

## A No-Joke Fruit Cake.

Recently, when I went back to England, I indulged in(1) something that I don't often get to indulge in; fruit cake. It might not seem very important, in fact, it might seem like a joke, depending on where you come from. Here in the U.S, for some reason, fruit cake is a joke. People joke about receiving a fruit cake at Christmas, and then trying to find a secret way of disposing of (2) it: put it in someone's mailbox, disguise it as a pet, or leave it in a basket outside a hospital.....I've even heard of a book called 'One hundred and one ways to get rid of(3) a fruit cake.' Well, this is all a new experience for me. I love fruit cake. But, then again, there's fruit cake and there's fruit cake(4). Maybe the problem is that people here have never had a decent one. In England fruit cake is on the essential list when it comes to(5) baked goods. The recipe originates in Roman times, and was changed a little in the Middle Ages. Traditionally, it is made with wheat, and loaded with(6) dried fruit, nuts, and brandy. It's just the thing(7), after a long walk, with a slice of quality cheese and a cup of tea. And that is how I ate it in Yorkshire with my sister. We had been for a long walk through a forest and fields, to a panoramic (8)viewpoint. Then we walked back to a cafe that is actually a converted farmhouse. It was a warm, rock building, with wooden tables, views of the fields, and the smells of a bakery.

1. 'To indulge in' often means to eat or drink something that is quite special, though it can also be used as 'to experience' with some non-eating activities. You can miss out the word 'in' if the object is not mentioned. 'To indulge oneself' is used as 'to treat oneself'.

- a. We indulged in the most delicious chocolate cake I've ever had.
- b. They over-indulged at the New Year's party, and felt ill the next day.
- c. I indulged myself in the spa with a manicure, pedicure, and a facial.

2. 'To dispose of' is the same as 'to throw away' or 'to get rid of'.

- a. Dispose of old batteries responsibly: take them to a recycling center.
- b. He disposed of the evidence; he threw it in the sea.
- c. The waste disposal is in the sink (machine that liquefies food waste).

3. 'To get rid of' is an English expression that is very common:

- a. Could you just get rid of that old pair of shoes?
- b. What did you do with the car? Answer: I got rid of it.
- c. What should we do with the corrupt politicians? Answer: Get rid of them!

4. 'There's fruit cake and there's fruit cake.' Why did I make this repetition? What does it mean? It means that there is good fruit cake, or real fruit cake, and there is also bad, or not real fruit cake. You can use this repetition about anything. Sometimes the word 'then' is used in the middle of the comparison to emphasize the contrast in quality. If you really want to contrast one with the other, you can also add an adjective in front of the second object.

- a. My mother doesn't like hamburgers. But, you know, there are hamburgers and (then) there are hamburgers.
- b. That shop says that it sells antiques. Well, there are antiques and then there are antiques.
- c. There are tires and then there are quality tires.

5. 'When it comes to...' is similar in sense to 'on the subject of' or 'while we're talking about...'

- a. It's always best to double check your plans when it comes to traveling.

- b. When it comes to baked goods, we should always use quality ingredients.
  - c. When it comes to the house, I think we spent too much money.
6. 'To be loaded with' or 'to load with' is, again, a very English sounding, common expression that can be used for more or less anything.
- a. They loaded my plate with chips; there were far too many.
  - b. His car is loaded with all kinds of junk.
  - c. This cereal is loaded with iron.
7. 'It's just the thing' is an odd expression that means 'it's the perfect thing'.
- a. Ah! A hot bath is just the thing when you're cold.
  - b. Some discipline is just the thing for lazy people.
  - c. My muscles ached after work, so I took an aspirin, and it was just the thing.
8. 'Panoramic' is a difficult word to say, so let's practice it.
- a. Pan -o-ramic, pan-o-ramic, pan-o-ramic.
  - b. That photo is panoramic; you can see the whole view.
  - c. My camera has a panoramic setting.

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