

BRACKET TASTING



THE BRACKET TASTING METHOD

©2011-2022 Clay Gordon/TheChocolateLife

Select four chocolates. It is best if they are themed in some way, but it's not absolutely necessary for this exercise.

Select four beverages of the same basic type – four beers, four wines, four spirits.

There does not need to be *any* theme with respect to the selection of beverages.

You can mix styles of beer (sours and porters and IPAs), varietals of wine (Cabs and Pinots; reds, whites, rosés, sparkling, fortified).

If you choose a spirits they should all be brown (bourbons, whiskeys) or all be white (gins, silver rums, plata tequila and mezcal –but not vodkas as they are too neutral and flavored vodka) or of the same type (e.g., all bitters/amari, liqueurs).

Avoid cream liqueurs.

TheChocolateLife Comparative Approach

TheChocolateLife Comparative Approach is based on the principle of *simultaneous contrast*. The human nervous system evolved to make comparisons and simultaneous contrast indicates that our perceptions are influenced by our surroundings and by the order in which we encounter them.

Thus, the green of the leaves on a tree is influenced by the blue of the sky, and vice versa. Change your vantage point so you only see the sky or the trees and your perception of their colors changes. Change the time of day (the amount and color of light) and your perception of both the green and the blue changes.

This principle extends to the foods we eat and what we drink, and this exercise has been created to demonstrate it conclusively.

The first bracket uses three beverages and a single chocolate. The chocolate will change the perception of each beverage when tasted alone and tasted again with the chocolate.

The second bracket uses three chocolates and a single beverage. The beverage will change the perception of each chocolate when tasted alone, and tasted again with the beverage.

BRACKET TASTING



INSTRUCTIONS FOR SETTING UP THE BRACKET TASTING MAT FOUR CHOCOLATES & FOUR BEVERAGES

©2011-2021 Clay Gordon/TheChocolateLife

First bracket

Put a piece of chocolate in square C1.

Arrange tastes of three of beverages for squares B1, B2, & B3.

Compare each of the beverages with the chocolate.

Second bracket

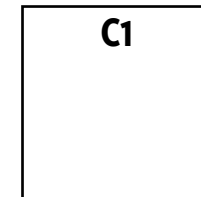
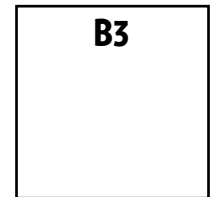
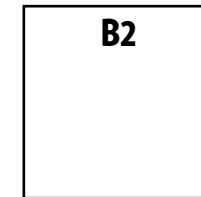
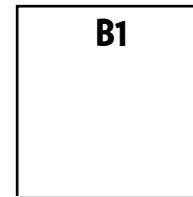
Arrange tastes of the fourth beverage for square B4.

Arrange pieces of the three remaining chocolates for squares, C2, C3, & C4.

Compare each of the chocolates with the beverage.

Note: *It is not necessary to prepare tastes for all four beverages before the start of tasting, especially those that “require” serving below room temperature. However, cold beverages should not be at refrigerator temperatures; they should be at the recommended serving temperature.*

For spirits (especially brown spirits) it is preferable to serve them neat. However, a single ice cube is acceptable as long as its use is consistent. The same is true if a small quantity of water is used. In fact, it’s possible to repeat the same brackets with slight variations. For example, the same chocolates but with whiskeys with and without ice or water.



First Bracket

Second Bracket

