

# Tasting the world: Food and travel



Travel Series | Episode 3

## PRE-LISTENING | Warm-up

Prepare before you listen to the conversation.

### Brainstorm

1. Look at the topic of this episode. Do you have any personal experiences related to this topic? If not, do you have any thoughts or opinions about it?
2. Below, write notes about what comes to your mind.

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### Vocabulary

1. What vocabulary do you think will come up in this conversation? If you can't think of the English word, check it in a dictionary.
2. Write the vocabulary that you came up with in the table below.


## LISTENING | Exercise

Listen to the conversation – feel free to pause any time or go back if you miss something.

In this conversation, Colin and Su discuss the importance of experiencing local food and dining customs while traveling. They emphasize that authentic food can often be found in markets and street food stalls where locals eat. They use Mexico as an example and mention popular street food like tacos. They also highlight the significance of following eating etiquette in foreign countries to show respect for the local culture. Colin mentions his experience in Japan, where people slurp noodles as a sign of enjoyment, and how it's important to observe and adapt to such customs when traveling. The conversation emphasizes that trying new foods and customs is an essential part of the travel experience, providing a deeper connection to the culture of the destination.

## Note-taking

Identify the key points of the conversation and add notes on some details. Try to keep it short.

Key Points	Details

## Quiz

Choose the correct answer – you can check your answers at the end of this PDF.

1. What is one of the key ways to experience authentic local food?
  - a. Fine dining restaurants
  - b. Markets and street food
  - c. Fast-food chains
  - d. Hotel buffets

2. According to Su, what is a popular street food in Mexico City?
- a. Sushi
  - b. Pizza
  - c. Tacos
  - d. Hot dogs
3. What does Su mean by "Tex-Mex" food?
- a. Traditional Mexican cuisine
  - b. Americanized Mexican food
  - c. Authentic Mexican street food
  - d. European-style Mexican dishes
4. How can you identify a good place to eat in a foreign country, according to Colin?
- a. If it has a lot of tourists
  - b. If it's expensive
  - c. If it has a fancy décor
  - d. If the locals are eating there
5. Why might it be important to follow the eating etiquette of a foreign country?
- a. To impress the locals
  - b. To show you are a food expert
  - c. To avoid offending people and to respect their culture
  - d. To avoid getting sick
6. In which country do people commonly slurp their noodles as a sign of enjoyment?
- a. Japan
  - b. France
  - c. Italy
  - d. Mexico
7. What is one possible reason mentioned for slurping noodles?
- a. To make less noise
  - b. To eat slowly
  - c. To annoy others
  - d. To cool down the noodles
8. What is the main message of the conversation?
- a. Authentic local food is overrated.
  - b. Travelers should stick to familiar dishes.
  - c. Exploring local food and dining customs enhances the travel experience.
  - d. Traveling is all about luxury dining.

## POST-LISTENING | Resources

Review the language used in the podcast

Word/Phrase	Class	Example Sentence
<b>authentic</b>	<i>adjective</i>	"The street food in Thailand is authentic and flavorful."
Real, genuine, not fake		
<b>etiquette</b>	<i>noun</i>	"I love to slurp the juice from a ripe, juicy watermelon."
Polite behavior in a society or a group		
<b>slurp</b>	<i>verb</i>	"The market stalls in the town square are permanent fixtures."
To make a loud sucking noise while eating or drinking		
<b>cuisine</b>	<i>noun</i>	"The petite lady had a soft-spoken voice."
A style of cooking from a particular country, region, or establishment		
<b>permanent</b>	<i>adjective</i>	"The street food in Thailand is authentic and flavorful."
Lasting or intended to last for a long time		
<b>impression</b>	<i>noun</i>	"I love to slurp the juice from a ripe, juicy watermelon."
A feeling or an opinion that you get about somebody/something		
<b>petite</b>	<i>adjective</i>	"The market stalls in the town square are permanent fixtures."
Small and dainty in stature or size		
<b>comfort zone</b>	<i>noun</i>	"The petite lady had a soft-spoken voice."
A situation or environment where a person feels at ease and without stress or anxiety		

## POST-LISTENING | Activities

### Shadowing

Choose one part of the conversation and listen to it again. Try to repeat what you hear out loud. Make sure you copy pronunciation, pauses\*, and stress\*.

\*Use the transcript to mark the **pauses** with a slash / and the **stress** with an underline \_\_\_.

### Speaking Practice

*Below are two questions you can use for speaking practice.*

- 1. Read each question and write some notes. Keep them short and only use bullet points or a mind map – these notes are just to help you organize your ideas.*
- 2. Record yourself answering the questions. Try to speak for at least 2 minutes for each question.*

**Q:** What are your thoughts on slurping food at the dinner table? Would you feel comfortable doing it, or do you find it unusual?

**Q:** Talk about a popular street food from your country. Describe what it is, how it's prepared, and where people usually eat it.





## Transcript

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**Colin:** This is episode three of our travel series and today's topic is tasting the world: food and travel. Hello Su.

**Su:** Hey.

**Colin:** How are you?

**Su:** Good, how are you?

**Colin:** I'm very well. Um, so how can you really experience the authentic, the true food of the place that you're traveling to?

**Su:** Well, um, I think the real food is where the locals eat and that would be the markets and the street food.

**Colin:** Right. Okay. Um, let's take, let's take Mexico, I think, as a good example. Somewhere that you're, uh, familiar with. Um, what kind of foods could you have on the street in Mexico?

**Su:** Well, tacos are one of the biggest, um, foods in Mexico City at least. And you can have that, uh, on the streets. Um, you'll see it, uh, all around the city. Um, there are some places that are more open to the street than others.

**Colin:** What do you mean?

**Su:** Um, just the restaurant might be quite closed. Uh, but then there's these places that are restaurants, but they are quite open to the streets. So you could go in or you could just stand outside and have your taco standing. Uh, yeah. So that's quite nice. There's other places that are just street food. You know, these are...

**Colin:** They don't have any buildings for you to sit inside, right?

**Su:** They, they have these kind of, um. What would you call it?

**Colin:** They have a kind of stall?

**Su:** They do, but these are, some of these are permanent.

**Colin:** Right, OK, so it's, they don't kind of set it up every day?

**Su:** No, they can close it, leave all their stuff in there and then they can come back. Some do come and just set up everything every day, but some are just permanent, well, within the city, yeah.

**Colin:** And you were saying this is where the locals eat.

**Su:** Yes. Uh, one of the things that my dad always looks for is, are the locals there? Are they eating there? Must be good.

**Colin:** Yeah. Cause they know. And also it's probably good value as well.

**Su:** And people do not get sick.



**Colin:** Right. Yes. It's, it's, yeah. I mean, if something is popular, uh, with the local people, then probably it has a good reputation locally. We found this in Greece. Uh, we found a place to eat and it was all local people. I think we were the only foreign people in the restaurant.

**Su:** Yes. They kind of looked at us like, what are you doing here?

**Colin:** A bit surprised when we walked in, but it was fantastic.

**Su:** It was delicious.

**Colin:** It was absolutely delicious and really good value. Um, every place is going to have different tastes, flavors, unique, um, dishes. So when you travel, you're getting a chance to really experience how people eat locally. So your idea of what food from Thailand is, is going to be very different to what you will actually have when you are in Thailand. So if you're in the UK, the version of Thai food that you eat, is Thai food for British people, um, not necessarily authentic Thai food that you might experience in the country itself.

**Su:** This happens a lot with Mexican food, right? In general, what people think about Mexican food is more Tex-Mex. Which is delicious, it's great, I enjoy it, but it's not necessarily Mexican.

**Colin:** Right, it's kind of...

**Su:** An interpretation.

**Colin:** It's an interpretation, it's kind of Americanized Mexican food. Delicious, as you said, I like Tex-Mex food, but it's very different to what you will have in Mexico. Um, and that's kind of interesting.

**Colin:** Um, what about etiquette, how to eat. So food is such an important part of every culture, um, everybody needs to eat. And food is something that people, um, care about a lot. Um, can you learn about the etiquette of a country, uh, in terms of how they eat when you travel?

**Su:** Um, well, you can look at what the locals are doing. Um, but it is important as well to try and follow that etiquette. Because people, in general, I've found that people are very proud of their national dishes, of the food that they eat.

**Colin:** Of course, yeah.

**Su:** It can be rude not to follow the etiquette or how you eat it or this kind of, you know, differences, cultural differences. You don't do it to annoy anyone. Right. You just don't know.

**Colin:** Exactly. And I think in those kind of situations, it's okay to ask. You know, if, if you're not sure how to eat something or how to prepare something. I see this a lot with Japanese food. Um, it's not always clear what to do. You can get a, a big, um, tray with many small dishes of sauces and things and you might not know what to do with all this stuff. Like, what do I do with this sauce? Do I pour it on here? Do I dip this thing into this sauce? It's not always clear what to do. And in those situations, it's absolutely okay to ask the staff or even somebody sitting on the next table - excuse me, what is this? How do I eat it? How do I eat it? What do I do with this? Um, because people are, as you said, people are proud of their food and they're usually very happy to share.

**Su:** Yeah, we were with some friends in Costa Rica and that was our first, uh, kind of impression of the country, the culture, and it was a buffet in the morning. Loads of food. Beautiful food. But we didn't know what to order or what to put in the plate. You know, you don't want to make a mix of things that don't go together. So as we were queuing, we were asking everyone in the queue - what are you having? And just getting an idea. And when we, you know, got to the chefs that are giving the food, we asked them like - what do you recommend? What is a breakfast? A proper breakfast. And, uh, they were quite happy to share that with us and of course we had a beautiful breakfast every day.

**Colin:** Yeah, because you, you don't know what breakfast looks like, like with these options, like I could put a really random selection of food together. Um, so yeah, asking, uh, asking the locals for advice.

Um, in terms of etiquette, behavior when eating, I think is a big thing. Um, a good example, again, referring back to Japan is when you're eating noodles, if you're eating ramen, uh, ramen noodles, Japanese people will slurp their noodles. So they will actually make a noise with their mouth as they're putting the noodles in their, their mouth. And for me, somebody from the UK, you try not to make any noise when you're eating, you certainly don't slurp food. You don't slurp soup from a spoon. Um, and slurping noodles loudly. And I mean, loudly. Uh, Japanese people, if you go to a ramen shop, you will hear people all around the, the restaurant, um, slurping their noodles, and it was quite a shock to me. But, you know, you look around and you realize that's how to do it. That's the way that people eat it. And it's kind of almost a sign of respect that you're enjoying it. There's various explanations about why they slurp their food. Some people say it's to cool down the noodles because they're very hot or the air can help you enjoy the flavor more. There's a few different theories, but it's a different way of doing it. It's a different etiquette. And it's accepted as, as polite, uh, behavior.

**Su:** We've seen very elegant ladies slurp.

**Colin:** Exactly. Yes. Um, very small, petite Japanese women slurping their noodles, uh, like they're a salaryman just finished their, their shift. Um, so yeah, I think the point you made is look around, see what people are doing and try it. It might be new to you. It might be uncomfortable. But this is one of the reasons you travel. It's to get out of your comfort zone and, uh, and try new things. And you never know, you know, you might learn a new way of doing something that you might continue for the rest of your life.

## ANSWERS – Multiple-Choice Questions

1. b      2. c      3. b      4. d  
5. c      6. a      7. d      8. c