

Let's Eat Healthy

TOGETHER

Explore Dairy!

9th - 12th
Grade

Tasting Activities: Cheese, Milk, and Yogurt

Instructions are provided for 3 tasting activities.”

Tasting Activities:

1. [Three Cheers for Cheese \(Lesson 2\)](#)
2. [Yogurt, Culture on a Spoon \(Lesson 3\)](#)
3. [Milk Masterclass \(Lesson 4\)](#)

How to Conduct a Tasting Activity:

- Review tips online for successful and respectful tasting activities at [HealthyEating.org/Nutrition-Topics/Meal-Planning/Food-Tasting](https://www.healthyeating.org/nutrition-topics/meal-planning/food-tasting).
- Wash hands before preparing food.
- Consider if students will taste in any order or in a specified order. Consider if students may taste as many times as they'd like. If so, have enough samples for each student to taste and more for seconds or thirds. Consider making the activity a blind taste test where students also guess which sample they are tasting. Some face masks could substitute as a blindfold.
- Discuss the [5 basic tastes](#) (sweet, salty, sour, bitter, umami).
- Establish classroom norms for trying foods:
 - Students wash their hands.
 - The class tastes together. Students will wait until everyone receives a sample.
 - Students use all their senses. If they do not wish to taste the sample they can explore it through sight, touch, smell, and hearing.
 - Try tasting a sample many times using small bites, instead of all at once.
 - It's OK to like or dislike different foods—that's just another way each student is unique. Encourage an environment of respect and open-mindedness.
 - During the tasting, do not talk out loud. Doing so may influence others' opinions. Ask students to save their thoughts for the discussion.



For more information and additional resources, visit [HealthyEating.org/ExploreDairyGuide](https://www.healthyeating.org/explore-dairy-guide).

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Tasting Activity: Three Cheers for Cheese!

Objectives:

1. Students will use their senses (sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing) to observe and describe the differences in texture, flavor, and appearance between different cheeses.
2. Students will use their senses (sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing) to describe different cheeses.

Time:

- 10 minutes for preparation
- 15 minutes for lesson
- 25 minutes total

Materials:

- At least 3 different types of cheese: (Need help choosing? Visit [Real California Milk.](#))
 - Hard cheese like Parmesan or cheddar
 - Crumbly cheese like feta or cotija
 - Soft cheese like cottage cheese or ricotta
- Single serving cups or plates
- Spoon or toothpick
- [Cheese Tasting Worksheet](#)
- [Tasting Activity Tips](#)
- [Nutrition Primer](#)

Preparation:

- Cut and label the samples (A, B, C).
- For reference, watch "[How to Cut Every Cheese](#)".

Procedure:

1. **Time to taste!** Distribute the Cheese Tasting Worksheet and samples. Invite students to write and draw the food, then make observations about the sample's smell and appearance. Have the students break the cheese to observe the texture. Have them taste the cheese, observing the flavor and how it feels in the mouth. Once they have filled in the front side of the worksheet, have them flip it over and rate each cheese individually and then add up their scores. Repeat for each variety.



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2. **Discussion.** Choose some of the questions below to spark discussion.
 - Did the cheeses look different from each other? How?
 - How did the textures of the cheeses vary? Which texture did you like the most?
 - Which cheese had the strongest or most unique smell? Why do you think that is?
 - What words would you use to describe the flavors of the different cheeses?
 - How does cheese taste different from milk? In what ways are they similar?
 - Why do you think people turn milk into cheese? What does cheese offer that milk doesn't?
 - How did you feel about tasting cheeses you might not have tried before?
 - What's one thing you learned about cheese today?
 - What cheese had the highest score?

3. **Conclusion.** If blind tasting was done, then reveal the names of each cheese sample and talk about the price points. Have the price of each cheese written on the board or displayed where students can see how much it cost and its weight. Share the following perspective with students: In this tasting activity, you've observed how different types of cheese bring their own unique characteristics to the table. Just as each of you have preferences, cheese comes in various forms to suit different tastes and needs. Cheese contains similar nutrients to milk, including protein (which is an essential building block for muscles) and calcium (which is an essential building block for bones and teeth).



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Tasting Activity: Yogurt, Culture on a Spoon

Objectives:

1. Students will use their senses to observe and describe the differences in texture, flavor, and appearance between different yogurt varieties.

Time:

- 20 minutes for preparation
- 25 minutes for lesson
- 45 minutes total

Materials:

- 3 different types of plain yogurt. (Not sure which to choose? Check a manufacturer's website for tasting notes or flavor profiles.) Consider varieties of:
 - Fat content (fat-free or nonfat, low-fat, whole milk)
 - Styles (American, Greek, Icelandic, Indian)
- Transparent or clear single serving cups or bowls and spoons
- [Yogurt Tasting Worksheet](#)
- [Tasting Activity Tips](#)
- [Nutrition Primer](#) (includes background information on yogurt varieties)

Preparation:

1. Decide how to serve the yogurt and prepare accordingly.
 - a. To limit bias from students recognizing a shape or color of a container, conceal the actual yogurt containers and labels. Cover the container with paper or foil or place in a paper bag. Ideally, reusing clean food (i.e., deli) containers and presenting each yogurt in the same type of container would be best. Be sure to label the container with a letter or number and make a key (picture of the yogurt container, nutrition label, unit price) for the discussion portion.
 - b. Set up how students will receive samples. One way is to put each sample in a small cup or bowl. Another way is to have a box of plastic spoons and have each student take the set number of spoons (one for each tasting), walk down the line, dip a spoon into "yogurt A," and place the spoon on a paper plate or the [spoon tasting guide](#) spot "A." Repeat for all samples. Once all students have the samples, review the guidelines of how the tasting will work.

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TOGETHER

Explore Dairy!



Procedure:

1. **Time to taste!** Distribute the Yogurt Tasting Worksheet and begin with the first yogurt sample. Invite students to make observations about the sample's smell and appearance. Next, taste the yogurt, observing the flavor and how it feels in the mouth. Take notes. Once they have filled in the front side of the worksheet, have them flip it over and rate each yogurt individually and then add up their scores. Repeat for each type of yogurt:
2. **Discussion. Option A:** Choose some of the questions below to spark discussion.
 - Did you enjoy the yogurt you tried today? Why or why not?
 - Which yogurt did you enjoy the most?
 - Were there any flavors in the yogurt that you found surprising?
 - Did any of the yogurt remind you of something you've tried before?
 - How did you feel about trying yogurt that was new and different?
 - What's one thing you learned about yogurt today?

Option B: You may also participate in the tasting and lead a group discussion simultaneously. After each tasting, describe what you taste and how you would rate it using the process grid; then have a group discussion.

3. **Conclusion.** Share the key, show the original yogurt containers, and talk about the price points for each yogurt. Share the following perspective with students: In this tasting activity, you've observed how different types of yogurt look, feel and taste. Yogurt can be used in many ways and it is also a nutritious food. It is an excellent source of protein, calcium and potassium and other vitamins and minerals. Since it offers health benefits beyond basic nutrition, yogurt is considered a functional food.



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Tasting Activity: Milk Masterclass

Objectives:

1. Students will use their senses to observe and describe the differences in texture, flavor, and appearance between different milk varieties.

Time:

- 10 minutes for preparation
- 15 minutes for lesson
- 25 minutes total

Materials:

- 3 to 4 different types of plain dairy milk such as:
 - Fat-free milk (0.2% fat)
 - Low-fat milk (1% fat)
 - Whole milk (3.5% fat)
 - Lactose-free milk (available in a variety of milk fat options and allows participation if opting out due to lactose intolerance; see [lactose content chart](#) for more information)
- A container or carton for each milk type
- Transparent or clear single serving cups
- [Milk Tasting Worksheet](#)
- [Article Reflection Worksheet](#) (optional)
- [Tasting Activity Tips](#)
- [Nutrition Primer](#)

Preparation:

- Prepare and label the samples. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Procedure:

1. **Introduce milk fat. Option A:** Show students the different milk cartons. Ask if they have seen the different milk cartons at the store. Ask what type of milk they drink in the cafeteria and at home. Have them make observations about similarities and differences in the packaging. Make the following points about milk:
 - Did you know that all types of milk naturally contain some fat? People choose to have milk with more or less fat, depending on their preferences or what they are using it for, and that's why a little magic happens during processing.



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- Think back to milk before it is homogenized. Do you remember how the bottle of milk in the video separated into different layers, with a creamy layer on top? That top layer of cream is the fat we're talking about. It's the special part of the milk that makes it taste really rich and smooth.
- Now, let's talk about different types of milk. To make fat-free milk, all the cream is removed. Whole milk hasn't had any of its cream removed. Products like heavy cream (often used for making whipped cream) can have cream added to the milk to make it super rich. The milk you're going to taste has different amounts of fat. See if you can taste the differences.

Option B: Students read the article "[All the Skinny on Milkfat](#)" and fill out the [Article Reflection Worksheet](#).

- 2. Introduce nutrition facts of each milk variety.** Ask students to compare the Nutrition Facts label of each milk sample. What are the similarities and differences? Refer to the Nutrition Primer for more information.
- 3. Time to taste!** Distribute the Milk Tasting Worksheet and the first milk sample. Invite students to make observations about the sample's smell and appearance. Demonstrate how to hold the milk sample up to the light to observe **transparency**. Before tasting, have students write observations and a hypothesis of what they think it will taste like. Finally, taste the milk, observing the flavor and how it feels in the mouth. Students write what they actually taste. Once they have filled in the front side of the worksheet, have them flip it over and rate each milk individually and then add up their scores. Repeat for each type of milk.
- 4. Discussion.** Choose some of the questions below to spark discussion.
 - How does the appearance of each milk type compare? Is one milk more transparent (see-through) than the others?
 - How does the texture of each milk feel on your tongue? Do some milks feel thicker or thinner?
 - Does the creamier milk leave a different aftertaste compared to the less creamy ones?
 - How might you use each type of milk in different foods or recipes? Can you think of a dish where one type of milk would work better than the others?
 - Which milk do you personally prefer, and why? Is it based on taste, creaminess, or other factors?
 - Do you think the different fat content in these milks affects their taste and texture? How might it impact their nutritional value?
 - What's one thing you learned about milk today?
- Conclusion.** If blind tasting was done, then reveal the names of each milk sample and talk about the price points. Have the price of each cheese written on the board or displayed where students can see how much it cost and its weight. Share the following perspective with students: In this milk masterclass, you've observed how different types of milk bring their own unique characteristics to the table. Just as each of you have preferences, milk comes in various forms to suit different tastes and needs. All forms of dairy milk contain 13 essential nutrients that play an important role in growth and development.



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