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## How-To: Host a Rum Tasting Party

By Bridget Shirvell - August 15, 2013



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Rum is a spirit to which everyone gravitates during the summer. Few, however, buy sipping rums -- a run to the local liquor store for rum means that a bar is set up at home ready for a **Mojito**, a Dark 'n' Stormy, or a **Classic Daiquiri**. One look at the liquor shelves reveals many choice rums including light rum, gold rum, dark rum, spiced rum and even flavored rum. With so many types of rum and **National Rum Day** approaching on **August 16**, it seems only appropriate to learn more about one of Latin America's favorite spirits.

Whether you're a rum novice or a seasoned rum drinker, hosting a rum tasting party is fun way to spend an evening with friends. Rum experts David Cid, **BACARDI brand master**, and Vance Henderson, Beverage Director at **Cuba Libre** in Washington, D.C., shared their tips on setting up your very own rum tasting party.

"Rum was viewed as a mixing spirit, but there's been a movement in recent years to appreciate rum for its uniqueness," Henderson said. To truly appreciate the spirit, Henderson and Cid suggest selecting a few different kinds of rum for your tasting. Different than wine where you can taste many varieties during one sitting, they recommend sampling between three and four rums, maximum.

"Tasting of three rums can be a rewarding experience," Cid said. "It can provide insight into three products while setting a pace that allows for proper nosing and tasting techniques to be applied."

Next, tips from the experts on how to host a rum tasting party...

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So, what type of rums should you select? Well, that depends on your preference. You can compare different styles of the same rum according to brand, or stage a tasting based on age. Another option is to compare light to dark varieties. To get an overall look at the various types of rums, Henderson suggests trying white, spiced, gold, and dark rums. If you want to do an age-based testing, he recommends trying 5, 10, 25, and 30 year-aged rums.

Whatever route you go, Cid said a tasting is most effective if you stagger the rums based on the intensity of flavor; order your rums from light to dark or neutral to full flavor profiles.

After you've settled on the types of rum, finish your preparations with the right accompaniments. You want to use glasses that will trap the rum's aroma, such as Bordeaux wine glasses or scotch tasting glasses. Serve the rum at room temperature and have a bottle of water, also at room temperature, for every guest. In terms of food, Cid recommends serving chocolate to cleanse the palate between tastings, but to avoid serving an actual meal in order to concentrate solely on the flavors of the rum.

During the tasting, swirl the rum first to allow the rum to release its aroma. Inhale and smell the rum before taking a sip to taste. Then, take a second, larger sip. Savor the flavors that you're experiencing. At this point, you and your guests can comment on what you taste. The rum, especially the gold or spiced rum will taste different based on the type of barrel it was aged in. Don't put pressure on yourself, everyone will likely taste something a little different in each rum.

Still not sure if sipping rums is for you? No problem! You can get into the National Rum Days spirit with food, too. Try one of these rum-soaked recipes, instead: [Mango Rum Sorbet](#), [Rum-Glazed Shrimp with Charred Sweet Corn and Coconut Relish](#), or [Hemingway's Frozen Special Daiquiri](#).



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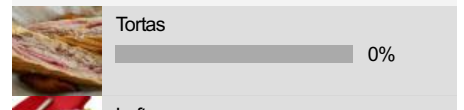
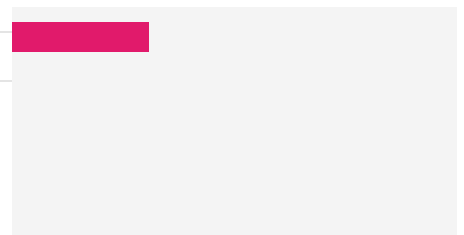


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