Restaurants and Eating Out

Introduction

Eating out is a common part of life in many countries. It can be an enjoyable way to try new foods, meet friends, make new ones, or relax after a busy day. There are many different styles of restaurants, from fast-food chains to small family-owned cafés, and large chains. Each restaurant offers a different menu, atmosphere and experience.

When people choose a restaurant, they often think about the menu, the price, the service, and the ambience or atmosphere. Other important factors can be location and accessibility. Restaurant reviews can also help diners make decisions.

Use the following vocabulary and discussion questions to help you to order food confidently in North American restaurants.

Vocabulary List

- **Ambience** — the feeling or atmosphere of a restaurant
- **Chain restaurant** — a restaurant with many locations under the same brand
- **Privately owned** — owned by an individual or family, not a large company
- **Appetizer** — a small dish served before the main meal
- **Main course** — the largest or most important part of a meal
- **Server** — the person who brings food to your table
- **Tip** — extra money given to a server for good service
- **Loyalty plan** — a program that gives rewards for repeat visits
- **Discount** — a lower price than usual
- **Unusual** — different from normal; surprising
- **Experience** — something that happens to you
- **Order** — to ask for food or drinks in a restaurant
- **Wait time** — how long you wait for your food
- **Favourite** — the one you like best
- **Fast food** — food that is prepared and served quickly

Discussion Questions

1. What is the first thing you think about when you hear the word, “restaurant”?
2. How often do you eat out? How often would you prefer to eat out?
3. Do you prefer restaurant chains or privately owned restaurants?
4. Describe your favourite restaurant in your hometown. Compare it with the restaurants you know in Canada and the United States.

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5. Have you visited any of the following cafés or restaurant chains in North America? Which ones? Which chain is your favourite? Why? Do you have any of these chains in your home country?

Swiss Chalet	McDonalds	Tim Hortons	Starbucks
Subway	Boston Pizza	Montana's	Papa Johns

6. Which do you think is more important in a restaurant – the food or the ambience?
7. Which of the following meals would you be most likely to order in a restaurant? Explain why.

Steak	Fried Chicken	Hot Pot	Sushi
Ceviche	Empanadas	Sichuan Pork	Pizza
Appetizers	A Vegetarian Dish	Hamburger	Fish & Chips

8. What do you think is an appropriate amount of time to wait for your food in a restaurant?
9. Do you know how to order food in a North American restaurant? What would you say?
10. Has anyone in your family owned a restaurant? What was it like?
11. Have you ever worked in a restaurant? Describe the experience.
12. What is the worst experience that you have had in a restaurant?
13. Where is the most unusual place you have eaten in a restaurant? What was the most unusual restaurant you ever visited?
14. Are restaurant discounts or loyalty plans popular in your home country?
15. What do you call the servers in your home country. Are you expected to tip them? How much?
16. Which of the following restaurant situations would you prefer?

Eat alone	Eat on a date	With a group of friends	Eat at home
Eat with family	Eat with your boss	Visit a new restaurant	Eat fast food

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