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## A British speciality

WORKSHEET A

Approximately one out of every hundred pounds British people spend on food is spent on it, and it is one of those dishes many visitors to Britain like to try when while they are there (Michelle Obama and her two daughters, for example, had it for dinner in a London pub in 2009). In one survey British people put it in first place in a list of 'national icons', above the Queen, Princess Diana and The Beatles, and in another they voted it their 'favourite smell' (beating fried bacon into second place). But what is it?

The answer is fish and chips.

This much-loved meal is sometimes prepared in the home and can be found on the menu in many pubs and restaurants, but more often it is bought in a specialist 'fish and chip shop' (or 'chippy', to use the popular slang expression), which is always very brightly lit and usually has little furniture apart from a few plastic tables and chairs. Of the two options available, most customers therefore prefer to 'take away' rather than 'eat in'.

One half of this British speciality consists of a large piece of fish (cod is the most popular) dipped in batter (usually a simple mixture of flour and water, though sometimes the water is replaced by milk or even beer) and then deep-fried (i.e. totally immersed in hot oil for a short while): the result should be hot, juicy fish inside crispy brown batter. The other half, the chips, consists of deep-fried sticks of potato that are thicker than the 'fries' (or 'French fries') found, for example, in most hamburger restaurants.

Foreigners have been known to turn their noses up at some of the traditional accompaniments to fish and chips. Usually they are not surprised by the salt and tomato ketchup always provided in fish and chip shops, but often they find it hard to understand the British habit of adding vinegar. Even stranger are the 'mushy peas' (semi-liquefied peas, which look like a very thick, lumpy, light green soup) that some people like to add.

You might be surprised that fish and chips contain less fat than most other popular kinds of take-away food in Britain, including curry with rice, hamburgers, kebabs and pizzas. It is even said that a portion of chips contains a third of the recommended daily intake of vitamin C, though no one is likely to recommend that eating three portions of chips a day is a good way of meeting all your vitamin C needs.

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WORKSHEET B

### Exercise 1

Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F), or if the text doesn't say (D).

1. Fish and chips are a popular kind of take-away food in Britain.
2. 'Chippy' refers to a place.
3. British 'chips' are not exactly the same as 'fries'.
4. The chips are cooked by being immersed in hot oil.
5. It is rare for fish and chips to be eaten in a pub in Britain.
6. When fried correctly, the batter around the fish should be crispy and white.
7. Michelle Obama didn't put vinegar on her fish and chips.
8. Most people who buy fish and chips at a fish and chip shop go somewhere else to eat them.

### Exercise 2

Answer the questions below.

1. Where are fish and chips most often bought?
2. What other popular kinds of take-away food are mentioned in the text?
3. In what way are chips good for you, according to some people?
4. According to the text, what accompaniments to fish and chips might foreigners not like?
5. What is batter usually made of?
6. For what reasons does the text suggest most customers choose to 'take away' their fish and chips rather than 'eat in'?
7. What specific kind of fish does the text mention?
8. What two surveys are mentioned in the text?

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## Exercise 3

Fill in the gaps to complete the text.

Approximately one out of every hundred pounds British people spend on food is spent on it, and it is one of those (1) **sh** many visitors to Britain like to try when while they are there (Michelle Obama and her two daughters, for example, had it for dinner in a London pub in 2009). In one survey British people put it in first place in a list of 'national icons', above the (2) **n**, Princess Diana and The Beatles, and in another they voted it their 'favourite (3) **s**' (beating fried bacon into second place). But what is it?

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This (4) **m** - **l** meal is sometimes prepared in the home and can be found on the menu in many pubs and restaurants, but more often it is bought in a (5) **sp** **t** 'fish and chip shop' (or 'chippy', to use the popular (6) **s** **g** expression), which is always brightly (7) **l** and usually has little furniture apart from a few plastic tables and chairs. Of the two options available, most customers therefore prefer to 'take away' rather than 'eat in'.

One half of this British speciality (8) **co** **s** **f** a large piece of fish ((9) **c** is the most popular) (10) **pp**ed in batter (usually a simple (11) **mix** of (12) **f** **r** and water, though sometimes the water is replaced by milk or even beer) and then deep-fried (i.e. totally immersed in hot oil for a short while): the result should be hot, (13) **j** **y** fish inside (14) **cr** **y** brown batter. The other half, the chips, consists of deep-fried sticks of potato that are thicker than the 'fries' (or 'French fries') found, for example, in most hamburger restaurants.

Foreigners have been known to (15) **t** **their no** **p** at some of the traditional (16) **acc** **pan** **ts** to fish and chips. Usually they are not surprised by the salt and tomato ketchup always provided in fish and chip shops, but often they find it hard to understand the British (17) **it** of adding (18) **vi** **r**. Even stranger are the 'mushy peas' (semi-liquefied peas, which look like a very thick, (19) **lum**, light green soup) that some people like to add.

You might be surprised that fish and chips contain less (20) **f** than most other popular kinds of take-away food in Britain, including (21) **c** **rr** with rice, hamburgers, kebabs and pizzas. It is even said that a (22) **p** **n** of chips (23) **cont** a third of the recommended daily (24) **take** of vitamin C, though no one is likely to recommend that eating three portions of chips a day is a good way of meeting all your vitamin C (25) **n** **s**.