Caledonian (Loch Oreet)
Nose
Floral, akin to samphire
Body
Big fruity flavours of apples, pears and avocados
Finish
Intensely sweet but culminates with tangy, but pleasant, tin
Texture
Plump and silky
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

Camel
Nose
Seaweed and rockpools
Body
Cucumber and lettuce with touch of lemon juice
Finish
Sharp metallic zing in the midst of soothing sweetness
Texture
Smooth and silky
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

Colchester
Nose
The smell of the open sea, iodine and ozone
Body
A very clear flavour of salted butter
Finish
A metallic finish, perhaps zinc, with potting soil and mushroom essence
Texture
Firm and creamy
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

Colonsay
Nose
Very slight sea breeze and geranium
Body
Woody and nutty; avocado and poisen
Finish
Strong white sugar finish
Texture
Mushy
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

Fal
Nose
Very delicate seawater
Body
A manifestly nutty taste
Finish
A real & tidy burst of seaweed that quickly recedes
Texture
Plump, meaty and creamy
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

Loch Ryan
Nose
The smell of a sandy shore
Body
A nutty, woody oyster with lemon and cut grass undertones
Finish
A clean earthy zinc finish
Texture
Juicy and plump
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

Maldon
Nose
Brackish
Body
Very subtle taste of driftwood
Finish
A slow-burning strong metallic finish which builds to a crescendo
Texture
Chewy and firm
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

Milford Haven
Nose
Lodine and seaweet
Body
A smooth salted butter and cucumber taste
Finish
A very clean, dry stainless steel finish
Texture
Meaty with just enough bite
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

Portsmouth Harbour
Nose
Iodine and seaweed
Body
A smooth salted butter and cucumber
Finish
A long lasting clean copper finish with pleasant sweetness
Texture
Firm and plump
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

West Mersea
Nose
Very distilled butter notes
Body
A complex flavour – salted butter then sweet cashew
Finish
A lingering medium sweetness
Texture
Plump, firm and meaty
Flavour
Saltiness ✿ Sweetness ✿ Umami ✿

Shellfish
Association of Great Britain

The flavours of oysters
a guide to tasting
**Oyster guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flavour</th>
<th>Texture</th>
<th>Finish</th>
<th>Nose</th>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Finish</th>
<th>Texture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frenchman's Creek (Helford)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Light, sweet, nutty</td>
<td>Deep sweet, nutty flavour of cashews and brown sugar</td>
<td>A finish with hints of forest floor and bark</td>
<td>Firm &amp; Plump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whitstable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very soft &amp; silky</td>
<td>Deep savoury and nutty pools</td>
<td>A definite aroma of a sea breeze</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lindisfarne</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very silky</td>
<td>Mustard and brown grass</td>
<td>A crisp metallic smack. Distinct tin with salt.</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>River Exe</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slow coming but a durable copper hit</td>
<td>Nutty butter flavour with hints of cucumber and herbs</td>
<td>A deep flavour of wood and nuts</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duchy Special (Helford)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deep complex flavours of pecan nut, avocado and cucumber</td>
<td>Succulent cashew nutty taste with a noticeable sweetness</td>
<td>A definite aroma of a sea breeze</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poole</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rich flavour of walnut and avocado</td>
<td>A delicate nose suggestive of samphire and geranium</td>
<td>Generally neutral but with a very faint sense of sea-breeze</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maldon</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A nutty bite.</td>
<td>A nutty bite, defined astrangent aroma of sea-salt</td>
<td>A crisp metallic finish</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portland</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A delicate finish</td>
<td>A natural bouquet of freshly-caught crab and pepper</td>
<td>Generally neutral but with a very faint sense of sea-breeze</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Menai</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strong sweetness</td>
<td>Unmistakable taste of grapefruit, lemon, apples and herbs</td>
<td>A crisp metallic finish</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumbrae</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Full flavoured</td>
<td>Light, limpid and available</td>
<td>A crisp metallic finish</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jersey</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strong sweetness</td>
<td>Fresh and available</td>
<td>Smooth and mellow</td>
<td>Meaty &amp; Chewy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Flavour**
- Saltiness
- Sweetness
- Umami

**Texture**
- Very soft & silky
- Firm, meaty and plump

**Finish**
- Slow build up into a lingering tang
- Thin and delicate

**Nose**
- Fresh shiokomi and seaweed
- Meaty & chewy
- Nutty bite
- Light, limpid
- Light, nutty
- Rich aroma of the sea
- Fresh and available
- Strong sweetness
- Strong sweetness
- Full flavoured

**Body**
- Crisp flavour of green wood and cucumber
- Nutty butter flavour with hints of cucumber and herbs
- Defined astrangent aroma of sea-salt
- Nutty, defined astrangent aroma of sea-salt
- Nutty bite, defined astrangent aroma of sea-salt
- Nutty butter
- Nutty butter

**Introduction**

Eating oysters is a uniquely intoxicating experience. No other food carries as an aural transmutation as strong as an oyster: the ebb and flow of taste in mouth.

However, there are large differences among oysters with regard to taste, body and nose; the environmental conditions have a shape-shifting impact on flavors. Tasting from some overly salty to fiery, some have fruity notes, mineral flavour or even hints of spice. Oysters from the same Cooler can vary in flavor depending upon exactly where they are grown.

**‘Rocks’ and ‘Flats’**

There are two types of oysters widely consumed and available in the UK. The Pacific oyster: stock oyster available all year round and the native or ‘flat’ oyster available from September to April.

**Why do oysters taste different?**

Oysters filter by sifting water through their system – a single oyster can filter up to 10 litres of water per hour. The flavour of oysters is a function of the minerals, salinity, and the type of algae (or ‘merroir’ even?!)

Different oysters suit different occasions and different people. Why do oysters taste different?

- Saltiness
- Sweetness
- Umami

- *Umami (the Japanese word meaning “the essence of deliciousness”) is a fifth category of taste, separate from the familiar quartet of sweet, salty, sour, and bitter. Umami is perhaps best described as savoury. It’s what makes chicken broth & soy sauce taste ‘meaty’. Free amino acids, especially glutamate, are responsible for umami. When an oyster is called brothy, that’s umami. In the oyster world, it’s the combination of these three, that sets them apart from just being salty or sweet.*

- **Why do oysters taste different?**

- **Oyster tasting is a lot like wine tasting.**

- Rather than order a dozen or half-dozen of ‘house’ oysters why not try a taste flat, almost buttery.

- Oysters with very high salinity, can taste bitter; you did not know oysters could taste so different. This guide aims to taste, body and nose; the environmental conditions have a function of the minerals, salinity, and the type of algae (or ‘merroir’ even?!)

- Different oysters suit different occasions and different people. Why do you need a guide?

- Differing oysters will suit different occasions and different people. If you haven’t yet been bowled over by oysters, you may well have been eating the wrong stuff.

- Maybe you didn’t know oysters could taste so different. This guide aims to demonstrate the high range of flavours that oyster’s exhibit.

- How to ‘taste’ an oyster

- Oyster tasting is a bit like wine tasting. We recommend that you have your oyster in a little glass and use a little spatula to allow the flavours to cross the palate and develop fully.