

TASTING EXPERT



TASTING EXPERT

ages
4

ages
5-6

ages
7-8

ages
9-12

ages
13 +

Recommended Length

30 à 60 minutes

Location

inside or outside
(a spot where you won't be distracted)

Age

various age groups

Goals

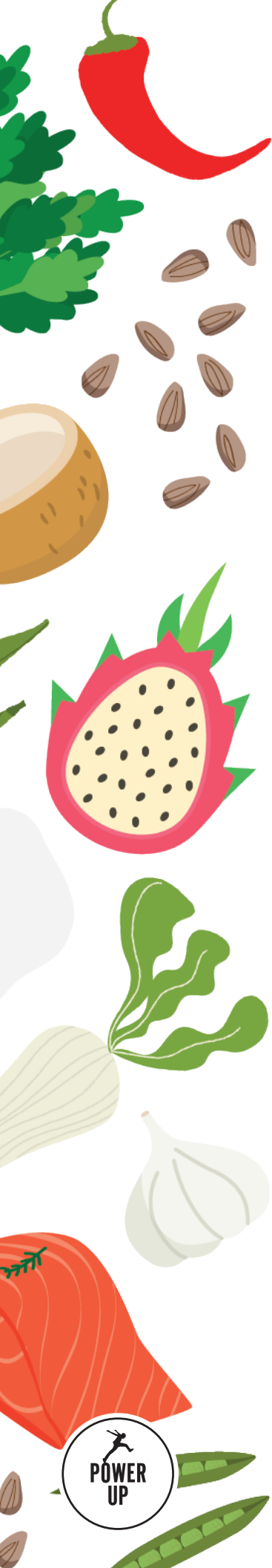
- Explore different foods using all five senses
- Develop a vocabulary around food
- Discover the different properties of food (texture, colour, smell)
- Learn more about one's personal tastes

Supplies

- Food(s) that will be used during the tasting, with quantities adjusted to the number of campers (see suggestions on page 2)
- Paper napkin or plate for each camper
- Printed version of the Five Senses Chart (Appendix 1)
- Printed version of the Food Evaluation Sheet (Appendix 2)
- Printed version of the Emotions Sheet (Appendix 3)
- Knife and cutting board for chopping foods (if needed)
- Scarf or bandana for campers 9 years old and up (optional)

Your role during the tasting

- **Take time to clearly explain the activity.**
- **Create a calm and welcoming atmosphere.**
- **Smile and actively participate in the tasting.** This will help you create a feeling of confidence. For example, you can show that you're open-minded by handling and smelling a food that you don't like without necessarily putting it in your mouth. "I don't like this food, but I'm going to smell it and taste it with my nose."
- **Listen kindly to all your campers' responses** and don't worry too much about sticking to the order of questions during the tasting. Examining a food one sense at a time can sometimes be a challenge for them.
- **Go along at your campers' pace and make sure the atmosphere is respectful.** There's no perfect answer. Avoid categorizing foods as "good" or "bad".
- **Ensure everyone's tastes are respected.** Encourage your campers to try different foods, but don't force them to.
- **Speak positively about the pleasures of the table!**



Recommended foods

Fruits and vegetables	Strawberries, cranberries, radishes, cauliflower, dried fruit (pineapples, raisins, cranberries, tomatoes), apples, lemons, limes, grapefruit, spinach, arugula, ground cherries, peppers (red, yellow, orange, or green), etc.
Fine herbs and ground spices	Basil, mint, coriander, cinnamon, cloves, curry, ginger (fresh or ground), etc..
Dairy products	Old cheddar cheese, blue cheese, Greek yogurt, plain yogurt, cottage cheese, goat cheese, etc.
Grain products	Rice cakes, corn kernels, brown bread, naan, pita bread, rice crackers, etc..
Other ideas	70% dark chocolate, sparkling water, dried seaweed, olives, tofu pudding, hummus, etc.

Have fun incorporating different themes into your tasting!

Here are some examples:

Discovering local products	The “known/unknown” combo	Shades of matching colours	Fresh smells	That’s prickly!
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Cranberries, ground cherries, cheese	Strawberries and fresh coriander	Curry powder and yellow pepper	Mint	Artichokes, lychee, or pineapple

You can even have them taste a more complex recipe and deconstruct its flavours, or use a food that’s on hand like a cucumber growing in the garden!

Allergies



It’s **VERY IMPORTANT** to inform yourself about any allergies in your group beforehand. Read all lists of ingredients carefully. Allergens will appear in bold lettering or after the words “May contain”. You will then be able to choose the right foods for your tasting.



Pssst.

Did you know that dried foods keep more easily? In addition, some fresh foods like apples and citrus fruits can be stored for up to seven days at room temperature.

Getting ready

1. **Start by organizing your space.** If you're inside, create a space where your campers will be able to sit comfortably without being distracted. You can set up chairs in a circle or arrange cushions on the ground, put tables together, or even use the lunchroom.
2. If the activity is taking place outside, **find a clean spot** (lawn, picnic tables) and avoid bumpy or dusty terrain (sand, pebbles, rocks). Parks and spaces occupied by other groups of campers are not recommended.
3. **Get your foods ready for tasting.** Don't forget to remove packaging! Cut the food into small pieces if need be and check lists of ingredients for allergies.
4. **Take out supplies needed** for your tasting (plates or paper napkins).



Doing the activity

5. Ask your campers to **wash their hands**.
6. **Hand out a plate** or paper napkin to each camper.
7. Ask your group to stay quiet. **Hand out the food** featured in your tasting to each camper. They must not say the name of the food out loud! Give your campers time to look at the food.
8. Invite your campers to **answer questions about the five senses** (see Questions to ask during the tasting), but keep the name of the food they're tasting a secret. Your campers might have a tendency to make comparisons. Listen to each answer and don't be shy about **suggesting words from the vocabulary** (see the Five Senses Chart – Appendix 1) to describe the food.
9. Reveal the name of the food at the very end.



ages
9-12

ages
13+



Pssst.

If your campers are already familiar with the food you've chosen for them to taste, you can ask them to close their eyes or put on a blindfold (9 years old and up)!

POWER
UP

Questions to ask during the tasting

General questions



1. What is a food tasting?

During a food tasting, we take time to discover a food, describe the food in front of us, and test our eating preferences to decide whether we like the food or not.

2. What are our five senses?

Sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste.

Sight – Look at the food



3. Have you ever seen this food?

4. Does it look tasty to you?

5. How would you describe this food (colour, shape, size, appearance)?

Touch – Touch the food with your fingers, lips, and tongue



6. Do you like the texture?

7. How would you describe what you're touching?

8. Is it hot or cold?

9. Have you ever touched anything like it?

Hearing – Manipulate the food in order to hear sounds



10. Does the food make a sound when we pick it up with our hands?

11. When we scratch it with our nails?

12. When we break it or slice it?

Smell – Smell the food



13. Do you like how the food smells? Why?

14. Does the smell bring back memories for you? A recipe? A place you've been before? A person?

Taste – Taste the food in your mouth



Hold your nose, then taste the food. Continue chewing, then unblock your nose.

15. Do you notice a difference in taste?

The thing you tasted once you unblocked your nose is called an aroma. An aroma is the smell a food makes once it's in your mouth. Our nose and our mouth communicate with each other. That's why our perception of taste changes if our nose is blocked.

16. Did you like the flavours?

17. Do you recognize the taste of the food?

Refer to the Five Senses Chart (Appendix 1) for examples!

18. Did you like the texture? Why?

19. Was it the same texture as when you touched it?

20. Does the food make a sound when you chew it?

Survey your campers' preferences.



21. Who liked this food?

22. Who didn't like it?

Pssst.

Use the vocabulary and pictures found in the Five Senses Chart (Appendix 1)!

Pssst.

Explain to your campers that it's normal for people to have different answers—we all have our own eating preferences!

It's possible to like raw carrots for their crunchy texture, while at the same time disliking cooked carrots because they're soft. In this case, it's not the carrot itself that we dislike, but the way it's cooked.

How a food is prepared can change our assessment of it (e.g., fresh lemon vs. lemonade).

POWER UP



Follow-up

Take a moment to review the activity with your group. Following up will give your campers a chance to express their lived experience in words.

Use the **Food Evaluation Sheet** (Appendix 2) and the **Emotions Sheet** (Appendix 3) to find out your campers' thoughts.

Examples of follow-up questions and prompts according to age group:

ages
4

ages
5-6

ages
7-8

- Show me a sense that we used during the tasting.
- What was the favourite food you tried during the activity?
- What was the least favourite food you tried during the activity?
- Using pictures, show me how you felt during the tasting (Appendix 3).
- Would you like to do this activity again??

ages
9-12

- Give me the name of a sense that we used during the tasting.
- Tell me about something from the activity that stuck with you.
- What food did you learn about during the activity?
- Tell me a new vocabulary word you learned.
- Would you like to do this activity again?

ages
13 +

- Did you discover something new during the activity?
- What stuck with you from the activity?
- Can you name a food that's similar to the one we tasted today? The resemblance can be based on taste, texture, or smell.
- Tell me a new vocabulary word you learned.
- Give me the name of a food that you'd like to discover (or have others discover) using your five senses.
- Would you like to do this activity again?



Variations

1) Same or different?

Give each camper two different foods for them to taste at the same time. This will let your campers make comparisons. For younger campers (5 to 6 years old) it might be simpler to compare foods than to describe them. Here are some ideas for pairings: raisins and grapes, raspberries and blackberries, lemons and oranges.



2) Mystery food (for 9 years old and up)

To start with, one camper per group of two puts on a blindfold. The other camper on the team receives the food and tries to get their teammate to guess what it is by describing it. The counsellor uses “Questions to ask during the tasting” to guide the campers, but the name of the food must NEVER be revealed!

At the end of the food tasting, the blindfolded campers remove their blindfolds and find out what the food is. Are they surprised? Did they guess correctly? Switch roles with a new food!

More ideas



- **Expand your vocabulary by learning about trigeminal sensations** (for more advanced groups).

Though these sensations contribute to how food tastes in our mouth, they are distinct from flavours and aromas. Our brains distinguish these sensations using signals sent by the mouth, eyes, and nose.

Check the “Trigeminal sensations” column in the Five Senses Chart for more information.

- **Host a drink tasting:** prepare different types of flavoured water and have your campers taste them (ex. water + lemon, water + mint + strawberry, water + raspberry + basil, water + rosemary).
- **Compare a processed food with a non-processed food** (e.g., tomato vs. Ketchup).
- **Cook with the food** (or foods) that featured in your tasting! You can use resources like Local chefs or What’s your recipe? as inspirations for your own cooking workshop.







Appendix 1 - Five Senses Chart

Physical senses			Chemical senses				
Sight	touch	Hearing	Smell	Taste			
COLOUR, SHAPE, APPEARANCE	WHAT OUR FINGERS FEEL	ANALYZING SOUNDS	ANALYZING SMELLS	THE FIVE BASIC FLAVOURS	TRIGEMINAL SENSATIONS	OTHERS (TEXTURE, CONSISTENCY)	
 Bumpy... like a pineapple	 Temperature: cold, hot, room temperature	 Crispy... like chips	 Scented... like perfume	 Umami... like mushrooms	 Refreshing... like mint	 Stringy... like celery	
 Smooth... like a banana peel	 Soft... like a kiwi	 Crunchy... like an apple	 Milky... like cheese	 Salty... like salt	 Cold... like ice	 Smooth... like a banana peel	
 Liquid... like juice	 Mushy... like apple sauce	 Crunchy... like a carrot	 Roasted... like coffee beans	 Sour... like a lemon	 Warm... like a flame	 Smooth... like a yogurt	
 Shape: round, square, rectangle	 Hard... like a nut	 Bubbly... like sparkling water	 Flowery... like a bouquet of flowers	 Bitter... like dark chocolate	 Tart... like rhubarb	 Creamy... like ice cream	
 Colour: red, yellow, brown, white	 Moist... like a watermelon	Quick sound	 Fruity... like a bowl of fruit	 Sweet... like a cake	 Bubbly... like sparkling water	 Clear... like water	
Familiar or unfamiliar?	 Dry... like crackers	Dry sound	 Spicy... like cinnamon	/		 Peppery... like a radish	 Sour... like a grapefruit
Appetizing: you'd like to eat it right now! Attractive: beautiful	 Light... like blueberries	No sound	Familiar or unfamiliar smell? Pleasant or unpleasant smell?			 Burning... like a hot pepper	Tasty: an explosion of flavours in your mouth

Appendix 2 – Food Evaluation Sheet










1. Ask your group of campers if they liked the foods they tasted and/or the activity. It’s important that they explain their level of appreciation and express their eating preferences in words.
2. Encourage your campers to explain their reactions! Avoid comments like “Ugh!” and “It’s gross!”.

Level of assessment	Meaning	Example explanations
	<p>I didn’t like/appreciate the food or the activity.</p>	<p>Foods: how the food looks, how it feels in the mouth, taste</p> <p>Activity: length, activity difficulty, foods that were not so popular</p>
	<p>I didn’t like/appreciate the food or the activity that much.</p>	<p>Foods: one of the five senses (touch, smell, taste, sight, hearing) reduced my appreciation of the food</p> <p>Activity: disappointed that I didn’t like all the foods, didn’t learn much, length</p>
	<p>I liked/appreciated the food and the activity</p>	<p>Foods: what did you like about the food? (smell, texture, colour...)</p> <p>Activity: learning about new foods and the five senses, tried a bunch of foods</p>
	<p>I loved this food! It’s my favourite!</p> <p>I liked this activity a lot! I’d like to do it again tomorrow!</p>	<p>Foods: discovering a new food, I learned that foods can appeal to all five senses</p> <p>Activity: I expanded my vocabulary, I love doing tastings</p>



Appendix 3 - Emotions Sheet

Use this sheet with your campers. They can point at the emoji that expresses the emotion they felt during the activity.

 Surprise	 Joy	 Sadness
 Disgust	 Fear	 Anger
 Amazed	 Perplexed	 Disappointment

