TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 244

Eating Out: How to Ask What’s in Your Food

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

94 lines

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

You are at a restaurant, and the menu has many dishes.

You want to ask what is in your food, but you do not know how to say it politely.

What can you say?

Welcome to Everyday Useful Expressions.

I'm Julia.

And I'm Martin.

Today's topic is eating out: how to ask what is in your food.

One important note before we start.

This episode teaches language, and it does not give medical advice.

If you have an allergy or a medical need, always confirm with the restaurant staff.

Good.

Let's hear a short dialogue.

Good evening.

Are you ready to order?

Almost.

Excuse me, I have a few questions about the menu.

Does this contain nuts?

Let me check with the kitchen.

The kitchen says the sauce has almonds in it.

Thank you.

Then I'd like a different dish.

Does the pasta contain nuts?

I do not know yet, so I will ask the chef.

Thank you for checking.

Could I have it without cheese, please?

Yes, we can do that.

And do you have a dairy-free option for dessert?

We have a fruit salad, and I can check the others.

Lovely.

May I see the ingredients, please?

Of course.

I'll bring the information from the kitchen.

Thank you for checking.

That helps me choose carefully.

Notice how I started.

I said, "Excuse me," and then I asked politely.

That makes the conversation friendly.

That was a short conversation, but it had four useful questions.

Let's look at them one by one.

First, "Does this contain nuts?"

Contain means to have something inside.

We can change the word nuts.

Does this contain eggs?

Does this contain fish?

For example, in a café, you can ask, "Does the soup contain meat?"

The server may answer, "No, it is a vegetable soup."

Second, "Could I have it without cheese?"

Could I have is a polite way to ask for something.

Without means not including something.

We can say, "without onions," or "without sauce."

Third, "Do you have a dairy-free option?"

Dairy-free describes food made without dairy ingredients, such as milk, cheese, or butter.

If you have an allergy, ask staff to check ingredients and possible cross-contact as well.

An option is a possible choice on the menu.

We can say, "Do you have a vegetarian option?"

Fourth, "May I see the ingredients?"

Ingredients are the things that make the dish.

May I is very polite and a little formal.

So, remember the structure.

Does this contain, for a question about what is inside.

Could I have it without, to change a dish.

Do you have an option, to ask for another choice.

May I see, to ask for information.

Now let's learn some answers you may hear.

"Let me check with the kitchen" means I will ask the people who cook.

"It contains" means it has this thing inside.

"We can make it without" means we can remove that thing.

And remember, if the answer is not clear, ask again.

For example, "Could you confirm that, please?"

If you have a medical need, do not rely on a short answer from memory.

Ask the staff to check, and confirm before you eat.

Time for a challenge.

Listen to each situation, and choose the best question.

Number one: you want to know if a dish has eggs inside.

The answer is, "Does this contain eggs?"

Number two: you want the burger, but you do not want onions.

The answer is, "Could I have it without onions?"

Number three: you need a different choice, with no milk or cheese.

The answer is, "Do you have a dairy-free option?"

Number four: you want to read what the sauce is made of.

The answer is, "May I see the ingredients?"

Number five: you want to know if a salad contains garlic.

The answer is, "Does the salad contain garlic?"

Number six: you want your sandwich without butter.

The answer is, "Could I have it without butter, please?"

Great work.

You can now ask four polite questions in a restaurant.

Remember: Does this contain, Could I have it without, Do you have an option, and May I see.

And we have more for you.

On our website, yourenglishtoolbox.com, you will find five extra expressions for eating out.

They are only on the website, and they are not in this episode.

The link is in the description.

Thanks for listening.

See you next time.