

Guide to chocolate tasting



coeur
de
Xocolat
The heart of Chocolate

David Greenwood-Haigh

Unveiling the Sensory World of Chocolate



Taste is just one of our five senses, but it's a gateway to experiencing the world in its most delicious form.

Tasting is a multifaceted process that engages all our senses, that's not limited to our mouths and tongues alone.

While many people just simply eat confectionery bars, fine chocolate lovers embark on a sensory odyssey a safari of taste. Chocolate, is often seen as a simple treat, whereas it's, in fact, a universe of more than 1500 intricate aromas and flavours, reminiscent of the rich tapestry of fine wines.

This guide is your passport to that universe, an epicurean adventure that should elevate your palate and deepen your love for chocolate.

It's a journey that engages every facet of our senses, inviting us to uncover the subtleties within each bite.

Chocolate, like fine wine, is influenced by myriad factors, crafting a unique and intimate experience for every individual. What we taste is not just cocoa; it's a story a narrative waiting to be unwrapped. Within these pages, we offer you a structured process, an enriched vocabulary, and practical tools to capture your chocolate discoveries in a personal journal. As we embark on this chocolate safari together, remember that your taste is a reflection of you, and your voyage through the world of chocolate is distinctly your own. This guide serves as your companion, offering insight and knowledge, but the ultimate experience is yours to embrace. In the chapters ahead, we will lead you through a sensory expedition into the realm of chocolate. We'll delve into the many variables that shape its flavour and aroma – from varietals and fermentation processes to roasting, conching, blending, storage, packaging, cocoa percentage, and the enchanting world of inclusions. Prepare to uncover the story behind each piece of chocolate, for within it lies an entire universe of sensations, waiting to be discovered.

Unveiling the Sensory World of Chocolate



Who am I?

I am David Greenwood-Haigh,
and it's a true pleasure to be your guide on this delectable chocolate-tasting journey.
My journey in the world of chocolate so far has been a interesting one, filled with experiences that have allowed me to delve into the heart of this indulgent delight.
Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to be recognised with accolades as a chef and chocolatier.
As an international chocolate consultant, I've had the privilege of traversing the globe, encountering a diverse array of extraordinary chocolates.
These experiences have not only honed my palate but deepened my appreciation for the intricate nuances that chocolate offers.
My passion for chocolate finds expression through my frequent blogging and the establishment of Coeur de Xocolat, my own chocolate haven. These platforms allow me to share my unending exploration of this delightful treat with kindred spirits like you.
Crafting recipes is not just an artistic endeavour for me; it's a means to connect with fellow chocolate enthusiasts, cocoa farmers and chocolate manufacturers sharing the knowledge and joy that only a well-crafted chocolate creation can bring.
Teaching in colleges, universities, and in the food industry has been a humbling experience.
Here, I've had the chance to impart the knowledge I've gathered over the years to a diverse range of students, from aspiring chefs to food buyers. I genuinely believe that their curiosity and questions have contributed as much to my growth as I've contributed to their understanding.
In essence, my journey in the world of chocolate has been a deeply humbling one, marked by constant discovery and a genuine enthusiasm for this delightful indulgence.
I am honoured to share what I've learned with you as we embark on this chocolate adventure together.



David Greenwood-Haigh
CHOCOLATE AT THE HEART

Who am I?



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Navigating the World of Chocolate

In days of old, our choices for chocolate were simple –

milk, dark, or white.

But in recent years, the chocolate world has undergone a remarkable transformation, ushering in an era of extraordinary and refined offerings.

Today, our pursuit of exceptional chocolate mirrors the same passion for food origins that has captivated the culinary world.

As a result, the market has been flooded with an abundance of single-origin chocolate bars, accompanied by a treasure trove of readily available online information.

Before making your next chocolate purchase, take a moment to read the label the front and back.

Approach this chocolate experience with the same reverence normally reserved for buying fine wines or whiskies.

The information on the packaging is your guide to an exquisite chocolate journey.

1. Origin Matters:

Much like the terroir of wines, the origin of cocoa beans profoundly influences the flavour of chocolate. Pay close attention to the geographical region from which the beans are sourced. You might encounter chocolates from far-flung places like Madagascar, Ecuador, or Tanzania, each boasting unique and captivating flavour profiles.



2. Cocoa Percentage:

The cocoa percentage is a fundamental element of the chocolate experience, but it doesn't stand alone as the sole measure of quality. While it plays a significant role in determining the intensity of flavours, it is just one piece of the puzzle.

How to maximise your exploration of the chocolate label

3. Quality is Multifaceted:

True quality transcends the cocoa percentage. Don't fall into the trap of assuming that higher percentages always equate to better chocolate. A meticulously crafted 45% chocolate can offer an extraordinary experience, while a haphazardly made 95% bar may fall short of expectations.

The chocolate label is your gateway to a culinary adventure.

Read it to uncover the nuances of flavour, the stories of origin, and the artisanal expertise that the chocolatier infused into each bar.

With this guide in hand, any chocolate bar can transform into a multi-sensory voyage waiting to be unwrapped and enjoyed.



Exploring the Art of Chocolate Tasting

CHOCOLATE AT THE HEART...

All Coeur de Xocolat [sho-ko-lat] products are born out of the finest cocoa beans, hand selected by our Chocolatier, David.

This bar is delicious as it is but, if you wish, David recommends that you enjoy it with a medium strength Arabica coffee.

For recipes, information and products visit www.coeurdexocolat.co.uk or contact david@coeurdexocolat.co.uk

Ingredients: Dark Belgian Chocolate (cocoa mass, sugar, cocoa butter, emulsifier: soya lecithin, Natural vanilla flavouring), Dried Chilli Flakes. Dark chocolate contains cocoa solids 53.8% minimum.

Allergy Advice: For allergens, see ingredients in **bold**. May also contain milk, nuts and wheat.

Best Before:



Nutritional Information

Typical Values per 100g	
Energy	2280 kJ
	546 kcal
Fat	36 g
of which saturates	23 g
Carbohydrate	46 g
of which sugars	43 g
Protein	5.0 g
Salt	0.03 g



0 635346 679063



Manufactured in the UK for:
CDX Trading Ltd, 4, Briarwood Close,
Wakefield, Yorkshire WF1 3TZ



Min. 90g

coeur
de
Xocolat
The heart of Chocolate

BELGIAN DARK CHOCOLATE
& Chilli

Crafted by a Master Chocolatier

BELGIAN DARK CHOCOLATE & Chilli

Chocolate

Prepare to embark on a journey through the captivating world of chocolate sensory analysis.



This immersive adventure promises to awaken your senses, enhancing your appreciation of chocolate in ways you've never before imagined.

When we indulge in the pleasures of eating or drinking, an intricate dance begins. Molecules of food and beverages meet our taste buds on our tongues.

Taste buds, those tiny clusters of cells, send signals to our brain, deciphering the various tastes we are experiencing. There are five fundamental tastes that humans can detect: sweet, **salty, sour, bitter, and umami**. Umami, a savoury essence often associated with foods like sun-dried tomatoes, meat, cheese, and mushrooms, adds another layer to our sensory journey.

Yet, our senses extend far beyond taste.

In this symphony of sensations.

Our sense of smell harmoniously intertwines with our sense of taste, allowing us to anticipate the flavour of what we're about to savour.

Our vision, the conductor of our sensory orchestra, wields considerable influence over our taste experience.

The presentation of a dish can elevate the entire dining experience, making it more pleasurable.

The texture, temperature, and mouthfeel of food emerge as instrumental players in our perception of taste.

They mould our culinary journey in profound ways.

Even our sense of hearing, though a subtle player, contributes to the sensory crescendo.

The sounds and ambiance in a dining setting can orchestrate the overall experience.

For those who, like you, craft delectable chocolates, the tactile aspect is a pivotal part of your artistry. When creating these exquisite confections, considerations of smoothness, creaminess, or the delightful crunch of a product are indispensable for crafting a taste experience that lingers on the senses. Infusing this tactile dimension into your creations elevates them to a realm of true exceptionality.

Prepare to journey through this symphony of senses, where each note is a delightful revelation, and where chocolate is not just a treat for the taste buds but a masterpiece for all the senses to relish.

The Art of Touch: Initiating Your Connection with Chocolate

Look: Unwrapping the Secrets of Chocolate



Chocolate comes in a dazzling array of forms and varieties, from the classic trio of white, milk, and dark to the enchanting newcomer, ruby. Once you've made your selection, it's time to dive into the intricate details of the bar—what went into its creation and how it was handled during production where is it from?

Much like a fine wine's tasting notes, a well-crafted chocolate bar communicates its qualities through its packaging, setting the stage for your sensory exploration. After the exchange of currency, it's time to unwrap your precious bar and place it before you, without laying a finger on it.

Take a moment to study the surface of the chocolate.

What do your eyes see?

During this pause, you may notice subtle hues, each influenced by the cocoa bean's varietal:

Dark chocolate: Reveals deep, intense mahogany hues.

Milk chocolate: Adorns itself with auburn, dark violets, and rustic reds.

White chocolate: Embraces a palette of yellows, butters, and creams.

Ruby chocolate: Showcases delicate pale pinks accompanied by a natural fruity note.

Notice the texture:

Is it glossy or matte?

Is it waxy or smooth?

A well-tempered chocolate bar should entice you with a shiny and smooth surface, a testament to the craftsmanship of its production.

Anything less may hint at a problem in the chocolate's journey, either during manufacturing or storage.

Can you see a hazy white film covering the surface? If so, it's called "bloom," a tell-tale sign that the chocolate has weathered extreme temperatures, be it scorching heat or icy cold. These fluctuations have disrupted the harmonious marriage of cocoa mass and cocoa butter, lending an unappetising appearance. Rest assured, it is safe to eat, but it might have lost some of its characteristic mouthfeel.

In the world of chocolate, what you see is only the beginning of the sensory adventure.

Let your eyes feast on the chocolate's presentation, and get ready to explore further with your other senses.



Listen: What is your chocolate saying?



As we continue our sensory journey into the world of chocolate, we now arrive at the sense of touch, a phase carefully designed to forge your connection with this exquisite delicacy.

Our sense of touch, a silent partner in the symphony of taste, has a significant role to play.

The texture of food has the power to influence our enjoyment of it.

Think about it: some people love crispy foods, while others prefer the softer textures.

Good chocolate beckons you with a tactile experience that hints at the pleasures to come.

Here's how to immerse yourself in the world of chocolate touch:

1. Dry and smooth:

The touch of fine chocolate should be a dry, almost velvety sensation on your fingertips. It shouldn't leave a sticky or waxy residue, nor should it feel gritty.

2. Gently Explore:

Gently run your fingertip across the chocolate bar, and take note of how it feels to your touch.

Savour the anticipation as your senses come alive, eager for the forthcoming explosion of chocolate flavours.

3. Squeeze and Melt:

Apply gentle pressure and squeeze a corner of the chocolate. It should yield slightly to your touch and, warmed by the heat of your fingers, begin to melt. Keep in mind that chocolate starts to melt at approximately 25°C (77°F). As the chocolate yields, you might see a residue left on your fingertips, a tantalising hint of the liquid pleasure contained within, lick your fingers clean.

Our chocolate sensory journey now takes a fascinating twist as we introduce the element of sound into our exploration.

This stage not only adds a touch of science to your chocolate adventure but also enhances your connection with this delectable treat.



Listen: What is your chocolate saying?

1. Listen:



Gently hold your chocolate bar still in the wrapper and bring it up to your ear.

2. Break with Precision:

Now, with deliberate care, break the chocolate bar in two with a decisive snap. As you do, pay close attention to the sound it produces.

A well-tempered chocolate bar at room temperature will reward your ears with a clear, resonating snap, rather than a dull thud.

3. Cocoa Butter Crystals:

That satisfying snap you hear is a result of the cocoa butter crystals forming during the tempering process. When done correctly, tempering imparts structural integrity to the chocolate, culminating in that delightful snap. As a rule of thumb, the higher the cocoa content, the more pronounced the snap becomes.



Smell: A Symphony of aromas

Smell: A Symphony of Aromas

In our journey through the sensory realms of chocolate, we now arrive at the realm of smell, a pivotal phase where the power of aroma takes center stage.

Did you know that a significant portion of what we taste, estimated between 70% to 90%, is attributed to our sense of smell?

It plays a critical role in building anticipation and enriching the flavours we are about to discover.

1. Aromatic Power:

Recognise that aroma is a key component of our chocolate tasting journey, enhancing the overall experience. As you may have noticed, not all chocolates have an obvious scent, even when held close to your nose.

2. Isolate the Olfactory System:

To truly unlock the chocolate's aroma, we need to focus on our olfactory system. This means honing in on your sense of smell, heightening the anticipation of the flavours soon to grace your palate.

3. A Symphony of Scents:

The aromas you'll uncover in chocolate bear a striking resemblance to those found in wine, but you might not have noticed them until now. That's because, until this moment, you didn't have the right tools at your disposal.

4. Unlocking Aromas:

Take a piece of chocolate and gently rub it between your thumb and forefinger. This action encourages it to begin melting slightly, releasing its hidden aromas.

5. Cupped Hands Technique:

Now, place the chocolate within your cupped hands, creating a cocoon of aroma. Hold it close to your nose and take a deep, lingering sniff, allowing the aromas to envelop you. Savour this moment for a few seconds.

6. Subtle Nuances:

As you exhale gently, you'll start to discern the subtle nuances concealed within the chocolate's flavour. These nuanced aromas are an integral part of your tasting experience, adding depth and character to the chocolate's profile.



Smell: A Symphony of aromas

7. Flavour Wheel:

You can use the flavour wheel provided in this booklet to assist in identifying and appreciating these intricate aromas. Remember, there's no right or wrong way to perceive and describe these scents. Taste is a deeply personal journey, and the aroma wheel serves as a guide to help you articulate your unique chocolate experience. In this aromatic phase, you have the opportunity to unravel the hidden scents within your chocolate, adding a layer of complexity to your exploration. Enjoy the anticipation, as the scents you discover will soon waltz on your taste buds, enhancing your overall chocolate experience.



The Essence of Chocolate Tasting



As you unwrap the world of chocolate tasting, aromas play a central role in unraveling the intricate tapestry of flavours. Your goal is to identify and appreciate a plethora of scents, including sweetness, acidity, bitterness, astringency, and umami (savouriness). A well-crafted chocolate should showcase a harmonious balance of these five attributes.

1. Smooth and Buttery Sensation:

A quality chocolate should offer a texture that is not just smooth but also buttery, gracefully melting into a creamy liquid that teems with distinctive flavours.

2. Layered Flavours for Complexity:

3. Concentrate on Your Tongue:

As you relish the chocolate, focus on your tongue and embrace the range of flavours. Start by identifying the acidic notes, which may be prominent initially. Then, if you allow the experience to linger, you might detect the emergence of subtle bitterness.

4. Engaging Your Sense of Smell:

To unlock the full potential of your chocolate, engage your sense of smell, similar to the approach in wine tasting. The aromatic journey unfolds in stages:

When savouring a well-made chocolate, you will encounter a symphony of layered flavours. Each layer complements the others, creating a complex and harmonious experience.

The individual aromas should not compete for your attention but instead combine to produce a multifaceted taste sensation.

Primary Aromas: At first, you'll taste the most volatile aromas, often characterised by brief floral or fruity notes. These quickly evaporate and give way to the heart of the tasting experience.

Body Aromas: As you progress through the tasting, the middle phase unveils what are known as body aromas. These are more robust and warm scents, reminiscent of roasted almonds, hot bread crust, spice blends, and more.

Chocolate Tasting



Chocolate Tasting

Less Volatile Aromas: As the experience lingers, your palate may embrace the less volatile aromas found in certain chocolates. These aromas can be woody, reminiscent of roasted cocoa nibs, malty, and more.

In this phase, your sense of smell enhances the anticipation and exploration of chocolate flavours, mirroring the sophistication of wine tasting.

Be open to the evolving aromas, and remember that the most well-crafted chocolates will reveal their subtleties as you savour each moment.

Taste: The Culmination of Your Chocolate Journey

Here we arrive at the pinnacle of your chocolate tasting experience – the act of tasting itself. To truly embrace the full spectrum of flavours, you need to isolate your senses, employing a method akin to that used in whiskey and wine tasting, known as 'cucking.'

This process ensures that you fully appreciate every molecule of taste in your chocolate.

1. Isolating Your Senses:

Begin by isolating your senses. This step prepares you to focus solely on the taste of the chocolate.

2. Blocking Aroma:

Breathe in and pinch your nose shut. This blocks your sense of smell, which contributes to approximately 70-90% of your flavour perception.

By doing this, you emphasise the remaining 10-20% attributed to taste, particularly the sugar content.

3. Central Placement:

Place a small square of chocolate on the center of your tongue, as centrally as possible.

Close your mouth to create a chamber for the chocolate to melt.

4. Allow Melting:

Count to five while allowing the chocolate to slowly melt.

This deliberate pace allows you to experience the chocolate's initial wave of flavours, textures, and aromas.

Chocolate Tasting

5. Unleash the Aromas:

Now, release your nose and draw in a breath over the top of the chocolate through your teeth. And out through your nose. This technique mirrors the 'cucking' method used in whiskey and wine tasting. It draws the aromas through your olfactory and helps distribute the aromas around your mouth, releasing every last molecule of taste.



6. Continue to Savour:

Let the chocolate continue to melt on your tongue. Pay close attention to the evolving flavours and aromas as it dissolves. Gently rub your tongue against your palate; this gradual increase in temperature further enhances the release of flavours.

7. Record:

At each stage, take your time to savour the chocolate and consciously experience the array of flavours. Make an effort to name and record the sensations you're encountering. Use your tasting journal to capture this rich tapestry of tastes.

This is the moment where the magic truly happens – the chocolate's flavours unfold and dance on your taste buds.

By consciously recording these sensations, you elevate your chocolate tasting experience, turning it into a memorable and enriching journey. Enjoy every moment!

Reflecting on the Aftertaste: The Final Note in Chocolate Tasting

As you embark on the captivating journey of chocolate tasting, one critical element to pay attention to is the aftertaste, often referred to as the finish. The aftertaste of different chocolates can be diverse and revealing, making it a pivotal aspect of your tasting experience.

Observations about the Aftertaste:

1. Duration of the Finish:

Take a moment to reflect on the aftertaste. Does it linger, gracefully lingering on your palate for an extended duration, or does it swiftly dissipate within seconds of swallowing? The length of the finish can vary significantly among chocolates and can offer insights into their complexity.

Chocolate Tasting

2. Variance from the Initial Flavour Profile:

Compare the aftertaste to the initial flavour profile you encountered while tasting the chocolate. Is the aftertaste distinct from the flavours you first perceived, or does it harmoniously extend the chocolate's taste journey? Variations in the aftertaste can provide valuable information about the chocolate's depth and character.

3. Prolonged Flavour Exploration:

Keep in mind that some chocolate flavours possess the remarkable ability to persist on your palate for an extended period, sometimes up to 45 minutes. Don't underestimate the importance of this phase in your tasting process. It's an opportunity to fully savour the nuances and intricacies of the chocolate's character before transitioning to the next sample.

In the world of chocolate tasting, the aftertaste serves as the final note in your sensory symphony. It offers a glimpse into the chocolate's lasting impression and a chance to appreciate its subtleties even after the initial flavours have danced on your taste buds. So, embrace this phase of your tasting journey with curiosity and a discerning palate, as it holds the key to unlocking the complete story of each chocolate you explore.

The Coeur de Xocolat Aroma Wheel is a valuable tool for chocolate enthusiasts seeking to delve into the diverse world of aromas and flavours that chocolate can offer. Every aroma and flavour you encounter during your chocolate journey is one note in a symphony of elements, influenced by the bean variety, the soil in which the cocoa was grown (terroir), and the expert choices of the chocolatier.



Chocolate Tasting

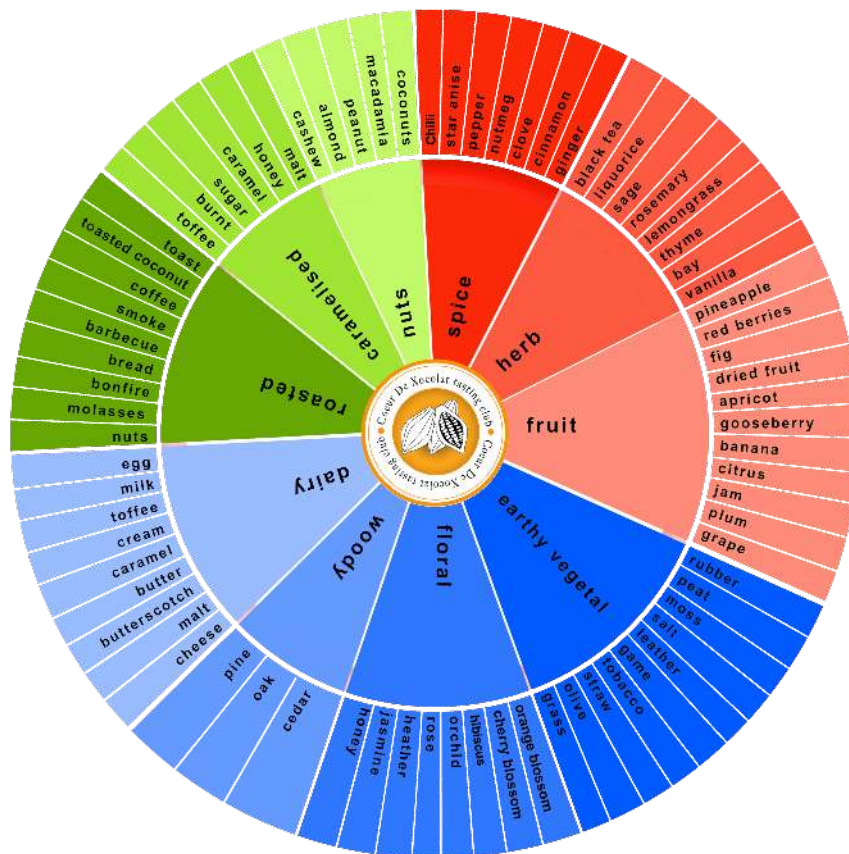
Navigating the Aroma Wheel:

The Aroma Wheel serves as a guide to help you identify, appreciate, and distinguish the multifaceted sensory experiences that chocolate unveils.

It is divided into several sections, each dedicated to specific flavours, scents, and aromatic qualities commonly found in chocolates, regardless of their origin.

Unlocking Aromas and Flavours:

As you explore the aroma wheel, you'll notice a cornucopia of aromatic complexities and sensations that transcend geographic boundaries. For instance, if you detect a fruity note in the chocolate, your discerning palate can further dissect it. Is it the luscious essence of berries or the invigorating zest of citrus? If it's berries, can you pinpoint the exact berry variety? Is it like a blueberry or the classic strawberry?



Exploring the Coeur de Xocolat Aroma Wheel:

Primary Aromas: The Early Fragrances:

In your initial contact with chocolate, you'll come across what experts refer to as primary aromas. These initial scents predominantly originate from fruits, adding a vibrant layer to your chocolate experience. These notes may include the aroma of red berries, the notes of grape, cherry, strawberry, blackcurrant, blueberry, and black cherry. Alternatively, you might detect the refreshing scents of citrus, apple, pear, pineapple, or other tropical fruits. Beyond fruits, your olfactory adventure may lead you to hints of coffee, vanilla, or the earthy richness of oak. Exploring further, you might uncover floral undertones, stony nuances, hints of liquorice, or the inviting aroma of jam.



The Coeur de Xocolat Aroma Wheel is your gateway to a world of sensory exploration, inviting you to appreciate the intricate tapestry of flavours and scents found in chocolates from every corner of the globe.

So, as you embark on your chocolate-tasting adventure, let the aroma wheel be your companion, helping you unravel the captivating story behind each delectable bite.

Pairing spirits with chocolate is a delightful and harmonious experience, offering a symphony of tastes and textures. Just as wine and food pairings have long been celebrated, matching fine spirits with high-quality chocolate opens up a world of sensory adventure. Here's a brief overview of how to elevate your senses through this pairing:

Matching Flavours: A Symphony of Taste

When pairing spirits and chocolate, it's essential to consider flavour profiles. For example, barrel-aged spirits like whiskey or aged rum can harmonise with the natural vanilla and caramel notes often found in high-quality chocolates. On the other hand, lighter spirits like gin can enhance the vibrant fruit notes found in chocolate.

Limits to the Pairing: Balancing Act

While pairing spirits with chocolate offers endless possibilities, it's crucial to remember that complex cocktails don't always mesh well with chocolate. The complexity of cocktails can overwhelm the subtleties of chocolate. To fully appreciate the pairing, it's best to enjoy spirits straight, without ice, to keep your palate engaged.

Chocolate and Sprits

Pairing spirits with chocolate has evolved into a culinary art form, with themed dinners, pairing events, and tasting menus becoming more common. These experiences add a new dimension to enjoying chocolate and spirits, making them a part of the broader dining experience.

Unlocking the World of Spirit Tasting

To explore the diverse world of spirits, it's important to understand how to savour their distinct flavours and characteristics. The process begins with visual examination, warming the glass, listening to experts, nosing (inhaling the aromas), and sipping and savouring. Pay attention to the body of the spirit and take notes in a journal to capture your tasting experience. The grand finale involves assessing the aftertaste or finish to fully appreciate the spirit's complexities.



By following these steps, you can embark on a flavourful and enlightening journey through the world of spirits. Whether it's whiskey, gin, rum, or another spirit of your choice, this method will help you discover your palate's preferences and deepen your appreciation for the intricate art of spirit tasting.

But there are some challenges to overcome, mainly related to the interaction of chocolate with water and the use of ice with spirits.

Here's a method to create a harmonious pairing:

Challenge One: Chocolate and Water

Chocolate and water don't mix well. When water comes into contact with chocolate, it can seize, resulting in an undesirable, chunky texture. This can also affect the texture of the chocolate negatively.

Challenge Two: The Icy Dilemma

Spirits are often served with ice, which can be too cold for a seamless pairing with chocolate. The extreme coldness can cause your taste buds to contract, hindering your ability to fully savour the experience.

Solving the Pairing Puzzle

To create a harmonious marriage of chocolate and spirits, follow these steps:

Place a piece of chocolate in your mouth and chew it slowly until it has entirely melted, allowing it to rest on your tongue. This ensures that the chocolate is at a thin consistency, ready for blending with the spirit.

Once the chocolate has reached the desired consistency, take a sip of the spirit, ideally in an amount similar to the chocolate in your mouth.

A Culinary Evolution: Pairing Spirits with Desserts

Gently swish and mix the chocolate and spirit together in your mouth. Pay close attention to the intricate interplay of taste and texture sensations. Savour the symphony of flavours as they dance on your palate before swallowing this harmonious union.

After swallowing, wait at least 10 seconds before taking a small sip of the spirit to cleanse any remnants of chocolate from your mouth.

Record your findings and sensations, as each pairing can reveal a unique combination of tastes, aromas, and textures that enhance your overall enjoyment.



By following this method, you can relish the delightful fusion of chocolate and spirits, transcending the challenges that may arise. Whether you're pairing chocolate with whiskey, gin, or any other spirit, this approach ensures a sensory adventure that tantalises your taste buds and leaves you with a memorable and rewarding tasting experience. Enjoy the delightful world of spirits and chocolate pairings!

The comprehensive process you've just experienced equips you with the skills to fully appreciate the diverse world of chocolate. While the core elements of chocolate tasting remain consistent, there are subtle nuances to be aware of when it comes to different types of chocolate.

Filled Chocolates: A Distinct Experience

When it comes to filled chocolates, the tasting process takes on a unique dimension. To derive the utmost pleasure from these delights, follow these steps:

Place the filled chocolate on your tongue and allow it to rest against the roof of your mouth, as you would with other chocolates. Let the outer layer start to melt, savouring its initial flavours.



Exploring the World of Chocolate: Tasting Other Varieties

After experiencing the outer layer's taste, gently chew the chocolate a couple of times. This action releases the inner filling, allowing its distinctive flavours to blend harmoniously with the slowly melting chocolate. Take delight in the delightful fusion of textures and tastes.

By following these steps, you'll unlock the exceptional experience of filled chocolates, where the interplay of flavours and textures elevates your chocolate tasting adventure to new heights. Whether it's praline, caramel, or any other delectable filling, you'll be able to fully appreciate the artistry and complexity of these culinary creations.



Our taste buds and flavour receptors are intricate and highly skilled at detecting nuances within the foods we consume. To fully appreciate the depth of flavours in different chocolates, it's crucial to allow your senses to work at their peak performance. Therefore, when you intend to sample multiple chocolates, it's essential to taste them in a specific order. Tasting out of sequence may cause you to miss out on the subtleties each chocolate has to offer.

For instance, imagine you have three chocolate bars: Dark Chocolate with Chilli, Milk Chocolate and Salted Caramel, and White Chocolate. To ensure that you capture the diverse flavours in each, it's recommended to taste them in the order of their flavour potency: white, milk, dark. Starting with the spicy chilli-infused dark chocolate might overwhelm your taste buds, potentially overshadowing the more delicate flavours of the other chocolates.

The Complexity of Judging Quality

After going through this tasting process multiple times, you might find yourself asked to pick a favourite type of chocolate. However, this can be an almost impossible task. Selecting the most intriguing or the most expensive is still subjective. Every sensory experience is deeply personal, and each of us has our unique tastes and preferences when it comes to flavour.

Some individuals may become fixated on showcasing the sophistication of their palate, attempting to identify every flavour note they've been told to look for. Yet, the truth is, we all perceive tastes and experiences differently. This guide isn't intended to provide a standardised rating system to score chocolates; instead, it's designed to help you explore and appreciate chocolate in a more profound and meaningful way. It's about enhancing your relationship with this beloved delicacy, one that respects your individuality and the rich diversity of chocolate flavours available.

Organising Your Own Chocolate Tasting Event

Here's a step-by-step guide to help you organise a successful event:

1. Make a Guest List

For a meaningful tasting experience, opt for smaller sample sizes, around 5g each. This quantity allows you to fully grasp the characteristics of each chocolate without overwhelming your palate.

Keep the guest list relatively small, preferably a dozen people or less. This size encourages meaningful discussions and interactions among participants. Remember, quality often beats quantity.

You might also consider hosting a chocolate tasting event for team-building or fundraising purposes at work.



2. Selecting the Chocolate

While you can find a variety of chocolates at most supermarkets, consider visiting your local chocolatier for a more adventurous selection. Purchase chocolates with different origins and cocoa percentages to provide a diverse tasting experience.

Do your research on each chocolate. Visit the company's website and read reviews to gather information about the cocoa farmers, country of origin, tasting notes, and pairing recommendations. This background knowledge can enhance your presentation and introduce each chocolate to the group.

3. Have Enough Chocolate

Plan on providing about 5g of chocolate for each guest. A standard 100g chocolate bar should be sufficient for a group of five to ten people. Keep some extra chocolate as a prize for the end of the event.

4. Share the Chocolate

Reduce stress by preparing tasting mats or plates in advance. You can foil-wrap these plates with chocolate pieces and store them at room temperature for a few hours without affecting the quality of the chocolate.

Consider giving each guest their own plate of chocolate pieces.

This allows them to appreciate differences in colour and texture before tasting. You can find a tasting board on the inside cover of this journal, which you can copy and use for this purpose.

5. Cleanse Your Palate

If you plan to taste multiple chocolates, remember that your palate can become overwhelmed. As a general rule, limit each tasting session to no more than 6 chocolates.

After tasting 6 chocolates, take a 15-minute break.

During the break, cleanse your palate with lukewarm water and an unflavoured cracker, such as plain matzoh.

Keep a tasting journal to jot down your thoughts, impressions, and preferences, helping you remember and score your favourite selections

With this guide, you'll be well-prepared to host a fantastic chocolate tasting event that your guests will cherish and remember. Enjoy the exploration of diverse chocolate flavours and the conversations they inspire!



Chocolate tasting Journal

NAME	
BRAND	COCOA
SPECIAL INGREDIENTS	
ORIGIN	SAMPLED

COLOR & TEXTURE

WHITE —

CREAM —

CARAMEL —

MOCHA —

BROWN —

BLACK —

RUNNY

SOFT

SEMI-SOFT

SEMI-FIRM

FIRM







HARD

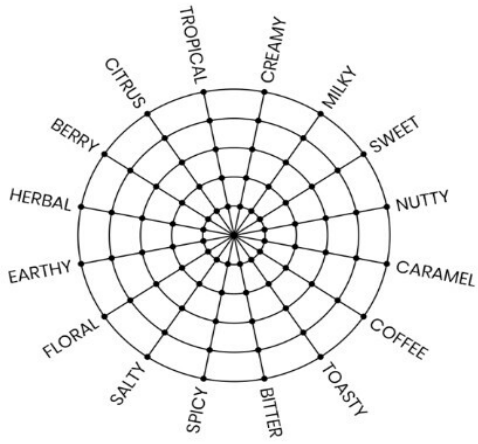
FLAVOR WHEEL

ADDITIONAL NOTES






FINAL RATING	
APPEARANCE	
AROMA	
TASTE	
MOUTHFEEL	
OVERALL RATING	

Chocolate tasting Journal

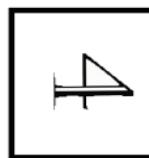
 NAME	
 BRAND	 COCOA
 SPECIAL INGREDIENTS	
 ORIGIN	 SAMPLED

COLOR & TEXTURE		FLAVOR WHEEL
<div>WHITE</div> <div>CREAM</div> <div>CARAMEL</div> <div>MOCHA</div> <div>BROWN</div> <div>BLACK</div>	<div>RUNNY</div> <div>SOFT</div> <div>SEMI-SOFT</div> <div>SEMI-FIRM</div> <div>FIRM</div> <div>HARD</div>	

ADDITIONAL NOTES	

FINAL RATING	
 APPEARANCE	☆☆☆☆☆
 AROMA	☆☆☆☆☆
 TASTE	☆☆☆☆☆
 MOUTHFEEL	☆☆☆☆☆
 OVERALL RATING	☆☆☆☆☆

Chocolate tasting mat



Back cover



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