

How to Make a Complaint in a Restaurant

Lindsay: Okay. Hey Molly and Susan. Welcome.

Molly: Hi.

Susan: Thanks.

Lindsay: Okay. Great. So let's get started. So today let's talk about how to make a complaint in a restaurant if you're not happy...

Susan: That's tough.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Molly: That is tough. That's tough in any language.

Susan: (Mm-hm).

Lindsay: That's really tough. So let's talk about the first situation. Let's imagine that you're – you get your food and it's cold when it gets to your table.

Key Vocabulary Phrases

1. "I'm sorry to bother you but the food is quite cold."
2. "Excuse me, this isn't what I ordered."
3. "I'm really sorry to bother you, but we have somewhere to be and it's been a while. Do you think you could check on our food?"
4. "I'm sorry, but I ordered a mild version of this dish and this is quite spicy."

Susan: (Ugh).

Molly: (Um) I think that when it's, when it's cold or something, I generally go with the apologetic pointing something out.

Susan: Yes.

Molly: So it would be more of a "Oh, I'm sorry to bother you, but my food's quite cold."

Susan: Yes, yes. Be like- you could just start in on it and realize it and summon them over right away and just -- at first, yeah, start out with apologizing and then just explain what the problem is.

Molly: Right and you don't actually need to clarify what you would like the solution to be. You can just kind of imply it by saying "My food is cold." You don't have to say "My food is cold, I would like warm food."

Susan: Yes. (Mm-hm).

Molly: It's just enough to, to state the problem clearly.

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Susan: Yes. (Uh-huh), that's correct.

Lindsay: Yeah, that's a really good point because if you're in a decent restaurant, they'll take care of it right?

Susan: Yes, that's true.

Molly: They should be able to take care of it.

Lindsay: So another thing you could say is "Excuse me, I just wanted to let you know that my food is cold," right?

Susan: Yes. (Uh-huh, uh-huh).

Molly: Right. Yeah.

Lindsay: Okay, any others. Anything else that you guys would say?

Molly: (Um) "Is this generally served cold?"

Susan: Yeah.

Molly: If it's like a noodle salad and you're not sure if it's supposed to be a hot noodle...

Susan: Yes, that's true.

Molly: ...salad or a cold noodle salad which is the case some places.

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Susan: Yes, that's true.

Molly: You could say **"I'm sorry is this, is this generally served cold?"**

Susan: (Uh-huh, uh-huh). We also often start out by apologizing even though we had nothing to do with the problem. Say "I'm sorry, (you know), I'm sorry about this," or **"I'm sorry to bother you, but (um) can you help me? My food just came out and it's cold,"** so.

Lindsay: Absolutely. That's perfect. Thank you and then situation number two. So I

don't know if this has ever happened to you guys, but imagine that the server actually brings you the wrong order, something that you just didn't order at all, what would you say?

Susan: I think it's important to say something right away, get their attention because that actually could've been for, (you know), an order for another table and you're gonna (going to) mess up the whole menu and they're gonna (going to) bring out your food to someone else, so it's important to say it right away.

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Molly: Right and, and this is one where I never feel the need to be indirect. I'm just directly, "This isn't what I ordered."

Susan: Yeah, "**Actually, this isn't what I ordered.**"

Molly: Right, right.

Susan: "I ordered the x, y, and the z," so.

Molly: Or if you're, if you're not certain if it doesn't look like what you think you ordered, you could say "**I'm sorry is this the...**"

Susan: Yeah.

Molly: "**...thing that you ordered?**"

Susan: (Uh-huh). That's correct.

Lindsey: Okay. Great. And number three, the food is taking too long. You're sitting there and you're starving and it's been a half an hour or 45 minutes, how would you get things to move along a little faster?

Susan: Yes, I think by just asking, summoning your (uh), your particular wait person. (Um) often, you, you shouldn't summon just any wait person but find your particular wait person because they're the ones who

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really know about your particular order and just ask them **“How much longer do you think it will be? We’ve been here for a little while and I’m just wondering- did something happen with the order? (Um), what’s going on?”**

Molly: Or (you know) (like) **“I, I’m really sorry to bother you but, but we have somewhere to be, it’s been a while. Do you think you could check on our food?”**

Susan: Yes, that’s perfect. (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: Yeah, those are all really great ideas. Thank you and the last situation. Your food tastes bad. Let’s say for

example, it’s too spicy. You asked for a mild version of the dish, but they brought you a super spicy version.

Susan: (Mm-hm, mm-hm). Yeah, that could be a problem.

Molly: Yeah or (you know), I’ve had a situation where there was an ingredient in the dish that I’m allergic to that wasn’t listed...

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Susan: Yes. (Mm-hm).

Molly: ...in the description, (um), so I said, **"I'm, I'm really sorry to bother you but I can't eat this..."**

Susan: Yeah. (Mm-hm).

Molly: ...(you know) (like) because.

Susan: Just -- yeah, you have to be direct and just say **"I'm sorry can you bring me another dish? This isn't what I expected,"** and just explain to them the problem.

Molly: And if the problem really is on their end and if it's not a misunderstanding if it's that you asked for mild and they brought you spicy, you just say it specifically, **"I'm sorry, but I, I ordered a mild version of this dish and this is quite spicy."**

Susan: (Mm-hm). That's right.

Lindsay: Okay. Thanks a lot guys. We have some great ways to complain about a situation in a restaurant. Thank you.

Susan: Sure.

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Molly: Of course.