# Meals and Eating Out

*The meals of the day, ordering and paying, describing food, and the words of restaurant critics, from A1 to C2.*

A1–C2 · English Vocabulary, Lesson 12

*Can I have…? · medium-rare · food for thought*

## Meals and food *A1–A2*

| | |
|---|---|
| breakfast | lunch |
| dinner | supper |
| snack | sandwich |
| soup | chips |
| egg | toast |
| cheese | cake |
| chicken | fish |

*have breakfast, have lunch (not take lunch)*

## Drinks and the table *A1–A2*

| | |
|---|---|
| coffee | tea |
| orange juice | water |
| milk | hot chocolate |
| cup | glass |
| plate | bowl |
| knife and fork | spoon |
| menu | bill |

*tea can be a drink or, in the north of England, the evening meal*

## At the restaurant *B1–B2*

**The meal:** starter, main course, side dish, dessert (pudding), the specials, a set menu

**Booking:** book a table, a reservation, a table for two, Is service included?

**Describing:** crispy, creamy, spicy, bland, tender, tough, overcooked

**Steak:** rare · medium-rare · medium · well done

**Dietary needs:** vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, a nut allergy, halal, kosher

**Paying:** the bill (US the check), a tip, a service charge, pay by card

***I'm afraid** my steak is a bit **overcooked**. I ordered it **medium-rare**.*

*Complain politely: I'm afraid… / I'm sorry, but…*

## The critic's register *C1–C2*

**Praise and blame:** assured, understated, overwrought, a misstep, generous portions

**The restaurant:** a tasting menu, an amuse-bouche, a palate cleanser, the plating

**The staff:** front of house, a sommelier, a wine pairing

**Idioms:** food for thought, have a lot on your plate, bite off more than you can chew, a pinch of salt

**More idioms:** the icing on the cake, eat your words, a moveable feast, no such thing as a free lunch, sell like hot cakes

*The **plating** was pretty, but the dish was **overwrought**; the cheese course was **the icing on the cake**.*

*rich food = heavy and creamy, not just tasty*

### In a café

- *Can I have a cup of tea, please?*
- *I'd like the soup, please.*
- *Is that to eat in or take away?*
- *Could we have the bill, please?*

### Common mistakes

- ~~I take lunch at one.~~ → **I have** lunch at one.
- ~~I want a coffee.~~ → **Can I have** a coffee, please?
- ~~the card, please~~ → **the menu**, please
- *dessert* (pudding) · *desert* (sand)

### Words with a past

- **supper**: a cousin of *soup* · **dessert**: *desservir*, clear the table
- **gratuity**: Latin *gratuitus*, freely given
- **banquet**: Italian *banchetto*, a little bench
- **gourmet**: first a wine merchant's servant · **vegan**: from *vegetarian* (1944)

### My new words

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