

Why Meals Taste Different

B2 Upper-intermediate · Travel · about 2 min of audio

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Name _____

Date _____

Part 1 — Fill the gaps while you listen

1. Meals served in aircraft often seem _____ bland, even when kitchens season them carefully.
2. That _____ is not simply poor cooking, however, because the cabin changes how flavor is perceived.
3. At cruising altitude, low humidity dries nasal passages, _____ the aromas that normally enrich taste.
4. Meanwhile, steady engine noise can reduce _____ to sweetness and saltiness, although umami may remain noticeable.
5. These effects explain why tomato juice can taste _____ in flight, despite seeming heavy on the ground.
6. Airlines sometimes respond by adjusting recipes, rather than assuming _____ have suddenly become difficult.
7. However, extra salt is not the only solution, since stronger aromas can restore some _____.
8. For travelers with reduced appetites, that _____ matters because an enjoyable meal may encourage adequate eating.
9. _____ the science also reminds us that taste is constructed by surroundings, not ingredients alone.

Part 2 — Write every sentence you hear

1. _____

2. _____

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

Answer key

Part 1 — the missing words

1. unusually 2. impression 3. weakening 4. sensitivity 5. appealing 6. passengers 7. complexity 8. distinction 9. Understanding

Part 2 — the full transcript

1. Meals served in aircraft often seem unusually bland, even when kitchens season them carefully.
2. That impression is not simply poor cooking, however, because the cabin changes how flavor is perceived.
3. At cruising altitude, low humidity dries nasal passages, weakening the aromas that normally enrich taste.
4. Meanwhile, steady engine noise can reduce sensitivity to sweetness and saltiness, although umami may remain noticeable.
5. These effects explain why tomato juice can taste appealing in flight, despite seeming heavy on the ground.
6. Airlines sometimes respond by adjusting recipes, rather than assuming passengers have suddenly become difficult.
7. However, extra salt is not the only solution, since stronger aromas can restore some complexity.
8. For travelers with reduced appetites, that distinction matters because an enjoyable meal may encourage adequate eating.
9. Understanding the science also reminds us that taste is constructed by surroundings, not ingredients alone.

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