

## Food Words



## Describing Taste and Flavor

Look thorough this list and write down 15-20 you think would help your descriptive writing for your restaurant review paper. Make sure you are suing the word correctly and in its correct form.

**Acerbic** is anything **sour, bitter or sharp** - cutting, caustic, acid, mordant, barbed, prickly, biting, pointed. The opposite flavor would be mild, sweet, or honeyed.

**Acid or Acidic** food can be sharp, tart, sour, bitter. Just the opposite of sweet, sugary, honey.

**Acrid** taste can be considered pungent, bitter, choking, sharp, unpleasant, harsh - sharp, cutting, caustic, bitter, vitriolic, mordant, trenchant - sour, tart, sharp, biting, acerbic.

**Aftertaste** is the trace, hint, smack, relish, savor food leaves behind.

**Ambrosia** is the food of the gods, and epicurean delight, food fit for a king, delicacy, heavenly spread, gastronomical delight, some apply this term to the pièce de résistance in a meal.

**Ambrosial** is, therefore, fit for the gods, delectable, mouthwatering, heavenly, savory, delicious, tasty, toothsome, divine. It is not distasteful or disgusting at all.

**Appealing** food is attractive, tempting, interesting, pleasing, alluring, likable, engaging, charming, fascinating, glamorous. It is never repulsive, disgusting, or repellent.

**Appetite** is the hunger, craving, desire, taste, ravenousness, sweet tooth, thirst, penchant, or passion we experience. When we have an appetite for something, we don't find it repulsive or distasteful.

**Appetizer** is the tidbit, snack, starter, hors d'oeuvre, finger food, dip, cold cuts, kickshaw, olives, anchovies - canapés, dim sum, aperitif, rollmops, antipasto, crudités we might have to open a meal.

**Appetizing** is everything we find appealing, mouth-watering, delectable, savory, delicious, palatable, inviting, tantalizing, toothsome, luscious, tempting, tasty, enticing. Opposed to what we find nauseating, sickening, repulsive, unappetizing, revolting.

**Astringent** is biting, harsh, sharp, cutting, acerbic, severe, rough, acrid, mordant, caustic. It is not mild, soft, gentle.

**Balsamic** comes as soothing, balmy, mild, gentle, temperate, tranquil, calm. Never irritant or abrasive.

**Biting** taste means caustic, piercing, penetrating, stinging, sharp, severe, mordant, stinging. It is not gentle, balmy, or soothing.

**Bitter** is acrid, tart, sour, harsh, acidic, vinegary, acerbic. The opposite of sweet, honeyed, mild, gentle, warm.

**Brackish** means salty, briny, saline.

**Briny**, almost the same as the previous word, salty, brackish, saline.

**Caustic** is something cutting, biting, acid, acidic, sharp, astringent, stinging, scathing, excoriating. To say the opposite you would call it mild, sweet, or smooth.

**Choice** can mean selection or pick, but in relation with food -like a choice steak- means more often superior, excellent, select, top-notch, fine, first-rate, high-quality, cream of the crop, vintage, prime. second rate.

**Delectable** food is delicious, tasty, mouth-watering, appetizing, scrumptious, luscious, enjoyable, palatable, delightful, toothsome, pleasing, satisfying. Never tasteless, disgusting, or nauseating.

**Delicious** meals are tasty, appetizing, scrumptious, yummy, luscious, delectable, mouth-watering, fit for a king, delightful, lovely, wonderful, pleasant, enjoyable, appealing, enchanting, charming. You wouldn't call delicious that what is tasteless or unpleasant.

**Divine** cooking is fit for the gods, heavenly, godly, celestial, great, marvelous, delightful, lovely, blissful. Nothing earthly.

**Dry** food can be desiccated and withered like an old prune. Sometimes dry food keeps better, as beans and pulses; then being dry is a desirable trait. The dry weight –the solid part- in canned food gives you an idea of the real nutritional value. But most times dry food is juiceless and tasteless, lacking moisture -it will need a sauce. Food with a sharp, biting taste, or with a high proportion of strong alcohol is also dry. Food eaten without any spread, sauce or garnish would be eaten dry. Overcooked meat gets dry, having lost all juices.

**Dulcet** is sweet, honeyed, pleasant, in a gentle way, something in harmony with your taste or likings. It is never harsh.

**Dulcified** is what has been made sweeter, or softer, in taste, edulcorated, sweetened.

**Flavored** equals seasoned; food that has been given flavor, by normal seasoning or by artificial flavoring. Which flavor? Any, but by being flavored, it is sure to give some kind of taste experience.

**Flavorful**, obviously full of flavor, or you could say, instead, flavorsome, tasty, tangy, appetizing, palatable, savory or sweet -for a particular flavor- and, if you want to try less known words, sapid or saporous. It wouldn't be flavorless, tasteless, bland, flat, or insipid.

**Flavoring** or seasoning, anything added to food for the flavor it imparts or the act of adding flavor to food. Think of herbs, spices, condiments, seasonings, or some food additives as different flavorings.

**Flavorsome** indicates good tasting, full of flavor, specifically pleasant flavor; implying delicious, tasty, appetizing, scrumptious, yummy, juicy, succulent, heavenly, inviting, luscious, mouthwatering, palatable, saporous, savory; may be divine, toothsome, and tempting. Consider flavorsome just the opposite of distasteful, nauseating, repulsive, sickening, unappetizing, unsavory.

**Fruity** food will be having a taste, smell or flavor of fruit; anything tasting or smelling richly of or as of fruit. A wine full of fruity flavors will probably be considered concentrated, full-bodied, full-flavored, heady, heavy, lusty, mellow, potent, redolent, rich, strong, well-matured.

**Full-bodied** -usually applied to wine- means robust, or rich and intense flavor and aroma; it would be a wine that feels heavy in the mouth.

**Gamy** refers to the flavor or strong odor of game, especially game that is starting to spoil. It would be malodorous and rancid, certainly not fresh. It is a word more often applied to other areas than to food.

**Gustatory**, relating to the sense of taste, to the sensation in the taste buds.

**Harsh**, unpleasant to the taste, abrasive, coarse, acerbic, astringent, biting, bitter, caustic, cutting, dry, mordant, nasty, sharp, stinging, vitriolic. Definitely not smooth.

**Heavenly**, considered divine, wonderful, blissful, delightful, lovely, fantastic, glorious, sublime; opposed to horrible and dreadful.

**Honey, honeyed** and let us say sweet, sugar, sweetened, sugarcoated, syrupy, candied. Never harsh, acerbic or salty flavor.

**Hot** as in burning, scorching, boiling, blistering, sizzling, searing, blazing, torrid; or **hot** as in spicy, peppery, piquant, pungent, so strong flavored that makes one feel burning, fiery, intense, vehement, ardent, fervent flavors – definitely not cold, mild, soft or tasteless.

**Juicy** food is succulent, luscious, thirst quenching, moist, ripe, usually flavorful, many times fascinating. Dry and bland don't apply.

**Luscious** food and we are talking juicy, moist food; delicious and delectable food; scrumptious or succulent food; super tasty, toothsome, more than palatable, surely mouthwatering food. Dry, disgusting or nauseating? No way!

**Lush** would be a rich, lavish, opulent meal; sumptuous, luxurious, certainly abundant. You would not be presented with sparse food, a scanty meal or a thin plate.

**Mellow** flavor is smooth, rich, full, soft, or melodious; usually a pleasant, fully developed flavor reached after an adequate aging period. In this sense of matured, softened, developed flavor, is often used when writing about cheese or wine. But it could be used perfectly for preserved or canned food, or to describe a particularly rich dish. **Mellow** is opposite to harsh.

**Mouthwatering** is that savory, flavorful, succulent, gorgeous, delicious food which gets you salivating; by no means unappetizing or distasteful.

**Nectarous** stands for ambrosial, delicious or sweet; something that reminds you of nectar, the drink of the gods –in Greek mythology, therefore it would seem more to the point using it for liquids than for solid food. Any sweet, stimulating drink could be nectar to your lips.

**Palatable** indicates edible, pleasant, tasty, just OK, appetizing, toothsome, I would not say delicious. Palatable food is acceptable to the palate, something in between mouthwatering and foul. It is NOT inedible, tasteless, or disgusting either.

Say **peppery** and piquant comes to the mind. Others could think of gingery, spicy, hot, fiery, sharp, stinging, pungent or somehow lively and strong. Tasting like pepper, no one would think it mild.

**Pickled** would account for that briny flavor that food preserved in a pickling liquid gets. Food is pickled, marinated or cured –pickling would prevent from spoiling- in some liquid with plenty of salt, vinegar, or similar, and spices.

**Piquant** and salty, savory, spicy, tasty or zesty are very similar words. Also to be considered having a pleasant pungent taste, hot, tangy, agreeably biting or sharp; never bland or insipid.

**Pungent** can be seen as strong, spicy, hot, heady, overpowering, sharp, biting, a penetrating taste or smell; or you could take it by the forceful, biting, cutting, caustic, acerbic side. Forget about bland or mild.

**Rancid** food is bad, stale, rotten, completely off; the opposite of fresh food.

**Rank** means pungent but in the fetid, smelly, foul, stale, rancid, definitely bad way; offensive to the smell or taste and not fresh.

**Rich** food is full, heavy, dripping, full-bodied, robust; a rich table is plentiful, abundant, loaded, ample, copious, stuffed. None of them is lacking or plain.

**Saccharine** is another way to say sugary, syrupy, maybe treacly; certainly it's overly sweet and opposite to bitter.

**Saline** or **salty** could almost be used without distinction or they could be substituted by briny or brackish because both contain **salt**. Salty food is sure to be savory. Remember, salty is one of the basic tastes.

**Savory** has flavor. Which one? It might be salty, spicy, pungent, sweet or plainly aromatic and flavorful, but the taste would be pleasant and agreeable.

**Scrumptious** is shouting “eat me!” It is delicious, delectable, mouthwatering, tasty, delightful, gorgeous, lip smacking, yummy, wonderful in taste and aroma; never unappetizing, unappealing, or tasteless. Think of a scrumptious pie is very appetizing, pleasing to your taste; your sense of taste.

**Sec** is another way to say medium dry, un-sweet. This word is borrowed from wine world.

**Sharp** incisive, harsh, sour, tangy, acid, pungent, tart, bitter; it could be acerbic or astringent, but it is not bland.

**Sour** is one of the basic tastes. It is acid, lemon-like or vinegary, tart, bitter, acerbic. Sour food has a sharp biting taste and, certainly, is not sweet.

**Spicy** food has the piquant, hot, fiery, burning taste of spices. We are talking of highly spiced, piquant, zesty food, certainly savory. It can be also described after the predominant spice, like peppery or gingery food. This is the complete opposite of mild food.

**Strong** tasting food is highly flavored i.e. highly seasoned; concentrated flavor, intense, pungent, and as such piquant, hot, spicy and sharp, with an intense aroma. The flavor is never weak or faint. A **strong** wine is high in alcoholic content.

**Succulent** food is juicy, moist, tender, lush, luscious food; usually sweet tasting and the opposite to dry, flavorless food.

**Sugary** or **sweet** means syrupy, candied, sugar coated, honeyed, sweetened, sugared, maybe saccharine; opposite to bitter, unsweetened or sugarless.

**Sweet-and-sour**, a Chinese specialty and also said of a dish that has a pleasant taste and a bitter or sharp touch in contrast.

**Sweetened** or **syrupy** are other ways to say sweet, sugared, candied, honeyed, sugar coated

**Tang** applied to food refers to a tart spiciness. Describe it as that taste experience which leaves the tongue tingling after taking food to the mouth. Flavor, relish, savor, smack, zest, tanginess, piquancy, nip, all those words can be written in place of tang. Bland or dull food is just the opposite.

**Tart** sharp, sharp-tasting that is, bitter, acid or acidic, harsh, sour taste, just like a lemon. Sweet, honeyed and the like words are the opposite.

**Tasteful** or full of flavor, flavorful, food; it could mean refined, sophisticated, stylish or classy when it refers to the layout of a dish –the realm of a food stylist; the opposite? The answer is tasteless.

**Tasteless** is the opposite of tasteful or tasty. We are talking bland, flavorless, flat, insipid, weak, dull, savorless, plain, unseasoned, unsavory, unflavored, probably unappetizing food.

**Tasting**, sensing and distinguishing food by means of your taste buds. A tasting will usually mean a small sample of wine or food. To have a tasting means taking a small amount of food or wine to test its quality. But, sometimes, the only way to describe food is to say food was good tasting, or it tasted foul.

**Tasty** and by association... yummy! It is delicious, flavorsome, full of flavor, appetizing, scrumptious, probably fresh and juicy, making a succulent meal, a kid would say finger licking good. Apply to food and dishes full of bite, piquancy, zing, zest and relish. It will never be dull or tasteless, disgusting, gross or nauseating.

**Toothsome**, strictly used, refers to edible and pleasant food, or you could even write tasty, appetizing or delicious instead, something really pleasant to the sense of taste. But you will see it very often meaning healthy food, good tasting food that has something more than good taste going for it. The opposite will be inedible, tasteless, disgusting or foul... yucky!

**Treacly** is sweet but overly so, syrupy and saccharine to the point of being disgusting.

**Unsweetened** or no added sugar, no added sweet flavor; probably sugarless, plain or bitter in taste, but not always. Unsweetened tea is not to everyone's taste but unsweetened fruit juices are perfect, as there is no need to add any sweetener to something it is already sweet. Opposites are sweet, saccharine, or syrupy.

Food with a **vinegary** flavor would taste like vinegar. It would be acetous, sour, acid, acidic, tart, astringent, pungent, harsh, acrid; never sweet.

**Yummy** food is scrumptious, delicious, delectable, luscious, great tasting, much more than tasty, really appetizing, lip-smacking; the kind of food to have you licking your lips in anticipation. This is the word everyone wants to hear when bringing food to the table. Yummy food is never unpalatable, plain tasting, distasteful or disgusting.

**Zesty** food has a vivid, spicy, piquant, utterly savory flavor; feels invigorating, stimulating, fresh and reviving. Food with a zesty flavor never soothing or dull; this is exactly the opposite.