

ESL Cooking Reading Conversation Passage

Modern Cooking

We all need to eat to keep fit and healthy. Young children cannot grow tall and strong unless they eat a well-balanced diet. This means a selection of foods that provide protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins, and mineral elements.

Some foods can be digested raw but other foods are heated and cooked to make digestion faster. Salad leaves, cucumber, tomatoes, vegetables such as carrots, and fruit do not need cooking. However, apples are an example of fruit that can be eaten raw and also cooked. Stewed apples, apples baked in the oven and apples in pies and topped with crumble are ways of eating the fruit. When food is cooked, it is heated.

Before people had electricity and gas, they cooked on wood and charcoal fires. A fairly recent addition to cooking is the microwave. This speeds up the cooking time. Fan ovens are also more efficient. Barbecue cooking outside in the garden on a warm day in summer, is very popular. In the kitchen, utensils are used to contain the food, and they vary from open pans to pans with lids, frying pans, steamers, pressure cookers and woks. Before supermarkets sold ready cooked meals that just require re-heating, it was the tradition that men left the women in the home to prepare and cook food. Now both men and women share the tasks in well-designed kitchens. In restaurants, the chef, a few years ago, was nearly always male.

Today however, there are as many female chefs as men. There has been a great revival in the way food is cooked, mainly in part due to seeing a lot of cooking programs on television. These are often presented as competitions like Master Chef and the Great British bake-off. Also, people travel more to foreign countries and return home with exotic and interesting recipes. The availability of ingredients in the supermarkets also encourages experimentation. The kitchen is now the 'hub' of the house. The family, friends and visitors when waiting for a meal to be prepared all gather in the kitchen and help to prepare the dishes or watch others doing the cooking. The utensils available to aid the food preparation are plentiful. Different types of knives for example. Aprons and oven gloves help to protect us from spills and heat when taking hot dishes from the oven.

Some people love cooking, planning the meal, assembling the ingredients, and then preparing the food. Others however prefer to open a tin of food and hot up the contents.

Exercise 1 - ESL Cooking Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension questions that go with the above reading passage.

- 1) Why do we need to eat a well-balanced diet?
 - A. To keeps us fit and healthy and helps children grow.
 - B. To help us balance on wet surfaces.
 - C. We need a balanced diet to help us live to be 100.
 - D. We can live well without a balanced diet.
- 2) Which food mentioned in the passage can be eaten raw?
 - A. Dates
 - B. Oranges
 - C. Brazil nuts
 - D. Apples
- 3) Where do people most often cook using a barbecue?
 - A) Inside the house.
 - B) In the garden
 - C) In the garage.
 - D) In the kitchen.
- 4) Where can you buy ready prepared meals for heating up at home?
 - A) At airports.
 - B) On the beach.
 - C) In supermarkets.
 - D) Only in London.
- 5) What is the main reason for using a microwave?
 - A) To shorten cooking time.
 - B) To teach young children how to cook.
 - C) To melt ice cream.
 - D) To make food much smaller.