

Podcast 54 - What Australians Eat

by Rob McCormack - Wednesday, January 28, 2015

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Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack
Podcast Number 54 – What Australians Eat

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Hi,

When it comes to food, I think Australians are amongst the luckiest people in the world. High quality food is relatively cheap here and there is plenty of it. What is more, you can buy just about any type of food you can think of and it is always fresh. So it's a little surprising to find out that our diet is not as healthy as it could be. In fact, over the last 15 years, it seems that Australians are increasingly choosing foods which are not good for their health, mainly in the form of fast food. In this podcast I would like to tell you a little about what Australians eat.

Australians take it for granted that, if you are hungry, just make a visit to the local supermarket and there you will find everything that you need, always fresh and really quite cheap.



Fresh fruit and vegetables are always available, depending of course on what is 'in season' at the time. I love to eat fresh fruit and our weekly groceries always include fruit such as apples, oranges, bananas, kiwi fruit and often fresh berries when in season. I love to make a fresh fruit salad which can last 2 or more days in the fridge. It's great for a snack, as well as for dessert at meal times. Fresh meat is also readily available, such as beef, chicken, pork, fish and every other type of meat you can think of. Chicken is probably my family's favourite meat, especially the breast meat which is great for using in stir fries and other dishes. There is also nothing better than a juicy beef steak cooked on a barbeque. We have a gas barbeque on our back porch where we often barbeque meat for our evening meal. Meat somehow tastes better when it's been barbequed outside on a warm summer evening. Add a mixed salad and perhaps some microwaved vegetables such as corn or potatoes and you have the perfect evening meal.

So it comes as a bit of shock to find out that, over the last 15 years, more and more Australians are eating less and less fruit and vegetables. In fact, in the recent Australian Health Survey, it was found that we are eating around 30% less of these. On an average day, around 1 in 4 Australians eat no vegetables at all. What is more, only 7% of Australians eat the recommended amount of vegetables, which for adults is 5 serves. The survey shows that the average Australian gets around 35% of their energy from highly processed foods such as alcohol, cakes, lollies, cereal bars, pastries, biscuits and soft drinks. Hmm, not exactly good for you and nothing like fruit and vegetables.

One of the reasons for our move away from fresh foods is our love of fast food. In fact, in 2013, 55% of Australians visited a fast food restaurant in any 4 week period. Many Australians visited a lot more frequently than that. So what are the most popular fast food restaurants in Australia? According to the Roy Morgan Research organization, the most popular is McDonalds, which sells hamburgers and a range of other fast food. Second is KFC which sells fried chicken.



Third is Subway which sells different types of bread rolls filled with different meats and salad.



Fourth is Hungry Jack's, which sells hamburgers and is similar to McDonalds. Fifth is Domino's Pizza, which obviously sells Pizza. Regular customers of these fast food restaurants use them a lot. For example, McDonalds customers, on average, visit them around 2.7 times in any 4 week period. Subway customers go around 2.3 times and Hungry Jack's customers visit 2.2 times. These are averages, so many people are visiting a lot more often than this.

Australians obviously love their fast food. It is so convenient and, unlike home cooking, it requires no effort, other than getting yourself down to the local fast food restaurant. It also tastes pretty good because it is usually high in fat. Eating too much fat will actually make you overweight because it's high in calories. Being overweight, or worse still, obese, is a serious issue for your health and is a major and increasing health problem in Australia. 3 out of 5 people in Australia are overweight or obese and for children it is 1 in 4. Eating more fruit and vegetables helps to stop you from becoming overweight, since they are much lower in calories, especially vegetables. In addition, eating a variety of fruit and vegetables in the right amounts can help prevent a whole range of serious diseases. According to the World Health Organisation, a diet high in fruit and vegetables can help prevent such serious diseases as heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.

Personally, my wife and I do sometimes go to a fast food restaurant like McDonalds or to Subway.



McDonalds now have some healthier alternatives like warm chicken salad, which is low in calories and made with lots of fresh vegetables. The other thing I like about McDonalds is that they tell you how many calories each meal has. So it is possible to buy something at McDonalds which is low in fat and low in calories. Subway is another restaurant I like to buy from. They also tell you how many calories each meal

has and they use fresh ingredients with large amounts of salad.

Australians really have no excuse for not having a healthy diet. It just requires the right decisions when deciding what you put into your mouth.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 40]

Vocabulary

amongst = to be with others

alternatives = another way of doing something

average = normal

barbeque = a way to cook food, usually outside

berries = a type of fruit

breast meat = the meat from the chest of a chicken

calories = a way to measure how much energy is in food

cereal bars = a type of food made from cereal

choosing = to make a decision

convenient = when something is easy to make or to buy. It needs very little effort

corn = a type of vegetable, yellow in colour

depending = when one thing changes because of another

dessert = that part of the meal that you have last, usually sweet. For example, ice cream or apple pie

diet = what people eat

energy = your body uses energy to live. You make energy with the food you eat.

excuse = the reason you give for not doing something

fast food = food that is made in a restaurant and you don't have to wait long for it

frequently = often

fresh = when something is new or has just been prepared

fridge = a short way of saying 'refrigerator'

fried = cooked in oil

groceries = the food that you buy for your family

hamburgers = a type of food made from a bun with meat

in addition = as well as

in season = that time of the year when certain fruit and vegetables are growing

include = as well as

increasingly = more and more

ingredients = the different foods that you use to cook something

juicy = when something has a lot of juice and it tastes good

kiwi = a type of fruit

lollies = sweets

luckiest = to have a lot of luck, more luck than other people

microwaved = when something is cooked in a microwave oven

mixed = when there are more than one type

obese = very fat

obviously = when something can be easily seen or understood

overweight = when you are fat

plenty = lots of something

porch = a small flat area at the back or front of a house, with a roof but no walls

prevent = stop

processed = changed

recommended amount = the amount that an expert tells you in the right amount

readily = easily

relatively = when compared to other things of the same type

requires = needs

serious diseases = sicknesses that are dangerous

snack = something that you eat between the main meals of the day

stir fries = a way to cook food with a wok (in this case, plural)

surprising = when you don't expect something

survey = when the same questions are asked to many people. For example, what food do you eat?

take it for granted = when something is there and you always expect it to be there

variety = many different types

worse still = when something is not as good