Curtis: Hey everybody. It's Curtis from RealEnglishConversations.com. Today Amy and I are talking all about hot springs. And for the Real English tip, we're going to give you a cool expression to say when you're talking about someone.

Curtis: Hi, everybody. It’s Curtis and Amy from Real English Conversations. And today we're going to be talking all about hot springs, which is one of our favourite things. How you doing today, Amy?
Amy: I'm pretty good. How are you?
Curtis: I'm doing pretty good as well.
Amy: Well, that's good. Yeah, this morning I woke up, it was a little bit of a cooler morning, because we had some rain overnight. And as we were eating breakfast, I had a thought cross my mind as, ah, today would be a good day to go to the hot springs.
Curtis: Yeah.
Amy: But unfortunately we don't have hot springs right in our area. Where are the hot springs, the closest hot springs to where we live?
Curtis: The closest hot springs are in an area called the Kootenays, up in the mountainous regions.
Amy: Um-hum. So how many hours?
Curtis: I would say five...
Amy: Yeah...
Curtis: ...approximately.
Amy: Yeah. About four, I think. Four hours it takes to drive to Nakusp. So, anyway, we were talking about the last trip that we did to the hot springs. And that was when we went camping last fall. I think we went to Box Lake, it’s called.
Curtis: Yeah. And...
Amy: What time of year was it?
Curtis: It was in the fall. In October, I believe.
Amy: Is it normal to be camping in October?
Curtis: No, it’s pretty cold in October, usually, but for some reason it was really nice when we went.
Amy: Yeah. I remember looking at the weather forecast and seeing that, oh, hey, you know, it’s going to be between 21 and 25 degrees, for some reason, in the middle of October. And the overnight lows were going to be down around 12 or 13 degrees. And I thought, I think we should go camping. Let’s just bring a car full of blankets and, you know, long pants and long johns and toques and gloves and everything that we could possibly need in case we’re cold.
Curtis: Yeah. And we were more than prepared.
Amy: But were we cold?
Curtis: No. We weren't cold at all.
Amy: No, it wasn’t any worse than camping in the summertime. Like it was...it was really strange. We have a preference for the type of hot springs that we like to go to. So what are the commercial hot springs like?
Curtis: Well, they're man-made. They built pools.
Amy: Right. To hold the hot water that's coming from a hot water source somewhere, usually out of the mountain, near where the hot springs are.
Curtis: Yeah. They're not heated by a heater or anything. They're heated from the natural water.
Amy: The hot water that's coming out of the ground.
Curtis: And they charge an admission, they're not free like the natural ones. And...
Amy: Do they have just one pool?
Curtis: They usually have two or three.
Amy: Some of them have one pool, but most of them have two or three pools, sometimes four. And...
Curtis: They'll have a really hot one, a medium warm one...
Amy: Yeah. One you can sit in for a really long time, like it's at your body temperature, almost. So it's just really comfortable to sit in, you don't get too hot, you're not cold. And then they usually have one special one, if you need to cool down quickly. What's that like?
Curtis: It's freezing cold ice water. It's called a cold plunge.
Amy: And what is it supposed to do? What's the benefit of jumping in freezing cold water when you're really hot?
Curtis: It's supposed to help with your circulation.
Amy: Um-hum. I don't know...I don't know if I believe it. I think it's really unpleasant. For me personally, jumping into cold water is not my favourite thing to do. But...
Curtis: Have you been in a cold plunge?
Amy: I've done it, yeah. But I don't like it so I'm...I don't do it anymore. So this is very typical of the commercial hot springs that they have available, but although we've been to the commercial hot springs, what is our preference?
Curtis: Our preference is the natural hot springs.
Amy: Um-hum. So the natural hot springs are usually in the middle of the forest somewhere. And you have to hike in to access them. And people from the community generally have done something to, like either they build up rocks around the around the area, and try to contain the hot water that's maybe seeping out of a rock or something like that. Or they dig a hole. Like the one at St. Leon they actually have a cement base that somebody must have created 50 or 60 years ago. And it's in the middle of the forest, in the middle of nowhere. And...
Curtis: Yeah. And it's a tub.
Amy: Yes. It's really cool. But what is it like...we should just back up a little bit here. What is the road like getting to the hot springs. Because we just have a small car, and it's a pretty rough road for our little car.
Curtis: It is. It's called a forest service road.
Amy: Or a logging road, more commonly.
Curtis: Yeah, where trucks go in and load up with logs where they've cut down trees.
Amy: Yeah, where they've done logging. So they're going into the forest, they're clear cutting an area. So there's been a chunk of the forest that this logging company has had permission to go in and they chop down all the trees. And so these roads are really built for this type of industry. And a lot of these roads are not active logging roads anymore, so they're not really maintained very well.
Curtis: No, they're really rough and bumpy.
Amy: They have a lot of pot holes.
Curtis: Yeah.
Amy: And they call it washboard, when you're going up...you're going up the logging road and you're driving, and it's almost like a whole bunch of mini speed bumps that have formed in the
dirt. Because maybe it's rained or something like that, or maybe even it's because of the cars driving up the road and spinning their wheels a little bit. And when you're going up the road it's just like, if you talk it's like...uh,uh,uh,uh,uh...like you can...you know, your whole car is shaking and what not. But we're able to get up this road.

Curtis: Yeah, we took it pretty slow and easy.

Amy: Yeah, and then what was it like...the first time we went to St. Leon, we didn't really know where we were going. So what was that like?

Curtis: It was like an adventure because we didn't know exactly where we were going.

Amy: Yeah. Because the day before we were at a different natural hot spring, and somebody had given us verbal directions about how to access this other hot springs at St. Leon. And what's really interesting about this hot spring is that it's technically on private property. And for many years the owner used to allow people to come, and they could camp, and you could pretty much drive right into this hot spring. But after, I don't know, maybe it was 10 years ago they decided to block off the vehicle access, and it was only available through hiking in. So what was the road like?

Curtis: The road was...they took I think a bulldozer, like a big machine...

Amy: Yeah, an excavator or something and...

Curtis: And dug these trenches...

Amy: Yeah. So no vehicle could drive down the road. So we went up and over all of these bumps, about ten of them, you know, because the first one wouldn't stop the cars (sarcasm), I don't know. And then we started walking into the forest, right?

Curtis: Yup. Until we got to the actual pools and springs.

Amy: But what is the forest like there?

Curtis: It's pretty dense.

Amy: Yeah. It's like a dense old forest, and you're kind of walking up this dirt path in the middle of nowhere. And there's no one around. And you know that you're in wildlife country, so there could be bears or animals or whatever. And you're just kind of, da-da-da-da-da, going I hope we're going the right direction.

Curtis: Yeah, you get that feeling of, oh, am I going the right way?

Amy: Yeah, you know. Eventually, I mean, we kept going. And we arrived and there was this awesome hot spring.

Curtis: Oh, it was well worth going on that adventure.

Amy: Yeah. And then there were two pools, so there was the one main pool. These are definitely not as big as the commercial hot springs. Maybe it was fifteen feet across.

Curtis: Yup.

Amy: And three or four feet wide. And then there was an upper one where you had to actually, there's like a rope that they have hanging down on a fairly steep rock, and it's to help you walk up the rope, because of course when you're going from one pool to the other pool, you have water running down your legs, and your feet are wet.

Curtis: It makes it very slippery.

Amy: Yeah, and you could fall. So this have this rope to help you get up and down this steep rock that takes you to this upper pool. And the upper pool is very hot. It's almost at the point when you first get into it where you're thinking, oh, this is too hot, I'm going to burn myself.

Curtis: Uh-huh.

Amy: But it's not. It's safe to go in. But you can only stay in for about a minute.

Curtis: Before you get too hot.
Amy: You get too hot and you have to get out again. What is really cool...not this hot spring, this one doesn't have a river near it. But one of our other natural hot springs that we really like to go to is called Halfway River hot spring. And of course, it's near a river.

Curtis: Yeah, it's beautiful actually.

Amy: Yeah, this one's really cool because the river can kind of be like the cold plunge, because the river is very cold, so if you're too hot, you can go in the river and cool down a little bit. But this one, every single year, the local residents have to rebuild the hot spring. Why do they have to do that?

Curtis: What happens is called a spring runoff. All the snow melts, and the river is just raging. All the water is rushing down. And all of these little rock pools that the local people built up at the beginning of summer, or late spring, the year before have all been washed away or flattened.

Amy: It's...it's literally just tarps that they put down. I think that's what they do. Tarps and sand, and then they stack rocks on top of it to kind of create these little pools. And there's usually, I don't know, what? Four or so pools?

Curtis: Yeah.

Amy: And then they also have a more permanent structure set up and I think it's almost like an old apple box...

Curtis: Oh, yeah.

Amy: Like the boxes that they use when they're harvesting apples from the apple orchards.

Curtis: Yeah.

Amy: And they've put a plastic lining in that and a couple of benches and...

Curtis: So you can sit in it.

Amy: Yeah, and then they've piped the water in from the side of the mountain where the hot water source is. And it just goes into that box and you can sit in it just like a hot tub.

Curtis: And the hot water source, how hot springs are actually created, are from the ground, right?

Amy: Yeah, yeah, this is really interesting because it's actually heated through geothermal activity. So what happens is there's a water source that comes from somewhere really, really deep in the ground and it's being heated by what?

Curtis: Below the earth's crust is this melted rock.

Amy: Molten lava.

Curtis: Molten lava.

Amy: The centre of the earth.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: So the water source is going down close to where all that heat is coming and it's creating a hot water spring that's coming out of the earth in this random area in the Kootenays. There's actually several hot springs within this region, so there's probably like an area where this heat source comes up and makes contact with the water. Now these hot springs, these are something that people do generally to just go and relax, and the water because of the super high mineral content is really supposed to be good for your body. I don't know how much it's true. But I feel pretty good when I go.

Curtis: Yeah.

Amy: But what is something common that happens with these natural hot springs for some reason?

Curtis: Well, I guess natural is a good word for it.

Amy: Yeah. Lots of...lots of...ah...
Curtis: Nudity.
Amy: Yeah, that's right. There's people running around naked at these natural hot springs. And I don't know what it is. Maybe it was just something that developed as a tradition or something like that? But...
Curtis: I think it's came from Europe.
Amy: Oh, right. The Europeans like to be naked in the spas.
Curtis: They do.
Amy: Yeah.
Curtis: Yeah.
Amy: They take off all their clothes, no bathing suit, and they bathe in the natural hot water, and you know, they don't expect that other people around them to take off their bathing suit.
Curtis: No.
Amy: But it's a little bit awkward when you're sitting there and you have your bathing suit on and the person next to you is just letting it all hang out\(^{10}\). But anyway, it's something to possibly expect to see. We've only seen one or two naked people in all of the times that we've went.
Curtis: Yeah.
Amy: But it's not common at the commercial springs, and it's only something that happens at the...at the natural ones in the middle of the forest.
Curtis: Yeah, because you could probably get into big trouble at the man-made ones, if you did that.
Amy: You're not allowed to be naked in public, in Canada anyway. Alright. We've got the Real English tip coming up.

**Real English Conversational Tip**

Amy: Okay. So for today's English tip, we have a couple of expressions that I guess are...I don't know. They're cute expressions anyway. I like them. So what do we say when we're talking about somebody and they are suddenly there.
Curtis: They walk into the room.
Amy: They walk into the room or you were just talking about them five minutes ago and then you see them driving down the street in their car.
Curtis: Oh, I know this one. I'd say, oh, speak of the devil.
Amy: Speak of the devil.
Curtis: There he is.
Amy: There he is. Exactly. So next time you've been talking about somebody and you see them either right then while you're talking about them, or just a few minutes before, even half an hour before, you were just talking about this person, and you see them.
Curtis: Yeah.
Amy: Can you say it to them?
Curtis: Yeah, you can.
Amy: Yeah, it's not offensive. It's just, oh, you were talking about me.
Curtis: You're not actually calling them a devil or anything bad.
Amy: No, no.
Curtis: It's just...
Amy: It's just an expression that we say, there's no offense that's taken to it.
Curtis: Yeah.
Amy: But what might the person say to you if you say that comment to them? So if I said to you, speak of the devil. What would you maybe say to me?
Curtis: Oh, yeah. I thought my ears were burning.
Amy: Yeah. So if somebody is talking about you, and you find out, you say that your ears are burning, or were burning. Of if it's someone else, oh, their ears must have been burning, because we were talking about them all night. Right?
Curtis: It's just a cute expression. Your ears aren't really on fire or burning.
Amy: No. I think it comes from when people are...when they get attention. And they get kind of flushed, it creates heat in your ears and your face, right?
Curtis: Oh, okay.
Amy: So...so that's...that's where it comes from. So anyway, if you guys want to come to our website, we've always got the audio transcriptions available for every single conversation that we've recorded. And how many hours of conversations do we have now?
Curtis: We have over six hours of conversations.
Amy: Six hours.
Curtis: Six hours.
Amy: With transcriptions. Every single word that we say is available in a transcription. So you can actually hear what you're learning.
Curtis: We point out certain words, and we've also got some exercises for you guys to try.
Amy: Um-hum. Yeah, there's some true and false, writing exercises. Our premium members get access to speaking exercises as well. So you can come to our website and check out our membership options at RealEnglishConversations.com.

Lesson Notes:

thought cross my mind1 – An expression to say you thought of something, usually an idea that you haven’t thought about much but you want to discuss.
• The thought crossed my mind that I would like to paint the kitchen one day.
• Yesterday I had a thought cross my mind and I was thinking about where we were going to go on our next vacation.

right2 – The word right has many different contexts. In the conversation today it was used to mean ‘in this area’ or so say the hot springs very close to us.
• Your phone is right here.
• The store right in our neighborhood, you can walk to it in 3 minutes.

overnight lows3 – A common weather expression that talks about the lowest temperature at night. The daytime high is the highest temperature of the day.
• In the middle of winter, the overnight lows can get down to -30 in our area.
• The daytime high for tomorrow will be 30 degrees, let’s go to the beach.

seeping4 – A word that describes some air or liquid kind of liquid that is slowly exiting.
• The wound on his leg was seeping after the surgery.
• There was a small hole in my tire where the air was seeping out. So I had to fill it up once a day.
in the middle of nowhere\(^5\) – A common expression to talk about something that seems to be far away from anything else. Often times it is used as an exaggeration.

- My car was broken down on the highway in the middle of nowhere. (But the car could be only 5 or 10 kilometers from the next city, so it’s not really that far away from somewhere)
- It seems like they have this festival in the middle of nowhere. It’s amazing that anyone drives this far to attend it.

clear cutting\(^6\) – To clear cut an area of the forest means to cut down all of the trees for lumber or pieces of wood to build structures.

- The residents of the region were protesting against clearcutting near there town because they know the rain forest should be protected.

pot holes\(^7\) – holes in a dirt or paved road.

- There was such a big pot hole in the middle of the highway that cars were being damaged when they drove over it.
- This dirt road is full of pot holes. I don’t like driving my small car on it.

what not\(^8\) – another way of saying etcetera / etc. It indicates that you are not listing everything that could be said but the speaker feels that the listener has a good idea of what they are trying to communicate, so they don’t need to continue explaining.

- Can you put the tent, chair and what not in the car so we can leave the house when I’m back home.
- On Halloween kids like to dress up like super heroes and princesses and what not.

river is (just) raging\(^9\) – The river is raging means that the water is very strong and dangerous in the river. There is a lot of water flowing down the river. Adding the ‘just’ makes it sound even more intense.

- The river is raging after a the big rainfall that happened last night.

just letting it all hang out\(^{10}\) – a funny expression to talk about people that are exposing their body or nudity that don’t care what other people think.

- The old lady was walking around the changing room for half an hour just letting it all hang out.
Practice Exercises

True or False
Decide if you think the following statements are true or false based on the conversation.

1. Camping in October is the normal time that people like to camp.
2. At hot springs, people like to jump into very cold water after sitting in the hot water to cool down.
3. Natural hot springs are commercially undeveloped pools of hot water that you can sit in.
4. The dirt roads that exist in the mountains were built for the logging industry to access a forest are where they cut down trees.
5. Nudity is common at commercial hot springs in Canada.

Fill in the Blanks
Choose the best word or phrase from the list below to complete the sentence.

- thought cross my mind
- seeping
- in the middle of nowhere
- pot holes
- river is raging

1. I need to get out of town and find a place _______________ for a few day to relax.
2. During the spring time the _______________ and it is very dangerous to go in the water.
3. I had an interesting _______________ about quitting my job at the end of the year.
4. The construction crew was filling in all the _____________ on the road.
5. When the water bottle is laying on it side, it _______________ water from under the lid because it’s not closed tightly.

Writing Exercise
What is your favorite excursion to do when you want to relax for a few days to relax? Where do you go and what is the place like? Describe what a typical trip is like to get there.
Answers to True or False

1. False
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. False

Answers to Fill in the Blanks

1. To the middle of nowhere
2. River is raging
3. Thought cross my mind
4. Pot holes
5. Seeping