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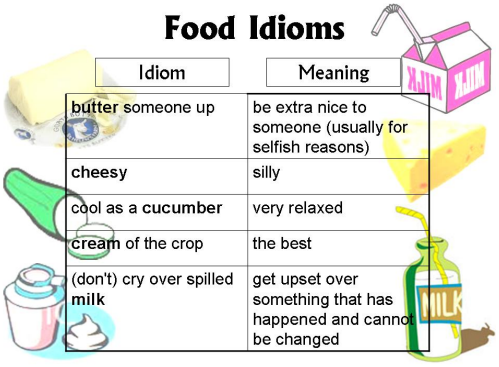
A guide to food idioms and their usage

Created: Thursday, 26 June 2014 11:05 | Published: Sunday, 05 October 2014 14:32 | Written by Shailja Varma | Print

Native speakers of a language use many idioms. However, when a person is learning a new language, for instance, English, the usage and understanding of idioms may take time. The English language is full of idioms and in fact, we have an idiom for any and every situation. If you ever get a chance to speak with an expert in English, you will be appalled by their usage of idioms to accentuate their communication. There are different types of idioms in the English language, but their categorization is not an absolute one. So what are food idioms if there is no specific categorization?

Let's learn about them in detail in this article, customized to make you adept with English food idioms, their meanings and their right usage.



Food Idioms

Idiom	Meaning
butter someone up	be extra nice to someone (usually for selfish reasons)
cheesy	silly
cool as a cucumber	very relaxed
cream of the crop	the best
(don't) cry over spilled milk	get upset over something that has happened and cannot be changed

Top 5 common food idioms

1. A piece of cake

It means a task that is easy to accomplish.

Ex:

I thought riding a Scooty was difficult, but it was a piece of cake.
Running on a treadmill is a piece of cake for me.

2. Cry over spilt milk

We all have heard this idiom many times. Here is what it means – to cry or complain about a thing that has

already happened;when you get upset over something that you cannot change.

Ex:

Don’t cry over spilt milk now, the results are already out and you have failed.
You have broken the glass; there is no point in crying over spilt milk now.

3. Not my cup of tea

Something that is not of your interest or you enjoy doing.

Ex:

Going to opera is not my cup of tea; I would rather listen to music at home.
Making cakes is not my cup of tea, although I love eating them.

4. Take with a pinch of salt

It means to accept or believe not in totality, but only a part of something.

Ex:

Take Rajan’s advice with a pinch of salt. He is no expert in this medium.
Take his statistics on economic slump with a pinch of salt. He has a habit of exaggerating things to make them appear worse.

5. Hard nut to crack

It means difficult to understand or some activity that is not easy to do.

Ex:

He is a hard nut to crack, especially when one has to motivate him to change his process of work.
Mr. Khan is a hard nut to crack in some ways. Getting sponsorship from him was almost an impossible task.

Food idioms are not only about food

If you read the common food idioms, you will notice that none of them was directly related to food. Hence, for non-native speakers, it becomes difficult to understand idioms. Food idioms include words about food or eating, but necessarily would not have a direct relation to them. Hope the above English learning class was practical and you have become confident to use some of these phrases when speaking in English.

Once you develop an English speaking fluency, you would most likely learn how to use the ‘word of play’ to

impress the listener. For more improve English lessons, stay tuned to this page.

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-By Shailja Varma

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