

The color of our choices

Would you prefer to drink a **red** wine at the **moulin rouge**, or a **white** wine in the **white house**?

Food choices consider sensory information beyond taste and odor. Visual cues offer information to people before even eat or drink. Food and beverage industries use this to influence the choice of consumers. Here, we explain some studies that show how colors can influence our choices toward food or drinks.

Does flavor have color?

Velasco *et. al* (2015) studied if a congruent association between the flavor and its related color (i.e tomato/red) would facilitate visual search for products label. They found that search efficiency was higher when the color-flavor association was congruent than when it was incongruent (i.e. blue/tomato). Moreover, natural pairings such as tomato flavor with red are stronger and consistent across countries whereas others such as lemon flavor (yellow in France or green in Columbia) are not. The stronger is the association between color and flavor, the higher is the interference (slow reaction time) when the combination is incongruent. This is called the **Stroop effect**.



Source: 17/10/2018 <http://empowerforhealth.com/protekd/mystery-of-minerals/244-2/>

Stroop effect:

When the name of a color is printed in a different color, naming the color of the word takes longer and is more prone to errors than when the color of the ink matches the name of the color.

Red Blue Green

Can color influence drink choices?



Source: 17/10/2018 <https://en.playbrain.me/ps/en11926-what-does-your-favorite-drink-say-about-you/>

Sester *et. al* (2014) conducted an experiment about the influence of the context on drink choices. She had 5 different scenarii where she modulated the color ambience by changing the video-clip projected in the room. Then she asked the participants to choose a drink from a list. The results showed that ambience facilitate drink choice towards semantically related to colors (i.e. in a red ambience people choose red cocktails or red beers). This is called **Top- Down process**.

Top-down process:

cognitive process that refers to how our brains make use of information that has already been brought into the brain by one or more of the sensory systems.

Our knowledge guides our perception.

Colors have an impact on our flavor perception because of psychological mechanisms such as Stroop effect and top-down process and this have consequences on our food and beverage choices.

Are we free to do our food choices
or
is it an illusion?



Source: 17/10/2018
<https://www.teepublic.com/hoodie/1110473-lets-drink-and-make-bad-choice-funny-drinking>

References:

Carole Sester. "Boire un verre dans un bar...! " : modulation de l'expérience d'une boisson par le contexte : apport de l'immersion à l'étude des influences contextuelles sur le comportement alimentaire. Psychologie. Université de Bourgogne, 2013. Français.

Velasco C, Wan X, Knoeferle K, Zhou X, Salgado-Montejo A, Spence C. Searching for flavor labels in food products: the influence of color-flavor congruence and association strength. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2015;6:301. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00301.