

Engineering the Representative Bite: Did the Judge Test the Dish the Cook Designed?

A methodological proposal by Ahmad Issam Maadarani for sampling design and interpretation of dish experience

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By Ahmad Issam Maadarani

A dish reaches a judge through bites whose location, size and sequence are selected. Sampling can therefore produce an experience different from the intended composition. This article distinguishes exploratory, combined and sequential bites, documenting the inference each supports. It is a testable professional proposal, not a validated experimental protocol or proof that one method suits every dish.

1. The bite is a decision within assessment

Taking the main component without sauce may test that component alone, but does not necessarily test the dish's balance. Taking more sauce than the intended distribution permits may produce an intensity unrepresentative of service. This does not invalidate the

observation; it specifies its subject. The first question is what the bite represents, before whether the judge enjoys it. A description of one part cannot become a judgment of the whole without explaining their relationship.

2. Three modes with different purposes

An exploratory bite isolates a component to examine its properties and cannot alone evaluate interaction. A combined bite brings components together according to the serving logic to examine their relationship. A sequential bite examines a dish requiring movement through parts or stages; forcing everything into one bite may distort the task. These proposed categories clarify tasting purposes rather than define fixed natural classes of dishes. One dish may require several modes, with each mode's findings preserved rather than merged into one statement.

3. Representation begins with a functional map

Before judgment, identify what belongs to the experience: the main component, components modifying its effect, optional elements where applicable and parts intended to be eaten sequentially. Precise ratios are unnecessary when service cannot support them, but the procedure must be understandable to another cook and judge. Special instructions should be limited to what is necessary and provided equivalently across entries. Difficulty forming a bite becomes information about eatability when included in the brief, rather than automatically being the taster's fault.

4. Hypothetical case: fish, purée and sharp sauce

Consider fish with purée and sauce, with a declared intention that the purée soften the sauce's sharpness without concealing the fish. A judge tastes the fish alone, then a sauce-heavy bite, and writes that the dish is sharp. The second description accurately concerns that bite but cannot settle overall balance. Retest with a bite reflecting the declared service distribution, then from another location. If sharpness dominates combined bites, the composition-based explanation gains support. If effects vary markedly by location, distribution becomes a possibility requiring separate examination. Manually equalising bites must not conceal a service defect.

5. Re-examination versus repair

Re-examination checks whether the observation concerns the appropriate sample; repair changes what was served. Judges should not add a missing component or redistribute the entire plate and credit the improved result to the original dish. Separate training may test a different distribution, explicitly identifying a changed version. If a balanced bite cannot be taken from the actual presentation, document that difficulty under the applicable criterion. The boundary is whether examination preserves the service structure or replaces it with a better structure created by the judge.

6. A sample and decision record

The proposed record has six fields: bite mode, location, present components, absent components, observed effect and inference scope. “The component is dry alone” differs from “dryness persists with purée and sauce in a combined bite.” Specify the location of a local defect instead of attributing it to every piece. More bites do not create independent samples: bites from one plate reveal within-plate distribution, while independent preparations are needed for inferences about repeatability between dishes.

7. A training examination design

Prepare independent versions of one dish and allocate tasters to explicit sampling instructions or general instructions, balancing presentation order. Predefine questions: did balance descriptions change, did confusion between component and dish decrease, and did organised sampling reveal or conceal distribution defects? Agreement cannot alone establish the method's superiority; a group may agree on a bite unrepresentative of actual service. Preserve both modes' observations and examine relevance to the task without generalising a limited exercise to every cuisine.

8. Conclusion: judgment must define what was tasted

Judgment strengthens when judges explain how they formed their sample and why it permits the recorded conclusion. Bite engineering does not impose rigid tasting; it prevents an undeclared leap from part to whole. Examination may locate a defect in a component, interaction, distribution or eating design. Each possibility calls for a different recommendation, making bite documentation part of critical quality rather than a marginal

detail.

9. A concise working sheet

Field	Review question	What to record
Task	Component, composition or sequence?	Name the object before giving a judgment.
Map	Which components serve the function?	Identify combined and sequential components.
Location	Where was the sample taken?	Record edge, centre or other relevant location.
Composition	What was present or absent?	Do not extend an isolated-component description to the whole dish.
Re-examination	Was the served dish preserved?	Addition or reconstruction creates a different training version.
Conclusion	What is the inference scope?	Separate local defects, distribution and preparation repeatability.

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