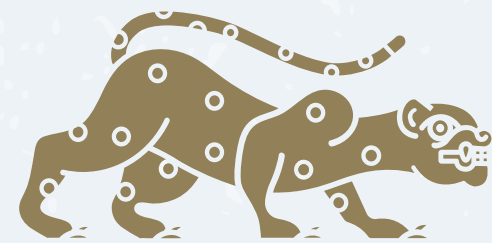


AGAVE DE CORTÈS

OAXACA

MÉXICO



AUTÉNTICA TRADICIÓN
PREHISPÁNICA



ORIGEN SANTIAGO
MATATLÁN



BRAND DECK

CASA  CORTÉS
— DESDE 1840 —
Experiencias con Mezcal



CASA CORTÉS

SINCE 1840

The Cortés family is one of the oldest and most respected mezcal families in Oaxaca, with a legacy deeply rooted in their Zapotec heritage. The Agave de Cortés brand honors this rich cultural lineage and the family's commitment to tradition. Now in their 6th generation, Casa Cortés has produced artisanal mezcal for nearly 200 years. Casa Cortés is proud to be one of the few mezcal companies that is 100% Oaxacan-owned with history rooted in Zapotec culture.

**JOSÉ CORTÉS,
4TH GENERATION ►**





100% OAXACAN OWNED

As the mezcal category grows, so do the number of new brands available in the U.S. market. However, very few brands are actually owned by the people that make the mezcal. Casa Cortés is proud to be owned by a 6th generation Zapotec family, whose mezcal-production history in the region dates back nearly 200 years. José Cortés and the Cortés Family are dedicated to continuing their family's great mezcal-making traditions.

MEZCAL: LIKE NO OTHER SPIRIT

Mezcal is the purest form of beverage alcohol. From a raw material that takes a minimum of seven years to mature in the field before harvest, to the non-industrial production processes, there is no spirit that has captivated the attention of our industry quite like mezcal. At the center of the category, are a handful of thoughtful producers that are ensuring that the future of mezcal is preserved.



CREATING JOBS LOCALLY

Casa Cortés has been working to improve the local economy since its inception. The explosion of mezcal's popularity in recent years has meant more consistent production cycles, especially for export markets. As production increases, so too do the number of jobs needed to ensure the products succeed in a competitive marketplace.

Since 2007, Casa Cortés has grown from a tiny core of 2 - 3 producers making mezcal, to include a team of 40 employees, handling everything from the actual production of mezcal, to bottling, logistics, administrative management, and branding and marketing.

Among its three brands, Casa Cortés works with 17 different families in 16 different regions for the production of its mezcals.

REGION OAXACA

In the far south of Mexico, the state of Oaxaca is a unique mix of cultures, inhabited by several ancient civilizations, including Zapotec, Mixtec, and Aztec - throughout its 7,000 year history.

The continuing presence of the indigenous population is a major asset for the preservation of native tradition. Infused with European cultures and languages resulting from colonization, Oaxaca is a true melting pot and bastion of diversity.





STATE OF OAXACA

The state of Oaxaca has the largest diversity of flora and fauna in Mexico, which is a direct result of the great geological diversity. Oaxaca has eight distinct regions, ranging from high elevation pine forests, to tropical coastlines with miles of beach, to rugged mountain terrains. Each region has a distinct microclimate. Santiago Matatlán is surrounded by mountains, with a narrow valley floor to the North East.

VALLES CENTRALES

REGION

Located in the heart of Oaxaca, the Valles Centrales region is home to hundreds of mezcal producers. The mountainous region is one of the most geographically and biologically diverse in Mexico, with the largest variety of endemic agave species on the planet.

SANTIAGO MATATLÁN

The village of Santiago Matatlán is located in the Central Valleys region of Oaxaca, Mexico. With nearly 250 tiny mezcal distilleries dotted throughout the town and the surrounding rural valley floors, it is the self-proclaimed world capital of mezcal.



AGAVE DE CORTÉS

MEZCAL JOVEN

Agave de Cortés is the foundational mezcal of Casa Cortés. It is crafted by fifth-generation Master Mezcalero Francisco Cortés Hernández in Santiago Matatlán, Oaxaca.

Made exclusively from mature and over-ripened estate grown Espadín, Agave de Cortés agaves are cooked in earthen ovens, crushed by horse-drawn tahona, fermented with native yeast in open air wooden vats, and finally double-distilled in copper pot stills.

Agave de Cortés is made using only the best agave, with a majority of each batch harvested using the traditional Capón method, in which the flowering stalk is cut and the agave is left in the field for months to over-ripen. This time-consuming and labor-intensive process results in a richer, more complex spirit that can't be found anywhere else.

AWARDS & ACCOLADES
2024 San Francisco World Spirits Competition Double Gold

TECHNICAL DETAILS

PALENQUE (DISTILLERY): El As

REGION: Santiago Matatlán, Tlacolula

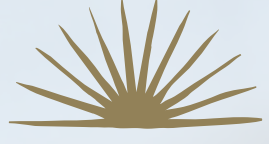
MAESTRO MEZCALERO (MASTER DISTILLER): Francisco Javier Cortés

AGAVE: 100% Espadín

ABV: 45%

TASTING NOTES: Delicate and sparkling nose of wood smoke and savory herbs introduces a bright, citrus, tart fruit and peppery palate.

Each batch has at minimum, 60% agave Capón, sometimes it can be as high as 80%



MEZCAL ARTESENAL

NOM-098X



Under the new laws governing the classification of mezcal, Agave de Cortés Joven is classified as Mezcal Artesenal.

The classification requires the following production elements:

- **COOKING:** Agave piñas must be cooked in underground pits or above ground masonry ovens.
- **MILLING:** Wooden mallet, tahona, Chilean/Egyptian mill, cane press, or chipper.
- **FERMENTATION:** Fermentation can be performed in rock pits, in-ground pits, tree trunks, clay urns, wooden vats, or animal hide. The fermentation may include agave fibers.
- **DISTILLATION:** Distillation must be fueled by direct fire beneath a copper or clay boiler or pot still. The head or cap of the still may be made of clay, wood, copper, or stainless steel.





AGAVE DE CORTÈS

MEZCAL REPOSADO

AGAVE: 100% Espadín

AGE: Rested for 2 - 11 months in second fill Bourbon barrels (Charred, American Oak) and second fill Chardonnay barrels (Toasted French Oak)

ABV: 45%

TASTING NOTES: The short window of oak aging brings out a smoky richness, with flavors of caramel, crème brûlée, and dusty cocoa. The fresh, fruity agave is prominent with tropical flavors of banana and mango. Baking spices and pepper abound in the long, dry finish.



AGAVE DE CORTÈS

MEZCAL AÑEJO

AGAVE: 100% Espadín

AGE: Rested for 18 months in second fill Bourbon barrels (Charred, American Oak) and second fill Chardonnay barrels (Toasted French Oak)

ABV: 45%

TASTING NOTES: Extended barrel aging brings out nuttiness and caramelized orange with layers of baking spice and smoked butterscotch, which complement the stewed tropical fruit and brightness of the agave.



AGED MEZCAL



The tradition of aging mezcals goes back generations. Producers originally used barrels to transport their mezcal to markets in the eight regions of Oaxaca. Glass was too expensive, fragile, and hard to transport, so barrels became the standard.

Like other spirits, barrel aging softens mezcal's edges, adding richness and light golden hue. Casa Cortés only ages mezcal made with the Espadín agave. Aged mezcals offer another expression of mezcal.

Under NOM-070, the recently amended laws governing classification and labeling, mezcal can be aged for different amounts of time, and its category reflects how old it is:

JOVEN

“young” or unaged in wood or glass.

REPOSADO

“rested” i.e. aged in oak for two months to one year

AÑEJO

“aged” in oak between one and three years

EXTRA AÑEJO

this classification no longer exists under the new NOM

OUR PRODUCER
FRANCISCO
CORTÉS
HERNANDEZ

Francisco Javier Cortés is a fifth-generation Master Mezcalero from Santiago Matatlán, Oaxaca, and one of the most respected figures in the Casa Cortés family. He began learning the art of mezcal at just seven years old, achieving the title of Master Mezcalero by the age of twelve. Known for his exceptional work crafting Agave de Cortés and El Jolgorio expressions, Francisco blends deep-rooted tradition with meticulous skill. He often works alongside his sons and grandson, continuing the legacy of mezcal production as a true family endeavor. His mezcals are celebrated for their purity, intensity, and deep connection to Oaxacan heritage.



OUR PALENQUE EL AS

VILLAGE Santiago Matatlán

AGAVE 100% Espadín

60 % to 80% of each batch is made with agave capón

HARVEST By hand

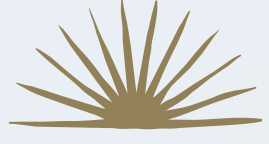
COOKING Pit Oven

MILLING Mule-drawn Tahona

FERMENTATION Open air, in pinewood tanks

DISTILLATION Twice distilled in copper pot stills

PROOFING Adjusted to 45% with local source
well-water

A small, stylized sunburst icon with multiple rays emanating from a central point.

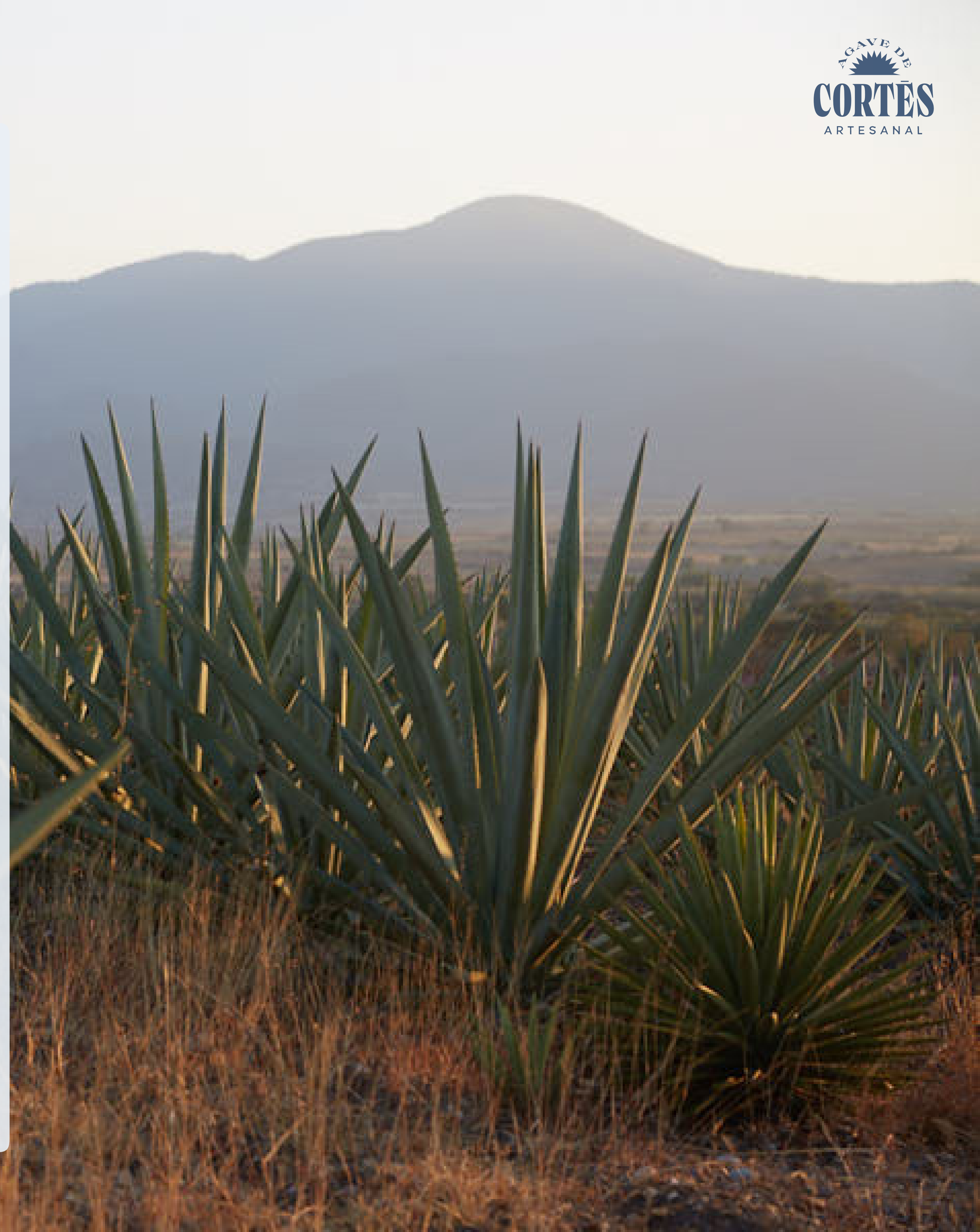
THE RAW MATERIAL

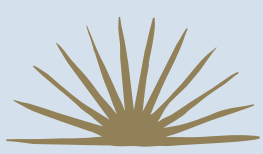
AGAVE ESPADÍN

A decorative wavy line in a light green color, consisting of several connected semi-circular shapes.

Agave Espadín was selected long ago as the agave species that would be the backbone of the mezcal industry. 90% of the mezcal that makes it to market is made from the Espadín agave. Thus, it is highly cultivated in various regions. Several factors contribute to Espadín's attractiveness as a staple in mezcal production:

1. Relatively short maturation period
2. Large size increases yield
3. High sugar content
4. Adaptability to various environments and microclimates





THE RAW MATERIALS

CAPÓN METHOD

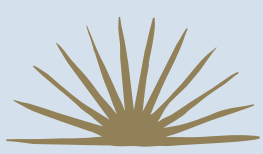


The capón method is a traditional practice intended to increase the complexity of the flavor profile by concentrating the sugars after harvest. It is both a labor and time-intensive process.

QUIOTE REMOVAL When an agave reaches maturity, it begins to grow a tall flowering stalk known as a quiote. This halts the plant's natural reproductive cycle and redirects its stored energy, mainly sugars, back into the piña (the heart of the agave).

EXTENDED FIELD TIME After the quiote is cut, the agave is left in the field for several months, sometimes up to a year, to allow sugars to further concentrate. Similar to letting bananas ripen before baking bread, this slow maturation process, post-quiote removal, is referred to as “capón.”





THE RAW MATERIALS

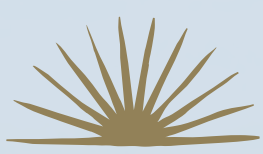
CAPÓN METHOD



RESULT This extended ripening produces piñas that are sweeter and more complex, leading to a richer, more nuanced mezcal. Mezcals made from capón agaves are often prized for their enhanced flavor and depth.

While the capón process is a revered technique that allows for greater complexity of spirit, it's demanding and involves leaving agave in the field for a prolonged time. During the extended time, agaves must be monitored closely to prevent rot, pests, or theft, and the delay in harvest means less yield and higher costs. Though time-intensive and economically demanding, this method reflects the dedication of mezcaleros like Francisco Cortés, who prioritize quality over yield.





PRODUCTION PROCESS

HARVEST

Espadín agaves take anywhere from 7–10 years to mature prior to being harvested, which occurs around the time that the plant begins to reproduce. For Agave de Cortés the overripe espadín agaves are harvested around 9 years. At that time, an agave will shoot up a large stalk called a quiote, eventually bearing seeds and bulbs. A mezcalero normally allows the quiote to grow for around two to eight months prior to cutting (capón). In the capón process, the plant is then left in the ground for several months as the sugars further concentrate in the piña. This extra process enhances the sweetness and complexity of the mezcal. Only the piña is used in production of mezcal, although the pencas, or leaves, have many uses and are often utilized as fuel for stills or for cooking.





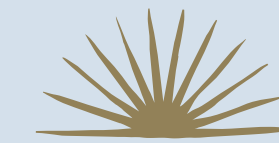
PRODUCTION PROCESS

ROAST



After the piñas are harvested, they are transported from the field to the palenque. An earthen pit oven is prepared by building a roaring fire, often days in advance, to heat the stones lining the pit. Once red hot, the piñas are piled inside and quickly covered with a protective layer, followed by a mass of dirt to insulate the oven, creating an intensely hot earthen pressure cooker. Without roasting, the wild yeast introduced during fermentation will be unable to break down the complex starches. After cooking for several days, the complex sugars in the agave piñas have been converted into simple sugars, ready for milling and fermentation.

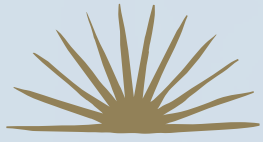
The oven at El As is a “Horno de mampostería”, or above-ground masonry oven, which has a firewood chamber beneath the pit which provides heat and allows the volcanic rocks to remain in place during the cooking process.



PRODUCTION PROCESS

MILLING

Once the agaves are roasted, they must be crushed prior to fermentation. Agave flesh is dense, with much of the sugar inaccessible to the yeasts and bacteria that will affect it during fermentation. To unlock the cooked sugars, mezcaleros often use the crushing weight of a tahona stone, traditionally pulled by a mule, donkey, or horse. At the El As palenque, Lea the horse pulls the tahona stone to crush the roasted agave used in Agave de Cortés.

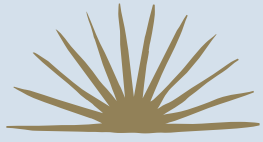


PRODUCTION PROCESS FERMENTATION



After the agaves are crushed, they are transferred to fermentation tanks, with local source water added, so that the ambient yeast and bacteria can get to work. During fermentation, these yeasts consume the sugars in the agave and, as a byproduct, excrete carbon dioxide and alcohol. After fermentation, the overall fermented agave “beer” is approximately 16 - 20% abv.





PRODUCTION PROCESS

DISTILLATION



The fermented agave mash is distilled twice in copper stills, set atop a wood-oven. As the spirit evaporates and rises in the still, it is trapped and run through a serpentine pipe submerged in cold water, causing the spirit vapors to condense into liquid form.

After the first distillation, the spirit is approximately 37% abv, and increases to approximately 45% upon the second distillation.





DIXEEBE!

For Oaxacans, mezcal is much more than just an alcoholic beverage. Mezcal represents families and culture. The work is difficult and generations of tradition go into each batch. The word Dixeebe (dee-shee-bay) is Zapotec word that signifies gratitude... for Mother Earth, for each other, and for each unique moment that we share the gift of mezcal.