



ESL Podcast 714 – Dining with a Foodie

GLOSSARY

the latest thing – something that is new, exciting, interesting, and innovative; something that interests people because it is the beginning of a new trend or fad

* This MP3 player is the latest thing for music lovers.

foodie – a person who is very interested in fine food and enjoys good meals and wines

* If your favorite meal is eating hamburgers at McDonald's, you probably aren't a foodie.

to have an interesting take on – to have an interesting perspective, opinion, or belief; to have opinions that other people like to hear about

* Yuki always has an interesting take on the latest movies.

passable – acceptable, but not excellent; something that is not bad, but is not very good either

* The first draft of my essay was passable, but it needs a lot of editing.

run-of-the-mill – ordinary, not special; standard; typical

* Jose Luis has decided to start his own business, because he doesn't want to work in his run-of-the-mill job anymore.

fine dining – the experience of eating very nice, expensive food in a restaurant that is fancier than what is normally served at home or in most restaurants

* I love fine dining, but I hate getting dressed up to go to those restaurants.

gourmet – a person who is very knowledgeable about fine food and knows how to prepare it and/or enjoy eating it

* Lynn is a gourmet baker who always has special ingredients in her kitchen.

to be bowled over – to be very impressed, amazed, shocked, or surprised by something

* We were bowled over by the movie. It was so much better than we had expected!

seasoned – having a different flavor because many herbs and spices have been added; flavored with small leaves and seeds

* Pork chops are delicious when they are seasoned with rosemary and mustard.



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a touch – a little bit; slightly

* The presentation was a touch rushed, but the information he presented was very clear.

overcooked – cooked for too much time, so that something becomes dry and tough

* Fish fillets can become overcooked in just a few minutes. It doesn't need to be in the oven for very long.

pairing – two things that are served together or eaten together

* Most people recommend a white wine pairing with seafood dishes.

aficionado – someone who is passionate about something, enjoys it very much, and has a lot of knowledge about it

* Shelley is a movie aficionado. She watches all the movies at the theater and then watches them again in her home on DVD.

palate – the parts of one's mouth that perceive different flavors in food and drinks; the ability to perceive small differences in the way things taste

* Marco used to enjoy eating fine foods, but years of eating only junk food has ruined his palate.

sophisticated – elegant, fancy, rich, and with style; associated with high education, culture, and wealth

* Bianca wants to go on a sophisticated cruise in the Bahamas, but I'd rather spend the week fishing at the lake.

forgettable – something that was not very good or interesting and will not be remembered; something that is not worth thinking about again

* The actors in the play were good, but the play itself was forgettable.

to leave a bad taste in (one's) mouth – to give someone a bad impression; to not be perceived favorably; to make someone feel unpleasant or uncomfortable

* These transactions may be legal, but they leave a bad taste in my mouth.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a run-of-the-mill dish?
 - a) An ordinary type of food.
 - b) A food that has been finely ground.
 - c) A food eaten very quickly.
 2. According to Nick, what was wrong with the fish?
 - a) It wasn't caught during the right time of year.
 - b) It wasn't cooked long enough.
 - c) It didn't have the right kind of herb and spices.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

a touch

The phrase “a touch,” in this podcast, means a little bit, or slightly: “This paint color is a touch too bright for the living room, don't you think?” The phrase “to get in touch with (something)” means to think about one's own thoughts and feelings and really understand them: “Rebecca likes to spend time outdoors because it helps her get in touch with her true thoughts and feelings.” The phrase “to be in touch” means to be in contact with someone or to have the latest information about something: “Are you in touch with your aunts?” Or, “A good politician needs to be in touch with the needs of local communities.” The phrase “out of touch” has the opposite meaning: “Some elderly people feel they are out of touch with modern technology.”

pairing

In this podcast, the word “pairing” refers to when two things are served together or eaten together: “All the waiters at that restaurant have been trained to recommend excellent wine pairings.” A “pair” normally refers to two things that belong together: “Harvey went to the mall to buy a new pair of shoes.” The phrase “in pairs” means in groups of two: “The teacher asked his students to solve the math problems in pairs.” The phrase “to pair off” means for people to come together and begin romantic relationships: “We were all just friends for years, but recently everyone has started pairing off and I've been left by myself.” Finally, the phrase “an extra pair of hands” refers to help one receives from another person: “We could use an extra pair of hands on this project.”



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CULTURE NOTE

Popular Food and Wine Magazines

Gourmets not only enjoy eating great food, but also reading about it. In recent years, “food magazines” (magazines that are all about food) have become very popular. Many people subscribe to magazines like Food and Wine and Bon Appétit.

Food magazines have many articles on food, wine, and restaurants. They also “feature” (showcase; have) “recipes” (instructions on how to cook or bake something) and menus. Some articles discuss “food politics” (how government, politics, the economy, and international relations affect food choices and availability) and food-based travel. Food magazines also have many “mouth-watering” (looking very delicious, making saliva fill one’s mouth) photographs of the foods described in the articles.

Food and Wine is a food magazine that always recommends one or more wine pairings for each recipe, meal, or restaurant experience mentioned in the articles.

Bon Appétit also has many articles about food, but it includes more recipes and “how-to” (explaining how to do something) articles for “entertaining” (cooking food and inviting friends into one’s home to eat it).

Gourmet was a popular food magazine first published in 1941. It was an “upscale” (directed at wealthy, well-educated people) magazine, but “due to” (because of) “declining” (decreasing) ad sales, the company stopped publishing the magazine, although the “brand” (name) is still used for books, television shows, and “online content” (websites). However, the company still publishes special “issues” (versions of a single magazine), such as Gourmet Grilling (cooking outdoors over a flame) and The Gourmet Cookie Book.

These and other food magazines can be purchased as a monthly “subscription,” with magazines being sent to the reader’s home each month. They can also be purchased at bookstores and even in grocery store “checkout lines” (where shoppers wait to pay for their purchases).

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – c



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 714: Dining with a Foodie.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 714. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there today. Why? So that you can download a Learning Guide for this episode. You can download a Learning Guide by becoming a member of ESL Podcast and supporting this effort.

This episode is called "Dining with a Foodie." A "foodie" is someone who likes to go to good restaurants, whose hobby, in a way, is going to restaurants and finding good places to eat. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

I invited my friend Nick to try a new restaurant with me. This restaurant was the latest thing, and since Nick was a foodie, I thought he would have an interesting take on the meal.

...

Anita: So, what did you think of the first course?

Nick: I thought it was passable.

Anita: Just passable?

Nick: Yes, it was a run-of-the-mill dish you could find in any fine dining restaurant. No gourmet would be bowled over by it.

Anita: Oh, I thought it was pretty good. What about the main course?

Nick: I thought the fish wasn't seasoned properly and it was a touch overcooked.

Anita: I'm sorry to hear that.

Nick: And the wine pairing was all wrong.



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Anita: I'm not a wine aficionado, so I guess my palate isn't as sophisticated as yours. I thought the wine was wonderful.

Nick: Hmm, in my opinion, the entire meal was forgettable.

...

That was the last time I invited Nick to join me for a meal. I thought the meal was delicious, but Nick's comments left a bad taste in my mouth!

[end of dialogue]

Our story begins with Anita saying that she invited her friend Nick – Nick is a short form, usually, of Nicholas – to try a new restaurant with her. “This restaurant,” she says, “was the latest thing.” “The latest thing” is something that everyone is now doing or someplace everyone is now going; it's considered new, exciting, interesting. For example we might say now, in the year 2011, the iPad is the latest thing, or some new computer is the latest thing, or new phone. “The latest thing” is what is very popular right now, that everybody wants to get or to try. The restaurant that Anita wants to go to is also the latest thing in her town – in her city, “and since,” she says, “Nick was a foodie,” she thought that Nick would have an interesting take on the meal. A “foodie” (foodie) is someone who's very interested in good restaurants, good food, someone whose hobby it is, in a way, to find good restaurants and good food in a certain city. Nick would have an interesting take on the meal, Anita thought. “To have a take on (something)” means to have an opinion, a perspective, an idea about something. Someone might say to you, “What's your take on the situation in the Middle East?” What's your opinion? What are your ideas about it? “To have an interesting take” would be to have an opinion that other people thought was interesting. So, Anita thought that Nick, being a foodie, would have an interesting take on the meal – on the food they were going to eat at this new restaurant.

Anita says, “So, what do you think of the first course?” Meals, especially formal meals, come in “courses.” The first course is what you eat first; the second course is what you eat second. Usually, though not always, they're brought out from the kitchen one by one: first course, second course, third course, and so forth. So, Anita asks Nick what he thinks of the first course. Nick says, “I thought it was passable.” “Passable” means acceptable, okay, but not excellent, not great. Anita says, “Just passable?” Only passable, you didn't think it was more than just okay?



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Nick says, “Yes, it was a run-of-the-mill dish.” The expression “run-of-the-mill” (mill) means ordinary, not special, very standard, very typical, maybe a little dull, not very exciting. Nick says the dish – the first course, the food they ate first – was run-of-the-mill. “You could find (that kind of dish) in any fine dining restaurant.” The term “fine (fine) dining (dining)” means the experience of eating at a very nice restaurant, often an expensive restaurant, one that is better than what you usually eat at. “To dine” (dine) is another word for “to eat,” it’s used in somewhat perhaps more formal situations. So, Nick thinks that this course – this first course could be found at any good restaurant, any fine dining restaurant. “No gourmet would be bowled over by it,” he says. A “gourmet” (gourmet) – it comes from French so the last “t” is not pronounced – is a person who’s very knowledgeable about good food. It’s kind of like a “foodie,” but “foodie” is a more modern term – more recent term. “Gourmet” is a more traditional term, and there’s also the idea the person is perhaps better educated in food, knows more about food, and so forth. We talk about a “gourmet chef” – a “chef” is a person who cooks food in a restaurant or other location. So, a “gourmet chef” is a chef that knows a lot about fine dining – about good food. Nick says that a gourmet would not be bowled over by that meal – by that dish. The phrase “to be bowled over” means to be very impressed, to be amazed, to be surprised by something. It could be a good surprise; it could be a bad surprise. “Bowling” (bowling), as you know, is a game where you take a ball and you throw it so that it knocks down what are called “pins” (pins), there’re usually 10 of them. The verb “to bowl” would be to throw the ball – the “bowling ball” we call it. “To be bowled over,” however, means to be amazed. It’s as though you are so surprised or so shocked that a bowling ball has hit you and you’ve fallen down – something like that.

Anita says, “Oh, I thought it was pretty good (I thought it was very good). What about the main course?” Again, in a formal meal you may have a first course, which might be a salad or a soup in an American restaurant; the main course would typically be the meat or the fish, or if it’s a vegetarian restaurant the tofurkey or the vegetarian hamburger – which is not a hamburger! But anyway, we’re talking now about the dialogue, and the main course is what Anita is asking about. In this case, the main course was fish. Nick says, “I thought the fish wasn’t seasoned properly.” “To season” (season) is to put certain spices, salt, pepper onto food. Nick thinks the fish was not seasoned properly; it didn’t have the right mixture of salt, pepper, other spices. He says it was also “a touch overcooked.” “To be overcooked” means to cook something too much; with fish and meat it usually makes the meal hard – it makes the fish or the meat too hard. “A touch” is another way of saying a little bit, just a little bit, a small amount. “Touch” has other meanings in English as well; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.



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Now, Anita doesn't agree with Nick. She says, "I'm sorry to hear that." She's sorry that Nick doesn't like his food. Nick then complains a little bit more, because Nick is kind of a jerk! I mean, you know, Anita invites him to this dinner, and then he sits there and complains the whole time: "Oh, the fish is overcooked." Too bad Nick! But to be fair, Anita did ask Nick to the meal to get his opinion. Nick continues to offer his opinion; he says, "the wine pairing was all wrong." "Pairing" (pairing) is two things that go together; at a meal it would be two things that are paired together, or something that is served at the same time. In this case, Nick is complaining about the "wine pairing," the kind of wine that they chose to go with this particular meal.

Anita says, "I'm not a wine aficionado." "Aficionado" (aficionado) is someone who is very passionate about something; that is, someone who enjoys something, who has a lot of knowledge about something. Anita says she's not a wine aficionado; she doesn't know a lot about wine, "so I guess my palate isn't as sophisticated as yours." Your "palate" is the part of your mouth that can detect or that can sense taste. It's used in a more general way to describe the kinds of tastes that you like and don't like. So, Anita says that her palate – her ability, her knowledge of food – isn't as sophisticated as Nick's. "To be sophisticated" means to be, in this case, more educated, with more experience. The word can also be used to mean something that is elegant, fancy, rich, something that is cultured; all of these are possible uses of "sophisticated."

Anita says, "I thought the wine was wonderful." I thought it was good; it was excellent. Nick says, "Hmm, in my opinion, the meal was entirely forgettable." "To forget" means not to remember, so something that is described as "forgettable" is something that is not memorable, usually because it's not very good. Anita says this "was the last time I invited Nick to join me for a meal. I thought the meal was delicious (it tasted excellent), but Nick's comments (Nick's opinions) left a bad taste in my mouth!" The expression "to leave a bad taste in your mouth" can refer to food you that are eating, and then later you can still taste the food but it isn't a good taste. The expression can also be used more generally, as it is here, to mean to leave a bad impression, to make someone feel unpleasant or uncomfortable later on. "I had an argument with my boss, and his comments left a bad taste in my mouth." I'm still thinking about them; they bother me; they still bother me even though the argument is over. That's what Anita is saying here about Nick's comments. So be careful if you are going to invite a foodie to dinner!

Now let's listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.



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[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

Our dialogues we hope are never forgettable, and we hope they never leave a bad taste in your mouth! We know they don't usually because our scriptwriter is the wonderful Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you, Lucy.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us again here on ESL Podcast.



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