

C2.1
Unit 6
Exercise 1

For questions 1–8, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap.

The Language of Taste

Food critics have long noted that describing flavour is an art form in itself. A dish can be slightly spicy or utterly bland, mildly sweet or absolutely delicious. Yet many learners of English use intensifiers rather **1** _____, producing combinations like completely tasty or very exquisite, which sound unnatural to native speakers.

Take the example of curry: one might be fairly hot or extremely hot, but to say utterly hot is **2** _____ wrong. Similarly, desserts are rarely utterly sweet, but they can be overly sweet or incredibly sweet. The key lies in understanding which adverbs collocate **3** _____ with which adjectives.

International cuisine also reflects cultural expectations. In French gastronomy, presentation is highly elaborate; in Japanese sushi, flavour is subtly delicate; while in Mexican cooking, spices are intensely aromatic. To call sushi deeply delicate, however, would sound **4** _____ absurd.

Moreover, the adjectives themselves matter. Disgusting and revolting are extreme adjectives, and therefore they collocate with absolutely or utterly, not with very. One might say utterly revolting stew, but not very revolting stew. These distinctions require **5** _____ attention if one hopes to sound authentic when writing restaurant reviews.

Consider also the language of hospitality. In Italian culture, it is warmly welcoming, not utterly welcoming. In Indian cuisine, a feast might be truly unforgettable, not slightly unforgettable. Misusing these patterns often gives an impression of **6** _____ exaggeration rather than genuine appreciation.

Food writing at the highest level demands precision. Reviewers are expected to be acutely sensitive to nuance: a soup may be slightly bitter but richly satisfying. This linguistic sensitivity is, **7** _____ speaking, what separates a professional critic from an amateur blogger.

Ultimately, cuisine is more than sustenance; it is language, culture, and metaphor. To master the idiom of flavour is to capture the essence of a nation's soul. And for that, there can be **8** _____ substitute.

1	A	randomly	B	wrongly	C	inaccurately	D	carelessly
2	A	strongly	B	utterly	C	flatly	D	entirely
3	A	closely	B	firmly	C	strongly	D	appropriately
4	A	vaguely	B	faintly	C	utterly	D	highly
5	A	detailed	B	strong	C	high	D	careful
6	A	overblown	B	enormous	C	excessive	D	vast
7	A	largely	B	closely	C	broadly	D	carefully
8	A	no	B	any	C	little	D	some

Exercise 2

Fill in the gap with the appropriate vocabulary from the word list below.

1. Here's a great way to turn half a pound of prunes into _____ little pastries to eat warm with crème fraîche.
2. I became an avid cleaner overnight after finding icebergs of _____ milk in the sink.
3. I like the _____ taste of venison.
4. The service was great but the meal was *a little* _____ for a Thai restaurant.
5. The fruit has a tart and _____ flavor.
6. The meat ends up juicy and _____, the gravy rich with a hint of sweetness and the carrots have bite.
7. Duck was served orgiastically and sweet yams in an otherworldly _____ sauce.
8. The next day, he was pleasantly surprised to find out what a _____ dessert he had created.
9. The odour and taste are mild; one field guide suggests it has a distinctive lemony _____.
10. Savoury and _____, the soup was a hit with everyone at the tasting.

Word List

rancid
delectable
bland
astringent
gamy
luscious
scrumptious
ambrosial
tang
sapid

Exercise 3

For questions 1–12, choose the correct option (A, B, C or D) that best completes the sentence, using collocations, set expressions and idioms related to food and restaurants.

1. The chef's new dish turned out to be a complete disaster; it was so bad that the critics said it was a real _____.
A) bread and butter
B) dog's dinner
C) piece of cake
D) big cheese
2. Although the restaurant is expensive, dining there is worth it — the experience is truly the _____ on the cake.
A) sugar
B) banana
C) cream
D) icing
3. When the waiter spilled soup on her, she remained calm and didn't make a _____ out of it.
A) storm in a teacup
B) tough nut to crack
C) small fry
D) red herring
4. The review praised the restaurant's signature dish, calling it _____ delicious.
A) absolutely
B) very
C) rather
D) fairly
5. He is so unreliable; you really need to take whatever he says with a _____ of salt.
A) pinch
B) spoon
C) drop
D) slice

6. The hotel's breakfast buffet was so _____ with options that guests could barely choose.
A) poorly stocked
B) sparsely filled
C) richly laden
D) lightly packed
7. She's been working in that café for years, but it's just her _____ — what she does to pay the bills.
A) icing on the cake
B) bread and butter
C) half-baked idea
D) big cheese
8. The steak was cooked to perfection, but the side salad looked rather _____ in comparison.
A) mouth-watering
B) underdone
C) half-baked
D) unappetising
9. When asked about the failed recipe, the chef admitted he had bitten off more than he could _____.
A) eat
B) cook
C) chew
D) taste
10. The food critic's review was brutally honest; he described the dessert as "a half-_____ attempt at innovation."
A) boiled
B) baked
C) fried
D) cooked
11. The restaurant's business model is based on quick service and modest prices — nothing fancy, just plain _____ food.
A) staple
B) essential
C) fast
D) common

12. The negotiation over the contract was intense, but in the end, the new restaurant owner got the _____ of the deal.
- A) thick end
 - B) fat end
 - C) thin end
 - D) short end