

ENGLISH CUISINE

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*If the English can survive their food,
they can survive anything.*
G.B Shaw.

The English proverb says: every cook praises his own broth. One cannot say English cookery is bad, but there is not a lot of variety in it comparison with European cuisine. The English are very particular about their meals.

Visitors to Britain generally agree about one thing – British cooking. “It’s terrible!” they say. “You can cook vegetables in so many interesting ways. But the British cook vegetables for too long, so they lose their taste.” These visitors eat in the wrong places. The best British cooking is in good restaurants and hotels, or at home. ‘British tastes have changed a lot over the past twenty cuisine, largely due to the importation of ingredients and ideas from places such as North American. China and India during the time of years. In the 1990s the national average for each was 352 grams of “red” meat each week, but now it’s less than 250 grams. People prefer chicken and fresh fish. And more people are interested in healthy eating these days. In 1988 the national average was 905 grams of fruit and fruit juices each week, but now it’s nearly 2,000 grams.

English cuisine encompasses the cooking styles, traditions and associated with England. It has distinctive attributes of its own, but also shares much with wider British the British Empire and as a result of post-war immigration. Traditional meals have ancient origins, such as bread and cheese, roasted and stewed meat and pies, boiled vegetables and broths, and freshwater and saltwater fish. The 14th century English cookbook contains recipes for these and dates from the royal court of Richard2.

Other meals, such as fish and chips, which were once urban street food eaten from newspaper with salt and malt vinegar, and pies and sausages with mashed potatoes, onions, and gravy, are now matched in popularity by curries from India and Bangladesh, and stir-fries based on Chinese and Thai cooking. Italian cuisine is also now widely adapted. Britain was also quick to adopt the innovation of fast food from the United States, and continues to absorb culinary ideas from all over the world while at the same time rediscovering its roots in sustainable rural agriculture.

Today many people want food to be quick and easy. When both parents are working, they cannot cook large meals in the evenings.’ Ready-made’ meals from supermarket and Marks and Spencer and ‘take-away’ meals from fast food restaurants are very popular. If you are feeling tired or lazy, you can even phone a local restaurant. They will bring food to your house.

If you go to hotel in Britain and ask for a typical English breakfast, you’ll probably get bacon and eggs, sausage, mushrooms, baked beans and tea and toast. When porridge or fruit juice are offered as well, the meal is sometimes advertised as a ‘full English breakfast’. But how many people in England actually eat an English breakfast? Only one person in ten! In fact, today's English breakfast is more likely to be nothing! One in five people say all they have for breakfast is a cup of coffee, and many children go to school without eating anything.

If you go to Britain to study English and you stay with a family you will almost certainly be given a 'packed lunch' to eat for your midday meal. Some factories and schools have canteens where you can eat but the packed lunch is the most common thing to eat. A packed lunch usually consists of some sandwiches, a packet of crisps, an apple and a can of something to drink, for example, Coca-Cola. The quality of the packed lunch can vary from terrible to very good; it all depends on who makes it.

The British population drinks about 2,000,000,000 cups of tea a day! That is an average of nearly 1,040 cups of tea a year for each person. 'Tea – mostly green tea from China – came to Britain in the late 1500s, but it was only for the very rich. It became cheaper about three hundred years later, when it was planted in India and later in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). People from all classes started drinking it. But some people thought that too much tea was bad for your health. So they started putting milk in it, to make it healthier!

It is widespread stereotype that the English "drop everything" for a teatime meal in the mid-afternoon. This is no longer the case in the workplace, and is rarer in the home than it once was. A formal teatime meal is now often an accompaniment to tourism, particularly in Devon and neighboring counties, where comestibles may include scones with jam and clotted cream (together known as a cream tea). There are also butterfly cakes, simple small sponge cakes which can be iced or eaten plain. Nationwide, assorted biscuits and sandwiches are eaten. Generally, however, the teatime meal has been replaced by snacking, or simply dispensed with.

Tea itself, usually served with milk, is consumed throughout the day and is sometimes also drunk with meals. In recent years herbal teas specialty teas have also become popular. Coffee is perhaps a little less common than in continental Europe, but is still drunk by many in both its instant and percolated forms, often with milk (but rarely with cream). Italian coffee preparations such as espresso and cappuccino and modern American variants such as the frappuccino are increasingly popular, but generally purchased in restaurants or from specialist coffee shops rather than made in the home. White sugar is often added to individual cups of tea, or brown sugar to coffee, but never to the pot.

Fish and chips are the classic English take-away food. It is usually bought ready cooked at special shops – fish and chip shops (or 'chippies' as they are sometimes called) – and taken away wrapped in paper to be eaten at home or outside. If you go to a fish and chip shop, you'll be asked if you want salt and vinegar to be sprinkled over your chips. Be careful because sometimes they give you too much!

The advent of take-away foods during the Industrial Revolution led to foods such as fish and chips, mushy peas, and steak and kidney pie with mashed potato (pie and mash). These were the staples of the UK take-away business, and indeed of English diets, however. Like many national dishes, quality can vary drastically from the commercial or mass produced product to an authentic or homemade variety using more carefully chosen ingredients.

However, ethnic influences, particularly those of Indian and Chinese. Have given rise to the establishment and availability of ethnic take-away foods. From the 1980s onwards, a new variant on curry, the balti. Began to become popular in the West Midlands. And by the mid 1990s was commonplace in Indian restaurants and restaurants over the country. Kebab houses, pizza restaurants and American-style fried chicken restaurants aiming at late night snacking have also become popular in urban areas. Fusions such as chips with curry sauce, chips with kebab meat and so on are also found.

It is so difficult to find English food in England. In Greece you eat Greek food, in France French food, in Italy Italian food, but in England, in any High Street in the land, it is easier to find Indian and Chinese restaurants than English ones. In London you can eat Thai,

Portuguese, Turkish, Lebanese, Japanese, Russian, Polish, Swiss, Swedish, Spanish, and Italian – but where are the English restaurants?

Indian cuisine is the most popular alternative to traditional cooking in Britain, followed by Chinese and Italian cuisine food. Thai, Spanish, Jewish, Greek, Tex-Mex and Caribbean restaurants can also be found, with American and Middle Eastern food mostly represented in the take-away sector. Whereas most international food is pitched in the middle of the price range. French food tends to be considered haute cuisine

Indian restaurants typically allow the diner to combine a number of base ingredients – chicken, prawns or "meat" (lamb or mutton) – with a number of curry sauces, without regard to the authenticity of the combination. (Many restaurants are run by Muslims from the Indian subcontinent, so pork is rarely offered.) Meals are almost always accompanied by rice, usually basmati, with bread sometimes ordered in addition. India's well-developed vegetarian cuisine is sketchily represented.

Anglo-Indian Fusion food started during the British Raj with such dishes as mulligatawny soup, kedgeree and coronation chicken. The process continued with chicken tikka masala in the 1960s and Balti in the 1980s, although some claim the latter has roots in the subcontinent

Chinese food is predominantly derived from Cantonese cuisine, and so adapted to Western tastes that Chinese customers may be offered an entirely separate menu. Spare ribs in OK sauce is an example of crossover cuisine.

Caribbean and Jewish food are mostly eaten within their respective communities, although bagels are becoming more widespread as a snack.