

Lunch was interesting, and with the odd mix of ingredients, conversation centred on the random recipe generator. I explained how I'd pored for days over lists of ingredients, sorting them into high, medium and low carbon footprint for each season.

'It was your joker column that gave me the most trouble.'

'I love the joker column man. You should put insects in there.'

'He's not joking,' Lori noticed my bemused face. 'We got some online for a Halloween party.'

'They were cool, instead of crisps we handed out dried crickets and mealworms.'

I sat up interested. I'd read several articles about the high carbon footprint of meat and suggestions that insects could form an alternative source of high fibre, low fat protein.

'You know that's a great idea,' I said. 'Insects are widely eaten around the world, and have a low carbon footprint.'

'Cool man, you should put them in your Random Recipe thingy then.'

'You care about climate change?'

'It's a proper mental health issue man!' Ethan did indeed have a worried expression, but I wasn't sure if that was still drug-induced paranoia.

'I'm sure Jo would be up for that.' I could picture her face, she'd be delighted to add insects to the list of ingredients.

'Oh, that would be great man. I could like MasterChef it. Make something really cool, like foraged frittata of beetles. Or...' He gazed thoughtfully into the distance, moving his lips slightly as if to taste an invisible substance, 'deep-fried chilli mealworm balls with a redcurrant coulis, the acidity of the redcurrant balancing the nuttiness of the mealworms.'

I was surprised at first by the fervour with which he was embracing the idea, but then it began to make sense.

'I can just picture it man. I could like go hunting for beetles and things. It appeals to something.... primal in me.' A wistful look appeared in his eye. 'I'd be killing things - not just one or two - lots of things. And it would be all for a good cause.'

Ethan gazed into the distance, seemingly in a trance. There was a brief silence while I struggled for something to say.

'It was the baked beans gave me the most trouble,' said Lori eventually, passing over a side dish of baked beans in red wine and turmeric.