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The cult of EMR

Rachel Johnson joins the Early Morning Regime

INSIDE TIMES2



An idiot's guide to therapy

Scrap 'immoral' freeze on benefits, leading Tories tell May

TIMES INVESTIGATION

Rachel Sylvester, Alice Thomson
Sam Coates Deputy Political Editor

Theresa May is warned by senior Tories today to end the benefit freeze for seven million people or see her party suffer at the next election.

The freeze, introduced by George Osborne in 2015, means a real-terms cut in income for millions of people and is due to continue until April 2020.

Five former cabinet ministers, including Justine Greening and David Davis, are leading the call for benefits to be raised now, in line with inflation.

The £1.4 billion move is also backed

by Nicky Morgan, chairwoman of the Treasury select committee, the former work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith and the former universities minister Lord Willetts. Another Tory MP, Heidi Allen, said that the freeze no longer made moral sense.

Their call comes as part of a *Times*

investigation into poverty in Britain, which discovered that:

- More families stand to lose than gain under the new universal credit benefit, according to a new analysis.

- In-work poverty is higher than at any time in two decades and rising faster than the rate of employment.

- Malnutrition has tripled over the past decade.

- Mr Duncan Smith threatened to make a Treasury official "eat his balls for breakfast" during a row over universal credit.

Mrs May and Philip Hammond, the chancellor, have already had to fend off
Continued on page 2, col 3

JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS



A White House employee reaches for a microphone held by the CNN reporter Jim Acosta. President Trump had clashed with him over a question about immigration at a post-election press conference yesterday

Trump points to second term

● US leader hails midterm success despite losing lower house ● Pence is running-mate again in bid for eight-year presidency

David Charter, Boer Deng Washington

President Trump immediately set his sights on re-election in 2020 yesterday after claiming to have "defied history" by making gains in US midterm elections even as his party lost control of one chamber of Congress.

He asked Mike Pence, the vice-president, to be his running-mate again — and Mr Pence agreed — during a bombastic and at times bad-tempered press conference performance from a

president pumped up by several "incredible" Senate victories.

Mr Trump then sacked Jeff Sessions, the attorney-general, after months of sniping at him, as he began to reshape his cabinet for the second half of his administration. The president put himself at the heart of Republican successes and blamed half a dozen candidates by name for losing because they "didn't want the embrace" of his personal support.

America was left exhausted and

divided by an election campaign marred by mail-bomb attacks, a mass-shooting of Jewish worshippers in Pittsburgh and aggressive partisan rhetoric from the president.

In an apparent olive branch to the Democrats, who regained control in the House of Representatives, Mr Trump offered a "new concept" of bipartisanship so long as they refrained from investigating his affairs.

This set the scene for bitter battles to come after one exit poll indicated that

77 per cent of Democrats wanted the party to use its House majority to launch impeachment proceedings against Mr Trump and senior party figures made clear that they would press for him to release his tax returns.

Last night the Democrats were on course to gain at least 30 seats in the House, after suburban and college-educated women turned against the Republicans. In the Senate most of the seats in this cycle were fought in Republican-leaning states and the

party was on track to make a net gain of at least two, with Arizona and Florida still counting.

Mr Trump's conflict with the American media deepened when he argued with Jim Acosta, a CNN reporter who asked if the president had "demonised" migrants heading to the US by calling it an "invasion". Mr Trump said that he viewed it as an invasion and ordered Acosta to stick to one question.

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Trump hails 'great victory', pages 30-31

IN THE NEWS

Charles: I'll change

The Prince of Wales will change his ways and stop meddling when he becomes king, he tells the BBC in a documentary tonight to mark his 70th birthday next week. Page 7

Veteran, 98, beaten

A 98-year-old war veteran is in a critical condition after he was beaten by burglars at his house in north London before they took a television worth about £50. Page 17

Rowling sues aide

JK Rowling is suing her former assistant Amanda Donaldson for allegedly taking expensive Harry Potter merchandise and using the author's credit card for spending sprees. Page 21

Merkel era 'is over'

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, protégée of the German chancellor, has begun her party leadership campaign with a declaration that the era of Angela Merkel is over. Page 33

Sack for £76m bonus

The housebuilder Persimmon has taken the unprecedented step of sacking Jeff Fairburn, its chief executive, because his £76 million bonus was harming its reputation. Page 37

United's dramatic win

Manchester United defeated Juventus 2-1 in the Champions League with late goals after Cristiano Ronaldo's opener. Manchester City beat Shakhtar Donetsk 6-0. Pages 68-72

the table

How to blow-dry the world's best

KATIE WILSON FOR THE TIMES

Is it surprising to find that Albert Adrià grooms his desserts? He was, after all, the experimental genius at Spain's greatest restaurant, says **Lucy Holden**

No, no, no, no, no!" exclaims the best pastry chef in the world, wielding a hot-pink Mark Hill hairdryer over half a dozen Michelin-starred

cheesecakes. I've got a jug of warm hazelnut chocolate in one hand and stop mid-pour, a smell like brie and Nutella hanging anxiously in the air alongside the idea that I've just ruined the best cheesecake in the world.

When you involve an Adrià brother in anything, there are a lot of "bests".

It all started at El Bulli, the three-Michelin star restaurant in the tiny Catalan town of Roses, which was continually voted the best restaurant in the world until it shut in 2011. Here, among the mountains near the Costa Brava, Albert Adrià, 49, trained under his brother, Ferran, 56. Together they turned the kitchen into a gastronomy experiment that dominated the food scene, changing the way that chefs around the world thought about texture, temperature and form.

Getting a table at El Bulli was the equivalent of winning the lottery. It received about a million requests a year at the height of its fame and given that it accommodated 50 diners for evenings only between April and September, it struggled to fit everyone in. Only 8,000 people a year had a chance to taste the gastronomic revolution (for €250), with the restaurant shutting for six months to allow the chefs to dream up their next creations, which included parmesan ice cream, savoury "lollipops", deconstructed consommé and ravioli that you realised was made of calamari only when you bit into it. I was once told that they invented culinary foam by blowing up a tomato with a bicycle pump, but Albert laughs this off as Willy Wonka-esque "legend" (although they did invent foam, for better or for worse).

You can now try a slice of El Bulli-quality cooking in London at Cakes & Bubbles in the Hotel Café Royal, their first venture outside Spain — provided that you want to go straight to dessert. Albert, who was named the best pastry chef in the world in 2013, has created the first sweet-only, fine-dining menu, he says, and is today showing me how to create the showstopper: a salty-sweet cheesecake made of white chocolate and a soft ripened French cheese from Coulommiers, a town to the east of Paris. It's also the only place in the world where you can eat it, since the dish was taken off the menu at Albert's Michelin-starred restaurant Tickets in Barcelona to give it pride of place here.

Luckily, Albert's shouts of "no" don't mean I have ruined my attempt at his cheesecake — he is vehemently answering one of my questions: How do you eat three courses of dessert?

"It won't be about eating a starter, main and dessert each," he explains. "You'll have the freedom to share a cheesecake for a main course, eat sweet tapas, do whatever you like. I don't think of it as a restaurant because you go to restaurants to fill up; here you come to indulge. It's fun and decadent. On your birthday you have bonbons and champagne; here it can be your birthday whenever you like. It's the first place like it in the world."

You must really love dessert, I say. "I don't like sugar," he replies.

Do you like champagne then, I ask, given that it's the only other thing on the menu. "Of course!"

Why a chef who dislikes sweet things would open a dessert bar could perhaps be partly explained by the phrase "perception versus reality", an El Bulli-style motto that he uses to describe much on the menu here, which includes Spanish egg flans served in golden eggshells, ice cream sandwiches in silver bags, air-light eclairs, frozen chocolate flowers, and pink puffs of strawberry meringue that taste, bizarrely, of toothpaste and leave your mouth menthol fresh.

The cheesecake is nothing like any cheesecake you'll have eaten before. The taste — when we finish making it, dripping it in chocolate and adding a gauze effect to make it look like a real French wheel — is so unexpectedly cheesy that I at first think it's foul, then the sweet hazelnut of the skin settles on my tongue and I begin to think it's brilliant. Anyone who loves a cheesecake will be head over heels.

One reason that Adrià gravitated to the dessert end of the menu as a chef, despite not having a sweet tooth, is that he has a severe allergy to seafood. He has never been able to eat or, often, handle lobster, crab and prawns without going into anaphylactic shock.

Deciding to spend one's life in a kitchen therefore seems illogical, and in truth he may never have become a chef had his brother not entered the profession first. "I didn't love cooking," he admits. "I did it to survive. A love of it didn't come until much later."

Neither brother nurtured adolescent dreams of gastronomic greatness. Albert says that Ferran was obsessed with emulating his idol, Johan Cruyff, the Dutch star of Barcelona's football team. "My childhood memories are of watching him play football every Sunday morning, then going with our parents to a local bar to 'do the vermouth' before lunch, which is an important social moment in Spain. We'd eat olives, potato chips and anchovies and then go home for lunch, which was cheaper." With a painter and plasterer for a father and a housewife for a mother, they weren't poor, but eating out in restaurants was still seen as a luxury.

The family lived in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, the densely crowded municipality just outside Barcelona.



Albert Adrià at Cakes & Bubbles, Hotel Café Royal, 68 Regent Street, London W1; hotelcaferoyal.com

“I didn't love cooking. I did it to survive”

When Albert left school at the age of 15, "out of boredom", his parents made it clear that he would need to pull his weight. Ferran, then aged 22, was already the head chef of El Bulli when his younger brother came knocking at the restaurant's door.

The brothers' age difference meant they weren't close until they started working together. "Seven years is a huge age difference when you are a child. Ferran was chasing girls when I was playing with toy cars and he was in Ibiza partying for the entire summer by the time I was 11," Albert recalls. "I didn't follow him around because I couldn't, but I looked up to him, of course."

"Working together as brothers is good," he adds. "We have a good system. I think we could have maybe done something else if not food."

Would you have become, say, a zookeeper if Ferran had?

"Possibly," he says, with a smile. "We have often considered what else we might have been doing. My dream was to work in advertising or to be a film director."

Like the Coen brothers, I suggest. "Who?" he asks.

Cooking can run in the family — just think of the Roux dynasty — but there's something more intense about brotherly ambition running side by side in the same industry. The rivalry can be friendly — the Hollywood actors Chris and Liam Hemsworth, for instance, are never seen fighting on the red carpet — but I wonder if the heat of the kitchen leads to more dramatic flare-ups. Did the Adriàs ever fight, like Liam and Noel Gallagher?

"Chefs are more pacifist than rock stars. We never fell out like them, but we argued in the kitchen, don't get me wrong. I was never made to clean the loos, but I was worked hard. I certainly didn't get an easier ride because my brother was head chef. I had to train on all the sections before I could specialise in pastry, where I felt more comfortable because even we weren't putting lobster into cake."

After 13 years, though, he had a "large crisis", he says, holding out his arms to illustrate how big. "I quit. I'd been serious about cooking, but by the

cheesecake



Albert Adrià's ultimate cheesecake

Makes 3 cakes

Ingredients

100g coulommiers cheese, cut into small pieces
200g double cream
30g pasteurised egg yolks
30g sugar
½ gelatin sheet, soaked in cold water
40g cream cheese
36g white chocolate
24g hazelnut paste

Method

I Put the cheese in a heatproof bowl. In a small, heavy saucepan, heat the cream, egg yolks and sugar to 85C, whisking constantly to create a smooth crème anglaise. Squeeze the water out of the gelatin, add to the crème anglaise and stir, then pour the mixture over the cheese. Blend with a handheld electric whisk and pass through a fine sieve into another bowl. Leave to rest for 24 hours.

2 Whip 60g of the mixture with the cream cheese. Using a piping bag and a plain nozzle, pipe into three 7.5cm-diameter rings. Freeze and, once solid, remove from the moulds.

3 To cover the cakes, melt the white chocolate in a bain-marie and mix with the hazelnut paste. Place the frozen cheesecakes on a rack and carefully coat with the hazelnut mixture, removing any excess with a hairdryer (on a cool setting). Allow the coating to crystallise, then, while wearing gloves, drape a piece of sterile cheesecloth over each cheesecake and allow them to set. Carefully peel off the cheesecloth, leaving an impression of it on the surface of the cheesecake (this creates the illusion of a cheese rind).

4 Leave the cheesecakes to thaw in a sealed container in the refrigerator. Serve with butter biscuits. cakesandbubbles.co.uk

time I was 28, I knew nothing else and I thought I could be serious about something different."

He became a mussel fisherman, he says, which seems counterintuitive given his relationship with crustaceans. "It was completely illegal because we didn't have a licence, but we'd get up at 5.30am to drive into France, pick the mussels and then sell them in Spain that day. It was very dangerous because we got higher prices for the biggest, most beautiful mussels, which grew out of reach in deep, awful waters or high on rocks and you could be carrying as much as 25kg of mussels on your back at a time. Sometimes it was too dangerous in the sea to go in at all and my boss made me wait in the car; other times he said he'd pay me £6 a mussel to go get them and it looked so dangerous I said I'd pay him £10."

Four months later he was back at El Bulli. Ferran, who had just won his third Michelin star, put him to work in the experiment kitchen. "He knew we needed a quiet, calm place outside the kitchen to invent and that became my job. He wanted me to solve the

impossibility of warm gelatin and warm ice cream. The latter I am still working on, but I can taste it, so I know it can be done."

Being the "shadow" in the kitchen wasn't easy. "Ferran was doing 600 interviews a year, sometimes eight a day and I was in complete solitude for months at a time," he says. "Balancing the loneliness with the onslaught of people who wanted to see what we were doing was difficult. I think Ferran was protecting us by speaking for us, but now it's weird for me being the face while he works behind the scenes at the El Bulli Foundation [his mystical gastronomic think tank]. We're very different at work and at home, but in a way he will always be my boss."

Still, here at the Hotel Café Royal in a kitchen that smells of passion fruit and is scattered with specialist madeleine-making machines, he looks very much in command as he keeps one eye on the piping work of the chefs around him and half an eye on me and the cheesecakes. "I'm not the shadow any more," he says, laughing, and he couldn't be more right.

The top tarts, tortes, puds, cakes and cookies that money can buy

Lemon tart

Osteria Francescana, Modena, Italy
Is "Oops, I Dropped a Lemon Tart!" a semi-demolished zabaglione and lemongrass ice cream dessert or a work of modern art? For the chef patron Massimo Bottura, the most iconic dish at his three Michelin-starred restaurant is about making the most of whatever life throws at you — in this case, almost literally from a sous chef's butter fingers. He calls it the "palate of the people" because its ingredients come from all over Italy, including bergamot from Calabria and lemon from Sorrento.

Custard tarts

Antiga Casa de Pasteis de Belem, Lisbon, Portugal
The antithesis of the anaemic, sloppy custard tarts that proliferate in the refrigerated aisles of supermarkets, the *pasteis de nata* that Antiga Casa has been turning out since 1837 are the flakiest and tastiest ones that you'll ever eat. "Crisp puff-pastry cases the size of espresso cups, filled with silky, citrus-scented custard — they're gone in three bites," Niki Segnit, author of *The Flavour Thesaurus*, says.

Rice pudding

The Ivy, London WC2
Comfort food has always been the Ivy's stock in trade, and nothing is more comforting than the rice pudding that makes its way on to the menu most winters. Sometimes it comes with a crimson blob of jam or a compote of Agen prunes, but the true secret to its glory is that the rice is cooked in evaporated milk and finished with cream for a rich, caramelised, nostalgic perfection.

Eccles cake

St John, London ECI
A homage to the northern roots of Fergus Henderson's mother, the eccles cake served at St John — with three slashes on top "for the Holy Trinity" — comes with a tangy sliver of Mrs Kirkham's Lancashire cheese. The chef admits that bakers in Eccles might balk at his choice of a lard-free vegetarian puff pastry, but frankly it would be their loss.

Sachertorte

Café Sacher, Vienna, Austria
The rich, chocolatey Viennese speciality was invented by Franz Sacher in 1832, apparently for the Austrian chancellor Prince Wenzel von Metternich. Elegant yet understated, the cake has decadent fudge-like icing and a wafer-thin layer of apricot jam. No wonder its genesis was the subject of a nine-year legal battle between the Hotel Sacher and the Demel café. In 1963 the hotel, which sells about 360,000 Sachertortes annually, won the right to call itself the original producer.

Macarons

Pierre Hermé, Paris, France
Known as "the Picasso of pastry", Hermé was declared the fourth most influential French person by his country's edition of *Vanity Fair* in 2016, two places above Emmanuel Macron, who was then campaigning to become president. For those with a sweet tooth, there's no contest — the patissier's macarons are unique. Try the



Osteria Francescana's *Oops, I Dropped a Lemon Tart!*

hazelnut and foie gras combination, or the decadent caviar and walnut-liqueur flavour. For the less daring, Hermé's signatures are the *Ispanh* (raspberry, lychee and rose water) and the *Mogador* (milk chocolate and passion fruit).

Chocolate-chip walnut cookies

Levain Bakery, New York, US
It's a fair cop — the former *Bake Off* winner Edd Kimber did create the perfect chocolate-chip cookie for *The Times* only last month, but this nutty version may eclipse it. The bakery's founders, Constance McDonald and Pamela Weekes, fine-tuned their recipe 24 years ago so that the cookies could be as big as possible without compromising on taste. Goopy on the inside, crisp on the outside. Served warm, the chocolate oozes. A nice crunch comes courtesy of the walnuts. They may be close to 600 calories, but even Taylor Swift is a fan.



Eclairs

L'Éclair de Génie, Paris, France
The master patissier Christophe Adam's version of the classic French treat are not merely iced and stuffed with cream. Some are dusted with edible powdered gold or have images, others are injected with lemon yuzu mascarpone. The toppings are diverse. Think rose petals and crunchy caramelised pecans.

Baklava

Karakoy Gulluoglu, Istanbul, Turkey
Founded in 1871, this bakery claims to be the world's biggest baklava producer. Every day, 400lb (180kg) of pistachios are sandwiched between paper-thin layers of filo dough. Then they're glutted with sugar syrup and lashings of thick clotted buffalo cream called *kaymak*. The distinctive taste comes down to the high-quality nuts, which are grown in Gaziantep, a province more than 500 miles from Istanbul in south-central Turkey.

Gingerbread

Church Cottage, Grasmere, Ambleside
In 1854 Sarah Nelson, a working-class Victorian cook, invented the now famous Grasmere gingerbread — a spicy-sweet, chewy concoction that can never quite decide whether it wants to be a biscuit or a cake. The shop is located in what was once Nelson's home, a quaint cottage in the Lake District. Everyone from Renée Zellweger to Jamie Oliver has visited — Tom Cruise went back for seconds. **By Tony Turnbull, Shaun Phillips and Elisabeth Perlman**

