

Simplified Speech #142 – Fake meat and meat alternatives

Episode description

Plant-based meat alternatives have gained in popularity over the past decade. People following vegan and vegetarian diets now enjoy better, tastier fake meats. Today, Andrew and Kassy talk about this new, controversial food trend.

This episode is part of Culips' Simplified Speech series. It features natural, easy-to-understand English conversations about interesting topics, like fake meat. Listening to native English speakers having natural conversations will improve your listening skills and increase your vocabulary. Tune in to today's English audio lesson to learn something new.

Fun fact

Even though fake meat is plant based, nutritionists say that they are not replacements for vegetables. In fact, plant-based burgers have almost the same nutritional benefits as regular meat. So having a side salad or other vegetable dish with your fake meat is a must!

Expressions included in the study guide

- That's [someone's] deal
- See what all the hype is about
- On that front
- On the horizon
- Camp
- Lukewarm



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. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello there, everyone. My name's Andrew.

Kassy: And I'm Kassy.

Andrew: And this is the Culips English Podcast.

Hey there, everyone. Welcome back to the Culips English Podcast. Today, we have a Simplified Speech episode prepared for you. Now, Simplified Speech is the Culips series that features clear, natural and easy-to-understand English conversations about interesting topics. And today I'm joined by my cohost, Kassy. Hello there, Kassy.

Kassy: Hey, Andrew. And hey, listeners. Today, we're going to talk about something pretty interesting. The topic for today's episode is fake meat and meat alternatives. But before we start our conversation, we should let everyone know about the study guide so they can follow along as they listen today.

Andrew: Yes, that's right. So, the study guide for this episode, everyone, includes a transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations and examples, a quiz, and more. And you can download it in a PDF file to print it off or you can view it on your computer or smartphone or tablet in our mobile-friendly version. So to access the study guide for this episode, you just need to visit our website, which is Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and sign up to become a Culips member.

Kassy: We also want to give a shout-out to one of our listeners named Nicole who is from Portugal.

Andrew: Yeah, Nicole left us a five-star rating on Apple Podcasts. And in her review, she wrote, "Hi guys, I'm from Portugal. And I'd like to say that I'm very grateful for all these episodes, which have been so important for my knowledge. A year ago, I couldn't keep a conversation for more than 5 minutes but now I'm able to do it for hours. Of course, I still have a lot to improve but your hard work on this platform has done special things in my life, for sure. I'm a super big fan. Thanks one more time."

Kassy: Wow, Nicole, what an awesome review. Thank you so much.

Andrew: Yeah, thank you, Nicole, that is amazing to hear. I love to hear success stories like this from people who have improved their English with Culips. And, Kassy, wouldn't you agree that that's a pretty big improvement, going from being able to have a conversation for 5 minutes to hours? That's a huge leap.

Kassy: It's phenomenal.

Andrew: So, keep up the good work, Nicole. Now, listeners, leaving a positive review and a five-star rating on Apple Podcasts or, really, whatever platform you use to listen to Culips helps more English learners, just like Nicole, from around the world find Culips and study with us. So even if you leave just a short review, we would really appreciate it.

And now, Kassy, that we finished with all of the official business at the start of the show, we can start our conversation in earnest. And today we are talking about fake meat and meat alternatives, which is a really fascinating topic but slightly controversial, I'd say. Kassy, would you agree that it's slightly controversial?

Kassy: Yeah, I feel like a lot of people have strong opinions about eating fake meat or not.

Andrew: And even the term fake meat is a little bit controversial because, depending on what side of the argument you're on, some people could say that fake meat is a little bit pejorative or offensive and maybe we could explain why that is. So, I think for meat eaters, people who consume meat as a regular part of their diet, maybe they don't think that the expression fake meat is offensive or derogatory in any way. But I think for some people who have a plant-based diet, like vegans or vegetarians that perhaps regularly consume fake meat products, they might not like this term. And so there are so many other ways to refer to, quote, unquote, fake meat, such as meat analogue, or maybe vegetarian meat, or vegan meat, or even plant-based meat.

So I think when our listeners watch the news, or they're online and reading in English, or speaking to English-speaking people, there are so many different ways that we can call this kind of food product but, really, we are just talking about an alternative to meat that tastes and looks and has a similar texture to meat, right? That's what we mean by fake meat.

Kassy: Yeah, that's right. And fake meat can be made using a variety of different ingredients, right? It could be fake meat that's bean based or fake meat that's soy based or, Andrew, what are some other ways that you can make fake meat?

Andrew: Yeah, I'm not an expert but I think most of the fake meat products are made, like you said, Kassy, maybe with beans or with soy or with pea protein or corn or something like that. It's just some kind of plant product that is made to resemble the texture, the flavour, the feeling of eating meat that is not meat.

And the reason I wanted to talk about this topic today, Kassy, is because recently, I've been seeing the popularity of fake meat products explode. And many fast food restaurants now have options on their menu for hamburgers that are made with fake meat. And if I go into the grocery store, as well, I can see a huge portion of the grocery store where they are selling meat alternatives. So, even things like chicken fingers, you know, there are veggie fingers that are kind of replacements for chicken fingers that are made with a fake meat product.

And I even went to a Chinese restaurant. At the Chinese restaurant they had, instead of sweet and sour pork, they had a kind of sweet and sour fake pork. So it was a meat alternative sweet and sour pork. Yeah. And there were also dumplings that instead of being meat based, they were fake meat-based dumplings at this Chinese restaurant. And I tried them, actually, they were pretty good. I was surprised, they tasted almost the same. I probably actually wouldn't have noticed a difference if I was unaware that they were a fake-meat product. So, I was I was surprised by that.

But, Kassy, has that been your experience, too, have you started to notice different fake-meat products available in the supermarket or at restaurants these days?

Kassy: Where I live in, or I guess both of us live in Korea, I've noticed Burger King selling like a Beyond Meat, fake-meat kind of burger. I haven't noticed too much in the grocery stores. But in the US over the summer, when I visited, I noticed that most restaurants have at least one or two menu items that incorporate some kind of fake meat, whether it be a burger or something you can put on your salad. And a lot of restaurants these days are actually, you know, completely meat free, but create dishes that traditionally would have meat in them like nachos, but with Beyond Meat, or lasagna, but with fake meat, you know. Any kind of things that you might normally see meat in, it has this substitute.

Andrew: Yeah, that's a great word that you used right there, substitute, because I noticed that word being used often when talking about dishes that have a fake-meat alternative instead of regular animal-based meat, right? So, like you mentioned, you might have a lasagna with a substitute meat alternative or fake meat instead of the real meat.

Kassy, have you ever tried a fake-meat product at all? Like, have you ever ordered a fake-meat hamburger, for example?

Kassy: I have had a veggie burger, which was technically labelled a black bean burger, but I think their goal is to make it, you know, taste as meaty, authentic as possible. And I can say that, depending on the place you go to and what ingredients they use, it really affects the quality. So I've had some really delicious veggie burgers or, you know fake-meat burgers, and I've had some really awful ones, too.

Andrew: Yeah, when I lived in Canada, I used to make black bean burgers at home. I had a really great recipe and they tasted delicious. It was something that I liked to make in the summer. I would just cook these black bean burgers right at my home. Now that I live in South Korea, I don't have access to all of the ingredients that I would use to cook those. We do have black beans that are sold here in Korea, but they're not the exact same kind that I used back home. So I kind of had to give up on that recipe. But I loved them, I thought they were really delicious, but it wasn't really trying to be a fake meat, right? It still tasted pretty bean-y and it was almost like a different kind of sandwich than a regular hamburger.

I did try one of the Beyond Meat hamburgers that is sold at a Canadian fast food restaurant called A&W. At least I think it's only in Canada. Do you have that franchise in the States, Kassy, A&W?

Kassy: You know, we—it sounds kind of familiar, but I know I've never eaten at one. So, I'm not a good person to ask.

Andrew: A&W is a very famous fast-food restaurant in Canada. They serve hamburgers and, famously, root beer and root beer floats. **That's kind of their deal.**

Kassy: I've heard of A&W root beer.

Andrew: Yes. And the last time I was in Canada visiting, they had just released an alternative meat burger made with a substance called Beyond Meat. And everybody was talking about this burger on TV and in the media and my friends were talking about it. And it was actually right before I was leaving to go back to Korea. I was in the airport and I was waiting for my flight and there was an A&W and I was hungry. So, I thought, hey, why don't I try this and **see what all the hype is about.**

The Beyond Meat, I actually looked it up on the internet this morning, Kassy, and Beyond Meat is made from water, pea protein, canola oil, coconut oil, rice, and some other things that are just, like, 1% of the ingredients that are mostly, like, vegetables and minerals and stuff. So it seems like it's not too processed, you know, it seems like it's pretty plant based. It's not like a whole bunch of weird, manufactured soy or something like that.

But, anyways, I tried this burger and I thought it tasted pretty good. I don't know if it was good enough for me to switch to it as, like, my main go-to hamburger but I'm happy that they have it on the menu at least. I think it's a nice alternative for vegetarians, and maybe vegans or people that just don't want to consume meat. It was an interesting experience.

Kassy: Yeah, I'd love to try one of those Beyond Meat burgers, too. Like, I told you I've had a kind of a veggie burger. It's almost the same thing, but not quite the same, right?

Andrew: It's weird. Like, it seems like most of the fake-meat products are orientated towards being substitutes for sandwiches or hamburgers or hot dogs or, like you said, lasagna, but I haven't really seen anybody eat like an alternative meat steak or rack of ribs or something. You know, it's like never a standalone food product. It's always something that goes into a sandwich or a dish. Have you ever heard of, like, a fake-meat steak, for example?

Kassy: I haven't. And I think the reason that is is because even though you can mimic the flavour and you could make a pretty yummy dish, when mixed with others, by itself, it doesn't have that texture, or that feeling of actual meat at all. But when it's combined with something else, it can meld well with other ingredients to kind of mimic that taste.

Andrew: Yes, I think that is exactly what's going on, I agree.

Kassy, so what do you think about the future of fake meat? Would you ever see a time in the future where you incorporate it as a regular part of your diet?

Kassy: Good question. For me, I'm not sure. The only thing that I'm a little concerned about, you hear a lot of people say the reason they don't eat meat is because, for environmental reasons, right? Raising livestock takes a lot of energy and land. But I think you could almost put that on the flip side for fake meat products, too. I've heard that making things with a lot of soy beans and processed oils, it takes a lot of land to do that. And it's also destroying parts of the ecosystem and rain forests because they need to tear down areas to grow more crops. So, I don't know how I feel about the taste either way, but I don't necessarily know if I agree that it's 100% times better than meat. I think both of them have significant pros and cons.

Andrew: Yeah, I agree with you **on that front**. There are some concerns about how it's produced and its impact on the environment. Obviously, we know that raising meat is also extremely bad for the earth. So, it kind of seems like a lose-lose. Either way, we're doing some damage to the earth.

But I would love for fake meat to be like a viable option. If scientists or the people who create these products, I guess we could call them food scientists, if they could develop something that would end animal suffering and end the environmental impact that farming has, then I would love that product to exist. I share your concerns about the environmental impact of fake meat, and also maybe the health impacts.

Some of these products seem like they're OK but then sometimes when I look at the ingredient lists, I see a lot of soy, and I see a lot of processed products and words that I can't pronounce. And if it's a word that I can't pronounce, usually it means that it's not good for me. There seems to be a connection between the healthiness of something and how easy it is to pronounce. I don't know if that's true or not, but it seems that way.

Kassy: It could be.

Andrew: It could be, it could be. So, yeah, at this point, I don't see myself switching to an alternative-meat diet anytime soon. But I'm optimistic for the future, we'll have to see. I know that there are companies that are trying to make lab-grown meat, which seems really creepy. But making organic meat in a laboratory, just from animal cells, you know, and growing it, that could be maybe a way for us to end animal suffering, still eat high-quality protein, and maybe eliminate starvation or food shortages around the world, as well. Who knows? But I think there could be some interesting things **on the horizon** in like the next 25 or 30 years or so.

Kassy: We'll have to wait and find out.

Andrew: Well, listeners, we would love to hear your opinion on this topic. I know people are very divided, aren't they, Kassy? A lot of people are either in I'm a meat-eater **camp**, they're on that side of the argument, or people are on the I'm a vegetarian, or I'm a vegan, and I don't eat meat at all, and I like these fake meat, alternative meat products. And they're in that **camp**, on that side of the argument.

Kassy, I'm sure, though, that there are a lot of listeners out there who are like us, who are kind of **lukewarm**, and we're interested, but we're not for one or for the other, either way. So, listeners, we would like to hear your opinion, which side of this do you support? And have you ever tried an alternative meat or a fake meat product? We'd love to hear about your experience. You can contact us. Our email address is contact@Culips.com.

If you enjoy listening to Culips and find us fun to listen to and helpful for building your English skills, then we would really appreciate it if you could support us. There are several ways that you can do that, such as telling your friends who are learning English to check us out, signing up and becoming a Culips member on our website, Culips.com, following us on social media, and leaving us a five-star rating and review on Apple Podcasts or your favourite podcast platform.

We'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode. Take care, everyone, and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Kassy: See ya.

Detailed Explanations

That's [someone's] deal

Slang

That's [someone's] deal means that is something the person does often or well. It can refer to habits or interests. For example, if a student always walks to school along the same route, you could say, "Walking this way is **their deal**." This expression can also refer to a skill or product.

In this episode, Andrew talks about the Canadian restaurant A&W, saying, "They serve hamburgers and, famously, root beer and root beer floats. **That's kind of their deal**." He means that root beer and root beer floats are something A&W is known for—it's a product they do well. Another way to say this is **that's [someone's] thing**.

Here are a couple more examples with **that's [someone's] deal**:

Yasmine: I'm very stressed right now. I have to send in my university applications. Hey, do you know which university you want to go to?

Khalid: I have a few ideas. I was thinking I'd go to the one in town. I've heard their math department is really great.

Yasmine: Oh, yes, I've heard the same. Apparently, **that's their deal** or, well, the whole sciences, technology, engineering, and math thing is **their deal**.

Khalid: Exactly. And I want to study math, so why not do that at a school that specializes in it, right?

Yasmine: Right! You know, maybe I should pick a major to study, then I'll be able to pick a school!

Alicia: Where's your brother today?

Lawrence: Out fishing.

Alicia: Oh, I didn't know he fishes!

Lawrence: Yup. Every afternoon he goes out to the pier. He never catches anything, though. **That's his thing**, I guess.

Alicia: Aw, that's sweet. He doesn't want to kill them; he just wants to catch them.

See what all the hype is about Expression

To **see what all the hype is about** means to find out, learn, or discover why everyone likes something so much. This often requires experiencing the thing that's being hyped for yourself.

For example, in this episode Andrew mentions how A&W sells Beyond Meat plant-based burgers. Before going back to Korea, he thought, "Hey, why don't I try this and **see what all the hype is about**?" To understand why people in the media and even his friends were talking about Beyond Meat burgers, Andrew had to try one.

Here are a couple more examples with **see what all the hype is about**:

Gabrielle: Did you hear? The More Directs are having a concert at our school next month! I'm so excited! Aren't you excited?

Jesse: Honestly? Not really. I've never really **seen what all the hype is about** with that band.

Gabrielle: What? I didn't know you felt that way. I was going to ask you to come with me. Ah, well, want to meet up before the concert anyways?

Jesse: Sure, sounds like a plan.

Rin: How was your weekend?

Saburo: So great! I took Kouta to that burrito restaurant, the one on Main Street.

Rin: Oh, had he never been there?

Saburo: He'd never had a burrito before!

Rin: Wow, really? Did he like it?

Saburo: He really did! His exact words were, "Now I **see what all the hype is about**!"

Rin: Ha, that's fantastic. I'm going to have to go to that restaurant soon. Haven't had a burrito in a while.

Saburo: Let's go for lunch this week.

Rin: Yes!

On that front

Idiom

On that front means in that area of activity. Often, you'll hear a noun between "that" (or "the") and "front." If a friend says **on the school front**, for example, they're talking about an activity related to school.

This idiom also means regarding an opinion or perspective. In this episode, Andrew tells Kassy, "I agree with you **on that front**." He means he agrees with her opinion about fake meat and regular meat both having significant pros and cons.

Here are a couple more examples with **on that front**:

Rachel: Schools are closed next week and I've been having trouble arranging childcare. Do you know what the policy is for taking time off to take care of family?

Ming: I wish I knew, sorry. I tried to find out back when my mom was ill, but it seems like management just can't seem to agree with one another **on the time-off front**.

Rachel: What did you end up doing to take care of your mom?

Ming: I arranged a schedule with my team. Can you speak with your colleagues to see if there's some way you can work from home or something like that?

Rachel: Oh, that's a good idea. I'll speak with my manager. Thanks, Ming.

Kai: My mom mentioned she stopped by to check on you over the weekend. Is everything OK?

Yassin: Yeah. My dad fell pretty hard and broke his hip, so we've been trying to fix up the house to reduce the risk of him falling again.

Kai: Ah, yeah, my mom did that for her parents a few years ago. Were you able to get everything set up?

Yassin: We were! Your mom is so knowledgeable **on that front**, and we listened to every recommendation she made.

On the horizon

Idiom

On the horizon means likely to occur or exist soon or in the future. If something is **on the horizon**, it is almost certainly going to happen. For example, if someone says, "Trouble could be **on the horizon**," it means they believe there will be trouble soon.

This idiom comes from how things **on the horizon**—where the sky meets the earth in the distance—are far enough away that it will take time for them to arrive, but close enough that you know they will arrive. Storm clouds are the best example of this idiom in action. When you see dark clouds **on the horizon**, you know that soon you'll have a storm.

Here are a couple more examples with **on the horizon**:

Sarah: That's it. I give up on dating. Whenever I think a date went well, the guy doesn't feel the same way. And every time I think the date went horribly wrong, the guy thinks he's in love with me!

Louisa: That sounds less than ideal. But you can't give up completely. You never know, meeting that special someone might be **on the horizon**!

Sarah: Well, they're going to have to come find me, because I'm not going to go looking for a while. I need to focus on my studies now.

Louisa: Oh, yeah. That's probably a better focus until after exams.

Glenn: I've been reading some articles recently on environmental sciences and environmentally friendly energy sources.

Ryu: Anything interesting come up?

Glenn: A few things. The biggest is that scientists believe that a major breakthrough is **on the horizon**, so that's exciting.

Ryu: Hmm, that's promising. My wife wants to convert our house to renewable energy sources, but there haven't been any options that we can afford. Hopefully this breakthrough will be the one we can afford.

Camp

Noun

Camp has a few different meanings in English. The most common is a place where people stay in tents or other temporary structures. However, that isn't the version of **camp** used in this episode. Andrew says that people are either in the meat-eater **camp** or the vegetarian **camp**. Here **camp** means a group of people with the same opinion.

This definition of **camp** is most often used to refer to supporters of political parties. It can also refer to a group of people promoting or defending a theory or opinion that they all share.

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

Marco: Ah, glorious silence. I need it today. My class was so crazy today.

Faith: Oh? Isn't your class usually calm and studious?

Marco: Yeah, except today my teacher brought up his phone, and said Android was the best model. That made the Apple phone owners angry and then everyone started arguing. It got loud.

Faith: Who won the fight? I hope it was Android.

Marco: Oh, no. You're in the Android phone **camp**? I'm in the Apple **camp**. According to my class, we can't be friends anymore.

Faith: I won't tell them if you won't.

Marco: Deal.

Jiang: How is the event planning going for the big spring show?

Beatrice: We're stuck on a catering company decision. The spicy food-loving **camp** is demanding we find a new caterer instead of using our usual company.

Jiang: Why?

Beatrice: Our usual company doesn't have any spicy dishes on their menu.

Jiang: Hmm, what if we purchased some hot sauces for the tables?

Beatrice: That's a great idea! Thank you!

Lukewarm

Adjective

Lukewarm means showing little enthusiasm or interest. When someone's reaction is **lukewarm**, that means that it's half-hearted and indifferent. Their reaction isn't bad—they're not upset, angry, or disagreeable—but nor is their reaction good—they're not happy, excited, or interested.

In fact, for something to be truly **lukewarm**, it shouldn't be positive nor negative. It must be neutral. This comes from the original meaning of the word: neither hot nor cold.

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

Jeremy: Did you talk to your parents about our trip?

Demi: I did. I think I can go, but I'm not really sure.

Jeremy: So, they said no?

Demi: No, but they didn't say yes either. Their response was actually, well, **lukewarm**. It's like they don't care if I go.

Jeremy: That's good, then! I'll book the tickets!

Osamu: It's been a week since that new manager started in your office, right?

Christie: Oh, yes, I suppose it has.

Osamu: How have the employees adjusted to the new boss?

Christie: Honestly? They're still **lukewarm** about him. He came to talk to me a few times to see if I knew why.

Osamu: Do you?

Christie: I don't, no. I told him that it might be because everyone's focused on the big presentation that's coming up, so he should give it another week or two.

Osamu: That's good advice.

Quiz

- 1. Which of the following means regarding that opinion or perspective?**
 - a) on that note
 - b) on the horizon
 - c) on that front
 - d) on that spot

- 2. If someone gives a lukewarm reaction to your presentation, which of the following best describes how they feel?**
 - a) excited
 - b) angry
 - c) indifferent
 - d) interested

- 3. Which of the following means likely to occur or exist soon or in the future?**
 - a) on that note
 - b) on the horizon
 - c) on that front
 - d) on that spot

- 4. If someone wanted to see what all the hype is about, what are they doing?**
 - a) drinking coffee to become hyper
 - b) pretending to know why everyone is talking about something
 - c) avoiding information about something popular
 - d) finding out why everyone likes something so much

- 5. Which of the following means a group of people with the same opinion?**
 - a) camp
 - b) clamp
 - c) carp
 - d) cramp

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Is there anything you do or a skill you have that you consider your deal or your thing?
2. What is one thing you want to try so you can see what all the hype is about?
3. What do you see on the horizon for your life?
4. Between the meat-eater camp and the vegetarian camp, which are you in and why?
5. Describe a time you received a lukewarm reception or reaction.

Quiz Answers

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

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