

# THE MRS HOOVER SHOW

COMEDY TIME WITH MRS HOOVER

## TAKING IN FOREIGNERS: Mrs Hoover's Tongue

Mrs Hoover is a landlady, which is to say she is in the business of cost-conscious catering for paying guests. Thirty years ago those paying guests were British holidaymakers down for a bit of fun at the seaside — a paper cone of cockles, a round of crazy golf, a ride on the ghost train, lukewarm beer, cold grey sea, full English breakfast, and no hanky panky in the bedrooms.

Today it's different: those kinds of people don't come any more, at least not for their fortnight's summer break. They're in Teneriffe or Corfu, Bodrum or the Algarve.

Mrs Hoover's guests now are overseas visitors, most of them young adults here to learn English at one of the many local language schools. She's had to move with the times, and for Mrs Hoover moving anywhere is a painful experience.

"Look, hospitality is my vocation. Taking in visitors. Serving people. It's what I live for. But I can't pretend it's been easy. I mean, *you* imagine having to sit and listen to a bunch of foreigners telling you, in one tense and a vocabulary of 120 words, everything that's wrong with your food, climate, national character and television programmes!"

But Mrs Hoover will admit to one curious benefit of having foreign students under her roof. "Because I get asked so many questions about English, I've learnt a *lot* about my own language. And it's all good news. It sounds potty but I've got really interested in things like the Present Perfect Tense and phrasal verbs, gerunds, homophones — things which before I never knew existed."

And now, as life President of the Hostmothers Guild of Great Britain, she has been invited by NaukaBezGranic to share her wit and wisdom (as well as her biscuits) with young Polish audiences.

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