TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 208

What Does That Even Mean? A Scoop or a Bowl? My Irish Ice Cream Surprise

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

69 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

I once ordered ice cream in a restaurant in Ireland.

I thought I was asking for one ball of ice cream.

What arrived was a tray with five or six scoops.

That sounds like quite a lot of ice cream.

Welcome to What Does That Even Mean, from Your English Toolbox.

I am Juan, and today I want to share a real misunderstanding.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.

In Spanish, we talk about a bola of ice cream.

In the restaurant, I asked for a bowl of ice cream.

I expected a single serving, but a very generous tray arrived.

Your request made sense in English, but it did not specify one scoop.

Let us look at the difference between a scoop and a bowl.

First, what exactly is a scoop of ice cream?

A scoop is an amount of ice cream served using a special spoon.

Often, it looks like a rounded ball.

So, one scoop is one bola de helado.

Exactly, when we are talking about the serving.

You can ask for one scoop, two scoops, or three scoops.

And what is a bowl?

A bowl is a deep, round dish that can hold food.

You can have a bowl of soup, a bowl of cereal, or a bowl of ice cream.

So a bowl tells me about the container or serving, not the exact number of scoops.

That is right.

Depending on the restaurant, a bowl of ice cream might contain one scoop, several scoops, or another amount.

In my case, it was five or six.

Your story shows why familiar words can sometimes lead us to the wrong idea.

The English bowl and the Spanish bol both refer to a container.

But a Spanish bola of ice cream is the serving we usually call a scoop.

So the important difference is between the portion and the container.

Exactly.

You can have two scoops in one bowl.

What if I want just one scoop next time?

You can say, could I have one scoop of vanilla ice cream, please?

Or ask, how many scoops come in the bowl?

That question makes the size of the order much clearer.

You can also ask for your scoop in a cone or in a bowl, if both are available.

A cone is the crisp pointed container often used for ice cream.

So I could say, one scoop in a cone, please.

Or, one scoop in a bowl, please.

One phrase describes the amount, and the other describes the container.

Let us practise with the listeners.

Before the quiz, let us build another order together.

Imagine that you want one scoop of chocolate ice cream in a bowl.

Could I have one scoop of chocolate ice cream in a bowl, please?

That sentence gives the amount, the flavour, and the container.

If you only want to know the portion size, you can ask a question first.

How many scoops come in a bowl?

The answer may be different in different restaurants.

A small word can make a big difference when you order.

Compare one bowl of ice cream with one scoop of ice cream.

One bowl tells the restaurant about the dish, but it does not say how many scoops I want.

One scoop tells them the amount, but you can still say whether you would prefer a cone or a bowl.

If the menu is unclear, asking is often the easiest solution.

How many scoops are included?

That is natural and polite.

You can also point at the menu and ask what comes with the dessert.

You want exactly two portions of ice cream.

Do you ask for two scoops or two bowls?

Two scoops tells them the number of portions.

Now you want those portions served in a dish rather than a cone.

What can you say?

Two scoops in a bowl, please.

Notice how a small detail can make an order clearer.

And how an unexpected order can become a story you remember.

On our website, you can read the transcript and practise the difference between scoop, bowl, and cone.

The episode link is in the description.

Thank you for listening to my story.

See you next time on Your English Toolbox.