

COCOA RUNNERS



OVERVIEW OF COCOA RUNNERS CORPORATE & PRIVATE VIRTUAL TASTINGS

Chocolate, Wine and More!

1. OVERVIEW OF A VIRTUAL TASTING

The lockdowns of recent months have encouraged a variety of behaviours, and at Cocoa Runners, we've been inspired by the creativity and innovation of so many people, in turning our circumstances into something positive.

We've seen how people are able to work, communicate, connect, and have fun; all from the comfort of their own homes.

We want to make tasting great chocolate: More convenient. Less pressure. More personalised. More interactive. Less hassle. Less possibility of embarrassment. More fun. More inspiring. More hands-on. Less stand-offish.

We've designed our sessions with a few critical mechanics and principles in mind:

- We don't 'lecture'. We encourage everyone to participate via a simple interactive software accessed via your phone. All tasting notes and results are shared in real-time, and are all anonymous.
- Our tastings are lead by a 'Cocoa Runner', somebody who is passionate and experienced in chocolate (i.e. not 'hired hands').

We also pride ourselves on having a different philosophy to most other tastings: We approach tasting a bit like learning how to ride a bike:

- None of us are born knowing how to ride a bike; it takes practice. Stabilisers can help. And falling off, with some embarrassment, is par for the course.
- For most of us, it's an experience where we remember the good parts and acquire a fun and rewarding skill. Learning to savour craft chocolate, fine wine, specialty coffee etc. is very similar.
- None of us instinctively can articulate the tastes, flavours, textures and mouthfeel that we experience when we taste fine foods or drink. We need some basic vocabulary so that we can describe the word on the tip of our tongue.

With this in mind, we work with a unique framework to help you. Think of this as ‘stabilisers’:

- ❑ For most of our senses and experiences we’ve developed standardised criteria and scientific measurements. Time has minutes, hours, years, etc. Distance has miles (or kilometres). Weight has kilos (or pounds). Sound has decibels (and pitch, rhythm, frequency, tone, etc.). Temperature has Celsius (or Fahrenheit or Kelvin). Colour, since Newton and his prisms, has wavelengths to describe red, yellow and even stuff we can’t see.
- ❑ Food and drink are different; they are about flavour, taste and texture. Judgements are a lot more subjective; after all unlike when we see or hear, when we eat and drink we are ‘doing’ more than ‘observing’.
- ❑ Disentangling what we enjoy when we drink and eat is incredibly complicated. To quote Professor Barry Smith of London University “...what we ordinarily call ‘taste’ involves input not just from the tongue, but from touch and smell...The experience often described in unisensory terms as ‘taste’ depends on the multi-modal combining of inputs”. By this he means that when we delight (or not) in food it is all about our sense of taste, smell, texture and a few other senses (e.g. spiciness). Untangling these is part of the problem. And part of the fun!
- ❑ So to provide a framework, and some vocabulary, we've developed the ‘Craft Chocolate Great Wave’ with Professor Smith, James Hoffmann of Square Mile Coffee, and Rebecca Palmer of Corney & Barrow wines. These three all have years of tasting experience. And they are all very articulate and passionate, and have put in the hours to acquire this fluency.



SUMMARY

So, if you join a Cocoa Runners Craft Chocolate tasting, here is what you can expect over the 60-90 minutes:

- ❑ We'll start by asking a few warm questions to get you used to using Menti.com (the interactive software we use).
- ❑ We'll explain how to savour chocolate and explore the difference between taste and flavour (we use a couple of sensory tricks here).
- ❑ We'll taste 8-10 chocolates, using these to explain how flavours, tastes and textures are generated as well as unwrapping the story behind each bar.
- ❑ During the tasting everyone will be encouraged to input any flavours, tastes, textures and sensations they get into Menti.com (see below for an example).
- ❑ In parallel, we'll take you on a whistle stop tour of the history of chocolate, up to the present day. And you'll discover why craft chocolate not only tastes better, but is better for you, better for the cocoa farmers, and better for the planet.
- ❑ At the end of the session we'll hold an open Q&A and an interactive quiz (with prizes for winners!).
- ❑ We can also host breakout rooms to give you some time for team building, client relationship building, etc.

By the end, we hope that you'll have had fun and (hopefully) learnt a bit more about your own palate, likes (and dislikes) and learnt more about chocolate.

You may also be quite full by the end of the tasting, so try to eat properly beforehand, or leave a reasonable amount of time before your next meal.

Thank you for your time!

We look forward to seeing you and your team soon!

2. PRICING OPTIONS & LOGISTICS

CHOCOLATE ONLY KIT OPTIONS:

- 'Taster' kit (mainly comprising of taster bars, suitable for 1-2 people) - £23.90 (incl. UK shipping* & VAT).
- 'Deluxe' kit (with full-sized bars, suitable for up to 6 people) - £38.90 (incl. UK shipping* & VAT).

*for international shipments, shipping rates vary. Prices start from £14.95.

We have chocolate kits for an '**Introduction to Craft Chocolate**' session, as well as deeper dive sessions on '**Taste and Flavour**' and '**Chocolate and the Environment**'.

CHOCOLATE AND WINE PAIRING KIT OPTIONS (UK ONLY):

- Chocolate & Two Wines - £57.90 (incl. DPD shipping & VAT).
- Chocolate & Three Wines - £67.90 (incl. DPD shipping & VAT).

CHOCOLATE AND WHISKY PAIRING KIT (UK ONLY):

- Craft Chocolate and Malt Whisky (50cl bottles) – starting at £57.90 (incl. DPD shipping & VAT).

3. OTHER COSTS

- The minimum cost of the chocolate kits for a private booking needs to reach £300 (excl. shipping).
 - This is, for example, at least 16 'pair kits' or 9 'family kits' (you can mix & match).
- We charge £120 (incl. vat) for a private tasting (this is in addition to the costs of the kits and postage).
 - This fee is to cover upfront administration costs, the 90 minute tutored session and covers a prize for the quiz. It does not include logistical support, inclusion of extra materials, etc.
- For in-person sessions, delivered by a host, there is a £150 (incl. vat) surcharge to cover time and travel. For the host.
- Payment is required upfront, and in full, to secure a slot and to start ordering. If you need to add more recipients, we will respond as quickly as we can.
- You can pay either by bank transfer or by card through our website; cocoarunners.com (there is a 3% surcharge on card payments).

4. ORDERING

- We provide a unique coupon for individuals to place their own orders via our online store for free. This means they can track their own delivery, contact their local delivery partner, etc.
- You can also place the individual orders on behalf of the recipients. But you will be responsible for inputting the correct details at checkout and 'chasing' orders, if necessary.

5. SHIPPING LOGISTICS

- All shipments will be sent via Royal Mail Tracked (or Royal Mail Tracked Overseas) unless otherwise specified.
- For international private tastings, we sell the chocolate "ex-warehouse". We separately contract the logistics for international orders. Please note that we cannot guarantee delivery times or reliability for international orders; this is contractually between you and the delivery partner.
- If chocolate is being shipped to countries with high-temperature climates, or during high-temperature weather, we cannot take responsibility for chocolate melting. We will make our customers aware of this in advance, but our packaging is not designed for specific scenarios such as outdoor mailboxes exposed to the sun or customs warehouses which are not temperature-controlled.
- We will do our best to support you should anything go wrong, but please be aware that once the shipments have left our warehouse in Devon, most post offices insist on talking to the recipient rather than us (the seller).
- If something goes awry and replacements need to be sent out or claims need to be made, we will do our best to support you. We will charge for any replacements made or if any extra delivery costs have been incurred.

6. SHIPPING COSTS AND TIMELINES

- Within the UK we ship via Royal Mail Tracked 48, this costs £3.95 incl. VAT. This can be upgraded to "next working day", but any orders will need to be placed (and paid for) before 11 am the day before. We always work to a 'best efforts' basis.
- Any shipment containing bottles requires a DPD service, which costs £7.95 incl. VAT. We cannot ship wine outside the UK.
- International shipping costs and timelines vary depending on location. For indicative purposes:
 - EU and ROW starts at £14.95 via Royal Mail Tracked Overseas.
 - We can arrange for your orders to be shipped with a range of couriers. Please note that for international orders there may sometimes be customs charges and delays.
- For UK shipments we recommend ordering at least a week before the tasting. For international orders, we recommend at least 2 weeks for Europe and 3-4 weeks for North America and ROW.

7. MECHANICS

- Our in-person tastings are available for addresses within Central London only.
- We can host the private tasting on our company Zoom account, but we are able to use Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, or most other platform you would prefer.
- Please note that if we may not be able to use our Zoom if we are already hosting another tasting at the same time.
- Unless specifically requested (and consents granted) we do NOT record sessions.

8. OUTLINING NEXT STEPS

- Confirm the number of participants, whether they're UK or international, which chocolate kit, and your preferred date & time for a tasting.
- Prepay for the above confirmations (either by bank transfer at no extra cost or by card on our website with a 3% surcharge).
- Send the below template email to invitees as their 'ordering instructions', as they will need to order their own kit via our website.
- We will track the usage of your personalised coupon code. This means you can see who has ordered and prompts you if you need to do another 'push'.
- Ahead of the tasting (typically on the same day), we email all the guests with the 'welcome instructions' and meeting link details.

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

(including Natwest, Google, Accenture, Amazon, PayPal, Shell, London Stock Exchange)

- ❑ “Brilliant and insightful! Would definitely recommend it, we had a lot of fun!”.
- ❑ “Thank you for going above and beyond on the logistics and for delivering a very insightful and engaging session! We had a wonderful time!”.
- ❑ “A really fun and informative tasting with a host whose passion and excitement about craft chocolate was infectious”.
- ❑ “What a great idea. A fantastic way to get together with your company over Zoom, I would highly recommend”.
- ❑ “Excellent experience. There is a saying that every day is a school day, I learned a lot about chocolate production during the tasting. It was informative and delivered with enthusiasm”.
- ❑ “Well done all, super client feedback in my breakout [group], I’m delighted. Please pass on my thanks to anyone and everyone involved in deciding on this as an event; it was terrific”.
- ❑ “It was a very enjoyable experience and now feeling high on chocolate. Greatly appreciated”.
- ❑ “It was brilliant. Creative. Interesting. Social. Informative. Delicious”.
- ❑ “Many thanks for inviting us to the chocolate tasting. Fantastic idea and really enjoyable!”.
- ❑ “This week was quite hectic and yesterday I really enjoyed this hour being “now and here”. New energy fulfilled me. When remembering chocolate tasting, I’m still smiling. I really have taken some lessons to learn; up to now I was relying more on % of cocoa and also price. Spencer opened eyes that 85% organic dark chocolate does not mean always what we want to expect. Looking on labels, labels, labels”.
- ❑ “The presenter certainly knows ‘chocolate’ and his knowledge sharing was most entertaining and enlightening. Despite my love for chocolate, he certainly highlighted my lack of familiarity of what goes into a making a good chocolate”.
- ❑ “Thank you for the invite to a memorable event which was very entertaining. It was definitely an interesting hour of indulging in excellent chocolate”.