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With No Grammar and No Textbooks!

### Episode #320

How to order Food in a  
Restaurant in the USA

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Hi! I'm Georgiana, and I'm back with a new episode. I'm here to help you speak English fluently.

If you want to help me, SHARE the podcast with your friends and family. That would mean a lot. Thanks.

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Today, I'll talk about **how to order food** in a restaurant **in the United States!** We'll review helpful phrases, cultural tips about tipping, and how to ask for a takeaway box. Plus, we'll practice fluency with a mini-story.

Okay, let's start!

Ordering food in a restaurant can be an exciting experience, especially when you're traveling in the U.S.!

### **Understanding the Menu**

When you go to a restaurant in the U.S., you'll usually get a menu that's divided into sections:

**Appetizers** – small dishes served before the main course.

**Entrées** – are your main dishes.

**Sides** – small portions of your meal, like fries or salad.

**Desserts** – sweet treats to end your meal!

**Menus** can also have terms like "**specials**," which the chef recommends that day. If you're unsure, ask your server, "What do you recommend?" or "What's today's special?"

### **Phrases for Ordering Food**

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Here are some common phrases you can use:

**To order:** "I'd like the..." or "Can I have the..."

**If you need a recommendation:** "What do you recommend?" or "What's popular here?"

**To customize your order:** "Can I have that without...?" or "Could I add...?"

For example, you might say, "I'd like the cheeseburger with no onions, please."

### **Tipping in the U.S.**

Let's talk about tipping. In the U.S., tipping is expected in restaurants. Usually, people leave 15% to 20% of the total bill as a tip for the server. It's their way of saying "thank you" for good service. Don't worry; most restaurants will give you the bill with a suggested tip amount, so it's easy to calculate.

### **Takeaway or "To-Go"**

If you don't finish your meal, asking for a **takeaway** box is very normal. You can simply say, "Can I have a to-go box, please?" or "Could you box this up for me?" This way, you can enjoy the rest of your meal later!

### **Practice Dialogue**

Let's practice a simple conversation:

**Server:** "Hello! Can I get you started with something to drink?" **You:** "Yes, I'd like a glass of water, please."

**Server:** "Are you ready to order, or do you need a few more minutes?" **You:** "I'm ready. I'll have the grilled chicken with a side salad."

**Server:** "Great choice! Would you like any dessert?"

**You:** "No, thank you. But could I get the rest to go?"

**Server:** "Of course! I'll bring a to-go box."

And now, let's continue with a mini-story.

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# Mini-Story 📖

(Practice your speaking)

I will tell you a story by asking simple questions. I use this method in my [premium courses](#) because it's highly effective.

First, I say a short sentence with facts. Then, I ask you questions. After each question, you answer. Then, I tell you the right answer. That's how we make the story.

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You will find several levels.

Okay! Let's start!

I'm an overweight middle-aged woman who wants to lose weight.

**Am I young or old?**

I'm not young, but I'm not old either.

**Am I fit or overweight?**

No, no. I'm not fit. I'm overweight.

**Do I want to gain or lose weight?**

No to gaining weight. I want to lose weight.

**What do I want to lose? My dignity?**

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No, no. Not my dignity. I want to lose weight.

**Do I want to eat a slice of cheesecake?**

I probably want to eat a slice of cheesecake, but I shouldn't if I'm serious about losing weight.

*My dietician tells me that I have to eat a variety of foods but in moderation.*

**Does my dietician prohibit me from eating greens like spinach or kale?**

No, no. My dietician doesn't prohibit me from eating greens. He tells me to eat a variety of foods, including spinach and kale.

**Can I eat any sweets?**

Yes, my dietician says I can eat a variety of foods, so I can have sweets too.

**Can I order French fries when I eat out?**

Yes, I can. I can order French fries when I eat out, but in moderation.

**Does the dietician tell me to eat big pieces of homemade pizza?**

No, no. The dietician doesn't tell me to eat big pieces of homemade pizza. He says I can eat foods in moderation.

*When I eat at a restaurant, I try to follow the doctor's advice.*

**When do I try to follow the doctor's advice? When I eat at a restaurant?**

Yes, I try to follow the doctor's advice when I eat at a restaurant.

**Do I order plenty of high-fat dishes when I eat out?**

No, no. I don't order plenty of high-fat dishes when I eat out.

**Do I want to eat healthy or unhealthy when I go to a restaurant?**

Healthy. I want to eat healthy when I go to a restaurant. Not unhealthy.

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**Whose advice do I want to listen to? My friend's advice?**

No, no. Not my friend's advice. I follow my doctor's advice.

*I usually order all the dishes on the menu but eat only half of each plate.*

**Do I usually order all the dishes on the menu or only half?**

All the dishes. I usually order all the dishes on the menu, not just half.

**Do I do this occasionally or usually?**

Not occasionally. I usually order all the dishes on the menu.

**I only eat half of each dish, right?**

Right. I order all the dishes on the menu but only eat half of each plate.

*After some time, I become heavier than ever and don't understand why.*

**When do I become heavier than ever?**

After some time, I became heavier than ever.

**Who becomes heavier? My cat?**

No, no. Not my cat. It's me who becomes heavier than ever.

**Do I understand why I get heavier?**

No, I don't understand why I get heavier than ever. After all, I did what my doctor recommended.

Well, we're finished with our short practice.

Answering many simple questions can improve your speaking, just like talking in real life.

Today, you've tried a small part of this question-and-answer technique. Do you want to learn more?

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I will be back next week!  
Bye! Bye!

*Georgiana*

founder of  
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