

24

Dinner's on me: entertaining and eating out

A Paying the bill

We'll **split the bill**, shall we? [either each person will pay for himself/herself, or the bill will be divided equally between all the participants]
 Lunch **is on me** today. [I am paying for you; *informal*]
 Would you like to **join us** for dinner at the City Plaza hotel? [come with us]
 We'd like you to **be our guest**. [we will pay; *formal*]
 Let me **get this**. [pay the bill; *informal*]
 I was **wined and dined** every night by the New York office. [invited out to restaurants]

B Describing service



A new Italian restaurant called Bella Roma has just opened in the High Street, and we went there the other night to try it. I couldn't help comparing it to the Casa Italia, where we ate last week. In the Bella Roma, the service was **impeccable**¹ and quick; at the Casa Italia it's always a bit **sluggish**². In the new place the waiters are **courteous**³ and friendly without being **overbearing**⁴. In the other place they tend to be **sullen**⁵ and the service is rather **brusque**⁶, which I find very **off-putting**⁷. But at Bella Roma they'll **go out of their way**⁸ to give you what you want.

¹ perfect, cannot be faulted

² rather slow

³ polite

⁴ too confident, too inclined to tell people what to do

⁵ bad-tempered, unwilling to smile

⁶ quick and rude

⁷ makes you feel you do not want to go there again

⁸ do everything possible

C Food preferences

I **have a sweet tooth** and can never say no to cakes or biscuits. [love sweet things]
 I won't have dessert, thanks. You're lucky being so slim, but I'm afraid I have to **count the calories** / I have to be a bit **calorie-conscious** these days. [be careful how many calories I eat]
 I'll just have a small **portion** of dessert, please. [amount of a particular food that is served to one person]
 I like to end the meal with something **savoury**, like cheese. [salty in flavour, or with herbs]
 Ben's a bit of a **fussy eater**. [person who has very particular demands when eating]
 No, thanks, I won't have wine. I'm **teetotal**. [never drink alcohol]
 Before I book the restaurant, do you have any particular **dietary requirements**? [special needs or things someone cannot eat; *formal*]
 I won't have any more wine, thanks. I don't want to **overdo it**. [eat or drink too much]

D Entertaining at home

A: Why not come home and eat with us? You'll have to **take pot luck**, though. [eat what we're eating, nothing special]
 B: Thank you. Shall I **bring a bottle**? [usually means a bottle of wine]
 A: Should I wear a suit on Friday?
 B: No, no, it isn't a **dinner party**, it's just an **informal get-together**. [rather formal dinner with guests] [informal group of people meeting for a meal/drinks, etc.]
 A: Does anyone want **seconds**? [a second helping/serving of a dish]
 B: Oh, yes please. It was delicious.
 A: Can I pour you some juice? **Say when**. [tell me when I have served enough]
 B: **When!** ['That's enough, thanks']
 A: Help yourself to some **nibbles**. [things like nuts, crisps, etc., before a meal]
 A: We have to leave at six. We can **grab a bite to eat** on the way. [have a quick meal]
 B: Or we could get a **takeaway** when we get there. [ready-cooked meal bought to take home]

Exercises

24.1 Rewrite the underlined parts of these sentences using expressions from A opposite.

- 1 When we eat out as a group, each person usually pays for their own food and drink. (Use a shorter expression meaning the same.)
- 2 Let me pay for this one. You can pay next time. (Use an informal expression.)
- 3 Visitors to the company's head office in London are always taken out to the best restaurants. (Use a phrase with two words which rhyme with each other.)
- 4 Fancy coming with us for lunch tomorrow? (Use a more formal expression.)
- 5 No, please. Put your credit card away. I'm inviting you for dinner. (Use an informal expression.)
- 6 I'd like to pay for you at the theatre tomorrow night. (Use a formal expression.)



24.2 Rewrite the underlined parts of these sentences using expressions from the opposite page to describe food and drink preferences.

- 1 I never drink alcohol. (Use an adjective.)
- 2 I don't really like sweet things. (Use an idiom.)
- 3 Are there things you can't or mustn't eat? (Use a formal/polite expression.)
- 4 Just a small amount of food (use one word) for me, please. I don't want to eat too much. (Use an expression that means the same.)
- 5 She's become very careful about how many calories she's eating. (Give two different ways of saying the same thing.)
- 6 Sasha is such a choosy person when it comes to food. It's difficult to find things she likes. (Use an expression that means the same.)

24.3 Give words from the opposite page which contrast with or are the opposite of these phrases.

- 1 a sweet dish
- 2 a friendly waiter
- 3 a formal gathering
- 4 rude staff
- 5 quick service
- 6 dreadful service

24.4 Which expressions on the opposite page mean:

- 1 eat whatever your hosts are eating at home, not a special dish for you?
- 2 tell me when I've poured enough in your glass?
- 3 get a quick meal or some other food that does not take a long time?
- 4 small items you eat before a meal, or perhaps at a reception?
- 5 another portion of what you have just eaten?
- 6 a semi-formal party in someone's house, probably not a meal?