

Dish: Ep 12 Wed 24 August 2022

GRACE DENT and a spicy carrot & avocado salad

[00:00:00] Nick Grimshaw Hello. I'm Nick Grimshaw.
[00:00:01] Angela Hartnett And I'm Angela Hartnett.
[00:00:03] Angela Hartnett Welcome to Dish, from Waitrose, where we have food.
[00:00:06] Nick Grimshaw Yes, chef.
[00:00:07] Angela Hartnett Drinks?
[00:00:07] Nick Grimshaw Yes, chef.
[00:00:08] Angela Hartnett And great guests.
[00:00:09] Nick Grimshaw Yes, chef. And me chef!
[00:00:12] Angela Hartnett Yes, Nick.
[00:00:17] Nick Grimshaw Today we have a critic. Join us. We're very sorry. Go. Well, that's fine. That's all right.
Angela Hartnett We do indeed, sorry (yawn).
Nick Grimshaw Wow, why do you find that so boring!
[00:00:27] Angela Hartnett No, no - I love who we've got coming on.
[00:00:29] Nick Grimshaw You did a big yawn when I said 'critic'

[00:00:30] Angela Hartnett I know, I know, I know.
[00:00:31] Nick Grimshaw Listen, back to it.
[00:00:32] Angela Hartnett I know.
[00:00:32] Nick Grimshaw That's how Angela Hartnett deals with the critics.
[00:00:36] Nick Grimshaw Oh, another one.
[00:00:39] Nick Grimshaw Lifes full of critics.
[00:00:41] Angela Hartnett Everyone is a critic these days. Not just the critics. Everyone. The amount of people who say can I just give you a little bit feedback. No, you can't.
[00:00:49] Nick Grimshaw Na, you can't.
[00:00:49] Angela Hartnett Really don't want your feedback, not interested in your opinion
[00:00:52] Nick Grimshaw Do you feel the pressure when a critic is coming to eat?
[00:00:57] Angela Hartnett I think there is a level of pressure. Yeah, of course there is. Because especially if they're going to write about it, you want them to write something great, so you want to make sure it is great. But if you're doing your job okay, it should be fine.
[00:01:07] Nick Grimshaw But I feel... you. If you are a singer songwriter, think about it you would be quite honest.
[00:01:14] Angela Hartnett Yes.

[00:01:14] **Nick Grimshaw** And you wouldn't be one of them artists. That's pretending to be something. So I think if we translate that to your food, even if someone wrote, they didn't like it, you'd be like, Well, I like it.

[00:01:25] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah, exactly.

[00:01:26] **Nick Grimshaw** And that's why people like you and your food, I think. But Grace Dent I really love because I feel like Grace Dent, who is our guest today, is not your standard restaurant critic, is she like? I like that she is an expert.

[00:01:40] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah.

[00:01:41] **Nick Grimshaw** At reviewing food and is a master chef. Review in great food. But I like that she's not a food snob is she? She loves like she says she still loves like Peppa Pig pasta in a tin.

[00:01:51] **Angela Hartnett** Oh yeah she's not a food snob. She knows good food. She understands it. And also the thing about Grace that she said to me years ago, it's always stuck with me. She said, at the end of day, I'm reviewing a restaurant or wherever she's reviewing, and someone's reading that, and then they're going to take their hard-earned cash and spend it. Due to my opinion.

[00:02:11] **Nick Grimshaw** That's the angle to take. Yeah. You know, it's not just going out to feel full, it's an experience.

[00:02:16] **Angela Hartnett** And the best restaurant of the year at the moment in the UK is this place called Ynyshir in Wales. It was voted number one restaurant and it was Grace that probably ten years ago first brought that restaurant up before I'd never heard of it. We were in this, we were in this judging panel and she was pushing it and I actually sort of argued against her again, how can this guy sit there and say, hey, you have to dictate? Like he really dictates. You have to come at this time. You have this food. You have to stay here and you're not allowed to change. You're not allowed. But everyone has been and says it's amazing. So I need to go and book it and swallow my pride about it. And I say. [mimicking noises] Don't you tell me what to do, I'm Angela Hartnett [inaudible].

[00:02:57] **Angela Hartnett** But it was Grace years ago, was a real flagship for it. So fair play to her.

[00:03:02] **Nick Grimshaw** What are we having today?

[00:03:04] **Angela Hartnett** We're going to have a butternut, carrot and avocado salad.

[00:03:07] **Nick Grimshaw** Yum.

[00:03:09] **Angela Hartnett** Because Grace is vegan which is great and we're going to put a lovely little, you know, my mum's Dijon dressing.

[00:03:18] **Nick Grimshaw** Oh we love the Dijon with the garlic in there.

[00:03:20] **Angela Hartnett** And then we've got some little pickled red onions and there's loads of herbs going around. So I'm going to throw some in, throw in some parsley, and yes, it'll be a great sort of salad for summer.

[00:03:32] **Nick Grimshaw** Wonderful if you want to try this yourself. Go on Dish Recipes... waitrose.com/dishrecipes that's Dish Recipes.

Let's welcome our guest to the kitchen Grace Dent, everybody.

[00:03:51] **Nick Grimshaw** Hi Grace Dent.

[00:03:53] **Grace Dent** Where should I stand?

[00:03:56] **Nick Grimshaw** Just by the bin.. No.

[00:03:58] **Angela Hartnett** Looking gorgeous. Look at how stunning you are.

[00:04:00] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah, you look fabulous.

[00:04:01] **Angela Hartnett** And the heels! I'm loving it!

[00:04:03] **Grace Dent** Do you like them?

[00:04:03] **Angela Hartnett** Let's get you sat down. Yeah.

[00:04:05] **Nick Grimshaw** All right. Well, thanks for coming round to eat, Grace.

[00:04:08] **Angela Hartnett** Yes.

[00:04:09] **Nick Grimshaw** We're going to have something in a moment.

[00:04:11] **Angela Hartnett** Yes, we will.

[00:04:12] **Nick Grimshaw** Which Angela's prepared.

[00:04:13] **Grace Dent** Just the pair of ya. It's just like being in the world's weirdest job interview.

[00:04:21] **Nick Grimshaw** So what can you bring to this role, Grace?

[00:04:25] **Angela Hartnett** Mr Grimshaw, can you ask Ms Dent please.

[00:04:28] **Grace Dent** I thought I was coming for dinner and now I feel like I'm joining the board.

[00:04:31] **Angela Hartnett** We might let you come on our board.

[00:04:34] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah, we might let you on the board. Yeah, we are big fans. We might let you on the board. So you've just been in France?

[00:04:40] **Grace Dent** Yes.

[00:04:41] **Nick Grimshaw** Famed for fantastic food. Yeah. Is that a true stereotype of France?

[00:04:46] **Grace Dent** I think the first, second, third and fourth nights I was there, I was like...you know, because we were in southwest France in Arcachon and there's a beautiful beach side bars and but it is the same menu again and again and again. I feel, you know, I feel guilty saying this, but yeah, it is. It's foie gras and it's oysters and crevettes. And what is it? Yeah, some fish. Yeah, that's it. There's nothing else.

[00:05:15] **Angela Hartnett** Cause they keep it really regional, don't they? That's the thing. Yeah.

[00:05:18] **Grace Dent** It's very real and they don't import from other countries. What am I trying to say here? They're very French.

[00:05:25] **Nick Grimshaw** So French. So French. I love that they're really French in France, so French.

[00:05:30] **Grace Dent** They're very French. And I was just crying out for a bit of heat and spice, you know. So I'm back and I'm here and I'm ready to get fed, you know, and you just get sick of restaurant food though because you're out all the time. I mean, obviously, I, and I got back last night and the first thing I had was four Quorn sausages cooked in the air fryer. I didn't even put them in the grill. I just took them and then I chopped them up and I just put them in a bowl and I ate them with bits of, you know, just hot sauce. That's what I had. All I wanted was some protein. Yeah, I wanted that beautiful taste of Quorn. So British.

[00:06:12] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah, not an oyster.

[00:06:15] **Grace Dent** And I just sat and I ate that. When I get back, when I've been away, I want, like, beans on toast.

[00:06:23] **Angela Hartnett** You want the difference don't you. I remember coming home from Argentina. I said, let's just want a vegetable. I just boiled broccoli and just ate it exactly like that because all I'd eaten was meat for like ten days. Yes, you need that. Yeah, I get it.

[00:06:37] **Grace Dent** I love Argentina, but I have never been. I was a complete culture shock. Yeah. I learnt how to do the tango in Buenos Aires

[00:06:47] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah. Well it's really nice that you've offered to end the podcast with a performance

[00:06:52] **Grace Dent** Absolutely not even with anybody. Just like just conceptual art.

[00:06:57] **Nick Grimshaw** We're really looking forward to going to be available on our social channels

[00:07:00] **Grace Dent** Just for far longer than is actually acceptable

[00:07:03] **Nick Grimshaw** Funny. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:07:07] **Nick Grimshaw** We're really looking forward to that. Stay tuned. And now I've been slightly ribbing, Angela that you're coming because I'm like, Oh, huge critic on the way. When you do go to people's houses for tea, are they ***** it.

[00:07:24] **Grace Dent** You know, the truth is, people do not ask me to their houses. They don't do that

Angela Harnett Oh no!

Grace Dent I don't mean that in a really sad way. I do have, do have friends it is more the, I think that people have a, they want to ask me for dinner so they do it when they're drunk. They go, you should definitely come to my house, I do a wonderful tagine. Yeah. And then about three weeks later, on the day of the wonderful tagine, they go, shall we just go to a restaurant? Because, because they, they do they feel the pressure. Yeah. I do tell a lie. I'm pretty sure you've cooked for me and been very hospitable.

[00:08:03] **Angela Harnett** I have I think I have

[00:08:04] **Grace Dent** Have in the past at some point. Or. Or did we just tend to go to a restaurant.

[00:08:09] **Angela Harnett:** No, but I think, you know, we were talking about it. I think you came to Merchants when Neil was cooking, but I went off menu and it was you and Tom. So we did cook for you. We just kept bringing you loads of food. Yeah. And actually, chefs hate that when you've got friends in that you want to cook for, but you don't want to give them the normal menu. I just go in, rip their sections apart. Give me some of that. I'll try that. And Neil's like trying to do 120 covers around me, opening all the drawers and cooking for you and Tom.

[00:08:35] **Nick Grimshaw** Get the Quorn sausages.

[00:08:40] **Grace Dent** I love a Quorn sausage. I might have mentioned it!

[00:08:41] **Nick Grimshaw** I like a Quorn scotched egg. Yeah.

[00:08:44] **Grace Dent** Yeah. But if you ever put one in half and put some salad cream in it?

[00:08:47] **Nick Grimshaw** Oh yeah, I love it.

[00:08:51] **Grace Dent** Where were we? I am always fascinated by what it's like from the other side of the pass when I walk into places.

[00:08:58] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah.

[00:08:58] **Grace Dent** When I walk into places because I know what it's like for me, I walk in and everyone's having a perfectly lovely night. And then I turn up you know like Darth Vader, and then you just see it goes through the staff, like the way you see the whiteness. And then everybody's kind of walking into walls.

[00:09:20] **Angela Hartnett** And dropping drinks.

[00:09:22] **Grace Dent** Dropping drinks. The worst one is when the person who's in charge of the floor just goes up to someone who's like really bad, really bad server and just takes them off the floor.

[00:09:32] **Angela Hartnett** Oh, no. That's terrible.

[00:09:33] **Grace Dent** Oh, I know. It is really bad. Yeah, that is bad.

[00:09:37] **Nick Grimshaw** So what does happen when Grace Dent then comes into a restaurant, our food critic comes in, is there like a bell?

[00:09:44] **Angela Hartnett** So there's probably, definitely an air of panic. Yeah. But also at the end of the day, that is the brilliant thing about it, because I presume you book under pseudo name.

[00:09:54] **Grace Dent** Yes, I do. But it's incredibly difficult to book under false names because everything. Yeah. Everything's booked through the Internet now. Yeah. So you're leaving these little cookies everywhere and also you can't book. Is that a credit card? Yes. And I can't get false credit cards.

[00:10:12] **Angela Hartnett** Sure we could work it out.

[00:10:13] **Grace Dent** The bank won't let me and also all you Chef's you bloody talk. Don't you? So if I'm seen in a restaurant down the road having like a little pre drink, then you're all on your bloody Whatsapp. And I've seen. I've seen like massive ...

Nick Grimshaw Seen her

[00:10:28] **Grace Dent** Big hair.. Yeah.

Angela Hartnett You know that one from the Guardian - she's around

[00:10:32] **Nick Grimshaw** She's lurking. She's round.

[00:10:34] **Grace Dent** I love those posters that you have of me. In the kitchen Yeah. Our faces.

[00:10:43] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah, actually, yeah. No way. Well, like in the corner shop when they've been spotted robbing

[00:10:49] **Grace Dent** Exactly.

[00:10:50] **Angela Hartnett** Don't let her back in.

[00:10:52] **Nick Grimshaw** No way.

[00:10:52] **Grace Dent** And it doesn't, it says like some key things about me, like.

[00:10:57] **Nick Grimshaw** Leo.

[00:11:00] **Nick Grimshaw** Loves cats

[00:11:02] **Grace Dent** Yeah, it does. It says things like, don't explain the food too much to her because it pisses her off. And things like that. I've seen.

[00:11:09] **Angela Hartnett** I remember we had when we opened Murano, a booklet this big because that was back in the day before we had all the social media and you had every critic- a picture, all the info about them, who they worked for, what their their little ticks, if you like, what they liked, they didn't like. And then you had all the Michelin guide, all the critics you had all the numbers. And I think I've still got it because I was looking through old stuff. And I mean, you're right, there's not one flattering picture of any critic on that ..Giles Coren, Jay, you all look terrible, sorry! I think Gordon put that list together.

[00:11:45] **Grace Dent** I quite like the idea though that I'm in my finery in the restaurant and there's just like a picture of me with **** on my head.

[00:11:53] **Angela Hartnett** And I'm like, it doesn't look anything like you look like her.

[00:12:00] **Grace Dent** It's the natural way.

[00:12:01] **Grace Dent** Yeah.

[00:12:02] **Nick Grimshaw** Can you tell, though, if a restaurant has, like jugged it up a bit for you?

[00:12:06] **Grace Dent** Yes.

[00:12:06] **Nick Grimshaw** How would you know?

[00:12:08] **Grace Dent** Because there's fresh hand soap in the toilet.

[00:12:12] **Angela Hartnett** Suddenly clean.

[00:12:13] **Grace Dent** Somebody's ran in. And you can tell the toilet's been kind of.

[00:12:18] **Nick Grimshaw** Smells of bleach.

[00:12:19] **Grace Dent** You can tell. Yes. It's a bit like you're a bit like the queen. You know, they would say the queen thinks everywhere just smells of fresh paint. Yeah, I think that everywhere smells of beautiful rose hand soap.

[00:12:29] **Angela Hartnett** So if you came in, I would just go over and say hi Grace coz I know you. It's a different thing. But I think, I think it's better when people because everyone knows them. So I think you want to be treated like a normal customer and if you come in and people know you and like literally know you. They should do that rather than this sort of Goddess way.

[00:12:47] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah. It's it's weird to pretend that we don't know who Grace Dent is if you own a restaurant. What about... do you know, Angela on the pass when you get an order through. Are you like - that's a food critic. Sorta like, do they do it in a certain way.

[00:13:01] **Angela Hartnett** I don't think so. No. I mean no because if you knew they were in. But I know I wouldn't.

[00:13:05] **Nick Grimshaw** For like the Michelin people. Do they do anything weird?

[00:13:08] **Angela Hartnett** No. They would order everything. Well, no, they don't order the same meal. I mean so if you had two people in and they were both for Michelin, you would expect four different dishes. You wouldn't expect both of them to have the same pasta, the same cod.

[00:13:22] **Grace Dent** Yes.

[00:13:23] **Angela Hartnett** And I imagine you come as a two. So you all order something different. You want to see as much as possible.

[00:13:28] **Grace Dent** Yeah. Yeah. But then people give it away because my friends always go. Huh... what shall I have?

[00:13:34] **Grace Dent** What should I have? And I say, don't say that because it looks like we're in a controlling relationship.

[00:13:42] **Grace Dent** And I choose all your foods for you, let's have the steak!

[00:13:48] **Nick Grimshaw** Who do you take? I imagine if I was friends with you, it'd be like please take me to a nice restaurant for free

[00:13:53] **Grace Dent** You say that. But this is everybody asks to go to restaurants. But do you really want to go on a Tuesday night to some crap restaurant that isn't cool. And you know, and they only open twice a week and you've already heard that the food isn't that good. Do you really want to go? I don't know. No, you don't.

[00:14:12] **Nick Grimshaw** Really no I don't

[00:14:14] **Grace Dent** Exactly. That's where you have your small group of people that go. I go with my bloke all the time because I like to be able to just eat in silence.

[00:14:25] **Angela Hartnett** Yes.

[00:14:25] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah that's quite good.

[00:14:26] **Grace Dent** That's the best thing about having somebody in your life, isn't it, that don't have to talk to them all the time

[00:14:31] **Nick Grimshaw** Sit there and eat. Talk when we get home.

[00:14:32] **Grace Dent** It's true isn't it though?

[00:14:34] **Nick Grimshaw** We spoke an hour ago. We don't need to do that every hour.

[00:14:37] **Grace Dent** Well, you wouldn't be with him if you hadn't just been in this endless bloody conversation at the start, you know, because that's when you end up with somebody for life. We kind of just start talking and that's it.

[00:14:46] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah.

[00:14:47] **Grace Dent** Yeah. So then it's lovely to be able to sit in a restaurant and just say nothing.

[00:14:51] **Angela Hartnett** I like that - that's confidence, great relationship.

[00:14:54] **Nick Grimshaw** And do you make notes or do you just....

[00:14:56] **Grace Dent** No, no, no. I, I just snap pictures on my phone so that I can just remember what the plate looked like, because I sometimes don't write it for

ages. And then sometimes I think I'm not going to write it because I've got other ones to write about. And then I run out of restaurants and it's like 5:00am in the morning and I have to write a bloody column and I have to go and find the restaurant I went to. I'm telling you all my secrets now. Now that I have, I feel I always feel what I'm talking about it like I'm being really bloody boring because I'm talking about my job in the same way, you know, I'm talking about it's just a job. It's glamorous, but it is just a job.

[00:15:34] **Nick Grimshaw** And I love reading your reviews when they're really brutally honest. I read one in May and I was going to Ibiza and I loved it and I was like, not laughing, but I was sort of enjoying the honesty of it. And then I made my boyfriend read it and I was talking to him about it. And a woman we didn't know sat next to us and she was nice coz she shared her Maltesers with us, but then she was like, What are you talking about? And I'm like, Read this. I thought, You know, this restaurant, she's not, Oh, yes I've seen it. And she read it and she loved it and we passed it round the row.

[00:16:11] **Grace Dent** That's nice, you are united in bile.

[00:16:12] **Nick Grimshaw** Yes

[00:16:18] **Nick Grimshaw** When you were younger, do you remember going out for a meal that really caught your imagination, that you really loved? Was there a meal that you remember?

[00:16:28] **Grace Dent** Well, I never went for posh meals when I was little. So because my parents just weren't, I mean I'm from Currock in Carlisle, you know, there weren't any posh restaurants. One of the most exciting meals I had was at the Wimpy.

[00:16:43] **Nick Grimshaw** Oh, yeah.

[00:16:45] **Grace Dent** So, I mean, I remember that was where you get taken for your birthday or if maybe you'd got a good parents night, you know, that the parents night report. So I think that was the first time I ever saw a Knickerbocker glory.

[00:16:57] **Nick Grimshaw** Oh, yeah.

[00:16:58] **Grace Dent** Which was the most exciting thing in the entire world, because in Carlisle there wasn't an awful lot going on. Other than looking at the Museum of Roman Rocks.

[00:17:08] **Grace Dent** I can't tell. You know what I mean.

[00:17:09] **Grace Dent** So, yeah, I think these were they were formative, formative experiences. But no, I didn't eat out anywhere posh, I think, until I think I'd had my first formal dinners when I was about 16. 17. Probably later.

Oh, my God, that looks amazing.

[00:17:29] **Angela Hartnett** I've given you the chilli. I've put extra chilli in as well.

[00:17:33] **Nick Grimshaw** Have you?

[00:17:34] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah.

[00:17:34] **Grace Dent** But I mean, you know, my family when I was growing up, whenever, you know, we went for pub lunch maybe. And my family love a carvery.

[00:17:46] **Nick Grimshaw** Oh, yeah. I've never had a carvery.

[00:17:48] **Grace Dent** You've never had a carvery?

[00:17:49] **Nick Grimshaw** I have had one since, but we never went for carvery because my mum, my mum would always, always do a roast like every single Sunday. So, you know, I don't really like a roast unless my mum has made it if I'm honest because I had so many Sundays. Yeah. It's a pub,

[00:18:05] **Grace Dent** So you've never been to Toby Carvery.

[00:18:07] **Nick Grimshaw** I have been, but I went at uni, me and my uni mates like we couldn't be arsed making a roast ... Grace you looked quite saddened by that.

[00:18:16] **Grace Dent** Yeah.

[00:18:17] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah.

[00:18:17] **Grace Dent** It's one of the saddest things I've ever heard.

[00:18:19] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah, well.

[00:18:21] **Grace Dent** So you've never never, never been to Toby and had, like, all three meats.

[00:18:26] **Nick Grimshaw** Never done that.

[00:18:27] **Nick Grimshaw** No.

[00:18:28] **Grace Dent** You've never had an everlasting custard jug with your pudding?

[00:18:31] **Nick Grimshaw** Never, had an everlasting custard jug

[00:18:33] **Angela Hartnett** We should do one for you.

[00:18:34] **Nick Grimshaw** We do one. Shall we go now? I know this looks nice Angela but it's no Toby carvery.

[00:18:39] **Grace Dent** But yeah, this unlimited gravy. You know.

[00:18:43] **Nick Grimshaw** To be fair, there was unlimited gravy at my mum's house. Yeah, she's a mancunian woman of Irish heritage, so there was a lot of gravy, don't worry.

[00:18:51] **Angela Hartnett** And custard

[00:18:52] **Nick Grimshaw** And custard, lot's of it. Right. Angela, what have we got here?

[00:18:56] **Angela Hartnett** We got roasted carrots, butternut squash and avocado salad with jalapeno pepper, watercress and pickled red onions.

[00:19:04] **Grace Dent** Oh wow.

Nick Grimshaw Delish

[00:19:04] **Angela Hartnett** And my mum's dressing.

[00:19:07] **Nick Grimshaw** I love your mum's dressing.

[00:19:09] **Angela Hartnett** Vinegar, olive oil, Dijon and a clove of garlic that just sits in there.

[00:19:14] **Grace Dent** You just put it in. Do you crush it?

[00:19:15] **Angela Hartnett** No it just infuses it.

[00:19:18] **Nick Grimshaw** Stick it in your fridge.

[00:19:19] **Angela Hartnett** Leave it in the fridge for the week. Yeah, yeah. And I do the thing you'll love it. So we roasted the veg with loads of cloves of garlic and then you squeeze the garlic into the salad. Yeah, yeah. Anyway, help yourself.

[00:19:32] **Nick Grimshaw** just help yourself?

[00:19:32] **Angela Hartnett** No no. You're closer, you serve it

[00:19:35] **Nick Grimshaw** God we've been really busy, Grace. Everyone's loving the restaurant.

[00:19:43] **Grace Dent** That's perfect. Perfect, perfect. Get him off the floor.

[00:19:49] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah, go round the back

[00:19:53] **Nick Grimshaw** I do feel the pressure, since I stood up.

[00:19:57] **Angela Hartnett** No, I'm good, I'm good. Thanks.

[00:19:58] **Grace Dent** I think the fact that I didn't grow up amongst fine dining and trips to France and French gastronomy, and I didn't spend any time in Tuscany or, you know, this isn't a sob story. I had a lovely childhood, but I do think it makes me very different in my approach to being a restaurant critic because I do think I just see it through fresh eyes. Maybe that's what made me a bit different when I first kind of appeared and started doing it.

[00:20:24] **Nick Grimshaw** Do you remember like first coming to London and trying food that was like, my family called London food? Do you remember like what it was because I remember going back....

[00:20:35] **Angela Hartnett** Was it your Gran who said you wouldn't get....

[00:20:37] **Nick Grimshaw** Oh my Gran said when I said I was moving to London. She's like oh they don't have owt wet on their tea there

[00:20:41] **Grace Dent** They don't

[00:20:43] **Nick Grimshaw** And then when I went back, I did a big shop - I'd been here for two years and I went back and I went shopping with my mum and I got a sweet potato and hummus and my dad was like, whoa, oh.

[00:20:57] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah.

[00:20:57] **Nick Grimshaw** He's like, what's all this Eileen? But my dad would go to nice restaurants, like, nice restaurants with work, but he loved, like, he won't come to, like, a fusion restaurant.

[00:21:11] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:21:12] **Nick Grimshaw** Like he'd go and have, like, a fish pie somewhere. Yeah, a steak somewhere. He likes good food, but he wouldn't have anything that was like he didn't like if anything was, like, trendy. Yeah, we hate like a gastropub. He was like I hate that idea. Yeah. Because it's a pub.

[00:21:24] **Grace Dent** Yes. Oh no.

[00:21:26] **Nick Grimshaw** A pub. Yeah

[00:21:27] **Grace Dent** Yeah. I remember going back up to Carlisle once and putting a fried egg on my dad's corn beef hash, and he was just utterly distraught just distraught.

[00:21:37] **Grace Dent** Where did you grow up?

[00:21:40] **Nick Grimshaw** I grew up in Oldham.

[00:21:42] **Grace Dent** So that would've been one of the first sweet potatoes they'd ever seen.

[00:21:46] **Grace Dent** Yeah.

Angela Hartnett It's still there. It's framed on the mantelpiece.

[00:21:47] **Nick Grimshaw** Really was and he'd think I was mad. And he'd say.. you can't have a salad for your tea. Yeah. Or, like, you know, he used to be mad if I drank water. He'd be like you're bloody mad on the stuff. And then I'd be like, you're meant to drink 8 glasses a day.

[00:22:11] **Nick Grimshaw** and he'd be like, never had a glass in my life.

[00:22:14] **Grace Dent** I, I still have arguments though, like with, like Southerners and my bloke whose family are French about this whole idea of food being moist.

[00:22:23] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah.

[00:22:23] **Grace Dent** Moist things, you know, so. Yeah. Gravy and know things that you add to make things more sticky like curry sauce. Yeah, see, I do. I love curry sauce. So when I do go into a chip shop or something like that, that is what I start looking for behind. Yeah. You know, and the idea that you get a piece of meat and then you cook it for so long that all of the juice comes out of it and then you serve the dry meat.

[00:22:52] **Grace Dent** With the juice.

[00:22:53] **Grace Dent** Which you taken and made into a gravy and my bloke who's family are all French. They're like, Why don't you just cook it for less?

[00:23:02] **Grace Dent** Because I want it to be really, really stringy and dry.

[00:23:07] **Angela Hartnett** I want to break my teeth on it..

[00:23:08] **Grace Dent** Yeah. That is absolutely delicious.

[00:23:12] **Nick Grimshaw** Really delicious.

[00:23:13] **Angela Hartnett** It's very good of you to come on our podcast, given that we're slight rivals.

[00:23:16] **Grace Dent** Yeah, I just want to see what was going on here.

[00:23:19] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah. Do you like us?

[00:23:20] **Angela Hartnett** Look at that face?

[00:23:24] **Nick Grimshaw** Can we come round yours Grace?

[00:23:26] **Grace Dent** No, no, no.

[00:23:29] **Angela Hartnett** That's charming, innit? You invite someone round, cook them their tea

[00:23:32] **Nick Grimshaw** So what about like because obviously before your job you get to go to hopefully nice restaurants or trailers. Restaurants. Is there any like restaurant chains you like?

[00:23:43] **Grace Dent** I love, look, I love the chains yeah right because being able to go to Wagamama in Stratford, Westfield. It's my joy. Yeah, right. Because it's not. I love Pizza Express. Because. The people that work in those places do not give a damn. They never watch MasterChef and they don't care. And even if they did, they don't have the bloody time to think about it anyway. So it is, it's just very - it's very free and easy. I love, like, Stratford, Westfield. I mean...

[00:24:22] **Nick Grimshaw** I've been there and tried that out.

[00:24:22] **Grace Dent** It's a massive shopping centre if you're not aware of it and there's like a massive food court at the top. And to me that is my... any given Tuesday just eatin the bang bang cauliflower.

[00:24:33] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah. Nice

[00:24:34] **Grace Dent** And.

[00:24:36] **Nick Grimshaw** I love a food court.

[00:24:37] **Grace Dent** Yeah. I love a food court. I love it.

[00:24:39] **Nick Grimshaw** I love even though I can't think where I used to go, I love that going. Yeah, I love doing that.

[00:24:45] **Angela Hartnett** But also chains is, you know, I've got like a few girl friends and stuff that have all got kids and that, you know, we're lucky that we can go out and splurge whatever money we want. I don't have children, you know. Yeah, but, you know, they sort of more in a budget and, you know, they'll go and I actually think you're right, there is a market for everyone that they can have a good meal; it's affordable. They can take their kids at the weekend. You know you can't - everyone knocks chains but actually, you know, Pizza Express has been going since the sixties.

[00:25:12] **Nick Grimshaw** That's what I was thinking of all the way through Glastonbury, was I really want a Pizza Express.

[00:25:17] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah.

[00:25:17] **Nick Grimshaw** Yeah. We got one on the Monday. We went at midday, knocking on the door. They were like 'hiya' ...Let us in.

[00:25:26] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah. And it's consistent.

[00:25:27] **Grace Dent** Do you need the menu at Pizza Express?

[00:25:29] **Nick Grimshaw** No, we had garlic dough balls, so obviously.

[00:25:32] **Angela Hartnett** La Reine?

[00:25:33] **Nick Grimshaw** So we had dough balls . Mesh has a La Reine and always calls it Lorraine and I'm like, but seriously, he's not joking. And weirdly my dad used to do that and they never met. And my dad was like, and I'll have a Lorraine I'm like, Lorraine's a woman? La Reine's the pizza. So Mesh has a Lorraine and I like American hot on the thin base.

[00:25:53] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah, it's got to be the thin

[00:25:54] **Nick Grimshaw** And then I have the garlic butter as a dip for my crusts. Grace, what do you have?

[00:25:59] **Grace Dent** The pizza changes but you know at the end they do a thing which is like a Café Royale or something. Yeah. And it's mascarpone with figs and then. No one knows about it.

[00:26:11] **Nick Grimshaw** Do you remember they used to do the bomb in the nineties. They used to do the bomb which was like it was like frozen ice cream. And then when you put your spoon in the ice cream. Yeah. And I like that was one of my strongest, like memories of childhood because I'd go on my birthday and have it. No one ever remembers it.

[00:26:31] **Angela Hartnett** I don't remember that, I liked the chocolate fudge cake they used to do. They still do that

[00:26:34] **Angela Hartnett** Say oh yeah.

[00:26:35] **Angela Hartnett** That's always yeah.

[00:26:37] **Grace Dent** Melting things are very exciting.

[00:26:41] **Angela Hartnett** Ice cream is the best dessert. It really is.

[00:26:44] **Nick Grimshaw** Tell us all about *Comfort Eating*.

[00:26:46] **Grace Dent** *Comfort Eating* was an attempt to get celebrities to speak to me in the way that I always wanted them to when I was interviewing. I hate interviewing celebrities because they often turn up with about three things they want to talk about, and they clam up and, you know, I was a writer for 20 years. But when you talk to them about food, that's when they open up. That's when they suddenly start talking to you about their school days and their parents and things like that. I always love the very first, you know, when you setting up microphones to do something and whoever's doing the sound says, What did you have for breakfast? And then the celebrity will certainly come out with, Oh, I had three cream eggs.

[00:27:29] **Grace Dent** And you're like, What?

[00:27:30] **Grace Dent** It's the most exciting thing they said for the entire interview. So I wanted to take that and kind of make it into a full podcast. I just love to know what people are eating. What they cobble together when they're sitting at home, you know? So it's not if you ask us again, if you ask a celebrity about food, they'll name check some bloody boring posh restaurant that they never go to anyway. And I love it when they just suddenly admit that, you know, they like to sit on the sofa and it's lovely.

[00:28:00] **Nick Grimshaw** And you do it in your house, which I love. Are you still doing it in your house?.

[00:28:03] **Grace Dent** I'm still doing it in my house. I'm really glad to do. I think it adds to it and it gives like an intimacy. But look, 20 minutes before they appear, I am in a right flap. because I like my house to be, to look. I'm not bohemian, right? I'm not a bohemian person. It's like you can't come down to my house and it's like, you know, cat piss and like orchids, which is what bohemian people's houses smell like. I can't.... I need things to be clean, you know?

[00:28:36] **Grace Dent** You know?

[00:28:37] **Grace Dent** And so I'm always like, my producer's going, we need to go. We need to go through the questions. And I'm just like, you know, like mopping and hiding things. Like taking things and hiding them in the boot of the car and then really worrying whether I've got the right toilet paper out for the celebrities. You've got to have a specific ply for Stephen Fry.

[00:29:03] **Nick Grimshaw** And how to get them out?

[00:29:04] **Grace Dent** How do you get them out..

[00:29:05] **Nick Grimshaw** like when you finish chatting? Are you like? [claps]. Because they might have something else to do. How do you shoo them?

[00:29:13] **Grace Dent** That's such a good question oh, my God. I can't tell you, because then they're going to know.

[00:29:16] **Angela Hartnett** Oh, yeah.

[00:29:19] **Grace Dent** Oh, they always want to go anyway.

[00:29:22] **Nick Grimshaw** It's a good sign.

[00:29:24] **Grace Dent** They always do want to go. But there are some who I know that if I do just encourage them, they'd still be in my house two days later.

[00:29:33] **Grace Dent** You know,

[00:29:34] **Grace Dent** The more party people you just know they're going to be like in your house walking around in a dressing gown. Yeah.

[00:29:41] **Grace Dent** So I always make sure that they know that there's a taxi outside.

[00:29:46] **Grace Dent** Yeah, right.

[00:29:47] **Angela Hartnett** Oh, that's good.

[00:29:47] **Nick Grimshaw** Oh, yeah you're taxi's here

[00:29:49] **Grace Dent** Yeah, yeah. But like somebody said to me the day that I was interviewing a sports person and they would like them, like, just went on and on and on and on and on about achievement and medals. And apparently halfway through them talking, I just went, oh, you're taxi's here.

[00:30:05] **Grace Dent** and my producer, said, I don't think anyone's ever done that to them before. So that's that's really exposing that question...

[00:30:13] **Angela Hartnett** Honest it's honest.

[00:30:15] **Nick Grimshaw** To know. Like I always think I'd love to do an episode of this in one of our houses, and I do love people, but also at certain points when you have people around for dinner, a party. I'm like, okay, I think it's a family trait. My sister just gives you your coat. So if we were sat round now, my sister's and she was like, I want you to go, she'd go.

[00:30:35] **Nick Grimshaw** Oh. Ange, there's your coat

[00:30:37] **Nick Grimshaw** And you're like, Oh my coat! Am I going? And she goes, Yeah.

[00:30:41] **Grace Dent** MasterChef is one of the greatest jobs in the whole world. Amazing! And it's like, it's an institution. Once you start to appear on it, you will never.

[00:30:52] **Angela Hartnett** You do both right? Professionals and the public one?

[00:30:55] **Grace Dent** I do. Professionals and the normal. I do celebrity as well, which is always absolutely terrifying.

[00:31:03] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah. I bet.

[00:31:03] **Grace Dent** To be quite frank.

[00:31:05] **Nick Grimshaw** Was anyone really surprised you on that. In the celebrity one, that's been absolutely banging.

[00:31:09] **Grace Dent** Oh God, no, there's always people on the celebrity one from the moment they walk in. You're going to win. I always say that about Angelica Bell, some people have just got that thing and they can just do it. They can just make a sauce glossy and they can just plate up and they can make it or and then you've got people like Sid Owen and his gazpacho which I'm still quite heavily medicated about really. Oh my God. Because I hate gazpacho soup.

[00:31:42] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah, yeah.

[00:31:42] **Grace Dent** Because I just don't think there's any place in civilised society for cold soup. And he, you know, people always say oh it's because you don't live in a hot country, but it's still disgusting when you're in Palma, it's horrible. So he had made a gazpacho by merely putting a red onion and a tin of tomato into a blender.

[00:32:05] **Nick Grimshaw** No!.

[00:32:07] **Grace Dent** And. And I'll just always remember him coming through the door and he had his thumb in it.

[00:32:12] **Angela Hartnett** Oh.

[00:32:15] **Nick Grimshaw** Sid Owen's thumb

[00:32:16] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah, you don't wanna be eating that

[00:32:20] **Nick Grimshaw** Also MasterChef when I watch it. Obviously, I think most of this is the music - so tense. I can't watch Masterchef on a hangover. too stressful. I'm like, turn it off. Yeah. Yeah, does it feel stressful in there?

[00:32:35] **Grace Dent** Yes, yeah, yeah, it does. It's very stressful. And I think that the technique they use to keep it stressful really works because they don't let me see the competitors at all. You know, it's not as if we're all standing outside having a ciggie together, so they're used to me. They never let them see me until that moment that they put the you know, they come through the door with the plate or whatever. Or if I'm in the kitchen walking about, they kind of hide me in like a cupboard at the back, you know. So Greg would go, We've got a formidable presence in food here today. Miss Grace Dent. What was that voice?!
The first few times I came through that door, I just used to kind of be quiet, like meek. But then I thought, I'm not getting any screentime so I just used to do pure panto, you know, just come through the door and be incredibly panto. But they look really upset when I first appear because they're tired, you know, they're sleepless and they've been mentally making the same dish in their head in the flight simulator all night, you know, I mean 70 times and then.
So they are. Yeah, they are. They're really tense. But, you know, are we even playing that game if people aren't crying?

[00:33:52] **Nick Grimshaw** No. Yeah, that's the show.

[00:33:56] **Nick Grimshaw** That's the show

[00:33:57] **Grace Dent** Joking aside, though, people cry because food is really emotional. If they've been set a brief to make something that reminds them of home or something that reminds them of travels or somebody they love or they often store it all in the pit of their stomach and then they make it. And then when you ask them to explain it for the first time, they just cry.

[00:34:18] **Angela Hartnett** Yeah, of course.

[00:34:19] **Grace Dent** You know, and it because it's in there and, you know, and that's, you know, that's why we love food. Yeah, because it's emotional.

[00:34:26] **Angela Hartnett** I was nearly having a tear there myself.

[00:34:26] **Nick Grimshaw** I was nearly going there myself. Yeah. Grace. Thanks for coming round. That's really nice. Thanks for a delicious meal too Angela.

Grace Dent Ah thank you.

Nick Grimshaw Make sure you listen to Grace's wonderful podcast Comfort Eating. You can get it the same place you probably got this! Grace Dent everybody.

[00:34:50] **Nick Grimshaw** All the recipes and drinks can be found on the Waitrose website. [waitrose.com/dishrecipes](https://www.waitrose.com/dishrecipes).

Follow us from Waitrose wherever you get your podcasts, stick us on whilst your making dinner and if the family approves, then send them to Spotify and Apple Podcasts to leave us a review.

We can't all have a Michelin star chef in the kitchen. It's sad, I know, but you can get some Michelin star advice. Email your questions for Angela to dish@waitrose.co.uk

