



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Restaurant Complaints

Topic: Food in Restaurants

Level: Advanced

Practice on Your Own

Imagine that you are living or traveling in a country where the language is spoken. You are having a meal at a restaurant. When your food arrives, there is a problem with it, and you need to complain to the server.

- First think about ordering in the restaurant. Imagine it is a restaurant that does not have printed menus, or there are specials that are not on the menu. You will need to listen to your server describe the dishes and ask questions before placing your order. You want to order something to drink as well.
- Now imagine complaining about a problem with the food. What possible issues can you think of, and how would you ask for them to be resolved? Possible problems include:
 - You are served a dish that you did not order.
 - The food is overcooked or undercooked.
 - You asked to substitute tofu for chicken, but the dish was made with chicken.
 - You asked for the dish to be made mild, but it is very spicy and you cannot eat it.
 - And many other possibilities...
- Practice these conversations out loud. Try out different variations – different problems, different possible solutions, etc...

Practice in Conversation Session

- Be prepared to role play ordering food without a printed menu. Ask questions about the different dishes. Maybe you want to ask for a substitution or make another special request. Order food as well as something to drink.
- Then role play complaining about a problem with the food. Repeat the role play with different problems and/or different solutions (replacing the dish, getting a refund, etc.). You might also try scenarios where there is a problem with the bill (you were charged for something you didn't order, etc.).
- Have a follow-up conversation with your conversation partner and fellow students. Have you ever been in a similar situation? How did you resolve it? Compare restaurants in the U.S. and in the country/ies where the language is spoken.