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Learning the Local Lingo

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Journals from Deakin University

2011-03-08 Learning the Local Lingo

I was prepared for some cultural adjustment when I arrived in Australia, but I wasn't expecting to need a dictionary! Though English is the native language, there are times when the Aussies speak and I have no idea what they're saying. The accents can certainly muddle my comprehension, but it's their vocabulary that really throws me for a loop. Below is a silly story I wrote to show some of the crazy ways I've heard Aussies express themselves…

It was already two in the *arvo*, but Gary was just waking up from a restless night. He stumbled down the stairs and into the kitchen where his *mate* Dave was cooking up some *chook*.

"You're looking quite *feral* this morning," Dave laughed. "Are you *keen f*or some late *brekky*? I'm making some *vegemite on toast* and *rashers*. I've got some *tomato sauce* for the rashers if you like."

"Nah, I don't think I could handle it," Gary replied. "I had some really *dodgy* *spag bol* for *tea*last night and I'm not feeling so hot."

"I bet all the *goon* you drank didn't help the situation."

Gary rolled his eyes and trudged back to his room to get ready for *uni*. To his dismay, he'd completely misread his *timetable* and realized that he only had 20 minutes before class started. He ran back downstairs to beg Dave for a ride to uni since there was no way the bus would get him there on time.

"Sorry mate,"Dave said, "but the *big smoke* is the complete opposite direction for me. I've got to drive my *ute*to *woop woop* to pick-up a shipment of *kiwi fruit.*"

"Looks like I'm skipping lectures today," Gary said sadly.

"Cheer up, mate," Dave said while patting Gary on the back. "I've got an extra ticket for the *Collinwood/St. Kilda footie match* tonight and I'm giving it to you. I'm having a *barbie*beforehand and I've invited a *pommie shelia*over to meet you."

"*Fair dinkum*? That sounds *fab*. Anything I can do to help out?"

"We need some bread*and some *coldies*." Dave replied

"*Toats*, I'll run over to the *bottle-o* and *milkbar*and stock up."

It might have been a rough morning, but now Gary was sure that *apples she would be*.

----------Arvo: afternoon

Mate: friend (used all the time)
Chook: chicken
Feral: disheveled
Keen: very common way of expressing interest or desire. "I'm keen to see that movie."
Brekky: breakfast – even restaurants call it this
Vegemite: concentrated yeast extract. The Aussies love it! I haven't met one who didn't. Personally, I find it tastes like a dirty salt.
Rashers: bacon

Tomato sauce: ketchup – all the Americans have been made fun of for asking for “ketchup”
Dodgy: questionable
Spag Bol: spaghetti bolognaise
Tea: dinner – I asked why it’s called this and no one has any idea
Goon: cheap wine that comes boxed and in a plastic sac, it’s about all uni students can afford
Uni: college - I learned quickly that I cannot say school or college. “School” stops when students leave high school and sometimes high school is called college.
Big smoke: the city
Ute: pick-up truck
Woop woop: a town far from a big city
Kiwi fruit: not just kiwi, you must say kiwi fruit
Footie: Australian rules football is so different than any game I’ve ever seen played. It’s like a combination of basketball, rugby, soccer, and football. Colinwood and St.Kilda are two of the Mebourne based teams
Barbie: BBQ
Fair dinkum: really? Are you serious?
Fab: fabulous. Aussies love to shorten their words
*Bread: for some strange reason Aussies don’t use buns for their burgers or sausages. You just wrap bread around your choice of meat instead…
Coldies: beer
Toats: definitely
Bottle-o: Liquor store
Milkbar: convenience store
Apples she would/will be: It would/will be all right
Enjoy everyone!

-Elisabeth