



Travel the world through your taste buds with these fascinating food stones. From cooking in the mud kitchen to restaurant role play, playing with the stones will build children's understanding of different cultures and provide plenty of opportunities for descriptive language.

### Food for talk

The food stones are beautifully visual and tactile, providing sensory feedback as children feel with their fingers the same details they observe with their eyes. The details are ideal for examining and talking about, and the stones offer a bridge to investigating which cultures the foods come from:

- You might like to place the foods in an intriguing place for children to discover, such as tucked inside food boxes or paper bags, or hidden in a picnic basket.
- Ask questions about the foods to develop children's thinking, vocabulary and observational skills. Have the children seen any of these foods before? Have they ever eaten them? Which do they think looks the tastiest? What do they think might be in or on each food? How might you hold these foods to eat them – with your fingers, cutlery or chopsticks? Are these foods usually eaten hot or cold? What shapes, colours and patterns can they see on the foods?
- Offer real versions of the foods, or similar items, for the children to try. Do they like them? Which is their favourite? Which words could they use to describe the texture or taste? Are the foods soft, hard, crunchy, chewy, salty, spicy or sweet?
- Do the children recognise any parts of the foods – such as rice, pastry, bread, meat, fish, cheese or vegetables? Find out more about the ingredients used to make the foods.



### Cooking up a world of flavour

The stones are equally at home in an outdoor mud kitchen and a role-play home corner, with invitations for open-ended creative play:

- In the mud kitchen, offer utensils for cooking or baking the food stones, such as baking trays, frying pans, oven gloves and slotted spoons. You could also offer materials for children to role-play recreating similar foods. These could include large dry leaves for taco shells, strips of leaves for dried seaweed (to make sushi), and play dough for pastry or dough. Fillings for the various foods could include small pebbles, sand, tree bark, herbs, leaves, moss, petals, seeds, pine needles, coffee grounds, oats, wood shavings and of course, mud.

- Budding foodies will enjoy the eating experience in a range of role play food outlets. The stones could be served in a restaurant with elegant table settings, or sold as street food in cardboard packaging from a food stall. They also make ideal picnic food.
- You can print off the free Match & tidy mat from the Yellow Door website and use this to keep track of the foods when they are not being played with, as well as talking about shapes and matching.

## A taste for travel

The food stones allow you to take the learning into other areas:

- Find out more about where these foods are enjoyed around the world. Have any of the children visited any of these places, or know anyone who has been there? Maybe some children will have family links to a part of the world where these foods are enjoyed. What time of day do people tend to eat these foods?
- Have a go at making simple versions of some of the foods. This could be mini tacos – fill small pieces of tortilla with beans, cheese and a mild salsa. Or you could try rolling rice, cucumber and avocado in seaweed to make simple sushi – or use strips of lettuce leaves if children would prefer this. Adding toppings to pizza bases is always fun too.
- Use your senses to explore different foods or ingredients – what do they look, smell, feel and taste like?



- Create works of food art on a plate – children might enjoy designing a face, an animal or a vehicle. Offer food with a variety of shapes, sizes and colours (with options such as sweetcorn, tomato pieces, grape halves, cheese cubes, ham strips, blueberries and apple pieces). Before children eat their creations, you might like to take photos to display.

- Find out more about the countries where people eat these foods – such as their flags, famous places, celebrations, or ingredients that grow or are produced there.
- Enjoy a global picnic together, featuring a variety of food from around the world.

## Books about food from around the world

*What's Cooking at 10 Garden Street?* By Felicita Sala

*Dim Sum for Everyone!* by Grace Lin

*Let's Eat! Mealtime Around the World* by Lynne Marie

*Welcome to Our Table: A Celebration of What Children Eat Everywhere* by Laura Mucha

### *Get talking – useful words*

Bao bun, empanada, kalitsounia, pizza, samosa, spring roll, sushi, taco, dough, pastry, rice, salmon, cucumber, seaweed, cheese, tomato, mushroom, olive, mince, guacamole, bake, fry, steam, boil.