

## Gastroidio(ma)tic

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So many idioms and expressions in the English language are food-drink-eating related. Many are not familiar even to native English-speakers, and they are not all easily found in general dictionaries. So for those of you who may know your onions, but who still go bananas trying to tackle some of these terms, I've separated the milk from the whey to give you a taste of some of the better- and lesser-known niceties of English idioms, slang and jargon.

*Bon appetit!*

<i>Eat one's heart out</i>	Suffer from excessive longing or envy	<i>When life feeds you lemons, make lemonade</i>	Make the most of a bad job
<i>Eat like a horse</i>	Eat greedily	<i>To be cheesed off</i>	To be fed up, disgruntled
<i>Eat out of someone's hand</i>	Be entirely submissive to a person	<i>One man's meat is another man's poison</i>	What is good for one person is not necessarily good for another
<i>Eat one's words</i>	Admit to being wrong	<i>No use crying over spilt milk</i>	One cannot undo the past
<i>Eat one's hat</i>	Admit amazement at being proved wrong	<i>Like a cat that stole the cream</i>	Smug; gloating; self-satisfied
<i>Eat crow</i>	To be humble	<i>To spill the beans</i>	To divulge information unintentionally
<i>Eat humble pie</i>	Make a humble apology; accept humiliation	<i>As different as chalk and cheese</i>	Total opposites
<i>Eat dirt</i>	Suffer insults without retaliating; retract one's words; make a humiliating confession	<i>The proof of the pudding is in the eating</i>	The true value of a thing (can be judged only from practical experience)
<i>Preach water, drink wine</i>	Say one thing and do another	<i>As sure as eggs is eggs</i>	Without a shadow of a doubt
<i>Pie in the sky</i>	An unrealistic prospect of future happiness after present suffering; a misleading promise.	<i>With egg on one's face</i>	Made to look foolish
<i>Couch potato</i>	A person who likes lazing at home, especially watching television.	<i>Butter someone up</i>	Flatter excessively
<i>Hard cheese</i>	Tough luck	<i>Spread the butter too thick</i>	Flatter excessively
<i>Turkey</i>	A stupid or inept person	<i>Take the bread out of someone's mouth</i>	Deprive someone of a living
<i>Good egg</i>	A good chap	<i>To know which side one's bread is buttered</i>	Know where one's interest lies
<i>Butter-fingers</i>	A clumsy person prone to dropping things	<i>Have one's bread buttered on both sides</i>	Have an easy life
<i>Lemon</i>	A person or thing regarded as feeble or unsatisfactory or disappointing.	<i>You can't have your cake and eat it too</i>	To have to make a choice; you cannot have it all your own way.
<i>Make mincemeat of someone</i>	To utterly defeat someone; to cut someone to pieces verbally	<i>To take the biscuit</i>	Something so outrageous it is difficult to believe
<i>Toffee-nosed</i>	Snobbish, pretentious	<i>Promises are like pie-crust</i>	Promises are made to be broken
<i>Cook the books</i>	Falsify accounts or records	<i>To be in the soup</i>	To be in trouble
<i>Sandwiched between</i>	Squeezed between two things	<i>Mutton dressed up as lamb</i>	An older women trying to look much younger than her age

<i>Food for thought</i>	Ideas as a resource for or stimulus to mental work	<i>To save someone's bacon</i>	To get someone out of difficulty
<i>Good wine needs no bush</i>	A good product will speak for itself	<i>To get on the gravy train</i>	Reap a share of the rewards
<i>Too many cooks spoil the broth</i>	Too many people on one project make for poor work	<i>To be as sharp/keen as mustard</i>	To be alert, keen, very bright
<i>Hot potato</i>	A controversial or awkward matter or situation.	<i>To be in a pickle</i>	To be in an awkward situation
<i>Give a raspberry</i>	Show strong disapproval	<i>Fine words butter no parsnips</i>	Actions are more important than words.
<i>A piece of cake</i>	Something very easy to do.	<i>Cool as a cucumber</i>	Calm when under stress
<i>Icing on the cake</i>	An additional incentive	<i>Salad days</i>	Inexperienced youth
<i>A beef; to beef about something</i>	A complaint; to complain about something	<i>A hard nut to crack</i>	A tough problem or person to overcome
<i>Talk tripe</i>	Talk nonsense	<i>(Not) One's cup of tea</i>	(Not) To one's taste
<i>Salami tactics</i>	Achieving one's objectives bit by bit.	<i>To bite off more than one can chew</i>	To take on more than one can cope with.
<i>A rotten apple</i>	A bad person	<i>To make a meal of something</i>	To treat (a task etc.) too laboriously or fussily.
<i>What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander</i>	What is suitable or good for one person/group etc. should be suitable or good for another	<i>To teach one's grandmother to suck eggs</i>	To teach someone to do something they can do as well if not better than you
<i>As nutty as a fruitcake</i>	Crazy, mad, eccentric	<i>A (very) different kettle of fish</i>	A (very) different matter altogether
<i>To have bigger fish to fry</i>	To have more important things to do	<i>A fine kettle of fish</i>	A perplexing or disagreeable state of affairs
<i>To be neither fish nor fowl</i>	To be neither one thing or another	<i>To have a lot on one's plate</i>	To have a lot to cope with

Rhyming slang is a language unto its own, mainly used by the “pearlies” and other cockneys. Strictly speaking, a cockney is a native of East London, born “within the sound of Bow Bells”. Rhyming slang replaces single words by rhyming words or phrases, and to complicate matters further, the rhyming element is often omitted (e.g. “plates of meat” means “feet”, but the “of meat” is dropped, and “plates” is understood to mean “feet”). A surprisingly large number of such terms are food-related, and to whet your appetite, here are a few examples:

<i>Apple Fritter</i>	Bitter	<i>Loaf of bread</i>	Head
<i>Apples and pears</i>	Stairs	<i>Lollipop</i>	Shop
<i>Baked bean</i>	Queen	<i>Tea leaf</i>	Thief
<i>Bees and honey</i>	Money	<i>Macaroni</i>	Pony
<i>Bottle of sauce</i>	Horse	<i>Mince Pies</i>	Eyes
<i>Brown bread</i>	Dead	<i>Peas in the pot</i>	Hot
<i>Bubble and squeak</i>	Week	<i>Plates of meat</i>	Feet
<i>Currant bun</i>	Sun	<i>Pork pies</i>	Lies
<i>Fish and chips</i>	Tips (gratuities)	<i>Ginger ale</i>	Jail
<i>Greengages</i>	Wages	<i>Rabbit and pork</i>	Talk
<i>Ham and eggs</i>	Legs	<i>Saucepan lid</i>	Kid (child)
<i>Jam jar</i>	Car	<i>Soup and gravy</i>	Navy
<i>Jam tart</i>	Heart	<i>Sugar candy</i>	Handy
<i>Kippers</i>	Slippers	<i>Sausage and mash</i>	Cash

I shall leave you with a motto from my corner of the world, where the accents and slang are about as far from the pearlies and rhyming slang as you can get in a country the size of England, but where food and drink still spice up the language.

<b>A Yorkshireman's Motto</b>	
<i>'Ear all, see all 'n say nought Eat all, sup all 'n pay nought 'N if thou ever doest ought for nought Do it fo' y'sen.</i>	Hear everything, see everything and say nothing Eat everything, drink everything and pay nothing And if you ever do anything for anyone Do it for yourself.