



Adding a Youth Flavor to Local Foods

Sensory Testing

Intended Audience:

- 8 year olds-18 year olds
- Adults who work with youth on food topics

Lesson Objectives:

Session participants will:

- Gain a basic understanding of local foods.
- Be exposed to local food products and have the opportunity to compare locally grown foods to non-locally grown food items.

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment and supplies:

- Sensory Survey (enough for each participant to have 1 for each food item)
- Writing utensil: 1 per participant
- Food items to test (jerky, salsa, potato chips, jelly/fruit butter, etc.)
- Napkins (1 for each food item)
- Serving dishes for each food item (1 for each food item)
- Serving utensils for each food item (toothpicks for jerky)
- Serving gloves for the facilitator to prepare food
- Signs (A, B) for each food
- Hand sanitizer

Do Ahead:

- Review activity instructions.
- Gather equipment and supplies.
- Set up taste testing stations. (See activity attachment for points to note and sample layout.)
- Have sensory surveys and writing utensils laid out by the taste testing stations.
- Prepare signs for each food item.

BACKGROUND

Sensory evaluation analyzes and measures human responses to the composition of food and drink for the purpose of evaluating consumer products; it enables producers to know what consumers like and why they have a preference of one item over another. For the purpose of this lesson, “local” means produced within Ohio.

WHAT TO DO

Activity:

- As a large group, ask participants to respond out loud to the following questions to gauge their knowledge on local foods. Reference the “Overview of Local Foods” at the beginning of this curriculum for answers to the questions below:
 - What are the benefits of purchasing food grown locally?
 - What are the challenges of purchasing food grown locally?
 - What kind of foods grow in Ohio?
 - Do you think there is a difference in appearance, smell, taste, and/or touch when food is locally grown compared to food grown far away? Why or why not?
 - No right or wrong answer.
- Split the group into four smaller groups of equal sizes. Assign each group to a taste testing station.
 1. Pass out a Sensory Survey handout and writing utensil to each participant. The handout includes 4 surveys on one document, one for each station.
 2. Youth will be comparing an Ohio food item (Food A) to a store brand item (Food B) across the following categories:
 - Appearance (Which food looks more desirable to consume?)
 - Smell (Which food smells the most desirable?)
 - Taste (Which food tastes the most desirable?)
 - Touch (Which food feels the most desirable?)
 - Overall Preference (Which food item do you prefer and would you ultimately purchase?)
 3. Remind participants to:
 - Use hand sanitizer before handling food at each station.
 - Use a different serving dish/napkin for each food item.
 - Make sure the same serving utensil stays with the appropriate food item.



Sources:

- Raisin, R. (2010). *Local Food Does It Matter What You Eat?* Ohio State University Extension. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohio4h.org/selfde/terminated>
- Locate a local farmer's market: <http://www.localharvest.org>
- Research Ohio products: <http://www.ohioproud.org/se/archpartners.php>
- Learn more about local foods in Ohio: www.localfoods.osu.edu

Additional lessons in this series can be found online at: <http://localfoods.osu.edu/addin-g-youth-flavor-extensions-signature-programs>

4. Have groups rotate through each station repeating the first three steps outlined above and marking their preferences on the survey handout.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- Have participants vote for each choice across food items (jelly/fruit butter, jerky, potato chips, salsa) based on their overall preference choice.
 - Ask, "Who preferred food item A? Who preferred food item B? Why?"
 - Have participants share the specific ratings for each food item (appearance, smell, touch, taste).
- Reveal the brands for each food item.
- "Did you find there was a difference in appearance, smell, taste, and/or touch when food is locally grown compared to food grown far away? Why or why not?"
 - No right or wrong answer.
- "In addition to the senses that you just experienced, like taste and smell and looks, what other factors do people use to choose if they will buy a food and/or eat a food?"
 - Examples answers: availability, cost, if other family members will eat the food, etc.
 - Reinforce that taste and enjoyment of a food is very important but it is one of many reasons why we choose and eat foods.
- "What are the benefits to purchasing local foods?"
 - Example answers: taste, support local economy, etc.
- "How can you encourage others to purchase local foods?"
- "What can we do in our local community to promote local foods?"

Apply:

- Encourage others to purchase local foods.
- Next time you go to the store, commit to purchasing \$10 worth of local foods.

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