

Mezcal Artesanal

PERRO DE SAN JUAN®



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PERRO  SAN JUAN[®]



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CORTA DE AGAVE

FIELDS:

Corta de Agave

(Primero el machete y luego la Coa)

The cutting or Jima consists of separating the agave plant from the root at the level of the stem neck, and eliminating the leaves. The presence of a floral escape or quiote is an indicator - among others - of the plant's maturity. Commonly, the agave reaches maturity between 7 and 8 years, although depending on the conditions and the type of agave, it can take up to 12 years.

Since the plantations do not mature homogeneously, the most suitable plants for the industry are harvested at maturity.

The cutting or Jima consists of separating the agave plant from the root at the level of the stem neck.





At the time of the Jima or the cut. They begin by eliminating the thorns, through the practice of barbeo with a machete, which consists of cutting the stalks in half. Subsequently, the neck of the plant is hit with a metal bar called Coa to separate the root from the stem and turn the agave upside down.

The pineapples are carried to a vehicle.

Campos



OVEN:

Azucares del agave

(Obtaining sugars from agave)

The second step in the elaboration of mezcal consists of obtaining the sugars from the agave. Possibly this is the most important part of the process, historically speaking, since it was our ancestors thousands of years ago who discovered these important properties in the agaves. It is said that because a lightning bolt from the sky was in charge of burning a maguey in the field and it was there when they realized the valuable food it could provide them.

To obtain the sugars from the agave pineapple, it is necessary to raise the temperature of the agave by using a conical stone oven and underground ovens heated with thick oak or mesquite wood.

While the oven is heating up,
cut the pineapples into 4 or 6 pieces to facilitate cooking.





Oven

Once the firewood is lit, the river stones are thrown on top of it until the firewood is completely up. It is necessary to wait for the wood to be completely consumed and the stones to be red hot, otherwise when the pineapples are put in with the wood still burning, they will pick up that smell and therefore the mezcal as well.

While the oven is heating up, the pineapples are cut in 4 or 6 parts to facilitate their cooking.

When the oven is ready, a layer of bagasse is placed in the oven to avoid direct contact between the pineapples and the stones and to prevent their cooking from being homogeneous. Finally the pineapples are placed in an orderly and compact way, forming a kind of pyramid.

Once all the pineapples have been placed on the fire, the kiln is covered with bagasse from previous productions, blankets (sacks, blankets, etc.), earth and logs to completely seal the kiln. When the kiln is completely sealed with earth and logs, it is then left for a minimum of 72 hours for cooking.

Generally, the palenques are also the usual home of the mezcal producers, so they live daily with the whole process of elaboration. For generations, mezcal producers pass down from parents to children their knowledge about everything related to mezcal, making it an important part of the culture, craftsmanship, tradition and history of Mexico.

Oven



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Grinding

“Machacado”

Once the agave pineapples are cooked, they are cut again into smaller pieces to be placed in the mill.

A circular stone or cement mill is used in which another stone, weighing approximately 500 kilos, turns, pulled by our horse.





The pieces of cooked and cut agave are placed in the mill to be crushed into a kind of paste and bagasse. The person in charge of the mill has to be constantly stirring the bagasse and the cooked agave so that the stone passes over it and crushes it.

Once all the cooked agave has been completely crushed, the next step is fermentation.

Grinding



Fermentation

The crushed agave is placed in the vats to ferment for a few days.

The type of material used to make the vats in which the fermentation takes place plays an important role in the flavor of the mezcal. At MPDSJ we use cylindrical vats made from strips of ocote wood from the region.

The containers are filled to approximately 75% of their capacity with the crushed agave for some time and then water is added until reaching 90% of their capacity, thus accelerating the fermentation process.





We use water from the Cerro de la Cruz spring, which is less than 1 km away, this plays an important role in the flavor of the mezcal. After filling to 90% capacity with water, it is left to ferment for a while and then the container is completely filled with warm water. About 15 cm of space must be left in the vat, as the agave and water rise during fermentation.

During fermentation, the entire contents of the vat must be stirred from time to time to ensure a complete process.

At the beginning of fermentation, strong alcoholic and sweet smells are perceived, which diminish with the passage of time until having a vinegary smell and a dark brown color.

Fermentation



Distillation:

The separation of the volatile substances from the non-volatile ones in the tepache coming from the fermentation stage, is what is known as distillation.

In the tepache we find solid matter (non-volatile) and liquid matter (volatile) which must be separated by distillation.

When tepache is subjected to the action of heat, it causes the evaporation of alcohols and impurities, separating it from the solid materials. If these gases are collected and return to their natural state, an alcohol is obtained, which in the case of agave is called mezcal.





Distillation

The distillation process is carried out in a still.

The result of the distillation of tepache is mezcal as mentioned above. Once the mezcal is obtained, its alcoholic richness must be adjusted to achieve the exact degree required according to the bottler's requirements, or as deemed appropriate by the Master Mezcalero. This adjustment can be carried out using the tails and tips of the mezcal. The part that is obtained first in the distillation, the tip, contains a higher % Alc. Vol. than the part at the end, called the tail.

The last process in the elaboration of mezcal is bottling and labeling.

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Mezcal distillation process