

Ricky Gervais

actor, comedian

Have a conversation with the chatty creator of the award-winning sitcom *The Office*, and it can be hard to distinguish the truth from a clever zinger. With the release of his new film, *The Invention of Lying*, on September 25, fans and movie audiences alike can see for themselves. "I'm a loser," Gervais says of his character. "Then I discover I can lie, and suddenly the shoe's on the other foot."

We caught up with the comedian to hear about his other favorite truths on animals, alcohol, and food.

INTERVIEW BY BEKAH WRIGHT



The British funnyman follows his conscience (but keeps his wicked sense of humor) wherever he eats.

What would people be surprised to find in your kitchen?

Two fridges of wine and Champagne. I never want to run out of chilled Pinot Grigio or Fumé Cuvée.

Name three foods that are always in your refrigerator.

Never without a nice, mature cheddar. I'm a big ball of gout waiting to happen, aren't I? You'll find everything in there organic and free-range, from fruits and vegetables to eggs and chicken. It's a pretty healthy fridge. I'm a high-protein, high-fiber kind of guy. The cupboard, however...

I refuse to cut out every single treat and vice. I'd rather work out for an extra hour that kills me if I can sit down and eat a lump of cheese and have a glass of wine, to be honest.

What's the perfect snack?

Chicken satay dipped in peanut sauce or cheese on toast. I love salt and monosodium glutamate—the end of instant ramen noodles when you haven't mixed it well and it's the strongest bit. Oh, man, what a hit that is. I've had some *amuse-bouches* in restaurants where I've insulted them by saying, "That's like instant ramen!" They look at me like I'm an idiot.

Any favorite indulgences?

Here's the bottom line. Cheese, wine, and Champagne are amazing. Salt and chocolate are amazing. It's not rocket science. We're mammals—we like fat, salt, and alcohol. Mammals love alcohol. You know, drunkenness occurs the same in animals as in

adults, from mammals down to insects. Antelopes eat fermented apples and go down to the watering hole the next day and they're hungover.

Where is your favorite restaurant, and what do you order there?

'21' Club in New York is fantastic. I have the Boston Bibb salad followed by the roast chicken with mash. Once, I went after having been on David Letterman the night before. They recognized me and gave my girlfriend, Jane, and me free pudding. Now if we go to a nice restaurant, we've got to have a nice pudding.

What's the most unusual thing you've ever eaten?

Accidentally, flies and spiders. I'm so unadventurous. I'm

not someone who likes deep-sea squid wrapped in pure gold. I'm not having it. I want starch, cheese, and chewy, nice meat with salt. I don't eat mollusks, crustaceans, eels, or squid. I'll do deep-fried scampi, when they've taken the shell off and popped it in a crispy crumb. Now it doesn't live in a shell. It lives in a lovely, deep-fried crispy crumb.

What would you never eat?

I've got a few moralistic issues. I won't eat any animal that's been mistreated, abused, or hasn't had a good life. I do eat fish and chicken, but it's got to be free-range, organic. I've got to sleep at night. Fine dining is wasted on me. That's the truth. I don't feel like I'm missing out. I'll keep with the chicken. ■