

## **The Taste of Color**

### ***Science of Cocktails version***

What color do you expect a strawberry to be? Would you like to eat a blue banana? What do you think purple orange juice would taste like? Explore the connection between the color of food and your perception of its taste.

#### **Things You Will Need:**

- One bottle of a flavored spirit (flavored vodka works well)
- 3 pitchers
- Cups for tasting
- Red, green, and blue food coloring

#### **To Do and Notice**

This activity works best with a facilitator.

To keep this activity fun and suspenseful, don't discuss your results with anyone until the end. Each sample of vodka may or may not be the flavor that its color suggests. Don't let anyone influence your "flavor vote."

- 1) Pour 1/3 of the vodka in each of the pitchers
- 2) Color each pitcher of vodka with a different color of food coloring
- 3) Give the taster a sample of each colored vodka and have them determine the flavor. Make sure they rinse their mouth between samples.
- 4) After the taster has determined the flavors of each vodka, reveal to them what the true flavor is.

#### **Interpreting Observations**

What flavor did you expect each sample to be? Why did you anticipate that flavor? Did the flavor agree with your expectation, or did you taste a different flavor? Based on your observations, what can you conclude about the influence of our experiences on how we "taste" different foods?

#### **What's Going On?**

The connections we make between the color or appearance of food and its flavor are reinforced on a daily basis; it is rare to encounter a food that does not agree with our expectations of taste.

When it is possible that at least one of the vodka samples may be the flavor its color suggests, you do not know to expect a contradiction; you rely on visual cues, then taste and smell to determine flavor. Though some of the flavors may be distinct, your expectations of flavor based on color are typically strong enough to influence how you perceive the vodka's taste.