

BBC Learning English

6 Minute English

Prison restaurants

NB: This is not an accurate word-for-word transcript



Dan: Hello and welcome to this week's 6 Minute English. I'm Dan Walker Smith and today I'm joined by Callum.

Callum: Hi Dan.

Dan: Now today we're talking about a new restaurant in Britain. So I want to ask you Callum, where's the strangest place you've ever eaten a meal?

Callum: Well I don't think I've eaten in any particularly strange places. I've eaten in a restaurant on top of a mountain; I've eaten in a restaurant on a beach. It's not particularly strange, but I suppose that's the most unusual, not-everyday kind of place I've eaten.

Dan: OK, well you might be interested in a new restaurant, which has just opened in a **prison** just outside London. The restaurant, Clink, is both a canteen – or dining hall – for prison staff and a four-star restaurant for the public. According to the founder, the quality of food is as good as some of the best restaurants in London.

Callum: Well that's interesting. I like the name – Clink – because 'clink' is a slang name in English for a prison. But it also has that kind of a posh name that you might get for a restaurant in London – 'Clink'.

Dan: Exactly, exactly. So you might be tempted to go there?

Callum: Well I don't know about that.

Dan: Well, let me tell you about it. But first, we've got this week's question for you. According to the International Centre for Prison Studies, how many people worldwide are currently serving **prison sentences**? A **sentence** is the word for a punishment given out by the courts for a crime. So a prison sentence is, of course, a punishment spent inside prison. So is it:

- a) 9 million
- b) 15 million
- c) 22 million

...people serving prison sentences?

Callum: Well this is just going to have to be a guess, Dan. I think 9 million sounds a little bit low. Fifteen or 22? I don't know. I'm going to go for 22 million. I'm going to go for the high number, 'cos in many countries I think there are lots of people in prison.

Dan: And we'll see if you're right at the end of the programme. Now let's hear from the British journalist Sheila Dillon, telling us about the decision to open a restaurant in the prison. She describes the present economic situation as '**gloomy**'. What does she mean by that Callum?

Callum: If something is described as being **gloomy** it means it's dark, depressing or unhappy. So when she says that we're in '**gloomy economic times**', she means that the financial situation is not very good. So have a listen to the extract; what term does she use to describe the restaurant?

Extract 1

In these gloomy economic times, it takes a brave man to open a restaurant. But it takes more than bravery to open one behind prison walls. Yet two weeks ago, the most exclusive restaurant in Britain opened for business.

Dan: OK, so she describes the restaurant as **exclusive**. What does she mean by that Callum?

Callum: Well, **exclusive** in this context means it's only for a particular select group of people. An **exclusive** restaurant is usually one that's only for very rich people or for private members, for example. But here the restaurant is **exclusive** because it's in a prison; and you can't really get much more **exclusive** than that.

Dan: The food is prepared and served by the **prisoners** or **inmates**. These are the people who are serving a **sentence** in the prison.

Callum: The **prisoners** receive training in cooking and hospitality, and cook meals using local ingredients and vegetables grown inside the jail.

Dan: The idea is that they can use these skills to help them get jobs after they leave prison.

Callum: The restaurant, Clink, isn't open to the public; you have to be invited. But it is designed to look and feel like top-class restaurant. The quality of the food has a very good reputation apparently, and a number of people from the food industry have now visited Clink to see if they want to hire ex-prisoners.

Dan: Now let's hear the prison's governor, Peter Dawson, talking about how this project could reduce crime. He argues that by providing skills for employment, you can lower the risk people committing crimes after they're released from prison.

Callum: Listen out for the word **resettlement**. To **resettle** means to move to another place or **relocate**. So in this case, **resettlement** means preparing the **inmates** for life after prison. What does he say the project allows the prisoners to do?

Extract 3

This is about resettlement; this is not about being nice to people for its own sake. This is about reducing the risk of crime when people are released and allowing people who have made a personal commitment to do it, to change their lives.

Callum: He says the restaurant scheme can reduce crime as it allows ex-prisoners to change their lives, rather than return to crime.

Dan: Well it sounds like an interesting approach to me. But we're almost out of time, unfortunately, so let's go over some of the vocabulary we've come across today:

sentence

gloomy

exclusive

prisoner

inmate

resettlement

Dan: And let's go back to today's question. I asked you Callum how many people in the world are officially serving a **prison sentence** at the moment?

Callum: Well I took a guess at 22 million.

Dan: And you're way about the mark there Callum. Actually it's 9 million people in the world serving a prison sentence.

Callum: Really?

Dan: Which I still think is quite high. I still think that's a big number.

Callum: Well it's a big world!

Dan: It's a big world, this is true! But there are some interesting figures in this. Half of the world's prisoners, half of that 9 million, are in the US, in Russia, or in China.

And across the world, men are apparently eight times as likely to spend time in prison than women.

So from all of us here at BBC Learning English, thanks for listening, and goodbye!

Callum: Goodbye!