



**JOHN TORODE AND LISA FAULKNER RETURN FOR A BRAND NEW SERIES OF *JOHN & LISA'S WEEKEND KITCHEN* ON ITV THIS WINTER**



*Photo credit: Geraint Warrington*

A brand new series of *John & Lisa's Weekend Kitchen* - produced by ITV Studios Daytime - will return to ITV this winter. It's packed with tempting recipes and chef's tips for one of the most exciting seasons of the year when it comes to food.

Top culinary couple **John Torode** and **Lisa Faulkner** are back with their expertise and flair for creating delicious, original and easy-to-cook dishes. It's difficult not to be inspired by their easy-to-do mouth-watering and imaginative recipes.

The popular series will return from Saturday 13th November at 11.40am and follows their most successful series yet, which aired in May. The series saw a further increase in the

show's viewing share, proving it has become one of ITV's most-loved weekend daytime offerings.

This 10-part series brings a feast of inspiration from hearty comfort food to speedy midweek suppers, plus weekend show-stopping meals. John and Lisa will also be getting ready for Christmas and have a line up of irresistible ideas for the festive season. With their sparkling enthusiasm, twists on traditional dishes and a host of simple ideas for snacks, starters, mains and pudding, John and Lisa make cooking for Christmas easy - and fun.

John Torode said, *"We always want to make sure we do food people can cook at home. The idea of this series is that for 10 weeks, we're there in your home, and just trying to help you through when it's getting a bit cold, you're feeling a bit down, and Christmas may feel a little bit too much of a burden... It's brilliant!"*

Lisa Faulkner added, *"Our schedules have been really busy, so to work together was a chance to see each other! We're lucky in the fact that we love food, so we're constantly thinking of ideas and chatting through recipes. I love working with John."*

*John & Lisa's Weekend Kitchen* is produced by ITV Studios Daytime and will be sponsored by Waitrose.

**Please credit with:**

***John & Lisa's Weekend Kitchen* returns to ITV and ITV Hub from Saturday 13th November at 11.40am.**

**Q&A with John Torode and Lisa Faulkner - please ensure credit is included if used:**



*Photo credit: Geraint Warrington*

**You both have such busy schedules - how does it feel to be working together again for *John & Lisa's Weekend Kitchen*?**

**L:** I love working with John, it's great. Our schedules have been really busy, so it's been nice to actually see him. He's been away and I've been doing some things, so to work together was a chance to see each other.

**J:** The thing about *John & Lisa's Weekend Kitchen* is it's just fun. We always want to make sure we do food that people can cook at home, and the idea of this series is that for 10 weeks, we're there in your home and just trying to help you through when it's getting a bit cold, you're feeling a bit down, and Christmas may feel a little bit too much of a burden. And it's brilliant! I love working with Lisa.

**There's ten new episodes - how do you continue to come up with fresh ideas? Does it ever feel like work?**

**J:** Never! I have to say I am really, really lucky. The way that this is filmed is that we actually go into the studio, the cameras roll and we cook the recipe all the way through as if we were cooking at home. We don't stop and start, we don't change direction, we just cook the recipe!

**L:** We're lucky in the fact that we love food, so we're constantly thinking of ideas. We could be watching a film and think, 'Oh that could be good' or cooking bits. Luckily, we have such a fantastic team working on our show. Our lovely producers will say, 'We've got some ideas for an

Italian theme' or 'Can you think of some easy veggie dishes?' and we all go away and just chat through recipes and think of stuff.

**J:** What happens is that Lisa and I will have our own ideas, then we have a brilliant team who give us some ideas and themes and we throw lots of ideas around together before we compile all the recipes. We then try stuff we've never cooked before and literally just bury ourselves in that and cook as much as we possibly can. We try out the recipes to get it right before we start filming. We just want it to be accessible. We've always wanted people just to enjoy it and smile. I think what's happened over the years is that some people are scared by people saying how it's supposed to be - just start with the basics. Know how to roast a chook, know how to cook a bit of steak, know how to make a bit of tofu taste good and you're going to be a winner!

### **Do you ever disagree over ideas?**

**L:** Yeah. John will often say something like, 'I think we should cook quail, they're really easy to cook and nobody cooks them really' and I'm like, 'No' [Laughs]. Our viewers wouldn't be bothered about a quail. I feel like I'm the 'mum viewer' person and he's the chef - obviously he is, but sometimes he can be ambitious with his ideas. He does have great ideas and does amazing Asian dishes and Asian flavours. Sometimes I'm like, 'Oh I'm scared of doing that' and he'll make it look so easy that I think, 'Why was I ever scared of it because it's actually so simple.'

### **Have yours and other people's eating habits changed since the pandemic?**

**L:** Not really, apart from the fact we couldn't eat out, but we've always cooked a lot at home and from scratch. During the pandemic, we cooked every day and made a daily video, so our eating habits didn't change at all, but it's lovely to go back into restaurants. It's the washing up element more than anything - having teenage kids try to do the washing up doesn't always work!

**J:** I don't know if it's changed our eating habits, but I think what it's probably done is made us a little bit more aware. There were some people, especially in the first lockdown, who may have had no idea how to cook at all... So I think it's probably made people think, 'Okay, it's good to have a couple of basic recipes in the bag' and it's probably the right time now actually to teach their kids a couple of dishes so when they do leave home they know how to boil an egg, they know how to make something nice to eat and something which is may be impressive but basic.

### **What's the first thing you did when lockdown lifted?**

**L:** We went for dinner to Scott's in Mayfair and it was lovely to be out. I ordered the monkfish curry - that's one of my favourites. And oysters - I love them.

**J:** We also went to Jin Kichi in Hampstead. The one place I wanted to go to during lockdown was a Japanese restaurant and have somebody making proper sashimi and sushi for me. They're such masters at it and it's just really lovely to watch somebody else do it - a proper treat.

**The entertainment and hospitality industry suffered during the pandemic. Do you feel lucky you had stuff to keep you busy?**

**L:** We were lucky as we did two series of the show. We also cooked for free on Instagram - we made videos to keep ourselves sane and to give people entertainment. I feel very blessed because we weren't affected like lots of people. I think the entertainment industry has bounced back very fast - there's a lot going on now for actors and people I know. It seems like the industry is really getting back up on its feet. It's really changed all of us. Those big nights out that used to be fun don't seem that fun anymore - I'd rather be with my friends, having dinner in our house or their house.

**J:** On the first day of lockdown, Lisa said, 'I can't do nothing.' And she was the one who instigated doing the videos on Instagram every single day, and we did 75 videos, one back to back for all those weeks and it was the thing that saved us, really. I think it saved us mentally... But yes, I feel very, very fortunate.

**This series focuses on those comfort foods and wintery feelings, what do you enjoy most about the winter?**

**J:** As an Aussie, we didn't really have seasons, so I really appreciate them. I love them because they are real seasons and actually you know what? The best seafood is in winter - amazing scallops and beautiful prawns - the water's cold, amazing fish like sea bass and turbot and cod and smoked haddock and all those sorts of things are great this time of year. Smoked haddock chowder - that's wintery, warming deliciousness!

**L:** I'm not very good with winter, I don't enjoy it much. I can't handle the light going and the darker nights. I try to embrace it and go, 'Lovely slow cooking recipes'. I'll light all my candles and sit in my pyjamas. And that does work - I'm very good at getting myself out of that darkness, but it is really not my favourite time of year.

**J:** Winter food in colour terms is brown. If you actually look at the colours around you, and you cook food that almost reflects those colours. So in spring, you're cooking lots of green, when it gets to autumn you're cooking more sort of oranges and browns like squashes and things like that. When you get to winter it becomes really quite brown. Very, very earthy. It's roasts, casseroles, stew, chocolate and caramel. It's things like that, and that's why I'm saying it's brown. But it doesn't have to be boring because it's brown, it can be really exciting. I mean there's nothing like a decent sausage casserole with lots and lots of ground black pepper and some dumplings across the top!

**What's your go-to easy comfort food that you and your family enjoy most?**

**L:** Mac and cheese - I just love it. My daughter loves it. You can pimp it up with bacon, chorizo, leeks, tomatoes and breadcrumbs on top and it can be a whole meal. It's just one of those things you don't have to think about, you can just spoon it into your mouth.

**J:** We're like most other big families and enjoy bowls of pasta, roast chicken, roast lamb. But even a boiled egg and bacon on toast. There's something really comforting about it, but we all have our particular ways that we like our bacon so even that has its own challenges!

**Are you looking forward to this festive season? Do you have plans to see family this year?**

**L:** Yes, much more than last year - last year was so depressing. John and I had a lovely Christmas, but it was just me and him because of being a blended family - we have our kids one year and not the next. Usually we'd go away or do something different, but we couldn't because of the lockdown. We'd planned to see the family but that all changed. So it will be lovely to be able to have all our family round and make Christmas dinner - I'm really looking forward to that.

**J:** I'm looking forward to presents as always! We always have a big Christmas and this Christmas we have all the children so hopefully there won't be any restrictions and we can have everybody together.

**Who makes the Christmas dinner?**

**L:** We both do. We get up and cook and laugh. John will have champagne and I'll have a glass of wine. We'll put Christmas music on and we love it - we're in our happy place.

**What is the food or drink that means Christmas to you?**

**L:** Stuffing - John makes amazing stuffing and that means Christmas. In November, I make mincemeat, Christmas puddings and Christmas cake for my dad and one for us. The smell of Christmas cake means Christmas to me also.

**J:** Bread sauce and stuffing for me. I make stuffing for people on order! There are certain people around the country who still ask me if I can make the stuffing for them. It's one of those things I love making and everybody in the family loves it.

**What's on your Christmas list this year?**

**L:** On my Christmas list will always be a new pair of pyjamas. There's not much, really - maybe it's my age. I feel like as long as I've got everybody around me I really don't mind. I remember my grandma used to say, 'Oh you don't have to get me anything, just you lot being here is my present' and I used to think that's really stupid, but I really understand it, especially after the years of not having people around.

**J:** I've almost finished my Christmas shopping! But the thing I'm struggling to get at the moment is wrapping paper, it's really annoying. I always put bows around my presents each Christmas, and I always attach a bauble too. Everybody gets a bauble on their present! I do it so my children will have a collection of baubles over the years that they will then have of their own

when they leave home. So when they get their own tree they'll have all these baubles with different memories of Christmases on them. Every child has got their own box and each decoration has a coloured dot underneath so that each child knows which Christmas decoration is theirs.

**What's your favourite Christmas song which is guaranteed to get you up dancing or singing along?**

**L:** Wham's *Last Christmas*.

**J:** Our Christmas songs start on about the first of December and they don't finish until about the third of January!

**Tell us your best Christmas cracker joke...**

**L:** Why did the sand blush? Because the sea weed. That was actually in my cracker last year!

**J:** Two elephants fell off a cliff.. boom boom!

**What are your plans for 2022? Do you always start the year eating more healthily?**

**L:** Hopefully more *Weekend Kitchen*, we'd love that. And just to keep working and to stay healthy, and to keep being very grateful for what I have and just taking time to appreciate all the moments and all the seasons - even the dark winter nights!

**J:** My year starts after my birthday and that's when I do all my resolutions. I start the year as positively as I possibly can. I think we've got a pretty good life. I'm hoping for more *John & Lisa's Weekend Kitchen* for sure! I'd also like to go and see my dad too, of course. I speak to him all the time. He's 84 and while he's been in lockdown in Australia, we've been sending him lists of books we've been reading and then we have conversations about the books on the phone which is great.

**L:** I don't understand people who say, 'I'm going to stop drinking' in January - the darkest, coldest, most depressing month. If there's any month you need a glass of wine and a bit of cake, it's January, so I don't even think about eating lighter until March. When Spring comes, I think, 'Oh good, I'll eat well and exercise a bit more.'

**Is there a new superfood or food fad that we should be aware of?**

**L:** I'm a home cook, so no. I don't really follow fads. My daughter would be the one to ask because she's constantly looking at different things on TikTok and making the weirdest food combinations!