

BOURBONTASTING

WITH

The image features two large, bold letters, 'M' and 'T', rendered in a golden-brown color. The letters are covered in numerous small, realistic condensation droplets, giving them a wet, refreshing appearance. The letters have a slight 3D effect with a soft shadow beneath them.

MODERN THIRST

BOURBONREFERENCE

What is bourbon?

All bourbon is whiskey.

But not all whiskeys are bourbon.

In 1964, Congress declared bourbon must be:

- Its mash (the mixture of grains and malts that is distilled) must be at least 51% corn.
- The mash must be distilled at 160 proof or less.
- It can be barreled at no more than 125 proof.
- It must be aged in new charred oak barrels (scotch and other whiskeys often reuse barrels)
- It must be made in the United States.

To be *Straight Bourbon*, it must be aged a minimum of 2 years, haven no flavorings or colorings added, and if it is aged less than four years, the age of the *youngest* bourbon in the bottle must be listed on the label.



BOURBONREFERENCE

Barrel Proof/Cask Strength: No water is added to the bourbon after it is removed from the barrel to bring it down to a desired proof.

Bottled-in-Bond: bourbon that is “straight bourbon” and meets the following requirements:

- Produced from a single mash type at a single distillery during a single distilling season
- Bottled at 100 proof (50% ABV)
- Aged in a federally bonded warehouse
- Label must identify the distillery and bottling plant (if different than the distillery)

Glencairn: A glass designed for maximizing bourbon and whiskey tasting.

Finish: The sensations and flavors experienced when tasting bourbon following the swallow.

Mash Bill: The recipe used to make the bourbon. At least 51% corn (typically 70%+) and any secondary grains, usually Rye or Wheat and Malted Barley.

Neat: Drinking bourbon with no ice or mixer.

Nose: The smell, or aroma, of a bourbon.

On the rocks: Drinking bourbon with ice.

Private Barrel/Private Selection: A series of bottles from the same barrel of bourbon that was hand-selected by a retailer or group and purchased in its entirety.

Rye: A grain typically used in bourbon mash bills. Provides a spiciness to bourbon.

Rye Bourbon: The standard bourbon mash bill, using rye as the secondary grain.

Single Barrel: All the bourbon in a particular bottle comes from the same barrel of bourbon. This can lead to some variations from bottle to bottle.

Small Batch: The bourbon in the bottle is from a mixture of multiple barrels that are “vatted” to produce a specific or consistent flavor profile

Snifter: A traditional bulbous whiskey drinking glass with a wine-glass like stem.

Wheat: A grain typically used in some mash bills. Provides a sweet flavor and creamy texture to bourbon.

Wheated Bourbon/Wheater: Bourbon made from a mash bill using wheat as the secondary grain.



Glencairn Glass



Whiskey Snifter

BOURBONFACTS

- Contrary to popular belief, bourbon does *not* need to be made in Kentucky. It *can* be made anywhere in the United States. However, 95% of all bourbon *is* made in Kentucky. That is a function of history, geography, and tradition.
- The origin of the name “bourbon” is somewhat debated. Some claim it is from Bourbon County, Virginia, which was the large tract of land that was originally part of Virginia, and the section out of which Kentucky was carved. (Kentucky was originally part of Virginia.) Some claim it was from Bourbon Street in New Orleans, where much of it was originally shipped and consumed. Others claim it was from the House of Bourbon, who ruled France and owned the Louisiana Territory which consumed so much of it in the 18th century. Even more will cite Bourbon County, Kentucky (which, ironically, has no active distilleries) as the source of the name. Historians disagree, and it’s not all that relevant anyway.
- Used bourbon barrels are often sold to scotch and whisky manufacturers, who have no “new” barrel requirements.
- Brewers often reuse bourbon barrels to age their beers.
- There are currently more barrels of bourbon aging in Kentucky than people.
- The un-aged distillate that will eventually become bourbon after it is aged is perfectly clear, and is referred to as “white dog.”
- During aging in the barrels, about 2-3% of the distillate in the barrel will evaporate through the oak each year, meaning a 20 year old barrel of bourbon will have lost as much as 60% to evaporation of its bourbon over the life of that barrel! The liquid that evaporates is referred to as the “Angels’ Share.”
- Legally, there is nothing stopping Brown-Forman from marketing Jack Daniels as bourbon. However, they choose to market it as *Tennessee Whiskey* instead.
- Jim Beam produces almost half the world’s bourbon supply in Clermont, KY.
- Over 600,000 people visited the “Kentucky Bourbon Trail” or the “Craft Bourbon Trail” in 2013. The trail is a series of distilleries in Kentucky with operating tourist facilities, and that doesn’t include one so the largest distilleries in Kentucky, Frankfort’s Buffalo Trace, which isn’t a member of the Trail!



HOW TO TASTE BOURBON

Appearance:



Is it clear? Cloudy? Light amber or dark mahogany in color? Age, proof, and filtration methods all affect appearance. Hold the glass up to the light, or in front of a clean white sheet of paper to get a good look at it. Swirl it around the glass once or twice.

Taste: Don't gulp the bourbon. No matter how strong it is, you'll get used to the alcohol burn on the tongue until it doesn't bother you. So take a generous mouthful into your mouth and "chew" it. The folks at Jim beam call it the "Kentucky Chew." Move the bourbon around inside your mouth with a chewing motion to coat your tongue. Notice the difference in flavors from the front to the back of your tongue. Finally, swallow it. The tongue has several tasting "zones." The tip of the tongue detects sweetness. The middle of the tongue detects salty flavors, and the back of the tongue can taste bitterness. These zones, combined with the aroma, define the flavors of the bourbon.



Aroma: Smell is a vital part of taste, and thus it's very important to not skip the aroma portion of a taste. Keeping your lips parted, stick your nose right above the opening of your glass, even in the glass if you're using a snifter or Glencairn.

Finish: the finish refers to the sensations after you've swallowed. How long does the taste stay with you? If it lingers for a while, that's a long finish. If it dissipates quickly, it's a short finish. Do any other flavors manifest in your mouth as the finish dissipates? What textures did you notice? Did you catch a warm sensation in your upper body after swallowing?

HOW TO TASTE BOURBON

What Flavors should I Taste?

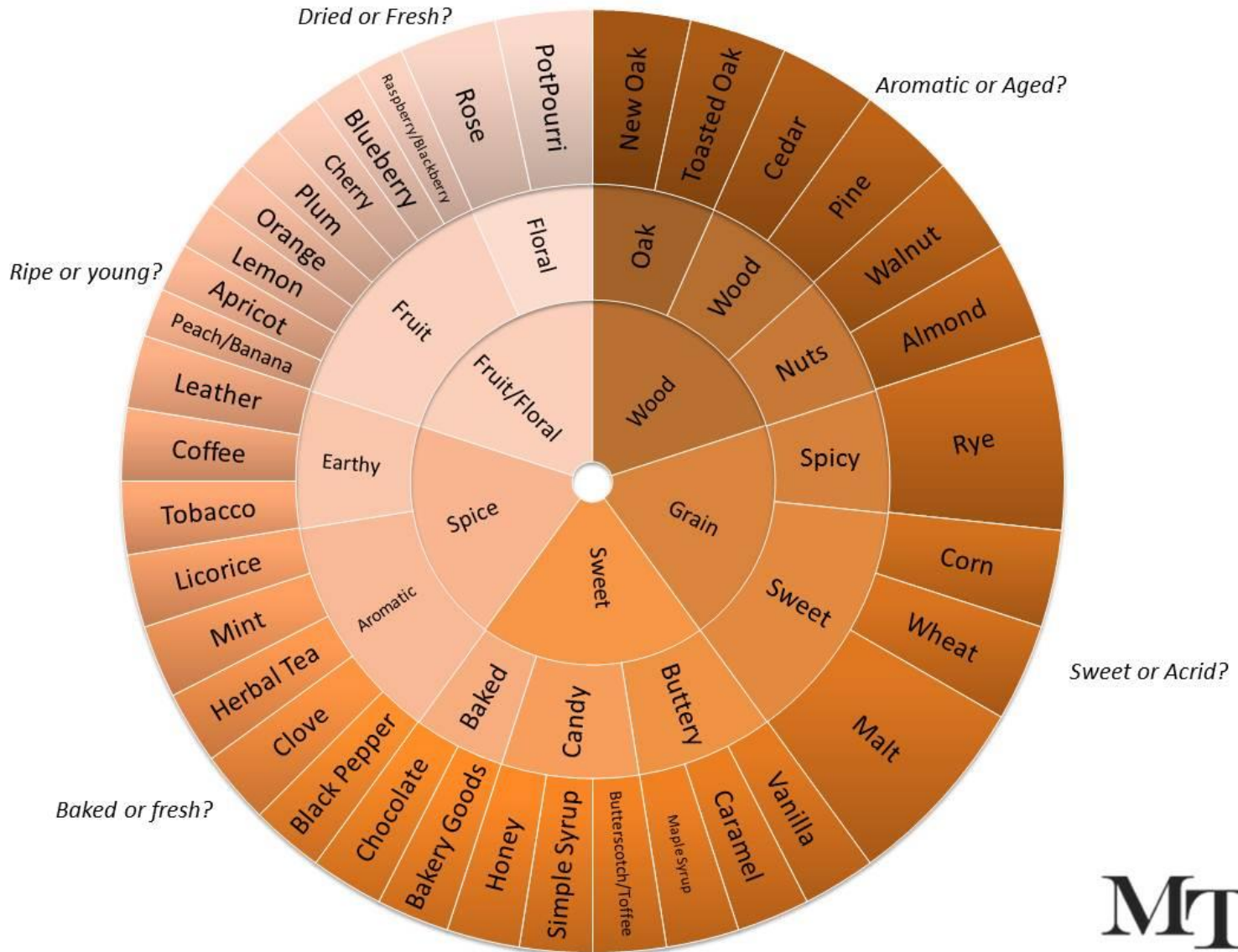
This is subjective. Rarely will two bourbon tasters taste the exact same flavors in the same bourbon. But the standard flavors apparent in most bourbons are vanilla, oak, caramel, and burnt brown sugar. The flavor wheel on the next page is a great resource to help guide you on your tasting journey. Start in the center of the wheel with the very general flavors, and work your way outward. When you reach the edge, feel free to add further flavors if you can detect them. This is just a guide!

What if I can't detect any of these flavors?

Don't worry! There are literally tons of factors that go into taste. The first and foremost reason is probably just a lack of familiarity with the flavors of bourbon. It's a strong liquor, and it takes some time to acclimate the tongue to pick out the variances above and beyond the strength of the liquor. Keep at it, and it will come to you. Also keep in mind that smell is a vital and integrated component of taste. Small things like a stuffy nose can greatly affect your sense of taste.



The Bourbon Flavor Wheel



TASTINGSHEET

Bourbon: _____
Proof: _____
Age: _____
Barrel/Batch No: _____

Price: _____
Availability: Available/Limited/Rare _____
Distiller: _____
Other: _____

Appearance:

/15

Aroma:

/25

Taste:

/35

Finish:

/25

Notes:

Total Score:

/100