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# Food for Thought

In English there are several idiomatic expressions related to food and eating. Take the title of this blog, for example. **Food for thought** means “something worth seriously considering”. To **chew on** something means to “consider” it. We use the word **swallow** to mean “accept”, as in accepting a proposal. If I found the proposal to be difficult to accept, perhaps because I had doubts about it, I would say, “that is **hard for me to swallow**”. If I wanted to imply someone was gullible[[1]](#footnote-1) I would say, “He would **swallow** anything,” which means he would believe anything.

If a person, or a problem, is difficult to understand we refer to that person or problem as **a hard nut to crack**. In other words, like a nut, that person, or problem, has a hard exterior that is difficult to get beyond. The expression **in a nutshell** means “simply put”.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Perhaps you are familiar with VIP, the initials for Very Important Person. We can colloquially refer to such as person as being a **big cheese**. If I say, “Bob is **buttering up** the boss for a promotion,” I am saying that Bob is using flattery[[3]](#footnote-3) on the boss to try to obtain a promotion. **Bread and butter** refers to “necessities”.[[4]](#footnote-4) The **breadwinner** in a family is the person who supports the family financially.[[5]](#footnote-5) To **bring home the bacon** means to “earn an income” and provide the money on which to live.

**Beans** can be used in different ways. To **spill the beans** means to reveal information that probably should have been kept secret. To say that someone is **full of beans** means that the person is talking nonsense. In baseball it can be used as a verb meaning “to be hit on the head.” For example, “The pitcher **beaned** the batter with a wild pitch.” That is because **bean** can also mean “head”. About 100 years ago **beanies[[6]](#footnote-6)** were a popular cap worn by boys.

Perhaps you may have heard the expression **a piece of cake** which means something easy to do or achieve. The expression **You can’t have your cake and eat it, too** means that you cannot have two mutually exclusive things you desire at the same time.[[7]](#footnote-7)

1. 騙されやすい [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 手短に、きわめて簡潔に言うと [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 世辞 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 毎日の生活に必須のもの [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 大黒柱 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. **ビーニー**帽 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 同時にふたつの相反することは楽しめない [↑](#footnote-ref-7)