

Chocolate Tasting Scoring Card

Scoring Card						
Type of Chocolate	Look	Touch	Listen	Smell	Taste	Overall Score
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						

Chocolate Tasting Words (that make you sound like a Chocolate Aficionado)

Appearance: high shine, even coloring, bright, dull, glossy, flat, bloom

Texture: firm, soft, smooth, silky, uniform, thin, greasy, grainy, sticky, waxy

Sound: soft, hard, dull, sharp, quick, long, low, high

Aroma: mild, strong, nutty, fruity, floral, earthy, subtle, multi-dimensional

Flavor: rich, creamy, sweet, bitter, spicy, roasted, flowery, salty, buttery, clean, milky, sharp, intense

Chocolates Tasting Mat

Tasting Mat

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____

#4 _____

#5 _____

#6 _____

How to Host a Chocolate Tasting

-- Preparation --

1. Pick out 6 different kinds of gourmet or imported chocolates from a local specialty or grocery store.
 - You might pick out chocolates with a variety of Cacao percentages ranging from low (35% Cacao) to high (82% Cacao).
 - Or you might choose to sample a single percentage Cacao. For example, selecting only 70% Cacao chocolates in a variety of different flavors.
 - Or you could compare chocolates of different regions. For example, selecting three American brands and three European brands.

NOTE- The percentage of Cacao refers to the total content of ingredients derived from the cocoa bean. Generally, there is an inverse relationship between the % of Cacao and the amount of sugar in a bar. For example, a 60% Cacao dark chocolate bar has more sugar and is sweeter than a 72% Cacao dark chocolate bar. If you enjoy milk chocolate, you will prefer the lower % Cacao bars. If you enjoy semisweet chocolate, you will prefer the higher % Cacao bars. (Unsweetened baking chocolate is 100% Cacao product, which has no added sugar and will have a very bitter flavor.)

2. Store the chocolate at room temperature until use. If it gets too warm, it will go soft. If it gets too chilly, it won't melt in your mouth to properly release its flavors.
3. Print off a tasting mat and scoring card for each person. Write the names of the different chocolates you bought on the squares of the tasting mat, starting with the chocolate with the highest percentage of Cacao for #1 and ending with the chocolate with the lowest percentage of Cacao for #6. (This sets up your taste buds properly to adjust and experience the sweeter, sugary chocolates last.)
4. Break the chocolates into ¼-inch by ¼-inch pieces for sampling. (Really good chocolate is flavorful enough to experience in little bits.) Make sure to place each piece of chocolate in the corresponding square on the tasting mats.
5. Next to each tasting mat, place a scoring card, pencil, and a small glass of room temperature water. (Ice water prevents chocolate from melting and dulls taste buds.) You may also place pieces of plain white bread or dry, unsalted crackers by each tasting mat, if you wish, to help cleanse the palate.

Chocolate Tasting Procedures

Remember to begin with #1- the chocolate with the highest percentage of Cacao. End with #6- the chocolate with the lowest percentage of Cacao. After each step, write down your thoughts and opinions of the chocolate on your scoring card, along with a final score at the end. Remember to rinse your palate with a drink and a bite of bread or cracker between each chocolate.

1. *Look...* Start by observing the appearance of the chocolate. Look for a smooth surface, high shine, and even coloring. Chocolate should not look dusty or have an ashy-white coat to it. This is known as "bloom," meaning the chocolate has been exposed to temperature or humidity extremes. It is still safe to eat, but it may have an unappealing texture.
2. *Touch...* Fine chocolate should be firm to the touch and should not feel grainy, greasy, or waxy. When you touch fine dark chocolate, it should hold its shape for a few seconds before melting.
3. *Listen...* Break the chocolate and note the sound, also called the "craquant." Was it soft, hard, sharp, or dull? Really good chocolate makes a sharp sound and breaks cleanly, leaving crisp edges without crumbling.
4. *Smell...* Chocolate comes in so many varieties and includes over 600 different aromas. So take a whiff. Does it smell mild or strong? Does it smell nutty, floral, or fruity? Next, rub it with your thumb and finger to soften the chocolate. Then smell again, noting any new layers of aroma.
5. *Taste...* Finally! It's time to taste. But don't rush the experience. You want to take in all of the flavors. Take a small bite and then place it in the center of your tongue and allow it to melt. Pay attention to if it melts slowly or quickly. Once it begins to melt, place your tongue on the roof of your mouth and move the melting chocolate around in a circular motion. Try to coat your entire tongue, as each part of your tongue will pick up a different taste. You may notice different stages of flavor. For example, it may start out with bitterness, followed by some fruitiness, and ending with a drying sugary sensation. Also take note of the textures (smooth, velvety, silky) and how long the flavor lingers afterward.