

NEWS LESSON

How Butter Became a Destination

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Which ordinary food would you queue to try?
2. Can good packaging make a familiar product feel special?
3. Would you travel across town for something you saw online?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**nervous**	☐	A	a little afraid or worried about something
2	**devoted**	☐	B	very surprising or easy to notice
3	**queue**	☐	C	how something feels, for example smooth or rough
4	**enthusiasts**	☐	D	a line of people waiting for something
5	**texture**	☐	E	a feeling of conflict between two ideas or sides
6	**striking**	☐	F	people who are very interested in something
7	**tension**	☐	G	made for one purpose only, or giving all your time to it
8	**craftsmanship**	☐	H	great skill in making things by hand

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Fifty varieties, a crowded shop and social media doing the rest. The ingredient most of us hide in the fridge is having a moment.

1 When Erwan Leo opened a shop devoted to butter in Paris during the summer of 2026, he had reasons to be nervous. The temperature was approaching 41°C, hardly ideal weather for selling a product that needs careful refrigeration. He was also unsure whether enough customers would turn up. Yet within months, Le Butter had attracted such interest that people sometimes had to queue outside. The humble ingredient normally hidden in our fridges had become a destination in its own right.

2 Inside the shop, customers can choose from around fifty varieties, including carefully produced salted butters. Some travellers buy several packets to take home, while food enthusiasts discuss flavour and texture with the seriousness usually reserved for cheese or wine. Elsewhere in Paris, a prestigious food department offers an even larger selection. According to a Guardian report in October 2026, butter is appearing at fashionable events, on restaurant tables and across social media in increasingly elaborate forms.

3 The change is striking because butter spent decades struggling with an unfashionable reputation. One generation remembers being told to replace it; younger food lovers may now discover it through stylish restaurant menus and recommendations on their phones. Health advice about saturated fat encouraged many households to cut back and switch to alternative spreads. Now chefs are whipping butter with herbs, shaping it into decorative pieces and treating bread and butter as a highlight rather than an afterthought. For some customers, the attraction is straightforward: a high-quality version of an everyday product can taste genuinely different.

4 There may also be an economic explanation, although this is interpretation rather than something the report proves. When larger luxuries feel out of reach, people sometimes look for smaller pleasures they can still afford. A special packet of butter might cost several euros, considerably more than a supermarket version but far less than a fine restaurant meal. Paired with fresh bread, it turns an ordinary evening into a small occasion. Social media then amplifies that pleasure, particularly when the packaging and presentation look irresistible on camera.

5 Not everybody welcomes the obsession. Some chefs question whether extravagant butter displays are more about getting attention than enjoying food. A beautifully prepared plate can be impressive, but huge sculpted arrangements may end up being thrown away. There is also a tension between describing butter as a natural, comforting ingredient and pretending that the nutritional concerns have vanished. Butter still contains saturated fat, and fashionable does not automatically mean healthy.

6 Perhaps the trend says more about how we treat food than about butter itself. We have a habit of rediscovering familiar ingredients, giving them stylish packaging and turning them into objects of desire. Sometimes that encourages people to appreciate quality and craftsmanship; sometimes it simply creates another expensive craze. When the excitement dies down, the best test may be surprisingly ordinary: does the butter make a piece of bread taste wonderful? If it does, perhaps that is enough.

Sources: The Guardian. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. A newspaper report in October 2026 described the butter trend. T F NG
2. Butter's nutritional concerns have gone away. T F NG
3. Butter sales in France rose by a fifth in 2026. T F NG
4. Some chefs think the butter displays are mainly about getting attention. T F NG
5. The report proves that people buy luxury butter because money is tight. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

amplifies	craze	elaborate	extravagant	humble	overcrowded	prestigious	reluctant

1. She wanted to study at a _____ university with a famous name.
2. The cake was covered in _____ decorations that took hours to make.
3. Online sharing often _____ a small problem until everyone is talking about it.
4. Spending a fortune on one dinner seems _____ when money is tight.
5. Last summer's _____ for brightly coloured trainers was over within a year.
6. Although he became famous, he stayed _____ and still lived in his small village.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time the doors opened, a long queue _____ outside. (FORM)
2. Butter _____ in a cool place. (KEEP)
3. She _____ a thick layer of butter on the bread when the phone rang. (SPREAD)
4. Our local bakery _____ very popular since it started selling cheese. (BECOME)
5. The bread and butter _____ at the restaurant last night. (SERVE)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Check what comes next. Words like despite need a noun, words like whereas need a full clause, and some join two sentences.

despite	meanwhile	nevertheless	otherwise	provided	unless	whereas

1. _____ the rain, hundreds of people queued for the new bakery.
2. You should book a table; _____ , you may have to wait for hours.
3. My sister loves strong cheese, _____ I prefer mild varieties.
4. The recipe was simple. _____ , the result tasted wonderful.
5. Stores usually will not refund food _____ it arrives damaged.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. When is a food trend worth the fuss?
2. Would a special version of an everyday food feel like a treat or a waste?
3. What familiar food from your area deserves more attention?

9 Role-play: a trip to the butter shop

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the food fan

You've seen a shop that sells fifty kinds of butter. You want to spend Saturday morning there. Persuade your friend to come. Say why it's worth a trip.

Student B · the sensible friend

You think queuing for butter is silly. You'd rather save money and cook at home. Ask questions, then agree on a plan you both like.

Useful phrases

Have you seen this shop?

I'd love to go on Saturday.

Is it really worth queuing for?

I'd rather save my money, to be honest.

We could go early, so there won't be a queue.

Let's meet in the middle: shop first, then lunch at home.

Afterwards, tell the class: where did you decide to go, and who gave way?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 A · 2 G · 3 D · 4 F · 5 C · 6 B · 7 E · 8 H

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 prestigious · 2 elaborate · 3 amplifies · 4 extravagant · 5 craze · 6 humble

6 Verb forms

1 had formed · 2 should be kept · 3 was spreading · 4 has become · 5 was served or were served

7 Language focus

1 Despite · 2 otherwise · 3 whereas · 4 Nevertheless · 5 unless

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