

"I love hummus, but I don't like spinach!"



The difference between **Taste & Flavor**

When someone asks us if we like a food or drink, we answer with certainty. But what if our likes and dislikes aren't really that straightforward? The taste of a food is relatively direct. Our taste buds sense bitterness, saltiness, sourness, sweetness, and umami (savoriness). Flavor, on the other hand, involves all that we experience when eating a food and is the basis of our likes and dislikes.

Everything about a food, from the smell to the packaging, and even the place or time we are eating, can influence how we perceive flavor. We can even be swayed by how a food is described before we try it. Simply adding the label "very sweet" to a drink increases how sweet we believe it is, without any change to the drink itself. Add our individual genetics into the mix and it is easy to see how flavor is about much more than just taste.



Give "Healthy" a Chance

One unfortunate example of taste vs. flavor is the myth that healthy food "tastes" bad. If you believe this stereotype, consider giving some healthy items another try with a clean slate. For a fun spin, try some foods through a blind taste test. You may be surprised with the results.



Keep Trying

With so many factors influencing flavor, it is worth giving foods a few tries before putting them on your dislike list. Vary the preparation and even the time or location and be open to the possibility of a new flavor.



Eat Mindfully

Part of mindful eating is awareness of many of the factors that can impact how we perceive flavor. When you eat, reduce distraction and dedicate your focus to eating.



REFERENCES:

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2. The Principles of Mindful Eating, The Center for Mindful Eating. <http://www.tcmce.org/principles.htm>.