

IELTS Speaking Part 2

Talk about an eating habit you or somebody you know has

You should say:

- what the habit is
- how long they've had it
- where they got it from

and explain how it affects their life.

Model answer

One friend of mine has **got into the habit of** eating nothing but **street food**. By that, I mean **food stalls**, kebab shops, **food vans** and the like. He has been doing this for as long as I have known him—so almost **two years running**. He normally **kicks his day off** at an **upmarket** café like Starbucks with some donuts and a large cappuccino. Lunch for him has some variety, but it has to include lots of meat or something equally **filling** and **savoury**. In the evening, he likes treating himself to some ice cream or other sugary dish like pudding.

I guess he **took it up from** the place he works—a barber shop, that is. His colleagues are usually too busy to cook at home, so they **stuff their faces with** street food whenever they get a chance. Admittedly, this lifestyle **grew on me** as well, although I do not **indulge in** food from street vendors nearly as often as he does. You see, he has become a living example of **a binge eater**. Maybe they add something to the food that makes you **crave** it all the time. I am ready to **give it the benefit of the doubt** and assume it's just incredibly tasty. Oh, and another thing is the cost. It all adds up, and I'd wager he spends most of his salary to **sustain** these eating habits.

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Food and the media

In your opinion, what role does the media have in shaping our diets?

I'd say it first of all affects the most **impressionable** part of our society - youngsters who are eager **to jump at** anything new. If young viewers see their favourite movie character **chug** Coke **days on end**, it makes them want it as well. **Subconsciously** they strive to resemble the hero they look up to, and the easiest way is to copy their consumption habits. This is not always **a thing of concern**, because the opposite can be true as well. They might choose to better themselves, **abstain from** junk food, and generally follow a more **wholesome** life when it comes to food.

Cooking shows is another vivid example of media affecting our choice of food. Those mostly promote healthy eating, artistic approach to cooking and nurture a more conscious vision of what we eat. I'd imagine that somebody might get inspired to turn cooking into their profession and make a living from it. But either way, my point still stands - the media can definitely **sway our opinion in** whichever direction it wants to.

Should advertisements for unhealthy food be banned? Why or why not?

A lot of food sold today can be labelled as unhealthy. A more appropriate approach is to fully **disclose** how harmful certain foods can be. Maybe advertisers should **take a hint from** the practices some restaurants have, where they list all the ingredients and highlight those that might cause an allergic reaction or be considered unhealthy by some

customers. This way, people who watch the ad will be fully aware of the possible consequences before making a decision to buy it.

Ironically, even if the state wanted to ban junk food advertising, they would think twice before doing that. First of all, companies that make such **foodstuffs** have enormous profits and thus contribute greatly to the state budget through taxes. Secondly, these companies have rather strong lobbies and thus have considerable **leverage** when it comes to legislation that can **make or break** their businesses. Finally, it would be possible for them to **circumvent** such bans by means of product placement, **celebrity endorsements**, and other methods of **guerilla marketing**.

Do you think films and TV-series should promote healthy eating?

Yeah, I definitely think that way. As I have stated previously, people can be easily influenced to **do one's bidding**. It is often the case that people simply don't know what's better for them. They instead need role models on the blue screen to set an example that can be followed. Make TV characters eat more vegetables, have them give up **fizzy drinks** and alcohol, show their **disdain for** drugs and smoking, and you end up with people following in their footsteps. With a healthier population, everybody wins - people have increased productivity, create more value and pay more taxes, which in turn improves everyone's welfare.

Eating habits

How have eating habits changed in comparison with the past?

Well, 'past' is a rather vague time period. If we look back to fifty years ago, everybody will agree that food today has more chemicals and additives than it ever had. This hasn't **dissuaded people from** eating more and more - or at least the obesity and body mass index charts seem to suggest.

If we look back at a relatively close past of five years ago, then I can safely say that we have been witnessing a **resurgence** of home-made food. Cooking is once again becoming a favourite **pastime** for many - unsurprisingly, as it is a fun, affordable activity that teaches you arguably one of the most important skills. It also helps you save money, as you no longer have to **splash out on** ridiculously expensive family dinners at some **pretentious** restaurant. Finally, cooking is a great conversation topic that brings people of **all walks of life** together.

Some people choose not to eat meat. Do you think it can have any effects on their health?

This has been a controversial point among **evangelists** of vegetarianism and dietologists all over the world. Meat is the prime source of affordable protein, and for long it has been a point of great debate. While it might be true, there are still reliable ways to make your meat-free diet rich in protein. Food like nuts, legumes and soy can more than **make up for** exclusion of meat-based dishes. Some scientists say that a plant-based diet can have health benefits, namely a lower risk of heart disease, obesity and even certain types of cancer. The bottom line is that vegan-based diet can be as healthy and nutritious as any other. However, it requires extra effort to plan it carefully, and it is likely to be more costly.

How has the concept of healthy eating changed over the years?

It is quite interesting to look at the idea of healthy diets in retrospect. Back then it meant showing **restraint** - in other words, not eating too much - and that was pretty much it. Nowadays, it is a much more elaborate idea that can even be hard to keep track of. Eating healthily today means no fast food, only **gluten-free** products, fresh **produce**, keeping your meat **intake** to a minimum, and many other restrictions. One might feel like a world-class athlete who has to give up almost everything in order to prepare for a competition. Except your preparation is life-long, and there is no competition other than the life completely void of **self-indulgence**. Maybe it is a good thing that standards of healthy diets are so high now, but I doubt few people are up to them.

Food and cuisine vocabulary

Street food - a general term for food sold on the streets. *Kebabs, doners and shawerma, hotdogs and burritos, as well as many other dishes, fall into this category.*

Food stall - a small structure built temporarily to sell food. *It is usually open from one side so one can buy from it without having to go inside.*

Food van - a mobile vehicle converted to cook food to be sold right from inside of it. *The beach was dotted with food vans selling popular items of mexican cuisine.*

Upmarket (adj) - more expensive and high quality than average. *Upmarket shops of central New York is one of the many attractions this city has to offer.*

Filling (adj) - (about food) satiating your hunger effectively, rich in nutrients. *A filling breakfast is a key to success in business life as you need a lot of energy to carry you through the day.*

Savoury (adj) - having spicy or salty spacy as opposed to sweet foods. *Some cooks are strongly against mixing sweet and savoury together - a great example of that is Hawaiian pizza, which has pineapples in it.*

Stuff your face with - to eat a lot of something.

Indulge in - to let yourself have or do something you want very much that might not be good for you.

Binge eater - a person who can't stop eating (with all the negative consequences of that).

Crave (v) - to desire something very much. *Pregnant women often crave various food they couldn't stand before.*

Chug (v) - to drink something in big gulps, greedily. Can also be used as a noun. *He took a couple of big, satisfying chugs from the milk carton.*

Abstain from - to choose not to do some activity because you believe it is bad for you. *Abstaining from alcohol might be the only thing that could get his life back on track.*

Foodstuffs (n) - another word for the variety of food and ingredients. *If you want to have better choice of foodstuffs you might want to go to a bigger shop like Walmart.*

Fizzy drinks - carbonated sparkly drinks like Coke or Fanta. *Some dietologists believe fizzy drinks to be a gateway to soft alcohol drinks like beer and cider.*

Gluten-free - not containing any gluten. For most people, gluten is not inherently bad or harmful to health. However, some people are sensitive to gluten or certain health conditions that can cause their body to react negatively to it.

Produce (n) - a collective word for agricultural food - fruits and vegetables. *Fresh produce is easier to get early in the morning.*

Intake (n) - consumption of something. *His daily caffeine intake can't be healthy - he has at least four cups of coffee a day.*

Self-indulgence (n) - the process of indulging in something - allowing yourself to do or have something you want very much but that might not be good for you.

General vocabulary

Get into the habit of - to start doing something regularly. *I got into the habit of sleeping till noon, and it didn't take much time to understand that it took a toll on my productivity levels.*

And the like - a phrase that means "and others/something else like that". *This place attracts artists, designers and the like.*

Two years running - two years in a row.

Kick something off - (informal) to start something with a certain action, usually in an energetic and resolute way.

My boss believes that kicking the week off with two hours of overtime is good business practice.

Take something up - to start doing something as a habit. *Don't take up smoking - you won't be able to quit it as easily.*

Grow on somebody - if something grows on you it means you start liking it, especially if you didn't like it previously. *Watching westerns really grew on me over the years.*

Give something/somebody the benefit of the doubt - to believe that something is true out of kindness, even though you are not sure if it is the case.

Sustain (v) - (here) to make something last, to carry on with something.

Impressionable (adj) - easily impressed, surprised. *Can also mean that one can have their beliefs or opinions changed easily. I hope you don't think that you are good with convincing people - she is just young and impressionable, that's all.*

To jump at something - to start doing something immediately and with enthusiasm.

Days on end - many days in a row.

Subconsciously (adv) - without realising. *Subconsciously, I suspected that Sally might not be telling the whole story, given her secretive nature and history of lying in the past.*

A thing of concern - something that makes you doubt or worry about something.

Sway somebody's opinion - to affect somebody's opinion or belief in a certain manner.

Disclose (v) - to make something clear and known, especially if it was previously unavailable to public knowledge. *At long last, the secret documents of national intelligence service have been disclosed.*

Take a hint from - follow somebody's example. *Take a hint from Roger's habit of brushing teeth twice a day, why don't you?*

Leverage (n) - if have leverage it means you can influence something or somebody. *I have no leverage in this situation because I am no longer a part of the company.*

Make or break - to be decisive, vital, extremely important. *Quality of customer relations department will often make or break a company.*

Circumvent - (here) to go around some limitation or restriction.

Celebrity endorsement - a programme of promoting something with the help of well-known people.

Guerilla marketing - advertising something through unconventional, usually creative means like graffiti or flash mobs.

Do one's bidding - to do what others want you to do. *You will either do my bidding with no questions asked or our business here is over.*

Disdain (n) - to have disdain for something or somebody means to have no respect for it or to be repulsed by it.

Dissuade somebody from something - to make somebody not do something.

Resurgence (n) - a repeated rise in popularity. *Resurgence of disco music was a pleasant surprise.*

Pastime (n) - a hobby, especially one that is popular throughout the nation. *Knitting is considered a pastime for old ladies.*

Splash out on - to spend a considerable amount of money on something. *Let's splash out on a holiday on a luxurious hotel - after all one ought to treat himself every so often!*

Pretentious (adj) - try to appear more important or impressive than it actually is.

Walks of life - used to talk about people of different social status. *People of all walks of life come to this place - factory workers, entrepreneurs, artists and others.*

Evangelist (n) - a person who strongly advocates for a certain cause. *Jogging evangelists preaching about the merits of running early in the morning.*

Make up for something - to compensate for something lost, for causing damage, or something else that is negative.

I decided to make up for being late and invited her to a fancy café that she likes so much.

Restraint (n) - the quality of keeping yourself under control, the opposite of indulgence.