



Coffee and Conversation for ESL Listening

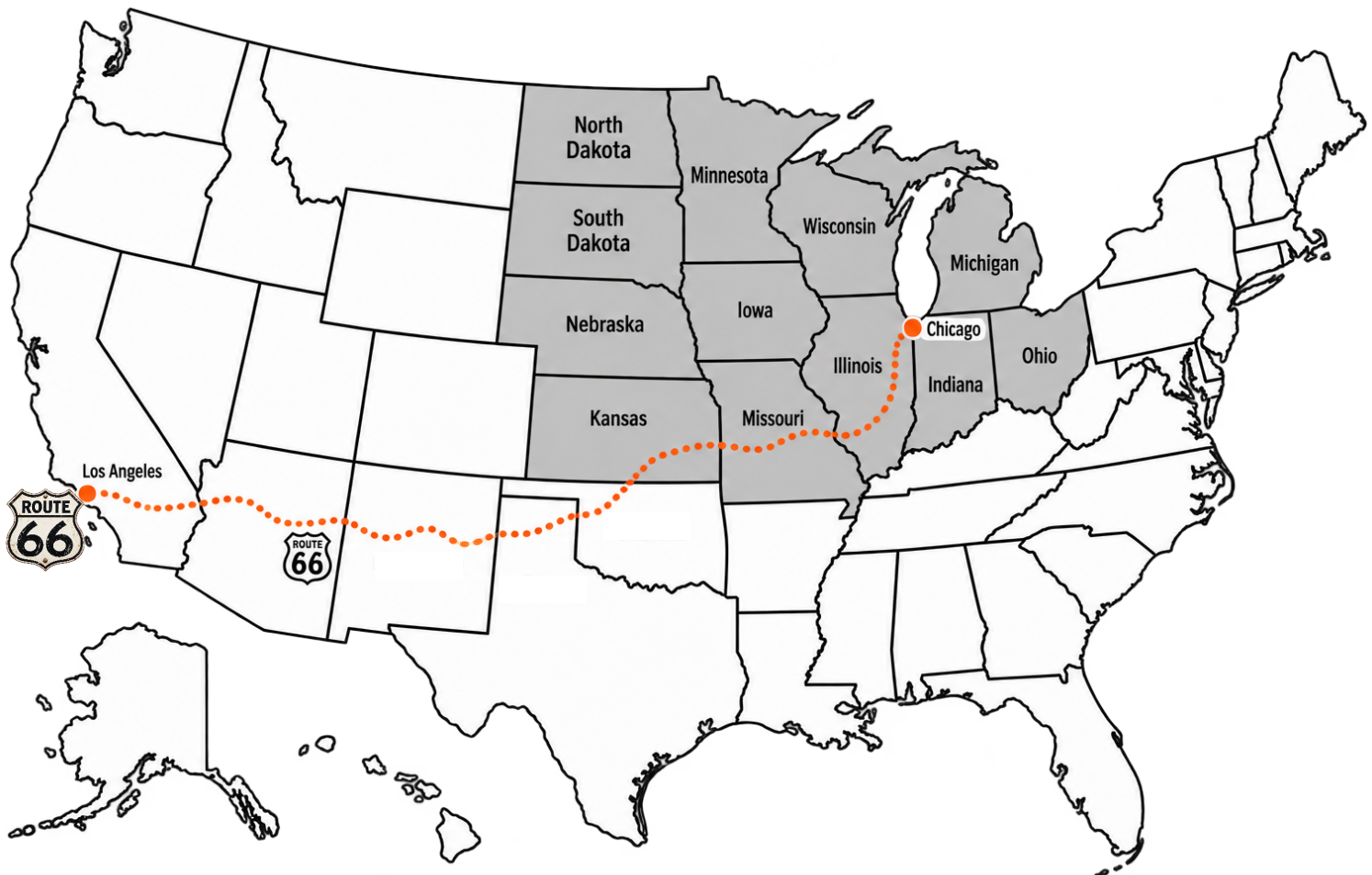


with Donielle and Khrystyna

Episode 49: Exploring the U.S – The Midwest

Hi! If this is your first time listening to our podcast, this is an opportunity for upper-level English learners to practice listening skills and learn new vocabulary by listening to authentic conversations.

In today's episode Donielle and Khrystyna discuss the culture, food, traditions, and everyday life of the American Midwest. **Here is an overview of the Midwest region and highlighting Route 66:**



Did you know...?

You can also read the [transcript](#) for this episode.



The Midwest is often called
America's Heartland.



Chicago
is the largest city in the Midwest.



Much of the Midwest is part of the
Corn Belt, one of America's major farming regions.



The Midwest is known for having
4 very distinct seasons.

See the following pages for vocabulary and language focus from this episode.



Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

eve	the day or evening before an event. Friday Eve is not really an official expression, but it was rather used in a humorous way. Traditionally, we refer to Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.
have off	not have to work or attend school on a particular day. • We <u>have</u> Fridays <u>off</u> in the summer.
Knicks	a professional basketball team from New York City
westward expansion	the movement of people across the United States toward the western part of the country during the 1800s
make [one's] way	travel or move toward a destination, especially if it involves time or effort • The Midwest Goodbye is tough because once you've <u>made your way</u> to the door, you get stuck there another hour of conversation.
touch on [sthg]	briefly discuss or mention • We <u>touched on</u> several interesting topics during our conversation..
that doesn't count	that should not be included or accepted • I've visited 7 states in the Midwest; Ohio <u>doesn't count</u> because we only drove through it.
dumped	fell in a large amount over a short period of time • It snowed all night and <u>dumped</u> nearly a foot of snow on the town.
pumpkin patch	a farm or field where people go to pick pumpkins
hayride	a ride on a wagon or trailer filled with hay, usually pulled by a tractor
orchard	a place where fruit trees are grown • We spent the afternoon picking apples in an <u>orchard</u> .
bushel	a large container or unit used to measure fruits and vegetables • We picked a <u>bushel</u> of apples to take home.
fritter	a small fried pastry, often filled with fruit
sweater weather	weather that is cool enough to wear a sweater comfortably • Fall is my favorite season because it's finally <u>sweater weather</u> .
chunky sweater	a thick knitted sweater made from heavy yarn
hot apple cider	a warm drink made from apples, often served in the fall • We drank <u>hot apple cider</u> after walking through the orchard.
pumpkin spice latte	a coffee drink flavored with pumpkin spices, especially popular in autumn
getaway	a short vacation or trip • We planned a weekend <u>getaway</u> to the mountains.
down-to-earth	practical, friendly, and easy to relate to • People in rural, midwestern towns are thought to be very <u>down-to-earth</u> .
reception	the way a person is greeted, welcomed, or reacted to by others • You tend to get a warmer <u>reception</u> in the rural areas than in a big city.

Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation - Cont'd

extraneous	something external, irrelevant, or not directly connected to what you're doing • <i>It was difficult to edit out certain <u>extraneous</u> noises, such as my cat's meows.</i>
be in the mix	be actively involved or included in an activity • <i>My cat always wants to be <u>in the mix</u>.</i>
thigh	the upper part of the leg between the hip and the knee • <i>The "Midwest goodbye" begins with a slap on the <u>thigh</u>, an "ope," and the classic phrase "Welp, I spose I'd better go"</i>
for the road	take something to eat or drink before leaving or to bring on a trip • <i>My grandmother always gave us cookies <u>for the road</u> before we left.</i>
on a mission	focused on reaching a goal as quickly as possible • <i>She was <u>on a mission</u> to finish her shopping before the stores closed.</i>
get on (one's) nerves	annoy someone • <i>If you're used to the fast pace of the city, slow walkers can <u>get on your nerves</u>.</i>
hit on [a topic]	mention or begin discussing a topic or idea • <i>We <u>hit on</u> several interesting ideas during the meeting.</i>
peninsula	a piece of land surrounded by water on three sides • <i>Michigan is made up of 2 <u>peninsulas</u>.</i>
cheese curds	small pieces of fresh cheddar cheese before it is pressed into blocks
rave about [something]	talk about something with great enthusiasm • <i>People <u>rave about</u> their pizza, but I think other places have better pizza.</i>
hit [a place]	go to or visit a place • <i>We made sure to <u>hit</u> a few apple orchards when we went to Michigan.</i>
beer-battered	coated in a mixture made with beer before being fried
cook down	simmer a liquid containing wine, beer, or liquor so that the alcohol and water evaporate, but the flavor remains
cut [someone] some slack	be less critical or more forgiving • <i>We don't have hundreds of years of cheesemaking history like France does, so <u>cut us some slack</u>.</i>
rivalry	a continuing competition between people, teams, businesses, etc. • <i>The <u>rivalry</u> between New York and Chicago extends to pizza, with each city claiming its style is the best.</i>
married [to something]	inflexible or strong attachment to a thing or idea • <i>I'm not <u>married to</u> any particular type of pizza.</i>
sparsely	with very few people or things in an area • <i>North Dakota is so <u>sparsely</u> populated that you can drive for miles without seeing another town.</i>
Big 10 Schools	schools that form the oldest & largest collegiate athletic conference in the U.S
casserole	a main dish made by baking several ingredients together in one pan • <i>a hot dish is a traditional comfort food <u>casserole</u> from the upper Midwest region. It typically combines a starch, a meat, a vegetable, and a creamy canned soup.</i>

Cultural Note: Regional Food Favorites

Here are some of the regional foods mentioned in the episode:



Join the Conversation

- Before listening to this episode, what did you already know about the American Midwest? Which cities can you name in the Midwestern states below? Which would you most like to visit?
 - Illinois
 - Indiana
 - Iowa
 - Ohio
 - Michigan
 - Wisconsin
 - Minnesota
 - Missouri
 - Kansas
 - Nebraska
 - North Dakota
 - South Dakota
- What regional foods were mentioned in the episode? Have you tried any of them, or would you like to?
- Does your country have regions with very different cultures, accents, or traditions? Are there any foods that are specific to your region?
- Are there any regions in your country that you think more people should visit? Why?
- If someone visited your hometown, what are three places you would recommend they see?
- Which local tradition or festival in your country would you recommend to visitors?
- What is the best season for visitors to experience where you live?
- When you travel, do you prefer exploring busy cities or relaxing in quieter places?
- **BONUS:** If you could ask Donielle & Khrystyna one question about the Midwest, what would it be?

Thanks for checking out our podcast!

We are enjoying these discussions, and we hope that you are finding them helpful!



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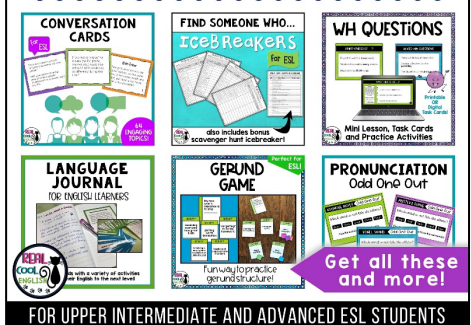
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