

### Preparations for a barbecue.

One of the things I like most about Summer is barbecuing. As a person who cooks all the time, it's so nice to have a break from the kitchen, and to do some rapid, easy clean-up cooking on the barby. Over here, it's often the men who are in charge of barbecuing the meat; it's like a tradition. However, because of its convenience, I take over often, and get everything prepared before anyone else turns up. The other day, when I went grocery shopping, I stocked up\* on sauces that I can use for marinading different meats and fish to keep my barbecues interesting. I bought an Asian ginger sauce, a Teriaki, a smoky barbecue sauce, and an Indian marinade. That should keep meals interesting for a while. I also bought a packet of wooden skewers onto which I can put all sorts of vegetables. So, now I'm prepared, with a fridge full of meat and vegetables, and also the freezer. "What's for dinner?" no longer has to be an annoying question. Part of getting prepared is making sure that there is enough propane in the gas canister. If that is empty, then dinner is not going to happen. So, I took a trip to the local DIY store (which is short for do-it-yourself). In its gardening department, it has an area that is reserved for propane. And, what makes it interesting is that you serve yourself. First, there is a machine which accepts your credit card for payment. You swipe\* your card, as you do in shops nowadays. Then, an automated\* voice talks to you, giving you instructions on how to retrieve your propane. From a large set of cages, one of them opens automatically, and the voice says, "Place your empty canister in cage number 23." So, you follow directions. Then, once you shut the cage door, the voice says, "Retrieve your new canister from cage number 42," and so you do. And there you have it, an easy, human-free transaction. I felt a little strange photographing the cages afterwards, as if the automated machine would suddenly say to me, "Hey, what do you think you're doing, lady?" So I took the picture, took my propane, and left quickly.

### Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary and phrases: to stock up, to swipe, automated, d-i-y

1. We stocked up on Australian wine when it was on sale.
2. Swipe your credit card to complete the purchase.
3. The car wash is automated; there are no workers to be seen anywhere.
4. I need to go to the d-i-y store to buy a closet building kit.

