



ESL Podcast 90 – Room Service

GLOSSARY

resort hotel – a nice place where many people go for vacation, often for golf, skiing, sunbathing, or other outdoor activities

* They spent all week at a resort hotel in Arizona, golfing each morning and riding bikes each afternoon.

golf course – the very large, green, grassy area where golf games are played, trying to hit small white balls into tiny holes that are separated by long distances

* After three hours on the golf course, they were hot, tired, and ready for lunch.

round – one game of golf, usually with 18 holes

* How many rounds of golf are played in this tournament?

snack – food eaten between meals; any food that is not part of breakfast, lunch, or dinner

* Meghan often takes a snack to school so that she doesn't get hungry while studying.

room service – a service offered in many hotels so that guests can order food over the telephone and have it brought to their room so that they can eat it there without going to a restaurant

* During their honeymoon, they ordered champagne and strawberries from room service every night.

I'd like an order of (something) – a polite, formal way to request one portion or one serving of something listed on a menu

* I'd like an order of the lasagna, and my wife would like an order of the salmon.

calamari – squid; food made from a large sea animal that has many leg-like tentacles and produces a dark-colored liquid for protection

* Brian doesn't like calamari because he thinks it's too chewy.

slice – one thin piece of something cut from a larger piece, often used to talk about bread, pie, cakes, and meat

* How many slices of turkey would you like on your sandwich?

cheesecake – a creamy dessert in the shape of a pie, made from cream cheese, sugar, eggs, vanilla, and often some kind of fruit

* The doctor said we should lower our cholesterol, so we need to stop eating cheesecake.



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appetizer – a small amount of food eaten in a restaurant while one is waiting for one's meal to be prepared

* It will take about a half-hour for the chef to make your pizza. Would you like an appetizer while you're waiting?

entree – the main meal; the main dish that one orders in a restaurant

* Our entrée was steak, followed by apple pie for dessert.

How long will that take? – a phrase used when one wants to know how much time will be needed to do something, or how soon someone can have or do something

* A: I want to go to school to become a lawyer.

B: How long will that take?

service charge – an amount of money that must be paid in addition to the cost of the thing being bought, often charged as a percentage

* Customers became very angry when the bank began implementing a service charge each time they spoke with a bank teller.

to charge (something) to the room – to have the cost of something added to one's hotel bill, so that one does not have to pay for it at that moment, but can instead pay for everything at once when leaving the hotel

* Would you like to pay for these drinks with a credit card, or would you prefer to charge them to your room?

to hit the spot – to be very satisfying and enjoyable; to be exactly what one wanted and needed

* I'm so thirsty! A tall glass of cold lemonade would really hit the spot right now.



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CULTURE NOTE

Ordering from Room Service

Room service offers many “benefits” (advantages; good things) to hotel guests. “First and foremost” (most importantly), it is very convenient. Hotel guests do not have to leave the hotel – or even their room – to eat. Instead, they can have food delivered directly to their room. This is especially helpful when the hotel guest is an “out-of-town” (not from the local area) traveler who doesn’t know the restaurants in the area or who doesn’t have a car.

Another benefit of room service is that hotel guests can “place an order” (say what one wants to have or buy) for breakfast the night before. For example, the guest can ask to have breakfast delivered at 7:00 the next morning. This “eliminates” (gets rid of) the need to wake up early that morning, place an order, and then wait for the food to be delivered. Room service is also generally available anytime, so guests can order food even at 3:00 a.m. when most restaurants are closed.

However, not all hotel guests enjoy using room service, because it has some “drawbacks” (disadvantages; bad things). Room service “tends to be” (is usually) more expensive than food served in a restaurant. Even if the prices listed on the menu seem “reasonable” (not too expensive), the service charge makes room service expensive. Room service also has a “limited selection,” meaning that the menu is smaller than most restaurant menus and people might not be able to order what they really want to eat.

The last drawback of room service is that the food is often delivered cold. In a restaurant, food can be moved from the kitchen to the tables quickly, but with room service there are often delays in taking food from the kitchen to the guests’ room, especially in a large hotel.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 90: Room Service.

You're listening to English as a Second Language Podcast episode 90. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Today's podcast is about room service in a hotel. Let's eat!

[start of dialogue]

I was staying at a nice resort hotel in Arizona on a short vacation. I had been out on the golf course playing a round of golf. When I got back into the room, I was feeling pretty hungry. I was meeting some friends for a late dinner around 8:30. I wanted a snack. I took a look at the room service menu and called their number.

Woman: Room service. What would you like to order?

Jeff: Hi, I'm in room 1201 and I'd like an order of the calamari and a slice of cheesecake.

Woman: Do you want the calamari appetizer or the entrée?

Jeff: I'd like the appetizer.

Woman: Anything to drink?

Jeff: A diet Coke. About how long will that take?

Woman: It'll be about 30 minutes.

Jeff: Okay. Thanks.

There was a knock on my door about a half hour later.

Jeff: Who is it?

Woman: Room service...Hi. Where would you like me to put the tray?

Jeff: On the desk would be fine.



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Woman: The total is \$16.75.

Jeff: Oh, that's higher than I'd expected.

Woman: There's a 12% service charge for room service and there's also the usual food tax.

Jeff: Oh, I see. Can I charge it to the room?

Woman: Sure. Just fill in the total here, write in your room number, and sign at the bottom.

Jeff: Okay, there you go. Thanks.

Woman: Thank you and have a nice day.

The calamari and the cheesecake really hit the spot.

[end of dialogue]

In this podcast we are on a short vacation in Arizona, the state next to California – one of the states next to California. Very dry, lots of desert. Anyway, we are in a nice “resort hotel.” A “resort hotel,” or simply a “resort,” is a hotel that has other services such as a golf course, maybe a spa where you can get a massage and so forth. More luxurious, more expensive hotels sometimes are resorts and the idea is that you can go and spend your whole vacation and you would have plenty of things to do at the hotel. The “golf course” is where you play the game of “golf,” where you hit a little light ball with a stick and the “golf course” is the place where golf is played. That’s (course) “course,” and a game of golf can be called either “a game of golf” or a “round of golf.” A “round of golf” means that you are playing either nine holes because in golf you have possible 18 holes. You hit the ball from one hole to the other. You can play 9 holes or 18 holes and a “round of golf” could be either one of those.

I said I was meeting some friends for a late dinner at around 8:30 but I wanted a “snack.” And a “snack” (snack) is a small amount of food, usually between meals. So, you have breakfast at 8 in the morning. You might have a “snack,” say, an apple or a banana at 10 o’clock and then, if you’re working in the United States, you would have lunch around noon. If you want to get food at a hotel and you want the food delivered to you, you call “room service.” “Room service,” two



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words, is the name that we give that service in a hotel that delivers you food from their restaurant or their kitchen.

So, I call room service and the first thing I do is say, “I’m in room 1201 and I’d like an order of calamari and a slice of cheese cake.” The expression, “I’d like an order of,” is how you say, “I want to have one plate or one dish of” that particular food. Notice also that we say, “I want an order of the calamari.” You can also say, “I want an order of calamari” – means the same. “Calamari” (calamari) is squid. “Squid” (squid) is a type of seafood. It’s a small – what’s called a “mollusk” in English (mollusk) and it’s a type of seafood, and you fry it up in oil and you get “calamari.” I also wanted a “slice of cheesecake.” A “slice of cake” is a piece of cake. We often use that for anything where you can cut up, like a “slice of pie,” a “slice of cake,” even a “slice of bread” when you have a big loaf of bread and you cut it up into small “slices” or pieces. “Cheesecake” is a very rich desert that has cream and soft cheese and a – what we call a “crust” (crust). That’s what’s on the bottom and the side. That’s the “crust” of the cheesecake. I happen to love cheesecake but it can make you a little overweight so you have to be careful. Don’t eat too much cheesecake.

The woman asks me if I wanted the calamari “appetizer” or the “entrée.” An “appetizer” is the first course, what you have before your main course, and that main course is called the “entrée” (entrée), another one of the French words that we borrowed in English. And the “entrée” is your main course, your main dish. I said I wanted the appetizer. In fact, I said, “I’d like the appetizer,” meaning I want the appetizer or smaller size of calamari, not the entrée. The woman then asked if I wanted anything to drink. She said, simply, “Anything to drink?” – which is just a short version of, “Would you like anything to drink?” I ordered a diet Coke and then I asked, “About how long will that take?” meaning, “How much time do I have to wait for my food?” “How long will it take?” When we say, “How long will it take?” – you can use that about any amount of time. For example, your brother needs to go to the store and he asked you to drive him and you say, “Well how long will that take?” meaning, “How much time is that going to take me?”

The woman comes back with my food and she knocks on the door and I say, “Who is it?” That’s what we would say when someone knocks on your door and you don’t know who it is. “Who is it?” You’re asking them to identify themselves. She comes in, she gives me the food, and the price or the total is more than I thought it was going to be and I say, “That was higher than I expected,” meaning it cost more than I thought it would. And the woman from room service says that there’s a 12% “service charge.” A “service charge” is what a hotel will charge you for bringing that food up to your room, so there’s the price of the food and then there’s the price of the service. It’s kind of like a tip, but usually in American



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hotels people add a dollar or two after the service charge, though you don't have to do that. I asked the woman if I can "charge it to the room." When you "charge something to your room" in a hotel, what you're saying is that you want this to go on your bill and you will pay for everything when you leave or check out of the hotel, and it's pretty common if you eat room service or in the restaurant of a hotel. You can ask to put something on your bill. The woman says, "Of course," asked me to write my name and my room number so that they can find my bill at the front desk of the hotel, and after she leaves, I say that the cheesecake and calamari "really hit the spot." When we say something "hits the spot" we mean that the food really was very satisfying and I am no longer hungry. "That hit the spot. I really felt like it and I ate it and now I'm not hungry anymore."

Now let's listen to the dialogue this time at native rate of speech.

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

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From Los Angeles, I'm Jeff McQuillan. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast

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