

Topic: Restaurants and Eating Out

Let's get started... Do you like to eat out in restaurants, or do you prefer to cook and eat at home? How often do you eat out? What type of food do you eat?

Background:

In the United States today, many people have very busy lives. Although a lot of people cook and eat at home most of the time, many people like to eat out at restaurants. Some people eat out once a week, on a special night of the week. For example, some families might decide that Friday night is "Pizza Night," or Sunday night is "Chinese Food Night," or Saturday lunch is "McDonald's Time" with their children. Other families eat out only for special occasions, for someone's birthday or anniversary. Still other families prefer to cook a special meal at home for birthdays and anniversaries. Some young, single adults, who have good jobs and *more money than time*, might eat at fast food restaurants almost every night of the week, and then go out with friends to more expensive and elegant restaurants on the weekends. People's habits differ, but restaurants and eating out are an important part of the culture of the United States.



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

- Do you like to eat out at restaurants? When, how often, and for what occasions, do you eat out at restaurants? Do you eat out on a regular schedule, or only on special occasions? If for special occasions, what are the occasions?
- In your native country, how often do people eat out at restaurants?
- In your native city, are there many restaurants with food from different countries? How many kinds of food did you eat and types of restaurants did you go to in your native city, before you came to the United States?
- Since you have moved to this area, how often do you eat out at restaurants? What kinds of restaurants have you gone to? What kinds of food have you eaten?

Share your partner's answers with the group.

Discussion Questions:

Do you prefer fast food restaurants, or “sit down” restaurants?

Do you prefer to find restaurants with food from your native country, or do you like to try new foods from other countries? How and why do you make your choices?

What is your favorite food to eat in restaurants? Where do you eat this food?

What is your favorite food to eat at home? Who cooks this food at home?

Are restaurants in your native city expensive? What does a meal cost in a restaurant there?

Are restaurant chefs in your country well-paid? What education or training does a person need in your country to become a chef in a hotel, or in an upscale restaurant?

To be a cook in a small restaurant in your country, does a person need any special education or certification?

Do you like to cook? What do you like to cook? What are your specialties? Tell a partner about a special dish you like to cook or eat, and tell how it is prepared.

What is your favorite restaurant? Where is it? What type of food does it serve? Why is it your favorite restaurant? How did you discover this restaurant (who told you about it)? Tell a partner about this restaurant.

What restaurant do you want to go to that you did not visit yet? Tell a partner the name of the restaurant, where it is, what type of food it serves, and why you want to visit it.

Do you eat at restaurants by yourself? With one or two family members? With friends? Or with large groups of people (family or friends)?

What do you like best about eating out at restaurants?

In the United States it is customary to leave a “tip” for your server, to show your pleasure or opinion about the food. Although 15% of the cost of the meal is considered an average, or appropriate tip, sometimes people will leave a 20% tip if they are very happy with the food and the service, or 10% or less if they are not happy about the food or service. This gives the restaurant and the server an incentive to give good service. It is “extra” pay for good work by the server. In your country, do people leave tips? If so, what is a good tip in your country? What is your opinion of tips?

New words and Idioms:

Eat out; special; special meal; special occasion; fast food restaurant; elegant restaurant; expensive restaurant; habit; regular schedule; area; sit down restaurant; chef; cook; upscale; special certification; specialties; discover; serve; visit; tip; incentive; server; pleasure; opinion; average; appropriate; extra pay.