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# Hate your greens? Researchers say it's not down to taste, it's the colour

SCIENCE may have discovered why a child will happily munch a red apple, but spurn spinach.

And it seems that it's not down to the smell or taste of the greens – it's the colour that's off-putting.

Humans are 'visual animals' who rely on their sense of sight for eating more than other animals such as dogs – who rely on sniffing and smelling.

And researchers have found that green is less 'arousing' for us in foods than red.

Over millions of years of evolution, our animal ancestors associated red food

By **Colin Fernandez**

with more energy. To this day, research in apes shows they prefer red food to green – and the same is true for us.

It is not difficult to see why if you think of a juicy red strawberry, as opposed to the green, unripe stage of the fruit.

Researchers at the International School of Advanced Studies in Trieste, Italy, and colleagues looked at the role colour perception plays in eating. They said the role of colour in evaluating food has received 'relatively little attention... maybe

because the human diet is not limited to fruits and leaves found in nature'.

Humans and apes are thought to have developed 'trichromatic' vision, which allows us to detect red, green and blue light to help us forage for fruit. It enables us to sense millions of different shades, unlike animals such as dogs which have much more limited colour perception.

Raffaella Rumiati, a neuroscientist who led the study, said: 'We are particularly efficient at distinguishing red from green. It is mainly the colour of food that guides us, and our experiments show how.'