

Great Taste judging resumes, going the extra mile to discover this year's stars



Judging in 2019

Following nearly two months of delays to this year's Great Taste judging process, the Guild of Fine Food has announced the recommencement of this year's competition, with regular members of the panel now judging from home. Working with teammates online to ensure that robust judging standards are maintained and the quality of feedback is not compromised, the judges will blind-taste, assess and provide comments remotely, before awarding stars from the world's largest and most revered food and drink accreditation scheme.

As judging was interrupted by lockdown measures just two weeks into the schedule, the organisers still have over 11,000 products left to judge, out of [this year's 12,734 entries](#). Necessitating a swift reinvention of the competition's goods handling operation, the remote judging system has been designed to uphold the key aspects of Great Taste's rigorous judging process, while maintaining social distancing. Each product will be blind-tasted and appraised by multiple judging teams, bringing in further judges as and when required in order to reach conclusive final ratings.

Promising good news for food and drink producers across the UK and beyond, many of whom have reported significant losses in sales due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's results will provide an important boost for the industry. With 1-, 2- and 3-star winners set to be announced by late-summer, [Great Taste](#) will shine a spotlight on this year's best products, as well as providing highly valued expert feedback, helping producers to bounce back from many months of extremely challenging trading conditions.



John Farrand, managing director of the Guild of Fine Food, organisers of Great Taste, explains: *“Nothing could have prepared the food and drink industry for what was coming in 2020, but it’s been hugely inspiring to hear how independent producers have adapted their businesses to survive. Facing cancelled orders, lost opportunities, furloughed staff and prolonged uncertainty, everyone from established brands to tiny start-ups have had to dig deep to weather the lockdown, so we knew we had to find a way to get Great Taste back up-and-running and provide a lift for these businesses. We could all do with some good news at the moment and Great Taste delivers exactly that – championing outstanding products and reminding us all about the lovingly crafted food and drink from our local areas and far beyond. With so many people stacking their cupboards with mass-produced items during the current crisis, they’re going to be in need of something a bit special on the other side, especially in the run-up to the all-important Christmas period. Rest assured, our Great Taste judges will find it.”*

Read the latest updates on Great Taste 2020 [here](#).

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What is Great Taste?

Great Taste, founded in 1994 and organised by the Guild of Fine Food, has judged over 146,000 products in the last 26 years; each one has been blind-tasted by a team of judges who are dedicated to finding the most exquisite tasting food and drink regardless of branding or packaging.

Great Taste ratings

3-star: Extraordinarily tasty foods – less than 3% of products are awarded a 3-star each year – don’t leave the shop without buying it!

2-star: Above and beyond delicious – less than 10% of entries will achieve this rating

1-star: A food that delivers fantastic flavour. Approximately 25% of entries will achieve this rating each year.

What are Great Taste judges looking for?

They're looking for great texture and appearance. They judge the quality of ingredients and how well the maker has put the food or drink together. But above all, they are looking for truly great taste.

How do they work?

Each team of four judges blind-tastes around 25 products per session, discussing each product as a coordinating food writer transcribes their comments directly onto the Great Taste website which producers access after judging is completed. Over the years, numerous food businesses, start-ups and well-established producers have been advised how to modify their foods and have subsequently gone on to achieve Great Taste stars. Any product that is deemed worthy of a 1-, 2- or 3-star Great Taste award is moved around multiple judging tables by a team of arbitrators before the final award is given. If judges feel that a product needs some adjustment, and is therefore not likely to receive an award, the food or drink gets a second chance on a referral table, where another team blind-tastes and deliberates. For a Great Taste 3-star award, the vast majority in the room – which can be as many as 30-40 experts – must agree that the food or drink delivers that indescribable 'wow' factor.

What do the stars mean for producers?

Recognised as a reliable stamp of excellence among consumers, retailers and major food buyers alike, Great Taste success can be the gateway to exciting opportunities for food and drink producers. As well as seeing an uplift in sales and revenue, award-winning producers also get to enjoy raised awareness by appearing in the Great Taste book, a unique directory used by many food retailers, supplying samples for high profile events and exhibiting as part of Great Taste Markets at events including RHS Hampton Court Flower Show, CarFest and Countryfile Live. Receiving a 3-, 2- or 1-star rating for products really puts producers on the map, while opening doors to investment and export opportunities.

What should consumers look for?

The logo. The Great Taste symbol is their guarantee a product has been through a rigorous and independent judging process. It's not about smart packaging or clever marketing – it's all about taste.

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