



AMERICAN BOURBON ASSOCIATION
Bourbon Evaluation Form

GENERAL RULES FOR TASTINGS:

- *Be as objective as possible. You might be surprised by what you like best about a particular bourbon.*
- *Don't feel like you have to be alone to give an objective review. Sometimes friends can help you pin down how to describe aromas and flavors. Besides, most things are more fun with your friends around!*
- *Don't do your review in a room with other strong scents that could confuse your senses, like wood-burning fireplace, food cooking or a scented candle.*
- *Don't smoke a cigarette or cigar immediately before or during your bourbon tasting and evaluation*
- *Be responsible and have fun!*

BOURBON: _____

PROOF: _____ *AGE:* _____

COLOR

When judging the color of a bourbon, start first by carefully choosing the glass you pour it in. A crystal glass will show you the truest color, but avoid the cut crystal glasses that are often made for whiskey. The cuts can distort the hues and mislead your eyes.

While you're picking out a glass, choose one that is tulip-shaped, like a wine or cognac glass. The shape will come in handy when you're testing aroma.

Test the color in a well-lit room, with the glass sitting against a white backdrop. When considering texture, swirl the glass around and see how thick, thin, or creamy the bourbon appears. You may notice little tear-like drips that slowly move down the sides of the glass. These are called legs, and are usually an indication of a full texture. Clarity is decided by holding the glass up to the light and judging how transparent and bright it is.

When reviewing your bottle, let us know if you feel that the responses listed don't exactly describe your take on the bourbon. For most questions, we've provided an "other" response for that very purpose.



Describe the color of this whiskey. Choose all that apply.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Straw | <input type="checkbox"/> Copper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gold | <input type="checkbox"/> Amber |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crimson | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |



Based on your personal preferences, how would you rate the color of this whiskey?
(Larger number is better)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |

AROMA

To get the best aroma, start with a tulip-shaped glass, like a wine or brandy glass. Warm the glass in your hands for a moment, swirl the spirits in the glass, then take your first smell. Try not to take in a huge whiff of air; a few short sniffs should do the trick. Then, if you'd like, take a breath of fresh air or a sip of water and sniff again. This should suffice to make note of your initial analysis of the aromas.

When whiskey and wine tasters talk about intensity, you might hear them describe the drink as “open” or “closed.” Think about standing outside your kitchen window while someone is baking a pie inside. If the window is wide open, you'll be exposed to a multitude of smells from the kitchen: the buttery crumbles, the tart apple filling, maybe even a slightly burnt crust scent. If it's shut, you might get enough smells to recognize there's something baking, but you probably wouldn't know it was apple pie. Keep this analogy in mind when rating the intensity of your bourbon.

Finally, try to pinpoint all aromas you instantly recognize from the first smell. We've listed some of the aromas common to bourbon, but feel free to list any other scents you recognize. Aromas change as the bourbon sits and also as water is added, so analyze your very initial reactions here.

Describe the aroma of this whiskey. Choose all that apply.



- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Butter | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee | <input type="checkbox"/> Mint | <input type="checkbox"/> Raisins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candied Fruit | <input type="checkbox"/> Grass | <input type="checkbox"/> Molasses | <input type="checkbox"/> Toffee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caramel | <input type="checkbox"/> Honey | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutmeg | <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate | <input type="checkbox"/> Leather | <input type="checkbox"/> Oak | <input type="checkbox"/> Vanilla |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cinnamon | <input type="checkbox"/> Maple Syrup | <input type="checkbox"/> Pepper | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Based on your personal preferences, how would you rate the aroma of this whiskey?
(Larger number is better)



- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |

MOUTH-FEEL

The mouth-feel means exactly what it sounds like – how the bourbon makes the inside of your mouth feel.

This mostly means texture. At this point, you should have already noted the texture of the bourbon based on its appearance, but testing mouth-feel allows you to see if your eyes told you the same thing about the drink's texture as your tongue. Using words like “creamy” or “smooth” gives a clearer impression of the texture than you could likely record only by looking.

Describe the mouth-feel of this whiskey. Choose all that apply.



- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smooth | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creamy | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rich | <input type="checkbox"/> Mouth-coating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thin | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Based on your personal preferences, how would you rate the mouth-feel of this whiskey?
(Larger number is better)



- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |

FLAVOR

Your nose can recognize over 32 primary aromas, but your tongue can really only categorize four: The tip of your tongue picks up sweetness, the middle of your tongue picks up sourness, the sides recognize saltiness, and the back of your tongue reports bitterness. When tasting your bourbon, keep in mind that not all of these primary tastes will occur during your sample, but some may occur twice. For example, you could attest that the bourbon starts off sweet, then feels dry in the middle, but ends sweet again as you swallow. Be sure to write all of these sensations down.

Interestingly, the flavors you often recognize in bourbon – smokiness or fruitiness, for example – are not actually caught by your taste buds. These are aromas that are going back through your nasal passages as you taste, creating a perceived flavor on your tongue. To differentiate these more specific flavors from the four Primary Tastes, we'll call them Overall Flavor. These may be the same as the aromas you noted earlier, or you may actually only be able to “taste” some of the flavors you were able to smell earlier. Or, the taste could yield new flavors entirely! Regardless, if you taste a flavor that isn't precisely defined in the list we provide, be sure to check “other” and describe the flavor in your own words.

Describe the flavor of this whiskey. Choose all that apply.



- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Butter | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee | <input type="checkbox"/> Mint | <input type="checkbox"/> Raisins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candied Fruit | <input type="checkbox"/> Grass | <input type="checkbox"/> Molasses | <input type="checkbox"/> Toffee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caramel | <input type="checkbox"/> Honey | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutmeg | <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate | <input type="checkbox"/> Leather | <input type="checkbox"/> Oak | <input type="checkbox"/> Vanilla |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cinnamon | <input type="checkbox"/> Maple Syrup | <input type="checkbox"/> Pepper | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Based on your personal preferences, how would you rate the flavor of this whiskey?
(Larger number is better)



- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |

FINISH

A good bourbon won't leave you high and dry after you've had a taste... it will linger. Thus, the finish is an important part of the process of reviewing your bourbon.

"Finish" describes both the flavor you are left with and the duration of time that flavor stays in your mouth. Experts typically describe a whiskey's finish as long, medium, or short. Think of "short" as a taste that leaves the senses almost instantly, "long" as one that lingers for several minutes after you swallow, and "medium" as any length in between.

The finish flavor of a good bourbon will mirror, or compliment the aromas and flavors you originally associated with the whiskey when smelling and tasting it. Clearly, if those flavors and aromas were ones you enjoyed, a long pleasant finish is most desired.



Describe the finish of this whiskey. Choose all that apply.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dry | <input type="checkbox"/> Spicy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Short | <input type="checkbox"/> Long | <input type="checkbox"/> Earthy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet | <input type="checkbox"/> Mint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smooth | <input type="checkbox"/> Lingering | |



*Based on your personal preferences, how would you rate the finish of this whiskey?
(Larger number is better)*

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |

OVERALL

Enjoying a nice glass of bourbon should put a content smile on your face. The overall experience should leave you smug and satisfied.

Although everyone has different tastes, we all know good bourbon when we taste it. Your overall opinion is based on everything from color, aroma, mouth-feel, flavor and finish. Hopefully this bourbon makes you happy. Life is too short, to drink bad whiskey.



Describe this whiskey overall. Choose all that apply.

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Balanced</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Elegant</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Oaky</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Smooth</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Bold</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Flat</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Oily</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Spicy</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chewy</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fruity</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sweet</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Complex</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Intense</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Rich</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tannic</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Dry</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Light</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Satisfying</i> | |



Based on your personal preferences, how would you rate this whiskey overall?
(Larger number is better)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |