

Podcast 47 - The Aussie Meat Pie

by Rob McCormack - Friday, October 03, 2014

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Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

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Hi,

When I travel overseas, I like to try the traditional foods in the countries that I visit. For example, in Austria, one of my favourite countries, I like to eat Wiener Schnitzel with salad. In Germany, I love to eat German sausage or Wurst as the Germans call it, with lots of sweet tasting mustard. One of my most enjoyable memories of my last trip to Munich in Germany was going into a restaurant in the centre of Munich and, in my best German, ordering Weißwurt or German white sausage. It tasted absolutely wonderful. Tasting the foods of other countries makes travelling more exciting. It helps to give you an understanding of the people and their lifestyle. But what about a traditional Australian food? In this podcast I would like to talk about one of the most common and loved foods in Australia – the meat pie.



The Aussie meat pie is not exactly sophisticated. It's not the sort of dish you would get in an expensive restaurant. In fact, you probably wouldn't be able to get it in most restaurants in Australia. The meat pie is more like a snack food. One of the great traditions in Australia is to have a meat pie when you go to a football game or a cricket match. It's easy to hold in your hand and you don't need a knife and fork to eat it. The Aussie meat pie is usually round, although it can also be square, about 12 centimetres in diameter and about 3 cm deep. Inside the pie is usually beef mince in thick gravy. The outside of the pie is made of pastry. It's pretty simple but it tastes great. You spread some tomato sauce on the top of the pie and just eat it, anywhere. Australians are estimated to eat around 270 million pies each year. That's around 12 pies for each Australian per year. Of course, not every Australian eats pies, so some people are having a lot more than 12. At the Australian Football League Grand Final at the MCG in September, the footy fans eat around 40,000 meat pies. That means that around half of the crowd will have a meat pie. Eating a meat pie while watching the AFL Grand Final is the ultimate Australian cultural experience.

The meat pie was certainly not invented in Australia. It's been around for a very long time. The ancient Egyptians, ancient Greeks and the ancient Romans all used a form of pastry to make a pie into which different types of foods were placed, including meat, before being baked. In those days, they never ate the pastry. In the 1400s, the Italians and the French improved the pastry by adding butter, making it flaky and very tasty. This was the start of pies as we know them today.

When English and Irish settlers came to Australia in the 1800s, they brought recipes for the meat pies they made in their country. Once in Australia, they found that mutton, the meat from an adult sheep, was a cheap and tasty filling for a pie. In the 1850s, pies were being sold at hotels in Australia and also sold from pie carts which would visit sporting events and other popular holiday places. This is when Australia's love of meat pies began. They were convenient, easy to make and could be made from simple and cheap ingredients. Today, Aussie meat pies are available at grocery stores, at cafes and at bakeries. Go to any sporting event and you will be able to buy a meat pie.

One of my favourite activities is to go motorcycling with my friends in the Victorian countryside (see Podcast 10). It's not only the motorcycling I enjoy, but also visiting the many small towns that we ride to near Melbourne. Nearly all country towns in Australia have at least one bakery or café where you can buy coffee, tea, sandwiches, cakes and, you guessed it, meat pies.



As well as the standard meat pie, most bakeries and cafes have other types of pies, such as beef and kidney, beef and mushroom, chicken, vegetable, steak and onion – the list goes on and on.

My favourite pie remains the standard traditional meat pie. If you want a sit down meal in one of these cafes or bakeries, then that's no problem. You can order your pie with salad and chips and it will come on a plate. A meat pie tastes just as good when eaten with a knife and fork. A visit to the local café or bakery is a must in any small town in country Australia, or indeed in any suburb of a major city. When you visit, be sure to order a meat pie, a real taste of Australia.



We even have songs written about the humble meat pie. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_7eAwq-bHM

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 32]

Vocabulary

a must = something which you should do

absolutely = completely, totally

ancient Egyptians = people who lived in Egypt many thousands of years ago

Aussie = from Australia

baked = cooked in an oven

bakeries = shops that sell foods that have been baked. For example, cakes, bread, pies

butter = a food made from cow's milk

carts = a vehicle usually pulled by horses, used to carry things

common = used by lots of people

convenient = easy to use and easy to find

countryside = away from the cities

cultural experience = an event which tells you about how people live

diameter = the distance from one side of a circle to the other side

dish = a food that has been cooked and is eaten as part of a meal

estimated = guessed

exciting = when something makes you feel very interested and happy

expensive = costs a lot

filling = what is inside

gravy = a sauce made from meat

grocery stores = shops that sell foods you can cook

humble = simple, not complicated, not sophisticated

ingredients = the things that you cook to make a meal

invented = to make something for the first time, when no one else has made it before

kidney = a type of animal meat

knife and fork = used to eat food. The knife cuts the food and you use the fork to put the food in your mouth

lifestyle = the way you live your life

match = game

mince = meat that has been cut into very, very small pieces

motorcycling = to ride motorcycles

mushroom = a type of food

mustard = a type of sauce made from mustard seeds, yellow in colour

not exactly sophisticated = not complicated, very simple

onion = a type of food

ordering = to tell the waiter in a restaurant what you would like to eat

overseas = another country. For Australians, all other countries are over the sea.

pastry = a type of food made from flour and butter

placed = to put

pretty simple = very simple. Pretty means 'very' in this phrase

recipes = instructions for making a type of food

remains = stays

round = like a circle

sandwiches = a food made with slices of bread and a filling

snack = something you eat between meals

spread = to make a layer of something over something else. For example, jam over bread

square = has four corners, like a square

suburb = an area of a city where people live

tasted = when you use your tongue to decide if a food is good to eat

traditional = has been used for a long time

ultimate = the best

Wiener Schnitzel = a special way to cook meat, covered with flour and bread crumbs and fried