

The Communards in the Kitchen

Jimmy Somerville and Richard Coles describe their eating habits to a shocked Richard Lowe. . . Richard Coles is the greediest person I've ever met," announces Jimmy Somerville as he carefully balances a pineapple on his head while trying to mould a pair of earrings out of two sticks of broccoli. "He's an absolute pig and the only reason he isn't grossly fat is because he's a neurotic nervous wreck." "He's quite right." murmurs Richard sheepishly after he's finished demolishing an innocent corn on the cob with a rolling pin. "I am a bit of a foodie, and I suppose I am a bit greedy. My mother used to be a caterer, you see, except she gave it up after giving loads of her customers food poisoning once. So you want to know all about our eating habits, eh? Well, where shall we start?" Let's start with breakfast. . .

Breakfast

Richard's policy when it comes to breakfast is to start the day as he means to carry on; i.e. by stuffing his face.

"Breakfast is a very important meal for me and especially on Sundays when I have more time. I start off with orange juice and coffee, then cereal - usually Crunchy Nut Cornflakes - and then I have my fry-up, which consists of sausages, bacon, egg, beans, tomato, mushrooms and trench toast. "I love a cooked breakfast and the best thing about touring is the breakfast you get in hotels, especially in the north of England where you get black puddings and in Scotland where you get porridge. But my favourite place for breakfast is this hotel in Norwich called The Nelson Hotel. It's not a very posh hotel but the breakfast is the best in the world and you can have as much as you want. I get up especially early at 7 o'clock when I stay there and I have two breakfasts I have a lie-down after the first one and then start all over again." Well, what a glutton! "The amount he eats is just shocking," agrees Jimmy, who's a little more restrained when it comes to breakfast "Compared to Richard I eat like a sparrow." pipes Mr. Pineapple Head "I used to eat cereals but I don't any more. I have a cup of coffee and a piece of toast with banana on Banana on toast is just so delicious, it's brilliant. I've been eating it since I was a kid when fused to take banana sandwiches for my lunch. I get all my minerals from bananas "

Lunch

Well, actually I can't , last until lunch time without a spot of elevenses." insists "Scoffer" Coles. "I have two jam doughnuts, a cup of coffee and a Tracker bar." "Ooh yes. I like Tracker bars as well." chips in Jimmy. "they're definitely the best chocolate bars around." "Well, I favour the roast nut flavoured ones myself." considers Richard "I find they combine well with jam doughnuts. Very nice. "Then it's lunch, which has to be a three course affair. I start with soup, then I like something healthy like quiche and salad, then pudding -banana and custard perhaps - to round it off some coffee and cheese and biscuits " This is quite clearly a man who enjoys his food. "I really like being taken out for lunch by the record company." he goes on. "because it's free and they're quite good about taking us out to nice restaurants. Our record company in Italy took us out for a meal once and the bill came to about £2.000! They complained because it was over the top - they sent a formal letter of complaint to our manager and we haven't been taken out there since ". "I can't stand restaurants." mutters Jimmy. "I like eating and I like food but I hate spending all the time hanging around waiting. All that palaver when you have to have a drink and wait to be taken to your table, then you have to wait ages for the food "

Tea

Well, in order to make ` up my quota of five meals a day I have afternoon tea." announces Richard. You mean scones and cakes etc? "That sort of thing, yes. But the best thing of all for tea is Sainsburys' smoked mackerel pate, which I'm addicted to. Waitrose do it as well but it's an inferior product. It's the Samsburys' version for me and I just cannot walk past a Sainsburys' shop without going in and buying some. "Then for dinner I usually go out for a curry. I'm to be round at an Indian restaurant just about every day I like kormas which are quite mild but I'm also something of a vindaloo man, especially when I've got a cold because I've got this theory that eating a really hot curry actually cures colds. It certainly clears the system out a bit. Then after my curry I like to have a pudding - usually banana fritters. I suppose it is a bit disgusting having a curry every day. . ." "It certainly is," froths Jimmy. "Honestly. I hate to think what his insides must look like, and his diet is just shocking So much meat and so much cholesterol it's just unbelievable " "Well, the amount you eat is ridiculous," counters Richard. "You couldn't keep a mouse alive on what you eat. A piece of lettuce for lunch and a bowl of soup in the evening. And you eat so early - how do you last until bedtime without getting hungry?" "I like to have my tea between five and seven - that's normal isn't it?" says Jimmy. "I just eat light. healthy food and I've been a vegetarian for about six years now I started when I was on the dole, because I was living in this squat and we didn't have a fridge or anything so it was impossible to buy meat and keep it fresh And also meat's so expensive. "I've just got used to never eating meat and I honestly believe that the whole world could be fed if there wasn't this concentration of resources on producing meat And all those chemicals and things they give cows and pigs and chickens make them fat - God knows what you're eating when you eat meat don't understand how anyone can think 'oh isn't that wee lamb sweet' and then eat it with mint sauce And I also think that when people start respecting animals they'll start respecting each other" "I quite agree with that," says Richard. "I've got a lot of respect for vegetarians even though I eat meat. I remember when I was at school we used to be made to go on cross country runs and I used always have to run past an abattoir - and the sounds and smells coming from that place we absolutely horrendous."

The Kitchen

Some of these pots and pans are amazing aren't they?" says Jimmy as he clatters about amongst the cooking utensils. "In fact I'd really like to have my own kitchen shop one day. Not selling cookers or anything like that but just all the weird tools you can get When you go to Italy the things they have in kitchen shops are just incredible - just loads of wee things you'd never dream of using The best is this big asparagus pot I saw once. It's a big long thing that would take up half the kitchen and the only thing you can possibly use it for is boiling asparagus. It's brilliant." "The kitchen should really be the most important room in the house," ventures Richard "Ideally I'd have a really massive kitchen in my house and apart from that all I need is somewhere to work in. I love it when you go to people's houses and they all sit in the kitchen and spend all their time m there. The kitchen should be the place where you all sit round a really big table - have the telly in there and everything. It's the only place to live really "And it means you're never far away from a snack. . ."

The Communards' Cookbook

What do you think of that giant sandwich we made? Would you like to try some?" Actually, I've just eaten, thank you Jimmy. "Oh well, /" have to eat it then," volunteers Richard. "Actually I'm doing more and more cooking these days. I've got this really book by Delia Smith called One Is Fun, because I live on my own and, I often cook just for myself. The trouble is the portions are far too small (or someone with an appetite as healthy as mine so I multiply the ingredients by four to make enough I like cooking lunch and the dish I really like at the moment is pork chop with apple in a cider and cream sauce. "Jimmy's quite a good cook too When we first met we were both on the dole and we used to get our money on different days. What used to happen was that when I had money, Jimmy and his flatmate Colin would come round to eat with us and we'd always make chilli con carne. then when they had money my flatmate and I would go to their flat and have Jimmy's soup." "My soups are fab!" exclaims Jimmy excitedly. "The secret of my success is that I always put a spoonful of strawberry jam in. My speciality is vegetable soup, and the way I make it is to fry everything for a bit. You start with the potatoes and the onions and fry them, then add the rest of the vegetables and carry on frying until everything has gone soft. Then you add the stock, a few herbs and the strawberry jam and just boil it all up- My other speciality is nee pudding which I made the other day " "That was such a saga." moans Richard "It took htm four hours to make it I was starving so in the end I just went out and got a takeaway instead." "Well," explains Jimmy, "the trouble with me when I'm cooking is that I tend to try and attempt to do other things at the same time. When I was making the rice pudding I was also stripping the bathroom before decorating it, doing my washing and trying to mend my motorbike so it took quite a long time "It's easy enough to make though. You just buy special pudding rice, add the milk - about a pint and a half - and then add cinnamon. I put a wee bit of ginger in too. and some mixed spice It s delicious. "Richard's a good cook though. He made this fab thing the other day - aduki bean stew. You've never heard of aduki beans? Well, they re these beans that a lot of vegans (i.e. people who don't eat any dairy products or meat) and vegetarians use as a meat substitute. You can make burgers and everything out of them, they're really nice and full of protein. Much better for you than meat."