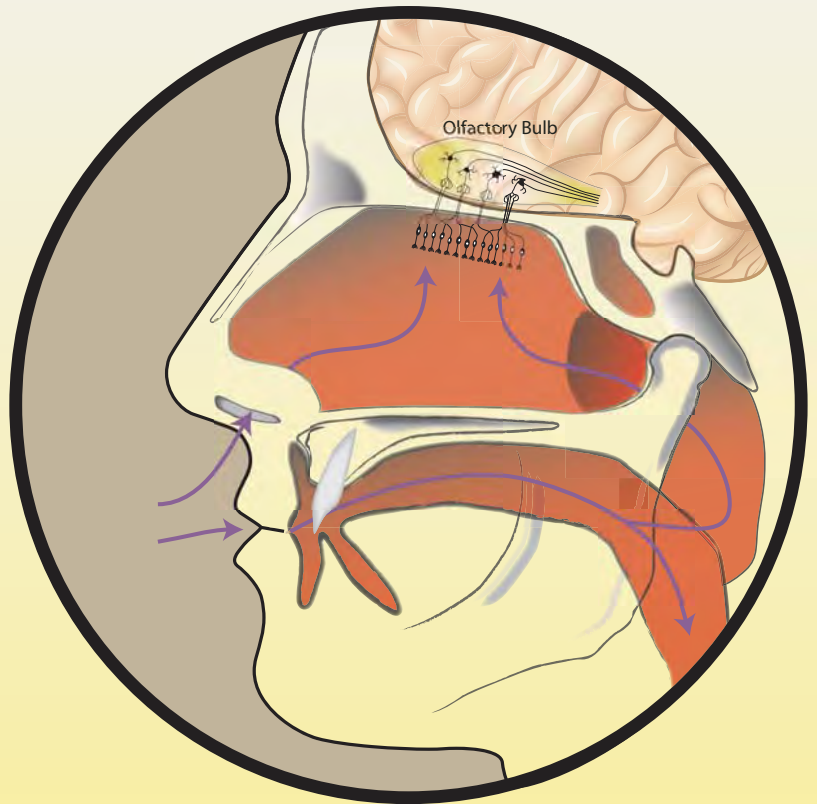


The Difference Between Taste and Flavour



Flavour

The flavour of food depends more on its smell, than on its taste, and we can recognise a very large number of different odours indeed. What you think of as taste, is more likely to be aroma. That's why food seems so tasteless when you have a cold.

To demonstrate this

Take a sweet, hold your nose and put it in your mouth.
What can you taste?

Now let go of your nose!

When you have food in your mouth, as you breathe molecules of the food that come off into the air (volatile chemicals) pass over a part of your nose called the olfactory epithelium.

Your olfactory epithelium is the super star of food flavour sensation

You have about 350 different types of odour receptor, each one works like a lock and key to detect a particular set of scent molecules. The individual receptors work together in combinations to produce the sensation of smell. It is like the letters of a giant alphabet and the smells we perceive are the words made up from a 350 letter alphabet. Your memory recognizes the smell and tells you what it is.

**You can probably smell between
10,000 and 100,00 different smells**

The Difference Between Taste and Flavour



Taste

Basic *tastes* are detected by receptors or 'Taste Buds' on your tongue and also throughout your mouth. Each taste bud has 50–150 taste receptors sensitive to certain chemicals. When these chemicals dissolve in the saliva in your mouth, a signal is sent to your brain.

There are FIVE basic tastes:

- SWEET** – the taste produced by sugar.
- SOUR** – the taste of acids like vinegar, lemon juice or malic acid found in 'sour sweets'.
- SALT** – a taste produced by sodium chloride and some other chemical salts.
- BITTER** – often thought as unpleasant or disagreeable. Coffee and quinine (in 'tonic water') are examples. Most toxic plants and many poisons taste bitter, and biologists think that a dislike of bitter tastes evolved as a defence against accidental poisoning. There are 25 different types of 'bitter' receptors.
- YUMMI** – the savoury, meaty taste produced by chemicals called glutamate. These are found in 'fermented' or 'aged' foods, and also in Chinese and Japanese cooking where mono-sodium glutamate is often added as an ingredient.

There may also be a sixth basic taste

- Fatty** – the taste of fatty acids, researchers are trying to find the 'fatty' receptors.