

Real Talk #030 – I don't care for that

Episode description

Have you ever been in a situation where you were offered some food that you really hate, but you didn't know how to politely decline it without offending the person? Well, then, look no further! In this Real Talk episode, Andrew and Suzanne provide you with some useful phrases for refusing that food you hate in the politest way possible. Bon appétit!

Fun fact

Why do so many children hate vegetables? Studies have concluded that children hate vegetables due to three common reasons: biology, bitterness, and food association. Children need a lot of energy in their daily life; therefore, they are much more inclined to eat fatty, sugary foods rather than high-fibre, low-calorie vegetables. Children also hate the slightly bitter taste of most vegetables. Finally, children associate fatty, sugary foods with fun, parties, and celebrations, but they associate vegetables with boring family dinners and chores. All of these facts combine to give children a very bad impression towards leafy greens!

Expressions included in the study guide

- Picky eater
- I don't care for [something]
- Tiptoe around [something]
- I'm not a fan of [something]
- I wanna save room for [something]
- A hawk
- To have [something] in your back pocket





Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: You're listening to the Culips English Podcast. To download the study guide for this episode, which includes the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world examples, and a quiz, visit our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hello, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And you are listening to Real Talk by Culips, the series where we teach you the English expressions you need to know for real-world situations.

Hey, Sue.

Suzanne: Hey, Andrew. How are you?

Andrew: I'm doing all right. It's been a while, we haven't recorded with each other for, I don't even know how long. But it's been a while.

Suzanne: Yeah, definitely a long time.

Andrew: And I'm not exactly sure when this episode will be released, Suzanne, but we're recording on Valentine's Day. So, happy Valentine's Day to you.

Suzanne: Oh, yeah, it is. Happy Valentine's Day. I forgot.

Andrew: Happy Valentine's Day, everybody.

Suzanne: Hope you guys have a lovely day.

Andrew: A lovely day, indeed.

Well, Suzanne, today we are going to talk about an interesting situation and we'll teach all of our listeners how to talk about food that you don't like in a polite way. And I think this will be a great episode, a very useful episode for all of the **picky eaters** out there.

Suzanne: And it's really important to know how to do this, Andrew, because a lot of people these days have special diets and so it's essential to know how to talk about what you can and can't eat.

Andrew: All right, Suzanne, so we'll get started in just a minute. But before we do, I want to remind everyone that the best way to study with this episode is with our study guide. And included in the study guide is the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-life usage examples, a comprehension quiz, and more. The study guide is, I think, the best way to study with Culips. I'm a little biased, but that's my opinion. And if you wanna get the study guide for this episode, and actually for all of the episodes in our archive, just visit our website, www.Culips.com, and you can sign up for that.

Suzanne: Awesome.

So today, we're gonna start by listening to a conversation taking place at a dinner party between a host and a guest. And the guest finds himself in a bit of an awkward situation because he doesn't like the food the host is serving. So let's listen to how this conversation unfolds, and then we'll closely examine the expressions and vocabulary that the speakers used.

Andrew: Sounds good, let's take a listen to that conversation.

Host:	Hey, Ralph, you didn't get any of the brussels sprouts. Let me pass them down to you.
Ralph:	Oh, you know, actually, that's fine. I've lots to eat here already.
Host:	No, you have to try them. I made them according to my grandma's old recipe. They're delicious.
Ralph:	I'm sure they're incredible, but I have to be honest and I don't really care for brussels sprouts . The rest of the meal is absolutely delicious, though. You're a fantastic cook.
Host:	Oh, OK. I see, no problem.

Andrew: In this example, we heard a conversation between a dinner party host and a guest. Now, the guest was offered some brussels sprouts, but he declined because he doesn't like them. So now, what we're gonna do is take a closer look at that conversation and talk about some alternative ways that the guest could have handled the situation. So let's take a look at some of those key expressions right now.

Suzanne: So the main key expression here is "**I don't care for brussels sprouts.**" Let's listen to that part of the conversation one more time.

Ralph:	I don't really care for brussels sprouts.
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Ralph:	I don't really care for brussels sprouts.
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- Andrew: OK, so **I don't care for brussels sprouts**, or **I don't care for kidney beans** or **I don't care for liver and onions**. You can use this expression to politely convey that you don't like a certain food, right, Suzanne?
- Suzanne: Right. I don't think I ever hear someone say **I don't care for ice cream**, do you?
- Andrew: I hear I scream for ice cream.
- Suzanne: Yes.
- Andrew: But not **I don't care for ice cream**, that's right. You can imagine yourself at a dinner party and the host is serving some food and you don't wanna eat it because you don't like it. That's a really delicate situation, you have to really **tiptoe around that situation** so that you don't offend the host, right? So we try to use an expression that is as polite as possible so that we don't hurt the feelings of the cook, 'cause you could easily offend someone in this situation, I think.
- Suzanne: It's true, it's a little bit different than at a restaurant where the cook is in the kitchen and you don't see them, so it's OK.
- Andrew: Yeah, that's a good point, Suzanne. I don't know if I would use this expression at a restaurant, per se. Although I guess you could, maybe, if there was a salad with a bunch of different ingredients, maybe, let's say, one of the ingredients was red onion, when you're ordering the salad, you could tell the server, "Oh, actually, **I don't care for red onions**, could you make the salad without them?" Something like this, that would work.
- Suzanne: Right, exactly, exactly. And now maybe we can look at some alternative ways that we can say the same thing, instead of **I don't care for**, or I don't like. What else could we say instead of those? Some alternative expressions.
- Andrew: Sure. Well, actually, the one that you just mentioned, I wanted to talk about for just a second, "I don't like." So let's compare **I don't care for brussels sprouts** and I don't like brussels sprouts, again imagining that we're at a dinner party and we're talking to the host who has prepared a lovely dinner for us. What is the difference between those two in this context, to you? What's your feeling?
- Suzanne: I guess I don't like is a little bit stronger. A little bit more definitive. You're really closing the door on the item in question, whereas **I don't care for** is a little more, it's a little softer, I would say, more I don't really totally like them but I guess I could try it, but it's not my favourite, you know? It's a little softer, I would say.



- Andrew: Yeah. And, Suzanne, you and I were talking before the episode and I mentioned that my mom taught me this expression because when I was younger I was a **picky eater** and when I'd go over to my friends' houses to eat supper with them, sometimes my friend's parents served food that I didn't like. And so my mom taught me this expression, oh, **I don't care for that food**. And I use that because, you know, if in that situation I said ew, I don't like brussels sprouts, it could be rude and my mom didn't want me to be a rude little kid, so she told me to say, oh, **I don't care for**. So I've always remembered that, and now I'm not a **picky eater** at all. I don't have this problem, but I guess at some point in my life I did.
- Suzanne: It's better than freaking out and saying, "What's that?" Yeah.
- Andrew: And, Sue, you mentioned that in this type of situation, there's an expression that you like to use. Which expression is that?
- Suzanne: Yeah, my family always says **I'm not a big fan**. So **I'm not a fan**, like when you're a fan or a fanatic of something, right? Like a team, you cheer for it, like scream for ice cream. I'm a big fan of ice cream, but **I'm not a big fan of anchovies**. And I feel like this kind of takes the charge off of, you know, the food a little bit or the cook, and it makes it more about the food, right? Instead of saying I don't like that, and it's a little more, you know, definitive. **I'm not a big fan of**, you know, strange fish like anchovies with hair. You know? It kind of makes it a little bit lighter, a little softer.
- Andrew: Yeah, I think it's a very light expression and I have used this one many times too. **I'm not a fan of such and such a food**, exactly.
- Suzanne: Yeah, and sometimes you can use it for textures, too, because maybe the food has a texture and it's not necessarily, it's not the cook, it's not the food, it's more the **I'm not a big fan of, like, that kind of texture of food**.
- Andrew: Yeah. Or **I'm not a fan of sweet food or salty food**. Yeah, for sure.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: And there's a couple other tactics that you could use in this situation.
- Suzanne: That's true.

- Andrew: That makes it so that you're not quite as direct, right? So, for example, let's say your host offers you some brussels sprouts but you don't like brussels sprouts. You don't really wanna say it, though, because you don't want to risk offending the host, so you could say, "No, thank you, actually, **I just wanna save some room for more mashed potatoes.**" Right? You could make up an excuse like that. "**I wanna save some room for more rice.**" Whatever alternative dish that is being served is. And here, what does it mean, save room? **I wanna save room for** that's kinda a unique turn of phrase.
- Suzanne: It's really the space in your stomach, right?
- Andrew: Yeah, exactly.
- Suzanne: So you don't want to fill up on brussels sprouts. You wanna make sure there's room in your stomach for dessert or for what you like.
- Andrew: Exactly. So that's kind of a cute way to jump around the issue and be less direct.
- Suzanne: And then, also, you can kind of change the subject a bit and say, you know, this food—maybe brussels sprouts—kind of bothers my stomach, so I'm going to pass on this one. You can kind of blame it on your stomach, you know? Maybe it gives you gas, maybe it gives you indigestion. Maybe you don't know, but you're gonna blame it on your stomach.
- Andrew: Yeah, or you could blame it on an allergy as well, right?
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: I'm allergic to brussels sprouts. Actually, this is kind of a classic 7-year-old excuse at the dinner table. When a 7-year-old doesn't like what's being served, oh, I'm allergic to that, I can't eat it.
- Suzanne: But be careful, don't say that to your mom, because your mom probably knows if you are allergic or not.
- Andrew: Exactly, exactly. Be careful. Another way that you could get around this issue is just to say I'm gonna save this for round two, right? Hey, Sue, try some of the brussels sprouts. You could say, I'm gonna save this for round two. And here round two means, well, your second plate of food, right? Maybe you have a full plate already, you're gonna finish that plate of food and get some seconds, a second serving. You could say, oh, at that time I'll eat some brussels sprouts. And I think the strategy here is hopefully by the time you're ready to eat a second plate of food, the host has forgotten that you didn't try the brussels sprouts the first time around.



- Suzanne: But you have to be careful, because if you have someone who's a real **hawk** and who really is watching you and saying, hey, you didn't have a second round, oh la la. So make sure that, you know, that you can easily redirect their attention to a good story.
- Andrew: I think here, because it was the host's grandma's secret recipe, she might be really inclined to make sure that you try some on the second round. So gotta be careful with this one, I agree.
- Suzanne: Yeah, maybe have a good story you heard from Culips **in your back pocket** to really take the tension away from the brussels sprouts.
- Andrew: I think the key here, as always, no matter which expression you use, is just to be positive and gracious. And you know, at the end of the day, it's more about the method that you communicate than the words that you say. So even if you make a mistake and you say something that's not quite polite, doesn't really matter if you say it friendly, usually listeners are pretty good at picking up on vibes and understanding what people actually intend, right?
- Suzanne: Yeah, absolutely. Keep it positive.
- Andrew: Sue, good job. I think that brings us to the end of today's episode.
- Suzanne: All right.
- Andrew: Well, thank you for listening, everybody. And just before we take off here, I want to remind you one more time that our website is Culips.com. If you wanna get the transcript and practice exercises for this episode, once again check out the website and you'll be able to download the study guide.
- Suzanne: Yeah and don't forget we're also on Facebook at Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast, and you can get in touch with us by emailing contact@Culips.com, and also now on Instagram, Instagram.com/Culips_English.
- Andrew: We'll be back soon with another brand new episode, so we'll talk to you then. Bye, everybody.
- Suzanne: Bye, guys.

Detailed Explanations

Picky eater

Noun

A **picky eater** is someone who is very selective about what he or she eats. Fussy eater is a synonym for **picky eater**. Children are often **picky eaters** and may or may not grow out of it as they get older.

Here are a couple more examples with **picky eater**:

Rebecca:	How's Ollie? He's 2 years old now, right?
Fran:	Yes, he is. He's doing really well. He's talking a lot and I can't get him to sit still for a minute. But ...
Rebecca:	But what? What's the matter?
Fran:	He is such a picky eater ! He won't eat anything besides fruit and french fries. The fruit is good, of course, but he cannot survive on those alone.
Rebecca:	Oh, dear, that is a problem. I recommend introducing things slowly, a little at a time. Maybe tell him he can't eat french fries until he tries a new food.
Fran:	But that's bribery! I don't think that would be considered good parenting.

Martin:	I'm hungry. Wanna go grab a steak?
Chris:	I don't really like steak.
Martin:	All right, how about fish and chips?
Chris:	You know I don't like seafood.
Martin:	OK, in that case, how about pizza?
Chris:	I'm not a big fan of pizza. It's too greasy.
Martin:	Oh my god, Chris! You are such a picky eater ! What do you like?



I don't care for [something]

Phrase

The phrase **I don't care for [something]** is a polite way to say you don't like something. You can use this phrase when you want to decline something that someone offers you in a polite way, without offending that person.

Here are a couple more examples with **I don't care for [something]**:

Ricardo:	Would you like some champagne?
Lucy:	Oh, no, thank you. I don't really care for alcohol. Do you have any water, though?
Ricardo:	Yes, of course. I'll get you a glass now. Can I interest you in some coffee, as well?
Lucy:	That would be lovely! Cream and sugar, too, please!

Alice:	Would you like some fish, Uriel?
Uriel:	It smells delicious, but I don't really care for seafood. Sorry.
Alice:	That's OK! How about some of this rosemary chicken? It's one of my favourite recipes.
Uriel:	I would love some. You can give me two servings, if you'd like, since I won't be eating the fish.
Alice:	Coming right up!

Tiptoe around [something]

Idiom

To **tiptoe around [something]** is to avoid dealing directly with a problem, or to be careful about how you behave towards someone because you are afraid of annoying or offending them.

To walk on tiptoes is to walk slowly and quietly on the balls of your feet, so as not to disturb anyone. Therefore, the idiom **tiptoe around [something]** is used to express that feeling of cautiousness and the desire to avoid disturbing anyone or anything.

Here are a couple more examples with **tiptoe around [something]**:

Jameson:	What's the matter with you? Are you angry at me?
Destiny:	No.
Jameson:	I think you are angry with me. Come on, tell me—what is it? Don't tiptoe around the situation . Just tell me what you are thinking.
Destiny:	Fine. Yes, I'm angry with you. You told me you would be here at 4:00, but it's 5:30 and you didn't even send me a message to tell me you would be late!
Jameson:	I'm sorry. I got caught up with something, but you're right. I should have messaged you. I won't do it again.

Father:	How did your interview go today?
Ander:	Oh, about that ... I didn't go. I just didn't think it was the right job for me.
Father:	Son, I can no longer sit still and tiptoe around you while you refuse to get a job. It's been 6 months since you got laid off. It's time to find a new job.
Ander:	I know, Dad. I just really want to find a job that makes me happy, you know?
Father:	I understand that, son, but you have to try, at least. You've been lazing about on the couch for far too long.



I'm not a fan of [something]

Phrase

I'm not a fan of [something] is another polite and indirect way of saying that you don't like something. A fan is someone who loves and appreciates something or someone, so if you are **not a fan** of something or someone, then you do not like it.

Here's one more example with **I'm not a fan of [something]**:

Tyler:	Do you wanna go to the soccer match after school today?
Jeff:	Sorry, man. I'm not really a big fan of soccer. How about watching a movie instead? I heard there's this great action movie on right now.
Tyler:	Sure, why not? I'm down for a good action movie. What time?
Jeff:	It starts at 7:30. I'll swing by your house around 7:00 and pick you up, OK?
Tyler:	Yup, see you then!



I wanna save room for [something]

Phrase

I wanna save room for [something] is the last phrase we learned in this episode; it is an excuse you can use to avoid saying that you don't like something. For example, if your host offers you pork but you really hate pork, then you can say, "No, thanks, **I wanna save room for dessert.**"

Save room in this phrase refers to your stomach space. If you **wanna save room for [something]**, it means you don't want to eat too much of one thing so that you have enough stomach space left to eat something else.

Here's one more example with **I wanna save room for [something]**:

Bianca:	Would you like some more mashed potatoes, Adolfo?
Adolfo:	No, thank you. I wanna save room for that chocolate cake I heard you made. Madeline told me that your chocolate cake is the best in the world.
Bianca:	Well, I don't know about that. It is a secret family recipe, though.
Adolfo:	I can't wait to try it!

A hawk

Noun

A hawk is a large predatory bird. However, a person can be referred to as **a hawk** as well, if they have **hawk**-like behaviour. For example, **hawks** have incredibly good eyesight and intense focus while watching their prey. Therefore, we have a common phrase in English, “to watch [someone or something] like **a hawk**”. To watch someone like **a hawk** is to watch someone very closely and intently.

Here are a couple more examples with **a hawk**:

Gina:	You won't believe what Mrs. Turner did in math class today!
Diane:	What?
Gina:	She watched me like a hawk during the entire math test! It's like she thought I was going to cheat or something.
Diane:	Well, did you give her any reason to be suspicious?
Gina:	I mean, I cheated on my math tests the last three times, but she shouldn't just assume I'll do it every time. That's so judgmental!
Diane:	Um, I think I agree with Mrs. Turner, in that case ...

Henry:	What's up with your mom? She's such a hawk , always watching over us when we come over to hang out.
Min-ho:	I know, I'm sorry about that. She's just a little overprotective. I hate it, but I can't do anything about it.
Henry:	Why don't you tell her to relax a little?
Min-ho:	It's not really respectful to talk back to ones' elders in my family.
Henry:	Ah, yeah, that makes sense. Still, maybe we should just hang at my house from now on.
Min-ho:	Sounds good to me!

To have [something] in your back pocket

Idiom

To have [something] in your back pocket means you have some thing or some skill that could give you an unexpected advantage in some situation. This idiom is similar to the phrase to have [something] up your sleeve.

You can imagine this phrase literally; for example, in a fight, if a man **had a gun in his back pocket** he could quickly pull it out and threaten his attacker with it, catching the attacker by surprise. You can also use this phrase figuratively; for example, the man **kept his knowledge of the murder in his back pocket** so that he could blackmail the murderer later for a large sum of money.

Tamera:	I heard you singing Bohemian Rhapsody at karaoke last Friday. You sounded just like Freddie Mercury!! How long have you had that secret in your back pocket ?
Vince:	Really, you were there? How embarrassing!
Tamera:	Embarrassing, why? You were fantastic! The crowd was going crazy for you!
Vince:	Wow, thanks ... I practise in my shower every morning.

Lindi:	I have that business deal on Friday. Do you have any advice for me?
Jonathon:	When negotiating the deal, I really recommend having something in your back pocket . Don't share all of your information at once or you'll get the bad end of the deal.
Lindi:	Oh, yeah, I do tend to share too much information too quickly, don't I?
Jonathon:	Yeah, you do ... I mean, just this afternoon you told me that you haven't showered in 4 days—a little too much information!

Quiz

1. What do you call a person who watches someone or something very closely?

- a) a wolf
- b) a tiger
- c) a hawk
- d) an iguana

2. Which is not a word used to describe a person with selective eating habits?

- a) picky
- b) versatile
- c) choosy
- d) fussy

3. Which phrase is similar to the phrase to have [something] in your back pocket?

- a) to have [something] to talk about
- b) to have a smoking gun
- c) to have eyes in the back of your head
- d) to have [something] up your sleeve

4. What does it mean to tiptoe around a problem?

- a) to avoid the problem
- b) to solve the problem
- c) to talk about the problem
- d) to make the problem worse

5. Which is not a good way to refuse a serving of broccoli?

- a) I don't care for broccoli.
- b) I can't stand broccoli.
- c) I'm not a big fan of broccoli.
- d) I'm saving room for dessert.

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Are you a picky eater? What are some foods that you don't really care for?
2. Is it very impolite to refuse food that is offered to you in your country? How so?
3. What are some foods that you always save room for? Why do you like them?
4. What skill would you like to have in your back pocket?
5. Which foods do most people hate in your country? And which foods do most people love?



Quiz Answers

1.c 2.b 3.d 4.a 5.b

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