

WAITROSE & PARTNERS
LIFE ON A PLATE
SEASON 1, EPISODE 1: NADIYA HUSSAIN

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SPEAKERS

Jimi Famurewa, Alison Oakervee, Nadiya Hussain

Jimi 00:00

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Welcome to Life on a Plate, the brand-new podcast from Waitrose, in which we talk to some very special guests about what food really means to them. We ask about their comfort foods and favourite dishes, their food memories and even their kitchen disasters. By the end of each episode, you'll know a lot more about them. My name is Jimi Famurewa and joining me is my co-host Alison Oakervee. Waitrose food editor and kitchen genius - she has her own business cards - who I'm very excited to see, particularly today, because, interestingly, we hadn't actually met until this week. We've been working together, but we had our first proper meeting, and it was just a really good laugh and it was nice to properly meet in the flesh. We had fun at the photo shoot, we were kind of both equally kind of larking around quite a bit, and...

Alison 02:10

I've got a feeling there was a bit of competitive eyebrows going on, about who could do the best facial expression.

Jimi 02:16

Yeah, yeah, we are both clearly total hams that will do anything for a funny photo. But it was really nice. It was lovely to just kind of have a little bit of, you know, we've been joking that this is like we're in an arranged marriage, like a professional arranged marriage, and the heat was on to see if it was going to

work. And I think it's going to be okay; I think we're going to be alright. Yes, but okay. We need to stop yammering on and get down to work, which today isn't really work at all, because we are introducing our conversation with Nadiya Hussain. We were hugely honoured to have her as a guest on the podcast. She is of course, the winner of series six of the *Great British Bake Off*, she has best-selling cookbooks, she has written children's books, she is a great advocate for better and more honest conversations about mental health and anxiety, she cooked the Queen's 90th birthday cake, she has an MBE, she's achieved so much. And she was just an absolute delight as far as I'm concerned. How did you find her?

Alison 03:29

I thought she was really great. I mean, I just think she's just an amazing woman. I don't know how she fits so much into 24 hours. I just love the way she hates to waste food and is always trying to work out how to use leftovers up. And that's exactly the type of thing I'm trying to do in the Waitrose recipes, giving people the confidence to just cook and use leftovers and avoid food waste.

Jimi 03:53

Yeah, yeah, she's a really good advocate for all of that stuff, and she kind of really humanises the work of baking in the kitchen, and she let us into, like, the chaos of her home and her home kitchen, and talked to us about testing things on her kids and that going disastrously at times. And you're absolutely right, she's got an ethos that's really inspiring. So, without further ado, here is our Life on a Plate conversation with Nadiya Hussain.

Nadiya, thank you so much for joining us. First of all, I wondered if you could tell us a little bit initially about just your first memories of food and cooking and its place in your family. You grew up as one of six. You know, I'm one of three, but you know, that sounds like a breeze compared to what that must have been like, so what was food like at home and what did it represent in your family?

Nadiya Hussain 04:56

I think when you're younger, you don't really think about what food is and you don't really... those memories, I think they sit in the back of your head somewhere till it becomes important. It was chaotic is the word that I would use, because I grew up with a dad who ran restaurants his whole life, and really he doesn't know how to do anything else apart from front of house and running restaurants. And that's what he's always done from, really, from the moment he could work. We very much lost our dad to the restaurant, you know, like he, like when you run a restaurant, you have to accept that that person isn't always going to be a central point in your life, because he ran the restaurants and he ran them badly, so he spent a lot of time running himself ragged. And so I spent a lot of time between the stainless-steel kitchen and our kitchen in our terraced house in Luton. That was life. If I was managing to... if I managed to wangle my way into the car with dad on a work day, I would be in the restaurant with him taking orders, peeling garlic, and that was kind of a lot of my childhood. And if I was at home, then it was mum who was always cooking. I mean, I genuinely don't remember her ever doing anything else. Like that was my life. Mum cooking, always something, always on the stove, whether it was something that needed to be cooked overnight, or whether it was breakfast, there was always something happening. And then there was dad who would come back from the restaurant with all the leftovers. So he was not a waster, like, everything that was leftover. And that was, like, the good stuff. Like you'd get

bits of king prawn, you know, like the stuff that was really expensive, so, it was great. So it was a mixture, I suppose, of the two, and those are my kind of very early memories of food.

Jimi 06:43

Yeah, I was going to say that one of the things that perhaps would surprise people that's missing from this is baking. And you have spoken about the fact that you came to baking late, even though, of course, through winning *Bake Off*, and through your incredibly successful career since, that's what people have come to know you for, that's what you're synonymous with. But the oven was just something that you stored pots and pans in right? Correct? Was that the case?

Nadiya Hussain 07:12

Yeah, baking was not a thing. And like, even in that conversation, I literally never mentioned cake, or baking or any of that. At any point. And I just, it was not a part of our life. And baking wasn't a thing that I ever really understood till I went to school. And then my Home Ec teacher at the time was like making cake. And I'd seen Delia do it. I'd never seen a real-life person make a cake. So, for me, I hadn't put the two together that she was actually doing what Delia was doing, but just in a kitchen, in a school kitchen. And then she put this kind of cake together and then turns on this oven and I couldn't... I was like: 'Mrs Marshall, you've gone mad', I said: 'What are you doing? That's the cupboard'. And she said: 'You're a silly girl. Are you telling me you don't know what an oven is?'. And actually, I went to a school where there were two English kids in our school and everybody was either Pakistani or Bangladeshi. And I did not, that was it. There were two English girls in the school and that was it. And we, every one of us were just as baffled. It wasn't just me. I wasn't alone in my astonishment. It was like everyone's like: 'Oh, is she making cake?', and so it was a huge big deal for all of us. I'll never forget that, my first ever smell of butter and sugar baking in an oven and then out comes this cake. And then we eat this cake, still warm out of the oven, and there was no Mr Kipling, and there was no wrapping involved, it was just a cake out of a tin. And I think that magic will always stay with me. And I never really started baking till I was in my 20s, after I got married, I was pregnant with my eldest, and I remember just thinking, ooh... it dawned on me that I'd bought this freestanding oven, but I could actually bake.

Alison 08:51

What was the first cake that you actually baked?

Nadiya Hussain 08:53

The first thing I ever baked was a Victoria sponge, a very lopsided... the oven was too hot on one side and not hot enough on the other. And I was only just getting into baking, so... and I remember when I was in high school, I'd won an award for excellence, and she came and asked me, she said: 'What would you like if there was any book you could have, if we could give all the children a book?', and I'd never, I'd never owned a book before, so I remember going to the library, but I'd never actually physically bought or owned a book till I was 16. So I'm like, of all the books in the world, what could I possibly want? And I asked her for a baking book. And so she bought me my first ever baking book which I still have, and I baked my first ever Victoria sponge out of that - it was lopsided, but it tasted just like Mrs Marshall's from Home Ec.

Jimi 09:49

It's very encouraging for all of us to hear that even you started with a lopsided bake. I think it gives us all hope that you know, we can get to your levels one day. You touch on that moment of revelation at school, and kind of being introduced to this kind of... baking, and this kind of... these English staples, and this kind of whole new world of food and cuisine. You've also been really candid, and admirably candid in the past about school not being the easiest time. And it's really amazing the way that you've been so honest and upfront about that.

Nadiya Hussain 10:26

So me, when I think back to being much younger, when I was quite badly bullied, I was, and I mean, like, it was quite horrific... And I remember, although, like I said, home was quite chaotic, because, you know, growing up in an immigrant household where it was mostly just survival, you know, as long as the bills were paid, and we were just getting by, you know, that was our life, there was no aspiration, there was no getting better, or improving our lives, or aspiring to be better, or being more, it was just survival. And I think a lot of growing up, that's what it felt like for me, especially in primary school leading into high school. The bullying became so bad that really, like, that chaos became my comfort. And food, I remember just really looking forward to going home and opening the door and, and being met with that smell and trying to guess what mum had cooked that day. And often it was like seven, eight different curries. And we would sit through eight different curries. And there was no, there was no: 'Oh, you don't just have one and you go', it was very much, there was an order. So you had the vegetables and the fermented fish, and then you'd have the chicken, and then you'd have the meat, and then you'd have the... and then you'd have the mango and the cream. So there was like a hierarchy of things that you'd eat every single night. And I don't know how my mum did it. But that has always been comfort for me. And that's something that I think I've always tried to recreate that for my own children.

Jimi 12:07

We touched on the idea of leftovers, and I know, you mentioned it with the things that would be brought home by your dad from the restaurant, and I know that waste is something that you have been really anti throughout your, kind of, when you were brought up, with this philosophy, and I think especially now it's something that people are getting more and more aware of, but, you are all about the kind of, the offal, and even the things that perhaps people would be put off. Talk us through that and your kind of journey with that. Is it still a treat? Is it still something that you kind of savour?

Nadiya Hussain 12:43

I absolutely hate waste. Like it's my biggest bugbear when I see people throwing things away. I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that I grew up in an immigrant home. My grandma was an immigrant, and my parents, and they all kind of grew up desperate for a taste of home, so they did everything they could possibly to create that home within their home in England. And I never understood that as a child. But I remember just growing up, and I remember once, you know those moments in school when they say: 'Right, so let's talk about what everybody had for dinner'. First time, I remember feeling really nervous as it got to me. And I said: 'Cow's tongue and rice and chicken livers,' and everybody was whoosh, and looked at me. And I was like: 'Oh, is this not normal?' And I knew, as she went through the class, that this wasn't like a thing that people did. And I remember then realising, there was a moment I was like: 'Oh, I'm never going to tell anyone what I eat at home'. And then when everyone reacted, I was like: 'Guess what else I eat?', and so it became a thing. So as a child I became very proud of this

stuff that we ate and my dad always said: 'You know what...!', and my dad would come home and say: 'Do you know how much I paid for this cow's tongue?'. I'm like: 'How much, how much?'. And he's like: 'Nothing'. And that was like, that is my dad through and through. And it's like, if they're throwing it away, and we can eat it, why are we not taking it? Why have we killed a whole animal? Why have we killed a whole animal to pay for the best bits? And actually the best bits are the bits that are being thrown away. And my kids, if you ask them what they love, they love tripe – absolutely love tripe, love cow's tongue, they love all the innards, like they... or, anything on the inside that they will devour. So, it's one of those things, like nose to tail eating is so important because it means no waste, but that equally, that being said, it's also about the stuff that let's put off on the side for a second, that's a whole other stretch, but it's things like potato peelings, and you know, chucking away, you know, bits of scrap pastry like I don't throw away scrap pastry, I bake it and I put it in a jar for when I'm making a cheesecake because, you know, normally when you're making a cheesecake, you'd use a whole packet of biscuits, but if you save up the pastry and crumble it up, before you know it, you've got an entire jar of biscuit crumbs that you can then use in your base. I don't throw anything away – potato peelings - if you just freeze it and stick it in the freezer, a couple of weeks later, you've got like potato, carrot and parsnip peelings that you can turn into an amazing, wholesome, hearty, scrapped soup, which is what I like to call it. So it's little things like that. I think it's changing your mindset. I think that's really important.

Alison 15:24

It's changing your mindset, but also, it's giving people the confidence not to waste food all the time as well.

Nadiya Hussain 15:31

Absolutely, I think that's why it's really important to be vocal about that kind of thing. Because I think it's very easy to fall into the trap of being a recipe writer, or a cook, and kind of constantly saying, you need this list of ingredients, and this is how you use them, and actually, we don't have to be, we don't have to be uptight about food, it is food, and it's edible, and it's delicious, and let's think about how much we're spending and what we're wasting. All of those elements are a big part of being a cook for me, like I am, that's a big part of how I was raised, and I think the more I'm vocal about it, and the more I talk about it, the more honest I am, the more honest it all feels for me. And the best thing out of it is that I think when people watch and say: 'Why she's doing it, I can do it'. That's giving people confidence. And that's really important.

Jimi 16:15

It's a very good point. And you mentioned your shows, and TV and books and children's books, and, you know, you've kind of got this incredible empire that's come up over these past few years, but the place that it all starts with was with *Bake Off*. How do you look back on that time and what it was like, and, what was going on behind the scenes, and, and the things that you were kind of going through at the time that people didn't really see?

Nadiya Hussain 16:42

That all does feel a bit like a blur, because it wasn't something that I'd ever intended to do. So like I didn't apply for a *Bake Off* myself, it was my husband that did the application. So, I'm like, 'Who does that?'. Like, I think that was the most bizarre thing for any human, because I was, at that point when he

applied, I was at my lowest in terms of my mental health. And I was really struggling to kind of, I suppose almost find myself again, because somewhere between being married, and having children, and being a stay-at-home mum, I kind of lost myself a little bit, or I was desperate. And I suppose for him he'd seen that I'd lost the will to find myself. And I think that's where it really got him and he just thought there was a time when you get lost, but you... you're desperate to find yourself I'd then given up and said: 'Yeah, I'm not even willing anymore to find the lost version of myself'. So I think it really upset him. And I think it really, I think it was something that was, that was affecting him. And he just said, as I spent more time in bed, and less time with the children, and more kind of... became more insular, he just said: 'I think you need to do something for you'. So he put the application in and I don't know where the common sense is in that because I don't see how being at the worst in my mental health at that point, to then say: 'I'm going to put you on the biggest baking show in the country'. I can't see how that clicked in his mind.

Jimi 18:08

The most stressful thing imaginable – where it's a kind of immersion therapy approach where you kind of put yourself through something so tough.

Nadiya Hussain 18:16

But he, for some reason, he decided that that would be the right thing to do. And I said, Yeah, yeah, look, I'll do it, but I won't get in. And that'll upset me. And that'll hurt me. And then that will just trigger something else entirely. And he said: 'No, no, no, it'll be fine', and I managed to get in, and I kind of look back at that moment, and I think anyone who suffers with a mental health, with mental health issues, or knows someone, I think when people watched me, they saw whatever it was that I wasn't willing to speak out about. And I know in that moment, when I look back, look back five years ago, I still can't fully watch that end bit because like the mixture, the mixture of the music and my sobbing face and my children's voices in the back, really can... really... I mean it really, even now I can feel my jaw tightening up as I say it, because it is... for me, because that moment was much more than cake. It wasn't about winning a competition. Nobody really saw how often I was falling apart, or needed to be picked back up every single week, to allow myself to believe that I could do that. You know, that was hard. That was a difficult 10 weeks that my children experienced, that I experienced and my husband experienced, and collectively, we were on that journey together, but ultimately, when I got on that train and went to that tent every weekend, I was really fighting myself to get through those weeks, and to get to week 10, which I still call week 10, and my husband says: 'It's the final, there's no week 11, you can't call it week 10'. And even now I still can't call it the final. And I look back and I think my life has changed so much in those five years, and often, I go back to remind myself of who I was, and I do find myself visiting her, and I find myself comforting her, and reminding her, that actually it's going to be okay.

Jimi 20:18

Just thinking about some of the specific dishes, I know that *Nadiya Bakes*, your most recent book - is there a keema spiced toad in the hole? Am I kind of getting that right.

Nadiya Hussain 20:28

Yes, it's like Lamb Seekh Kebab Toad in the Hole.

Jimi 20:31

Yes, yeah. So talk us through the kind of... the, the inspiration behind that one. And using that as an example, to what extent do you know when something's kind of got legs as a recipe and as an idea, and the fusion of two different cultures is going to work?

Nadiya Hussain 20:49

Well, I mean, come on, Seekh kebabs and Yorkshire pudding? Can it go wrong? Come on, you just like, you only have to say the words to know that it's going to work, right? That's it, like for me, there's some things, and I sometimes, I do feel like: 'Oh, gosh, is this really out there?'. I used to, at first, really worry that some recipes would be too much. But then, like, I... there's this... and I suppose it's like, my distinct disrespect for tradition has just allowed me to just do whatever I want. Like, I just think it's sometimes... I just think it's okay, like because that's always, that's just always the way I've cooked. And so when you take something like a Seekh kebab, which I grew up eating, and a Yorkshire pudding, like if you do both elements justice, if you really spice that mince and make it really delicious, simple, yet, spiced and fragrant and delicious. And you respect that Yorkshire pudding. Why can't you put the two together? I just can't see why that can't happen. And I think we need to just stop worrying about... I used to worry so often about putting recipes together and being told off because once I did a Cornish pasty and someone had called me and said: 'Oh, you can't put apple in a Cornish pasty'. But like, I'm just going to tell you, it's really tasty when you put chunks of apple, instead of the swede, because some people don't want to buy a swede but they have an apple at home. So that was like, just, it was just one of those things, and it tastes out of this world - that delicious Cornish pasty. Yeah, so I used to really worry at first but then you do things, like I did chicken doughnuts. So I've got chicken doughnuts. There was a little bit of a social media meltdown and everyone was like: 'No, I can't even imagine'. But I mean, I don't think I've ever eaten so many carbohydrates in one sitting. When I made it... I always know it works when I make them at home, and the kids say: 'Hmm'. You know when I've done it and it's worked first time, and I don't have to test the recipe anymore, the kids say... the kids come home, eat the lot, and say: 'Mmm-hmm, Mum, I think you need to test that one again'. Aah-ah, they like it!

Jimi 23:00

So it's always the giveaway.

Nadiya Hussain 23:02

Exactly. And it's like, yes, the words are weird to put together, chicken and doughnut. But, like, you know, essentially, a doughnut is fried bread isn't it? So why can't we put chicken in it just because somebody said jam was acceptable? Why can't we put... who said? Who said we can't put chicken in a doughnut? Well, I'm saying it's allowed and I think it's a delicious concoction and it works and it wouldn't be in the book if it didn't. So like you have to think, when you... when I come up with things like that, there's no point in being shy about it, and there is no point in being humble about it, because I know it's delicious and it's going to be anyone who's made it, it's like one of the most delicious things - anything fried with chicken and doughnut, like – come on. And then it's got like a savoury dust on top of garlic and dried coriander. Just delicious. Just delicious.

Alison 23:51

Sounds amazing. Have you got any examples of any combinations that you've tried that on paper you think will look good, but in practice just really have been a total disaster.

Nadiya Hussain 24:02

One of the things that I really was nervous about using, and I have been since *Bake Off*, was lavender. For me lavender is a thing that I grow in my garden to deter other cats from coming and weeing in my garden. So to think that we can use it as an ingredient stresses me out slightly. It did at first, and then I gathered my lavender from my old garden, and later on during *Bake Off*, I did a bavarois cream and I flavoured it with white chocolate and lavender, and not really understanding the potency and the kind of strength of lavender, and I remember saying to my kids - like they they're my chief taste testers - I was like: 'Guys, try this'. I'm shoving things in their face, saying: 'Here, try this'. 'Okay Mum, I'm kind of midway through a changing', or 'having a shower', and I'm like up there with pots and pans: 'Try, try, try it', and my son put this kind of bavarois cream in his mouth and I cook the look on... I don't know if you've ever seen this kind of look, but you know, when you know his eyes and mind are just looking for a bin.

Alison 25:09

He must have felt like he'd tasted a mouthful of chocolate-flavoured soap if you had that dominant a flavour of lavender.

Nadiya Hussain 25:15

So he literally ran around, ran downstairs, chucked it in the bin, and then came up to the... I was still at the top of the stairs; he was still at the bottom and it's the only time my son has ever shouted at me. And he said: 'Don't ever, ever put anything like that in my mouth ever again'. I was like: 'Okay, okay'. So he was at eight at the time, he was furious, absolutely furious. And he spent the whole-time eating salt and vinegar crisps then to get the flavour out of his mouth. But then I decided to, in this book, to revisit lavender. And I said: 'No, I'm going to pair it with something that it works with, and like, really understand what lavender can bring to a recipe'. So I did a lavender and blueberry scone pizza. I mean, I don't know if you can put so many weird words together.

Jimi 26:06

Yeah, I was going to mention this.

Nadiya Hussain 26:10

Scone. Pizza. Blueberry. Lavender.

Jimi 26:12

Fantastic. You mentioned your kids there as you're kind of chief testers and toughest critics, it turns out, how important has it been for you to kind of create the kind of environment that you've been talking about, that you grew up in, and kind of in terms of the values that you kind of had and you've carried through life. I know that there's always quite a surprise from people from the outside that, that will assume that you'll have lots of help. And, you know, there'll be kind of some, you know, fancy test kitchen that you're going off to, and you're surrounded by an entourage of, kind of, test bakers, but that's not really the case, is it? You're shaking your head now.

Nadiya Hussain 26:58

Absolutely not. No, no, I'm... for me, ultimately, when I write a cookbook, and we have these weeks of talking about the cookbook, and then I go on, and you know, I've been really lucky to have cookery shows that go with my cookbook. So you know, when I am up there standing talking about my recipes, whether it's a podcast or an interview, or just your daytime TV, whatever it is, they have to be my recipes. There is... I have to know that book top to bottom, back to front, inside out. I have to know everything. When somebody says: 'How much is it?', I have to know that, like even if I have to refer back, I have to know exactly which recipe they're talking about. Because that's really important to *me*. And I know that, you know, there are people who do have their recipes written for them and have things tested for them, and have books created for them - I can't be a face of a book. For me, it's the integrity of the book that really matters. And if I don't write those recipes, what's the point? Like, to me, it's just another book. And I know that I know, when I see people on social media posting pictures of the recipes they've done. That is the very same recipe that I would have tested in my house. And it's not a big kitchen. It's a lovely kitchen, and it does what it... it serves its purpose. It is the heart of our home, it's where I test all of my recipes, all 120 of them. One by one over two, three months. It's the same place where I cook dinner for my kids and get the cat food out and you know, do the dishes and all of that. So for me that's like, it is the heart of my home, and it's the place where I am most creative. And to me that matters. And no I don't have, I refuse to get myself a cleaner because, I just... there's nothing wrong with getting a cleaner, I'm not judging anyone who has one, I choose not to because nature has given me cleaners in my children and I firmly believe that if they make a mess, they have to learn that somebody has to clean that up. And if they want to bake a cake, they've got to clean that up. If they want to make something, they've got to clean it up. There is no... and yes, sometimes I'm nice, I might clean up a little bit around them if I'm in the kitchen. But on a Sunday, they spend three hours on a Sunday cleaning the whole house top to bottom. And there's no arguments - you have to. Yeah, they don't like it. They hate cleaning the house. And by that I mean dusting the tops of the doorframes, that kind of cleaning. They have to do it, they don't have a choice, they don't get paid for it, they have to do it and they don't, they don't love it, but you know, I just don't see the value in raising my kids believing that I can just afford to get a cleaner in and to clean the house - because the only thing I can't do is clean the windows. So like we have somebody come in and clean the windows and right now, especially right now, these people need their jobs. So absolutely, it's even more important to pay them to do it. So no, I mean once they're tall enough to get up a ladder they're cleaning the windows!

Alison 29:58

Brilliant! Tell us, apart from cleaning do the children do much cooking? Do you do much cooking with them?

Nadiya Hussain 30:02

Yes, they love it. I've got three kids. So the two boys, my eldest is 14. He loves cooking. So he loves getting in the kitchen and chopping and peeling. I still have to coax him to do some of the cleaning because he very, very much cooks and then leaves. And I'm like: 'Come back, come back'. Yes, there is no fairy, you will be cleaning this yourself. But he loves to cook. And my little girl who's 10 loves baking. But my son who's 13, like, loves eating, but like sometimes, because he's so desperate to play video games, he just says: 'Imagine if somebody could invent food in a tablet where you just take it and it fills

you up'. But yeah, he genuinely cannot see the value in being in the kitchen. He loves to eat but hates cooking, doesn't really like baking, and so what I tend to do with him is when the others are in the kitchen, pottering around, I try and get him to do the dishes - and he loves doing the dishes. So even if that means like, for me, that's enough, like, if he doesn't want to cook and if he doesn't want to cook or bake, I can't force him to do it. But he likes certain elements of it. So I try and include him in certain bits of it. But, I mean, my husband cannot cook to save his life.

Jimi 31:13

I'm still amazed at that.

Alison 31:15

So tell us Nadiya, on a busy week when you're writing your testing recipes, what do you feed your family? Do you have a quick go-to supper?

Nadiya Hussain 31:25

Yeah, so we, for us, it's because I am busy and I'm testing recipes – less so now – but, you know, like, for me, it's all about, kind of every, it's about how do we use stuff up? It's always about for us, right, how can I use this up, I don't want to waste this? But for us on a weekday, one of the quickest things... so my kids have to have, like they love puddings, so they have got to have... that's the least Bangladeshi part of them. They're very British, like we've got to have some pudding. So two of our staples, like I do a very quick no-cook avocado pasta sauce, so the only thing you cook is the pasta, and then you literally just scoop out avocado, bit of garlic, bit of chilli, bit of coconut oil and blitz it all up and you have a delicious avocado pasta that's so simple to make. And then you can just make it, make loads of it, stir it through your pasta, and then like, whatever you've got leftover sits in the fridge and you can spread that on toast. It's just such a versatile thing to make midweek, you know, when we just kind of need something very quick, when they're in and out of zoom calls and classes, and things like that. And also one of the recipes I have to say, is one of their favourites from this book, is the croissant bread and butter pudding. So it's, and it's such a... it literally uses four ingredients that we always have at home, which is croissants split down the middle, buttered, jammed and then you take ice cream that you deliberately thaw out. And then you pour that all over the croissants and then you bake it in the oven. Essentially what you've got is a very quick instant bread and butter pudding. That is just like, delicious. That's what ice cream is, ice cream is just frozen custard. And normally, in a bread pudding, you would normally use... you'd be making a custard so why not just take the one you've got in your freezer and defrost it right?

Jimi 33:12

It's a really, really good point.

Nadiya 33:13

That's how my mind works!

Alison 33:14

And also, it means you can have all sorts of different flavoured custards.

Nadiya Hussain 33:18

Exactly.

Alison 33:19

Depending on what ice cream you've got.

Nadiya Hussain 33:20

Oh, we've got Neapolitan, we have - we've got chocolate, strawberry and... It's out there and it's going to make you eat a lot of pudding. I'm just saying, I reckon you should try it out.

Alison 33:29

And is there an ingredient that you've always got in your store cupboard?

Nadiya Hussain 33:32

Yes, I always, always have harissa. So it's just one of those things that are so easy to use. Everybody needs something really quick... because my kids are slightly spoiled in that they eat really kind of very flavoursome food. So you know, like, I mean, these are kids who love shrimp paste. So you can imagine, like, they love all of that. So, like, whenever I make egg and chips, it just doesn't cut it so they have to put, you know, they always have to put something extra with egg and chips, even egg and chips in our house - it's like they've got to add something extra. And harissa gives you that instant kind of, you can get flavour in anything, whether you're stirring it through a pasta, whether you're adding a little bit to a curry, whether you are spreading it on toast with a poached egg and some honey, like that, you know even that, something as simple as that. So I always have a jar of harissa for emergencies.

Jimi 34:24

Emergency harissa I think that is something that we can all learn from and try to emulate. Looking ahead. You've achieved so much; we've already talked about that. Are there any things that you kind of had that you still want to set as goals, or other kinds of projects that you're looking ahead to now?

Nadiya Hussain 34:42

Gosh, I wish I knew, like, I think mostly I've been winging it. I don't know that I've ever really had a plan. And I think I have mostly been winging it. It's really weird because I have, I feel like I've achieved so much more than I ever imagined I would in five years. You know, that like, that moment when I got that letter, all sealed, that I got an MBE, which was like... right? So, I was like, I couldn't lie. I remember looking at the letter and thinking: 'Ooh, this is fancy paper. What's this?'. You know, like this is...? What's this? You know, like, this isn't one from the high school, it's not from the doctors - what... I mean it was... it was plump and it was fancy. And I remember getting it. And, it's really weird because I always talk about the kind of balance. And I remember being really excited and telling my mum and she said: 'What's it? What's it? What's in it? What's an MBE?'. 'Ok, nevermind, nevermind'. And then I said: 'Pass the phone to dad', so I spoke to Dad, and I said: 'Dad, Dad, I got an MBE', and he said: 'Hmm. Aren't there other letters that are better than an MBE?'. 'Dad! Dad, you can't say that!'. I was like: 'What are you raining on my parade for?'. So, like I can't believe sometimes I've achieved some of the things that I have. And with those achievements, I have like moments of highs and moments of lows, but equally I have balance in that I can firmly keep my feet on the ground. And I think that's what keeps me

doing what I'm doing. I think it's because, I'm actually, essentially, just like everybody else – it's just that this is my job. And I cook and I write books, and I work in telly. And I think, I think, as long as I'm... for me, I think I've understood the importance of doing this job in a way that I hadn't five years ago, because it isn't just for me, I've stepped into an industry that has never had space for someone like me. There was never space for somebody like me in publishing, in television. Because if there was there'd be more people like me already doing this job. Hence, I would have... I would have gone into the industry, feeling like I could do it. So I've always had that kind of sense of: Can I? Am I allowed? Should I? There's always been that, that wall that's come up straight away thinking: 'Oh, I don't know if I belong here'. It has always been about belonging, or whether I fit in, or whether there's space for me. The truth is, there was never space for me in this industry, whether it's television or publishing, whatever, everything that I've done. There's never been space for me. So five years on, I understand the importance of doing the job that I do. Because it's much more than just writing cookbooks and working in television. It's about representation. And in those moments where I think: 'Oh, I don't know if I can do this anymore. I don't know if I belong here', I have to constantly tell... I have to remind myself why I'm doing it. It's about creating space. And there's a thing that I say to my children, I always say to my kids, whenever they feel like they don't fit in, or they feel like... and they're teenagers, so they never feel like they fit in, so there's moments where they always say: 'Mum, I don't think I can do that', 'Mum, I don't think I fit in', 'Mum, I don't think there'll be anyone there like me'. In those moments, I tell my children: 'elbows out'. And it's about creating space. And if you think about, like, actually the action of elbows out, it is about... it's about physicality, it's about emotionally creating that space for you - because if you don't create that space for you, if you don't fight for that space, how will you create space for other people? And ultimately, that is what my job is. I love doing what I do. I would never be doing anything else. But it is about creating space for others. Who will? There's a generation out there who will look at me and say: 'Gosh, if she's doing it, I think I can do it'. And that is enough for me. And as long as I'm doing that, I'm happy.

Jimi 38:29

Nadiya, thank you so much for your time. It's always such a joy, and we look forward to seeing whatever comes next. Because I'm sure it'll be great and I'm sure it'll be delicious.

Nadiya 38:38

Thank you.

Jimi 38:50

You've been listening to Life on a Plate from Waitrose. I'm Jimi Famurewa, thank you to my co-host Alison Oakervee, and our guest, Nadiya Hussain. To learn more about the series, go to waitrose.com/podcast, and please subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.