

# Tequila!

Thomas W. Broadhead  
broadhea@utk.edu

Spirits created from the sap of agave plants in Mexico are reported to have originated during the early Toltec period, and the post-mythological legend has the woman, Xochitl offering a bowl of fermented agave sap, now known as pulque, to the emperor Tecpancaltzin Iztaccaltzin in 843 CE. Naturally, soon after, he married her. Much later, in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, agave juice began to be distilled, creating mezcal. Mezcal produced in the state of Jalisco and surrounding areas was distilled from the juice of the blue agave plant (*Agave tequilana*), and became known as tequila, after the city in Jalisco. Today, tequila is distilled only in Jalisco and limited areas in surrounding states. Most is bottled in Mexico, but bulk exports are bottled in other countries.



*Xochitl presentando el pulque.*

The legend of Xochitl presenting pulque to the Toltec emperor. (postcard ca 1905)



Collection of juice from a large agave to ferment for making pulque. Two-centavo UPU international postcard rate, 1906.



Tequila was featured on the 1978 10-peso and 1990 1700-peso stamps of the Exporta series of Mexico (1975-1992). Images X 150%



Early tequila distillery facilities and commercial blue agave fields. Note that agave plants shown on the stamp are not blue agave.



Pictorial meter for tequila bottled in Germany



The agave fields and distilleries around Tequila were collectively named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006. (postal card of China).

While you are enjoying a delicious shot of Tequila, sit back and enjoy the song "Tequila" by The Champs (1958):