

Listening Sample Answers

Listening Dialogue - Locally Sourced Food

Andrea: Woah Brandon, it's already 5 o'clock. I have no clue what to make for dinner tonight. I need to do the groceries, but I feel sick to my stomach having to pay an arm and a leg for pantry staples and fresh fruit and veg. And in this economic climate, I'm trying my best to buy local.

Brandon: Tell me about it, Andrea. Did I mention that last week, I set out to see just how possible it is to cook a dish using only Canadian-grown and produced ingredients?

Andrea: No, but spill. Was it actually possible? Like, really Canadian ingredients only?

Brandon: I mean... yes and no. Technically, I pulled it off. But it was a logistical nightmare. Honestly, it exposed how fragmented and misleading our supply chains can be. You'd think it'd be as easy as buying from Canadian brands. Nope.

Andrea: Let me guess - made in Canada, but grown somewhere else?

Brandon: Bingo. I picked up spinach from a brand I know is based in Toronto. Turns out, it was grown in California. Then, I grabbed a bag of chips from a Canadian company, only to find a "Product of USA" label. Meanwhile, Lays Canada, part of an American snack corporation PepsiCo, actually makes their chips in Canada. How weird is that? The packaging plays mind games with you.

Andrea: Wow. That's such a bait and switch...So much for buying local by default.

Brandon: Right? I ended up pacing up and down aisle five, questioning my entire grocery strategy. What if the product contains lemons? Or salt from overseas? What if the spices aren't grown in Canada? It got deep!

Andrea: I mean, how far did you go? Did you draw a hard line, like, no lemons, no rice, no olive oil?

Brandon: Pretty much. The reality is, though, we're already past the point of no return in terms of a globalized food system and it's not practical for most people to stick to a strictly made-in-Canada diet year-round.

Andrea: Yeah I get that. So what did you end up cooking? Some sort of soup, maybe?

Brandon: No - I made a warm winter salad - root vegetables, beans, some hydroponic lettuce. I even made my own mayonnaise. It actually turned out delicious.

Andrea: Hold up... you made mayo? You're officially on another level.

Brandon: Hey, once you try homemade mayo, it's hard to go back. And it made sense—the salad needed something richer to tie it all together.

Andrea: Okay, sounds fancy. But real talk — was it worth the hassle?

Brandon: Yes and no. The exercise taught me a lot about food systems. We've normalized year-round abundance to the point where seasonality feels obsolete - berries in January, avocados on demand? It's easy to forget that so much of our food is imported.

Andrea: Totally. But isn't that just modern life? I mean, we're all working, running around...That's why convenience wins, even when it contradicts our values.

Brandon: That's fair. I'm not saying everyone needs to live like a pioneer.

Andrea: True. I guess it's more about being mindful than going full locavore. Though I draw the line at giving up lemons.

Brendan: Same. No one's coming for your citrus. But it does get you thinking about seasonality. I mean, greenhouse-grown lettuce from Quebec in winter? It's not as wild as it sounds.

Andrea: I always thought greenhouse stuff was expensive and flavorless.

Brendan: That used to be true, but not anymore. The newer hydroponic farms are stepping it up. Plus, it cuts down on food miles. And it supports local agriculture technology, which is kind of cool.

Andrea: So you think the future's more local?

Brendan: In some ways, yeah. Especially with trade tensions, climate stuff, and general food security. Shorter supply chains mean fewer disruptions, and quicker turnarounds.

Andrea: Hmm... but do you think people will actually go for it?

Brendan: Depends. Some people are already making the switch: shopping at farmers' markets, growing herbs on balconies. But it won't happen overnight. These things take time.

Andrea: So would you do it again?

Brendan: Maybe not every week, but yeah. It stretched my creativity. And weirdly enough, it felt grounding - like I was cooking with a sense of place.

Andrea: That's such a poetic way to put it. Cooking with a sense of place. I like that.

Brendan: It's true, though. There's something special about knowing exactly where your food came from, and that it didn't travel 4,000 kilometres to get to your plate.

-END-