



Fun Food Facts

Kids try and practice new skills at school every day. Why not let them try new foods too?

Serve new foods with a side of silly, mix in a little math, or add a bit of agriculture to nudge students to try them. Schools can use fun facts in many ways. Invent your own uses or start with our favorites:

- Add a fun fact to your **monthly menu**. Keep the message simple for younger students or add more detail for older students.
- Dish out a little fun on the **servicing line**. Nudge kids with a joke, dazzle them with trivia or educate them about how the featured food is grown.
- Build excitement during **morning announcements**. Give fun facts to the principal, teachers or student leaders to promote the day's featured food.
- Promote healthy foods through school or district **newsletters**. Encourage parents, the target audience of these publications, to nudge their kid(s) to try featured foods.
- Offer a **taste test** before the item is served on the menu. Invite student leaders, the principal, a farmer, or parents to hand out samples and ask them to share a fun fact to excite, intrigue or provoke a laugh.
- Highlight healthy foods on the district **website** or a school **bulletin board**. Include a photo, recipes and fun facts to increase awareness and spark an interest in trying the featured food.

Descriptive names, silly jokes, fun trivia and intriguing facts can help your school promote healthy, colorful foods.

We've provided a few ideas for the following foods, many of which are grown on Minnesota farms: apples, beans, beets, broccoli, cantaloupe, carrots, cucumbers, kiwi, red peppers, romaine lettuce, squash, strawberries, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, watermelon and wild rice. We also highlighted, **in yellow**, our staff favorites. Have fun using your favorites to coach kids to try new foods!

Sources:

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Foods	Names	Jokes	Trivia	Agriculture	Nutrition	Other
Apples	Crisp Apples Fresh Apples Apple Wedges Awesome Apples	How does a ghost eat an apple? By gobblin' it. When is an apple a grouch? When it is a crabapple.	The largest apple on record weighed over 4 pounds, as much as a half-gallon of milk. Apples are 25% air, which is why they float in water.	Apple trees produce flowers in the spring and apples in the fall. Apple trees need bees to help them produce fruit.	An apple a day really does keep the doctor away. Studies have shown that apples can help keep your heart, lungs and brain in tip-top shape.	An average apple tree produces between 150 and 350 apples every year.
Beans, Legumes	Fiesta Beans Great Garbanzos Yummy Hummus Cowboy Caviar	Knock knock. (Who's there?) Bean. (Bean who?) Bean a while since I last saw ya!	Minnesota ranks 4 th in the US for bean production. The amount of fields devoted to growing beans in Minnesota would fill 110,000 football fields.	Most beans grow in a pod with a few of their bean buddies. Beans come in many colors – black, brown, red, white, yellow. Some are even spotted.	Beans might be small in size, but they're big on nutrition. They are one of the only foods to fit in two spots on USDA's MyPlate: as a vegetable and a low-fat protein.	Beans can be eaten in salads, soups, burritos and more.
Beets	Sweet Beets Bright Beets Savory Beets	Why did the people dance to the vegetable band? It had a good beet. Knock knock. (Who's there?) Beets. (Beets who?) Beets me, try some yummy veggies.	Beets have been used as food, medicine, and as a natural dye throughout history.	Beets grow underground, with only their stems and leaves poking up to catch the sun. Most beets are red, but some are gold or pink and white striped.	Jeepers, beets are great for your peepers! Carrots have traditionally been associated with eye health, but beets have a potent mix of nutrients that put them in a class of their own.	Have you ever tried painting with vegetables? Slice a beet, stamp it on paper and see what happens.
Broccoli	Broccoli Trees Broccoli Forest Brawny Broccoli	Knock knock. (Who's there?) Broccoli. (Broccoli who?) Broccoli doesn't have a last name, silly.	Americans eat 900% more broccoli now than we did 20 years ago.	Most people eat the tops of broccoli, called the flower, but all parts are edible. Broccoli must be harvested before the tops, or flowers, open.	Timber! A forest of broccoli trees has a dynamic trio of nutrients that support your immune system and takes an axe to the toxins in your body.	Dip a forest of broccoli trees in ranch dressing for a tasty treat.

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Cantaloupe	Fresh Cut Cantaloupe Marvelous Melon Mighty Melon	Why can't melons get married? Because they can't-elope.	Cantaloupe is about 90% water, but 100% goodness. The largest cantaloupe on record was 63 pounds, about the size of an average 4 th grader.	The average cantaloupe contains hundreds of seeds.	Goodbye colds and hello healthy eyes. One cup of cantaloupe has enough vitamin A and vitamin C for a whole day.	Cantaloupe comes with its own serving bowl. Cut it in half, scoop out the seeds and enjoy.
Carrots	Crunchy Carrots Crisp Carrots X-Ray Vision Carrots	What did one snowman say to the other? Can you smell carrots? A guy walks into a doctor's office with a carrot in his ear and celery up his nose. The doctor told him he wasn't eating right. How do you catch a rabbit? Hide in a meadow and make carrot noises.	The longest carrot on record was 200 inches, the size of 20 checkerboards set side-by-side. The average American eats over 10,000 carrots in their lifetime.	Carrots are a root vegetable that originated in Afghanistan. The first carrot grown was purple. In the 16 th century, the Dutch made orange carrots by breeding pale yellow ones with red ones.	Carrots have more beta carotene than any other veggie, great for eyesight and for fighting infections.	In Japan, carrots from the city of Kyoto are red!
Cucumbers	Cool Cucumbers Crisp Cucumbers Crunchy Cucumbers	Where do cucumbers go for a date? The salad bar!	The longest cucumber on record was 36 inches, the length of a yardstick! Ever wonder where the saying "Cool as a Cucumber" comes from? The inside of a cucumber is 20 degrees cooler than the outside.	Cucumbers prefer to grow in sandy soil because it warms up faster in the spring.	Cucumbers can be made into pickles, but unlike their salty cousin, have no added sodium.	
Kiwi	Kickin' Kiwi Krazy Kiwi	Why did the kiwi go to the doctor? It wasn't peeling well.	Kiwi was named after the Kiwi bird because both have fuzzy brown skin. Kiwi is the national fruit of China.	Kiwis grow on small trees in warm climates. Most kiwis are egg-sized with soft green fruit and tiny edible seeds.	Do you want to add an emerald, tropical flair to your meal and get more vitamin C than an orange? Give your tray a kiss of kiwi.	

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Red Peppers	Beta-for-You Bells Perky Peppers	Why did the pepper blush? It saw the salad dressing.		As bell peppers ripen, their color changes from green to red and they become sweeter.	Green might mean go when you're on the road, but when you're on the lunch line, go red! Red peppers have nine times more beta carotene than green peppers which keep your eyes and heart in top shape.	
Romaine Lettuce	Rockin' Romaine Leafy Lettuce Salad Greens Spring Salad	Knock knock. (Who's there?) Lettuce. (Lettuce who?) Lettuce on your tray and you'll find out. What is a kayaker's favorite kind of lettuce? Row-maine! What did the salad greens say to the hungry kid? We'll make your mouth and tummy happy, if you lettuce!	Romaine lettuce was named by the Romans. The largest head of lettuce on record weighed 25 pounds! Americans eat about 30 pounds of lettuce every year.	Lettuce is a member of the sunflower family. Lettuce was discovered as a weed growing in Europe thousands of years ago. Thomas Jefferson had 19 varieties of lettuce in his garden.	Romaine lettuce can help you from your head to your toes. A Romaine salad packs enough vitamin K for the day which keeps your circulatory system pumping and your entire body healthy.	
Squash	SuperPower Squash Sweet Squash Savory Squash	How do you fix a cracked pumpkin? With a pumpkin patch!	The largest squash ever grown weighed 962 pounds, the size of a baby elephant!	Squash come in summer and winter varieties. Summer squash, like zucchini, has thinner skin than the winter warriors, like acorn, butternut and pumpkin.	The nutrients in squash can squash your chances of getting diabetes by keeping blood sugar even and your metabolism humming.	
Strawberries	Sweet Strawberries Fresh Strawberries Scrumptious Strawberries	Why were the strawberries so upset? Because they were in a jam! What is a scarecrow's favorite fruit? Strawberries!	A single strawberry is covered with over 200 tiny seeds.	Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside of their skin. Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in the spring.	Experts have found that eating berries may improve your memory. The ancient Romans believed that strawberries could relieve sadness and bad breath!	

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Sweet Corn	SuperSweet Corn Crisp Corn on the Cob	Why is it foolish to tell a secret in a corn field? There are too many ears! Why did the corn stalk get mad at the farmer? He kept pulling his ears!	One ear of corn contains about 800 individual kernels. Sweet corn loses its sweetness after 6 hours at room temperature. Every ear of corn has an even number of rows.	Corn is produced on every continent except Antarctica. Sweet corn is harvested in the cool morning to keep the natural sugars from turning to starch.	Chew on this – corn is a good source of dietary fiber which has digestive and blood sugar benefits.	
Sweet Potatoes	Super Sweets Powerhouse Potatoes	What did the sweet potato say to the pumpkin? I yam what I yam. How do you describe an angry potato? Boiling mad.	Scientists think that sweet potatoes grew 12,000 years ago.	Sweet potatoes look like potatoes with pointed ends.	Sweet potatoes are a great source of potassium which can keep your muscles “fresh” when playing sports. Sweet potatoes can help keep blood sugar levels steady.	Sweet potatoes and yams are very similar but in the US, the word “yam” describes a softer, orange sweet potato.
Tomatoes	Terrific Tomatoes Sliced Tomatoes Cherry Tomatoes Tomato Wedges Fresh Tomatoes	A faucet, lettuce, and a tomato were in a race. The faucet was running, the lettuce was a-head, and the tomato was trying to ketchup! How do you fix a broken tomato? Tomato paste.	The heaviest tomato on record weighed 7 pounds, 12 ounces, about the size of a newborn baby. An average American eats 20 pounds of tomatoes per year, over half as ketchup and tomato sauce.	Tomatoes grow on vines that need a little support (cages or poles) to hold their ripened fruit.	Trying times? Try a tomato! The vitamin C in tomatoes helps dial back stress and inflammation.	The largest tomato plant in the US grows at Walt Disney World’s Epcot Center. It produces 32,000 tomatoes per year!
Watermelon	Watermelon Wedges Marvelous Melons	How do you get the water in watermelon? Plant it in the spring.	Early explorers used watermelon rinds as canteens to carry water. The largest watermelon on record weighed 262 pounds, about the size of a full grown black bear.	Every part of a watermelon is edible, including the seeds and rind!	Watermelons are 90% water and 100% healthy!	Some Japanese watermelons cost \$100! Farmers spend more to grow them as rectangles to fit on gift store shelves.
Wild Rice	Go Wild Rice		About 5 million pounds of wild rice are harvested in Minnesota every year. Wild rice is the only grain that is native to the U.S.	Wild rice looks like green grass growing in water. Wild rice is harvested by hitting the plants so the rice falls off the plant.	Wild rice is a whole grain that has 30 times the nutrition of plain white rice.	Cooks add wild rice to soups, salads, and hot dishes to add texture and a nutty flavor.