

RILEY'S RAINFOREST



“Send down... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing...”

—Bahá'u'lláh

Explore & Soar:

Amazing Avocados

By Andrea Hope

Truth about Taste Buds

Have you ever wondered why you enjoy some foods, but not others? Taste, smell, and texture all contribute to what makes a food appealing to us or not. And those tastes are identified by your thousands of taste buds – tiny sensors, mostly on your tongue, that transmit taste to your brain.

About 15-25% of people are “supertasters,” who can have up to twice as many taste buds as the average person. When you’re young, new taste buds are made as old ones are destroyed. But as you grow older, fewer are remade. By the time you’re an older adult, you may have about half of the taste buds you were born with!

But that’s only part of the story. The foods you’re exposed to help shape some preferences.

For example, kids in cultures that eat a lot of chili peppers get used to spicy food from an early age. You can also acquire a taste for foods you don’t currently like. Scientists say it can take trying a food 10–15 times to start liking it. Why would you want to do that? Since different foods provide different nutrients, eating a variety of foods is healthy. It’s also fun to be adventurous and try new things. Sometimes preparing food in a different way can surprise you. For example, blend spinach with eggs before cooking to make “green eggs.” Or try a healthy recipe for brownies using black beans and no flour.

Take a chance on your changing tastes. Once in a while, try a few bites of a food you don’t think you like. You never know—you might find a new favorite!

Tough, yet soft, an avocado is a fruit of contrast. Its thick, bumpy skin inspired a fun nickname—“alligator pears.” On the inside, the fruit is smooth and full of vitamins, making it healthy and tasty.

While you may have already tried avocado in guacamole, here are a few other ideas for adding avocado to your meals.



- Instead of mayonnaise, try spreading avocado on your sandwiches to enjoy its creamy flavor.

- Use mashed avocado as a substitute for butter when making your favorite pancakes or muffins.

- Mix avocado and yogurt to make a dip for raw vegetables.

- Throw some avocado into a fruit smoothie for an extra creamy texture.



Curiosity Canopy



Did you know? Mexico has a long history with the avocado (*aguacate* in Spanish). Archaeologists found evidence of avocados being eaten there almost 10,000 years ago, and Mexico is still the fruit’s largest producer. Today, avocados are enjoyed all over the world and even used to protect or moisturize people’s skin and hair.