
Advanced Skill Certificate in Tea Blending

Tea Tasting Techniques

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Tea tasting techniques are essential skills for tea professionals, especially for those pursuing the Advanced Skill Certificate in Tea Blending. These techniques involve specific methods of evaluating the aroma, flavor, appearance, and overall quality of teas. By mastering tea tasting techniques, tea blenders can create unique blends that cater to different preferences and market demands. Below are some key terms related to tea tasting techniques:

1. Agony of the Leaves:

- Related Term: Leaf appearance
- Explanation: The term "agony of the leaves" refers to the unfurling of tea leaves during steeping.

Observing the agony of the leaves can provide insights into the quality and freshness of the tea. High-quality teas will unfurl gracefully, while lower-quality teas may exhibit broken or uneven leaves.

2. Aroma:

- Related Term: Fragrance
- Explanation: Aroma refers to the scent or smell of the brewed tea. Tea tasters pay close attention to the aroma as it can offer clues about the tea's origin, processing, and flavor profile. Common aroma descriptors include floral, fruity, earthy, and nutty.

3. Bite:

- Related Term: Astringency
- Explanation: Bite refers to the briskness or astringency in a tea. It is the sensation of dryness or puckering in the mouth caused by tannins present in the tea. Some tea drinkers enjoy a bit of bite in their tea, while others prefer a smoother, less astringent brew.

4. Body:

- Related Term: Mouthfeel
- Explanation: Body refers to the weight and texture of the tea in the mouth. Tea tasters assess the body of a tea as light, medium, or full-bodied. The body of a tea can be influenced by factors such as the tea's origin, processing method, and leaf grade.

5. Bouquet:

- Related Term: Aroma
- Explanation: Bouquet is another term used to describe the aroma of the brewed tea. It often refers to the complex and nuanced scents that can be detected in high-quality teas. Tea tasters pay attention to the bouquet to identify subtle notes and characteristics in the tea.

6. Brewing Time:

- Related Term: Steeping time

- Explanation: Brewing time refers to the duration for which tea leaves are steeped in hot water to extract flavor and aroma. Different types of tea require varying brewing times to achieve the desired strength and balance. Oversteeping can result in a bitter or astringent brew, while understeeping may produce a weak and insipid cup.

7. Clarity:

- Related Term: Liquor appearance

- Explanation: Clarity refers to the clearness or transparency of the brewed tea. Tea tasters examine the clarity of the liquor to assess the purity and cleanliness of the brew. Cloudy or murky teas may indicate poor quality or improper brewing techniques.

8. Finish:

- Related Term: Aftertaste

- Explanation: Finish refers to the lingering taste and sensation that remains in the mouth after swallowing the tea. It can be described as short, medium, or long, depending on how long the flavors persist. A pleasant finish is often associated with high-quality teas.

9. Flavor:

- Related Term: Taste

- Explanation: Flavor refers to the combined perception of taste, aroma, and mouthfeel in a tea. Tea tasters evaluate the flavor of the tea for its complexity, balance, and intensity. Common flavor profiles in tea include sweet, bitter, sour, salty, and umami.

10. Fragrance:

- Related Term: Aroma

- Explanation: Fragrance is synonymous with aroma and refers to the smell or scent of the brewed tea. Tea tasters use fragrance to identify the specific notes and characteristics in the tea, such as floral, fruity, spicy, or woody.

11. Liquor:

- Related Term: Infusion

- Explanation: Liquor is the liquid produced by steeping tea leaves in hot water. It is the final brew that is poured into a cup for tasting. Tea tasters examine the liquor for color, clarity, and intensity of flavor to assess the quality of the tea.

12. Liquor Appearance:

- Related Term: Clarity

- Explanation: Liquor appearance refers to the color and visual characteristics of the brewed tea. Tea tasters observe the liquor appearance to determine the tea's type, origin, and quality. Different teas exhibit a wide range of colors, from pale yellow to deep red.

13. Mouthfeel:

- Related Term: Body

- Explanation: Mouthfeel refers to the tactile sensation of the tea in the mouth. It describes the texture, weight, and smoothness of the tea as it is consumed. Tea tasters pay attention to mouthfeel to assess the overall drinking experience of the tea.

14. Nose:

- Related Term: Aroma

- Explanation: Nose is a term used to describe the aroma or smell of the brewed tea. Tea tasters often use the term "nose" when evaluating the initial scent of the tea before tasting. The nose can provide valuable information about the tea's quality and characteristics.

15. Oversteeping:

- Related Term: Brewing time

- Explanation: Oversteeping occurs when tea leaves are steeped in hot water for a longer duration than recommended. This can result in a bitter, astringent brew with overpowering flavors. Tea tasters avoid oversteeping to preserve the delicate nuances of the tea.

16. Pungency:

- Related Term: Strength

- Explanation: Pungency refers to the sharp, biting quality in a tea's flavor. It is often associated with bold and robust teas that have intense and spicy characteristics. Tea tasters assess pungency to gauge the strength and depth of flavor in the tea.

17. Steeping Time:

- Related Term: Brewing time

- Explanation: Steeping time is the duration for which tea leaves are allowed to infuse in hot water during brewing. The optimal steeping time varies for different types of tea and influences the strength, flavor, and aroma of the brewed tea. Tea tasters carefully control steeping time to achieve the desired cup.

18. Strength:

- Related Term: Pungency

- Explanation: Strength refers to the intensity and robustness of the tea's flavor. Tea tasters evaluate the strength of a tea based on its boldness, depth, and overall impact on the palate. Strong teas can be invigorating and satisfying, while weak teas may lack character and presence.

19. Taste:

- Related Term: Flavor

- Explanation: Taste refers to the sensory perception of flavors in the mouth when consuming tea. Tea tasters assess taste for its complexity, balance, and depth of flavor. The taste of a tea can be influenced by factors such as origin, processing, and brewing technique.

20. Taster's Vocabulary:

- Related Term: Flavor profile

- Explanation: Taster's vocabulary refers to the specific language and terminology used by tea tasters to describe the aroma, flavor, and characteristics of teas. Developing a rich taster's vocabulary is essential for

effectively communicating and evaluating teas during tasting sessions.

21. Undertones:

- Related Term: Aftertaste
- Explanation: Undertones are subtle and underlying flavors that can be detected in a tea after the initial taste. Tea tasters pay attention to undertones to identify hidden nuances and complexities in the tea. Undertones contribute to the overall flavor profile and depth of the tea.

22. Vegetal:

- Related Term: Green
- Explanation: Vegetal is a flavor descriptor used to describe teas with fresh, grassy, or leafy qualities. It is commonly associated with green teas, which exhibit vegetal notes reminiscent of vegetables or green foliage. Tea tasters use the term vegetal to identify specific flavor profiles in teas.

23. Wet Leaf Aroma:

- Related Term: Agony of the leaves
- Explanation: Wet leaf aroma refers to the scent released by tea leaves after they have been steeped and unfurled during brewing. Tea tasters inhale the wet leaf aroma to assess the tea's complexity, freshness, and processing techniques. The wet leaf aroma can provide valuable insights into the tea's quality and characteristics.

24. Aftertaste:

- Related Term: Finish
- Explanation: Aftertaste is the lingering taste and sensation that remains in the mouth after swallowing the tea. It can be described as sweet, bitter, floral, or any other flavor note that persists after the initial taste. Tea tasters pay attention to aftertaste to evaluate the tea's complexity and depth of flavor.

25. Balance:

- Related Term: Harmony
- Explanation: Balance refers to the harmonious interplay of flavors, aromas, and textures in a tea. A well-balanced tea exhibits a smooth and cohesive fusion of different elements, without any single aspect overpowering the others. Tea tasters assess balance to determine the overall quality and enjoyment of the tea.

26. Complexity:

- Related Term: Depth
- Explanation: Complexity refers to the multi-layered and intricate nature of flavors and aromas in a tea. Complex teas offer a diverse and evolving sensory experience, with subtle nuances and interplay of different elements. Tea tasters appreciate complexity as a sign of high-quality and well-crafted teas.

27. Depth:

- Related Term: Complexity
- Explanation: Depth refers to the richness, intensity, and fullness of flavors in a tea. Teas with depth offer a profound and immersive tasting experience, with layers of flavors that unfold gradually on the palate. Tea

tasters seek teas with depth for their complexity and lasting impact.

28. Harmony:

- Related Term: Balance
- Explanation: Harmony refers to the seamless integration and unity of flavors, aromas, and textures in a tea. A harmonious tea presents a cohesive and well-rounded profile, with each element complementing and enhancing the others. Tea tasters appreciate teas with harmony for their overall enjoyment and satisfaction.

29. Intensity:

- Related Term: Strength
- Explanation: Intensity refers to the strength, concentration, and impact of flavors in a tea. Intense teas offer bold and vibrant flavors that leave a lasting impression on the palate. Tea tasters assess intensity to gauge the depth and complexity of the tea's flavor profile.

30. Overall Quality:

- Related Term: Excellence
- Explanation: Overall quality refers to the holistic assessment of a tea based on its aroma, flavor, appearance, and mouthfeel. Tea tasters evaluate the overall quality to determine the tea's excellence, balance, and value. High-quality teas exhibit exceptional characteristics across all sensory aspects.

31. Processing:

- Related Term: Manufacture
- Explanation: Processing refers to the series of steps involved in harvesting, withering, rolling, oxidizing, and drying tea leaves to create the final product. The processing method greatly influences the flavor, aroma, and appearance of the tea. Tea tasters consider processing techniques when evaluating the quality and characteristics of teas.

32. Purity:

- Related Term: Cleanliness
- Explanation: Purity refers to the cleanliness, freshness, and absence of defects in a tea. Pure teas are free from contaminants, impurities, and off-flavors, resulting in a pristine and unadulterated drinking experience. Tea tasters value purity as a hallmark of high-quality and well-crafted teas.

33. Scent:

- Related Term: Aroma
- Explanation: Scent is synonymous with aroma and refers to the smell or fragrance of the brewed tea. Tea tasters use scent to identify specific notes, nuances, and characteristics in the tea. The scent is a crucial element in evaluating the quality and complexity of teas.

34. Sharpness:

- Related Term: Pungency
- Explanation: Sharpness refers to the crisp, biting quality in a tea's flavor. It is often associated with teas that have a strong and assertive character. Tea tasters assess sharpness to gauge the tea's intensity, depth, and impact on the palate.

35. Spiciness:

- Related Term: Aroma

- Explanation: Spiciness is a flavor descriptor used to describe teas with warm, pungent, or peppery notes. It is often associated with certain types of black teas and oolong teas that exhibit spicy characteristics. Tea tasters use the term spiciness to identify specific flavor profiles in teas.

36. Sweetness:

- Related Term: Flavor

- Explanation: Sweetness refers to the perception of sugar or honey-like flavors in a tea. Sweet teas offer a pleasant and mellow taste that can balance out bitterness or astringency. Tea tasters assess sweetness to evaluate the tea's overall flavor profile and enjoyment.

37. Texture:

- Related Term: Mouthfeel

- Explanation: Texture refers to the tactile sensation and consistency of the tea in the mouth. Tea tasters evaluate texture for its smoothness, creaminess, or thickness, which can enhance the overall drinking experience. The texture of a tea plays a crucial role in determining its quality and appeal.

38. Umami:

- Related Term: Fifth taste

- Explanation: Umami is known as the fifth taste, alongside sweet, sour, bitter, and salty. It is a savory and rich flavor often found in certain teas, such as Japanese green teas and aged pu-erh teas. Tea tasters appreciate umami for its depth, complexity, and unique taste profile.

39. Warmth:

- Related Term: Spiciness

- Explanation: Warmth is a flavor descriptor used to describe teas with comforting, soothing, or heat-like qualities. It is often associated with spicy teas that offer a warming sensation in the mouth and throat. Tea tasters use the term warmth to identify specific flavor profiles in teas.

40. Woodiness:

- Related Term: Earthy

- Explanation: Woodiness is a flavor descriptor used to describe teas with woody, earthy, or forest-like notes. It is often associated with aged teas or teas that have been stored in wooden containers. Tea tasters use the term woodiness to identify specific flavor profiles in teas.

By mastering these tea tasting techniques and terms, students pursuing the Advanced Skill Certificate in Tea Blending can enhance their ability to evaluate, blend, and create exceptional teas that cater to diverse preferences and tastes. Practice, experience, and continuous learning are key to developing proficiency in tea tasting and blending, and these techniques provide a solid foundation for aspiring tea professionals to excel in the world of tea.