

3-2 Restaurants

Main Reading text

We all know what restaurants are, they are places to buy and eat food that has been prepared for eating; and there are an amazing variety of restaurants.

Almost every country will have its own style of restaurant specializing in the food of that country. So we have French restaurants, German restaurants

Japanese restaurants, Korean restaurants, Mexican restaurants, and so on. The list is almost endless. We also have styles of restaurants, such as pizza

restaurants, burger restaurants, pasta restaurants, vegetarian restaurants, and in the UK, fish and **chip** restaurants. But where was the first restaurant, and where does the word 'restaurant' come from?

The word comes from French and "a restaurant' originally meant "a food that restores"; and is derived from French word "restaurer", which means "to restore or refresh". The first 'restaurant' was opened in Paris in 1765, by M. Boulanger, near the Louvre art museum. At this time, the idea of serving individual meals to customers who could sit down and eat them in the shop was very new. There he sold what he called 'restaurants' or 'bouillons restaurants'; that is, meat-based consommé intended to "restore" a person's strength. A consommé is a clear soup made from a richly flavored bouillon (similar to a hot-pot) that has been **clarified** by using egg whites to remove fats and little bits of meat and vegetables. Ever since the **Middle Ages** the word 'restaurant' had been used to describe any of a variety of rich bouillons made with chicken, beef, roots of one sort or another, onions, herbs, and, according to some recipes, spices, crystallized sugar, toasted bread, barley, butter, and even exotic ingredients such as dried rose petals, Damascus grapes, and amber.

In order to **entice** customers into his shop, M. Boulanger had written on his window a line from the Bible: "Venite ad me omnes qui stomacho laboratis et ego vos restaurabo." Which is Latin and translates to "Come to me all you that labor and I would restore your stomach."

However, M. Boulanger was not content simply to serve bouillon. He also served leg of lamb in white sauce, and no doubt later served other meals.

You may also have noticed that in English we have different words for the animal we eat and the meat of that animal. We have the word '**cow**' for the

animal and '**beef**' for the meat, the same with pig/pork and sheep/mutton. Why is this? We use the Old French words for the meat and the old English words (Anglo- Saxon language) for the animal. So we get beef (from *boeuf*), mutton (from

mutton) and pork (from *porc*). This tradition of using French words for food and meals extends to the present day. If you go into any high class restaurant, in almost any country in the world, the menus (another French word) will be in French.

Also, many words associated with high quality food are French, such as 'cordon bleu' (French, 'blue ribbon'), which was originally a meat wrapped around cheese, but nowadays has come to indicate a very high level of food preparation, as taught by Le Cordon Bleu schools around the world. The person who prepares food in a restaurant is a chef, another French word, short for 'chef de cuisine', meaning 'head of the kitchen'. Now let's turn our attention to some unusual restaurants, and begin with a restaurant with robot workers. The Dalu Robot Restaurant in Jinan, Shandong Province, China, has twenty robots that serve customers as receptionists, greeters, waiters, and there is one robot, called Jenny, who wears a white skirt and will entertain you by dancing. The twenty-one tables in this blinking-neon-lit **futuristic** environment are arranged in a circular pattern so that the robots can ride tricycles around a track to bring you your food and drinks.

The restaurant is owned by Zhang Yongpei, who is president of the Shandong Dalu Technology Company. With his research team he began researching

robots a decade ago, and so far has developed more than 70 kinds of robots with different uses. Zhang Yongpei used to own a **catering**

company and as he says, "I found that although wages kept increasing, the staff loss rate was still high and the service quality needed to be improved. But with robotic servants, you don't need to worry about such problems. It's simpler and less expensive to develop robots for a restaurant than for other businesses."

These staff will never give you the '**cold shoulder**', expect a tip, or ask their boss for a pay rise. The only human employees are the chefs who prepare the food in the kitchen, and two technicians responsible for operating and maintaining the robots. Another interesting restaurant is "Choo Choo Johnny's" in Naperville, just outside Chicago, in the USA. As you might guess from the name, the **theme** of this restaurant is model trains. The model trains run out of the kitchen and around a large table in the center of the restaurant, delivering your meal. The seats round the table are quite low, but they can provide 'high chairs' for very young children. The staff are all dressed like American train drivers and will unload the food from the trains for you. While you are enjoying your meal, a variety of train, country, and children's music plays in the background, **enhancing** your railroad dining experience.

Now let's finish this section with a few restaurants extremes. Where is the highest restaurant in the world? The tea house and hotel is located at the North Everest Base Camp, **Tibet**. This tea house is at an altitude of 5,364 meters above sea level.

Where is the highest restaurant in a man-made building? On level 122 of the world's tallest building, at a height of just over 442 meters, on the observation deck of the Burj Khalifa building in Dubai. Where is the lowest restaurant in the world? There are two, both on the Dead Sea beaches, one in Israel and one in Jordan. They are about 306 meters below sea level, the lowest place on the earth that is not covered with water. Where is the smallest restaurant in the world? There are several in Austria, Finland and the Netherlands. In the **Kuappi restaurant** in Finland, there is only one table, two chairs, one bar, one toilet and a terrace with one table and two chairs.

Where is the biggest restaurant in the world? The Damascus Gate restaurant, in Syria. It has 6014 seats and 1800 staff. Where is the most expensive restaurant in the world? Probably the Japanese 'Masa' restaurant in New York. A meal there can cost between US\$400 to US\$600. But the restaurant that made the most money (in 2009) was the Tao restaurant in Las Vegas, USA. They took US\$59,292,345.

Vocabulary

1. **CHIP** (n.) 炸馬鈴薯條；炸洋芋片

In the UK, potatoes cut into sticks and deep fried. In the USA they are called 'French fries'.

2. **CLARIFY** (v.) 澄清

To make a liquid pure or easier to see through.

3. **MIDDLE AGES** (ph.) 中世紀

The period of European history from about A.D. 500 to about 1500.

4. **ENTICE** (v.) 誘使；慫恿

To attract someone especially by offering or showing something that is attractive, interesting, etc.

5. **FUTURISTIC** (adj.) 未來的

Of something relating to, or characteristic of the future, or of something very modern.

6. **CATERING COMPANY** (n.) 餐飲公司

A business that specializes in providing food and meals for special occasions, such as weddings and parties.

7. COLD SHOULDER (ph.) 冷漠

To give you the 'cold shoulder' means to ignore you, or be unsympathetic towards you.

8. THEME (n.) 主題

The main subject that is being discussed or described in a piece of writing, a movie, etc.

9. ENHANCE (v.) 增加

To increase or improve the value, quality, desirability, or attractiveness of something.

Review exercise

Choose the best word or phrase to complete the following sentences based on the text.

1. Many countries have their own style of restaurant which _____ in the food of that country.

(A. specializes B. produced C. given D. reproduced)

2. A consommé is a clear soup made from a richly _____ bouillon.

(A. expensive B. produced C. flavored D. made)

3. Nowadays, 'Cordon Bleu' has come to _____ a very high level of food preparation.

(A. prepare B. produce C. indicate D. show)

4. The Dalu Robot Restaurant has twenty robots that _____ customers.
(A. serve B. show C. give D. take)
5. The only human _____ are the chefs who prepare the food in the kitchen.
(A. robots B. waiters C. customers D. employees)
6. As you might guess from the name, the _____ of this restaurant is model trains.
(A. food and drink B. color C. theme D. paintings)
7. In Choo Choo Johnny's, music plays in the background, _____ your railroad dining experience.
(A. enhancing B. making C. paying for D. bringing)
8. The tea house and hotel is _____ at the North Everest Base Camp, in Tibet.
(A. located B. to be C. made D. reproduced)
9. The Kuappi restaurant in Finland is the _____ restaurant in the world.
(A. most expensive B. smaller C. terrace D. smallest)
10. The most expensive restaurant in the world is _____ the Japanese 'Masa' restaurant.
(A. less than B. sure C. probably D. Las Vegas)

True or False

1. The first restaurant was opened in Paris in 1765. T/F
2. Hot-pot was very popular in the Middle Ages in Europe. T/F
3. The owner of the first restaurant wrote in English on his shop window. T/F

4. The person who prepares food in a restaurant is a waiter. T/F
5. Robots can only be waiters, they can not dance or greet you. T/F
6. To give you the 'cold shoulder' means to ignore you. T/F
7. In Choo Choo Johnny's the meals are delivered by plane. T/F
8. The highest restaurant in the world is in Tibet. T/F
9. The lowest restaurant in the world is in Dubai. T/F
10. The most expensive restaurant in the world is in Las Vegas. T/F

Reading Comprehension - choose the best answer

1. For hundreds of years, the word 'restaurant' was used to describe:

- a. A popular place for meeting friends and discussing the bible while at the same times eating delicate snacks such as dried rose petals and grapes.
- b. Any food that was supposed to restore your energy or food that made you feel relaxed and able to face the difficulties of the world.
- c. A place, usually in the center of a community, where a variety of bread was prepared and sold. This bread was thought to be especially healthy and would restore your stomach.
- d. High quality food prepared by high class chefs. Nowadays this style is known by the French name, 'Cordon bleu'.

2. A restaurant in Shandong Province, China, has twenty robots that serve customers. The owner of this restaurant chose to use robots because:

- a. Most people in this region of China are quite wealthy, therefore he could not find any humans to work as waiters and receptionists.
- b. He only needs to employ four humans, two are the chefs who prepare the food in the kitchen, and two are technicians who operate and maintain the robots.
- c. Many of his customers told him that they didn't like being served by humans, who were often lazy and gave the customers the 'cold shoulder'.
- d. He found that he was losing staff and service quality was not so good; even though he increased their wages. Robots can easily improve service quality and robotic servants don't need increased wages.