



Washington State Liquor Control Board

Tequila



5 Things You Need To Know

Origin

Tequila is Mexican liquor distilled from the Agave (a plant in the lily family often confused with cactus). It is named for the town of Tequila in the state of Jalisco in western Mexico close to the city of Guadalajara where it has been produced for over 200 years.

Tequila is best known for being the main ingredient in the perpetually classic cocktail Margarita. Tequila can be clear (silver) or golden (reposado or anejo) and may be either unaged or aged. You will also see the terms plata (silver) and oro (golden) on some labels.

By law Tequila must be made in Mexico and clearly marked with a Mexican governmental stamp.

What does it taste like?

Tequila definitely has a unique taste. Some are of a smoky quality and some with even a slightly sweet aftertaste or “finish”. The agave component adds character and aging can add smoothness in flavor for the drinker. Some finer and more premium Tequilas are now made to be sipped like a fine cognac or a brandy inviting the drinker to sit, savor and enjoy the Tequila as a quality distilled beverage. Recently flavor enhanced Tequilas such as citrus have entered the market and are available on LCB shelves.

The three styles of Tequila are:

1. Blanco (silver)-Not aged-clean refreshing taste. Often used in mixed cocktails, especially Margaritas.
2. Reposado – Aged a minimum of six month in oak barrels- richer with more pronounced flavor.
3. Anejo – Aged a minimum of one year in oak barrels-complex and distinct flavor. Often consumed on its own.

Tequila in WSLCB Stores: By the numbers

- There are currently 67 different Tequilas available in the 750 ml size.
- In 1979, by comparison, there were only 24 choices available
- The current prices for Tequila range from \$12.40 to \$189.95 - with a majority (36) of selections in the \$30.00 to \$50.00 price range.
- As a category, Tequila contributes nearly ten percent of overall profits returned to the State.
- Tequila as a category is trending up at eight percent annually.
- Washington State is the number one state for Tequila sales among control states and number ten in sales for all states.

Category Leaders

In Washington the leaders in the Tequila category are:

1. Cuervo Gold
2. Patron Silver
3. Sauza Hornitos
4. Sauza Gold
5. 1800 Reposado

And in the economy brands:

1. Pancho Villa Gold
2. Monarch Gold

Note: Signpost brands (brands that are easily identifiable to the consumer and lead the category in Washington) are Cuervo and Sauza.

How it is used and what the future holds

The Tequila category in Washington is considered highly developed and the Tequila consumer very savvy. The continuing popularity of the Margarita and the increased consumer interest in luxury style Tequilas almost guarantee Tequila will see growth in the coming years. With ultra premiums and flavored Tequila entering the market, the consumer can look forward to continued choices and styles.