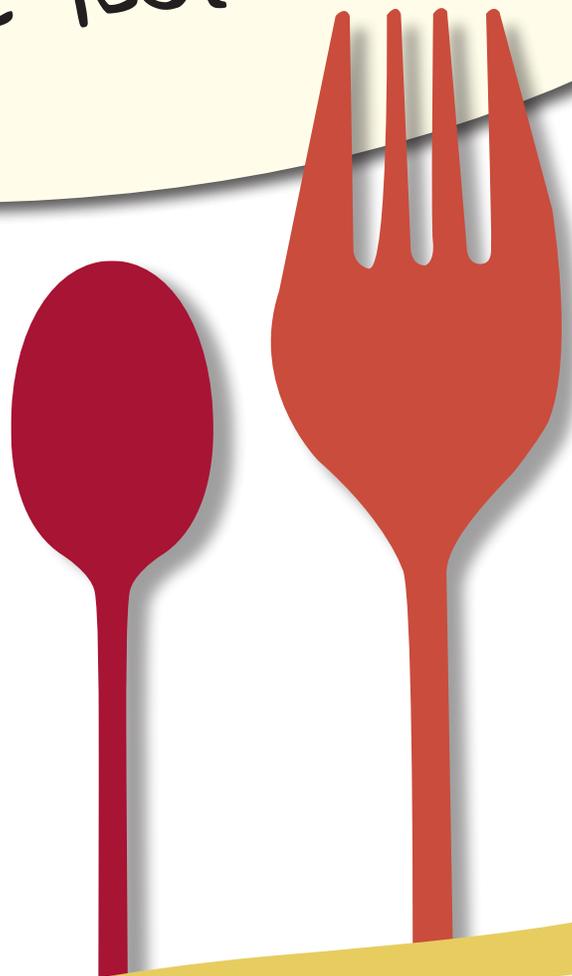




Home Grown

Taste Test Guide





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Home Grown Taste Test Guide

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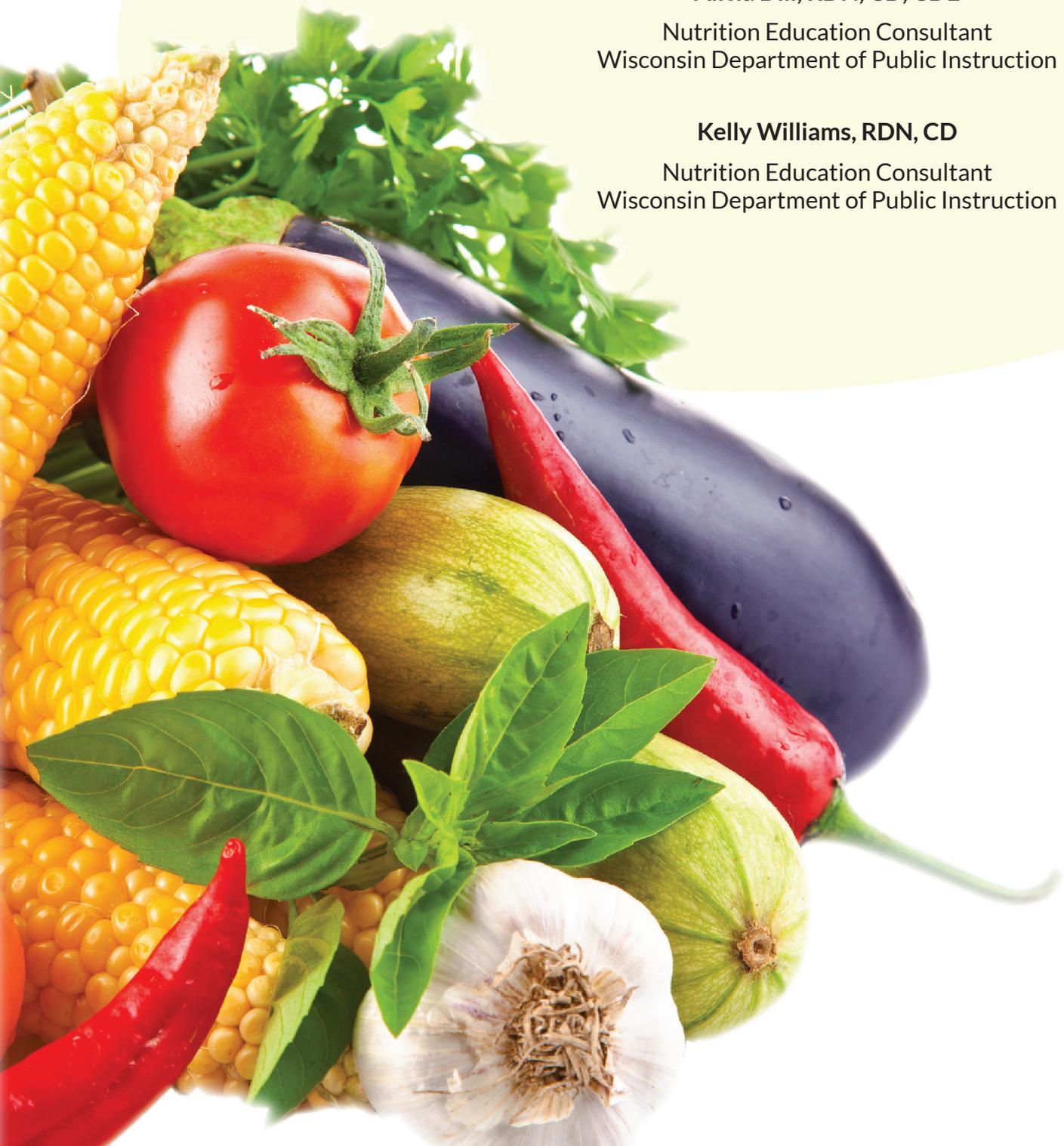


Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Steps To Success	2
Conducting a Tasting	3
Taste Test Tips	4
Taste Test Timeline	5
Home Grown: Tastes of Wisconsin	6-7
Nutrition Education	8
Taste Test Survey	9



Introduction

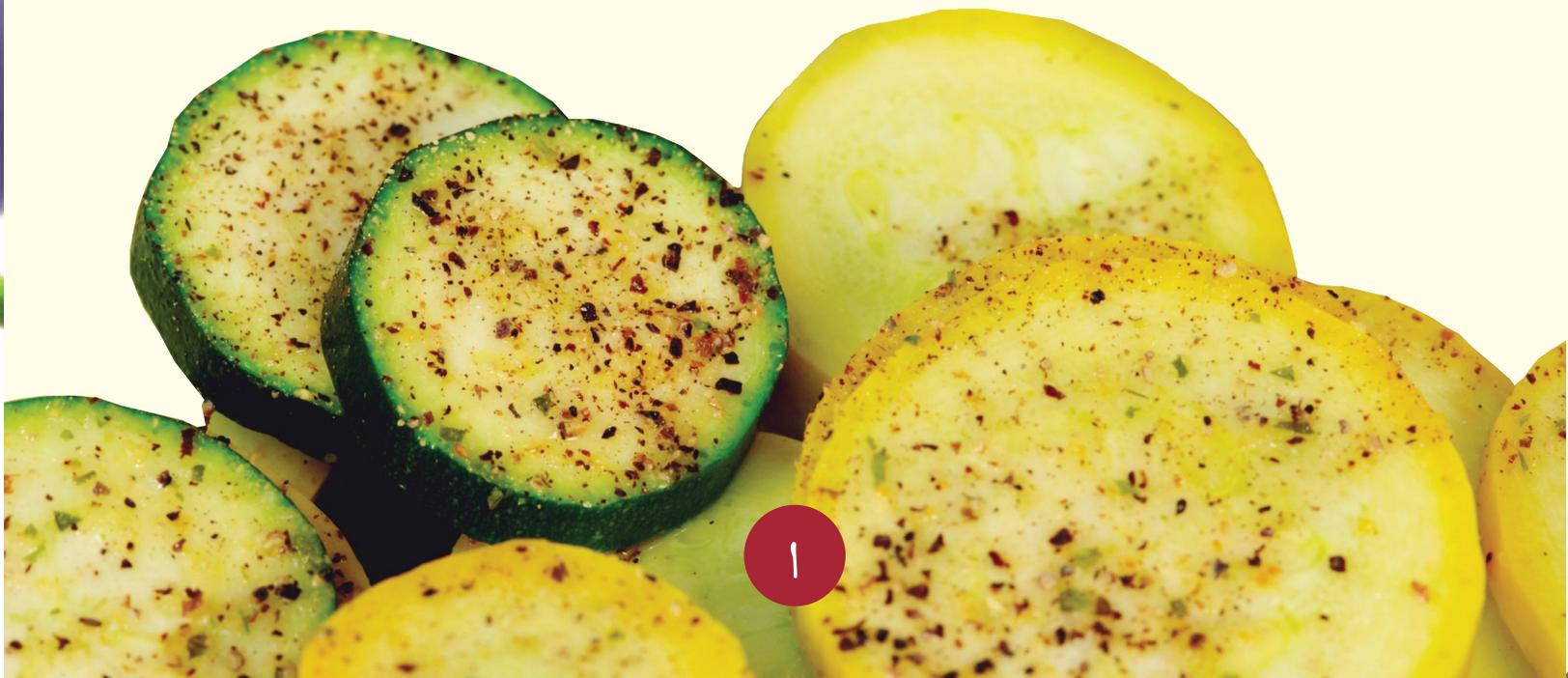


Have you ever considered that your cafeteria is a classroom?

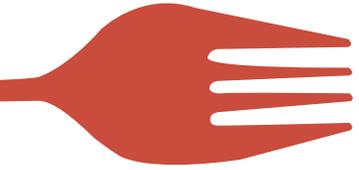
Wisconsin Team Nutrition recommends taste testing new foods prior to adding them to a menu as a way to increase selection of the food and reduce food waste.

Not only are students provided with the nourishment needed to succeed in a traditional classroom, but they also learn about well-balanced meals and food choices in the cafeteria. This type of learning will impact students every day. Educate your students to make healthier food choices by offering taste testing events.

Children are often hesitant to try new foods. They may be unwilling to select a new food offered as part of the school meal if they are not sure they will like it. Hosting fun taste tests can be used to introduce students to the smell, texture, and flavor of food in a non-intimidating way. Observing peers and teachers try new foods can motivate students to try new foods. One taste of a new food can change a student's perception and lead to the development of a healthy eating habit. Wisconsin Team Nutrition recommends taste testing new foods prior to adding them to a menu as a way to increase selection of the food and reduce food waste.



Steps to Success



- 1. Identify goals** – before starting a taste test program, establish goals about what you hope to get out of the activity. Are you implementing a taste test program to expand salad bar offerings? Do you want to broaden the menu or expand a Farm to School program? Identifying your goals will help determine the foods you offer in the tasting.
- 2. Create a committee** – a comprehensive taste test program can be a labor intensive endeavor for one person. It is beneficial to develop a committee that can assist with all facets of the program (food preparation, food service, nutrition education, survey tabulation, etc). People to consider including on the committee are the foodservice director, school head cook, supportive teachers, interested parents, and the custodial staff. Be careful about soliciting assistance without adding excessively to their workloads.
- 3. Determine program details** – with the input from your school partners, begin to work out the details of the program. How many taste tests will be conducted, and how will they be evaluated? What foods will be tested, and where will products be purchased from? Where and when will the taste tests be conducted, and who will be responsible for purchasing, preparing, and serving the foods? Will nutrition education be part of the activity, and who will be responsible for providing it?
- 4. Offer students hands-on experiences** – studies have shown that students who help prepare a food for a taste test are more likely to try it and like it than those students who have not. If possible, consider offering hands-on lessons to provide students with the opportunity to participate in the food preparation.
- 5. Keep the channels of communication open** – once you have answered all the logistical questions about planning a taste test, be sure to communicate your plan with the school and community. You want to make sure you are choosing dates that work for the entire school. Planning a taste test on a day when half of the students are gone on a field trip is not ideal. Make sure the principal, teachers, foodservice staff, and custodial staff are aware of the activity to ensure no scheduling conflicts arise.

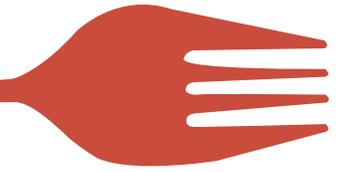




Conducting a Tasting

1. **Select** the food(s) that you will be offering for the taste test(s). You may consider offering multiple taste tests to increase the students' exposure to a certain food or recipe.
2. If you will be providing nutrition education, **identify** specific **topics** and questions to ask the students.
3. **Describe** the featured food and display this information.
4. Cut the featured item into **small pieces** or slices so that each student can taste a bite of the item. Consider leaving unprocessed samples of the ingredients at the taste test to allow students to see and touch the foods in their original form.
5. **Offer** portions of the item to each student. Allow students to decline samples if they are uninterested or unwilling to participate in the test. Ask students to think about how each item tastes, smells, and looks different from the other varieties and record or remember their observations.
6. Have students **share** their thoughts on the samples via a survey.

Taste Test Tips



- Don't stress out! Leading a tasting should be simple, easy, and fun! Remember that the amount of time dedicated to conducting a taste test is up to you.
- Find teachers, parents, or community volunteers to assist in coordinating the activities.
- Keep samples small and voluntary. Taste testing is a great way to introduce students to new foods in a pressure-free way. Don't bombard students with large portions of a new food or require students to take the sample. Doing so may cause students to have a negative reaction to the food prior to actually tasting the item.
- Be prepared for all reactions. Students can be picky eaters and not like what you are offering. Be patient with your students. Many people may have to try a new food ten to fifteen times before he or she accepts it.
- Announce the results to the whole school after the taste test has finished and plans for continued use of the food.





Taste Test Timeline

Two Weeks Before the Taste Test

- Find parents, students, or staff members that are willing to prepare and serve the food the day of the taste test.
- Write an announcement of the taste test for the school newsletter or website.
- If purchasing directly from a farmer, contact him or her to be sure the product will be available and invite the farmer to the taste test.

One Week Before the Taste Test

- Make sure that taste test items have been purchased or are being delivered on the date needed.
- Make copies of the taste test surveys and any education materials you will be using.
- Advertise the taste test in the school newsletter and school website. You may consider inviting the local paper or news station.

Day of the Taste Test

- Announce the taste test during school announcements and post signs throughout the school.
- Set up taste testing table or carts.
- Conduct the taste test and distribute the surveys.

One Week After the Taste Test

- Tally the results of the taste test and post them in the school newsletter, cafeteria, or school website.
- Send a letter home to parents describing the taste test and results. Consider including nutrition education materials in this mailing.



Home Grown: Tastes of Wisconsin



Home Grown: Tastes of Wisconsin is a nutrition and agricultural education program that schools can elect to participate in. The materials developed for this program include recipes for school foodservice, nutrition education handouts, and taste test surveys. The materials are available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/team-nutrition/home-grown>. *Home Grown: Tastes of Wisconsin* was developed in order to:

- broaden food experiences of students,
- introduce foods that are commonly grown and available in Wisconsin,
- provide recipes that can be tested and incorporated into school meals, and
- educate the broader school community on local foods and health benefits of fruits and vegetables.

Nutrition education and the promotion of healthy eating are essential to students' health, well being, and educational success. Nutrition education in school promotes healthier eating in students. Through education, Wisconsin students can become empowered to choose healthy lifestyle behaviors to help them excel in all their endeavors. Students can learn about food and nutrition through multiple disciplines, including math, science, social studies, physical education, and health.



Bringing local foods into the classroom and cafeteria is an exciting way to engage students in learning. If students learn about the food (where it comes from and how it is grown) and are able to smell, see, and taste a small portion of food, they are more likely to accept it. Additionally, through the offering of local food taste tests, schools are able to connect the classroom, cafeteria, and community to improve learning and help students make healthier food choices. To maximize nutrition education, consider:

- discussing the difference between locally grown foods and those that are imported;
- inviting community members in health professions to discuss nutrition or farmers to bring his or her local food and discuss how it is grown or made; and
- incorporating the taste tests into other subjects, like history, math, or creative writing. Utilize resources found at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/team-nutrition/nutrition-education> for actual nutrition education lessons.

Comprehensive Nutrition Education



Classroom:
provide standards-based curriculum that incorporates nutrition and agricultural education.



Cafeteria:
highlight the incorporation of local and seasonal produce and menus, displays, and serving lines.



Community:
develop partnerships with farmers, local businesses, and health professionals to assist in promoting and developing educational opportunities.

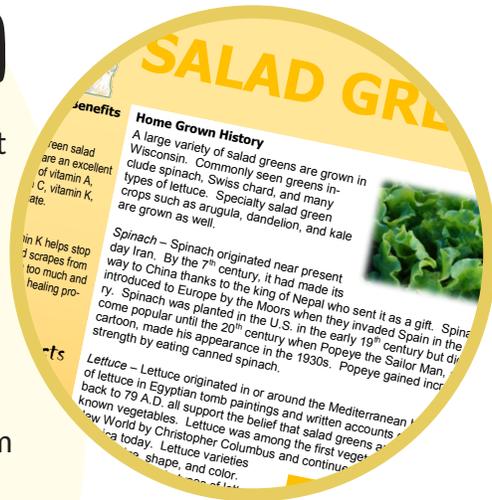


Nutrition Education

Education materials have been developed for seven different foods grown in Wisconsin: melons, tomatoes, apples, cranberries, winter squash, sweet potatoes, and salad greens. The materials are available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/team-nutrition/home-grown>.

Educator Handouts

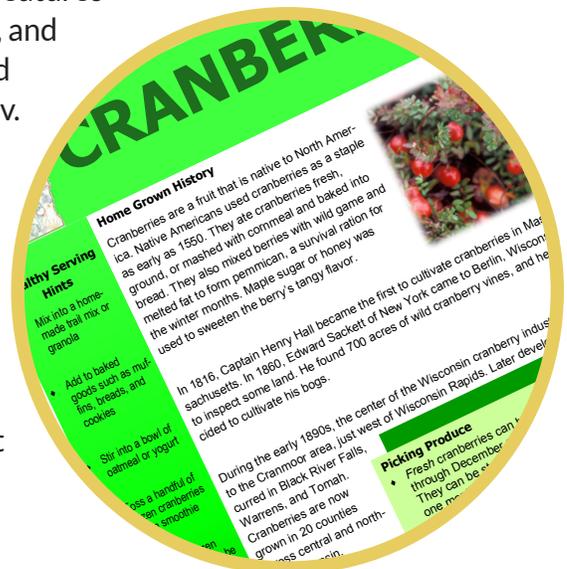
The educator handouts were written to be used by classroom teachers and/or foodservice personnel. Each handout has a brief history of the food, basic health benefits, fun facts, and student activities. It also includes a guide for growing the food in Wisconsin and a recipe that can be made in a classroom or at a cafeteria serving station in front of students. The recipes also could be used as part of the taste test if desired. Provide a copy to each staff member who will be conducting nutrition education.



Community Handouts

The community handouts were written to be distributed to parents or guardians of the students participating in the taste tests. They include information about the history of the food, purchasing tips, health benefits, and fun facts. The handouts also contain a recipe that features the product, hints to increase consumption of the food, and a chart of the recommended daily amounts of fruits and vegetables to eat as found on: www.choosemyplate.gov.

Each food has two versions of the community handout. Some schools may choose to offer foods in their taste tests that were purchased locally. If you are not purchasing local product, it is recommended that you use the version of the handout without the green dashed box at the bottom of the first page. If you do purchase a local product, be sure to include that information in your community handout.



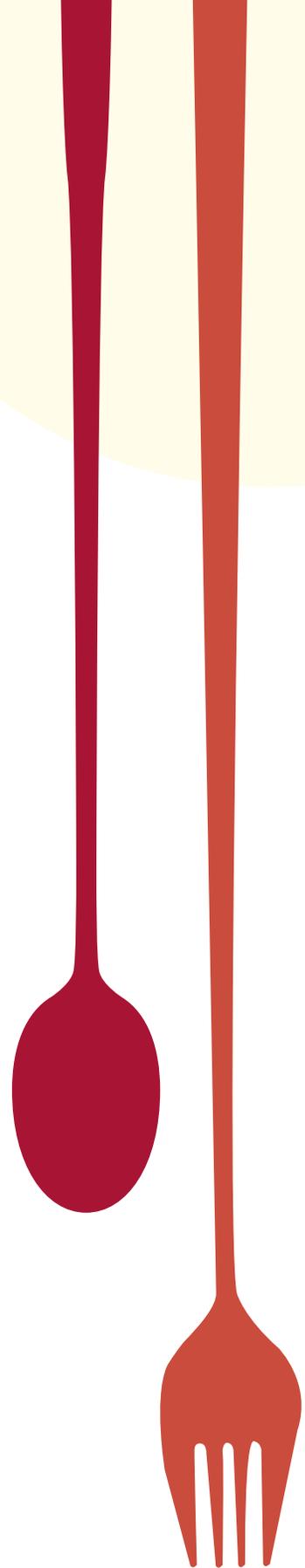
Taste Test Survey

Food _____

Rate how the food:			
LOOKED	Good	Okay	Bad
SMELLED	Good	Okay	Bad
TASTED	Good	Okay	Bad
I would eat this food again	Yes	Maybe	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Check the box if you did not try the food			
I learned something new about this food		Yes	No
I enjoyed the taste test		Yes	No

Food _____

Rate how the food:			
LOOKED	Good	Okay	Bad
SMELLED	Good	Okay	Bad
TASTED	Good	Okay	Bad
I would eat this food again	Yes	Maybe	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Check the box if you did not try the food			
I learned something new about this food		Yes	No
I enjoyed the taste test		Yes	No







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