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**ESL Podcast 477 – Planning a Gourmet Meal**

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**GLOSSARY**

**food critic** – a person whose job is to taste food, especially at restaurants, and then write about it, often for a newspaper or magazine, letting other people know whether they should try it too

\* I read an article by a food critic who said the restaurant was fantastic, but when I went there, I didn't think the food was very good at all.

**gourmet** – very good food made with the best ingredients and cooking techniques

\* Tomas makes gourmet desserts, using only the best and most expensive chocolate.

**mind-blowing** – amazing and surprising; beyond expectations; difficult to believe or understand

\* The professor gave a mind-blowing lecture. I had no idea computer networks could be so interesting!

**cuisine** – a type of food, especially if it's from a particular geographic region

\* Do you prefer Thai or Indian cuisine?

**you're only as good as your last (something)** – a phrase used to show that it doesn't matter how many times one does something well, because other people will remember only the most recent one

\* Remember that you're only as good as your last performance, so go on stage and sing as well as you can for each audience.

**delicacy** – a food that is delicious and not very common, often because it is very expensive and difficult to make

\* In some countries, frog legs are a delicacy.

**hors d'oeuvre** – an appetizer; a small amount of food that is served and eaten before the main meal

\* We ate some delicious crab hors d'oeuvres while we were waiting for our food to be served.

**chef** – a person whose job is to cook in a restaurant

\* The food at that restaurant has gotten a lot better since they hired a new chef.

**entrée** – the main course; the main part of a meal

\* I ordered spaghetti for the entrée and ice cream for dessert.



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**to put all of (one's) eggs in one basket** – to put all of one's efforts, energy, money, or time into a single project or task, so that if it fails, one fails, but if it is successful, one succeeds

\* I know you've been working really hard on the Acme project, but don't put all your eggs in one basket. It would be safer to work on several other projects at the same time, just in case the Acme project fails.

**course** – one part of a meal, such as an appetizer, a soup or salad, an entrée, or a dessert

\* The main course was lasagna, followed by a delicious tiramisu dessert.

**out of this world** – very good; unbelievably good

\* Have you ever listened to their music? That band is out of this world!

**run-of-the -mill** – ordinary, normal, and not very interesting; just like every other thing; not unique; boring

\* He paid a lot of money to go to the conference, so he was disappointed that it was just another run-of-the-mill event where he didn't really learn anything new.

**mediocre** – average; not special or good

\* Chuck was always a mediocre student, earning Bs and Cs.

**mouthwatering** – making one very hungry because something is delicious; making one want to eat something

\* When they walked into the kitchen, they commented on the mouthwatering smell of dinner cooking.

**delectable** – delicious; very pleasant

\* That was a delectable soup. Could you please give me the recipe so that I can make it at home?

**taste buds** – the very small spots on one's tongue that let one sense flavors like sweet, salty, bitter, and sour

\* Doctors say that we lose our taste buds as we get older, and that's why many old people don't enjoy their food as much as they did when they were younger.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these is a course?
    - a) Cuisine.
    - b) Delicacies.
    - c) Hors d'oeuvres.
  
  2. What does Hung mean by saying, "I don't want to put all of my eggs in one basket"?
    - a) He doesn't want to make anything with eggs.
    - b) He wants to use the basket to serve something other than eggs.
    - c) He wants to make several different dishes for the food critic.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **delicacy**

The word "delicacy," in this podcast, means a food that is delicious and not very common, often because it is very expensive and difficult to make: "In some Asian countries, shark fin soup is a delicacy." Doing something "with delicacy" means doing something carefully so that one doesn't hurt or shock another person: "He spoke with great delicacy, carefully considering how his audience would react to each word he was saying." The word "delicate" means fragile, or easily broken or hurt: "That's a very delicate vase. Please be careful with it." Someone with "delicate features" has a small, elegant, and beautiful face: "It's unusual to see a hockey player with such delicate features." Finally, the word "delicate" can mean something that is gentle or weak, but very pleasant or pretty: "She painted the walls in her baby's room a delicate pink color."

#### **course**

In this podcast, the word "course" means one part of a meal, such as an appetizer, a soup or salad, an entrée, or a dessert: "They went to a very expensive restaurant and enjoyed a five-course meal." The phrase "to let (something) run its course" means to let something happen naturally, without interfering: "Her parents didn't like her boyfriend, but they decided to let the relationship run its course without saying anything against him." The phrase "par for the course" is used to talk about a negative thing that normally happens or that one expects to happen: "Borrowing a lot of money from banks is par for the course for many American college students." Finally, the phrase "in/over the course of time" means after a certain period of time has passed: "He'll figure out what he wants to study at the university over the course of time."



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**CULTURE NOTE**

Many Americans are very interested in gourmet cooking. They might watch “cooking shows” (television programs where professional cooks show people how to make something) or read “cooking magazines” (magazines filled with descriptions, photos, and recipes for food). Recently, there have been some interesting “trends” (things that begin to be popular with many people in a large area) in gourmet cooking.

One of these trends is the “raw” (uncooked) food “movement” (something that many people are interested in and support). People who are part of the raw food movement believe that raw foods are healthier than cooked foods, so most or all of the foods they eat are uncooked. Many of these people are “vegetarians” (people who do not eat meat) or “vegans” (people who do not eat anything that comes from an animal, including meat, eggs, and milk), but some of them eat raw meat as part of their diet.

Another recent trend in gourmet cooking is “farm-to-table cooking.” People who choose to cook this way believe that fresh, “locally grown” (grown nearby) foods are healthier and “tastier” (with better flavor) than other foods. Whenever possible, they try to buy foods from local farms and cook with them the same day that they were “harvested” (picked; taken off the plant). These people eat only “seasonal” foods, or foods that can be grown in the local area at that time of year.

Similarly, the “eat local” movement is based on the idea of eating foods that are grown or “raised” (referring to animals that live on a farm) nearby. “Proponents” (supporters) of the movement believe that eating locally helps to keep money in the local economy and is better for the environment because food does not have to be transported over long distances.

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 477: Planning a Gourmet Meal.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 477. 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](http://eslpod.com). Go there to download a Learning Guide for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Planning a Gourmet Meal." Something that is "gourmet" is something that is very good food, something that is very sophisticated food. This will be a dialogue between Hung and Padma that will use a lot of vocabulary related to eating good food. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Hung: I can't believe that the famous food critic, Julia Schilds, will be eating in my restaurant tomorrow night. I need to prepare a gourmet menu that's going to be mind-blowing.

Padma: She wouldn't be coming here if she didn't already know that your cuisine is considered some of the best food in the city.

Hung: That may be so, but you're only as good as your last meal. I need to think of some delicacies that will really impress her. Let's see, I think we should offer two new hors d'oeuvres, in addition to the ones already on the menu.

Padma: Are you sure the chefs in the kitchen will be able to handle making six different hors d'oeuvres?

Hung: Hmm, maybe not.

Padma: Why don't you concentrate on the entrées? I'm sure you could come up with one or two new dishes that will really impress her.

Hung: Okay, but I don't want to put all of my eggs in one basket. I need to have dishes in every course that are out of this world.

Padma: Come on. You're a great chef. What's the worst she could say?



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Hung: Lots of things. She could say that this is a run-of-the-mill restaurant with mediocre food that she wouldn't even feed to her cat!

Padma: Okay, yes, she could say those things but she won't. Your food will be mouthwatering and delectable, and her taste buds will thank you for it!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Hung saying, "I can't believe that the famous food critic, Julia Schilts, will be eating in my restaurant tomorrow night." A "food critic" is a person who tastes food at restaurants and then writes about it for a newspaper, a magazine, or, nowadays, a website. A "critic," in general, is someone who gives their opinion about things. There are book critics, there are film critics; this is a food critic. Hung says, "I need to prepare a gourmet menu that's going to be mind-blowing." "Gourmet" (gourmet) is very good food, made with the best ingredients, the best cooking techniques. The expression "to be mind-blowing" means to be amazing and surprising, to be very, very good. Something that is mind-blowing may also simply be something that is difficult to understand because it is so shocking, so surprising, so unusual. Here, it means excellent, something that is very good.

Padma says that this food critic would not be coming here if she didn't know that your cuisine is considered some of the best food in the city. "Cuisine" (cuisine) is excellent food. It's usually a type of food from a particular region or area. Padma is saying that your cuisine – your food is some of the best food in the city. Hung says, "That may be so (meaning maybe), but you're only as good as your last meal." This expression, "you're only as good as your last (something)," is a phrase used to show that it doesn't matter how many times you do something well, people will only remember the most recent thing. So if you're a great cook and you cook many excellent meals, but then you cook a very bad meal, people will remember the last thing they ate, which was a bad meal. So you have to keep performing at a high level, you always have to be good; people won't remember the good things you did in the past.

Hung says, "I need to think of some delicacies that will really impress her." A "delicacy" is a food that is very good tasting; something delicious, but it is not very common, usually because it's very expensive or it's difficult to make. Hung then says, "I think we should offer two new hors d'oeuvres, in addition to the ones already on the menu." An "hors d'oeuvre" is another French word – many of these terms come from French – that means something you eat before the



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main meal, what we typically say in English is an appetizer. It's a small amount of food that you eat before the main course – the main meal.

Padma says, “Are you sure the chefs in the kitchen will be able to handle making six different hors d’oeuvres?” The “chef” is the person whose job it is to cook in a restaurant, the person who cooks the food. Many restaurants have several different chefs working in the kitchen. Padma is asking: “Are you sure the chefs in the kitchen will be able to handle (will be able to manage) making six different hors d’oeuvres?” Hung says, “Hmm, maybe not.” Padma then suggests: “Why don’t you concentrate on the entrées?” The “entrée” is the main course – the main part of the meal. She’s suggesting to Hung that he worry about the entrée (the main part of the meal) the most. She says, “I’m sure you could come up with (I’m sure you could think of) one or two new dishes that will really impress her.” A “dish,” here, is some particular food that’s usually part of the larger meal.

Hung says, “Okay, but I don’t want to put all of my eggs in one basket.” This is an old expression; “to put all of your eggs in one basket” means to put all of your effort, your energy, your money, or your time into one project – one thing. If that thing fails, then you don’t have anything else. So it’s investing all of your time and energy into one thing hoping that that one thing will be successful. Of course, if that one thing is not successful, then you will fail completely; you won’t have any other choices – any other options. Hung is saying that he doesn’t want to put all of his emphasis into just one course – one part of the meal. He says, “I need to have dishes in every course that are out of this world” – I need to have types of food (specific preparations of food) in every course, meaning in every part of the meal. The appetizer or hors d’oeuvre, the soup or salad, the entree, the dessert; those are all courses. Each part of that meal – each course of that meal has to have dishes that are out of this world. The expression “out of this world” means incredibly good, very, very good, excellent.

Padma says, “Come on. You’re a great chef. What’s the worst she could say?” meaning you’re a good cook, you’re a good chef, she is not going to have anything very negative to say about your food. Hung says, however, “Lots of things,” meaning there are lots of negative things she could say, “She could say that this is a run-of-the-mill restaurant.” The expression “run-of-the-mill” (mill) means ordinary, normal, not very interesting. You may say, “This is a run-of-the-mill hotel.” It’s a normal hotel, it isn’t a bad hotel, but it isn’t a great hotel; it’s an average hotel, something that you would expect from this particular place or at this particular price. It isn’t unique; it isn’t interesting. Hung says that the food critic could say that this is a run-of-the-mill restaurant with mediocre food that she wouldn’t even feed to her cat. “Mediocre” means average, not very good, nothing special about it. Mediocre food would be not very good food that,



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perhaps, you would give to an animal, which is really, of course, a very negative thing to say – unless the food really is bad, like my cooking for example!

Padma says, “Okay, yes, she could say those things but she won’t. Your food will be mouthwatering and delectable, and her taste buds will thank you for it!” Something that is “mouthwatering” is something that makes you more hungry because it is so good tasting; it is so delicious it makes you want to eat even more. “Delectable” means delicious, very good, very pleasant. Finally, “taste buds” (buds) are the small spots on your tongue that allow you to taste or sense the flavor, whether it’s sweet or salty, bitter or sour. Those are your taste buds on your tongue. She says, “her taste buds will thank you for it!” meaning they’ll consider it very good food – she’ll consider it, of course, very good food.

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

This mind-blowing, out of this world script was written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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