

Dark red cherry tomatoes, please!

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In canteens belonging to ISS Facility Services, it was investigated; How colour of cherry tomatoes affects consumers preferences by the following hypothesis; 1) Dark red cherry tomatoes will tempt consumers more in terms of appearance and taste compared to pale red cherry tomatoes 2) Consumption of cherry tomatoes increases when a mixt of orange, yellow, brown and green tomatoes are offered versus red only. 3) Young people would eat cherry tomatoes that were served as a part of an attractive lunch dish.

Methods

Two canteens, one at a High school and one at a company participated and a total of 153 persons responded by a questionnaire. All respondents tasted a) light and dark red tomatoes and b) whether they preferred a bowl with mixed colours (yellow, orange, brown and green tomatoes) or rather a bowl with red tomatoes. The amount of tomatoes was weighed before and after lunch. In a canteen at an upper secondary school, we tested whether young people would eat cherry tomatoes that were served as part of an attractive lunch dish with baked salmon.

Results & discussion

47% of the respondents preferred the appearance of dark red tomatoes before tasting, but the flavor of paler tomatoes after tasting (table 1, figure 4). This indicates that development of a dark colour in early ripening stages is important for a first sale but may not be promoting the resale. A choice of several colours cherry tomatoes did not increase the consumption; 1 kg coloured and 1.5 kg red tomatoes were consumed by 500 people visiting the canteens. Compared to earlier findings in another canteen this was a surprise.



Figure 3: Different colours of cherry tomatoes in our tests

Table 1. Results after evaluation of deep red and pale cherry tomatoes

Category: Deep red cherry, Pale red cherry	Percentage of respondents
Prefer deep red on appearance, but pale red after tasting	47 %
Prefer deep red both before and after tasting	29 %
Prefer pale red both before and after tasting	14 %
Other combinations	10 %



Figure 1. Assessment of cherry tomatoes based on their appearance only (left) and after tasting (right).

At a cafeteria in an upper secondary school, we tested whether young people would eat cherry tomatoes served as part of an attractive lunch dish: Greek salad with cherry tomatoes served on a dinner plate with baked salmon. The result showed that the dish was popular, but was mainly bought by adults working at the school. The students found cheaper food at street kitchens right across the street. Enterprises sponsor healthy food in the canteens, but not for school canteens.

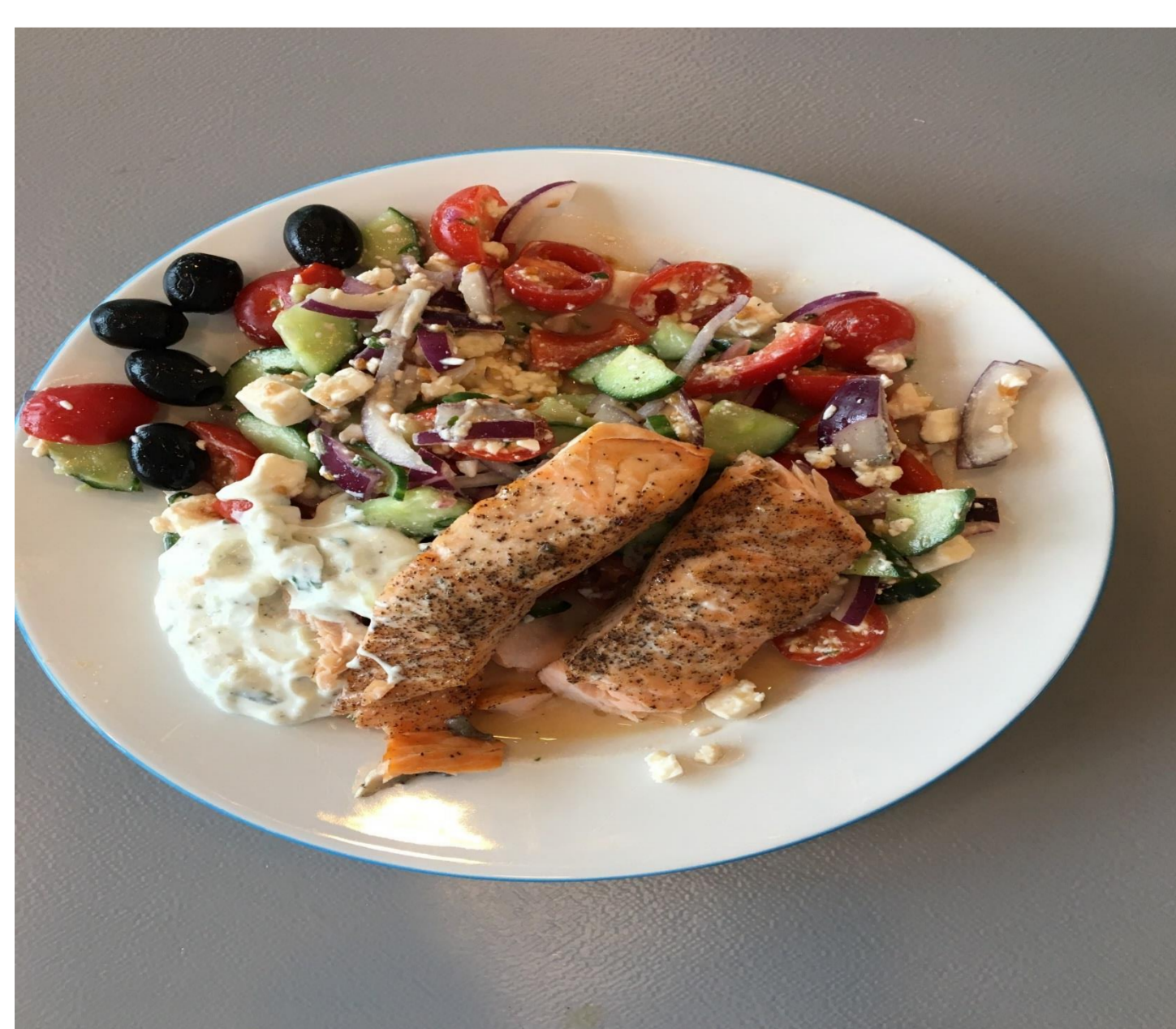


Figure 2. Fried salmon, cherry tomatoes and Greek salad

Acknowledgments

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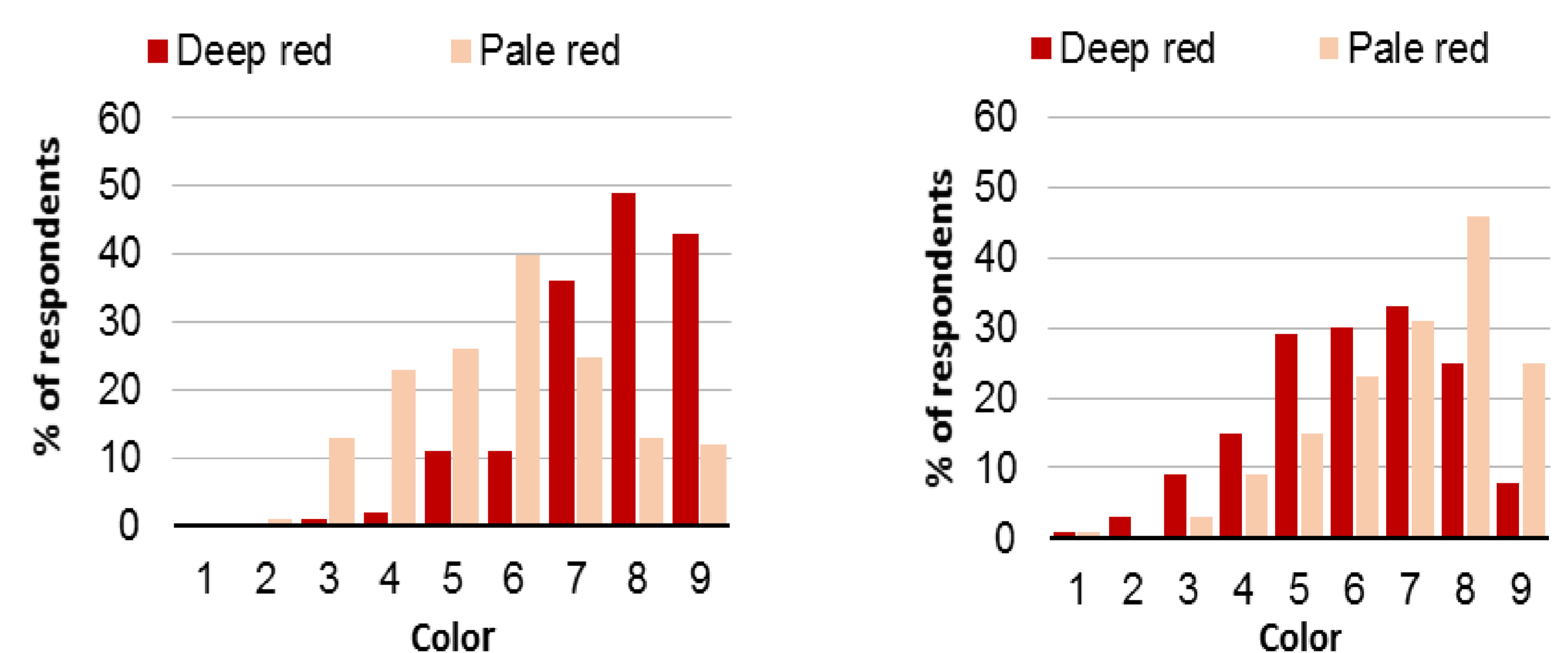


Figure 4. Assessment of cherry tomatoes based on their appearance only (left) and after tasting (right).

Summary

- Dark red cherry tomatoes will tempt consumers more in terms of appearance compared to pale red cherry tomatoes, but tasted less.
- Development of a dark colour on the cherry tomatoes in early ripening stages is important for the taste and first sale
- A choice of several colours cherry tomatoes did not increase the consumption, but they were served in a canteen for hungry hard working workers who rather preferred to eat meat before vegetables
- Greek salad, containing cherry tomatoes, and served on a dinner plate next to baked salmon was popular in a school canteen, but the dish was mainly bought by adults working at the school. The students could buy cheaper food at Mac Donalds next door. Enterprises sponsor healthy food in the canteens, but not for school canteens