

# Taste Tests With a Twist

## Overview

Taste tests are a fun and engaging way to explore new foods and get a little creative in the kitchen. Using all five senses, children can learn more about the health benefits of their favorite foods or discover their taste for something new. Play with combinations of sweet and savory, and test out alternative ways to prepare foods.



## Take Action

Consider some foods that are ripe (no pun intended) for creativity. For example, salsa is a quick and delicious snack, packed full of vitamins and minerals, that can easily be made with a twist.

### *What You Need:*

- 1/3 cup tomatoes, diced
- 1/3 onion, diced
- 1 cup bell peppers, chopped
- 1/3 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and diced (optional)
- 1 avocado, chopped
- Salt, pepper, red pepper flakes to taste

### *What You Do:*

- Wash and prepare ingredients then mix together in a large mixing bowl. Add salt, pepper and red pepper flakes to taste.

### **Now, let's make it with a twist!**

- Pineapple - 3 cups, diced
  - Pineapples are a fruit that taste delicious both sweet and savory! An excellent source of Vitamin C, which helps to build a healthy immune system, they can be a sweet addition to a salsa or chicken stir-fry.
- Mango - 1 fresh mango, diced
  - Another fruit packed with Vitamin C, mango also brings the organ-supporting benefits of Vitamin A! Like pineapple, mango goes great in salsa and with chicken, as well as on top of a warm bowl of oatmeal.

Hungry for another twist? Check out these recipes from Dole, or create one of your own.

- [Strawberry Salsa with Homemade Chips](#)
- [Plantain Chips](#)
- [Cinnamon Roasted Sweet Potatoes and Apples](#)
- [Broccoli and Fruit Slaw](#)

*This activity was created as part of the [Healthy Eating Toolkit](#), sponsored by Dole.*

## **Social Emotional Health Highlights**

**Self-Awareness:** Allowing children to decide for themselves whether they do or do not like a certain food at a taste test helps them to establish self-efficacy and self-confidence to speak up about their preferences. A taste test encourages children to step out of their comfort zones and learn more about themselves by being brave and trying something new!

**Social Awareness:** Taste tests are a great way to showcase foods and culinary practices from different cultures. Children can learn more about their peers likes and dislikes, or favorite dishes at home, by identifying similarities and differences and practice perspective-talking when sharing about their own.

**Responsible Decision Making:** Providing children with healthy food options creates an openness in the school community to discuss optimal nutrition and how it can be achieved through the discovery and exploration of new foods. Even though a child does not like carrots, doesn't mean they won't like peas! Letting children make the decision for themselves increases the chances that they will choose healthier foods in the future.

## Tips



Have children make a list of their favorite food items and foods they want to try (or try again). Make it an activity, and have them write down what comes to mind for each food. Is it sweet? What is it often used in? Then ask them to think outside the box and think of different ways it could be prepared and enjoyed.



Create a fun, welcoming atmosphere that will enhance the experience for children. Play background music or make it a family cooking challenge.



Include children in the planning and preparing. Getting kids in the kitchen not only empowers them to challenge their thinking and creativity, it also helps grow nutrition knowledge and create healthy dietary habits.



Reflect on the activity afterwards. Ask questions related to why or why not they liked the final product. Discuss ways it could taste differently or explore alternative ingredients.

For more activities and ideas like this one, be sure to [sign up for our news and updates](#). And if you like what you see, please [donate to support our work](#) creating more ways to help build a healthier future for kids.

## Related Activities

### Host a Taste Test

Expose your students to a variety of healthy food items so they'll eat better!

### New Year, New Smoothies

Make the New Year a healthy one by trying these recipes as part of a smoothie taste test with your students or family.

### Seasonal Fall Recipes

Celebrate with students through the fall months by eating healthy snacks made with seasonal foods.

### Valentine's Day Recipes

Swap out the sweet treats for Valentine's Day with these healthier (and fun to make) alternatives.