



ABOUT YOU

Answer the questions and compare your ideas.

- 1 Can you think of any situations where we might eat with people we do not know?
- 2 What kinds of things do people talk about when they don't know each other well?
- 3 Do most people think the food in their country is the best in the world? Why? / Why not?
- 4 What do you typically eat for breakfast?

The narrator of 'Germans at Meat' describes her experience as a guest in a German 'pension' (a type of small hotel).



1 Read the text. As you read the text think about this question.

What are the characters more interested in – the food they are eating, or the food they are talking about?

'Germans at Meat', from *In a German Pension*

Katherine Mansfield

Bread soup was placed upon the table.

"Ah," said Mr Rat, leaning upon the table as he **peered** into the bowl, "that is what I need. Bread soup, and just the right **consistency**. I am a good cook myself." He turned

5 to me.

"How interesting," I said, attempting to put just the right amount of enthusiasm into my voice.

"Oh yes – when one is not married it is necessary. Now at nine o'clock I make myself an English breakfast, but not

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much. Four slices of bread, two eggs, two slices of cold ham, one plate of soup, two cups of tea – that is nothing to you."

He asserted the fact so **vehemently** that I had not the courage to deny it.

15 All eyes suddenly looked at me. I felt I was responsible for the nation's absurd breakfast – I who drank a cup of coffee while **buttoning** my blouse in the morning.

"Nothing at all," cried Mr Hoffmann from Berlin. "When I was in England in the morning I really used to eat."

20 He turned up his eyes and his moustache, wiping soup from his coat.

"Do they really eat so much?" asked Miss Stiegelauer. "Soup and baker's bread and tea and coffee and fruit, and honey and eggs, and cold fish and **kidneys**, and hot fish and liver? All the ladies eat, too, especially the ladies."

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"Certainly. I myself have noticed it, when I was living in a hotel in Leicester Square," cried Mr Rat. "It was a good hotel, but they could not make tea – now –"

"Ah, that's one thing I can do," said I, laughing **brightly**.

30 "I can make very good tea. The great secret is to warm the **teapot**."

"Warm the teapot," interrupted Mr Rat, pushing away his soup plate. "What do you warm the teapot for? Ha! ha! that's very good! One does not eat the teapot, I suppose?"

35 He **fixed** his cold blue eyes upon me.

"So that is the great secret of your English tea? All you do is to warm the teapot."

I wanted to say that was only the first step, but could not translate it, and so was silent.

40 The servant brought in **veal**, with German salad and potatoes.

GLOSSARY

peered

looked carefully or with difficulty

consistency

how thick or smooth a liquid is

vehemently

showing strong, often negative, feelings about something

buttoning

fastening a piece of clothing with buttons

kidneys

organs in the body that remove waste from the blood and produce urine

brightly

in an enthusiastic way

teapot

a container for making and serving tea with a handle and a shaped opening for pouring

fixed (eyes on someone)

looked (at someone) with concentration

veal

meat from a very young cow

2 Read the text again and answer the questions.

- 1 What do the German guests think about the food in England?

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- 2 Why do you think Miss Stiegelauer repeats the word 'and' when she asks her question?

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- 3 Why is Mr Rat not impressed by the narrator's explanation of how to make a good cup of tea?

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- 4 Do you think the narrator feels uncomfortable with the conversation? Why? / Why not?

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VOCABULARY

3 Complete the sentences with the correct word from the box.

There are two words you do not need to use.

buttoning consistency kidneys teapot
veal vehemently

- 1 I don't believe that meat was It came from an old animal, I'm sure of that.
- 2 He denied having eaten the last piece of cake.
- 3 She bought a blue and white because it matched the cups.
- 4 He added more water to the soup so that it had the right

4 Choose the word in *italics* that best completes sentences 1–5.

- 1 Rob was *fixing* / *buttoning* his coat because it was cold outside.
- 2 Some people don't like eating organs, so they avoid *veal* / *kidney*.
- 3 She *fixed* / *peered* her eyes on me as she asked the question.
- 4 Without his glasses, he *peered* / *fixed* at the title of the book.
- 5 He starts the day so *brightly* / *vehemently*, so full of energy and hope.

WRITING

5 A friend of yours from another country has written this email.

✉

Reply

Forward

To:

From:

Subject:

Hi,

How are you? I am doing a project for school about meals and mealtimes around the world. Could you tell me about eating habits in your country? What times of the day do people usually eat? What do they eat? Do they eat alone or with other people? Any other information you can think of would be great! Hope you're well.

Reply to the email, answering your friend's questions in about 200–220 words.

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SPEAKING

6 Work in groups of four or five. Research unusual food and dishes from around the world and present three examples to the rest of the class. If you present a type of food that nobody else does, your group will score five points. If more than one group describes the same food, you will each score two points. The team with most points at the end is the winner.