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What's your favourite flavour of crisp?



This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Neil

Hello, this is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

Beth

And I'm Beth. In Britain we call them crisps and you might know them as potato chips, but whatever you call them, these fried potato slices are probably the world's favourite snack. Neil, are you a big crisp eater and what's your favourite flavour?

Neil

I love crisps, Beth. They are my favourite snack.

Beth

My favourite flavour is prawn cocktail, which is controversial because a lot of people don't like that flavour.

Neil

I think my favourite is salt and vinegar.

Beth

Yummy! You're making me hungry.

Neil

Well, crisps might be popular but with lots of oil and salt they're not the healthiest food. So, why do we love them so much? That's what BBC World Service programme The Food Chain wanted to find out. Here, presenter Ruth Alexander talks to Mitchell Dingwall, a food executive responsible for developing new crisp flavours:

Ruth Alexander

Why do we love crisps so much?

Mitchell Dingwall

Hmm. I think it's just that crunch, right? **You can't beat** the crunch. And then that delicious, salty feeling in your mouth and it just becomes a **snowball effect**. You just want more of it!

Beth

For Mitchell, the best thing about crisps is the loud crunch. He says, "**You can't beat it!**" An idiom meaning something like: "That's the best thing and you won't find anything better!"

Neil

Mitchell says once you've started eating crisps, it's hard to stop and you just want to eat more and more. He calls this a **snowball effect** – a situation where doing something causes other similar things to happen. You eat one crisp and before you know it, the whole packet's gone!

Beth

In this episode, we'll be visiting two countries in love with crisps and, as usual, we'll be learning some useful new words and phrases, all of which you can find on our website, bbclearningenglish.com.

Neil

But first, I have a question for you, Beth. The record for the world's largest packet of crisps was recently broken in Saudi Arabia, but how much did the packet weigh? Was it:

- a) about 1.5 tonnes,
- b) about 2.5 tonnes, or
- c) about 3.5 tonnes?

Beth

OK. Wow! They are all huge! I'm going to guess about 3.5 tonnes.

Neil

OK. We'll find out the answer later. Let's travel first to Singapore, home of Jolene Ng, a market research analyst who specialises in salty snacks. Here's Jolene talking with Ruth Alexander for BBC programme The Food Chain:

Ruth Alexander

Is the potato chip the most popular of all salty snacks?

Jolene Ng

It's very, very much dependent on **personal preference** but if I were to look at certain countries, you could see, like in the UK, it's very much **part and parcel** of life. You don't have it only during snack times. You have it with lunch as well. You put it... My husband's from the UK and he, kind of, puts it in his sandwich as well.

Ruth Alexander

Oh yeah, a cheese sandwich with a crisp inside. Oh yeah, that's great!

Jolene Ng

Exactly!

Beth

Jolene says the popularity of different snacks depends on **personal preference** – someone's subjective liking or disliking for something, based on their personal opinion.

Neil

In some places, crisps are **part and parcel** of everyday life. **Part and parcel** means to be an essential element or feature of something. In Britain, crisps are so essential that people even eat crisp sandwiches!

Beth

But not everywhere is so in love with potato chips. Let's meet Jenny Martinez, a food vlogger from Mexico. In Mexico, tortilla corn chips are eaten instead of potato chips, and it's common to see street vendors selling bags of corn tortillas filled with different sauces. Here, Jenny tells Ruth Alexander more for BBC World Service programme The Food Chain:

Ruth Alexander

For you, which is your **go-to** snack – the tortilla chip or the potato chip?

Jenny Martinez

Definitely the tortilla chip.

Ruth Alexander

Why?

Jenny Martinez

Because you could do so many things – dip it in almost everything, adding some **guacamole**, spicy salsa or just sour cream with a mixture of chipotle sauce.

Neil

Ruth asks if tortillas are Jenny's **go-to** snack. You can use the phrase **go-to** to describe something which is relied upon to be the best thing for a particular purpose. For example, for a lot of people, Wikipedia is the **go-to** website for online information.

Beth

And Jenny thinks corn tortillas are especially good with **guacamole**, a paste made of mashed avocado... which sounds delicious and maybe a little healthier than a British crisp sandwich! Speaking of which, what was the answer to your question, Neil?

Neil

I asked you how heavy the world's largest bag of crisps was.

Beth

And I said very heavy – over three and a half tonnes.

Neil

Well, it's not that big but the real answer is still enormous – about 1.5 tonnes. The bag, made in Riyadh, was nine metres tall.

Beth

Yeah.

Neil

OK. Let's recap the vocabulary we've learned, starting with the phrase **you can't beat that**, meaning that something is the best and you won't find anything better.

Beth

A **snowball effect** is a situation where one action causes other similar actions to happen.

Neil

Someone's **personal preference** is their subjective liking or disliking for something, based on their own opinion.

Beth

To be **part and parcel** of something means to be an essential or integral feature of it.

Neil

And something which is described as the **go-to** can be relied upon as the best thing for a particular situation.

Beth

And finally, **guacamole** is a paste made of mashed avocado, lime juice and salt – delicious! Once again, our six minutes are up but if you're hungry for more, then head over to our website, bbclearningenglish.com, where you'll find a worksheet and quiz for this episode. See you again soon, but for now, goodbye!

Neil

Goodbye!

VOCABULARY

you can't beat that

(idiom) something is the best and you won't find anything better

snowball effect

situation where one action causes many other similar actions to happen

personal preference

an individual's subjective liking or disliking for something, based on their personal taste and opinion

part and parcel

(idiom) essential feature or element of something

go-to

relied upon to be the best thing for a particular purpose or situation

guacamole

paste made of mashed avocado, lime juice and salt



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