



# Stinky Tofu

Reading Worksheet — Level F | [tahricteaches.com](http://tahricteaches.com)

Stinky tofu is one of Taiwan's most iconic and **controversial** street foods. Its powerful smell comes from a special **fermentation** process that can take several days to complete. Regular tofu is soaked in a brine made from fermented ingredients and herbs. As the proteins break down, the tofu develops the strong **aroma** that can be noticed from far away.

There are several different **varieties** of stinky tofu, and each one has its own flavor and texture. Deep-fried stinky tofu is the most popular version, with a crispy outside and soft inside. Steamed versions are lighter, while grilled tofu is often brushed with sweet sauce and chili paste before serving.

Night markets are the best places to **experience** authentic stinky tofu. Famous markets like Shilin, Raohe, and Fengjia are known for vendors who use family recipes that have been passed down for generations. The tofu is often served with pickled **cabbage** and a tangy sauce that balances the strong flavor.

Stinky tofu also has deep **cultural** meaning in Taiwan. Many people connect it with childhood visits to night markets and family outings. For tourists, the dish has become a popular **symbol** of Taiwanese identity and a memorable part of travel in Taiwan.

In recent years, stinky tofu has gained international **recognition**. Restaurants in other countries now serve it, and chefs sometimes create **fusion** dishes that keep the flavor while changing the presentation. Traditional or modern, stinky tofu continues to fascinate adventurous eaters around the world.

## A. Vocabulary

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|------------------|-----|---|
| 1. controversial | ___ | a. a strong and distinctive smell                       |
| 2. fermentation  | ___ | b. something that represents an idea or identity        |
| 3. varieties     | ___ | c. to directly see, feel, or take part in something     |
| 4. experience    | ___ | d. a mix of styles or traditions from different places  |
| 5. cabbage       | ___ | e. the chemical process of breaking down food over time |
| 6. cultural      | ___ | f. different types or kinds of something                |
| 7. symbol        | ___ | g. a vegetable with thick green leaves                  |
| 8. recognition   | ___ | h. related to the beliefs and customs of a group        |
| 9. aroma         | ___ | i. public notice, praise, or acknowledgment             |
| 10. fusion       | ___ | j. causing disagreement or different opinions           |

## B. True or False

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- \_\_\_ 1. Stinky tofu gets its smell from a fermentation process.
- \_\_\_ 2. Deep-fried stinky tofu is a very uncommon version.
- \_\_\_ 3. Night markets are the best places to find stinky tofu in Taiwan.
- \_\_\_ 4. Every vendor uses exactly the same family recipe.
- \_\_\_ 5. Stinky tofu is often served with pickled cabbage.
- \_\_\_ 6. The dish has no cultural meaning in Taiwan.
- \_\_\_ 7. Some restaurants outside Taiwan now sell stinky tofu.
- \_\_\_ 8. Fusion dishes try to change the presentation while keeping the flavor.
- \_\_\_ 9. Stinky tofu is only popular with foreign tourists.

## C. Fill in the Blanks

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**Word Bank:** controversial, fermentation, varieties, experience, cultural, recognition, aroma

1. Stinky tofu is one of Taiwan's most \_\_\_\_\_ street foods.
2. Its strong smell comes from the \_\_\_\_\_ process.
3. There are many different \_\_\_\_\_ of stinky tofu.
4. Trying stinky tofu at a night market is a memorable \_\_\_\_\_ for many visitors.
5. The dish has strong \_\_\_\_\_ importance in Taiwan.



## D. Comprehension Questions

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1. How does stinky tofu get its strong smell?
2. What are some common ways stinky tofu is prepared?
3. Why is stinky tofu culturally important in Taiwan?

## E. Discussion Questions

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1. Why do you think people are interested in foods that smell unusual?
2. Should traditional foods be changed into fusion dishes, or should they stay the same? Why?

# Answer Key

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Source: Taiwan Tourism Administration (eng.taiwan.net.tw)

**A. Vocabulary:** 1-j, 2-e, 3-f, 4-c, 5-g, 6-h, 7-b, 8-i, 9-a, 10-d

**B. True/False:** 1-T, 2-F, 3-T, 4-F, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-T, 9-F

**C. Fill Blanks:** 1-controversial, 2-fermentation, 3-varieties, 4-experience, 5-cultural

**D. Comprehension:**

1. The tofu is soaked in a fermented brine for several days, which creates the strong smell.
2. It is often deep-fried, steamed, or grilled.
3. People connect it with night markets, family memories, and Taiwanese identity.

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