

Worksheet - Eating customs around the world



1. Special Specialities

What is your favourite kind of food?

What kinds of food don't you like?

Would you eat the following specialties?

- roast suckling pig (eg Spain, Germany)
- sheep's head (eg some Mediterranean countries)
- haggis (roasted lung, stomach, liver and heart of lamb or sheep mixed with onions, oatmeal, herbs and spices, stuffed inside a bag made from the animal's stomach) (Scotland)
- octopus (eg Spain)
- sushi (a type of rice seasoned with vinegar and are garnished with raw fish or vegetables) (eg Japan, now popular in Europe, too)
- frog legs (eg France)
- snails (eg France, Spain)
- surströmming (small Baltic herring that is salted, fermented and further fermented in a tin. It has a pungent [strong] smell) (Sweden)
- tripe (eg France, Spain, some German-speaking regions)
- guinea pig (in some Latin American countries)
- insects (in some Asian and Latin American countries)

2. Read the following case study and answer the questions.



Photo by Matthew T Rader on Unsplash

A group of German teenagers are on a language course in England. At a party they are offered a dish called "toad in the hole". It consists of sausages in a batter. The students enjoy the dish until one student tells them that a toad is an amphibian similar to a frog. Most of the pupils then refuse to finish their plate. Later they find out that 'toad in the hole' is just a name and the dish is not made of toads.

Would you have finished the dish if you thought it was made of toads?

Why wouldn't you eat certain type of food

- because of the way it looks, smells or tastes?
- because you find the idea of eating this type of food unappetising or unethical?

If you were invited for dinner and didn't like a food item, what would you do to avoid offending the host?

3. Comparing eating habits and table manners

Eating customs vary across cultures. Below you will find some information on table manners in different countries. Which are similar or different in your culture?

In China	In my culture
<p>During a meal, you may be served up to 20-30 courses. It is therefore advisable to try only a few bites or spoonfuls of each dish.</p> <p>Eating everything and leaving a 'clean plate' will make your hosts think you haven't had enough to eat, which is a terrible insult in China.</p> <p>Your host will be offended if you don't try a dish. Therefore, even if you find the food unappetising, at least try a small portion to be polite.</p> <p>The tea-drinking ritual known as 'yum cha' is an important part of Chinese business entertainment. Its purpose is to build rapport with business partners before a meeting or during a meal.</p> <p>If you do not want more tea, leave some in your cup.</p> <p>If you are served food that doesn't require utensils such as a spoon or chopsticks, a bowl of tea will often be provided for you to dip your fingers in to clean them.</p>	
In India	
<p>It is important to wash your hands both before and after eating. In Hindu homes, you are also expected to rinse out your mouth.</p> <p>The left hand is considered unclean, so only eat with your right hand. However, it is possible to pass dishes with the left hand.</p>	
In Mexico	
<p>Mexican breakfast is usually a hearty meal, similar to brunch, that includes fruit, meat and eggs.</p> <p>Lunch is the main meal of the day. A business lunch often lasts several hours.</p>	

In Japan	
<p>Slurping your noodles or tea shows you are enjoying them.</p> <p>If you do not want to try a food item, you must make a plausible excuse. For example, you could say that you are unable to try a dish for health reasons. This way everyone can "save face".</p> <p>Use both hands to hold a bowl or cup that you want refilled.</p> <p>If you're a guest, don't serve yourself. Wait for the host or someone else to refill your drink.</p> <p>If you don't need your chopsticks, put them on the chopstick rest.</p>	

4. What questions are important regarding eating habits and table manners before socialising with somebody from a different culture?

Example: When are the mealtimes?

5. Activity 3 – Vocabulary – English – German

course = Gang	dip = eintauchen
recommendable = empfehlenswert	rinse = spülen
offend = beleidigen	chopsticks = Stäbchen
insult = Beleidigung	chopstick rest = Stäbchenhalter
polite = höflich	slurp = schlürfen
build rapport = eine Beziehung herstellen	

For some quick tips on dining customs around the world see

<https://theculinarytravelguide.com/dining-etiquette-around-the-world/>