

Emma Freud cooks for...

JOSE PIZARRO



Every month our columnist cooks for a top chef and chats about food, life and everything in between. Here, she makes José's roasted cauliflower with anchovy sauce

photographs DAVID COTSWORTH



To start this new feature with a flourish, I asked the godfather of Spanish cooking in the UK, José Pizarro. He has three beautiful tapas restaurants in London, is a regular on BBC One's *Saturday Kitchen*, and has written four brilliant Spanish cookbooks.

I spent the morning preparing two of José's recipes, and getting nervous. He arrives, is instantly handsome, charming, funny and gracious. He hugs me, gives me a big bottle of olive oil and some wine. It couldn't be going better...



“
When I arrived here it was just paella, sangria, tortilla... it was sad. Spanish food is more than that
”

STARTER Gazpacho

Emma I'm making a legendary gazpacho for the legend who created it. This is weird.

José My mother made this. She never let me cook in the kitchen when I was a child, she would shout 'you go away from here'. But I knew all about the flavours and smells. This dish is so simple.

Emma Everything just goes straight into the blender.

José Almost, blend all your vegetables now, and when it's smooth, then add the olive oil very slowly. It's the oil which makes it thick and creamy. And you need to 'final finish' it with some little strips of jamón ibérico.

Emma I bought two different packs because I didn't know which one is better.

José One is organic, but the other one is from a producer I know and trust. I'd rather use that. I believe in teaching people to go behind the label to find out who is making it. It's the best ham in the world, and it is expensive, but when you know what is behind the jamón, you can see why.

Emma You've had such an impact on Spanish food here. I don't even think you could buy this ham in London 20 years ago.

José When I arrived here it was just paella, sangria, tortilla, patatas bravas. It was sad. I love all those dishes, but Spanish food is more than that, and people didn't understand the base of our cuisine which is the ingredients and the freshness. Everyone knows Italian food is all about amazing ingredients – great



tomatoes, basil, fresh pasta – it's the same with Spain. Our ingredients are everything. So my focus was to change the thinking by telling people the history behind the ingredients.

Emma So what's behind this jamón ibérico?

José 150 years of tradition. I know how this farmer treats the animals, how much work has gone towards keeping the pig happy for 22 months, why the best jamón takes three or four years to make and tastes absolutely amazing.

Emma I have had a brilliant idea for a FINAL final finish. Shall we put some vodka in it?

José No. I am from Spain – let's add dry sherry. Salut.

MAIN COURSE Whole roasted cauliflower with anchovy sauce (recipe overleaf)

Emma Do you ever get sick of your own cooking?

José No. Even after a day in the restaurant I get home and I cook for myself.

Emma This is one of your signature dishes. Whole roasted cauliflower with anchovy sauce. (I remove the cauliflower from my oven – half of it is burnt. Silence.)

Emma I've burned it.

José We don't call that burnt, it's caramelised.

Emma And here is your sauce. The recipe said eight salted anchovy fillets – these came from a Spanish deli and there were lots of bones.



Emma and José celebrate a successful main course

“ I need diversity, to see different things and different ideas to keep me alive. So I moved to London ”



Emma's disastrous cake

José So you need to fillet them – you get two fillets per fish.
Emma Ah. So I've used... 16 fillets then.
José Did you put in the bones as well?
Emma Ah. Yes. (Silence. Again.)
José It's gonna make it taste amazing. I've never used the bones before but it's gonna be great. (Already I love this man.)
Emma What brought you to the UK?
José The diversity – of people, of food. There's so much more in London. In Spain 20 years ago there was no diversity at all. Everyone did nothing wrong – it was white, and square – and the restaurants were all Spanish food with Spanish wine. I need diversity, to see different things and different ideas to keep me alive. So I moved to London.
Emma And did you find it?
José I found it. I love it. Around the corner from my home there is a Turkish shop, and an Asian one, I can go to them and choose amazing ingredients. I need to learn from different cultures, and I have friends now from all over the world. I need to meet different people. Diversity is how I learn.
Emma My hands smell of 16 anchovy fillets.
José In the Basque country the old ladies who peel anchovies say rubbing toothpaste on their hands is the only way to get rid of the smell. (We eat.)
José You know what, the bones give it flavour.
Emma Result!
José I'm going to do it like this from now on.
Emma *faints*.

PUDDING

Emma's Spanish fig & sherry cake

Emma I invented a cake for you, in your honour.
José Excellent.
Emma Unfortunately, it's gone horribly wrong. It's a Spanish cake, so I used figs and some Pedro Ximénez sherry.
José Tick.
Emma But in a moment of insanity, I used half a pot of coconut oil instead of butter.
José That is not very Spanish.
Emma What was I thinking? I've never cooked with it before. I'm sure it's a good ingredient sometimes, but in a Spanish fig cake, it's disgusting, I'll never do again. I'm so sorry. You don't have to try it. Do you ever use coconut oil?
José For massage. My fiancé uses it every night before bed on his face.
Emma Maybe we'll just have coffee.
José Espresso, please.

José's whole roasted cauliflower with anchovy sauce

Try the recipe Emma cooked with José yourself at home.

SERVES 4-6 PREP 20 mins COOK 1 hr EASY

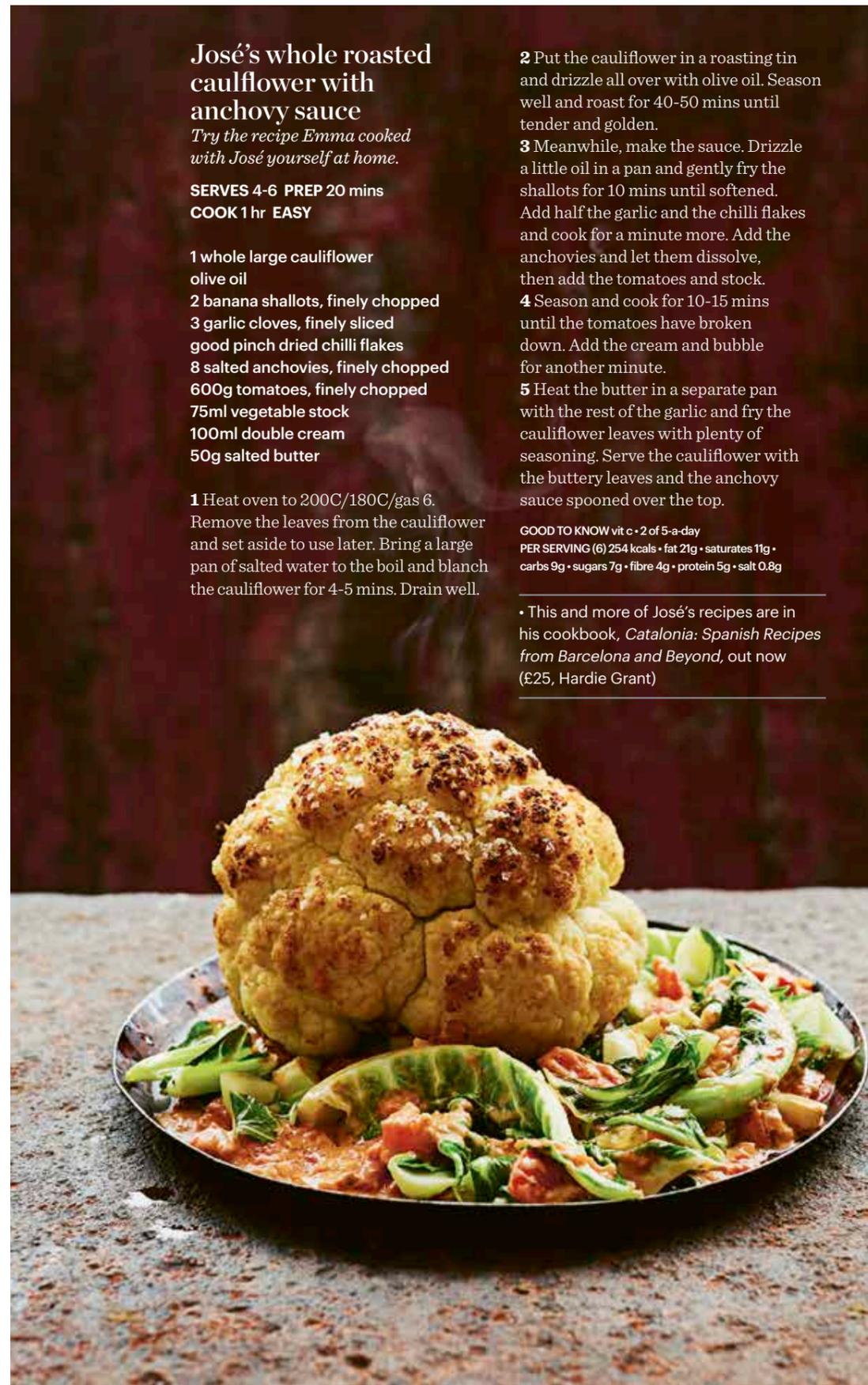
- 1 whole large cauliflower
- olive oil
- 2 banana shallots, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- good pinch dried chilli flakes
- 8 salted anchovies, finely chopped
- 600g tomatoes, finely chopped
- 75ml vegetable stock
- 100ml double cream
- 50g salted butter

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C/gas 6. Remove the leaves from the cauliflower and set aside to use later. Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and blanch the cauliflower for 4-5 mins. Drain well.

- 2 Put the cauliflower in a roasting tin and drizzle all over with olive oil. Season well and roast for 40-50 mins until tender and golden.
- 3 Meanwhile, make the sauce. Drizzle a little oil in a pan and gently fry the shallots for 10 mins until softened. Add half the garlic and the chilli flakes and cook for a minute more. Add the anchovies and let them dissolve, then add the tomatoes and stock.
- 4 Season and cook for 10-15 mins until the tomatoes have broken down. Add the cream and bubble for another minute.
- 5 Heat the butter in a separate pan with the rest of the garlic and fry the cauliflower leaves with plenty of seasoning. Serve the cauliflower with the buttery leaves and the anchovy sauce spooned over the top.

GOOD TO KNOW vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (6) 254 kcal • fat 21g • saturates 11g • carbs 9g • sugars 7g • fibre 4g • protein 5g • salt 0.8g

• This and more of José's recipes are in his cookbook, *Catalonia: Spanish Recipes from Barcelona and Beyond*, out now (£25, Hardie Grant)



QUICK-FIRE WITH JOSE

Your favourite starter

I always start a meal with Cinco Jotas jamón ibérico.

Your favourite main course

My mother's goat stew with fried potatoes.

Your favourite pudding

I don't have a sweet tooth but I do always like to finish my meal with a little bit of chocolate. My recipe for chocolate pot with olive oil & salt is amazing.

Worst dish you have ever cooked

It was my first chocolate cake and I made it at my brother's house. It was a disaster. The blender broke and the cake mix ended up on the ceiling.

The one piece of kitchen equipment you love the most

My pestle and mortar, great for sauces and aioli. I use it all the time.

Your guilty food pleasure

Fish and chips.

Favourite alcoholic drink

A glass of fino sherry before dinner. And I have my own brand of a chardonnay and a shiraz from a wine producer in Andalusia.

Favourite cookbook

All of Claudia Roden's books.

Favourite restaurant

I love going to different restaurants. I recently had a lovely lunch at the Portuguese restaurant Londrino in London (londrino.co.uk).

Four famous people to have around your table for a perfect dinner party

I would like to cook for Maria Callas and Pablo Picasso, and then have music afterwards from Spanish guitarist Paco de Lucía and singer Camarón de la Isla.

@emmalfreud; @Jose_Pizarro

next month
 Indian chef, campaigner and activist, Asma Khan.