Porridge gets a cosy comeback in Britain

LEVEL A2/B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What do you usually eat for breakfast?
2. How do you keep warm on a cold morning?
3. Do you follow any food trends? Which ones?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

porridge
a hot breakfast made by cooking oats in water or milk

oats
a grain often used for porridge and granola

fibre
parts of plant food that help your digestion

topping
food put on top of a dish to add flavour

recipe
instructions that tell you how to cook a dish

bakery
a shop or place that makes and sells baked goods

cholesterol
a type of fat in the blood that can affect health

trend
a fashion or idea that becomes popular

III. READING

Porridge is back in fashion in the UK. The trend is driven by health and nostalgia. On social media, new recipes add rich toppings. At 26 Grains in London, a five-grain porridge comes with fig, red grape jam and whipped cream. At Oatis in west London, toppings include caramelised banana with tahini.

Fans point to fibre. The NHS says adults should eat 30g of fibre a day. The British Dietetic Association says the average is 18g. Oats contain soluble fibre that supports gut health and may reduce cholesterol. At Ocado, searches for organic jumbo oats are up 98%. Sales of White's jumbo oats are up 56%.

Porridge also invites personal taste. Hedié Rhodes runs the bakery Husk & Honey and sells porridge blends. She says people enjoy choosing flavours. On the Isle of Skye, Café Cùil soaks pinhead oats and finishes with seasonal toppings. Its founder Clare Coghill judged 86 bowls at the porridge championship in the Scottish Highlands.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "'Comfort in a bowl': porridge hotter than...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What two forces are driving porridge's comeback?
2. Name one creative topping mentioned in the article.
3. How much fibre should adults eat per day, according to the NHS?
4. Which supermarket saw searches for organic jumbo oats rise 98%?
5. Where did Clare Coghill judge 86 bowls of porridge?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Do you eat porridge? How do you like to make it?
2. Which topping would you choose and why?
3. Should cafés offer more fibre-rich options? Why or why not?
4. Do you prefer cooking at home or trying new café recipes?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Should / ought to

Use should/ought to to give advice or recommendations. Form: should/ought to + base verb (eat, choose).

"The NHS says adults **should eat** *30g of fibre a day."*
"People **ought to choose** *high-fibre oats."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with should/ought to + the verb in brackets.

1. Shoppers (read) ___ labels when buying oats.
2. At cafés, you (try) ___ new porridge flavours.
3. People (reduce) ___ sugar in sweet toppings.
4. Fans (not/add) ___ too much whipped cream.
5. Beginners (start) ___ with plain oats first.

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 10–12 minutes reading, 8 minutes comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check: porridge, oats, fibre, topping, recipe, bakery, cholesterol, tahini. Bring a photo of a porridge bowl to anchor meaning.
- Run the reading as a jigsaw: half the class highlights health facts and numbers; the other half notes places, people and toppings. Pair to share, then quick whole-class checks. No sensitive content expected.
- For discussion, start with a quick show of hands (who eats porridge), then pair work. Encourage reasons (taste, cost, health). If students are shy, let them point to toppings in a picture menu before speaking.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. If answers are short, ask follow-ups on milk type, oats, or cooking time to extend.
2. List toppings on the board and have students rank their top three in pairs.
3. Split the room: yes/no. Have each side give two reasons, then switch partners.
4. Prompt details: price, time, and comfort. Ask for one example from recent life.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write a 70-word café menu entry for a new porridge bowl with toppings.

Survey: Students poll five classmates on breakfast habits, then make a 4-sentence class summary.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Should / ought to

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What two forces are driving porridge's comeback?
   Health and nostalgia.
2. Name one creative topping mentioned in the article.
   For example, fig and red grape jam with whipped cream, or caramelised banana with tahini.
3. How much fibre should adults eat per day, according to the NHS?
   30 grams a day.
4. Which supermarket saw searches for organic jumbo oats rise 98%?
   Ocado.
5. Where did Clare Coghill judge 86 bowls of porridge?
   At the porridge championship in the Scottish Highlands.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use should/ought to to give advice or recommendations. Form: should/ought to + base verb (eat, choose). (Example 2 constructed.)

> *"The NHS says adults* **should eat** *30g of fibre a day."*
> *"People* **ought to choose** *high-fibre oats."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with should/ought to + the verb in brackets.

1. Shoppers ___ labels when buying oats. **should/ought to read**
2. At cafés, you ___ new porridge flavours. **should/ought to try**
3. People ___ sugar in sweet toppings. **should/ought to reduce**
4. Fans ___ too much whipped cream. **shouldn't/ought not to add**
5. Beginners ___ with plain oats first. **should/ought to start**