

TASTING EXPERT

7-8 year old



[1 OF 3]

SUGGESTED DURATION

± 30 minutes (at activity leader's discretion). Ideally there should be one activity leader for every 8 to 10 kids, to encourage discussion (depending on group size and available material).

GOALS

- Help children learn to discover foods using all 5 senses
- Discover aromas and the memories they can trigger, discover textures, be able to identify flavors, learn that the sense of smell plays a role in the taste of foods in the mouth, discover other sensations (e.g., spicy, bubbly)
- Learn more about their own personal tastes
- Develop an appropriate vocabulary to talk about different foods and their sensory characteristics.

MATERIAL

For the group:

- 1 **Sensory chart, Age 7–8** to be laminated (p. 3 of 3).

Per pair of kids:

- Your choice of two different foods (Food 1 and Food 2) from the **Suggested foods** list (p. 2 of 3), plus one of each that the activity leader keeps hidden during the activity
- One paper napkin
- Dishware and cutlery for tasting sessions (small cups and plates, and utensils, as required)
- 1 blindfold or scarf



IMPORTANT: CHECK BEFOREHAND WHETHER ANY OF THE CHILDREN HAVE ALLERGIES.

HOW TO PROCEED

- The kids pair up in teams of 2.
- One person in each pair puts on a blindfold.
- The activity leader hands out Food No. 1 to each child who is not blindfolded (everyone gets the same food). He sets aside the extra food (well hidden) for the final unveiling.
- The activity leader follows the **Tasting steps** (p. 2 of 3) to guide the children not wearing a blindfold as they explore their sensory perceptions of Food No. 1.
- The activity leader and the kids doing the tasting **must never mention the food!** They describe the food in as many words as possible by whispering them into their ear of their blindfolded partner to help him or her guess what the food is.
- Once the tasting is over, each child removes their blindfold and discovers the food. Are they surprised or did they guess what it was? It's a good idea to proceed with each step, even if some children have already guessed right. This will give them a chance to confirm their hypothesis.
- Switch roles for the Food No. 2 tasting/guessing game (plan on 15 min. per tasting).

For each step the activity leader proposes two tasting phases:

1. **Individual tasting:** Each unblindfolded child samples the food calmly, on their own. The activity leader asks questions to help them. This individual phase allows kids to explore foods without being unduly influenced by the others and to learn to trust their own instincts when it comes to their perceptions and preferences. For 7- and 8-year-olds this is a relatively short phase, but it is important nonetheless.
2. **Whispering to their partner:** The activity leader once again asks the unblindfolded kids the questions and tells them to whisper their words into the ear of their partner. The kids can refer to the **Sensory chart** as needed. Kids this age tend to make comparisons to describe sensations or to use a word similar to the appropriate word. Once the two foods have been revealed, the activity leader can propose common words, keeping in mind that each child perceives things differently.

KEY MESSAGES TO REPEAT DURING THE ACTIVITY

"There is no right or wrong answer! Taste is personal—it varies from one person to the next. You may like, love, or hate a food. The important thing is to explore it with whatever senses you choose—your eyes, nose, fingers...!" Urge children to try a food, but never force them.

TAKING IT ONE STEP FURTHER

Repeat the same activity with other foods from the list, choose other foods, use snack foods, etc.

TASTING EXPERT

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[2 OF 3]

SUGGESTED FOODS

A cube of fresh peach, a spoonful of cottage cheese, a slice of radish, a piece of molasses cookie, a piece of endive leaf, an olive, a bite of bagel, half a strawberry, a cube of cheddar, half a slice of cucumber, a piece of sliced bread, a piece of dark chocolate, a piece of orange, a piece of Rice Krispie square, an arugula leaf, a spoonful of plain yogurt, a piece of grapefruit, a cooked noodle (farfalle, penne), a few corn kernels, a basil leaf, a pickle, half a spoonful of maple butter, sparkling water mixed with juice.

ACTIVITY LEADER'S ATTITUDE

The activity leader creates a calm and welcoming atmosphere, is smiling and pleasant, encourages group discussion and individual participation, and makes sure each child's tastes are respected, whatever they may be.

The activity leader respects the pace of each child. For example one child may spontaneously taste the food while for another, just touching it with their fingers may already be a challenge.

The activity leader samples the foods together with the children, to help put them at ease, and expresses her appreciation. If she doesn't like the food, she should feel free to say so, but should show her willingness to use her other senses to set an example, e.g., "I don't really like this food, but I'm going to get a sense of it by smelling it with my nose."

TASTING STEPS

At each step the kids can refer to the **Sensory chart** or come up with other words that spring to mind during the tasting.

1. Look at it!

- Have you ever seen this food before? Does it look appetizing?
- How would you describe it (color, shape, size, look, etc.)?

Blind taste tests are not recommended with younger children since they can make them feel insecure.

2. Touch it with your fingers, lips, and tongue!

- Do you like the texture?
- How would you describe what you are touching?

3. Smell it!

- Do you like the smell of it? Why?
- How would you describe the smell? Does it remind you of anything, like a food or dish, a place you've been before, a person?

4. Taste it!

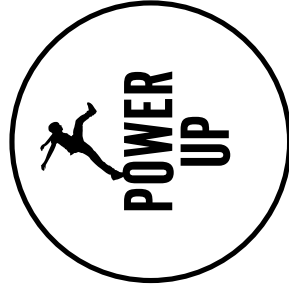
- Pinch your nose while tasting the food. Continue chewing, then unpinch your nose. Does it taste different now? What you tasted as soon as you unpinched your nose is called the "aroma." It's the smell of the food that you experience when you put food **in** your mouth.
- Did you like the flavor(s)? Why? Did you notice that you can taste the flavors just as well when your nose is pinched as when it is unpinched? That's because it's your tongue that registers taste. Did you think it tasted salty? acidic? bitter? sweet?
- What other feelings did you notice in your mouth? Was it spicy? bubbly?
- Did you like the texture? Why? Did you recognize the same texture you described in Step 2?

5. Survey (show of hands)




















- Who liked this food? Who didn't like it?

TASTING EXPERT SENSORY CHART

Age
7-8



[3 OF 3]

APPRECIATION OF FLAVOR*	DESCRIPTION OF FLAVORS AND OTHER SENSATIONS	DESCRIPTION OF TEXTURES	
I don't like it 	SALTY like salt 	LUMPY texture like oatmeal 	DRY texture like crackers 
I like it a bit 	SOUR like lemons 	CRUNCHY texture like carrots 	FLESHY texture like cantaloupe 
I like it a lot 	BITTER like dark chocolate 	STRINGY texture like celery 	CRISPY texture like chips 
I love it! 	SWEET like sugar 	MELT-IN-YOUR-MOUTH texture like chocolate 	JUICY texture like watermelon 
<p><i>*The flavor of a food is an experience that involves all the senses.</i></p> <p>Note: Participants can also describe the smell, which may remind them of Grandma's cottage, Christmas cookies, a walk in the woods in the fall, or other memories. They can also name the source of the smell (it smells like mint, roses, toast, etc.) These are all ways to help kids express and develop their tastes!</p>	SPICY like radish 	SOFT texture like bread 	CREAMY texture like yogurt 
	BUBBLY like sparkling water 	RUBBERY texture like shrimp 	SMOOTH texture like pudding 