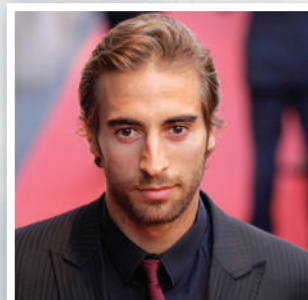


GOURMET GUNNERS



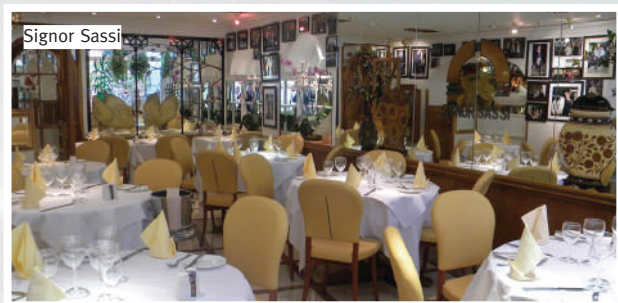
Napoleon said 'an army marches on its stomach' and fellow Frenchman Arsène Wenger certainly needs his troops to be well fuelled if they are to fire on all cylinders for the first team. Each month we ask an Arsenal star to spill the beans on all their foody thoughts. On the menu this month is

MATHIEU FLAMINI



What would you say is your favourite food?

Italian food – pizza or pasta. I also like spicy food – Indian or Thai curries.



What is your favourite restaurant – either to visit regularly or as a treat?

An Italian one in Knightsbridge called Signor Sassi. I used to visit in my first spell here, and I still go now!

What's the first thing you look for on a menu?

I will always order some spicy pasta, a nice crab salad and some 'special coffee'. You'll have to go there to find out what's in that!



Tell us the perfect person for you to go to a restaurant with.

Good friends – people I can be myself with.



What is the main cuisine in the city/ you come from?

In Corsica we have some nice specialities – a sausage called figatelli is particularly nice. You can grill it and eat it with bread... unbelievable! I love Corsican cheese too.

What do you have for breakfast?

I just go straight to training so I don't tend to eat much. But if I have time I'll have an omelette and some granola with almond milk.

...and a late night snack?

Maybe a shawarma – Lebanese food. Their restaurants stay open quite late and are really nice.



Did you have school dinners?

Yes, I ate them with all my school friends.

Did you like them?

I can't really remember what they were like. I know we always used to complain about them but I think they were OK really.

How do you like to eat your eggs?

Scrambled, but not cooked too much.



What do you like on toast?

Some strawberry jam.



Toast and jam

Favourite three vegetables?

Can I say fruits? Strawberries, bananas and mangos.



Mango

Your favourite cold drink?

I don't really drink many, but I'll say a nice glass of fresh orange juice.

...and hot drink?

Hot chocolate.



Hot chocolate

What's your secret vice?

Burgers! A double Big Mac!

Best dish you can cook?

I can cook a nice omelette, or some pasta or risotto. Sometimes meat – plenty of things.



Risotto

Tell us what you have for Christmas dinner?

I'd ideally have some foie gras and some chicken, maybe with a good Italian or French red wine on the side. Then a nice dessert – we have a special cake in France so that would do.



Christmas cake

Finally, when you go for lunch at the training ground, tell us what you hope to see on the menu that day?

Caesar salad, vegetable soup and some fish.



Chicken Caesar salad

COLLINS GEMS



HOW COFFEE AFFECTS YOUR BODY

This month, Arsenal Nutritionist James Collins looks at two new studies that reveal some interesting news about the effects of drinking coffee



It's hard to believe now that it was once seen as a luxury, but a large and growing number of people enjoy drinking coffee throughout the day. Yet the effect that this has on hydration has always been unknown.

Caffeine is a well-known stimulant, and has been used by sports people before training or competition to give them a mental boost. But many people – nutritionists among them – feared that the diuretic potential of coffee may leave you dehydrated.

Now there is some good news for the millions of people who enjoy a cup of the black stuff. New research has found that, in moderation, it won't leave you dehydrated after all.



THE TEST – Fifty male coffee drinkers (who claimed to enjoy between three and six cups per day) were asked to consume four cups of either coffee or water per day for three days. During this period scientists assessed dehydration status through blood, urine and bodyweight measures.

The results were perhaps surprising – the scientists found no differences between the coffee and water-drinking groups for any of the markers of hydration.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU – Regular coffee drinkers needn't worry about an increased risk of dehydration and can continue to drink it both for the taste and that all-important mental boost.

But remember, moderation is key. Drink too much – more than six cups per day – and the potential for nervousness, insomnia when consumed in the evenings and other health issues increase considerably.

AND THERE'S MORE GOOD NEWS – We know that caffeine can give a short-term boost to cognitive function, such as mental alertness. Whether or not caffeine can benefit long-term cognitive functions hasn't been so widely researched.

But a new study, published in the Nature Neuroscience journal, suggests caffeine can have a positive effect on long-term memory.

Subjects were given either a placebo or a caffeine tablet (200mg) five minutes after studying a series of images. Twenty four hours later the subjects were shown another series of images and asked whether they were 'new', 'old' or 'similar' to the previous day's images. The researchers found the subjects who had been given caffeine pills were better at identifying the 'similar' images than the placebo group.

So, whether you're planning to exercise or simply remember where you put your shoes, it might be worth putting the kettle on right now.

