

Tasting Lesson – Fruits & Vegetables

Repeated opportunities to taste and eat fruits and vegetables are required to increase acceptance and intake of new and familiar foods. Taste tests encourage students to use all of their senses to explore fruits and vegetables that they may not have had the opportunity to try at home. Taste testing allows students to try new foods in a supportive environment by acknowledging their likes and dislikes.

Each student's tastes are different and it is important to be accepting of each student's tastes. Try not to praise students who like a fruit or vegetable more than those who dislike it. Remember, our taste buds may change and so although a student may not like a fruit or vegetable today, they may like it in the future.

What's Needed:

1. Fruit/vegetable – One whole fruit/vegetable and adequate samples for the class
2. Fun Facts about the food. Use the Farm to School toolkit for ideas
3. Map of Minnesota, region or county
4. Minnesota Seasonal Guide. Available at: www.minnesotagrown.com
5. Pictures of family farm and/or farmer (optional)
6. Chef hat/apron (optional)

Objectives:

Student will

1. Identify *what* fruits and vegetables are grown in Minnesota and near their community.
2. Recognize *when* locally grown fruits and vegetables are in season.
3. Know *where* they can buy fruits and vegetables grown in Minnesota and near their community.
4. Experience and try a fruit or vegetable grown locally in a positive environment.
5. Share the benefits of eating locally grown fruits and vegetables (for example: freshness, great taste and flavor, nutrient dense, supports farm families in the community, keeps money in the community, decreased environmental impacts).
6. Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables at school and at home.

Introduction:

1. **Students should wash their hands before** the tasting lesson begins. Arrangements should be made with classroom teachers prior to the tasting lesson.
2. **Before getting started**, consider providing a mini-lesson on manners. Ask students to be kind to others Do not make faces or say unpleasant things about the food. When students have a positive experience they are more likely to continue to try new foods. For polite tasting instructions, go to page 44 of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*
http://www.mypyramidforkids.gov/tn/Resources/growit_book1.pdf

3. **Start a conversation** with the students about their experiences with trying new foods. Share your experiences and get the students engaged in talking about fruits and vegetables. Example:

Who likes to taste new fruits and vegetables? Why? Why not? When I was your age, there were some fruits and vegetables that I loved to eat, so I ate them all the time! And there were others I didn't like very much. Sometimes there were fruits and vegetables that looked really good but that I was afraid to try. Do you ever feel that way?

It is good to try new foods. Sometimes we don't like something the first time we try it. But it can taste good when we try it later. Has that ever happened to you? Our tastes change. We should keep trying foods because we learn to like more foods the more we eat them.

4. **Introduce the fruit/vegetable.** Hold up the whole fruit/vegetable and ask the students: “Who knows what we get to taste today?” or “Does anyone know what fruit/vegetable we get to try today?”

Pass the whole fruit/vegetable around the classroom and have the students feel and smell it. Get students involved by asking them to describe the: size, shape, color, smell, and feel.

- This is an excellent time to share some fun facts about the food.
 - Use the **Minnesota Seasonal Guide** from Minnesota Grown. Remember one objective to the tasting lesson is for students to recognize when locally grown fruits and vegetables are in season.
 - When talking about the origins of the fruit/vegetable, have a **map or globe** available to show students where the food originated and where it was grown in Minnesota.
 - If the fruit/vegetable was purchased directly from a farm family, show a picture of the farm or farmer to increase student recognition and appreciation of where the fruit/vegetable came from.
5. **Taste the fruit/vegetable together** as a class. Ask students to describe the taste.

Adjectives may include: *Sweet, sour, flavorful, salty, strong, mild, earthy, sharp, crisp, squishy, zesty, ripe, fragrant, firm, tangy, acidic, crunchy, bitter, refreshing, delectable, tough, smooth, tender, spicy, etc.*

Bonus: Students are more willing to try a fruit or vegetable if a peer is responsible for offering the fruit or vegetable to the class. If you have a chef's hat or apron, ask one student to be your Executive Chef for the day to help pass around the fruit or vegetable.

Tip

If students require prompting, ask questions that allow them to choose from opposites or answer with "yes" or "no." "Is it wet or is it dry?" "Is it smooth or is it bumpy?"

Instead of: "What does it taste like?"

Try: "Take a moment to think about the flavor. Would you describe the flavor as sweet, sour, bitter, or salty?"

Encourage student participation by supporting an environment that is relaxed and friendly. Remember to provide a positive atmosphere to encourage the students to taste the fruit/vegetable as they feel comfortable.

6. **Involve students in clean up.** Everyone should have a chance to get as much hands-on experience as they can with the fruit/vegetable. Have students put waste in the trash, wipe down tables, or pick up the floor.

7. **Further discussion and wrap-up** with the students.

Ask – "How can you eat the fruit/vegetable at school, home or anywhere?" Examples:

- Cut them into fun shapes and eat them raw – use a little dip if you'd like.
- Add to your favorite dish (spaghetti, casseroles, tacos, pizzas, sandwiches).
- Add sliced fruit to yogurt or add vegetables to scrambled eggs.
- Add shredded fruits/vegetables to cole slaw.
- Use fruit/vegetables in a mixed green or spinach salad.
- Steam, boil, stir-fry or microwave until cooked but still crisp.
- Make a fruit or vegetable kabob.

Encourage- students to tell their family about the taste testing and to share what they learned. Tell students they can do a taste testing like this one at home.

Brainstorm - ways to get more fruits and vegetables at school, home or anywhere.

- Go to the farmer's market or grocery store. Help choose fruits and vegetables.
- Teach your family what you are learning in school about fruits and vegetables.
- Ask your family to buy a new fruit or vegetable you have never tried.
- Ask for fruits and vegetables at breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Ask your family to put your favorite fruits/vegetables into regular family meals.

Resources: 1) *Cooking with Kids* - <http://cookingwithkids.net/> and 2) *Go Wild! With Fruits and Vegetables*