

Mezcal & Tequila

Learning Resources



Tequila:



TEQUILA PRODUCTION

- Tequila is produced from the Blue Maguey plant or Agave Tequilana grown in the states of:
 - Jalisco
 - Nayarit
 - Guanajuato
 - Michoacan
 - Tamaulipas
- The Maguey matures in approximately 6-8 years.
More rapidly than that for Mezcal producing Magueys

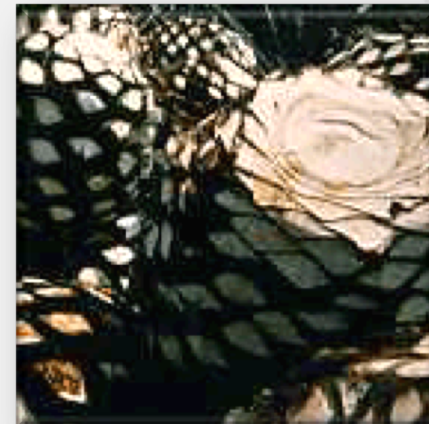


MEZCAL

- The Mezcal of Oaxaca are made in small scale production using traditional methods.
- The Magueys used in production vary:
 - The Giant Pulque Maguey.
 - Maguey Silvestre. (Wild)
 - Maguey Tobala. (A rare mountain plant)
 - Maguey Espadin. (most commonly used)

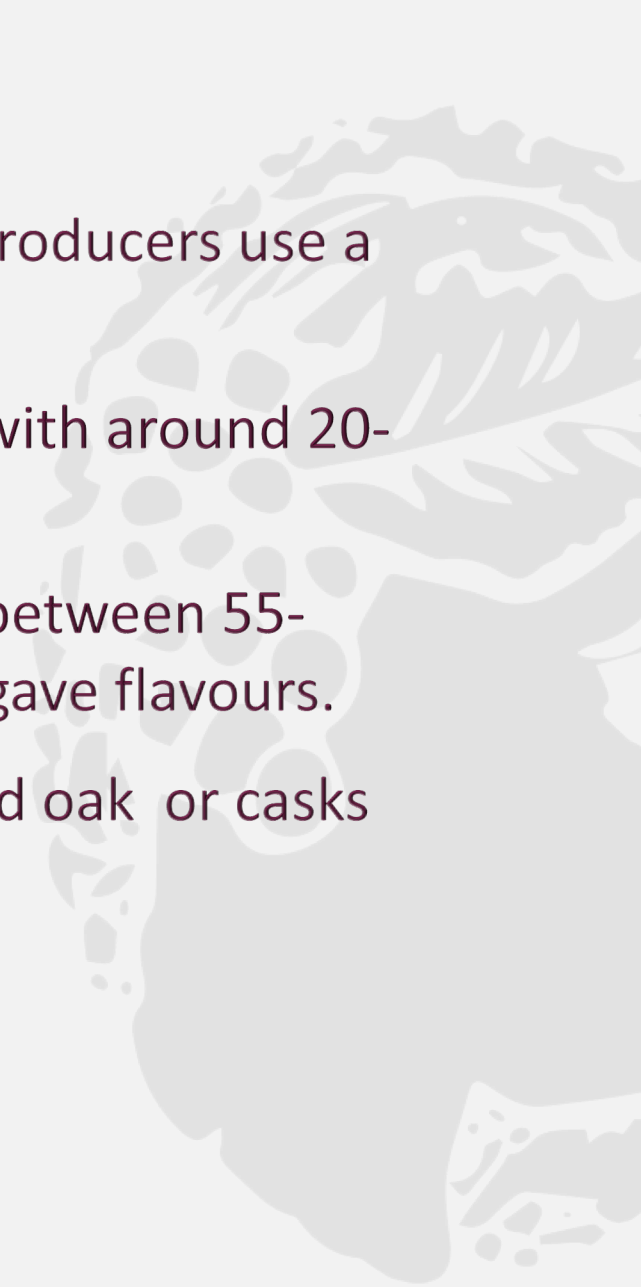
TEQUILA PRODUCTION

- The plant's leaves are removed, leaving the heart (the Pina), which weighs 30-80kg.
- The prepared Pina's are shredded, cooked with steam 35-50 hours to convert sugars, then pressed to extract the juices.
- Sugar and yeast are added to the juice and fermentation commences.
- The resulting Pulque has an alcohol content of approximately 8%



DISTILLATION

- The Pulque is traditionally distilled twice in pot stills but some producers use a combination of pot and patent stills.
- After the first distillation the spirit is known as destrozamiento with around 20-25% alcohol.
- The second distillation – rectification produces a distillate with between 55-75% alcohol. Ideally the distillate at 55% better preserves the Agave flavours.
- Maturation is optional. Aged Tequila may be aged in new or used oak or casks which have previously held other spirits (American Whiskey)



TEQUILA - STYLES

- **Plata, Blanco, Joven Plata, Blanco, Joven**

- Not aged. Can be very pungent with vegetal and pepper spice notes

- May be permitted to rest on oak for up to 60days

- **Mixto:**

- At least 51% of the alcohol in Tequila must come from the distillation of Blue Agave juice.

- The remainder may come from any sugar distillate.

- These Tequilas can be labelled Mixto.

- Tequila made entirely from Blue Agave will generally have 100% Agave on the label.

- Not aged. Can be very pungent with vegetal

- and pepper spice notes.

- **Joven Abocado:**

- Not aged. Caramel used to colour and flavour.



AGED TEQUILA

- The ageing of the spirit in wood turns the Tequila golden in colour .
- It is marketed as different grades of anejo (years) at prices ranging upwards according to the months and years of ageing.
- **Reposado:**
 - Rested Min 2 months but less than 12 months in oak cask. Mellow flavours.
- **Añejo:**
 - Aged for a minimum of 1 year but less than 3 years in new or old oak casks.
- **Extra Añejo:**
 - Aged a minimum of 3 years in small oak casks.
 - Complex flavours like old Cognac develop.

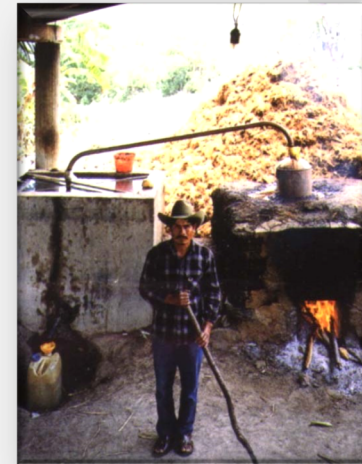
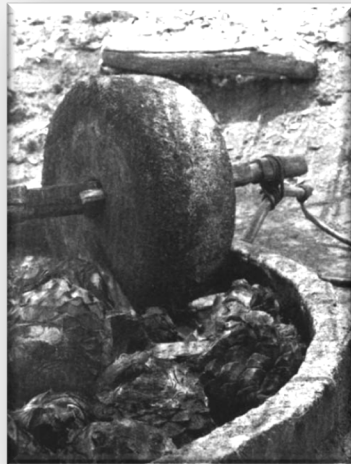


MEZCAL – TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION METHODS

- Each village propagates the plants until they are approx 2 years old when they are transplanted into mountain locations to grow for a further 6 years.
- When prepared, the Pinas are placed in a rock-lined conical pit (Palenque) covered with hot rocks, leaves and earth.
- They are baked for 2-3 days absorbing flavours from earth and wood smoke.



- After roasting the Pinas are placed inside a stone circle.
- In the centre of the circle is a vertical post connecting an axle to a millstone which is pulled around by a horse to crush the Pinas.
- The crushed Maguey is then placed in vats which hold approx 1000 litres and about 10% water is added.
- The mash is left to ferment with its own yeasts for 8-10 days.
- Up to 49% other sugars may be added.
- The liquids and solids are then distilled twice in copper stills of approx 100-litre capacity.



SINGLE VILLAGE MEZCAL

Chichicapa:

- Produced at 2000m.
- Smoky nose and taste.

San Luis del Rio:

- Produced at 2500m
- Spicy roasted fruit taste. Smoky finish.

Santo Domingo Albarradas:

- Produced at 2500m.
- Light nose, smooth finish with roasted pear flavours.

Minero:

- Produced at 1900m
- Using clay stills .
- Clean fresh fruity flavours (Vanilla & figs)

Tobala:

- Made from wild mountain Magueys at about 2500m
- Fresh fruity flavours (Cinnamon & Mango)





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