

Seeing pictures of food affects taste perception

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Just looking at images of food can change our taste experience, according to research published Mar. 14 in the open access journal *PLoS ONE*.

The authors of the study, led by Johannes le Coutre of the Nestlé Research Center in Switzerland, found that participants reported tastes to be more pleasant when preceded by [images](#) of high-calorie foods, such as pizza or pastry, as compared to low-calorie foods like watermelon or green beans.

The researchers conducted neuroimaging studies that identified previously unknown brain mechanisms of visual-gustatory sensory interactions involved with food enjoyment. Taken together, the study highlights the importance of visual food appeal as one determinant for nutritional reward.

More information: Ohla K, Toepel U, le Coutre J, Hudry J (2012) Visual-Gustatory Interaction: Orbitofrontal and Insular Cortices Mediate the Effect of High-Calorie Visual Food Cues on Taste Pleasantness. *PLoS ONE* 7(3): e32434. [doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0032434](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0032434)

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