

Convenience Food.

Oh, what will I make for dinner? There's nothing for dessert; what could I quickly make? It's a real pain when the evening has already begun, and my plans for dinner have been delayed for whatever reason. When that happens, I look around in the fridge, hoping to stumble across something substantial that can quickly be cooked. Or, sometimes, mid-afternoon at the weekend, if we are at home, everybody fancies something sweet, like cookies. Yes, of course, I could make some, and sometimes I do. However, it's becoming easier now to reach for a packet of this or a box of that, and whip up some convenience food. When I go to the supermarket, and read labels of different products, I find that I get a general view of the kinds of products out there. In the past, convenience food was made from very refined and artificial ingredients. However, I am finding that there are more and more healthier options on the market. People are beginning to get more of what they want: convenient *real* food. Let's take cookies for an example. The packets or tubes of cookie dough that were available usually had hydrogenated oils, super refined sugar, coloring, flavoring etc etc. Now, you have a choice. There are some convenience foods that have what we call 'whole' foods. I picked up a packet of ready-made cookie dough the other day, and was very pleased to read the ingredients: organic flour, sugar, eggs, butter, chocolate, oats. The list was short, and nothing on it annoyed me. Great! I'll keep that in the fridge this week, and when 'crunch time' comes, I can whip it out, throw it into the oven, and voila, please everyone. It's all about saving time, for me. And I'm sure that the marketers realize that. Making everything from scratch in the kitchen is ideal, but it can take away a lot of time from other activities. Life is certainly different from when my mother was a child. You used to have to warm up your irons, and then iron almost every piece of clothing in the house. Nowadays, you can buy tumble dryers that have settings you can choose to avoid having to iron your clothes. And it's the same with cooking. Instead of having to gather eggs, and milk cows, and cook all the food, now we can cook if we want to, and supplement that with pre-bought, ready to eat food, that is actually food. It might cost a little extra, but it's great to have choices.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: to fancy something, to whip up, to whip out, hydrogenated oil.

1. I fancy some extra rich chocolate cake.
2. Could you whip up some eggs for breakfast, please?
3. All of a sudden, the man whipped out a gun from inside his coat. A passer-by jumped on him and seized it.
4. Hydrogenated oil is oil that has had hydrogen pumped through it, which makes it thicker.

