



### Unit 16 Food for thought

#### Before you read

Think about these questions. What kinds of food do you like? Have you tried foods from other countries?

#### Read the article

##### Food in America

The U.S. is traditionally famous for its very solid and unchanging diet of meat and potatoes. Now there are different alternatives to choose from: ethnic food, health food, and fast food, in addition to the traditional home-cooked meal.

Because the U.S. is a country of immigrants, ethnic restaurants and supermarkets are commonplace in the U.S. Any large American city is filled with restaurants serving international cooking. Many cities even have ethnic neighborhoods, for example, Chinatown, Little Italy, or Germantown. There are also regions in the U.S. that are well known for certain ethnic foods because of the people who settled there. For example, southern California has many Mexican restaurants, and Louisiana is known for its Cajun cooking (The Cajuns descended from French-speaking immigrants from Acadia. Cajun cooking is characterized by the use of hot seasonings such as cayenne pepper.) With this vast ethnic choice, Americans can enjoy foods from all over the world.

The variety of international foods to choose from is often a pleasant surprise for those who come to the U.S. to travel or to work. Visitors to the country usually find their native specialties: tabouli (Lebanon), arepas (Venezuela and Colombia), or miso soup (Japanese).

Health foods—fresh, natural, unprocessed food such as organic fruits, vegetables, and dairy—gained popularity when people began to think more seriously about their physical well-being. Health food does not contain preservatives. Some health food enthusiasts are vegetarians; that is, they don't eat meat. They prefer to get essential proteins from other sources, such as rice and beans, soy products, and eggs.

Fast-food restaurants continue to expand rapidly all over the country. In the U.S., people usually have a short lunch break, or they do not want to spend their time eating. So speed is a must. Fast-food restaurants that offer burgers, French fries, and pizzas are very popular. There is usually very little waiting, and the food is usually inexpensive.

America's attitude toward meals is changing, too. People are rediscovering the social importance of food. Dinner with family or friends is again becoming a very special way of enjoying and sharing. Like so many people in other cultures, many Americans are taking time to relax and enjoy the finer tastes at dinner, even if they still rush through lunch at a hamburger stand.

Source: Adapted from *Contact USA 3* by Paul Abraham and Daphne Mackey, Longman



### Build your reading skills: Locating examples

Give three examples of each of the following food categories:

1. Ethnic foods

Chinese food, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

2. Health foods

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

3. Fast foods

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### Check your comprehension

Read the article again. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- The traditional American diet is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - rice and beans
  - hamburger and pizza
  - meat and potatoes.
- Cajun cooking is characterized by the use of a lot of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - butter
  - soy sauce
  - hot seasonings
- People who don't eat meat are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - food enthusiasts
  - vegetarians
  - immigrants
- Foods that don't contain preservatives are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - health foods
  - fast foods
  - ethnic foods
- A restaurant that serves foods native to a particular country is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a seafood restaurant
  - a fast-food restaurant
  - an ethnic restaurant