

Whiskey Cheatsheet



60-80%

Of whiskey flavor comes from maturation. We are drinking unaged spirits. It should be grain (corn) forward.



100% CORN

While other notes can come through, these samples are 100% corn of different varieties. Write what you pick up, but keep this in mind when sampling.

WHAT YOU'RE TASTING:

Whiskey is built from a variety of elements. Grain, water, yeast, and oak aging, yes, but what we are tasting are the congeners, or the chemical elements that assemble to create the scent, taste, and flavor of a whiskey. Here are the building blocks we will pick up from these white dog samples.

GRAINS

The flavors of the grains come through fermentation and distillation and are one of the major components of what you taste in some whiskeys. Corn yields sweetness and the recognizable flavor of... well, corn.

ESTERS

Esters are fruity, aromatic by-product of fermentation and can be carried over through distillation. Various esters have different aromas, and the degree of reflux and how the cuts are done determine how much will be in the spirit.

ALCOHOL

Ethanol is not the only alcohol created during fermentation and may not be the only alcohol carried over in distillation. It is not highly flavored, with a mostly clean and just a tiny bit sweet essence. The other alcohols may be collectively called fusel alcohols, and they are undesirable, yielding oily flavors in high concentrations

ALDEHYDES

Aldehydes have their own aromas - floral, lemon, or solvent. Not pertaining to this study, but aldehydes can also react with oak lignin to create esters.



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BOURBON FLAVOR GRAPH:

FINISHES

How long the flavor stays for



- **SHORT: (NOT SO GOOD)**
Flavor is fleeting. Hits the palate then disappears.
- **MEDIUM: (EH, SO-SO)**
Anywhere in the middle
- **LONG: (WHAT WE ARE WANTING)**
Flavor is clinging on for dear life

MOUTHFEELS:

ADHESIVE:

Sticky all over the palate, an adhesive mouthfeel seemingly hangs around the cheeks long after you swallow. Not to be confused with a long finish, an adhesive mouthfeel dries the areas it touches.

ASTRINGENT:

A bourbon with an astringent mouthfeel has a strong alcohol flavor like mouthwash.

CHEWY:

A chewy mouthfeel presents a lot of wood from the barrel and the tannins that come with it.

CREAMY:

The whiskey hits the mouth and feels silky on the tongue, falling down the sides like a spoonful of yogurt. The creamy mouthfeel is usually reserved for the very best bourbons, and you'll feel the flavors develop throughout the palate.

CRISPY:

This mouthfeel typically comes with notes of citrus and brings desired taste buds to light on a spring or hot summer day. Bourbons with a crispy mouthfeel are typically light in proof.

DRY:

When a dry mouthfeel hits, you immediately want a glass of water to coat your tongue. Some bourbons just suck the moisture from your tongue.

MOUTH COATING:

You can feel this bourbon all over your tongue in a warm and lovely way. Unlike creamy mouthfeel, which stays on the tongue, mouth-coating mouthfeel will tingly travel from the back of the bottom tongue to the front left cheek.

ROUGH:

This mouthfeel stings, bites and doesn't let up. When a bourbon has an initial rough mouthfeel, add water or ice and try again.

SNAP-CRACKLE-POP:

The tongue literally feels like the snap, crackle, and pop of gum tingling the tongue. You'll find a snap-crackle-pop sensation in higher-proof bourbons, but you could very well notice the mouthfeel changes once you get accustomed to the proof.

SOFT:

The feeling on the mouth is quick, intense, and offers delightful notes. Soft mouthfeels tend to fade and don't stick around for the finish.

COMMON AROMAS:

CARAMEL

Caramel-scented candle
Crème brûlée
Chocolate caramels
Heated caramel
Syrup

GRAINS

Cornmeal
Malt-O-Meal
Oatmeal
Rye meal
Wheat meal

NUTS

Almond
Roasted almond
Pecan
Marzipan
Pine nut

VANILLA

Vanilla beans
Vanilla extract
Vanilla ice cream
Vanilla icing
Vanilla pudding

EARTHY

Grass
Hay
Leather
Tobacco

WOOD

Cedar
Mossy log
Oak
Pine
Plywood
Wood chips

SPICES

Allspice
Anise seed
Basil
Bay leaf
Black pepper
Caraway
Cardamom
Celery seed
Cilantro
Cinnamon
Clove
Coriander
Cumin
Dill seed
Fennel
Fenugreek
Ginger
Green pepper
Mace
Marjoram
Mint
Mustard
Nutmeg
Oregano
Parsley
Pink pepper
Poppy
Rosemary
Saffron
Sage
Sassafras
Savory
Sesame
Tarragon
Turmeric
White pepper
Rose

FRUITS & FLORALS

Baked apples
Plum
Pear
Apricot
Peach
Geranium
Lavender
Lemon zest
Orange juice