



**Learning Math and
Science Through Play**

Floaters and Sinkers

Experiment in the kitchen to discover some surprises about what sinks and floats.

What You Will Need:

- A variety of fruits and vegetables, including some with thick peels or rinds and with different weights
- Examples: banana, orange, grapes, apple, bell pepper, potato, peas, zucchini, beans
- A large bowl or tub
- Knife
- Water
- Stay flexible in your exploration and keep an open mind!

Here's What To Do:

- Fill your bowl or tub with enough water to cover the biggest produce.
- Examine your items and compare their sizes, shapes, and weights. Do some feel solid or hollow? Which ones do you think will sink or float in water?

Now Try This:

- Test your predictions by placing each item in the tub to see if it sinks or floats.
- Does removing a rind or peel change whether it floats or not? Adults, help younger children as needed.
- Does ripeness affect how items sink or float?
- What happens when you cut the food into smaller pieces?

More To Explore:



You can use salt to test how making water denser affects buoyancy or sinkability. Fill two wide and tall glasses (big enough around to easily hold a slice of potato) about half full of water. Dissolve 4–5 tablespoons of salt in one of the glasses. Try to float a thin slice of potato first in the plain water then in the salty water. What do you notice? What about trying to float thin slices of carrots or other produce in either glass?

Books To Read Together:

What Floats in a Moat? by Lynne Berry

Mr. Gumpy's Outing by John Burningham

Who Sank the Boat? by Pamela Allen



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