The Importance of TASTE (Rasas):
Taste is a major way that your body communicates with itself, to set up efficient digestion.
It is the body's FIRST LEVEL of communication with itself. The various tastes inform your body about what it has to do next, for your good health.
In Ayurveda, TASTES are called “RASAS”, and there are 6 major tastes identified. It is important that we include all six tastes in our food during each day (not so much in every meal, but over each day’s food intake).

The Six Tastes are:
Sweet, Sour, Salty, Bitter, Pungent, Astringent.
Some examples of foods with each kind of taste are included in these guidelines, to make choices easier.

Examples of the Six Tastes in Various Foods:

Sweet: sugar, grains, milk, ghee, butter, bread, many cooked vegetables, dhal, basil
Sour: citrus fruit (oranges, lemons etc.), yogurt, cheese, sour cream, unripe fruits
Salty: any food with salt added
Pungent: hot spicy foods, pepper, chillies, basil
Bitter: Green leafy vegetables, cilantro, basil, turmeric, raw vegetables
Astringent: dhal, beans, turmeric, cilantro

Taste sets up everything that follows:
Even before you swallow the first mouthful, your body has been informed about what it has to do to digest and to nourish itself.
Good digestion gives us a healthier gut, so good bacteria can thrive there.

The bottom line is:
DELICIOUS TASTES = GOOD DIGESTION = GOOD BACTERIA = GOOD GUT HEALTH.

CRAVINGS & THE TASTES:
Cravings are very often due to some of the six tastes missing in our daily diet. So our body starts craving ways to include them (but often in “quick-fix” unhealthy products, like salty chips or ice cream or chocolate).

Here are some very simple ways to add the various tastes to your meals:
. Try adding a little bitter orange marmalade (sugar-free if possible) to the pot, after the end of the cooking. It’s delicious and will add the tastes bitter, sour and sweet to the meal.
Cranberry or Pomegranate sauce or jam will add astringent and sweet tastes. Arugula (also known as Roquette or Rocket Salad outside the US), or similar bitter salad vegetables will provide bitter and pungent (ie. spicy) tastes to your meal.

Basil and Cilantro (ie. Coriander) leaves are particularly valuable and healthy additions to meals, both for their taste and their nutritive value. Following is some information about basil and cilantro, courtesy of MAPI.com:

Basil is used in both its fresh and dried forms. Sweet basil is the type most commonly used in cooking; it is balancing for Vata and Kapha, as well as for Pitta when used in lesser quantities. It is a warming herb, and contributes the sweet, bitter and pungent tastes. Holy basil is more therapeutic and is used in many Maharishi Ayurveda herbal products. This variety balances Vata and Kapha but increases Pitta.

**Reducing toxic load in the body:**
Coriander leaf (cilantro) is a safe way to begin purifying mercury and other deep toxins from the body. You can eat Cilantro Chutney with holy basil as an addition to your diet. This is a simple recipe (courtesy of MAPI.com) using the remarkable coriander leaf (cilantro). It is not only delicious, but many studies show that cilantro is a safe way to begin purifying deep or environmental toxins (known as garavisha) from the body. The cilantro is said to help remove heavy metals, and the holy basil is helpful in eliminating two particular kinds of toxins recognized by Ayurveda — amavisha and garavisha. If you grow it in your home, it helps purify the air as well. It grows easily in most spring-summer north American climates.

**Ingredients**
- 8 tsp. chopped organic cilantro leaf
- 1 tsp. shredded organic ginger
- ½ tsp. organic lime or lemon juice
- ½ tsp. chopped holy basil leaf
- A little water to blend

**Directions**
1. Mix all ingredients and blend together to a thin paste. Add salt to taste.
2. You can use this chutney with cooked veggies, rice and other grains and flatbreads (chapatis). Spread on wholemeal toast, it makes an excellent breakfast addition.

Coriander seeds are used commonly in Indian and Mexican cooking. They can be used whole, but are normally used ground. Coriander is a tridoshic spice highly appreciated in Ayurveda. It is a cooling spice and contributes the sweet and astringent tastes.