

## **LIFE ON A PLATE**

### **SEASON 3, EPISODE 1: JOE WICKS**

#### **SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

people, cooking, recipes, cook, food, bit, thought, eating, joe, lovely, works, jamie oliver, feel, enjoying, book, exercise, cocoa puffs, kids, love, ice cream

#### **SPEAKERS**

Joe Wicks, Jimi Famurewa, Alison Oakervee

#### **Jimi 00:05**

Hello, and welcome to the third season of Life on a Plate, the podcast from Waitrose, in which we talk to some very special people about food, what it means to them and the role it has played in their life. We ask about food memories and favourite recipes, must-have ingredients and the dishes that represent comfort, celebration or adventure and find out a lot more about our guests in the process.

Alison, hello, how you doing?

#### **Alison 00:36**

I'm all right, thank you. We're back.

#### **Jimi 00:38**

We are back for the third season. And it seems like we are celebrating because you have been incredibly sneaky but in the best possible way and sent me some mystery packages.

#### **Alison 00:52**

It's arrived has it? That's good.

#### **Jimi 00:54**

Yes. Yeah, they did. I thought it was gonna be a lemon drizzle, obviously, but it was not and you know, I was only mildly disappointed that it wasn't.

#### **Alison 01:02**

But it's summer. You've got to have ice cream. So you've got some vanilla ice cream, some good organic vanilla ice cream there to try.

#### **Jimi 01:09**

Yeah so, I mean, you know, it didn't make a whole lot of sense initially, why you sent me that with something else. So please explain what we're gonna be, what we're going to be doing, and what I'm going to be tasting.

**Alison** 01:21

Well, I'm going to get you to try some of this vanilla ice cream. We're not going to cover it with sugar sprinkles or chocolate or syrup. You should have a bottle of 100% Italian olive oil, extra virgin olive oil.

**Jimi** 01:32

Yes I have. Wow, it looks incredible. I'm going to open that up. Very satisfying to open up a fresh bottle.

**Alison**

So first off we're going to try it.

**Jimi**

So we're pouring oil onto a spoon. That's really, really good.

**Alison**

It's fruity. It's peppery.

**Jimi**

Yeah, yeah, there's a real sort of late-blooming kick of pepper at the end. And it's got like a really lovely lingering mellowness to it. It's got real complexity to it. That is really, really good. That's amazing. So I can probably see where this is going.

**Alison** 02:03

So we're going to drizzle this. So you could use this over salads, or a tomato salad, and have it to finish dishes.

**Jimi**

Yeah, of course.

**Alison**

We're just gonna put a tiny trickle over the ice cream.

**Jimi** 02:12

Okay, let me just scoop some out. I must confess that there's a little bit that's disappeared since it arrived. There's a few scraps left. Okay, so a little drizzle over, there we go. It's really lovely. It looks fantastic with the very pale, not kind of, you know, the kind of nostalgic yellow ice cream with the lovely little golden speckled splodges in there.

**Alison** 02:36

Mine's just pooled around the outside, it just looks beautiful. And if you taste it with the ice cream...

**Jimi** 02:42

I should say that I've had this in a restaurant before, I think it was rapeseed oil, with an ice cream sundae. I thought it was very nice, but I would never think to do it at home. I think it's just one of those strange things. But anyway, here we go.

**Alison** 02:56

It really works. I mean, I've done recipes with olive oil in the ice cream as you've made it, but this is a good store cupboard dessert.

**Jimi** 03:06

It's really good. It's really, really good. Oh my God, it just works so brilliantly. It's kind of... the olive oil isn't overpowering, but it gives it this new kind of dimension. You get that little bit of contrasting pepper with the creaminess of the ice cream. It's really, really nice. And it feels... Yeah, it feels kind of nicely grown up. It's kind of like you take something that could be a little bit childish and, and you kind of give it that new level of sophistication.

**Alison** 03:39

That pepperiness comes from the Italian, the fact that it's 100% Italian, it's not blended. It's all grown on the slopes of Italy, so we know where it's come from. And that's what gives it that lovely peppery kind of backbite. Anyway, we could carry on talking about ice cream, and I could talk about olive oil forever. Do you think we should get on with our guest?

**Jimi** 04:01

I think we probably should. And although ice cream probably isn't the thing that you'd think of first with him, with regard to his health and fitness, he's a man that is all about balance and all about enjoying yourself as well. So it's kind of fitting. Our guest on this episode is the amazing Joe Wicks. Now, it was incredibly exciting to have a conversation with him, I think I gushed to him about just what it meant, like the PE with Joe sessions that he ran throughout this past year of the pandemic and various lockdowns. Like it was huge in my family. It was the kind of, the alarm clock to our days. And it was huge for like my wife and her sisters and her mum. It was the way they kind of connected, they always did Joe Wicks, and it was amazing.

**Alison** 04:50

But just talking to him... he had good days... And it was great to hear what it was like on those tough days, too, when he didn't want to get out of bed.

**Jimi** 04:57

Yeah. And, you know, he gave us a real insight, as well, into juggling things, you know, a big part of that honesty, is you know what it's like to be a parent to two very small kids

His children and his family are a big part of his new book, which we also talk about the creation of that and why it's such a passion project for him. He touched on the tough times he had growing up. He's so honest about the difficulties and challenges of his upbringing and how that feeds into his ethos and his philosophy and the ways in which he wants to educate people about food and, and make mealtimes a really sacred family event. So here we go then, here is our *Life on a Plate* conversation with Joe Wicks.

Joe Wicks, thank you so much for joining us. It feels weird because it feels like you've kind of been part of all our families for part of like a year. Certainly part of mine, with PE with Joe. It feels like, 'Oh yeah, it's our mate Joe,' but like, obviously, this is the first time we're meeting.

**Joe Wicks** 06:03

Thank you so much. It's lovely to hear. And I think yeah, I enjoyed that moment. It was a tough time. But I love that I was there to connect and inspire people to get moving. And, you know, I've always been on that mission to get people moving and cooking. It's, it's what I love, because I know how happy you can feel after, you know, a healthy recipe or a good workout.

**Jimi** 06:19

And you're here, you've got a book that feels completely in step with everything you've been doing over the past year. And it's called *Joe's Family Foods*. And it feels like such a natural progression. Was this always a book that you were building towards and wanted to do?

**Joe Wicks** 06:35

Yeah, it's a progression of my life. I'm here now with two kids, I'm a parent and I really, I really cherish mealtimes I really value that moment of like sitting down together and, you know, learning to cook together and having fun in the kitchen. But also connecting through food. I think nowadays, it's so easy to whack something in the mic' or the oven for the kids and they eat on their own and parents eat afterwards... and it's all kind of a bit mad. And I really, no matter how busy and chaotic my life gets, I always make time to put my phone down and be present and have dinner together as a family. I think it's really important. I didn't really have that as a kid, I didn't have that... It was a bit more chaotic. We were eating at random times and eating in my bedroom and stuff. And now, as a parent, I see how much my kids learn through a) sort of cooking and learning ingredients and stirring and making porridges and things, and then also sitting down and having a chat, like: "How's your day going?" I think it's so important. So in this book I really talk about the importance of connecting through food and enjoying that moment together.

**Jimi** 07:37

And I imagine even more so with you, in terms of putting your phone down and disengaging from that, it must be so difficult when that is your professional life as well. Is it something that you've had to learn over the years?

**Joe Wicks** 07:49

Yeah, definitely. I'm so connected to my audience still. I could be on my phone all day long and never look up and still not reply to everybody. It's a never ending inbox.

**Jimi** 07:58

Allison was pointing out that: "Oh, I don't know if I've seen that room in his house". You must get this all the time...

**Joe Wicks 08:07**

People pretty much know... because every time I film I move the camera to a different room. So yeah, I have filmed in here before, but I think between the hours of say, 5 and 7.30pm, I consciously make the effort to leave my phone in another room so that I can have dinner time, you know, do the cooking and be present. I actually think that it is the best time to sit down and say: "How's your day been, Rosie?" And I even say to Indie, "Indie, what are you grateful for today?" And she'd be like, "I'm grateful for my peas or I'm grateful for Marley's cuddles."

**Alison 08:35**

Remind us, how old is Indie?

**Joe Wicks 08:36**

So Indie's two and a half and Marley's one and a half.

**Alison 08:39**

And do you get Marley to help cook as well?

**Joe Wicks 08:41**

Yeah, I mean, we've started them really young. And he's always dipping his fingers in. I mean, he's obsessed with things like peanut butter and ketchup and jams and dippy sauces. So he'll always have his finger in something, but Indie's probably more involved. She's a little bit older. And so we might make a recipe from one of my books and, you know, I'll say, "Right do you wanna do that step?" and she peels the garlic for me and she'll use the garlic crush and things. I really love that. I think a lot of her learning, when I think about some of the words and vocabulary she's picked up from the early stages of her talking, it was like porridge, berries, butter, like she was learning words. I was constantly pointing things out. And yeah, she was stirring in the oats, she was adding the peanut butter and the berries on top of her thing, so yeah, I love that. She's learning how to crack an egg and I let her do it, but she makes so much mess it goes everywhere.

**Alison 09:33**

But that's a brilliant thing because actually that's how they learn, by making mess and not being told off for it.

**Joe Wicks 09:36**

Yeah and I want her to feel like that and when she knocks something on the floor I say: "Oh don't worry, darling, we can clean it up." And she looks up at me, she sort of thinks: "Is he going to be mad at me?" but I always try and in that moment, just let her... I say look, it's mess, we're having fun. It's like when you're painting, you know it gets everywhere. But I really see the educational side of cooking together and I think that, just like she sees me exercising, she sees me and Rosie exercising all the time, so it's become normal. Like, she comes upstairs and she hangs on the bar, she can hang for 30 seconds on a bar. So she's being inspired, in a sense, as a fitness kind of element in life, but also, through cooking. She knows that when we come together, we cook, we enjoy food. And I think that's so important for kids to learn and be around that and be exposed to that.

**Alison** 10:20

So, tell us, on a midweek, who does the cooking, is it you or your wife, Rosie?

**Joe Wicks** 10:24

I'd say now, it's probably 50/50 I think. We come up with different ideas. We, you know, we might follow other Instagrammers who share good recipes or, you know, we've got a lot of cookbooks ourselves. I always get lovely cookbooks sent to me, which is a nice bonus. So I tend to test out recipes from other people's books and friends of mine that release books. So yeah, I'd say 50/50. And we sometimes cook together. But if it's a bit chaotic and the kids are starving hungry, I'll take the kids in the garden for 20 minutes while Rosie is cooking and vice versa. Because there's nothing worse than trying to cook when you've got two screaming babies literally pulling at your ankles trying to get the food.

**Alison** 10:57

From your new book, is there a recipe that is your standout favourite?

**Joe Wicks** 11:01

I'm gonna have a little look through and remind myself because you know what, I've been making recipes from this book now, but when you write a book, it's like months ago. I really like the kind of tray bake things you know, where you just throw it all in the pan. This is a really lovely recipe. It's cod, bean, tomato and rosemary parcels, so you sort of bake it in the foil in a parcel. And the kids love this. The kids really enjoy fish. So that's something that we stick in, it's got the vegetables in there. And it's quick, you're prepping it in 10 minutes, and it cooks in 15. So perfect for two adults and two small kids.

**Jimi** 11:37

It's fair to say that you've always been quite open and upfront about the fact that you're not, in fact, a trained chef but you're a cooking enthusiast who is open to learning because it goes hand-in-hand with fitness and leading a healthy lifestyle. But tell us about your cooking journey from first starting out to where you are now, being such a bestselling author of multiple cookbooks?

**Joe Wicks** 11:59

Well, I think one of the reasons I've been successful is because people have come on a journey with me, they've watched me from the start, sharing recipes, learning to cook, you know, and really taking people on a journey into cooking, because I actually feel quite a confident cook now. But when I started, I had no idea – all I could really make was a really basic stir fry. And I could cook a bit of chicken. But I think the more and more I pushed myself on Instagram, because I was obsessed with sharing recipes. You know, this is long, long before I had a book deal with Pan Macmillan, long before I'd even thought about that, it wasn't even something I was thinking about. Because in the early days of Instagram, it was a 15 second video, all you could post was 15 seconds. So the hashtag 'leanin15', it meant a 15 second video and a 15 minute meal, a meal you could do in 15 minutes. So that was the idea that I had.

**Jimi** 12:51

Wow. So it was literally shaped by those limitations by that platform, basically.

**Joe Wicks** 12:56

One hundred per cent. And I think, you know it was the right time. There was other people doing Instagram recipe videos, but I brought a little bit of energy to it. I was you know, obviously throwing the rice in the mic', and all the craziness that came with those videos. And I think I really, I really pushed myself. Like one week I'd be: "Right I want to do a filo pastry pie, I want to make a risotto...", and I kept challenging myself. And so as I learned, I started to share these recipes. And my greatest gift to the world is not that I'm, you know, an incredible chef, and I'm creating recipes that are gonna blow you away. It's really about food that's accessible and easy to do. And you can all have a go at it and you are going to come out of it with a wonderful... it's going to taste great, and the kids are gonna eat. And so yeah, I think that is the reason I've sold nearly three and a half million books. Which is mind blowing, right? That's really without TV, it's not about... I didn't do cooking shows, but it was just people that genuinely loved the recipes because they were just simple.

**Jimi** 13:53

Yeah, yeah.

**Alison** 13:54

Who were you looking to for inspiration to learn to cook?

**Joe Wicks** 13:57

Well, without a doubt, you know, the first person I ever really would tune into and watch any kind of cooking was Jamie Oliver. I was at school, I was a teenager when Jamie started *The Naked Chef*, and I just remember always, I wasn't cooking at the time, but I just love the way he talks about food and I just loved watching those shows. But I never really started cooking until I got into university, when I had to sort of fend for myself and start cooking. And yeah, I would really just, I was following other Instagram accounts, you know, for like quirky... You see these sort of quirky ideas around like baked eggs and different kind of novelty things and I'd go: "Oh, that's good. I'll make it on my Instagram." I was just inspired, just constantly wanting to try something different because I was sharing a recipe every day. So every day of the week I wanted to share something new.

**Jimi** 14:41

You mentioned mealtimes when you're at home and like your home life and stuff, and you've been very open about the challenges that you faced growing up. What was it like? What were your kind of early memories of food in particular and just family life in general?

**Joe Wicks** 14:55

So yeah, I'm quite open about my past. You know, I've come from a family of addictions. So my dad was struggling with drug addiction from a young age. So he wasn't always there. You know, he's in and out of rehab, and I suppose my mum was doing the majority of the cooking. And she left home at 15, she left school at 15, she left home, so she didn't have the knowledge and the skill set around cooking. And, also, it wasn't... in the 80s, like nutrition and child nutrition, it wasn't a big thing. We didn't really, you know, I was drinking like, Ribena in a bottle. I remember my brother Nikki... eight of his teeth got removed because they went black. So it was really a lack of education back then. And really, my mum... and also financially, you know, she was on benefits. We couldn't afford good food. It was always

frozen dinners. It was... she would make pasta and just have like, you know, like a tomato sauce on it. She just didn't know how to cook. So, for me, I didn't have a great diet growing up, lots of Sunny Delight, you know, Wagon Wheels, it was crisps. We'd get home from school, and it would be like: "Do you want to have a picnic?" And it would just be like sandwiches on white bread with like the teddy bear ham and that sort of stuff. It was a case of the financial situation we were in but also, that kind of food, the cheapest kind of food, is just what we could afford. And she didn't have the education around cooking.

### **Alison**

And it was just really fuel rather than nutrition.

### **Joe Wicks**

Yeah, it was just food just to keep you full up. And I loved all that food because I was a fussy eater. So I did enjoy the food. And I was never an overweight child. But I think because I was so active, you know, playing football, I was running, I was so hyperactive, but it no doubt it affected my behaviour, my attention span, you know, and I would never give those foods like in that quantity to my kids now, because I know how much it would affect them. But I honestly in 1985, 1990, I just don't think people knew the effects of nutrition on our bodies as much, you know.

### **Jimi 16:50**

You wanted to be a PE teacher when you were younger, which seems kind of perfect considering what's happened the last year and you kind of becoming the nation's PE teacher. PE with Joe was in the works for quite a while, wasn't it? It was something that you had been building towards for a while, right?

### **Joe Wicks 17:08**

Yeah, it looks like I had this amazing idea overnight. And I just launched it and it blew up. But I really had been working on this for kind of four or five years, visiting schools, and then a couple of UK tours. And I really got a sense of what young children like to do, how you can engage them in exercise. So I was all over the place, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, I went everywhere visiting schools. And my aim was to kind of do a similar thing to Jamie Oliver's *School Dinners*, I was trying to get a TV show, I was trying to get support. But you know, no one had the budget, and they just didn't have the time for it at that moment in time. And then when I launched PE with Joe, obviously I had built so much trust around working out with kids and always being positive and sharing good content. And people knew, parents and teachers knew that when I went live on 9am that morning, that I was going to deliver a safe, fun, friendly workout. I wasn't gonna swear. And I think that was because I built that community and brand trust over so many years. And so every newsletter in the UK, every school newsletter, every Twitter account, every, you know, media outlets helped me promote that and help me share those workouts. And that's the reason it got so many views. And I think, yeah, that was something that I truly believed that I was going to achieve that, I just thought it's going to take me 10 years. I truly thought I'd do a Jamie Oliver touch style campaign, I might do some kind of government initiatives, but then PE with Joe happened and it was like, my whole dream came true. It manifested in such a short time.

**Jimi** 18:31

Yeah, yeah. And it's funny that you say because I still work at the *Evening Standard* and I remember being in the office when you were interviewed in like 2015, 2016 maybe. And you said in the interview that you wanted to get an OBE, you had this plan that you would kind of, you know, change the way the nation looked at exercise. And I think you know, at that time, people might have thought, oh, what's he talking about? And then, you know, five years later, you've got an MBE and you've literally accomplished that. So, yeah, any predictions you make in this conversation I think people need to take them seriously.

**Joe Wicks** 19:02

Thank you. It's a mad journey. I do stop sometimes and think of other things I imagined happening and the things I dreamed of. I do believe in that manifestation thing where if you work towards something and you're truly passionate... you know, people can sniff out a rat on social media, they can see if you're genuine or not, and I, I've just always been from day one the same person. I just love helping people, I truly am inspired by people getting healthier and happier, and for me, I work so hard still, even this year gone, I've never worked so hard. I've obviously done the PE with Joe, I launched an app, I launched a podcast, I've been doing filming with *Hey Duggee* and children's TV, and I'm loving it.

**Jimi** 19:40

What were the more challenging moments of PE with Joe, because obviously, with each successive lockdown, you kind of brought it back. And, you know, you posted a very honest, emotional video in January at the time of the third lockdown kind of being imminent or announced, and you were kind of very honest about how you were feeling and how low you were. What were the, what were the challenges?

**Joe Wicks** 20:05

Well, it was ups and downs wasn't it really for me and for everybody. I had weeks where I was fine. And then I had weeks where I felt really down. I missed my family. But ultimately, I think, the work and the workouts and just the kind of social media, just how busy I was, it distracted me a little bit, you know, because I was just working so hard. I was doing so many videos. And I think because of that it helped me, it helped me get through the lockdown. I was happier. Every time I worked out, I felt good at the end of it. And I felt focused, I had something, I had purpose and I had structure to my day. But yeah, that video you were talking about... I did an Instagram Live, it was when Boris announced another lockdown. And I had this sense of, like, we're going backwards. And you know, I had my daughter on my lap. And I was thinking I'm in this nice, warm house, and we'd just had a lovely dinner, but I imagined myself being the child I was, growing up in a council flat. We didn't have the heating on. We'd walk around in our jackets and dressing gowns because we couldn't afford the heating. And it was winter and I had this feeling of emotion towards everyone struggling out there, losing their jobs and stuff. And it really got to me and I shared it and I didn't plan on crying on Instagram. I didn't plan that. But it was like a moment of vulnerability that people really connected with. And they said, wow, like this guy's The Body Coach, this guy's always happy, always laughing, always smiling, and yet he's telling us and he's shown us that actually he's really upset and feeling a bit down. And it opened up a lot of conversation. A lot of men, a lot of men especially, messaged me saying: "I'm feeling the same. I'm trying to be this strong dad and be like this stable, strong man of the house. But I feel really down and

I'm struggling." And I spent a long time replying to people that week around mental health and communication, because I think one thing I promote a lot of is obviously food and exercise is so important for your mental health. But the third thing, the third thing, a part of the whole, the whole equation is communication and being able to talk about your feelings. And I think nowadays, everyone's going through it. And I think the more we can communicate and be open and vulnerable, the better everyone's gonna feel, because you feel like you're not alone.

**Jimi** 22:01

Yeah, you talk about the evolution of your approach. And you know, when you started, it was kind of 'lean in 15' and eating healthy and physical transformation. But it's become much more for you about, you know, mental health as well hasn't it? And as you say, like having that structure, getting that buzz off an exercise, it makes such a difference to your emotional wellbeing,

**Joe Wicks** 22:25

For sure. Well the reason is, it's not been like a forced thing, where I'm like, I'd better talk about mental health. But I've evolved, I was all about body image, it was about, you know, looking good and having abs. But I've realised, as I've got older, I just want to be active and fit and healthy so I've got more energy with the kids, so that I'm more patient with the kids, all these things really affect my mood. So exercise is like the anchor to my life that I've always kept consistent. And then the more I read the transformations... I look at the before and after, I'm like, wow, you smashed it, you've done amazing, but that is the visual. But when you read below the actual testimonials of people that have done my recipe books or my 90-day plan, and when you read those, that's the true, I call them the 'non-scale victories'. Where you can't see them on the scale, there's not something you can see. But it's people's mental health and, you know, their anxiety, their depression, everything's improving. And so I really know that I need to talk about those things and highlight that. I know I share the before and after, and it feels a bit contradictory, but some people just like the visual – they need to see it, it's a motivator, it kind of inspires them to go: "I feel that and I really wish I was a bit healthier. Look at that wonderful transformation." But I'm still always saying: "Look, read below." Because that's what's really the most important thing, isn't it? It's the things you can't see.

**Jimi** 23:41

Yeah, yeah. And you touched on it there kind of, you know, the visual aspect of it and like the ab shots and like, you know, your heartthrob status was kind of a big part of your early rise, especially. How do you reflect on that when, you know, everyone just wanted to talk about your abs or your hair or... your very handsome face, it has to be said.

**Joe Wicks** 24:04

Well, I always laugh about this when I look back at some of the photoshoots because I – and I know I wind Jamie up because Jamie Oliver got some shocking photos of him like you know, in the bath with the vegetables and all that and he said: "Joe, I just did everything." But looking back, I was the same, like I'd turn out to shoot wherever it is for *The Telegraph* or *The Guardian* or *The Mail* or whatever it was and they'd say: "Right get your shirt off and hold this broccoli." If you google me there's like images of me hanging out of a tree holding the broccoli, you know, with my shirt off. And I remember thinking it was just normal, people just would expect me to have me top off but I think the . Like before it was

mainly, like, fitness guy you know. It's more now, you know, I'm a family man. I've got a wife and kids and I think that narrative around me like having to get my top off and that's kind of stopped now but people still say: "Oh, are you going to do a topless shoot?"

**Jimi 24:53**

Are you glad it's stopped?

**Joe Wicks 24:54**

Well, yeah, I liked, I did like it when like, it gave me something to focus on. If I was going to do like a *Men's Health* cover or *Men's Fitness*, they'd say: "Right, you've got six weeks." I did like having that focused goal, but to sustain that level of body fat and be super lean, it's not enjoyable. It's not sustainable. You've got to be – you know, no gin and tonics, no desserts, you know, thinking about what you're eating, and I just love my food. So I'd rather be a little bit more you know, a little bit more squishy, not as lean, but I'm happier if I've got a bit more body fat because I'm obviously I'm enjoying the food I love when I'm not as lean because you've got to be so strict to get that *Men's Fitness* thing.

**Alison 25:31**

Tell us, do you remember the first issue cook for Rosie?

**Joe Wicks 25:35**

The first dish I cooked for Rosie? I think the first the meal I would have cooked for her would have been... It was Joe's chicken pie from my first ever *Lean in 15* book so it's like chicken and leek and mushroom, a bit of a creamy sauce and you literally just cook that and then you whack a bit of filo on top, a bit of butter, stick it in the oven for sort of 10 minutes and it comes out and she was yeah super impressed because it's quite an easy pie to make but you know that crispy filo has such a wonderful taste. So that would have been the first recipe and yeah, I think from there, she fell in love and we got married. It worked!

**Jimi 26:06**

You mention music there. I know that you play the guitar and are those the things you go to when you're feeling like you need to relax or you need a lift, you need to be energized? What are the things that you turn to when you're feeling low or flat or you just need comfort?

**Joe Wicks 26:25**

Without a doubt, food and music are two of my favourite things. And you know, I can go from listening to like, you know, Bruce Springsteen, or you know, Dua Lipa to then listening to like, Ludovico Einaudi like playing this beautiful piano and composing music. I have a real diverse range of music and I also love you know, old Motown I love you know, Sam Cooke and Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder. I listen to all that stuff. So music can really take me somewhere. And really chill me out. I also listened to, I've listened to a Spotify playlist, it's called Lullaby Baby Music. And it's really calm piano, lullaby music, and I can find that, yeah, music can really calm me and kind of chill me. But then, like, last night, I was out in a restaurant, and it was a Cinco de Mayo party. So, you know, we're sitting down eating this wonderful food. My friend just opened a restaurant in London. It's called Chameleon. It's beautiful. It's like Tel Aviv-Mediterranean kind of fusion. And they had a mariachi band. So we're sitting there eating

our food, enjoying this wonderful mezze, and then there's a mariachi band. They've got like, a live band that was singing it was singing beautiful Mexican music and it's just lovely. I think you combine good food and good music and you're having a great time. You could be anywhere. You could be in London – it was raining, it was freezing cold, it was raining – but we were there. I felt like I was in Mexico. My favourite thing in the world really, apart from being here and being with the kids, I love to travel. I love taking them somewhere new that I haven't been to. I took Indie and Rosie to Costa Rica for a month, and we just rented a car and drove around eating food and being in nature. So I do love that. I sort of love working hard, and being this guy that's really productive. But I also love doing nothing. I love going on holiday and doing nothing just having breakfast, sitting on a beach and eating lunch and thinking what's for dinner? I can live that life for a couple of months quite comfortably.

**Jimi 28:19**

Through PE with Joe, you raised a pretty phenomenal amount of money for the NHS. It was an incredible gesture. But I wonder how did you come to that decision to donate the money? Were there people around you that were maybe suggesting you keep some of it? And did you have to fight to ensure that you could do that?

**Joe Wicks 28:38**

No, I mean, I don't have a massive team around me. You might think that I have this big organisation, but it's just really, you know, me and my brother Nicky, and I've got obviously some support coaches, but I really instinctively knew like, because I've never really made much money from YouTube. It was kind of my free content platform. You know, I obviously have a successful book career and I've obviously got my online fitness plan, but I really share free content. So I never really made money from YouTube revenue from the ad sense, but when I did that first live and I thought, oh my word – like 6 million views in the first 24 hours? And I said to my brother, this is going to generate a lot of money, let's donate this to someone. Let's think of a charity we could contribute towards and obviously at the time the NHS were, it was a tough time for everyone in the NHS. We thought this charity, it's called the NHS Charities Together fund, it was helping people in the NHS.

**Alison 29:29**

You give so much to others. What motivates you to keep giving? Is it the responses from your followers?

**Joe Wicks 29:32**

For me, it's not another book deal, it's not another TV show... That stuff, that's not really – that's extrinsic, isn't it? Whereas intrinsic motivators are things that make you feel good, make you feel like you've got purpose and connection. And for me, I can spend the whole day reading DMs and replying to people, you know, people that have got anxiety and depression and people that have transformed their lives and I'm only seeing a small percentage because a lot of people would never have the confidence to actually message me. So I think wow if I'm doing that today, you know, that is enough. That's the reason I film all the time. I'm always in the gym. I'm always outside in the garden filming workouts – because I know that that content is reaching people.

**Jimi 30:10**

You mentioned a little bit about plans for the future. One thing that I think is part of your appeal is that you do the exercises you, you know, you're struggling for breath, you're sweating, you're doing them you've not, as you said, you've got a small team, you've not moved off into the background. Have you thought in terms of well into the future? Like, do you know, do you just want to keep going until you drop in terms of doing the exercises yourself?

**Joe Wicks 30:34**

Well, I've only recently started to change my mindset around this, you know, from being like – I always thought, you know, there'll be a day where I just stop training, or I stop sharing videos and The Body Coach, just was a moment in time, it was a person, it was a thing, it was like this great moment in time. But I'm now thinking, I'm restructuring my mindset around: 'Well, actually, how amazing would it be if The Body Coach lived on beyond me?' That it could be other trainers, you know, so now I'm starting to recruit trainers and trying to find new people that can essentially carry it forward and be giving amazing workouts. Because I think The Body Coach – it is me at the moment, but it's also a brand that you associate with health and fitness and happiness. And so I'm now trying to recruit wonderful people that can really continue that message and that mission. I had 5000 entries, we're now down to five people. And it's really tough. I've now got to choose about three of them. And it's difficult, but I know that this is evolution. I'm not I'm not going to just hire them and then like, disappear into the sunset, I still think I'll always be the face and I'll be generating content, but maybe it'll be like 50% me, 50% other trainers so that I can have a bit more balance. Because it is exhausting. I'm filming all these workouts.

**Jimi 31:41**

Yeah, we should touch quickly on your podcast. Congratulations on it. I listened to the Jamie Oliver episode. And it was a fantastic conversation. I really loved it. What's the experience been like? It seems, from the outside, like it would be an absolute joy.

**Joe Wicks 31:56**

It's something that I was really nervous about doing. I'm really unconfident and really like, I'm insecure when I'm doing them and stuff. But I mean, I did it, I went for it –

**Jimi 32:04**

That might be quite surprising for people to hear. You don't seem like someone who lacks confidence!

**Joe Wicks 32:08**

I think being talked to and having questions asked to you... it seems quite as easy but actually interviewing is a skill like listening is a skill and knowing what to ask next. So basically, we gave it a go and it was all through lockdown. So it's all over Zoom. So I had people like Jamie Oliver, Gordon Ramsay and Louis Theroux – people I love and I admire. So it was great. I wish I'd met them in person face to face and did it in a studio, but we've just done a second series and I actually got Tom Jones to meet, I got to meet Tom Jones in a studio in London. And I'm so into his, you know, his story and his music. It's incredible some of the musicians he's sung with in the past. So it's good, but what I'm saying is when I do it, I'm very nervous. I'm nervous, and I'm unsure myself. But when I listen back, I'm like:

“That wasn't too bad. It was actually quite good.” And you know, people are enjoying it. But I don't have... I'm not a really confident interviewer, if you know what I mean.

**Alison** 32:56

You haven't found the more interviews you've done and podcasts you've done, that confidence has grown as you've realised that what you're doing is good?

**Joe Wicks** 33:03

A little bit, but it's still like, you know, I'm not a natural interviewer. And I think it's a real skill. And when I think about the people I'm about – like, I'm about to interview Melinda Gates. And so like, that's a big conversation with someone. And obviously, even more recently, she just announced she's divorced. So I'm going into that thinking: “Wow, that's intense.” Like, what can I say? What can't I say? So I get myself in a bit of a fluster before. Again, I was asking Tom Jones about his wife that passed and I'm like, how much do I probe him? Like, how much do I ask? And so it's just, I'm just self-conscious. But I'm really proud of the episodes. I mean, we've had some great guests and the second series coming out soon is going to be really cool.

**Alison** 33:38

There's a question that I always ask everyone: no-one escapes without me asking, I'm just saying nosy. Do you have an ingredient that's always in your kitchen cupboard? Is there a go-to ingredient that the Wickses is always have at home?

**Joe Wicks** 33:51

I think it's eggs. I think I've always got like six or 12 eggs in the cupboard because we can obviously make omelettes, you can make fritattas, you can make... I mean I love a classic beans and egg on toast. I just do a couple of fried eggs, pan of beans on toast. It's quick, it's lovely, it's warm and it sort of reminds me of being at school.

**Alison** 34:08

And it's actually really nutritious as well, beans on toast with an egg.

**Joe Wicks** 34:11

Yeah, it's brilliant.

**Alison** 34:17

So Joe, this is the third season of the podcast and we're introducing a quickfire question round called Kitchen Grill. Answer as quickly as possible, but feel free to explain, elaborate or justify your answers. Here we go. Mash or chips?

**Joe Wicks** 34:31

Chips all day long.

**Alison**

Fruit or veg?

**Joe Wicks**

I'm gonna say fruit. I eat so much fruit. We go through so many punnets of raspberries and blueberries a week, it's a joke. You wouldn't believe how much we spend on berries.

**Alison 34:42**

Is that because you're eating them neat or just chucking them in porridge or smoothies or everything?

**Joe Wicks 34:47**

In porridge, in smoothies but I'm just a grazer. I just put my hand in there and I grab a handful of blueberries, all day. I can eat a bag of satsumas a day. I love – I really love fruits. If I'm not going to eat something like chocolate, you know, kind of sweet, I like to have a bit of fruit but yeah still eating loads of it.

**Alison 35:01**

What about this one? Chocolate or crisps?

**Joe Wicks 35:04**

Chocolate all day long. I'm obsessed. I'm really into – I love my crisps, that's a tough one where you shouldn't have put them together, that's really mean. But I think chocolate.

**Alison**

Fried or poached?

**Joe Wicks**

Fried. Fried eggs for me. Yeah, bit of coconut oil, bit of salt and pepper.

**Alison 35:17**

Nice. Tea or coffee?

**Joe Wicks 35:19**

Well I don't drink coffee and I don't really drink tea but if I was, I'd probably go for like a peppermint or herbal tea or something.

**Alison 35:26**

A mint infusion, nice! Bacon or smoked salmon?

**Joe Wicks 35:29**

Bacon. You know the one thing – I love sushi, I love raw fish, I can eat sashimi but I don't like the smoked vibe of smoked salmon, it's weird. I can eat salmon fillets and tuna steak and whatnot. But I can't eat tinned tuna and I can't go near smoked salmon. I don't know what it is, it's the smokiness that does me.

**Alison** 35:46

Bacon all the way. What about a baguette or sourdough?

**Joe Wicks** 35:50

Oh sourdough, big time, with a big dollop of butter and some orange marmalade on top.

**Alison**

Oh yum. Butter or olive oil?

**Joe Wicks**

Ah... I mean I cook with olive oil a lot but I just think for me, butter has just got... put it in your scrambled eggs, on toast... Yeah, so I like I like a good salty butter.

**Alison** 36:09

Nice. I'm with you there. I could eat slices of butter, it's so lovely. And what about porridge or cereal?

**Joe Wicks** 36:19

Do you know what? I'm obsessed of porridge and I love it, but the other day I went old school. My friend mentioned Coco Pops and I haven't had Coco Pops since the year 2000. So I went around the shop, bought some Coco Pops and I've done a whole box of Coco Pops in a weekend. That for me is the all-time greatest cereal. So I'm gonna say, in terms of flavour and just pure joy, Coco Pops. So cereal for me.

**Alison** 36:42

You're going to mainline some Coco Pops. Okay. That's it. Thanks Joe, that was our Kitchen Grill. And thank you for being our first victim.

**Joe Wicks** 36:51

I love that, that's a great – I like the name of it. Kitchen Grill, that's a good title, that.

**Jimi** 36:55

Joe Wicks, this has been a total joy. Thank you so much for taking the time and for just for what you've done in the last year and beyond. You've kind of helped so many people and it's just really great to get a chance to talk to you. Thanks for coming on.

**Joe Wicks** 37:11

Well, thank you so much for having me. I've really enjoyed it.

**Jimi** 37:18

You've been listening to Life on a Plate from Waitrose. I'm Jimi Famuwera. Thank you to my co host, Alison Oakervee. And our guest, Joe Wicks. If you've enjoyed this conversation, you can find lots more like it by subscribing wherever you get your podcasts. To learn more about the series, go to [waitrose.com/podcast](https://waitrose.com/podcast).