Sensory vocabulary

Sensory evaluation involves using one or more tests to determine different characteristics of food such as *appearance*, *odour*, *taste* and *texture*.

A wide range of vocabulary is used to describe sensory characteristics of food products.

ODOUR

aromatic
floral rotten
perfumed acrid musty
fragrant scented
pungent

The nose detects volatile aromas released from food. An odour may be described by association with a particular food, e.g. herby, cheesy, fishy. The intensity can also be recorded.

APPEARANCE

stringy
heavy flat
fizzy crystalline wet
cuboid fragile dull

A product's size, shape, colour and surface texture can be described e.g. large, small, oblong, square, yellow pink, rough.

TASTE

bland
rancid tart
acidic strong
citrus mild
spicy
tainted weak
savoury

Odour and taste work together to produce a flavour. These words may be used to describe either odour or tastes of food products.

TEXTURE

firm
flaky crisp
fluffy crumbly
lumpy smooth
hard mushy
sticky dry

Thee words may be used to describe either appearance or texture of food products.

TASTE

sweet cool bitter zesty warm
hot tangy sour sharp
rich salty

The tongue can detect four basic tastes: sweet, sour, salt and bitter. Tastes may be described by association with a particular food, e.g. meaty, minty or fruity. The intensity can also be recorded.

TEXTURE

brittle rubbery short gritty
clammy close stodgy
bubbly sandy tacky
tender waxy
open soft

Texture may be assessed through touch. When food is placed in the mouth, the surface of the tongue and other sensitive skin reacts to the feel of the surface of the food. Different sensations are felt as the food is chewed.

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