

The story of food and how food arrives on your plate makes a difference in how you taste it, according to a new study.

More precisely, food evokes a certain sense of pride. Earlier research has discovered that a narrative of food is an important factor in how people taste.

New research specifically finds that knowledge of the origin of food is attached to an individual's pride in their culture.

"Much more than taste and how much we like what we eat affects our behavior", says Michael Bom Frost from the [University of Copenhagen](https://www.universityofcopenhagen.com).

"There are a lot of feelings about food that are connected to where it comes from."

The University of Copenhagen research team conducted this study in Indonesia. They gave tempe - a legume dish that is traditional to the region- to a group of young people.

165 young Indonesians tasted nine different kinds of tempe. Participants sampled two groups of five traditional types and four modern types.

Tempe has been an important source of protein in Indonesia for centuries. Along with being environmentally sustainable, it is culturally significant and can be made with local products.

Study process

They prepared the dish in a traditional way which involved quickly frying it in oil and marinating it. Researchers ensured it was the same as the most common method of preparing it in Indonesian culture.

The first time around, participants had no information about the samples.

The second time, researchers told them the types of beans used, whether they were local or imported. They also told them whether modern or traditional production took place.

Participants then answered questions about their preferences and what the food tasted like. In addition, they answered how the food made them emotionally feel.

"When the young people were told that the tempe in front of them was made from local ingredients with traditional production methods, the information made the products taste significantly better," explains Bom Frost.

“Here it was clear that other elements of the experience, such as the pride of eating food made from local produce and using traditional production methods, significantly changed the perception of the food.”

Why people like knowing where their food comes from

Researchers think that these results could be related to the fact that modern, industrial tempe often has a standardized taste.

That is why the young participants tended to like the modern tempe when they didn't know where it came from.

"We know from other research that we really like the taste of something we can recognize, and therefore it is not surprising that the young Indonesians like the modern versions of the tempe best, as it is simply these versions that they know best," says Bom Frost.

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