

Talk Time Topic: Food and Cooking

Let's get started...

Food is often an important part of holiday traditions. In the United States, we eat turkey on Thanksgiving, and roast beef or ham on Christmas. What is your favorite holiday meal? Who usually prepares it?

Background:

Food and cooking are very important parts of many cultures. Food is often a good way to bring people together. In the United States, friends and family gather for meals on special occasions, but often our everyday meals are hurried. Some families find it difficult to sit down together for meals everyday. In the United States, we often use on "convenience foods", such as packaged mixes or frozen food.



In pairs for 5 minutes, ask and answer these questions:

What is one food you "could not live without"? (that is very important to you)

What is the worst thing you have ever eaten?

Share your partner's answers with the group.

Discussion Questions:

Do you enjoy cooking? What do you like to cook? Does it take a lot of time?

Do you think it is important for families to eat together?

In your home country how many meals do people eat each day?

At what time is the largest meal eaten?

Does your family eat together every day? If so, which meals?

Do you eat quickly, or do you like to spend a lot of time at the table?

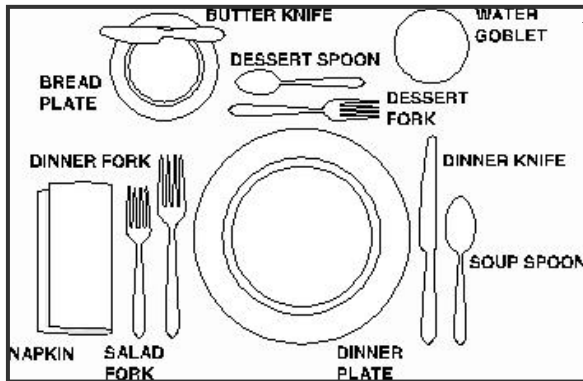
Do people in your family talk and visit while they eat?

Most Americans serve their food "family style" – all the food is served in large bowls or plates, and each person takes some for his own plate. Each person adds condiments (salt, pepper, ketchup, salad dressing, etc.) to his own food. Is that the same or different from the way families eat in your home country?

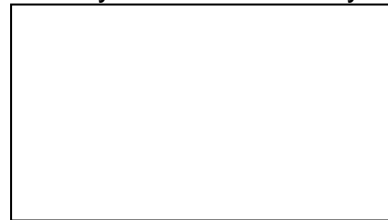
Have you ever gone to an American's house for a meal? Or have you ever hosted an American for a meal in your home? What happened? Did anything surprise you?

What could you do if you went to someone's home and were served something that you could not eat or did not like?

What new foods have you tried since coming to the U.S?



← Here is a place setting for an American dinner. For casual dining families might use just one plate and one knife, fork, and spoon. Make a drawing to show what a place setting looks like in your home country:



Are table manners important in your home country? How are they different in the U.S.?

Do you enjoy food from different countries? What is your favorite cuisine?

Do you like to eat in restaurants? How often do you eat out? Where do you like to eat out in this country?

Where do you shop for food? Are American supermarkets different from the food stores in your home country? Is it more expensive to buy food in the U.S. or in your home country? What kind of food costs less in your home country?

How often do you shop for food in this country? Do you shop every day or only once a week?

Do you ever use coupons to save money when you buy food? Where are some places you can find coupons?

What do you usually eat for breakfast? What is a typical breakfast in your home country?

Is there any food from your home country that you miss? Are you able to find it in the U.S.? Where?

New words and Idioms:

hurried; typical, potluck, family dinner, family style, barbeque, cook-out, grill, fire up the grill, eat out, eat up, eat on-the-run, eat someone out of house and home, fast food, leftovers, doggy bag, table manners, junk food, snack, produce, pasta, eat light, pig-out, appetizer, cuisine, vegetarian, buffet, picnic, finger food, dietary restriction, place setting