



INTERNATIONAL
TEQUILA ACADEMY

TEQUILA ESSENTIALS

Study material for the
Level 1 - CertTequila Qualification



**INTERNATIONAL
TEQUILA ACADEMY**

**CertTequila Certification
Course**

LEVEL 1

Course material

International Tequila Academy

Level 1

Course Material

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The Tequila Essentials - Study Material for the level 1 -
CertTequila Qualification

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Published by: Adam Fodor / International Tequila
Academy

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1st edition

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LESSON 1

How to read a tequila label

1.1

The Tequila Sign



Whenever you grab a bottle of tequila the single most important sign on the label is the word **“tequila”**.

Now it may sound evident to check the tequila sign, still there are way too many bottles that are trying to outsmart consumers with some **clever design tricks**.

These usually include **Mexican references like sombreros, ranches, cactus, agave and using the labeling term 100% agave**. Believe it or not, many tourists are tricked into buying cheap liquors thinking it is tequila.



One of the most important things when reading the word tequila on the label is to associate it with **legal protection**.

You can think of it as a “Mexican Intellectual Property” protected by international trade agreements. You can even think of it as a Mexican Trademark with special rules!



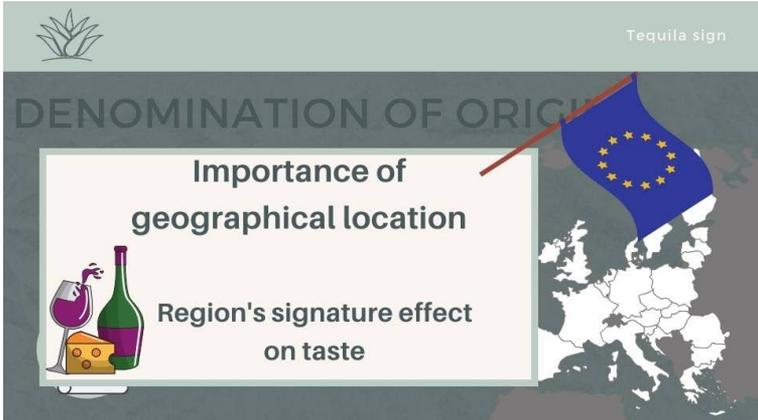
Just to give you an example - back in 2018, the well-known entrepreneur Elon Musk wanted to create his own “fantasy brand” called Teslaquila.

However, in the end he failed to register his brand as the Tequila industry vetoed his application and issued a clear legal statement that his brand name sparked confusion amongst Tequila consumers. Their argument was the lack of guarantee that Mr. Musk will use agave at all for his brand and won't produce let's say rum or vodka.



In order to produce Tequila:

1. He would have had to find an Authorized Producer first
2. Then obtain the permission to use the word tequila from the Mexican Patent Office
3. and only then can he use his already registered brand Tesla to create his now fully legal tequila.



When a spirit becomes a legal intellectual property of a country, that is when we start talking about **Denomination of Origin**.

The idea of the Denomination of Origin is coming from Europe, where small artisan producers believe that the **Region** where a certain food, wine or spirit is produced has a signature unique effect on its taste.

So to provide promotion and protection to these small producers, Appellation of Origins, Geographical Indications and Denomination of Origins started to form and legalize themselves.



Let me give you some examples so you can understand.

Cheese is a great way to demonstrate some well known food appellations. Beaufort, Comté and Roquefort are from France, Gorgonzola is from Italy and Feta is from Greece.

There are also famous protected wines like Champagne, Bordeaux, or Burgundy.

There are many origin protected spirits too like Bourbon from the United States, Scotch from Scotland and Cognac from France.



All of these food and **drinks are protected by bilateral trade agreements**. So let's say the United States sign a contract with Mexico as part of a trade agreement (this is currently part of the NAFTA contract).

In the agreement, the United States accept Tequila as a Mexican Origin protected spirit and Mexico accept that Bourbon is a US Origin protected spirit, and they take all legal action to enforce this in their respective countries. Mexico will check if an imported bourbon has the appropriate legal documents and disallow bourbon's local production. Then of course, the United States do exactly the same with tequila.



To further demonstrate how Tequila fits into the landscape of denominations is like this:

Cognac is the famous brandy produced in and around the town of Cognac, whereas **Tequila is the famous mezcal(!)** which is produced in and around the town of Tequila.

Yes, you heard it correctly, Tequila used to be referred to as mezcal vino de Tequila, so essentially it is a mezcal.



So let's look at the map and see which Mexican States are allowed to produce Tequilas.

The denomination of Origin includes the whole State of Jalisco (that is where the town of Tequila is located) and parts of the following states: Nayarit, Guanajuato, Michoacán and Tamaulipas.

Most of the producers are located in Jalisco and that is where the majority of the tequila is produced. This is why you will find a lot more references to Jalisco vs. the other states when someone is talking about tequila.

QUALITY CONTROL

IN TEQUILA WORLD

- 1 Certain place 
- 2 Certain producers 
- 3 Certain plant 



Tequila sign

Denominations and appellations can set other kinds of **qualifying criterias** for ingredients, special processes and other limitations to further control the quality.

In the world of tequila, the quality control applies to 3 major elements:

1. There is a certain **place** where tequila can be produced - this would be Jalisco and parts of 4 other states as discussed
2. Only certain **Authorized Producers** can produce tequila
3. There is a certain **plant** that can be used to produce tequila / this is the blue agave or agave tequilana Weber.

LESSON 1

How to read a tequila label

1.2

The NOM Number



In this section we are going to learn about the significance of the **NOM number** on the label while also getting an interesting insight into who the real producers are for some well known brands.

Probably the biggest tequila shockwave so far was when George Clooney sold his tequila to Diageo in a deal of 1bn dollars which earned him several hundreds of million dollars. But was he the real “maker” or “producer” of the tequila? In the video lesson we used Tequilamatchmaker.com to search their database to find out that the original producer of George Clooney’s tequila was “Productos Finos De Agave” and that Dwayne Johnson’s Teremana tequila is made by the same team.

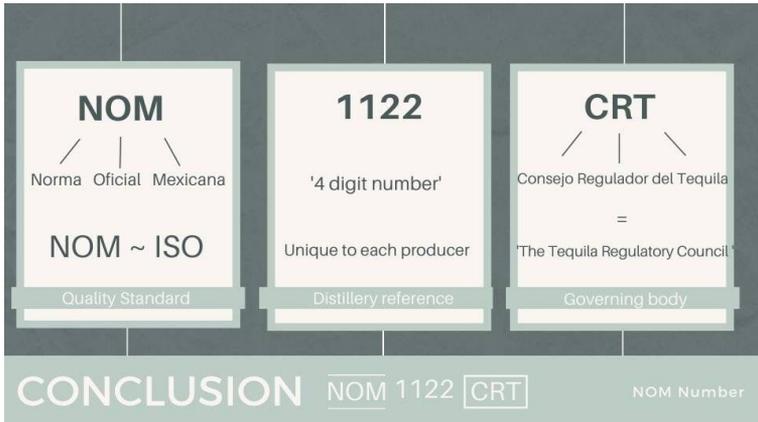


What did you learn from this exercise?



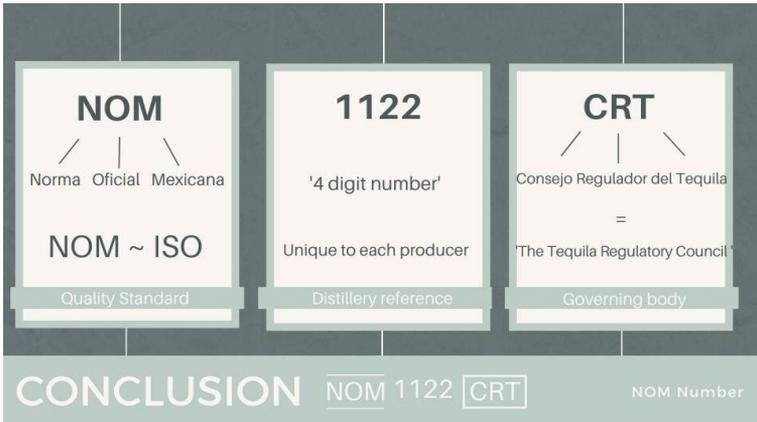
So what to take away from this learning exercise? NOM number can give us a lot of information. It can give us a **connection between different brands** - as brands from the same distillery often has the same concept.

Let's see another interesting example. Casa Cuervo is the biggest tequila producer and host many brands, and sometimes the only way to identify them is by knowing the NOM number which is 1122 in all cases. So while a bottle of 1800 tequila has no mention of any Cuervo in its design, checking its four digit producer ID will allow you to understand more about its origin.



Let's take a look at the tequila label again, it has a 3 section reference.

1. **The NOM abbreviation** - stands for Norma Oficial Mexicana. This is a quality standard, basically the Mexican version of the ISO international standards. If you come to México, electronic appliances have this - it is a reference for the safety measures applied.
2. **Four digit ID** - this is a direct reference to the Authorized Producer who is responsible for the production of the tequila.
3. **CRT - Consejo Regulator del Tequila** or Tequila Regulatory Council - they are the Quality and Compliance body for the tequila industry



Conclusion:

These 3 items together are a compulsory element for every tequila label, so should you see a bottle with the **tequila sign** but without the **NOM, four digit ID** and **CRT combination**, the bottle you are holding is unfortunately not a tequila.

(It does not mean that there is something wrong with it, only that it does not legally qualify as tequila)

LESSON 1

How to read a tequila label

1.3 Categories



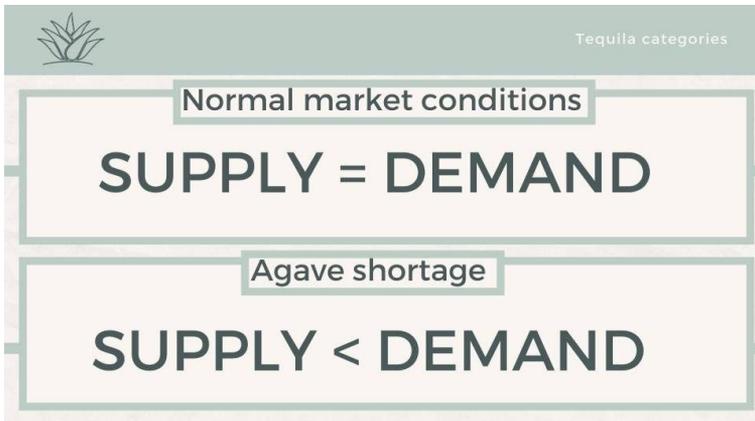
The two official categories for tequila are:

- **Tequila 100% de agave**
- **Tequila**

Yes that is right, the word Tequila is not only a reference to the spirit itself but is also one of the categories. Producers refer to this as “**categoría de Tequila**”, aficionados prefer to call it “**mixto**”. Most people instantly think that something is wrong with the drink that something bad is “mixed into it”, but the truth is very far from this. While agave is a great plant to use to produce quality alcoholic beverages, it was not designed for a global scale production.

Nowadays it takes 5-6 years for the plant to grow

before it can be used to produce tequila and when people all around the world decide to drink more tequila than what the agave farmers had predicted, agave shortage happens.

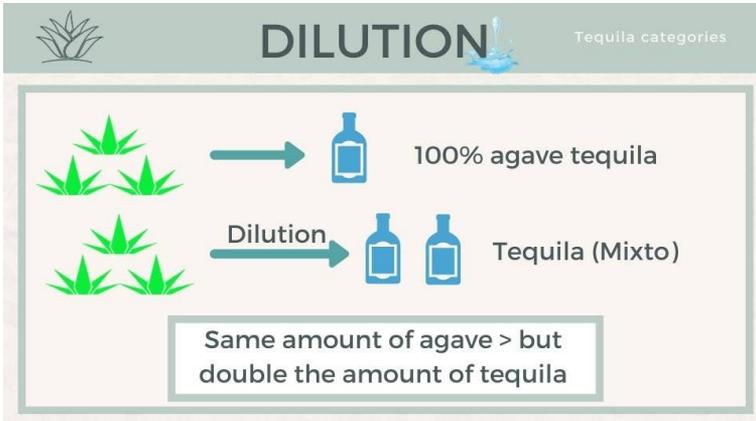


Let's try and visualize this:

a) Supply = demand: Let's say you are a producer and there are only 100 people in the world who want to drink tequila and you properly planted agaves to provide tequila for 100 people. In this case, your supply equals demand and you relax, everything is fine and you make proper 100% agave tequilas.

b) Supply < Demand: However in one of the next 3 years there are now 200 people who want to drink

your tequila, but 6 years ago you thought it would still be 100, so you only planted agaves for 100 people. Now if you don't want to see 100 sad people who won't be able to drink tequila, what do you do?



The answer is dilution. The agave content of a Tequila “mixto” is diluted up to a maximum of 49% dilution content and 51% original agave content, so basically you can make double the amount of tequila from the same amount of agaves.



DILUTION

Tequila categories



More info about the
topic in the

MIXTO TEQUILA

BASICS

Bonus lesson



If you want to become a professional we will cover the exact legal parts and chemistry for the dilution in separate add-ons.

For now, imagine putting an ice cube into your whisky, it has the similar effect, except that mixto tequilas retain the same alcohol content. Now most of these “mixto” tequilas are mass produced so their quality can range from “great for cocktails” to “borderline drinkable”, but some producers can actually make nice “mixto” tequilas.. I do serve a mixto tequila to start my tastings, and some of my guests love it the most even after tasting many 100% agave tequilas after it.

CONCLUSION	
<p>100 % AGAVE</p> <p> No dilution</p> <p> More expensive</p> <p> Sign on the label</p>	<p>MIXTO</p> <p> Dilution allowed</p> <p> Cost less</p> <p> 100% Sign is missing</p>
<p> Tequila categories</p>	

So what kind of conclusion can we deduce from the above?

#1 For the 100% agave tequilas, no agave content dilution is allowed while mixtos can have up to 49% non-agave related content.

#2 100% agave tequilas cost usually more vs. their “mixto Tequila” counterparts. The idea to have a “mixto” tequila category is a response to the supply-demand challenge of the growing tequila industry.

#3 When looking at the label the category is defined whether the 100% agave sign is present or not. If the 100% agave sign is missing from the label or the agave sign is not paired with the 100% word, then your tequila belongs to “categoría de Tequila” or unofficially the “mixto” category.

LESSON 1

How to read a tequila label

1.4 Classifications



In this section, we are going to learn about the **5 classifications of tequila**.

Each classification represents a certain amount of time tequila had spent in oak barrels or containers.

The five classifications are **blanco, joven, reposado, añejo and extra añejo**.

This is a compulsory element for all tequila, so you should be able to see this aging statement on any tequila bottle.



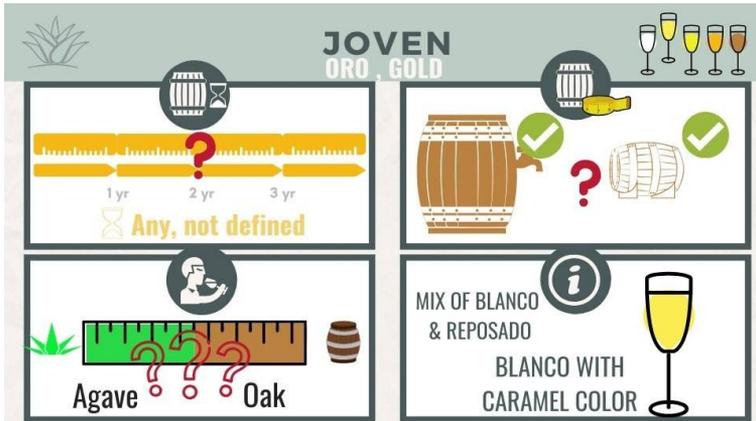
Blanco tequilas are the unaged tequilas.

While they can be aged for a maximum of 2 months, most producers never age them at all.

You may find alternative words on the label such as “plata” or “silver”. They all refer to the same as blanco.

Blanco means white in Spanish and it is a direct reference to the color.

The aroma of a blanco tequila is the closest to the aroma of the cooked agave of all classifications.



Our next classification is **joven**. Joven is more famous as “**gold**” or “**oro**” tequila.

There is no aging requirement here, the word “gold” is a reference to the color of the tequila as the first gold tequilas were basically colored versions of the white ones. It doesn’t have to do anything with quality like gold medal or silver medal for the blanco. Gold tequilas are either blanco tequilas with caramel coloring and other additives or a mix of blanco tequila with reposado, añejo or extra añejo. Because of the lack of aging requirements, some of them are very oaky, sweet, others are just caramel colored blancos.



The next classification is **reposado**.

Reposado means rested. These tequilas undergo at least 2 months of aging in oak containers.

These containers can be large oak vats or even small barrels and there is absolutely no limitation for the size of the barrels.

Reposado tequilas can have many different kinds of colors from light yellow to amber and brownish.

Reposado tequilas have an oaky feel to them, that if made properly can represent a good balance of the agave and the oak.



The next classification is the **añejo**.

Añejo tequilas undergo at least 1 year of aging in oak barrels that are restricted to a capacity of maximum 600L.

Añejo tequilas are usually darker than reposado tequilas of the same producer and its color typically gets into the darker ranges of yellow to brown.

In case of añejo tequilas, the oak may start to dominate the flavor profile and it is usually harder to find the classic agave notes.



The last classification is the **extra añejo**.

Extra Añejo tequilas are the oldest with an aging period of at least 3 years.

Like their añejo brothers, they also have a restriction of maximum 600L barrels.

The color of these tequilas usually range from the darkest yellow to dark brown.

After only 3 years of aging, the tequila can develop a flavor profile very similar to other aged spirits like whisky, cognac or rum.

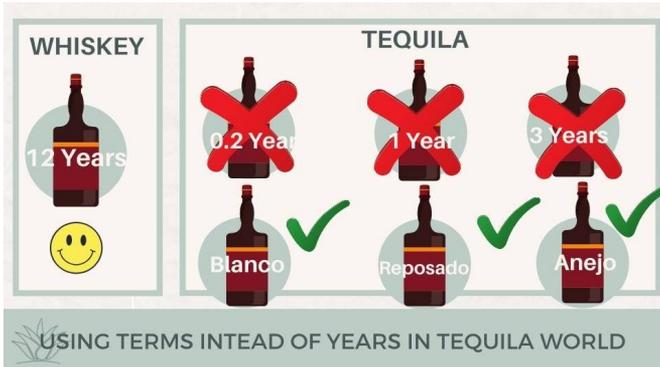


You may have noticed that there are **no upper limits for aging**. It means that a 4 year old tequila can still be a reposado, right? Ever wondered why? The best way to understand how the aging system works is to look at another spirit like Scotch. Most consumers when looking at a label that says 12 years old would instantly think of a barrel that was aged for only twelve years. Such whiskies and tequilas exist and they are called single barrel editions. However most aged spirits are a blend of barrels of different ages. When a spirit is a blend of barrels, the youngest in the blend counts. However producers are not restricted to only use 12 years old barrels, so a 12 year old whisky can have some 14, 18, 30 even a 100 years old barrel.



The same way, the tequila industry do not restrict producers to only blend “reposado” grade barrels to get a reposado.

While a 4 years old tequila may qualify as a reposado, it also qualifies as an extra añejo so producers will prefer to use extra añejo, because they can ask more money for it. And if they decide to blend the 4 years old barrel with a 6 months old barrel, then it will no longer classify as extra añejo, so the reposado term will be used instead.



So why do we see words instead of numbers on the tequila label?

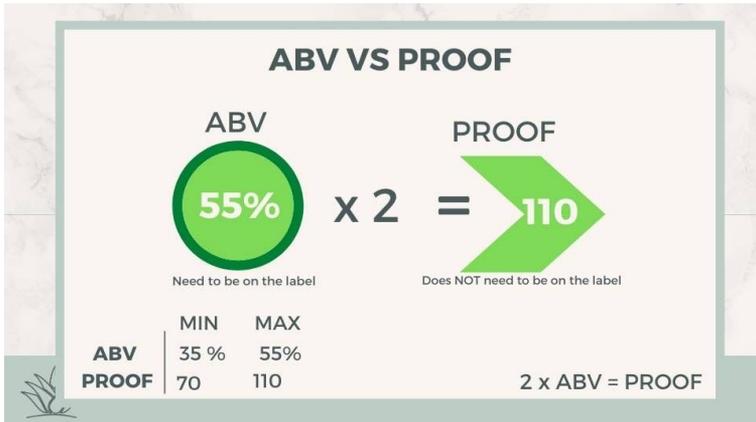
As most tequilas are aged for a short time, putting on an age indication is just not very appealing. Just imagine 0.2, 1 and 3 years on the label. Who would ever pay in some cases thousands of dollars for an extra añejo with a number 3 on the label, when you could get cheaper 12 years old spirits right?

Also people tend to forget about the 5-6 years agave growing time which does not count for aging purposes. Tequila usually costs higher because of the ingredient cost, while whiskies and rums are made of cheaper ingredients but are aged longer. So do you prefer blanco tequila? No problem there, you are drinking a tequila made of approximately 6 years old agaves.

LESSON 1

How to read a tequila label

1.5 Other/Misc Label Items



The Alcohol content of tequila is heavily regulated by the industry.

All tequilas have to fall into the range between **35% and 55%** alcohol by volume or **70 proof** and **110 proof**. As per the regulation, the bottles have to state their abv, however the proof is only optional.

Calculating proof from abv is simple, just double the abv value and you will get to the proof value of tequila.

So if next time someone is telling you he's got a 70% abv tequila at his place, you should be able to tell that it is not tequila, unless he wrongly quoted the 70% being proof instead.

STORY TIME

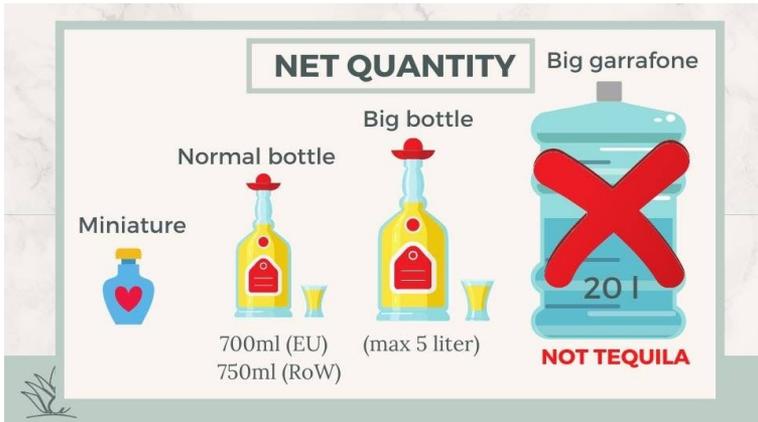
REMEMBER:  **ABV** | **PROOF**

	MIN	MAX
ABV	35 %	55%
PROOF	70	110

 **ABV= Alcohol by Volume** 

In my situation when someone told me he had a 70% abv bottle, it was a guest of mine from a tasting and he was from Europe and fortunately it was just him not remembering exactly of the proper alcohol content of his tequila and he was kind enough to send me a message that I was correct and his tequila indeed had 55% abv only.

Regardless, memorizing the alcohol range can help you spot fake tequila producers. Some may even go as far as putting a fake producer ID or NOM number on the bottle, but they can easily make a mistake by producing a low alcohol content (28-34% abv) product and even stating it on the label.



The net quantity is another important thing to look at - it may not be an issue most of the time, however it will give you yet another tool to identify tequilas correctly.

First, the net content has to be stated in **mL** or **L**. If the net content is not on the label for some reason, the product is not a tequila.

Second, there is a maximum limit of **5L** for a tequila bottle. The normal size for tequila bottles is typically 700mL for Europe and 750mL for the rest of the world, however it really comes in many different sizes, there are miniatures and big bottles around too.



If you see someone taking a 20L huge garrafone and pouring some liquid from it, it is definitely not tequila. In my situation I received a call from someone wanting to get quality tequila for his event for which he wanted to hire a Michelin star rated chef. I was very happy to have received such a call as I find that not everyone is usually interested in hand picking some good quality tequilas for their events.



Unfortunately he went on and explained that his normal supplier disappeared and is looking for a substitute for his 20L añejo which comes in a garrafone for a price of approximately **100 pesos (MXN) per liter** and it would be great if I could help. Even the cheapest commercial brands had a higher cost so it already should have raised some alarm bells, but he actually thought that the product he bought was quality tequila. He even showcased it at his events as a great tequila. Well obviously I was only able to wish him luck with his project, but the learning point is that if you participate in an event where the chef earned a Michelin star and you see a garrafone - just run. Run fast.

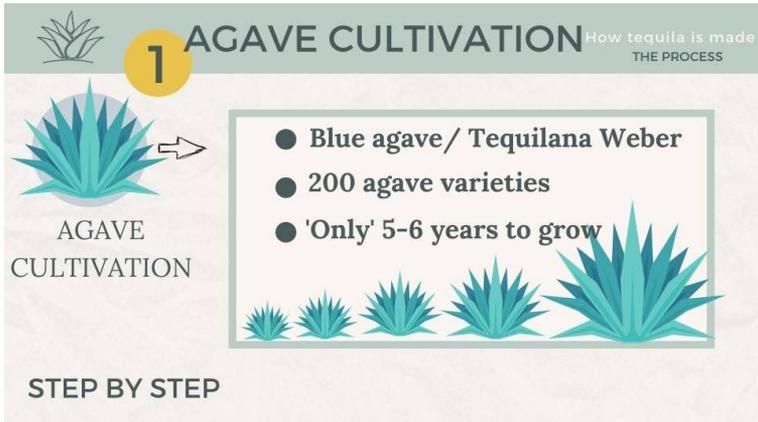
LESSON 2

How tequila is made



The steps we are going to cover are:

1. Agave cultivation
2. Harvest
3. Hydrolysis (cooking)
4. Extraction
5. Fermentation
6. Distillation
7. Blanco tequila
8. Aged tequila



1. Agave Cultivation

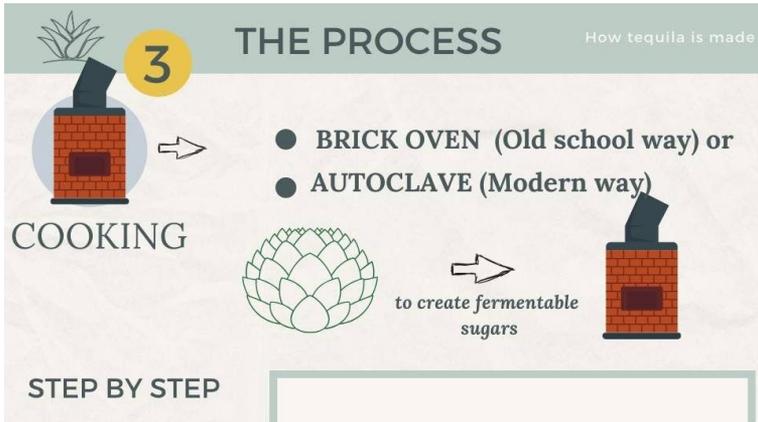
Let's start with the main ingredient. Tequila can only be made of one key ingredient - the **blue agave or agave tequilana Weber**. So if the label doesn't specifically say it's blue agave, don't worry it can still only be made of blue agave or agave azul. There are over 200 different agave species in the world and you can find around 150 of them in Mexico. Why did the tequila industry pick the agave azul from all those species? Well with its 5-6 years of growing period, it takes less time to grow these agaves - some other agave plants grow for over 15 years.



2. The Harvest

Once the agave is matured, it is harvested by the jimador.

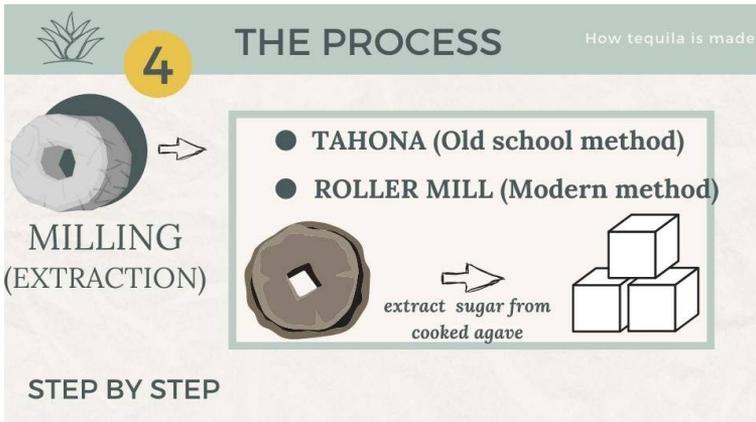
They bring their sharp, shovel shaped equipment (the coa) to efficiently cut the leaves of the agave leaving only the middle ball part which is commonly referred to as **piña** but the bola or cabeza terms are often used too.



3. Cooking

Then the agaves are put on a truck that brings the piñas to the distillery where the cooking process begins to **create fermentable sugars in the agave plant.**

Producers can use brick ovens which is the old-school way to cook the agaves or autoclaves which is a modern machinery where extra pressure can be applied to reduce the cooking time.

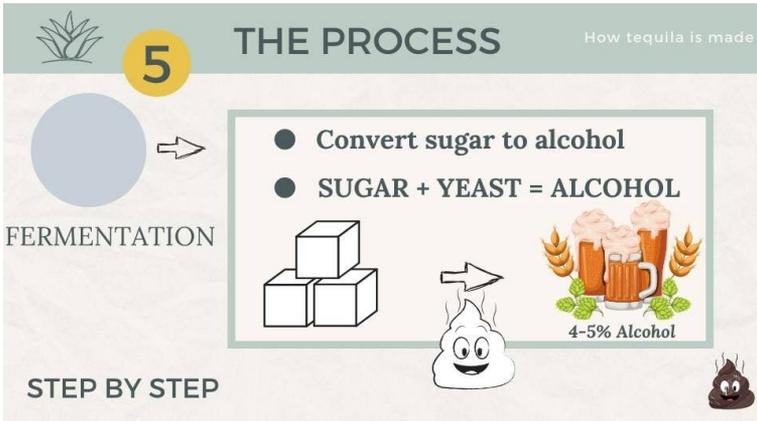


4. Milling/ Extraction

After the agaves are cooked, the sugar rich agave juice is extracted.

The old-school method that only a handful of producers apply is the **tahona**. A heavy stone wheel goes around in a pit pressing the agave fibres to extract the agave juice.

The more common method is to use the **roller mill**. The roller mill utilizes mechanical presses and the fibres are delivered by a conveyor belt to each press. After only 4 pressings, the fibres are discarded making it a lot faster and more efficient than the tahona.



5. Fermentation

The next step is the fermentation. Now, this is where the fun begins as the **sugars** in the agave juice **convert to alcohol**.

The fermentation process is about the yeast converting the sugar into alcohol and Carbodioxid. In fact we enjoy the poo of another animal so much.

At the end of the fermentation, basically we get a 'beer' of 4-5% abv (8-10 proof) that producer's distill to reach a higher level of alcohol.

6 THE PROCESS How tequila is made

Boiling points:
WATER 100 Celsius/212 F
ALCOHOL 78 Celsius/173 F

Ethanol evaporates

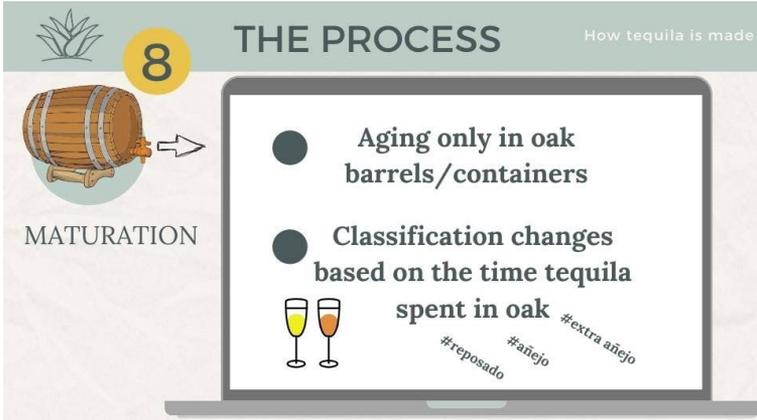
Alcohol can be separated/ concentrated

DISTILLATION

6. Distillation

Distillation takes advantage of the different boiling points of the water and alcohol. Water boils at 100C (212F) and Alcohol which refers to ethanol has a boiling point of 78.37C (173.1F).

When producers start to increase the temperature, the alcohol evaporate at a quicker rate and can be separated and concentrated. By using different distillation techniques, producers can **increase the alcohol level from 4-5%** (8-10 proof) from the fermentation **to 55-70%** (110-140 proof) and then they **add water to dilute it back** to the desired level which is usually around **40%** (80 proof).



7. Blanco Tequila

Right after distillation, the tequila can be bottled as a blanco tequila or it can be aged.

8. Maturation/Aging

Only aging in oak containers count for aging purposes and the classification changes based on the amount of time tequila spends in oak as covered in the classification section. Producers may use oak vats for aging blanco and reposado tequilas and oak barrels with a maximum of 600L capacity to age añejos and extra añejos.

LESSON 3

How to serve and store tequila



There are many ways you can serve a tequila and while there is no right or wrong to do so, depending on the occasion, just even with little knowledge, you can enhance the experience.

The most obvious way to drink tequila is to shoot it with salt and lime, which in Europe it has evolved into shooting a “silver” tequila with salt and lime and “gold” tequila with orange and cinnamon. The salt and lime take the bite out of blanco tequila, and the orange and cinnamon pairs well with the oaky flavor of the gold. While this is great for partying, this would change its flavor, much like mixing tequila into cocktails. All in all, if our mission is to have a good time, then we should not be worried about the glassware too much.



GLASSWARE

How to serve & store tequila

Shot glass

?? glasses



To party

Aromas not properly captured for smelling



On the other hand, if we want to enjoy or analyze the flavors, then we need to look elsewhere, as the shot glass does not allow the aromas to be properly captured and focused for our smelling sense.

Let's look at the glassware.



GLASSWARE

How to serve & store tequila

Riedel glass

Officially supported by CRT

High price

Low durability

Riedel glass

The regulator body for the industry the CRT officially supports the Riedel glass, which is a special glass designed for tequila by a famous Austrian manufacturer. However due to its high price and low durability only people serious about tequila use it and typically for home use.

Retail Price: 30 USD for a set of 2 glasses



GLASSWARE

How to serve & store tequila



Stölzle design / Jarrito

There is also a special Stölzle design called jarrito which is also Austrian and expensive and extremely hard to come by but is praised for its qualities and it does not break easily.

Retail Price: 30 USD per glass



Glencairn Crystal & Tulip glass

More popular alternative

Affordable

Durable

The advertisement features a central white box with a black border. Inside the box, there are three glasses: a snifter on the left, a tulip-shaped glass in the middle, and a tulip-shaped glass on the right. To the right of the glasses, there is a green arrow pointing down with a dollar sign inside, the word 'Affordable', a glass icon with a smiling face, and the word 'Durable'. The background of the advertisement shows a blurred image of a bar with various glasses and bottles.

Glencairn Crystal & Tulip Glass

A popular alternative to Riedel or Jarrito glasses is the Glencairn glass or any similar unbranded or branded but not as well-known producer made tulip style glass. These glasses are a lot more affordable and do not break easily.

**Retail Price: 40USD per set of 6 glasses.
(for Glencairn crystal)**



Champagne glass

Tasting for
larger
groups

Affordable

Most popular

Easy accessibility

Champagne glass

When it comes to bars restaurants or for tastings for larger groups, the champagne glass seems to be the most popular for its easier access and availability. They are relatively cheap and they come in lots of different shapes and sizes for versatility. Certain wine glasses can equally serve well for this purpose.

Retail Price: varies by brand, but can easily be as low as 1USD per glass



SERVING TEMPERATURE



Serving temperature for tequila

As for the serving temperature, most aficionados prefer room temperature. This is a good starting point for any spirits.

The idea is to find the temperature which makes the tequila well balanced. Warm temperatures put a lot of pressure on our palate and can cause a burning sensation, while chilled tequilas carry the risk of losing flavors.

Most tequilas seem to work best in the range from wine cellar to room temperature. The advice here is the same as with wines.



SERVING TEMPERATURE

IF

Too cold



Losing flavours



Let it rest until
warms up a bit



If a tequila is chilled, just let it rest for a while until it warms up, you can even use your hands on the glass to warm it manually.

If the tequila is too warm, just put it in the fridge or freezer for 10-15 minutes and check if it is easier to drink.

For novice drinkers, a lower temperature is recommended until their palate gets accustomed to the higher level of burning sensation tequila may have vs wines, beers and other spirits.

STORING TEQUILA



Distilled spirit

↓



No expiry date



Resistant to aeration



Resistant to sunlight

How to serve & store tequila

Storing tequila

Tequila has no expiry date being a distilled spirit, however in case of flavored tequilas it is always best to check the label as it may have one. They are a lot more resistant to aeration than wine or beer.

An opened bottle of tequila may keep its aromas for years and a natural oxygenation can even help soften out some of the harshness. Distilled spirits are also more resistant to sunlight vs. wines, however if kept under sunlight for a prolonged period of time, its color may fade and it can have an effect on its taste too.



While a good wine typically needs to be kept in a cool temperature, distilled spirits can deal with a warmer temperature too.

However be careful as in very hot environments, even the cork can pop open and you run a higher risk of evaporation, especially if the cork does not seal perfectly.

Best kept in a dry, cool place if possible.

STORING TEQUILA

VS

WINE	DISTILLED SPIRIT
 <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Has living organism● Can go wrong● Turns to vinegar	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sterilized due to distillation● NO living organism● Doesn't go wrong

How to serve & store tequila

Wine may still have residual yeast, harmless bacteria or fungus in it, though its alcoholic concentration and low oxygen levels discourage their growth. Due to its biological nature, once the wine is opened, the oxygen can quickly turn a great wine undrinkable in a couple of days.

Tequila on the other hand was sterilized due to the distillation and its higher alcohol content does not allow such living entities to be ever present, so naturally it is more resistant. Just think about rum being the pirates favorite drink. Rum, being a distilled drink like tequila could survive months, even years on a ship where the temperature, humidity and sunlight conditions may change all the time.

LESSON 4

How to taste tequila

The systematic
approach



Tequila tasting is similar to wine tasting for its systematic approach, which consists of analyzing

1. the color,
2. the aromas and
3. the flavor.



1. Let's start with the color.

The color of a tequila can be somewhat misleading, and it's best to have many tequilas with different classes and brands to do a comparison.

White, silvery white or faint yellow colors may refer to a blanco tequila. Blanco tequila gets its white color from the distillation which removes all coloring components.

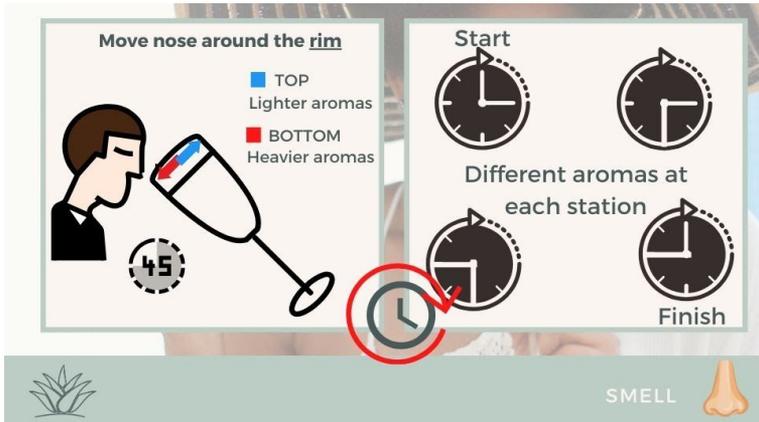
Other tequila classifications like gold, reposado, añejo or extra añejo can get their color from the combination of oak barrel, oak extract or caramel coloring. Lighter colors usually mean less aging, less additives or older barrels with less coloring components.



2. The next part refers to the aromas.

When it comes to the aromas of the tequila, it is important to identify if a tequila is balanced. It is best to hold the glass in a **45 degrees** or even lower angle, so that the aromas are further captured and concentrated for our nose.

When we first take a smell of the tequila, let's take note is it a more neutral, but unpleasant alcoholic smell that dominates, or the alcoholic particles are nicely balanced out with the tequila's aromatic components. As you can see, there is no such thing as a good or bad tequila, there is balanced and "alcoholic" tequila. Then there are several ways to continue from here.



You would typically want to move your nose around the rim, as if you dive deeper, the alcoholic sensation may become overwhelming. Looking at your glass held in a 45 degrees angle, the top part of the glass is where you will find the lighter aromas, the bottom part will give you the heavier ones.

A good exercise is to go from the top and **move your nose around the rim clockwise** and note the aromas. You may find different aromas from 12 to 3 o'clock, then from 3 to 6, from 6 to 9 and finally from 9 to 12. These aromas can be quite complex and the best tequilas may have hundreds of different ones in a tequila.

GOOD TO KNOW
about tequila

- High alcohol content
- Complex
- Take smaller sips first then repeat

 **Breath in**  **Small sip**  **Breath out**

 ...before you start tasting TASTE 

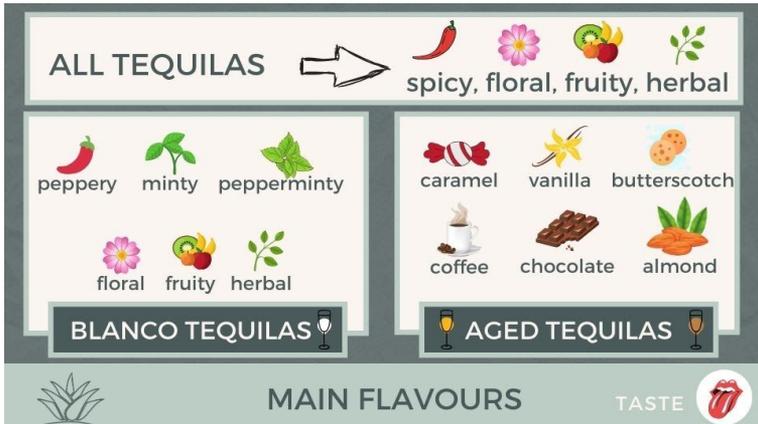
3. The next step is probably the most enjoyable one, we finally get to taste the tequila!

Now, before we just rush in, there are a few things that are worth mentioning. Tequila has a lot higher alcohol content compared to other drinks like wine or beer. Also, a traditional tequila is a lot more complex than other spirits so it may be challenging to novice drinkers.

It is recommended to take smaller portions several times, rather than doing a large sip as there are several tequilas that open up to our palate over time by repeatedly sipping them. Taking a breath before the sip and breathing out after it can further

improve the experience. If you have a selection of tequilas, it is great to compare them to each other. Doing blind tastings can also be a fun way to improve our learning exercise





So what kinds of aromas to look for in a tequila?

All tequilas can develop a wide variety of aromas primarily **spicy, floral, fruity and herbal**.

Blanco tequilas may have a peppery, minty, pepperminty aroma coupled with herbal or fruity and occasionally floral notes.

Aged tequilas start from a blanco tequila, so the flavors of the blanco is coupled with tasting notes of caramel, vanilla, butterscotch, coffee, chocolate, almond and similar.



Don't worry if you don't find some or even most of the earlier tasting notes as not all tequilas are complex.

Yet, some tequilas are so complex that they can have a lot more notes than listed on the previous page.

Remember, tasting tequila is a personal experience and by tasting as many tequilas as you can, you can improve your palate and find your personal favorites.

LESSON 5

Debunking tequila myths

Bonus Lesson 1



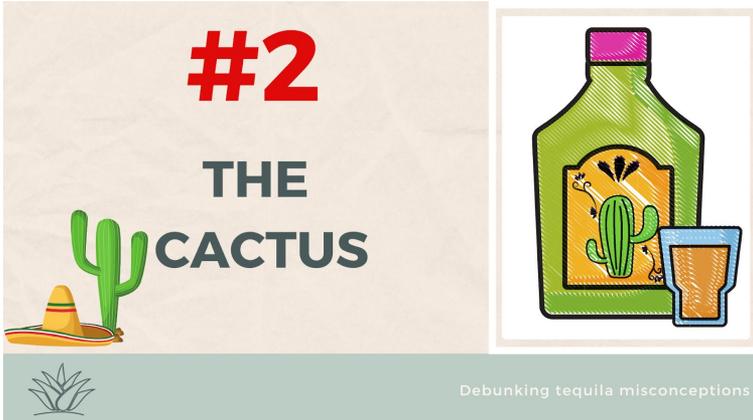
Myth #1: The Tequila Worm

Probably the biggest mystery in the world for an average consumer is the tequila worm. It is called the tequila worm, but no one ever seemed to have found a bottle of tequila with the worm in it. Some of you may have found the worm in the bottle but it was mezcal. Long story short the phrase “tequila worm” is incorrect. Tequila regulations don’t allow producers to put a worm (or other living entity) in the bottle, sorry. However in case of mezcal, producers can add a few worms in the bottle.



Is it a thing or is it a marketing gimmick?

Well, old-school, traditional mezcal producers agree that it is a liability - the drink is already great without the worm, so no need to add extras, and none of the high end mezcals seem to have it. You should probably try one with and one without the worm and decide for yourself!

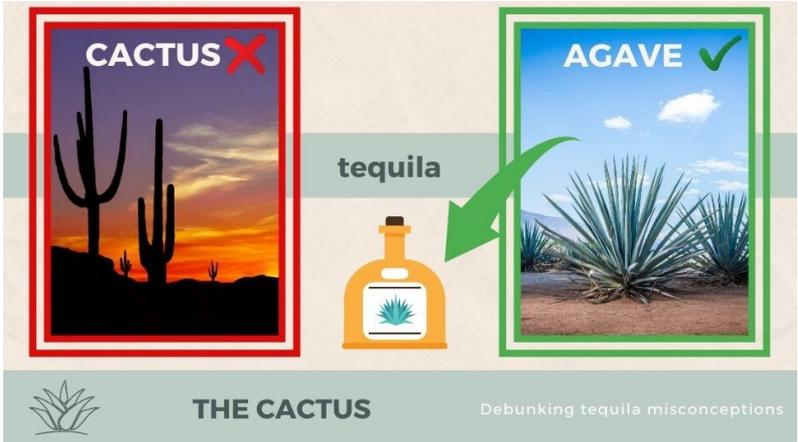


Myth #2: Tequila is a cactus distillate

There are still many consumers out there thinking that tequila is a cactus distillate.

This is not true, and while the agave species are indeed succulent plants like cactus, they belong to an entirely different branch of plants.

It is hard to imagine, but the agave plant is closer to a lily, a pineapple, even rice and wheat than to cactus. A closer well known relative is the aloe vera plant, which resembles the shape of the agave a lot more than cactus.



Sorry again, **agave is not a cactus and will probably never be.**

#3

DRINKING TEQUILA WITH SALT & LIME



Debunking tequila misconceptions

Myth #3: Mexicans drink tequila with salt and lime

It is a common misconception that Mexicans drink tequila with salt and lime and that it is the best way to enjoy it.

First of all, most Mexicans don't use the salt and lime these days. It is a lot more popular to either drink it neat or with a sangrita chaser, which is a tomato based spicy drink.

The best tequilas are enjoyed slowly in a champagne glass or something similar that would allow the aromas to develop.



According to some old stories, doctors were prescribing tequila with salt and lime as a remedy for the devastating Spanish Flu in the first half of the 20th Century.

Salt is necessary for your body as you're losing water due to the high fever.

Lime has C vitamin in it so it can help your immune system.

And **Tequila** well... even if it doesn't save you, at least it will make you feel better for a minute and take the fear away.

So if you think about it, it is probably not a great reminder for Mexicans to drink tequila like that. Nowadays salt and lime is primarily used to take away the bite of the tequila and make it easier to drink - it does not mean that it is the right way to do so for all tequilas as you might miss the real taste of the agave this way.

#4

THE DARKER THE BETTER



Debunking tequila misconceptions

Myth #4: the darker the better

More aging, darker color, higher price tag. A common misconception is that darker tequilas have a higher quality as they are aged for a longer time and have a higher price. This is considered to be wrong on two levels.

Darker colors don't necessarily mean more aging as the age of the barrel and the added caramel coloring and oak extract all have their unique effect on the taste of tequila. The pricing then only follows the cost of production.

Aging tequila costs money, and so producers charge more for them. However if you go and talk with some

producers, many of them prefer their unaged white tequilas as their flavors express more the flavor of the agave and the amount of work they put into the tequila.



With the help of caramel coloring and oak extract it is easy to create a flawless but less natural flavor profile. Long story short, **darker tequilas can be better but not necessarily.**

It all depends on your perception.

#5

HANGOVER FROM TEQUILA



Debunking tequila misconceptions

Myth #5: terrible hangover from tequila

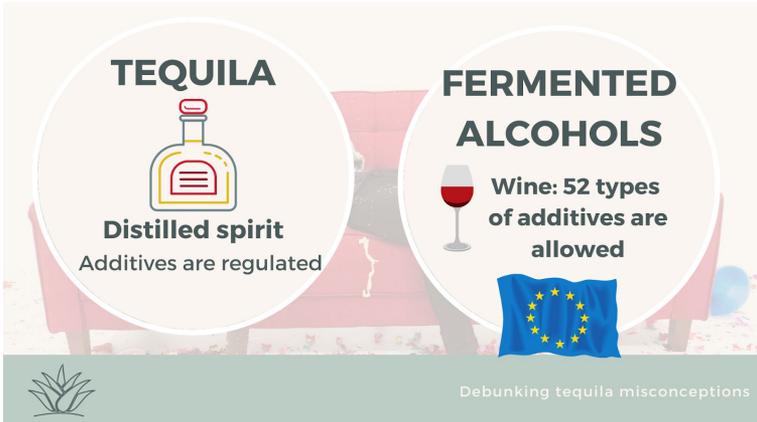
Many people seem to remember some awful time with tequilas from their youth and drink tequila with extreme caution as it gave them a bad hangover.

While no one is entirely sure about the causes of hangover, drinking tequila does not contribute more to having one than beer, wine or other spirits.

As tequila is a distilled spirit, many impurities are removed during the process, making it a lot cleaner.

Blancos are regulated to be additive free and even aged tequilas are restricted to have only four natural additives. Compared to this, the EU legally allow wine to have 52 types of additives and is only

fermented, so scientifically speaking there are a lot more molecules that could potentially contribute to hangover.



But think of it in another way. Isn't it easier to blame that one poor tequila shot in the end after having 6 beers and a bottle of wine?

To sum it up it is unlikely that tequila alone is the major contributor of a hangover. Consuming tequila blanco only with plenty of water is one of the safest options against having a bad hangover.

#6

TEQUILA HAS PROBIOTICS



Debunking tequila misconceptions

Myth #6: probiotics in tequila

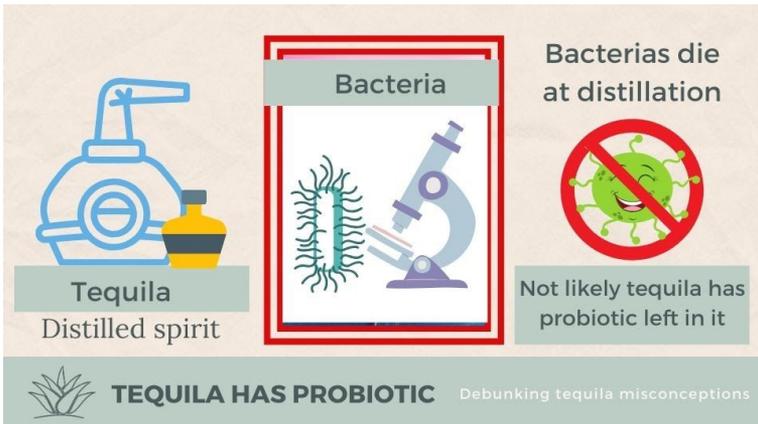
There are many articles about researches stating that tequila has lots of probiotics which contribute to a healthy digestion.

While drinking alcohol is generally regarded to be great for our digestion, tequila is unlikely to have any probiotics.

Probiotics is regarded as a bacteria and one of the best things about 40% abv or 80 proof spirits that such an alcohol level is not an appealing environment for bacterias so you can even regard tequila as being sort of anti-bacterial. And if it wasn't for the high alcohol content, the bacteria dies at a temperature of around 49 C or 120F and distillation

happens at temperatures a lot higher than this killing all those bacteria.

This is why some tequila distilleries even allow you to touch the fermented juice of the agave - they know that none of the bacteria from your hand will ever end up in the tequila.



Sadly not even the probiotics will ever make it into our bottle.

#7

TEQUILA HELPS TO GET SKINNY



Debunking tequila misconceptions

Myth #7: Tequila helps to get skinny

Last but not least - apart from the probiotics related articles, another popular thing to say about tequila is that it makes people skinny.

While it is obvious that losing weight is probably not going to happen because you start slamming tequilas down your throat, it does have some truth to it. Tequila being a distilled spirit is a lot lighter than fermented beverages like wine or beer.

It means that it contains less calories than the other two, making it an ideal choice for those who care

about their daily calorie intake.

The infographic is divided into three main sections. The left section, titled 'Tequila doesn't contribute to weight loss', features a pink scale icon with '0.0' on the display. The middle section, titled 'BUT it has less calories than fermented beverages E.g. wine, beer', includes a green 'kcal' icon with a minus sign and a comparison icon showing a green arrow pointing left. The right section shows a photograph of a woman's midsection holding a green apple and a yellow banana. At the bottom, there is a dark grey bar with icons for a tequila plant, a margarita, a green arrow, a bottle of tequila, a wine glass, and a beer mug, followed by the text '...ing tequila misconceptions'.

While tequila will not make you skinny, it can help you to get there or let you stay skinny and if losing or maintaining weight is important, tequila is a lot better choice than most of its alternatives.

(This does not qualify as professional advice, please make your own decisions or hire a professional)

LESSON 6

Cristalino & Flavors

Bonus Lesson 2



Cristalino may seem like a blanco tequila first but actually cristalino tequila is basically an overfiltered aged tequila.

Some labels use the term “clear” instead of cristalino, but it refers to the same thing.

These tequilas typically belong to one of the aged classifications like reposado, añejo or extra añejo.



There are **two major ways** producers can produce such white aged tequilas.

The most popular seems to be the **filtration**. Basically when producers apply a filtration technique, they remove certain molecule sizes. Even normal aged tequilas are usually filtered, but their filtration is a lot more careful. It is important to understand that in case of a cristalino tequila not only the color giving barrel particles but the aroma carrying molecules are filtered as well.

The other way to create a cristalino is by **distilling** tequila one more time. As the color giving molecules are solid particles, they cannot fly through the still and so the tequila that comes off the still is white just like a blanco tequila.

CRISTALINO 'CLEAR' TEQUILA
A filtered aged tequila (white aged tequila)



The process takes away flavours

#1 CRISTALINO TEQUILA Cristalino and Flavoured tequilas

Cristalino tequila was never designed for serious tequila consumers.

The problem is that this process takes away the flavors which can add a certain depth or richness to aged tequilas.

On the other hand classifications such as reposado, añejo and extra añejo do allow for a higher level of additives and this is something producers may take advantage of.



Flavored tequilas in a way are opposite to cristalinos - instead of removing aroma molecules producers add them in. Here we can talk about two different kinds of products.

One is still a **tequila** and producers can add up to 85g/L dry aroma extract and 75g/L sugars. Putting on the name of the aroma is compulsory though and it has to be an aroma approved by the Health Secretary.

And then there are **drinks containing tequila**. There is a soft unofficial minimum 25% tequila content requirement for such drinks to be able to display tequila as an ingredient. Such labels are also subject to approval by the CRT (Tequila Regulatory Council), to make sure the context in which the word tequila is presented is correct.

➔ **How to differentiate between them?**



Flavours added

It's a tequila!



**Ingredients:
...tequila...**

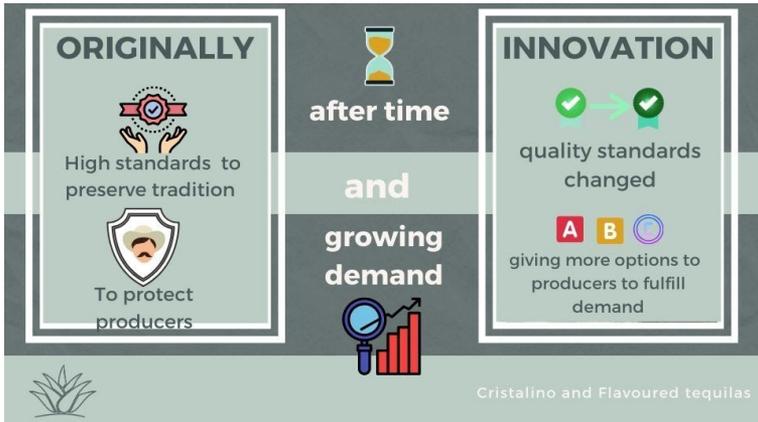
Liquor containing tequila

 **#2 FLAVOURED TEQUILA** Cristalino and Flavoured tequilas

The way to distinguish between these two variations is how the term tequila is used.

If the drink is called tequila and a flavor is just simply added, then it actually counts as tequila.

If tequila is clearly displayed as an ingredient such as - 100% agave tequila was used for this product - then it is not a tequila and brands are even required to put the term liqueur on the label to further reinforce this. There is absolutely no restrictions on the flavors that producers can use, from coffee, chocolate, coconut, mango, there is a great variation you can find when shopping for tequilas.



Let's talk about how the regulation changed, giving more options and flexibility for producers to make wide range of different tequilas like the relatively new cristalino or flavoured ones.

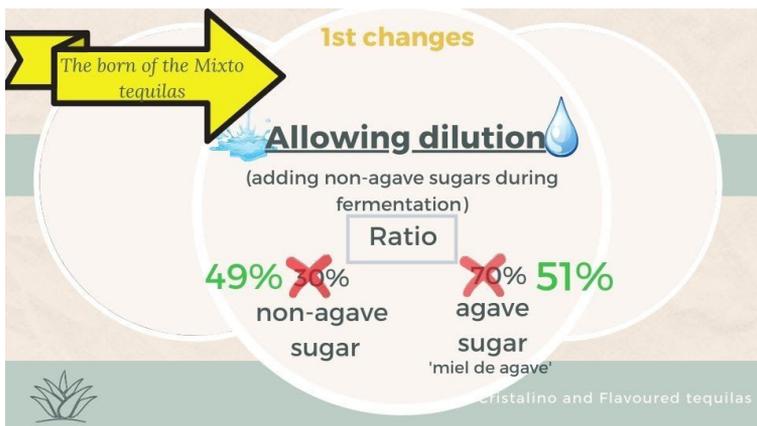
The original European way of denominations is about preserving tradition by protecting and promoting it and producers have to comply with high standards of quality to make sure consumers are getting a top notch product.

This allows producers to charge a higher fee to compensate for their higher production costs. Tequila started out like that. Tequila had to be made in a very certain way that ensured that it has a very unique and high quality.

As tequila became more and more popular and the

demand surged, the industry could not adapt with the supply as it takes a long time to grow new agaves.

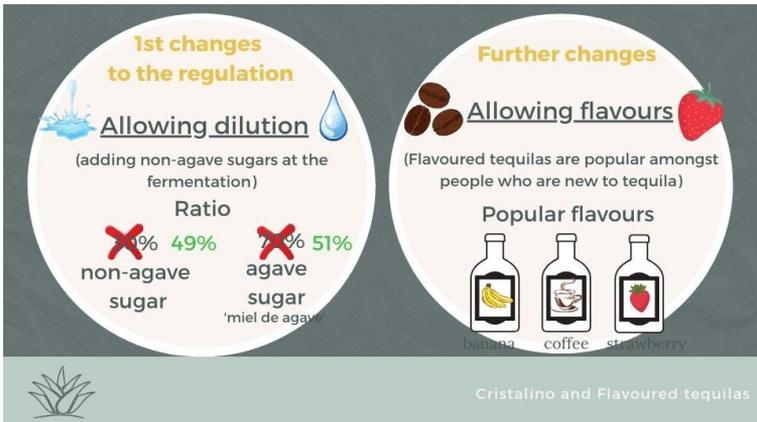
So to support the growth of the industry, the high quality restrictions were slowly removed and there are only a handful of tequilas that are made in a similar way as was required in the 1950s.



First changes: Allowing dilution aka Mixto tequila was born

Producers were allowed to dilute their tequilas by adding non-agave sugars to ferment with the agave sugars. This allowance was only 30% first but was later elevated to 49%. Dilution with cheaper

ingredients is not unique - even Scotch whisky or Bourbon allow for this. Malt whiskies are superior to grain whiskies and it is reflected in the prices. Cheaper options allow the industry to grow so everyone wins. Except for the denomination, which is no longer a clear setting for traditions and quality excellence.



Further changes: Allowing flavours

The tequila industry seems to be the standard setter in going one step further. Many spirits are mixed into cocktails anyways, so why not allow the production of tequila which is flavored like in the case of flavored vodkas or spiced rums? Well there we have

it with all its controversy it generated amongst traditional producers. Will Scotch, Cognac and the others follow? Only time can tell.

Still one thing is for sure. Newbies love flavored tequilas and cristalinos while aficionados despise them. In the end it all comes down to knowing what you drink.

LESSON 7

Mixto tequila basics

Bonus Lesson 3



Producers refer to it as **“categoría de Tequila”** (official category name), aficionados prefer to call it “mixto” (unofficial term). While “mixto” is a lot easier as a reference, the problem with it is that the “mixto” word gives a lot of people the impression of “mixing” something with tequila and I have heard even a producer of only 100% agave tequilas saying that these tequilas are a mix of rum and tequila. Many producers use sugarcane origin sugar for the process which is the most typical base ingredient for rum, so no wonder why people might say this.

However reading through the legislation, it clearly says that tequila is not allowed to be mixed with other alcoholic beverages.

CONCLUSION

SUGAR IS MIXED:

 **From cooked Agave**
Miel de agave

Non-agave sugar
E.g. sugarcane



Tequila Mixto Basics

So if the tequila cannot be mixed, what can be mixed then?

The best term to use here is **enrichment** and they enrich the mosto - the fermenting agave juice.

They basically add sugar, however adding sugar into the mosto has a very different effect vs. adding sugar to the tequila!

The sugars of the mosto are a mix of a min. **51% agave based sugars** and a max. **49% non-agave based sugar**. The most popular variations are 51-49 and 70-30.



The fermentation is all about converting sugar to alcohol. So more sugar converts to more alcohol right? But why is this beneficial at all?

We have already discussed in the certification course that the “mixto” category exists so that producers can make more tequila from the same amount of agave.



Alcohol level goals

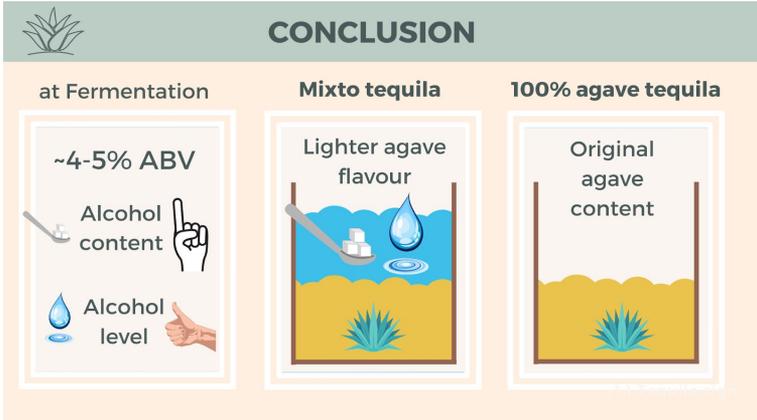
Tequila Mixto Basics

Before distillation	After 1st distillation	After 2nd distillation
~4-5% ABV (10° PROOF)	~20% ABV (40° PROOF)	~55% ABV (110° PROOF)

ABV = Alcohol by Volume

To imagine **the process** let us visualize it, we only need basic chemistry.

Tequila producers set different alcohol level goals for each stage of the distillation. Before the distillation starts, their ideal alcohol content is around 4-5% abv and then after the first distillation it is around 20% abv and after the second distillation it is usually around 55% abv.



So let's look what happens if they add sugar into the fermentation tank.

The added **sugar** would raise the alcohol content, but they want it to keep it at 4-5% abv.

So they add **water** to reach the desired alcohol level. However if you now compare the quantity of the two fermentation tank, you can see that the "mixto" has twice as much content vs. the 100% agave one.

It will produce more tequila. However if you check the original agave juice content in the two tanks, the one for "mixto" has less of that relative to its total. This is why **mixto tequilas have lighter agave flavor** as the agave content of a mixto was diluted by the enrichment of sugar in the mosto.

LESSON 8

Modern tequila production -
Diffuser

Bonus Lesson 4



Do you remember the steps of the tequila production from the certification course?

That was the traditional production process.

The modern production method refers to a new automated process where the production is designed to remove all of the manual labor intensive elements except for the harvest, which is still done by the jimadores.



As the demand for tequila was getting higher, the biggest producers started to invest in technologies that would allow them to make the production more efficient, cost-effective. While this idea goes against the ideology of the denomination that the land, the water and the special local artisanal processes together should make tequila unique, yet the industry found this evolution to be necessary for tequila to become a truly international, global drink.

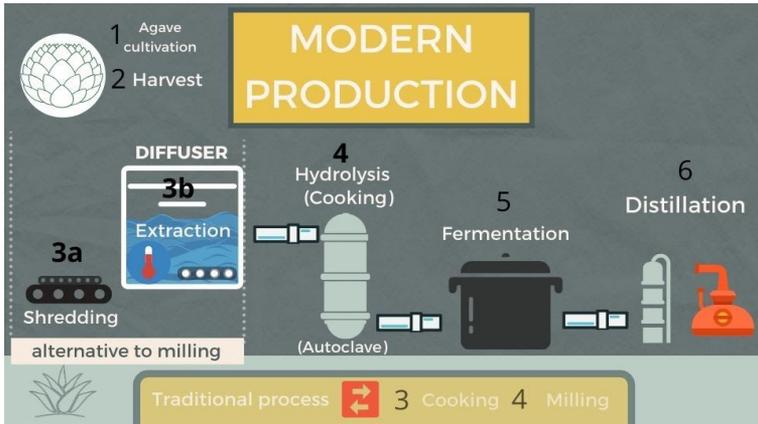
So while the traditional way works with batches and is very labour intensive the modern way is all about automation and continuous processes.



The agave farming and the harvest as mentioned earlier is the same.

Cultivating agave is considered to be a risky investment (and it requires a high level of micro-management), so big producers buy most of their agaves from small farmers.

The individual farmers don't have the capital to invest in technology for more efficient farming, so cultivating and harvesting agaves remain an old-school process.



On the other hand, once the agave arrives into the plant and is loaded onto a conveyor belt, the rest of the process is mostly automated.

The conveyor belt passes through a few shredders to shred the agaves into tiny pieces.

Then they enter a chamber called the diffuser or diffuser in English. The diffuser uses hot currents to wash the sugar s(or more like the inulin, fructans, starch) from the plant and separate them from the fibres.

After this, the liquid passes through to be hydrolysed or with other word cooked in autoclaves. This is the exact opposite way of the traditional

method, where the agave is cooked first then shredded and milled for extraction.

Then comes the fermentation. The modern method works best in a closed fermentation environment where the temperature can be controlled.

The distillation is usually done by column stills or a combination of column stills with pot stills.



The process is a lot more efficient **achieving over 95% efficiency** when extracting the sugars of the agave.

However it does not allow many small refinements traditional producers can apply and the efficiency

has its cost for having **too many molecules in the fresh distillate that are not necessarily appealing.**

These need to be removed through extensive filtration (including triple distillation and high proof/abv column distillation) which in turn can make the tequila lighter and less unique.

On the other hand **the cost saving effect would allow the producer to sell the tequila at a cheaper price tag** to those consumers to whom a light, one-dimensional tequila is not an issue.

LESSON 9

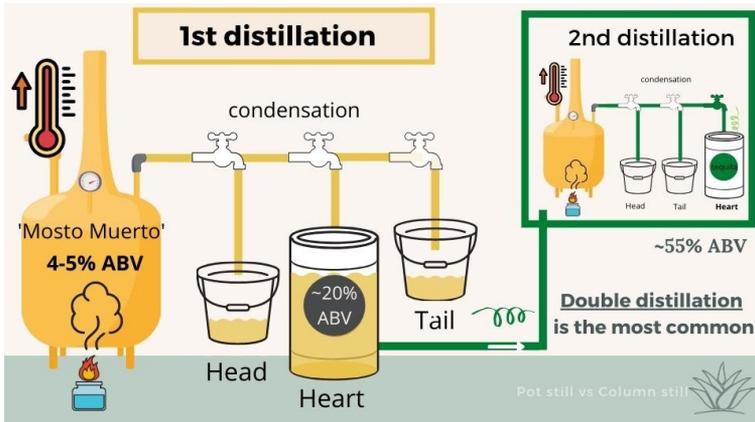
Pot still vs Column
still

Bonus Lesson 5



Distillation in a pot still is the old-school batch distillation - it is a lot more manual process, where during the distillation certain parts of the distillates are collected or discarded.

As the temperature rises in the still, at a certain temperature point, the more volatile components start to rise from the bottom of the still and are captured at the top of the still as they condense. What they capture and what they discard is broken down into three parts: **head, heart and tail.**



Most producers discard the distillate obtained in the first few minutes (called: **the head**) as it can have aromatic components that they don't want in their tequila.

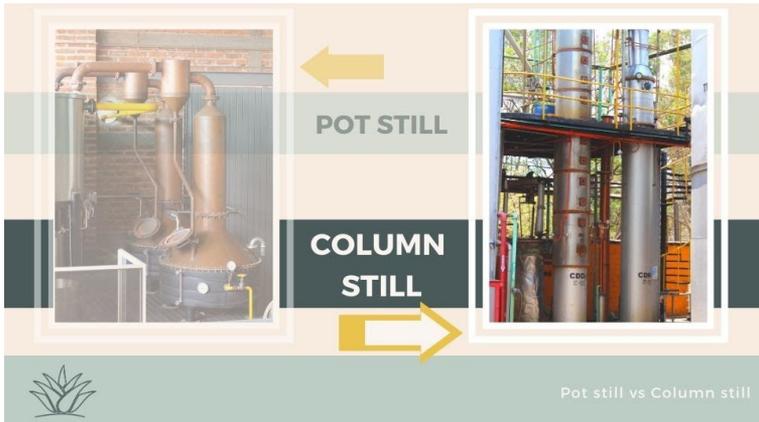
This first discarded part is called the “head” or “cabeza” of the spirit. **The “heart” or “corazón”** contains the most precious components and it is collected separately to be used in the final product.

Once the flow from the still reaches a certain alcohol content, they switch from collecting the heart to collecting the **tail**. Leaving too much of the tail may make the tequila taste of citric fruits or olives. While single distillation in theory is allowed by the regulations, no producers seem to apply it and

instead they double distill. There are a few triple distilled tequilas - distilling it for a third time however may remove some precious aromas from the tequila.

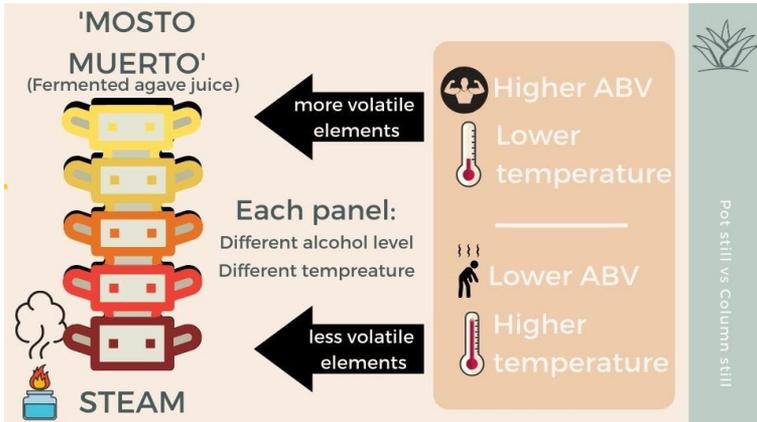


Pot stills come in two materials copper and stainless steel. Tequilas made by copper stills are usually regarded as superior (not to mention the material is approx. 10 times more expensive), however stainless steel made tequilas can be just as good. There are so many other things that impact the quality of a tequila, even the shape of the still!



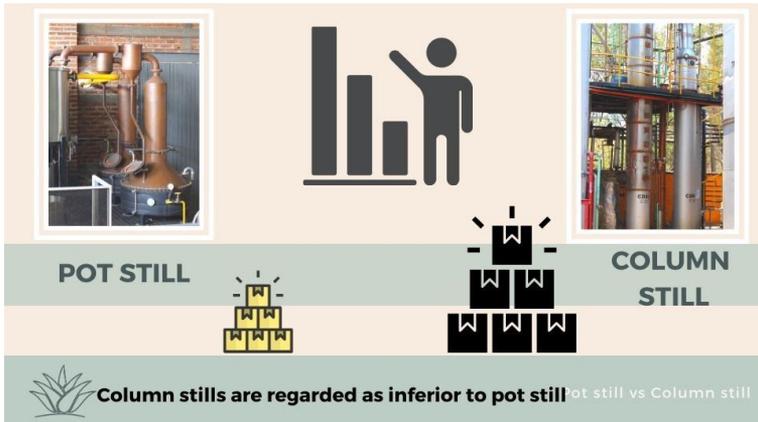
The best way to describe the **column still** is like a series of pot stills on top of each other forming a vertical tube.

Unlike in the case of a pot still, where distillation is achieved by one batch at a time, a continuous still in theory can operate 24 hours a day without any disruptions. There are multiple plates inside the tube, and basically the distillation happens in between the plates.



The mosto muerto which is basically agave beer is released from the top of the still while the bottom of the still is heated and they release steam into the system.

As the warm steam from below interacts with the mosto, there is an exchange of heat and molecules. Heavier, less volatile elements with higher boiling points get pushed to the lower plates and the more volatile elements with lower boiling points (like the ethanol) will rise to the higher plates. The higher the plate is located from the bottom of the still, the higher is the level of its alcohol (ethanol) content. Then at the top of the still, the purified alcohol is collected.



Column stills are regarded as inferior to pot still.

Most producers using column stills are volume oriented large producers, however as always there are some rare exceptions to this rule too.

La Tequileña (producer of Don Fulano) has column stills (as seen on the pictures), however they use it at a low alcohol strength leaving lots of aromatic components in the spirit. And even they blend their column still tequila with copper pot still batches and the majority of the blend is from the pot stills. Another example is Armagnac, the spirit where column stills are utilized for smaller batches and low still strength to achieve high aromatic quality.

LESSON 10

Tequila as Mezcal

Bonus Lesson 6

MEZCAL		TEQUILA
SMOKINESS		
SMOKEY		NOT SMOKEY with exceptions
AGAVE SPECIES		
SEVERAL AGAVE SPECIES CAN BE USED		ONLY AGAVE TEQUILANA WEBER (Blue agave)
REGION		
DIFFERENT REGIONS & PRODUCERS		DIFFERENT REGIONS & PRODUCERS

Tequila as mezcal

When it comes to tequila and mezcal, there are three major differences that we are going to cover.

1. **SMOKINESS:** Mezcals are usually smokey, and at times it can be incredibly smokey, while tequilas are mostly not smokey at all.
2. **AGAVE SPECIES:** Mezcal producers use several different agave species, while tequila producers use only one.
3. **REGION:** Tequila and mezcal are produced in different regions and by different producers.



The confusion around this topic comes from an interesting fact: **tequila and mezcal are historically related.**

While the word Tequila derives from the town, the word mezcal is a reference to the agave plant from the Nahuatl words “Metl” and “Ixcalli” which is identified as cooked agave. Mezcal vino or in English “mezcal wine” was the term to refer to agave distillates.

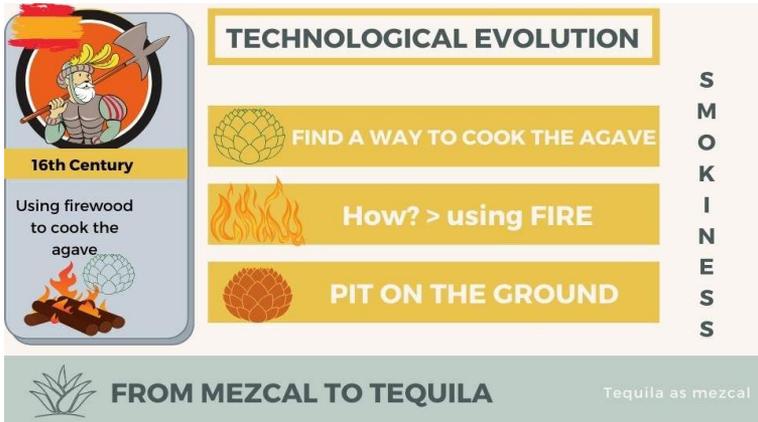
Mezcal has a documented history from the 16th century from the Spanish conquest naturally attributing the technology to be brought by them, however some recent archeological research may

suggest that mezcal vino production could be a lot older than that. But due to the lack of written evidence prior to the Spanish conquest, we will not cover such theories and they are not supported by the CRT either.

So how do we get from mezcal to tequila?



The best answer to this question is through **technological and commercial evolution.**



The **technological evolution** is evident if we think about the word “cooked agave”. For mezcal production, producers needed to find a way to cook the agave, so in the 16th century they were using the most high-tech resource that was available to them: fire. They were using local firewood as the source and covered it with volcanic rocks that could keep the heat inside. Then they rounded the agaves around this temporary fire-powered-hut and covered them with dirt and agave fibres. After a couple of days the agaves were cooked and its sugars were ready to ferment. The most artisan mezcals still use the same approach to cook the agaves and this is what makes mezcal to taste smokey!



Now let's see the **commercial aspect** of how mezcal was sold. With the new Spanish administration, the king wanted to sell Spanish liqueur and brandy to the locals and so mezcal production was banned. However the imported booze was extremely expensive, and only the wealthiest citizens were able to afford it, mezcal became the poor men's drink. Producers built their operations in derelict regions, no man's land to hide their production from the authorities.



Evolution usually starts with a commercial aspect and tequila was no different.

The Cuervo family is quoted as the first to begin the commercialization of the industry. The Spanish king granted the family several farms in the region where the town of Tequila is located.

By the end of the 18th Century, the ban on the production of mezcal was lifted as the producers agreed to pay a tax. Throughout the 18th and 19th century, the town of Tequila became a hub for commercial mezcal producers, and they were able to build up legal capital to invest in technology and to further expand their lands for agave farming.



With the growth of the industry, agave farming became an issue. For local oriented, small scale production producers were gathering their agaves from the wilderness, however **to cater for the national and then later even an international market, the agricultural cultivation of the agave plant became necessary.**

Mezcal producers use several different agave species, while tequila producers use only one.

AGAVE CULTIVATION

BLUE AGAVE
Tequilana Weber

- Lower maturation period than other species
- High sugar (inulin, fructane) content
- Less fibres > easier to work with it

AGAVE FARMING
wild agaves vs agave cultivation

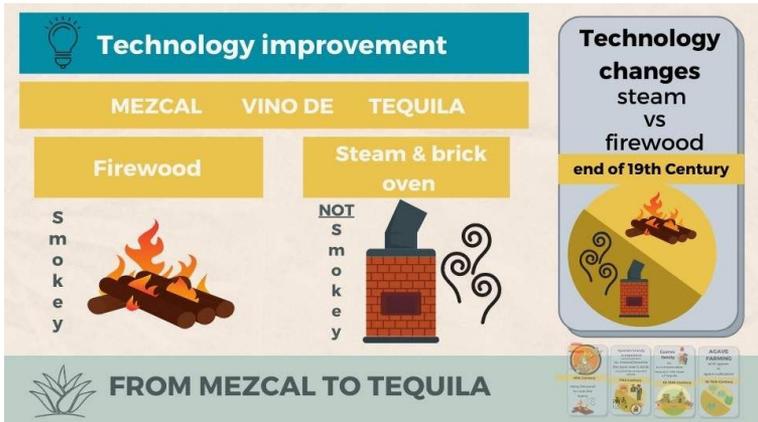
18-19th Century

FROM MEZCAL TO TEQUILA

Tequila as mezcal

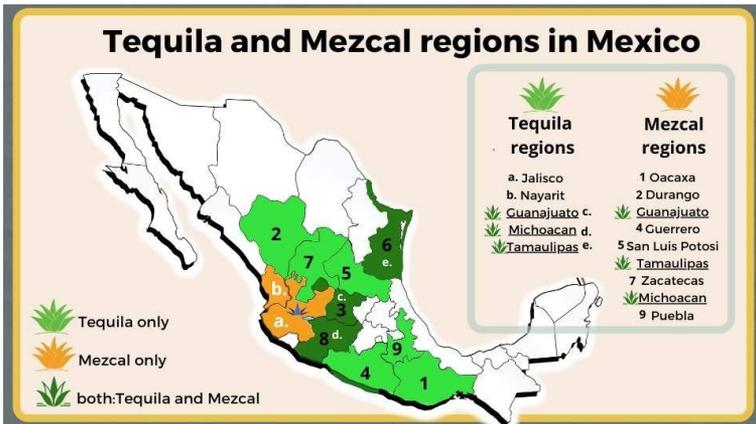
The iconic blue agave otherwise known as agave tequilana Weber became the most popular agave for cultivation for 3 reasons:

1. It was quicker to mature compared to other species,
2. had a higher sugar(inulin, fructane) content and
3. contained less fibres, so it was easier to work with.



By the end of the 19th century, the steam boiler became a successful technological invention and several producers started to use them to cook the agaves with it. **They built brick huts powered by steam boilers and this is the technology now referred to as brick oven.** This came with a change in the taste profile as the steam no longer provided smokey flavors to the mezcal. Eventually it became a signature taste for the mezcal coming from Tequila and now producers wanted to distinguish this new product from the other mezcals. In the early 20th Century the first bottles came out with the name only tequila on it and in the 1930s, the **companies started to protect their brand names with the**

word **tequila** clearly indicated without any reference to mezcal.



This legalization effort reached its conclusion in **1974**, when the Mexican government issued a decree that Tequila is a Denomination of Origin protected spirit with its special rules on production.

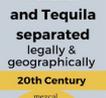
In **1995**, when even mezcal became a denominated spirit, the separation between tequila and mezcal became complete which leads to our 3. Point: Mezcal & Tequila are **geographically separated**.

Tequila can be made in territories of states of Jalisco, Nayarit, Guanajuato, Michoacán and

Tamaulipas, while Mezcal can be made in Oaxaca, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas, Michoacán and Puebla.

	<p>Expensive Spanish brandy High tax Mexican mezcal became the poor men's drink</p>		<p>Cuervo family 1st to commercialise mezcal in the town of Tequila</p>	
<p>16th Century</p>	<p>17th Century</p>	<p>18th Century</p>	<p>18-19th Century</p>	<p>20th Century</p>
<p>Using firewood to cook the agave</p> 		<p>Mezcal banned Local hidden mezcal producing places</p> 		<p>Mezcal and tequila separated legally and geographically Steam instead firewood Brick oven instead pit Separate regions</p>
<p>Denomination of origin protected spirit</p>		<p>1974 Tequila</p>	<p>1995 Mezcal</p>	
<p>FROM MEZCAL TO TEQUILA</p>				<p>Tequila as mezcal</p>

SUMMARY

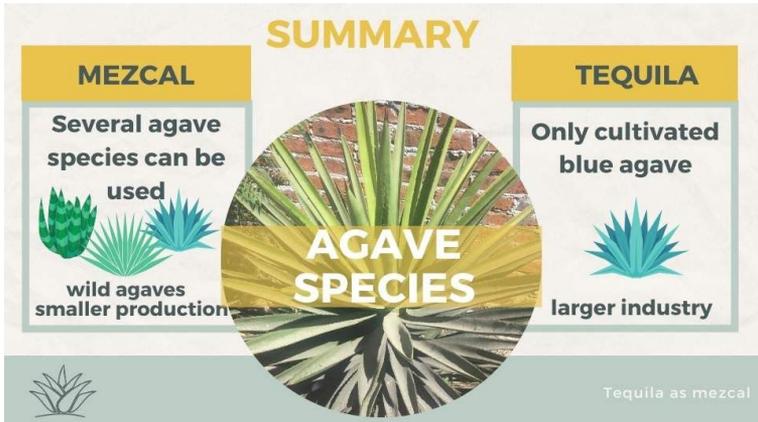
 <p>16th Century</p> <p>Using firewood to cook the agave</p> 	<p>High tax on Spanish brandy ...mezcal as poor men's drink Local hidden mezcal production</p> <p>17th Century</p> 	<p>Cuervo family 1st to commercialise mezcal in the town of Tequila</p> <p>18-19th Century</p> 	<p>AGAVE FARMING wild agaves vs agave cultivation</p> <p>18-19th Century</p> 	<p>Technology changes STEAM end of 19th Century</p> 	<p>Mezcal and Tequila separated legally & geographically</p> <p>20th Century</p> 
<p style="text-align: right;">Tequila as mezcal</p>					



SUMMARY #1

Mezcals are smokey as the agaves are cooked on firewood whereas the tequila industry uses steam and this approach creates a smoke-free character for the spirit.

NOTE: there are some rare, notable exceptions to this rule.



SUMMARY #2

Mezcal production is smaller and traditionally no agave cultivation was necessary, so producers were harvesting wild agaves, while the tequila industry is larger and it requires a constant source of agave plants in the most economically viable way so they use cultivated blue agave exclusively.

NOTE: With the growth of the mezcal industry, most of the agaves are cultivated and the majority of mezcals is made from one particular species “agave angustifolia” - this species too is excellent for cultivation just like agave tequilana.

SUMMARY

MEZCAL	TEQUILA
<p>Both started as mezcal</p> <p>Designated States: Oaxaca & other designated States</p> 	<p>now legally separated</p> <p>Designated States: Jalisco, Nayarit, Michoacan, Guanajuato, Tamaulipas</p>  <p style="font-size: small;">Tequila is mezcal</p>



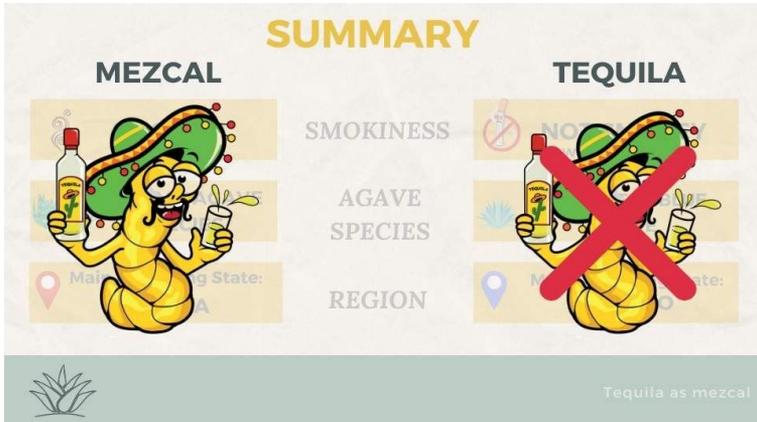
REGION

SUMMARY #3

The mezcal and tequila industry has similar roots, both were mezcal and literally they both are as they are distillates of the cooked agave. However in order to avoid confusion, they are legally separated, so a bottle cannot legally qualify as both tequila and mezcal and a producer can only make tequila or mezcal at their premises. Also, the denomination territories, the States producing tequila or mezcal are different with only a few exceptions.

NOTE: While we name and highlight the states that are included in the denomination, it does not

necessarily mean that 100% of each state's territory belong to a denomination. For accurate info on the exact municipios (counties) please visit www.crt.org.mx for tequila and www.crm.org.mx for mezcal.



+1 THE MEZCAL WORM

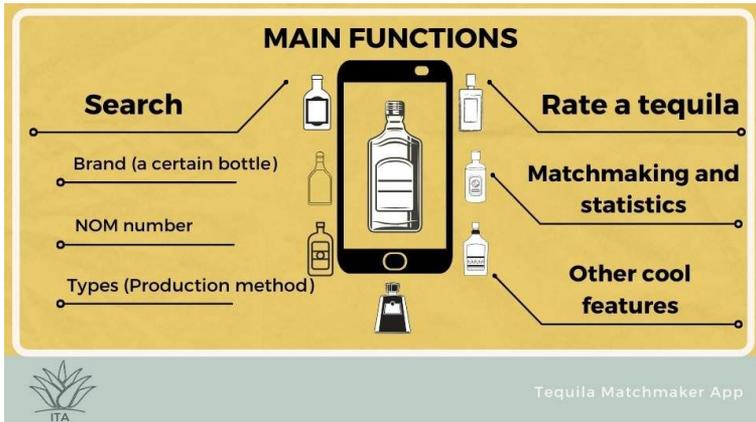
Mezcal can have worm in the bottle while worm in a tequila bottle is not allowed.

NOTE: Not just worm, but even fruits and insects are allowed to be added into the bottle in case of a mezcal.

LESSON 11

The Tequila Matchmaker App

Bonus Lesson 7

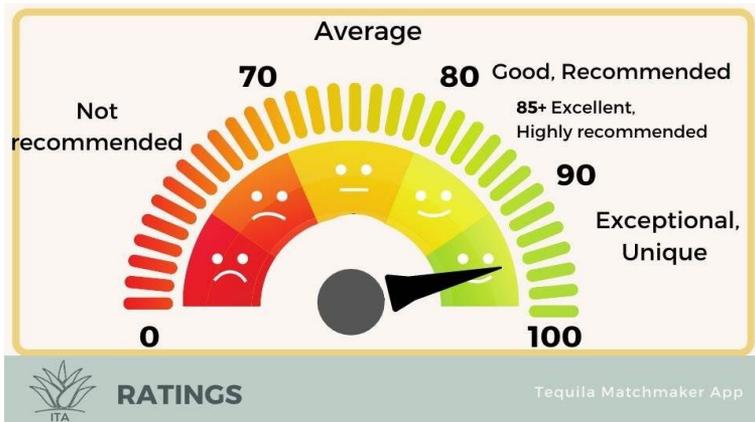


Are you not entirely sure if the bottle you are about to buy is any good? Well, let us introduce you to an app that can help you with your future purchases. In this lesson we are going to talk about the Tequila Matchmaker app. This cool application provides lots of features and information that can be a great help - especially for people starting out in the world of tequila, so we decided to create this lesson to help you understand how it works. Its main functions include search by brand, NOM number, production method, rating tequilas, matchmaking, statistics and other features.



Search function

Let's see how the brand search function works. You can do a quick search for any brand to see how people rate their individual tequilas! There are two ratings, one for community members and the other is for panel members who were selected by the founders for their experience in assessing tequilas. The app also collects tasting notes from its users that can help you with food pairings.



As an unofficial rule of thumb, ratings below 70 are for tequilas not recommended by most users, between 70 and 80 is the range for average quality, less complex tequilas, 80 is the rating where a tequila is considered to be good and recommended and only few tequilas seem to have 85 or higher scores which means they are excellent and highly recommended tequilas. Tequilas in the range of 90 and above are usually very unique, exceptional tequilas, typically very small batches or single barrels and they come with the highest recommendations.



Some tequilas have a few ratings, others have 1000s of ratings, so it's worth to check how many ratings each tequila have received as more ratings typically give a more accurate rank. We all have our unique palate so use this information with care and understanding that you may not like some of the recommended tequilas. It's also worth mentioning that the creators put a great deal into gathering the **officially stated production methods** too for brands. Feel free to check if the tequila was produced with tahona, roller mill, brick oven, autoclave or with the modern production method referred to as "diffuser" then compare the effect on the taste of these various production methods!



Do you remember our lesson about NOM number? We used the Tequila Matchmaker app there and for a good reason. Currently the easiest way to quickly look at a NOM number and see all tequilas that belong there is by this tool. Not only does it **list the active brands**, it also lists brands that were **previously produced** under the particular registration number. And on top of this, it lists other **NOM numbers connected to the same distillery**, which we used to realize that celebrity tequilas like that of George Clooney’s and Dwayne Johnson’s were essentially made by the same producer.

NOTE: Connected NOM numbers for the same distillery are only visible via the desktop version

TYPE / PRODUCTION METHOD

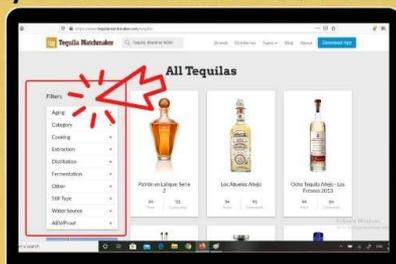
Only on
desktop
version



Tequila Matchmaker App

TYPE / PRODUCTION METHOD

Only on
desktop
version



Tequila Matchmaker App

Would you like to try a triple distilled tequila or perhaps you are looking for a tequila that is tahona crushed? The web version accessible through the website tequilamatchmaker.com gives you this option.

Just simply click on “Types” at the menu, select “All” or a specific classification and then you will be able to find the filters on the left hand side of the screen. Happy browsing!



Rating tequilas

You can join the other tequila fans and start rating tequilas! For this feature you'll need the app version, then find and select the tequila you would like to rate.

Just simply tap on the “rate” icon and let the fun begin! Notice how the face in the middle and the text below starts to change as you adjust the slider to further help you select the right score.



There are four sliders representing **aroma**, **flavor**, **finish** and **value**, then you will be asked if you would be happy to drink the tequila again or if you would recommend it to your friend.





Summary screen: Here you can make some final adjustments if you feel the score is too high or low.

The last part is your opportunity to leave comments. Leaving comments can help others understand your rating and if you even leave tasting notes, the app will collect this data for you and will tell you which aromas do you prefer in a tequila and will make suggestions for tequilas with these aromas to try. In the same screen you have the option to **make your rating private** which is a great feature allowing you to rate tequilas if you are a brand ambassador or would rather keep your opinion private for any other reasons.

Matchmaking & Statistics



According to the creators, a lot of people thought that tequila matchmaking was actually finding a date with a mutual interest in tequila. While it is not impossible to find a date partner based on commonly shared interests which in this case would be tequila, the “matchmaking” refers to finding the best tequilas matching your profile. After rating at least 4 tequilas with the app, it will give you recommendations based on your ratings. The app has many **useful statistics** too like which flavors you like the most in a tequila, personal average ratings for certain extraction, hydrolysis, distillation methods and by region.

Other features



There are some other cool features like searching for nearby tequila stores, following other users, you can like tequilas and producers, you can earn badges with various activities and display them and the app is constantly evolving. The creators love tequila and they try and give the best experience to their users. And it is not just us recommending - producers and tequila enthusiasts seem to agree based on our interviews that this is a tool that can help you grow and understand tequilas better, especially when starting out.