

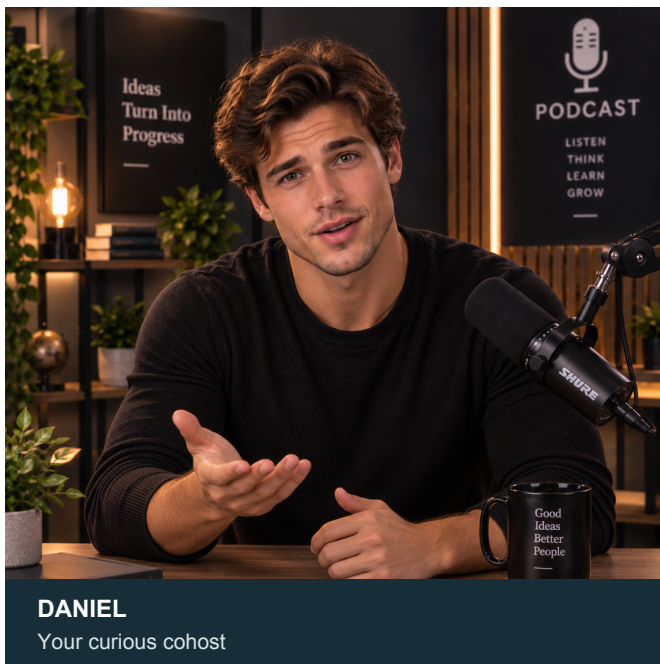


Eating Out and Ordering Food

English listening & speaking with Daniel and Maya

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Practise useful English from this episode.

B1-B2 / 19:31 AUDIO / FULL TRANSCRIPT



LISTEN. READ. SAY IT.

- 1 Listen once for the story.
- 2 Read along and notice useful expressions.
- 3 Choose one useful phrase and try saying it out loud.





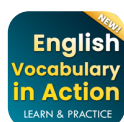
FULL TRANSCRIPT / 01 OF 08

The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

00:00 Booking a table

- Daniel** Welcome back! I'm Daniel, and tonight I'm taking friends to dinner. I was asked to book a table, and I've spent twenty minutes choosing a restaurant based entirely on its dessert photos.
- Maya** I'm Maya, your English teacher, and I support dessert research. Start with the day, time, and number of people. Say, "Could I book a table for four on Friday at seven?"
- Daniel** "A table for four" is much easier than "four chairs surrounding a table." Should I give my name immediately, or wait until they ask?
- Maya** They'll usually ask. You can add, "It's under the name Daniel." If you're calling, speak slowly and spell your name if necessary. Confirm the details: "That's Friday at seven, correct?"
- Daniel** My friend uses a wheelchair. I don't want to assume the entrance works for them. How do I ask about it clearly?
- Maya** Ask, "Is there step-free access to the restaurant and the bathroom?" Describe the practical need. A vague answer like "we're accessible" may not tell you what you need to know.
- Daniel** Another friend has a peanut allergy. Should I mention that when I book, or wait until we're sitting down and looking at the menu?
- Maya** Mention it early and again when you order. Say, "One guest has a peanut allergy. Can you tell us what options are safe and how the food is prepared?" Don't guess from a menu label.
- Daniel** I see "walk-ins welcome." Does that mean we can arrive without booking, even if we're carrying a cake and three very hungry friends?
- Maya** It means they may seat customers without reservations if there's space. At a busy time, there might be a wait. Ask, "Do you take walk-ins on Friday evening?" before making plans.
- Daniel** The booking form asks for "special requests." May I write, "Please put us near the dessert menu"? Or should I ask for a quieter table?
- Maya** The quieter table is a useful request. Write, "If possible, could we have a quieter table?" A request isn't always a guarantee. Then tell your friends, "I've booked a table for four. Please let me know if you can't make it."
- Daniel** "Make it" means be able to come. Great. I have a booking, a confirmation, and a very serious reason to inspect the dessert photos again.
- Maya** That's a productive start. Keep the booking details handy, and remember that a short, clear question can solve a problem before you arrive.



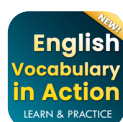


The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

02:30 Arriving and getting seated

- Daniel** It's Friday. I'm ten minutes early. At the entrance I say, "Hello, I have a table." That sounds as if I brought furniture from home.
- Maya** Say, "Hello, we have a reservation for four at seven, under Daniel." In British English, "booking" is common; "reservation" works in many places. Give your name when they ask.
- Daniel** What if my friends are late? They are wonderful people, but their relationship with clocks is complicated. Do I just stand outside looking worried?
- Maya** Tell the host, "Two of us are here, and the other two are on their way." "On their way" means travelling here now. If the delay is long, phone ahead and ask whether the booking can still be held.
- Daniel** They offer a table beside a noisy kitchen. Could I ask to move without sounding ungrateful? I enjoy cooking sounds, but I don't need them in my ear.
- Maya** Of course. "Would it be possible to sit somewhere a little quieter?" If no other table is available, you can decide whether to stay. A polite question is not an accusation.
- Daniel** The host says, "Please follow me." I do, but one chair rocks whenever I move. Is it okay to ask for another chair?
- Maya** Yes. "This chair seems a little unstable. Could I change it?" Name the specific issue. You don't need a long speech about your dramatic relationship with chairs.
- Daniel** At a café, someone asks, "Is this table taken?" What does "taken" mean there? Nobody has carried the table away.
- Maya** It means occupied or reserved for someone. Answer, "No, please go ahead," or "Yes, we're waiting for a friend." "Go ahead" means they may use it.
- Daniel** The server hands us menus and asks, "Can I get you started with drinks?" Are we being invited to a race?
- Maya** No. They are asking whether you'd like to order drinks first. You can say, "Could we have some water while we look at the menu?" Or, "We're ready to order drinks."
- Daniel** I want tap water, if it's available. I can ask, "Do you offer tap water?" and check the price of anything else before we order.
- Maya** Exactly. Once everyone arrives, you're ready for the next challenge: a menu with nineteen different ways to describe roasted vegetables.





FULL TRANSCRIPT / 03 OF 08

The conversation

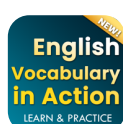
Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

04:59 Reading the menu

- Daniel** The menu has “starters,” “mains,” and “sides.” I know “main” usually means important, but can you translate this dinner map for me?
- Maya** A starter is a small first course. A main is the central dish. A side is something served with it, such as potatoes or vegetables. In American English, you may see “appetizers” and “entrées.”
- Daniel** “Entrée” sounds like an entrance, but on an American menu it usually means the main course. English loves making hungry people work.
- Maya** You might also see “specials,” dishes offered for a limited time, and “set menu,” a fixed selection of courses or choices for one price. Ask what's included before choosing.
- Daniel** My burger comes “with a choice of side.” Do I choose the side, or does the chef surprise me with a dramatic potato?
- Maya** You choose from the available options. Ask, “Which sides can I choose?” British “chips” are often called “fries” in American English. Menu words can vary, so ask if you're unsure.
- Daniel** The menu says “contains nuts” beside one dish, but my friend has a peanut allergy. Is that label enough information?
- Maya** No. Ingredient labels and kitchen practices vary. Your friend should explain the allergy and ask what the kitchen can safely prepare. If the answer is unclear, choose a safer option.
- Daniel** I'm not allergic, but I don't eat meat. Should I say, “I'm vegetarian,” or “I don't like meat”? And what if I avoid eggs too?
- Maya** “I'm vegetarian” is clear if it describes your diet. Add specific details that matter: “I also don't eat eggs.” You can ask, “Which dishes can be made without meat or eggs?”
- Daniel** This dish says “spicy.” My spice level is somewhere between “mild” and “please bring more water.” How do I ask?
- Maya** “How spicy is this dish?” or “Could you make it less spicy?” Some dishes can be changed; others cannot. Ask before ordering, and don't assume “mild” means the same thing everywhere.
- Daniel** I also see “market price,” which sounds mysterious. Am I allowed to ask how much it is today?
- Maya** Definitely. “How much is it today?” is a sensible question. The point of reading a menu is to make a choice you understand, not to pass a vocabulary test.

07:39 Asking for recommendations

- Daniel** I want a recommendation, but “What should I eat?” sounds like the server must solve my whole personality. How can I make the question useful?



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FULL TRANSCRIPT / 04 OF 08

The conversation

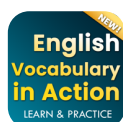
Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

07:39 Asking for recommendations (continued)

- Maya** Give them a clue: "Could you recommend something vegetarian and not too spicy?" Or, "I'm choosing between the pasta and the fish. Which is lighter?" A specific question makes a useful answer easier.
- Daniel** If they say, "The pasta is our most popular dish," does that mean it will be my favourite? Last year, the most popular film made me fall asleep.
- Maya** Popular means many customers choose it, not that it fits your taste. Ask, "What is it like?" or "Is the sauce creamy or tomato-based?" Find out what you actually want to know.
- Daniel** The server calls the soup "hearty." Does it have a kind heart? Is that why it costs more than my first bicycle?
- Maya** "Hearty" food is filling and satisfying, often warm and substantial. "Light" food feels less heavy. "Rich" can describe a strong flavour or a dish with butter, cream, or other substantial ingredients.
- Daniel** I could say, "I'd like something light because we're going dancing later." Although my dancing might still frighten the furniture.
- Maya** That works. Another word is "portion," the amount served. Ask, "Are the portions large enough to share?" Then decide whether you need two starters or one main each.
- Daniel** If we share, can I ask for an extra plate? I don't want to move pasta between tables with a fork like a tiny crane.
- Maya** Say, "Could we have an extra plate? We'd like to share the starter." Some restaurants have their own approach to sharing, so the question helps.
- Daniel** The server recommends a dish with a sauce I can't pronounce. Is "Could you tell me what's in the sauce?" natural?
- Maya** Very natural. If an ingredient matters for an allergy, be specific and ask the server to check with the kitchen. Don't rely on a guess about a sauce's name.
- Daniel** I hear, "Would you like the dressing on the side?" Does that mean it arrives separately?
- Maya** Exactly. "On the side" means in a separate container so you can add as much as you like. You can say, "Could I have the sauce on the side, please?"

10:03 Ordering and changing a choice

- Daniel** The server comes back and asks, "Are you ready to order?" I'm ready in my mind, but my mouth is still negotiating with the menu.



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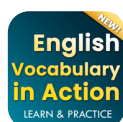
FULL TRANSCRIPT / 05 OF 08

The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

10:03 Ordering and changing a choice (continued)

- Maya** You can ask for time: "Could we have another couple of minutes, please?" When you're ready, say, "I'd like the vegetable pasta, please." "I'll have" is also natural.
- Daniel** What if I want to change one ingredient? Could I say, "I want the pasta without cheese," or should I use a softer question?
- Maya** Try, "Could I have the pasta without cheese, if that's possible?" For an allergy, explain the allergy clearly and ask the kitchen to confirm whether the change is safe. A simple preference can be a request; a safety issue needs a clear answer.
- Daniel** My friend wants the steak "medium." I'm not ordering it, but what is the word for how much meat has been cooked?
- Maya** That's "doneness." The server may ask how they'd like it cooked. Your friend can state a preference, for example, "medium," and ask what the restaurant means if they're unsure.
- Daniel** I order pasta, then immediately see a better dish passing our table. Can I change my order before the kitchen starts?
- Maya** Ask quickly and accept that it may be too late: "I'm sorry, is it still possible to change my order to the rice dish?" The server can check. Don't assume a change is automatic.
- Daniel** The server repeats our order. I hear "two soups," but we asked for one. How do I correct that without making a scene?
- Maya** Say, "Sorry, just one soup, please. The other starter is the salad." Repeating the order is a chance to catch mistakes. "Just to confirm" is a useful phrase before you restate the details.
- Daniel** And if my friend needs the pasta to arrive without cheese, I should confirm that too: "Just to confirm, one pasta without cheese."
- Maya** Exactly. Specific confirmation prevents confusion. If your table is large, you can point politely to the person who ordered each dish, but let the server do their job.
- Daniel** May I ask for everything to come at the same time? I'd rather not eat dessert while my friend waits for soup.
- Maya** "Could our mains come out together, please?" is clear. Restaurants usually aim for that, but you can ask when you have a special reason or separate orders.
- Daniel** Good. My mouth and the menu have finally reached an agreement. Now I only have to stop staring at other people's food.
- Maya** That's the hardest part of dining out, and sadly no phrasal verb can fix it.



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FULL TRANSCRIPT / 06 OF 08

The conversation

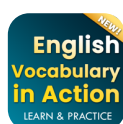
Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

12:39 When something goes wrong

- Daniel** My pasta arrives, but it has cheese on it. I asked for no cheese. Should I say, "You've ruined my entire evening," or is there a better opening?
- Maya** Begin with the fact and a request: "Excuse me, I ordered the pasta without cheese, but this one has cheese. Could you help me sort it out?" "Sort it out" means resolve the problem.
- Daniel** What if it's not a preference but an allergy? Then I need to be very clear about it, right?
- Maya** Yes. State the allergy again and don't eat the dish until the restaurant has answered whether it is safe. You can say, "I have an allergy. Could the kitchen check this dish and explain the ingredients?"
- Daniel** My friend's meal hasn't arrived, and the rest of us have almost finished. I don't want to blame the server personally. What can I say?
- Maya** "Excuse me, we're still waiting for one main course. Could you check on it, please?" "Check on" means find out what is happening. This focuses on the missing food and the next step.
- Daniel** Suppose the soup is cold. Can I say, "This soup is cold. Could it be heated up?" Or does "heat up" only apply to my apartment?
- Maya** It works for food too. "The soup seems cold. Could it be heated up or replaced?" is polite and direct. You can also ask how long a replacement might take.
- Daniel** The server apologises and offers a new bowl. Should I apologise back for causing trouble?
- Maya** You can simply say, "Thank you, I appreciate it." You did nothing wrong by pointing out a clear issue. Good manners don't require pretending the problem isn't there.
- Daniel** What if the music is too loud? That isn't a mistake with my order, but we're shouting across the table like actors in a storm.
- Maya** You can ask, "Would it be possible to lower the music a little, or move to a quieter table?" They may or may not be able to help. A request gives them a chance.
- Daniel** I like the formula: say what happened, ask what can be done, and listen to the answer. No speech about the end of civilisation.
- Maya** Exactly. "Sort it out," "check on," and "heat up" are useful, but a calm tone and specific details matter even more.

14:57 The bill and leaving

- Daniel** Dinner is over, and the dessert research paid off. Now I need the bill. Is "Give me the bill" too direct?



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FULL TRANSCRIPT / 07 OF 08

The conversation

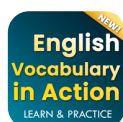
Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

14:57 The bill and leaving (continued)

- Maya** It's understandable, but "Could we have the bill, please?" sounds more natural and polite. In American English, "check" is common: "Could we have the check, please?"
- Daniel** There are four of us. One person ordered a big meal, and one had only soup. Can I ask to pay separately?
- Maya** Ask, "Could we pay separately?" or "Could you split the bill?" Check whether they can divide it by person or only into equal parts. If the restaurant can't, your group can settle it afterwards.
- Daniel** "Split the bill" means divide the cost. "Settle it" means pay each other later. I hope nobody tries to calculate the price of one shared olive.
- Maya** It happens. If you need an itemised bill, ask, "Could we see an itemised bill, please?" It lists the dishes and charges, which helps when you want to check a possible mistake.
- Daniel** I notice a service charge. Is that the same as a tip? Should I pay both?
- Maya** Customs and rules differ by place. Read the bill and ask, "Is the service charge included?" If you're unsure about an extra tip, ask what is usual there. Don't assume one rule applies everywhere.
- Daniel** What if I see a drink we didn't order? Is "I think there may be a mistake on the bill" a good start?
- Maya** Yes. Then be specific: "There's a lemonade here, but we didn't order one. Could you check?" It leaves room for a simple correction rather than turning the bill into a courtroom drama.
- Daniel** The server brings the payment machine. I can say, "Can I pay by card?" or "Do you take cash?" Those are probably easier than my earlier courtroom speech.
- Maya** Exactly. Before you leave, check for your coat, phone, and friends. A friendly "Thank you, we enjoyed the meal" ends the conversation nicely.
- Daniel** And if I didn't enjoy the meal, I don't need to invent a glowing review. I can simply say, "Thank you. Have a good evening."
- Maya** Right. Politeness can be sincere and simple. Also, take your cake if you brought one. We've already lost too many cakes to restaurant refrigerators.

17:22 A complete restaurant conversation

- Daniel** Let's practise from the beginning. You're the restaurant host, then the server. I'll be a customer with a sensible question and an unreasonable interest in dessert.
- Maya** Welcome. Do you have a reservation?



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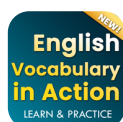
FULL TRANSCRIPT / 08 OF 08

The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

17:22 A complete restaurant conversation (continued)

- Daniel** Yes, a table for four at seven, under Daniel. Two friends are on their way. Is it possible to sit somewhere a little quieter?
- Maya** Certainly. I can show you a table away from the kitchen. Here are your menus. Could I get you started with drinks?
- Daniel** Could we have water while we look at the menu? Also, one guest has a peanut allergy. Could you check which dishes the kitchen can safely prepare?
- Maya** Of course. I'll ask the kitchen and come back with a clear answer. In the meantime, is there anything else you'd like to know about the menu?
- Daniel** Is the vegetable pasta spicy? And could I have the sauce on the side? I'm choosing between that and the rice dish.
- Maya** The pasta is mild, and the sauce can come separately. The rice dish is a little heavier. Which would you prefer?
- Daniel** I'll have the pasta, please. Just to confirm, one sauce on the side. My friends will order when they arrive.
- Maya** Great. Now we've finished the role-play, what did you do well?
- Daniel** I gave the booking details, asked about a quieter seat, explained the allergy, asked a specific menu question, and repeated the important part of my order. I didn't shout, "Bring me the dessert map!"
- Maya** Exactly. Listeners, try your own version. You can pause and order a main course, ask about an ingredient, and request the bill politely. Use one complete sentence for each step.
- Daniel** My recap: "make it" means be able to come; "on their way" means travelling here; "on the side" means separately; "sort it out" means resolve a problem; and "split the bill" means divide the cost.
- Maya** Perfect. You don't need perfect pronunciation of every menu word. Ask clear questions, confirm important details, and enjoy the conversation. Thanks for listening; we'll see you next time.



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