

MEZCAL: PRODUCTO 100% MEXICANO

Before the arrival of the Spaniards to Mexico in the 16th century, the alcoholic beverage that was known was the *pulque*, obtained through the fermentation of the agave.

However, with the introduction of the distillation process the production of beverages with a high alcoholic content was introduced and became known as the "agave wine", from which emerged the mezcal. The word, mezcal came from the Agave cooked, which in Nahuatl language was: metl or meztli (maguey) and ixcalli (Cook).

Mezcal is a drink that is still deeply rooted in the culture of the regions where it is produced. It is an important part within their main ceremonies and rituals, both religious and social.



Mezcal in numbers:

1. The value of exports reached 97 million, proceeds from the sale of 4.8 million liters of mezcal to United States, England, Spain, Italy, Japan, Taiwan and Turkey, among others.
2. This activity generates approximately 30,000 jobs. 5,270 are direct related
3. In 2009, Oaxaca was the leading producer of mezcal, generating 54.4% of the total.
4. The second place is occupied by Zacatecas which has 45.3% of the total output, while Durango and Guerrero produced 0.3%.
5. The more sought after categories by foreigners are the young mezcal with worm; rested and rested with worm. They represent 93% of the total exports.

TYPES OF MEZCAL

According to the NOM-070-SCFI-1994 mezcal is an alcoholic beverage obtained by distillation and rectification of the juice of the agave previously prepared with the sugars extracted from mature heads of Agave, which were previously boiled and subjected to fermentation.

The above standard considers two types of mezcal, according to the percentage of carbohydrates from the agave used in its preparation.

Type I. Mezcal 100% Agave. Product obtained from distillation and rectification of juice prepared directly and originally with mature heads of Agave. This type of mezcal can be young, rested or aged (old).

Type II. Mezcal. Produce obtained through the distillation and rectification of the juices, which have been added with up to 20% of other allowed carbohydrates by the legal and applicable dispositions.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEZCAL AND TEQUILA

- Tequila only uses the tequilana weber agave variety, while mezcal has an extraordinary diversity; at least 30 varieties of agave can be used. Each of them has special aromas and flavors. Some mezcals are made with a combination of several species.

- Mexico has about 200 species of agave, but only 12 or 15 are currently of the mezcal type. Each mezcal is associated with a species of maguey and a peasant region.



For further information...

Financiera Rural <http://goo.gl/rXe7C>

Consejo Mexicano Regulador de la Calidad del Mezcal, <http://www.comercam.org>