

THE GRADEABILITY OF 'DELICIOUS'  
IN NATIVE SPEAKER CORPORA

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# The gradeability of ‘delicious’ in native speaker corpora

## **Introduction**

This paper is an account of a corpus investigation into whether and to what extent *delicious* is treated as a gradeable adjective in native speaker corpora.

I had noticed that some of my students tended to use *very* to intensify *delicious* as in *\*It was very delicious*, which sounded intuitively unnatural to me as a native English speaker. I would error-correct such utterances, and prompt students to use *absolutely* or other maximizers (1.2) in conjunction with *delicious* when they wished to emphasize the notion of ‘deliciousness’.

When broaching the subject with colleagues, opinion was split as to whether *very delicious* was in fact any less natural than *absolutely delicious*, and I was led to question my intuition. When I referred to the grammar in order to confirm my intuition, I determined that *delicious* must be an ungradeable as opposed to a gradeable adjective (1.3) because *absolutely delicious* sounded natural, but *very delicious* did not.

However, it was still only my intuition telling me that *\*very delicious* was unnatural, and I considered that a corpus study, as ‘a more reliable guide to language use than native speaker intuition’ (Hunston 2002, p.20) was in order.

## **1. Literature review**

### 1.1 Intensifiers

Intensifiers, drawn from a class of words known as ‘adverbs of degree’, are used in conjunction with adjectives in order to grade the intensity of the adjective. The most common intensifier of adjectives is the adverb *very* (Greenbaum and Nelson 2002, p.96)

Most notable authorities on grammar (including Greenbaum and Nelson (2002), Parrott (2000), and Celce-Murcia and Larson-Freeman (1999)) maintain that intensifiers can only be used in conjunction with gradeable (see below, 1.3) adjectives.

However, certain types of intensifiers can be used with ungradeable or non-gradeable (1.3) adjectives. Among this special class of intensifiers are ‘intensifiers of absoluteness’ such as *absolutely*, *completely* or *totally* (Parrott 2000, p.37).

## 1.2 Maximizers

‘Intensifiers of absoluteness’ (1.1) have also been termed ‘maximizers’ (Penston 2005). Lorenz (1999) classifies maximizers as “adjectives that denote ‘full, complete, perfect, whole’” (Lorenz 1999, p.97). This paper investigates those maximizers identified by Lorenz (1999), namely: *absolutely*, *completely*, *entirely*, *fully*, *perfectly*, *purely*, *thoroughly*, *totally*, *utterly*, and *wholly*. (Lorenz 1999, p.97)

## 1.3 Gradeable and ungradeable adjectives

It has been suggested that gradeable adjectives are those that we can grade the intensity of using intensifiers. For example, it is possible to indicate the point on a scale of adjectives such as *hot* by using intensifiers, as in *quite hot*, *very hot*, and *extremely hot* (Greenbaum and Nelson 2002, p.96).

Ungradeable or non-gradeable adjectives (the two terms are used synonymously) include those, it is claimed, the intensity of which cannot be graded because they express extreme qualities, such as *terrified*, *furious*, and *starving* (Parrott 2000, p.23).

Such adjectives cannot, according to grammarians, be graded with adverbs of degree such as *very*, as in *\*very terrified*. It is possible, however, to modify ‘extreme quality’ ungradeable adjectives with intensifiers of absoluteness (above, 1.1.1) – or ‘maximizers’ (Penston 2005) – such as *absolutely* as in *absolutely terrified* (Parrott 2000, p.23). Maximizers cannot, however, be used to modify most gradeable adjectives, as in *\*absolutely big* (Lorenz 1999).

### 1.3.1 Determining the gradeability of adjectives

Jackson (2002, p.66) posits two criteria which should be fulfilled before we can classify an adjective as gradeable:

- a) the adjective should have a comparative and superlative form, and;
- b) the adjective should be modifiable by intensifiers such as *very*.

However, he also states that:

“the gradeable/non-gradeable distinction may not always be clear cut. In particular, essentially non-gradeable adjectives may, in certain contexts, *become gradeable by virtue of how speakers choose to use them.*” (Jackson 2002, p.67) (italics added)

He uses the example of ‘unique’ to illustrate his point, explaining how this essentially ungradeable adjective – by virtue of its meaning ‘without equal’ – is sometimes nevertheless intensified by native speakers as in ‘She is very unique’. He argues that we must either conclude that such instances are erroneous uses of English, or that “unique has developed a use that allows it at least to be intensified [although] we might balk at comparison” (Jackson 2002, p.67)

Jackson (2002) suggests that ‘unique’ is used by some native speakers as a gradeable adjective, at least in respect of the fact that they intensify it with *very*. He also suggests, however, that we might recoil from the idea of *unique* being used in its comparative form, e.g. \**She is more unique than me*. He doesn’t mention anything about the superlative form *the most unique*, as in *She is the most unique person I know*, which seems, on the face of it, intuitively acceptable.

There is no definitive list of ungradeable adjectives, and whether or not certain adjectives are gradeable continues to be a matter of debate among academics and native-speakers alike (Greenbaum and Nelson 2002).

### 1.4 ‘Delicious’

There are numerous meanings conveyed by the word *delicious*, but the one at the center of the current investigation is that defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “highly pleasing or enjoyable to the bodily senses, esp. to the taste or smell” (Simpson 2011).

In this paper, *delicious* is presumed to be an ‘extreme quality’ ungradeable adjective (above, 1.3), and therefore not subject to intensification by *very*, but able to be modified by *absolutely* and other maximizers.

There is support for classifying *delicious* as an ungradeable adjective in, among others, Penston (2005), Backhouse (1994), and Lorenz (1999). Penston (2005, p.54) includes *delicious* in an illustrative list of ungradeable adjectives, while Backhouse (1994, p.38) states:

“Semantically, DELICIOUS is an implicit superlative standing at the end-point of a scale and relating to NICE, etc., as ENORMOUS relates to BIG; as such it may not be modified by graders (VERY, etc.)”.

Lorenz (1999, p.157) suggests that because the intensifier in *very delicious* is ‘the weaker link’ and the adjective is ‘marked for emphasis’, *delicious* ‘would therefore more suitably be amplified by maximizers such as *absolutely*, *quite* or *completely*’.

*Table 1*, below, shows my intuitive judgement of the acceptability of *delicious* as modified by the intensifier *very*, the maximizer *absolutely*, in its comparative form *more delicious* and in its superlative form *most delicious*.

**Table 1**

Form	Intuitive acceptability	Example sentence
intensifier	unacceptable	*( <i>It was</i> ) <i>very delicious</i>
maximizer	acceptable	( <i>It was</i> ) <i>absolutely delicious</i>
comparative	unacceptable	*( <i>It is</i> ) <i>more delicious (than X)</i>
superlative	acceptable	( <i>It is</i> ) <i>the most delicious (X I have ever eaten)</i>

**A table to show the intuitive acceptability of *delicious* as intensified by *very*, maximized by *absolutely*, in its comparative form and its superlative form**

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Scope and focus of investigation

Most of the attention will be given in this investigation to examining whether and in what circumstances *delicious* is intensified by *very* in native speaker corpora, and whether and in what circumstances the comparative form of *delicious*, i.e. *more delicious*, is used. There are several reasons for this approach.

Firstly, constructions containing *very delicious* and *more delicious* seem intuitively unacceptable (*Table 1*), so when these forms do occur, it is desirable to gain a more detailed understanding of their usage. Secondly, if an adjective is amenable to intensification by *very*, and also has a comparative form, there would seem to be a very strong case for it being a gradeable adjective (1.3.1). As the superlative form of *delicious* seems intuitively acceptable anyway (*Table 1*), this would appear to be a less pertinent criterion in determining its actual gradeability. Thirdly, it has proved linguistically problematic to parse the periphrastic superlative (*the*) *most* (Lorenz 1999, p. 62) from the intensifying *most*. As such, constructions containing *most delicious* have not been investigated.

Significant attention has also been given to the question of whether *absolutely* is a more typical collocate of *delicious* than *very* (4.1.1). This is due to the fact that ungradeable adjectives are purportedly able to be modified by maximizers but not intensifiers (1.1 and 1.2, above), and gradeable adjectives are purportedly unable to be modified by maximizers (1.3). This consideration therefore forms a central part of determining whether *delicious* is in fact gradeable. *Absolutely* is also my intuitive substitute for *very* when correcting students who use *\*very delicious*, and it is important for me to confirm whether such corrections are justified.

Some attention has also been given to the statistical significance of alternative maximizers of *delicious* (4.1.2)

### 2.2 Computer corpora

In modern times the methodology entailed by corpus linguistics almost always involves the use of computers to process very large databases of written and transcribed spoken language. The computer software used to access and analyze electronically held corpus data is able to rapidly process millions of words of language, and present the results of searches along with useful statistical information. Concordance lines – a search term or ‘node word’ presented in the center of the screen in its original context – comprise the primary format of data presentation (Hunston 2002).

Corpora and concordance lines can be used to obtain information about how language works that might not be apparent or obvious by using native speaker intuition (Hunston 2002). Any findings derived from corpus research, however, are not necessarily generalizable to the whole of language the corpus purports to represent. Such findings can only be used as evidence to support propositions about language usage in general, as even the biggest collections of corpora cannot claim to represent the entire language (Hunston 2002).

### 2.3 The Bank of English

The corpora which were used for this investigation are those held jointly by The University of Birmingham and HarperCollins Publishers, and known as the ‘Bank of English’. The corpora are comprised of over 450 millions words of spoken and written native varieties of English, in both formal and informal registers.

*Table 4* (p.12) shows the full list of sub-corpora contained in the Bank of English. It is hoped that some useful insights might be obtained from examining which sub-corpora certain collocations tend to occur in the most. It is important to note that the Bank of English contains significantly more data from written, British English than other modes and varieties of the language.

### 2.4 T-scores and Mutual Information (MI) scores

T-scores and Mutual Information (MI) scores have been used to statistically grade the significance of collocations revealed in this corpus study. MI scores have been used primarily as a measure of the strength of the collocations and t-scores primarily as a measure the certainty of the collocations (Hunston 2002).

Church, Hanks et al (1994) suggest that intersecting MI scores and t-scores to identify statistically relevant collocations is a good way to avoid both the ‘very high frequency words that may be too compositional to be of interest’ revealed by relying on t-scores alone, and the ‘low frequency pairs that are too specific to a particular corpus’ revealed by relying on MI scores alone. However, they concede that intersecting t-scores and MI scores in this way may cause us to ‘miss many interesting pairs’ (Church, Hanks et al. 1994, p.168).

For this reason, in this paper, ‘interesting’ collocations (namely *very delicious* and *more delicious* in the sense that they are both intuitively unnatural) will be given further attention even if they are found to be statistically significant according to only one of these measures. In determining the relevance of the collocations overall, however, those collocations statistically significant in both measures will be given greater emphasis.

### 3. Analysis

**Table 2**

Notes	Word type	Collocate	Total frequency in corpora	Frequency with “delicious”	MI score
Does not collocate with ‘delicious’	maximizer	fully	N/A	N/A	N/A
	maximizer	purely	N/A	N/A	N/A
Statistically significant (MI score>3)	maximizer	utterly	5,988	24	8.15
	maximizer	absolutely	26,719	55	7.19
	maximizer	perfectly	16,514	8	5.11
	maximizer	totally	23,489	5	3.92
Statistically insignificant (MI score<3)	comparative	more	974,471	65	2.24
	intensifier	very	436,637	16	1.38
	maximizer	completely	32,920	1	0.00
	maximizer	entirely	22,708	1	0.00
	maximizer	thoroughly	8,039	1	0.00
	maximizer	wholly	6,018	1	0.00

**A table to show intensifier, maximizer, and comparative (non-)collocates of ‘delicious’ ranked by MI score**

### 3.1 Analysis of statistical significance

#### 3.1.1 (Non-)collocates of 'delicious' by MI score

Table 2 (above) shows intensifier, maximizer, and comparative (non-)collocates of *delicious* ranked by MI score. The most significant maximizer collocate of *delicious* according to the MI score ranking is *utterly*. The maximizer *utterly* occurs 5,988 times in total in the corpora, and on 24 of those occasions, it occurs together with *delicious*. After *utterly* are *absolutely*, *perfectly*, and then *totally* in the fourth highest position among the maximizers of *delicious*. The maximizers *fully* and *purely* were not found to collocate at all with *delicious* in the corpora, and *completely*, *entirely*, *thoroughly* and *wholly* all failed to qualify as significant maximizer collocates of *delicious*, with MI scores of less than 3. The comparative *more* and the intensifier *very* were not found to be significant collocates by MI score.

**Table 3**

Notes	Word type	Collocate	Total frequency in corpora	Frequency with "delicious"	T-score
Does not collocate with 'delicious'	maximizer	fully	N/A	N/A	N/A
	maximizer	purely	N/A	N/A	N/A
Statistically significant (t-score>2)	maximizer	absolutely	26,719	55	7.37
	comparative	more	974,471	65	6.36
	maximizer	utterly	5,988	24	4.88
	maximizer	perfectly	16,514	8	2.75
	intensifier	very	436,637	16	2.46
	maximizer	totally	23,489	5	2.09
Statistically insignificant (t-score<2)	maximizer	wholly	6,018	1	0.92
	maximizer	thoroughly	8,039	1	0.89
	maximizer	entirely	22,708	1	0.68
	maximizer	completely	32,920	1	0.54

**A table to show intensifier, maximizer, and comparative (non-)collocates of 'delicious' ranked by t-score**

### 3.1.2 (Non-)collocates of 'delicious' by t-score

Table 3 (above) shows intensifier, maximizer, and comparative (non-)collocates of *delicious* ranked by t-score. The most significant maximizer collocate of *delicious* according to the t-score ranking is *absolutely*. The maximizer *absolutely* occurs 26,719 times in total in the corpora, and on 55 of those occasions, it occurs together with *delicious*. After *absolutely* are *utterly*, *perfectly*, and then *totally* in the fourth highest position among the maximizers of *delicious*. As with the MI score rankings, *fully* and *purely* did not collocate at all with *delicious*, and *completely*, *entirely*, *thoroughly* and *wholly* all failed to qualify as significant maximizer collocates of *delicious*, with t-scores of less than 2. The comparative *more* and intensifier *very* were both found to be significant collocates by t-score.

## 3.2 Analysis of mode and variety of English

### 3.2.1 'Very delicious' and 'more delicious'

Table 4 (below) shows the total number of occurrences of *very delicious* and *more delicious* along with the sub-corpora they appear in, sorted from the lowest to highest number of occurrences. The vast majority of occurrences of both *very delicious* and *more delicious* are in British written English, but there is also at least one occurrence of each in Australian written English and American written English, as well as one occurrence of *very delicious* in British spoken English.

## 3.3 Analysis of concordance lines

### 3.3.1 *Very delicious*

Appendix 1 lists the occurrences of *very delicious*, and the contexts in which it appears. By examining the corpus reference and publication codes, we can see that both the first (VD1) and second (VD2) occurrences of *very delicious* were in the same publication, and were probably used by the same writer.

**Table 4**

Sub-corpus name	Number of occurrences of “very delicious”	Number of occurrences of “more delicious”
<b>US academic books</b>	0	1
<b>UK New Scientist</b>	0	0
<b>US public radio</b>	0	0
<b>UK Economist</b>	0	1
<b>UK BBC radio</b>	0	0
<b>US spoken</b>	0	0
<b>UK Business</b>	0	0
<b>US papers</b>	0	0
<b>US ephemera</b>	0	0
<b>CA Canadian mixed corpus</b>	0	2
<b>US books</b>	1	4
<b>UK Guardian</b>	1	5
<b>UK Sun/NoW</b>	0	5
<b>UK books</b>	2	7
<b>UK ephemera</b>	0	3
<b>UK Times</b>	2	10
<b>OZ papers</b>	2	2
<b>UK spoken</b>	1	0
<b>UK Independent</b>	3	7
<b>UK magazines</b>	4	18
<b>Total occurrences</b>	16	65

**A table to show the number of occurrences of *very delicious* and *more delicious* in each of the Bank of English corpora**

The writer’s style is informal, and as ‘Nice balance of acidity and fruit, good zesty mouthful’ (VD1) shows, his or her article does not consist of grammatically complete sentences, but rather resembles something of a stream of consciousness. VD3 and VD7 are written in a similar style.

In VD3 *very* is used as an intensifier twice in short succession, ostensibly for anaphoric rhetorical effect. In VD6 and VD9 *very delicious* occurs in reported speech, in VD9 the quote being tellingly attributed to a Japanese supermarket executive. VD15 can be set aside from the current

investigation as it contains a use of *delicious* the meaning of which is different from that defined in 1.4, above. In VD16 *very delicious* occurs in transcribed speech.

### 3.3.2 More delicious

*Appendix 2* lists the occurrences of *more delicious*, and the contexts in which it appears. There are some significant themes and patterns in the usage of *more delicious*, as evidenced in the corpora, that will briefly be summarized here. The concordance lines have been grouped for ease of reference.

The instances comprising *Group A* have been disregarded due either to the fact that:

- a) they feature uses of ‘more’ not in the adverbial sense of ‘to a greater extent or degree’, but in an adjectival sense of ‘in a greater quantity or amount’, as in MD11, ‘one or more delicious fish dishes’; or
- b) they feature uses of *delicious* where the meaning or nuance is different to that defined in 1.4, above, as in MD30, ‘the more delicious tales’

*Group B* is comprised of instances where adverbs such as ‘even’, ‘much’ or ‘far’ have been used to emphasize the comparative form of *delicious*, as in MD18, ‘this will make them even more delicious’.

*Group C* is comprised of instances that convey ‘ever increasing’ intensity, as in MD36, ‘Each page looks more delicious than the next’.

*Group D* gathers together negative constructions as in MD2, ‘there is nothing more delicious’.

Finally, *Group E* comprises the remaining instances of *more delicious*, where usage appears intuitively unnatural and unidiomatic.

## 4. Interpretation

## 4.1 Interpretation of statistical significance analysis

### 4.1.1 'Very delicious' versus 'absolutely delicious'

It is clear from the evidence presented in both *Table 1* and *Table 2* that, statistically, *absolutely* is preferred to *very* when emphasizing the notion of 'deliciousness'. The strength of the collocation between *absolutely* and *delicious* is over five times that of *very* and *delicious*, as measured by MI score. The certainty of the collocation *absolutely delicious* is almost 2 times that of the collocation *very delicious* as measured by t-score. Additionally, *absolutely delicious* occurs almost 3.5 times more frequently than *very delicious*.

Statistically, then, it is clear that *absolutely* is preferred to *very* in ranking the intensity of *delicious*. But what does this mean in practical terms? One of the most prominent uses of corpus studies is to determine the centrality or typicality of particular linguistic constructions (Biber, Conrad et al. 1998). By examining the the language usage of 'the mass of ordinary writers' (Sinclair 1991, p.17) we are able to determine normative linguistic constructions. As Stubbs (2001, p.3) puts it:

"Corpus linguistics... investigates relations between frequency and typicality, and instance and norm. It aims at a theory of the typical, on the grounds that this has to be the basis of interpreting what is attested but unusual. Priority is given to describing the commonest uses of the commonest words."

I would argue that the 16 occurrences of *very delicious* in the corpora make it an 'attested but unusual' construction.

Furthermore, the fact that *very delicious* occurs in the corpora should not convince us that it is a permissible construction. The misspelling *\*suprising* appears 54 times in the same corpora. Should we therefore be convinced that *\*suprising* is an acceptable spelling of the word *surprising*? I would argue that we should not, and I tend to agree with Hunston (2002, p.22) and Lorenz (1999, p.18), among others, who submit that native speaker intuition should remain the ultimate authority on questions of language permissibility.

While *very delicious* may be attested in the corpora, I maintain that it is neither typical nor permissible. *Absolutely delicious* is both more idiomatic, and more in line with propounded grammatical explanations. *Absolutely delicious* remains statistically significant even when interesting the two measures of MI score and t-score. The same cannot be said of *very delicious*.

#### 4.1.2 Other maximizers of 'delicious'

Maximizer collocates of *delicious* which were shown to be both strong (MI score over 3) and certain (t-score over 2) were: *utterly*, *absolutely*, *perfectly*, and *totally*. It would seem then that I would be able to advise future students with some confidence that these words are the ones typically used by native speakers to emphasize the notion of 'deliciousness'.

It is also important to note that the data in *Tables 1* and *2* suggest that the maximizers identified in 1.2 are not all substitutable. Indeed, *purely* and *fully*, fail to collocate with *delicious* at all, and *wholly*, *thoroughly*, *entirely*, and *completely*, are not significant collocates by either MI or t-score. To say these maximizers are synonyms would not, therefore, be completely true when using them to emphasize the notion of 'deliciousness'

## 4.2 Interpretation of mode and variety of English analysis

### 4.2.1 'Very delicious' and 'more delicious'

We might be tempted to conclude from *Table 4*, above, that *very delicious* and *more delicious* are constructions more acceptable in written English than other modes, and in British English than other varieties. However, this would be a spurious assumption, because the Bank of English contains more data from written English and British English sources, so we would expect to find relatively more occurrences appearing in these categories anyway. In fact, the only reasonable conclusion we can make from this data is that *very delicious* and *more delicious* are constructions that appear in both written and spoken modes of English, and also appear in three major native varieties of English.

## 4.3 Interpretation of concordance lines analysis

### 4.3.1 *Very delicious*

Although there does not appear to be any kind of overarching system which might regulate or predict the usage of *very delicious*, we might tentatively suggest that *very delicious* tends to be used more in casual written or spoken situations, where traditional grammatical expectations are suspended (e.g. VD1, VD3, VD7, VD16). This is, however, a weak hypothesis in the absence of further evidence. We might also suggest that idiomaticity may sometimes be suspended in favor of rhetorical effect (e.g. VD3). This hypothesis would also require much more investigation in order to be confirmed. There is also some evidence to suggest that *very delicious* is a construction used by non-native speakers of English, as in VD9.

### 4.3.2 *More delicious*

Because there is significantly more evidence for the usage of *more delicious* than *very delicious*, it might not be unreasonable to conclude from this evidence that *more delicious* tends to be used idiomatically in the following ways:

- c) in conjunction with adverbial phrases which further emphasize the comparative (*Group B*);
- d) in constructions of ‘ever increasing intensity’ (*Group C*); and
- e) and in negative constructions (*Group D*).

## 4.4 Is ‘delicious’ treated as a gradeable adjective?

The main aim of this paper was to determine whether and to what extent *delicious* is treated as a gradeable adjective in native speaker corpora. As discussed in 1.3.1, above, adjectives have been considered gradeable if they have comparative and superlative forms, and they are modifiable by intensifiers such as *very*. I have amended these criteria slightly in this paper (2.1) and focused mainly on whether *delicious* is used in its comparative form; and whether it is amenable to intensification by *very* or whether it is more typically maximized by words such as *absolutely*.

In this corpus study, I have adduced evidence to show that the comparative form of *delicious*, i.e. *more delicious*, is used idiomatically by native speakers, particularly in the kinds of constructions outlined in 3.3.2. There are also attested instances of *delicious* being modified with *very*, although

due to lack of evidence, no typically characteristic constructions can be identified with any confidence (3.3.1).

I would argue, however, that *delicious* is generally treated as an ungradeable adjective, bearing in mind:

- a) the high statistical significance of *absolutely* and other maximizer collocates of *delicious* in the Bank of English;
- b) the fact that these maximizer collocates are significant both in terms of MI score and t-score;
- c) the fact that idiomatic use of the comparative form *more delicious* tends to be restricted to the kind of constructions identified as *Group B*, *Group C* and *Group D* (3.3.2)
- d) the fact that *more delicious* is not significant when intersecting MI score and t-score;
- e) the fact that *very delicious* has such a low overall frequency of occurrence; and
- f) the fact that *very delicious* is not significant when intersecting MI score and t-score.

## Conclusion

I would suggest that this corpus study provides us with substantial evidence that *delicious* is treated as a non-gradeable adjective by native speakers, which, in addition to the support marshaled for *delicious* as an ungradeable adjective in 1.4, above, gives us reasonable grounds to assert that *delicious* is in fact ungradeable. This research has also show than maximizers identified in 1.2 cannot be treated as synonyms when used in conjunction with *delicious*.

Questions which remain to be addressed by further research include:

- what the implications are for other seemingly ‘extreme quality’ ungradeable adjectives, such as ‘amazing’ or ‘wonderful’, which my students also sometimes intensify with *very*;
- whether and in what way inclusion of the periphrastic superlative form *(the) most delicious* would affect the results of this research;
- whether constructions such as *very delicious* are more typical in non-native speaker corpora than native speaker corpora (research conducted by Lorenz (1999) suggests they are)
- what the relevance of evidence derived from native-speaker corpus research is to learners of English, bearing in mind the rise of English as an International language.

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**Appendix 1:**  
**16 occurrences of 'very delicious' in multiple corpora**

**(VD1) Corpus brbooks/UK. Text <tref id=BB-----625>.**

region, which reminds us of a swan in flight - long-necked but quite bulbous in the body. Also an excellent wine, it perhaps comes just below Guy Bossard's in the pecking order, but is also **very delicious**. Nice balance of acidity and fruit, good zesty mouthful. Just what good Muscadet should be like. <p> Every year top Muscadet producers in the Loire submit their special Cuv?e wines for the

**(VD2) Corpus brbooks/UK. Text <tref id=BB-----625>.**

and the grape is capable of making some very fine wines. This example has fullish flavour and marked bouquet. <p> Light, fresh and smooth, rounded and with a delightful sweet finish. <p> **Very delicious** Gew?rztraminer, strong spicy flavour. Matured in oak for three years, a powerful, heady wine with a rich, long finish. <p> A fairly sweet wine, full of succulent rich grape flavours. Described

**(VD3) Corpus brmags/UK. Text <tref id=MBX-----21>.**

carrot were entombed in an insipid jelly. This is bursting with goodies simply packed into a mould and held together by pouring a little savoury jelly round them. Very little effort to do, **very delicious** - and impressive looking because the ingredients are handsome. Just right for a picnic lunch in the garden or a late-night supper party. Serves 6 <p> about 9 oz cooked chicken meat, cut into

**(VD4) Corpus brmags/UK. Text <tref id=MBX-----795>.**

dresser and beautifully packed dried goods artistically line the shelves. Tucked away around the back is a bare little room serving breakfast, lunch and tea. <p> Offering a fairly cheap and **very delicious** lunch has made Villandry very popular, so customers sit hugger-mugger, passing the plates or wistfully requesting a fork. This is not a criticism of the nice waiters and waitresses. they often

**(VD5) Corpus brmags/UK. Text <tref id=MBX----1241>.**

the tinned varieties are the 101-things-you-can-do-with-a-tin-of-Campbell's-mushroom-soup recipes that you see on the side of the tins. Someone once tried to convince me that you can make a **very delicious** `Tuna Bake" with a tin of Campbell's mushroom and a packet of cornflakes: need I say more? One of my myths about soups is that you need a stock. Yes, it tastes fantastic made from broths that's

**(VD6) Corpus brmags/UK. Text <tref id=MBX----1269>.**

is very much en prince," adds Kenneth Rose. `If she has a lunch party, there's practically a footman behind the chair. The food she serves is like English pre-War country-house cooking and **very delicious** - such as scrambled egg with asparagus, followed by chicken or veal and then black cherries in liqueur with meringue and vast quantities of thick cream." Many of the Queen Mother's old friends

**(VD7) Corpus guard/UK. Text <tref id=NB3--990113>.**

the back and well on their way to becoming lobster masala. They're channel-surfers, these lobsters, because they've somehow got themselves onto Rick Stein's Seafood Odyssey over on bbc2. And **very delicious** they look, too. Almost as good as the turbot, done with leeks and apples, calvados, cider, button mushrooms and creme fraiche. You just know that's a winner, don't you? Trouble is, you need a

**(VD8) Corpus oznews/OZ. Text <tref id=NA---950122>.**

were outraged. <p> Grant wrote: `When I stayed at the Lake Vyrnwy Hotel this summer I am very sorry that I sometimes referred to a (very nice) male member of staff as # The breather and to a **very delicious**) vegetable dish as `Farmer's Underwear"." <p> Both jokes were childish but were meant to be private and not all mean spirited." <p> <b> DIBBEN K </b> TEENS CHARGED OVER ASSAULTS By KAY DIBBEN A

**Appendix 1:**  
**16 occurrences of 'very delicious' in multiple corpora**

**(VD9) Corpus oznews/OZ. Text <tref id=NA---950908>.**

on sale in Japan for the first time. <p> The Millin brand rice is the first 15-tonne shipment after Japan lifted its import ban on rice. <p> A Tokyo supermarket executive described it as "**very delicious**". <p> A 2kg pack costs Y=860 (\$A11.60) while a 5kg pack costs Y=2140 (\$28.89). <p> The rice is being sold through 62 outlets in major cities. <p> <b> CHAPPELL F </b> Bonus for netball By FIONA

**(VD10) Corpus usbooks/US. Text <tref id=BU-----533>.**

is a roast leg. Other cuts, like the shanks and shoulder, are excellent for braising. Ground lamb is also good for sausage and patties. <p> The liver and kidneys of baby lamb and goat are **very delicious**. Cook the liver as you would calves' liver (page 175); it is much smaller, so count two portions per liver. The recipe for lamb kidneys on page 188 can also be used for goat or even veal. As

**(VD11) Corpus indy/UK. Text <tref id=NB2--990131>.**

with a sweet dipping sauce. I'm not sure exactly what's in them - it looks like the sort of thin, squirmy, translucent thing you might find at the bottom of the ocean - but they're **very, very delicious**. Dick and his family won't eat them, though, because they contain minced pork; further proof of the insanity of vegetarianism. Being only fair-weather vegetarians, though, both Dick and Oliver

**(VD12) Corpus indy/UK. Text <tref id=NB2--990227>.**

of a Marks & Spencer's foodhall. The best thing about the first course, a butternut squash and apple soup, was that it was served individually from a big silver tureen. There's something **very delicious** about chugging through Clapham eating soup spooned from a big silver tureen. The fact that it was obviously freshly prepared, and served with two sorts of bread - onion and Parmesan - was a

**(VD13) Corpus indy/UK. Text <tref id=NB2--990321>.**

big) broke the line. No matter, that night there was more lovely food to consume, including a gorgeous sea trout that my boy Pete (not on the course) had caught that very afternoon, and a **very delicious** trifle. The following morning we were taken to the river Lyd. Here I caught three beautiful wild brown trout almost immediately on a dry fly - a Parachute Black Gnat. Dry flies are really

**(VD14) Corpus times/UK. Text <tref id=NB1--990523>.**

favour the troglodyte large white asparagus, which personally I don't think is a patch on our more bosky and pungent green variety. But served with boiled potatoes and hollandaise, it's **very delicious**. The trouble is, what with eating in cellars and so much Spargel being consumed, along with so much gassy beer, the whole of Berlin has the distinctive, complex odour of asparagus pee. Other

**(VD15) Corpus times/UK. Text <tref id=NB1--991121>.**

t know what to do about it. She couldn't very well sack Lawson and anyway she is a bad sacker." Tuesday June 13: Went to a lunch given by the chairman of Lloyd's. In came Mary Archer looking **very delicious**. She represents the external people in the syndicates. Marcus Kimball, who is on the same committee, said at first they were worried that she would be letting Jeffrey Archer know what was going

**(VD16) Corpus brspok/UK. Text <tref id=SB1----0765>.**

you. Well all I've had today is a corned beef sandwich that I made myself out of a roll <tc text=pause> with a bit of coleslaw inside and then I bought this rabbit from Thomas's which was **very delicious**. I wish I'd bought two more we could have them they were really tasty. It was <F01> Mm. <F02> shortbread just with chocolate on but by the time I had my break they were more or less closed

**Appendix 2:**  
**65 occurrences of 'more delicious' in multiple corpora**

**Group A: Disregarded in the current inquiry**

MD 3 It made the occasion all that **more delicious** to know that for a few brief  
MD 5 S MEALS IN MINUTES, Mon, bbc1 **More Delicious** fast food dishes for people  
MD 6 today YOU could pocket even **more delicious** dosh than they did! Nobody won  
MD 7 else will you encounter **more delicious** breasts of duck, grilled and  
MD11 restaurant will have one or **more delicious** fish dishes - moules marinieres,  
MD12 are but mock turtle - that **more delicious** delicacies remain behind?" Time  
MD13 near this hostelry. More and **more delicious** things were put before us and I  
MD16 Turn to the next page for two **more delicious** recipes that make the most of  
MD19 If you would like to try out **more delicious** recipes using Alaska canned  
MD22 at The Canonbury Academy.for **more delicious** ideas, phone Lorna on 071 731  
MD23 Vic Goddard tribute offset by **more delicious** doleful angst. I'll leave you to  
MD30 gleefully recounted the **more delicious** tales of Battle's diva  
MD32 was that Wener needs to pen **more delicious** tunes quickly. Lest - in the  
MD35 hanging there is probably no **more delicious** spectacle in this country than  
MD40 is reborn on Wednesday for one **more delicious** taste-buds escapade; <p> special  
MD42 helping of points towards **more delicious** treats. <p> The Beefeater chain  
MD46 in those slacks, now an even **more delicious** vision. It was like she had  
MD54 and refereeing. And with **more delicious** irony, Graham Dawe ('How Change

**Group B: Adverbial phrase used to emphasize the comparative**

MD 4 and fluffy and tastes even **more delicious** if you can find fresh figs to  
MD 8 makes those muffins taste even **more delicious**! <p> Can the same results be  
MD 9 to match. To make them even **more delicious**, I pop my muffins into the  
MD10 conscious you can expect even **more delicious** food alternatives to come along.  
MD17 blackberry jellies are all the **more delicious** if you've picked hedgerow berries  
MD18 this will make them even **more delicious**. Since this is such a good dish  
MD20 Weedkiller's Daughter" all the **more delicious** for its sheer audacity. But by  
MD21 Doc-he's turned out to be far **more delicious** than I deserve. It's the  
MD24 exhausted from climbing ever **more delicious** peaks of pleasure-yet most of us  
MD25 Boxer makes her custard even **more delicious** by folding in lightly whipped  
MD26 is heavenly-and will be even **more delicious** with a few shavings of Perigord  
MD28 Paris recently seemed all the **more delicious** for being eaten within sight of  
MD33 I had forgotten just how much **more delicious** they are than those from the  
MD37 analogy suggests an even **more delicious** irony. As Sara Rosenbaum of  
MD43 they can be made to taste even **more delicious** if marinated in the fridge for a  
MD47 was to gasp, 'It tastes even **more delicious** than it smells.' You are most  
MD48 easy-to-carry sweet - and much **more delicious** than a packaged candy bar! Any of  
MD50 below, which made a much **more delicious** arrangement. 'The thing about  
MD51 cream, as here, it has an even **more delicious**, nutty flavour.) <p> Add the  
MD57 hemisphere made all the **more delicious** by the fact that one was  
MD58 over pine needles (rather **more delicious** than it sounds), as well as  
MD59 made with the local salt (far **more delicious** than it sounds). There is a  
MD64 but to make the meat even **more delicious** he began hanging it for at least

**Group C: Ever increasing intensity**

MD36 available. Each page looks **more delicious** than the next. The recipes are  
MD27 gooey cake", with each layer **more delicious** than the one preceding. Although

**Group D: Negative constructions**

MD 2 taste. 7 <p> THERE is nothing **more delicious** on a warm day than an ice-cold  
MD15 SOUP </h> <p> There is nothing **more delicious** on a hot summer's day than a bowl  
MD29 receiving end, there's nothing **more delicious** than having the time to savour  
MD31 and no surprise. What could be **more delicious** than smooth, sweet, silky,  
MD44 The results couldn't be **more delicious** or successful. <p> See for  
MD45 that there could be nothing **more delicious** to touch and fondle. There was,  
MD56 in his room. I can think of no **more delicious** prospect than of a selection of  
MD61 in our hands. What could be **more delicious**? <p> This time, I am really

**Appendix 2:**  
**65 occurrences of 'more delicious' in multiple corpora**

MD62 2001 </dt> <p> There's no **more delicious** way to eat pasta, noodles and  
MD63 </dt> <p> Is there anything **more delicious** than the sight of an idol on the  
MD65 could scarcely be simpler or **more delicious**. Cheers mate. Nice one. All the

**Group E: Unidiomatic usage**

MD 1 boundless desert, desert the **more delicious** the more solitary it is. There,  
MD14 bottles, and seemed to taste **more delicious** that way, accompanied by highly  
MD34 It was hard to say what was **more delicious** about the entries - their  
MD38 both more dangerous and **more delicious**. For example, Harry Block's  
MD39 suggestions. Some of the **more delicious** ones include spaghetti sauces,  
MD41 and perhaps the stalks are the **more delicious** part. Crops are being harvested  
MD49 else at this time of year. Are **more delicious** varieties simply being ignored by  
MD52 is that junk food is often **more delicious** than mediocre healthy food. Set a  
MD53 exterior. The mixture is made **more delicious** by the Parmesan and lemon. Cooked  
MD55 it was still far healthier and **more delicious** than anything out of a freezer.  
MD60 off motion sickness, but a **more delicious** option is to nibble on