

RENEWING AMERICA'S FOOD TRADITIONS

Poultry Tasting Protocol

Compiled by American Livestock Breeds Conservancy in collaboration with Slow Food USA & Chefs Collaborative

1. Meat preparation
 - a. Prepare 2 birds of each breed.
 - b. Prepare the meat as simply as possible, without seasonings, to allow the tasters to clearly taste the meat
 - c. Prepare each breed or cut identically, to the same degree of doneness or temperature. It is recommended that a commercially available cut be included in the blind comparison.

2. Presentation & logistics
 - a. Serve warm.
 - b. Plate each breed separately, with each containing slices of skin, white meat and dark meat. Identify each plate, as needed, to help to prevent confusing the breeds.
 - c. Display a whole bird on separate platters and the drippings pan, if roasted. These birds may be sliced up by the tasters if they need additional samples.
 - d. Provide water, napkins, forks, salt, and pens.
 - e. Conduct the tasting blind.
 - f. It is recommended that you taste no more than three different breeds at one time, unless you are using a very experienced panel of tasters.
 - g. It is recommended that you limit the panel to 10, unless you are able to serve everyone a warm plate in a timely fashion.

3. Facilitator presents and explains the evaluation process and form to tasters.
 - a. Welcome

 - b. Explain the purpose of the tasting. For example: *“The purpose of your work is to help chefs and consumers understand the differences and complexities of these three chickens. You are investigating a wide range of factors, NOT JUST TASTE. Scent or aroma, visual appearance, taste, texture, aftertaste experience. You’ll use all of your senses.”*

 - c. Introduce the breeds. *“The breeds you’ll be tasting today are ...(e.g. the Buckeye, the Barred Plymouth Rock, and a commercial Cornish Rock cross from the grocery store.)”* Share history and show a picture if at all possible. Contact the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy to help with this.

 - d. Review the form. For example: *“Let’s review the form so you’ll be comfortable with it when you begin.”*
 - *You’ll use one form for each breed. Please numbering each form 1 – 3 (or as appropriate).*
 - *Today’s date is....*
 - *The preparer is...*
 - *Each bird was... (e.g. rinsed, patted dry, and roasted whole and uncovered at 350 F until the thigh meat reached a temperature of 160 F. The bird was removed from the oven and rested for 10 minutes before slicing.)*
 - *You’ll be evaluating the whole bird for its appearance, aroma, and your overall impression. You’ll also evaluate white meat, dark meat, and skin.*
 - *Because of the differing strengths of flavors, please taste them in that order: white meat, dark meat, then skin.*
 - *Evaluate each item on a scale from 1 to 6, with 1 being “unfavorable” and 6 being “exceptionally favorable.” Circle your choice.*
 - *Then comment on your experience. You can choose from the list of descriptors above, or use your own words. Take a few minutes to review these descriptors.*

Descriptors

Skin color: Pale, tan, brown, black, purple, mottled, speckled, as expected, not as expected

Meat color: Pale, dark, rich, gray, white, cream-colored, tan, light brown, dark brown, pink, red, maroon, mottled, speckled, as expected, not as expected

Aroma: old, musky, fatty, fragrant, of grass, of freezer, fresh, earthy, pleasant, unpleasant, natural, artificial, chemical, sour, sweet, faint, intense, as expected, not as expected

Skin texture & flavor: Soggy, soft, crispy, tough, chewy, gummy, bland, mild, flavorful, rich, as expected, not as expected

Meat texture/ Mouth Feel: slimy, moist, dry, succulent, off, mushy, tender, resistant, firm, dense, tough, hard, slimy, chewy, gummy, gristly, rubbery, as expected, not as expected

Flavor: bland, mild, flavorful, rich, natural, balanced, juicy, robust, lingering, buttery, gamey, intense, explosive, insipid, faint, bland, ordinary, artificial, chemical, fatty, nutty, of corn, of grass, of ammonia, fresh, old, of the freezer, no impact, watery, salty, as expected, not as expected

Finally, have the participants answer the questions at the bottom, and add any additional thoughts on the back.

e. Explain the process. For example:

- *“This is a blind tasting. We’ll share which breed is which when the tasting is complete, but, to prevent any preconceived opinions you may have of any of these from influencing your opinion.”*
- *“You’ll each receive a plate containing portions of white meat, dark meat and skin from each breed. Place the plates on the correspondingly numbered form. You may begin your evaluation as soon as your plates arrive. It is important that you keep the breeds separate. To help you do this we...(e.g. will serve each breed on a different colored plates.)*
- *Evaluate the food thoughtfully and deliberately. Take your time. Look at it. Smell it. Chew a bite, then inhale gently to intentionally incorporate the aroma. Wait long enough to note any aftertaste.*
- *The whole birds and dripping pans will be displayed for your evaluation. You may go back for seconds from these birds, as needed.*
- *Please refrain from talking with each other until the tasting has concluded.*
- *Are there any questions?*

f. After tasting is completed, and comment forms are filled out, the identity of breeds is revealed. Tasters are allowed to taste more samples to help associate the experience with the breed.

4. Tasters are asked to share their comments and experiences with the group.
5. More information about each of the breeds may be shared at this time. This may include a picture, history, degree of endangerment, production information, availability, and producer of these products. Contact the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy to assist with this.
6. The preparer is asked to share with the group his/her experiences of the raw product and in the preparation of the meat. Allow time for Q & A.
7. The questionnaires are gathered and responses tabulated. Information can be shared as follow-up.
8. To help support the use and conservation of rare breeds of livestock and poultry, please send a summary of your results to ...
 - ❖ American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312, 919-542-5704, 919-545-0022 fax, albc@albc-usa.org
 - ❖ Slow Food USA, 20 Jay Street, #313, Brooklyn, NY 11201, 718-643-3401, makale@slowfoodusa.org
 - ❖ Chefs Collaborative, 4018 S. Sherman Street, Spokane, WA 99203, 206-849-2704

THANK YOU for your participation

