



Ignite Your Success

**NACE Experience Conference
for Catering and Events**



A Journey Through Mexico: Understanding Tequila and Mezcal!

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Agenda

Tequila and Mezcal 101

- Introduction
- Objectives
- Trends
- Tequila History
- Tequila Production
- Mezcal History
- Mezcal Production
- Tequila and Mezcal Tasting
- Q&A

Learning Objectives

During this session, attendees will learn to:

Learning Objective 1: During this session, attendees will learn to understand Tequila and Mezcal 101 helping identifying new opportunities for their venue.

Learning Objective 2: During this session, attendees will learn to understand why Mezcal is moving from under Tequila's shadow.

Learning Objective 3: During this session, attendees will learn to understand the shift in brand loyalty from legacy Tequila brands.



- Mexico's Tequila and Mezcal distilleries, brands and sales have dramatically increased the past 10 years.
- Today you will learn the Micro and Macro picture on Tequila and Mezcal, where we were, where we are now and trends moving into the future. Y
- You will see where the large legacy Mexican distilleries fit in, adapting and discover the new entrees and expressions into the market.

Tequila and Mezcal Sales Reach Record \$6 Billion in U.S. in 2022

There's something in the water—and it's agave. Tequila and Mezcal sales reached a record \$6 billion in the U.S. in 2022, according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States' (DISCUS) annual economic briefing. The \$6 billion represents an increase of 17.2% (\$886 million) over 2021's total of \$5.16 billion.

In fact, only Vodka sales (7.2 billion) outpaced the Tequila/Mezcal category in 2022, while American Whiskey (\$5.1 billion) followed in third. But, once again, Tequila/Mezcal is seeing some serious annual growth.*

*Source - Distilled Spirits Council of the United States' (DISCUS)

Top 5 Spirits by Revenue*



1. Vodka: \$7.2 billion (-0.3%)
2. **Tequila/Mezcal: \$6.0 billion (+17.2%)**
3. American Whiskey: \$5.1 billion (+10.5%)
4. Brandy/Cognac: \$3.1 billion (-12.3%)
5. Cordials: \$2.9 billion (+2.6%)

*Source - Distilled Spirits Council of the United States'
(DISCUS)

Top 5 Fastest Growing Spirits by Revenue %*

1. Premixed Cocktails: \$2.2 billion (+35.8% or \$588 million)
2. **Tequila/Mezcal: \$6 billion (+17.2% or \$886 million)**
3. American Whiskey: \$5.1 billion (+10.5% or \$483 million)
4. Irish Whiskey: \$1.4 billion (+6.9% or \$91 million)
5. Blended Whiskey: \$940 million (+6.8% or \$60 million)

*Source - Distilled Spirits Council of the United States' (DISCUS)

Selling to your customer:

- First; make sure your spirits menu is up to date with new category selections from your wholesaler's.
- Become the expert; this seminar will be a great start.
- Education is key in selling and upselling to your clients which in turn adds to your bottom line; ask your wholesaler to come in and train you and your staff; not once but until the staff is comfortable on all categories.
- Attend and create local Tequila and Mezcal events and learn how unique they are different from each other.
- Offer to your client as a unique event, similar to a wine tasting.

Tequila History



- **Tequila Volcano.**

- **Erupted over 200,000 years ago.**
- **Deposited mineral rich soil over time.**
- **Perfect soil for the abundant growth of the Blue Agave Plants.**

- **Tequili Indians Fermented Blue Agave and used this wine for special celebrations.**

- **Aztecs also made a fermented beverage from the Agave called Pulque; the Spanish found the flavor unpleasant; so they distilled it; calling it Mescal.**

Tequila History, continued



- **Over 125 years ago, distillers around the town of Tequila began making a superior form of Mescal**
- **Only the Agave Azul Tequilana Weber or Weber Blue Agave makes Tequila – if another Agave is used; it is called Mescal. Over 400 species of Agave exist.**
- **Mexico is the only place in the world known to grow Blue Agave naturally.**

Standards for Tequila



NOM – Normas Oficiales Mexicanas:

- All Tequila must have a 4-digit NOM number on the bottle. NOM number designates the producing distillery.
- Must use The Agave Azul Tequilana Weber (Blue Agave).
- Made in Mexico within 5 designated states.
- Minimum 51% residual sugars from the Agave Azul.
- 100% Blue Agave--Must be bottled in Mexico.
- Double distillation required.
- Defines the 5 classifications of Tequila.
- Maintains quality standards in the industry.



Tequila Terms & Styles



Two Categories:

- **100 percent Agave** –produced entirely from the fermented juice of the Blue Weber Agave plant.
- **Tequila (was called Mixto until recently)** – began in 1930's due to shortage of Agave plants. 51% Agave sugars + other sugars sources. (Molasses, Corn, etc.)

Tequila Terms & Styles, continued



Five Classifications:

- **White (Blanco, Plata or Silver)** - Distilled and bottled.
- **Gold (Joven Abocado or Oro)** - Picks up color by adding caramel.
(not produced as 100% Agave)
- **Reposado** – Rested, between 2 months but less than 1 year in wood barrels.
- **Anejo** – Minimum 1 year aging in wood barrels.
- **Extra Anejo** – (1990) Aged over 3 years in wood barrels.

There are five state's where tequila can be legally produced:

1. The entire state of Jalisco
2. Specific areas in the state of Guanajuato
3. Specific areas in the state of Michoacan
4. Specific areas in the state of Nayarit
5. Specific areas in the state of Tamaulipas



**Map of the 5
Tequila Producing
States.**

**Jalisco is the
largest producing
state.**



•Agave is not a Cactus!! Member of the Lily Family.

• The variety of Agave used in tequila production is the Agave Azul Tequilana Weber or Weber Blue Agave



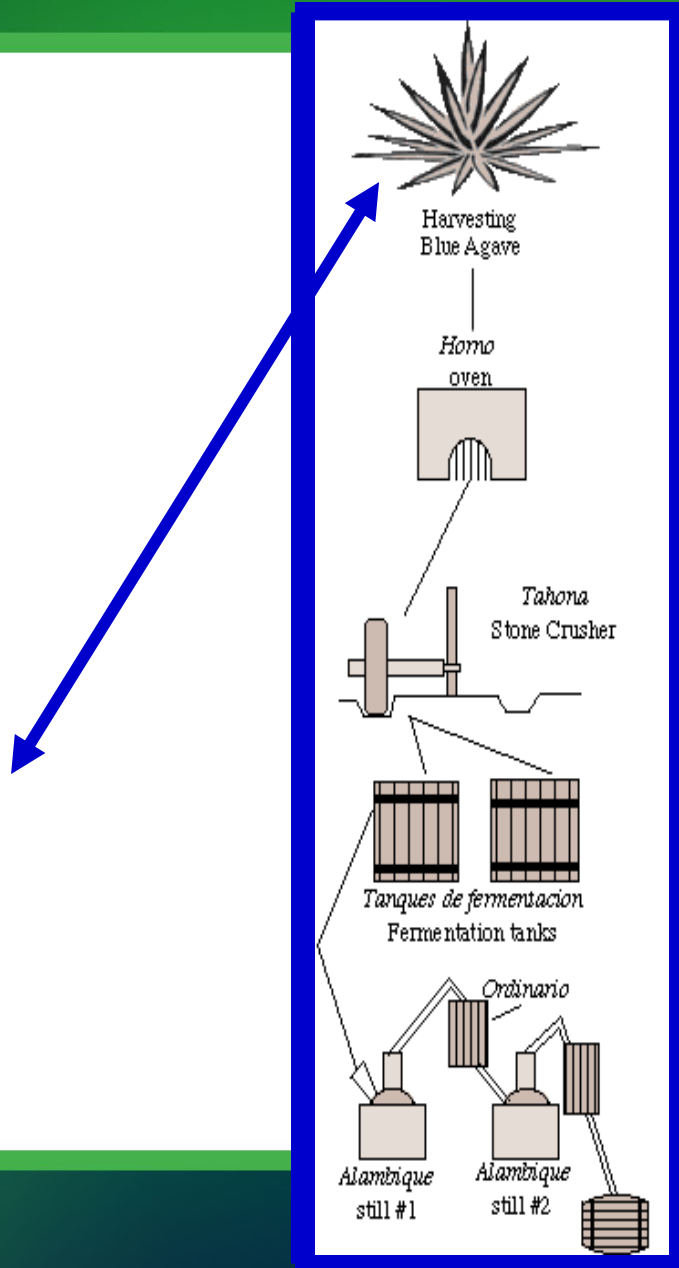
Agave Azul Tequilana Weber

(Blue Agave)

- **The Agave needs 6 -10 years to reach maturity.**
- **It produces seedlings, called “Hijuelos”.**
- **Hijuelos are transplanted to continually replace harvested Blue Agaves.**
- **The Agave needs very little attention, other than pruning - during the rainy season the plant receives enough water for the entire year.**
- **Example - the volcanic soil, arid climate and higher altitude of the Jalisco region are sufficient for the plant to grow by itself.**

Tequila Production

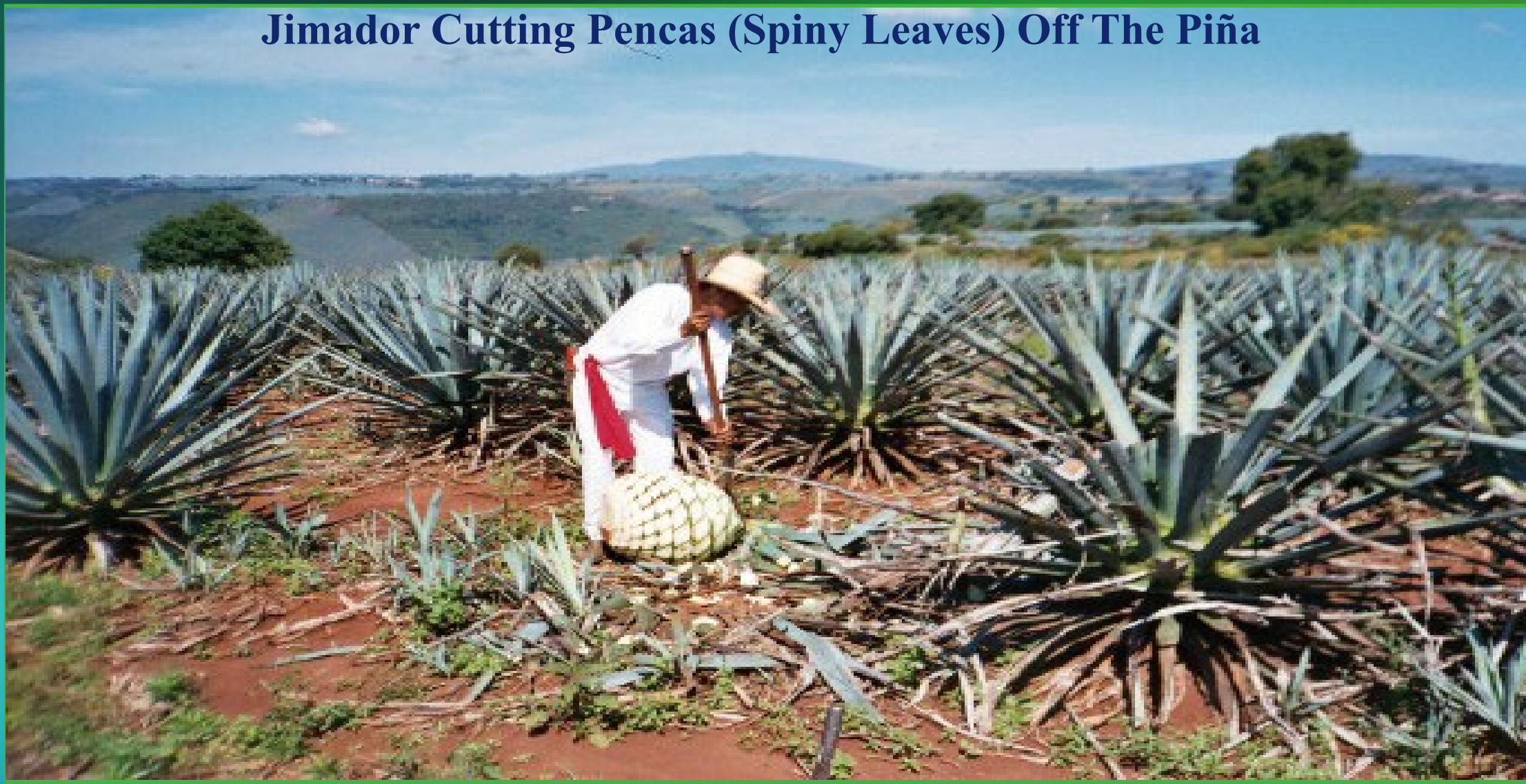
Harvesting Agave



Harvest

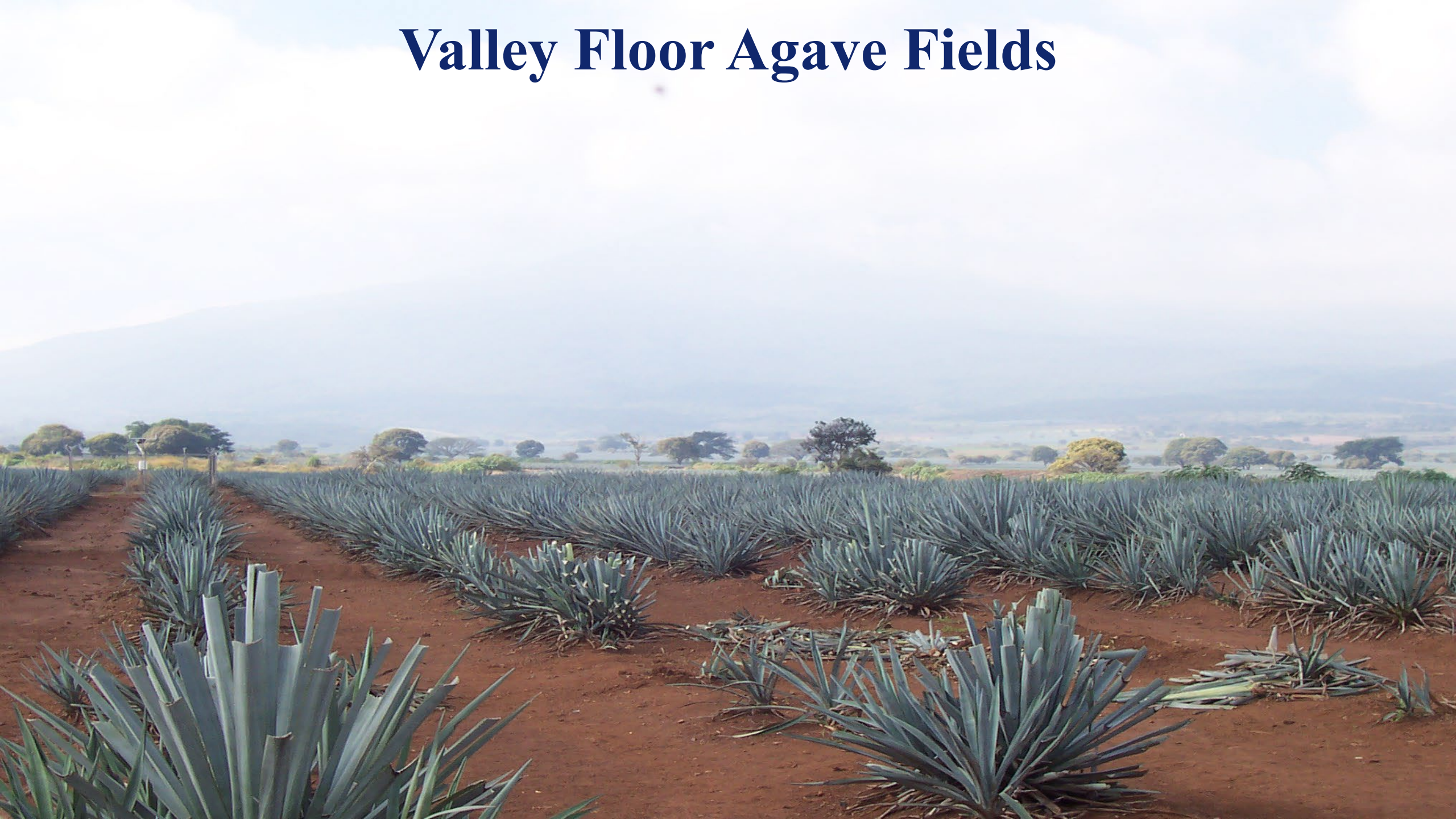
- **The Blue Agave is harvested when it is 6 - 10 years old.**
- **The “Pencas” (spiny leaves) are cut off; exposing the “Piña” - The Heart of the Agave. The Pencas; “rich in nutrients” are plowed into the earth as fertilizer.**
- **The weight of the Piña can vary between 45 and 200 lbs.**
- **Harvesting takes place year ’round.**
- **The Piñas are then transported to the distillery.**

Jimador Cutting Pencas (Spiny Leaves) Off The Piña





Valley Floor Agave Fields



Los Altos “The Highlands” Agave Fields



Acres of Agave

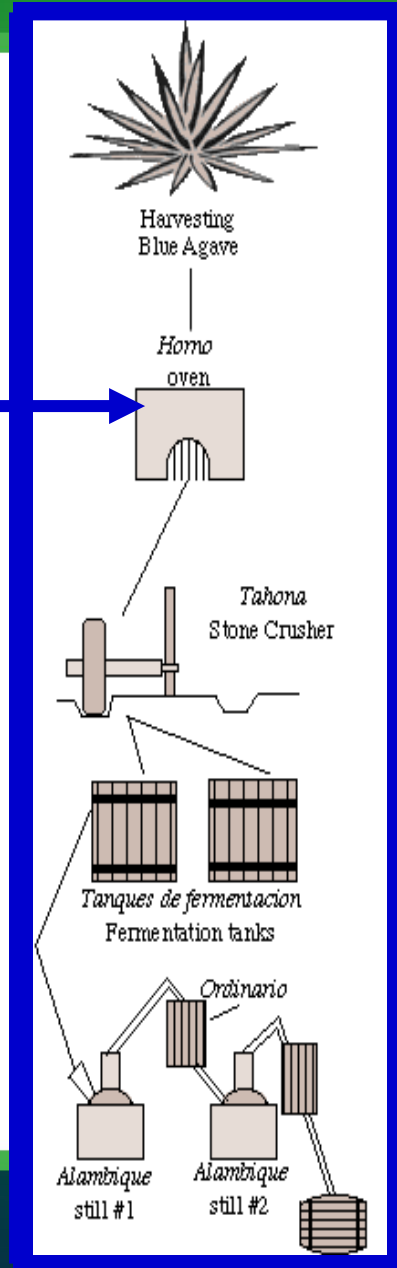


From The Field To The Distillery



Tequila Production

Cooking the Pina's in the Hornos (Ovens)



Cooking

- **The Piñas are steamed in an adobe oven “Horno” for 36 to 48 hours.**
- **The Piñas are cooled before they are taken out of the Horno.**
 - **Adobe ovens impart a special flavor to the Piña and is the preferred method for producing high-quality tequila.**
- **This process converts the starches into fermentable sugar.**

Into the Horno

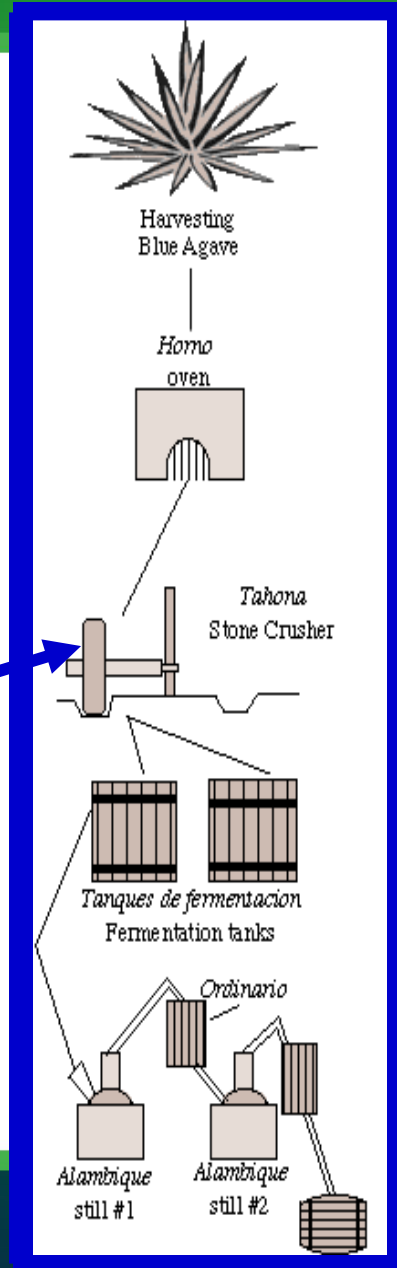


After The Horno, before Milling



Tequila Production

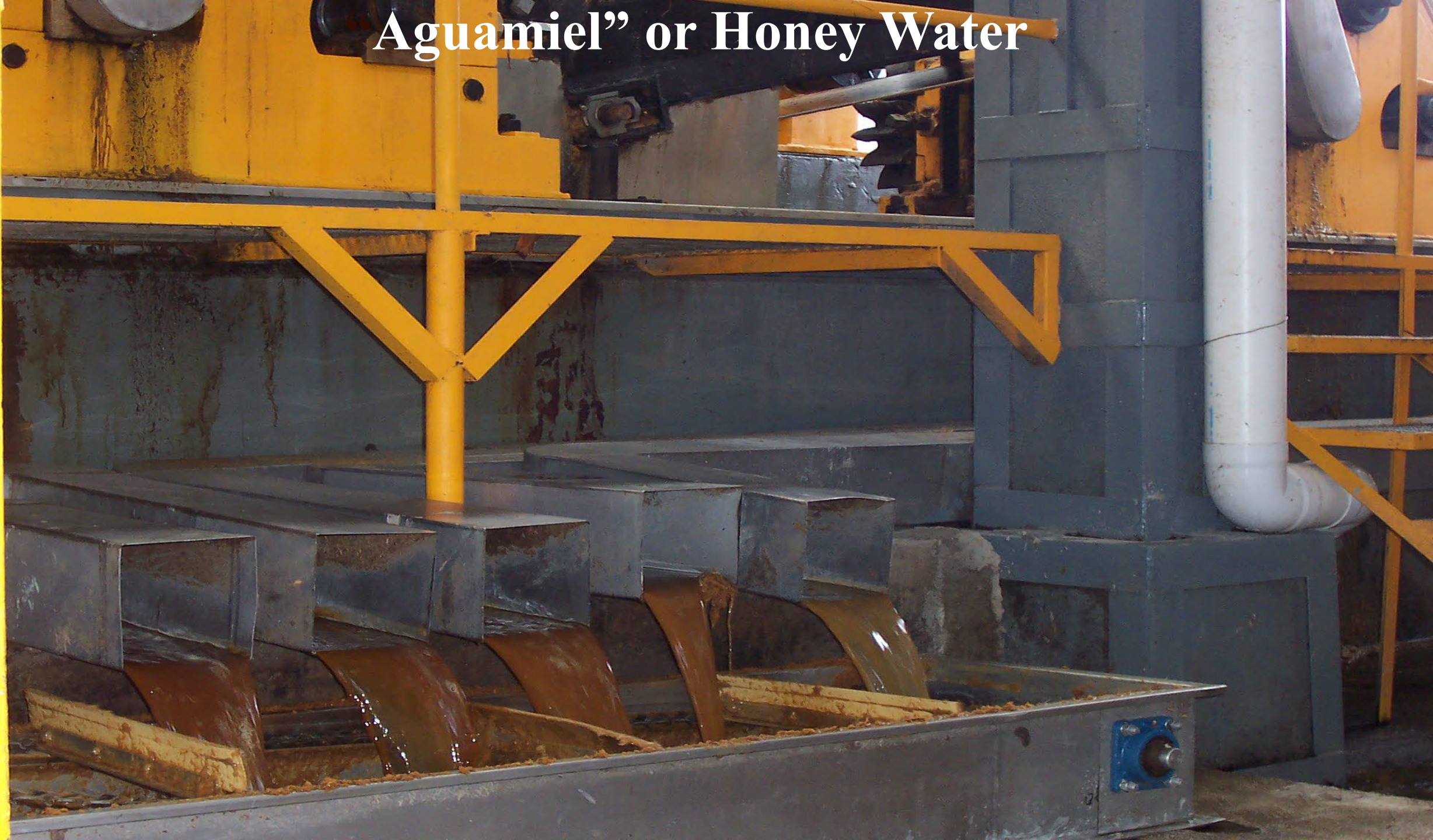
Crushing the Cooked Pina's in the Tahona (Stone Crusher)

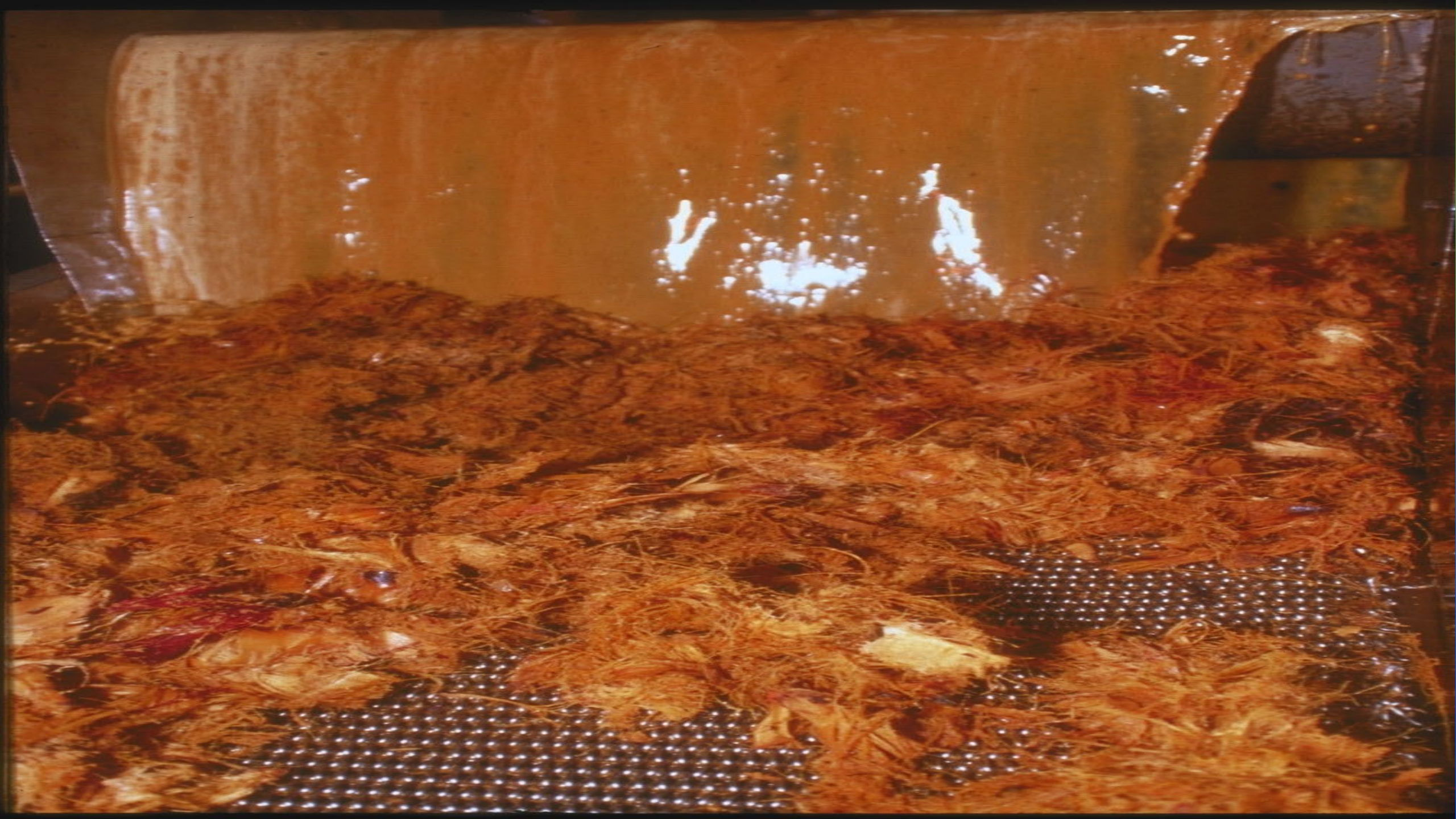


Milling

- **The Piñas are ground to a pulp and washed with de-mineralized water to extract all the sugars.**
- **The resulting liquid is “Aguamiel” or Honey Water.**

"Aguamiel" or Honey Water



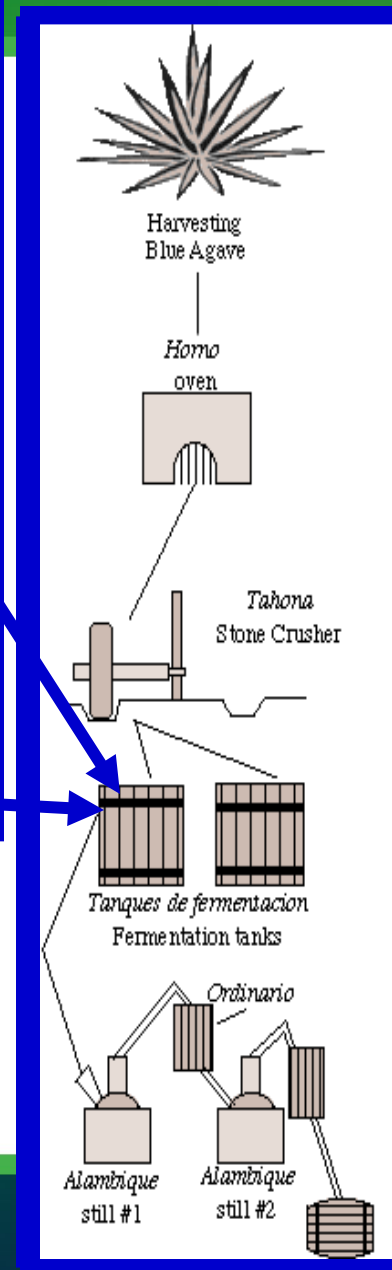


Tequila Production

Fermentation



Workers carry the crushed agave in large wooden buckets to the fermentation tanks. □
Yeast is added and fermentation begins. □



Fermentation

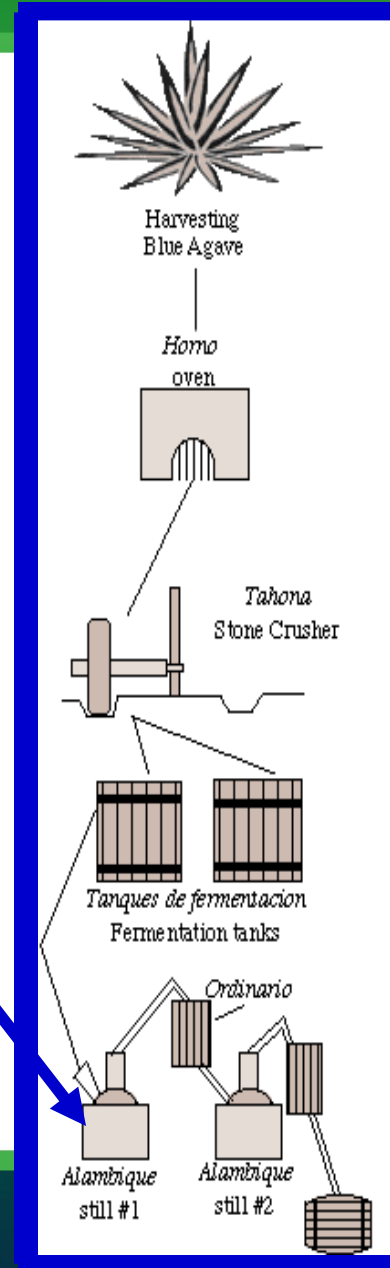
- **Natural yeast is added to the Aguamiel to ferment the liquid over several days (7-10 days).**
- **The yeast consumes the sugar and converts it to alcohol.**
- **After fermentation, you have the equivalent of “Agave Wine”; since the liquid is about 10-12% alcohol.**

Tequila Production



Distillation

The majority of tequila is double distilled.



Distillation

- **After fermentation, the liquid must be distilled twice, discarding the heads and tails to get the pure, clean heart of the distillation.**
 - **First distillation achieves Ordinario around 38% ABV.**
 - **Second distillation achieves Tequila around 55% - 65% ABV.**
- **All Tequila starts off as White Tequila, i.e. clear.**
- **After distillation; the Tequila is either married or aged.**

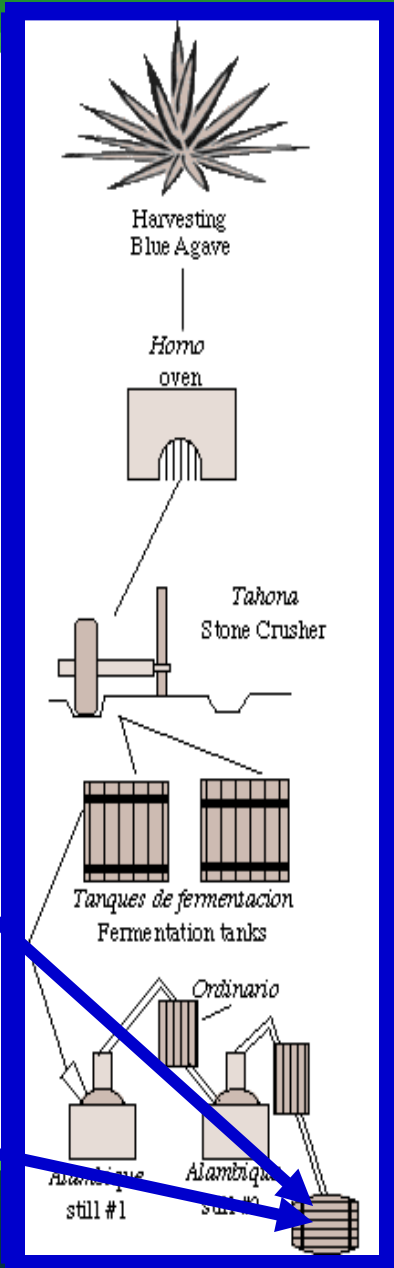


Cuervo Pot Stills

Tequila Production



Maturation or Aging



A CHEAT SHEET TO ADDITIVES*

Caramel color: Creates uniform color. Because reposados, añejos and extra añejos are aged for months (instead of years, as with whiskey and other aged spirits), the natural color is often quite light. The addition of caramel makes the spirit look like it has rested much longer as a means of appealing to whiskey and brandy drinkers.

Glycerin: A viscous substance used to cover defects. The texture is somewhat oily, to “smooth out” the feel, numbing flavors and aromas in the process.

Jarabes: Sugar-based syrups that add extra sweetness to tequila. These include artificial sweeteners, such as stevia, aspartame and Splenda, as well as natural ones, like agave nectar. “You can add flavors into jarabes, and you don’t have to tell the CRT what is in it because that’s your ‘trade secret,’” Grover says. “Almost anything goes: wood, vanilla, tutti-frutti flavor, etc.”

Oak extract: Adds woody notes. “Say you age a reposado for three to four months, but you want it to taste like it was aged for six to seven months—the extract will give it more barrel qualities,” Source - *tequilamatchmaker.com

Mezcal Terms & Styles

- Production is almost identical to Tequila.
- Agave is roasted underground giving mezcal its unique, intense and signature smoky characteristic.
- Mezcal can be produced from over 30 agave types whereas tequila can be made only with the Weber Blue Agave.

Mezcal Terms & Styles



Classifications:

- **Dorado** – Golden, coloring is added. Reposado or Anejo is placed in wood barrels from two to nine months. This can be done with 100% agave or mixed mezcals
- **Joven** – Distilled and bottled. The majority of the category is unaged
- **Reposado** – Rested, between 2 months but less than 1 year in wood barrels.
- **Anejo** – Minimum 1 year aging in wood barrels.

Agave Fields



Acres of Agave



From The Field To The Distillery





Q&A

Continue the Conversation

#NACEEXP23



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