

RENEWING AMERICA'S FOOD TRADITIONS

Meat Tasting Protocol

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

1. Meat preparation
 - a. Prepare meat from each breed using the same cuts.
 - b. Prepare the meat as simply as possible, without seasonings, to allow the tasters to clearly taste the meat
 - c. Cook each breed and cut identically, to the same degree of doneness or temperature. It is recommended that a commercially available cut be included in the blind comparison. Avoid serving pieces with gristle or areas that may be over-cooked.
2. Presentation & logistics
 - a. Provide water, napkins, forks, salt, and pens.
 - b. Serve the meat warm.
 - c. Plate or identify (with colored toothpicks) each breed separately. Distinguish each plate, as needed (e.g. by color or number), to help to prevent confusing the breeds.
 - d. Display a whole roast or steak, etc. directly behind the tasting samples on separate platters and the drippings pan, if roasted. These larger cuts may be sliced up by the tasters if they need additional samples and may also be evaluated for appearance, aroma, and overall impression.
 - e. Conduct the tasting blind. In other words, do not reveal the name of the breed before or during tasting.
 - f. Taste no more than three different breeds at one time, unless you are using a very experienced panel of tasters or you are able to serve everyone a warm plate in a timely manner.
 - 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 breeds. 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. Highland cattle, White Park Cattle, Pineywoods cattle, and a commercial beef.) Share history and show a picture. Contact the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy to help with this.
 - d. Review the evaluation questionnaire. For example:
"Let's review the evaluation questionnaire so you'll be comfortable with it when you begin."

The name of the product is....

Today's date is....

The preparer is....

The preparation method....

The cut of the meat....

Your name (optional)

"You'll use one column on the evaluation questionnaire for each breed. You will need to label each column with their identification number or color assigned during the blind tasting."

"You'll be evaluating the whole meat portion for its appearance, aroma, and your overall impression."

"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 the provided descriptors, or use your own words. Take a few minutes to review these descriptors."

Descriptors

Meat color: *Pale, dark, rich, red, gray, 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

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, 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 completed, but, for now you must rely solely on your five senses. Our goal in doing this is to prevent any preconceived opinions you may have of any breed from influencing your opinion.”

“You’ll each receive a plate containing portions of meat from each breed. 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 or with different colored toothpicks.) Place the plates, or samples on the plate, in the same order as the corresponding columns on the evaluation form. You may begin your evaluation as soon as your plates arrive.”

“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 meat portions and dripping pans will be displayed for your evaluation. You may go back for seconds from these portions, as needed.”

“Please refrain from talking with each other until the tasting has concluded”

Are there any questions?”

- f. Conduct the tasting in silence. Be sure to keep time and check in with tasters to see if they need more or less time. Participate in the tasting.
- g. Reveal the identity of breeds at the end of the tasting. Afterwards, the 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 ...
- ❖ The Livestock Conservancy, PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312, 919-542-5704 phone, 919-545-0022 fax, info@livestockconservancy.org, www.LivestockConservancy.org
 - ❖ Slow Food USA, 20 Jay Street, #313, Brooklyn, NY 11201, 718-643-3401 phone, www.slowfoodusa.org
 - ❖ Chefs Collaborative, 4018 S. Sherman Street, Spokane, WA 99203, 206-849-2704, www.chefscollaborative.org

THANK YOU for your participation.