

Conduct Taste Tests



Identify the purpose of the taste test

Examples may include:

- Connect the classroom, cafeteria, and community
- Expose students to new fruits and veggies
- Promote a new or unpopular menu item
- Highlight a local food

Plan the taste test

- What will the taste test item or recipe be?
- How will items be purchased and paid for?
- Who will prepare the items?
- Where and when will the taste test be held?
- Are there student food allergies to be aware of?
- Use volunteers to help if kitchen staff are preparing for lunch service

Set up

Consider which option will work best in your cafeteria:

- Tasting table
- Serving students
- Offering samples at the point of service or having spoons available for taste testing if students seem hesitant. This set up has worked well in larger schools.

Allow opportunity for student voice

- Give students voting options (love, like, tried, ok, no thank you)
- Use visuals for younger students (thumbs up or down, smiley or emoji faces)
- Label cups with emoji faces and use a token or other item to allow students to vote by placing their token in the cup of their choice
- Give students stickers to place on a poster board that lists choices and allow them to vote by placing their sticker

Include all students

- Collaborate with special educators to engage students who may be extra sensitive to the texture, smell and appearance of new foods. This is a great opportunity to help very choosy eaters try something new along with their peers.

Tip for success

- [Maine Harvest of the Month](#) is a good way to introduce different vegetables and fruits on the menu for the month