

## Home Cooking Episode 15

Samin: I'm Samin Nosrat

Hrishi: And I'm Hrishikesh Hirway

Samin: And we're home cooking. We're still home cooking.

Hrishi: You know when you order French fries from a fast food place and you eat all the French fries, and then you look in the bag and there's still some French fries down at the bottom of the bag.

Samin: And you're so excited!

Hrishi: That's what this episode is.

Samin: We're like the last two French fries and you're like, yes. And they're kind of cold and soggy.

Hrishi: Yeah, exactly. They're not really as good, but you know, it's a nice surprise.

Samin: It's totally. Yeah.

Hrishi: Welcome to the bottom of the bag fries, episode of home cooking.

Hrishi: We're back with this bonus episode for one main reason, which is to tell you about this amazing, adorable new Netflix show that Samin's part of called Waffles and Mochi.

Samin: Oh, I am so sorry to tell you this Hrishi but it's the best thing I've ever been a part of.

Hrishi: I know I've been hearing about how excited you are about the show for months. So I'm glad I get to finally at least watch the thing that's better than anything else you've done.

Samin: It's a family show. It's a kids' show, but I think it's for kids of all ages, including grownup kids, and it's made by Higher Ground, the Obama's production company. And, waffles and mochi are two amazing puppets who, aspire to be chefs. They have lived their whole lives in the freezer section until one day they get to escape. And, this is the story of their adventures in the grocery store and beyond. And it was really an honor for me to get to be a part of it. And I'm so excited for everyone to get a chance to watch it

Hrishi: Yeah. And later on in the episode, we've actually got waffles and mochi themselves as guests, our first fictional characters as guests.

Samin: But first we're going to answer some questions.

Hrishi: Actually, before we get to other people's questions, here's my question. What is the right way in your mind to revive some soggy fries, much like we need some reviving right now as the soggy fries of this show, how would you bring us back to delicious life?

Samin: Wait. I'm so confused who, who lets a fry get soggy?

Hrishi: Okay, this is coming from recent experience. I mean, it's an experience I've had many times in life, but recently I got takeout and they put the French fries in with the sandwich in, with the hot sandwich. And so by the time it arrived, you know, the steam from the sandwich kind of soggyed up, the fries a little bit.

Samin: Yes. Okay. This is a take out problem.

Hrishi: Yeah,

Samin: Okay. Okay. I understand. I understand. I mean, I think you gotta go in the oven...but who has the patient? Let's be honest here.

Hrishi: I tried. I went to the toaster oven. I put them in. I tried to be, you know, good about it. Cause I was, I really wanted fries, but I did not want to settle for these Episode 15 fries. I wanted some real nice fresh fries. And so I was like, I'm going to commit to actually like putting them in the toaster oven, but I just still feel like they just weren't as good.

Samin: Okay. I think the problem is just terrible ordering, honestly, I just wouldn't order fried food I know is going to go through the process of like being delivered to me. And I would have to eat it 30 minutes, 40 minutes later. Especially not something like a French fry that to me is unrevivable.

Hrishi: Yeah, I accept this as an answer. I do remember at the time of this recording a year ago, you know, when, pandemic first hit, I remember the last time I went, to sort of my regular grocery store when nobody was wearing masks and people were grabbing all kinds of things. I tried to get tater tots just because I had a craving for tater tots and the entire tater tot aisle like the whole thing was cleaned out.

Samin: Comfort spuds.

Hrishi: Because I was thinking, "Oh, maybe what you do is you order the rest of your meal, you don't get the French fries and then you just make some tater tots at home." And I just had a tater tot scarcity flashback.

Samin: Yeah, of course you have PTSD, you have P like spud, TS. I mean, if I were you, I would have like a perfectly good pun prepared, but--

Hrishi: Oh for Potater Tot Scarcity Disasters. Well, that's, that's enough of that. Let's get some questions going.

Samin: Wait, you're not even going to ask me like what I've been cooking or what you've been cooking. Like we've completely just,

Hrishi: Oh I can't remember how to make this podcast. Okay, have you had anything in the three months, have you had anything to eat in the three months since I last talked to you?

Samin: I eaten anything or cooked anything

Hrishi: Yes, please.

Samin: I will say the most delicious stuff that I've been cooking has been out of that wonderful cookbook, Coconut & Sambal.

Hrishi: Yeah.

Samin: Which I just like, can't stop thinking about and cooking out of. It's not even that I'm like cooking so much directly out of it anymore, it's just that I probably have made like eight or 10 things out of it, it's by a cook named Laura Lee and it's an Indonesian cookbook and so many sort of, it seems like a lot of the foundational flavors are shallot and garlic, and lemon grass and ginger, and a lot of things start with sort of sizzling some combination of those ingredients at the beginning. And so it's, it's a completely new, flavor base for me, like aromatic flavor base, which just makes my food into a whole new direction, which is so welcome

Hrishi: What's your number one out of that book?

Samin: Oh, there's like these roast potatoes that you make and then you toss them with this soy vinaigrette with like ginger and garlic. I mean, everything is so good that I've made out of that. Oh my gosh, there's this chicken that you make whole muggle. You make this, pepper paste. You take like a ton of chilies and garlic and you fry the bejesus out of them, chopped chilis and garlic, and you dry them out. And then you stuff a whole bunch of that under the skin of the chicken. And then you put the chicken in a, like a, kind of a deep roasting pan. And then you make this paste out of like tamarind and a whole bunch of the rest of the chilies and garlic. And then you mix that with coconut milk and all this other stuff. So then the chicken gets roasted in this like bath but then it also has all these chilies and stuff under the skin. And it's just so delicious. And so at the same time, it becomes a roast chicken on top. It's also kind of this like Curry-ish juice, bath thing happening on the bottom. And then you take all of the liquid that it comes out of and you reduce it and you have this kind of like two and one Curry deliciousness. And you're just a very happy person and it's so spicy and you want to cry and you're so happy and your sinuses are very clear.

Hrishi: That sounds awesome.

Samin: Wait, can you please do me a favor because there is one development in your eating life that I have been enjoying hearing about

Hrishi: Oh, okay.

Samin: That I would like you to share with our listeners.

Hrishi: Oh, okay.

Samin: Dear listeners, it was our friend Hrishi's birthday, not long ago. And as everyone knows, he loves sweets. Sometimes he can't control himself. And so, he went into his birthday weekend with like this plan to eat all these sweets. And I think also like some of his friends brought some sweets over

Hrishi: Also for context, I had not eaten any sweets the entire month of January.

Samin: For an entire month leading up to his birthday, he had eaten no sweets. So he was very excited to go into his birthday weekend and eat all the sweets. So like, really mature. So, he sent me this picture and he's like, "Oh, my friends brought me these chocolates, this like these really nice chocolates, but they brought it and it's in this safe and it's locked and I have no access to it until it unlocks automatically on such and such date." And I was like, wow, these people really know you well, cause they know that like you have no self control and like, this is actually really good because it's going to force you into not eating these things all at the same time. Little did I know it was not that they had like, given you this gift of this like safe, it was their own safe. And they were just trying to give you a taste of their chocolate. couldn't let it, they couldn't even let you taste some of their chocolate because it was locked away from their own selves. And so they just had to leave the safe at your house until it automatically unlocked so you could taste some of it, but you were so impressed by the experience of the safe and the unlocking that you bought yourself, your own safe.

Hrishi: In fact, I just locked my safe before coming to record this, I just locked all my sweets in the safe, so I can't open until next weekend.

Samin: So like, is the safe working for you?

Hrishi: I think it is. I mean, you know, my dad sent me some sweets, some Indian sweets in the mail and so that's, what's in the safe currently because...

Samin: You can't trust yourself.

Hrishi: No, he sent me like three boxes and in a few days I realized I had eaten two of the boxes already. And so I put the contents of the third box in the safe and so my plan is to only eat sweets on the weekends and not during the week. And this is like my way of forcing myself into having some self-control and it's working, I think cause you can't get in there unless you like break the safe.

Samin: Not that I think this is a good idea for anyone. I'm just so amused by this.

Hrishi: All right, Let's start with this question from Gary. Okay?

Samin: Okay.

Gary: Hi Samin and Hrishi, this is Gary from Oakland, California

Samin: It's Gary!

Gary: Being single and alone during the pandemic was not easy. And not only because my parents kept reminding me that I was single and alone, I did however, spend a lot of quarantine learning to cook. As we enter into this new phase with the world opening up. And I somehow try to start dating again. I'm hoping to cook something that would really impress a date. I guess my question is what's a sexy dish, chimichangas, soup dumplings, saag paneer? Thanks for your help!

Samin: Oh Gary!

Hrishi: I love that Gary sent us a question. Gary works for Samin.

Samin: Gary's my assistant

Hrishi: His name is in the credits.

Samin: He's in the credits. Gary. I'm so proud of you for opening your heart because when you moved here and we went to Target and I tried to convince you to buy more than one dish, like as in more than one spoon and more than one plate, you resisted. Cause you were like, no, I'm never going to have more than one person. There's never going to be...

Hrishi: Aw, Gary.

Samin: So the idea that you are thinking about dating, this is really good. But I think if anyone knows what sexy food is, Hrishi it's you, because of the two of us, you're the only one who's partnered.

Hrishi: Well, I don't think there's really such a thing as a sexy dish. Sexiness is in the eye of the beholder, just like people have different flavors that they like, or don't like, the idea of a sexy food it's too hard to predict. I do think though the idea of cooking for someone is inherently sexy. Like, that is an experience that's just awesome.

Samin: Agreed

Hrishi: And I don't even think you have to do something that wild to impress them.

Samin: Agreed.

Hrishi: But I think the idea that you're like, "Hey, we're going to go on a date. Oh, why don't you let me cook for you?" So many points just from that.

Samin: To me, I think the best way to make someone happy is to cook toward them and for them, toward what their preferences are. A question I always get asked is like, what would, if you could cook for Mrs. Obama, if you could cook for Beyonce, if you could cook for whoever it's like, what would you make them? And I'm like, whatever they want. Do you know what I mean?

Hrishi: Right, right.

Samin: Like, if I get the chance to cook for somebody really fabulous, I'm going to make the thing that you want.

Hrishi: Yeah.

Samin: So I think, the best way to delight someone, Gary is to ask them what they want,

Hrishi: Yeah, totally. I think, yeah. The sexiest thing is really like paying attention to somebody

Samin: Also I would say, here are some practical tips I'll offer you. Don't overdo it. Don't try to like reach too far, and keep things simple

Hrishi: Cook within your comfort level.

Samin: Yeah. Do stuff where you can get stuff done in advance and maybe choose dishes where some part of it, or maybe most of it can be served at room temperature or, you know, things can be done the day before and you're just reheating or even things that taste better when they're done the day before and reheated like stews or braises, or the kinds of salads that tastes yummy after they've been marinated for awhile.

Hrishi: Yeah. I will say, anything that lets you not be stressed in the moment.

Samin: Exactly.

Hrishi: You want to just be able to have fun. And again, you want to be able to pay attention to them. You don't want to be leaving them alone to sort of like, look at a magazine while you go tend to six different dishes that are on the stove

Samin: Exactly. Yeah. You don't want to be stressed in that moment, you want to be putting the finishing touches on at the last moment. So you want to already have marinated all of the things you want to have already made your farro salad or your chickpeas salad. And then at the last second, you're just adding the last few herbs, you know, or you already made your beautiful stew and you're just reheating and sprinkling some chopped parsley on top.

Hrishi: Yeah. That's a great idea. Do something that you serve hot and something that you can serve room temperature.

Samin: Exactly.

Hrishi: Should we tell people where to find Gary? If there are any ladies that want to go on a date with him?

Samin: Oh, yeah. If you're interested in Gary who is very delightful and so charming and so funny, you can find him on Instagram or Twitter @whoisGaryLee.

Hrishi: He is the best.

Samin: He is truly the kindest and also funniest person. And also he will be so mortified that I'm like shilling for him on this podcast, which is just become a single's podcast.

Hrishi: Well, as a way to take a cold shower from that last question. Uh, let me go to a word that I love, but I think is maybe not so sexy.

Claire: Hi Samin and Hrishi, my roommates, and I just got a really big rutabaga and our last CSA box of the year. And we have no idea what to do with it. By really big, I mean, it's just over seven pounds and the only suggestion we've gotten was from my mom who told us to trim the sides and use it as a bowling ball. Please help. Thanks.

Samin: There are babies that are like smaller than that.

Hrishi: Is there a vegetable with a more fun name than rutabaga though?

Samin: Rutabaga, rutabaga, rutabaga. No.

Hrishi: Anyway, I just figured you could probably judge the best way to use this. You can judge it like, rutabaga Ginsburg.

Samin: Oh, no you didn't. How did I not anticipate that?

Hrishi: I apologize to everybody. I don't know. I don't, there's like not enough people. I can apologize for that. I'm so sorry to everyone.

Samin: I mean, I think you have to, first of all, apologize to Justice Ginsburg.

Hrishi: Yes, but I would love, I would love to see, Claire's rutabaga with a little RBG,

Samin: Like collar?

Hrishi: Yes, with the little collar. Step one, make the RBG collar for your rutabaga and then call it rutabaga Ginsburg. And then what should they do?

Samin: Okay. Well, I will say first of all, this, clearly it was a three-month old voicemail. So hopefully by now worked your way through the seven pounds of rutabaga. Secondly a seven pound rutabaga is going to be a different story than like a typical rutabaga, any vegetable that's that huge probably means it's quite mature. And you know, the more mature a vegetable is the starchier it will be and like the more fibrous typically. And so you'll have to treat it differently, you know, like you know when you get perfect baby turnips or baby carrots, and those are the ones that you eat raw.

Hrishi: Are you a vegetable ageist?

Samin: A veg...First, I'm an vegetable segregationist. I'm a vegetable ageist

Hrishi: Yeah. Samin has discriminating taste, emphasis on discriminating.

Samin: I am a vegetable ageist and I'm not ashamed to admit it.

Hrishi: All you starchy, fibrous, vegetables out there. Get outta here. I don't know if people know this, but the working title originally of Waffles and Mochi was Listen to Your Vegetables. And I think Samin has taken that too far now. Now she's talking to her vegetables.

Samin: Okay. Basically all I'm saying is. You do need to listen to your vegetables.

Hrishi: You need to show respect to your elder carrots in a way that you don't have to, when they're just, young baby naive carrots that don't know any better and you can just eat them raw.

Samin: Exactly.

Hrishi: This got creepy.

Samin: And so when they're young baby naive carrots, you can do anything to them. They can just be like dipped in boiling water for a second, like drizzled with a little

bit of olive oil or butter and salt. And they're like so delicious and so perfect. But by the time it's grown to be seven pounds, it is going to be quite starchy and fibrous. And so you are going to have to peel quite a bit off the outside, and you're probably going to have to like, maybe even deal with some of the inside and maybe discard some of the inside if it is fibrous or just, you're not going to be able to like, eat it raw. You're not going to be able to cook it lightly. You are probably going to have to do a little bit more to it to make it really delicious. And so probably that means roasting it or even turning it into mashed rutabaga.

Hrishi: What does a rutabaga actually taste like? Are they delicious?

Samin: Well, yeah, of course. I mean, any vegetable can be delicious. Like basically by the time you roast anything, you know what I mean? Like, and caramelize it and make it yummy with like some, some oil and salt, like it's going to be really tasty. So, they're cousins of turnips, they're in that kohlrabi family, we've had kohlrabi questions here too. It's like in that kohlrabi, turnip sort of situation. So a smaller rutabaga, you could actually shred. And serve like a Coleslaw with apples, but I think a bigger one, like this, I would probably recommend roasting or turning into like mashed, with like probably brown butter and some salt. And maybe even some like e Parmesan cheese would be delicious in there. like my answer for everything, Parmesan cheese, or, you know, what I've been cooking with a lot lately is szechuan peppercorns. Like forget butter altogether and just do like sesame oil, and szechuan peppercorn, a little bit of ginger, garlic and mashed rutabaga. That would be super delicious.

Hrishi: That sounds amazing actually.

Samin: Yeah.

Hrishi: When you have to cut up the rutabaga you know, before you mash it or roasted or whatever, I mean a seven pound vegetable, you just need to reach for the biggest knife you have.

Samin: Oh yeah. Oh actually that's a fantastic question because this is one of the ways that I've hurt myself. The worst in the kitchen is I'm cutting an unwieldy squash. And I'm not kidding. I went to the emergency room and had surgery and was in physical therapy for months afterwards.

Hrishi: Oh, jeez.

Samin: So in order to not hurt yourself, what you would need to do is to get yourself to a flat surface so that this thing isn't like rolling around on the cutting board and you do need to use, the largest knife that you have. To be honest, probably the safest thing to do is to keep one hand completely out of the way and just use your other hand and just like whack it through, you know, just like hack through it so that you just have cut through and you end with two halves.

Hrishi: Yeah, but you need to have a really sharp knife for that.

Samin: You have to have a pretty sharp knife or just like, use like a lot of strength and speed to go through.

Hrishi: I can't remember if we've talked about this before, but people don't realize how much a really sharp knife is essential for kitchen safety.

Samin: Yes.

Hrishi: People think that, Oh, it's might be dangerous if you have a really sharp knife, but actually most kitchen injuries happen because you have a dull knife.

Samin: Yes. Because you're pushing a lot harder with a dull knife.

Hrishi: Yeah.

Samin: A sharper knife is much safer than a dull knife. Absolutely.

Hrishi: All right. Claire, good luck. This is, and for everybody else who for this very outdated question, next time, Thanksgiving rolls around. Now you have some rutabaga ideas. And I really hope we are going to see some pictures of Rutabaga Ginsbergs, please tag @caiosamin and @hrishihirway if you do dress your rutabagas up as Justice Ginsburg. And on that note, on the basis of starch.here's another question.

Hannah: My name is Hannah. I live in Sarasota, Florida, and I've had an ongoing debate with friends for years now about whether or not a banana should be considered a fruit. And this is based upon like, I understand the scientific reasons as to why it is considered a fruit, but the texture of a banana is so starchy compared to a peach or a plum or a lemon that honestly, I think it's more closely related to a potato and all of my friends think this is hilarious. But I would like you guys to weigh in, should a banana be considered a fruit?

Hrishi: I'm just going to read from PBS news hour,

Samin: Okay. Please do.

Hrishi: An article from their website, headline "Eight Things You Didn't Know About Bananas,"

Samin: Okay.

Hrishi: We'll link to this. "Number one, bananas aren't really a fruit. Well, they are, and they aren't," that's what they said!

Samin: Was the question asker a lady named Hannah.

Hrishi: Oh, yes. She definitely was. Hannah, if your friends are real friends, they will get you a shirt that says "Banhannah" on it. And they will appreciate this answer, from PBS, "bananas are both a fruit and not a fruit. While the banana plant is colloquially called a banana tree, it's actually an herb distantly related to ginger." How about that?

Samin: I don't think that addresses her specific concerns though.

Hrishi: Doesn't it?

Samin: No, because you're like giving us a botanical answer.

Hrishi: A banana-cal answer, really.

Samin: A banana-cal answer. And she wants like more of a cooking answer. Her sort of argument is this thing is really starchy and hence it belongs alongside a potato.

Hrishi: Yeah. Well, let me complicate things and introduce the plantain to the debate.

Samin: Okay. Sorry. I just. That was really dorky.

Hrishi: Dorky! What? Am I a rutabaga? Why are you suddenly roasting me? Okay. I was going to say, what about a plantain?

Samin: Oh yeah. Well that's where I was going to,

Hrishi: Oh, okay.

Samin: That's the natural place to go. That's not that complicated.

Hrishi: Well, I just say if banana feels more easy to write off as a fruit and not a vegetable, what about a banana's starchier cousin?

Samin: Yeah. I mean, it's still also a fruit. They're just starchy fruits.

Hrishi: Okay, well final answer?

Samin: I dunno because a banana banana bread, potato bread, banana cake, potato cake.

Hrishi: You're just putting nouns together now. Lamp curtain.

Samin: Okay. banana chips, potato chips, banana hammock, potato hammock.

Hrishi: Wow

Samin: I'm just trying to think of like,

Hrishi: All the ways in which bananas are like potatoes,

Samin: I was just trying to feel it, feel my way through it The uses of a banana and the uses of a potato. And I was feeling like a banana feels like a fruit. Sorry, Hannah. I'm always up for crazy or like a nutty theory.

Hrishi: I for one, am with you. And thank you, Banhannah.

Hrishi: We're not done. I have more fruit questions for you.

Samin: It's fine. I'm in the fruit mood.

Hrishi: Okay, good. It's a whole fruit salad. Here we go.

David: This is David, I'm from Chicago and I have a question in regards to maraschino cherries. So my boyfriend, uh, his mom gave us like a 72 ounce or two kilogram

jar of maraschino cherries. And we love cocktails. And not saying we don't want to have more cocktails, but looking to see if there's something else we can do with these. Apparently the shelf life, once opened is four weeks and it's been about 12. So, uh, anything you can do to help, that would be great. Thank you.

Hrishi: That is very surprising to me because what I remember from my childhood is that there was like one jar of maraschino cherries that was in the fridge in the garage for about six years.

Samin: Yes. Also, can I please, excuse me, David, this being a poetry friendly podcast.

Hrishi: Are you going to write a poem?

Samin: No, I'm going to read one

Hrishi: There once was a maraschino who loved the films of Al Pachino

Samin: This is truly one of my very favorite poems in the whole world.

Hrishi: The one that I'm just writing right now, about Al Pachino?

Samin: No,

Hrishi: Okay.

Samin: No. this is why I almost went to get an MFA in poetry. Was this poem, it's called Refrigerator 1957 by Thomas Lux.

Hrishi: Okay, I'll noodle on the piano.

Samin: More like a vault. You pull the handle out and on the shelves. Not a lot. And what, there is a boiled potato in a bag, a chicken carcass under foil looking dispirited, drained, mugged. This is not a place to go in hope or hunger, but just to the right of the middle door shelf on fire, a lit from within red heart, red sexual red, wet neon red, shining red in their liquid, exotic, aloof, slumming in such company, a jar of maraschino cherries, three quarters full fiery Globes, like strippers at a church social. Maraschino cherries, maraschino the only foreign word I knew. Not once did I see these cherries employed, not in a drink nor on top of a glob of ice cream, or just pop one in your mouth. Not once. The same jar there through an entire childhood of doll dinners, bald meat, pocked peas, and see above boiled potatoes. Maybe they came over from the old country, family heirlooms or were status symbols. Bought with a piece of the first paycheck from a sweatshop, which beat the pig farm in Bohemia, handed down from my grandparents to my parents to be someday mine then my child's. They were beautiful. And if I never ate one, it was because I knew it might be missed or because I knew it would not be replaced. And because you do not eat that, which rips your heart with joy. The maraschino cherry poem. I love it so much. Refrigerator 1957 by Thomas Lux. And it has a few uses for maraschino cherries in there and so beautiful and inspiring actually. But, and I feel like that it actually says that there's a same jar of cherries, like throughout his whole childhood in the refrigerator door.

Hrishi: There you go. That's exactly what I'm saying. That was my experience too.

Samin: But like, I'm like the whole thing with maraschino cherries are like all preservatives. So like whatever shelf life you're talking about, forget about that. Unless they are like artisanal ones, which may be there's some kind that I, I don't know about.

Hrishi: I mean Lindsey has those fancy ones, the luxardo maraschino cherries, but even those have a shelf life of at least three years.

Samin: I mean, the two uses that come to mind for me are kind of fun, sort of like Americana classic ones. And one is you know, like to sort of use a bunch of toothpicks and stick it on a ham and make a roast ham.

Hrishi: Oh really?

Samin: like a, like a luau ham. And the other one is classic, pineapple upside down cake where you stick a half a maraschino cherry in the center of a pineapple ring. Why are you laughing? It's amazing.

Hrishi: No. Yeah. I was just imagining they have 72 ounces of cherries, the number of cakes that they're going to have to make to go through all this cherries. They're like, we did it, we made 64 cakes. And we finally ate all of the cherries. Anything else?

Samin: There's also these cookies you can make, there are these like little surprise cookies. My friend Emily made them for Christmas. They were like little almond cookies that they were had a little surprise inside. So when you bit into it, it had a candy cherry that was wrapped in, I think it had like maybe chocolate inside. So, you could totally make that where like you basically wrap the cookie dough around a cherry and a chocolate chip. and then you bite into it and that's kind of, like a delicious, like cherry chocolate surprise cookie. I think you're going to be able to do it.

Hrishi: That sounds great. Good luck, David.

Hrishi: Okay next we have a question from Cassie.

Cassie: I got really excited about citrus and preserving it and went a little overboard. And now I have two, two gallon jars of preserved limes, blood oranges, lemons, one grapefruit, any tips outside of tagines to use these. Thanks in advance. Bye.

Samin: Have I got some ideas for you, Cassie. First of all, I've been scrolling instagram a lot lately-

Hrishi: And you saw, a pair of khakis but they were made of denim and you were like, "Oh my god, tan jeans." But she's already said, outside of tan jeans, what can she do?

Samin: Exactly.

Hrishi: So you've got to come up with something else.

Samin: After the tan jeans, I was like, what is this. To begin with like, just to describe what preserved citrus is usually like the most basic version is just lemons. You would take a lemon and you would score it with an X sort of uh, length wise.

Hrishi: You're not cutting all the way through it, but you are cutting it open,

Samin: You're cutting it open. Yeah. But not all the way apart so that it's kind of like a little flower, but it's held together at the very bottom, you know?

Hrishi: It kind of looks like the mind Flayer from Stranger Things.

Samin: I don't know what that is, but, or a tulip.

Hrishi: Sure!

Samin: You kind of like unfold it, open, and then idea is you use as much salt as you possibly can, and you take all the exposed bits of flesh and you just rub like obscene amounts of salt. You can't possibly use too much salt. And then you jam all of this like super salty lemon into a jar. And then you pack all of that with as much lemon juice as you possibly can. So that there's no air, so you just take like a skewer or a fork or a knife or something, and you just like work any air bubbles out as much as possible. And then you would like seal that with a lid and airtight lid and leave it on a counter in an, or like in a dark corner, room temperature for three weeks. And it would sort of just like lightly ferment. And then there, you have it, your preserved lemons. So to use them, you essentially want to rinse off all of the salt and get rid of all of the like flesh and what use the usable part is the skin. Like a tiny little bit goes a really, really long way. So Cassie you with your two huge jars, you have like enough to last you the next six to seven pandemics. So,

Hrishi: Don't even joke about that.

Samin: In addition to these vinaigrettes and salsas, I think you can turn to some of these other things that I can suggest.

Hrishi: Yeah, what was the thing on Instagram that you saw, that you started talking about?

Samin: I saw something new to me. So there's a pastry chef named Nick Muncie and he has, like a pastry box that you can subscribe to. It's called Drool and I've been eyeing it. And one of the items in this box that looks so beautiful is this kind of inside out upside down lemon meringue tart.

Samin: It's so beautiful. Do you see this Hrishi?

Hrishi: Yeah, this is gorgeous.

Samin: It's so gorgeous. And so he folded little bits of preserved lemon, that he's candied, into the meringue. So it's like studded with, the savory thing. It had never, in a million years occurred to me to take something savory salted, preserved lemon and candy it. And so I was like, "Oh my gosh, this is amazing. It's brilliant. So clever." This is just one of those things where I'm like, Oh, these

are the kinds of brilliant things people are doing. You know, it's just kind of this, I feel so lonely. I think that's one of those feelings that I've had this year is this kind of like total isolation, culinarily. And I'm like I am just eating my broccoli again. And so to see like, people having like innovation and being creative and like using ingredients in these ways that I've never even thought, like, that's the kind of stuff I really miss. And so to be able to like see that, even if I can't taste it and hopefully I will be able to taste it, but then to see it and then get to share it with you guys through the podcast is exciting too. And then another thought that I also have is my friend, Chris Crawford she has this company called tart vinegar and she makes all of these really delicious vinegars. But also she does all sorts of other fermented goods. And she started asking herself, "Why do I throw away all of this other part of the citrus? It seems like so wasteful." So she started taking the whole citrus and just dumping it in a blender. And blending the whole thing up. And she just started sending me like a whole jar of the entire blended paste, like, and she had both mandarins and Meyer lemons and lemons, and she was like, it's really good. Start mixing it into your vinegarette, start mixing it into different, like, you know, marinades and stuff. I started doing that last year and it's really tasty. So that's another way to use it up.

Hrishi: Awesome. All right. Should we switch out of this fruit mode?

Samin: Okay.

Hrishi: I have a question here from Katie, she said, "we have a big blended family. My husband's from the Midwest. I'm from Louisiana and our seven children are Thai, Chinese, Korean, and Midwestern, ages 24 through four."

Samin: Wow

Hrishi: "I'm so tired of cooking, fried rice spaghetti, goulash, mashed potatoes, Mac, and cheese. What else is affordable that will feed my big family. We love to cook. I'm just running out of ideas. The kids love trying new foods. So we're up for an adventure." And she sent this great picture of the whole family. There's 11 people in this photo of all different ages. so the question for you to me is if you have to cook for say 11 people...

Samin: All the time.

Hrishi: on the cheap, what's a great thing to feed that many people.

Samin: That's a lot of people. Katie. You are inspiring.

Hrishi: As you ponder this question, let me tell you where my mind goes. There's three elements, right? There's like a big salad, so everybody's getting some vegetables and then there's something that you cook in a pot and then there's like some easy to multiply carb. /big carb, something to put on top of the carb and then a salad,

Samin: Exactly. That's the simplest formula for sure. And then I think there are ways to do it where it's even easier on Katie, where it's just even like a one-step dish or like a one-pot thing, like the Mac and cheese, or a lot of those things she listed

are one pot thing. So one thing I came up with is something like shakshuka where you create a really rich sort of tomato sauce, and then, you know, you crack a bunch of eggs into it and then you have a pile of pita breads and that's basically it that's it. And you know, and then that's dinner, there you

Hrishi: And it's delicious.

Samin: And it's super delicious and it's super satisfying and filling and yeah, maybe if you want, you can have on the side a big salad and there you go. That's dinner. You had some like hot sauces and some yogurts that could make it a little more interesting for people, but it doesn't even necessarily need it, you know.

Hrishi: Yeah, condiments can be the way for them to customize it

Samin: personalize it. Yeah.

Hrishi: So I know we've talked about this dish before, but there were times in my life when I would have to cook for a big group of people. Usually, bands that I was friends with were coming to town and they would crash on my floor. Suddenly there's six, seven people that I'm cooking for. And I would make chole for them, because it was something that I could do... as long as you have a couple of onions, garlic, spices, and a bunch of cans of chickpeas and some crushed tomatoes, you can make it. And then you just make some rice. That was always my, my go-to thing whenever I would have to cook for like suddenly what felt like a lot of people, I mean, I'm talking about this. It's still not even as many people as Katie has to cook for every day, but in the times when I was like, "Oh my gosh, so many people, how do I do this?" And you know, I didn't have any money. I would make um chole.

Samin: Cool beans.

Hrishi: No no no, you have to cook them Samin. They're hot beans.

Samin: But generally, I think legumes are a great source of protein and also keep costs down. Every place in the world has their like go-to legume. And so, if you sort of look at your family and all of the different places that people come from, like you could probably go from place to place and, and like find the source dish. There's the people from the South and there's like the beans and greens. And I'm looking right now at Hrishi and I'm like, "Oh, he's got his dal," my family, we have lentils and rice. And so like, that's always like the classic sort of comfort food that's the like really healthy, sort of very incredibly, highly nutritious, and inexpensive way to feed a family and keep costs down.

Hrishi: Thanks so much for the question Katie and thanks for sending the photo of your beautiful family. Okay, and once again we have a Chef Detective question. Here it is.

Samin: Yes!

Cecily: Hi, this is Cecily, I'm calling from New York, although as you might have been able to tell from my accent I'm originally from London. It's about my maternal

grandmother, she was famously a really good cook, kind of quite a traditional English cook, but she died when my mom and her sister were teenagers. So, a lot of her recipes have been kind of lost to the mists of time. And we've tried to recreate some of them over the years with, you know, reasonable success, but there's one that we just can't figure out. And it's the tomato sauce that she used to serve with Whitefish. My mom and my aunt describe it as a smooth source without any bits, kind of very light red almost orangy, kind of bright color and translucent kind of the texture and the viscosity of a raspberry cooley or something. She would have had like a two hall, small oven, not nothing fancy or posh in her kitchen at all, and no access to any particularly fancy ingredients. And we really can't figure out how she was making this thing. So we would love your thoughts.

Hrishi: Can you think of a way to recreate this kind of beautiful tomato sauce from Cecily's grandmother?

Samin: Well, yes and no. I fear that without tasting and seeing it, I won't be able to give the exact sauce, obviously. But upon, you know, having gotten this very beautiful description it kind of reminds me the description does remind me a lot of the Marcella Hazan tomato sauce recipe. The main clue is the orangy color and the smoothness. The fact that there are no bits, it's a little bit orangy and quite like thin. The fact that it's orangy makes me think that there's a little bit of dairy in there, like a little bit of butter, or even cream. It kind of changes the color from red to like a little bit of pale orange.

Hrishi: Yeah, I love that.

Samin: Yeah, me too. And that classic Marcella sauce, it doesn't have anything, you know, it doesn't have chopped garlic in it. It doesn't have chopped tomato in it. It's just like can of tomatoes, that's like crushed, and that one's actually just crushed by hand. So this one might just be, processed, like through a food mill or like pass through a sieve or something. And then that Marcella one had just as like cooked with like a half of an onion for a little while, and then you remove the half onion and then at the end you add a little knob of butter and that kind of turns it orange. So...

Hrishi: For an English recipe though, I think probably best not to call it a knob of butter.

Samin: It's true.

Hrishi: This really is our most like rated R episode.

Samin: A little bit of butter.

Hrishi: Would you serve that kind of Marcella Hazan tomato sauce with a white fish?

Samin: Oh, absolutely. I would. I mean, there are people who like, don't believe in combining dairy and fish.

Hrishi: Yeah. That was what I was thinking of because I remember you told me that was a rule one time.

Samin: But I'm not one of those people.

Hrishi: Okay, phew. Me neither.

Samin: I'm guessing a classic tool that she might have is a food mill, you know? Which is also called a Mouli. It's not like a food processor. It just sort of creates a pretty smooth sauce depending on what size plate it has in there. Or you would pass it through a sieve. And then at that point you could add some butter or you could add butter and cream or a little cream. And the key is to add the dairy right at the end, or even after it's come off the heat so that it doesn't separate. It's literally the simplest possible sauce. And it truly sounds like that's probably what your grandma was making. So probably what I'm guessing is that all the rest of you are overthinking it. Yeah.

Hrishi: Awesome. Cecily, let us know.

Samin: I hope it helps!

Hrishi: Yeah. Let us know if that works. And joining us now are the two main character's from the new Netflix kids show Waffles & Mochi which also features Samin. Here's Waffles and Mochi.

Waffles: Hey!

Samin: Hi waffles. Hi Mochi!

Waffles: Hi, Samin. It's good to hear your voice again.

Samin: It's been really fun watching and learning about all your adventures around the world.

Waffles: Yeah, we went on so many tasty adventures. We went to Venice, Italy. We went to Peru.

Samin: Were there any ingredients that you didn't get to learn about, but you encountered that you have any questions about?

Waffles: I did have a question actually, we went to meet chef, Patricia Lopez and she was making a thing called mole and she put all kinds of ingredients, like so many ingredients, It's like so many things she kept saying, and then it goes in and then that goes in and this and this and this, uh, and then she said raisins. I was like ways and what's the reason. And it'll just look like a shriveled up little thing.

Samin: Yeah, raisins. Hrishi do you know about raisins?

Hrishi: Yeah I mean, I'm probably in the raisin family as I slowly become a shriveled up thing myself. Samin, I think this is a really interesting question because I think of raisins primarily as an ingredient for desserts, you know, of course my, my mind goes to an oatmeal raisin cookie or something like that. I know that raisins are an ingredient in mole, are there other dishes that use raisins as an ingredient that aren't desserts? Of course, in Indian food, there's a lot of raisins that are just like in rice...

Samin: Can I tell you about one of my favorite dishes that my mom used to make me when I was a little kid?

Waffles: Yes, yes, please.

Samin: So my family is from a country called Iran. And, we have a dish called keshmesh polo because keshmesh is the word in our language for raisins.

Waffles: Keshmesh

Samin: Keshmesh, yeah. And polo is the, is our word for rice. And so my mom used to make keshmesh polo for me as a little kid. And I loved it because it was rice and it had lentils in it, which are a kind of a bean. And then it had fried raisins. And so they were crispy and chewy on top.

Waffles: You can fry a raisin? Woah!

Samin: And, even though it's part of your dinner. It tastes sweet. So it kind of tastes like you're having dessert in your dinner.

Waffles: Growing up, did you ever play keshmesh polo? Like someone would say keshmesh and then you say polo? keshmesh...polo, that sounds like a fun game.

Samin: No, but I would play that with you if you ever want to come back and visit me!

Waffles: Okay. Okay. Next time in your garden, I'll just say keshmesh. That's how you'll know to find me.

Hrishi: And Samin, how do you actually make keshmesh polo?

Samin: Oh, sure yeah. I actually have a recipe for a similar dish called adas polo in my book. And it's just rice and lentils that are cooked together, until they are done, in a pot. And then you make fried raisins that you can fry in oil or butter and you put them on top. And so what I love is getting a bite that has just the right number of lentils, and raisins, and rice. And it was always my favorite when I was a little girl, I asked for it everytime my mom asked what I wanted.

Waffles: That sounds great!

Samin: Thank you so much, I know you're really busy so it was really wonderful to get to chat with you.

Waffles: Thank you! Come on Mochi, let's go! Bye-bye!

Hrishi: Bye!

Samin: You can watch all of waffles and mochi right now on Netflix, and you can find them on Instagram @wafflesandmochiofficial.

Hrishi: The show is so good! I wanted to share this thing that happened over text during our hiatus. Normally, it would have happened on our podcast, but we weren't making the podcast. I'll play both parts.

Hrishi: Okay, I had an idea for a signature recipe for your book.

Hrishi (as Samin): This had better not be a pun.

Hrishi: What if you only had a little bit of bread, and some tin fish, and some tahini? Could you make a recipe?

Hrishi (as Samin): Could you use the bread for a sandwich?

Hrishi: Yes, I'm thinking maybe grill the bread. And could you call it, Saminy's Tiny Tahini Sardiney Panini?

Hrishi (as Samin): I DON'T DESERVE THIS!

Samin: I don't deserve this. This is just beyond.

Hrishi: Okay, here's a question though. When we get out of this pandemic fully, and I come over are you gonna make me my own signature version of the Iranian raisin rice dish?

Samin: Is that what you want?

Hrishi: Yeah, as long as you call it Hrishikeshmesh polo.

Samin: 100% That one is so good. And that's it for this episode.

Hrishi: We're going back into hibernation mode for now or forever. Who knows? Who knows?

Samin: yeah, who knows. I'm working on my book and Richie's got a bunch of his own projects in the oven.

Hrishi: We make this podcast with the help of Margaret Miller, Zach McNeese, Gary Lee, who loves a sexy dish and Casey Deal. Mamie Reingold Does our artwork.

Samin: She also just had a baby. Congratulations, Mamie.

Hrishi: Go follow Michelle Zamora, the wonderful puppeteer who plays Waffles @michellezamoraofficial.

Samin: We're a proud member of Radiotopia, a collective of independent podcasts. You can learn more about all the Radiotopia shows at Radiotopia FM.

Hrishi: Our website is home cooking.show, where you can find recipes and transcripts for all of our episodes.

Samin: You can follow Hrishi on Twitter and Instagram @HrishiHirway

Hrishi: And you can follow Samin @Ciaosamin

Samin: Stay healthy. Eat well and take care of each other

Hrishi: And thanks for listening.

Samin:                    Until we meet again. I'm Samin

Hrishi:                   And I'm Hrishi

Samin:                   And we'll be home cooking.