

## Why does cilantro taste like soap to some people? Tracking genes that predispose taste for bitter beer, grapefruit and kale

Between [3% and 21%](#) of people, depending on their location in the world, dislike cilantro for its soapiness. But how can people have such vastly different sensations from the same herb?

Genetics plays a major role, it turns out.

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One of those genes encodes for the receptor OR6A2, which happens to specifically bind to aldehydes that give cilantro its specific odor, according to [23andMe](#).

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On the taste side, scientists know that of the 25 genes that encode bitter taste receptors in humans, four or five contain functional polymorphisms, [\[sensory expert John\] Hayes](#) said, meaning there are several mutations that change the way some people experience bitter food. The gene TAS2R38 determines if you like bitter greens, like kale and Brussels sprouts, or a hoppy beer, And TAS2R31 influences preference for grapefruit juice and quinine in tonic water. "It also predicts whether you are going to like saccharin," the sweetener in Sweet'N Low, Hayes said.

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Even though cilantro preference is innate, it's not concrete. Just like other food preferences, you can grow accustomed to cilantro with repeated exposure. "Biology is not destiny," Hayes said. So, even if you hate cilantro now, it's never too late to change

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)