



Espresso evaluation form

rev. 22, 11/4/07

data		hour		test code		cup tester	
------	--	------	--	-----------	--	------------	--

sample description							
blend					single origin		Rob Arab
prod. country				pr./state			
producing area				process		crop	
classif.			screen	exp. brand			
producer			estate				
cult. var. & approx %							
ref.			marks			prep.	
other						lot	
roasted		from		by		preserved	

Roasted	Color	burnt/raw	very dark/light	dark/light	fair	good	brown
	homogeneity	very bad	poor	irregular	regular	good	very good

Color of the cream	1 eye	1,5	2 heav. ins.	2,5	3 insuff.	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 good	6,5	7 striped	,
---------------------------	-------	-----	--------------	-----	-----------	-----	-----------	-----	--------	-----	--------	-----	-----------	---

Texture/Life	1 no	1,5	2 heav. ins.	2,5	3 insuff.	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 good	6,5	7 very good	,
---------------------	------	-----	--------------	-----	-----------	-----	-----------	-----	--------	-----	--------	-----	-------------	---

Olfactory sensations	1 very bad	1,5	2 heav. ins.	2,5	3 insuff.	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 good	6,5	7 very good	,
Pleasant perceptions						Unpleasant perceptions								

Bitterness (quality)	1 very bad	1,5	2 heav. ins.	2,5	3 insuff.	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 good	6,5	7 very good	,
-----------------------------	------------	-----	--------------	-----	-----------	-----	-----------	-----	--------	-----	--------	-----	-------------	---

Acidity (quality)	1 very bad	1,5	2 heav. ins.	2,5	3 insuff.	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 good	6,5	7 very good	,
--------------------------	------------	-----	--------------	-----	-----------	-----	-----------	-----	--------	-----	--------	-----	-------------	---

Aroma	1 very bad	1,5	2 heav. ins.	2,5	3 insuff.	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 high	6,5	7 very high	,
Pleasant perceptions						Unpleasant perceptions								

Sweetness	1 no	1,5	2 very low	2,5	3 low	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 high	6,5	7 very high	,
------------------	------	-----	------------	-----	-------	-----	-----------	-----	--------	-----	--------	-----	-------------	---

Body	1 no	1,5	2 very weak	2,5	3 weak	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 strong	6,5	7 very strong	,
-------------	------	-----	-------------	-----	--------	-----	-----------	-----	--------	-----	----------	-----	---------------	---

Aftertaste	1 very bad	1,5	2 heav. ins.	2,5	3 insuff.	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 good	6,5	7 very good	,
Pleasant perceptions						Unpleasant perceptions								

Overall balance	1 no	1,5	2 heav. ins.	2,5	3 insuff.	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 good	6,5	7 very good	,
------------------------	------	-----	--------------	-----	-----------	-----	-----------	-----	--------	-----	--------	-----	-------------	---

Personal evaluation	1 very bad	1,5	2 very low	2,5	3 low	3,5	4 suffic.	4,5	5 fair	5,5	6 good	6,5	7 very good	,
----------------------------	------------	-----	------------	-----	-------	-----	-----------	-----	--------	-----	--------	-----	-------------	---

Notes

total evaluation		,
n. defects	intensity	
x	x 5	= penalties - ,
	from 0,5 to 3,0	+ 23,0
final total		,

© E. Meschini & P. Milani

from	to		from	to	
65	69,5	merely satisfactory	85	89,5	very good
70	74,5	fair	90	94,5	excellent
75	79,5	rather good	95	100	outstanding
80	84,5	decidedly good			



Espresso evaluation form : a detailed description

Introduction

The purpose of the Espresso evaluation form is to describe the quality of the products examined by means of 11 quality descriptors, also taking into account any defects encountered.

For three of these descriptors it is possible to go into detail and description, and the space allotted for comments must allow the taster to describe the coffee just tasted, thus indulging over and above the fundamental but arid numerical calculation (mark).

The philosophy of these forms is to render the language used more accessible to everyone. Therefore each vote is followed by one to two words of description. Statistically this approach tends to level out the judgements of the components of the panel.

This form is the result of lengthy tasting experience, in-depth discussions amongst many tasters and an accurate statistical evaluation.

Before tasting

1 The tester must write the **date** (ddmmyy), the time (1830), the code (alphabetical code; one capital letter) and the **cup tester's** name (his own name and surname). Testing is performed blind, so the list of samples to be tested must be prepared beforehand, with each sample being given a code consisting of a single capital letter.

2 Roasting

Before beginning to taste each sample the taster will have the opportunity to evaluate the level of roasting, choosing one of the options indicated in the lines marked "Color" and "Homogeneity".

The judgement passed on the roasting will not affect the final mark.

Tasting

Evaluation

A mark of from 1 to 7 can be assigned to the 11 descriptors which makeup the tasting form (Color of the cream, Texture/Duration, Olfactory sensations, Bitterness, Acidity, Aroma, Sweetness, Body, Aftertaste, Overall balance, Personal Evaluation). Intermediate marks may also be given (1.5 - 2.5 - 3.5 - 4.5 - 5.5 - 6.5).

A mark must be given for each descriptor.



The mark will be written with a pencil and may therefore be altered before the form is handed in.

Once the mark - which is given by means of an X (see below) - for each descriptor is decided as being final, the taster must transcribe it into the space on the extreme right of each line (see below).

Color of the cream	1	eye	1,5	2	heav. ins.	2,5	3	insuffic.	3,5	4	suffic.	4,5	5	fair	X	6	good	6,5	7	striped	5,5
--------------------	---	-----	-----	---	------------	-----	---	-----------	-----	---	---------	-----	---	------	---	---	------	-----	---	---------	-----

This is for the sake of clarity and to facilitate the input of the data into the computer.

At the end of the test the taster must add up the marks given for the 11 descriptors and write the total in the space "total evaluation":

total evaluation	48
------------------	----

Defects and penalties

This form has been prepared with coffee of medium-high quality in mind.

However, the possibility of a defect being noted has been taken into consideration. In the space on the left the number of defects will be inserted, whilst the degree of the defect (from 0.5 to 3) will be marked in the central box. Therefore should - for example - a clearly noticeable astringency be found, we shall write:

1	x	1,5	x	5	=	penalties	-	7.5
---	---	-----	---	---	---	-----------	---	-----

7.5 will then be deducted from the score of the sample.

Final Evaluation

Continuing with the previous example, and taking into account that **we shall still have to add 23 points**, the final evaluation of this sample will be of

total evaluation	48
1 x 1.5 x 5 = penalties	- 7.5
	+ 23
final total	63.5

Please bear in mind that an Espresso will be considered as:

from to



outstanding	95	100
excellent	90	94,5
very good	85	89,5
decidedly good	80	84,5
rather good	75	79,5
fair	70	74,5
merely satisfactory	65	69,5

The peculiarity of the Espresso

The aspect of the freshly prepared Espresso is very important and is taken into account - unlike other types of tasting - in the evaluation of the sample. It is for this reason that the Colour of the cream and the Texture and Duration are considered fundamental.

The descriptors

1 Colour of the cream

As said, the colour of the cream is fundamental and must be judged immediately. Reddish-brown cream will receive a higher mark than any other shade of brown. Coffees with cream which is too light or too dark will receive mark lower than 7 depending on how light or dark the cream is.

2 Texture and Duration

To judge the texture the dimensions and uniformity of the individual components (bubbles) and the overall compactness will have to be evaluated. This will be done by tilting the cup and judging the little 'step' which forms over the underlying liquid. Wait for a few seconds (and check even after the olfactory sensations have been adjudged) before deciding what mark to give. Texture and Duration are correlated and must be judged with a single mark.

3 Olfactory Sensations

After judging the visual aspect in the cup, the olfactory sensations perceived by rotating the cup (to facilitate perceptions) will be examined. The mark given will represent a synthesis of the intensity, delicacy and complexity of the perceptions.

A space has been left immediately below in which to comment on the pleasant or unpleasant smells perceived (if perceived at all). Usually a mark of more than 4.5 should automatically earn a 'pleasant' comment, whilst a mark lower than 3.5 should earn an 'unpleasant'.

Remember that there are not many common smells, and that it is not essential to seek out what is not there. If we note a smell which we are unable to define, it is sufficient



to write if it is “sweet”, “pungent” or a similar general description which may, in the future, remind us of this test.

4 Bitterness

Espresso must be bitter. The task will be that of evaluating the quality of the bitterness perceived. Therefore, a very bitter Espresso will be marked as insufficient (< 4). If the espresso has been judged as too bitter (less than 3), add a touch of sugar after the test; if the bitterness remains, then this is a defective coffee and must be considered accordingly.

A pleasant bitterness, decided but not too persistent, will instead receive top marks.

5 Acidity

Again, we are called upon to judge the quality of the acidity perceived rather than the quantity, always bearing in mind that the perfect Espresso must not be particularly acid but that its acidity must be aromatic, soft, enveloping. Tart, aggressive and/or persistent acidity, which may even result as sour, will always receive evaluation as insufficient.

6 Aroma

This is the olfactory sensation perceived at the moment the sip of coffee is aspirated. It will not necessarily be the same as the Olfactory sensations previously perceived, nor as the sensations perceived in the aftertaste.

Just as for the Olfactory sensations, we have left a space for the comments “pleasant” or “unpleasant”.

7 Sweetness

Sweetness is not in contrast to Bitterness. An Espresso marked with a 7 in Bitterness might be sweet or it might not, depending on the degree of ripeness of the beans, on the processing undergone, on the sugars present or on a combination of several factors which have nothing to do with bitterness.

Remember that a rhubarb flavored candy is both bitter and sweet.

8 Body

Apart from visual, olfactory and taste sensations, tactile sensations, which give us the Body of the Espresso, contribute to the formation of our judgement. Body is the tactile sensation we perceive as the sum of our perception of density, viscosity and oiliness.

Since an espresso must not be astringent, if the taster notes an astringency then he should prepare another cup and recommence the tasting process before signalling a defect. Should the sensation persist, the coffee must be adjudged as defective and penalty points will be assigned.



9 **Aftertaste**

Once the coffee has been swallowed, judgement of the aftertaste tells us what remains, good or bad, in the throat and mouth, when exhaling air through the nose with lips closed.

Yet again in his case the mark given will represent the synthesis of the intensity/persistence, delicacy and complexity of the perceptions.

As per the Olfactory sensations and Aroma descriptors, we have left a space for the note “pleasant” or “unpleasant”.

10 **Overall balance**

With this descriptor we are judging the completeness and the balance of our Espresso. This is an overall judgement, which must take into account all the previous descriptors. In other words – did the orchestra all play in unison?

It is to be noted that the more uniform the evaluations on the previous 7 descriptors are (Olfactory sensations, Bitterness, Acidity, Aroma, Sweetness, Body and Aftertaste), the more the espresso will be balanced.

11 **Personal evaluation**

This is the only subjective descriptor, which ignores everything else and represents purely the taster’s taste. For this reason it will not always be in agreement with the Overall Balance. Exactly because it is ‘personal’ and ‘subjective’, this evaluation must be independent of (even if it may be in agreement with) the previous descriptors.

Conclusions

Espresso is a coffee which is consumed hot and within a time measured in seconds, not minutes. The evolution of its characteristics in time must not be taken into account as instead is the case when judging coffee in infusion. For this reason we do not consider it worthwhile discussing the changes which take place when the temperature decreases: it is an interesting exercise which often gives amazing results which are, however, without significance on this present context.

However one thing must be made clear: **at no time in the life of our Espresso must any defects of any nature whatsoever be noticed!**