



# Off Menu – Ep 246 – Karan Gokani

## **Ed Gamble**

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast, taking the hopper of conversation and cracking in the egg of humour and you've got yourself a hopper with an egg podcast.

## **James Acaster**

That is Ed Gamble, my name is James Acaster. Together we own a dream restaurant and every week we invite in a guest, and we ask them their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink, not in that order, and this week our guest is Karan Gokani.

## **Ed Gamble**

Chef, owner of Hoppers.

## **James Acaster**

Entrepreneur.

## **Ed Gamble**

Hoppers is a fantastic mini chain, would you call it a mini chain? There's three restaurants in London.

## **James Acaster**

Yes.

## **Ed Gamble**

They are fantastic restaurants that we are huge fans of, cooking Sri Lankan cuisine.

## **James Acaster**

I think it was you who recommended it to me for the first time, as it is with anywhere that I eat.

## **Ed Gamble**

Yes.

## **James Acaster**

Ed recommended it to me.

## **Ed Gamble**

But then it normally happens that I have been somewhere once, I recommend it to you and then within a two-month period, you go there more times than I've ever been there.

## **James Acaster**

Yes.



**Ed Gamble**

Yes, definitely because you'll go with your girlfriend, you'll go with some friends, your parents are in town, you take them there.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Some other family are in town, you take them there.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Then you're like, 'Ed, have you had this on the menu?' I go, 'No, I've not been there for three months maybe.' You're like, 'Well, I've been there six times.'

**James Acaster**

Because you've been trying other restaurants and recommending them to me, but I don't listen for that three month period because I- my new favourite place.

**Ed Gamble**

'They know my name now.'

**James Acaster**

Yes. Yes, exactly. Yes, I've lost count of the amount of times I have been to Hoppers. Many a special meal, very excited to talk to Karan. I'll try and get him talking about some of my favourite dishes. That's my plan going into this.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, that's your plan. I mean, I don't think you're going to have to trick him into that.

**James Acaster**

I'm going to trick him.

**Ed Gamble**

It is his restaurant.

**James Acaster**

He's going to get tricked. He will think it's his idea.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Right, we will see. I mean, it was his idea, the restaurant was his idea.



**James Acaster**

He'll think it's his idea to talk about the dishes.

**Ed Gamble**

Right, okay.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, I'm excited to talk to him. There's also a Hoppers cookbook out now, James.

**James Acaster**

Yes. I mean, obviously, any aspiring chefs, anyone who just wants to vary up their menu at home.

**Ed Gamble**

Any current chefs.

**James Acaster**

Yes, any current chefs, actually.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Any retired chefs that want to get back in the game. You can all get the Hoppers cookbook that Karan's written. It looks beautiful as well. Recipes, memories and inspiration from Sri Lankan homes, streets and beyond.

**Ed Gamble**

Lovely. I've got a copy at home actually. I've been flicking through it. It looks fantastic, I don't really have any time to cook any of it, but you know what? I'm reading it.

**James Acaster**

You know what else people should read? They should read Ed Gamble, *Glutton: The Multi-Course Life of a Very Greedy Boy*.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you so much, James, yes, that's my book.

**James Acaster**

Out now.



**Ed Gamble**

That is out now.

**James Acaster**

Now. We love Karan Gokani.

**Ed Gamble**

We do.

**James Acaster**

But if he says the secret ingredient, an ingredient which we deem to be unacceptable, we will be forced to kick him out of the dream restaurant, which is a shame because he has a restaurant, and he could get us back.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, he could kick us out of our dream restaurant, which is Hoppers.

**James Acaster**

Yes. So, let's hope we don't have to do this, but this week the secret ingredient is Bovril.

**Ed Gamble**

Bovril, I mean, it doesn't feel like he's going to pick it.

**James Acaster**

I swear to God, we've already had it, but we did a live show recently and someone shouted out Bovril and then it turned out that we'd never had it and we thought, 'That's too good. We have to have it on a proper studio episode.'

**Ed Gamble**

I don't like it, man, Bovril. What's it playing at?

**James Acaster**

No. Yes, well-,

**Ed Gamble**

Is it trying to be like Marmite?

**James Acaster**

Yes, it's like liquid Marmite drink, hot drink and some stinky old man will drink it at a football game.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.



**James Acaster**

That's my only memory of it.

**Ed Gamble**

Stinky old footy fans.

**James Acaster**

Yes, they sit there drinking it and you're like, 'Oh, what a Saturday.'

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, what are you doing? Yes, have a tea or coffee.

**James Acaster**

Have a tea or a coffee, mate, don't drink that Bovril around other people in a crowded stand, we're trying to watch the footy.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, we always think that when we go to the footy, don't we?

**James Acaster**

Yes, when me and you go to the footy and we just want to watch the football, we want to watch them kick the old footy about and then we're just sitting next to some stinky Bovril drinker.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, disgusting.

**James Acaster**

Disgusting.

**Ed Gamble**

So, if Karan picks that, he's obviously out on his ear, out of the podcast, out of the dream restaurant, out of the footy stand.

**James Acaster**

This is the Off Menu menu.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, interesting. You're doing that?

**James Acaster**

Well, not any more because you interrupted me.



**Ed Gamble**

Okay. This is the Off Menu menu of Karan Gokani.

Welcome, Karan, to The Dream Restaurant.

**Karan Gokani**

Absolutely. I've been waiting to come and dine here with real food.

**James Acaster**

Welcome, Karan Gokani, to The Dream Restaurant, we've been expecting you for some time.

**Karan Gokani**

Thank you.

**Ed Gamble**

It's an odd restaurant to get two welcomes, immediately.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, but it's good hospitality, we need some of that right now. We keep saying it's the welcome that's the most important thing. The farewell is equally important. You often don't get those.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, that's true. That's true actually. Normally, I don't think badly of it but if you're in a restaurant you finish the transaction and you're leaving and sometimes I might see the server who I was dealing with talking to another table and then I feel oddly jealous.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

That is true though. And for that reason, I say there's no harm stopping to talk to that table, look up for a second, say goodbye because now you've done two good things. You've stopped you from being jealous but the guys he's talking to know that he'll do the same for them, hopefully.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

So, you've, kind of, won two parties with one gesture.

**James Acaster**

What's the best farewell you've had at a restaurant?



**Karan Gokani**

It's probably one I gave to someone. I've run down the street just thanking someone who was a complete arse. I'd run down-, you know, they were difficult on the table, years ago, and I said, 'This is my culture, it's not theirs.' And eventually, you know, I think the server who was pissed off with them, sort of, did say, 'Bye,' to them, they just walked past and then I chased them down the street and I was, like, 'Listen, I just wanted to say a big thank you for coming in, I hope to see you again.' And they were shocked, and I think it's a nice one too, turn the other cheek in a sense.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, change their mind in future because they probably walked out of there going, 'Oh, I've been rude again.'

**Karan Gokani**

Well, hopefully not.

**Ed Gamble**

'Oh, I've been rude again. I can't go back to that restaurant, I've burnt my bridges again.' And then you chase them down the street. I'd imagine when they first see you chasing them down the street, they think, 'Oh, no, he's coming to tell me off here.'

**James Acaster**

Yes, 'Uh oh. Yes, we're going to get beat up again by another restaurateur.'

**Karan Gokani**

Yes. No, I think that's what hospitality is about, because you catch people on the wrong day sometimes.

**Ed Gamble**

Sure.

**Karan Gokani**

And you've got to give them the benefit of doubt. There's this whole thing about, 'The guest is always right in hospitality.' People go a bit crazy about that. It's, like, look, give them the benefit of the doubt, listen to them before you make a judgement and allow them that little bit of grace because they could be having a bad day and that's why they've probably stepped in. It could be, one person has booked a table, the other person's not really keen on eating and if we could convert both, we've done something really nice. Otherwise, it just gets boring bussing tables.

**James Acaster**

Yes, and also, you've probably, you know, if you confront someone like that, it's probably not going to go very well, but if you chase them down the street and say, 'Hey, I just wanted to say thank you for coming, I hope we see you again.' If they think, 'Well, that was odd.'

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.



**James Acaster**

And then they're, like, 'Well, why do we think it's odd? Oh, because we didn't deserve it.' Yes, then that might make them reflect a bit more rather than just going, like, 'You guys are a bunch of dickheads.'

**Ed Gamble**

It's a much better way to make your point, I think. That's good, we've never talked about the farewell before.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I never go back in the lamp of the end of the episode, do I?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, you've really got to nail the end of this episode, James.

**James Acaster**

I should go back in the lamp. Yes, we've really got to do that. I actually don't know your history of where you started out, like what your first restaurant was that you worked at.

**Karan Gokani**

Do you want to give it a wild shot? Do you want to just guess?

**James Acaster**

Where you learnt these things and got the farewell. I mean, McDonald's?

**Karan Gokani**

Actually, I'm a huge fan of what they do.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, I'm not going to lie and say no, there's lots of restaurateurs or chefs who will come in and be like, 'I don't eat at McD's.' But I love it. I do eat it once in a while, there's a reason you go to McDonald's. The Filet-O-Fish burger changes very minutely across the globe, and I think that's an amazing feat, to have created a product that's consistent and you know, this is another, sort of, way going in all hospitality podcasts, the farewell was one, the other thing is consistency. Sometimes it's not about the food, it's not about the service, it's about the consistency you get from that experience, and I think we all go to McDonald's, or we go to fast food restaurants for that, the same colours, you know what it's going to feel like, you know what it's going to smell like. There was a book by the founder of McDonald's called Grinding it Out and it was fantastic. They made it into a movie as well. I love that book and I read that when I was a lawyer and it really inspired me. Not to do McDonald's, maybe one day a fast food chain but Hoppers is very different. Another great inspiration was Danny Meyer and I think I've learnt a lot of this from him. He's probably one of the greatest-, have you guys heard of him?





**James Acaster**

No.

**Karan Gokani**

Probably one of the greatest restaurateurs across the pond. New York, he has a restaurant called Union Square Café, he's got Gramercy Tavern. He's got the whole load of great hospitality across New York.

**Ed Gamble**

I have been to both of those restaurants, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

But he's also got Shake Shack.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh wow, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

And one of the highlights of my career has been doing burgers with Shake Shack. So, we've done a Hoppers burger with Shake Shack in New York, here.

**James Acaster**

What? Oh my God, I've never wanted to eat something immediately so much.

**Karan Gokani**

It was a really good burger.

**James Acaster**

I'd love a Hoppers burger from Shake Shack, are you shitting me? Wow.

**Karan Gokani**

Okay, brilliant, hopefully this brings it back.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

I've been trying every angle.

**James Acaster**

What was the burger? What was it?



**Karan Gokani**

Every time I do a collab the idea should really be, it's me not stepping into your kitchen on your toes, but it's how is there this meeting of mine, meeting of food? And it was the same with Shake Shack. Mark Rosati who is the culinary director of Shake Shack, the entire team, we're all really good friends and we've gone back a long time and when it came to finally doing this burger, we said, 'I'll use your burger. You've put all this effort into creating it, I'm not going to do a new patty.' So, we used their bread, lovely rolls, I love their bread, their patty, their cheese but then we added layers onto that. So, we did this lovely, sort of, slow cooked beef in, I'm sure you've tried our bone marrow curry at Hoppers.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, absolutely.

**Karan Gokani**

So, that was an inspiration. So, we got all the bone marrow into the curry, folded it through, slow-cooked it, added some meat to it, pulled that meat and we had that sloppy meat on top. So, a bit like a Sloppy Joe on top of their burger. We then had pickled red onions for colour as well as, you know, to cut the fat. A green coriander mayo. So, it's a really visually beautiful burger. You can check it out on Instagram. We've got a really nice build of it and then finally, a green chilli. So, half a green chilli and then anyone we didn't like, we just put a whole green chilli. It was really fun because they bit into it.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Chasing them down the street.

**James Acaster**

Yes. I just want to say, 'Thank you very much for coming.'

**Ed Gamble**

'Enjoy your afternoon.' That sounds so delicious.

**Karan Gokani**

So, yes, Danny is who I've learnt-, he's got a book called Setting the Table, which has been a bible. I read it every year. I get the team to read it. He's got videos out on YouTube. The man is a genius, and the way he explains concepts. There's a more recent book by Will Guidara, EMP called Unreasonable Hospitality, which is great. It's, kind of, an extension because Will worked with Danny for a long time. So, those are great books to read and understand these concepts and I think they're natural. You've either got hospitality within you or you don't, and I think maybe I had that. So, I used to be a lawyer and then I jumped ship, moved back to India for a year, dabbled a little bit there, came back. My wife and her brothers had set up a great group of restaurants by then. Smaller group then, much bigger now. Joined them, we came up with this idea of Hoppers, tiny little 40-seat restaurant in Soho and there were queues around the block. It was just really fun. I still love Soho. I still say it's our flagship restaurant although our most recent, King's Cross, our third site is about four times the size of Soho.



**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I felt very lucky the first time I went to Hoppers, I just got there, so I was there before it opened that day.

**Karan Gokani**

Hoppers Soho?

**Ed Gamble**

I've done that before as well.

**James Acaster**

In Soho, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

I was probably on the door.

**James Acaster**

Really?

**Karan Gokani**

I swear to you, I was there on the door for the first two and a half years.

**James Acaster**

Oh, someone did chase me down the street at the end, actually, but yes, and I felt very lucky to get a table there and yes, it was so good.

**Ed Gamble**

We should talk about the book because there's a Hoppers cookbook which is out now.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Which is incredible. It's the debut cookbook.

**Karan Gokani**

It's the debut cookbook, it's my debut cookbook, Hoppers debut cookbook. It was, you know, a year in the making and in many ways it's, like, you know, I treated it like our fourth restaurant but at an international scale. So, Hoppers Soho was first, Hoppers Marylebone, which is on the corner of James and Wigmore, just behind Selfridges. That was number two in 2017, and then King's Cross was '20 and then everyone knows what happened for the best part of a year and a half.



### **Ed Gamble**

Yes.

### **Karan Gokani**

I'd write from about ten to three o'clock for about six months. It was good, there was no distractions, nowhere to go out and eat, no restaurant to run then. I mean, off and on, and it was an amazing project but I think the design was a very important part of it because, again, what I'm doing here, I'm not just looking back and trying to write a book for fans of Hoppers or people who have been to Hoppers and want to cook the dishes at home, because that's a given, they will come and buy the book. I wanted to write the book for people who have never heard of Hoppers. How do we create that little sense of Hoppers in their homes, wherever in the world they are? You know, there's a little ribbon which is the border of the floor tile that borders you in Soho, and it was one of the first elements we chose when my brother-in-law and I were in Sri Lanka, we were researching the restaurant and the design, we saw a lovely floor in someone's home, we took a picture, sent it to our designer here. She then sent it to Italy to copy and we had these beautiful floor tiles. We probably spent more on those tiles than anything else in that restaurant, and this border borders that tiny little, you know, whatever, 500, 600 square foot room, and I just wanted that same border to follow you through the book. So, it's on the cover, it's on the back page and it's on this ribbon, I had to fight with the-, it wasn't a very hard fight with Quadrille, my publisher, and they allowed me to do it. So, those little touches, I feel if you've read the book and you've never been to Hoppers and then that entices you to come in, when you walk in you're, like, 'Oh my God, this is like the book in 3, 4, 5D.

### **James Acaster**

Yes.

### **Ed Gamble**

I think it's so important, with cookbooks especially, to get the aesthetic right and make them look beautiful and the formatting and all of that, sort of, stuff because, I mean, I can only speak for myself. I'm not doing every recipe in a cookbook, I'm not cooking cover to cover but I like to read them like novels. So, I will sit there and enjoy them and go through them. So, it's so important that it looks lovely on a shelf, even. So, yes, it looks absolutely amazing.

### **Karan Gokani**

Thank you.

### **James Acaster**

They're the nicest books that I own, how they look and cookbooks. They look much nicer than anything else, apart from Ed's book, Glutton: The Multi-Course Life of a Very Greedy Boy.

### **Ed Gamble**

Thank you, James.

### **James Acaster**

Let's start your dream menu then. We always start with still or sparkling water.



**Karan Gokani**

Still to hydrate, sparkling to celebrate, but I tell you why, because sparkling water just makes me want to pee.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

If it's a long meeting, if it's an interview, I'm not going to drink sparkling water, or if it's a podcast like here.

**Ed Gamble**

More than still water? Sparkling water makes you want to pee?

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, there's just something in it. I don't know what it is. I do love it and I've recently stopped drinking, which will probably answer the second question, but that's even more reason to, you know, when someone's having a drink on the table you miss it once in a while, a bit of sparkling water. A few drops of-, not immediately, but after a bottle or two.

**Ed Gamble**

Sorry, because I wanted to talk more about the pee, but then I missed the bitters.

**James Acaster**

Yes, that's way more-,

**Karan Gokani**

You just add a little bit of wedge of citrus, get a little bit of a bitter in there and then it's a bit of a drink, and it's not a sweet drink, it's not pop. It's just nice fizz on your terms.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Fizz on your terms.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

A good tag line.

**Karan Gokani**

Good drink, right?



**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, fizz on your terms.

**James Acaster**

So, you wouldn't have that for your dream meal, or you would?

**Karan Gokani**

Now the secret's out and you don't mind me getting up and going off to the loo, I'll have sparkling, yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, because that sounds great for the bitters, I think, yes, definitely.

**Ed Gamble**

And also, it's your dream meal, so you can get up and go to the loo as much as you like.

**Karan Gokani**

Exactly, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Or can the genie remove?

**James Acaster**

I can remove the urge to pee, if you like, with my genie powers?

**Karan Gokani**

Okay, great. Fantastic, okay.

**James Acaster**

Unless you like going to the toilet in a restaurant, in which case you can carry on.

**Karan Gokani**

You always check the toilets in the restaurant, it says a lot about the restaurant.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, I think so.

**James Acaster**

Yes, that's a good point actually.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, it's nice to see if they ran out of budget, if they actually clean the toilets.



**James Acaster**

Yes. Well, when you're designing a new restaurant and it comes to the toilets, what things are very important to you for the toilets?

**Karan Gokani**

The most important thing, music, and I've screwed up a few times, having music in the toilets, and especially if you're going unisex, which is also something we've done.

**James Acaster**

Yes. You've got to have a-, what's the best toilet music?

**Ed Gamble**

Good question.

**Karan Gokani**

I don't know, I'm trying to figure it out. Just anything loud. Anything with a lot of beats dropping.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, a lot of songs that have got plops in them.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, exactly.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

I was going to say that.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Poppadoms or bread? Poppadoms or bread?

**Karan Gokani**

The good thing is I've heard this podcast enough to know that that's not directed to me because of the colour of my skin.

**James Acaster**

Poppadoms or bread, Karan Gokani? Poppadoms or bread?



**Karan Gokani**

I'll tell you what, obviously, it depends on what I'm going to be eating later, but this is the dream meal, you know, my palette will be completely cleansed. I do love poppadoms, but I call them papads, because that's what the name is, and I also like them roasted. I only like one particular kind. It's the one made with the black lentils, the urad dahl, with black pepper, and you roast that, which gives it a completely different flavour from frying it. It's got a lot more depth, it's got that spice, and then with that, the best thing you can ever do is if you ever get these from a restaurant, so even if you get the fried stuff, the coriander chutney they normally send, ask for some yoghurt, mix it through and you've got this lovely yoghurt-y coriander chutney to dip into, but then bread any day-, I'm a lawyer, I'm going to caveat everything.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

You can argue both sides.

**Ed Gamble**

That's good, a hack.

**Karan Gokani**

Bungay butter, good sourdough bread. You know Bungay butter?

**James Acaster**

No.

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**Karan Gokani**

Fen Farms. It's so good.

**Ed Gamble**

What's it called?

**Karan Gokani**

Bungay butter. Yes. So, they're called Fen Farms out in Sussex [sic], I'd like to think. You get it at good cheese shops. It's almost like a Brie, one of those wooden boxes, the little wooden boxes, I'm guessing, and it's incredible butter. Really, really good.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, now I want that.





**Karan Gokani**

You've got to try it, but that's if you were having bread, I'm having poppadoms with a chutney yoghurt.

**Ed Gamble**

The chutney yoghurt is such a good hack, I'm going to do that next time I'm having a curry.

**James Acaster**

That's great.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

And you know what? It's quite forgiving because sometimes you've got a chutney that might be too acidic or sometimes it's a bit salty or it's just not got the flavour, the yoghurt really-, good Greek yoghurt just blends it nicely together and then you can add a little bit of sugar or salt, just to balance it out.

**James Acaster**

Yes, you've made me want you to have both now.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

That's exactly what I was going for.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

He's got you.

**James Acaster**

Also, I just want to order Bungay butter because it's fun to say.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, you've got to do it. You've got to do it. We'll go for a walk after this, and we'll go and pick some up.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Go and get some Bungay butter on the way to the airport and then fly to Sri Lanka and then we've got all of our dreams.

Let's start with your menu proper, your dream starter.



**Karan Gokani**

So, a trick I always have at restaurants, again, you can see I've thought this through, a bit like the whole Bungay butter and papad vibe.

**Ed Gamble**

This is great.

**Karan Gokani**

I go with someone I like, and I have a good rapport with, and I make sure I order their meal as well, so I get to taste both. I'm going to do the same thing here. So, two starters.

**James Acaster**

Lovely.

**Ed Gamble**

This is so funny that we've established that you used to be a lawyer and now you're a restaurateur and you're absolutely attacking this in a way a lawyer would.

**Karan Gokani**

Good.

**James Acaster**

Oh, if I was ever-, I mean, there's no life in which I'm a lawyer but if I was and I was against you in court, you would make mincemeat out of me.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

No pun intended there.

**James Acaster**

Yes, sure. You would destroy me.

**Ed Gamble**

There is a world where I was a lawyer but a very bad one. Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes. I'd be like Uncle Jack in Always Sunny. That's as good a lawyer as I would be.

**Ed Gamble**

I'd be Lionel Hutz.



**James Acaster**

Yes, and Karan would destroy both of us.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Who's the friend you're bringing with you?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

I thought I said. You're the waiter and you're the genie, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, oh, great.

**Karan Gokani**

We've hung out in a festival. We're eating together.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, we hung out at Pub in the Park.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes. So, Ed, you're eating a pizza.

**Ed Gamble**

I'm eating a pizza.

**Karan Gokani**

We can eat the mini pizza because it's a starter.

**Ed Gamble**

We don't have to have mini pizzas.

**Karan Gokani**

Okay-,

**Ed Gamble**

I'm at the meal now.

**James Acaster**

Karan's ordering for you.



**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

So, maybe keep your opinions to yourself.

**Karan Gokani**

So, that's not my starter done yet, that's his.

**Ed Gamble**

What's my pizza I'm having?

**Karan Gokani**

I think just simple Margherita. Good chillis on the side, dry chillis on the side, chilli oil on the side and you just dip in. You don't even sprinkle it over, just simple. I love that. There's so much it's like good bread, there's just few ingredients and there's so much effort and this is the chef, or the cook in me talking.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

And I'm obsessed with pizza. If you follow my Instagram account, there's Indian, Indian, Indian, Sri Lankan, Sri Lankan, Hoppers and then pizza. Everyone's like, 'What the hell? There's no connection. Do you rate the account?' I said, 'This is just me, this is what I do and hopefully I'll get some pizza lovers. I'll get some Sri Lankan lovers and that's it.'

**Ed Gamble**

Whereabouts is your favourite pizza? I mean in the world, or in London?

**Karan Gokani**

I mean I cook a lot of it at home.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

But in London, my go to place is Mozza, have you been?

**Ed Gamble**

No.



**Karan Gokani**

It's Nancy Silverton's restaurant, so she's from LA. Great, very well renowned, sort of, legendary pizza chef. She's got a restaurant called Mozza at The Treehouse Hotel. It's right next to the BBC studios.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh nice, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Can I talk about the studios?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, yes, of course.

**Karan Gokani**

So, off Regent Street, I love it.

**Ed Gamble**

Someone was telling me about that actually, saying that it's like so renowned in LA, it's like the place to go to.

**Karan Gokani**

It is, it is legendary.

**Ed Gamble**

But it doesn't seem to have had that in London.

**Karan Gokani**

No, I think they've had a construction site in front of their building for a long time.

**Ed Gamble**

Right, okay.

**Karan Gokani**

And look, it's different people have different sort of preferences. I think hers are very LA style pizza, it's a really cool crust, the crust is quite, sort of, she's got semolina on it. And almost overdone to an extent, but I love it, it's just really-, and again a simple pizza there is great, on the counter, watching the guys make it in front of you. But then equally, there's-, I want to try this Crisp Pizza, I haven't been to it yet, East London I think.

**Ed Gamble**

Crisp Pizza?

**Karan Gokani**

Crisp Pizza, I see it all over Instagram.



**Ed Gamble**

Oh wow.

**Karan Gokani**

Hear people talking about it.

**James Acaster**

And now and this might be a silly question.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, it's going to be.

**Karan Gokani**

What's my real starter?

**James Acaster**

Are the crisps on top of the pizza? Or is the base made of crisps?

**Ed Gamble**

No, Crisp doesn't necessarily just relate to potato crisps, does it?

**Karan Gokani**

Could be a good one though.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, you know crisp is also just the general word for a texture?

**James Acaster**

But why it is on Instagram if it's-, it doesn't sound very exciting.

**Ed Gamble**

Well everything's on Instagram isn't it?

**James Acaster**

So it's just a crisp, it's just crispy.

**Karan Gokani**

Crispy pizza, I think they missed the y.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

But yes, I mean there's great pizza. Even Pilgrims does a good pizza.



**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

You know, I like the story of the guys, you know, I was following them since I was a lawyer, they've done so well. It's still a relevant brand, it's amazing, amazing what they've done.

**Ed Gamble**

So I've got a-, you're having a pizza?

**Karan Gokani**

You're having a pizza, I've nicked a slice or two.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

But my starter of choice.

**Ed Gamble**

If it's a mini pizza.

**James Acaster**

Ed, that's what's happening.

**Ed Gamble**

Well if it's a mini pizza, how are you nicking a slice or two? There's not very much left for me.

**Karan Gokani**

I'm glad you chose the big one then.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, yes, yes, thank you.

**Karan Gokani**

A full mean sized pizza, sliced up, yes. Sliced up, see I don't get why people don't slice pizza sometimes.

**Ed Gamble**

Sometimes they arrive-, like I order them sometimes and they arrive and they've not been sliced and you're like.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, and I get so annoyed.



**Ed Gamble**

Yes, luckily I've got one of those big curved blades to do that.

**Karan Gokani**

Oh do you carry that?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, yes, yes. No, I don't carry it with me, but I've got one at home. It's difficult to carry with me.

**James Acaster**

And sings a sailor song when you're cutting it up.

**Karan Gokani**

The only thing more annoying than that is when it's sliced, but it's not really sliced.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

So they've, kind of, gone through the top. And you think it's sliced and you go to pull it and all the cheese just comes off.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

In one slice, what is that about?

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, yes. I don't know what they're thinking.

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**James Acaster**

I know that during COVID, or during the lockdowns, they were like, 'We can't be slicing up their pizza, we've got to be careful here.' So, I was like, 'Okay, fair enough.' But now, they've continued it. I'm like, 'Guys you know.'

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.





**James Acaster**

That I'm going to want to slice this up and now I've got to do it myself. That's a sad day and you just reminded me of a global pandemic.

**Karan Gokani**

I'm sorry.

**James Acaster**

It's alright.

**Ed Gamble**

So what's your starter?

**Karan Gokani**

Duck pancakes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

I love them. It's one of those you can never get enough.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

It's like this dish we had growing up called pain puri. You know, this is not my third starter, I mean it could be. But you had these little crisps, have you guys tried it?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, yes, yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

In Indian restaurants you get these little crisps and then you fill them in with some potato, spiced potato and chickpeas and stuff, and then you get this green, minty water, it's delicious, with tamarind and stuff, and you pour that in. The point is, when you finish the crisps, you have the other two left, so you ask for more crisps, the little, crispy balloons. Then you finish the water and you ask for more and you can never stop. It's this constantly this vicious circle. And I find it's the same with duck pancakes, until the duck is finished. But then I start eating the vegetables and chilli oil and sauce and stuff.



**Ed Gamble**

Yes, of course, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

But I love that, yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I mean, I'd be very tempted to put the pancakes to one side for a second and put all the duck and everything on the pizza. And eat that, I'll be tempted to Frankenfood it.

**Karan Gokani**

That'd be nice, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Shout out to Bella Italia, I once had a Hoisin duck pizza. At the time I loved it, looking back it was crazy.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Instead of tomato sauce base, it was Hoisin sauce.

**James Acaster**

Too much.

**Ed Gamble**

Duck, cheese and spring onion, absolutely insane.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

In a good way?

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**Karan Gokani**

No?

**Ed Gamble**

No, just mad.



**James Acaster**

I wouldn't want the cheese for starters.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, well the cheese was-,

**James Acaster**

Yes, we don't need that.

**Ed Gamble**

It has to have cheese to be the pizza right?

**James Acaster**

Maybe.

**Karan Gokani**

Does it? That's another thing, where you get the white pizzas. You get pizza without cheese and all that, that's the worst thing. You know, you order that pizza, it just sounds so good and then, you know, that's why I started going for a margherita.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

So you know what it's going to be, but, you know, you go with four friends and they're not going to share with you. And then you get that, you're the only person who gets that white pizza. It's, like, oh.

**Ed Gamble**

How do you build your pancakes? What order are you putting the things on?

**James Acaster**

What are the ratios?

**Karan Gokani**

Hoisin sauce, chilli oil and you build in your hand, that's a nice way of doing it. So you pick it up, you can stretch over. Little bit of Hoisin sauce, chilli oil, something we always love, my wife and I is chopped, fresh red chillies with soy sauce. You pour soy sauce over, it, kind of, it just do something to the soy sauce and to the chilli. Then duck, a little slither or two of spring onion, cucumber for crunch and then those little, red chillies.



**James Acaster**

Yes, great. I love that you're adding all this chilli stuff as well, that's great. Normally I just end up having the duck, the veg and the Hoisin sauce. Which is great, but with chilli oil as well, sounds fantastic.

**Karan Gokani**

It takes it to the next level, nice balance.

**Ed Gamble**

I go Hoisin sauce first, spread it out on the pancake.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes same.

**Ed Gamble**

Duck, vegetables on top.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

You to me seem like a drizzler James?

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, yes. I'll-

**Ed Gamble**

You go last, Hoisin last.

**James Acaster**

No, no.

**Ed Gamble**

No, no.

**James Acaster**

No, come on, don't put me in that category, that's not true.

**Ed Gamble**

Because these people who go Hoisin last are using up all the fucking Hoisin. Because they've got no way of regulating how much they're putting on. You need to put enough on to get the flavour of it, but you're not putting dollops on. And these people are fucking dolloping and drizzling, it gets on my nerves.



**Karan Gokani**

But I tell you what's worse than that is the people who are using up all of the duck. When they just pile their pancake high with duck. It's just get the little shred of duck, it's a nice balance and then we can have more.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, did you say pancake last James?

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Pancake last.

**Ed Gamble**

In your hand.

**James Acaster**

Yes, in my hand.

**Ed Gamble**

Duck in your hand.

**James Acaster**

In my hand, I just grab everything in my hand and then I get a pancake, slap it on the top and then pancake first into my mouth.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Dream main course?

**Ed Gamble**

Main courses I guess?

**James Acaster**

Main courses for you and for Edward Gamble.

**Karan Gokani**

Absolutely yes, absolutely. So.

**James Acaster**

Ed Stevenson Gamble.



**Karan Gokani**

So, here I've got it built into the course itself, so I'm not necessarily going to have to choose two, but very happy to. Always greedy when it comes to ordering. In close second, it could be a biriyani.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, I had a lovely biriyani at Pub in the Park from Hoppers.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, very, very good.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, that was our-, yes, so that was one kind of biriyani, so we toss it all together. We call it a tapa biriyani, or a pan biriyani, where the sauce is mixed with the rice and it's really delicious. Perfect for volume like that, but then the dumb biriyani, which is where you've got the meat. You've got layers of rice and meat and the rice almost, sort of, steams through in that lovely aroma. And then it's garnished on top and it's usually under a little seal. Which could be pastry, which could be roti, which could just be a lid, I love that stuff. I think it's the ideal dinner party menu.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

It's the ideal one pot meal coming out of that region of the world. Just a little raita on the side, it's perfect.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

But the other equivalent of that, which would be my first choice is something called lamprais. Now you'll have to buy the book to find out what that is.

**James Acaster**

You're not going to tell us?

**Karan Gokani**

I will tell you. But to cook it maybe, so we've got the whole recipe broken down in the book. It's a Sri Lankan dish, have to be Sri Lankan yes, lamprais. It's spelt L-A-M-P-R-A-I-S and it's a Dutch Burgher dish. So, it was, you know, like you had the Anglo-Indians, you had the Dutch colonise Sri Lanka for a while. And the children were known as the Burghers. There's a h there, so nothing to do with the McDonald's burgers we were talking about earlier. But it's an incredible dish, it's in banana leaf, you've



got this short grain rice. So first you cook a meat, so it's usually mixed meat, three kinds of meat, we're really going all in here.

**James Acaster**

Yes, great.

**Karan Gokani**

This is like a full feast in one parcel. Three kinds of meat, lots of lovely spices. You stew them and then you collect the stock. It's almost like-, think Hainanese chicken rice. You get the stock, you boil the rice in that stock. Really aromatic rice and you put these two together, so it becomes a dryish curry by the time you, sort of, dry it out and that stock is used to cook the rice. Then you've got lovely aubergine pickle, like a moju, or . So it's this aubergine, pickled aubergine with onions and stuff. Then tend to have two or three other little dishes in there. You have a little fried egg on top, you have a cutlet and then you wrap the whole thing in banana leaf. And I used to have friends at university, still have friends who bring parcels and parcels of these from Sri Lanka frozen. And they keep in the freezer and they are very, very protective of them. So, you've got to be a really good friend for one of them to share it with you. So, they do these tiny parcels, Hoppers we occasionally for specials, do larger parcels. But imagine that that little parcel is then steamed or baked, so now on top of all the flavour, you also get that lovely flavour from the banana leaf into all these things. And then you just open it up, it's not much to look at. So, it took a while for us to actually bring it on the menu because it just looks like someone's had this doggy bag, where they've given, very stingily given just one box and they had to clear the whole table.

Everything left over into one box and they swung it on the way home, it's like one of those really bad takeaway orders that you get, you know. Someone swung the whole thing and just everything's mixed into everything. But it looks a bit like that sometimes and it's hard to make it look visually pleasing, but the flavours are insane.

**James Acaster**

And is that going to be on Ed's plate, or your plate?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

I reckon I'll take this one, Ed's having a biriyani, so.

**James Acaster**

Okay.

**Ed Gamble**

But we would share.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, yes.



**James Acaster**

Alright, good.

**Karan Gokani**

If he wants one, if he wants one.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, I was going to ask, we hadn't quite established whether-, because obviously you're going to have some of mine. Because that's why you've established this, but am I going to have any of yours?

**Karan Gokani**

Only if you have that duck pancake the other way around like this. You've got to have it on your hand.

**Ed Gamble**

I'll eat the duck pancake like James.

**James Acaster**

I get to decide how Ed eats your food?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, there you go.

**James Acaster**

That's great.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes okay, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

So, how am I eating the biriyani?

**James Acaster**

Well you've got the biriyani, lamprais.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh yes, how am I eating the lamprais?

**James Acaster**

I guess I'd like you to eat it one grain at a time.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh no, that sounds like torture.





**Karan Gokani**

But you've got a banana leaf to play with.

**James Acaster**

Oh yes.

**Karan Gokani**

You can use that.

**James Acaster**

You have to lick the banana leaf clean.

**Ed Gamble**

Lick the banana leaf clean.

**James Acaster**

At the end, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

But, you have to eat one grain of rice at a time. And then just lick everything else off the banana leaf.

**Ed Gamble**

That genuinely sounds like torture to me, that's awful. The idea of eating, having an amazing like flavoursome meal and I'm hungry. And I've got to eat one grain of rice at a time.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh no.

**Karan Gokani**

That's like when you were a kid and they were saying chew everything 32 times. Did you guys have that here?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

It was always these things like chew your food 32 times. Now I'm in the opposite position. My eldest son, who hates eating for some reason, it's really upsetting. He's this five-year-old and, you know, I just



finish battles at breakfast with him, and you give him a bite and he's got this really good way of hiding food in his cheek.

**James Acaster**

Like a hamster?

**Karan Gokani**

Like a hamster.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

And it just fills up, and the days I've caught him with a slice of pizza there about an hour and a half later. Like he's gone off to play something, he's gone to a class and he's come back. And it's, like, he's been eating then. The teacher's, like, 'Oh was he chewing gum?' I say, 'No.' It's, like, 'What's in his mouth then?' He's, like, 'Oh I've got pizza, it's now become too dry, can I spit it out?' I was, like, 'You should have just asked me earlier.' But it's a bit like him, I tell him, 'Eat fast.' Whereas we always grew up saying, 32 bites and that was really frustrating.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, you've got to chew everything so many times.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

I was told that as well, there was no chance I was listening to that.

**Karan Gokani**

No, four or five times at most.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, yes, yes, at most.

**Karan Gokani**

Just enough to make sure it doesn't kill you on the way down.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, just to get it down, yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Also, I can't be counting and eating.



**Ed Gamble**

No.

**James Acaster**

I'd fall asleep.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Forget it, man.

**Karan Gokani**

It just changes flavour. After a while, after five, six bites, it tastes of nothing, that's it.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, no thank you. No, you can have as many bites as you like in the Dream Restaurant.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, okay, except him.

**James Acaster**

Except Ed has to eat a grain of rice every time.

**Ed Gamble**

I have to eat rice grain by grain, yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

After slamming a pancake into my face with all the filling on my hand.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Pancake first, I think that's fair.

**Ed Gamble**

Pancake last.

**James Acaster**

Pancake goes on last and then it goes in your mouth first.



**Ed Gamble**

Right, okay.

**James Acaster**

It's very important.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, thank you.

**James Acaster**

Actually maybe the banana leaf.

**Ed Gamble**

Do you want me to wear it like Baloo?

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, I was going to say.

**Ed Gamble**

Do you want me to wear it like Baloo?

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Can I leave the restaurant?

**James Acaster**

Your dream side dish?

**Karan Gokani**

And being honest to that main, I think I'd just have a simple pot of yoghurt, which is really nice to balance out, so. I'll stick to that, if I was having something.

**James Acaster**

Does Ed get the yoghurt as well?

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, we're sharing everything, except the banana leaf.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, I'm disappointed to hear I get the yoghurt because god knows how I'm going to have to eat it, James?



**James Acaster**

Oh yes, through a straw.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, okay.

**James Acaster**

Ed's got to use a straw for the yoghurt.

**Karan Gokani**

Okay, but one of those big, fat bulbous straws, the bubble tea straws?

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, yes, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Because it needs to be nice and thick.

**James Acaster**

Yes, it's two feet long.

**Karan Gokani**

Ooh perfect.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Lots of lung power here.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh no, this is turning into my nightmare meal.

**James Acaster**

Oh sorry Ed, I don't make the rules.

**Ed Gamble**

You do, you literally do, that's what you're doing right now.

**Karan Gokani**

I'll tell you what, I mean if it was something else, I'd just go simple French fries.

**James Acaster**

Oh yes.



**Karan Gokani**

Just simple French fries, they're just really nice. No truffle oil, none of that crap on top.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, yes, just salted.

**Karan Gokani**

Wedges sometimes, but just good French fries are great.

**James Acaster**

Where from? Where does the best French fries do you reckon? Is it a fast food chain?

**Karan Gokani**

There's something about that smell of McDonald's French fries. But I tell you what, Shake Shack.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, I was going to say.

**Karan Gokani**

They do the best French fries.

**Ed Gamble**

If you want to get back into bed with Shake Shack.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Those, the crinkle cut.

**Ed Gamble**

The crinkle cut ones.

**Karan Gokani**

The crinkle cut and perfect with cheese on top.

**James Acaster**

Oh yes, I know the ones you mean.

**Karan Gokani**

I was just having some of them the other day. We did-, so when we did the burger with them, we did chilli cheese French fries.



**James Acaster**

Oh great.

**Karan Gokani**

I'll take that, I'll take that as my side.

**Ed Gamble**

I can't believe we missed this collab man.

**Karan Gokani**

We'll bring it back.

**James Acaster**

It was in New York right? It was in New York.

**Karan Gokani**

No, there was one here.

**James Acaster**

There was one here as well?

**Karan Gokani**

There was one here. And then we did a home and away.

**James Acaster**

Karan, you're breaking my heart man, you're breaking my heart.

**Karan Gokani**

We'll bring it back.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Hopefully the guys are listening.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, bring it back, Shake Shack.

**James Acaster**

Do you have like a dream collab, so someone who you haven't collaborated with before? Who you would love to just yes, team up on, on a dish?



**Karan Gokani**

We've done some interesting ones, we're doing, you know, I've done some really cool stuff. We did a burger, we did an ice cream with Salt & Straw, do you know those guys?

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

So they're like the Ben & Jerry's of the West Coast. Tyler's one of the coolest, most fun guys I've met, so we did a bone marrow ice cream. The bone marrow he turned into an ice cream, which was incredible. So that was earlier this year. I've done stuff with Tom Kerridge.

**James Acaster**

Oh I shouldn't have asked this actually, I'm going to cry.

**Karan Gokani**

I think I'd love to do something with a musician. Like I think, again that bringing that whole experience together, doesn't need to be. Because we're artists, we're doing different things. I don't really understand visual art, or not really into, sort of, painting and that kind of stuff. But I love music, I don't know much about it, can't play an instrument to save my life. But I love rock and roll.

**Ed Gamble**

Who's your dream musician to do a collab with?

**Karan Gokani**

Bruce Springsteen.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

It would have to be the boss.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

I mean Mick Jagger's out in the market again, he's doing new albums and stuff. But I think Bruce Springsteen.

**Ed Gamble**

I think Springsteen would be the coolest one to do a Hoppers collab, I think so.





**Karan Gokani**

I hope he's listening as well.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, I'm sure he is.

**Karan Gokani**

Bruce, please make it happen.

**James Acaster**

Come on Bruce. I'm trying to think of-

**Ed Gamble**

Yes I know you are, I can see it in your eyes you're trying to think of what the dish would be called.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I'm trying to think of his song titles in a pun, that would involve food.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

I can't do it, it's stressing me out.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

It's stressing me out here.

**Karan Gokani**

It'll drop by the end of the episode. We'll know what it is, we'll finish with that.

**James Acaster**

Do you know what I mean? Ben's got one, Benito's got one.

**Ed Gamble**

It's going to be bad.

**James Acaster**

Prawn in the USA.

**Ed Gamble**

Prawn in the USA.



**James Acaster**

Fuck, that's good

**Karan Gokani**

We'll just do a festival then. We'll do a festival.

**James Acaster**

That's good, I'm having a nightmare of an episode myself Ed. I'm learning about all of these nice foods that have been and gone.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

That I wish I could try. I want the bone marrow ice cream so much.

**Ed Gamble**

And now Benito's beaten you at a joke.

**James Acaster**

And now Benito's just beaten me. I've just had my arse handed to me in a pun war by Benito. Prawn in the USA, it's very good. It's so good, I'm now just thinking about that ice cream and how much I want that.

**Karan Gokani**

It was nuts, it was totally nuts.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I bet it was, I love weird flavoured ice creams that-, especially if they've got a bit of a salty, savoury thing going on with them.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, yes.

**James Acaster**

Oh man.

**Karan Gokani**

And texture.

**James Acaster**

Yes.



**Karan Gokani**

And they just do it so well.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

It's almost like that was like being in Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory, where he's like all these different flavours. He's telling you all about them, the guy's a complete ice cream nerd. But one of the nicest, nicest guys I've ever collaborated with. And again, it was the same thing, it's like let's do what you guys do really well. And let's add a layer of our stuff on top of that. So, he, kind of, our rotis, which you've had are these flaky parathas, which we make in house. And when he had those, we started talking about it. We both came to the conclusion that actually doing this out in Portland, Oregon, which is a phenomenal place by the way. We could just come and make these there, but he's like, 'No, let's just use some local.' And then we came upon flattening croissants, because it's effectively the same thing. It's got the same amount of oil in there as croissants have butter. It's that lovely flaky texture, so we flattened croissants, candied them and then ran them through this lovely spiced ice cream. And then he did a bone marrow fudge, so we did a coconut base, mixed spices into it and that was a soft serve. But not the soft serve, the base of the ice cream, we had these candied pieces of croissant. And then we had this lovely bone marrow, rich bone marrow fudge. So he just melted bone marrow in and made this fudge sauce.

**James Acaster**

Oh my god.

**Karan Gokani**

It was amazing.

**Ed Gamble**

James has lost it, he's gone.

**James Acaster**

Where do you get off Karan?

**Karan Gokani**

I tell you what, he's-

**James Acaster**

Saying this stuff to me.

**Karan Gokani**

He's a genie, you could have that for your dessert.



**Ed Gamble**

No, that is truly torture because then I'm having to imagine something I've not had and there's absolutely no chance of me having.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I think yes, we're back on like-, I mean we've mentioned the banquet scene in the film Hook many times over the years and Bangarang. But then, it really is like being at that meal, but being unable to imagine the food and just eating the ice cream and imagining everything that Karan just described. But you can't actually eat it.

**Ed Gamble**

So, do they do that any more in Portland?

**Karan Gokani**

It was literally one weekend only.

**James Acaster**

You monster, you're a monster.

**Karan Gokani**

We made it, we did a video, we just had fun doing it. And we went off to the biggest book store in all of USA, biggest independent book store, it was a whole block. Called Powell's of Portland and we did a little talk, two of us and we had free ice cream, giving it away to anyone who came. There's one way to bribe people.

**James Acaster**

Oh my god. You know what, it's nice to know that I've finally got an answer to if I had a time machine, where would I go.

**Karan Gokani**

It wasn't that far back.

**James Acaster**

Because I've never known.

**Karan Gokani**

It was March this year.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I'd go, yes, March this year please in Portland.

**Karan Gokani**

March '23, yes, Portland Oregon.



**James Acaster**

At the massive book store please, I want my free ice cream and keep going around the block in a different disguise each time.

**Ed Gamble**

Well no, keep using the time machine, right?

**James Acaster**

Yes, just keep using the time machine.

**Ed Gamble**

Going back five minutes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I'd go back to the end first of the talk and then I'd go back in one minute each time until I get to the beginning of the talk and I always get the ice cream every time.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

We haven't asked him how he'd eat the ice cream though?

**Ed Gamble**

Oh yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, that's a good point.

**Ed Gamble**

Well different every time, right?

**James Acaster**

Yes. Well yes, yes, so.

**Karan Gokani**

Give us the top three.

**James Acaster**

I mean were you serving it in cones?

**Karan Gokani**

No, we were doing cups.



**James Acaster**

You were doing cups.

**Karan Gokani**

But we could serve it to you in a cone if you like?

**James Acaster**

Well I guess I'd just change my cup every time to a different-, I'd also use the time machine to bounce around time and get famous cups. Like King Arthur's cup.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh hang on, you'd bring your own cup would you?

**James Acaster**

I'd get the Ark of the Covenant probably and have the ice cream in the Ark of the Covenant.

**Ed Gamble**

The Ark of the Covenant wasn't a cup man.

**James Acaster**

Was it not a cup?

**Ed Gamble**

It's massive.

**James Acaster**

I thought it was a cup?

**Ed Gamble**

No, you're thinking of the Holy Grail, you're thinking of the other Indiana Jones film.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

The Ark of the Covenant was that massive thing that they opened it and all of the Nazi's faces melt.

**James Acaster**

Yes sorry, no I would have it out of that.

**Ed Gamble**

What, I mean, I don't-, if they're giving out free ice cream.



**James Acaster**

Oh no, because it would melt, it would melt the ice cream. Yes, forget it.

**Karan Gokani**

But you're a genie.

**James Acaster**

If it melts faces.

**Karan Gokani**

You can prevent it melting.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

I would have it in a load of things from Indiana Jones. The crystal skull, yes, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Bone marrow, makes sense.

**James Acaster**

They ate the monkey brains at one point out of the monkey skull don't they? So I'd have the monkey skull as well, have the ice cream in there.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

I'd just do that because I'd just like you guys to start thinking like, 'A lot of people turning up today who like Indiana Jones.'

**Ed Gamble**

Yes and then whatever that last one was about, you can have it in that.

**James Acaster**

Yes, the dial of, I don't know, Fleabag.

Now, dream drink is very exciting, because one of my dream drinks is a Hoppers drink, which I don't think is on the menu any more.



**Karan Gokani**

We'll bring it back. That's easy enough to do.

**James Acaster**

You'll bring it back.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, that's easy. I don't need Salt and Straw or Shake Shack.

**James Acaster**

I'm about to burst into tears, because I can't remember its fucking name.

**Ed Gamble**

Describe it.

**James Acaster**

It's got-,

**Ed Gamble**

You know the name, Benito.

**James Acaster**

You know it, because you know what I'm talking about because I've talked about it before. Rosé Smash.

**Karan Gokani**

Rosé Smash.

**James Acaster**

The Rosé Smash. Do you remember it, from Hoppers?

**Karan Gokani**

I do, yes. That was a while ago.

**James Acaster**

Yes, man. I loved it so much. Like, every time I went there, I'd get it. Sometimes, I'd go in just because I fancied a Rosé Smash. I think about it all the time, still.

**Karan Gokani**

We'll do version 2.0 for you.

**Ed Gamble**

You fancied a Rosé Smash.





**James Acaster**

Yes, I fancied a Rosé Smash.

**Ed Gamble**

It sounds like you're banging someone at a picnic. 'Fancy a quick Rosé Smash?'

**James Acaster**

That's quite an elegant way of putting that, actually. I'd consider myself quite the gentlemen, if I offered someone a Rosé Smash at a picnic. Yes man, I loved it.

**Karan Gokani**

Good. I know what I'm going to be doing for the rest of the day. I'll work with the team. We'll bring back the Rosé Smash.

**Ed Gamble**

What was the Rosé Smash? I never had the Rosé Smash.

**James Acaster**

Yes. The thing that it had in it, that I think was the-, it was a Rosé-,

**Karan Gokani**

It was like a slushie, wasn't it?

**James Acaster**

Yes. But, there was like a Rosé Vermouth, was it? Or, a Rosé-, was it Rosé Vermouth? Benito's nodding his head, according to the menu. So, that was like-, it had this flavour that I've never found in any other drink. It must have come from the Rosé Vermouth. I can't even describe it to you, because I haven't had it anywhere else. It was very addictive because of that.

**Karan Gokani**

I'll tell you, this is the thing we do with Hoppers. Because, we've reached a point where we've got the three restaurants. Very often, people come there expecting the food to be-, just to have certain dishes. They become so famous. For a little while, we tinkered with the menu, changed things around. We realised we're just pissing people off. They come for classics. It's like McDonald's doing sandwiches one day, and deciding they're not doing burgers or doing a wrap one day and stuff. Then, we said, 'Okay, fine. Let's rein that creativity in. Let's do a dish or two on the specials. Let's keep the menu very focused. Let's get better at doing what we're doing. Let's do these collaborations outside,' which is where we express our creativity and have some fun. But, what we've started doing a lot of is getting very creative on the drinks side. We've got Martin, Angelis and the team. They're doing a phenomenal, phenomenal job. You've got to come back. I think we will definitely match and raise you on that, sort of, Rosé Smash. The drinks are the best they've ever been. You know, Kings Cross has the biggest bar for that reason. We wanted to show people that, 'Look, you can actually have a nice, overall great time.' Hoppers as a whole, most people used to come in smashed, because we'd make them wait two and a



half hours. So, we really missed a trick there. The guys next door were doing more sales on drinks and potentially snacks than we were doing on food, because they'd be waiting two and a half hours.

When we opened Marylebone, it was a different area. People kind of come there for the food, it's more functional. Now, they're drinking a lot more. But, Kings Cross is a great area. No one waits. If you tell someone to go off and wait for an hour for a table, they just leave and eat somewhere else. So, we've kind of built this whole beautiful bar when you walk in. The idea is you wait there, you have a few great drinks. You make friends with the team. Then, you have your dinner and you kind of want to come back there, before you get your train back home. So, drinks have become a big part of what we do. Obviously, we'll be food led. You know, I'm very, very excited about what's in store, what we've been doing. There's some lovely drinks out there. I mean, we'll bring the Rosé Smash back. But, we'll make you try about fifteen more as well. Then, roll you out.

### **James Acaster**

If I must. But, your dream drink. What's Ed having first, actually?

### **Ed Gamble**

Yes, what am I having for my drink?

### **Karan Gokani**

I'll let you choose your drink. I'm not going to-, like I said, I think, three months ago, I just decided one day, I want to stop drinking. Not because I was an alcoholic or any of that sort of stuff. But, it just gives you-, it's just been a really refreshing time. It's fun. I don't know when this will-, by the time this airs, I might be drinking again. So, I don't want to harp too much about it. But, I've enjoyed this, sort of, little phase of not drinking. It's also meant I have tasted a lot of non-alcoholic beer, something I frowned upon earlier. It's definitely a market that's picking up a lot. I had one at a festival, was it-, no, it wasn't Pub in the Park. It was at the Rock Oyster Festival in Cornwall. These guys called Impossibrew. They have something in their beer that says that it even gives you a buzz. I didn't feel it. It was interesting. Then, these guys called Brulo, they do a beer.

It also makes you realise that a lot of drinking is about the social setting and a ritual. A bit like coffee. You know, people go on about, 'Oh my God, it takes a lot to get addicted to these things.' But, I think you can break that ritual if you just decide. You look at everything surrounding that ritual. It might be friends who only want you to drink or won't hang out with you if you don't drink. I feel the shift that little bit. But, I've loved it. I guess it will be the sparkling water with a touch of bitters in it. Maybe a non-alcoholic beer. I tell you what, I don't not drink at all. So, I do have sips from the other person, which doesn't count. So, you're probably having a Negroni.

### **Ed Gamble**

No, I'm having a Rosé Smash.

### **Karan Gokani**

Okay. With a Negroni, which I can have a sip of. I love a bloody Negroni. I love a Negroni.



**Ed Gamble**

I'd like a Rosé Smash.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

You can have a sip, Karan. But, James can't.

**James Acaster**

What the fuck? I just fucking told you about it. I'm the one who sold it to you.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Well, I'll enjoy it very much.

**James Acaster**

Ed Gamble. I'm getting the 2.0.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, yeah.

**James Acaster**

The Smash King.

**Ed Gamble**

That's good. You should do a collab with James.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes? Let's do it.

**Ed Gamble**

But, it has to be on a cocktail called The Smash King and it has to have mashed potato in it.

**James Acaster**

No, it doesn't have to have the mashed potato in it. I'm the mash king, because I used to make great mashed potatoes, you see. So, we can do a cocktail called The Smash King, but don't put potatoes in it, Ed.

**Karan Gokani**

I'm sure we can work a way of getting potatoes in it.

**Ed Gamble**

Exactly. I'd trust Karan and his team.



**James Acaster**

Actually, that's exciting.

**Ed Gamble**

I'm sure you and your team could come up with a cocktail with mashed potato in it.

**Karan Gokani**

It would taste great.

**James Acaster**

Wow. Well, yes, this is exciting.

**Karan Gokani**

What's your recipe for the best mashed potatoes?

**James Acaster**

It was, obviously, the potatoes. Cream, full fat cream. Salt and pepper, butter, cheese, orange cheese.

**Karan Gokani**

Orange cheese?

**James Acaster**

Well, it's just like orange colour.

**Ed Gamble**

Sounds horrible.

**James Acaster**

Then, I mash it up. I don't stop mashing until it looks beautiful and there's no lumps, and then send that out and everyone would say, 'You're the mash king.'

**Karan Gokani**

Send it out? Have you worked in a restaurant?

**James Acaster**

I did. I worked in a pub kitchen.

**Karan Gokani**

Doing the best mash?

**James Acaster**

Doing the best mash.



**Karan Gokani**

Time travel. I'd love to come and eat that, I would love to.

**James Acaster**

You can borrow my time machine, if you want to try my mashed potato at The Star.

**Karan Gokani**

I'll come along with the burger, with the ice cream, with the Rosé Smash. All I want is mashed potatoes in return.

**James Acaster**

Absolutely.

**Ed Gamble**

You'll bring all that nice stuff to The Star in Geddington.

**James Acaster**

Yes, The Star in Geddington. You should also get the nachos. If you're going back to that time, you should get the lay of nachos with all the chilli in it. That was a great dish at The Star in Geddington, when I was there. Very good. People loved it.

**Karan Gokani**

That's where the orange cheese came from, didn't it?

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, yes. We had the orange cheese. Yes, yes, yes.

**Karan Gokani**

There's some nachos in the potatoes as well. Actually, a good one. You'd probably just scoop up-,

**Ed Gamble**

A bit of texture.

**Karan Gokani**

Scoop up mashed potatoes with nachos.

**James Acaster**

That would be great.

**Ed Gamble**

You guys are coming up with great stuff. This will be a whole range.

**James Acaster**

We're firing on all cylinders here. So, you'll have a sip of the Negroni?



**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

I love a Negroni.

**Ed Gamble**

Negroni's are good stuff. I didn't used to like them, because whenever I had one, the way it sort of connects with your mouth and the feeling it gave me was the same feeling I have when I'm just about to vomit. Do you know what I mean? The back of the throat starts to moisten, because it's that bitter that hits right at the back of the throat. That's what you get when you're about to be sick and your mouth starts producing saliva. So, every time I'd have a sip of Negroni, I'd be like, 'No, I think I'm about to be sick.' But then, I taught myself to enjoy that. Which means now, I love Negroni's and I love being sick.

**James Acaster**

I like it when Ed occasionally picks up the torch of the boring stories from me.

**Ed Gamble**

That's more exciting than the Diet Coke story.

**James Acaster**

What are you talking about? The Diet Coke story is fascinating. It's a story of science. We arrive at your dream dessert. We've already talked about ice cream and it was fantastic. It's one of my favourite conversations I've ever had.

**Ed Gamble**

Bone marrow fudge.

**Karan Gokani**

Can we continue that?

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Dessert is definitely going to be ice cream. I just love ice cream. It has to be a massive, massive sundae, right? With all kinds of textures. There has to be chocolate in there and lots of hot fudge sauce. None of that stuff that, sort of, crystallises. None of that quick freeze stuff. I don't like it. For me, it's like gooey textures. Ben and Jerry's on the couch. Guilty pleasure. But, I think this takes Ben and Jerry's to the next level, this cream dessert. Tons of ice cream.

**James Acaster**

Would it be Ben and Jerry's ice cream?



**Karan Gokani**

It would, but you're a genie. You'll bake something much better than that.

**James Acaster**

Sure.

**Karan Gokani**

So, yes, all kinds of flavours. Peanut butter. I mean, Ben and Jerry's did a flavour with Tony's recently, the chocolate guys. It was amazing.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I had that one.

**Karan Gokani**

I think it's still available. It's fantastic. It's great chocolate.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I can get it at the big Tesco near my house.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes, yes. They do amazing chocolate. So, great chocolate, great ice cream, plus all the other add ins. I think clean ice cream doesn't do it for me. You need the texture. It goes back to that whole thing of panipuri and duck pancakes, where it's like I'll sit on the couch, tub of ice cream. In my head, I'll say, 'Okay, I think I can eat about midnight or past. I should not eat more than a third of that tub now.' But then, you reach that line, that imaginary line. 'Actually, there's a little piece of brownie.' It's like the tip of the iceberg. It's like it's just looking at me, I need to have that. You kind of dig in and it's like, 'Okay, now I've had the brownie, I need to have a little bit of ice cream.' Just to balance it out. You have that ice cream and then you're like, 'Actually, this chocolate is looking at me.' You just go down. I've had a whole tub in a sitting. I've been very ashamed of that.

**Ed Gamble**

Also, you kid yourself, because you're like, 'I'll eat half of this.' So, you think that's half way down on the tub. But, the tub's wide at the top. So, you've eaten three quarters of it by the time you get to what you think is half way and then you're like, 'Fuck it, I'll just eat the rest.'

**Karan Gokani**

Or, you just feel really shit the next day, when you're eating the other half. It's like, 'I should have just eaten that, the smaller half yesterday.'

**Ed Gamble**

'I can't wait for another half tub of ice cream.'



**Karan Gokani**

Or, you open the next one. You finish that and you open the next one. That's another thing I've done. So, yes, for me, ice cream is definitely the thing. The textures, all kinds of stuff.

**James Acaster**

The main thing I do with a Ben and Jerry's is that because the sides obviously melt first, the outside. So, I just get the spoon down there. I'm telling myself that I'm not really having much, I'm just eating the sides. I just go right down to the bottom, scrape up. Just have the more melted bits.

**Karan Gokani**

Then, there's a little ball in the middle, floating.

**James Acaster**

I go all the way round. I'm like, 'This next layer is quite soft as well.' I go round there. So, a lot of the time, that's my-, then, I'm the same as you.

**Ed Gamble**

Like a beaver on a log?

**James Acaster**

Yes, like a beaver on a log. Then, I see a little chunk like you do and go, 'I've got to get that chunk.'

**Karan Gokani**

Yes. Then, you're left the next day with just chocolate ice cream. It's like, 'This is no good.' I'll tell you what, of all the ways he's taught us how to eat things, this is probably the truest.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

I totally agree with you, yes.

**James Acaster**

I do the outside first of the ice cream.

**Karan Gokani**

Because, your hands are warming the tub up.

**James Acaster**

Yes, hands warming the tub up.

**Karan Gokani**

Holding on to it with anticipation, sweating. It's like, 'I want more, I want more.'





**James Acaster**

I don't like it when it's too hard. I used to live with someone who wanted it straight out the freezer. Didn't let it melt.

**Ed Gamble**

But, how were they eating it?

**James Acaster**

Like, scraping little bits. She was like, 'That's how I like it.' I was like, 'What the? Are you high as a kite?' You've got to soften these things. I like soft ice cream.

**Karan Gokani**

The trick there is putting it in the microwave. On the lowest power, for like five or ten seconds. I don't have the patience to wait then. Invariably, it kind of melts weirdly. But, I think putting it in the microwave just melts it evenly across. But, you've got to find that. The worst thing is putting it in on the wrong setting and now it's turned into milk and you don't have the ice cream.

**Ed Gamble**

What I do, if I have ice cream and I'm eating dinner. When I'm about to eat the main savoury bit of dinner, that's when I get the ice cream out. So, I'm happy with the savoury food. Then, by the time that's finished, we are ready to go to ice cream town.

**James Acaster**

That's great.

**Karan Gokani**

In a buffet, I hit the desserts first.

**Ed Gamble**

Do you?

**Karan Gokani**

I've got a massive sweet tooth.

**James Acaster**

Respect.

**Karan Gokani**

Hit the dessert first. I just try them, so I know how much of an appetite I need to save for it. Knowing fully well I've got a separate stomach, as everyone says. So, I first try it, justifying to myself, 'Okay, I'm just tasting it so I know how much to save up.' Then, I'll hit the buffet. Then, I'll go back, loading a plateful of dessert. I just love dessert.



**James Acaster**

Yes, because you know what you like at that point.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

I've got a-, so, my sofa that I sit on to watch television has a radiator behind it. So, that's where the ice cream goes. I put the Ben and Jerry's on the radiator.

**Karan Gokani**

No wonder it's melting from around first.

**James Acaster**

When I start. Then, I start to watch Strictly. Then, I'll reach behind.

**Ed Gamble**

You said my story about Negroni tasting like sick was boring. You've somehow trumped me with an even more boring story.

**James Acaster**

I think it's a beautiful story, what I've just told.

**Ed Gamble**

A story about watching Strictly on the sofa and putting your ice cream on the radiator?

**James Acaster**

Look up happiness in the dictionary, Ed. You'll find that story.

**Ed Gamble**

I'm holding up a sparkly paddle saying three.

**James Acaster**

They're not sparkly, the paddles.

**Ed Gamble**

So, just basically a massive sundae with loads of texture?

**Karan Gokani**

Massive sundae. Cookies, texture. Cookies, brownies for sure. Nuts, toasted nuts. Cashew nuts, they taste amazing.

**James Acaster**

Great.



**Karan Gokani**

Have you guys ever had, like, a chocolate sizzling brownie?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

We grew up having that. There's a restaurant locally called Colaba, where I live. Great little Indian spot around the corner, run by some amazing people. They do, like, a sizzling chocolate brownie. It's like they bring a brownie on a sizzling platter and you dump hot fudge sauce on top. It all sizzles and kind of burns at the bottom. Vanilla ice cream, that's now melting. You don't need a radiator for it. It's almost like the radiator, actually. Next time, get a brownie on the radiator. Put your Ben and Jerry's tub on top. Then, you've got the sizzling brownie.

**James Acaster**

I'll do whatever you say. I'll absolutely do that.

**Karan Gokani**

And the cashew nuts. Salted cashew nuts.

**James Acaster**

Great.

**Ed Gamble**

I'm so hungry.

**Karan Gokani**

There's something about the nuts. And salted nuts in ice cream.

**James Acaster**

I know what I'm going to do tonight. I know I'm going to go home, I'm going to order Hoppers on Deliveroo and then I'm going to get some ice cream and some salted cashew nuts from the shop. I'm going to mix them together.

**Karan Gokani**

Don't forget the brownie.

**James Acaster**

I won't forget the brownie.

**Karan Gokani**

The brownie.



**James Acaster**

I'm going to get a brownie as well. Right, I'm going to read your menu back to you now and see how you feel about it. Sparkling water with bitters and a wedge of citrus.

**Karan Gokani**

Grapefruit, lime, lemon.

**James Acaster**

Grapefruit, let's go for grapefruit.

**Karan Gokani**

Grapefruit, yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, nail that down. Poppadoms or bread? You want poppadoms with black chutney and lentils and yoghurts.

**Karan Gokani**

No.

**James Acaster**

Black chutney, yoghurt-

**Ed Gamble**

No, not black chutney.

**James Acaster**

Black lentils.

**Karan Gokani**

Black lentil and black pepper yoghurt. No, papads. I forgot.

**James Acaster**

No, you haven't messed anything up.

**Ed Gamble**

The papad itself is made of black lentil and black pepper.

**James Acaster**

Black lentils and chutney yoghurt.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh my God.



**Karan Gokani**

It's definitely a tongue twister.

**Ed Gamble**

The coriander chutney is mixed with the yoghurt.

**James Acaster**

Papad is made with black lentils, and you would like a chutney yoghurt with it?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Jesus Christ. You want bread with Bungay butter.

**Karan Gokani**

Ed's having that. I'm having a bite.

**James Acaster**

Starter, you got the duck pancakes with the chilli oil and the fresh chillis. Ed's got the margherita pizza.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you.

**Karan Gokani**

Yum.

**Ed Gamble**

With chilli oil.

**Karan Gokani**

And dried chilli.

**Ed Gamble**

And dried chilli.

**James Acaster**

Main course. Lamprais and biriyani for Ed.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you.



**Karan Gokani**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Did we say what meat is in the biriyani? Did I miss that?

**Karan Gokani**

No, we didn't. We did chicken or lamb. But, I like lamb. Like, a nice lamb shank biriyani. We do it at Hoppers. Just a nice, fall-off-the bone lamb shank biriyani. Suck the marrow out afterwards.

**Ed Gamble**

Talking of falling off the bone, I'll be dressing as Balloo for that course.

**James Acaster**

Does he fall off the bone?

**Ed Gamble**

No. I just thought I could make it sound sexual. Talking of sucking the marrow.

**James Acaster**

I think we're going to the same picnics, Ed. Side dish, a simple pot of yoghurt. Also, the chilli cheese French fries from Shake Shack, that you did as a collab. Drink, a sip of Ed's Negroni. Dessert, a massive sundae. Chocolate ice cream, peanut butter, cookies, brownies, nuts, salted cashews, loads of hot fudge sauce.

**Karan Gokani**

Loads.

**James Acaster**

It may or may not be Ben and Jerry's. Basically, it'll be like the genie version of that, which Ed at some point did call Ben and Genie's. We glossed over it. But, I think it's worth shouting it out. Benito and Genie's, maybe.

**Ed Gamble**

Benito and Genie's.

**James Acaster**

Yes, ice cream.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you so much for coming to the dream restaurant, Karan.

**Karan Gokani**

I've loved it.



**James Acaster**

Karan, that was so good. Absolutely delicious. It's been a long time since we've had a menu that has made my mouth water that much. So, thank you. But, damn you.

**Ed Gamble**

Look out for Hoppers X The Smash King.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Coming soon, The Smash King.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, there we are James. A wonderful menu from Karan Gokani.

**James Acaster**

I'm covered in drool over here.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, James is covered in drool. He's drooled all over himself, all over his front and all over his crotch.

**James Acaster**

I should have worn a bib for that episode.

**Ed Gamble**

Should have worn a bib. Especially when he started talking about that fucking bone marrow fudge, man.

**James Acaster**

That bone marrow fudge ice cream, with the candied-, and the croissants in it. Oh my God.

**Ed Gamble**

Why's all the best stuff only available for limited times? What are these people doing?

**James Acaster**

For one day in a book shop, are you fucking kidding me? Talking of books, the Hoppers cookbook is out, of course.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, the Hoopers cookbook is out. But, you can't get the ice cream when you go and buy it. The book itself is enough reward. Obviously, go to Hoppers restaurants, if you can.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, highly recommend.



**Ed Gamble**

There's three. There's one in Soho, one in Marylebone and one in Kings Cross.

**James Acaster**

Yes. If you go to the one in Kings Cross, you can catch a train to Kettering after.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Why not do that?

**James Acaster**

That's St Pancras though, not Kings Cross. But, they're the same.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Who knows-, I mean, in fact, I think where Hoppers is is probably closer to St Pancras. Who knows, one day, the Rosé Smash might be back on the menu.

**James Acaster**

If it is, raise a glass for me, will you?

**Ed Gamble**

Are you going to die?

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

One day.

**Ed Gamble**

The Rosé Smash will only come back on the menu when James Acaster is dead.

**James Acaster**

Oh no. Don't say that.

**Ed Gamble**

You'll never be able to have it again.

**James Acaster**

That would be so bad.





**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

I hope I never die.

**Ed Gamble**

I also have a book out, called *Glutton: The Multi-Course Life of a Very Greedy Boy*. It's available now in hard cover, audiobook and e-book, from wherever you get those things from.

**James Acaster**

Great.

**Ed Gamble**

Great.

**James Acaster**

I mean, we're still recording this on the day that I've been given it. So, I'm looking forward to it still.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, thank you. Hopperslondon is the Instagram for Hoppers. Karancooks is Karan's personal Instagram, where he puts up loads of exciting food stuff.

**James Acaster**

Yes. He has promised pizza.

**Ed Gamble**

He's promised pizza that he makes at home.

**James Acaster**

You heard it, he said it.

**Ed Gamble**

I should make pizza at home again.

**James Acaster**

Yes, you went through a big stage of that, making a lot of pizza at home. Did I try your lamb anchovy pizza? I think I did.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, you did.

**James Acaster**

That's good stuff, man.



**Ed Gamble**

I just want to do no work and just stay at home and cook.

**James Acaster**

Yes, we're hungry. I mean, just for the listener. We're hungry, man. We haven't really had a proper lunch. We've listened to Karan describe all this amazing food. We're hungry.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, we're hungry.

**James Acaster**

That's the situation.

**Ed Gamble**

We should go and eat now.

**James Acaster**

We should go and eat. He didn't say Bovril. We need to go and eat.

**Ed Gamble**

Sorry, Benito's just stopped us when we were about to go and eat. He didn't say Bovril. Obviously.

**James Acaster**

Yes. We need to go and eat, man.

**Ed Gamble**

Bovrilously.

**James Acaster**

Bovrilously.

**Ed Gamble**

Bovrilously. He didn't say-,

**James Acaster**

What does your t-shirt say? It doesn't say Korn.

**Ed Gamble**

Aries.

**James Acaster**

Why does it say Aries?



**Ed Gamble**

Because it's an Aries t-shirt.

**James Acaster**

It's a collab of Korn and Aries.

**Ed Gamble**

It's the cover of the debut Korn album. Instead of saying Korn in the shadows, it says Aries.

**James Acaster**

I thought how hungry I am was making me hallucinate.

**Ed Gamble**

No. Thank you very much for listening, we will see you again next week. I'm so hungry.

**James Acaster**

Bye, bye. I'm so hungry.