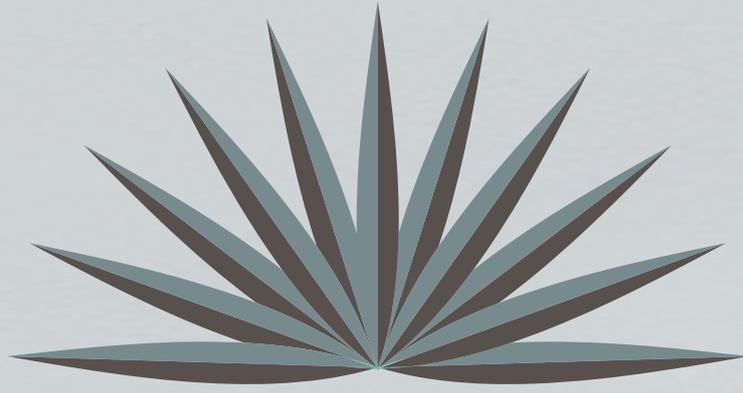




FIND YOUR LOVE FOR
AGAVE

Sazerac invites you to explore
The Plant, The Man and The Spirit.



FIND YOUR LOVE FOR **AGAVE**

From small batch, smoky mezcals to smooth and subtle tequilas, the spirits distilled from agave are legendary in complexity and character. They are some of the oldest distilled spirits in the Americas, born from equal parts myth and handcrafted innovation.

We invite you to discover the world of agave. Shrouded in mystery and rich in tradition, agave's tequilas and mezcals are spirits like no other. They will capture your imagination and hold a place in your heart forever.



THE MAGUEY

THE ANATOMY OF AGAVE

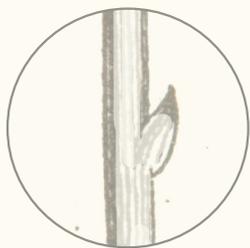
Indigenous American cultures considered the agave sacred. They found sustenance and shelter from the whole plant. As food, it was a vital source of carbohydrates and nutrients. Its needles were used for sewing clothes, writing, drawing and ritualistic bloodletting ceremonies. The leaves were used for baskets, floor mats, clothing, and building materials. And the fermented fruit was made into pulque, a sour, beer-like beverage.

Agave is a perennial succulent, native to the Southwestern United States and tropical South America. In Mexico, agave is known as

the “maguey,” and today, there are over 200 species of wild and cultivated agave, diverse in size, form and color. Approximately 40 of them are used in the creation of mezcals and tequilas.

An agave plant typically takes 8 to 25 years to mature, and are harvested only once. They ripen in the field, and harvesting the agave is a grueling, physical process done by highly skilled farmers called jimadores.

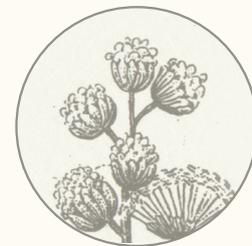
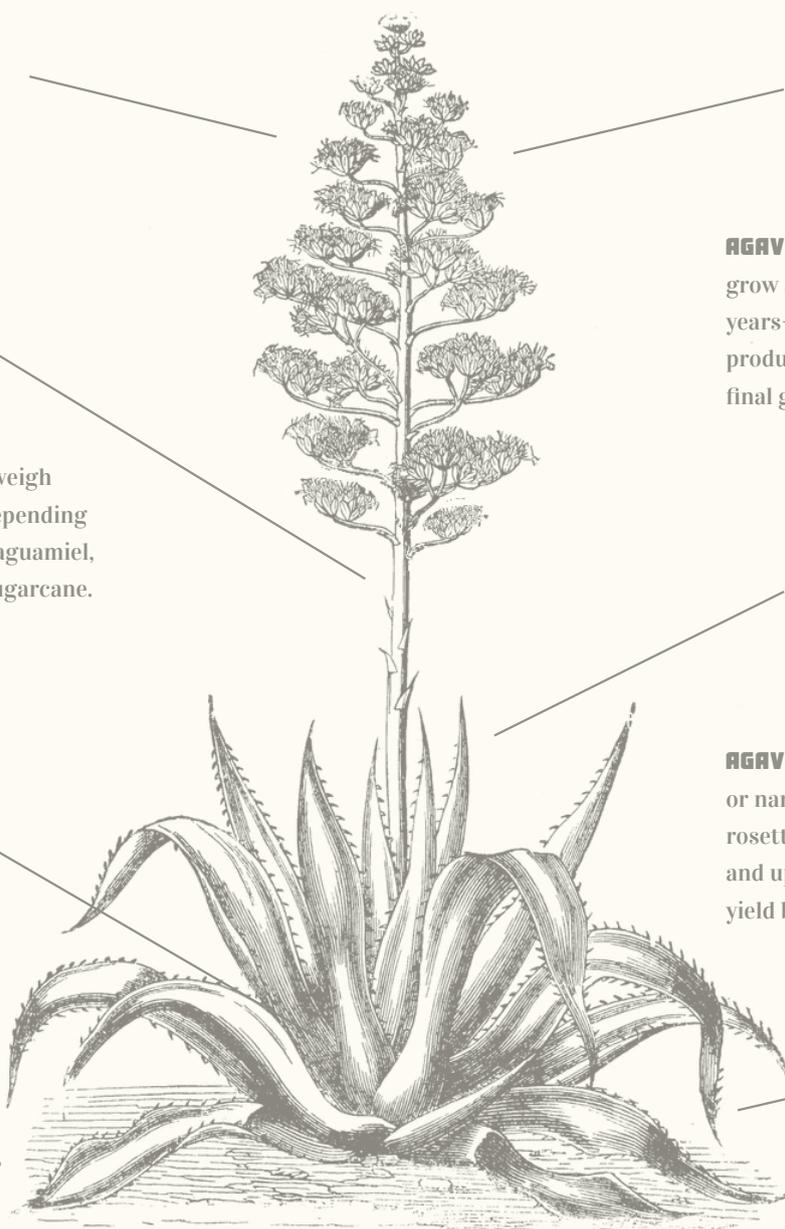
HIJUELOS are the baby agave shoots, or “pups” that grow into new plants.



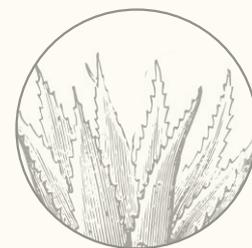
AGAVE STALKS, called quiotes, can weigh several pounds. Their size ranges depending on species. Stalks are the source of aguamiel, or honey water, which is used like sugarcane.



THE PIÑA The piña is the heart of the agave. Varying in size, some have been known to weigh as much as 1000 pounds. As the plant ages, the piña accumulates sugar and starch. Steamed, roasted or smoked, the piña is the key ingredient of mezcal and tequila.



AGAVE FLOWERS are edible. The plants grow slowly—some species as long as 25 years—and they bloom only once, potentially producing several pounds of flowers in their final growing seasons.



AGAVE LEAVES can be short and broad, or narrow and long. They are arranged in rosettes that are typically a few inches wide and up to 12 feet in diameter. The leaves yield both sap and fiber.

The agave plant has a small **ROOT SYSTEM**. Suckers allow the plant to multiply and produce colonies.

LOCAL FLAVOR

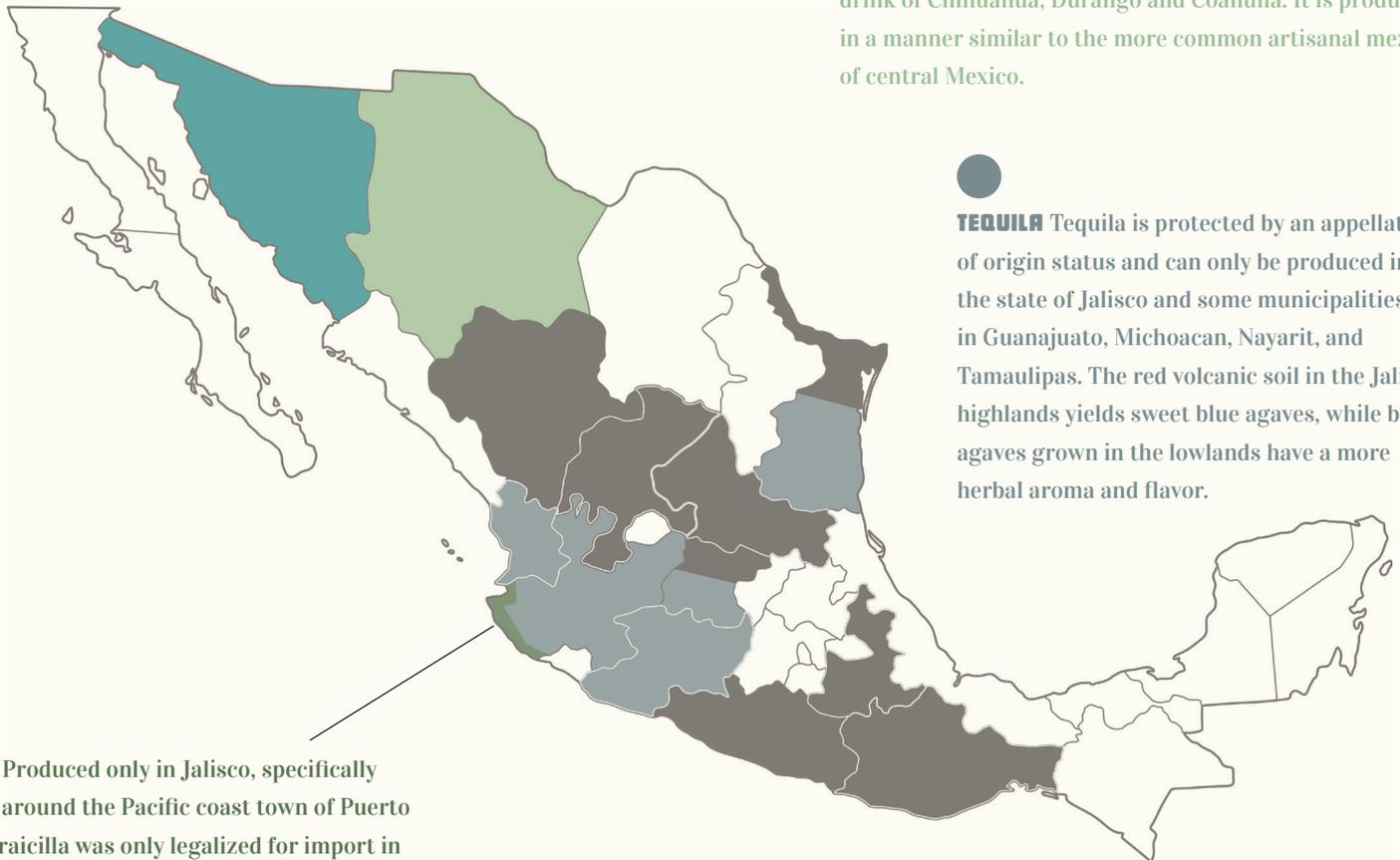
THE AGAVE MICROCLIMATES

Typically thought to grow in only arid climates, agave can actually be found around the world in both humid and dry environments.

And so the language of agave is the language of terroir. Each mezcal and tequila is made in a specific region, typically utilizing local raw materials. They carry the unique flavors of the earth and environment in which the plant grows and the spirit is distilled. Local and family recipes are passed from one generation to the next, whose continual refinement of the craft is driven by devotion as much as it is by pride.

BACANORA Bacanora is distilled from the wild agave pacifica, which is only found in the mountain ranges of Sonora. The hot days and cold nights in Sonora's dry, arid climate manifest in a dry, complex, and peppery spirit, with an earthy finish that's often enhanced with pine nuts or almonds in the early stages of distillation.

SOTOL is a distilled spirit made from *Dasyliroium wheeleri* - commonly known as Desert Spoon or, in Spanish, sotol. The plant grows in northern Mexico, New Mexico, west Texas, and the Texas Hill Country. It is known as the state drink of Chihuahua, Durango and Coahuila. It is produced in a manner similar to the more common artisanal mezcals of central Mexico.



RAICILLA Produced only in Jalisco, specifically near and around the Pacific coast town of Puerto Vallarta, raicilla was only legalized for import in the United States in 2014. Made from wild agave varieties like chico agar and maximilana, raicilla has a sweeter, tropical fruit-forward flavor.

TEQUILA Tequila is protected by an appellation of origin status and can only be produced in the state of Jalisco and some municipalities in Guanajuato, Michoacan, Nayarit, and Tamaulipas. The red volcanic soil in the Jalisco highlands yields sweet blue agaves, while blue agaves grown in the lowlands have a more herbal aroma and flavor.

MEZCAL Like tequila, mezcal can only be classified as such if made within these designated regions of Mexico: Oaxaca, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Puebla, Michoacan and Tamaulipas. But, mezcal can be made from any species of agave, which take on the terroir of the microclimates in which they grow, and impart flavors ranging from herbal and citrus, to spicy and floral.

MEZCAL

THE MOTHER OF AGAVE SPIRITS

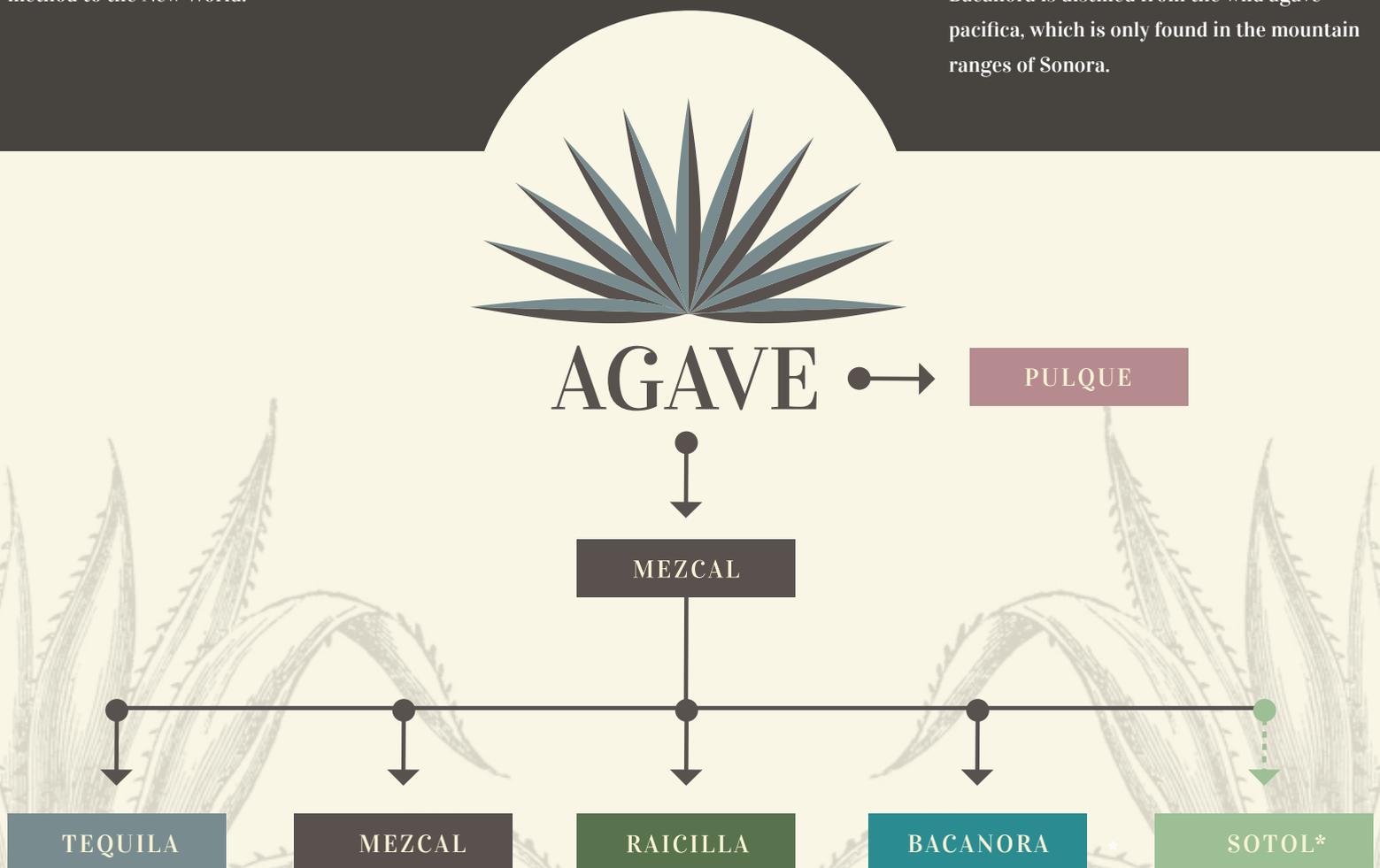
ALL SPIRITS DISTILLED FROM THE AGAVE PLANT ARE CONSIDERED MEZCALS. Just like the grape varietals used for wine, mezcal can be classified by the species of agave plant from which they are distilled. Different regions of Mexico are home to different species of agave and distillation methods which yield spirits unique to that region.

There are multiple theories regarding the origin of agave distillation in Mexico. Although there is little evidence, some researchers have found evidence of Pre-Hispanic (before Spanish invasion) distillation as well as Filipino-influenced practices dating as far back as the early 1500's. However, the most popular theory still attributes the Spanish as the first (or at least most influential) to bring the method to the New World.

Dating back 1000 years B.C., pulque is considered to be the first fermented beverage to be produced from the agave plant. Mezcal, however, is considered the first *distilled spirit* produced from the plant. As the Spanish explore Mexico to the north, they discover the area now known as the State of Jalisco. Here they discover a native tribe known as the "Tiquili" - a faction of the Toltecs. Their village Tequitlan, "land of hard labor," is later

shortened by the Spaniards to "Tequila." It is here that the process of baking the piña is moved above ground into an oven.

As exploration continued throughout the country, so did the distillation process. Slight variations of agave selection, fermentation and distillation have then resulted in other spirits. For example, Raicilla is made along the coast town of Puerto Vallarta, and Bacanora is distilled from the wild agave pacifica, which is only found in the mountain ranges of Sonora.



*Until recently, Sotol was listed in the agave family but now is classified as a member of the Nolinaceae family. So to be clear, Sotol is NOT made from an agave, therefore, not technically a mezcal. However, given its history and close proximity it has been included here.

MAKING THE MEZCAL

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

All mezcals have at least one thing in common: a one-of-a-kind recipe. They are all born from a carefully crafted process that has been tested and refined for generations. Although there are similarities in mezcal vs tequila production, there are also some distinct differences.

MEZCAL

To achieve Mezcal's characteristic smokiness, the piña is roasted for three to five days over hot stones in a pit covered with earth.



After roasting, the piña is mashed in horse-turned stone mills or by hand with heavy mallets.



The piña mash is then fermented with wild yeasts in wooden vats.



In the final step of the mezcal process, the liquid is distilled in wood-fired clay or copper stills.



TEQUILA

Once harvested, the piña is baked or steam-cooked in an oven called a horno.



After cooking, the piña is mashed, either by machine, or under a traditional stone wheel called a tahona.



The juice that is extracted from the piña mash is poured into stainless steel or wooden vats for fermentation, resulting in a low-alcohol sweet liquid called the mosto.



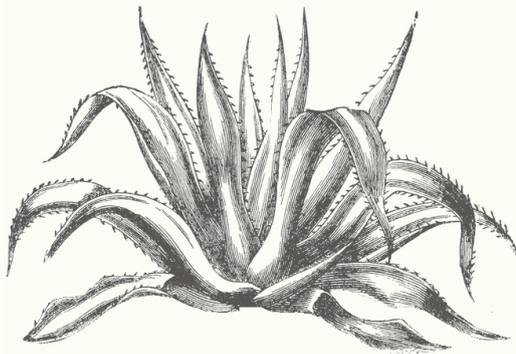
The mosto is distilled twice in copper or stainless stills to produce a clear, silver tequila.



MEZCAL^{OR} TEQUILA

A FEW NUANCES

After distillation, the un-aged spirit is often referred to as blanco or silver. Both tequila and mezcal can be classified by how long they are aged - which can range from two months to over three years. Reposado, añejo and extra añejo are terms used to detail the age of the spirit. Separately mezcals often use the agave varietal or their geographic region to distinguish expressions.



MEZCAL

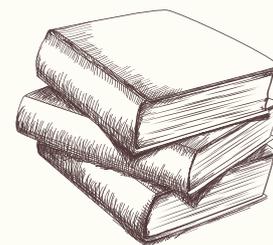
Non-tequila mezcals can be made from any type of agave, and their flavor profiles are vast. Handcrafted in small batches, most carry a signature smokiness that is the result of baking the piña, or heart, of the agave in an earthen pit. Unlike tequila, which is always made from blue agave, mezcals are made from over 40 species of the plant. Only a few of those species have been domesticated, and the espadin agave is the most used for mezcal production. Mezcal can only be made within designated regions of Mexico: Oaxaca, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Puebla, Michoacan and Tamaulipas.



TEQUILA

Tequila must be distilled using only the Weber blue agave. It carries an appellation of origin status and can only be made in five designated regions in Mexico: Jalisco, Michoacan, Tamaulipas, Guanajuato, and Nayarit.

GLOSSARY OF AGAVE TERMS



AÑEJO: tequila or mezcal that has been aged in wood barrels for at least one year.

BLANCO: unaged tequila or mezcal

MIXTO: tequilas that are at least 51% agave and contain other neutral spirits and sugars

PECHUGA: a traditional mezcal that undergoes a third distillation, where fruits are added to the liquid and raw chicken, turkey, or rabbit is suspended in the air of the still

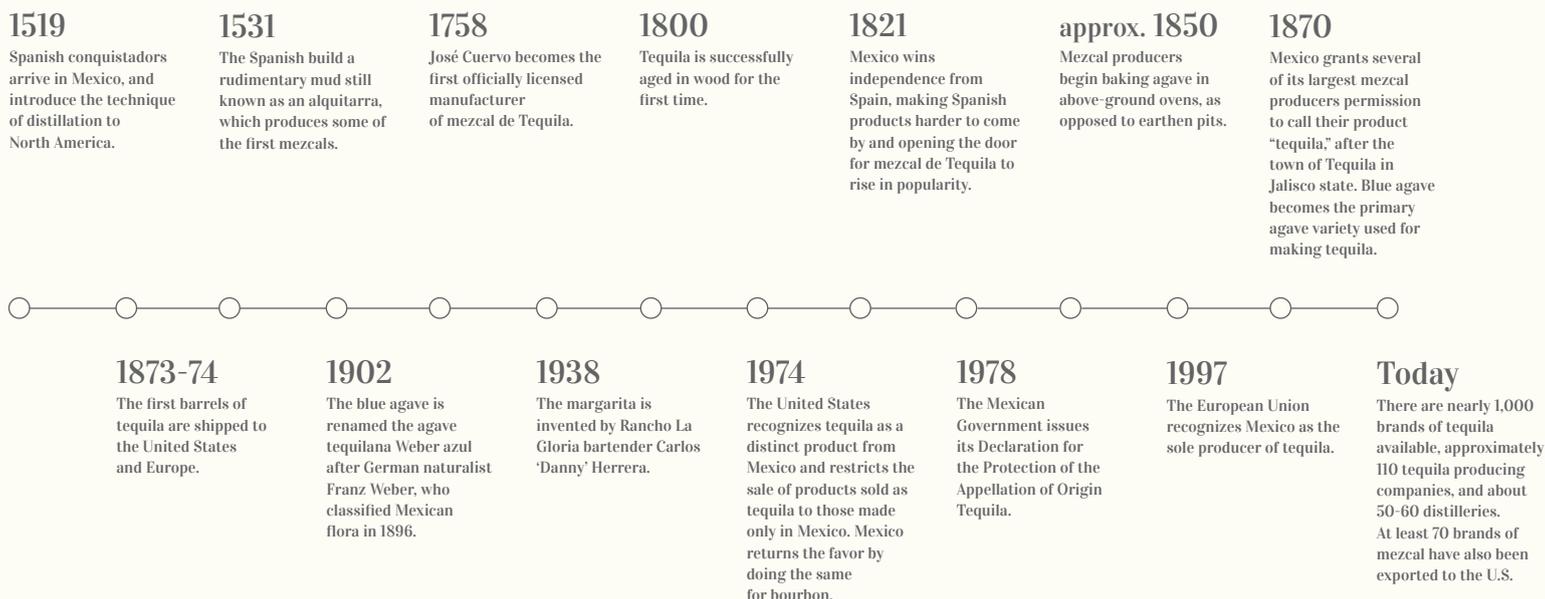
REPOSADO: tequila or mezcal that has been aged in wood barrels for at least two months and no more than a year

PALENQUE: a mezcal distillery

JIMADORES: the agave farmers who harvest the piñas

MAESTRO DE MEZCALERO: a traditional, craft distiller of mezcal

A BRIEF TIMELINE OF AGAVE



THE IRRESISTIBLE AURA OF AGAVE

Some say that drinking 100% agave spirits will change you forever. Their mysterious complexities will charm you. And their versatility will make you want to try them over and over again.

Tequila is the fastest growing spirits category in the US today!

- IRI, May 2016

Agave spirits were named 4 out of the top 10 Bartenders' Choice Favorite Spirit Brands for 2015.

—Drinks International, January 2016

“Between 2007 and 2011, mezcal sales grew by nearly 48 percent according to Mexican government data.”

—The Guardian UK, August 2014







www.greatagave.com • www.sazerac.com

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