

CHAPTER 8 PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Tequila and Agave Spirits - 100 Questions

1. What type of agave must be used to produce tequila?
 - A. Agave angustifolia
 - B. Blue Weber agave (Agave tequilana Weber azul)
 - C. Any variety of agave
 - D. Agave americana

2. How long does Blue Weber agave typically take to mature before harvest?
 - A. 1-2 years
 - B. 3-4 years
 - C. 5-6 years
 - D. 7-10 years

3. The heart of the agave plant used for tequila production is called:
 - A. Piña
 - B. Pencas
 - C. Quiote
 - D. Hijuero

4. Which Mexican state produces the majority of tequila?

- A. Oaxaca
- B. Michoacán
- C. Jalisco
- D. Guanajuato

5. "100% agave" on a tequila label indicates:

- A. The tequila is extra aged
- B. The tequila is made entirely from Blue Weber agave sugars
- C. The tequila is unaged
- D. The tequila is certified organic

6. What is "mixto" tequila?

- A. A blend of different tequila ages
- B. 100% agave tequila
- C. Tequila mixed with mezcal
- D. Tequila made with at least 51% agave and up to 49% other sugars

7. The traditional stone oven used to cook agave piñas is called:

- A. Horno
- B. Autoclave
- C. Tahona
- D. Alambique

8. What is the purpose of cooking the agave piñas?

- A. To remove toxins
- B. To add color
- C. To convert starches into fermentable sugars
- D. To soften them for aging

9. The "autoclave" in modern tequila production is:

- A. A fermentation tank
- B. A pressurized steam oven for faster agave cooking
- C. A type of still
- D. An aging barrel

10. The traditional stone wheel used to crush cooked agave is called:

- A. Molino
- B. Horno
- C. Alambique
- D. Tahona

11. "Tequila Blanco" (or Silver/Plata) is:

- A. Unaged or aged less than 60 days in stainless steel or neutral oak
- B. Aged 2-12 months
- C. Aged 1-3 years
- D. Aged more than 3 years

12. "Tequila Reposado" must be aged for a minimum of:

- A. 30 days
- B. 60 days
- C. 2 months (60 days) to 1 year
- D. 1-3 years

13. "Tequila Añejo" requires aging for:

- A. 2-6 months
- B. 1-3 years in oak barrels (maximum 600 liters)
- C. 6 months to 1 year
- D. More than 3 years

14. "Extra Añejo" tequila must be aged for a minimum of:

- A. 2 years
- B. 18 months
- C. 1 year
- D. 3 years

15. The Tequila Regulatory Council (CRT) is responsible for:

- A. Certifying and regulating tequila production standards
- B. Marketing tequila internationally
- C. Setting tequila prices
- D. Owning all tequila distilleries

16. Which of these is NOT one of the five Mexican states authorized to produce tequila?

- A. Jalisco
- B. Nayarit
- C. Oaxaca
- D. Guanajuato

17. "NOM" on a tequila bottle refers to:

- A. The agave variety
- B. The distillery identification number
- C. The age classification
- D. The alcohol content

18. Mezcal differs from tequila primarily because:

- A. It is always smoky
- B. It must be 100% agave
- C. It is only made in Oaxaca
- D. It can be made from many different agave species, not just Blue Weber

19. The most common agave variety used in mezcal production is:

- A. Espadín (Agave angustifolia)
- B. Blue Weber
- C. Tobalá
- D. Madrecuixe

20. Traditional mezcal production typically cooks agave in:

- A. Autoclaves
- B. Brick ovens
- C. Underground earthen pits lined with rocks
- D. Stainless steel tanks

21. The smoky flavor characteristic of many mezcals comes from:

- A. Roasting agave in underground pits with wood and charcoal
- B. Adding smoke flavoring
- C. Barrel aging
- D. Specific agave varieties

22. "Mezcal joven" refers to:

- A. Aged mezcal
- B. Extra-aged mezcal
- C. Unaged or briefly rested mezcal
- D. Blended mezcal

23. The "worm" sometimes found in mezcal bottles is actually:

- A. A required ingredient
- B. A larva (gusano) added for marketing, not tradition
- C. A sign of quality
- D. A natural occurrence in agave fermentation

24. Raicilla is a traditional agave spirit from which Mexican state?

- A. Oaxaca
- B. Michoacán
- C. Tamaulipas
- D. Jalisco (specifically the Sierra region)

25. Bacanora is a regional agave spirit produced in:

- A. Sonora
- B. Jalisco
- C. Oaxaca
- D. Durango

26. "Sotol" differs from tequila and mezcal because it is made from:

- A. Blue Weber agave
- B. Espadín agave
- C. The Dasylirion plant (desert spoon), not agave
- D. A blend of agave species

27. The "jimador" in tequila production is:

- A. The master distiller
- B. The person who harvests and trims the agave plants
- C. The owner of the distillery
- D. The person who operates the stills

28. The tool used by jimadors to harvest agave is called:

- A. Machete
- B. Tahona
- C. Horno
- D. Coa (or coa de jima)

29. "Highlands" (Los Altos) tequilas from Jalisco are typically known for:

- A. Sweeter, fruitier, more floral character
- B. More earthy, mineral notes
- C. Smokier flavor
- D. Higher alcohol content

30. "Lowlands" (El Valle) tequilas from Jalisco are typically characterized by:

- A. Sweeter, fruitier notes
- B. Lighter body
- C. More earthy, herbal, mineral, and peppery notes
- D. Tropical fruit flavors

31. "Diffuser" technology in tequila production is controversial because:

- A. It produces better quality tequila
- B. It extracts sugars before cooking, potentially reducing flavor complexity
- C. It is too expensive
- D. It is illegal

32. The minimum alcohol content for tequila is:

- A. 37.5% ABV
- B. 38% ABV
- C. 40% ABV
- D. 35-55% ABV (with 35% minimum for some markets)

33. "Ordinario" in tequila distillation refers to:

- A. The first distillation product, which is redistilled
- B. Low-quality tequila
- C. Aged tequila
- D. 100% agave tequila

34. The second distillation in tequila production is called:

- A. Ordinario
- B. Primero
- C. Rectificación
- D. Reposado

35. "Cristalino" tequila is:

- A. Unaged blanco tequila
- B. Aged tequila that has been filtered to remove color
- C. A new age classification
- D. 100% agave only

36. Tequila was granted "Denomination of Origin" (DO) status in:

- A. 1995
- B. 2000
- C. 1978
- D. 1974

37. The fermentation vessel traditionally used in tequila production is:

- A. A wooden vat or stainless steel tank
- B. Clay pot
- C. Copper still
- D. Oak barrel

38. Wild or "silvestres" agaves in mezcal production are:

- A. Cultivated agaves
- B. Blue Weber agaves
- C. Foraged from the wild, often rare varieties
- D. Genetically modified agaves

39. "Tobalá" is a highly prized mezcal agave because:

- A. It grows quickly
- B. It is wild, slow-growing, and produces complex, fruity mezcal
- C. It is the largest agave
- D. It is used for tequila

40. "Pechuga" mezcal is distinctive because:

- A. It is distilled with raw chicken or turkey breast (and often fruits/nuts) hanging in the still
- B. It is extra aged
- C. It is unfiltered
- D. It uses a specific agave variety

41. The minimum agave content required for mezcal to be labeled "100% agave" is:

- A. 51%
- B. 80%
- C. 90%
- D. 100%

42. "Ancestral" mezcal classification requires:

- A. Modern distillation equipment
- B. Traditional clay pot distillation and earthen pit cooking
- C. Column still distillation
- D. Autoclave cooking

43. "Artisanal" mezcal classification allows:

- A. Diffuser extraction
- B. Autoclave cooking
- C. Copper or clay pot stills with pit or masonry oven cooking
- D. Column still distillation

44. The agave "quiote" is:

- A. The flowering stalk that is typically removed to preserve sugar content
- B. The root system
- C. The leaf
- D. The heart of the plant

45. "Hijuelos" in agave cultivation refers to:

- A. The flowering stalk
- B. The piña
- C. The leaves
- D. Offshoots or "pups" used for propagation

46. The fermentation of agave juice for tequila typically takes:

- A. 1-2 hours
- B. 2-12 days depending on method
- C. 30 days minimum
- D. 6 months

47. "Aguamiel" in agave spirits production refers to:

- A. Distilled spirit
- B. Aged tequila
- C. The sweet juice or "honey water" extracted from cooked agave
- D. The fermentation vessel

48. Pulque is:

- A. A fermented (not distilled) agave beverage with ancient origins
- B. A type of mezcal
- C. Aged tequila
- D. A brand of tequila

49. The "heads" and "tails" in tequila distillation are:

- A. Different agave varieties
- B. Age classifications
- C. Marketing terms
- D. Portions separated and typically discarded or redistilled for quality

50. "Single estate" or "single quinta" tequila indicates:

- A. Mass-produced tequila
- B. Agave sourced from one specific property
- C. Blended from multiple estates
- D. Column-still only

51. Casa Noble, Patrón, and Don Julio are examples of:

- A. Mixto tequilas
- B. Mezcal brands
- C. Premium 100% agave tequila brands
- D. Sotol producers

52. The town of Tequila in Jalisco is located in which production region?

- A. The Highlands (Los Altos)
- B. Oaxaca Valley
- C. Mexico City
- D. The Lowlands (El Valle)

53. "Joven" or "oro" tequila is typically:

- A. Extra aged
- B. Aged 3+ years
- C. 100% agave only
- D. Unaged tequila blended with aged, or blanco with added coloring/flavoring

54. The CRT's "Norma Oficial Mexicana" (NOM) standards regulate:

- A. Only export tequila
- B. All aspects of tequila production, from agave to bottling
- C. Only 100% agave tequila
- D. Only aged tequilas

55. "Tapatio" is a term that refers to:

- A. A type of agave
- B. An aging classification
- C. Something or someone from Guadalajara/Jalisco
- D. A distillation method

56. The "angel's share" in tequila aging refers to:

- A. Evaporation loss during barrel aging
- B. The distiller's portion
- C. The first distillation
- D. Added coloring

57. American oak barrels used for tequila aging often previously held:

- A. Wine
- B. Cognac
- C. Rum
- D. Bourbon

58. French oak barrels in tequila aging typically contribute:

- A. Strong vanilla and caramel
- B. More subtle, spicy, and tannic characteristics
- C. Smoky flavors
- D. No flavor difference from American oak

59. "Ensamble" mezcal is:

- A. Single-agave mezcal
- B. Unaged mezcal
- C. A blend of different agave varieties
- D. Extra-aged mezcal

60. The town of Santiago Matatlán in Oaxaca is known as:

- A. The "World Capital of Mezcal"
- B. The birthplace of tequila
- C. The sotol capital
- D. The pulque center

61. "Destilado de agave" on a label may indicate:

- A. Premium tequila
- B. Certified mezcal
- C. An agave spirit that doesn't meet DO requirements for tequila or mezcal
- D. 100% Blue Weber agave

62. "Cupreata" is an agave variety used in mezcal from:

- A. Guerrero and Michoacán
- B. Jalisco only
- C. Sonora
- D. Tamaulipas

63. The volcanic, red soil of the Jalisco Highlands contributes to:

- A. Smokier tequilas
- B. Lighter tequilas
- C. More bitter tequilas
- D. Larger, sweeter agaves

64. "Madrecuixe" is a wild agave variety known for producing mezcals with:

- A. Neutral flavor
- B. Herbal, vegetal, and complex character
- C. Only smoky notes
- D. Very light body

65. "Blanco" tequila is often preferred for cocktails because:

- A. It is cheaper
- B. It has the strongest agave flavor
- C. It has pure, unaged agave character ideal for mixing
- D. It is sweeter

66. The legal minimum age for Blue Weber agave harvest is:

- A. No minimum, but industry standard is typically 6-8 years for quality
- B. 3 years
- C. 10 years
- D. 15 years

67. "Dobladillo" in mezcal production refers to:

- A. A type of still
- B. An agave variety
- C. The fermentation process
- D. The practice of folding pencas (leaves) into the cooking pit

68. "Copper pot stills" are preferred in quality tequila production because:

- A. They are cheaper
- B. Copper helps remove sulfur compounds and produces cleaner spirit
- C. They are required by law
- D. They produce smokier tequila

69. "Reposado" means "rested" and refers to:

- A. Unaged tequila
- B. The jimador's break time
- C. Tequila aged 2 months to 1 year
- D. Extra-aged tequila

70. The practice of adding "abocante" to tequila refers to:

- A. Permitted additives like caramel, oak extract, glycerin, or sugar syrup (in non-100% agave)
- B. A distillation technique
- C. An aging method
- D. A type of agave

71. The 2024 additive disclosure requirement for tequila requires:

- A. Complete ingredient lists
- B. Calorie counts
- C. Sugar content
- D. Labels to indicate if additives are used in 100% agave tequilas

72. "Fortaleza" tequila is known for:

- A. High-volume production
- B. Traditional tahona-crushed, brick oven-cooked production methods
- C. Diffuser extraction
- D. Only making mixto tequila

73. "Clase Azul" is recognized for its:

- A. Simple bottle design
- B. Low price point
- C. Handcrafted ceramic decanters and premium positioning
- D. Column-still production

74. The "Bat Friendly" tequila certification promotes:

- A. Allowing some agaves to flower and support bat pollination
- B. Using bat guano as fertilizer
- C. Aging in caves
- D. A marketing gimmick

75. "Tequila Ocho" is notable for its emphasis on:

- A. High-volume production
- B. Flavored tequilas
- C. Mixto production
- D. Single-estate, vintage-dated terroir expression

76. Mezcal from "San Luis del Rio" in Oaxaca is known for:

- A. Milder flavors
- B. Mineral and distinctive regional character
- C. No smokiness
- D. Only producing unaged mezcal

77. "Del Maguey" is credited with:

- A. Inventing tequila
- B. Mass-producing mezcal
- C. Pioneering single-village artisanal mezcal in the US market
- D. Creating the diffuser process

78. The "minero" or "ancestral" distillation method uses:

- A. Industrial column stills
- B. Stainless steel pot stills
- C. Autoclaves
- D. Clay pot stills over direct fire

79. "Vago" mezcal is known for:

- A. Large-scale industrial production
- B. Flavored varieties
- C. Only producing silver mezcal
- D. Working with traditional family producers in multiple Oaxacan villages

80. "Union" mezcal was significant for:

- A. Being the first mezcal to enter the US mass market at accessible prices
- B. Being the most expensive mezcal
- C. Only using cultivated agave
- D. Being a tequila brand

81. The "piña" of a mature Blue Weber agave typically weighs:

- A. 5-10 pounds
- B. 40-200+ pounds (varying by growing conditions)
- C. 500 pounds minimum
- D. Under 20 pounds

82. "Caballito" is the traditional:

- A. Agave variety
- B. Aging barrel
- C. Distillation method
- D. Small, narrow glass used for drinking tequila

83. The proper way to taste quality tequila or mezcal is:

- A. Sipping slowly, not shooting
- B. Always with salt and lime
- C. Mixed with soda
- D. Frozen

84. "Sangrita" is a traditional Mexican accompaniment to tequila made from:

- A. Beer
- B. Wine
- C. Tomato, citrus, and chili (or citrus and chili in Jalisco style)
- D. Agave syrup

85. A "Paloma" cocktail traditionally contains:

- A. Tequila and cola
- B. Tequila, grapefruit soda (or fresh grapefruit), and lime
- C. Tequila and orange juice
- D. Mezcal and pineapple

86. The "Margarita" cocktail typically consists of:

- A. Tequila and lime only
- B. Tequila, rum, and vodka
- C. Mezcal and grapefruit
- D. Tequila, lime juice, and orange liqueur (Cointreau/triple sec)

87. "Bandera" is a tequila serving style featuring:

- A. Three shots: lime juice (green), tequila (white), and sangrita (red) representing the Mexican flag
- B. Tequila with beer
- C. Frozen tequila
- D. Tequila in a salt-rimmed glass

88. "Mezcal Vago Elote" is notable for being distilled with:

- A. Fruits
- B. Chicken breast
- C. Roasted corn (elote)
- D. Cinnamon

89. The "NOM" number allows consumers to:

- A. Determine the alcohol content
- B. Identify which distillery produced the tequila
- C. Know the agave source
- D. Understand the price point

90. Multiple tequila brands can share the same NOM because:

- A. They are the same brand
- B. They have different agaves
- C. They are from different countries
- D. They are produced at the same distillery (contract distilling)

91. "La Altea" distillery (NOM 1139) produces which notable tequila brands?

- A. El Tesoro, Tapatio, and Ocho
- B. Jose Cuervo
- C. Patron
- D. Don Julio

92. "Siete Leguas" is known for:

- A. Diffuser production
- B. Industrial methods
- C. Traditional production methods and being a source for early Patrón
- D. Only producing mixto

93. The "terroir" concept in tequila refers to:

- A. The barrel type
- B. How environmental factors (soil, climate, altitude) affect agave and final spirit character
- C. The distillation method only
- D. The brand name

94. "Agave shortage" or "agave crisis" refers to:

- A. Too much agave production
- B. Low tequila demand
- C. Government restrictions
- D. Cyclical supply issues when demand outpaces the 7-10 year agave maturation cycle

95. "Cascahuín" is a traditional tequila distillery known for:

- A. Traditional methods and small-batch production in the town of El Arenal
- B. High-volume export production
- C. Only making mixto
- D. Being the largest distillery

96. The "Valley of Tequila" is a UNESCO World Heritage site recognized for:

- A. Its beaches
- B. Ancient pyramids
- C. The agave landscape and traditional tequila production culture
- D. Modern architecture

97. "Arroqueño" is a wild agave variety that produces mezcal known for:

- A. Very light, neutral flavor
- B. Bold, complex character with notes of tropical fruit and earth
- C. Identical taste to espadín
- D. Extremely fast maturation

98. A "maestro mezcalero" is:

- A. A brand ambassador
- B. A marketing executive
- C. A tequila salesman
- D. A master mezcal distiller with traditional knowledge

99. The use of "diffuser technology" in tequila production is criticized for:

- A. Being too slow
- B. Producing too much waste
- C. Being too expensive
- D. Creating a less complex product by extracting sugars without traditional cooking

100. "Additive-free" tequila brands like Pasote, G4, and Fortaleza are valued for:

- A. Lower prices
- B. Faster production
- C. Authentic, unadulterated agave character
- D. Added sweetness

CHAPTER 8: ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Tequila and Agave Spirits

1. B. Blue Weber agave (Agave tequilana Weber azul) - Tequila must be made exclusively from Blue Weber agave, named after German botanist Franz Weber who classified it in the 1900s. This specific variety was selected for its high sugar content, relatively consistent maturation, and flavor profile. The "azul" (blue) refers to the plant's blue-green leaves. No other agave variety is permitted for tequila production.
2. D. 7-10 years - Blue Weber agave typically requires 7-10 years to mature before harvest, though Highland agaves may take longer (up to 12 years) due to cooler temperatures. During this time, the plant accumulates sugars in its piña (heart). Harvesting too early results in lower sugar content and less complex flavors. This long maturation cycle contributes to periodic agave shortages when demand spikes.
3. A. Piña - The "piña" (Spanish for pineapple) is the heart of the agave plant, named for its resemblance to a pineapple once the leaves are removed. This starchy core contains the sugars that will be converted and fermented into alcohol. A mature Blue Weber piña typically weighs 40-200+ pounds depending on growing conditions. The piña is the only part of the plant used for tequila production.
4. C. Jalisco - Jalisco produces approximately 90% of all tequila and is the heartland of tequila production. The state contains both major production regions: the Highlands (Los Altos) and the Lowlands (El Valle), including the town of Tequila itself. While four other states (Guanajuato, Michoacán, Nayarit, and Tamaulipas) are authorized for tequila production, Jalisco dominates the industry.
5. B. The tequila is made entirely from Blue Weber agave sugars - "100% agave" (or "100% de agave") indicates that all fermentable sugars come from Blue Weber agave, with no other sugar sources added. This designation represents higher quality and must be bottled in Mexico. The distinction is important because non-100% agave tequilas (mixtos) can contain up to 49% sugars from other sources.
6. D. Tequila made with at least 51% agave and up to 49% other sugars - "Mixto" tequila contains a minimum of 51% Blue Weber agave sugars, with the remainder (up to 49%) coming from other sources like cane sugar or corn syrup. Mixto tequila can be shipped in bulk and bottled outside

Mexico. While less expensive, mixto is generally considered lower quality and is often blamed for tequila's reputation for causing hangovers.

7. A. Horno - The "horno" is a traditional brick or stone oven used to slowly cook agave piñas, typically for 24-72 hours. This slow cooking caramelizes sugars and develops complex flavors. Traditional hornos are still used by quality-focused producers, though they require more time and labor than modern autoclaves. The cooking process converts agave's inulin (starch) into fermentable fructose.
8. C. To convert starches into fermentable sugars - Raw agave piñas contain inulin, a complex carbohydrate that yeast cannot ferment directly. Cooking (whether in hornos or autoclaves) hydrolyzes these starches into simple, fermentable sugars (primarily fructose). The cooking method significantly impacts flavor—slow horno cooking develops caramelized, complex notes while faster autoclave cooking produces cleaner, more straightforward character.
9. B. A pressurized steam oven for faster agave cooking - The autoclave is a large, pressurized steam chamber that cooks agave piñas much faster than traditional hornos—typically 8-12 hours versus 24-72 hours. Autoclaves are more efficient and consistent but may produce less complex flavors. Many large-scale producers use autoclaves, while traditionalists prefer hornos. Some distilleries use both.
10. D. Tahona - The "tahona" is a large stone wheel (typically volcanic stone) traditionally pulled by mule or horse to crush cooked agave piñas and extract their juice. Tahona crushing is labor-intensive and slower than modern roller mills but is prized for producing fuller, more textured tequilas. The tahona method retains more agave fiber in fermentation, contributing additional flavor complexity.
11. A. Unaged or aged less than 60 days in stainless steel or neutral oak - Tequila Blanco (also called Silver, Plata, or White) is either unaged or rested for less than 60 days in stainless steel or neutral oak containers. This category showcases the purest expression of agave character without oak influence. Blanco is preferred by purists and for cocktails where agave flavor should shine through.
12. C. 2 months (60 days) to 1 year - Tequila Reposado ("rested") must be aged for a minimum of 2 months (60 days) up to 1 year in oak barrels of any size. This aging mellows the spirit and adds subtle oak notes while maintaining agave character. Reposado represents the most popular category in Mexico, offering balance between agave expression and oak influence.
13. B. 1-3 years in oak barrels (maximum 600 liters) - Tequila Añejo ("aged" or "vintage") requires aging for 1-3 years in oak barrels with a maximum capacity of 600 liters. This extended aging develops deeper oak flavors, amber color, and smoother texture. Añejo tequilas show more influence from the barrel—vanilla, caramel, and spice notes—while still retaining agave character.
14. D. 3 years - Extra Añejo ("extra aged" or "ultra aged") is tequila's newest official category, established in 2006. It requires minimum 3 years aging in oak barrels (maximum 600 liters). Extra

Añejo tequilas develop very complex, whiskey-like characteristics and dark amber color. The extended aging can sometimes overwhelm agave character with oak influence.

15. A. Certifying and regulating tequila production standards - The Consejo Regulador del Tequila (CRT) is the official body that certifies and regulates all aspects of tequila production, from agave cultivation to bottling. The CRT verifies compliance with the NOM (official Mexican standard), conducts inspections, issues certification, and protects the tequila denomination of origin. All legitimate tequila must be CRT-certified.
16. C. Oaxaca - Oaxaca is not authorized for tequila production—it's the heartland of mezcal. The five Mexican states legally permitted to produce tequila are Jalisco (where most is made), Guanajuato, Michoacán, Nayarit, and Tamaulipas. These states' authorized municipalities are specified in the tequila NOM. Producing tequila outside these areas is illegal.
17. B. The distillery identification number - The NOM (Norma Oficial Mexicana) number on a tequila bottle identifies the specific distillery where the tequila was produced. Each licensed tequila distillery receives a unique four-digit NOM number. This allows consumers to trace any bottle back to its production facility and can reveal when multiple brands come from the same distillery (contract production).
18. D. It can be made from many different agave species, not just Blue Weber - While tequila must use only Blue Weber agave, mezcal can be produced from over 30 different agave species. This diversity creates mezcal's incredible range of flavors and styles. Common mezcal agaves include espadín, tobalá, madre cuixe, arroqueño, and many wild varieties. Each agave imparts distinct characteristics to the spirit.
19. A. Espadín (*Agave angustifolia*) - Espadín is the most widely cultivated and commonly used agave for mezcal, accounting for approximately 80-90% of production. It matures in 6-8 years (faster than Blue Weber) and produces reliable yields with approachable flavor. Espadín serves as most people's introduction to mezcal. Wild and rare agaves produce more distinctive but expensive mezcals.
20. C. Underground earthen pits lined with rocks - Traditional mezcal production cooks agave in conical underground pits ("palenques") lined with volcanic rocks. Wood (typically mesquite or oak) is burned in the pit, rocks are heated, agave is layered in, and everything is covered with earth to roast for 3-5 days. This method imparts mezcal's characteristic smokiness as agave absorbs smoke during cooking.
21. A. Roasting agave in underground pits with wood and charcoal - Mezcal's signature smoky character comes from the traditional pit-roasting method, where agave cooks in direct contact with wood smoke and smoldering charcoal for several days. The smoke permeates the agave flesh during this process. The degree of smokiness varies by producer, wood type, and cooking time. Not all mezcals are intensely smoky.

22. C. Unaged or briefly rested mezcal - "Mezcal joven" (young mezcal) is unaged or rested for less than 2 months in any container. This category represents mezcal in its purest form, showcasing agave character and production techniques without oak influence. Most artisanal mezcals are released as joven, as producers believe aging can mask the unique flavors of different agave varieties.
23. B. A larva (gusano) added for marketing, not tradition - The "worm" is actually a moth larva (gusano de maguey) that lives on agave plants. Adding it to mezcal bottles began as a marketing gimmick in the 1950s, not an ancient tradition. Quality mezcal producers consider it a sign of poor quality or tourist-trap marketing. The worm has no positive effect on flavor and is not found in premium mezcals.
24. D. Jalisco (specifically the Sierra region) - Raicilla is a traditional agave spirit from Jalisco's coastal and mountain Sierra regions—the same state as tequila but from distinct areas. Raicilla uses different agave varieties (lechuguilla, maximiliana, and others) and production methods. It was historically unregulated "moonshine" but received denomination of origin protection in 2019, distinguishing it from tequila.
25. A. Sonora - Bacanora is a regional agave spirit with denomination of origin from Sonora state in northwestern Mexico. It's made exclusively from wild *Agave pacifica* (also called *Agave yaquiana*) using traditional production methods. Bacanora was actually illegal for much of the 20th century and only gained DO protection in 2000. It has a distinctive character different from tequila and mezcal.
26. C. The *Dasyliirion* plant (desert spoon), not agave - Sotol is made from *Dasyliirion wheeleri* (desert spoon or sotol plant), which is not an agave—though it looks similar and grows in similar environments. Sotol is produced primarily in Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Durango states in northern Mexico. Its flavor profile differs from agave spirits, often showing more herbal, grassy, and vegetal notes.
27. B. The person who harvests and trims the agave plants - The "jimador" (from "jima," meaning harvest) is the skilled laborer who identifies mature agave plants, harvests them, and trims away the leaves (pencas) to reveal the piña. This demanding physical work requires years of experience to master. Jimadors use a specialized tool called a "coa" and their expertise directly impacts tequila quality.
28. D. Coa (or coa de jima) - The coa is a specialized tool with a long wooden handle and a sharp, rounded blade used by jimadors to harvest agave. The jimador uses the coa to sever the agave from its roots and then trim away the leaves, leaving only the piña. The coa has been the traditional harvesting tool for centuries and requires significant skill to use effectively.
29. A. Sweeter, fruitier, more floral character - Highlands (Los Altos) tequilas come from higher elevation areas (6,000-7,000+ feet) with red volcanic soil. Cooler temperatures and longer agave

maturation produce larger, sweeter piñas. Highland tequilas are typically characterized by floral, fruity, and sweet notes. Major Highland towns include Arandas and Jesús María.

30. C. More earthy, herbal, mineral, and peppery notes - Lowlands (El Valle/Valley) tequilas from the valley around the town of Tequila are grown at lower elevations (3,900-4,000 feet) in darker volcanic soil. Warmer temperatures and shorter maturation produce different flavor compounds. Valley tequilas typically show earthier, more herbal, mineral, and peppery characteristics compared to Highland tequilas.
31. B. It extracts sugars before cooking, potentially reducing flavor complexity - The diffuser is an industrial machine that shreds raw agave and uses water and enzymes or acid to extract sugars before (or instead of) traditional cooking. Critics argue this produces less flavorful tequila because the Maillard reactions and caramelization from cooking don't occur. Diffuser tequila can taste thin, vegetal, or artificial to discerning palates.
32. D. 35-55% ABV (with 35% minimum for some markets) - Tequila's legal alcohol range is 35-55% ABV, though 35% is only permitted for domestic Mexican consumption. Export tequila must be minimum 40% ABV for most markets. Standard tequila is typically bottled at 40% ABV (80 proof), though some premium expressions offer higher-proof versions.
33. A. The first distillation product, which is redistilled - "Ordinario" is the low-proof liquid (about 20-25% ABV) produced from the first distillation of fermented agave juice. This cloudy liquid is then redistilled to produce the final tequila. The term also historically referred to lower-quality tequila. The first distillation is sometimes called "destrozamiento" (destruction/breaking down).
34. C. Rectificación - "Rectificación" (rectification) is the second distillation that transforms ordinario into final tequila. During rectification, the distiller separates heads (cabezas), hearts (corazón), and tails (colas), keeping only the desirable middle portion. The skill of the distiller in making these cuts significantly impacts final quality. Some producers do a third distillation for extra smoothness.
35. B. Aged tequila that has been filtered to remove color - "Cristalino" is a trending category featuring añejo or extra añejo tequila that has been charcoal filtered to remove color while (theoretically) retaining aged flavors. The result is a clear spirit with aged smoothness. Critics argue filtration removes complexity along with color. Cristalino isn't an official classification but a popular marketing category.
36. D. 1974 - Tequila received its Denomination of Origin (DO) in 1974, making it one of the first spirits to receive such protection. The DO legally restricts tequila production to specific regions in Mexico and establishes quality standards. This protection was strengthened in subsequent years with additional regulations and the formation of the CRT (Tequila Regulatory Council).
37. A. A wooden vat or stainless steel tank - Traditional tequila fermentation occurs in wooden vats (tinajas de madera), though many modern facilities use stainless steel tanks. Wooden vats harbor

native yeasts and contribute subtle flavors, while stainless steel offers consistency and easier sanitation. Fermentation converts sugars in the cooked agave juice (mosto) into alcohol.

38. C. Foraged from the wild, often rare varieties - "Silvestres" (wild) agaves in mezcal production are foraged from their natural environment rather than cultivated. These wild varieties—like tobalá, tepeztate, and madrecoixte—often grow in remote, difficult terrain and take 15-35 years to mature. Wild agave mezcals are highly prized for their complexity and unique terroir expression, but sustainability is a concern.
39. B. It is wild, slow-growing, and produces complex, fruity mezcal - Tobilá (Agave potatorum) is a small, wild agave that grows in shaded, high-elevation areas and takes 12-15 years to mature. It produces relatively little juice, making tobalá mezcal expensive. The flavor is distinctive—often fruity, floral, and complex with tropical fruit and mango notes. Tobilá can only reproduce by seed, not cloning.
40. A. It is distilled with raw chicken or turkey breast (and often fruits/nuts) hanging in the still - "Pechuga" (breast) mezcal is a traditional ceremonial spirit made by hanging a raw chicken or turkey breast (and often seasonal fruits, nuts, and spices) inside the still during a third distillation. The proteins and fruits add subtle flavors and smoothness. Pechuga is traditionally made for celebrations like Day of the Dead.
41. D. 100% - Unlike tequila's allowance for mixto (51% minimum agave), mezcal labeled "100% agave" must be made entirely from agave sugars—no other fermentable sugars permitted. Most quality mezcal is 100% agave. The mezcal NOM does technically allow for non-100% agave mezcal (minimum 80% agave), but this is rare in the market.
42. B. Traditional clay pot distillation and earthen pit cooking - "Ancestral" is the most traditional mezcal classification, requiring underground pit cooking, stone or wood mallet crushing (no mechanical mills), and distillation in clay pots over direct fire. This category represents pre-industrial production methods. Ancestral mezcals often show distinctive earthy, mineral character from clay pot distillation.
43. C. Copper or clay pot stills with pit or masonry oven cooking - "Artisanal" mezcal allows more flexibility than Ancestral while maintaining traditional character. It permits cooking in earthen pits or masonry ovens, crushing by tahona/mallet/mechanical mill, and distillation in copper alembics, clay pots, or Filipino-style stills. Most quality mezcal on the market falls into the Artisanal category.
44. A. The flowering stalk that is typically removed to preserve sugar content - The "quite" is the tall flowering stalk (up to 20+ feet) that an agave sends up when it reaches maturity to reproduce. Agave plants die after flowering (they're monocarpic). Jimadors remove the quite early to prevent flowering, forcing the plant to store more sugars in its piña. Quiotes can be roasted and eaten.

45. D. Offshoots or "pups" used for propagation - "Hijuelos" (little children) are the clonal offshoots or "pups" that grow from the root system of a mother agave plant. These genetic clones are separated and replanted to propagate new agave plants. Using hijuelos is faster than growing from seed but reduces genetic diversity—a concern as diseases threaten monoculture Blue Weber plantations.
46. B. 2-12 days depending on method - Tequila fermentation typically takes 2-12 days, depending on temperature, yeast type, and producer preference. Faster fermentations (using commercial yeasts and warm temperatures) are more industrial; slower, cooler fermentations with native yeasts develop more complex flavors. Some traditional producers allow fermentation for several weeks.
47. C. The sweet juice or "honey water" extracted from cooked agave - "Aguamiel" (honey water) is the sweet, syrupy juice extracted from cooked agave piñas. The cooking process converts starches to fermentable sugars, making the juice sweet like honey. Aguamiel is fermented to create the "mosto" (agave wine) that is then distilled. The term also refers to the sap collected from living agave for pulque.
48. A. A fermented (not distilled) agave beverage with ancient origins - Pulque is a traditional Mexican beverage made by fermenting aguamiel (fresh agave sap) collected from living agave plants—not distilled. With origins dating back over 1,000 years to Mesoamerican civilizations, pulque has cultural and religious significance. It has a viscous, slightly sour character and low alcohol content (4-6%). Pulque is experiencing a revival.
49. D. Portions separated and typically discarded or redistilled for quality - "Heads" (cabezas) contain volatile, harsh compounds that come over first in distillation, while "tails" (colas) contain heavier fusel oils from the end. The skilled distiller separates these from the desirable "heart" (corazón) to ensure quality. Heads and tails may be redistilled with the next batch or discarded. This process is called making "cuts."
50. B. Agave sourced from one specific property - "Single estate" or "single quinta" tequila uses agave sourced from one specific property or rancho, highlighting terroir differences. Tequila Ocho pioneered this approach, releasing vintage-dated tequilas from individual estates. This concept, borrowed from wine, emphasizes how location affects agave character. Most tequila blends agave from multiple sources.
51. C. Premium 100% agave tequila brands - Casa Noble, Patrón, and Don Julio are well-known premium 100% agave tequila brands that helped elevate tequila's image from cheap shot alcohol to sophisticated sipping spirit. These brands (along with others) expanded the premium tequila market significantly since the 1990s. They are produced in Jalisco under tequila regulations.
52. A. The Lowlands (El Valle) - The town of Tequila, which gave the spirit its name, is located in the Valley (El Valle/Lowlands) region of Jalisco at approximately 4,000 feet elevation. Major producers like Jose Cuervo are based there. The town is a tourist destination with distillery tours, and the surrounding agave landscape is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

53. D. Unaged tequila blended with aged, or blanco with added coloring/flavoring - "Joven" (young) or "oro" (gold) tequila is typically unaged blanco with added caramel coloring for gold appearance, or sometimes a blend of blanco with small amounts of aged tequila. In the 100% agave category, joven indicates an unaged blend. Many gold mixtos are simply colored blanco, which has given the category a poor reputation among enthusiasts.
54. B. All aspects of tequila production, from agave to bottling - The CRT's Norma Oficial Mexicana (NOM) standards comprehensively regulate tequila production—including approved growing regions, agave cultivation practices, harvesting methods, cooking, fermentation, distillation, aging requirements, additives, labeling, and bottling. Compliance is mandatory for all tequila sold legally. The current standard is NOM-006-SCFI-2012.
55. C. Something or someone from Guadalajara/Jalisco - "Tapatio" is a demonym for people or things from Guadalajara and the broader Jalisco region. It's commonly used in tequila contexts—Tequila Tapatio is a respected brand from La Alteña distillery. The term reflects Jalisco's identity as tequila's homeland and appears on various regional products beyond tequila.
56. A. Evaporation loss during barrel aging - The "angel's share" in tequila (as in other spirits) refers to liquid lost through barrel evaporation during aging. In Mexico's warmer climate, evaporation rates are higher than in cooler regions—approximately 5-10% annually compared to 2% in Scotland. This affects both economics and concentration of the remaining spirit.
57. D. Bourbon - Most barrels used for tequila aging previously held American bourbon, which by law must use new charred oak barrels. These once-used bourbon barrels are economical and contribute vanilla, caramel, and sweet oak flavors to tequila. American oak's wider grain imparts more aggressive flavors than French oak. Some producers also use sherry, wine, or new oak barrels.
58. B. More subtle, spicy, and tannic characteristics - French oak barrels contribute different characteristics than American oak—typically more subtle, spicy, and tannic rather than the bold vanilla and caramel from American oak. French oak's tighter grain releases flavors more slowly. Some premium tequilas use French oak for added complexity or refinement. French oak barrels are significantly more expensive.
59. C. A blend of different agave varieties - "Ensamble" (ensemble/blend) mezcal combines multiple agave varieties in one production, either co-fermented/co-distilled together or blended after separate production. This creates complexity from multiple agave characters interacting. For example, espadín might be blended with wild varieties like tobalá or madrecoixte. Ensamblés showcase the blender's craft.
60. A. The "World Capital of Mezcal" - Santiago Matatlán in Oaxaca's Central Valley region is known as the "World Capital of Mezcal" (Capital Mundial del Mezcal) due to its concentration of mezcal producers—dozens of palenques operate in and around the town. Most Oaxacan mezcal on the market originates from this region. The town's mezcal tradition dates back generations.

61. C. An agave spirit that doesn't meet DO requirements for tequila or mezcal - "Destilado de agave" (agave distillate) is used for agave spirits produced outside protected denominations—either from unauthorized regions or using non-approved methods. Some high-quality producers choose this designation to avoid regulatory restrictions or because their region lacks DO status. The term doesn't indicate lower quality.
62. A. Guerrero and Michoacán - Agave cupreata is a wild species native to Guerrero and Michoacán states, used to produce distinctive regional mezcals. Cupreata mezcal often shows bright, citrusy, and herbaceous character different from Oaxacan espadín. As mezcal's DO expanded to include these states, cupreata has gained recognition among mezcal enthusiasts.
63. D. Larger, sweeter agaves - The Jalisco Highlands' volcanic, iron-rich red soil combined with cooler temperatures and higher elevation produces larger Blue Weber agave piñas with higher sugar content. These conditions result in the Highland region's characteristic sweeter, fruitier tequilas. Piñas from the Highlands can weigh significantly more than those from the Valley.
64. B. Herbal, vegetal, and complex character - Madrecuixe (*Agave karwinskii*) is a wild agave producing mezcals known for herbal, vegetal, and complex character—often with notes of green herbs, citrus, and mineral qualities. The long, cylindrical piña shape is distinctive. Madrecuixe takes 12-18 years to mature and grows in rocky, difficult terrain. It's a favorite among mezcal enthusiasts.
65. C. It has pure, unaged agave character ideal for mixing - Blanco tequila is preferred for many cocktails because its unaged character lets agave flavors shine through mixers and other ingredients. The clean, direct agave expression provides the authentic tequila backbone cocktails need. Margaritas, Palomas, and other classic tequila cocktails traditionally use blanco. Aged tequilas' oak notes can conflict with some mixers.
66. A. No minimum, but industry standard is typically 6-8 years for quality - Mexican law doesn't specify a minimum agave age for harvest, but quality producers typically wait 6-8 years (or longer in the Highlands). Harvesting immature agave yields less sugar and inferior flavor. Economic pressure during agave shortages sometimes leads to premature harvesting, negatively impacting tequila quality across the industry.
67. D. The practice of folding pencas (leaves) into the cooking pit - "Dobladillo" refers to the traditional practice of folding agave leaves (pencas) and placing them in the cooking pit along with the piñas. The leaves create a protective barrier and can contribute subtle flavors. This technique is used in traditional mezcal production. The term is specific to artisanal and ancestral production methods.
68. B. Copper helps remove sulfur compounds and produces cleaner spirit - Copper pot stills are preferred in quality tequila production because copper catalytically removes sulfur compounds and other undesirable elements during distillation, producing cleaner, more refined spirit. The copper

also contributes to the formation of desirable flavor esters. Stainless steel stills, while easier to maintain, lack these benefits.

69. C. Tequila aged 2 months to 1 year - "Reposado" literally translates to "rested," referring to tequila that has rested in oak barrels for 2 months to 1 year. This aging period allows the spirit to mellow and pick up subtle wood character while maintaining agave expression. Reposado represents the most popular tequila category in Mexico, balancing freshness with barrel influence.
70. A. Permitted additives like caramel, oak extract, glycerin, or sugar syrup (in non-100% agave) - "Abocante" refers to additives legally permitted in tequila to adjust color, flavor, and mouthfeel—including caramel coloring (for color), oak extract (for aged flavor), glycerin (for mouthfeel), and sugar syrup (for sweetness). While historically allowed only in mixto, these additives have controversially been used in 100% agave tequilas too.
71. D. Labels to indicate if additives are used in 100% agave tequilas - Beginning in 2024, new Mexican regulations require 100% agave tequilas to disclose whether additives are used via label statements. Additive-free tequilas may state "sin aditivos" while those using additives must indicate this. This transparency requirement resulted from consumer advocacy and helps buyers identify authentic tequilas.
72. B. Traditional tahona-crushed, brick oven-cooked production methods - Fortaleza, owned by the Sauza family (descendants of tequila pioneer Don Cenobio Sauza), is renowned for using traditional production methods—brick oven cooking, tahona crushing, copper pot distillation, and no additives. This approach produces tequila with rich texture and authentic character. Fortaleza has become a benchmark for traditionally-made tequila.
73. C. Handcrafted ceramic decanters and premium positioning - Clase Azul is recognized for its distinctive handcrafted and hand-painted ceramic bottles (each taking two weeks to produce) and ultra-premium positioning. The brand has successfully marketed tequila as luxury product. While the packaging is undeniably beautiful, some critics note the liquid uses diffuser production methods and additives.
74. A. Allowing some agaves to flower and support bat pollination - The "Bat Friendly" certification program encourages tequila and mezcal producers to let some agave plants flower rather than harvesting all of them. Mexican long-nosed bats, which historically pollinated agave, have declined as monoculture farming removes their food source. Allowing flowering supports bat populations and increases agave genetic diversity.
75. D. Single-estate, vintage-dated terroir expression - Tequila Ocho, created by Carlos Camarena and the late Tomas Estes, pioneered the single-estate, vintage-dated approach in tequila. Each release comes from one specific rancho in one harvest year, highlighting how terroir affects tequila character. This wine-like philosophy has influenced other producers to emphasize provenance and agave origin.

76. B. Mineral and distinctive regional character - San Luis del Rio is a village in Oaxaca known for mezcal with distinctive mineral character, attributed to its specific microclimate, water sources, and soil. Village-specific mezcals like those from San Luis del Rio demonstrate how location affects agave spirits. The village is in the Miahuatlán district, slightly south of the Tlacolula valley.
77. C. Pioneering single-village artisanal mezcal in the US market - Del Maguey, founded by artist Ron Cooper in 1995, was instrumental in introducing Americans to artisanal, single-village mezcal. Each Del Maguey expression comes from a specific village and producer, highlighting regional diversity. The brand helped transform mezcal's image from cheap tequila alternative to craft spirit and introduced many to mezcal's complexity.
78. A. Clay pot stills over direct fire - The "minero" or ancestral distillation method uses clay pot stills (ollas de barro) heated over direct wood fire. A copper or wooden condensing apparatus sits atop the clay pot. This ancient technique produces mezcal with distinctive earthy, mineral character from the clay. Ancestral-category mezcal must be distilled using this method.
79. D. Working with traditional family producers in multiple Oaxacan villages - Vago mezcal works with multiple traditional family producers (mezcaleros) in different Oaxacan villages, bottling their distinctive spirits under the Vago brand while crediting each producer. This model supports small producers who lack resources for independent export. Each Vago expression reflects the individual mezcalero's methods and local agave.
80. A. Being the first mezcal to enter the US mass market at accessible prices - Union mezcal was significant for making mezcal accessible to mainstream American consumers at relatively affordable prices. While not positioned as ultra-premium, Union introduced many people to mezcal who might not have tried expensive artisanal brands. This helped grow mezcal's overall market presence in the US.
81. B. 40-200+ pounds (varying by growing conditions) - A mature Blue Weber agave piña typically weighs 40-200+ pounds, with Highland agaves often reaching the larger end due to longer maturation and favorable growing conditions. Some exceptional piñas exceed 200 pounds. Size correlates with sugar content—larger piñas generally produce more tequila. Environmental factors significantly impact final size.
82. D. Small, narrow glass used for drinking tequila - The "caballito" (little horse) is the traditional narrow glass used for drinking tequila in Mexico. It's taller and narrower than a shot glass, holding about 2 ounces. The shape is designed for sipping rather than shooting, concentrating aromas. Quality tequila is traditionally sipped slowly from a caballito, not slammed with salt and lime.
83. A. Sipping slowly, not shooting - Quality tequila and mezcal should be sipped slowly to appreciate their complexity, not "shot" quickly. Shooting tequila (especially with salt and lime) originated with poor-quality mixto that needed masking. Premium agave spirits have nuanced flavors best appreciated through careful tasting—nosing first, then small sips. Some use copitas (small wide glasses) for better aroma.

84. C. Tomato, citrus, and chili (or citrus and chili in Jalisco style) - Sangrita is a traditional tequila chaser made from tomato juice, citrus, and chili (in Mexico City style) or just citrus and chili without tomato (in traditional Jalisco style). It's sipped alternately with tequila, not mixed in. The name means "little blood" for its red color. Authentic sangrita should be tangy and spicy, complementing agave flavors.
85. B. Tequila, grapefruit soda (or fresh grapefruit), and lime - The Paloma (dove) is Mexico's most popular tequila cocktail, traditionally combining tequila with grapefruit soda (like Jarritos or Squirt), fresh lime juice, and often a salted rim. Fresh versions substitute grapefruit juice and club soda for the soda. The Paloma is refreshing, balanced, and arguably more popular in Mexico than the Margarita.
86. D. Tequila, lime juice, and orange liqueur (Cointreau/triple sec) - The classic Margarita combines tequila, fresh lime juice, and orange liqueur (Cointreau, triple sec, or Grand Marnier), typically served on the rocks or frozen with a salted rim. The origin is disputed but the cocktail emerged in the 1930s-40s. A proper Margarita uses quality blanco tequila, fresh lime, and real orange liqueur—not sour mix.
87. A. Three shots: lime juice (green), tequila (white), and sangrita (red) representing the Mexican flag - The "Bandera" (flag) is a patriotic tequila serving featuring three shot glasses representing the Mexican flag's colors: green (lime juice), white (tequila blanco), and red (sangrita). The three are sipped in sequence, not mixed. This traditional serving style celebrates Mexican national identity and showcases tequila in cultural context.
88. C. Roasted corn (elote) - Mezcal Vago Elote is a distinctive expression distilled with roasted corn (elote) added to the final distillation, similar to how pechuga is made with meat. The corn imparts subtle sweetness and toasted notes to the mezcal. This creative variation demonstrates mezcal's flexibility for experimental distillation with different ingredients.
89. B. Identify which distillery produced the tequila - The NOM (Norma Oficial Mexicana) number on tequila bottles identifies the specific distillery of origin. Each licensed facility has a unique four-digit number. This allows consumers to research production practices and discover when multiple brands come from the same source. Websites like Tequila Matchmaker provide NOM lookup tools.
90. D. They are produced at the same distillery (contract distilling) - Multiple tequila brands sharing the same NOM indicates they're all produced at one distillery, a common industry practice called contract distilling. A single facility may produce dozens of different brands with varying recipes and specifications. Some consider this acceptable while others prefer estate-produced tequilas from dedicated distilleries.
91. A. El Tesoro, Tapatio, and Ocho - La Alteña distillery (NOM 1139), owned by the Camarena family in the Jalisco Highlands, produces El Tesoro, Tapatio, and Tequila Ocho. Master distiller Carlos

Camarena is renowned for traditional methods—tahona crushing, brick oven cooking, and copper pot distillation. These brands represent some of the finest traditionally-made tequilas available.

92. C. Traditional production methods and being a source for early Patrón - Siete Leguas is a respected, family-owned distillery known for traditional production methods including tahona, brick ovens, and copper pot stills. Notably, Siete Leguas produced the original Patrón tequila before Patrón built its own facility. The brand is popular in Mexico and among tequila cognoscenti who value authenticity.
93. B. How environmental factors (soil, climate, altitude) affect agave and final spirit character - "Terroir," borrowed from wine, refers to how environmental factors—soil composition, climate, altitude, rainfall, and microclimate—affect agave growth and resulting spirit character. In tequila, Highland vs. Lowland terroir produces distinctly different flavor profiles. Single-estate tequilas like Ocho emphasize terroir expression.
94. D. Cyclical supply issues when demand outpaces the 7-10 year agave maturation cycle - The "agave crisis" describes cyclical shortages occurring when tequila demand surges past available agave supply, which takes 7-10 years to mature. High prices encourage over-planting; surplus then crashes prices; farmers abandon agave; shortage recurs. These cycles cause quality issues as producers harvest immature agave or use diffusers to maximize extraction.
95. A. Traditional methods and small-batch production in the town of El Arenal - Cascahuín distillery in El Arenal, Jalisco maintains traditional production methods including brick ovens and copper pot stills. A family-owned operation, Cascahuín has gained recognition among enthusiasts for quality, traditionally-made tequila at reasonable prices. The distillery represents the craft tradition surviving alongside industrial giants.
96. C. The agave landscape and traditional tequila production culture - The "Agave Landscape and Ancient Industrial Facilities of Tequila" became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006, recognizing the cultural significance of tequila production. The designation covers agave fields, distilleries, and the town of Tequila in Jalisco. It acknowledges tequila's importance to Mexican identity and the unique agricultural landscape.
97. B. Bold, complex character with notes of tropical fruit and earth - Arroqueño (*Agave americana* var. *oaxacensis*) is a large, wild agave producing mezcals known for bold, complex character—often showing tropical fruit, floral notes, and earthy depth. Arroqueño takes 15-25 years to mature and can produce piñas weighing hundreds of pounds. Its distinctive character makes it prized among mezcal enthusiasts.
98. D. A master mezcal distiller with traditional knowledge - A "maestro mezcalero" is a master mezcal maker who possesses traditional knowledge passed down through generations. This title honors the skill required to transform agave into mezcal using ancestral methods. Maestros control every production aspect—from identifying mature agave to making distillation cuts. Their expertise is increasingly recognized and valued.

99. A. Being too slow - Actually the opposite: diffusers are criticized for creating less complex products. Diffuser technology extracts sugars from raw (uncooked) or briefly-cooked agave using water jets and enzymes. Critics argue this bypasses the flavor development from traditional cooking, producing thin, characterless tequila. Many diffuser tequilas compensate with additives. The technology is efficient but controversial.
100. C. Authentic, unadulterated agave character - Additive-free brands like Pasote, G4, Fortaleza, El Tesoro, and Siembra Azul are valued by enthusiasts for delivering authentic agave character without manipulation. These producers reject caramel coloring, oak extract, glycerin, and sweeteners that many brands use. The additive-free movement has grown as consumers seek transparency and authenticity in tequila.