

## ENGLISH IDIOMS AND SAYINGS RELATED TO EATING AND DRINKING

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*Abstract: English idioms and sayings are frequently used not only in written English but also in spoken English. Learning idioms is a way of enriching one's vocabulary, the different meaning connected with them being often surprising. Among English idioms, the idioms and sayings related to eating and drinking are abundant. Many of the colourful phrases in English relate to eating and drinking. We often say that we are what we eat. It is a good thing to eat and drink but, moreover, talking about it is even more pleasant. Our article is focused on this particular domain of the English phraseology, since eating and drinking have always been a rich source of idioms and proverbs.*

*Keywords: eating, drinking, proverb, idiom, origin.*

In everyday language people frequently use different proverbs or phraseological expressions whose meanings are not quite fully understood, especially due to the fact that they do not know their origin. There are a big number of idioms which have entered the English language from the domain of food and beverage. Many of these idioms have originally come from this particular domain, but they are used to talk about other situations.

Our article has tried to give a list, as comprehensible as possible, of these idioms and sayings related to eating and drinking. The expressions are arranged alphabetically, each one of them is explained and an example is provided. Unless a word (or expression) is used in all parts of the English-speaking world, the country of origin or the country in which the word is most prevalent is given between brackets. Some entries also contain a note on the origin of the idiom or proverb. We have had as a reference book "*Oxford Idioms. Dictionary for Learners of English*"<sup>1</sup>. Here are some examples:

*a bad / rotten apple* = one bad person who has a bad effect on others in a group; e.g. *I don't think you should continue to be friend to James. Everybody says he is a bad apple.*

*a big cheese* (familiar speech) = an important person with a lot of influence in an organization, group, etc.; e.g. *Samuel is a big cheese in the IT department.* Note: *cheese* comes from the Urdu word *chiz*, meaning *thing*.

*a bite at / of the cherry* (British English) = an opportunity to do something, or a second attempt at doing something, especially something you have failed to do earlier; e.g. *He has failed his driving test but he will get another bite at the cherry pretty soon.*

*a couch potato* (familiar speech) = a person who spends a lot of time sitting and watching television; e.g. *I hate telling you that, but your husband is nothing but a couch potato.*

*a dog's breakfast / dinner* (British English, familiar speech) = a very untidy piece of work; a mess; e.g. *The children made a complete dog's breakfast at Julia's party.*

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<sup>1</sup> A se vedea A se vedea *Standardele specifice pentru Anul pregătitor de limbă română pentru cetățenii străini*, [online la URL]: [http://www.aracis.ro/fileadmin/ARACIS/1\\_Prima\\_Pagina\\_web/Standarde\\_specifice\\_-\\_An\\_pregator.pdf](http://www.aracis.ro/fileadmin/ARACIS/1_Prima_Pagina_web/Standarde_specifice_-_An_pregator.pdf), [Accesat în 01.04. 2019].

*a feeding frenzy* (especially American English) = a period of time during which somebody/something eats, spends, etc. a lot in a way that does not seem to be controlled; e.g. *Everyone I spoke to said that their wedding was like a feeding frenzy.* Note: *a feeding frenzy* is an occasion when a group of sharks or other fish attack and eat something.

*a few, two, etc., sandwiches short of a picnic* (familiar speech) = (of a person) not very intelligent; slightly crazy; e.g. *I think Mary's boyfriend is one or two sandwiches short of a picnic.*

*a fish out of water* (familiar speech) = a person who feels uncomfortable or embarrassed in unfamiliar surroundings; e.g. *When Tom went to Susan's house for the first time he felt a bit like a fish out of water.*

*a hot potato* (familiar speech) = a very sensitive matter that is difficult or embarrassing to deal with; e.g. *His dismissal is a hot potato for his family.*

*a hill of beans* (American English, familiar speech) = something that is not worth much; e.g. *I don't give a hill of beans about him.*

*a meal ticket* (familiar speech) = a person or thing that you see only as a source of money and food; e.g. *You know that fellow is just a meal ticket for Susan, don't you?*

*An apple a day keeps the doctor away* (saying) = eating healthy foods will make you healthier; e.g. *You should try eating more fruit; you know the saying: an apple a day keeps the doctor away.*

*a piece of cake* (familiar speech) = very easy to do; e.g. *Our yesterday's Math test paper was a piece of cake.*

*apples and oranges* (American English) = used to describe a situation in which two people or things are completely different from each other; e.g. *"Who do you think runs more, a footballer or a basketball player?" "That's apples and oranges! You can't compare the two!"*

*as cool as a cucumber* (familiar speech) = very calm, especially when the opposite might be expected; e.g. *I can't imagine how you can just sit here, cool as a cucumber, considering it is a matter of life and death.*

*as dull as ditchwater* (British English) / *as dull as dishwater* (American English) = very boring; e.g. *I found Susan's party as dull as ditchwater.*

*as flat as a pancake* (familiar speech) = completely flat; e.g. *Playing football on this field is ideal as the landscape is as flat as a pancake.*

*as keen as mustard* (British English, familiar speech) = wanting very much to do well at something; enthusiastic; e.g. *He has always been as keen as mustard about new acquaintances.*

*a share / slice of the cake* (British English) / *a piece / share / slice of the pie* (American English) = a share of the benefits or profits; e.g. *Since the company has been enormously profitable, the employees want a slice of the cake.*

*(as) nice as pie* (familiar speech) = very kind and friendly, especially when you are not expecting it; e.g. *He had been very nervous about meeting his fiancée's father, but he turned out to be as nice as pie.*

*(as) nutty as a fruitcake* (familiar speech, humorous) = completely crazy; e.g. *She must be as nutty as a fruitcake to marry that fellow.*

*a square meal* = a large and satisfying meal; e.g. *"How about today's special?" "It was a square meal indeed."*

*a stiff drink* = a strong alcoholic drink; e.g. *I think what you need is a stiff drink and a good meal.*

*a / the land of milk and honey* = a place where life is pleasant and easy and people are

very happy; e.g. *Everybody says that America is the land of milk and honey*. Note: this idiom comes from the Bible and it refers to the Promised Land.

*be (all) water under the bridge* (spoken language) = be an event, a mistake, etc. that has already happened and is now forgotten or no longer important; e.g. *I know we have had certain disagreements in the past, but they are all water under the bridge now*.

*bear fruit* = have the desired result; be successful; e.g. *She has had many ideas, but this is the first one to bear fruit*. Note: this idiom originates in the Bible, especially in regards to *bearing spiritual fruit*.

*be champing / chomping at the bit* = be impatient to do or to start doing something; e.g.

*I know you are all chomping at the bit, so let's party!* Note: *champ* and *chomp* mean to bite or eat something noisily. The *bit* is the piece of metal which goes in a horse's mouth and is used to control the horse.

*be cooking with gas* (American English, familiar speech) = be doing something very well and successfully; e.g. *Ever since he started his business, he has been cooking with gas*.

*be / feel like jelly* (of legs or knees) = feel weak because you are nervous or frightened; e.g. *When they opened the coffin, Tom was speechless and his legs felt like jelly*.

*be / go on the wagon* (familiar speech) = no longer drink; decide to stop drinking alcohol, either for a short period of time or permanently, especially if you drink a lot; e.g. *Jason has just returned from the rehab; it has been half a year since he was on the wagon*. Note: this idiom refers to the *water wagon*, which in America sprayed roads with water to prevent clouds of dust. If somebody starts drinking alcohol again, they are said to *fall off the wagon*.

*(be in / get into) murky / uncharted waters* = (be in / get into) a difficult or dangerous situation that you do not know anything about; e.g. *The moment she set foot in that house she realized she was getting into completely uncharted waters*. Note: *murky* water is dark or dirty; if somebody is in *uncharted waters*, they are in an area of sea or ocean that is not known or recorded on a map.

*be in the soup* = be in or get yourself or somebody into trouble or difficulties; e.g.

*Unless I am paid soon, I will be in the soup*.

*be (like) water off a duck's back* (familiar speech) = used to say that something, especially criticism, has no effect on somebody; e.g. *The novelist was harshly criticized by critics for the anti-Semitism rising from his books, but it was all water off a duck's back to him*.

*be like taking candy from a baby* = used to emphasize how easy it is to do something; e.g. *This test is not as difficult as you may think; try to solve it and you will see it is like taking candy from a baby*.

*be meat and drink (to somebody)* = be something that a person enjoys very much or is very interested in; e.g. *The Queen of England has always been meat and drink to everybody*.

*be off your food* = have no appetite, probably because you are ill or depressed; e.g. *She is off her food, probably because she has a flu*.

*be starving (for something)* (familiar speech) = feel very hungry; e.g. *So, what's for lunch? I am starving!*

*(be) three sheets to the wind* (old-fashioned) = (be) drunk; e.g. *I had to drive him home last night as he was three sheets to the wind*. Note: this idiom comes from sailing; if three *sheets* (= the ropes attached to the sails) are loose, the wind blows the sails about and the boat moves in a very unsteady way.

*bite off more than you can chew* (familiar speech) = attempt to do something that is too difficult for you or that you do not have enough time to do; e.g. *She said she would finish her task by the end of the week but I think she has bitten off more than she can chew.*

*Blood is thicker than water.* (saying) = your family is more important than other people; e.g. *I know you are angry with your brother now, but you should take into account the fact that blood is thicker than water.*

*blow somebody / something out of the water* (familiar speech) = destroy somebody / something completely; show that somebody / something is not good at all; e.g. *The prosecutor found evidence that blew Tom's case out of the water.*

*bring home the bacon* (familiar speech) = be successful in something; be the person who earns money for a family, an organization, etc.; e.g. *I know it is father who brings home the bacon, but mother is the one who keeps our family together.*

*butter wouldn't melt (in somebody's mouth)* (spoken language) = a person looks very innocent, but probably is not; e.g. *Thomas looks as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, but I think this is just a false impression.*

*chicken feed* (familiar speech) = a small and unimportant amount of money; e.g. *Can you lend me fifty euros? I know it's chicken feed for you.*

*cold turkey* = the unpleasant state that drug addicts experience when they suddenly stop taking a drug, or a way of treating addicts that makes them experience this state; immediate, complete withdrawal from something; e.g. *Susan gave up smoking cold turkey.*

*come hell or high water* = whatever the difficulties or opposition may be; e.g. *Come hell or high water, I will marry Tom.*

*cook somebody's goose* (familiar speech) = ruin somebody's plans or chances of success; e.g. *When Tom found out I was about to get promoted, he unjustly accused me of fraud.*

*cook the books* = change facts or figures in order to make the situation seem better than it is or to hide the fact that you have stolen money; e.g. *The vice-president of that company has been cooking the books for years.*

*cupboard love* (British English) = affection that somebody shows towards somebody else in order to get something; e.g. *"That's enough with this cupboard love. Just tell me what you really want."* Note: *cupboard* originally meant showing love to somebody in order to get food.

*dead in the water* = a person or plan that is *dead in the water* has failed and has little hope of succeeding in the future; e.g. *He realized that, unless he tried harder, his project would be dead in the water.*

*dog eat dog* (familiar speech) = fierce competition, with no concern for the harm done or other people's feelings; e.g. *Haven't you known that in the real world it's dog eat dog?*

*drink, laugh, shout, etc. yourself silly* (familiar speech) = drink, laugh, shout, etc. so much that you cannot behave in a sensible way; e.g. *No wonder you cannot remember anything from the previous night – you drank yourself silly.*

*drink like a fish* (familiar speech) = drink a lot; e.g. *He always drinks like a fish at parties.*

*drink somebody's health* = wish somebody good health as you lift your glass, and then drink from it; e.g. *We all drank Sam's health on his retirement.*

*drink somebody under the table* (familiar speech) = drink more alcohol than somebody without becoming as drunk as they do; e.g. *You really drank Tom under the table last night, didn't you?*

*drive somebody to drink* (often humorous) = make somebody so annoyed, worried, etc. that they begin to drink too much alcohol; e.g. *Susan's eloping with a young man drove her father to drink.*

*Eat, drink and be merry.* (saying)= said to encourage somebody to enjoy life now, while they can, and not to think of the future; e.g. *You should try to relax and enjoy the moment; you know the saying: eat, drink and be merry.*

*eat humble pie* (British English) / *eat crow* (American English) = say and show that you are sorry for a mistake that you made; e.g. *She had to eat humble pie when Sam, whom she said would never have a chance of winning, received the gold medal.* Note: *humble* comes from the old word *umbles*, meaning *offal* (= the inside parts of an animal), which was considered inferior food.

*eat like a bird*= eat very little; e.g. *No wonder she is so slim; she always eats like a bird.*

*eat like a horse* = eat very large quantities of food; e.g. *He is so fat; he always eats like a horse.*

*eat somebody for breakfast* = criticize or punish someone severely because you are extremely angry with them; defeat somebody completely in an argument, a competition, etc.; e.g. *If he dares to come here, I will eat him for breakfast.*

*eat somebody's lunch* (American English, business) = take away another company's business or their share of the market; e.g. *It only took one careless moment for that shareholder to eat our lunch.*

*eat somebody out of house and home* (familiar speech, often humorous) = eat all the food that somebody has; e.g. *Every time our cousins pay us a visit they eat us out of house and home.*

*eat your heart out* = used to compare two things and say that one of them is better; e.g. *He sings beautifully! Eat your heart out, Pavarotti!*

*eat your words* = be forced to admit that what you have said before was wrong; e.g. *Everyone said that Jane would not pass her exam, but when she got an A they all had to eat their words.*

*food for thought* = an event, a remark, a fact, etc. which should be considered very carefully because it is interesting, important, etc.; e.g. *The things he revealed to her gave her much food for thought.*

*forbidden fruit*= something that you are not allowed to have, do, etc. and for this reason is more attractive; e.g. *She was attracted to her best friend's fiancé but was conscious that he represented the forbidden fruit to her.*

*from soup to nuts* (American English, familiar speech) = from beginning to end; e.g. *I will stand by you from soup to nuts.* Note: this idiom refers to a long meal that often begins with soup and ends with nuts.

*full of beans* = very lively, active and healthy; e.g. *After her long and painful divorce Jane is full of beans again.* Note: this idiom was originally used to talk about horses that were fed on beans.

*go bananas* (slang) = become angry, crazy or silly; e.g. *If you keep answering your mother like that, she will go bananas.*

*Half a loaf is better than none.* (saying) = you should be grateful for something, even if it is not as good, much, etc. as you really wanted; e.g. *I know this is not your dream job and you are not paid as much as you would like, but half a loaf is better than none, you know.*

*hand something to somebody on a plate* = give something to somebody without the

person concerned having to make any effort to get it; e.g. *Money is not just going to be handed to him on a plate; he has to earn it.*

*hard cheese* (British English, familiar speech) = used as a way of saying that you are sorry about something, usually in an ironic way; e.g. *Orange juice is the only cold drink we have left, and if you don't like it, hard cheese.*

*have a finger in every pie* (familiar speech) = be involved in everything that happens; e.g. *Samuel tends to have a finger in every pie.*

*have somebody eating out of your hand* = have somebody completely in your control so that they will do whatever you want; e.g. *Don't worry about Mark; I have him eating out of my hand.*

*have your cake and eat it* (British English, familiar speech) / *have your cake and eat it too* (American English, familiar speech) = enjoy the advantages of two things that cannot exist together; e.g. *"I am out of money after buying this house." "But it is a lovely house! You can't have your cake and eat it!"*

*he, she, etc. won't eat you* (familiar speech) = said to encourage somebody to speak to or approach somebody who seems frightening; e.g. *You should talk to the manager right away; he won't eat you.*

*high-water mark* = the highest stage of achievement; e.g. *His election as president was definitely the high-water mark of his popularity.* Note: this idiom refers to the highest mark left by the sea on the land or by a river when it floods.

*hold water* (familiar speech) = (of a theory) remain true even when examined closely; e.g. *Her story simply doesn't hold water.* Note: if a container *holds water*, no water escapes.

*I'll eat my hat* (familiar speech) = used to say that you think something is very unlikely to happen; e.g. *I'll eat my hat if he is elected chairman of the board.*

*in apple-pie order* = neat and very well organized; e.g. *She keeps her documents in apple-pie order.*

*in deep water(s)* = in trouble or difficulty; e.g. *Unless you find a solution to this matter right away, you will get into deep water.*

*in hot water* (familiar speech) = in trouble; e.g. *He got into hot water when he was caught stealing.*

*It's no good / use crying over spilt milk.* (saying) = it is a waste of time worrying, complaining or feeling sad about something which is done and cannot be changed; e.g. *That's it: you have failed your driving test again; it's no use crying over spilt milk now.*

*I, you, etc. could use a drink* = I, you, etc. need a drink; e.g. *I have just found out my husband is cheating on me. I could really use a drink.*

*know which side your bread is buttered* (familiar speech) = know what to do in order to gain advantages, stay in a favourable situation, etc.; e.g. *She tried very hard to please her employer as she knows which side her bread is buttered.*

*like a duck to water* = naturally and without any difficulty; e.g. *When she started the piano lessons she felt like a duck to water.*

*like a kid in a candy shop* (American English) = used to say that somebody is very happy and excited about something; e.g. *Every time I see you, you make me feel like a kid in a candy shop.*

*like a knife through butter* = (cut) through something hard easily; e.g. *The drill went through the metal door like a knife through butter.*

*like chalk and cheese* = very different; e.g. *I just can't believe Tom and Mark are twins; they are like chalk and cheese.*

*like the cat that got, stole, etc., the cream* = very pleased or satisfied with yourself; e.g.

*Ever since she got into law school, she has been like the cat that got the cream.*  
*like water* (familiar speech) = in large amounts; in great quantity; e.g. *He usually spends money like water.*

*make a meal of / out of something* (familiar speech) = do something with more effort and care than it really needs; treat something as more serious than it really is; e.g. *I know I have made a blunder, but you shouldn't make a meal out of it.*

*make a pig of yourself* (familiar speech) = eat and drink too much; be greedy; e.g. *You shouldn't make a pig of yourself every time you go to a restaurant.*

*meat-and-potatoes* (American English) = dealing with or interested in the most basic and important aspects of something; e.g. *You know I am a meat-and-potatoes kind of guy.*

*make mincemeat of somebody / something* (familiar speech) = defeat somebody completely in a fight, argument, etc.; e.g. *The speaker made mincemeat of his interlocutor at the public debate.*

*make somebody's mouth water* = make somebody feel hungry; make somebody want to do or have something very much; e.g. *The smell of my grandmother's apple-pie made my mouth water.*

*muddy the waters* = make something which seemed clear and easy to understand before seem much less clear now; e.g. *The results of their research have substantially muddied the waters.*

*not a sausage* (familiar speech, old-fashioned) = nothing at all; e.g. *There is nothing in the fridge. Not a sausage!*

*not be somebody's cup of tea* (familiar speech) = not be the kind of person, thing or activity that you like; e.g. *"I have two tickets to the opera. Would you like to come with me?" "Not really. That's not really my cup of tea."*

*(not) cut the mustard* = (not) be as good as expected or required; e.g. *Susan didn't cut the mustard as a pop singer.* Note: *mustard* in this idiom may refer to an old-fashioned slang word used in American English, meaning *the best of anything*.

*on an empty stomach* = without having eaten anything; e.g. *She always drinks her coffee on an empty stomach.*

*One man's meat is another man's poison.* (saying) = used to say that different people like different things; e.g. *I can't imagine why certain people like football so much; indeed, one man's meat is another man's poison.*

*on the breadline* = very poor; e.g. *Most of the inhabitants in this village are on the breadline.* Note: in North America, a *breadline* was a queue of poor people waiting to receive free food from the government.

*out to lunch* (American English, familiar speech) = crazy, stupid or confused; e.g. *She is generally a well-balanced person but there are times when she is out to lunch.*

*over-egg the pudding* = used to say that you think somebody has done more than is necessary or has added unnecessary details to make something seem better or worse than it really is; e.g. *Just tell me the truth! Don't you know it is better not to over-egg the pudding?*

*pass water* (formal language) = urinate; e.g. *You have to pass water in this urine specimen cup and then take it to the lab.*

*pie in the sky* (familiar speech) = ideas that are not practical; false hopes or promises; e.g. *His dream of being hired editor-in-chief of the newspaper proved to be pie in the*

*sky.* Note: this idiom comes from a song written in 1911 by Joe Hill, who worked to improve the rights of workers in America. The song criticizes religion for creating false hopes in the poor: "Work and pray / Live on hay / You'll get pie in the sky when you die".

*pour oil on troubled water(s)* = try to settle a disagreement or dispute; take action which will calm a tense or dangerous situation; e.g. *My sister is always arguing with my father, and I am the one who has to pour oil on troubled waters.* Note: sailors used to pour oil on a rough sea to calm the water in order to make a sea rescue easier.

*roaring drunk* = extremely drunk and noisy; e.g. *"Have you heard John coming home last night?" "Of course I have, he was roaring drunk."*

*save somebody's bacon* (familiar speech) = rescue somebody from a difficult or dangerous situation; e.g. *Every time I am facing a difficult issue I give my sister a call and she somehow manages to save my bacon.*

*sell like hot cakes* (familiar speech) = be sold quickly in great quantities; e.g. *This singer's latest album is selling like hot cakes.*

*shake like a jelly* = shake with fear; be very afraid or nervous; e.g. *Whenever I see Jack's father I shake like a jelly. He is a very frightening man.*

*sing for your supper* (old-fashioned) = do something for somebody in order to get what you want or need; e.g. *Going to social events is part of a journalist's job; I have to sing for my supper, you know.*

*sour grapes* (saying) = used to describe the behaviour of somebody who pretends that something they cannot have is of little value or interest; e.g. *When she didn't manage to pass her driving test, she said that she never wanted to drive anyway, but I suppose that's just sour grapes.* Note: this idiom comes from one of Aesop's fables: a fox cannot reach some grapes so he decides that they are not ready to eat.

*spill the beans* (familiar speech) = tell somebody something that should be kept secret or private; e.g. *"Why have you told Mary about our plans? Have you decided to spill the beans without asking me first?"*

*take the biscuit* (British English, familiar speech) / *take the cake* (American English, familiar speech) = be especially surprising, annoying, etc.; e.g. *Her behaviour really takes the biscuit! She always tells me what to do.*

*take the gilt off the gingerbread* = spoil something so that you find it less attractive than

before; e.g. *Next weekend is a long weekend as it is our National Day on Friday, therefore we can go on a minibreak. Unfortunately, we have run out of money, which rather takes the gilt off the gingerbread.* Note: in the past, *gingerbread* was decorated with *gilt* or *gold leaf* (= a very thin sheet of gold).

*talk turkey* (American English, familiar speech) = discuss the practical details of something seriously and honestly; e.g. *It's time we talked turkey. What are you going to do, now that you are broke?*

*that's the way the cookie crumbles* (familiar speech) = that is the situation and we cannot change it, so we must accept it; e.g. *He decided to give up school and join the army. That's the way the cookie crumbles.*

*The apple doesn't fall / never falls far from the tree.* (saying, especially American English) = a child usually behaves in a similar way to his or her parent(s); e.g. *I realize now why George's son has behaved like that; the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree.*

*the apple of somebody's eye* = a person or thing that is loved more than any other; e.g.

*Jane, my only granddaughter, is the apple of my eye.* Note: in the past, the *pupil* (= the small round black area at the centre of the eye) was called the *apple* of the eye, the part that had to be protected most carefully.

*the best thing since sliced bread* (familiar speech) = if you say that something is *the best thing since sliced bread*, you think it is extremely good, interesting, etc.; e.g. *I find football rather boring, whereas my brother thinks it is the best thing since sliced bread.*

*the carrot and / or (the) stick* = rewards offered to somebody to persuade them to do something or try harder, and/or punishment threatened if they do not; e.g. *I think that a carrot and stick approach would be the best solution.*

*the cream of the crop* = the best people or things in a particular group; e.g. *These five teenagers consider themselves the cream of the crop in their school.*

*the cupboard is bare* (British English) = used to say that there is no money for something; e.g. *They would like to change their car but the cupboard is bare.* Note: this idiom refers to a children's nursery rhyme about Old Mother Hubbard, who had nothing in her cupboard to feed her dog.

*the demon drink* (British English, humorous) = alcoholic drink; e.g. *It was the demon drink that made him act so foolishly.*

*the fruit(s) of something* = the good results of an activity or a situation; e.g. *His holiday*

*spent in the Bahamas is the fruit of a year's work.*

*the icing on the cake* = something attractive, but not necessary, which is added to something already very good; e.g. *His hobby is taking photos; getting paid for it was just icing on the cake.*

*the milk of human kindness* = kind feelings; e.g. *There's no milk of human kindness in that man: he is so conceited.* Note: this idiom originates in Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*.

*The proof of the pudding is in the eating.* (saying) = you can only say something is a success after it has actually been tried out or used; e.g. *She can't tell whether her party will be a success until the moment comes; you know the saying: the proof of the pudding is in the eating.* Note: *proof* in this idiom refers to a way of testing something.

*There's no such thing as a free lunch* (saying, spoken language) = used to say that it is not possible to get something for nothing; e.g. *He lent me his guitar but I had to pay 50 dollars for replacing two strings.* *There's no such thing as a free lunch.* Note: in the past, some pubs offered their customers a free lunch, but they had to buy drinks first.

*the staff of life* (literary) = a basic food, especially bread; e.g. *Bread is often called "the staff of life".*

*the whole enchilada* (American English, familiar speech) = the whole situation; everything; e.g. *Not everyone gets the whole enchilada.* Note: an *enchilada* is a Mexican dish with meat and a spicy sauce.

*the worse for drink* = drunk; e.g. *He was already the worse for drink when I got to the party.*

*Too many cooks spoil the broth.* (saying) = if too many people try to do something it will not be done well or properly; e.g. *You should let your son handle the matter himself; you know the saying: too many cooks spoil the broth.* Note: *broth* is a kind of thick soup.

*tread water* = make no progress while you are waiting for something to happen; e.g. *I really need to change my job as I don't have any hope of promotion. I feel like I am treading water here.*

*what's cooking?* (familiar speech) = what is being done or planned; e.g. *What's cooking*

*in here? You are a little too quiet.*

*what's eating somebody* (familiar speech) = used to ask why somebody is worried, unhappy, etc; e.g. *You look very worried nowadays. What's eating you?*

*whet somebody's appetite* = make somebody feel hungry; make somebody interested in something; e.g. *The book he lent me really whetted my appetite.* Note: if you *whet* a knife, sword, etc., you make it sharper.

*wine and dine (somebody)* = go to restaurants and enjoy food and drink; entertain somebody by buying them good food and drink; e.g. *Perhaps you should wine and dine Mr. Johnson to persuade him to change his mind on this matter.*

*You can take/lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.* (saying) = you can give somebody the opportunity to do something, but you cannot force them to do it if they do not want to; e.g. *I've signed him up for the competition, I have even paid the entry fees, but he still doesn't want to compete. Well, you can take a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.*

*You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.* (saying) = you cannot make an important change in something without causing problems for somebody; e.g. *I realize that all these pay cuts get workers upset, but you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.*

*your bread and butter* = the work that somebody does which provides them with enough money to live; e.g. *He has sold a few paintings but law is his bread and butter.*

*your daily bread* = the food or money that you need to live; e.g. *What do you do to earn your daily bread?*

*your eyes are bigger than your stomach* (familiar speech, humorous) = used to say that somebody has been greedy by taking more food than they can eat; e.g. *No wonder you were throwing up; your eyes are bigger than your stomach, you know.*

*your salad days* = the time when you are young and do not have much experience of life; e.g. *John met Susan in his salad days.* Note: this idiom comes from Shakespeare's play *Antony and Cleopatra*.

The proverbs and expressions related to eating and drinking define a certain nation remarkably well, together with all its qualities and flaws. Food and beverage can make us think of health, happiness, wealth or poverty, decency or rudeness, holiness or sinfulness. Our ancestors have transmitted the very essence of healthy life by means of various words of wisdom. If we took account of these words, we would learn how to eat moderately and live a peaceful and prosperous life. Our forefathers could tell the difference between *feeding* and *eating*.

We surely like to eat and drink and the numberless idiomatic expressions and sayings inspired by such is an indisputable proof of this. Our article has tried to render a list as comprehensible as possible of these expressions in order to help all those people who want to be proficient in the use of the English language, to expand their vocabulary and to become better English speakers.

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