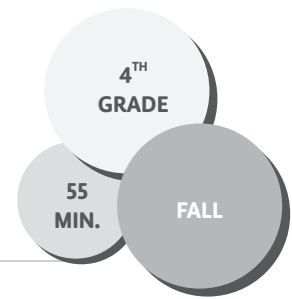


Choose-Your-Own-Flavor Popcorn

THEME: PREPARING HEALTHY FOOD



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we balance flavors in a dish?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to identify the flavor profile of various herbs and spices.
- ✓ Students will be able to blend flavors to create a custom popcorn seasoning.

LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students explore the five flavor profiles, identifying and sorting ingredients in teams and working collaboratively to create a custom popcorn seasoning.

MATERIALS

- Popped popcorn (see Preparation)
- Olive oil (for drizzling)

A tray with the following for each group of 4–6 students:

- 1 large bowl for popcorn
- 1 small bowl for each student
- Large spoon or tongs for stirring
- Small paper tasting cups of individual herbs or spices, representing a sample of each flavor profile in the 5 Flavor Profiles chart below, for example:
 - **Bitter:** finely chopped rosemary, grapefruit zest
 - **Sweet:** honey or sugar (choose one, and provide only a small amount in one tasting cup)
 - **Spicy:** chili powder, cinnamon
 - **Sour:** lime wedges
 - **Salty:** sea salt
- 1 spoon for each tasting cup
- Scratch paper and pencils

PREPARATION

- ▶ Pop popcorn. Typically $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of kernels produces about 8 cups of popcorn, so you'll likely have to make three to four batches.
- ▶ Just before class, drizzle the popcorn with olive oil, and distribute it into one bowl for each group of 4–6 students. Prepare trays for groups of students.

5 FLAVOR PROFILES

Salty/Umami

Sea salt
Soy sauce
Dried seaweed
Nutritional yeast
Parmesan cheese

Bitter

Rosemary
Thyme
Peppermint
Grapefruit zest
Cocoa powder

Spicy

Chili powder
Hot sauce
Cinnamon
Cumin
Curry powder

Sweet

Honey
Maple syrup
Brown sugar

Sour

Lemon or
lime juice

ACTION STEPS

1. Engage: Tell students that today they'll be working with the five flavor profiles in cooking to create their own popcorn seasoning. Have students turn and talk to see if they can name all five. Share as a class. **(5 min.)**

2. Wash Hands Break! (5 min.)

3. Exploring Flavors: Explain that you've prepared different herbs, spices, and ingredients that fit the five different flavor profiles, and in teams they'll

need to figure out which belongs in each profile group. Explain, *I'll give each team five scraps of paper. Your task is to sort the ingredients into five distinct groups. On each paper, write the flavor, such as bitter, and then all the ingredients you can identify that fall under bitter.* Demonstrate how to use a spoon to put a small pinch of one item into your hand without touching or licking the end of the spoon. Then smell, observe, and taste the ingredient to figure out what it is and what flavor profile it matches. Remind students that the spoons are to share, so they shouldn't touch the serving end. Also remind them to save some of each flavoring for their popcorn. Pass out trays and circulate through the room as students work in groups, asking guiding questions such as, *Does this herb smell familiar to you? In what dish have you smelled or tasted this spice before?* **(10 min.)**

4. Discussing Flavors: Go over each flavor profile as a class, having groups take turns sharing the identified herbs and spices. As you review ingredients, share information with students, such as how bitter herbs like peppermint can help your stomach digest foods. After you've gone over each flavor, discuss combining them. Ask, for example, *How would you balance sweetness in a dish?* Discuss different popular flavor combinations students might be familiar with, such as sweet and sour sauce from Chinese restaurants or chili and lime on fruit in Mexican cuisine. **(10 min.)**

5. Creating Custom Popcorn Seasoning: Explain that student teams will now create their own custom seasoning for their team bowl of popcorn. Model with your own bowl (e.g., sprinkling salt, squeezing lime juice, and distributing a pinch of chili powder over your bowl). Stir with a spoon and sample, demonstrating how you adjust the flavor for your taste. Tell students

they'll have five minutes to work with their team to create their seasoning. Pass out bowls of popcorn to groups of students, and have them prepare their own custom blend. **(10 min.)**

6. Tasting: Have students wait until you tell them to eat their popcorn. Encourage students to share some of their popcorn with other groups to taste a variety of combinations. **(10 min.)**

REFLECTION

Have students discuss the following questions in small groups, then share with the class: **(5 min.)**

- *What did you use for your seasoning? What were your favorite flavor combinations? How do some of your favorite dishes combine the flavor profiles?*
- *How would you teach someone else to make a flavorful popcorn seasoning?*

ADAPTATIONS

Garden Setting: Split students into teams, and have them hunt for herbs and other items in the garden, finding as many of the flavor profiles as they can. Remind them only to taste with adult permission to ensure that they don't pick and eat anything poisonous.

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.5.C

Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).