



ESL Podcast 578 – Eating a Home-Cooked Meal

GLOSSARY

to live abroad – to live overseas; to live in another country, often as a student for a certain period of time

* Living abroad was the best part of my college experience.

home-cooked meal – food prepared and eaten at home, not made in a restaurant or from already prepared foods

* Jerome's favorite home-cooked meal is his mother's spaghetti and meatballs with a green salad and garlic bread.

to not have the heart (to do something) – to not want to do or say something because it will hurt another person's feelings or make another person feel disappointed or sad

* Vick is so excited about going to the beach this weekend that I don't have the heart to tell him it's supposed to rain.

to slave over a hot stove – to work very hard in the kitchen to cook something

* After slaving over a hot stove all day, Janet was very disappointed when her husband called to say that he wouldn't be home for dinner.

lavish – very generous or fancy, with a lot of something

* Do your parents always give each other such lavish Christmas gifts? That necklace must be worth at least \$1,000.

labor of love – something difficult or taking a lot of time that one does because one loves another person and/or to show that person how much one loves him or her

* It took a long time to paint the baby's nursery, but it was a labor of love.

to cut corners – to take shortcuts; to do something the easy way, especially if the final result isn't as good as it would have been if one had done everything properly.

* If we hadn't cut corners the first time, we wouldn't have to redo our work now.

from scratch – using only basic ingredients, without using any already prepared foods

* This cake is so good! Did you make this cake from scratch, or did you make it from a boxed mix?



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recipe – written instructions on how to make a particular type of food, including all the ingredients that will be needed

* According to this recipe, we're supposed to use two cups of sugar, but I'm going to make it healthier by using only one cup.

to pass down – to give something to a member of the next generation, especially to one's child or grandchild

* This vase has been passed down in our family for more than 200 years.

intricate – very complicated and complex, with many details or many ingredients

* Her wedding dress was beautiful, with many intricate details.

to crave – to have very strong feelings of wanting to eat a particular food

* Why do so many pregnant women crave pickles and ice cream?

comfort food – a food that is very familiar, usually because one ate it as a child, and that one eats because it helps one feel better

* Chicken noodle soup and homemade carrot cake are Ashley's favorite comfort foods.

to make (one's) mouth water – for the thought or mention of a particular food to make one feel very hungry so that one's mouth begins to salivate (fill with liquid)

* The smell of fresh-baked cookies always makes my mouth water.

instant – immediate; referring to foods that can be prepared in a very short period of time, usually by adding hot water or heating them in the microwave

* Instant oatmeal isn't nearly as good as old-fashioned oatmeal, but it is very easy to make.

take-out – food that is bought from a restaurant but not eaten there, and instead taken to one's home or another place to eat

* Each Friday night, they order Chinese take-out and eat it while watching a movie at home.

I tell you what – a phrase used when one is proposing an idea or making a suggestion to another person

* I tell you what. If you agree to let me pick the movie tonight, I'll let you pick the movie next week.



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Thanks, but no thanks – an informal and slightly funny phrase used to show another person that one appreciates his or her offer, but isn't interested in accepting it

- * - Do you want me to go to the dentist with you?
- Thanks, but no thanks. This is something I need to do on my own.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these could be an example of a home-cooked meal?
 - a) Comfort foods.
 - b) Instant noodles.
 - c) Take-out food.
2. What does Gil mean when he says his mother "doesn't cut corners"?
 - a) She serves only square-shaped food.
 - b) She doesn't try to make things easier.
 - c) She never serves low-calorie meals.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

from scratch

The phrase "from scratch," in this podcast, means using only basic ingredients, without using any pre-prepared foods: "Do you make mayonnaise from scratch, or do you just buy a jar at the store?" The phrase "from scratch" also means to do something without using anything that existed before: "He built up this business from scratch more than 15 years ago." A "scratch" is a small cut in one's skin: "Did you get those scratches from your cat?" A "scratch" can also be a small or shallow mark on a surface: "When they moved the heavy refrigerator, it left scratches on the wood floor." Finally, "scratch paper" is a piece of paper that has already been used on one side and is used again to write a short note or for something else that is unimportant: "Do you have a piece of scratch paper where you can write down my phone number?"



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instant

In this podcast, the word “instant” means immediate and refers to foods that can be prepared in a very short amount of time: “How can you drink instant coffee? Real, brewed coffee is so much better.” The word “instant” can also be used to talk about something that happens immediately or very quickly: “His book became an instant best-seller.” As a noun, an “instant” is a moment or a short period of time: “For a brief instant, Shelly was really angry about what you’d said, but then she changed her mind.” The phrase “this instant” is sometimes shouted when one is angry and wants someone to do something right away: “Clean up your room this instant!” Or, “Put the knife down this instant, or I’ll shoot!”

CULTURE NOTE

The Food Network is an American channel that “airs” (broadcasts; shows on television) shows about food and cooking. One of its most popular hosts is a chef named Rachael Ray, who “hosts” (leads) three programs for the Food Network: 30 Minute Meals, Rachael Ray’s Tasty Travels, and \$40 a Day.

In 30 Minute Meals, Rachael Ray shows people how they can cook a delicious meal in just 30 minutes. It is “aimed at” (intended for) people with busy schedules who do not want to spend a lot of time in the kitchen, but want to eat “yummy” (good-tasting) home-cooked meals. “Critics” (people who dislike her show) say that it is impossible to actually prepare the meals in 30 minutes, because her show doesn’t include “prep time” (the time needed to prepare foods), but her show is nevertheless very popular.

Rachael Ray’s Tasty Travels follows Rachael Ray as she travels around the world. The show “features” (highlights; focuses on) what she eats while she is traveling. In \$40 a Day, Rachael Ray takes one-day trips to different cities, where she has only \$40 to pay for three meals and a “snack” (food eaten between meals) or an after-dinner drink.

In 2006, Rachael Ray “launched” (began producing) her own magazine called Every Day with Rachael Ray, which contains many recipes and menu ideas. She is also a “spokesperson” (a person who promotes a product or company) for Nabisco crackers, and her photographs are on the boxes for many of the company’s products.



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Rachael Ray is “credited with” (given credit for) “coining” (creating) several phrases, including “EVOO” (extra-virgin olive oil) and “stoup” (a combination of a stew and a soup).

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast episode 578: Eating a Home-Cooked Meal.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 578. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

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This episode is a dialogue between Louise and Gil. They are talking about eating a meal at home and some of the vocabulary that might be connected to that activity. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Louise: What's the matter with you?

Gil: I just got off the phone with my mom and she says they're planning a welcome-home party for me next week – at a restaurant!

Louise: What's wrong with that?

Gil: After living abroad for a year, I was really looking forward to a home-cooked meal.

Louise: Why didn't you just tell your mother that?

Gil: I didn't have the heart to do that. She was so excited about the party, and who am I to tell her she has to slave over a hot stove to cook me a lavish dinner?

Louise: I'm sure she wouldn't mind. It'd be a labor of love.

Gil: You don't know my mother. She doesn't cut corners and makes everything from scratch. She uses these recipes that were passed down to her from her mother. She can make the most intricate dishes, but what I'm craving are the comfort foods she always made for us when we were kids. It makes my mouth water just thinking about her cooking.



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Louise: After a year of living on instant noodles and take-out food, I'm not surprised you want something home-cooked. I tell you what. After the party, come over to my house and I'll have a home-cooked meal ready for you.

Gil: You, cook for me? Thanks, but no thanks!

[end of dialogue]

Louise begins by saying to Gil, "What's the matter with you?" meaning what is wrong with you. Gil says, "I just got off the phone with my mom and she says they're planning a welcome-home party for me next week – at a restaurant!" So, Gil says he just got off the phone, meaning he just finished talking to his mother, and his mother says that they (his family) is planning a welcome-home party for him. "Welcome home" is when someone goes away and then comes back home. If they've been gone a long time you might have a welcome-home party. But this party is going to be at a restaurant. Louise says, "What's wrong with that?" Gil says, "After living abroad for a year, I was really looking forward to a home-cooked meal." "To live abroad" means to live in another country; sometimes people say "to live overseas." That's popular in the United States, meaning you have to cross the ocean – cross the Atlantic or Pacific and live in another place. But that's not always the case; you can live abroad by moving to Canada for example.

Gil says that he was really looking forward, after having been away from his country and his family for a year, to a "home-cooked meal," a meal – a lunch or a dinner – that is prepared at home. Louise says, "Why didn't you just tell your mother that?" Gil says, "I didn't have the heart to do that." If someone says they "don't have the heart to do (something)" they mean they don't want to say something or do something because they think it will hurt another person's feelings – it will make that other person feel bad. Gil says his mom "was so excited about the party, and who am I to tell her she has to slave over a hot stove to cook me a lavish dinner?" "Who am I to tell her (means how can I tell her; what right do I have to tell her) to slave over a hot stove?" A "stove" (stove) is what you have in the kitchen; you use it to put pans on and then you light a fire underneath, or have some sort of heat coming from below and you cook things inside of the pan. "To slave (slave) over (something)" means to work very hard at something. A "slave" is a person who is owned by another person. Fortunately in the United States there is no more slavery; we don't have any slaves, at least not legally. But the expression "to slave over" means to work



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very hard at something, and this is a common way of using it: “to slave over a hot stove.”

He doesn’t want his mother to slave over a hot stove just cook him a lavish dinner. “Lavish” (lavish) is something that is very fancy; it could be something very expensive. We could talk about giving your wife a lavish Christmas gift or birthday gift. “Lavish” would be expensive, it would be nice, and I would highly recommend it! But here, it means a meal that perhaps had many different ingredients that was very difficult to make.

Louise says, “I’m sure your mother wouldn’t mind,” meaning it would not bother her. “It would be,” she says, “a labor of love.” The expression “a labor of love” means doing something difficult or that takes a lot of time, but you do it because you love the other person. You want to show the other person how much you love them by doing this particular thing. So it’s difficult, yes, but you’re doing it because you love this person.

Gil says, “You don’t know my mother. She doesn’t cut corners and makes everything from scratch.” “To cut corners” is an expression that means to do something the easy way. “To take shortcuts” is another expression that means the same thing. If you cut corners, usually the final result is not as good as it could have been. You are not doing everything you’re supposed to do. Well, his mother does not cut corners; she makes everything from scratch. To cook or to make some particular food “from scratch” (scratch) means that you don’t use any canned good, you don’t use any food that has already been prepared; you just start with the basic ingredients and you mix them together and you cook them or prepare them for the meal. There’s no going to the grocery store and buying something in a bottle or a can. Everything is done from the original ingredients; that’s making something from scratch. “Scratch” has a couple of other meanings in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for this episode that will give you some additional explanations.

Gil says that his mother uses these recipes that were passed down to her from her mother, Gil’s grandmother. A “recipe” is a written set of instructions – of steps – that tells you how to make a certain kind of food, what we would call a certain “dish,” which is the thing that you are preparing made from other ingredients – from other things. His mother got these recipes that she uses from her mother; they were passed down to her. To “pass down” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to give something to someone in the next generation. So when a father gives his son his wedding ring, or gives his daughter some



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important book that has been part of the family for many years, that's to pass something down. Usually it's something valuable, at least to the family.

Gil says his mother "can make the most intricate dishes, but what I'm craving are the comfort foods she always made for us when we were kids." Something that is "intricate" (intricate) is very complicated, very complex, a lot of details, a lot of ingredients in order to make that particular kind of food – that dish. But Gil doesn't want an intricate dish, he's "craving," meaning he has a very strong sense of wanting, particularly food – he's craving comfort food. "Comfort food" is food that is very familiar to you, often it's the kind of food that you ate as a child, and so eating it again makes you feel comfortable. It makes you feel like you were a child, innocent and protected, things that would make you feel comfortable. Chicken noodle soup is for some people comfort food. For me, comfort food would, hmm, probably be a jelly sandwich – yes, that's a comfort food!

Gil says that it makes my mouth water just thinking about her cooking. "To make your mouth water" means that when you think of a particular food it starts to make you feel hungry, and when you start to feel hungry your mouth begins to what we call "salivate," it fills with water. So, something that makes your mouth water is something that is very good tasting, something that is delicious.

Louise says that after a year of living on instant noodles and take-out food, I'm not surprised you want something home-cooked. "Instant" means immediate. When we talk about "instant" with food, we're talking about food that can be prepared in a very short period of time. For example, a food that's very popular especially among college students because it's cheap is ramen noodles, at least here in Los Angeles. Ramen noodles is a Japanese food, but it can be prepared very quickly if you buy the noodles already prepared in a package at the store. So instant noodles would be that kind of food; you pour hot water in it and you can you eat it. "Take-out food" is food that you buy from a restaurant and bring back to your home, you don't eat it at the restaurant. In the U.S., that's called take-out food.

Louise says, "I tell you what." "I tell you what" is a phrase you use when you are proposing or suggesting an idea to another person. You can also say "I'll tell you what," both of those are possible. Louise says, "After the party (the coming home party – the welcome-home party), come over to my house and I'll have a home-cooked meal ready for you." Gil says, "You, cook for me? Thanks, but no thanks!" "Thanks, but no thanks" means you appreciate the person offering or suggesting to do something for you, but you don't want to do it. It's often used



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somewhat sarcastically or humorously to say I don't really want to do that at all, that's not a good thing that you are offering me

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

We have such great scripts on ESL Podcast because our scriptwriter never cuts corners; that's Dr. Lucy Tse.



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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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