

SCIENCE in the NEWS • May 2025



Scientists Make Games More Real

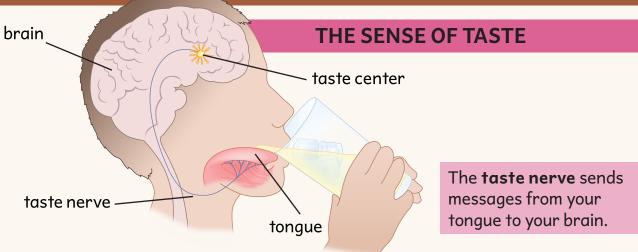


Have you ever wanted to taste food in a video game? Maybe you will one day! Scientists made a new machine to use with virtual reality (VR). VR is a kind of game where people see and hear things in a pretend world. The new machine lets people taste things there, too.

How? The machine makes stuff. The stuff tastes like different foods. It can taste like cake, coffee, eggs, fish soup, or lemonade. People wear the machine in their mouth. The machine sprays the stuff onto their tongue. People used the machine. They tried to figure out what the stuff tasted like. They got the cake and lemonade right. They had trouble with the other tastes.

The new machine is not just for games. It can help scientists learn more about the sense of taste. �





All About Taste Buds

How do you taste food? With **taste buds**! Taste buds cover the inside of your mouth. Most of them are on your tongue. They look like tiny bumps. Your taste buds touch the food you eat. They send a message to your brain. Your brain tells you what the food tastes like.

Each taste bud senses five different tastes. The tastes are sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and **umami** (oo-MAA-mee). Umami is the taste in foods such as meat and soy sauce.

Taste buds are very important. They help you enjoy your food. They also help you know if food is safe to eat. Thank you, taste buds! ❖

FIVE TASTES	
Taste	Foods
sweet	grapes, cake, candy, honey
sour	lemon juice, vinegar, plain yogurt
salty	french fries, potato chips, pretzels
bitter	plain cocoa, coffee, olives
umami	mushrooms, fish, ripe tomatoes

This table shows how some foods taste to most people.

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O Process Science

How to Study Cats and Not Scare Them

Cats can be hard to study.

They get scared in new places.

One scientist found a way to study cats without scaring them. He went to the cats' homes.

The scientist had a question. How do cats know if they can fit through a small space? To find out, he gave cats holes of different sizes. Some holes were short and wide. Other holes were tall and narrow. The scientist watched what the cats did. Eight cats did not do the test at all. But thirty cats did.

Most did not go through short, wide holes. Most did go through tall, narrow holes. The scientist learned cats know their own size. Cats sometimes think about how big they are before going through a small space. Now we know more about cats! ❖



Cats do different things at home than they do in a new place.