

TEQUILA 101

Nothing makes us happier at The Matador than sharing what we know about Tequila and that's why we compiled a few key points for you. Next time you're visiting us, ask anyone of our bartenders or servers for help. Each one is a tequila aficionado, knowledgeable in the subtleties of each tequila's flavor profile.

KNOW YOUR AGAVE SPIRITS

If a tequila is a mezcal, why is mezcal not necessarily a tequila? What's the difference between tequila categories? What's "Mexican Moonshine"? The Matador has the answers to these pressing questions, and so many more.

TEQUILA

To be called 100% de Agave tequila, a spirit must be made only from the juice of the Weber Blue Agave, in the Mexican state of Jalisco or in certain parts of Guanajuato, Michoacán, Nayarit, and Tamaulipas. There are six carefully regulated categories a tequila can fall into: Blanco, Joven, Reposado, Añejo, Extra Añejo, and the most recently certified category, Cristalino.

Blanco

This is freshly distilled tequila in its purest form. It's either completely un-aged, or allowed to rest for up to 60 days in stainless steel tanks. All you taste is the agave and the work of the distiller.

Joven

Joven is the Spanish word for young. In tequila-speak, it means a Blanco mixed with Reposado or Añejo to add some depth and subtle character.

Reposado

Allowed to age in oak anywhere from two months to a year, a Reposado is barreled just long enough to round out its rough edges and provide light flavoring from the spirit's interaction with the wood.

Añejo

Aged between one and three years in oak, an Añejo emerges from the barrel in perfect sipping condition, offering up rich and intense flavors of vanilla and lush floral aromas.

Extra Añejo

This designation is reserved for tequilas that are aged three years or more—the amount of time is up to the distiller. The province of true tequila aficionados, Extra Añejos are often released as special commemorative editions or packaged in special collectible bottles.

Cristalino

The newest classification of tequila, a Cristalino is an Añejo or Extra Añejo that's been filtered to remove the heavier compounds and colors that find their way into the tequila during the barrel aging process, leaving only smooth flavors.

MEZCAL

While tequila must be made only from the Weber Blue Agave, mezcal can be made from that plant, or any one of 49 other different agave varieties. So, just as a scotch is whiskey, but whiskey isn't necessarily scotch, tequila is mezcal, but mezcal isn't always tequila.



OTHER SPIRITS

Sotol

Sotol is made from the Dasylirion wheeleri plant, a close relative of the agave. This plant grows in Mexico's Chihuahua, Coahuila and Durango regions. Produced in much the same way as mezcal.

Bacanora

Bacanora is named after the town of its origin in the state of Sonora. It is made from either Agave pacifica or Agave yaquinana, and produced in the Mezcal style. Illegal to produce until 1992, Bacanora was granted a Mexican denomination of origin (DO) in 2000.

Raicilla

Ever heard of "Mexican Moonshine"? That's Raicilla they were talking about. Produced in 7 municipalities of Jalisco, primarily around Puerto Vallarta, it's mostly made from the Agave inaequidens, which until 1997 was illegal to use—hence the contraband-oriented nickname. This spirit doesn't have a Mexican DO, but it does have a protected trademark: "Raicilla Jalisco."



The Matador's Private Reserve Tequila

Certain tequila producers extend a very special opportunity to us. They invite us to visit them in Mexico, where we take tastes from a number of select barrels and choose the one that impresses us the most to bring back to our guests at the Matador. This barrel is ours exclusively. No bottles from it are ever sold at retail. No other restaurant will ever serve it. When it's gone, it's gone, and another private reserve selection will take its place.

PREVIOUSLY RELEASED PRIVATE RESERVES

Spring 2018

Patrón

Aged 12 months

Light citrus notes laced with a mild flavor of cooked agave, and finishes with hints of freshly cut hard wood.

Avión

Aged 11 months

Notes of cherry, peaches and pear, rounded out with vanilla and heavy oak on the finish.

El Mayor

Aged 9 months

Fruity notes and a cooked agave flavor at the beginning lead to a finish sparked with light oak.

