



Cauliflower Investigations



It's winter on the farm, and Tractor Ted is helping to harvest cauliflowers. With their interesting colours, shapes and textures, there's lots to explore in a cauliflower!

THIS ACTIVITY...

- enables children to investigate and learn about cauliflowers
- helps the development of all five senses
- encourages exploration of shape, colour, size, weight, texture, taste and smell
- offers lots of opportunity for asking questions, listening and conversation

WHAT TO DO

Show a small group of children a whole cauliflower before cutting it up to investigate the different parts.

Looking - study the cauliflower's round, creamy white head and look at how the leaves curl round the head. Cut into the leaf stems, let the children pull them off and compare the large green outer leaves with the smaller, paler inner leaves. Once you have sliced up the cauliflower, examine the stems and branches of the florets. What do they look like?

Feeling - let the children feel the weight of the whole cauliflower before you slice it into sections. Encourage them to explore the different textures, and introduce words to describe how different parts of the cauliflower feel (bumpy florets, smooth stems, soft leaves). Slice the top off some of the florets and let the children play with the tiny cauliflower buds.



Tasting, listening and smelling - try tasting the (washed) cauliflower. Ask the group to remain quiet so they can hear the crunching sounds, and check the florets for teeth marks. Sniff the cauliflower. Blitz a few florets in a food mixer to make cauliflower 'couscous', and let the children smell the pungent scent that is released.

Words - as you talk about the cauliflower, use the correct names for the different parts: head, floret, leaf, stem and leaf veins. Listen out for any comparisons the children might come up with, and introduce one or two into the conversation - the florets are like little trees; the cauliflower head looks like fluffy cotton wool; the leaf is as smooth as my cheek.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Use the above ideas as pointers - but let the children lead the exploration and follow what interests them.
- Role model smelling and tasting the cauliflower with a loud 'sniff' and an exaggerated 'crunch'.
- If any children are not keen to taste the raw cauliflower, encourage them to lick a floret or take just a tiny bite.
- Show children how to feel the cauliflower in different ways – rubbing leaves between fingers, squeezing a whole floret in the hand, stroking the 'tickly' surface against a cheek.
- Compare the regular cauliflower with a green Romanesco cauliflower and other vegetables with edible flower heads, such as broccoli and purple sprouting.
- Explore size and weight by introducing a baby cauliflower, a medium sized cauliflower and a jumbo cauliflower.



When the investigation is finished, explain to the children that you are going to save the cauliflower for cooking and art activities.

JINGLE TIME

To the tune of 'Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star'
Crunchy, munchy, pretty white and green
Nicest cauliflower I've ever seen!
White and round and fluffy like a cloud
When I take a bite you can hear me out loud.
Crunchy, munchy, pretty white and green
Nicest cauliflower I've ever seen!

