

Taste Testing Guide

Plan your own taste testing event by following this guide! Taste tests can boost program awareness and student participation!

Getting Started



- ☐ Notify your staff, teachers, and administration about your event
- ☐ Create a team of volunteers to help run your event
 - Include staff, teachers, parents, students, and/or community members!
- ☐ Plan your purchasing for the taste test item and other materials needed
- ☐ Promote your event!
 - Make announcements, hang posters and flyers, and post on social media!

During the Event



- ☐ Promote the event during morning announcements
- ☐ Make sure your event team is ready to go!
- ☐ Set up and prepare the taste test item for the event
- ☐ Handout the food samples and ballots to students
- ☐ Take photos!
- ☐ Collect all taste testing ballots and clean up the event

After the Event



- ☐ Tally your ballots and record your results
- ☐ Share the results of your event with your school and community!
- ☐ Don't forget to share photos and stories with TDA at nutrition@texasagriculture.gov



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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Food and Nutrition Division
Nutrition Assistance Programs

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How Will You Run Your Taste Test Event?

Below are ideas, tips, and considerations!



Taste Testing Table

- Set up a table in your lunchroom for students to visit during or after they finish their lunch.
- Have students fill out ballots at the table or allow them to take their food sample and ballot back to their seats.
- **Considerations:** How many volunteers are needed? Will you provide pens/pencils?



Service Line

- Have the food item in its whole/raw form at the beginning of the line for all students to see. Serve the taste testing item in the service line.
- Give each student who takes a sample a ballot to fill out OR have students fill ballots out at a designated table after they have tried the food sample
- **Considerations:** Will you provide pens/pencils?



Delivery

- Walk through your lunchroom and handout samples and ballots using a cart.
- Other event volunteers can follow behind to assist students and collect complete ballots and writing utensils.
- **Considerations:** How many volunteers are needed? Will you refill the cart or stop the taste testing when all the samples are gone? Will you provide pens/pencils?



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Promote Your Event!

Use these resources and materials to promote your taste testing event!



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

RED AND YELLOW BELL PEPPER

AUGUST

Red bell peppers could be called the full-grown bell peppers, because they are picked later than other bell peppers. They often have a sweet taste. Yellow peppers are picked in the middle of their growing time and rank between green and red bell peppers on how ripe they become. Yellow bell peppers lack the sour taste green peppers sometimes have.

BENEFITS

Bell peppers are an excellent source of vitamin A (in the form of carotenoids), vitamin C, and vitamin K. Vitamin B6 and dietary fiber. They are also a good source of folic acid, iron, and magnesium.

TALKING TO STUDENTS ABOUT VITAMIN B6

Vitamin B6 supports normal nervous system function and brain development.

SELECTION

- Choose firm, brightly colored peppers with light skin that seem ready for their size.
- Avoid dull, shriveled or pitted peppers.

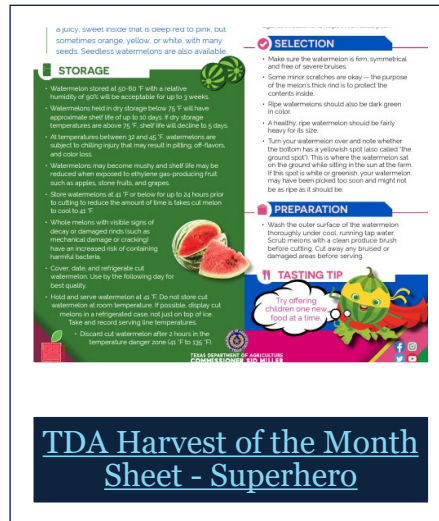
STORAGE

- Store peppers in the coolest part of a storeroom or warmest part of a refrigerator.
- Store red and green bell peppers in the vegetable crisper of a refrigerator.

PREPARATION

- First, wash and dry bell peppers.
- Then, remove the stem by cutting around it in a

TDA Harvest of the Month Sheets



a juicy, sweet inside that is deep red to pink, but sometimes orange, yellow, or white, with many seeds. Seedless watermelons are also available.

STORAGE

- Watermelon stored at 50-55°F with a relative humidity of 90% will be acceptable for up to 3 weeks.
- Watermelons held in dry storage below 75°F will have approximately 50% of the shelf life.
- At temperatures between 30 and 45°F, watermelons are subject to chilling injury that may result in pitting, off-flavor, and color loss.
- Watermelons may become moldy and shrivel the rind be reduced when exposed to ethylene gas-producing fruit, such as apples, stone fruits, and grapes.
- Store watermelons at 45°F for 24 hours prior to cutting to reduce the amount of time it takes out melon to reach 45°F.
- Whole melons with visible signs of decay or damaged rinds (such as mechanical damage or cracking) have an increased risk of containing harmful bacteria.
- Cover, date, and refrigerate cut watermelon. Use by the following day for best quality.
- Hold and serve watermelon at 45°F. Do not store cut watermelon at room temperature. If possible, display cut melons in a refrigerated case, not just on top of ice. Take and record serving line temperatures.
- Discard cut watermelon after 2 hours in the temperature danger zone (41°F to 135°F).

SELECTION

- Make sure the watermelon is firm, symmetrical, and free of green bruises.
- Some minor scratches are okay – the purpose of the rind's thick rind is to protect the contents inside.
- Ripe watermelons should also be dark green in color.
- A healthy, ripe watermelon should be fairly heavy for its size.
- Turn your watermelon over and note whether the bottom has a yellowish spot (also called the ground spot). This is where the watermelon sat on the ground while sitting in the sun at the farm. If this spot is white or greenish, your watermelon may have been picked too soon and might not be as ripe as it should be.

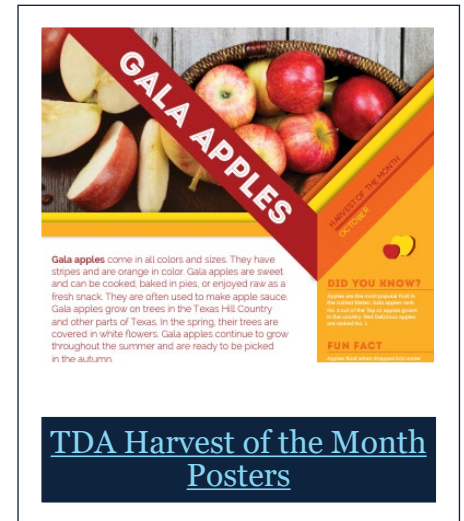
PREPARATION

- Wash the outer surface of the watermelon thoroughly under cool, running tap water. Scrub melons with a clean produce brush before cutting. Cut away any bruised or damaged areas before serving.

TASTING TIP

Try offering watermelon as a food at a time.

TDA Harvest of the Month Sheet - Superhero



GALA APPLES

HARVEST OF THE MONTH

SEPTEMBER

Gala apples come in all colors and sizes. They have stripes and are orange in color. Gala apples are sweet and can be cooked, baked in pies, or enjoyed raw as a fresh snack. They are often used to make apple sauce. Gala apples grow on trees in the Texas Hill Country and other parts of Texas. In the spring, their trees are covered in white flowers. Gala apples continue to grow throughout the summer and are ready to be picked in the autumn.

DID YOU KNOW?

Apples are the most popular fruit in the United States. Some apples are red, some are green, and some are yellow. They are all delicious!

FUN FACT

Apples are the most popular fruit in the United States. Some apples are red, some are green, and some are yellow. They are all delicious!

TDA Harvest of the Month Posters



Be a Food Critic for a day!

Try our new menu item.

USDA Posters



Official Taste Tester

USDA Stickers



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