



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 160

TOPICS

Cook-offs and bake-offs; public health codes; a software evangelist; to look forward to; sandwich versus hamburger

GLOSSARY

to grill – to cook food, usually meat, outdoors over very high (or strong) heat
* Do you like your chicken grilled or baked in the oven?

competition – an event where many people or teams do something to see who does it best
* Come and join us! We're having a competition in the park to see who can run the fastest.

judge – a person who decides who the winner is; a person who decides which is correct or the best
* The judge at the dog show picked Dan's dog as the best one out of the entire group.

chili – a thick soup that has beans, ground beef or turkey, tomatoes, and chili peppers; a type of hot red pepper
* On a cold day, I look forward to having a large bowl of chili when I get home from work.

recipe – instructions for making a type of food; instructions on how to prepare a particular dish of food
* Nickie has a secret recipe for making cookies. She never shows it to anyone else.

to sample – to taste a little bit of a food or drink; to try a little of all the different kinds of things
* We went to the place where they make wine and we were able to sample all of the wines they make.

sponsor – a person, company, or business that give money so that an event or program can happen
* Do you think that Monica's company will sponsor our sports team this year?



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code – law, usually made by the government; rule

* The Johnsons didn't follow the city code when they built their new home and now have to pay a fine.

sanitary – clean and healthy; without a lot of dirty or harmful things that can make people sick

* Your kitchen is so dirty! I don't think it's sanitary to eat in there.

inspection – a test or visit to see if a person, business, or organization is following the law or the rules

* The inspectors visited our factory and didn't find any problems.

grade – score; a judgment of something's quality or value

* The beef with a low grade is less expensive than the beef with a high grade at the grocery store.

to revoke – to take something away after it has been given; to take back

* If I get one more traffic ticket, the state will revoke my driver's license.

evangelist – a person who tries to convince people to become Christian; someone who tries to convince other people to believe in something

* On Sunday morning, a group of evangelists knocked on my door and wanted to tell me about their religion.

to look forward to – to be pleased about something in the future; a positive feeling about something that is coming

* People who are over 60 years old can look forward to retirement at the age of 65.

sandwich – two pieces of bread that contain one or more items between them such as meat, cheese, or vegetables like lettuce, tomato slices, or onion

* At the restaurant, Shana ordered a ham sandwich and a large soda.

hamburger – a round flat shaped piece of ground beef (beef cut into very small pieces) that is fried and usually served between two round pieces of bread

* Last weekend, we cooked hamburgers in our backyard and invited our neighbors to eat with us.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

A Love of Grilling

Americans have a love of cooking outdoors, especially grilling over a gas or charcoal grill. Because of this, many U.S. restaurants will advertise their menu items – typically meats such as chicken or steaks – as “grilled” or “barbecued,” which is when the food is cooked directly over a fire or a source of dry heat. The food will often be served with “grill marks,” which are the dark lines made by the grill’s metal surface as the meat cooks.

Some people consider grilling or barbecuing to be an art, or at least something to “take pride in” (to feel proud of or good about) and to try to “perfect” (make without faults or flaws). People can buy barbecue sauces or marinades (liquid to put the meat in for a period of time before cooking) from the store. You will find many different kinds of barbecue sauce in any grocery store.

Many people who grill or barbecue, however, create their own barbecue sauces, which are brushed onto the meat while it is cooking to give it flavor. Also to add flavor, people use different kinds of wood to mix in with the “coals” (black burning rock used for fuel). For example, you may find many people cooking with the wood of the mesquite tree or the hickory tree, which people say gives food a “rich” (full and strong) taste.

In addition to cooking traditional foods such as hamburgers and hot dogs on a grill, people can put many different kinds of food on skewers to cook. “Skewers” are long, thin metal sticks that you can put small pieces of meat, seafood, and vegetables on to cook over the grill, without the small pieces falling through the spaces on the grill. Other people like to add a “rotisserie” to their grill, which allows them to put an entire chicken or large pieces of meat to cook over the grill, but that can also be turned easily so that all sides get cook evenly.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 160.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 160. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in the beautiful City of Los Angeles, California.

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On this Café, we're going to talk about cook-offs and bake-offs, two events which are very popular in some parts of the United States, especially in the summer. We're also going to talk about public health codes (or laws) that help keep Americans healthy when they eat at restaurants. And as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

One of the things that Americans do during the months of summer is to grill outside. "Grilling" means to cook food, usually meat, outside (outdoors) over very high (or strong) heat. We have special machines called outdoor grills or barbeques that use either gas or coal to make the heat. A grill usually has a piece of metal lies above the heat, and that's where you put the food that you want to cook. It's very traditional in the United States, especially during a party in the summertime or on a major summer holiday, to have a barbecue, to people over and to cook food outside on this outdoor cooking device, the grill. People enjoy grilling hamburgers and hot dogs in the summertime; those are the two most popular foods.

I don't grill very often. I have a grill, but it doesn't work. I think the gas ran out. But most people have grills that do work, and some people like it so much that they enter competitions. A "competition" is like a contest; it's an event where many people or teams try to do something to see who is best. When we're talking about cooking, there are special competitions that are called "cook-offs." In a cook-off many people are in the competition trying to cook the same type of food. Then you have "judges," people who taste the food, eat a little bit of each person's food, and then decide who has cooked the best tasting food. Judges decide who the winner of the competition (of the cook-off) is.



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Cook-offs take place outdoors. The most common summer cook-off is what's called a chili cook-off. "Chili" (chili) is what we call a type of hot red pepper, or vegetable. But chili is also the name of a thick soup that has beans, often beef, tomatoes, and these hot chili peppers. There are a lot of different "recipes" or instructions for making chili. That's why a cook-off is so interesting, because everyone has a slightly different recipe.

At a cook-off, you can see how people make chili, and you can "sample," or taste a little bit of the different kinds. You usually get a small free sample if you go to the cook-off, and then if you want more you can buy a bowl of the chili from the person who's making it. Chili is often very "spicy" meaning hot, but hot not in temperature, hot, rather, in terms of a very hot pepper. It makes your mouth feel like it is on fire.

Some cook-offs are for individuals and some of them are for teams. Other cook-offs are only for professional "chefs," people who run a restaurant for example. There will sometimes be cook-offs at local "fairs," local gatherings where people come together for entertainment. This happens sometimes in the summertime.

Just like there are cook-offs, there are also bake-offs. "Baking" is when you put something in a hot oven, usually things like bread, cookies, cake, pies, and other kinds of desserts. That's baking. Baking can also be used with meat and vegetables when you put something into the oven to cook it, a turkey or a chicken for example.

Bake-offs are usually sponsored by food companies. To "sponsor" means that the food company gives money to pay for the event. For example, Nike, a company that makes shoes for running, often sponsors sporting events, like races. Sponsoring is good advertising for a company, and bake-offs are, like races, often sponsored by a company, in this case companies that make food.

One of the most famous bake-offs is called the Pillsbury bake-off here in the U.S. This is sponsored by a company which happens to be in Minneapolis called Pillsbury. This is a company in Minnesota. "Competitors," people who are in the competition, can make whatever they want, as long as they use some of the Pillsbury flour, which is one kind of food that Pillsbury Company makes. The judges then taste the food and decide which recipe is best. Pillsbury bake-offs began back in 1949, and are usually, or used to be, I should say, held every year. Now it's every two years.



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The competitors in these cook-offs and bake-offs are mostly interested in making good food, but real restaurants have to worry about many other things as well. Cook-offs and bake-offs are typically for amateurs. But if cooking is your profession, if you have a restaurant, you have to follow something called the “public health codes.” A “code” (code) is just another name for a law or a rule or regulation. Public health codes are laws related to public health, that is the health of people in general (of many people).

There are many different public health codes for restaurants, and different cities, different places in the United States have different codes, but there’s some similarity among them. The codes are usually designed to keep the restaurants sanitary. When we say something is “sanitary,” we mean it is clean and healthy, without a lot of “germs,” or bacteria and viruses that can make people sick. Many of the public health codes for restaurants try to make sure the people who are preparing the food do so in a sanitary way (in a healthy way). For example, a very common public health code in the United States (a law) says that if you are an employee preparing food, you must wash your hands after you use the bathroom. You would think this would be common, but there’s a law that says you must do this – I hope so! Other public health codes require workers (cooks and chefs) to wear a “hairnet,” which is something that covers your hair so that none of the hair falls into the food. I don’t wear a hairnet; I just shave my hair off of my head. It’s easier that way!

Sometimes public health codes are related to food itself. For example, they may say that the temperature of the food has to be at a certain number of degrees, and you must keep it at a certain degree in order for you to sell it. So you don’t want hot food becoming cold, for example, because that could be dangerous.

Well, if you have all of these laws and codes, you need someone who’s going to “enforce” them. That is, you need someone who’s going to make sure that people are following the laws, and these are government “agencies” (government groups) that do health inspections. A “health inspection” is when someone, called an “inspector,” comes into your restaurant and looks to see whether you are following the health codes (following the health regulations). Usually, at least here in California, this is done by the county government. In the U.S., we have states, and then we have smaller parts of the state (smaller divisions) called “counties,” and inside those counties we have cities and towns. So the county, here, is the one, in California anyway, that does these health inspections. The idea is that you want people to be safe (not to get sick) when they go to a restaurant, and so these health codes are supposed help prevent that.



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The inspector comes to the restaurant and looks for violations of the code, that is, when things are not being followed. The inspector has a usually list of things to look for and writes down all the problems. In many places, such as here in Los Angeles, at the end of the inspection, the inspector gives the owner of the restaurant a “grade” or a score, just like a teacher gives a student a grade on a test. These grades are usually A, B, or C. If you get less than a C, then the inspector could close your restaurant down, meaning the inspector could say you have to stop selling food until you solve all of these problems.

In order for most restaurants in most places to operate they must get permission from the city, what is called a “permit” (permit), a type of license to have a restaurant to sell food to the public. These permits can be “revoked,” that is, they can be taken away – taken back by the government.

Restaurant grades, in many places, are “posted,” or actually put on a piece of paper, so when you walk into the restaurant (any restaurant here in Los Angeles County) you will see either an A, a B, or a C on the wall. The idea is that you can then decide whether you want to eat at this restaurant. I don’t really worry about this too much myself; as long as a restaurant has a B I’m usually okay with it. If a restaurant gets a C, then I might think twice – I might consider it more carefully.

Now let’s answer a few of your questions.

Our first question comes from Lars (Lars) in Germany. Lars wants to know the meaning of a term that he read: “software evangelist.”

“Software” are computer programs, things that tell your computer what to do. Microsoft Word is a type of software; iTunes from Apple is a type of software. An “evangelist,” the original meaning of that term is someone who tries to convince other people to follow certain a religion, usually Christianity. However, now the word “evangelist” means someone who really believes in their product (in what they are selling) and tries to get other people to believe in it and use it also. So a software evangelist would probably be a person who tries to give people information about a certain piece of software and get them to use it, and, of course, to buy it.

Elmer (Elmer), also in Germany – perhaps he knows Lars! He wants to know the meaning of an expression: “to look forward to something.”

“To look for to something” is to be anticipating something with a positive feeling, to be happy about something that is going to be happening in the future. “I’m



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looking forward to my birthday, when I can eat whatever I want.” I’m looking forward to it – I have happy, positive feelings about it.

You can also look forward to doing something, and when you use a verb after the expression it’s always in the “ing” form, what we call the “gerund” form. So you could say, “I look forward to skiing in Switzerland,” going down the mountain in the snow on skis. Or, “I look forward to reading your emails when you ask me questions.” These are things you can look forward to.

Binji (Binji) from China wants to know the difference between a “sandwich” and a “hamburger.” Interesting question.

A “sandwich” is anything that is made with two pieces of bread, and you put something in between the two pieces of bread. It could be meat; it could be vegetables, cheese, tomatoes, etc.

A “hamburger” is a round, flat piece of ground beef that is fried and usually put in between two pieces of bread. So, a hamburger is kind of like a sandwich, (a special kind of sandwich), but normally we refer to a sandwich when we are talking about things that are not hamburger meat. If there’s hamburger meat in it, then we’ll just call it a hamburger: “I’m going to McDonald’s to order a hamburger.” So, a sandwich would be anything that is not hamburger, generally speaking.

Our final question comes from Rohith (Rohith) in the state of Texas here in the United States. The question has to do with the use of the words “can,” “could,” “will,” and “would” when making a request of someone, when asking someone to do something.

“Can” and “could” are both ways of asking if something is possible; if it is possible for this to happen or for this person to do something. “Can” is a little more informal. “Could” is often used to be a little more formal or more polite. For example if you are talking to someone you do not know very well, you’ll probably say to them, “Could you give me a call?” rather than “Can you give me a call?” You would say “can you give me a call” if the person perhaps were a friend or better known to you, although sometimes people use “could” even with close friends. But definitely, “could” sounds a little more polite in most cases.

“Can” and “could” are, again, when you are asking if something is possible.



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“Will” and “would” are used when you want to know if the person is willing to do something, is going to actually do what you are asking. For example, you have a very large box and want someone to open the door for you. You might say to this person, “Will you open that door, please?” Or, to be a little more polite, “Would you open that door, please?” We might even say, “Would you mind opening that door for me?”

“Would” and “will,” then, have to do with whether the person will actually do it. You know that the person is able to (can open the door); you’re asking if they will.

Now having said all of that, in normal conversation all four of these words can be used interchangeably. That is, it would certainly not be unusual for a native speaker to say “Could you open that door for me, please?” instead of “Would you open that door for me, please?” I can definitely see someone using both of those to mean basically the same thing.

Technically then, “can” and “could” refer to whether someone is able to do something. “Will” and “would” refer to when someone is willing to do something.

If you are willing to ask us a question, would you mind emailing us at eslpod@eslpod.com? We can’t answer all of your questions, but we’ll do our best to answer as many as we can here on the Café.

That’s all we have for you today. From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on the English Café.

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