

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's the turn of celebrity chef Jamie Oliver

**The prized possession you value above all others...**

My grandad Ted's wedding ring. He died after a stroke when I was ten and my nan wore it until she gave it to me not long before she died in 2013. It connects me to two beautiful people in my ancestry.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...**

I'm gutted I never met Keith Floyd. He was a loose cannon but brilliant. I'd love to have cooked with him.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...**

Giving my wife Jools's lovely bum a little smack when she's doing the washing up. It never goes down well!

**The person who has influenced you most...**

Gennaro Contaldo was my first boss in London at Carluccio's restaurant when I was 17 and he's still my best mate. I've learnt so much from him.

**The film you can watch time and time again...**

The Goonies is the ultimate fantasy film with a bunch of kids saving the day. I loved it when it came out in 1985 and still enjoy watching it with my kids.

Right: The Goonies. Above right: poker. Far right: an underwater scene off the coast of Brazil



**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...**

I read the River Café Cook Book by Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers when I was working at Carluccio's and it was so original I knew I had to work with them next. Six months later I had a job at the River Café.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...**

When dudes don't get up for old people on buses.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...**

I'd hang out at No 10 to hear Theresa May's strategy for fighting childhood obesity so I can be ready.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...**

Charles Darwin. I'd just like to be in the company of such a genius.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...**

Invest in lots of friends, because relationships are precious.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...**

Just get stuck in and have a go.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...**

I find whittling [carving shapes from wood] very therapeutic, but I'm not as good as Gennaro and Antonio Carluccio, who taught me how to do it.



**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...**

My Ray-Bans. I lose about 15 pairs a year!

**The poem that touches your soul...**

Nothing Gold Can Stay by Robert Frost. It's Jools's favourite poem and I had it etched on a vintage mirror for a wedding anniversary present. It reminds me that nothing lasts forever and you should stop to value the good times.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...**

That because I'm successful I'm a posh, middle-class kid. But I went to comprehensive school and my dad is a working-class geezer who turned a s\*\*thole into a great pub.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...**

The night in 1997 when I was called in at the last minute to cover for someone at the River Café. A documentary was being filmed and they caught me on camera a lot. About four months later it went out on TV and the next day I had three production companies ring up asking me to do a TV show.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...**

I'd sneak into Whitehall and make it law for firms to cook their staff a good lunch.

**The song that means most to you...**

Mr Brightside by The Killers, which was the theme tune for my School Dinners series in 2005 and is now an anthem for my Food Revolution campaign.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...**

I'd start with a big Italian breakfast at the River Café. It doesn't open for breakfast but it would on this day. Then a limo would take me and my best mates to the Italian Alps for some skiing. We'd have lunch in a mountain restaurant – to freak out the Italians they'd have to cook us south Indian curries! After a few Negroni cocktails we'd arrive at a stunning beach in Brazil, where Jools and the kids – Poppy, 14, Daisy, 13, Petal, seven, and Buddy, five – would join us. I'd have a bit of sandcastle action with them, then go scuba diving. Everyone would tip up for dinner at Il San Pietro in Positano,

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Italy, where we went for our honeymoon. We'd have Bellinis on the terrace at sunset followed by seafood pasta and plenty of Fontodi Flaccianello red wine. Then I'd play poker with the lads at the Villa Cimbrone hotel in Ravello while drinking the best tippie from the Scotch Malt Whisky Society.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...**

Convincing Jools to come on our first date when I was 18. I'd been in love with her for about six months, but I wasn't very confident with women – I sounded like Scooby-Doo whenever I spoke to one – so it took me ages to ask her. I took her to Browns restaurant in Cambridge and it was very exciting.

**The saddest time that shook your world...**

A close friend committed suicide seven years ago. It still haunts me.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...**

To play drums for Bon Jovi at Glastonbury!

**The order of service at your funeral...**

I'd come down the aisle to Mr Brightside, then we'd have Nothing Gold Can Stay and my kids and Jools would say a few words. Jamie Culm would sing Bon Jovi's Livin' On A Prayer, then I'd be burnt in a wood oven – I've got to keep it culinary!

**The way you want to be remembered...**

As a half-honest bloke who had a go.

**The Plug...** Super Food Family Classics by Jamie Oliver is out now, published by Michael Joseph, £26. The accompanying TV series airs on Channel 4 in September. [jamieoliver.com](http://jamieoliver.com). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



## PS...

Will Smith is a supervillain in fantasy blockbuster *Suicide Squad* – in cinemas from Friday. *The Edinburgh Fringe Festival* begins on the same day, and a double album of Elvis's last recordings, *Way Down In The Jungle Room*, is also released



## NEXT WEEK

- Mo'Nique relives the events of London 2012's Super Saturday
- Tom Kerridge's best barbie recipes
- Monty Don's tips for growing fruit in a tiny garden
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings