

Paul Donnelley talks food with **Harriet Scott**



Harriet Scott is one of the leading female DJs in Britain. The 29-year-old was the first woman in the country to anchor a commercial radio breakfast show and launched the GWR network. She joined Virgin Radio in September 1998 and her daily show is fast becoming required listening.

What was your favourite sweetie as a child?

I love the 1p sweets, things like milk bottles, fizzy cola bottles.

What is it now?

I can live without chocolate but I couldn't do without things like cola bottles.

What, and how, do you dunk?

At work I discovered these amazing ginger snaps with chocolate on top and I dunk those into my Earl Grey tea in the afternoon. The chocolate just melts around the ginger snap. They're gorgeous and I'm really trying to wean myself off them.

Under what circumstances did you last eat caviar?

It was at a recent party arranged by Trudie Styler. The food there was incredible. There were these amazing canapés with caviar. Mick Jagger was there. I'm really small so it was quite nice to be standing next to someone who doesn't tower over me.

Has anyone ever eaten anything off your body?

Yes, ice cream but I'm not going to tell you why or how.

A meteor's about to zap the earth for good. What would be your last meal?

Something laden with calories so it would have to be fish and chips. Really big, fat chunky chips with lots of vinegar and really crunchy batter.

Why do you loathe one particular food or drink?

I love food but for some reason I hate fresh coriander. I can't drink Southern Comfort. It's one of those drinks that if you've ever had a bad experience with it that you can't go near it.

What was the most romantic memory you associate with food?

I go out to dinner a lot with my boyfriend and I like that calmness. You are there for the duration of the meal and you have each other's undivided attention – it's really nice.

What was your worst culinary disaster?

I was trying to impress my boyfriend by making him breakfast on a Sunday but I ruined it because I burnt the bacon and set off the fire alarms. I filled the house with smoke but he was so sweet. He said: "No really, I love burnt bacon and black crispy sausages." The next time I tried he told me to do it like I had the last time.

Confess your most loathsome kitchen hygiene story.

It was when I was still living at home and my parents were having this dinner party for about twenty people including my dad's boss. My only job was to take this dish out of the oven pour in some cream and put it back in. I dropped it and it went everywhere. My parents had a white kitchen and it was this kind of ground coriander dish and it literally splattered from one side of the kitchen to the other. I scooped up the food and put it back in the dish. I put in some water and some cream to try and repair the damage. I told my dad and he thought it was so funny he decided to tell all his guests. They were not very impressed.

What was your weirdest craving/thing you've ever eaten and why?

I love pesto. I can eat it with anything. If I get in late, I'll eat it with carrots or smear it on toast, anything.

Name your all-time fave takeaway dish.

Chilli fried beef.

Agh! Sudden guests! What's your standby meal?

Beans on toast. I'm not very good at keeping a storehouse. I'm trying to get better.

What's the oldest thing in your cupboard or freezer?

I once thought it would be a good idea to cook a meal on a Sunday and then freeze it so I would have something in the week as a standby meal. So I made this sausage casserole but I think it's just going to rot in the freezer. In my cupboard I have some millet and I have no idea what to do with it.

You allergic to anything? And what happens?

I don't think I am but I came out in a rash a while ago after eating a load of strawberries. It would be a shame if I was allergic to strawberries.

Tell me a school dinner story.

At Tadley Primary School near Basingstoke I was really frightened of the headmaster Mr Brown and I didn't want to finish my food. I couldn't eat this piece of meat. I had tried to chew it but I spat it out and hid it under my fork. You had to finish the food before you could have dessert and I went to take my plate up but he spotted the meat and embarrassed me in front of the whole dining room. "Is that a piece of meat I see on your plate, Miss Scott?" I said "I tried to eat it, but I had to spit it out." Luckily, he didn't make me try to eat it again but that was so embarrassing.

What's the most useless kitchen gadget you possess?

I bought this thing that you are supposed to be able to seal up coffee bags with but I haven't a clue how to use it. It was only cheap, thankfully.

Anything you've always wanted to eat, but never got the chance?

I'm quite squeamish and I haven't tried foie gras. I'd like to satisfy my curiosity.

Fried, poached, boiled, coddled or scrambled?

Scrambled.

Ever done a runner from a restaurant?

No. I've been with friends and someone has said "Let's do a runner" but I can't run very fast so I just know I'd get caught if I tried.