ESOL – Eating out

This companion document covers the same learning as the interactive session, but in a different way so as to be more accessible for learners with sight impairments. Because of this, it does not follow a slide structure.

Welcome

Welcome to this session on the eating out.

By the end of this session, you will:

* Understand what eating out means
* Know different types of restaurant
* Understand courses
* Be able to identify different types of menu
* Know useful expressions to use when eating out

What is eating out?

Eating out is when you eat food outside of your home. You don’t cook or prepare the food yourself. You buy it from the place where you eat it.

You might eat out at a café or restaurant. This is a building that serves food and drink and where you sit down to eat.

You might also eat at a fast-food restaurant. This is a place where you are served your food very quickly. You usually order your food at a counter and then carry your food to your table. Examples of fast-food restaurants are McDonalds and Burger King.

You might eat out at a pub that serves food. Some pubs only serve drinks, but some also serve food.

Food from around the world

A restaurant may sell food from a particular country or part of the world. This is known as fusion cuisine.

For example:

* Indian
* Mexican
* French
* Italian
* Greek

Some restaurants combine foods from more than one country or part of the world. These are known fusion restaurants. For example:

* Italian-Thai
* British-Japanese
* Chinese-Korean
* Portuguese-Indian
* French-Vietnamese

Courses

A course is a part of a meal. Each course of a meal is served separately. Many restaurants offer three courses: starter, main meal and dessert. Some specialty restaurants offer more courses.

A starter is the first course of a meal. It is a small portion of food. If you don’t feel hungry, you might decide not to have a starter.

A main course is the main part of the meal. The portion of food is larger. Most people order a main meal.

A dessert is the last course of the meal. It is usually a sweet food, such as cake, sweet pie or ice cream. However, some people prefer to have a savoury dish such as cheese and biscuits as their final course. Again, if you don’t feel hungry, you might decide not to have a dessert.

Menus

A menu is the list of food and drink that you can order. It tells you the price of each item.

A menu might be written on a large board that everyone can read. Sometimes a menu is printed on paper and each person gets one to read.

On a menu, the items are usually grouped together. A typical menu will list:

* Starters
* Main courses
* Side dishes
* Desserts
* Drinks

There are different types of menu you might be given.

A **set menu** is a list of dishes that you can order together. For example, you might be able to order a starter, main meal, and dessert for a set price.

An **à la carte menu** is a list of dishes that you can order separately. You don’t have to order the dishes together from a set menu.

A **dessert menu** is a list of the desserts that you can order. Some restaurants include desserts in their main menu, but some have a separate menu.

A **drinks menu** is a list of soft drinks and alcoholic drinks that you can order.

A **wine menu** is a list of wines that you can order. They will tell you the price of a glass and the price of a bottle for each wine.

Booking a table – an example

If you want to make sure that you can eat at a particular restaurant, you might reserve a table beforehand.

In our example, Marla has made plans to go out for dinner at Tommi’s Restaurant with two of her friends. She phones the restaurant to make a booking and speaks with Paul, the restaurant manager.

Paul: Hello, this is Tommi’s Restaurant, Paul speaking. How can I help you?

Marla: Hello, my name’s Marla. I’d like to book a table for tomorrow night at 7 o’clock. It’s for three people.

Paul: That’s fine, Marla. I’ve reserved you a table for three at 7pm tomorrow.

Marla: Thank you. See you tomorrow. Bye.

Paul: We look forward to seeing you tomorrow. Goodbye.

Arriving at the restaurant

When you arrive at the restaurant, you will be greeted by a staff member. This might be the head waiter, called a maître d’.

If you have booked a table, you would say:

Hello. My name is [your name]. I’ve booked a table for [number of people].

If you haven’t booked a table, you would say:

Hello. Do you have a table for [number of people] available?

You will then be shown to your table and your waiter or waitress will bring you menus. They might talk about the day’s specials. These are special dishes that are not on the main menu.

Ordering your food

Your waiter or waitress will come to your table and take your order.

If you haven’t decided what to eat and drink yet, you will say:

We’re not ready to order yet. Could you give us a few more minutes, please?

If you are ready to order, you will say:

Could I have [the food and drink you would like to order]?

Paying for your meal

There are several different ways to pay for your bill. When you are ready to pay, you will say:

Could we have the bill, please?

If you want to pay with a credit or debit card, you will say:

Can I pay by card, please?

Always check your bill to make sure it is correct. If you think a mistake has been made, you will say:

Could you check the bill for me, please? I think there has been a mistake.

If you have had good service, you may wish to leave a tip for your waiter or waitress. A customary amount to leave as a tip is around 10-15% of the bill.

Knowledge checks

Below are a few questions you can answer to test your knowledge.

Question 1:

Which course of a meal is usually the largest?

1. Dessert
2. Starter
3. Main course

Answer: The correct answer is c, the main course.

Question 2:

Which course of a meal might you eat a slice of chocolate cake?

1. Dessert
2. Starter
3. Main course

Answer: The correct answer is a. You might eat a slice of chocolate cake for dessert.

Question 3:

Susan is going to a Japanese-British restaurant. What type of restaurant is she going to?

1. Fast food
2. Fusion
3. Pub

Answer: The correct answer is b. Susan is going to a fusion restaurant.

Summary

Well done. You have completed this session on eating out.

You should now:

* Understand what eating out means
* Know different types of restaurant
* Understand courses
* Be able to identify different types of menu
* Know useful expressions to use when eating out

If you have any questions about anything covered in this session, please speak to your tutor for more help.