

There'll Always be an England.



John Smith was a real old-fashioned Englishman who worked in an office in Newcastle. He liked everything that was English and criticised everything that was not. His colleagues liked him, but thought he was a bit difficult to work with.

One day last year, the staff decide to gout together for a meal and, of course, John was invited.

"What do you like to eat, John?"

"Just ordinary English food. If it's not English, I would rather go without."

"So we can't go to Amigos, Rodrigos, Bendigos, Giovanni, Pastrami, Toonami, or the Roman Wall Chinese Garden. So where?"

"Let's think about it overnight and decide tomorrow."

The next day they had found only one restaurant that specialised in serving English food - the Yorkshire Pudding House - so they booked it for eight o'clock the next Saturday.

They all arrived on time, sat down and studied the menu. John Smith was the last to order and the others were wondering what he would ask for and if, for once, he would have something that was not a pure English meal.

"Right, I will start with pea soup".

"But John, didn't the first peas in England come from India?"

"Oh, potato soup then".

"John, potatoes come from South America."

"Watermelon then"

"Sorry, John. They are from Africa."

John went on to order a main course. Or try to.

"Turkey?"

"North America".

"Chicken?"

"North Asia."

"Salad?"

"Tomatoes from South America, lettuce, onions and cucumber from Egypt, pepper from India, vinegar and olives from Continental Europe."

"In that case, I'll go on to the dessert. They seem to have a nice long list of fruits."

"That's true. Vanilla from Central America, blackcurrants from Asia, strawberries, chocolate and pineapple from South America."

"Well, I'm getting quite hungry now, so while you're all eating your foreign food, I'll just have a few peanuts and a glass of arak."

"Do you mean peanuts from South America and arak from Sri Lanka?"

"Oh, this is hopeless. There must be something English. I'll ask the waiter for a beefsteak."

He placed his order.

While the others were still enjoying their meal and John was waiting for his, he looked around and thought how well furnished the restaurant was, especially the beautiful snow-white tablecloths.... He commented on this just as the waiter was serving the steak. The waiter overheard him.

"Yes, sir. They all very nice aren't they - the best quality Egyptian cotton. Enjoy your steak sir. It's an Aberdeen Angus - Scotland's finest".

John realised he was beaten.

"Oh, alright then. And a nice cup of tea".

"Certainly sir. India or China?"



Colin Jenks