



Off Menu – Ep 274 – Andy Zaltzman

James Acaster

Welcome to the Off Menu Podcast. I've definitely done this before, heating the brandy of conversation, lighting the flame of chat, pouring over the Christmas pudding of the internet, you've got yourself a Christmassy Off Menu.

Ed Gamble

Have you seen Black Doves?

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

Spoiler alert, if you haven't seen Black Doves, but the very last shot of it is-

James Acaster

I haven't. I've already told you I haven't seen it, so why are you giving me a spoiler alert?

Ed Gamble

Well, it's not really a spoiler.

James Acaster

Okay.

Ed Gamble

What's funny is that it's got nothing to do with anything, in this whole, kind of like, spy drama, and then the very last shot is Keira Knightly pouring brandy over a Christmas pudding, lighting it, and then looking in the camera.

James Acaster

That's Ed Gamble, my name is James Acaster, together we own a dream restaurant and every single week, we invite in a guest and ask them their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish, and drink. Not in that order, and this week, our Christmasy guest is Andy Zaltzman.

Ed Gamble

Andy Zaltzman, a fantastic comedian, podcaster, Taskmaster champion.

James Acaster

A cricket commentator.



Ed Gamble

A cricket stats man.

James Acaster

I told my dad, 'We've got Andy Zaltzman on this week,' and I didn't know my dad knew Andy, but my dad does like cricket-,

Ed Gamble

Well, if you like cricket, you know Andy. Them's the rules.

James Acaster

Well, that's the thing, and my dad just went-, it's like he was genuinely happy for Andy, and he just went, 'That man has a great life. That man has a great life, and a great career, and it must have been his dream growing up to be-, I bet he can't believe he gets to do all that. I'm really happy for Andy Zaltzman-,'

Ed Gamble

To be on Off Menu.

James Acaster

Yes, I mean that's what it was it was.

Ed Gamble

Yes, people who like cricket are jealous of Andy's career, and are very happy for him, and John Robins wants Andy Zaltzman's career, I think.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, and has said on multiple occasions.

James Acaster

We can't wait to chat to Andy, I love Andy. He's so funny.

Ed Gamble

Yes, hilarious man, lovely man. I don't know if he's a lover of food, we'll find out, I guess.

James Acaster

We'll find out. We'll find out. I think he is. I think I've heard some stuff in the past about him-,

Ed Gamble

Oh yes?



James Acaster

Cooking, and you know, dinner parties, and all of that sort of stuff.

Ed Gamble

Oh, that's promising.

James Acaster

I think we're on safe ground.

Ed Gamble

Do you know what I've heard about him?

James Acaster

Go on.

Ed Gamble

That he's got a brand-new show, The Zaltgeist, which he is touring nationwide as part of his biggest UK and Ireland tour, running until 9th May at London's Leicester Square Theatre, for full dates and tickets, do you know what? AndyZaltzman.co.uk.

James Acaster

Yes, go and see Andy on tour. He is always brilliant, the amount of material that he generates for his stand-up, as part of the Bugle, his podcast.

Ed Gamble

Of course.

James Acaster

So, definitely get along to that, but if Andy says a secret ingredient on which we have pre-agreed, he will be kicked out of The Dream Restaurant, and at Christmas, no less.

James Acaster

Oh, for this week, the secret ingredient is wax lettuce.

Ed Gamble

Wax lettuce, of course, picked by last week's Christmas guest, Rose Matafeo.

James Acaster

Yes, and instantly we were like, 'Great, we can use that as a secret ingredient,' because it's a weird thing to order on your dream menu.

Ed Gamble

I mean, Andy can be a weird guy, so he might pick wax lettuce.



James Acaster

We've seen him subvert things on Taskmaster, go the surreal route. So, this is not out of the question here, and it would be quite satisfying to kick out a guest the week after, for something that was on the previous menu, and inspired the choice. I mean, that's like-,

Ed Gamble

Yes, and it's rare that we record so close to release, and after the last one has been released. So, the fact that we get to use the secret ingredient from a previous episode, that was only a week before, is very exciting.

James Acaster

Yes, I mean, for the listener, we're recording this on the day last week's was released. So, if you're listening to this on the day it comes out, this is exactly a week ago.

Ed Gamble

This is only a week ago.

James Acaster

These words could be hitting your ears exactly one week before, since I said them.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but a lot can happen in a week.

James Acaster

A lot can happen in a week.

Ed Gamble

They might have found that guy who shot that other guy.

James Acaster

Who popped the CEO?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Benito thinks they've found him. If they've found him-,

Ed Gamble

Well, there you go, that's how quickly things can happen.

James Acaster

If you're listening to this podcast mate-,



Ed Gamble

Well, anyway enough of this Christmasy chat, let's get on with some more of it with our special guest, the brilliant Andy Zaltzman. Off Menu.

James Acaster

Andy Zaltzman.

Welcome Andy to The Dream Restaurant.

Andy Zaltzman

Oh, it's great to be here.

James Acaster

Cock-a-doodle-do. Welcome Andy Zaltzman to The Dream Restaurant, we've been expecting you for some time.

Ed Gamble

Now, that was unusual, Andy. We've done nearly 300 episodes, and James, as the Genie normally bursts out of the lamp with the sound you'd expect-,

James Acaster

Christmas Turkey.

Ed Gamble

So, you're a Christmas turkey bursting out of the lamp today?

Ed Gamble

Right. Do turkey's make that-, I'm not sure turkey's-,

James Acaster

Cock-a-doodle-do.

Ed Gamble

I don't think that's a turkey.

James Acaster

Go for the turkey.

Ed Gamble

It would be turk-a-doodle-do, if they did it.

James Acaster

Cock-a-doodle-do. Yes, turk-a-doodle-do.



Ed Gamble

For me, a turkey, would say gobble gobble.

Andy Zaltzman

Well, it depends on the turkey, I think, doesn't it.

Ed Gamble

I don't think it depends does depend on the turkey. I think standard turkey would be gobble gobble, but-

James Acaster

It's cockle-doodle-do.

Ed Gamble

Cock-a-doodle-do.

James Acaster

Text in now. Text in now listeners of what you think it is.

Ed Gamble

Andy if you found a magic lamp, and you rubbed it, and a turkey came out of it, how would that make you feel?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, I think I'd be disappointed. I'd be respectful of the turkey, I hope. You know, I'd invite the turkey to go back into the lamp. That would be my first wish, actually. Can the turkey grant me wishes, or is it just a turkey?

Ed Gamble

Yes, good-, quite right, here we go.

James Acaster

Absolutely, you'd think, if it pops out of the lamp, it can grant you wishes. Yes, it's got magical powers.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, well, I'd wish it would get back in the lamp, but then, would I then lose my other two-, I presume it's a three-wish turkey, isn't it?

James Acaster

Yes, you'd have to whisper your other two into the spout of the lamp.

Andy Zaltzman

Right, yes.



James Acaster

Is what you'd be faced with doing.

Ed Gamble

Would you be hoping that there'd be other things in the lamp? So, if you put the turkey back in and you rubbed it, maybe some, a genie would eventually come out?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, you'd expect there to be probably a fox and a bag of grain in there as well.

Ed Gamble

Well, you're a Christmas turkey genie today.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, cock-a-doodle-do.

Andy Zaltzman

Gobble gobble. In terms of the evolution of the turkey, training yourself to say, 'Gobble gobble,' when you are a food stuff is probably not really-, not particularly helpful, is it?

James Acaster

It's putting ideas in people's heads.

Andy Zaltzman

Exactly.

Ed Gamble

Well, that's why it's so popular on Christmas, you know, it worked out that it's the driest meat. So it needed to do something to establish itself on people's menus. So, gobble gobble is what it went with.

James Acaster

It's a PR move.

Andy Zaltzman

You see, if I was a potentially edible animal, I'd probably would have evolved so that my natural call sounded like, 'I taste disgusting, don't eat me.' Rather than, gobble. Rather, you know, inviting people to gobble, industrial exploitation.

Ed Gamble

So, what sort of call would you go for?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, I don't know, I mean, there's cock-a-doodle-don't. Don't eat me.



James Acaster

Cock-a-doodle-Do not eat me.

Ed Gamble

Or, something that suggested that you were smelly maybe, like, pooey. Something like that, that would put me off eating an animal, I think.

Andy Zaltzman

But, you know, that's so much, for Darwin.

James Acaster

One of the little birds in a Beatrix Potter book calls out, 'A little bit of bread and no cheese.' I remember that as a kid.

Andy Zaltzman

Brilliant.

Ed Gamble

What?

James Acaster

In one of the Beatrix Potter books, I can't remember what animal it is but, she was, like, basically trying to say what this bird song sounds like and it was, 'A little bit of bread and no cheese.' And I remember it very distinctly as a kid.

Ed Gamble

Yes. But she had hedgehogs wearing dresses and stuff, didn't she?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. I mean, it's not scientifically accurate, that stuff, to be fair to Potter.

James Acaster

No.

Andy Zaltzman

I mean, if you're choosing between Potter and Attenborough in terms of reliability of facts about the natural world, you'd go with Attenborough anytime.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I'll go with that.

James Acaster

You've got to go with Attenborough.



Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Yes. Big Dave.

James Acaster

Yes. Oh, David Attenborough.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Yes.

James Acaster

Oh, right. Fair enough. I was thinking dinosaurs are real, as in, they were real originally.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Yes. But this is not the big revelation that James doesn't believe in dinosaurs.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes. Yes. I do. I do believe in them. They're the OGs.

Andy Zaltzman

The OG turkeys in many ways, aren't they?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

They are.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes.

Ed Gamble

That would be different.

Andy Zaltzman

Christmas would have been huge back then, wouldn't it? Imagine eating one of those.

James Acaster

Enormous.

Ed Gamble

I'd like to see Jurassic Park but with the sound redone. So, the T-rex is saying, 'Gobble gobble.'

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.



Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes. And voiced by Andy.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Yes. Yes. I'm happy to do that.

James Acaster

Do you like Christmas, Andy?

Andy Zaltzman

I do like Christmas, yes. I mean, probably more than the average Jewish person but, yes, it's good fun, Christmas and also there's generally cricket on the television at midnight in Australia.

James Acaster

We had to, as long as we could, get you talking about birds and, like, different animals but-,

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

I've been quite disciplined I think.

Ed Gamble

Yes. I was going to say this feels like a long time that you've not mentioned cricket.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Yes.

James Acaster

Yes. And there is cricket on TV during Christmas? I didn't know that.

Andy Zaltzman

Well, yes. So, the boxing day tests in Australia usually starts at midnight at the end of Christmas day UK time. So, you know, however bad your Christmas is going you've got that little beacon of hope.

James Acaster

If this has been asked to you before many times and it's already common knowledge, the answer, then, you know, I apologise but do you have a favourite test match of all time that you are, like, 'That is the best one I've ever seen. That's the GOAT.'



Ed Gamble

Wow. We're really doing this. Okay.

James Acaster

I won't ever get the opportunity to ask Andy this again.

Andy Zaltzman

How long is this podcast generally?

James Acaster

The answer doesn't have to take as long as a game of cricket.

Andy Zaltzman

Oh, I assumed you wanted me to talk you through it.

Ed Gamble

We're going to have a stop for tea.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes. Yes. Through it actually. Your one that is, like, 'That is the best game. That was such a great test match.'

Andy Zaltzman

Well, I mean Edgbaston 2005 test match, it's hard to look beyond that. I wasn't there. I was actually in Edinburgh doing the Edinburgh Festival, sharing a flat with Stewart Lee, who probably his greatest flaw as a human being is that he doesn't like cricket.

James Acaster

Really? So, his routines are basically the same thing over and over again for ages.

Andy Zaltzman

And we all find that rhythm in life in different places though, don't we?

Ed Gamble

He really reads as someone who likes cricket though.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. He should like cricket. You know, I don't think he's completely lost as a long term project but, anyway, at that point in 2005 he wasn't really into it and when England won that test match by two runs at the end I was basically collapsed onto the floor hyperventilating and I think he was quite concerned about my state of health at that point. It was quite hard to explain that it wasn't just the culmination of the one single match. That was the culmination of-

Ed Gamble

A lifetime.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Well, sixteen years of pain and suffering.

James Acaster

Who were they playing?

Andy Zaltzman

Australia.

James Acaster

The Ashes.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. There we go.

Ed Gamble

Do they still go in for tea in cricket?

Andy Zaltzman

They do. Yes. Yes.

James Acaster

Oh, yes.

Ed Gamble

So, they stop the game and then go in-

Andy Zaltzman

In test matches. Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

And, you know, village games, whatever, yes. I mean, that's one of the great things. I mean, you'd think on this podcast, the fact that cricket, a test match has, if it goes the full five days, ten built-in meal breaks, that should be right in your guys' hitting zone.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Well, I want to know more about it. Do you ever get in there and get to have tea with them?

James Acaster

Oh, yes.



Andy Zaltzman

Well, not with the players but in the media sense of when I'm doing cricket commentary we get some pretty spectacular food. Not at all the grounds. I mean, without naming any specific grounds, there was one where there was a rumour that we were getting the same food as the local prison.

James Acaster

I can believe that.

Andy Zaltzman

And it, sort of, lived up to that.

Ed Gamble

Did you get those segmented trays?

James Acaster

Luckily the local prison was the one Paddington was locked in. That is the best food ever.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

But, yes, I mean, Lord's and Edgbaston, yes, you'd expect those press boxes have Michelin stars lurking around somewhere.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

And do you get the same stuff as the players, do you know? Or do you get even fancier stuff?

Andy Zaltzman

No. Well, the players are generally at the other end of the ground. I mean, the Lord's food is quite-, I think the players' food is off-the-scale. But I don't know. I've never done a statistical analysis of how bad players are in the half hour after lunch at Lord's when they've gorged themselves on-,

Ed Gamble

That really feels like you should look into it, stats-wise.

James Acaster

Yes. You've got to. What about The Oval?

Andy Zaltzman

The Oval? A little bit up and down. A little bit up and down.



James Acaster

Yes. Yes. I've heard bad things.

Andy Zaltzman

Really?

James Acaster

I used to work at a school as a classroom assistant and the class I was with went to The Oval one day but I had to stay behind and do something else and I saw them the next day and there was a kid called Georgie who had been mouthing off to the guy showing them around and he made him run around The Oval ten times. And I saw Georgie the next-, and Georgie was quite naughty anyway but I liked him and I was like, 'How was it yesterday?' He went, 'Promise me, you'll never go to The Oval. You've got to promise me.'

Ed Gamble

And have you been?

James Acaster

No, I've never been.

Ed Gamble

You kept the promise.

James Acaster

Georgie, if you're listening, I'll always keep my promise. I respect you so much, even when the dental truck came in and you stood in the gap between the dental truck and the school building and you threw stones at the other kids.

Ed Gamble

Right.

Andy Zaltzman

What's a dental truck?

James Acaster

It was a truck that came in to check all the kids' teeth to get them used to going to the dentist. It was this organisation who did it. They got booked for the day. But they didn't park tight enough to the wall. There was a little gap and a little hidey hole that Georgie could go in and get tiny stones, to be fair to him, and antagonise the other kids with them. What he didn't foresee is that he had boxed himself in, so that when they then decided to get their revenge he was absolutely fucked.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Yes. They shouldn't have left that gap. They should have filled it in.



James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Of course, The Oval has an important place in the history of British food.

James Acaster

Oh, really?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. So, in 1882 it was a test match, England versus Australia, it was so tense and it was the game that then, you know, led to The Ashes beginning because, like, a spoof obituary was printed in one of the papers after England lost, like, 'The death of English cricket. The ashes will be, like, taken to Australia.' And that was how The Ashes began but that test match was so close and so tense that someone in the crowd chewed through the handle of his umbrella. Like, a wooden umbrella handle. Apparently he chewed through it. I mean, it was 1882. Do we have documentary evidence of this? No. But I'm prepared to believe it. And, of course, the fact that, you know, he sat there chewing this umbrella handle, they then had to legalise the hot dog as a stadium food to stop that happening again.

James Acaster

To stop any further confusions.

Ed Gamble

So, that's why it's important to the history of British food, because a man ate his umbrella?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Absolutely.

James Acaster

It is very important. And, look, anyone who's seen Andy on Task Master and his approach to the prize tasks will not be surprised if one of his food choices is an umbrella. The guy thinks outside the box.

Ed Gamble

Tell us about your tour, Andy.

Andy Zaltzman

Well, my tour, that's a very good question. Well, it wasn't a question actually, was it?

James Acaster

No. No. No. It was an order.

Andy Zaltzman

A demand.



James Acaster

It was a demand.

Ed Gamble

It was a demand. Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. My tour, it's a show called The Zaltgeist and it's, sort of, analysing where we are as a planet, species, hemisphere. Big fan of the northern hemisphere.

James Acaster

Yes. Do you want to shout out some disses to the southern hemisphere while you're here?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, look, I think that's too divisive, James.

Ed Gamble

The hemisphere is pretty divisive.

Andy Zaltzman

I think you can love the northern hemisphere without necessarily hating the south. Have we not learnt that? Is that not one of the lessons of history? Well, you and the rest of the human race.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

So, basically seeing, you know, where we are coming up to the end of 2024. So, that is the psychologically critical 2.5% of the way through a millennium and history shows that when millennia start badly it's quite hard to pull it around. So, we've only got 975 years to pull this one out of the bag. So, can we do it? What do you think?

Ed Gamble

Well, it's not looking good so far but, I mean, you're the expert. You're the one doing a tour about it. Do you think we're going to get there? We need to start now though, right?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

But Andy can't, like, spoil what's in his show.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, I can't.



Ed Gamble

Yes, that's true.

James Acaster

He can't tell. There's a conclusion and everyone goes, 'Oh, I already know what he thinks of that.'

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. So, the tour's going to go on for the next 975 years.

James Acaster

Oh, congratulations.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Thanks.

James Acaster

I mean, was that you intending to live that long or are you going to franchise it and other people can do it or are we looking at The Zaltzman, the hologram that's going to come out?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, I mean, that seems to be the likely future of comedy, doesn't it?

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

You know, it's the future of 1970s Swedish pop, so it really should be the future of 2020s British stand-up as well. So, I mean, I intend to do a hologram tour for the rest of the millennium. I mean, I don't want to dissuade people from buying tickets to see it now because obviously it's going to evolve. You know, I'm not going to still be doing jokes in the year 2983 about the world in 2024, hopefully. Maybe I will be. I mean, who knows.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Would you tour the hologram or would you have it in one location, like ABBA Voyage?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, I think, you know, thinking a little bit ahead, thinking 600, 700 years into the tour, you'd expect that the technology would be there for just, like, a single, atom sized microchip where people just shove it into their eyeball and they'd be able to see any show that they wanted and obviously they'd choose The Zaltgeist 2700 it will be then.

James Acaster

Yes.



Ed Gamble

I can't wait for the eye microchips.

James Acaster

Yes. I think Ed will be happy.

Andy Zaltzman

Well, I mean, the human eyeball has proved fallible over the years. You know, it doesn't always see what it thinks it sees, so the sooner it's replaced by, like, the Apple eyeball-,

Ed Gamble

The apple of your eye, it'll be called. Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Yes. So, I mean, the marketing writes itself, doesn't it?

James Acaster

There you go. In a think tank.

Andy Zaltzman

So, you know, that can then record everything you see, so you can check. You thought you saw something or, you know, or someone, so you meet them again and say, 'Oh, I saw you then.' And they say, 'No, you didn't.' And then, you can, like, check back through your files and say, 'Yes I fucking did.'

Ed Gamble

And then, you can prove them wrong. Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Sorry, viewers.

James Acaster

Sorry, viewers.

Ed Gamble

Oh, I can't wait.

Andy Zaltzman

So, yes, the other thing I think, I mean, facial technology, because at the moment, it's on the face, isn't it? Like, the smart glasses. But, you know, you think it should be in the face, with, like I say, the eyeball, the 6G AI nose, whatever.

James Acaster

That could be their tag line, 'It should be in the face.'



Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Yes.

Ed Gamble

Not on the face. In the face.

James Acaster

Like, in the face. Yes. I get my feelings hurt whenever my phone doesn't recognise my face, as a celebrity, and also I just think to myself, 'Oh, I've got to go to the gym.'

Andy Zaltzman

Right.

Ed Gamble

I don't think that's why it doesn't recognise you.

James Acaster

Yes. It's just going, 'Okay. I don't even recognise you anymore, Acaster.'

Andy Zaltzman

Well, I was very suspicious of that technology when it first came in, so I took my profile picture wearing, like, a fake beard and glasses and a hat, so I haven't actually-

James Acaster

Can't get in.

Andy Zaltzman

Opened my phone in eight years.

James Acaster

So much important stuff on there.

We always start with still or sparkling water, Andy.

Andy Zaltzman

Well, I've got to go for sparkling because, you know, I'm a big fan of the environment.

James Acaster

Oh, yes?

Andy Zaltzman

And, you know, the more carbon dioxide we can get out of the atmosphere and into drinks, then surely the better for the future of the planet. So, I mean, every time you drink still water you're basically saying, 'I don't care if we live or die as a species.' So, you know, we need to trap the carbon dioxide because only 0.04% of the atmosphere is carbon dioxide. You know, I don't know what the goal is, to get it down



to absolutely zero or 0.02, whatever. So, the more sparkling-, and obviously you have to then swallow the bubbles otherwise they re-escape-,

James Acaster

Yes. Don't spit the bubbles out.

Andy Zaltzman

Back into the atmosphere. But I think that's, you know, doing my little bit for the environment.

James Acaster

Wow.

Andy Zaltzman

Also, I like to think of those little bubbles as the souls of dead fish trying to escape.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

You like to think of them-

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

But you love the environment.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. But fish are our evolutionary rivals.

Ed Gamble

Fish live on as well, yes, through the bubbles.

James Acaster

Are they?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Why are they our rivals, evolutionary speaking, the fish?



Andy Zaltzman

Well, I mean, because they must resent the fact-, because we obviously emerged from the seas back in the day, you know, and fish look at what we've achieved on land and the increased lifestyle choices that you have as a land-based species, I think there's got to be a little bit of jealousy and resentment.

Ed Gamble

So, you think they're plotting?

Andy Zaltzman

You know, my old double-act partner, John Oliver, went to America and became one of the most famous comedians in the world so he's very much the humans to my fish in that, you know, I can understand the-,

James Acaster

You're still in the pond, watching Oliver.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

So, you're the fish in this scenario?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes. So, I empathise. I empathise. Yes, yes.

James Acaster

Yes, you empathise with the fish, yes?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

Do you think Oliver just thinks to himself, 'I wish I was back in the pond?'

Andy Zaltzman

Well, no, I think he looks wistfully out of his window in New York. He can probably see the pond.

James Acaster

So, why haven't fizzy drinks companies harnessed this? They should be promoting that and being, like-

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes. 'We're pulling carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.' I didn't know that's how it works.



James Acaster

Yes, that's exactly how it works.

Andy Zaltzman

It must be how it works.

Ed Gamble

Yes, pulling it out the atmosphere and then putting it into the drinks. Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, they should be using that as a-

Andy Zaltzman

It's carbon capture, basically, isn't it? That's what they call it.

Ed Gamble

Do you then neutralise the carbon dioxide within your body?

James Acaster

Yes, I think so.

Ed Gamble

Because you're not-,

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

You're not pissing out the carbon dioxide, are you, and it goes straight back into the water system?

Andy Zaltzman

Do you do fizzy piss? I hope not.

Ed Gamble

Sometimes I worry.

James Acaster

You ever had fizzy piss?

Ed Gamble

Sometimes I do a really big, foamy one and you do panic, yes.

James Acaster

Oh, yes, yes. Bit of a head to it.



Ed Gamble

Yes, cappuccino.

James Acaster

Is that what you call it? Why are you saying it like that?

Ed Gamble

Cappy, cappy-,

James Acaster

Oh, yes, yes, I just thought you were being-

Ed Gamble

It's difficult. Andy's a real punster so I'm trying to match up-

Andy Zaltzman

I've been clean for a while.

James Acaster

No, you haven't. We all saw Taskmaster. Everytime you did a pun Greg looked like he was going to rip your head off. What's that like? Episode one, making a pun, seeing how angry it is and knowing, 'I've got so many more of these. I've said them all in the house, I've got them for every prize task. He's going to be furious, this guy'?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, you know, it's a rush, isn't it? You know, to know you have that hold over someone who likes to think of themselves as an authority figure and yet you just, like, needle your way in.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

By the end, he was an absolute wreck of a human being.

James Acaster

He was actually. He softened. By the end he was enjoying the puns, I thought.

Ed Gamble

Yes, he had to. Yes, I think. It's just attrition, yes.



James Acaster

Poppadoms or bread? Poppadoms or bread, Andy Zaltzman? Poppadoms or bread?

Andy Zaltzman

What bread? What are the bread options?

James Acaster

Whatever you want. Your favourite bread.

Andy Zaltzman

I do love a poppadom.

James Acaster

Yes?

Andy Zaltzman

I think I'd go with poppadoms because you don't want to fill up. On a meal like this, don't want to fill up too much on bread.

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

Just for listeners, Andy is one of the first guests ever to have a full laptop out in front of him, so-,

James Acaster

It's a big laptop. It's a PC.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

We haven't had this before. I don't think we've even had someone bring, like, a MacBook in.

Ed Gamble

No.

Andy Zaltzman

Really?

James Acaster

We've had people bring in notes.



Ed Gamble

Paper notes.

James Acaster

On their phone.

Ed Gamble

Phone.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, sometimes they pull them out. You have a ginormous laptop.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. It's my stats laptop.

Ed Gamble

Yes, the stats top is there.

Andy Zaltzman

I've got one of the specially high screens so I can see more stats on it and, you know, you look through the stats. It's like a magic eye picture. You look at, like, just a screen full of stats in a spreadsheet, you just let your eyes relax and you see the blinding light of pure truth, James.

James Acaster

That's good.

Ed Gamble

Well, James did suggest, before we started recording, that you have your food stats here, everything you've ever eaten, on a spreadsheet.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

Wouldn't be surprised. If Andy Zaltzman, as a little boy, bought that laptop and-

Andy Zaltzman

I was ahead of the game.

James Acaster

Started putting in his stats for what he's eating all the time.



Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes. I mean, just checking the latest stats, I think my career average is 402.3 sausages per annum.

Ed Gamble

That's not bad at all.

James Acaster

Impossible to imagine Andy as a little boy without that same hairstyle.

Ed Gamble

Yes, impossible.

James Acaster

I can't imagine you without it, Andy.

Andy Zaltzman

Well, in fact my receding hairline was a lot further back when I was a child and it's gradually coming forwards. You know, you have me back on this show in 50-60 years time, I'll just be like a-

Ed Gamble

Like a very specific Benjamin Button type thing.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

Ed Gamble

End of the millennia when you're still-

Andy Zaltzman

Exactly, yes.

James Acaster

You'll be Cousin It. Shout out Cousin It.

Ed Gamble

Shout out Cousin It.

Andy Zaltzman

Right, yes. I mean, the Indian breads and Asian breads give you a lot of options.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



James Acaster

Yes, yes, I mean, paratha's banging as well.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

If you want, you could set your dream meal in an Indian restaurant and you could cheat the system that way, get poppadoms and bread.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Of course, the rest of the menu might not be-, I mean, look-,

James Acaster

Andy's stomach. It was the most cartoon stomach rumble that we've had on the podcast. We've had quite a few stomach rumbles on the podcast. We've done it, both of us.

Ed Gamble

Oh, all the time. I did one earlier.

James Acaster

Benito never does because he's a god-damn robot from space so he doesn't have any emotions, even hunger, but Andy's went guggle gulgggle boboing.

Ed Gamble

It sounded more like a turkey than you did.

James Acaster

It was a perfect turkey impression. I wish I'd done it earlier. What was it that made the stomach rumble, then? The thought of bread or the thought of poppadom?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, I think just the concept of the poppadom. I mean, when you think, the ingenuity, and this is something that obviously you probably talk about a lot on this podcast, how food reveals the ingenuity of the human species, compared with all the other species that we've outdone over the years in terms of what we eat. So, I don't think any other species would've looked at a chickpea and thought, 'Well, I'll tell you what, if we roll that out and, kind of, deep fry it, turn it crispy, that's going to be awesome with chutney.'



Ed Gamble

It's mad when you see all of these foods that we take for granted that took all of that work to-, think about all of the things that they tried and then discarded.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

Ed Gamble

You know, this is not the first time they did-, they've obviously tried so many different versions of it.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes, I mean, and probably the early versions of poppadoms that were shaped like a javelin, and the number of people who got, like, speared in the face by it before they finally thought, 'Oh, let's go with the discus rather than the javelin.'

James Acaster

Yes. India have a brilliant cricket team.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I didn't know you knew about cricket, man.

James Acaster

If you were going to go to an Indian restaurant with any Indian cricketer who's ever lived, who would it be? Who would you like to-,

Andy Zaltzman

Who's ever lived?

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

I have actually been to restaurants with some Indian cricketers.

James Acaster

Have you?

Andy Zaltzman

I had lunch with Rahul Dravid, legend of the Indian game, many years ago in Bangalore. We were both writing for the same cricket website. Delightful man.



James Acaster

Oh, that's nice. What a nice story.

Ed Gamble

You've had lunch with him so-,

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, so, you know, I don't want to repeat-,

James Acaster

It's also going to an Indian restaurant.

Andy Zaltzman

Right, so it has to be specifically an Indian restaurant?

James Acaster

Yes, because we'd already said you were setting the-, sorry?

Ed Gamble

And they've planned it, as well, so it's not you going, 'I'm taking you out for dinner. We'll go to an Indian restaurant.'

Andy Zaltzman

Okay, so any Indian cricketer from history?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Oh, well. Oh, I might go with Vinoo Mankad, who played for India after the second world war.

Ed Gamble

I don't know why James has asked this question, because he's not going to know who the person is.

Andy Zaltzman

No, no.

James Acaster

Huh?



Ed Gamble

You're not going to know who they are.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. He was a very good player, spinning all-rounder, and I'd probably choose him because he's been dead for quite a long time so I'd get more food.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Andy's stomach's gone again.

James Acaster

I love the stomach. I love how adorable Andy's stomach is.

Andy Zaltzman

Whenever I do a podcast, I bring thematic corporeal noises.

James Acaster

That's what the laptop's really for. He's secretly pressing the space bar every now and again and setting off the stomach rumble sound effect. I love this. I love him. So, you are choosing poppadoms or are you choosing bread?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Yes, I'm choosing poppadoms.

Ed Gamble

Are we talking the dips?

Andy Zaltzman

Absolutely. Absolutely, I want, you know, chutney options. I love a mango chutney but it's nice to have, you know, a sweet plum chutney.

Ed Gamble

Sweet plum chutney?

Andy Zaltzman

I like the, you know, raw onion dip, hot pickle, a bit of that yogurt-y sort I never quite know the name of, that isn't a raita but it's similar.

Ed Gamble

Similar consistency. I love that. I think that's my favourite.

Andy Zaltzman

They used to call it grasshopper sauce when I was young. That's what my dad called it.



Ed Gamble

Oh nice.

James Acaster

Why?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, because it just looked like it was made of minced-up grasshoppers.

James Acaster

Grasshopper sauce. Well, that's lovely. Maybe the listeners could adopt that and-,

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, I think you should.

Ed Gamble

How many poppadoms do you reckon you're getting through?

Andy Zaltzman

Two-and-a-half.

Ed Gamble

Yes, that's good. I think that's solid because when you go to an Indian restaurant they're like, 'How many poppadoms do you want?' I'm always, like, thinking about it and then the person I'm with is like, 'Oh, just one each.' I'm like, 'What are you talking about? That's nothing.'

James Acaster

Yes, yes, that's very disappointing when that happens. I think two each.

Andy Zaltzman

I think two X plus two, where X is the number of people at the dinner.

James Acaster

That's good.

Andy Zaltzman

Then you've got a bit of-,

James Acaster

Yes, that's good.

Andy Zaltzman

Bit of leeway.



James Acaster

Do you say that at the start of the meal, make it fun?

Ed Gamble

Yes. Two X plus two.

Andy Zaltzman

'Two X plus two, guys.'

James Acaster

'And don't skimp on the grasshopper sauce.'

Ed Gamble

Poor waiter is so confused. 'What the hell is this guy doing?'

James Acaster

Is somebody running a ruler over the side of their desk and twanging the ruler in then drawing it in quickly?

Ed Gamble

No, that's just my stomach. Anyway, poppadoms, two X plus two please, and plenty of grasshopper sauce.

James Acaster

Your dream starter?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, there are a couple of choices for this. One is a single scallop that I ate in Scotland when I was on holiday with my then girlfriend, now wife, a millennium ago, in fact, and I'd never had a scallop before. And we went to a little pub on the west coast of Scotland and ordered scallops for starter and it turned out it was one scallop but it was pretty much the size of a tennis ball and it was one of those culinary moments where you feel like the, sort of, scales are falling from your eyes. You think, 'Oh, what have I been missing for the past, what, 23 years of my life,' at the time. It was just glorious perfection.

James Acaster

I know exactly what you mean. The first scallop you have is insane. It's so good. And congratulations on saying tennis ball there. I know that must've not been easy for you.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

Well done.



Andy Zaltzman

I was advised to try and, you know, bring other sports into it.

Ed Gamble

You've got to diversify now, haven't you?

Andy Zaltzman

Broaden my portfolio.

Ed Gamble

How was it prepared? Did it have, like, a sauce with it or anything?

Andy Zaltzman

Quite simply. It had, I think, just a little bit of, sort of, a peppery sauce and a bit of a, you know, salad garnish, but really it was just a scallop on a plate. There was no need to-,

Ed Gamble

They're so sweet, they're so delicious.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

Did your then girlfriend, now wife-, is that how you still introduce her to people?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, I'm in showbiz. I introduce her as my first wife.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes, of course. Did she know it was your first scallop?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. We're very open about these things. You know, there's no point claiming you've had loads and loads of scallops just to impress a new partner or something. You've just got to be honest, haven't you?

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Andy Zaltzman

This was my first one.

Ed Gamble

Especially if you're then going to be blown away by the scallop so much. You can't control that.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

We already know you can't control your bodily reactions to things.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, exactly.

Ed Gamble

'Listen, I've had loads of these.' (Imitates stomach rumbling).

James Acaster

'Oh no, old tummy giving me away again.'

Andy Zaltzman

My choice is not that. My choice is Dahi puri, which is-, I'm following up the poppadoms with another crunch-based Indian-, have you had Dahi puri?

Andy Zaltzman

Chaat. So, you get your little crispy shells. Chaat. I don't think there are enough As in the word chaat.

James Acaster

There are not, there are not.

Andy Zaltzman

You get your, like, crispy shells, which I think are also made of chickpea flour. Fill them up with a chopped up bowl of potatoes, tiny little bowl of potatoes, chopped up raw onion, chickpeas, pomegranate seeds, spices, bit of chaat masala, bit of chilli, dollop of yogurt, chutneys, tamarind chutney, maybe a mint chutney, coriander, topped with sev, which is, like, crunchy chickpea micro-noodles, some coriander leaves, and it is the perfect mouthful. I don't think it's possible in this universe, or any other universe, to come up with a better mouthful than a Dahi puri. It's got everything.

Ed Gamble

It's, like, a perfect size as well. You can just pop it in.

Andy Zaltzman

You just pop it in and, again, the first time I had that was at a restaurant in Tooting called Kastoori which, sadly, shut down. It was a South Indian vegetarian place. Shut down ten or twelve years ago and I still haven't really recovered from that. It's possibly the greatest trauma of my life when I drove past that and it had closed. You know, it's like, for people of an older generation, 'Where were you when you heard that John F Kennedy had been assassinated?' For me, 'Where were you when you drove past Kastoori and saw that it shut down?' I always remember that I was driving my car past Kastoori.



James Acaster

Kastoori was where you were when John F Kennedy was assassinated, as well, so, like-,

Andy Zaltzman

It was this fantastic little restaurant and the Dahi puri-, and I've had Dahi puri in many places round the world, in India and wherever I can find it in Britain, in America. That was actually quite a weird one in America. I was in Los Angeles and I'm staying in an Airbnb. I was doing a stand-up tour, and I saw there was a little Indian restaurant at the bottom of the road where I was staying in an Airbnb, and I got back, sort of, late after the show and I thought, 'Oh, I'll just-, and saw it was still open and I thought, 'Oh, I'll go in and get something there.' And I walked in there and the guy at the counter said, 'Hello, Mr Zaltzman,' and it was a time I was writing a blog on a cricket website and had a quite big following in the Asian expat community in America.

James Acaster

I just thought John Oliver is so famous in America that everybody knows Andy Zaltzman.

Ed Gamble

'What's the fish doing on land?'

James Acaster

'The fish is here everyone.'

Andy Zaltzman

It was, yes, very odd, and then they had panipuri, which is similar but without the yoghurt, on the menu, and I said, 'Can you do Dahi puri?' And he said, 'For you, we'll do Dahi puri.'

Ed Gamble

Amazing.

Andy Zaltzman

And it was, like, about midnight and that was glorious.

James Acaster

Oh man. So, panipuri has got, like, stuff poured into it?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, it's-,

James Acaster

You're cracking the top, so they come as the little pillows, right, and you crack the top and then pour them in?



Andy Zaltzman

Well, yes. I mean, it slightly depends which ones you're having. You know, the Dahi puri comes prepared with the top pre-cracked and filled up with-, you know, it's got everything. It's got crunch, it's got gloop.

James Acaster

Loads of stuff.

Andy Zaltzman

It's got sharp, sweet, sour.

Ed Gamble

I love that. Tamarind chutney is so good. The tamarind is my favourite bit of that sort of stuff, yes, so good.

James Acaster

I love you getting one in LA there. Like, just a sneaky midnight one just for you. That's got to feel special. You probably didn't care how the gig went at that point. Was worth the trip.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes but, I mean, I long since learned in my career not to care how the gig goes but-,

Ed Gamble

Just think about the puri after.

James Acaster

And how many of them do you want on your dream?

Andy Zaltzman

I think six.

James Acaster

Six of them. You're sinking those one after the other.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes. I mean, that's quite a lot for a starter but, you know, it depends. Are there two of you at this meal or is it just me?

Ed Gamble

Whoever you want.

James Acaster

It's your dream meal.



Andy Zaltzman

My dream meal?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, so if your dream guest is at the meal, we're with you.

Andy Zaltzman

What are the chances of my wife listening to this show?

James Acaster

You know her better than us. Your now wife.

Ed Gamble

Also, bear in mind, she knows you very well, so-,

Andy Zaltzman

Oh, I don't know. I don't know who I'd have at my dream meal.

Ed Gamble

Let's be honest, it's a cricket player.

James Acaster

It could be a historical figure. It could be friends, it could be people that you know. It can be as many or as few people, as you like.

Ed Gamble

Could be us guys.

James Acaster

Could be us guys. Some people sometimes choose us and it's nice, but in the back of our minds obviously, we're like, 'Well, that's bullshit. You wouldn't have us.'

Ed Gamble

'It's because we're in front of you.'

James Acaster

'You're being nice because we're in front of you.'

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. I'd not thought of who my perfect dinner companion would be.



Ed Gamble

If it's alone, that's also fine.

James Acaster

Yes, that's fine. Mine would be alone.

Andy Zaltzman

I like to commune with fine foods on a deeply spiritual level. I mean, I've had a lot of wonderful meals with my wife, so it feels ridiculous to have another one. Unnecessary, I would say.

James Acaster

Yes, especially the best meal you've ever had.

Andy Zaltzman

So, I don't know. I mean, anyone from history. I mean, Jesus would be quite interesting. You know, just to see if he could turn a Dahi Puri into 5,000 Dahi Puris.

Ed Gamble

That's more than two X plus two.

James Acaster

Yes, because that's never really covered how he does-, because, like, with that feeding the 5,000, it just seems that it just keeps on going but there must've been a point where they're picking it up and they're dividing it and they're going, 'What the fuck?'

Ed Gamble

My assumption is he just-,

Andy Zaltzman

Nouveau cuisine gone mad for me, wasn't it? I mean, in terms of what you're actually getting as a-,

Ed Gamble

Well, tiny portions, I assume.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

Ed Gamble

He's just really divided it up.

James Acaster

They're all like, 'Are you kidding me?'. This is a 5000th of a loaf of bread.



Andy Zaltzman

The other potential explanation is that it was a, sort of, scheme whereby he made a few fish finger sandwiches and then encouraged everyone there to get the fish finger sandwich and then lend it to the person sitting next to them and that keeps going until everyone thinks they are owed a fish finger sandwich at the end of it. So, basically people go away thinking, 'We are one fish finger sandwich better off,' so it's basically a, sort of-, some kind of ponzy scheme. With all due respect. Like I say, I'm Jewish, so we have to be a little skeptical about.

James Acaster

Your dream main course?

Andy Zaltzman

My dream main course. Well, this is another specific dish. You know, choosing one main course, I do love a big chunk of hake. I think it's a much under-rated fish.

James Acaster

Yes. We went through a hake phase.

Ed Gamble

You went through a hake phase?

James Acaster

A hake phase, yes. When I was a kid, my mum and dad got big into hake for a while.

Andy Zaltzman

Right.

James Acaster

Yes, so it was breaded hake at least one day a week.

Andy Zaltzman

Right, yes, I think it's a really under-rated fish and, you know, I think the people of Spain do a lot of good things with food. They really, really know how to treat a dead pig. And, you know, it must be exciting, I think, being a pig in Spain thinking-, I mean, obviously you might-, I don't know if you enjoy your life as a pig but to think what awaits. You know, what joy you will bring.

Ed Gamble

Spanish pigs go, 'Eat me.'

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

They do.



Andy Zaltzman

They definitely go, 'Gobble gobble,' but, yes, hake is a glorious fish but my main course is a venison Wellington, specifically a venison Wellington made by the aforementioned wife.

Ed Gamble

So, she's not invited to the meal but she is cooking.

James Acaster

Fucking hell insult to injury.

Ed Gamble

'You can bring in the venison Wellington but you've got to leave straight away, and don't look Jesus in the eye.'

Andy Zaltzman

You know, we used to do these New Year's Eve parties where we'd have about six or eight friends now and they've give us £25 or £30 and we'd go out and buy a mother-lode of food and cook an eight- or ten-course meal. Of which I was generally responsible for, I think it's fair to say, fewer than half of the courses. The venison Wellington, and to put this in further context, I'm pretty sure this was 2008 and we'd just had our second baby on 15th December so this culinary masterpiece was created two weeks after-, sixteen days after giving birth, so it was pretty impressive. So, it was a great big bit of venison fillet, or loin, I can't remember which, and you have a, sort of, wild mushroom chicken liver pate around it, wrapped in Parma ham and then pastry and baked with a sharp, fruity sauce on the side. And it was absolutely spectacular.

Ed Gamble

That sounds so good.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. I mean, it's no secret on this podcast how much I love Wellingtons. We've done our dream menus twice now, 100 episode and both times, I've picked the same beef Wellington as my main course. I can't get over it. I think I'm coming to your house for New Year's Eve, so episode 300, I've got a different main course, and venison Wellington at Andy's house.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, it was glorious, and venison. Venison's a great meat.

Ed Gamble

It's a great meat. The wellington format is one of my favourite formats.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.



Andy Zaltzman

Was it named after the Duke of Wellington? Is that what he was nibbling on at the Battle of Waterloo?

Ed Gamble

Look it up, Benito.

James Acaster

He's already on it. He's already on it.

Ed Gamble

But yes, I'm guessing he's got a large part to play in the naming of it.

Andy Zaltzman

Right.

Ed Gamble

Because he's the boots as well, right?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, after-, yes.

James Acaster

So, the Wellington boots are named after him?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, and-, because before that, everyone just wore green flash trainers, in fact. They can often get quite muddy. So, we invented a better, key military edge, wellies.

James Acaster

It's unclear and it's not defined on-, while historians generally believe that the dish is named after Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington-,

Andy Zaltzman

Wellesley, yes.

James Acaster

The precise origin of the name is unclear, and no definite connection between the dish and the duke have been found. So, there you go.

Ed Gamble

I mean, it's just the best pie, isn't it, really?



James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It's a pie where you know you're going to get good filling, yes.

Andy Zaltzman

And other wonderful main courses I've had over the years in-, been to a few of the restaurants of the American celebrity-, celebrity chef Slutton Malvein, and in one of his restaurants, he had his signature thrice-slap-shotted puck of ruthlessly-executed guiltless cow, served on a sesame-besieged mattress yeast-inflated and heat-metamorphosed and wheat-influenced dough, sourced with a deconstructed and reconstructed ketchuping rouge of tomate squidge, comfortably blanketed with a rectangulate of time-ripened coagulated udder-origin lactotum of maternal bovoid, or to give it its nickname, a cheeseburger.

James Acaster

See, this is what I thought would happen at every course.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I thought, Andy's going to have written a bunch of stuff that doesn't exist, and we're going to have to engage with it.

Ed Gamble

No, that exists.

James Acaster

But that exists, it's a cheeseburger.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's a cheeseburger, yes.

Andy Zaltzman

I don't know if you've been to any of Malvein's restaurants. His emoto bistro, where each dish is intended to provoke an emotion as well as a flavour.

James Acaster

Right.



Andy Zaltzman

It's fantastic. Signature dishes include hollow-eyed haddock, pessimistically served on a resigned bed of fait accompli seaweed, gunpoint-served ransom of lamb's liver, frightened into a terror terrine, presented with a harrowed memory of spirit-broken split peas, and giggly hen sausages aroused in a pseudo erotic ketchup of seriously buff stripped tomatoes.

James Acaster

I mean, they all sound quite nice.

Ed Gamble

It was like you hit your threshold of saying stuff that was real. Then you were like, 'I've got to do it. Let me hang on. Let me just do this before we carry on.'

Andy Zaltzman

I must have done nearly half an hour.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's amazing, yes.

James Acaster

But it's interesting, because your two main passions are stats, which couldn't be more real, and absolute bullshit. Absolute nonsense.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

I love it. On this new year's meal, you said less than half the dishes, you were responsible for, but what were those dishes?

Andy Zaltzman

Well-,

Ed Gamble

The cold starters.

Andy Zaltzman

We haven't done it for quite a long time now, but I did want to make a very good cheesecake with-, so, it was an Indian-influenced cheesecake. So, the topping had rose water and cardamom in it, and crushed pistachios on top.

Ed Gamble

Nice.



Andy Zaltzman

It was absolutely delicious.

James Acaster

That would get you a Hollywood handshake, surely.

Andy Zaltzman

You'd think so, yes.

Ed Gamble

Well, was it a baked cheesecake?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Oh, it was. Okay, good.

Andy Zaltzman

I think so, because-,

Ed Gamble

Because to me, it sounds like one of those cold cheesecakes that you just do in the fridge.

Andy Zaltzman

No, I think I baked it. I really can't remember. It was a long time ago. A Bollywood handshake.

James Acaster

Oh, lovely.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Absolutely brilliant.

Andy Zaltzman

Bollywood bandshake, no?

James Acaster

So fast.

Ed Gamble

Not fast enough.



James Acaster

That was great. Bollywood handshake. It contested it to begin with. Is it baked? I'm not going to do the joke if it's not baked. It is? It's a Bollywood handshake, then. Absolutely brilliant. Merry Christmas, everyone.

Andy Zaltzman's Christmas dinner.

Andy Zaltzman

Possibly my greatest individual culinary triumph, in Christmas 2021. So, I'll talk you through the menu that I did then. I was in Australia for the cricket with the BBC Radio and it was still in the Covid times, and we'd been in Adelaide for the second test match and a couple of our team had had positive Covid tests, and a couple of the others. So they and two others had had to isolate. So, the two who had had the positive tests who were stuck in Adelaide over Christmas didn't get to Melbourne until after Christmas and two others had to isolate until they'd, I think, done a week. Then they flew into Melbourne on Christmas day, so I said, 'Right, I'll do dinner.' So, there were three of us. So, I went up to the Victoria market in Melbourne, which you've probably both been-, amazing market. I did a five-course Christmas lunch, which I think was, yes, my greatest-, in a little apartment hotel with a fairly limited-, so, the first course was-, I mean, I say I cooked it. This was just assembling some hams and a bit of mozzarella.

James Acaster

Charcuterie board.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, basically, yes. Then prawn and lobster risotto, which-,

Ed Gamble

Wow.

James Acaster

That's a big job.

Andy Zaltzman

Which was-, I can't remember which book the recipe was from, but basically roast up all the prawn shells, make a stock out of the roasted prawn shells, cook the risotto in the prawn shell stock. Then cook off the actual prawns and a bit of lobster tail to give it a bit of Christmas zizz, and it was absolutely delicious.

Ed Gamble

That sounds so good, but I know those apartment hotels, and I ain't cooking fish in them. The bed is about four steps from the oven.

James Acaster

Is this is the Edina?



Andy Zaltzman

It wasn't the Edina, no. I can't remember which it was, but it was not an Edina, I don't think.

James Acaster

Close to my heart.

Andy Zaltzman

So, that was the starter. Main course, we had one non-meat eater, so other than the ham starter-, there were non-meat options on the charcuterie board, obviously.

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Did Japanese salmon with fried garlic shoots as a side.

James Acaster

Wow.

Andy Zaltzman

Garlic shoots in oyster sauce, the Japanese salmon marinated in Mirin, some ketchup mayonnaise, some Shaoxing cooking sherry-,

James Acaster

The stomach is non-stop. I love it.

Ed Gamble

The stomach's back. We know which your favourite course is.

James Acaster

It's not back, it's been going-, I've just decided to reference it again.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, so just marinade the salmon for half an hour in a-, and then cook it hard but short. Like war on the inside.

Ed Gamble

That sounds so good.

James Acaster

Amazing.



Andy Zaltzman

Dessert was a chocolate and passion-fruit mousse with a mango fruit salad underneath and then a load of cheese.

James Acaster

Then a load of cheese after.

Andy Zaltzman

So, when I say a cooked a five-course meal-,

James Acaster

Well, you did-,

Ed Gamble

The top and tail were just organising, really, arranging.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

But still, that-,

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, not your traditional Christmas meal, but also-,

James Acaster

In that part of the world, as well, I think they're more likely to have fish and stuff on Christmas day, do you know what I mean?

Ed Gamble

It's boiling.

James Acaster

It's not-, yes, they're not doing Christmas dinners the same in your favourite, the northern hemisphere.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It sounds incredible. I'd be so happy with that on Christmas day, I think.



James Acaster

I would love it.

Ed Gamble

Especially being away from home, and you don't think you're going to get a nice, sit-down meal, and then Andy Zaltzman's whipping up a five-courser in his hotel room.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, I don't usually go that big on cooking. I love cooking, but I generally just riff stuff. But yes, that was a definite triumph.

James Acaster

Did you call it a risotto-ho-ho?

Andy Zaltzman

Well, no, because we were in the southern hemisphere, so it goes backwards then. It's not ho-ho-ho, it's oh, oh, oh.

Ed Gamble

Is that how Santa speaks in Australia, oh, oh, oh?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, everything's-, yes.

James Acaster

Everything's backwards? Well, that sounds-, I think that's a lovely Christmas.

Ed Gamble

That sounds great. I want that for my Christmas meal this year.

James Acaster

I would like that. Can you come round to either of our houses on Christmas Day?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, if the money's right.

James Acaster

The money will be right.

Your dream side dish, Andy.

Andy Zaltzman

Right, my dream side dish. Does it have to be edible? It could just be a video of David Gower's cover drive.



James Acaster

To be honest, you can have that. I mean, our other Christmas special that we've done, they've chosen a non-edible course at one point, so we have to let you.

Andy Zaltzman

Does it have to be a side dish that complements the main dish?

Ed Gamble

No, not at all, this is your dream.

James Acaster

Whatever you want.

Ed Gamble

Don't worry about complementing.

Andy Zaltzman

Okay.

Ed Gamble

And I'm perfectly happy to serve whatever you're going to have on a VHS copy of David Gower's cover drive.

Andy Zaltzman

Okay. Well, maybe we'll just, yes, serve it on a picture of David Gower's cover drive, so we'll get that factored in.

James Acaster

What's a cover drive?

Andy Zaltzman

Right. It's a-, okay, James. How old are you?

James Acaster

I'm 39. The only thing I know about cricket is that Atherton rubbed dirt on the ball.

Andy Zaltzman

Right.

Ed Gamble

And that is true. He mentions that a lot.

Andy Zaltzman

All right.



James Acaster

That's all I know.

Ed Gamble

Genuinely brings that up a lot.

James Acaster

We're on a text group with some other comedians. A lot of them like cricket. Every time it comes up, I say, 'Did anyone rub dirt on the ball? I hope Atherton's nowhere near it because he's a cheat and he will rub dirt on the ball.'

Andy Zaltzman

Right. I think that's-, when you're just remembering that one incident from a really illustrious career of well over a hundred test matches and one of the finest opening batsmen of the 1990s, which of course was a very difficult era to be an opening batsmen, high-quality bowling, I think that's pretty unfair on Atherton.

James Acaster

Well, he let himself down. He shouldn't have been cheating.

Ed Gamble

Is it cheating? Rubbing dirt on the ball?

James Acaster

Yes, he shouldn't have cheated. Don't ever rub dirt on the ball.

Andy Zaltzman

Well, it was-, I think he's acknowledged that it was not the right thing to do.

Ed Gamble

It was more gamesmanship than-,

James Acaster

It was to make it spin funny, weren't it?

Andy Zaltzman

Look, the point is, Mike Atherton is absolutely beyond criticism as a human being.

James Acaster

Yes, obviously. What do you think about when the guy in Cool Runnings put weight in the front of the bob sleigh to make it go faster? John Candy's character. That's the other thing I remember.

Ed Gamble

About cricket.



James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

So, on the subject of bobsleds, my side dish could be, well, two things. One is a whole mozzarella. I don't know why that's on the subject of bobsleds, but I think you could fit a mozzarella on a bobsled. You could probably churn out-

Ed Gamble

You could probably stick a couple in there, I think.

Andy Zaltzman

Isn't that how it was invented, speed churning in a bobsled?

Ed Gamble

Just put buffalo milk in a bobsled and send it down the course.

James Acaster

I think someone was caught in a snowball fight, and they weren't looking. They were building their snowballs, but not looking at the snowballs, and then they picked up some cheese by mistake. Balled it up, about to throw it, 'That smells different.'

Andy Zaltzman

To me, a good mozzarella-, and obviously, there's a wide range of mozzarellas-,

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

But a good mozzarella-, and I stayed with my wife in an agriturismo in Italy when our first child was about one, and we were expecting the second child.

James Acaster

This was before the venison Wellington.

Andy Zaltzman

Before the venison Wellington, and it was an agriturismo attached to a buffalo farm, so we just had mozzarella pretty much every meal, and a good mozzarella is, I think, one of the purest delights. The kind-, a big, gloopy, globular perfection. The kind of thing you want to bury your face in.

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

The kind of cheese you want to climb inside and live in, you know? When you take a bite of a really good mozzarella, it makes you feel connected to the birth of the universe. It's that kind of thing.

James Acaster

You'd like it, like James and the Giant Peach, but Andy and the Giant Mozzarella.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Could you live in a mozzarella, though? How quickly are you going to start eating your own house from the inside?

Andy Zaltzman

Pretty quickly.

James Acaster

Yes, pretty quick.

Andy Zaltzman

But I think you'd enjoy those minutes before you started eating your way out to get some air.

James Acaster

It'd be soft, and-,

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

What do you think of burrata, then? We've mentioned burrata a lot on the podcast and how it's basically the end of the mozzarella because people are like, 'This is creamier. It's like mozzarella but better.' Do you feel that way or is mozzarella still the king for you?

Andy Zaltzman

I'm not sure if it's still the king for me, but I like a mozzarella. I like a scamorza, just because I love the word. It's one of those words that's almost impossible to say without putting on a New York accent.

Ed Gamble

Well, it sounds like it's the rank above capo in the mafia, doesn't it?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

When you put on a New York accent so John Oliver feels more at home.



Andy Zaltzman

Yes. So, does a whole mozzarella count as a side dish?

Ed Gamble

Yes, totally, yes, especially if it's on a picture of David Gower doing his cover drive.

James Acaster

Still don't know what that is.

Andy Zaltzman

And you maybe chuck in some deeply tomato-ish tomatoes, a bit of olive oil.

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Maybe a little tiny little squeeze of-

James Acaster

So, it's not quite as crazy-, you're not having basil leaves on-,

Andy Zaltzman

Oh, yes, no, you can caprese it up, but the key is, it's just the mozzarella, uncut, just a big blob of mozzarella.

Ed Gamble

I had mozzarella last night, and yes-, had a steak and asparagus I was making for myself, and I thought, 'You know what, get some mozzarella, get some tomatoes, do that.'

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Oh, nice.

Ed Gamble

And quite disappointing. When I poured the mozzarella water out, which I don't-, you might drink it. I just pour it away.

James Acaster

Oh, yes, Andy's drinking that.

Ed Gamble

It was a really small mozzarella.

Andy Zaltzman

You can pour it in your ear before you go to bed, and you dream of mozzarellas.



Ed Gamble

Quite a disappointingly small mozzarella.

Andy Zaltzman

Really?

Ed Gamble

Yes, so I did have a whole mozzarella last night.

James Acaster

Because it was quite small?

Andy Zaltzman

The really, really fresh ones are-,

Ed Gamble

Yes. I used to, at the end of the Edinburgh festival, after I did my last show, I'd generally mark the occasion by buying a mozzarella and eating it.

James Acaster

Stewart Lee even more confused.

Ed Gamble

Yes. What's he doing now?

Andy Zaltzman

The other option for my side dish is back to Spain for some octopus, pulpo a la gallega, a bit of paprika, and again, it's slightly-, a lot of food is about memory, isn't it, and the first time me and my wife went to northern Spain, we went to Galicia, and we stayed in a beautiful old town called Pontevedra and had some octopus, which basically just cooked up fresh in front of us. Again, I'd never even contemplated eating octopus before, and it was, yes, so delicious and soft.

Ed Gamble

So, this is, like, grilled octopus?

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

No, I think it's just boiled, actually.

Ed Gamble

Okay, yes.



James Acaster

And then a bit of oil on it, a bit of salt.

Andy Zaltzman

A little bit of paprika, and also, I mean, in terms of the evolutionary race, the octopus is one of the most intelligent species that there is, and some people say, 'Oh, you shouldn't eat them. It's disrespecting an intelligent species.' I say, we are in an evolutionary race. If you don't eat an octopus, they're going to evolve, aren't they, and then overtake us.

Ed Gamble

You're very suspicious of the sea.

James Acaster

We are in an evolutionary race.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

I love the thought of someone at dinner with you. 'I don't think you should eat that, Andy, they're quite clever.' 'We are in an evolutionary race.'

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. Same with pigs, isn't it? I mean, pigs are-, I know not strictly couture, but like I say, very lapsed. There are loopholes.

Ed Gamble

You've mentioned-,

Andy Zaltzman

If you eat it ironically.

Ed Gamble

You've mentioned pork products over 50 times this episode.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

That can't be a-, if you're saying we are in an evolutionary race, and then you bow to the rules of religion-, I think you're going to be in trouble there.



Andy Zaltzman

So, it's-, we've about got an octopus versus cheese battle here, but I think I'm going to go with the cheese as my-,

Ed Gamble

Lovely.

Andy Zaltzman

My first.

James Acaster

Well, yes, I mean, both of those things, obviously, are delicious, simple side dishes, but like-,

Ed Gamble

I think out of those two, as well, the mozzarella is the one that goes better with the Wellington.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

Would you like a mozzarella Wellington?

Andy Zaltzman

I'm not sure that would work, would it?

James Acaster

Have a big thing of mozzarella and then cover it with olive oil and salt just all around it-,

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

And then basil leaves.

Andy Zaltzman

Right.

James Acaster

All around it, and then the pastry, or-,

Ed Gamble

It's not going to work, is it, Andy?



James Acaster

Or maybe hollow out a tomato that's slightly bigger than the mozzarella.

Ed Gamble

Yes. You'd still need a parma ham, maybe a duxelles. I think me and Andy both think it's not going to work, because it's just going to melt straight away, isn't it?

James Acaster

Heston might be listening to this and will think, 'By Jove.'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

I mean, in terms of octopus, Slutten Malvein has some wonderful octopus dishes.

Ed Gamble

Oh, here we go. I've sensed Andy had zoned out in that bit.

James Acaster

He's reading his doc. He was reading his document. He was teeing something up.

Andy Zaltzman

His Protesteron, which is the first protest-themed restaurant in the world, where waiters take your orders by chanting through a megaphone, 'What do you want?' And then you announce what you want it, and then they say, 'When do you want it?' And you say, 'Now,' and then they go, 'Fuck off.' But it's amazing starters. There was a crusade of crudité, a rioting rillettes of real grouse. Placards Icelandic elk ham vitrioled squid ink slogans and brandished on a Soviet-influenced sausage stick. But the main courses, the octopus dish, which was a pastry-fenced occupassiance of octopus riot policed with carrot batons and swayed by propaganda with lefty lettuce. Hard to look beyond that. The beefs from around the world served overdone or underreported. They were pretty good. And force-fed opinions of sheep driveled in an evangelified sauce de resentment, redrivelled in a half-baked tomato motto. That was also excellent.

James Acaster

Cannot believe Kettle chips isn't in there. Absolutely waiting for Kettle chips.

Andy Zaltzman

The plumb grumble was excellent.

James Acaster

That's everything, then.



Andy Zaltzman

And the furious banana banners with an absolute fool. That was also good.

Ed Gamble

Good. Got that off your chest?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

Have you seen Finding Dory, the sequel to Finding Nemo?

Andy Zaltzman

No, I've not seen it. I did see Finding Nemo when my kids were quite small.

James Acaster

Octopus drives a truck in that.

Andy Zaltzman

Really?

James Acaster

In Finding Dory, yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes. It just proves my point, doesn't it? Proves my point.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

We can't let that happen.

Andy Zaltzman

It's eat or be eaten, isn't it?

James Acaster

We can't let that happen.

Your dream drink, Andy?

Andy Zaltzman

My dream drink. Cup of tea.



James Acaster

Yes. Do you know what's nice? You're a very sweet man, and everyone knows this, and you have the same little self-satisfied smile as the Great Benito does.

Andy Zaltzman

Oh, right, yes.

James Acaster

And I don't think the listener knows that Benito smiles. Every now and again, he does.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but it's always when he's said something he likes.

James Acaster

Yes, it's always about his own thing that he's just said, and he'll smile to himself, really pleased with himself. It's a nice little U-shaped smile, and you've got the same one, and it's just very sweet. When you said cup of tea, you were-,

Andy Zaltzman

It's a specific cup of tea, which is-,

James Acaster

Yes, this is why.

Andy Zaltzman

I love tea. I think good leaf tea is one of the greatest luxuries, because you buy one of the best teas in the world and it works out about 40p, 50p a cup. It's cheaper than a teabag at a station, by a considerable amount, and the variety in tea is just like wine, it's all about how it's-, where it grows. Some-, I don't know if I'm allowed to mention brands, or-,

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Or companies.

Ed Gamble

If you must.

Andy Zaltzman

But my chosen supplier of class-A tea is Imperial Teas in Lincoln. They're a fantastic shop, fantastic website, with a little essay on all the teas, and some of them come from-, it's a specific tree at a specific height halfway up a mountain somewhere in China. My two favourite teas, one is one that they sell called honey hong cha, which is-, it's like drinking optimism. It's-, and as the name suggests, it's got a



sort of honey-ish taste. That's a Chinese black tea. You can brew it long and have it with milk, or brew it for a couple of minutes and have it on its own.

James Acaster

Lovely.

Andy Zaltzman

Glorious, and the other is a tea called Opium Hill, which I got from a French tea shop in Paris when I did a really weird BBC world show with the American economist Max Kaiser, also featuring-

Ed Gamble

Funny old career you've had, isn't it, Andy?

Andy Zaltzman

One of Boris Johnson's brothers.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

And it paid not a great deal, but you had to get the Eurostar out to Paris-

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

But it was filmed in Paris.

James Acaster

With the three of you on the same train?

Andy Zaltzman

I shared the train with Boris Johnson's brother.

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Leo. But anyway, then-, so, basically, got the Eurostar over in the morning, back in the evening, did the recording. It was, like, I can't remember, a twenty minute chat about the state of the global economy or something, can't remember. But then I had, like, an afternoon in Paris and I went to this tea shop called Mariage Frère and got this tea called Opium Hill which is-, sorry about that.



James Acaster

That's what happens when you bring a full PC into the studio, I guess.

Andy Zaltzman

That was his stomach again.

James Acaster

Not run out of noises, it's so hungry, it's started-, full digital.

Andy Zaltzman

It's what they call a blue tea which is like an Oolong from Thailand.

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

And that is like drinking liquefied truth. It's a tea that affects me on a deeply spiritual level, in the same way that listening to Muddy Waters singing-

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

I see that as the tea equivalent of the depth of-

Ed Gamble

And, ironically, that's how I see tea.

Andy Zaltzman

The depth-

James Acaster

He's good.

Andy Zaltzman

The depth of truth that you get.

James Acaster

It's no Bollywood handshake, but it's good stuff.

Andy Zaltzman

So, that would be my-



James Acaster

I love it.

Ed Gamble

That's good, it's rare we go into such depth on tea.

James Acaster

Yes. We haven't had such a-, normally people are, like, 'Let's have a tea, as I just like it.' But that's lovely. And, like, do you want to listen to Muddy Waters while you drink your tea?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, I mean, once-, you know, particularly if it's tea during the tea interval of a cricket match and you're listening to Muddy Waters. I mean, that's quite hard to see where humanity can go that would ever be better than that.

James Acaster

Yes, that is the end of the -

Andy Zaltzman

There's a certain disappointment in having done the greatest thing that could ever be done. So, maybe you'd want to leave that as a hypothetical rather than, 'Already have done it and the rest of your life seem like pallid a desert of nothingness.' What a way to go that would be. I mean, there's a lot of talk about assisted dying, but if that's-, if you could do it like that, drinking a cup of Opium Hill tea listening to Muddy Waters, watching cricket-,

Ed Gamble

During a tea break at the cricket.

Andy Zaltzman

Sign me up.

James Acaster

Never been more serious about anything, absolutely wants to do that. Any particular Muddy Waters song that you would want?

Andy Zaltzman

Not a specific song but a specific album, which is Folk Singer, which is an acoustic album he did in the early '60s, which had Buddy Guy playing guitar on it as well. And that I picked up in Norton Caine services on the M6 toll road for three pounds. Back in the days when you had-, cars had CD players, remember that, kids? Remember that? Yes, put it on. I was already a big Muddy Waters fan and, God, that's beautiful.

James Acaster

I'm going to listen to that after this, after the record.



Ed Gamble

Glad you're treating yourself to the toll road, as well.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes yes, why not?

James Acaster

Your dream dessert, we arrive at your dream dessert.

Andy Zaltzman

Right. So, again, a couple of options for this. One is just some ice cream from a shop called Giolitti in Rome, which is near the Pantheon, an old Roman temple and they just do fantastic-, I mean, obviously there's a lot of fantastic ice cream in Italy but this-, again, sort of, specific family memories of buying ice cream and sitting next to this 2000 year old temple eating-,

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Pistachio ice cream from-,

Ed Gamble

That's no way to talk about your wife from the Gods.

Andy Zaltzman

Particularly pistachio ice cream from there, which-, I think a good test of a pistachio ice cream is a good test of an ice cream shop.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

You can't nail a pistachio, you've got no business.

James Acaster

So, a lot of people would say that about the vanilla. They'll go, 'If you want to test how good it is, you go for the vanilla,' but you're a pistachio guy? You want to see how good they do that?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes yes.

James Acaster

Okay. Why the pistachio?



Andy Zaltzman

Well, I guess it's not too sweet. It's, sort of, mellow and smooth and rich, deep flavour. Nut ice cream.

Ed Gamble

You want to taste the roasted, sort of, nature of the pistachio, right?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

Ed Gamble

You want to get that flavour but without it being overbearing?

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I agree with you. I love a pistachio, same with a hazelnut, as well, is a good gelato to go for.

James Acaster

Peanut butter ice cream? Peanut ice cream?

Andy Zaltzman

Not such a fan of that.

James Acaster

No no.

Andy Zaltzman

I don't rate a good black-, you know, black fruit sorbet, fan of that.

Ed Gamble

Are you going cone or cup?

Andy Zaltzman

Cup.

Ed Gamble

Cup? Good, you've passed. You've passed the test.

James Acaster

You know, you don't get cones in cricket. But they all wear a cup. Loves it.

Andy Zaltzman

God, I've-, I'm really struggling here.

James Acaster

Your stomach is-, well you say you're struggling-,

Ed Gamble

I'm loving it every time.

James Acaster

It's absolutely phenomenal. It was from the moment we started, it's not stopped, it's going crazy, Andy. It's going absolutely crazy on you.

Ed Gamble

Is it picked up on mic, Benito?

James Acaster

Surely it's been picked up on mic.

Ed Gamble

That first one has to be picked up on mic.

James Acaster

The first one-,

Ed Gamble

The first one was louder than Andy speaks.

James Acaster

That frequency has-, yes it was a very high pitched frequency, cuts through all of us.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

But that last one just then must do, as well. It was quite a-,

Andy Zaltzman

Well, it's basically my-, literally, my internal monologue.

James Acaster

Yes, throughout all of this.

Ed Gamble

How many flavours per cup is-? Because sometimes I get excited and I'm, like, 'Three scoops in a cup,' and then they all mix up and you're losing the purity of it.



Andy Zaltzman

Two is optimum, you can always, you know, go back and-,

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Get a, you know, a bonus if you've done well on the first two.

James Acaster

Yes, I find it hard not to go three because I love ice cream so much and I always go, 'I should have just got two.' Like, 'I'll remember next time, just go for two, because you know that's enough and it's nice and they complement each other.' And three is just always-, it's too much ice cream and they're not going to complement each other as much because now you're going different ways.

Andy Zaltzman

One of the best ice creams I ever had was a vanilla ice cream at a restaurant in London, possibly Andrew Edmonds? And it just had Pedro Ximinez sherry poured on the top and simple but divine.

Ed Gamble

I love it, I absolutely love stuff like that. Yes, with the sherry poured on top, it's proper, proper.

James Acaster

Yes, vanilla ice cream with booze on it.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Whisky as well, with that kind of ice cream.

Andy Zaltzman

I don't know if this counts as dessert but a cheese trolley. Is it either or?

James Acaster

Now listen.

Ed Gamble

Here we go. This is the controversial point here, Andy.

James Acaster

We have-, and it's fair-, fucking hell. Sorry, someone's just wheeled the trolley in.



Andy Zaltzman

I'm not even hungry.

James Acaster

That was the sound of the-

Andy Zaltzman

I had a big breakfast.

James Acaster

That was the sound of the trolley wheels on the floor, rolling along. Andy's brought in props.

Andy Zaltzman

This has never happened to me before.

James Acaster

Yes yes, sure. Don't worry, it happens to a lot of guests.

Ed Gamble

It's great having two guests on.

James Acaster

The tummy. So, listen, transparency, there are guests on the podcast before who have decided they want a cheeseboard instead of a dessert. I've gone absolutely ape-shit at them, it makes me furious. Ed and I have both, on our dream menus, chosen a traditional sweet dessert and a cheese board and we had, you know, one after the other in whatever order. And we've had other guests do that-

Ed Gamble

And we know you've got a history with that after your Christmas meal in Melbourne.

James Acaster

I like that, because I do like doing that myself. I like the cheese course as either a bridge from the main course to the dessert, or afterwards by the fire with your friends. Just, like, taking your time with a cheeseboard, that's fine. If you have it in place of the ice cream, especially because it sounds delicious, your stomach is going to be making way worse noises than what it's currently making. I'm going to wail on you.

Ed Gamble

Christmas episode, it would be a shame to not give you the ice cream and the cheese board.

Andy Zaltzman

Right, good.

James Acaster

Be a huge shame.

Andy Zaltzman

So, I mean, a good cheese board is one of-,

James Acaster

The stomach.

Andy Zaltzman

Sorry about this.

Ed Gamble

The stomach has run out of battery.

Andy Zaltzman

Put it on silent and it still bloody bleeps. Anyway.

James Acaster

'Andy, I'm really tired.'

Ed Gamble

Your stomach is on vibrate and your phone is on loud.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, pressed the wrong button. One of my favourite ever cheese boards was in the Wandsworth restaurant Chez Bruce. Which is, you know, constantly rated one of the best certainly in London, possibly the country. And we went there to celebrate when my wife and I found out she was pregnant for the first time.

James Acaster

So, this is pre-Wellington.

Andy Zaltzman

Pre-Wellington.

James Acaster

Pre- the buffalo mozzarella farm.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

But post-scallop?



Andy Zaltzman

Post-scallop.

James Acaster

We're doing the timeline of Andy's relationship.

Andy Zaltzman

We went to celebrate and they have a fantastic cheese trolley there but my wife had just found out she was pregnant so was unable to eat-

James Acaster

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

The-, you know, a lot of the cheese were unpasteurised, so I just vaunted my cheese freedom in her face. And still one of the greatest moments of our relationship, as far as I'm concerned.

James Acaster

Well maybe that's your dream, you know? Your dream meal, the person you're having it with is your wife while pregnant and you get to just, like, go absolutely wild and eat whatever you like.

Andy Zaltzman

But in terms of-, we mentioned food showing the ingenuity of humanity, I think cheese does that more than anything else. How humans have taken the idea of milk and turned it into thousands and thousands of cheeses, I think that tells you-, you know, a lioness wouldn't do that. A shark wouldn't do that. It took a very special species.

James Acaster

What a list of animal of other animals that wouldn't do it. 'A lion wouldn't do it, a shark wouldn't do it.'

Andy Zaltzman

It took a very special species to-,

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

To do that.

Ed Gamble

Do you remember any of-, which particular cheeses that really-?



Andy Zaltzman

I can't remember from that occasion. I do like a strong blue cheese. We've been to Northern Spain on holidays quite a bit and their-, the Cabrales cheese, I don't know if you've ever had that? It's from the north of Spain and it is a, kind of, combat level blue cheese. You know, it's the kind of cheese that needs to be cordoned off and it's borderline assault more than cheese. But it's-, I mean, that's quite spectacular. I had an outstanding Mimolette in Paris once. Like a hard, orange-y cheese.

Ed Gamble

So, you like the big cheeses?

Andy Zaltzman

I do like-, I like a big cheese.

Ed Gamble

Smack you in the face, sort of cheese. Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

Want to hear the worst joke I've ever said on this podcast?

Ed Gamble

Go on then.

James Acaster

Cabrales is Charlie Dimmock's favourite cheese. Remember Charlie Dimmock?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Everyone was obsessed that she didn't wear a bra. It was, like, the main news in this country for ages. As a topical comedian-,

Ed Gamble

Yes, the Dimmock's.

James Acaster

Zaltzman would have covered that every week.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Would you? Would you have done?



Andy Zaltzman

Well, look, if it's in the news. You know? I have a sacred, sacred duty.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Given to me by Almighty Zeus to try and make jokes about it.

James Acaster

Full respect to Dimmock.

Andy Zaltzman

A curse as much as a gift.

James Acaster

I'm going to read your menu back to you now and see how you feel about it.

Andy Zaltzman

Okay. Yes.

James Acaster

You would like sparkling water, of course, saving the planet. You would like two and a half poppadoms with chutney, all the chutney options, raw onions, grasshopper sauce, of course, hot pickle. Starter, six Dahi puris. Main course, venison wellington, made by your wife on New Years Eve. Your Christmas meal is the charcuterie board, the prawn and lobster risotto, ho ho. Japanese salmon, chocolate and passion fruit mousse and the cheese board afterwards. Side dish whole mozzarella.

Andy Zaltzman

On a picture of David Cameron.

James Acaster

Oh yes, sorry. On a picture on David Cameron's cover drive, which I still don't know what a cover drive is. You drink is Opium Hill cup of tea from Paris, while listening to Folk Singer by Muddy Waters. Dessert, you would like a cup of pistachio ice cream from Giolitti in Rome. And what was the other item? Was it just pistachio you want in that cup?

Andy Zaltzman

No, chuck in a sorbet.

James Acaster

Chuck in that fruit sorbet that you said.



Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

Do you know what? I'm also going to chuck in the vanilla ice cream with the sherry on it, I'm just going to throw that in.

Andy Zaltzman

Separate bowl.

James Acaster

Because it sounds so great. I think you should have it. Then you want to follow that up with a cheeseboard from Chez Bruce while your wife is pregnant.

Andy Zaltzman

Sounds pretty good.

Ed Gamble

It does.

James Acaster

That does sounds good. Weirdly, me reading you that menu back was the quietest your stomach has been, though. It completely stopped for the hearing of the full menu.

Ed Gamble

I think your dream menu is more Christmassy than your Christmas menu.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes, that is.

James Acaster

It is, to be fair. Does that sound good to you?

Andy Zaltzman

That sounds excellent.

Ed Gamble

It sounds good to me.

Andy Zaltzman

Do we cook it now? Is that how this show works?

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes. We've got a little kitchen out there if you-,



James Acaster

And listeners might be like, 'No, you never do that.' We actually-, for the listeners, we always do an episode afterwards where we cook the meal and eat it, we put those in the vault, like Prince does with albums, or used to. We're going to release them all posthumously, and that's-,

Andy Zaltzman

I brought my own deer for the venison Wellington, so-,

Ed Gamble

I was wondering what that was.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Andy Zaltzman

Wrestle it to the death. That's the best way because then you, sort of, ready tenderise it.

James Acaster

Well, in an evolutionary race I'll take on that venison.

Ed Gamble

Also, we release some, 'Best of,' episodes at the end of the year where we have all our favourite clips and there's going to be a separate section that's going to be, like, 'We had Andy Zaltzman on to talk about Christmas,' it's going to be all our favourite clips from this. But then we will have a separate section saying, 'But our most surprise guest was Andy's tummy,' and then we'll just have a compilation of all of your tummy sounds.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

Supercut of all of the tummy sounds and then someone out there will undoubtedly autotune all those into some Christmas song using your tummy gurgles.

Andy Zaltzman

Yes.

James Acaster

And you'll be able to play that every Christmas as a family, will be a new tradition.



Andy Zaltzman

I think, 'Tummy Gurgles,' plays baseball for the New York Forks, I think.

James Acaster

Anything you want to say before we go, Andy?

Ed Gamble

Yes, any more bullshit on the laptop for us?

James Acaster

Yes, I wouldn't want you to have written a whole dish out and we don't get to hear it.

Andy Zaltzman

No no, I think that's-, I think we've-, yes, we've covered it, I think. There was- Malvein's has got a new insect restaurant?

Ed Gamble

Fantastic.

Andy Zaltzman

And he's got a new restaurant in Paris which is an all-you-can-eat shellfish brasserie called, 'Moule vous buffet avec moi, ces soir'. He's-, Got a couple of Christmas recipes he's just put out on social media, one is, 'Regretful wood pigeon, hand haunted in a memory of asparagate wrongdoings. Bondage to a bed of covertly assassinated scallops and hard punched potato faces.' Or you can go with the high speed car crash, 'Tenderised paragon of overbearingly mothered beef groin with a splenetic reductio, gruffly manhandled chanterelle mushroom willies and a pert bouncer of cabbage tits.' But he's got a new insect-, because obviously, you know, insects are going to be the future of food, and his latest insects menu is a trio of breast of ladybird, fillet-de-wasp and tarantula-web-snaffled moth sweetbreads, heartened by a sauce squiggilishy of fear-motivated larvae. Then you've got an amuse-bouche of ready-popped cocoon of caterpillar, flouncing into a mouth-flutter of freshly buttered butterfly, and then a maggotine of swat-orphaned fly infants, confronted by an encroachment of filth-fed cockroaches counter-intuited on a tagliatelle of hand-splattered worms.

Ed Gamble

Beautiful. Well-,

Andy Zaltzman

It's the future of food, people.

Ed Gamble

Andy, thank you so much for coming on the podcast.

James Acaster

Thank you, Andy.



Andy Zaltzman

Pleasure.

Ed Gamble

Thanks, Andy, merry Christmas. Well, there we are, what a wonderful way to see the Christmas period in.

James Acaster

Yes, with Andy and his very vocal tummy.

Ed Gamble

Oh, my goodness, the tummy, man.

James Acaster

The tum.

Ed Gamble

Look, it happens a lot on the podcast but maybe would only happen once or twice, and it's often me.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

There'll be a little gurgle but it will go unreferenced because it's quiet enough to get away with, but we just couldn't leave it because Andy's stomach was louder than his voice.

James Acaster

The first one was so loud, and then it didn't stop.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

We had to, you know, not reference it every single time, otherwise we'd still be recording.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

It happened so much, I'm very curious to see how often it is audible to the listener.

Ed Gamble

Yes. I tell you what we're going to start having to do-, sorry, this is more work for you, Benito.



James Acaster

Yes, sorry, Benito.

Ed Gamble

Is having three extra mics in the studio at tummy level.

James Acaster

Yes, you all have to do that, and make sure they're at tummy level, otherwise we'll be in trouble, have a few guests complaining.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Neither Andy or his tummy mentioned a wax lettuce, so that was good.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

That means we don't have to kick either of them out.

Ed Gamble

Yes, exactly, but don't forget to go and see Andy on tour with his brand-new show The Zaltgeist, touring nationwide until 9th May at London's Leicester Square Theatre. Plenty of dates, go and check him out on andyzaltzman.co.uk.

James Acaster

Thank you so much, Andy, for coming on again. Ed, do you want to do some food shout-outs? We've had some food sent to us.

Ed Gamble

Yes, we've had some lovely stuff sent to us.

James Acaster

Which we appreciate very much.

Ed Gamble

Always very grateful for it. We've had some kombucha from Lo Bros and Left Field, two different types of kombucha. You're a buch-head.

James Acaster

I'm a buch-head, so I'm looking forward to contrasting and comparing these two brands.



Ed Gamble

Yes, like fine wines.

James Acaster

Drinking back and forth. Yes, exactly like a fine wine.

Ed Gamble

A vertical tasting.

James Acaster

Yes, I will do a vertical tasting on both of them. That is exciting, I like discovering new kombuchas.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

You know, I've shouted out my favourite one on the podcast before but maybe this will be a challenge.

Ed Gamble

We've got some great coffee as well from Elsewhere Coffee.

James Acaster

That Benito has described himself as lovely.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

He is a big fan of it. It's here in the offices, in Benito's office, which he runs a pretty tight ship here.

Ed Gamble

He does, but we get so much nice stuff that any guests coming in, they've got the pick of the crop here.

James Acaster

Yes, they've got the pick of the crop, and now they've got some lovely coffees to drink while they're waiting to talk to these two hunks.

Ed Gamble

We've got some beer from Pressure Drop which Benito thinks got drunk at the Christmas party.

James Acaster

He said, 'Thinks,' very uncertainly, because clearly, he had a bit of a rowdy one at the Christmas party, Benito, going on the sherries.



Ed Gamble

Yes. I didn't get to taste any of this Pressure Drop but I like Pressure Drop, I've had their beers before, so I am happy to give a big shout-out to Pressure Drop.

James Acaster

Oh, lovely, thank you, Pressure Drop.

Ed Gamble

Thank you, Pressure Drop. We got sent some grounded plant-based protein shakes.

James Acaster

You drink that at home, don't you, Ed?

Ed Gamble

I have drunk that at home, and I didn't realise we got sent free ones until I came into the Christmas party and there was a box of it sat there. Well actually, first time I saw it Ania Magliano was walking around the party drinking it like it was a party drink, and then said she was going to take the whole box, and then messaged me the next morning saying, 'I forgot the protein drinks.'

James Acaster

Why was she drinking them at the Christmas party, protein shakes?

Ed Gamble

You've met Ania, right?

James Acaster

I guess so. I mean, is it because it's like a milkshake?

Ed Gamble

Yes, I guess so. It's the closest thing to a milkshake she could get, yes.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes, that's fair enough.

Ed Gamble

She was loving it.

James Acaster

Needs must.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but I really like those and they help my gains. We got sent some whiskey from Compass Box Whisky, and a lot of fun, James. They put it in, like, a leather pouch with a padlock on it, and you've got to solve the puzzle to open it to get to the whisky.



James Acaster

That's more up your street than mine.

Ed Gamble

Well, it wasn't up my street, I worked out that the bag was quite loose so I could just take the bottle out without opening the padlock.

James Acaster

That's lateral thinking.

Ed Gamble

Lateral thinking. That's in my bag, thank you very much.

James Acaster

Congratulations, Ed, lovely whisky.

Ed Gamble

Thank you. Ding ding. Well, that's it from our Christmas specials, but fear thee not, we'll be back with best-of-the-year episodes as we always do. We do compilations of our favourite bits from across the whole year.

James Acaster

Yes, and it's the best episode of the year.

Ed Gamble

It's the best episode of the year. It's the only one James listens to while he cleans his house.

James Acaster

That should be the best of.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

It's clips of the best of.

Ed Gamble

Yes, that's true-,

James Acaster

Because that's the best.

Ed Gamble

Well, it is, it is.



James Acaster

No, what we should include is that clipped up.

Ed Gamble

But that's what it would be.

James Acaster

We should do another episode at the end of the year which has clipped up the best of the best of.

Ed Gamble

Then it just gets shorter, and shorter and shorter.

James Acaster

Until you get the best.

Ed Gamble

Yes. So, looking forward to that. I hope everyone has a lovely Christmas period, whatever you're doing, however you're celebrating. Just have a lovely rest.

James Acaster

Yes, look after yourselves.

Ed Gamble

Bye-bye.

James Acaster

Bye.

Ed Gamble

Gobble gobble.

James Acaster

Gobble gobble, cock-a-doodle-do.