like, there's a beef tallow broth. Almost, if you pull something out, and then it goes on the table you see it harden up again. It's just, like, just full of fat. It's amazing. This is such a good choice. What's in the fish head one?

Nisha Katona

So, the fish head one. So, this is the thing, and I'm really, I mean, I think this is coming from the East, and Eastern cuisine. Honestly, if you're going to eat an animal you want every part of the animal. So, we eat the heads. We eat the tails. There's no such thing as a hermetically sealed bit of chicken breast in an Indian fridge. It's always bone in, always. I think it's really important. God, I just think it's really brave. This is the in the centre of the West End, you know, these hot pot restaurants are in the centre of the West End, and they are completely un-ameliorated. They do not tone down the authenticity of their cuisine. It is what it is, and it is utterly delicious, and darn right we should be learning to eat in that way. So, it will be the silver carp head, and that sounds awful, doesn't it? They serve one in Fallow as well. I notice that fish heads are becoming a thing, and good for them for doing that, because why waste it, and there's so much meat. I think because it's so articulated, you know, because the bones in the mouth are constantly moving, a fish's mouth is constantly moving, the more articulation the softer the meat, and the tastier the meat, you know, the more work it's done.

So, it's not as though they just plop a head in. It's the structure of the jaw, or whatever, or it's the bones, but the flesh from that fish, I have to say, honestly, is some of the best fish I've ever tasted. Please, please try it.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I'm going to go, yes, for sure.

Nisha Katona

Please try it, and let me know what you think, honestly. I always text you from that place, but please go and try it. That fish head soup. Honestly, James, if you're not afraid of that kind of stuff?

James Acaster

I'm not afraid.

Nisha Katona

No. Do you know what the other really amazing thing is about to pot restaurants? Have you ever been to the sauce bit at the side? So, you go around the corner, and then you go and pick your sauces. It's like discovering for the first time as a human being a piano, and all the permutations, and combination of notes you can play in these various sauces that you can put together to dip your things. So, you get your pot of soup, you dip your sirloin in, or whatever it might be, your tentacle in. Pull it out of the soup when it's done, and you dip it in the sauces that you've created. That, I mean, if you've got a Chinese friend, or in Pang Pang, for instance, he will come and he will guide you as to how to put sauces together. It's things like chive flour sauce, and fermented bean sauce, and green oil. Green oil is



Szechuan oil. So, it's the oil they've steeped in Szechuan peppers, and green Szechuan peppers. It's that tingling, fantastic, cleansing, amazing oil. Just flavours that are totally other-worldly. It is, you know, it's like being abroad. It's extraordinary.

Ed Gamble

I'm going to go there.

Nisha Katona

Yes. Mr Zhang's in Liverpool. Can I tell you as well?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

So, here's the thing, so what with me being from the North, honestly, the Liverpool Chinese food scene is extra-ordinary. So, it's the oldest Chinese community. So, in terms of Chinatown, it's the oldest Chinatown in the UK. So, Mr Zhang's is a great place to go for hot pot there, and Mr Chilli's. So, that's a shout out to the North, and these northern restaurants. Again, it's that bravery, and the audacity of just bringing that cuisine completely, completely unfiltered to the British audience, and saying, 'This is how we need to evolve, to use all the bits of the fish.'

James Acaster

So, your dream main course is the fish head hot pot?

Nisha Katona

It's a hot pot. A Chinese hot pot. Ideally, I'm going to go with the fish head hot pot. That's what I'm going to do, if that's alright?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Lovely.

Nisha Katona

Honestly, I'm not contriving. I told my nephew about that, and he said, 'Oh, you're just trying to be cool.' Honestly, I'm not. I just thought, 'Okay, I'm going to-,'

Ed Gamble

You do the hot pots at home as well, right?

Nisha Katona

Yes. Do you remember?



Ed Gamble

I've seen you put up on Instagram, like, you've done the whole thing for a big group of people, and got all the ingredients prepared, and laid out, and stuff. It looks amazing.

Nisha Katona

Yes, it is. It's so interactive. It's not just that. It's not okay for food just to be interactive. It's got to be utterly delicious, and in the way that you describe that thing about the chilli, and you went back the next day, that is how I feel about hot pot. I will get the train back to Liverpool today, and all I can think about even as I'm sitting here, is, 'Will I make it in time to go and get a hot pot in?' It's totally addictive.

James Acaster

Your dream side dish?

Nisha Katona

So, the thing about your hot pot is you're not getting any of that caramelised crunch anywhere. So, I thought about this, and the things that I would have, I need that little bit of-, I love a bit of caramelised crunch. So, one thing I would say is my own roast potatoes that are a bit strange, but they're so, so good. So, very often I will-, what? Do you even know how I've done them?

Ed Gamble

Yes, carry on.

James Acaster

What?

Ed Gamble

I just remember you showed us a picture of them once and they looked burnt to fuck.

Nisha Katona

That was a burnt roast potato. Okay, that was one of the burnt roast potatoes. Do you remember that?

Ed Gamble

Yes, very proudly showing Tom Kerridge a picture of-

Nisha Katona

Yes, I was really proud, actually. Olive oil is the thing. So, you par boil them. So, they're very, very simple, and they're very you're not doing that dance to A&E, you know, by having to shake them in hot oil, and all of that. So, you par boil them until they're just soft. You can shake them if you want, you know, or whatever, to get a bit of a coating, a bit of a powdered outside. I'm not really bothered about that. I want the flavour. Into a tray, and in the tray you've got olive oil. Just not extra virgin obviously, but a good olive oil. You've got a little bit of brown sugar. You've got a little bit of salt. A bit of garlic puree. Have you switched off?



James Acaster

No, I'm listening.

Ed Gamble

James loves these bits.

James Acaster

Do I look bored?

Nisha Katona

A tiny little bit, honestly, of turmeric. That's not an Indian-, I'm not talking about that going in to do any kind of Indian skew into this dish. So, what turmeric does is it simply tastes of soil. It tastes of earth. So, in India you would always put turmeric on potatoes before you cook them. You just always would, because what it does is it deepens the earthiness of your potatoes. It deepens the potato-y-ness. So, I recommend if you're ever going to make chips, or anything like that, just rub it with turmeric before, and then fry it. It just deepens the, I don't know, the darkness of the flavour. It's really lovely. So, a little bit of that. You mix all that together, and then you toss your par boiled potatoes into it. So, it's dead simple. So, it goes into this cold mix, and then you roast them. You roast them until they're not black. I took pictures of that to show you how bad they were, yes. So, you're also going to get that lovely golden thing, but you're getting-, what you want from roasties is you want that, kind of-, you want to feel like you're-, the smell of. The ultimate comfort food, isn't it?

See what I don't understand is things like adding rosemary. This is that business about just looking at the way-, there are certain troupes that I just feel are almost performative, honestly. I think rosemary in roasties is almost like that's what you've seen posh people do, and therefore you feel like you've got to do it. Honestly, you want the smell of comfort, don't you? You don't want the skewing of resinous perfume.

James Acaster

I hate rosemary.

Nisha Katona

I just don't get it. The same on focaccia, you know, which is an amazing thing, but why the rosemary? It's just it's bitter, and it's perfumed, and you don't want perfume with-,

James Acaster

Yes, get lost.

Nisha Katona

Yes, exactly, with the roasties.

James Acaster

Yes.



Ed Gamble

I know you've got James onboard, because he's never heard anyone suggesting putting sugar on roast potatoes.

James Acaster

Yes, you had me at brown sugar.

Nisha Katona

James, do you know what? The thing is with roasties, because you want a little bit of that sweetness, don't you? This is just a dead naturally quick way of doing it. So, you definitely-, because some potatoes are going to give you a bit of that sweetness, and some aren't. Isn't it so sad when you get one that isn't giving you all of those areas of the-, you know, stimulation of all the areas of the tongue? You want a little bit of sweet, salt. So, just a tiny bit of brown sugar ensures every mouthful, every one of those roasties is going to blow your mind. So, a tiny bit of brown sugar.

James Acaster

What are we talking about texture wise, crunchy, fluffy?

Nisha Katona

I like a crunchy outside, and I like a fluffy inside. Of course, that's what I'm meant to say. Is that what I'm meant to say? That's what I'm meant to say, isn't it? I actually don't care as long as-, I actually don't really care. As long as it's, kind of, crunchy-ish on the outside. That's the dream, is scraping all the bits off the bottom of the tin, I get that. Frankly, for me with roasties, it's really quantity, you know, more than anything. I like almost a tray to myself. My other side would be Yorkshire puddings, because I was forbidden them all my childhood.

James Acaster

Do you know what you've walked into here?

Nisha Katona

No, why, what have you done?

James Acaster

I've not done anything. Ed Gamble famously on the podcast hates Yorkshire puddings.

Ed Gamble

Rubbish.

Nisha Katona

What is wrong with you, Ed?

Ed Gamble

They're rubbish. They're boring.



Nisha Katona

Green corduroy shorts you're wearing, and you're telling me-,

Ed Gamble

Bland.

Nisha Katona

You don't like Yorkshire puddings?

Ed Gamble

They're bland.

Nisha Katona

How are they bland? That's what you want from a Yorkshire pudding.

Ed Gamble

Well, there you go. So, they are.

Nisha Katona

Yes, no, bland, but there's a place for bland, for goodness sakes.

Ed Gamble

There's no place for bland.

Nisha Katona

Have you watched that sketch in Goodness Gracious Me? It's like a duvet in your mouth. It's a duvet on to your soul, Yorkshire puds.

Ed Gamble

I think what you're going to do is put who like Yorkshire puddings off Yorkshire puddings now. You've just said they're bland, and they're like a duvet in your mouth.

Nisha Katona

Do you know what they are? They're not bland at all. What I love about a Yorkshire pudding is they're packed with flavour.

Ed Gamble

They're not though, are they?

Nisha Katona

Heart-warming flavour.

James Acaster

Nisha, your mic's in your neck again.



Nisha Katona

Can you hear me alright? No, because you're really winding me up with this whole Yorkshire pudding thing. Do you know what I mean? A little bit of gravy. You want gravy in them. Okay, you don't want the desiccated Yorkshire puddings that are sitting there, and all scroaty. You want them moist.

Ed Gamble

They're like old pancakes.

Nisha Katona

Yes, that's a nice thing, Ed. Ed, you're getting the purest taste of meaty carb. Do you know what I mean? That's what a Yorkshire pudding is doing to you. The outside of a Gregg's sausage roll. It's that same hit that you get. It's a meaty carb.

Ed Gamble

Well, I prefer that then. So, the next time someone is preparing Yorkshire puddings, instead for me I want the outside of a Gregg's sausage roll.

Nisha Katona

It's the same. It's semantics. This is semantic. It's the same flavour.

Ed Gamble

I think, are you going to go with your roasties for the side, because this sounds delicious?

Nisha Katona

Well, do I only have one side?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

So, here's what I'm going for. Can I just give some honourable gunch-ions with this as well?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Another junction.

James Acaster

While it lasted.

Nisha Katona

Another honourable junction, KOL-, can I do this?



Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Honestly, because I was thinking-

Ed Gamble

Do you want to do it with the microphone towards you?

Nisha Katona

Yes. KOL's pistachio guacamole. Have you had that? Do you know what I'm talking about, KOL, K-O-L, Mexican restaurant.

Ed Gamble

Yes, of course.

Nisha Katona

In London. You know London?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Amazing. Have you had that?

Ed Gamble

I'm not sure I've had that. I've not been there for a while.

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

So, I don't think I've had the pistachio guacamole.

Nisha Katona

Is that because you can't get in? So, is that my sides? Am I only allowed that many sides?

James Acaster

What are you pitching?

Nisha Katona

Twenty KFC hot wings. Is that not okay?



James Acaster

What?

Nisha Katona

Twenty KFC hot wings.

Ed Gamble

Hang on. So, you've got roast potatoes, your roast potatoes, Yorkshire puddings, pistachio guacamole from KOL, and twenty KFC hot wings.

Nisha Katona

Yes, because you want the crunch.

James Acaster

You said you want the crunch at the top.

Ed Gamble

We'll allow two of those, will we?

James Acaster

Let's hear about the hot wings first.

Nisha Katona

So, the hot wings. There are two types of hot wing. There's the radius and ulna. Do you know, the two little thin bones?

James Acaster

Oh, yes.

Nisha Katona

There's the humerus, the big drumstick-y one.

Ed Gamble

The flat, or the drum?

Nisha Katona

I'm going to go with the drum.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

So, I'd like, ideally, if you can get to the bag quick enough, you can get all the drumsticks out, you know, the drumstick wings. Twenty KFC hot wings, please.



James Acaster

Why KFC?

Nisha Katona

It's so good. You can drive through. You don't even have to do eye contact with anyone. You don't have to put your clothes on. You can drive through.

James Acaster

I should tell you that you do. Anyone listening, you do have to put your clothes on if you're going to KFC.

Nisha Katona

Put your clothes on then. Put your clothes on then, but you don't have to do the eye contact. You just go in. You get them through a window into your car, James, like that on to the front seat. You can eat them while you're driving, but they're also-

Ed Gamble

I think James was asking why you like them, like, taste wise, rather than he didn't want to have it explained to him what a drive through is.

James Acaster

I know what a god-dam drive through is. I was wondering why they are your favourite hot wings.

Nisha Katona

They are delicious.

James Acaster

What makes them?

Nisha Katona

They have got exactly the right amount of seasoning. They've got the right amount of heat. So, there's just that really-, honestly, there are very few places on Earth where you get that balance of heat just right. Where it's just a little bit of background warmth. You know, just enough stimulation, but not hot. You're not scared of rubbing your eyes after eating it, you know, a KFC hot wing.

James Acaster

Spice wise, spice level wise, would you serve those in Mowgli, or would that get rid of the kids, and the animals?

Nisha Katona

No, no, no, keema's a little bit hotter than that.



James Acaster

So, you're alright, you're-

Nisha Katona

Yes, because it's a funny thing, isn't it? It's almost like that white pepper heat. I feel it's almost-, it's not a chilli heat which is more front of the mouth, aggressive. This is a kinder heat. This is a more bring you into the realms of heat, kind of, heat.

Ed Gamble

Warming.

Nisha Katona

A warming heat, but they're just brilliant. Honestly, the crunch on them, the flavour of that batter. You can get them at any time, anywhere, that is an amazing thing. I live in Birkenhead. Do you know what I mean?

James Acaster

Well, I know what you mean by you live in Birkenhead.

Nisha Katona

Yes, so, you know, I often listen to you two, and you talk about Deliveroo delivering these extraordinary things to your doorstep. I can get Domino's, and that's it where I live. So, the KFC hot wing, or the KFC is a beacon of hope to me. My palate needs things like this, and I know I can drive through at any time, and that's sanity. So, they matter a lot to me. Have I got to just pick, or are you picking two of these for me out?

James Acaster

Well, I don't know. It's a discussion, I guess, because I would say you seem more passionate about the KFC hot wings, and the roast potatoes, whereas the pistachio guacamole, and the Yorkshire puddings you seem to like, but maybe they don't ignite the same fire.

Nisha Katona

Do you know, I think you're absolutely right there, James. I think you're absolutely right there. It's the roast puddings, and the KFC hot wings, I think.

James Acaster

Well, hold on. The roast puddings?

Ed Gamble

Roast potatoes.

Nisha Katona

Did I say roast potatoes?



James Acaster

Yes, roast potatoes, yes.

Nisha Katona

Sorry, it's the roast potatoes, and it's the KFC hot wings.

James Acaster

I thought you were sneakily getting a third option in there by saying, 'Roast puddings. I can have both of those.'

Nisha Katona

I do love a roast. I do love a Yorkshire pudding.

Ed Gamble

It's the roast puddings, and it's the guacamole hot wings.

James Acaster

Yes.

Dream drink?

Nisha Katona

Oh, God, right.

James Acaster

Guess what I order at Mowgli to drink each time I go in?

Nisha Katona

I can tell you what you drink.

James Acaster

You can tell me?

Nisha Katona

You don't get a beer there. Do you get one of the cocktails?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Okay, is it a mocktail?

James Acaster

Yes.



Nisha Katona

Is it a Chauffeurs Cocktail? Do you get the Twister?

James Acaster

No.

Nisha Katona

Do you the Sweet Delhi?

James Acaster

No.

Nisha Katona

Do you get the Chai Rum Sling?

James Acaster

No.

Nisha Katona

Give me the colour?

James Acaster

Brown-y, orangey, red-y.

Nisha Katona

Oh, you get the Cola, the Cinnamon Cola.

James Acaster

I get the Cinnamon Cola.

Nisha Katona

Yes, that's a really good drink. I'm so glad that you-, I'm so glad you've even been. I honestly wasn't expecting you to have been, honestly.

James Acaster

You know that a lot of people like it. Yes, you've done really well with it.

Nisha Katona

Well, my mum did for a while, and that's it. You just keep your head down, and do not presume. That is really nice that you've been there. So, can I tell you my drink? So, you get the Cinnamon Cola.

James Acaster

Yes.



Nisha Katona

You notice that I've not done any Indian food, or any Mowgli food. This is not about this. This is about me disinhibitly telling you what I like. Do you remember Belgos, many years ago?

James Acaster

No.

Nisha Katona

No, okay. I like a banana beer. Do you know, if I'm going to have to do alcohol?

Ed Gamble

You don't have to.

James Acaster

You don't have to.

Nisha Katona

Okay. Can I tell you my drink that I would have that's not alcohol?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Do you know TSUJIRI? This is a shout out to TSUJIRI. T-S probably U-J-I-R-I. Japanese, kind of, matcha drink-y place. There's one in Dessert Alley in Chinatown.

Ed Gamble

It's fantastic.

Nisha Katona

Cannot recommend it highly enough. I'm so glad you've-

Ed Gamble

With the ice-cream you can pick the strength of the matcha.

Nisha Katona

God, it's so good.

Ed Gamble

How much matcha you want in it. It's good. I go big.

Nisha Katona

Yes. They're phenomenal. What I love about them is that they also saw fit to open in Liverpool. That means, honestly, it means a lot to me when brands that do well in London choose to go-, you know,



rather than just staying in London, take their outfits up to the North. It's a really big deal. So, they've opened in Liverpool. They do this thing called a kinako kuromitsu latte. Kinako kuromitsu is basically date molasses, and roasted ground soya beans.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

It's so good. It's one of those drinks that you drink. I know it's like a milkshake, okay, so I have it oat latte. James, that is so-, because it's a little bit umami, it's a little bit, I'm not going to go so far as to say salt, but it's that roundness from the soya beans, the depth of sweetness from the date molasses, you know, and then it's toned down. It's banded in colour when it's first made, because of the different weights of the different liquids within it. It's a beautiful-

Ed Gamble

It sounds amazing.

Nisha Katona

Beautiful thing. It's just one of those drinks that goes into your body, and your body again puts its arms around it, because it's so phenomenal.

Ed Gamble

We love kinako anyway, because of, best dessert in London. Kinako French toast.

Nisha Katona

I need to go, yes. I need to go and try that, yes.

Ed Gamble

It's pretty special, but I need to try this. I need to try this drink.

James Acaster

This drink sounds great.

Nisha Katona

Yes, honestly, highly recommend.

James Acaster

This is your dream drink?

Nisha Katona

This is a dream drink, but I do, yes-, is this just for this course?



James Acaster

Actually, here's another loophole that some people, including ourselves, have employed, is that if you want to you can assign a different drink to each course, and get a bunch of different drinks in.

Nisha Katona

Yes. So, I can do this, because I really do love a banana beer. So, a Trappist white beer. I'm not a big drinker. So, my parents were big drinkers. So, in the way that I wasn't allowed beef when I was eight, I was probably allowed Midori, Baileys, and fags. So, I had my-, honestly, there was no-, because they drank a lot. So, I think because I grew up with alcohol I got to the point where I just thought, 'Actually, I'm really not bothered about it anymore. Why do it?' I think as a child protection barrister, honestly, you see the damage it does. So, I just I've got an addictive personality when it comes to food. I probably would be off my face all the time if I was into drink as well. So, I don't. One of my Achilles heels, and one of those things that if I saw it on the menu I'd have to order it, and I couldn't stop drinking it, are those Trappist banana beers. So, they used to do them in Belgo. It's just it's a, kind of, soft, soapy beer. It's a really good weis beer. It's a really good Belgian white beer, which is just gorgeous anyway, and then it's got that banana flavour to it.

James Acaster

Does it actually taste like proper banana?

Nisha Katona

It does taste a bit of proper banana. So, I have a very unrefined palate when it comes to alcohol. I would like to further refine my palate when it comes to-, well I'm not going to try too hard, to be honest, because it gets you hammered. This is not just like a banana flavoured beer. This is whatever, brewed with fruit in the way that they do. God, if you like bananas it's-, and I love bananas.

James Acaster

Love bananas, yes.

Ed Gamble

Is it quite a strong beer?

Nisha Katona

I think it's about 4.8.

Ed Gamble

Okay, so not, like, some of those Belgium beers are 10%, 12%, or something. They go mad for it.

Nisha Katona

So, for me that's strong. So, for me one of those and I'd be completely gone, but it's not super strong. It's not about the strength of it, I think. I think it's about that fine brew that it is, really delicious. So, that's something. Perhaps I would have that with my dessert cheese.



James Acaster

The what the fuck?

Nisha Katona

I know. Perhaps I'll just have that-,

James Acaster

Don't you even dare.

Nisha Katona

To sweeten the bitter pill at the end of the day.

James Acaster

I swear to high Christ. So, we are moving on to the dessert now. Now, look, I hope you've just been winding me up for a laugh. You've mentioned enough sweet things along the way.

Ed Gamble

Yes, banana beer, that latte has probably got a bit of sweetness to it.

Nisha Katona

For my dessert, so I honestly don't have a sweet tooth. It's awful, and I'm looking you straight in the eye when I say that. I really don't have a sweet tooth. I have a bit of an intolerance to chocolate, to cocoa. So, I think because I've not been able to have much chocolate all my life it, kind of, weans you off sweets. Okay, I'm not going to-

James Acaster

This is your mate that we brought on. I got her on because she's your mate.

Nisha Katona

It's complementary though, because Ed has, and I haven't it works quite well. Do you know what? I'm not going to go cheese board just because of his little face. Just because of his little face.

Ed Gamble

You shouldn't have let him-, he's absolutely done you there, Nisha.

Nisha Katona

Does anyone dare go cheese board with your face across-,

James Acaster

Yes, some absolute pricks.

Ed Gamble

Not for a while. So, you're not going cheese board?



Nisha Katona

I'm going to go, okay, have you been to Hefaure, those Japanese soufflé pancakes, have you had those? Have you had those?

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

I had some in Tokyo, yes. A place in Tokyo.

Nisha Katona

Okay. There is a place, and it's a, kind of, hole in the wall on Shaftesbury Avenue. It's called Hefaure, H-E-F-A-U-R-E, Hefaure. Anyway, Japanese soufflé pancakes. So, they are a pancake, but they're extremely risen. They're such a big thing in Japan that, do you know those, kind of, cuddly toys, they make cuddly toys of them. They're so beautiful. On to them they'll put things like-, so there will be five flavours, and the one that I like is the Biscoff one. So, it's a Biscoff sauce, with Biscoff biscuits, but you can have those little tapioca balls on as well, which is delicious. These are so whipped, James. So, they're a pancake. They're not overly sweet. You can imagine the, kind of, American pancakes. I don't like those. I like a crepe. They make them by hand in the cellar, and you will see one of the chefs just beating the hell out this batter like the Magic Porridge Pot kind of thing. You know, just beating it for ages. There's no hurry in this. There's always a queue outside this place, which is where the pickpockets circle. You will run the gauntlet of losing your iPhone for these pancakes.

So, they then cook them on a griddle, and they rise really high, but they are so angelically aerated inside, I can't tell you. So, they're real soufflé pancakes, but then you've got the heft, and the creamy saltiness of the Biscoff sauce on top, and the Biscoff biscuits, or whatever. They do them with strawberries. They do them in matcha. There's only a limited flavour. There are many places that have started to do that actually in Chinatown, or around Soho, and around the West End, but I have to say of all of them it's Hefaure I think that is the best. Again, it is that uncompromising, 'I'm going to take my time whipping this.' You can see her making the batter with real ingredients, you know, whatever, eggs, milk, whatever they put in it, and whipping it in the cellar, and then bringing it up. That really artisanal way of doing it, but queues and queues outside. So, very often I think if you go in there, there are these people called bloggers. Are you a blogger?

Ed Gamble

I'm not a blogger, no.

Nisha Katona

You see these-,

James Acaster

How long have you known Ed?



Nisha Katona

I don't really know what one is.

Ed Gamble

I'm not a blogger. You might mean vlogger, actually.

Nisha Katona

You're a stand-up comedian, aren't you?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I mean, that was a lovely description of the food, by the way, Nisha. It sounded absolutely delicious. There's a whole bunch of things that, you know, we would normally pick someone up on, but we're just letting you run with it. I don't know what the Magic Porridge Pot is.

Ed Gamble

I heard you make a sound when Nisha said, 'Magic Porridge Pot.'

James Acaster

I was, like, what? Then you moved on to there being pickpockets around, which I don't know how many pickpockets there are in London these days. Maybe in old times, in Oliver times.

Ed Gamble

No, that is still a thing.

Nisha Katona

That is still a thing.

James Acaster

Are there still pickpockets?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Do you know what's crazy? It's that spot, honestly, James, that spot on Shaftesbury Avenue is so bad for it. So, when you're queueing in the Hefaur queue, people will come up and tell you to just watch your phone. It's in the centre of town, you know, the West End.

James Acaster

What's the Magic Porridge Pot?



Nisha Katona

The Magic Porridge Pot is an old- it's a children's story. It's one of those old Ladybird books. Does anybody around this table know-

James Acaster

Am I the only one?

Ed Gamble

I don't remember Magic Porridge Pot.

Nisha Katona

Don't you? She has a pot, a magic pot, and it makes an infinite amount of porridge. She says, 'Cook, little pot, cook,' and it will start to create this beautiful porridge that overflows, and in the end it drowned the whole village. You had say, James, to the pot, 'Stop, little pot, stop.' It's only then that it stops. It was one of those Ladybird books with these beautiful-, are you totally going to edit this out?

James Acaster

No, this is going to be-,

Ed Gamble

Oh, God no.

James Acaster

This will be the video clip. This is absolutely going to be the video clip that Ben puts out.

Nisha Katona

Okay, can I tell you? Any of your viewers, or whatever you call them, your audience, over the age of 40, it's going to mean something to them.

James Acaster

Everyone knows what that means.

Nisha Katona

Everyone knows what that means.

James Acaster

What, the porridge pot?

Nisha Katona

The Magic Porridge Pot. It is, the Magic Porridge Pot is a very famous children's story, and it's that.

Ed Gamble

The lady who's making the pancakes, it's like the Magic Porridge Pot.



Nisha Katona

Do you know, it is a little bit, Ed, because it's that-, so there is an image in the book, and she's beating. You know, there are those iconic images in children's books, like, Hans Christian-, whatever, and she's got this big beautiful pot, and she's beating this beautiful porridge. It's that same-, anyway it evoked that in me. Forget that-,

James Acaster

She's not, she's not overflowing, and drowning the whole of Shaftesbury Avenue.

Nisha Katona

No, she's not.

Ed Gamble

Take the pickpockets out.

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

Then it does. Then it does overflow, and even that looks delicious. Even that looks delicious. Can I get an ice-cream side?

James Acaster

Yes, of course.

Nisha Katona

Can I just do one Hammer and Bull Johnson?

James Acaster

Yes.

Nisha Katona

That is going to be the tahini and date molasses ice-cream from Honey & Co.

Ed Gamble

Oh, yes.

Nisha Katona

Highly recommend it if you haven't had that.

Ed Gamble

So, I love that we had the build-up of, 'I don't have a sweet tooth,' and you've gone for pancakes with Biscoff on top, and date molasses ice-cream.



Nisha Katona

Yes, because, you see, that's the thing, is they're almost savoury.

James Acaster

I knew you were tricking me.

Nisha Katona

No.

James Acaster

You were just tricking. You were never even considering a cheese board.

Nisha Katona

Can I tell you? Honestly, I haven't got a sweet tooth. What I was really toying with, but I didn't think you'd allow it, was, you know, the Little Chef? Do you remember the pineapple with the gammon underneath it? That is actually what I would have loved for my dessert.

James Acaster

What?

Ed Gamble

Oh, Nisha, I wish you'd picked gammon and pineapple for your dessert.

Nisha Katona

I'll tell you something, honestly, gammon and pineapple, that is my idea of a heavenly dessert.

James Acaster

A dessert?

Nisha Katona

You get a lovely bit of pineapple. You can butter it, but you grill it, lovely. Then you put a lovely grilled gammon steak on top, flip it over, that-,

James Acaster

For no reason.

Nisha Katona

That is a good dessert.

Ed Gamble

Yes, why don't you just take the pineapple out and put it straight on top of the gammon?

James Acaster

Yes, why don't you just take the gammon out, and put it straight in the bin, because this is a dessert?



Ed Gamble

I wish you'd picked gammon and pineapple.

Nisha Katona

It's so good though.

James Acaster

Are you crazy? What course do you think this is?

Nisha Katona

Come on, you can get things like bacon and maple scones for dessert.

James Acaster

Listen, I like meat and pineapple together. I'm on record on this podcast saying that I like it, but it's not a pudding, it's not a dessert.

Nisha Katona

I agree with you it's not technically a dessert.

James Acaster

Well, it's not even-, technically doesn't come into it.

Nisha Katona

Emotionally it can take you to dessert land.

James Acaster

No, it can't.

Nisha Katona

Yes, it can, because it's sweet.

James Acaster

No.

Nisha Katona

It's salty, and it's only as much as a Biscoff anything, or a miso and tahini anything. Do you know what I mean? Date molasses and tahini.

James Acaster

What do you mean as much?

Nisha Katona

It's that savoury sweet play.



James Acaster

No, it's not.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it is.

Nisha Katona

Are you putting that in your starters?

James Acaster

No, it's not. You know that's not true. Don't even lie.

Ed Gamble

It is, because the sweetness from the pineapple, and the saltiness from the gammon.

James Acaster

Meat is not a dessert.

Nisha Katona

The meat, that's incidental.

James Acaster

No, it's not.

Nisha Katona

You're just talking textures now. You're just talking textures there.

James Acaster

No, I'm talking the main bulk of the dessert that you've just chosen is meat. It's a gammon, the steak.

Nisha Katona

It's just words.

Ed Gamble

Well, I think luckily Nisha has chosen Biscoff Japanese pancakes, and tahini and date molasses ice-cream.

Nisha Katona

Let's go with that. Let's go with that, because it's going to get you less anxious about it.

Ed Gamble

Do you want a little ramekin of gammon and pineapple on the side?



Nisha Katona

I'd like a small side plate of that. Just a side plate of a little bit of pineapple and gammon. It's a rare thing. You don't see it in places, James, anymore, and that's why I just think it's something that you celebrate. I couldn't put it in my starters.

James Acaster

Celebrate it's not in places anymore. I'm glad they've made that decision. I hope the Little Chef goes bankrupt.

Nisha Katona

You could have a little egg on the side as well.

Ed Gamble

I'm pretty sure it has.

James Acaster

Good, I'm glad it has.

Ed Gamble

The Little Chef grew up.

James Acaster

If they're serving those as desserts there.

Nisha Katona

They're not-,

James Acaster

That is not a dessert. I'll let you have it as a little side on your dessert.

Nisha Katona

I'll have it as a little side on the dessert, yes.

James Acaster

I hope that while you're eating it all the pickpockets absolutely rinse you. I hope they take everything from you while you're eating that.

Nisha Katona

That's done.

James Acaster

Disgusting. I'm going to read your menu back to you now, see how you feel about it. Water: You would like the plum flavoured drinking vinegar. Poppadoms, or bread: You want a bread basket of pao de queijo, Irish soda bread, and the inside of a croissant. Starter: Spaghetti ricci di mare.



Nisha Katona

Nicely done.

James Acaster

Main? Fish head hot pot from Pang Pang. Side dish: Your own roast potatoes, and twenty KFC hot wings. Drink? Kinako kuromitsu latte. Dessert? Japanese soufflé pancakes Biscoff from Hefaure, and a Trappist banana beer.

Nisha Katona

Yes.

James Acaster

I will let you have with the dessert the side of gammon and pineapple. I'm not happy about it, but I feel like clearly you did use the phrase, 'It would be your dream,' and if I don't let you have that then that's bad form. So, I will let you have that as the side, but not happy about it at all in the slightest.

Nisha Katona

Yes, this is all about breaking down those old structures, and you've done that beautifully by allowing me that.

Ed Gamble

Thank you very much, Nisha. Are you happy with your menu?

Nisha Katona

That's my dream menu.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

That's my dream menu now.

Ed Gamble

I love it. I mean, there's at least three things that I've got to go and try now.

James Acaster

Yes. I think this is going to be a big, like, recommendation fest for a lot of people.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I think a lot of people are going to be taking those recommendations.



Ed Gamble

Yes.

Nisha Katona

It's a rallying call for the hot pot. If it's a rallying call for the hot pot then job done.

James Acaster

Thank you.

Ed Gamble

Well, there we are, James. Always love to be here with you when you properly meet someone for the first time. Love Nisha. Brilliant talking about food.

James Acaster

Yes, fantastic.

Ed Gamble

Really knows her stuff. Loves food. Huge passion for it.

James Acaster

Superb. Yes, I love.

Ed Gamble

Obviously, we love her restaurants. Then also just goes off on one quite a lot.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I loved it. I love Nisha. That was brilliant.

James Acaster

Yes, thank you, Nisha, for coming on. Thank you for not saying the secret ingredient. Thank you for not saying, 'Kangaroo meat.' It meant that we got to continue talking in the dream restaurant, hear your full menu.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Do go and get Nisha's new book, Bold, and why not go and grab 30 Minute Mowgli, and Meat Free Mowgli as well. If you're near a Mowgli restaurant, the chances are you might be because they're all over the UK, do pop in to one of those as well.

James Acaster

Bombs away.



Ed Gamble

Bombs away. James, thank you for a wonderful episode.

James Acaster

Hey, thank you, Ed. A real pleasure. Thank you for bringing one of your friends in. I look forward to the Big Chris episode.

Ed Gamble

Of course. Thank you for bringing one of your friends in, Paul Rudd.

James Acaster

We've got different friends.

Ed Gamble

Thank you, Benito, for a wonderful episode.

James Acaster

Yes, thank you, Benito. Good job. Did a good job, man.

Ed Gamble

Thank you very much. We'll see you next week.

James Acaster

Bye.