NOURISH GAMES

Food Trivia

Fifty-two questions about the story of your food. **The answer key is on sheet two.**

Read aloud
One reader keeps the key and asks the questions. Everyone else calls out a, b, c, or d. Good for a classroom, a car, or a table.

Pass the sheet
Fold the key out of sight, hand the questions round, and mark answers on paper. Score together at the end.

Teams
Split into two teams and alternate. A team that misses passes the question to the other side for a steal.

1. How old was Frank Epperson when he invented the Popsicle in 1905?
   A 5 years old B 11 years old C 43 years old D 92 years old
2. Peanuts grow in an unusual place. Where?
   A inside flowers B on floating vines C underground D on tall trees
3. Which of these foods would vanish without pollinators?
   A wheat B potatoes C rice D almonds
4. What country opened a Global Seed Vault in 2008 to store and safeguard crop seeds from around the world?
   A Japan B Norway C United Kingdom D Brazil
5. Why is burying food scraps worse for the climate than composting them?
   A buried scraps get too hot B buried scraps get too wet C buried scraps get no air D buried scraps get no water
6. What does a hard frost do to kale?
   A makes it bitter B makes it tougher C makes it sweeter D makes it hollow
7. The longest carrot on record was grown in England in 2016. How long was it?
   A 5 feet B 10 feet C 20 feet D 30 feet
8. Cocoa beans get their chocolate flavor by being...
   A frozen B fermented C smoked D boiled
9. Why are Australian cattle stations so much larger than American ranches?
   A the cattle are bigger B the land is drier C the law requires it D the land is hilly
10. What is the silk on an ear of corn for?
    A scaring birds B catching pollen C holding the husk D gathering water
11. In much of Europe, the tomato was at first grown only as an ornament. What did people believe?
    A it was poisonous B it was magical C it was sacred D it was bitter
12. A hen set the record for eggs laid in one year. How many?
    A 98 B 135 C 253 D 371
13. Black, green, and white tea all come from...
    A one plant B two plants C three plants D four plants
14. Which of these foods has the most vitamin C?
    A lemons B red peppers C broccoli D oranges
15. What nut, in its natural state, contains poisonous oils?
    A pistachio B cashew C walnut D hazelnut
16. Why can't you grow a Honeycrisp apple from its own seed?
    A it grows a smaller apple B it grows a sour apple C it grows no apples at all D it grows a different apple
17. Chickens were first domesticated on which continent?
    A Asia B Europe C Africa D South America
18. In 2005, scientists sprouted the oldest seed ever germinated. How old was it?
    A 600 years old B 1,200 years old C 2,000 years old D 3,100 years old
19. Most of the world's 20,000-plus bee species do what?
    A live alone B live in hives C make honey D fly south
20. A cow is a ruminant. What does that mean?
    A it sheds its horns B it never sits down C it has two hearts D it digests grass
21. Rice, wheat, and corn are all what kind of plant?
    A bushes B grasses C vines D mint
22. In 1994, the first genetically modified (GMO) whole food went on the market. What was it?
    A carrot B corn C strawberry D tomato
23. Saffron threads are picked by hand from inside a crocus flower. How many threads does each flower give?
    A 3 B 30 C 300 D 3,000
24. Between 2012 and 2020, U.S. organic food sales...
    A roughly doubled B shrank a little C roughly tripled D barely changed

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25. From 1935 until it closed in 2018, the world's largest fish market was in which city?
A Madrid B London C Sydney D Tokyo

26. The word restaurant means “restoring.” The first Paris restaurants, in the 1760s, sold what restorative food?
A tea B soup C cake D bread

27. The heaviest watermelon on record was grown in Tennessee in 2013. How heavy?
A 90 pounds B 180 pounds C 350 pounds D 500 pounds

28. Most of the world's farmland is used for what?
A growing cotton B grazing animals C growing grain D raising chickens

29. Why do bakers knead bread dough?
A to warm up the yeast B to press out the air C to build a stretchy web D to dry out the flour

30. Why does Egypt import more wheat than any other country?
A too many bakeries B too much livestock C too little rainfall D too few tractors

31. Quinoa is rinsed before cooking to remove what?
A a bitter coating B a waxy shell C a green sprout D a hard husk

32. Of the following fruits, which one is considered a berry?
A plum B apple C banana D fig

33. Globally, how much of the food produced is never eaten?
A 10% B 15% C 20% D 30%

34. Which keeps longer in the pantry, white rice or brown rice?
A they spoil at the same rate B brown rice C white rice D wild rice

35. A coffee bean is actually what?
A a piece of stem B a dried flower C a bush nut D a fruit seed

36. What year did Congress pass the law that created national organic standards?
A 1955 B 1970 C 1990 D 2005

37. Which of the following is not a fruit?
A squash B avocado C cauliflower D cucumber

38. Why does overfishing hit the biggest, longest-lived fish hardest?
A they eat the most B they breed slowly C they swim together D they stay inshore

39. Why do you turn a compost pile?
A to add air B to block light C to cool it D to add water

40. How do bees turn runny nectar into thick honey?
A they wait for cold nights B they add sugar to it C they stir it with their legs D they fan out the water

41. Which part of the plant is cinnamon?
A leaf B seed C bark D root

42. Broccoli, cauliflower, kale, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts were all bred from a single...
A wild squash plant B wild mustard plant C wild grape vine D wild cabbage plant

43. What part of the plant is a potato?
A stem B seed C root D fruit

44. What is the single biggest use of the U.S. corn crop?
A fuel for engines B starch and syrup C feed for animals D food for people

45. A honeybee's waggle dance tells the hive what?
A where the water is B where the flowers are C where the danger is D where the queen is

46. Which of these reached Europe only after 1492?
A chocolate B tomatoes C potatoes D all three

47. Which of these takes the most water to produce?
A beef B apples C lettuce D potatoes

48. Which of these foods is a fungus?
A tofu B yogurt C yeast D vinegar

49. Where does a pineapple grow?
A on a low plant B on a long vine C on a tall tree D in the ground

50. Which of these is not a nut?
A pecan B hazelnut C peanut D walnut

51. Why do onions make you cry?
A they release a gas B they are acidic C they contain salt D they absorb water

52. Putting a banana in a bag with hard fruit ripens the fruit faster. Why?
A the banana gives off heat
B the banana gives off sugar
C the banana gives off water
D the banana gives off a gas

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FOOD TRIVIA

Answer key

Each answer carries the reason behind it, so a wrong guess still teaches something, and the source it was checked against.

1. **B** 11 years old
   Wikipedia: Ice pop (Frank Epperson origin)

2. **C** underground
   After the flower is fertilized, a stalk called a peg grows down and pushes the young fruit into the soil, where the peanut finishes developing. Botanists call it geocarpy. Wikipedia: Peanut (geocarpy; the peg pushes the fruit underground)

3. **D** almonds
   Almonds are entirely bee-pollinated. Wheat and rice are pollinated by wind, and potatoes grow from tubers, not seeds. About three in four of the world's leading food crops depend at least partly on pollinators. FAO Pollination Services; Wikipedia: Almond

4. **B** Norway
   Wikipedia: Svalbard Global Seed Vault (opened 26 February 2008; funded by Norway)

5. **C** buried scraps get no air
   With no air, buried scraps give off methane, a gas that traps about 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide over 20 years. A compost pile has air, so it gives off mostly carbon dioxide instead. Wikipedia: Landfill gas, Compost, Global warming potential

6. **C** makes it sweeter
   Wikipedia: Kale

7. **C** 20 feet
   Joe Atherton grew a carrot 20 feet 5.86 inches long, verified at the UK National Giant Vegetables Championship. Guinness World Records: longest carrot, Joe Atherton (UK), 23 September 2016

8. **B** fermented
   Wikipedia: Chocolate / Cocoa bean (fermentation creates the flavor precursors; raw beans are bitter)

9. **B** the land is drier
   Wikipedia: Anna Creek Station (arid; 140 mm rainfall; 7x the largest US ranch)

10. **B** catching pollen
    Every strand of silk leads to one future kernel, and pollen has to land on that strand for the kernel to fill. A cob with gaps is a cob whose silks missed the pollen. Wikipedia: Maize (the silks are the styles: one per carpel, each becoming a kernel when pollinated)

11. **A** it was poisonous
    Tomatoes are in the same plant family as deadly nightshade, so Europeans assumed the fruit was poisonous too. Wikipedia: Tomato (understood to be related to the nightshades and assumed poisonous; first use ornamental)

12. **D** 371
    Wikipedia: Chicken (highest authenticated rate of egg-laying)

13. **A** one plant
    Wikipedia: Tea (all types are Camellia sinensis; they differ by oxidation)

14. **B** red peppers
    Wikipedia: Vitamin C, food sources (mg/100g): red bell pepper 128, broccoli 90, orange & lemon 53

15. **B** cashew
    Wikipedia: Cashew (shell oils cause poison-ivy-like dermatitis; not sold in shell)

16. **D** it grows a different apple
    Every apple seed makes a brand-new variety. The only way to get another Honeycrisp is to graft a cutting from the original tree. Every Honeycrisp on earth is a clone. Wikipedia: Apple (seedlings do not breed true; cultivars are clonally grafted)

17. **A** Asia
    Every chicken alive descends from the red junglefowl of Southeast Asia. The earliest good evidence comes from central Thailand. Wikipedia: Chicken (domesticated form of the red junglefowl, native to Southeast Asia; earliest probable bones from central Thailand)

18. **C** 2,000 years old
    Wikipedia: Judean date palm (Methuselah, sprouted 2005 from a 2,000-year-old seed)

19. **A** live alone
    Wikipedia: Bee (over 20,000 species; over 90% solitary)

20. **D** it digests grass
    Wikipedia: Ruminant

21. **B** grasses
    Wikipedia: Poaceae (true grasses; includes maize, wheat, rice)

22. **D** tomato
    Wikipedia: Flavr Savr (first GM food licensed for human consumption, FDA 1994)

23. **A** 3
    Three threads per flower, each picked by hand. It takes roughly 150 flowers to make a single gram, which is why saffron is the world's costliest spice. The threads are the flower's stigmas. Wikipedia: Saffron (three-pronged style, one crimson stigma per prong; ~150 flowers per gram)

24. **A** roughly doubled
    About $30 billion in 2012 to more than $56 billion in 2020. Wikipedia: Organic food (US market ~$30bn in 2012; over $56bn in 2020)

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25. **D** Tokyo
Wikipedia: Tsukiji fish market (opened 1935; largest in the world until it closed 6 October 2018)

26. **B** soup
They sold bouillon, a meat broth said to restore health and vigor. The word itself is older: it meant a restorative drink as early as 1507. Wikipedia: Restaurant (first such Paris establishment 1765-66, serving bouillon)

27. **C** 350 pounds
Chris Kent of Sevierville, Tennessee grew a 350.5-pound 'Carolina Cross' watermelon. Guinness World Records: heaviest watermelon, Chris Kent, Sevierville TN, 4 October 2013

28. **B** grazing animals
Permanent pasture is about 68% of the world's agricultural land; cropland is about 28%. Wikipedia: Agricultural land (FAO): permanent pasture 68.4% of agricultural land vs arable 28.4%

29. **C** to build a stretchy web
Kneading links wheat's proteins into gluten, a stretchy web that traps the gas the yeast gives off. That is what makes bread rise and hold its shape. Wikipedia: Gluten

30. **C** too little rainfall
Wikipedia: Wheat (Egypt largest importer, 13.1 Mt in 2024) / Agriculture in Egypt (arid, minimal rainfall)

31. **A** a bitter coating
Wikipedia: Quinoa (seeds carry a bitter saponin coating; commercial grain is processed to remove it)

32. **C** banana
A banana is botanically a berry. A plum is a drupe and an apple is a pome. Wikipedia: Banana / Berry (botany)

33. **D** 30%
Wikipedia: Food loss and waste, citing FAO (2011): ~one third, 1.3 bn tonnes/yr

34. **C** white rice
Brown rice keeps its oily outer layer, which turns rancid in a few months. Milling that layer off is what makes white rice last for years: the same trade-off as white flour versus whole wheat. Wikipedia: Bran / Brown rice (bran oil goes rancid; brown rice keeps ~6 months)

35. **D** a fruit seed
Wikipedia: Coffee bean (seed of the coffee cherry, botanically a berry)

36. **C** 1990
The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 told the USDA to write national organic standards. The final rule was published in 2000 and the USDA Organic seal followed. Wikipedia: National Organic Program (Organic Foods Production Act of 1990; final rule published 2000)

37. **C** cauliflower
Wikipedia: Cauliflower (edible part is undeveloped flower buds)

38. **B** they breed slowly
Wikipedia: Overfishing / Orange roughy (slow-growing, late-maturing species have low stock resilience)

39. **A** to add air
Wikipedia: Compost (turning maintains oxygen; aerobic bacteria need >5% O2)

40. **D** they fan out the water
Nectar arrives about three-quarters water. The bees beat their wings in unison to move air across it until only about 17 percent water is left, which is also what keeps honey from spoiling. Wikipedia: Honey (coordinated wing beating evaporates water down to 15.5-18%)

41. **C** bark
Wikipedia: Cinnamon (inner bark of Cinnamomum)

42. **D** wild cabbage plant
All of them are cultivars of one wild species: Brassica oleracea, the wild cabbage. Centuries of breeding for different parts of the same plant gave us broccoli (flower buds), kale (leaves) and kohlrabi (stem). Wikipedia: Brassica oleracea (wild cabbage; cultivars include cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, Brussels sprout)

43. **A** stem
Wikipedia: Tuber (a potato is a stem tuber)

44. **A** fuel for engines
Nearly 45 percent of U.S. corn becomes fuel ethanol, more than the roughly 40 percent that feeds animals. Only a small slice is eaten by people directly. USDA Economic Research Service: Feed Grains Sector at a Glance

45. **B** where the flowers are
Wikipedia: Waggle dance (von Frisch; encodes direction and distance to a resource)

46. **D** all three
Wikipedia: Columbian exchange

47. **A** beef
Wikipedia: Water footprint (Mekonnen & Hoekstra, L/kg): beef 15,415; potatoes 287; apples 822

48. **C** yeast
Wikipedia: Yeast (a fungus); yogurt & vinegar are bacterial, tofu is soy

49. **A** on a low plant
Wikipedia: Pineapple (herbaceous perennial, 3.5-5 ft)

50. **C** peanut
Wikipedia: Nut (fruit) / Peanut (a peanut is a legume)

51. **A** they release a gas
Wikipedia: syn-Propanethial-S-oxide

52. **D** the banana gives off a gas
Ripening fruit gives off ethylene, a gas that tells other fruit to ripen. A closed bag traps it. Wikipedia: Ripening (ethylene is a gaseous plant hormone; covered bowls trap it)

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