



How to Taste Vanilla

A tasting wheel and a simple method, from Amadeus Vanilla Beans

The method: closer to wine than you'd think

1. Warm it.

Split a bean and steep it in a little warm milk, or rub the seeds into a spoon of sugar. Heat opens the aroma; a cold bean tells you very little.

2. Nose first.

Smell before you taste. Name the broad family first (floral, fruity, sweet, creamy, woody, smoky, spicy, earthy), then narrow to a specific word.

3. Taste.

What registers on the palate: sweet, bitter, astringent, and how layered it is.

4. Finish.

How long the flavor lingers after you swallow, and what changes as it fades. This is where origins separate most clearly.

5. Compare.

Two beans side by side teach more than one alone. Same milk, same time, same spoon.

Where our beans tend to land

Madagascar (Bourbon)

creamy, sweet, classic; the reference point

Mexico

woody, spicy, a little smoky; deeper, less sweet

Uganda

bold; cocoa and dark-fruit notes; robust in extract

Comoros

Bourbon family; rounded, sweet, faintly floral

Indonesia (Papua)

smoky, woody, earthy; built for long infusions

Tendencies, not rules. Harvest, curing and age all influence aroma and flavor, so vanilla from the same farm in the same region won't always land in exactly the same place on the wheel.

