

# Tasty Facts

Our tongues are made up of eight muscles that are attached at one end of our mouths. They enable us to taste and enjoy the food that we are eating, and help us to form different sounds when talking or singing. Our tongues are covered in small papillae which have taste buds on top of them, although our taste buds are not visible to the naked eye. The taste buds pick up different flavours including salty, sweet, sour, savoury and bitter. There are around 3,000 to 10,000 taste buds on each person's tongue and they regenerate every two weeks.



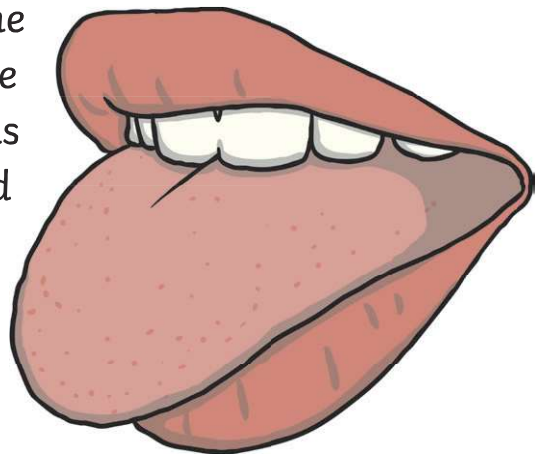
## Did you know?

There is a genetic link between people who can roll their tongue. If your parents can roll their tongue, you are more likely to be able to!

Photo courtesy of Gideon Tsang (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Our tongues are made up of two sections, the anterior and the posterior. The anterior is the visible part at the front of your mouth and the posterior is the back of your tongue towards your throat. The average length of a human tongue is 8cm but men's tongues are normally longer than women's.

When we eat our food, as well as the sense of taste, we also use our sense of smell. The food in our mouths sends messages to our nose, which are picked up by receptors. These receptors work with our taste buds to give us the gorgeous flavours in our food. When you have a cold or allergies, and



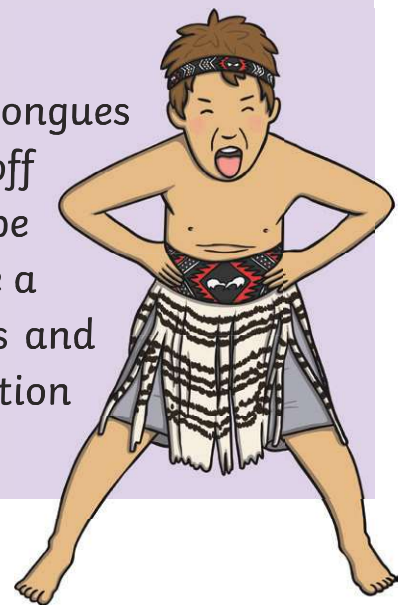
your nose is stuffy, you might notice that your food doesn't seem to have much flavour. That's because the upper part of your nose isn't clear to receive the chemicals that trigger the olfactory receptors (that inform the brain and create the sensation of flavour).

### **Amazing Animal Tongues!**

The pangolin from Africa has an enormously long tongue. In fact, its tongue is so long, it is longer than the length of its entire body! They use their long tongues to get termites and ants out from their nests underground. A chameleon also has a long tongue which reaches up to one and a half times the length of its body. The sticky lasso catches the prey quickly so that the chameleon can enjoy a tasty meal!

### **Intimidating Tongues!**

In the Pacific Islands, locals use their tongues as part of chants and rituals to ward off enemies. One famous dancing ritual can be seen when players perform the Haka before a rugby match. They stick out their tongues and make threatening noises to scare the opposition before they play.



# Tasty Facts Questions

1. How many muscles are inside our tongues?

---

---

2. Name the five flavours that the tongue can taste.

---

---

3. What is the name of the bumps that the taste buds sit on?

---

---

4. How does the chameleon catch its prey?

---

---

5. Who does the Haka?

---

---

6. What is the average length of a human tongue?

---

---

7. Why should you never have your favourite meal when you have a cold?

---

---

8. Which foods do you not like the taste of? Why?

---

---