

BRITAIN → EATING HABITS

Britain is not famed for its cuisine, but its reputation for poor food, having been formed in the 1970s and 80s, is no longer deserved. It may be no coincidence that this is when Britain joined the European Union, and like many places now, a range of international food is on offer. A few specific foods and eating habits, however, still distinguish Britain from other countries.

- 1 **Tea drinking.** Although coffee shops are widespread, tea (commonly taken with milk) remains the national drink.
- 2 **Warm beer.** Generally coming in measures of a pint or half a pint, traditional English beer (or 'ale'), is served at room temperature.
- 3 **Curry.** Don't be surprised to be invited out for a curry, food from the Indian sub-continent being Britain's most popular foreign cuisine.
- 4 **Puddings.** The British like their puddings sweet and heavy. Don't be put off by this as they are often delicious, but do save room for them at the end of the meal.
- 5 **Meal times.** These are fairly standard, but the evening meal, usually called 'dinner' – but also 'tea' or 'supper' – can be anytime between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. (Sometimes 'lunch' is called 'dinner'.)

Table manners are also similar to those practised in other European countries, the main points being:

- wait until everyone has been served before beginning to eat.
- do not rest your elbows on the table or eat with your hands, except when eating bread or fruit.
- avoid speaking with your mouth full and avoid making noises while eating, the latter being considered particularly off-putting.