

EGSM – 1 - Baking

Content Warnings

- Explicit language
- Discussions of: food

ANIL

It's done-zo. You are-

(Group laughter)

ANIL

You are now, you are now in the hands of the gods!

[Show Theme - Intro]

HELEN

Hello friends and fans and welcome to Enthusiasm. I am your host, Helen Gould, the best Rusty Quiller. This is a show where various members of the RQ crew get together, kick back and chat about a few of our favourite things. Today on the agenda we have baking. And I'm delighted to be joined by:

ANIL

Hi, I'm Anil and I am the comms guy.

ELIZABETH

Hi, I'm Elizabeth and I work as an editor on the Magnus Archives.

NICO

Hey, I'm Nico, I am also an editor for the Magnus Archives.

HELEN

Excellent. I've also just realised that was pointing at each of you in turn.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

But there's no way that you could tell!

ANIL

Yeah it was like - ah, right!

HELEN

So I have some, like, steering questions to help us get started in the conversation but I think that once we get started we won't need that too much because we are all pals here. So I think the first and most obvious question is; how did we get interested in baking, and Anil I wanna ask you because Nico, I don't know much about you and baking-

(Group laughter)

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HELEN

-but I know that Anil definitely likes baking, so-! [laughs]

NICO

That's fair enough!

ANIL

Um. How did I get into it? Like, so, weirdly enough I should know the answers to this off pat, because I have filled in a Great British Bake Off entry form.

ALL

[gasps]

NICO

Ooh!

ANIL

But that is something we can probably talk about later!

HELEN

[laughs]

ANIL

But it probably started like a lot of folks when I was a kid, my mum when she was home, because she worked, she used to work nights as a nurse and so often on the weekend she would spend her days showing us how to cook or, me and my sister, and doing like little fairy cakes mainly, just, just very simple baking that um, with like glacé cherries and raisins in a fairy cake sponge, and it was just from that that I kind of learned that I liked cooking and I liked baking.

And I didn't do much for a very long time until post-Uni when I was living with Bryn and just got back into it, or just started doing it, because it's like: oh, we've got people coming round. Because we had the largest flat at the time,

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so we would host a lot of our friends coming round. So it's like, oh, rather than just going out and buying crisps and things all the time it's like: oh, I should try baking, and make cakes, and things like that. And it just kind of spiralled out from there. [laughs]

HELEN

Oh that's super cute. You've got an actual, like, origin story!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

How about you Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

Er, definitely with my grandmother, my, on my mother's side. She just was a, she was a really good cook but she would only make a certain amount of things, but she was also a really good baker. So like we'd always have ginger nuts and like, her birthday cake-

ANIL

[sighs] I love ginger nuts!

ELIZABETH

-which was like a chocolate sponge cake was like, always really nicely done, and like we, I've actually just today made Russian Slice, which um-

HELEN

Ooh!

ELIZABETH

I don't know why in New Zealand we have like a ton of things named after random peoples around the world!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

In both bad and OK ways, so! But let's not get onto that, but um that's like a baked slice with, normally with sultanas but I always put walnuts in, salt- um, chocolate chips in it as well, and it's like a slice which you then ice with chocolate. So yeah, my grandmother um, you know, coming into her place and you'd smell whatever she'd made, you know, apple pie, just, um, she also and I, if anybody knows what this recipe is, but she used to make a pizza and I swear to god she would mix one egg in with the cheese before she put the cheese on.

NICO

Whoa!

ELIZABETH

Like there was something weird that she used to do that made it just a little bit different and - I dunno.

HELEN

That IS weird.

ELIZABETH

So it was almost like it was partially almost heading towards a quiche? But um-

ANIL

Ahh.

ELIZABETH

But with this like, sort of more like a pizza base but like a crispy pizza base. Anyway so yeah, definitely my grandmother. I've got as many of her recipes written down as possible that I can go back to, but yeah.

HELEN

Aww.

NICO

That's so sweet!

ELIZABETH

Yeah!

HELEN

I'm still back at this pizza quiche thing.

ELIZABETH

Oh I know!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

I don't even know what - what, a "quizza"?

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

And you're like - and then you sort of try to explain things to people and they're like: what is this madness? But like-

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Because she used to make-

HELEN

But it did taste good?

ELIZABETH

Oh it was good. Like, and she used to make macaroni cheese but she'd use like a, um, tomato base in it as well so she'd put, it was a tomato, celery and probably garlic kind of tomato sauce that she'd make and she'd add that into it

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and so whenever I'd have macaroni cheese anywhere else I'm like - why, why is this so plain? Why is it just cheese flavoured?

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

This is - you know, and everyone else is like: what is this monstrosity you used to eat? [laughs] But-

HELEN

[laughs]

ELIZABETH

But it was good.

ANIL

Well that's the thing...but I mean macaroni pie - well not so much macaroni cheese because I don't like melted cheese a lot, but macaroni pie is very, is something that my mum also used to make a lot.

ELIZABETH

Right.

ANIL

So made in a similar way to like, macaroni cheese but instead of using a cheese sauce she would beat a couple of eggs together, pour that over the macaroni and then bake it in the oven.

ELIZABETH

Oh!

ANIL

So it comes out as thick slices of like, glued-together macaroni.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Right, yeah yeah yeah.

NICO

Err...

HELEN

(laughing) Appetising!

ANIL

But it's really - it's really nice! Well it's really nice, especially when cold and you just have it as your carb alongside something else.

ELIZABETH

Wow.

ANIL

And like, we would have it with chicken curry.

ELIZABETH

Right.

HELEN

Wow.

NICO

Oh that sounds good.

ANIL

It's an - it's one of my most endearing childhood meals and I've never quite been able to replicate it. [laughs]

HELEN

Oh no!

NICO

I was gonna say it's like lasagne but if you have it cold I imagine it's much more-

ANIL

It's more solid, yeah.

NICO

That there's much more bite?

ANIL

Yeah.

HELEN

OK. Since we're on you already Nico, how did you get into baking?

NICO

Oh, so I'm the trouble child.

(Group laughter)

NICO

So, I'm-

HELEN

Wow, your family must be like super-super calm if it's the baker who is the trouble child.

(Group laughter)

NICO

I'm second generation born here, both my grandparents were Italian. So they tried, bless their hearts, so hard to teach me how to speak Italian and because all my friends didn't speak Italian and spoke English I was just like: nah. Nah. Not gonna do that. Nah.

(Group laughter)

NICO

And I got into uni at around 20, 21 and it's sort of like round that age where you want to kind of like figure out what your roots are? And it was kind of like, well I can learn Italian language, or I can take the easy way out and just learn how to make pasta.

(Group laughter)

NICO

So like- I just moved into this flat, we had no internet, like it was a grungy little student flat, like we flooded constantly, it was like that year when it was really cold, where all the pipes were freezing over.

ALL

Mm.

NICO

So it was like - well I need something to do for six weeks whilst all my flatmates are away and it's just me, and pasta's really cheap to make. So every day I would just make pasta with eggs and flour and get slightly better and slightly better. And after about four weeks I got really good, and I started getting into the Bake Off because there was nothing else on TV and yeah, the rest I just got really, really into it. And when you watch Bake Off you get a really really-

ANIL

[laughs]

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HELEN

Mm.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

NICO

Into the competitive manner, so!

HELEN

So is it fair to say that all of us here have watched Bake Off?

ELIZABETH

Oh yes.

NICO

Oh yes.

HELEN

Yes.

ANIL

Up until the last series, pretty much. I can't -

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HELEN

Is that the one where it went to Channel 4 or 5?

ANIL

4, yeah. I like, I - I tr-, I watched some of it but like, Noel Fielding irritates me and-

HELEN

Ohh, yeah.

ANIL

And the format, the format is not the same. I mean it's been like that for the last couple of years, but it is not the same show as it started out with.

HELEN & NICO

Mm.

ANIL

And like I think series 3, 4, 5 they're probably the best, the best seasons of it. And after that it starts getting too, too competitive.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Mm.

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NICO

It does.

ANIL

And I know that-

ELIZABETH

It is the cricket of the um, you know the competitors TV programming of-

(Group laughter)

ANIL

Yeah! It's just, it starts to get a bit more mean-spirited and not necessarily from the competitive-

HELEN

Really?

ANIL

Er sorry, not so much from the competitors but the way that it is edited. And I have a lot of issues with the way that Bake Off is edited.

NICO

Yeah.

ANIL

Particularly with the Channel 4 series in terms of the way that they are trying to manufacture drama, and we see this with a lot, I mean this is reality TV in a nutshell, but they're trying to make it more exciting and try and engineer like risks, and disagreements and things like that. Plus the, the tasks have become much more arbitrarily difficult.

HELEN

Mm.

ANIL

Particularly with cutting short time limits.

HELEN

So it's becoming kind of like Americanised, like-

ANIL

Yeah.

HELEN

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Mm.

HELEN

Oh, what a shame.

ANIL

Like the technical test is a really nice idea, but once you start adding more and more complications into that, and once you start cutting time limits, you start making people feel very frazzled and it means that they're more prone to making errors, and this is how they start engineering some of that drama.

HELEN

Big mistakes and stuff.

ANIL

Yeah.

HELEN

And yeah wasn't, wasn't that the big, god, was it custard, the stolen custard?
Wasn't that like-

NICO

[laughs]

HELEN

Wasn't that really early on, wasn't that completely accidental?

NICO

Yeah, there's a stolen custard one and then there's the ice cream cake fiasco where-

ELIZABETH

Oh the ice cream cake!

ANIL

Oh!

HELEN

Oh yeah!

(Group laughter)

ANIL

Bin-gate!

NICO

Oh it was my favourite, just the anger!

HELEN

For those who maybe haven't seen Bake Off, what was the custard fiasco and what was the custard fiasco and what was the ice cream fiasco dessert, does err, Elizabeth, do you remember?

ELIZABETH

Oh I definitely remember the ice cream - they were making like an eskimo cake or something, I can't remember exactly what it was called but one of the competitors, the ice cream just wasn't setting so he just, he, towards the end of it he just freaks out and put it in the bin.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

And we're all watching it and we're like - no, don't do that! Like, that's a bad idea! Like, don't! And then um-

HELEN

[raucous laughter]

NICO

[laughs]

ELIZABETH

So yeah, and then of course because you feel so, it's one of those shows for people who don't wanna see people fail, like I don't, I don't like seeing people fail.

HELEN

Yeah.

ANIL

Mm.

ELIZABETH

So um I just, yeah, I think everyone was like just, just put the slop in, in a container and be like: here's the slop I made!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

It still would have been better than like, throwing it in the bin!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Because you could have got the taste of the slop!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Yeah! I mean there's gonna be no texture, but if it tastes good, you know!

ELIZABETH

Yeah! You never know.

HELEN

OK, so what was the custard thing Nico?

NICO

Custard one, that one's much more chilled out in comparison.

HELEN

[laughs]

NICO

Like because they're all making custard and everyone's custards were setting at the same time and the guy was just completely frazzled panicking which I think I can definitely relate to-

ANIL

Mm hm.

NICO

And just saw custard in the fridge, opened it and just took it. And I think they were making trifle? Yeah-

HELEN

Ah yeah.

NICO

In fact I'm almost certain they were making trifle.

ANIL

Yeah, and he ended up using somebody else's custard-

ELIZABETH

Oh no.

ANIL

And like, yeah.

NICO

And it's like, because the custards were different consistencies, the one he stole was thicker so he could layer it better, whereas the poor sap who had to use his original custard everything just like sunk.

HELEN

Oh no!

NICO

I know!

HELEN

Wait, so it was deliberate? I always thought it was an accident.

NICO

I think it was accidental.

ANIL

No, I think it was accidental, because they were both, because there were only so many fridges, so I think it was like-

HELEN

Mm.

ANIL

Where it was placed in the fridge, he just open it, grabbed one, thought it was his and it's like - oh, wait...

HELEN

[laughs]

NICO

The thing I always found with Bake Off, it's kind of like people who watch sports, like, you watch it on TV and it's like: oh I can do that, I don't know why everyone's stressing, it's just cake, I can totally do that. And then you just try and make something like a sponge cake and everything just goes wrong and it's like oh...

(Group laughter)

HELEN

See, I have completely the opposite reaction. Like: oh god, that's so complicated, there's no way! And like all - I'm just bad at details as anyone who has seen my streams will know.

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NICO

[laughs]

HELEN

At a certain point I just go: "Ahhh fuck it!" and I just throw it away.

NICO

[laughs]

HELEN

Also this is a Patreon show so I think we are allowed to swear, but probably let's not just have a string of expletives.

(Group laughter)

NICO

I learnt this the hard way.

ELIZABETH

You shouldn't have invited us on, like certainly not me.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

I grew up like a pirate.

NICO

I was tasked to do, so this is off-topic, to do the bloopers for one of the Patreon things?

HELEN

Oh yeah.

NICO

And I spent like two and a half hours bleeping out everything and I was like - OK, I did it!

(Group laughter)

NICO

And I was like, OK, I did it! And I did it like - you know the word "fuck", I left the "f" and the "k" but I cut out the "uc". So it's like f-beep-k.

HELEN

Yeah. [laughs]

NICO

And I was like: OK, I've done it, it's perfect, go and take, have a listen! April was like: Nico, take the bleeps out. I was like aww...

(Group laughter)

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HELEN

Oh no! And that must have taken so long as well!

NICO

Oh yeah! Everyone swears!

HELEN

Which one was it?

NICO

It's Magnus, it was like old, the next like four, five blooper sets for the Magnus Archives but EVERYONE swears.

HELEN

Ohh.

NICO

I've heard Alex swearing, Jonny, just everyone!

(Group laughter)

NICO

It's like - I thought everyone was a good boy? Nope!

ANIL

[laughs]

ELIZABETH

No!

HELEN

No, no, secretly we're a very swearsy company.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Apparently that's a sign of honesty-

HELEN

That you swear?

ELIZABETH

The more someone swears, it's the more likely that they're not someone who lies. Because I guess it's just coming straight out of your brain, right, like because you're just like: grr, fuckity blah blah blah.

ANIL

Well I mean if venting it's like you're actually giving your anger or frustration a, a leash - sorry, unleash.

ELIZABETH

Well and also you're not censoring yourself when you talk. So I guess it's like people who censor themselves all the time just won't ever say an expletive because, you know. Anyway. That's the theory.

HELEN

Interesting!

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HELEN

Well we're getting into psychology now.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Very closely linked to baking.

ANIL

Although - yeah exactly, or swearing while baking is often very frequent!

HELEN

Oh yes! Alright so OK, OK. So what's the worst, what's the worst baking incident that you've ever had?

(ANIL gives a heavy sigh)

HELEN

I'll start, I'll start.

ELIZABETH

Alright.

HELEN

So mine, I didn't start baking for a very, like I've only recently like in the past few years gotten into it properly. The first cake that I properly made from scratch was for, I think it was my friend Tim's birthday, and I didn't know what I was doing, I don't even remember if I used a recipe, but I put it in the oven and I took it out and I was like: oh, that looks fine. And I came back like half an hour later and it had just sunk completely in the middle!

ELIZABETH

Oh!

NICO

Aww!

HELEN

And I was like: well that's OK, I -can pretend it's like some kind of doughnut cake!

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(Group laughter)

HELEN

And I just covered it in icing, but it kept sinking!

ELIZABETH

Oh no!

HELEN

Because it was still warm, so it was just absorbing the icing.

NICO

Ohh.

ELIZABETH

[gasp]

HELEN

So eventually what I turned up with to school was a cake completely covered in icing and the hole in the middle was full.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

It was just solid icing in the middle! [laughs]

ELIZABETH

Oh my god!

HELEN

And it was like: um.... what the fuck is this? [laughs]

(Group laughter)

HELEN

So that was my first major baking fail. [laughs]

NICO

Mine would be - so the thing about fresh pasta, you're meant to keep it separated until it dries, you're not meant to like clump it together unless you whack a lot of flour - I did not know this, So I-

HELEN

That's why you get all those hooks, right?

NICO

Yeah yeah yeah. So like, I made like spaghetti. And then was making it into like a pasta bake thing so like I made all the pasta and then I just plunked it on a plate, so it's like a thick casserole dish, everything layered. That all glunked together but I didn't know this at the time. So then I added the pasta sauce on top of it, and then I let it chill and then put it in the oven. And it came out and it was basically like thick pasta sauce, digging down to just like-

ELIZABETH

Oh!

(Group laughter)

NICO

Two inches of spaghetti.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Mm, yum!

NICO

And everyone's like: I can't wait to taste your pasta Nico, I've never had fresh pasta so I was like: I know, it's gonna be amazing! Bless 'em.

(Group laughter)

ANIL

Oh no! Oh no!

HELEN

Oh, it's happened to us all!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Nico, how do you make fresh pasta, just as an aside, because I don't - I know people say it's easy but it doesn't look easy.

NICO

It depends how finicky you want to go. I - Italians would tell me off for how basic I do it. I go one egg-

HELEN

Mm hm.

NICO

Just a medium egg, 100 grams of flour and a pinch of salt. And all you do is you just knead it and knead it, and pasta you can't overwork it. So you're just keeping kneading it.

HELEN

Really?

NICO

Yeah yeah. Like you're just keeping kneading it and kneading it, you can even like keep adding flour. It will basically get to the point where it just won't take any flour and when you try and knead it you can't knead it any more because it'll just bounce back.

HELEN

Cool.

NICO

So then you whack that in the fridge for like 30 minutes, let it chill, let is sort of get all cooled down and cool. Bring it back out and then you can either roll it out with a rolling pin really thin and just slice it, or if you're fancy and pretentious and me you've got like a pasta rolling machine and you put it through the rolling machine.

ANIL

[laughs]

HELEN

And then you just like put it straight into boiling water?

NICO

Yep. Just put it in water and it'll cook within like 2 minutes. Like some - boil it in like salted water if you want it.

HELEN

Cool.

NICO

But it's so simple and it's - it's almost foolproof, it's really good.

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HELEN

I mean you say "almost" foolproof, I mean...

(Group laughter)

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NICO

Almost! Just don't clump it together.

HELEN

To give, to bring us back on topic-

(Group laughter)

HELEN

What other baking fails have we had? [laughs]

ANIL

Like there've, like I've had various ones over the ears, er just, ranging from like the very simple of: oh, I forgot to put sugar, or I forgot to put eggs.

HELEN

[laughs]

ANIL

And often actually, like those two, while they sound catastrophic, often like not putting sugar in something that you're going to ice is actually not too bad.

ELIZABETH

Mm.

ANIL

And eggs, because a lot of Indian cakes actually end up being made without eggs because of like ayurvedic or like vegan style diets, so they are things you can pass off, the cake may be a little bit flatter or not quite as sweet but you can get away with it. I would say probably, I'm not going to delve too much into the history of failures because there have been many, but-

(Group laughter)

HELEN

This comforts me to know!

ANIL

Yeah! Like, especially when, especially when you're trying a new recipe out for the first time. Like my first attempt at choux pastry: awful. Just really awful!

NICO

Yep, same.

HELEN

So that's the one that like - puffed up balls like with profiteroles?

ANIL

Yeah, to make, to make eclairs and profiteroles and things like that. I was really bad at that.

HELEN

Wait wait, what's the difference between choux pastry and puff pastry?

ANIL

Puff pastry is er layered. So it's, it's what you'll use for you know, tops of pies and things like that or mille feuille.

ELIZABETH

Mm.

ANIL

Choux pastry is the one that expands and you can use, you can fill it.

HELEN

Ohh.

ELIZABETH

You know like for, for eclairs.

ANIL

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

I mean that's the, that's the in profiteroles. Eclairs and profiteroles.

ANIL

Pretty much, yeah.

ELIZABETH

So basically it's a way to get cream into your body through-

(Group laughter)

ANIL

Yes. It is a cream delivery vehicle!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

It is! Basically that's the only reason to have it!

ANIL

So my most recent disaster, and it's the one I'm really upset about, because-

HELEN

No! Oh!

ANIL

It was supposed to be my niece's birthday cake!

ALL

Oh no!

ANIL

The day - so I start, so my niece wanted a, she's really into Disney films now and she just watched The Little Mermaid and she wanted an Under the Sea theme, or her parents were throwing her an Under the Sea theme party. So she wanted a fish cake, a fish-shaped cake. And she'd watched Finding Nemo so I was - I had it in my head, I'm going to do a cake that is shaped and decorated like Dory from Finding Nemo.

NICO

Wow, OK.

HELEN

Sure.

ANIL

So like, I got myself set up two days before, and her birthday's in June, at the end of June, and this June we were already getting into quite warm weather, so I, like two days before I found the picture I was gonna copy, I made the stencils out of baking parchment, did all of that up and it's OK, day before. It's gonna take me about a day to make this.

HELEN

Mm hm.

ANIL

So I bake, I bake the chocolate cake that is gonna be the sponge for it. It doesn't work, so I have to throw it out and start again.

HELEN

Oh no!

NICO

Ouch.

ELIZABETH

Aww.

ANIL

I make - so I make a second chocolate traybake that is going to be the thing. Cut it out, start making up the icing, but it is really warm. I can't build it in one, I'm having to chill everything, so I'm having to chill the cake, I'm having to chill the frosting, I'm having to chill the fondant that I want to use to cover the, the top of the cake. The fondant doesn't colour right, the buttercream splits while it is chilling. [laughs]

ELIZABETH

Aww!

NICO

Ouch!

HELEN

Oh no!

ANIL

So I've got like this bright orange buttercream, er like orange flavoured buttercream that I'm trying to use to put between the layers, and as I put it in to chill it then splits. So I have to try and make another batch of that. And time is running short here because I am heading down to my sister's the next day!

HELEN

Oh no!

ANIL

So at something like ten o'clock at night I've got what I think is alright, but I'm gonna have to keep this cool before I can do, and it's too warm to do any fondant work at this point. So I put everything in the fridge. I get up at five o'clock the next morning, open the fridge, and the cake has collapsed.

ALL

[gasps of horror] Oh no!

ANIL

Because, because the buttercream didn't set and the top layer slid off.

NICO

[gasps] Oh no! Oh no!

ELIZABETH

[groans]

HELEN

Oh Anil you're breaking my heart!

ANIL

And so the tail, because the tail was like, the fragile point of where the tail is, the top layer had basically had cracked and come out, and then the fondant wouldn't roll and it like, at like eight o'clock-

HELEN

Oh honey!

ANIL

I tried for three hours to try and restore some semblance to this thing and it was a case of, at like eight o'clock I had to give up and call my sister and say: I'm not going to have a birthday cake ready for her.

HELEN

Aww!

ANIL

And like, I had to head to my parents' like, within a couple of hours and so we, I ended up stopping off at like Morrisons to get a, one of, like a store-bought cake. And obviously, my niece is 4 so she didn't really remember that she had asked me for this cake in the first place but-

NICO

Mm hm.

ANIL

So she wasn't fussed! But it was just that, ohh, that frustrating thing where you want something to go right and everything-

HELEN

Yeah, so spend so much time on it.

ANIL

And everything conspires against you to do it, and that's actually how baking turns out sometimes!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Oh the life of a baker is full of disappointments!

(Group laughter)

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ANIL

Yeah!

NICO

I always do the Julia Childs thing, the chef from like 30, 40 years ago.

ELIZABETH

Yeah yeah.

HELEN

Yeah.

ANIL

Mm.

NICO

And it's like - aim high but just expect that everything's gonna go wrong-

(Group laughter)

NICO

-and just pretend like that's the plan anyway and sort of, I sing to myself a lot to calm myself down. Currently a lot of Lion King for unknown reasons, Anil!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

I think that's the big, the big difference isn't it really between people who like to cook and people who like to bake, like-

HELEN

Mm.

ELIZABETH

I like to bake, I've just never been much of a cook. But like, the cooks always love the fact that you can just keep adding, or keep doing something, whereas the bakers are like: you put that in the oven, your fate is sealed!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

It's done! It's done!

ELIZABETH

That's it! Yep!

ANIL

Yeah, once it goes in, it's done. Like you can do, you can do, if you know what you're doing you can make a load of modifications up until that point but yeah, at that point-

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

ANIL

It's done-zo. You are-

(Group laughter)

ANIL

You are now, you are now in the hands of the gods!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Yeah!

HELEN

I love that phrase! Just close the oven and the oven says: "It's done-zo."

(Group laughter)

HELEN

What about you Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

Oh I mean I've had the, the odd you know, sponge that's sunk a bit. And I tried doing meringues for a while, and it's always that thing that the first time you

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do it, it's great and the second time you're like: ah, I know how to do this! And then it just-

HELEN

Yes! Why does that happen?

ANIL

Yes, yes!

ELIZABETH

It's always the second time!

HELEN

[laughs]

ELIZABETH

The same with choux pastry actually. The first time I did it: amazing. The second time I'm like, oh, just it was gunk. And then-

ANIL

Yeah, bread for me was like that.

ELIZABETH

Oh bread actually, bread I've been OK with. But brandy snaps I tried as well which you don't really seem to get here so much but in New Zealand it was like every, at Christmas or just any time, party, brandy snaps, right?

ANIL

[laughs]

HELEN

Yeah, you can get them here, you can get them here.

ELIZABETH

Well but it's, it's just we always have them.

ANIL

You usually buy them, yeah.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, you buy them and then you like, you fill them with cream. Done. Like, another cream vehicle.

ANIL

Yep.

ELIZABETH

So I was trying to make those and they just wouldn't spread or they would spread too far, it was just, your whole thing is about trying to get these things to spread and then bubble. So that was a pain. But actually my favourite, nothing I've ever done has been anywhere near as momentous, shall we say, as the cake that someone once bought into one of my workplaces, which was where they had decided they were gonna make a cake, but they weren't gonna

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follow a recipe. Then they realised they didn't have anything to bake whatever they were gonna make in anyway, so they decided they'd bake it in a wok. So-

(Group laughter)

NICO

Oh my...

ELIZABETH

And then they're like: what am I gonna flavour it with? I've basically got Weetabix and some other ingredients and BBQ sauce.

HELEN

Did you say Weeta-, did you say Weetabix?

ELIZABETH

Yeah, Weetabix. So this cake had-

HELEN

That's not a flavour!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

-Weetabix and BBQ sauce flavoured cake, baked in a wok.

HELEN

What?!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Who was this monster?!

ELIZABETH

And then they were like yeah - and then they'd bring it into work for people to work to like have to try to not eat because you know it was like such a tradition for people to bring in cakes and other people to eat them at our workplace and it was like - oh god, we now have to try to eat this BBQ flavoured cake, like...

(Group laughter)

HELEN

No!

ANIL

I've heard of fusion cooking but this seems to be taking it to extremes!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Like, it's con-fusion cooking.

ANIL

Yeah [laughs]

ELIZABETH

Just, yeah. Like it, and it weirdly somehow was almost edible, but it was just the fact that it was like, everything about it was wrong.

HELEN

Wait wait wait - you said al- did you, did you EAT it?

ELIZABETH

We, we, some of us who were like you know, like I was in the social committee, I was, I was always promoting cake for charity days, so I'm like: oh god, I have to try this cake.

ANIL

[laughs]

HELEN

Ohh!

ELIZABETH

It was just mostly the flavour of - and I don't even think there was baking powder in it, so it was very dense.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Dense, in a wok. Still in the wok by the way, at work.

NICO

Oh god, presentation!

HELEN

Well yeah, you're not gonna be able to get it out are you?

ELIZABETH

Like sort of brownie, BBQ slice thing. It was-

(Group laughter)

NICO

I'm just - I'm picturing that on the Bake Off when they're like saying: can you please bring your bake up to the judges now, and he's just like with a wok:

"There you go!" [bonk]

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

And I mean it did not look appealing in the lea... I mean (a) because it was in a wok and also because it just looked BBQ coloured, right? And I'm not a meat eater anyway so I was like: this is very sort of reddy-orange kind of thing to, to-

ALL

Eurgh!

ELIZABETH

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So. Just that, see that's the thing like, whenever I think of anything to do with baking I'm like: the wok cake.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

We're all just reeling from this information!

NICO

You can't top that, I don't think I'll ever be able to top that ever!

HELEN

No! [laughs]

ANIL

No I think, I've seen some bad things on Nailed It! but er- that, oh!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

That's a great show.

Rusty Quill Enthusiasgasm – 1 - Baking

ELIZABETH

The guy – but the guy was a maverick. A real maverick. So I'll grant him that.

(Group laughter)

ANIL

Well that sounds like one way of describing him.

HELEN

Yeah!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

It's like: baking, how hard could it be?

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Just pile ingredients in! Anything!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Well I mean he's not entirely wrong, it - baking is just adding ingredients to things and then putting it in the oven but -

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Like, wow.

ANIL

It's a science! Well I mean it it, I mean it's that thing like, they say cooking is an art and baking is a science.

ELIZABETH

Mm.

NICO

Oh yeah.

ANIL

I don't necessarily hold to that entirely-

HELEN

Yeah.

ANIL

Because it's a case of - baking is a science, but if you know where, so long as you know the fundamentals and so long as you know where you can tweak things-

HELEN

Mm.

ANIL

It can be an art in the sense of you're pushing, you're pushing the limits of how much you do. I mean case in point, everything - I mean, I shouldn't, I probably shouldn't be so general but it's like, you're making, er, you're making brownies and you know you've got cocoa and sugar and eggs and butter. You've got generally fixed ratios. But brownie recipes differ, like not every brownie is gonna have the same ratio of ingredients.

HELEN

Yeah. Yeah yeah.

ANIL

I mean like I was given an amazing brownie recipe and it's the one I was using all the way up until the beginning of this year and it, the original recipe because it was a family recipe, calls for 450 grams of sugar.

NICO

OK.

HELEN

Yeah.

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ANIL

Alongside 100g flour, 100 and something grams of butter and 70 grams of cocoa plus 100 grams of actual chocolate.

HELEN

That's not too outlandish.

ANIL

No. But 450 grams of sugar-

NICO

Quite sweet.

ANIL

-is a lot of sugar!

HELEN

It is, it is, yeah.

ANIL

I was like, over subsequent bakings I was basically able to get that down to 250 grams of sugar without any change in taste.

HELEN

Wow.

NICO

Oh wow.

ANIL

I was like so - you, you can alter ingredients, even like key ingredients like that, but again you know that you can't push it too far-

HELEN

Mm.

ANIL

Like you couldn't eliminate the sugar altogether unless you were replacing it with something, I mean apple sauce might work, and to be fair like I stopped using that recipe because I found a variant of it that, I replaced some of the sugar and I replaced some of the butter with yoghurt because it makes it fudgier.

ELIZABETH

Mm!

NICO

Ah!

HELEN

That is, that is the ideal.

ANIL

Yeah.

HELEN

Like I have this brownie recipe and it makes perfectly fine brownies but they're not as like dense and gooey as I would really like them to be.

ANIL

Yeah.

HELEN

But I'm not entirely sure what I need to change to-

ANIL

The way, as I say, yoghurt I think is a way of doing it because it just keeps that, it gives the fat content while remaining liquidy enough-

HELEN

Yeah.

ANIL

That a standard baking time will keep it squidgy.

HELEN

Yeah. I think I'm gonna, I'm gonna write that down in my little notebook here.

ANIL

I, I'll post, I think I posted the recipe in Discord actually, because the way I found this out is because I was trying to make the recipe vegan.

HELEN

Mm.

NICO

Oh right.

ANIL

And I needed a substitute for the butter, and then I tested it with my normal recipe and just had like half and half butter and yoghurt.

HELEN

Mm.

ANIL

But I think I'll, I think I've modified it since then so I'll post the recipe in the Discord.

HELEN

I'd love that. Wait, so, is umm, but then isn't, aren't butter and yoghurt, don't vegans, that's still animal products isn't it?

ANIL

Er, if you use soy yoghurt.

HELEN

Ohhh.

ANIL

So like Alpro or something.

HELEN

I always forget that soy is a thing.

ANIL

Yes.

HELEN

Have either of you two come up with like interesting substitutions for stuff?

NICO

So like, not so much substitutions, but the thing that like changed, like blew my mind, like I struggled for ages to find like the perfect like cookie recipe, like chocolate chip cookie.

HELEN

Oh I've got the perfect one, I'll give that to you later!

(Group laughter)

NICO

And it's like - once I started, once someone said you can, instead of just doing like little titchy-tiny little chocolate chips, if instead you use just like whole chunks of chocolate-

HELEN

Mm.

NICO

And then freeze the dough once it's ball-shaped and then cook it like that. Like it's like gooey and like you get like the sort of crust like, you know like you split the cookie in the centre and it comes out and it's like the chocolate oozing.

ANIL

Oh.

HELEN

And you've got all the-

ELIZABETH

Oh my god.

ANIL

I've still not like, I've still not got a really good like go-to chocolate chip cookie recipe or anything like that.

NICO

I've got a feeling Helen's will be better than mine but I can definitely show you mine as well.

HELEN

I mean so mine is based on like the Millie's Cookies recipe.

ANIL

Oh.

NICO

Mm hm. Mm hm.

HELEN

And that's the texture that I really like to have in my cookies. But yeah I'll send, I'll send that over. I like, it just, it never fails me, it doesn't matter what I put in it, it's just, it's always cookies that I would like to eat, the only thing is like, because I've got a fan oven-

ANIL

Mm.

NICO

Yeah.

HELEN

It's just making sure that I haven't accidentally left them in too long and now they're crunchy instead of chewy. Which I just - oh! Can't, can't stand a crunchy cookie.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Oh really? Oh.

HELEN

Well I mean biscuits, those are meant to be crunchy.

ELIZABETH

That's true. There is that definition.

HELEN

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

You can't use the word "cookie" in my brother's household, he bans it. Everything has to be a biscuit!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Why?

ELIZABETH

He won't have these Americanisms in the house.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

My thing is just, if you've got a recipe and obviously a sweet one generally, but if it's like: do this and then add sultanas in or add whatever, normally I'll add at least probably a half more or some other ingredients as well, right? So if it's gonna have sultanas, I'm like: chocolate chips, walnuts.

HELEN

Mm.

ANIL

Mm hm.

ELIZABETH

If it's like carrot cake, it's like it's gotta also have walnuts in it. Like just any of the dry ingredients that you can just pack more of, I will, I will do that. I love that.

NICO

That's, I was gonna say, that's the thing about baking as opposed to cooking though because you can't really, once you start going you can't really sort of double backtracking yourself, because like I make pasta sauce all the time-

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

NICO

And like I made it on Sunday now, and you can just add like little spices and stuff and like so long as you don't go overboard, that's fine

HELEN

Yeah.

NICO

I learnt the hard way, especially when it comes to French cooking, you can't just decide to add another egg white after it's already been whipped and shaped.

ANIL

[laughs]

ELIZABETH

Ah!

HELEN

Ooh!

NICO

Because it's just like - yeah, you've got like the crispiness and then it's just like egg white egg cooked on top of it, it's just-

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Oh yes!

ANIL

Oh!

NICO

It's a Nico speciality that one.

(Group laughter)

ANIL

Oh no!

HELEN

Have any of you seen that Tweet going around where it's like someone has just been making weird kinds of eggs?

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NICO

It's my favourite!

HELEN

Where - [laughs]

ANIL

I've not seen this.

ELIZABETH

No, no - what's? Oh, you'll have to share.

HELEN

It's just four pictures. One of them is like the yolk on one side of the pan and all the white on the other side of the pan.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

The other one is like a massive yolk and a tiny bit of white. The other one is like loads of white and then a tiny little yolk in the middle and then I can't remember the other one. But it's just-

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HELEN

You know, eldritch eggs. I love it.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

What I was gonna ask you earlier Elizabeth was is there anything in New Zealand that you just don't get here or that you can't seem to replicate here?

ELIZABETH

Well you don't sort of get like pavlo- I mean you can get pavlova but pavlova is very common in Australia and New Zealand. What you don't get is a flavour called boysenberry and that's what I really miss.

HELEN

Ahh.

ELIZABETH

And it's, basically a cross I think between blackberries and raspberries or something or other else that have-

NICO

Oh.

ELIZABETH

You know, if you've heard of Knott's Berry Farm, the theme park, that was originally a berry farm and that's where it was invented, the boysenberries. And it spread down to I think Chile and then New Zealand, so like there's only a couple of places in the world you can get it and it's like the number one fruit flavoured ice cream you can get in New Zealand will always be boysenberry. And it's just -

ANIL

Oh wow.

ELIZABETH

It's, so it's really popular and then you come overseas and you're like: why have you not heard of this?

(Group laughter)

ANIL

I mean I've heard of it, it's just I've, it's, it's not been a flavour I've tried.

HELEN

Yeah, I've never found anything-

ANIL

You won't get, yeah, you don't find fresh boysenberry here, and I don't think I've even seen boysenberry syrup or anything like that in the shops.

ELIZABETH

No, you certainly-

HELEN

It's something you have to order online.

ELIZABETH

You need to sort of have it sent over and it's not, not something that you actually even get so much as a syrup, it's more like that the companies have access to it and they put it in their ice creams.

HELEN

Mm.

ELIZABETH

And that's the delivery mechanism for boysenberries.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Like - and there's a few other things you can get, like I think you can possibly get boysenberry syrup but like yeah, you just, you don't see it. So I really miss that. And um hokey pokey as well which is like essentially honeycomb flavour but just slightly done in a slightly different way. But a lot of cooking like that New Zealanders and Australians think of as being like: oh that's very New Zealand or Australian and then we argue about who invented it.

HELEN

[laughs]

ELIZABETH

And what you find is you go overseas and you're like: oh no, this is just something that other people don't do as much or it kind of was lost to time.

NICO

Ahh.

ELIZABETH

So like you know, it's all European things that yeah, people just don't do any more or it's east, like it's Middle or Eastern European and so it's just not as well-known in say the British cooking so, which is what New Zealand or Australia would reference ourselves to as like what the British are doing or what the Americans are doing. So there's weird things, like we have lolly cake which is like where you basically get biscuits and you crumble them up and get lollies and then you - er lol... being um soft, chewing candy. Because lolly for you guys is like ice blocks, right, like-?

ANIL

Yeah.

NICO

Yeah, yeah yeah.

HELEN

Or it's like a lollipop, like a sweet on a stick.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, so lollies for me is like anything that's like candy that you'd put in your mouth like Haribo or whatever else.

(Group laughter)

NICO

Oh right.

ANIL

Oh, gummy?

ELIZABETH

Yeah like a gummy, but you know when you get the soft ones that's just kind of like just very fragile, you can just pull them apart?

NICO

Yeah yeah yeah.

HELEN

Oh like Chewits or something?

ELIZABETH

Yeah it's like - oh, I don't know.

NICO

Or like Drumsticks.

HELEN

Um, Percy Pigs.

ELIZABETH

Percy Pigs, see they're chewy, it's something that you don't have to chew, that will just sort of crumble a little bit.

NICO

Oh.

ELIZABETH

Like bana- you know the bananas that you get which like-

NICO

Yeah. Oh yeah yeah yeah.

HELEN

Yeah! Oh foam, foam sweets.

ANIL

Oh right yeah.

ELIZABETH

Foam ones, foam ones, foam ones, right. So you, so you get those types of lollies, so you get this, you get this kind of ginger nutty or digestive base, you get those lollies, you add a Ton of butter and then you basically smash them all together and then roll it, like just densely pack it into like the most calorie, calorie-dense thing you can possibly imagine.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Then you roll it in coconut, and then you slice it. And that's lolly cake.

ANIL

Oh!

NICO

Actually sounds really good.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, it is pretty good but like, as long as you've got like the world's most sweetest tooth.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

So I was like, well you don't see that anywhere else but then there is something similar that I think it was a Polish friend once brought in which was

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kind of like a chocolatey version of that but where you just rolled up, it wasn't quite lollies but it was like other bits of like cake or something, and then you sliced that. And I'm like: well there's the history.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

So there's always like some like origin story which you know, as a Kiwi or Australian is normally like: no! We invented it!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Actually no, it comes from somewhere else in the world. But boysenberry is the one thing I really miss.

HELEN

Aww.

NICO

The biggest thing I've found from like talking to people who live in like America or Australia 'n stuff, is that how we have it good in Europe with our ambient room temperatures. So whenever it's sort of like, when you're mixing eggs or like you leave butter to be at room temperature and stuff in recipes, they don't have that luxury of just keeping something in the kitchen to sort of chill, they have to-

ANIL

Yeah!

NICO

-sort of like artificially recreate that temperature.

HELEN

I mean I ran into some problems with that as, as you know Anil with the pastry that I've been trying that just-

ANIL

[laughs]

HELEN

I'm not, I'm not doing it anymore! As I've said, pastry and I are nemeses now.

ANIL

Like I, I think we've got the, we've got the issue that particularly over the last few summers-

HELEN

Mm.

ANIL

Trying to do pastry in a home kitchen if you haven't got like good cooling setups is more and more difficult.

ALL

Mm.

ANIL

It just, it's getting too warm to do it properly, particularly in a lot of kitchens, and especially in the kind of kitchens particularly when you've got like the small flats which retain heat.

HELEN

That's - that's my flat!

NICO

[laughs]

ANIL

So make it difficult to work with pastry to start with, unless you're chilling it every ten minutes. That, that hassle is er, is something that we don't necessarily all want all the faff with. Plus pre-made, pre-made puff, like no one is, no one wants to be messing around with making puff pastry from scratch.

HELEN

[laughs]

ANIL

Pre-rolled, pre-rolled stuff is, is much more prevalent and it is perfectly fine to use it.

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HELEN

Thank you Anil. Thank you.

ANIL

[laughs]

HELEN

Also what I'm hearing is that pies are for winter.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Nice big slab of pie.

ANIL

There is that.

HELEN

Do you know what, one of my most enduring memories of my dad is how he would just eat what the hell he wanted, usually in the car, so the one, so my dad was a terrible cook, he just applied heat to things and that was it.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

So whenever he was cooking it was, it was grilled pork chops, boiled potatoes and some kind of boiled vegetable and that, like that's, that's all he could do. But he also made crumble.

ANIL

Ahh!

HELEN

And he wasn't too bad at making crumble. But one of my, like I have a memory of him just like getting into the car with like a bowlful of crumble and eating that as he drove, and like he would pass it to me while he was like turning round a corner and then I'd have to give it back to him while he ate it with one hand!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Oh my lord!

HELEN

One time he bought like an entire steak pie and that was on my lap.

(Group laughter)

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NICO

Jesus!

ANIL

Wow!

HELEN

Another time he got a block of marzipan [starts giggling]

NICO

Oh!

HELEN

And he was like a quarter of the way through it and then he was like: does marzipan have sugar in it?

(Group laughter)

HELEN

And I was like : DAD! You're diabetic! [helpless with laughter]

ANIL

Oh no!

NICO

Oh my god!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Oh my god!

HELEN

Oh so like-

ELIZABETH

Like an entire - he was just eating marzipan straight?

HELEN

Yeah!

ELIZABETH

That is madness!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

He was also, I dunno if any your parents even did this like would they, actually no, actually this sounds so, this sounds very much like an "only my dad" thing. He really liked Jaffa Cakes.

ELIZABETH

Right.

HELEN

Right? And he would like get a packet of 12 when we got into Sainsburys or wherever and he would eat them as we went round getting all the stuff. And then when we got to the checkout he would just hand over the empty packet!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Oh yes! Yeah yeah yeah.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

But that's that they - that's what you did with the kids-

ANIL

Yeah!

ELIZABETH

That was like: oh the kids ate something, normally the adult can like manage to get through the store without-[laughs]

NICO

Oh that's amazing!

HELEN

Nope, no. It was my dad eating the Jaffa Cakes!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Have any of you ever tried to make like one of those like giant Jaffa Cake recipes or something like that?

ANIL

I've not tried any of the giant recipes. There was a time when I would, I voraciously read the website which tries all the giant versions of, of things.

HELEN

[laughs] Oh yes!

ANIL

And I was like: oh I'd really like to try that! But it's like - no. [laughs]

HELEN

Lot of hassle.

ANIL

It, it is a lot of hassle and - yeah.

ELIZABETH

I suppose, but if you were gonna try a giant thing of something, I think the Jaffa Cake.

ANIL

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Would be-

ANIL

I think that would be one that I would try, yeah.

ELIZABETH

I mean I do like a fruit flavour going through my cakes.

HELEN

I mean it shouldn't, it shouldn't be too hard, I mean it would be like a sponge cake and then you would get some orange flavoured jelly to go on top and then you'd cover it in chocolate?

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

ANIL

Yeah. I mean-

ELIZABETH

Because we all know that it's a cake, so that makes it really easy for a start!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Don't - don't start the Jaffa cake cake/biscuit discussion!

ANIL

Look that, that has been settled in a court of law!

HELEN

[laughs]

NICO

Yeah.

HELEN

Oh god, does someone want to explain the Jaffa Cake business for our American listeners?

ANIL

[sighs]

ELIZABETH

Oh gosh. Er well because yeah it was the, whether or not the, it's the definition of whether it was a cake was if it would go stale by drying out or by getting -

HELEN

Soft?

ANIL

Or yeah, retain-, like going sloppy, like retaining, like going softer than it is, yeah.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, so biscuits go soft and then cake goes dry, and so Jaffa Cakes go dry so therefore-

ANIL

It is a cake.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Even though it's the size and basically the texture of a biscuit.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

But it was all over - it was over tax or something wasn't it?

ANIL

Yeah. It's because it's, it's whether or not it gets taxed at effectively a duty-free rate, i.e. 0% or if it gets classified as a luxury.

HELEN

[laughs]

ANIL

And I think at the time cake is classified as a luxury and therefore attracts 20% tax and biscuits don't get classified as a luxury and therefore are tax-free, it's-

ELIZABETH

Just madness.

HELEN

[laughs]

ELIZABETH

Like there's a very similar thing which is total segue that like we're, with X-Men they, there's a tax in the US on bringing in dolls versus other toys.

ANIL

Oh!

ELIZABETH

And so when the X-Men figurines were being brought out, they went to court to prove that the X-Men characters were not human and therefore not dolls.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

So-

HELEN

Well they've got a point! They have a point! [laughs]

ELIZABETH

But even so the entire - but the entire narrative of X-Men is like: oh you know, you're supposed to treat us like humans, you know we're just sorts of people. It's like, but they went to Court to prove it for tax reasons, that they weren't human.

NICO

This is how to, we struggle so hard to beat the British stereotype but you know when you've got things where we go to court to figure out whether something's a biscuit or a cake-

(Group laughter)

NICO

You know we're just, it's just lodged in there!

ANIL

Yeah!

(Group laughter)

NICO

There's no escaping it!

HELEN

Right - we've got ten minutes left. I would like to ask, because we're on the topic of fictional things, like what is like, OK, I'll tell you what sparked this. One of the formative Disney films of my childhood was Sleeping Beauty, because of that scene with the fairies and they're turning her dress all kinds of different colours, and they make this terrible tottering cake, and half of it's purple and half of it's blue or something? And it's like all terrible like, I was wondering like: what fictional baking stuff do you remember, like do you have any thoughts of like: oh yeah, that's what a cake should be? Like the massive sandwiches in Scooby-Doo and stuff like that.

ANIL

Ohh...

ELIZABETH

Oh gosh.

HELEN

I know it's a weird question but like-

NICO

For me I'm like a massive, massive fan of Studio Ghibli.

HELEN

Oh yeah.

NICO

Like just all the animé the food in that is incredible but it's the baking breads that's in the Kiki's Delivery Service?

ALL

Ooh.

NICO

And just like how they do like the pie crusts and things. And it just looks stunning. Like it just looks perfection. Like I know they can paint it to make it looks perfect, but like I've always wanted to be able to just like recreate it.

HELEN

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Mm. I think there's that thing where um, I always, my experience of things that seem to look really good and then weren't is very strong in my memory of like-

ANIL

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

So there's that like storytelling as well as part of that but um, so I hate fondant, right like I don't want like a-

ANIL

[laughs]

HELEN

Me too.

ELIZABETH

I don't want a cake which is like full of fondant, because I just don't think it tastes very nice.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

So I'm one of those people where I'm like: if it looks more like a hot mess but it tastes really good, I'm there. But if it looks really pretty - like I totally, like I love watching people do the shows-

ANIL

Mm.

ELIZABETH

-where they make the extravagant stuff, but at the same time I'm like: yeah, I'm not gonna eat it.

HELEN

Mm.

NICO

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

And it almost feels like you shouldn't. Like I feel like I really like baking to be something that isn't huge effort and therefore you can eat it without feeling some sort of random guilt about the fact that-

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Like those wedding cakes that are really big, like I just-

ANIL

Yeah!

ELIZABETH

I'm also like: how are you gonna cut through that? That's like half your size, how's it gonna-?

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Yeah yeah yeah.

ANIL

Like I'll watch the shows, like a lot of the American like "Cake Aces" and things like that.

HELEN

Cake Boss, yeah. [laughs]

ANIL

Yeah, they're really inter- they're really inter- they're really interesting to watch but I'm never going to try reproducing any of that!

HELEN and NICO

No!

HELEN

I mean you can't, they have like special machines and everything.

ANIL

Well I mean true, but even like stuff from the Bake Off it was like - as Elizabeth said, I'm much more focused on taste because my decoration skills are not great. There are a few things that I can - like if it's simplistic to look good, like I was really proud when I managed to do a mirror glaze for a cake, because it came out really well-

NICO

Wow.

ANIL

And it's a fairly simple thing to produce, like it's not fancy swirls that you have to spend like hours piping or anything like that.

HELEN and ELIZABETH

Yeah.

ANIL

Because I know that if I was to try and do that everything would collapse probably.

HELEN

A mirror glaze is one of those super shiny ones yeah?

ANIL

Yeah it's where you, yeah, you and it was a chocolate one which is easier than trying to do coloured ones, but it just makes it look like it's got an abso- like a sheen on it. And there was, because it - and this was after a Bake Off thing where like, the showcase challenge was you had to do, you had to make a cake with a mirror glaze and so like this was at a time when, it was a couple of years ago and we were doing like, every other week we would get a group of people together to watch, to watch the show and you'd make, like people would try and do something in the vein of something that they did on Bake Off in the last couple of weeks.

HELEN

Mm hm.

ANIL

And so like I tried to do the mirror glaze and it came out really well and I have not tried it again since! [laughs]

(Group laughter)

ANIL

But it's also because like if I'm decorating a cake it's for an occasion and especially under the current circumstances, I'm not showing cake off to anybody!

(Group laughter)

ANIL

So it's like - I just wanna make something that I will like to eat.

HELEN

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Mm.

HELEN

The furthest I've ever gone with cake decoration is when we got all those awards and I made a banana cake for Alex and for Rusty Quill in general, and I just had those silver balls and I just wrote "YAY!" on it.

ANIL

Oh yes, I remember that!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

I was really pleased with the actual cake though, I think that's maybe the best-tasting cake I've ever made.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HELEN

But yeah, that's all you're gonna get from me.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

And like when I stream people are like: oh are you gonna put icing on it? And I'm always like: no.

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

I think the fanciest cake I've ever done is, for some reason at one of my workplaces we were obsessed with the, I think it was the Nyan Cat?

ANIL

Yeah.

NICO

Yeah!

HELEN

Oh, Nyan Cat!

ELIZABETH

It was the page you could go to and add the rainbow? Yep, yep. So, and we had like, so what we did is we just had a computer running where we just had it going constantly because we were like: we need to have this record! So yeah once we passed the like, the most, longest it was opened for record we um, I then did a cake which had like the little, I mean because it was simple right? Just cake and like different coloured icing and then like - just simple to draw, so.

HELEN

I feel like a, I'm trying to remember, isn't Nyan Cat like a cat in a, in a sandwich?

ANIL

Or a pop-

ELIZABETH

It's like a pop tart. It's like a pop tart cat.

ANIL

And that irritating music. [laughs]

HELEN and ELIZABETH

[sing the Nyan Cat music and dissolve into giggles]

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – 1 - Baking

HELEN

I like how me and Elizabeth are both the kind of people-

ELIZABETH

I'm totally there!

HELEN

-who are like: oh yeah, that annoying thing and we immediately do it!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Yeah yeah yeah. I - well I was like, you know if there's other suggestions for shows that we do after this, like: musicals.

ANIL

Oh yeah.

ELIZABETH

I'll be there for the musicals.

ANIL

I'll be there for musicals, yes.

HELEN

Oh my god. So-

ELIZABETH

Any Andrew Lloyd-Webber. [laughs]

HELEN

I am, I am thinking about second season, one of them is courtroom dramas and now I'm just adding musicals.

ELIZABETH

Oh!

NICO

Amaze.

ANIL

Yeah, yeah.

HELEN

Because I love, I love a good courtroom scene.

ANIL

Aw, no the problem is like I can't talk about like, I couldn't talk about any of the recent stuff but I did remember watching LA Law when it was on but that's-

ELIZABETH

Oh yes, yeah.

ANIL

-probably a reference that is gonna go pa- go over the heads of many of our listeners! [laughs] It's probably a bit old!

HELEN

It's gone over my head, I mean.

NICO

Me too.

ELIZABETH

Oh no, I know LA Law because, because in New Zealand we got TV ten years later, that's why Anil!

ANIL

Right!

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

What was the other one with um, where it was like you went from the Police to the, it was Police and then it went to the lawyers and I can't remember it. It was very long running. [makes gavel sound from Law & Order]

ANIL

I mean Law - well there's Law & Order, yeah.

ELIZABETH

Law & Order. Law & Order, sorry.

ANIL

Which is slight - slightly more recent but LA Law would have been effectively a precursor to Ally McBeal, more so.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

ANIL

But, and that's probably only just about on the verge of people's - [laughs]

ELIZABETH

God, Ally McBeal was just atrocious, what a - it was just an awful show!
[laughs]

HELEN

Weird, weird show.

ELIZABETH

I mean you know when you look back on things and you're like: Friends.
Friends wasn't that good.

ANIL

No, Friends is-

Rusty Quill Enthusiasgasm – 1 - Baking

(Group laughter)

ELIZABETH

Like Ally McBeal was really bad! [laughs]

ANIL

Friends after season 4 is awful. It's actually downright awful.

HELEN

[laughs]

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

ANIL

Yeah. Like the first few, the first few series of it I think are actually not too bad but after that it's like - [groans]. It starts getting really problematic really quickly.

NICO

It's...

HELEN

I still like the idea of Rachel's trifle.

ANIL

[laughs]

NICO

Yeah! With the meat!

HELEN

I think that's a real classic!

ANIL

Oh that, that makes me ill!

HELEN

Because we've all been there when someone's made something horrible and you eat it and you have to be like: Mmmm! [laughs]

ELIZABETH

Oh yes!

HELEN

On that note I think we're coming up to the end of our hour. So-

ANIL

Aw! That's gone really quickly! [laughs]

HELEN

It has! It's because we're having fun!

ANIL

Yay!

HELEN

I would just like to say thank you so, so much for coming here and chatting to me about cakes and icing.

ANIL

Thank you for having us on.

HELEN

[laughs] So thank you to Anil and Elizabeth and Nico and thank you to you, the listener, for joining in and I wish you good luck in all of your oven-based adventures, and I think that's where we say goodbye, right?

(Group laughter)

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

HELEN

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Rusty Quill Enthusiasgasm – 1 - Baking

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