



ESL Podcast 390 – Dietary Restrictions and Preferences

GLOSSARY

to invite (someone) over – to ask someone to come to one's home for a short period of time as a visitor

* Troy invited us over for pizza and a movie at his apartment last night.

vegan – a strict vegetarian who does not eat any meat, eggs, milk, or anything else that comes from an animal

* This bakery makes a great vegan chocolate cake that tastes great even though it doesn't have eggs.

organic – grown naturally without any chemicals

* Do you think that organic foods taste better than normal foods do?

lactose intolerant – unable to eat milk and foods made from milk without getting sick

* Vicky always feels sick after eating ice cream and yogurt, so she might be lactose intolerant.

low-salt diet – a combination of foods that one should eat that have very little salt, usually because one has high blood pressure

* After Grandpa had a heart attack, his doctor put him on a low-salt diet.

health nut – a person who is very interested in having a healthy lifestyle, eating only healthy foods and getting a lot of exercise

* He's such a health nut that he hasn't had a cookie in more than six years!

saturated fat – a type of fat (grease or oil) that is very bad for one's heart and health, usually found in foods made from animals

* Some fast food hamburgers have more than 10 grams of saturated fat!

added – additional; put in with something else; put onto something else

* Many children like to eat foods with added sugar and colors.

artificial flavor – something that is used to change the taste of foods, made with chemicals instead of natural foods

* Are these candies made with real lemon juice or an artificial flavor?

red meat – meat that is a dark color before cooking, such as beef and lamb; meat from animals such as a cow or lamb

* Red meat has more cholesterol than chicken or fish.



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gluten-free – food made without a certain type of substance that is found in wheat, oatmeal, and other grains

* When Yolanda had a lot of stomach problems, her doctor said that she should try to eat gluten-free foods.

kosher – food that is prepared in a special way, following Jewish laws

* When Zeke became Jewish, he began to eat only kosher foods.

beats me – a phrase used to show that one does not understand something or does not have an explanation for something

* - How are you going to pay for your apartment now that you aren't working?
- Beats me!

potluck – a meal where every person brings a dish of food to share with everyone else

* That church organizes a potluck for its members every Sunday.

beggars can't be choosers – a phrase used to show that one cannot always get or have what one wants when one is in the position of asking, and that one needs to take what one gets without complaining

* When Mindy's parents gave her a car for her birthday, she started complaining about the color, but then stopped and said, "Beggars can't be choosers."

desperate times call for desperate measures – a phrase used when one is in a difficult situation and is ready and able to do whatever is necessary, even if it is difficult or unusual

* They didn't want to sell their car, but desperate times call for desperate measures and they needed the money.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these foods is gluten-free?
 - a) oranges
 - b) bread
 - c) pasta

2. Which of these foods could a vegan eat?
 - a) red meat
 - b) cheese
 - c) peanuts

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

nut

The phrase “health nut,” in this podcast, means a person who is very interested in having a healthy lifestyle, eating only healthy foods and getting a lot of exercise: “She’s such a health nut that she’ll probably live until she’s 100 years old!” A “nut” is a person who is very excited and enthusiastic about something, or who likes something very much: “He’s a nut for skiing.” A “nut” is also a crazy or insane person, or a person who behaves in strange ways: “A nut is standing on the street corner, shouting about the end of the world.” The phrase “a tough nut to crack” is used to talk about a problem that is very difficult to solve, or a situation that is very difficult to deal with: “Figuring out this computer password is going to be a tough nut to crack!”

beat

In this podcast, the phrase “beats me” is used to show that one does not understand something or does not have an explanation for something: “Do you know how to solve this algebra problem? It beats me!” “To beat (someone)” usually means to win a game or contest against someone else: “Did you beat your dad at chess, or did he beat you?” That same phrase can also mean to hit someone violently: “The woman was sent to jail for beating her children.” A third meaning of “to beat (someone)” is to do something before someone else can do it: “Craig beat us to the theater and had to wait for us to get there.” Finally, the verb “to beat” can mean to be better than something else: “Fishing beats working!” Or, “Nothing beats a long, hot bath for relaxing!”



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CULTURE NOTE

Some U.S. airlines offer “meals” (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) to their “passengers” (the people who fly on an airplane) on long flights. Usually the passengers may choose one “entree” (the main part of a meal). For example, they may be asked to choose between chicken and fish, or beef and pasta. Airplane meals have a “reputation” (the way that people think about something) for not being very “tasty” (pleasant to eat).

Some people request specialty meals that meet their “dietary restrictions” (rules about what one can and cannot eat). For example, many vegetarians and vegans request the vegetarian meal. This is made without meat, milk, or eggs. Other people request a “fruit-and-cheese plate” instead of a meal.

You don’t have to be a vegetarian to “request” (ask for) a vegetarian specialty meal. In fact, many meat-eating people request a vegetarian meal because they believe the food is healthier. Also, since few vegetarian meals are requested, they are not “mass-produced” (made for many people) and therefore may have better quality.

Other passengers request a “diabetic” specialty meal. A person with diabetes has a medical problem and has to be very careful about how much sugar he or she eats, and when. A diabetic meal has very little sugar, so people with diabetes can eat it.

If you would like to have a specialty meal the next time you fly, you need to “request” (ask for) it when you purchase your ticket. You cannot request these meals on the plane, because the airline packs enough specialty meals only for the people who have requested them ahead of time.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 390: Dietary Restrictions and Preferences.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 390. 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 and download a Learning Guide for this episode, which will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Dietary Restrictions and Preferences." It's a dialogue between Tony and Carmela. "Dietary" refers to what you eat, so the conversation will be about different types of food – different things that people can't eat because of their particular preferences or medical restrictions. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Tony: Who did you invite over for dinner Saturday?

Carmela: I invited Keith, Sung, Stephanie, and Luis.

Tony: You didn't!

Carmela: I did. Why?

Tony: You're going to have a hard time cooking for them. Keith is a vegan and only eats food that's organic. Sung is lactose intolerant and his doctor put him on a low-salt diet.

Carmela: Really? I didn't know. How do you know so much about their diets?

Tony: I went on a trip with them and I'll never do it again. We could never agree on a restaurant.

Carmela: What about Stephanie and Luis?

Tony: Stephanie is a health nut, and doesn't eat anything with saturated fat, added sugar, or artificial flavors. She also doesn't eat red meat. And Luis, he can only eat gluten-free kosher foods.



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Carmela: This is a disaster. How am I going to cook for all four of them?

Tony: Beats me. Maybe you can turn it into a potluck. At least each of your guests will have one dish they can eat.

Carmela: I can't invite my friends over for dinner and then tell them to bring their own food!

Tony: Well, you wanted a solution and beggars can't be choosers.

Carmela: You're right. Desperate times call for desperate measures!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Tony asking Carmela, "Who did you invite over for dinner Saturday (or on Saturday)?" To "invite someone over" is a phrasal verb meaning to ask someone to come to your house for a short period of time as a visitor – as a guest. "I'm inviting you over for coffee," that means I want you come to my home and have some coffee with me.

In this case, Carmela invited some people over for dinner. She says she invited Keith, Sung, Stephanie, and Luis. Tony says, "You didn't!" He obviously doesn't like this idea. Carmela says, "I did. Why?" Tony says, "You're going to have a hard time cooking for them. Keith is a vegan and only eats food that's organic." A "vegan" (vegan) is a vegetarian, a very what we might call "strict" vegetarian, who doesn't eat any meat, eggs, milk, or anything that comes from an animal. We call that a "vegan." Here in Los Angeles, you can go to vegan restaurants where all the food is of this very strict vegetarian kind. "Keith is a vegan and only eats food that is organic." "Organic" means grown naturally without any chemicals, so the corn, or the potatoes, or the tomatoes – the food that grows is not grown by the farmers using chemicals. Organic has become very popular in the U.S. in the last couple of the years. You can go the grocery store now and see food that is labeled – that says organic; many people think it is healthier.

Tony says, "Sung is lactose intolerant." To be "lactose intolerant" means that you can't eat milk or foods that are made from milk. "Lactose" refers to milk; "intolerant" means that you cannot put up with it; you cannot eat it without having problems – without feeling sick. So, "Sung is lactose intolerant, and his doctor put him on a low-salt diet." This isn't related to being lactose intolerant; in addition, he's also on a low-salt diet. A "low-salt diet" is a combination of foods that has, you can guess, very little salt. Usually this happens because someone



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has high blood pressure, a medical condition that could cause problems, so they put them on a low-salt diet.

Carmela says, “Really? I didn’t know. How do you know so much about their diets?” Tony says, “I went on a trip with them and I’ll never do it again. We could never agree on a restaurant,” meaning they went on this trip, but because everyone had a special diet they had to find a place that could accommodate all of them – that would have food for all of them: a vegan, lactose intolerant, organic, and low-salt diet.

Carmela says, “What about Stephanie and Luis?” Tony says, “Stephanie is a health nut.” A “nut,” in general, can be used to describe a person who’s a little crazy, who’s a little too fanatical – too interested in something. A “health nut” would be someone who is very interested in their health, maybe too interested. The word “nut” has a couple of different meanings; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

So, “Stephanie is a health nut, and she doesn’t eat anything with saturated fat, added sugar, or artificial flavors.” “Saturated fat” is a type of fat, like grease or oil, that is considered by most doctors to be bad for your heart. It’s often found in foods – or usually found in food made from animals. Saturated fat is what some doctors call a “bad fat,” at least in terms of your heart. The problem is that saturated fat often makes food taste better, and so the good food often has saturated fat – at least the food that I like to eat! “Added sugar” means additional sugar, when companies make a food product and they put additional sugar in it, like cereal, for example, for children. Stephanie doesn’t eat anything with “artificial flavors.” “Flavor” is another word, here, for taste. “Artificial” is the opposite of natural, things that are made by humans to change the taste of something – not the real taste of the food or the ingredients that make the food. Usually, artificial flavors are made with some sort of chemical that is produced by the company.

Tony says that Stephanie also doesn’t eat red meat. “Red meat” is meat that is dark in color such as beef, which is meat from a cow, or lamb. Those are considered red meat. Chicken is not considered red meat, even though it’s a kind of meat; we call that “poultry” to distinguish it between the meat that you get from a cow or a lamb, say.

He continues, “And Luis, he can only eat gluten-free kosher foods.” “Gluten” is a kind of substance that is found in wheat, in oatmeal, in other what we would call “grains.” Some people can’t eat food with gluten in it, it makes them sick, so they need food that is gluten-free. “Kosher food” is food that is prepared in a special



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way, following Jewish laws. So, someone who is of the Jewish religious faith may only want to eat food that is kosher – that is prepared according to certain rules and regulations that are traditional in the Jewish community.

Carmela says, “This is a disaster. How am I going to cook for all four of them?” Tony says, “Beats me.” This expression, “beats me,” means that you don’t know; you don’t understand something or you don’t have an explanation for something. The word “beat” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for some more explanations.

Tony says, “Beats me (I don’t know). Maybe you can turn it into a potluck.” To “turn something into something” means to change something. So, Tony is saying maybe you can change the meal to a potluck meal. A “potluck” (potluck – one word) is a meal where every person brings something to share with someone else – or everyone else. So, I may bring a salad, you may bring dessert, someone else may bring some meat, and so forth. Everyone brings some food, that’s called a “potluck dinner” or a “potluck meal.”

Carmela says, “I can’t invite my friends over for dinner and then tell them to bring their own food!” Tony says, “Well, you wanted a solution and beggars can’t be choosers.” This is an old expression: “Beggars can’t be choosers.” It means that you can’t always have a choice about what your options are, especially if you have a difficult situation. Sometimes you are not in the position of asking for a particular solution; you just need to take the option available to you and not complain about it. A “beggar” is someone who stands in the street and asks for money as people walk by; the verb is “to beg.” So, the idea is that if you are asking other people for a solution, and you don’t have any other options, then you can’t choose the option – you don’t have a lot of choice, you can’t be a “chooser,” so “Beggars can’t be choosers.”

Carmela says, “You’re right,” and then she uses another common expression: “Desperate times call for desperate measures!” To be “desperate” means to be in a situation where it is very difficult, where you don’t have a lot of hope, so “Desperate times (desperate situations) call for desperate measures.” To “call for,” here, means to require – to need, so if you’re in a difficult situation, you need to use desperate measures. “Desperate measures” would be desperate means, desperate methods – ways of solving the problem. You need to use extreme or unusual measures in order to get out of this difficult situation: “Desperate times call for desperate measures.”

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



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[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was made with added sugar, by Dr. Lucy Tse.



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From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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