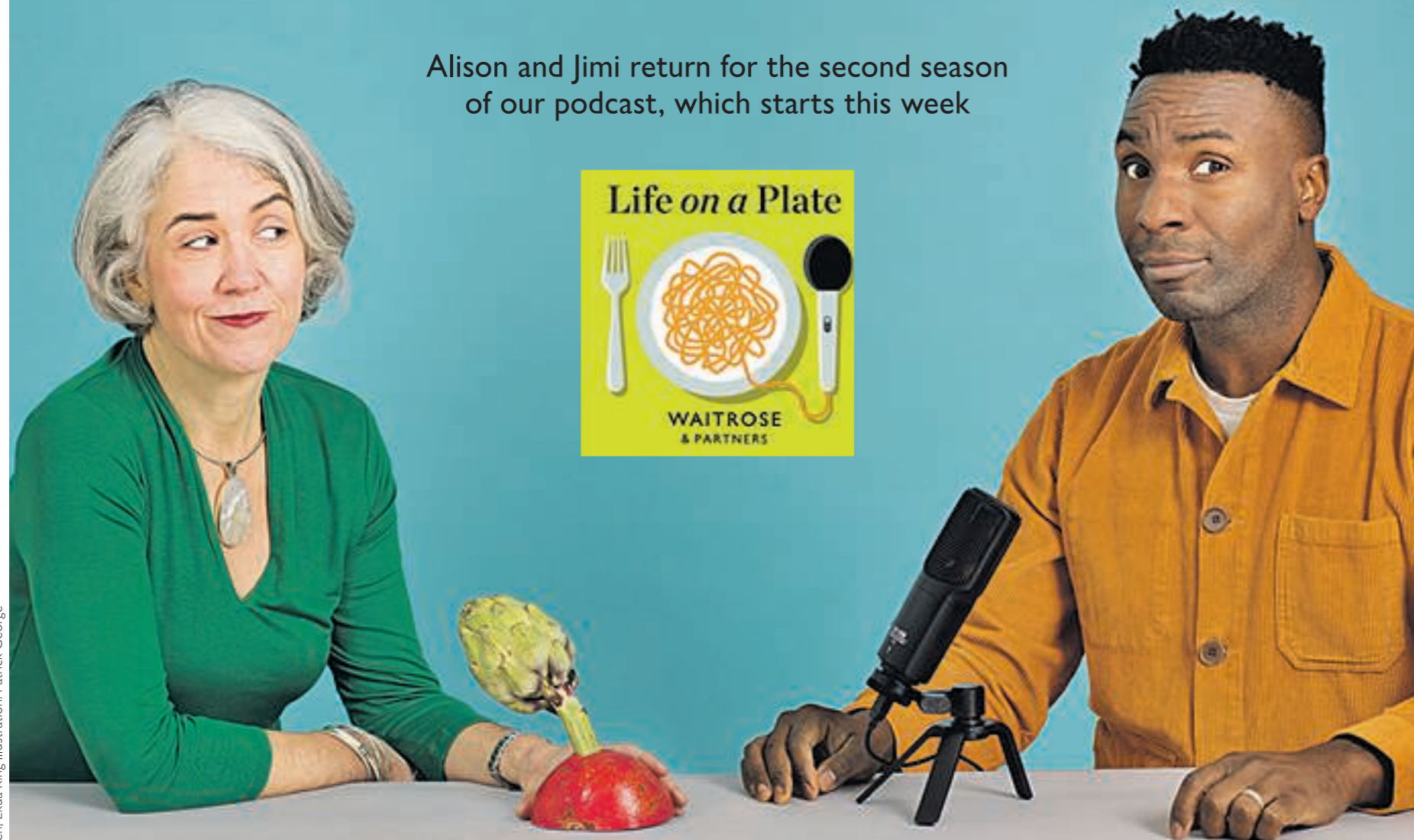
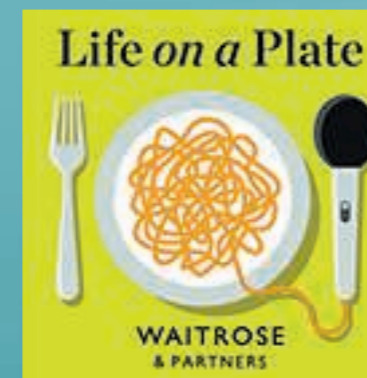


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## Life on a Plate is back

Alison and Jimi return for the second season of our podcast, which starts this week



This week, Alison Oakervee and Jimi Famurewa speak to Candice Carty-Williams (left), author of bestselling 2019 novel *Queenie* and the first black writer to win Book of the Year at the British Book Awards. Candice talks about her father's fried plantain, the challenge of cooking in flatshares and why cashews make the best writing fuel. It's available now, as are all episodes from season one, with guests including Tom Kerridge and Nadiya Hussain.

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Sponsors Life on a Plate

## Inspiring kids in the kitchen

Children love to cook and Anna-Marie Julian talks to the experts encouraging them to have fun with it

Letting go of perfection is something most homeschooling parents are familiar with by now, but when helping children learn to cook, it's the only way. That's the advice of The Kids' Cookery School founder, Fiona Hamilton-Fairley. Over the past 20 years the London-based charity has worked with more than 100,000 children, many of whom have severe physical and learning disabilities.

"I had a letter from local schoolchildren in years three and four [aged six and seven] saying 'thank you for making us brave in the kitchen'," laughs Fiona. "We made savoury cheese muffins. They felt they hadn't been allowed in before. We did classes with the whole school, bubble by bubble.

"You can't put on a piece of paper that child's face, feeling, and pride of 'I made this myself'. If something positive is coming out of this time, it's allowing children into the kitchen, to be part of it and become 'brave'."

One in five parents told the *Waitrose Food & Drink Report 2021* that their children are cooking more now than before the pandemic. Provision of cookery in schools might still be patchy, but new and exciting sources of inspiration have sprung up online, on TV and even via the post. Just take a look at Jamie Oliver's son Buddy sharing recipes on YouTube and Instagram via the hashtag #cookingbuddies. We're not talking sugar-loaded cupcakes either – Halloween featured apple monsters with strawberry slices for tongues and mini pizzas with olive spiders.

Michelle Obama's new Netflix kids cookery series *Waffles + Mochi* launches on 16 March, with two puppet pals travelling the world in a magical flying shopping cart, learning how to cook. Michelle plays a supermarket owner and there are star turns from the likes of actor Jack Black and chef Samin Nosrat.

Another show to take children on a global culinary tour is CBeebies' *My World Kitchen* – the fourth series, narrated by chef Ainsley Harriott, airs this month. In it, children aged six to eight from different countries cook from scratch, sharing traditional and favourite foods with friends. Recipes range from Tibetan spinach momos (dumplings) to Sri Lankan fish curry or Sussex banoffee pie.

The series was devised by authors and children's cookery consultants Sally Brown and Kate Morris, who used to run a cookery school for under fives. "People can



**SERVING UP A TREAT** Children on *My World Kitchen* (top); Fiona Hamilton-Fairley (far left); Michelle Obama's new *Waffles + Mochi* show

underestimate kids' capabilities," says Kate. "We want to encourage children and adults to explore together."

Their tips include getting children to use scissors to snip spring onions instead of chopping white onions with a knife, tearing peppers with their hands and helping wash up. All recipes use the oven rather than the hob. The series is aimed at children as young as four, so adults might boil potatoes or cook mince in advance.

For busy parents, another option that removes an element of planning is Little Cooks Co cooking kits. They arrive by post with the correct amounts of dried ingredients for that month's healthy cooking session. They might also include seeds to plant and games. Founder Helen Burgess launched the company in 2017, but in the past year the business has grown 10 times bigger. Why?

"It's giving parents a bit of relief at a stressful time and getting children away from their screens having fun," says Helen. "The more we amaze and capture children's wonder, the more likely they are to cement it as a memory and take it forward with them."

### ANNA-MARIE'S HOMEMADE FAMILY FUN

Any fears about letting my four-year-old son Benji loose on a Zoom Waitrose Cookery School class were unfounded. He did shoot his hand in the air to answer every question directed at the class of 16, which meant we were un-muted while I scabbled for the answers. Apart from that it was remarkably relaxed. You weigh everything out in advance, leaving time to concentrate on the making. He loved picking thyme leaves, crumbling Cheshire cheese and mixing. Our chef Sarah smilingly took the class through each step, ably assisted by co-chef Andrew who engaged with the class from his computer, typing her instructions into the chat box. I relied on a bit of toddler TV time to occupy my other son, but the 11am start meant that

Benji's homemade cheese and apple soda bread was ready just in time for lunch.

*Kids' workshop: Cheese, thyme and apple soda bread cookery class, £10. More kids' classes at [experiences.johnlewis.com](https://www.experiences.johnlewis.com)*



**A GREAT MIX** Anna-Marie and son Benji loved the different elements of online cooking