



ESL Podcast 342 – At the Butcher’s

GLOSSARY

ground beef – cow meat that has been cut into very small pieces by using a special machine

* Let’s buy some ground beef and make hamburgers for dinner tonight.

lean – with very little fat; with less fat than normal

* Turkey and chicken are leaner than beef is.

to throw in – to add; to include something with the other things that one is selling or giving away

* When I bought a lot of fruits and vegetables from the farmer, she threw in a pound of strawberries for free.

pork chop – a thick piece of pig meat cut for one person, often served with the bone inside

* They’re having pork chops, mashed potatoes, and applesauce for dinner.

chicken breast – the white meat on the front of a chicken, from its chest

* When she needs to cook dinner quickly, she often grills chicken breasts with lemon juice, salt, and pepper.

thigh – the upper leg of a person or animal where there is a lot of meat and/or fat

* Carrie doesn’t like chicken thighs because the meat is dark. She prefers white meat.

in that case – in that situation; considering what you just told me; considering all the facts

* We plan to go to the park on Saturday, but the weather reporter said that it may rain. In that case, we’ll go to the movie theater instead.

ham – the meat from the top part of a pig’s leg that has been preserved with smoke or salt and is ready to eat

* Does your family cook a ham or a turkey for Christmas dinner?

sliced – cut into thin, flat pieces from a larger piece

* The bread was sliced too thin, so our sandwiches fell apart.

cold cuts – meats that are cut into very thin, flat pieces and are usually used to make sandwiches

* He made a big sandwich with three types of cold cuts: turkey, roast beef, and ham.



ESL Podcast 342 – At the Butcher’s

salami – a long, spicy sausage that is cut into slices and eaten cold

* He brought out a plate of crackers, salami, and cheese for his guests.

bologna – baloney; meat that is sliced thinly and used for sandwiches, often made from ham, turkey, and/or other types of meat

* Shelby takes a baloney, cheese, and mustard sandwich to school every day.

steak – a thick piece of very good-quality beef

* This restaurant is famous for its excellent steaks, but they are expensive.

tender – soft; easy to cut and chew; not hard or chewy

* Chicken is usually more tender than duck.

tough – difficult to eat; difficult to cut and chew; not soft

* The meat was so tough that they had to cut it with special knives.

T-bone – a thick piece of beef that has a bone inside it where the bone is in the shape of the letter “T”

* Hank makes a delicious sauce to put on his T-bone steaks.

rib eye – a thick piece of the tender, fatty beef that is found around a cow’s ribs (the bones in its chest)

* The chef’s specialty is a rib eye steak served with green beans and wild rice.

sirloin – a thick piece of good-quality beef cut from a cow’s back

* Sirloin steaks are more expensive than most other types of beef.



ESL Podcast 342 – At the Butcher’s

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Gina ask the butcher to “throw in” the pork chops?
 - a) She wants him to throw them into her bag.
 - b) She wants him to sell them to her.
 - c) She wants him to give them to her for free.

 2. Which of the following are cold cuts?
 - a) Bologna.
 - b) Pork chops.
 - c) T-bone steaks.
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

lean

The word “lean,” in this podcast, means with very little fat, or with less fat than normal: “Lean meat is healthier, but it usually doesn’t taste as good as regular meat.” The word “lean” can also be used to talk about people who are thin, muscular, and healthy: “I used to be fat, but I lost weight and I’m now lean.” As a verb, “to lean” means to rest against something while one is standing, especially when one is very tired: “The saleswoman was very tired, so she leaned against the wall when she wasn’t talking to customers.” The verb “to lean” can also mean to put something at an angle so that it is resting against a wall: “Ian leaned his bicycle against the side of the house and then ran off to play with his friends.”

tough

In this podcast, the word “tough” means difficult to eat, cut, and chew because something is not soft or tender: “After his dentist appointment, Chuck couldn’t eat any tough foods because it hurt his teeth.” The word “tough” also means difficult or hard to do: “How tough was the homework assignment?” “Tough” can also mean strict or demanding: “She was very tough on her children, demanding that they get perfect grades, but today they are all successful professionals.” Often “tough” means able to handle difficult situations: “She was very sad when her father died, but she is tough and she’ll be able to get through it.” Finally, the word “tough” can be used to talk about something that cannot be damaged, cut, torn, or broken easily: “If you’re going to work in the garden, put on some tough gloves.”



ESL Podcast 342 – At the Butcher’s

CULTURE NOTE

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) tries to improve “food safety” (the safety of the food that people eat, so that they don’t get sick from eating bad food). One of the ways that it does this is by “operating” (running or managing) a “beef grading program.”

The “beef grading program” is “voluntary” (optional, or not required). Companies that prepare and sell meat can “opt” (choose) to pay a USDA-trained “meat grader” to “grade” (evaluate and assign a number to) “carcasses” (the bodies of dead animals) before they are cut into smaller pieces of meat. The meat grader “considers” (thinks about) the amount of fat on the carcass and the age of the animal. These two factors determine the quality of the meat.

A meat grader may “assign” (give a number to something) one of eight grades to the carcass. Listed in order from best to worst, the grades are: prime, choice, select, standard, commercial, utility, cutter, and canner. The grade is “stamped” (marked on the surface) onto the carcass, which is then cut into smaller pieces.

Prime meats are sold to very “fancy” (very nice and expensive) restaurants. Most “grocery stores” (businesses where food is sold) sell choice and select meats. The other grades have very little fat in them and are not normally graded or sold to individuals.

Some people believe that the USDA meat grading system needs to be “updated” (changed to become more modern). Some of these people think that the meat graders should “consider” (think about) the meat’s “tenderness” (how soft and easy it is to chew). Other people think that meat graders should pay more attention to the animal’s health.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – b; 2 – a



ESL Podcast 342 – At the Butcher’s

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 342: At the Butcher’s.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 342. I’m your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California, the home of Hollywood.

You can visit our website by going to www.eslpod.com. While you’re there, download a Learning Guide for this episode, an 8 to 10 page guide that helps you improve your English even faster.

On this episode, we’re going to take a trip to the butcher’s. A “butcher” is someone who cuts and prepares meat, and sells it. Let’s get started.

[start of dialogue]

Butcher: What can I get for you?

Gina: I’d like a pound of ground beef, please.

Butcher: Would you like the regular or the extra lean? The extra lean is a dollar more per pound.

Gina: I’ll take the regular. Could you also throw in two thick pork chops and two chicken breasts?

Butcher: I’m sorry, but we’re out of chicken breasts right now, but we have some thighs.

Gina: Hmm...In that case, I’ll just take some ham. I’d like that thinly sliced.

Butcher: Okay, is there anything else?

Gina: Yes, I’d like some other cold cuts, but I’m not sure which ones. Why don’t you give me half a pound of salami and a pound of bologna?

Butcher: No problem. Will that be all?

Gina: No, I’d like two steaks. Do you have any that are very, very tender? The ones I bought last week were really tough.



ESL Podcast 342 – At the Butcher’s

Butcher: We have T-bone, rib eye, and sirloin steaks. The rib eye is probably the most tender.

Gina: I’ll take two of those.

Butcher: Okay, anything else?

Gina: No, I think that’s all...for now.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue today is about a “butcher shop,” a place where they sell meat specifically. Butchers are, in terms of having their own business, not as popular in the United States as they used to be, maybe 30-40 years ago. There are some still, what we call, “butcher shops,” places that you can only buy meat, but most of the butchers now work for one of the larger supermarkets.

The butcher begins the dialogue with Gina by saying, “What can I get for you?” He’s asking what she wants to buy. “What can I get for you,” he says. Gina says, “I’d like a pound of ground beef, please.” “Beef” is a general word we use to describe the meat from a cow, in particular. “Ground beef” is cow meat that has been cut up into very small pieces, using a special machine. We make hamburgers, for example, from ground beef.

The butcher says, “Would you like the regular or the extra lean?” When we say something is “lean” (lean), we mean it has very little fat; it’s meat that has very little fat in it or on it. “Lean” has a couple of different definitions; take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations. You’ll also find, in the Learning Guide, an explanation of something called the “USDA” in the United States, and we talk about how meat is rated by quality in the U.S. Take a look at the cultural note for that.

The butcher says, “The extra lean is a dollar more per pound.” Gina says, “I’ll take the regular,” meaning give me the regular. When you say to someone at a store that you want to buy something, you say, or can say, “I’ll take two pairs of socks, and one of those watches,” means I want to buy those things.

Gina says, “I’ll take the regular (beef). Could you also throw in two thick pork chops and two chicken breasts?” “To throw in” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to add. Usually we use this when someone is selling something to you and you want them to include some additional things, not necessarily for free,



ESL Podcast 342 – At the Butcher’s

though sometimes that’s the case. In this case, Gina’s asking the butcher to add to her order – what she’s buying – two thick pork chops and chicken breasts. A “pork chop” is a thin piece of meat that comes from a pig. It’s usually big enough for one person to eat. You often, in a pork chop, still have the bone in the meat, that you have to eat around. “Chicken breasts” are the white meat part of a chicken that’s on the front of the chicken, from, you can guess, their chest. Your “chest” is the front, upper part of your body.

The butcher says, “I’m sorry, but we’re out of chicken breasts right now.” “We’re out of (them)” – we don’t have any more left, we don’t have any to sell you. He says we do “have some thighs.” A “thigh” (thigh) is the upper part of a person or an animal’s leg. In the case of a chicken, there’s a lot of meat in the thigh. There’s also more fat in the thigh part of a chicken.

Gina says, “Hmm,” which is a sound you make when you’re thinking about something. “Hmm...In that case, I’ll just take some ham.” “In that case” means “well, in this situation – considering what you told me – considering all the facts, I’ll just take some ham.” “Ham” is meat from the top part of a pig’s leg. Usually, it has been what we call “preserved” with either smoke or salt. So, it’s given a special treatment – a special processing. Gina says, “I’d like (the ham) thinly sliced.” “To slice” (slice) means to cut something into very thin, flat pieces. You can slice bread; you can slice meat. In this case, she wants thin slices – pieces that are not thick, but thin, of the ham. Personally, I like thick sliced ham, but this is Gina, so it’s her decision.

The butcher says, “Okay, is there anything else?” and Gina says, “Yes, I’d like some other cold cuts, but I’m not sure which ones.” “Cold cuts” are meats that are cut into very thin, flat pieces – that are in thin slices. Usually we use cold cuts to make sandwiches. You could have cold cuts of turkey, of ham, of bologna, of roast beef – all of these are cold meats that you use to make sandwiches. And usually, cold cuts are meat that is prepared in a way that you can use it for a sandwich. A “cut” of meat is just another word for a piece of meat.

Gina says, “Why don’t you give me half a pound of salami and a pound of bologna?” “Why don’t you give me” means “please give me half a pound of salami (salami) and a pound of bologna.” “Bologna” (bologna) is a meat used for sandwiches, usually made from other kinds of meat mixed together, such as ham, turkey, or other things. When I was growing up, bologna was very inexpensive; it was the cheapest cold cut you could buy. So, since I come from a big family of 11 children, in order to feed everyone for lunch, we would often eat bologna. In fact, we’d have bologna almost every day, which is why I don’t eat



ESL Podcast 342 – At the Butcher’s

bologna anymore! “Salami” is a long, spicy sausage that’s cut into slices and is eaten cold. A “sausage” is, again, a mixture of different kinds of meats that are put into a long tube, and you slice them, and you have “salami” as a cold cut.

The butcher says, “No problem. Will that be all?” meaning do you have anything else you want to buy? Gina, who is apparently feeding 100 people, says, “No, I’d like two steaks.” A “steak” is a thick piece of good quality beef from a cow – usually from a cow. You can have other kinds of steaks; there are ham steaks from a pig, but normally when someone says a steak, they mean a beefsteak.

“Do you have any (steaks) that are very tender?” Something that is “tender” (tender) is soft. So, when we’re talking about meat, we’re talking about meat that is easy to cut, easy to chew in your mouth; that would be “tender” meat. The opposite of “tender” would be “tough.” Gina says, “The ones I bought last week (the steaks I bought last week) were really tough.” “Tough” means they were difficult to eat, they were hard, they were difficult to cut and chew. It’s definitely considered a bad thing if your meat is tough. “Tough” has a couple of different meanings in English; once again, take a look at your Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

The butcher says to Gina, “We have T-bone, rib eye, and sirloin steaks.” These are three different kinds of steaks from a cow. “T-bone” is a thick piece of meat that has a bone inside of it, and the bone is usually in the shape of the letter T. “Rib eye” is a thick piece of meat that is very tender; it also usually has more fat. It’s found around the ribs; the bones of the cow’s chest are the “ribs.” So, rib eye steak is very tender, a little fatty. “Sirloin” (sirloin) is a thick piece of good quality beef that comes from the cow’s back. So, these are three different kinds of beefsteaks.

Gina says, “I’ll take two of” the rib eye. The butcher says, “anything else?” and Gina says, “No, I think that’s all...for now.” She’ll probably be back in a few minutes and order an entire cow! Gina may be very hungry, however.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Butcher: What can I get for you?

Gina: I’d like a pound of ground beef, please.



ESL Podcast 342 – At the Butcher’s

Butcher: Would you like the regular or the extra lean? The extra lean is a dollar more per pound.

Gina: I’ll take the regular. Could you also throw in two thick pork chops and two chicken breasts?

Butcher: I’m sorry, but we’re out of chicken breasts right now, but we have some thighs.

Gina: Hmm...In that case, I’ll just take some ham. I’d like that thinly sliced.

Butcher: Okay, is there anything else?

Gina: Yes, I’d like some other cold cuts, but I’m not sure which ones. Why don’t you give me half a pound of salami and a pound of bologna?

Butcher: No problem. Will that be all?

Gina: No, I’d like two steaks. Do you have any that are very, very tender? The ones I bought last week were really tough.

Butcher: We have T-bone, rib eye, and sirloin steaks. The rib eye is probably the most tender.

Gina: I’ll take two of those.

Butcher: Okay, anything else?

Gina: No, I think that’s all...for now.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by steak-loving Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We’ll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

English as a Second Language Podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. This podcast is copyright 2008.