

ESL Podcast 12 -Dining at a Restaurant I (Fast)

Welcome to English as a second language podcast number 12. Welcome to another edition of English as a second language podcast, brought to you by www.eslpod.com. I'm your host doctor Jeff Mcquillen, senior researcher at the center for educational development here in Los Angeles, California. ESL podcast is made specially for you, those who are trying to improve your english listening and speaking. If this is the first time listening to this podcast, I recommend you go to our website www.eslpod.com to read more about how to best use this podcast to improve your English.

In today's podcast we are going to talk about going to restaurants and ordering food. One of my favorite activities. As in all of our podcasts, we will first listen to a discussion, and then we will come back and talk about the vocabulary. Let's get started.

Well, I love going out to restaurants to eat. One of the best experiences I've had recently was at a place here in Los Angeles called Il Fornaio. It's an Italian restaurant in a very nice part of Beverly Hills. I don't go there very often--I can't really afford it, but every once in a while I'll **treat** myself. The last time I went, I walked in with a friend and I was greeted by the **hostess**. She asked how many people were in my **party**, and I said, "Just two." "Right this way! I'll **show you to** your table" she said. She was very polite. When we reached our table by the window, she asked us, "Is this all right?" We said, "Of course!" and then she handed us the menus, along with the wine list. The place setting with the silverware was very complete. There were two forks (one for the salad course, one for the main course), a spoon, a knife, a dinner plate, a dessert spoon on top, a wine glass and a water glass, a cup and saucer for coffee, and a bread basket. I was already getting hungry! "Your waiter will be with you shortly," the hostess said. So, we looked over the menus, so many choices, especially for a **lover of** Italian food like me. The waiter came up to the table a few minutes later and said, "Good evening. My name is Giorgio, and I'll be your waiter this evening. Is there anything I can **get you started with**-a cocktail, a glass of wine?" Well, my friend and I are not exactly **big drinkers**, so we just ordered a couple of iced teas. "Would you like a few minutes to look at the menu?" he said. We nodded our heads, and he went off to get our drinks. As I was looking at the appetizers, I **spotted** one of my favorite **dishes**-crab cakes! I told my friend that the crab cakes were **a must**. Just then the waiter returned to our table, with our drinks on a large tray. Now, I was ready to order.

Let's talk now about some of the difficult words and expressions that we used in telling our first half of the story about going to a restaurant. In starting my segment, I said that I don't go to the restaurant, the Italian restaurant very often because I can't really afford it. To be able to afford something means that you have money to pay for it. I also said however that, every once in a while I treat myself. There are two expressions there: "every once in a while". Every once in a while, means every so often not every day for example but maybe with less frequency. The other expression is: "to treat yourself". I said I'll treat myself. To treat yourself means to give yourself a present or a gift or something that you really want that is just for you. Something special that you would not normally go and buy or do. When I talked about going into the restaurant I said that the host (the hostess rather), the host is a man, the hostess (h-o-s-t-e-s-s) is a woman. The hostess said to me: "how many people are in your party?". We use that expression in restaurants specifically to talk about how many people are going to be having dinner or having lunch with you. The word "party" you probably already know, usually means a fest of occasion where we celebrate something. But here in a restaurant, the word "party" just means the number of people in your group. The hostess then said to us: "I'll show you to your

table". To show someone to show their table or to show someone to the door means that you take them and lead them to wherever you're going. This is a common expression in restaurants, when the hostess or host shows you to your table. Later in my discussion I mentioned that there were so many choices specially for a lover of Italian food like me. That expression "for a lover of" is something we use when we are describing someone who really is an expert or really likes something a great deal. For example, for a lover of rock music going to a live concert is the best. For a lover of then is someone who is a fan or someone who is very much in love with a certain thing. When the waiter came to our table he asked: "is there anything I can get you started with?". In a restaurant when the waiter says is there anything I can start you with or I can get you started with, this mean that he or she is asking you whether you want an appetizer before meal course or if you want a cocktail an alcoholic beverage is a cocktail or some wine. In this example, in my example I said that my friend and I are not exactly big drinkers. This is somewhat of an informal expression. To be a big drinker means that you like to drink a lot, drink alcohol a lot. So, when we say John is a big drinker, we mean John likes to drink a lot of alcohol. Finally, at the end of my discussion I said that I spotted one of my favorite dishes. To spot something her means that I found it, I saw it. For example, I was in the store yesterday and I spotted a hat that was on sale. Meaning I looked and I saw and I found it. You can also say for example I spotted my friends yesterday at the café. Meaning you saw them there, you found them there, not necessarily because you were looking for it. The other term that we used there is "dishes". Dishes means not just the physical plates, but also the parts of the meal. So, an appetizer with crab cakes, that would be a dish and then Lasagna that would be a separate dish. A meal, particularly a fancy meal that is a formal meal often has more than one dish. Finally, I said that crab cakes were a must. The expression to be a must for example for me listening to music in the morning is a must. That means that something that's necessary for me, that I absolutely must have. We use that expression a lot in English to express something that we have a strong desire for.

That's going to wrap up our podcast today. Remember that you can get all of our podcasts that are currently available by going to our website www.eslpod.com or you can also email us your questions and your suggestions. We are always interested in finding out who is listening to us, where you are and what ideas you have for future podcast. Email us at eslpod@eslpod.com. Thank you again for listening and we'll see you next time.

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