

Flavor Descriptors

Everyone working to create a new flavor needs to have a common understanding of the desired flavor profile and the flavors they taste during its creation. This can be difficult since everyone's perception, expectations and experiences are different. That's why using words called flavor descriptors is so important to the flavor development process.

The lists of words are simply an agreed upon collection of adjectives which everyone draws from when speaking about the flavor they are tasting or desiring. The lists aren't meant to be all-inclusive, though. They can help jumpstart your mind to think of other words for what you are tasting. There is no right or wrong word — but descriptor use works best when everyone has a frame of reference for the words being used.

Banana

Descriptive Terms

Amylacetate
Brown
Candy-like
Cooked
Creamy
Diffusive
Estery
Floral, Geranium
Fresh, Sulfidic
Green
Mashed
Peely
Pulpy
Ripe
Rotten
Starchy

Descriptive Types

Banana Nut Bread
Pudding
Bonomo Taffy
Circus Peanuts
Banana Cream Pie
Puree
Baby Food
Crème de Banana

Blackberry

Descriptive Terms

Astringent
Earthy
Fermented
Fresh
Green
Jammy
Juicy
Musty
Perfumey
Seedy
Sweet
Woody

Descriptive Types

Jam
Brandy
Pie Filling
Tea

Blueberry

Descriptive Terms

Berry
Cooling
Floral, Linalool
Fresh
Fruity
Grape
Green
Green, Stemmy
Jammy
Musky
Perfumey
Ripe
Tart
Woody

Descriptive Types

Pie Filling
Juice
Jam
Fresh Berry

Caramel

Descriptive Terms

Browned
Burnt
Butterscotch
Buttery
Caramelized Sugar
Caramellic
Cooked
Creamy
Custard
Drying
Egg
Fruity
Honey
Malt
Maple
Milky
Molasses
Nutty
Oxidized
Raisin
Rich
Roasted
Smoky
Toasted
Toffee
Vanilla
Vanillin
Waxy

Cherry

Descriptive Terms

Benzaldehyde
Berry, Strawberry
Bitter Almond Nut
Burning Bite
Candy-like
Cinnamon-like
Citrus, Citronella
Cooked
Floral, Rosy
Fresh
Fruity, Banana
Green, Aldehydic
Juicy
Liqueur Type
Maraschino
Medicinal
Metallic
Morello, Dark
Mushy
Musty
Pit Type
Red (Amyl Butyrate)
Ripe, Bruised
Sour
Sweet
Tart
Wild
Winey

Descriptive Types

Kool-Aid Beverage
Branded Gelatin
Bing
Pie Filling
Cough Syrup
Cough Drop
Maraschino
Black Cherry
Sour Cherry
Morello Cherry
Queen Anne
Lifesavers Candy
Fresh-picked
Jolly Rancher
Soda Pop
Cobbler

Chocolate

Descriptive Terms

Alkalized
Astringent
Acidic, Harsh
Beany
Bitter
Black Cocoa
Botanical
Caramellic
Cocoa Powder
Coffee, Burnt
Dairy, Buttery
Dark Chocolate
Dirty
Dutched
Earthy
Ethyl Vanillin
Fatty
Floral
Fruity
Fudgey
Green
Hot Chocolate
Ice Cream
Liqueur
Malted Milk Balls
Malty
Marshmallow
Medicinal, Phenolic
Milky
Musty
Nutty
Oily
Perfumey
Pyrazine
Resinous
Roasted
Rosy
Rubbery
Semi-sweet
Skunky
Sour
Spicy
Stale
Sulfitic
Sweet
Tea

Tobacco

Vanillin
White Chocolate
Woody

Descriptive Types

Devil's Food Cake
Hershey Bar
Hershey Syrup
Milk Shake
Morsels, Semi-sweet
Nestlé Quik Oreo® Cookie

Grape

Descriptive Terms

Buttery, Estery
Candy-like
Caramellic, Maltol
Cool, Frosty
Diffusive
Dry
Floral, Perfumey
Fresh
Fruity, Banana
Green, Seedless
Jammy, Jelly
Juicy
Leafy
Lemon, Citrus
Methyl Anthranilate
Musty
Purple, Concord
Ripe
Seedy
Sour, Acetic Acid
Sweet
Tart
Vanillin Sweet
Woody

Descriptive Types

Bubblegum
Sour Candy
Jelly
Welch's® Juice
Jam
Mogen David Wine
Concord
Green Seedless
White Juice
Red
Cough Syrup (Dimetapp®)
Soda Pop
Popsicle

Grapefruit

Descriptive Terms

Aldehydic, Decanal
Bitter, Naringin
Bitter, Orange
Chemical, Artificial
Citrusy, Peel Oil
Dry, Astringent
Fresh
Green
Juicy
Peely, Nootkatone
Pungent

Sulfur
Tart, Sour
Terpeney

Green Apple

Descriptive Terms

Acidic
Astringent
Bitter
Buttery
Cooked
Earthy
Estery
Fresh Fruit
Fruity, Green
Green
Juicy
Leafy
Mealy
Peely
Raw
Sour
Tart
Waxy

Descriptive Types

Jolly Rancher Type
Bubblegum Type
Granny Smith

Lemon

Descriptive Terms

Acidic
Aldehydic, Citral
Candy-like
Citral
Citrus
Cooked, Pie Filling
Fleshy
Floral, Linalool
Floral, Rosy, Geraniol
Fresh
Juicy
Lemongrass, Green
Lime
Over-ripe
Peely, Rindy
Seedy
Sour, Tart
Sulfide
Sweet
Terpeney, Oxidized, Stale
Waxy
Woody

Descriptive Types

Candied Peel
Cooked Pie Filling
Fresh Juice
Fruit Cereal
Furniture Polish
Gelatin
Lemon Oil
Lemonade
Lemonheads Candy
Wafers

Lime
Descriptive Terms
Fresh, Green
Acidic
Juicy
Fleshy
Lemon, Citral
Sweet
Piney
Dry, Medicinal
Oily
Camporaceous
Citrusy
Terpeney, Oxidized
Floral, Terpineol
Peely

Descriptive Types
Gummy Bear
Lemon-lime Soda
Lime Juice
Key Lime Pie
Candied Peel
Hard Candy
Lime Oil
Fruit Cereal

Maple
Descriptive Terms
Acidic
Alfalfa
Anise
Astringent, Drying
Balanced
Botanical
Bready
Brown Sugar
Burnt, Roasted
Butter
Butterscotch
Buttery, Creamy
Caramellic
Celery-like
Chocolate
Coffee, Roasted
Corn Syrup
Cotton Candy
Floral
Foenugreek
Fruity
Green
Hay-like
Herbal
Honey
Horehound
Licorice
Malty
Maple Sap
Marshmallow
Metallic
Molasses
Musty, Mossy
Nutty
Perfumey
Prune
Raisin
Rummy
Salty
Smoky
Sorghum
Tinny
Tobacco
Vanilla
Vanillin
Weedy
Yeasty

Descriptive Types
Pure Maple Sugar
Log Cabin®
Aunt Jemima®
Aunt Jemima® Lite
Mrs. Butterworth's®
Cream Center

Orange
Descriptive Terms
Acidic
Aldehydic, Fatty
Bitter Orange
Citrusy
Creamy, Cardboardy
Estery, Chemical
Fleshy
Floral, Waxy
Fresh, Green
Fruity
Juicy
Mandarin, Tangerine
Oily
Peely
Peely, Rindy
Seed Note
Sweet
Tart, Sour
Terpeney, Oxidized
Woody

Descriptive Types
Fresh Juice
Soda Pop
Candied Peep
Grated Peel
Orange Blossom
Confectionary, Slices
Curacao, Triple Sec
Gelatin
Fruit Cereal
Orange Oil
Temple
Navel
Tangelo

Peppermint
Descriptive Terms
Acidic
Anisic
Aromatic, Heavy
Camphoraceous
Cedarwood
Chemical
Clean
Cool, Cooling
Crushed Leaf
Drying
Earthy, Musty
Ethereal
Eucalyptus
Fragrant
Fresh
Fruity, Pear-like
Grassy
Green
Herbal
Ketonic
Medicinal
Menthollic
Metallic
Minty
Oily
Peroxide
Pine Oil
Sharp, Pungent
Solvent
Sour, Vinegar
Sweet
Vanilla
Weedy
Woody, Resinous

Descriptive Types
Altoids
Candy Cane
Cough Lozenge
Doublemint® Gum
Fresh, Picked Leaves
Schnapps
Starlight Mint
York Peppermint Patties

Raspberry
Descriptive Terms
Berry
Butter
Cherry
Floral
Fresh
Fruity
Green
Jammy
Perfumey
Ripe
Rosy
Seedy
Soapy
Sulfuraceous
Tart

Descriptive Types
Fresh, Mashed
Sweet Blue Candy-like
Black Raspberry
Red Puree
Liqueur
Juice
Branded Gelatin
Preserves

Red Apple
Descriptive Terms
Blossom
Buttery
Candy-like
Chemical
Cooked
Dry
Estery
Floral
Fresh
Fruity
Green
Juicy
Mealy
Musty
Peely
Pulpy
Red
Ripe
Sweet
Winey

Descriptive Types
Macintosh
Pie Filling
Cobbler Type
Apple Sauce
Motts Apple Juice
Delicious

Spearmint
Descriptive Terms
Balsamic
Camphoraceous
Clean
Clove
Crushed Leaf
Diffusive
Drying
Ethereal
Fragrant
Fresh
Fruity
Green
Heavy
Herbal
Ketonic, Carvone
Medicinal
Minty
Oily
Smooth
Solvent
Spicy
Sulfidic, Musty
Sweet

Terpeney
Warm
Weedy

Descriptive Types
Branded Mouthwash
Branded Toothpaste
Chewing Gum
Green Leaf Jellies
Lozenge
Schnapps

Strawberry
Descriptive Terms
Alliaceus (Onion-like)
Burnt
Buttery
Candy-like
Cooked
Cotton Candy
Creamy
Floral, Rosy
Fresh
Fruity, Berry Maltol
Green
Jammy
Ripe
Seedy
Sweet

Descriptive Types
Fresh Berry
Jam
Ripe
Preserves
Mushy
Cobbler

Vanilla
Descriptive Terms
Acidic
Astringent
Baby Powder
Balanced
Beany
Bitter
Caramellic
Cocoa, Chocolate
Cotton Candy, Marshmallow
Creamy, Dairy, Fatty, Rich-tasting
Fig-like
Floral
Fruity
Harsh
Hay-like
Heliotrope (Floral)
Honey-like
Maple-like
Nutty
Perfumey
Prune-like
Raisin-like
Roasted
Rum-like
Sharp
Smoky
Smooth
Spicy
Sweet
Tobacco
Unbalanced
Winey
Woody

Descriptive Types
Edy's® Ice Cream
Breyers® Ice Cream with Beans
Carvel Soft Serve
Dairy Queen® Soft Serve
French Vanilla Coffee
Household Extract
JELL-O Cooked Pudding
Marshmallow
Milk Shake Nilla® Wafers

Rice Krispie® Treats White
Cake
Yogurt

Watermelon
Descriptive Terms
Candy-like
Cantaloupe-like Chemical,
Melonal Cherry-like
Estery
Fresh, Green Juicy
Melony
Overripe, Rotten Pickled
Pulpy
Rindy
Seedy
Sweet, Sugary

Descriptive Types
Jolly Rancher Candy Air-
heads Taffy Fresh
Yellow Melon Bubblicious
Gum Seedless

Wintergreen
Descriptive Terms
Aromatic
Bark, Birch-like Burning
Camphoraceous Chemical
Cool
Fermented
Floral
Fragrant
Fruity
Grassy
Green, Rooty Herbal
Medicinal
Menthollic
Methyl Salicylate Minty
Oily
Pungent, Strong Spicy
Sweet
Warm, Leafy

Descriptive Types
Branded Toothpaste Breath
Mint
Copenhagen® Smokeless
Tobacco
Linament
Lozenge
Tic Tac®