



RICHFIELDS™

CHOCOLATE TASTING GUIDE

Like when wine tasting, keep your mind open to different aromas that are found in chocolate. As your expertise develops so will your ability to discern the amazing variety of aromas, textures and flavours that chocolate reveals.

The 5 Senses

When tasting chocolate, professional connoisseurs rely on all 5 senses to determine the quality of chocolate:

1. **Sight - Look at the chocolate.**

The surface should have a silky sheen and be free of blemishes or white marks (bloom). Chocolate varies in colour with various tints, such as pinks, purples, reds, and oranges but like wine, the intensity of the colour does not necessarily indicate the intensity of flavour.

2. **Sound - Listen to the chocolate.**

Break the piece in half. It should break with a resounding "SNAP!" and a clean line along the broken edge. Lower quality chocolate will be softer and not break with the same snap.

3. **Smell – Breathe in the chocolate.**

Especially at the break point. The aroma is an important component of flavour and chocolate carries up to 400 identifiable aromas. Your nose will prime your tongue for the incoming chocolate which will allow you to sense the various nuances of the aroma and start your mouth watering.

4. **Touch - Feel the chocolate**

Place the chocolate on your tongue, and bring it up to body temperature. Let it melt. This step is crucial to allow the cocoa butter to melt and distribute the flavours evenly across your tongue. Try to avoid using your teeth except for finely grinding the melted chocolate between them to judge smoothness. Texture can be the most obvious clue about the quality of a chocolate. Low quality chocolates will have a grainy or waxy texture.

5. **Taste – Savour the chocolate**

Concentrate on the flavours enveloping your tongue. Melting will further release volatile compounds for you to breathe in the aromas. Close your eyes and enjoy this moment. Nothing else in the world is quite like this!



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As the chocolate nears its finish, note how the flavour evolves. Any metallic or unpleasant flavours in the finish is a sign of lower quality chocolate.

We're all unique, so your tasting experience will be uniquely your own. Have fun comparing and contrasting your discoveries with others.

Tips and Facts

- High cocoa chocolate is widely considered to be good for you. This is widely published by such esteemed organisations as Harvard Medical School and the British Medical Journal. Daily consumption in small amounts (a few pieces) will maintain a healthy heart, reduce the risk of heart disease, lower blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Dark chocolate is also an excellent energy source, because it releases slowly into the bloodstream and does not elevate insulin levels. (Indeed, dark chocolate has a GI rating of a mere 22.) As a result, the sustained energy it provides is ideal for endurance activities and even weight-training routines.
- If you don't like dark chocolate (yet), start with a mildly dark chocolate such as a 45% cocoa and work your way up. Great dark chocolate is found at the 70% cocoa level, like the entire Richfields Dark range. For the more adventurous, you can get dark chocolate that goes all the way up to 100% cocoa in some delis.
- The formation of whitish spots, or bloom, on chocolate is due to a separation of fat or sugar crystals in the chocolate, caused when it is exposed to improper storage such as heat, cold or damp conditions. While it affects the aesthetics of the chocolate somewhat, it isn't harmful to eat or use chocolate that has bloomed. Because blooming is related to temperature and humidity store chocolate in a cool, dry place free of odours. Your pantry cupboard is perfect.
- Chocolate is toxic to dogs, birds, and many other animals - never feed chocolate to an animal.
- Sucrose used in chocolate may contribute to the formation of plaque so we developed the Richfields No Added Sugar range. This is real chocolate made from a corn derivative that is not metabolised by oral bacteria so does not promote tooth decay.

