



# Tasting Table.

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**12 BEST MEZCAL BRANDS, RANKED**

**By: Cristina Alonso**

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Mezcal is produced using the fermented juices of the cooked agave or the piña. These cores are cooked in stone ovens, mashed, fermented, and distilled. Afterward, the liquid can be aged to produce a reposado or añejo mezcal, and it can also be infused with different ingredients, from fruits and spices to animal protein.

Under the Denomination of Origin, mezcal can be produced in nine states in Mexico: Oaxaca (which boasts 66 percent of the entire country's production), Durango, Guerrero, Puebla, Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas, Michoacán, and Guanajuato.

Most producers (traditionally called maestro mezcalero or mezcal masters) have learned the trade of mezcal production from their ancestors, making this spirit a true family affair. This also means that each family brings their own knowledge and vision to the production.

### 3 BADGE BEVERAGE CORPORATION

Over the past decade, mezcal's popularity has grown immensely, both in Mexico and abroad. According to Yahoo Finance, the North Americas accounted for the industry's maximum growth during 2017, and the global market is estimated to reach \$437 million by 2028. Amidst the success and hype, there are a few brands that really stand out due to their commitment to quality and fantastic products.

#### **11. Bozal**

Bozal is a self-described "untamed" brand, which refers to not only the wild agave grown in the states of Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Durango but also the traditions upheld by its maestros mezcaleros. The maestros harvest fully-grown agave plants using tools like machetes and separate the cores from the leaves so that they can cook them in earthen pit ovens.

The cooked hearts are mashed in a stone tahona, which is a traditional wheel turned by a horse or a donkey, and the resulting mash is allowed to ferment naturally in clay pots or wood tanks. The brand's Artisanal mezcals are distilled twice, while its Reserva mezcals are distilled in clay pots.

Bozal's expressions include single-agave mezcals like a smoky Cenizo, a sweet Cuishe, and a peppery, mineral Tepeztate, as well as an Ensamble (blend of Espadín, Barril, and Mexicano). Bozal also produces a unique line called Sacrificio, featuring mezcals infused with ingredients like Ibérico ham and lamb during the final distillation process.

Recipes for some of these mezcals have been in the families of maestros mezcaleros for generations. Bozal's 100% artisanal process makes it an excellent contender in its category, although some of its bottles are pricier and not as accessible to all drinkers.

#### **BOZAL MEZCAL**