

Water used to mix with the crushed and cooked agave for fermentation, distillation and to prepare for bottling.

Yeast used to begin fermentation of agave juice.

Distillation process, using either large or small alembic.

Aging – how long and in what.

Final bottling – 100% agave or mixed.



## Tequila Information – List of Resources

### Books

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| <i>Classic Tequila</i><br>Ian Wisniewski                           | Prion Books             |
| <i>Tequila – The Book</i><br>Anne & Larry Walker                   | Chronicle Books         |
| <i>Maria's Real Margarita Book</i><br>Al Lucero                    | Ten Speed Press         |
| <i>Mezcal</i><br>Gerard Uferas                                     | Editions Plume          |
| <i>Tequila Cooking with the Spirit of Mexico</i><br>Lucinda Hutson |                         |
| <i>Tequila Lovers Guide to Mexico</i><br>Lance Cutler              | Wine Patrol Press       |
| <i>Mesa Grill Guide to Tequila</i><br>Laurence Kretchmer           |                         |
| <i>The Tequila Book</i><br>Marion Gorman &<br>Felipe P. de Alba    | Contemporary Books Ltd. |

### Web sites

- [www.cuervo.com](http://www.cuervo.com)  
<http://users.aol.com.mrtequila/home.htm>  
[www.1800tequila.com](http://www.1800tequila.com)  
[www.tequilaspecialist.com/](http://www.tequilaspecialist.com/)  
[sazatequila.com](http://sazatequila.com)  
[www.tequilafancy.com](http://www.tequilafancy.com)  
[www.geogian.net/rally/tequila/links.html](http://www.geogian.net/rally/tequila/links.html)



## Knowledge in the Glass

The Power to Connect with Guests

### The Margarita

The Margarita is the most popular mixed drink in the USA today; the drink that has done most for tequila sales around the world. Before the Margarita the Martini was the most famous cocktail but women didn't really like it as it was too austere. Today the Margarita has suffered the degradations of US culture and far too often it is frozen, diluted and made with poor quality Tequila, sour mix and other unmentionables. In its natural state it's a fine cocktail with a delicate blend of sweet, tart, strong and weak, the classic cocktail mix.

Its origins are hazy but some stories stand out.

Pancho Morales, a bartender from Juarez was asked for a "Magnolia" and he forgot how to make it. Rather than ask, he was a true bartender, so just threw together tequila, lime and Cointreau. The guest said that although it wasn't what she had ordered she liked it and what was it called. He asked her name and called it a Margarita. He was bartender trainer in Juarez, so word spread.

Or maybe it was Margaret Sames, a U.S. socialite from San Antonio who 'invented' it as a Christmas treat for her house guests. She thought nothing of it till she was flying back from Acapulco airport and saw the exact recipe in the airport bar with 'Margarita's Drink' as its name. Among her house guests was Nicky Hilton who took 'the drink' to his hotels.

Or maybe it was Carlos Herrera who made it for a lady called Marjorie who couldn't drink any other spirit than tequila so to make it more ladylike he added Cointreau, lime and a salt rim. The salt caught people's attention at the bar and they ordered the drink too...

Which ever story you prefer, just remember "Margarita - its more than a girls name!"

### Recipe:

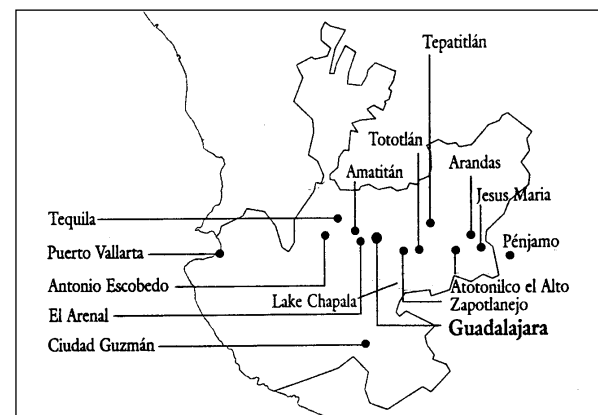
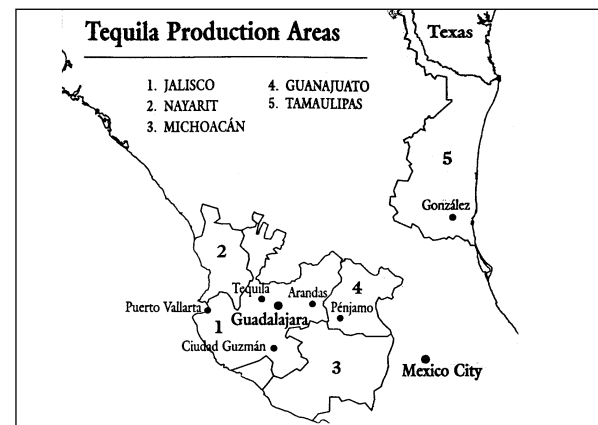
2oz Tequila  
1oz Cointreau  
1oz Fresh Lime Juice

### Method:

Shake all and strain into a salt rimmed cocktail glass. Garnish with Lime Wheel.

### Tips:

Remember that salt is a garnish not an ingredient.



For more information or to make a booking please contact:

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The Taste and Flavour  
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TEQUILA  
EXPLAINED



## History

Though the Spaniards introduced the art of distillation into South America, pre-Columbian Indians first fermented the juice of the Agave.

The Blue Agave, a plant native to the state of Jalisco, was found to produce the finest spirit and Tequila, the town located in this state, became the centre of production.

The first commercial distillery was established in 1753 but prohibition soon followed. It was not until 1795, after repeal, that a certain Don Jose Cuervo, having been granted the first commercial licence, opened his own distillery. Others followed during the 19th century, including Sauza, who established La Perseverancia Distillery in 1873.

In 1976 all aspects of production became regulated and, in 1992, the Consejo Regulador del Tequila was formed to supervise production in every distillery and to award certificates of quality, now signified on labels by the initials CRT and the NOM numbers to identify the distillery.

Tequila is not the spirit with the worm. Just as Cognac is a unique brandy, so Tequila is a unique Mezcal. Both enjoy recognition as exclusive spirits of Mexico and each is produced according to strict regulations and defined according to their contents of blue agave. It is other Mezcal that sometimes include a worm in their bottles.



## Preparation

Agave or century plant, used in the production of Tequila, is not a cactus. It is better described as “a member of the lily family.” The variety used in Tequila production is the Weber Blue Agave.

Agave Azul takes 8-12 years to reach maturity, when each heart can weigh up to 100 kg. When mature, a flower stalk, more than two metres high, shoots from the heart of the plant to signal the approaching death of the plant. The grower must harvest the agave before this flower begins to feed on the starches

stored within its heart. Because each plant will mature at different times, harvesting is a year round activity, always done by hand.



## Cooking

The agave hearts are sliced into two or four pieces before being steam cooked for 24-48 hours, to convert their starchy sap into fermentable sugars. The traditional oven is made from brick or stone or even mud and straw but some distilleries now use stainless steel pressure cookers.

After cooking the hearts cool for a further 24-36 hours before being crushed, traditionally by a stone mill that rotates round a circular pit to crush out the sugary sap called ‘agua miel’. Others will use modern industrial crushing machines and shoot out the sap with jets of water.



## Fermentation

For production of 100% agave Tequila, only sugars from the blue agave are transferred to fermentation vats. For standard Tequila only 51% of the sugars need come from the blue agave. Any other sugar, such as molasses or corn syrup, can make up the balance and the producer’s choice can be noticeable in the flavour and character of the final spirit.



## Distillation

Though a few Tequilas are triple-distilled and there is some experimentation with continuous stills, most producers double distil the ‘mosto’ in pot stills, traditionally made from copper but now more usually constructed from stainless steel. The product of the first distillation is known as ‘ordinario’. Only after a second distillation can the product be described as Tequila.



## Maturation

White or Silver Tequilas can be reduced with water and bottled straight from the still without any barrel

aging. When Tequilas are aged only oak barrels may be used. Speciality Tequilas can be aged for some years but most will not mature for more than a few weeks or months and a year at most. More than 5 years can mean that the character of the agave is lost and that the wood takes over.



## Types of Tequila

Despite its undeserved reputation, Tequila, usually bottled at 38% or 40% abv., is no stronger than other spirits. Tequila has a strong, herbal flavour with a slightly oily consistency. The best aged Tequilas develop additional subtle and complex flavours from the aging process.

Aged qualities have been especially relevant in recent times when interest has grown in ‘boutique’, premium spirits. These Tequilas can be enjoyed alongside other more traditional aged spirits, sipped or mixed, savoured after meals or enjoyed as aperitif, before.



## Tequila Terms

**Silver/Blanco:** Also known as ‘Plata’. A clear and intense Tequila, particularly fresh because it is not aged in oak barrels though some may have been rested for up to thirty days to ‘marry’.

**Gold:** Also known as Joven Abocado, joven meaning young. Produced in the same manner as Blanco, a Gold Tequila, with no further description, will use caramel for colour and to suggest age. Only Gold Tequilas, described as ‘Reposado’ or ‘Anejo’, are, in fact, aged.

**Reposado:** Aging Tequila is a relatively recent development. To use this term the Tequila must be aged in oak tanks for a minimum of sixty days and usually no more than one year. Caramel can still be added to improve the colour and invariably some of the agave character is sacrificed to the wood.

**Anejo:** Term used for quality Gold Tequilas, usually produced from 100% agave. Mexican law requires Tequila bearing this title to be aged in government sealed oak barrels no larger than 450 litres. they will be aged for at least a year and in some cases up to ten years. Long aging can turn the spirit bitter..

**Mixed:** Term often used to describe Tequilas that are not 100% Agave. These Tequilas may contain up to 49% cane or other sugars.

**100% Agave:** A Tequila with no sugar added during fermentation, and which uses only alcohol from the sap of the blue agave. If the label does not state 100% Agave, it isn’t.

**Curados:** The term applies to Tequilas flavoured with natural ingredients such as fruits.

**Hecho en Mexico:** Made in Mexico.

**NOM:** Norma Oficial Mexicana de Calidad, a number that appears on brands that abide by production regulations set by the ‘Consejo Regulador del Tequila’. Each distillery is given its own NOM number and all brands of 100% agave and aged Tequila produced by that distillery will have the same NOM number. This number is not a guarantee of quality, merely of authenticity.

**D.G.N.:** Formally a Mexican government quality stamp which appeared on the label of the best Tequilas. This stamp was abolished in 1978 but some Tequilas bottled in the USA still carry the letters.



## Key Influencers on the Final Product

‘Terroir’ – Where the agave is grown, the soil and climate.

Sugar/starch content of the agave.

Cooking of heart – the nature of oven and duration of cooking.