



THE HISTORY OF TEQUILA

So where did it all begin?

Tequila's origins lie with the indigenous Aztec peoples of Mexico, the Chichimecans, Otomies, Toltecs and Nahuatl who made a beverage from the agave plant long before the Spaniards arrived in a village called Tequila in the shade of a dormant volcano named Tequila in a land they called Techinchan.

When the Spanish conquistadors arrived in April 1530, they were running out of brandy and other comestibles they had brought along from Spain, so they fermented agave juice. The first tequila factory, however, was not established for 70 years, not until 1600 when Don Pedro Sanchez de Tagle, the Marquis de Altamira started to cultivate mezcal and distill tequila, a liquor that gets its name from the Nahuatl word for "volcano". The town of Tequila, Mexico, became a Municipality in 1824, and its status was elevated to that of a city in 1974.

Tequila's reputation is as much of a legend as it is an image problem. In movies, it was associated with dark, hot little adobe cantinas, and drunken cowboys with itchy trigger fingers. In real life, it has been famous around the frat house for its monumental hangovers. Baby boomers are credited with the current trend from cottage beers and fine imported wines and single-malt scotches to tequila. Boomers are health conscious, and image conscious, so part of tequila's popularity

might result from the fact that you've never seen a "tequila gut", while the "beer gut" is endemic in some sectors.

Many bars (Las Margaritas especially) list tequila with their fine sipping brandies and liqueurs, and gourmet chefs use tequila to perk up even their most proven recipes. It works well as an ingredient or an accompaniment to a particular dish.

Tequila is not a hallucinogenic. It is not Mexican moonshine. Tequila does not have a maggot or worm in the bottle. Tequila is not made from cactus. These are just a few of the myths about Tequila. Tequila is just different from all other liqueurs. It can exhibit the same complex subtleties as cognac. It generates the same loyalty and passion as a fine wine. It can stimulate good conversation and fellowship like a good whisky.

When you first start to learn about tequila, keep in mind that there are more varieties than just clear and gold. Under Mexico's tequila law (Norma Oficial Mexicana Tequila, 1949) only certain plants are allowed to be used to make tequila. These plants may be grown in certain regions and tequila may be manufactured only to certain standards. By law, tequila is double-distilled from the fermented juice of the heart of the blue agave plant, and the best stuff is 100% agave. Enjoy...

