
**Coffee — Sensory analysis —
Vocabulary**

Café — Analyse sensorielle — Vocabulaire

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

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Coffee — Sensory analysis — Vocabulary

1 Scope

This document defines terms relating to coffee sensory analysis.

This document covers definitions applicable to green, roasted and ground coffee, coffee extracts and soluble coffee.

The terms are given under the following headings:

- a) basic terms of sensory analysis;
- b) generic terms in the sensory assessment of coffee;
- c) terminology relating to coffee-specific odours and tastes;
- d) terms commonly used in sensory assessment of coffee by practitioners.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>

NOTE 1 For additional information on sensory analysis, see ISO 5492:2008.

NOTE 2 For additional terms and definitions on sensory analysis of coffee, see Reference [4].

3.1 Basic terms of sensory analysis

3.1.1

acidity, noun

acid taste, noun

basic taste (3.1.4) produced by dilute aqueous solutions of most acid substances (e.g. citric acid and tartaric acid)

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.3]

3.1.2

aroma, noun

<English sense and French informal language> *odour* (3.1.9) with a pleasant or unpleasant connotation

Note 1 to entry: The terms “aroma” in English and “arôme” in French are not exactly equivalent.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.24]

3.1.3

aroma, noun

<French sense> sensory attribute perceptible by the olfactory organ via the back of the nose when tasting

Note 1 to entry: The terms “aroma” in English and “arôme” in French are not exactly equivalent.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.25]

3.1.4

basic taste, noun

distinctive *taste* ([3.1.12](#)), any one of: acid/*sour* ([3.3.31](#)), bitter, salty, sweet, umami

Note 1 to entry: These tastes are affected by the botanical species of coffee, the degree of roasting and other brewing/extraction procedures.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.2, modified — The definition has been reworded and the note has been replaced.]

3.1.5

bitterness, noun

bitter taste, noun

basic taste ([3.1.4](#)) produced by dilute aqueous solutions of various substances such as quinine, or caffeine

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.5]

3.1.6

flavour, noun

complex combination of the olfactory, gustatory and *trigeminal sensations* ([3.1.15](#)) perceived during tasting

Note 1 to entry: Flavour may be influenced by tactile, thermal, painful and/or kinaesthetic effects.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.20]

3.1.7

mouthfeel, noun

mixed experience derived from sensations in the mouth that relate to physical or chemical properties of a stimulus

Note 1 to entry: Assessors differentiate the physical sensations (e.g. density, viscosity, particulate) as *texture* ([3.1.13](#)) properties and the chemical sensations (e.g. *astringency* ([3.2.2](#)), cooling) as *flavour* ([3.1.6](#)) properties.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.62]

3.1.8

note, noun

distinctive and identifiable feature of an *odour* ([3.1.9](#)) or *flavour* ([3.1.6](#))

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.28]

3.1.9

odour, noun

olfactory, adj

sensation perceived by means of the olfactory organ in sniffing certain volatile substances

Note 1 to entry: The olfactory organ may be stimulated by the volatiles of roast coffee or coffee brew, with the inhaled air stream through the nose or from the mouth cavity via the retronasal route.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.18, modified — The term “olfactory” and a Note 1 to entry have been added.]

3.1.10**saltiness**, noun**salty taste**, noun*basic taste* (3.1.4) produced by dilute aqueous solutions of various substances such as sodium chloride

Note 1 to entry: This taste can mean high mineral concentration in the water used for brewing/extraction of coffee.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.6, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.1.11**sweetness**, noun**sweet taste**, noun*basic taste* (3.1.4) produced by dilute aqueous solutions of natural or artificial substances such as sucrose or aspartameNote 1 to entry: Commonly associated with sweet *aroma* (3.1.2) descriptors such as fruity, chocolate and caramel. It is dependent on the ripeness of the coffee cherry. (This could also be affected by processing method.)

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.7, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.1.12**taste**, noun

sensation perceived by the taste organ when stimulated by certain soluble substances

Note 1 to entry: The term “taste” should not be used to designate the combination of gustatory, olfactory and *trigeminal sensations* (3.1.15) which are designated by the term *flavour* (3.1.6).

Note 2 to entry: Taste organs are the epithelial cells in the mouth cavity, stimulated by the coffee brew.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 2.12, modified — A sentence has been deleted from the Note 1 to entry and a Note 2 to entry has been added.]

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3.1.13**texture**, noun<in the mouth> mechanical, geometrical, surface and *body* (3.2.4) attributes of a product perceptible by means of kinaesthesia and somesthesia receptors and (where appropriate) visual and auditory receptors from the first bite to final swallowing

Note 1 to entry: Beverage preparations with foaming influence the texture of the coffee brew.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.41, modified — The two notes have been replaced with a new Note 1 to entry.]

3.1.14**smell**, verbperceive or to attempt to perceive an *odour* (3.1.9)

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 2.15]

3.1.15**trigeminal sensation**, noun**oro-nasal chemesthesia**, nounsensation resulting from irritation caused by *chemical* (3.3.8) stimuli in the mouth, nose or throat

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 2.19]

3.2 Generic terms in the sensory assessment of coffee

3.2.1

after-taste, noun

residual taste, noun

olfactory and/or gustatory sensation that occurs after the elimination of the product, and differs from the sensations perceived while the product was in the mouth

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.65]

3.2.2

astringency, noun

astringent, adj

complex sensation, accompanied by shrinking, drawing or puckering of the skin or mucosal surface in the mouth

Note 1 to entry: Produced by substances such as kaki tannins, sloe tannins, cranberry, Spanish lime, green plantain peel or unripe green skin.

Note 2 to entry: Astringency is a *mouthfeel* (3.1.7) suggested to be directly transmitted to the brain through trigeminal nerve endings in the mouth.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.10, modified — The definition has been reworded and notes to entry have been added.]

3.2.3

balanced, adj

coffee with an adequate proportion of each characteristic under evaluation and with none of them excessively dominant

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3.2.4

body, noun

consistency, compactness of *texture* (3.1.13), *fullness*, *richness*, *flavour* (3.1.6) or substance of a product

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Note 1 to entry: This concept along with *acidity* (3.1.1) and *aroma* (3.1.2) is used to assess the quality of coffee.

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.27, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.2.5

creamy, adj

mild, unctuous and persistent sensation in the buccal cavity

Note 1 to entry: Caused, basically, by suspended lipids in the coffee brew.

[SOURCE: NTC 2758:2002, 4.84, modified.]

3.2.6

dry aroma coffee, noun

fragrance, noun

odour (3.1.9) of roasted and ground coffee before adding hot water

Note 1 to entry: This term is often used in coffee cupping.

3.2.7

flat, adj

product perceived to be below the expected organoleptic level

Note 1 to entry: Not to be confused with *insipid* (3.2.10).

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.71, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.2.8**hard**, adjperception characterized by high levels of *bitterness* (3.1.5) and *astringency* (3.2.2)**3.2.9****heavy**, adj**dense**, adj

sensation of lingering mouth after-feel caused by high contents of soluble solids or fine suspended particles in a coffee brew

Note 1 to entry: Not to be confused with “body”.

3.2.10**insipid**, adjproduct with a much lower level of *flavour* (3.1.6) than expected

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.68]

3.2.11**neutral**, adj

product without any distinct characteristic

[SOURCE: ISO 5492:2008, 3.70]

3.2.12**smooth**, adj

gentle and pleasant sensation which does not produce harshness in the buccal cavity

Note 1 to entry: Indicating certain levels of fatty suspended substances and allowing for easy beverage ingestion due to moderate amounts of lipid in the coffee brew.

[SOURCE: NTC 2758:2002, 4.93, modified.] ISO 18794:2018
<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/4dc8354c-08ff-45a4-8655-0199b46dd4df/iso-18794-2018>**3.2.13****strong**, adj*flavour* (3.1.6) indicative of *balanced* (3.2.3) coffee with high *body* (3.2.4) and intense *taste* (3.1.12) remaining in the mouth**3.2.14****thin**, adjcoffee brew of poor *body* (3.2.4) features

Note 1 to entry: Due to few soluble solids, essentially derived from a light roasting or inadequate preparation.

3.2.15**wet aroma coffee**, noun**cup aroma**, noun*odour* (3.1.9) of roasted and ground coffee perceived after adding hot water upon preparation

Note 1 to entry: This term is often used in coffee cupping.

3.3 Terminology relating to coffee-specific odours and tastes**3.3.1****acrid**, adj*rough* (3.4.10), bitter, *astringent* (3.2.2), *spicy* (3.3.32) and sharp *note* (3.1.8)

Note 1 to entry: Usually associated with particularly black beans.

[SOURCE: NTC 2758:2002, 4.28, modified.]