ACTIVITY 11
READING

INSTRUCTIONS: *Read the article below.*

HOW TO EAT STREET FOOD WITHOUT GETTING SICK



In my decade of nomadic travel, one of the most frequent questions from readers was very straightforward: how can I try delicious food from around the world without getting sick? I've received this question from readers all over, and often about street food.

My food journey may have begun with restrictions on eating, mainly when diagnosed with celiac disease; but it inhabits a wide open space of curiosity. Food is the most intensive and rewarding lens I used to learn about a new place, and staying curious about why dishes are prepared a certain way, or how ingredients are used, led me to experience destinations differently. Therefore, these are:

My tips for eating street food without getting sick

Everyone tells you to eat at the stalls with the longest line of locals. This is still good advice! But I always add that it's important to look at *who* is in line, so I try to opt for street stalls with both women and children in line. For sure, it is where you want to go.

For a cheap lunch, go to the local university and find a place nearby to eat. Students are a hungry bunch, and often the funniest variations pop up there. In Saigon, "pho burgers" were present but so were cheap stalls that served local favorites to a rotating cast of students. The meal will be local, fast, cheap, and usually delicious.

I have more control over a street stall when I see how food and money are handled. If someone is touching the money and then the raw ingredients, I don't eat there. If there are plastic gloves for food-making, then they are kept on for handling money: it's a miss. For two-party stalls often one person will be in charge of the cash and cooking, and the other preparation. This is a good: they are kept separate.

Cutlery must be washed to avoid contamination.

Cutlery can be a source of bacteria even if the food is safe and fresh. I carry baby wipes with me for older wooden chopsticks that look like they need a wipedown, or for utensils that don't seem well-washed. It will get you some weird looks but it can be helpful to ensure the cutlery is clean.

Try to mimic the local food times for their meals. I realize that 6 pm dinners or 11 am lunches don't fit the usual meal patterns for most, but it can be very helpful for your stomach if that's when locals eat. This is especially important when dishes are cooked and set out buffet style, as you'd want to eat them when they are fresh and before bacteria can form as the food cools.

Adapted from Legal Nomads (Ettenberg, 2024).

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1. **Label the paragraphs with the correct headings.**
2. **Look at the example of one labelled heading.**

~~Cutlery must be washed to avoid contamination.~~

Take advantage of a transparent kitchen: street stalls!

Check out the length of the queues.

What time do locals eat? That's when you want to be eating.

Go back to school at lunchtime.

3. **Tick (√) the affirmations from the text.**

Despite others' weird looks, you can clean your cutlery with baby wipes to avoid contamination.

A 'Pho burger' is an example of a cheap and local university lunch in Saigon.

A street stall is safe when the same person makes the dish and handles money with plastic gloves.

Eating street food is safe when you wait in long queues with children and women.

Aligning meal schedules with locals is not necessary for buffet-style dishes.

Food is the gateway of local people, new places, and new dishes.

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