



All About

Top 5 American Dishes You Have to Try and Top 5 Desserts for the Sweet
Tooth

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Grammar Points

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The Focus of This Lesson is American Cuisine

What comes to your mind when you think of American food? Hamburgers, hot dogs, and pizza? You're definitely on the right track with these dishes; however, you'll see in this lesson how there are a lot of different kinds of dishes that don't come to mind when you think of American food.

Table Etiquette

First, let's talk about table manners. Table manners may differ slightly in different regions, but we will give you a safe standard that you can use in most situations. In general, we don't lift plates off the table. This goes for soup bowls as well. Americans also consider slurping rude, and you should eat soups without noise. When you're in the middle of your meal and you put your pieces of silverware down, rest them on the left and right side of your plate with the handles on the table. When you're finished, place them completely on your plate pointing diagonally left. Of course, chew with your mouth closed.

Regional Dishes

As you know, the United States is made of many different people from many different cultures. This means that different areas of the country are known for their specialty dishes. These dishes will definitely have clear influences from different immigrants, but nonetheless they have become American over time.

A popular example is the influence of Mexican food. You can find countless taquerias in the state of California, and Tex-Mex is the term describing the food that blends both southern and Mexican cooking. This includes foods such as chili con queso, chili con carne, and fajitas, which are all particular to this region. Tex-Mex cooking also uses a lot of beef and cheese in the cooking. Spices that are not typically Mexican can also be found in Tex-Mex dishes.

Other regional dishes include Italian food, which has changed from the food the original immigrants who came to the United States cooked. A popular dish that has been modified and spread is pizza, now a common fast food for many. Another popular common food is Chinese food. This too has changed over time with Western influences, and it is now very different from the cuisines found in China. The Chinese food found in the United States contains a lot of meat, which is different from the original Chinese food that has a lot of vegetables.

Well-Known American Desserts

Accompanying a good meal is a good dessert. Some desserts that are popular in America are apple pie, ice cream, brownies, carrot cake...and the list goes on and on. Some regional desserts are banana pudding from the south, haupia from Hawaii, panocha from New Mexico and Colorado, Boston cream pie from...well...Boston, and that list goes on as well. Common household everyday desserts can be ice cream or cake from the local supermarket.

Seasonal Dishes

Seasonal dishes usually accompany a celebration of some sort in the United States. For example, many Americans eat turkey during Thanksgiving. For many people, family and friends gather for a large meal that takes hours to cook, with the main dish being turkey. Eggnog is a sweet dairy drink made of beaten eggs, sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg that is usually sold only during the months from Thanksgiving (November) to Christmas (December). Barbecues are popular in the summer, with open grills cooking different kinds of meats and vegetables. Either way, seasonal dishes are usually accompanied by gatherings, at which people eat together and enjoy the food and company.

Top Five American Foods

Hamburgers

Apart from being famous due to the many fast-food restaurants that serve hamburgers, there are hamburgers that are gourmet and can still earn points for being a proper meal. The food with the meat patty, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, pickles, and cheese between a bun is a very popular meal in the United States. Some say it originated when a person at a fair in Hamburg, New York (named after Hamburg,

Germany) replaced sausages with beef to put in sandwiches. Other say it was because a man known as Hamburger Charlie started serving meatballs in a sandwich at another fair. Whatever story may be true, the hamburger's date of origin was around the 1880s. Since then, hamburgers have grown on the American people, and today there are a variety, such as turkey burgers, chicken burgers, and buffalo burgers. People also have their own preferences in toppings, such as avocado, bacon, chips, ham, chili peppers, and so forth.

Buffalo Wings

Despite the name, buffalo wings are fried chicken wings and coated in sauce. The name comes from the sauce that they are smothered in. The sauce is usually spicy and is made from cayenne pepper and melted butter. They are commonly served with celery sticks and blue cheese dressing. The origin of the buffalo wing also has several stories. One is that in the 1960s, a lady named Teressa Belissimo thought of frying chicken wings on the spot then tossing them into cayenne pepper when she heard that her son was coming over with some friends. She served them celery sticks with blue cheese while they waited. Teressa's son tells another story, stating that on a one night their bar was full of many people buying a lot of drinks. He wanted to serve them something delicious to go with their drinks, and that's when his mother came up with the idea. These days, buffalo wings are served as appetizers at many restaurants and are also called "hot wings."

Jambalaya

Jambalaya is a Louisiana creole dish made of meats, vegetables, rice, and stock. The name is thought to be from the French word *jambon*, which is "ham," and *aya* from a West African language, meaning "rice." Like the name suggests, the dish is a combination of European influences from the early settlers and the Africans who came to America enslaved. Chefs first cook or smoke the chicken and andouille sausage, then they add tomatoes, other vegetables, and seafood. At the end, they add the rice and stock and leave everything to simmer. The Cajun way of cooking it is to use a cast iron pot and not add any tomatoes, which gives it a brown color. Many may think it looks similar to the Spanish *paella*, which probably did heavily influence this dish.

Caesar Salad

This dish is definitely worth mentioning. A Caesar salad is made of green leaves-usually romaine lettuce-cROUTONS, and parmesan cheese, and it is covered in a dressing that has lemon juice,

Worcestershire sauce, olive oil, egg, and some black pepper. You can find this salad on almost any menu in a typical restaurant, and if you're not feeling sure of the salad you want, you can never go wrong with this one. Like other foods, there are several stories as to who invented the salad, but a popular misconception is that it is named after Julius Caesar—it is not. One story is that it was invented by an Italian-born Mexican named Cardini Caesar who had a restaurant in Tijuana but lived in San Diego. Another story is that a man named Paul Maggiora made it for an American in the Air Force. Either way, the two stories date from around the 1920s.

Pizza

We can't NOT mention this food! Pizza is the flat, usually circular dough that is topped with tomato sauce, mozzarella, and other toppings of choice. The pizza in the United States comes from the Italians, but people also topped flat bread with olive oil and seasoning in other ancient Mediterranean societies. Different areas of the United States may have different ways of making pizza. For example, Chicago is popular for its Chicago-style pizza, which is made of a thicker crust and chunkier tomato sauce. Pizza is a favorite among Americans for parties, as it is easy to pick up the phone and order a box. Many families have the number to the local pizza shop on their fridge. There are many toppings of meats and vegetables you can choose from and different sizes as well.

Top Five Foods for Your Sweet Tooth

We picked out some junk food for you to try as well! Here are our top five.

Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

A peanut butter and jelly sandwich is a popular snack for everyone. Take two slices of bread and smother peanut butter on one slice and strawberry jam on the other. Put it together and you have your snack.

Root Beer

Root beer is a carbonated drink originally prepared using sassafras. Many who are unaccustomed to this drink may find the taste to be strange, disgusting, or pretty good. In other words, you like it or hate it.

Cadbury Mini Eggs

Seasonal only during Easter, Cadbury Mini Eggs are little egg-shaped chocolates that are coated in a pastel colored candy shell. They sound like a typical chocolate snack, but these are really good.

Twizzlers

Twizzlers are a licorice snack that is sold in a pack where you have to tear a strip off from the pack. Strawberry is a popular flavor, but other flavors are also sold. This candy is also known for its straw-like shape, because it is hollow in the middle.

Jelly Belly

These are small jellybeans that come in a variety of flavors. The box has instructions on how to combine flavors to get a different tastes. The little beans come in fifty different flavors, each with a unique color.