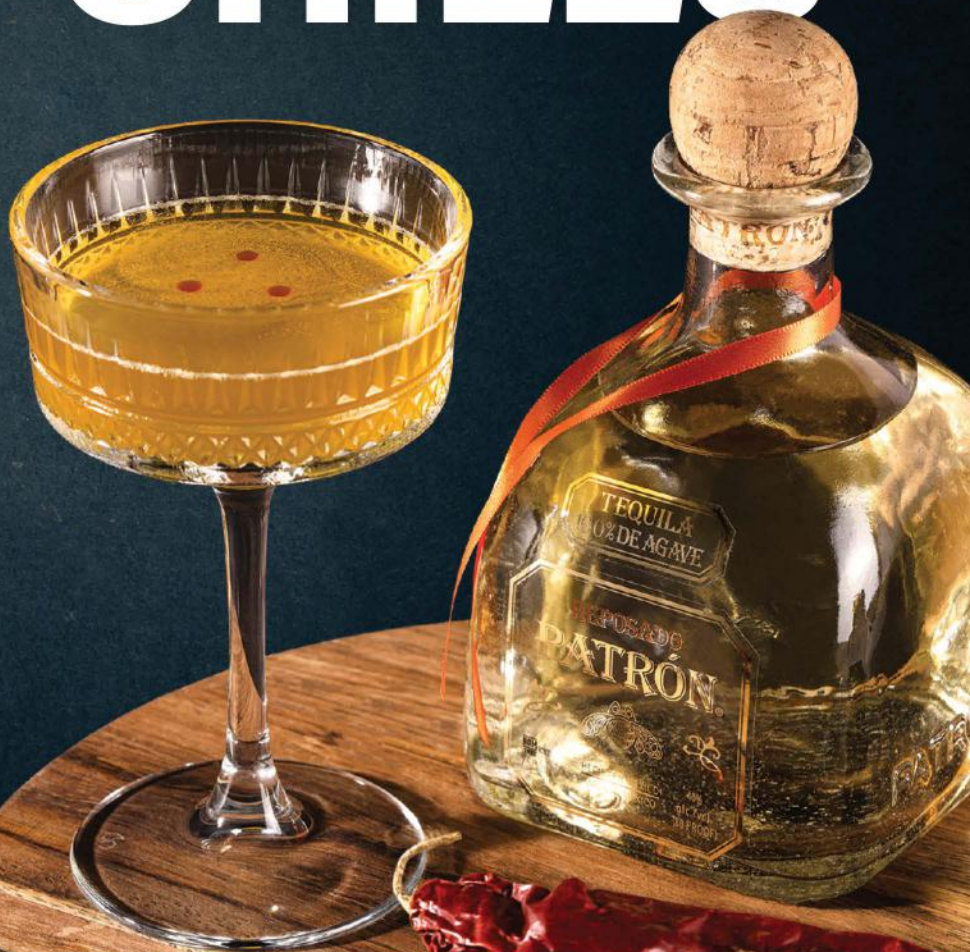




MIXOLOGÍA
DE MÉXICO

CHILES







MIXOLOGÍA DE MÉXICO

MIXOLOGÍA DE MÉXICO is a rich, invigorating showcase of Mexico's beverage culture throughout the ages and the Mexican bartenders who are shaping its future. It will touch on the history of traditional Mexican beverages, ferments, and spirits from pre-colonial civilizations to modern day creations.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Mixología de México is not contained to a single book or program; it is an embodiment of lived experiences, continuously evolving over centuries, showcasing Mexican culture, traditions, and talented individuals. More than anything, *Mixología de México* is an homage to the country, its flavors, and especially its people—who have made it one of the richest culinary nations in the world.

We were fortunate to collaborate with an exceptional group of Mexican talent on this book: Claudia Alarcón and Haba Flores, who believed in this project from its earliest beginnings; chef Ana Castro; our incredibly talented bartenders, Ben Zapién, Pepe Guti, Eli Martínez, Carlos Pintor, Karen Barradas, Óskar Murillo, Isaac García, Jesús Arcéo, Óscar Olvera; and our photographer, Inés Magaña. Special thanks to Steph Teslar, and to the team at OFFSITE. Without you all, none of this would be possible.

¡MUCHAS GRACIAS!

DAVID ALAN

DIRECTOR TRADE
EDUCATION & MIXOLOGY

ROBERTO NÚÑEZ MORENO

PATRÓN AGAVE MASTERS
NATIONAL AMBASSADOR

FOREWORD

Academia Patrón presents ‘Mixología de México,’ a rich, invigorating showcase of Mexico’s beverage culture throughout the ages and the Mexican bartenders who are shaping its future. This program will touch on the history of traditional beverages, ferments, and spirits from Mexico from pre-colonial civilizations to modern day creations, and be inspired by a new generation of bartenders, who are bringing Mexico’s cocktail scene to the world.

Today, Mexican beverage culture is radiantly kaleidoscopic, a composite of overlapping cultural habits and comforts, regional variations, emblematic ingredients, historical perspectives, and the influences of Mexican drink-makers themselves. These people are similarly diffuse, from folks in home kitchens making lip-smacking *aguas frescas*, to local street vendors selling chilled tejuino and pulque, and mixologists at renowned bars transforming produce and spirits into astonishing new cocktails.

‘Mixología de México’ aims to spotlight these past and present drink-makers and their voices, honoring traditional beverage-making customs and the very best contemporary Mexican bartenders offer. By honing in on distinctly Mexican ingredients, this program will cover Mexican mixology to appreciate how these flavors are interwoven in beverage making, how they appear in drinks alongside Tequila Patrón, and how the culture as a whole has flourished and grown over the centuries.



CHAPTER 01

ABOUT MIXOLOGÍA DE MÉXICO



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EVOLUTION OF MEXICAN BEVERAGE CULTURE

Pre-Colonial Beverage Consumption

Before the arrival of Spanish conquistadors, non-alcoholic and fermented beverages made from grains, seeds, sugars, and fruits were of critical importance to pre-Colonial civilizations, particularly Aztec and Mayan peoples. Non-alcoholic beverages provided not only refreshment, but also nutritional subsistence via ancient corn-based porridges such as *pozol* and *atole*.¹ Some were valued for their psychoactive properties (in the case of caffeinated cacao-based drinks),² and others were simply a part of everyday life, served at meals, to break bread with travelers, and at ceremonies.³ Fermented beverages were equally popular: notable examples include *balché*—a ceremonial beverage made from honey-water—and *chicha*, or fermented sugarcane juice.⁴ None is more famous perhaps than pulque, made by fermenting the *aguamiel* or sap of a mature agave plant (or ‘maguey’). Made as early as 6,500 BC, this and other maguey-based beverages played vital roles in religious ceremonies and for homeopathic purposes.⁵ However, agave was much more valued socially as

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- 1 Alfonso Villa Rojas, “Maya Lowlands: The Chontal, Chol, and Kekchi,” in *Handbook of Middle American Indians, Volumes 7 and 8: Ethnology*, eds. Robert Wauchope & Evon Vogt (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1969), 417
 - 2 Sophie Coe, *America’s First Cuisines* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005), 150
 - 3 Alfonso Villa Rojas, “The Mixe, Zoque, and Popoluca,” in *Handbook of Middle American Indians, Volumes 7 and 8: Ethnology*, eds. Robert Wauchope & Evon Vogt (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1969), 852
 - 4 Rojas, “Maya Lowlands,” 430
 - 5 Ivy Mix & James Carpenter, *Spirits of Latin America: A Celebration of Culture & Cocktails, with 100 Recipes from Leyenda and Beyond* (New York, NY: Ten Speed Press, 2020), 30

a food source by most indigenous tribes before the Spanish Conquest of Mexico as opposed to a raw ingredient to make beverages.

Introduction of Distillation

According to scientists Ana Valenzuela-Zapata and Gary Nabhan in *Tequila!*, “Distillation was neither widespread nor the most common means of preparing alcoholic beverages prior to the Spanish Conquest.”⁶ However, its introduction to Mesoamerica undeniably influenced Mexican beverage culture moving forward. Popular literature would have one believe that distillation was introduced to Mexico in 1519 via the Spanish Conquest, with conquistadors adapting the Arab still for agave-based distillates that resembled *eau-de-vie* as viable alternatives to local beverages.⁷ Yet, contemporary research and archaeological evidence has introduced the idea that a Filipino-style still—brought first to Colima by Filipino immigrants some years before the conquest—was likely the first apparatus used to distill ‘wines’ made from mature coconut and agave, or *vinos de coco* and *vinos de mezcal*.⁸ This was succeeded by the Arab still, and the blending of Arab and Asiatic distillation techniques and technologies is said to influence *vino de mezcal* culture to this day.

6 Ana Valenzuela-Zapata & Gary Nabhan, *Tequila: A Natural and Cultural History* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 9

7 Chantal Martineau, *How the Gringos Stole Tequila: The Modern Age of Mexico's Most Traditional Spirit* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press Incorporated, 2015), 20

8 Patricia Colunga-GarcíaMarín & Daniel Zizumbo-Villarreal, “Early Coconut Distillation and the Origins of Mezcal and Tequila Spirits in West-Central Mexico” in *Genetic Resources and Crop Evolution*, vol. 55, 4 (2008), 498–499



Rise of Pulquerías & Cantinas

As urban Mexican communities began splitting across lines of race and class, the commercialization of Indigenous fermented drinks such as pulque and tepache ushered in new employment opportunities, notably for women. Many purchased and combined the two, and resold them at their own *pulquerías* in *cuberas*, enabling them to adapt to urban life.⁹ Meanwhile, distilled *vinos de mezcal* spread across the nation over existing trade routes.¹⁰ As they encroached on the market share of Spanish wines, sherries, and spirits, there came several efforts from monarchs over the centuries to curtail their proliferation—from outright bans to heavily imposed taxes—which elevated *vinos de mezcal* to a cult-like status more often than discouraging consumption.¹¹ These beverage trends crystallized into the birth of cantinas in the 19th century, which offered space for people (typically only men) to consume Mexican beverages at leisure alongside *botanas* or “appetizers.”



Salón Venus, Casasola, ca. 1925-1930. SINAFO, INAH.

9 Marie Sarita Gaytán, *¡Tequila!: Distilling the Spirit of Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020), 25

10 Colunga GarcíaMarín & Zizumbo-Villarreal, “Early Coconut Distillation,” 505–506

11 Martineau, *How the Gringos Stole Tequila*, 14

Arrival of ‘Vino de Mezcal de Tequila’

José Maria Guadalupe de Cuervo was granted the first official license to produce what became known as *vino de mezcal de Tequila*, made primarily with Blue Weber agave, at his distillery ‘*Taberna de Cuervo*’ in Jalisco.¹² Known among the Mexican aristocracy as a ‘cleaner’ beverage than the stronger-smelling pulque, vino de mezcal de Tequila rose in popularity nationwide during and after Mexico’s independence in 1821. This was aided by the vacuum created in the absence of Spanish beverages, the nation’s booming infrastructure, and framing by politicians of it as an emblematic drink of the people. In particular, the regime of president Porfirio Díaz or the ‘Porfiriato’ from 1876 to 1911—during which the nation leaned into capitalist progress and began trading across borders—saw the production

of *vino de mezcal de Tequila* streamlined, particularly through the adoption of column-still distillation.^{13, 14} The spirit, which eventually came to be known as ‘tequila,’ got its first big international break



1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago, IL

12 *Ibid.* 15

13 Sarah Bowen, *Divided Spirits: Tequila, Mezcal, and the Politics of Production* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 34–35

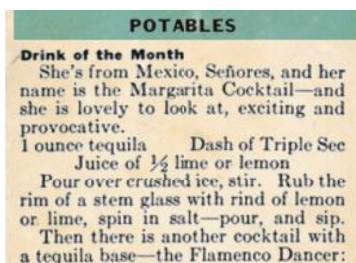
14 Gene Yeager, “Porfirian Commercial Propaganda: Mexico in the World Industrial Expositions” in *The Americas*, vol. 34, 2 (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 231

in 1893, when it was showcased at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Its newfound exposure only bolstered tequila's credibility as a national beverage of Mexico both in the US and beyond.¹⁵

Mexican Beverages Across Borders

The 1900s ushered in a period during which many Mexican beverages began receiving widespread recognition and respect, their initial popularity in America leading to international demand. In addition to coffee and beer, tequila and mezcal were appealing both to Americans looking to explore new beverages and Mexican immigrants looking to feel a stronger connection to home.¹⁶ Their popularity was only spurred on by the vacuum created in the USA thanks to Prohibition, booms in tourism to Mexico, and the development of cocktails such as the Margarita, all of which created demand and visibility for these distillates. Both tequila and mezcal would go on to receive their own Geographic Indications (GIs) that globally recognize them as distinctly Mexican beverages.

Tequila's GI in particular states that, for a product to be marketed as "tequila," it must be made from at least 51% Blue Weber agave sugars, grown in specific municipalities across



"Painting the Town." *Esquire*, Dec 1953, p. 76.

15 Valenzuela-Zapata & Nabhan, *Tequila*, 48

16 Gaytán, *¡Tequila!*, 38

five states in Mexico (including the entirety of the states of Jalisco). In 1994, the Consejo Regulador del Tequila (CRT) was established in Guadalajara, Jalisco, and took on the responsibilities of verifying compliance with established regulations to safeguard its purity and protect its specific Denomination of Origin (DO) & GI status.

NOTES ON MEXICAN BEVERAGES

Fermented Beverages

PULQUE

As mentioned previously, pulque was (and remains to this day) an indigenous Mexican beverage made from fermenting the *aguamiel* from fresh agave *piñas* or “hearts.” Most folklore states that pulque was first made by Nahua tribes who had ties to ritual drunkenness and associated pulque with deities that were strongly linked to worshipping the moon. This thick, sour beverage is thought to be one of the oldest

alcoholic beverages in North America and is considered an acquired taste. It is often lightly effervescent, possesses a bright, tangy flavor, and is easily available across the nation today.¹⁷



© Marco / Adobe Stock

17 Henry Bruman, *Alcohol in Ancient Mexico* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2002), 63

TEPACHE

This incredibly popular, street-side beverage is most commonly made by fermenting fruit peels (often pineapple rinds) with water and piloncillo sugar. Historically made with corn and sugarcane, tepache was frequently combined with pulque, both during pre-Colonial times and under Spanish rule at *pulquerías*. Fruit-based tepaches are much more common today, and can easily be made at home by fostering the right conditions for fermentation. Variations on this beverage differ by region and include versions unique to Jalisco, Colima, and Nayarit.

TEJUINO

Made from sprouted corn, tejuino is one of the most characteristic fermented beverages in the Sierra Madre Occidental area, and is especially popular in Jalisco. It is implied that tejuino fell out of favor due to pulque's popularity, and that the introduction of the still encouraged communities to use corn more as a source of food and nutrition.¹⁸ Today, tejuino is a widely consumed beverage, now made by lightly fermenting a masa dough with piloncillo, adding lime and sea salt, and serving it cold with fresh ice or a scoop of citrus-flavored *nieve de garrafa*, a traditional Mexican, water-based sorbet.

CERVEZA

Mexico is the fourth largest producer and largest exporter of *cerveza* or “beer” in the world, and the beverage is one of the nation’s more popular exported goods today. Mexican *cerveza* production

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 37–38

flourished in the 19th and 20th centuries, thanks to an influx of German immigrants that helped influence and improve production. The majority of styles of *cerveza* sold in Mexico are lighter lagers, pilsners, and Vienna-style beers, in addition to some darker and Munich-style beers, often served crisp and cold or in the guise of a *Michelada* (a globally-recognized beer-based cocktail).¹⁹

TUBA

This ancient beverage is the product of fermenting the sap of many species of palm trees, and was allegedly introduced to the states of Colima, Jalisco, and Michoacán by enslaved Filipino immigrants brought over by Spanish conquistadors in the 15th and 16th centuries. As a *vino de coco* of sorts, tuba was immensely popular once introduced to Mexican communities, and has endured the test of time. A non-alcoholic version known as *tuba fresca* (made from coconut water and sap) has also seen some recognition over the years.

Distilled Spirits

TEQUILA

Taking its name from the town in Jalisco that it originally hails from, tequila received the first internationally-recognized DO for a region outside of Europe in 1974. This specific type of *vino de mezcal* can only be made in specific municipalities across five states in Mexico

¹⁹ Mexperience, "The Story and Origins of Mexican Beer and Breweries," Mexperience, January 5, 2023, <https://www.mexperience.com/mexican-beers/>

and using Blue Weber agaves, and must contain a minimum of 51% of fermentable agave sugars. Today, tequila is available on the market in one of two recognized categories ('100% de agave' and 'mixto' tequila, made by combining other fermentable sugars) and across several distinct classes such as *blanco*, *reposado*, *añejo*, and *extra añejo*, based on the time it may spend maturing in oak.

MEZCAL

While all tequilas are technically *vinos de mezcales*, being made by distilling agaves, the word, the word 'mezcal' encapsulates a much broader category of all the *vinos de mezcales* that have been produced across the nation for several centuries.



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Its DO permits agave growth and mezcal production in nine states in Mexico²⁰, using as many as over thirty different species of agave. In popular culture, mezcal as a category of its own is distinguished from tequila by its artisanal production methods that often involve smoking the *piñas*; the resultant changes in flavor often carry over to the final distillates as well.²¹

20 K. Nathiely Ramírez-Guzmán et al, "Traditional Fermented Beverages in Mexico," in *Fermented Beverages, Volume 5: The Science of Beverages*, eds. Alexandru Grumezescu and Alina Maria Holban (Woodhead Publishing, 2019), 605–635

21 Emma Janzen, *Mezcal: The History, Craft & Cocktails of the World's Ultimate Artisanal Spirit* (Minneapolis, MN: Voyageur Press, 2017), 21–22

RAICILLA

An agave-based distillate also made predominantly in Jalisco, raicilla has often sat in the shadow of tequila. Unlike tequila, raicilla can be made from five different species of agave according to its DO, and offers a much wider range of flavors on the market as a result. Its DO also breaks all raicilla into smokier ‘coastal’ (Raicilla de la Costa) and more vegetal, ‘mountainous’ distillates (Raicilla de la Sierra); the former is allegedly one of the forebearers of *vinos de mezcales*, and was also purportedly made by enslaved Filipino immigrants brought to Mexico.²²

BACANORA

Bacanora is a northern distillate hailing from the state of Sonora and made from *Angustifolia* agave *piñas*, and protected by its own DO. This beverage started out as a type of pulque, made by the Opatas peoples living in the Sonoran desert in pre-Columbian times. Like raicilla, it too was banned from consumption in Mexico for a time. With incredibly similar production methods to mezcal, bacanora is reminiscent of an earthier style of tequila, and can express variation from producer to producer.²³

SOTOL

Unlike the other beverages mentioned above, sotol is not distilled from the agave plant. This earthy, mineral-driven distillate, also

22 Instituto de Información Estadística y Geográfica, “Raicilla, la bebida más artesanal de México,” *Strategos*, November 23, 2022, <https://iieg.gob.mx/strategos/raicilla-la-bebida-mas-artesanal-de-mexico/>

23 Mix & Carpenter, *Spirits of Latin America*, 68

protected by its own DO, can be made from one of sixteen species of the *Dasyllirion* genus of plants. Also known as the ‘desert spoon,’ the *piñas* of these plants are steamed or roasted before extracting their liquids, fermenting, and distilling them. The flavor of the liquid depends highly on where the *piñas* are sourced from, and can range from intensely herbaceous to quite musky.²⁴

And More!

The diaspora of Mexican beverages created and consumed across the nation spreads far beyond the spotlighted examples above. It encompasses even more fermented and distilled drinks, non-alcoholic beverages, and countless variations of all of the above, refracted by regional differences in available produce, techniques, traditions, and customs. Put together, all these drinks and the people that make them are what create the rich tapestry that is Mexican beverage culture, one truly like no other.

Above all else, this program aims to celebrate the resonance, diversity, and vibrancy of that culture, by digging deep into the nation’s roots, partnering with expert voices, and upholding unique, Mexican perspectives. Join us as we at Patrón dive into the world of ‘Mixología de México!’ 🍷

24 Emma Janzen, “Meet Sotol, Mexico’s Other Indigenous Spirit,” Imbibe, February 9, 2017, <https://imbibemagazine.com/sotol/>

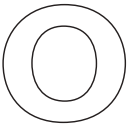


CHAPTER 02

ABOUT CHILES







f all the gifts Mexico has given the world, few are of such culinary importance as chiles. Although they are widely believed to be native to South America, it is in Mexico where they are most relevant in both culture and cuisine. Chile plants belong to the botanical family of *Solanaceae*, which also includes tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, and tobacco, among other nightshades. They vary greatly in shape and size; although some can grow up to thirty feet, the average height of most cultivated varieties is less than three feet. Botanically speaking, the fruit produced by chile plants are berries—although horticulturists consider them fruits²⁵—and can range from a quarter inch to almost seventeen inches in length.

ANATOMY OF A CHILE

Chiles come in many shapes: round, conical, elongated, or bell-shaped, ranging from smooth and glossy to ridged and wrinkled. Their colors are even more diverse, from white to pale yellow, shades of green or purple when unripe, and various shades of red, orange, brown, and yellow when ripened. The flavor of a chile is concentrated in its ‘pericarp’ or outer flesh, and is not related to its spiciness,

25 Dave DeWitt & Paul Bosland, *The Complete Chile Pepper Book: A Gardener’s Guide to Choosing, Growing, Preserving, and Cooking* (Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2021), 10

which resides in the ‘placenta,’ recognized as its inner white veins and membranes where its seeds reside.

A Study in Variety

There are five domesticated species of chiles,²⁶ and 90% of those consumed worldwide belong to the *Capsicum annuum* variety, which includes a large variety of sweeter bell peppers and mild-to-moderately hot chiles such as jalapeños and Anaheims. Most



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domesticated chile plants are self-pollinating, which means they don’t need another plant to produce fruit. Cross-pollination between various plants by insects, birds, etc. in the wild and in gardens helps produce new varieties.²⁷

There are nearly ninety types of fresh chiles in Mexico alone, and the number swells to a hundred and forty five when we add dried and smoked varieties. It is important to note that most (but not all) fresh chiles and their dried counterparts have different names and have entirely different flavors, aromas, and culinary uses.

26 Patricia Van Rhijn, *LA Cocina Del Chile* (Mexico City: Editorial Planeta Mexicana Sa De, 2003), 16

27 *Ibid.* 9

The Heat in Chiles

As chiles are very easily cross-pollinated, horticulturists and enthusiasts have created hundreds of varieties, each hotter than the last. The spiciness in chiles is derived from a combination of capsaicinoids and alkaloids produced in the placenta and in the veins; capsaicin is often recognized as a predominant capsaicinoid, and is responsible for approximately 60% of the spiciness produced in the average chile. Currently, the hottest chile in the world is the Carolina Reaper, developed by renowned American chile breeder Ed Currie, while the hottest Mexican chile is the habanero.

Several factors determine the spice level of a chile. As a general rule of thumb, smaller chiles like piquín are hotter than those with larger fruits, like poblanos or chilacas. Factors such as climate, water, and minerals in the soil also play a role. For example, a chile plant that experiences drought or extreme heat during its production cycle tends to produce spicier fruit than those cultivated under controlled conditions.

The heat intensity of a chile is measured using the Scoville scale. Based on his 'Scoville



"The game changer for me was while doing a culinary internship in Puebla. One of the line cooks in charge of the staff meals, Violeta, made us the simplest yet most delicious salsa: roasted habaneros with green tomatoes and garlic. It was spicy, sure, but at that moment, I understood that eating and working with chiles is not just about the spiciness, but also the flavor of the pulp and the techniques you can pick to express those flavors in the final dish or drink."

HABA FLORES, BARTENDER

Organoleptic Test,' the scale was invented in 1912 by American pharmacologist Wilbur Scoville through a process in which a chile sample is repeatedly diluted with water and provided for subjects to taste over and over until they no longer felt any heat. The level of dilution at which the test's participants could no longer taste heat in the sample was used as the basis for developing the SHU (Scoville Heat Unit).²⁸

Naturally, this level of measuring heat is purely subjective, dependent on each subject's tolerance to capsaicinoids. Today, the heat in chiles is determined using high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC), which recognizes and measures the principal capsaicinoids that contribute to spice, such as capsaicin and dihydro-capsaicin, and determines their concentration empirically.²⁹ 

28 "Chili Pepper Scoville Scale," Scoville Scale, <https://scovillescale.org/chili-pepper-scoville-scale/>

29 *Ibid.*



CHAPTER 03

CHILES IN MEXICO THEN



Historians today widely agree that the genus *Capsicum*—the umbrella under which all varieties of chiles fall—is firmly rooted in South America, likely stemming from the highlands of Bolivia before spreading into Peru and further north.³⁰ Wild precursors of chiles all shared fruits with common characteristics: they tended to be smaller, vividly hued, and easy to pluck from the plant. These qualities made them inherently attractive to birds; unfazed by the capsaicin, the seeds passed through their digestive tracts wholly intact and were dispersed across Mesoamerica naturally, long before the plants were ever carried across boundaries by humans.³¹

Evidence of chiles in the Mexican diet stems from around 6,500 BC, at which time chiles were almost certainly being foraged from the wild.³² Indigenous folk began selecting species with heavier, more “pendant” fruit, and over time these domesticated varieties became wholly reliant on human propagation and cultivation.³³ Chiles likely disseminated across present-day Mexico as the fruit (both fresh and dried) and its seeds exchanged hands across trade routes through

30 Coe, *America's First Cuisines*, 70

31 Dave DeWitt, *Chile Peppers: A Global History* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2020), 16–18

32 Jean Andrews, “The Peripatetic Chile Pepper: Diffusion of the Domesticated Capsicums Since Columbus,” in *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World*, ed. Nelson Foster & Linda Cordell (Phoenix, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 81–82

33 DeWitt, *Chile Peppers*, 20–21

hubs such as Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlan, eventually cementing themselves as a foundational pillar of flavor in Mexican cuisine.

In Pre-Colonial Civilizations

Prior to the arrival of conquistadors from the East, chiles were already embraced by three major Mesoamerican civilizations: the Incas, the Mayans, and the Aztecs, each of whom found value in the plant as a culinary boon worthy of reverence. In these civilizations, the chile acted as the primary spice for millenia, akin to the role played by black pepper in Old World countries at the time. Chiles served as a crucial accompaniment to central foods on a plate such as maize and cassava. Pre-Colonial folk harnessed and hybridized wild *chiltepinies*, creating a slew of “designer” chiles, each suited for individual communities and their niches.³⁴

In Incan foodways, chiles were a highly-favored fruit, recognized as the “uchu” and incorporated into all the dishes and sauces typical



34 Maricel Presilla, *Peppers of the Americas: The Remarkable Capsicums That Forever Changed Flavor* (New York, NY: Ten Speed Press, 2017), 61–63

of the cuisine, whether roasted or boiled. In addition to being prized above all other spices, chiles were also recognized by Incans for their strong medicinal properties, spotlighted in larger feasts, bartered as an item of tribute, used to inflict punishment and pain, and immortalized on Incan embroidery, pottery, and engravings in the form of a religious deity.³⁵ The oldest *molcajetes*—traditional Mexican tools used to grind down food, much like a mortar and pestle—were made of clay in around 500 BC, and are believed to have been used exclusively to mash down softer foods, including chiles, for sauce-making.³⁶

After spreading from Peru into Mexico, chiles became a staple of both Aztec and Mayan cookery, the forebears of modern-day Mexican cuisine. Chiles were considered a staple crop alongside beans, squashes, maize, and tomatoes, grown typically in raised, kitchen garden plots or *caanchés* alongside other prized crops like epazote and oregano.³⁷ For many tribes such as the Zapotecas, Huave, Chocho, Huichol, and Cora, the most ubiquitous dish was corn tortillas dipped in chiles “dissolved” in water.³⁸ Mayan cooking in particular is noted to be built on a backbone of chile ‘stocks,’ whereby the fruits are infused in water, a technique used for the humble preparation of beans

35 Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (New York, NY: Avon, 1971), 322.

36 Janet Long-Solis, *Capsicum y Cultura: La Historia del Chile* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1986)

37 Alfonso Villa Rojas, “The Maya of Yucatan,” *Handbook of Middle American Indians, Volumes 7 and 8: Ethnology*, ed. Robert Wauchope & Evon Vogt (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1969), 454–455

38 *Ibid.* 100–101

all the way to serving as the braising liquid for celebratory game fowl at feasts.³⁹

These flavor-enhancing fruits were equally relevant in ancient beverage-making. In particular, Aztec peoples were known for enjoying chiles in a beverage called *chicahuatl* made with cacao and water,⁴⁰ as well as in *chilote*, a liquor made with pulque, epazote and other herbs, and ancho chiles. Traces of chiles have also been found in spouted vases, pots, and jars from Mayan archaeological sites in the absence of cacao, suggesting that chiles may have been infused into other indigenous beverages such as pulque or *chicha*—a corn-based beer—for consumption.⁴¹

"We use chiles in everything, from table salsas and condiments all the way to more complex dishes like moles where there are layers and layers of flavor. I remember that if my mom didn't have time to make salsas for the table, she would just blister some serranos and serve them to my father with a little salt on the side."

CLAUDIA ALARCÓN, AUTHOR

Discovery & Dispersion

Arriving in Mexico in 1493, Christopher Columbus and his accompanying physicians were intrigued by the widespread use of chiles in local dishes. Ship records from the time detail the use of chiles to season and awaken flavors of all other parts of the native diet, likened often

39 Coe, *America's First Cuisines*, 173

40 José Pardo Tomás & María Luz López Terrada, "Las Primeras Noticias Sobre Plantas Americanas en las Relaciones de Viajes y Crónicas de Indias, 1493-1553," *Cuadernos de Historia de la Medicina y de la Ciencia*, 40 (1993), 165.

41 DeWitt, *Chile Peppers*, 28

to pepper.⁴² Such a novelty was this crop that it incited all sorts of conversation and opinions, from rapturous praise to outright disgust. It was noted as being ubiquitous and multifunctional in the culture; at open-air Aztec markets chiles were both sold—cooked in dishes and as raw or dried fruits—and used as a form of payment.⁴³

Botanists landing alongside Columbus at the time were eager to learn about the crop and how locals interacted with it. Chief among these was Dr. Diego Álvarez Chanca, who accompanied him on his second voyage in 1494 and made mention of chiles, a “spice called agí,” as a principal crop of the land.⁴⁴ Bernadino de Sahagún’s 16th century *Florentine Codex* dug even deeper, detailing recipes of chiles cooked with fish, in stews, and even a mole made “from avocados mixed with chile that burns a lot.”⁴⁵

The discovery of chiles and the eventual Spanish Conquest led not only to chiles finding their way even further north into Mexico, but more importantly, on ships headed back eastward. Their longevity and potency were ensured by the fruits being easy to load, transfer, and use in their dried form, and the recognition of chiles as the most prevalent spice in the New World only boosted their potential market value. From Europe, chiles began to spread across the rest of the

42 Jean Andrews. *The Pepper Trail History & Recipes From Around the World* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1999), 10

43 Bernadino de Sahagún, *The General History of the Things of New Spain; Florentine Codex* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research, 1963), 68

44 DeWitt, *Chile Peppers*, 33

45 Presilla, *Peppers of the Americas*, 53–54



globe along Spanish and the Portuguese trading routes from the Mediterranean all the way to the Far East.⁴⁶

Colonial Mexico & Beyond

It wasn't until the late 18th and early 19th centuries that chiles gained prominence in the United States, spurred on by the Mexican Revolution and an economic boom that made chiles more available and affordable, especially for the average Mexican family to purchase as a pantry staple.⁴⁷ However, in Mexico, chiles remained a staple crop through succeeding centuries, finding their way into countless dishes alongside crops introduced from the Old World. Chiles became so integral to the cuisine and culture, that a basic penance when fasting in South American and Mesoamerican societies was to deny oneself salt and chiles.⁴⁸ Several signature Aztec and Mayan dishes featuring chiles have lasted through the ages virtually unchanged, including 'fish chiles' and *chilmolli* (the forebears of ceviche and mole),⁴⁹ as well as in a variety of beverages. 🌶️

46 Andrews, "The Peripatetic Chile Pepper," 82–84

47 Anderson, *Chillies: A Global History*, 31–34

48 Coe, *America's First Cuisines*, 71–72

49 Heriberto García Rivas, *Cocina Prehispánica Mexicana: La Comida de Los Antiguos Mexicanos* (México: Panorama Editorial, 1991), 30–37



CHAPTER 04

CHILES IN MEXICO NOW





Today, Mexico maintains the highest average per capita consumption of chiles in the world; Mexicans eat around eight kilograms of fresh chiles and almost one kilogram of dry chiles per year.⁵⁰ Chiles are grown in almost the entire country since they easily adapt to different climates and altitudes. However, with the exception of select varieties, the plants are susceptible to cold weather, and are better suited for temperate climates. The most notable production of chiles is in Sinaloa, Chihuahua, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas, Nayarit, and Zacatecas.

CHILES IN MEXICAN FOOD

The diversity and richness of the dishes prepared with chiles in Mexico is impressive: from the typical moles of Puebla, Oaxaca, and Mexico City, to the refined sauces and marinades of the State of Mexico and the Yucatán. Although ingredients and preparations vary across the many diverse regions of the country, the widespread use of chiles characterizes and defines Mexican gastronomy.

Mexicans enjoy sprinkling salt and ground chile, such as *chile de árbol* or piquín, on fresh fruit as a snack. This preparation also frequently translates to street-vendors selling local and regional

50 Van Rhijn, *La Cocina del Chile*, 10

Antojitos such as tacos, quesadillas, huaraches, and other street food classics are nothing without a good salsa. In street stands and markets across the country, vendors offer various chile-based salsas, including pickled jalapeños en escabeche or thinly sliced habaneros with red onion and lime juice, aside from the ubiquitous red, green, and pico de gallo salsas. Some street food and salsa pairings are de rigueur, like salsa borracha for barbacoa tacos and green salsa cruda for carnitas.

CLAUDIA ALARCÓN, AUTHOR

produce and frozen treats such as *mangonadas* (frozen mango and shaved ice desserts) and popsicles.

Chiles are widely used in soups and stews such as *caldo tlalpeño*, *pozole*, and *mole de olla*. They are also featured in main dishes (often known as *guisados*) featuring meats and vegetables cooked in richly flavored, chile-infused sauces.

Salsas can be made from fresh or dried chiles in combination with other ingredients such as onions, garlic, tomatoes, other fruits, and even insects. They can be made from raw ingredients or by boiling or roasting the produce to change their flavor and texture.

Popular Mexican Dishes

TAMALES

The oldest known prepared food in Mesoamerica, tamales are steamed masa filled with various ingredients, which are often cooked in some form of chile sauce. Red tamales are usually prepared with dry chiles, while green tamales involve tomatillos and green chiles like serranos. Other popular varieties are *rajas con queso* (roasted

poblano strips and cheese) and *oaxaqueños*, filled with chicken cooked in a traditional Oaxacan mole.

ENCHILADAS

The simplest of preparations, ‘enchiladas’ literally translates as “the ones with chile.” In its most basic form, the dish consists of lightly fried corn tortillas dipped in a chile sauce, garnished with crumbled cheese and sliced onions. They can also be filled with meats or vegetables and baked in the oven with Mexican cheese melted all over.

TORTA AHOGADA

A signature preparation from Jalisco enjoyed frequently in Guadalajara, it’s said that the first *torta ahogada* was created entirely by accident (just like countless other classics) when a street vendor dropped an entire sandwich into a vat of chile sauce. The rest, as is often the case, was history. This iconic Mexican submarine sandwich is filled most commonly with pork carnitas and quite literally ‘drowned’ in a chile de árbol based sauce.

MOLE

Mexico’s most iconic group of sauces, moles are as varied and distinct as the people who make them. Their exact origins are still shrouded in mystery, but it is generally accepted that they first appeared in Central Mexican convents in colonial times. Moles vary greatly regionally; even within a specific region, no two are alike. Complex recipes like *mole poblano* and *mole oaxaqueño* can consist of up to

thirty ingredients, including various dried chiles, nuts, seeds, spices, and artisanal chocolate.

CHILE RELLENO

Chile can be stuffed with foods as varied as refried beans, cheese, meat, or vegetables and served as appetizers or main dishes. The most common are poblanos, which are roasted, peeled, seeded then filled to create the iconic *chile relleno* (literally meaning “stuffed chile”). Depending on the filling, these can be served chilled, at room temperature, or hot, and prepared in countless ways.

CHILE EN NOGADA

Chiles en nogada are a seasonal variation of the same, first made by nuns in Puebla to commemorate the arrival of the newly appointed Emperor of Mexico after independence from Spain was declared. Poblanos are filled with seasoned ground beef and pork, fresh and dried fruits, and nuts and then covered in a white sauce made from fresh walnuts and cream. The chiles are topped with fresh pomegranate seeds and chopped parsley to match the colors of the Mexican flag.

CHILES IN MEXICAN DRINKS

Of course, chiles have found their way into Mexico’s beverages too. Pre-Columbian cultures often consumed drinks from masa and cacao spiked with chiles. Some of these deliciously hearty *chileatoles* are



still consumed in certain parts of the country. Today, chiles also have a prominent spot behind the bar in various cocktails.

Popular Mexican Drinks

SANGRITA

This traditional tequila chaser is believed to have been created in Chapala, Jalisco, in the 1940's by Sr. Edmundo Sánchez and his wife, Guadalupe. They ran a restaurant serving Sr. Sánchez's homemade, rustic, high-proof tequila, where Sra. Sánchez was inspired to serve orange slices sprinkled with salt and ground chile to mitigate the

alcoholic burn. Eventually, she squeezed the juice and seasoned it with salt and chile to serve alongside the tequila, and the rest, as they say, is history. There are many variations on the recipe—to-mato juice, grenadine, fresh orange and lime juices, and spices are all key players—but all recipes always include some form of chile.

BANDERA

Bandera, which translates to 'flag' in Spanish, goes one up on the idea of the Sangrita

Most commonly, I have seen chiles pulled into modern drinks by being infused in spirits or liqueurs. I first started out by making spiced Margaritas with habanero or serrano-infused triple sec. Now, being involved in more competitive bartending, Mexican bartenders are using chiles in more creative applications: garnishing drinks with roasted mild chiles (Anaheims or bell peppers), making custom rims with habanero ashes or dehydrated jalapeños, or even making our own 'bloody' mixes with different spices. My personal favorite recipe is one for morita chile and raspberry syrup—a winner!

HABA FLORES, BARTENDER



‘chaser’ by serving it lined up with a *caballito* shot’s worth of tequila and the juice of one lime to complete the colors of the Mexican flag. The three are intended to be sipped separately in the same order as they appear in the flag: the ‘green’ lime juice first, followed by the ‘white’ tequila, and finishing with the ‘red’ sangrita.

VAMPIRO

The Vampiro also uses the sweet and tangy Sangrita as a principal ingredient. Unsurprisingly, its origin also seems to go back to Jalisco, specifically the small town of San Luis Soyatlán, south of Lake Chapala. The story goes that a roadside fruit vendor, Oscar Hernández, started mixing local tequila with his homemade Sangrita, adding fresh lime juice, ice, and a good dose of Squirt (Mexico’s favorite grapefruit soda) to keep him cool on blistering hot days. As inquisitive customers started posing questions, he eventually began selling Vampiros in plastic bags with a straw, a common practice to this day. Today, they are often served as highballs in salt- and

chile-rimmed glasses, representing Mexicans' love for the combination of sweet, salty, spicy, and sour flavors.

MICHELADA

The Michelada is a beer-based addition to the canon of classic Mexican drinks that's more of a family in its own right today, with numerous variations enjoyed across the nation. While this drink is subject to endless innovating depending on its creator, chiles, beer, lime juice, and a salt- or chile-rim are frequently regarded as mainstays in many recipes. From here, bartenders and street vendors freely riff on the formula by seasoning the drink with a slew of ingredients—from umami condiments such as Maggi and soy sauce to tomato juice, chamoy, Clamato, and more—and garnishing it even more creatively.

BLOODY MARÍA

Given Mexico's love for spicy and savory drinks, it is not surprising that tequila would find its way to replace vodka in the Bloody Mary! 🍷



CHAPTER 05

WORKING WITH CHILES



With hundreds of varieties to choose from, chiles play many roles in Mexican cuisine and are a source of joy and comfort. Sometimes, they shine bright as the star of the show and other times they are in a supporting role acting as the backbone that holds a dish together. No matter how they show up, for many, they are bound to memories and traditions. Chiles, family, and food are so intrinsically linked in Mexican culture, it is not surprising that natives learn how to work with chiles at a young age with techniques passed down over generations.

Fresh vs. Dried Chiles

Both fresh and dried chiles are essential in a Mexican pantry, and the consumption of chiles is typically quite evenly split between the two.⁵¹ The process of drying allows for a significantly longer shelf life and also encourages a noteworthy change in a chile's flavor. While all chiles can be dried, most chiles selected for drying are fully ripened, red chiles as opposed to green chiles, which are more commonly picked and sold fresh. It's important to note that many chiles (but not all) have different names for their fresh and dried forms, depending on the choices made by farmers and producers during the drying process.

51 DeWitt, *Chile Peppers*, 88

Generally speaking, dried chiles are made in one of three ways, depending on the local humidity levels and climate, desired flavor outcomes, and other variables. In drier, more arid climates, chiles are often sun-dried in shaded areas for several weeks, often covered with cheesecloth to ward off pests and pulled in at night to prevent condensation; this method is the most primitive of the three. Alternatively, chiles can be dried via artificial heat to encourage dehydration in damper climates, or they can be smoked over traditional fire pits to develop a richer, smokier flavor.⁵²

How to Handle Chiles

Chiles contain varying levels of spice, making it necessary to take preventative measures to handle them safely. Knowing the best way to handle chiles can save time and prevent individuals from putting themselves in a potentially uncomfortable situation.

When working with fresh chiles, it is crucial to avoid direct contact with chiles as their natural oils can linger, causing skin irritation that can possibly last up to a few days. When prepping, always wear disposable gloves and avoid contact with any part of the face, especially the eyes! The oils from chiles can quickly transfer between surfaces, utensils, and even foods, so it's important to avoid handling or roasting chiles between other tasks and essential to clean as you go to minimize cross-contamination. Finally, to control the heat level of chiles, remove

52 Jean Andrews, *Peppers: The Domesticated Capsicums* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995), 138–139



the stems, seeds, and inner veins. To do this, be sure to slice off the white capsaicin glands to alleviate some of the heat.

How to Assess Quality

For many people in Mexico, checking the quality of chiles is something learned at a young age from family members who taught them to assess produce by touch and smell.

When assessing fresh chilies for quality, first check for signs of discoloration and soft spots: avoid fruits with these features! Also check for cracks and breakage in chiles, which will eventually cause them to dry out or spoil. Key information also lies in the stems of fresh chilies, where mold can often develop. Fresh chiles should be stored at room temperature and laid out flat (as opposed to being stacked atop one another) to allow for ample air circulation. When keeping chiles in the refrigerator, line the container with a towel and leave its lid ajar.

When assessing dried chiles for quality, don't let the word "dried" fool you. These chiles should never be *completely* devoid of moisture. Look for ones that have a similar feel and texture to dried fruits, a raisin, for example. If the dried chiles are cracking or brittle when bent, they have been on the shelves for a little too long and aren't at their optimal freshness. Make sure

to also note their color and smell as, despite being dried, these chiles should still be fragrant and vibrant. Dry chiles should be stored at room temperature in a cool, dry place with no sunlight in an airtight container. If stored in a humid climate, add a couple of food-grade silica packets to help extend their shelf life.



"There is no winner between fresh or dried. Definitely the fresh ones have a very vibrant mix of flavours, that lean more into the white spirits, and aperitif vibe while the dried ones call you more into food pairing mood, thicker textures, fortified and standard wines. Once again, this is an immediate way to think through it, but definitely go crazy and put Anaheim in your mulled wine and make an amazing New York Sour."

HABA FLORES, BARTENDER

FRESH APPLICATIONS

Fresh chiles are used primarily in warmer months, when they are in season, and are sparkling, light, seasonal, colorful, and most importantly, youthful when they are in their prime. They are extremely versatile and can be eaten in many ways, raw or cooked: opt for raw over cooked when looking to introduce a brightness and texture to

drinks and food without a dominating flavor profile. Compared to dried chiles, the heat encountered working with fresh chiles is more immediate and upfront rather than a slower burn. Cooking chiles will decrease the capsaicin levels slightly and introduce new flavors.

Fresh chiles are not specific to savory meals and pair well with sweet ingredients such as fruits. Many will often see chiles paired with tropical fruits such as mangos and pineapples in salsas, chutneys, and cocktails. Those looking to incorporate fresh chiles into their dishes should take a trip to your local farmers market and explore the options. Since all chiles have a unique profile, it is essential to try them on their own to better understand the flavors and heat levels associated with a particular chile. This allows people to find their favorites and create original flavor combinations.

Using a Molcajete

A molcajete is a tool used in Mexican cooking, dating back hundreds of years. A molcajete is a version of a mortar and pestle, traditionally made from volcanic rock, and is integral for making dishes such as salsa and guacamole. Although it does take a little more physical effort and some technique, the final results are worth it.

Using a molcajete grinds the ingredients. The grinding motion allows you to extract all of the flavors and natural oils from the ingredients, creating dishes with more depth than chopping or using a blender. Using a molcajete also gives individuals more control over the final product's consistency.



Pickling in Brine

Pickling fresh chiles is a popular preservation method used to extend the shelf life of chiles and provides alternative ways to use them in traditional dishes. This is a great option when looking to preserve fresh chiles for use in cooler months when they are not readily available, allowing color and heat retention in chiles for use year-round.

The pickling process involves adding sliced fresh chiles to a brine, traditionally made using vinegar, water, and salt—many people add additional spices and ingredients to influence the final flavor profile.

“Some of my earliest food memories revolve around my grandmother roasting poblanos in September to make chiles en nogada for Mexican Independence Day, or my entire family coughing, except for her, when she makes chile de árbol base for posole rojo (this still happens every time).”

ANA CASTRO, CHEF

Fresh chiles are pickled in jars through various methods, including simply by refrigerating the liquid and chile mixture for one to two days before eating.

Roasting & Puréeing

Roasting chiles imparts a richer, smokey, and more intense flavor. Roasted chiles are found in countless popular

Mexican dishes, such as *chiles en nogada*, which features roasted poblanos and is served to celebrate Mexican Independence Day. Roasted chiles can be pureed using a food processor or blender to create smooth salsa for traditional dishes.



© Marcos / Adobe Stock

A few different methods can be used to roast chiles at home. Many simply roast them in the oven, placing them on an oiled sheet pan and baking until the skins are blackened. Many also use the oven to broil peppers, which often produces quicker results than baking, and the heat and time spent in the oven varies based on the size of the chiles.

Finally, grilling peppers over an open flame is an excellent method for creating deep, smoky flavor in chiles. Once cooked, it is common practice to place the freshly roasted peppers in a bowl or a sealed plastic bag to steam until cool, which allows the tougher, more fibrous skins to be easily peeled and discarded.

DRIED APPLICATIONS

Dried chiles are complex and can be used year-round to impart toasted, stewed, rich, and dark layers in drinks and foods. When people often think of chiles, they immediately think of “spice” and “heat,” but dried chiles are so complex, offering more than simply heat to dishes. Compared to fresh chiles, which are bright and vibrant, the drying process brings out new and often surprising flavors such

as umami, chocolate, and smoke, just to name a few. Dried chiles are often the star in many Mexican dishes, such as pozole and a wide variety of moles offering depth. Also, in Mexican cuisine, It is not shocking to see multiple dried chiles in one dish to create a medley of flavors that work well together.

Similarly to fresh chiles, dried chiles are not specific to savory meals and work well with sweets. Unlike fresh chiles, which often complement fresh fruit, dried chiles pair wonderfully with chocolate. Those looking to incorporate fresh chiles into their dishes don't be afraid to explore local Mexican vendors and spice shops.

Infusing in Tinctures

Using dried chiles to make tinctures is a great way to incorporate the flavor and spice of chiles into a drink with as little as one to two dashes. To create tinctures, take the desired chile, split them open—remove the seeds for more control of the spice level—and steep them in high-proof neutral grain spirit to extract its flavors.

Keep the infusion sealed and in a cool, dry place for two weeks, occasionally shaking it to integrate. Then strain the tincture through a coffee filter and transfer it into a small dasher bottle. Or, use an atomizer to add aromatic elements by spraying small amounts on top of a cocktail.



Powdering for Spice Blends

Chile powders are a powerful tool that can take any dish or drink to the next level. Making chile powder at home allows the opportunity to adjust the heat level to suit a specific palate. If looking to create a powder at home, invest in a home spice or coffee grinder, although using the more traditional molcajete to hand-grind chiles works great as well. Start by lightly toasting the chiles to bring out the natural flavors and allow them to cool before grinding. Another fun tip is to save dried chiles seeds to use as chile flakes on popular dishes.

It is important to note, making chile powders at home is not the only way to guarantee freshness and quality. With so many amazing spice vendors (and local Mexican markets, of course), it is easy to find excellent chile powders in stores and online. Take some time to explore and make sure to buy from trusted vendors and brands. Purchasing chile powders also allows for the opportunity to explore different flavor profiles before making house blends. 🌱



CHAPTER 06

CHILES: A CLOSER LOOK





Today there are over a hundred Mexican species of chiles and even more ways to prepare them, appearing in beverages, sauces, marinades, accompaniments, and even desserts and popular candies. It is important to note that not all chiles are interchangeable; in fact, each brings a distinct flavor profile and spice level to the table, making each suited for specific utilizations and preparations.

The list of chiles that are important to Mexican beverage culture is endless, especially if you factor in regional differences and preferences, common uses, and methods of preparation. That acknowledged, below is an overview of chiles that are distinctly notable in their fresh and dried forms, and are frequently encountered in Mexican drinks and food.

POBLANO

SCOVILLE UNITS 500 – 1,500 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Silver

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Pomegranate / Walnut / Queso Fresco

For someone looking to begin their journey with chiles, the poblano is one of the best places to start. These are recognized by their mild flavor and deep, bottle-green hue (they are most often plucked before fully

I think poblanos in cocktails work especially well with anything creamy or oil-based with poblano, especially thinking of and inspired by my memories of enjoying chiles en nogada. Coconut, crème fraîche, whipped cream, cream liqueurs, nuts, orgeat, and various dairy and non-dairy milks can all provide interesting touchpoints when mixed with poblanos, complimenting the chile's rich texture and crisp, bright flavor. Think about rounding out these pairings with some blanco tequila and a hit of something fresh or acidic for balance, like the parsley and pomegranate over a classic chile en nogada; the nuns knew what they were doing!

HABA FLORES, BARTENDER

ripening), and a shape like a longer, skinnier bell pepper. The name 'poblano' comes from the Mexican state of Puebla and translates to "pepper from Puebla." It is important to note that in some areas of southern California, poblanos are called 'pasillas,' which in Mexico are an entirely different variety.⁵³ These chiles are akin to bell peppers even in flavor, offering sweetness and warmth to drinks and best utilized by fire-roasting them, peeling their skins, and blending them to make rich, flavorful syrups.

53 David Floyd, *101 Chillies to Try Before You Die* (New York, NY: Cassell Illustrated, 2016), 40





ANAHEIM

SCOVILLE UNITS 500 – 1,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Silver

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Chervil / Dill / Coconut

Arguably one of the mildest, most approachable chile peppers, Anaheims are also commonly called New Mexican chiles. These are distinguished by their tapered shape, glossy skin, and pale green coloration, and are much more commonly enjoyed fresh than dried. Mellow, unfussy, and endlessly versatile in food, these chiles are full of clean, grassy flavors, reminiscent of green apples and fresh *fines herbes*. Anaheims are frequently eaten raw, enjoyed for their sweetness and distinctly aromatic profile.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Presilla, *Peppers of the Americas*, 113

MIRASOL

SCOVILLE UNITS 2,500 – 5,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Reposado

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Orange / Tuna (Prickly Pear) / Marigold

‘Mirasol’ translates to “looking at the sun,” as the fruits of this pre-Colombian species are often found growing pointed upwards. This chile is one of the hottest that is easily consumed raw, packing a stinging punch on the palate. Mirasols are often allowed to ripen fully until vividly scarlet on the plant before being plucked and enjoyed fresh. The chile is often described as *travieso* or *trompa*, referring to its spice and trunk-like shape respectively. It serves as a workhorse chile in food-based applications, and is an excellent choice for muddling and infusing in cocktails. It can even be sliced raw, de-seeded, and used simply as a garnish for a beverage to pack in some more heat.





JALAPEÑO

SCOVILLE UNITS 2,500 – 10,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Silver

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Avocado / Cilantro / Kiwi

Easily the most recognizable chile of all, the jalapeño that most are accustomed to seeing is often medium in size and available in its green, unripe state. In Mexico, a sign of quality jalapeños are small, brown lines on the skin, called “corking.”⁵⁵ The name stems from Jalapa, the capital of Veracruz, but in much of Mexico the fresh chile is referred to as *cuaresmeño*, while only the pickled version of chiles are called ‘jalapeños.’⁵⁶ Thanks to its gentle heat, widespread availability, and inherent grassiness, jalapeños are used in numerous fresh, fried, and pickled ‘*en escabeche*’ style applications in food, and can be used quite similarly to mirasols in beverages. Like poblanos, they can also be fire-roasted and peeled (or even blackened *tatemar*-style) to deepen their flavor.

⁵⁵ Floyd, *101 Chillies*, 77

⁵⁶ Andrews, *Peppers*, 108

SERRANO

SCOVILLE UNITS 10,000 – 30,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Silver

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Cilantro / Grapefruit / Watermelon

While not quite as prominent as the jalapeño, the serrano has made a name in Mexican cuisine in its own right. Serranos, the name meaning “from the sierras,” are much smaller than the average jalapeño, and can be traced back to the Sierra mountains of Mexico.⁵⁷ Like jalapeños, serranos are also known for their bullet shape, but have significantly thinner skins, and pack a much more fiery punch. These chiles are mostly consumed fresh and boast pungency and a clean, sharp profile.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 118





CHILTEPÍN

SCOVILLE UNITS 60,000 – 85,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Reposado

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Piloncillo / Vinegar / Green Apple

The chiltepín has a long, rich history in Mesoamerican foodways. Also known as the ‘*chiltecpín*,’ the tiny, scarlet fruit is seldom longer than a quarter inch and has a distinct smoky, earthy flavor. Enjoyed both fresh and dried, fresh chiltepins in particular are used to season a wide variety of Mexican dishes, working well in sauces, pickled with vinegar, or seasoning meats. Its spice levels are notably high compared to other household chiles, but the chile itself is described as *arrobatado*, which means its extreme heat dissipates rapidly.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Andrews, *Peppers*, 119

HABANERO

SCOVILLE UNITS 100,000 – 300,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Añejo

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Guava / Milk Candy / Sour Lime

If you want to talk about heat, there is no avoiding the habanero. Their lack of a Mayan name has led to the belief that they originated elsewhere and came to Mexico through Cuba, since ‘habanero’ stands for “from Havana.”⁵⁹ For some perspective, even the mildest habanero is about forty times hotter than the mildest jalapeño. They are often enjoyed fresh and are known for their tropical, sweeter flavor profiles, a quality that finds them paired frequently with fruits.

59 Presilla, *Peppers of the Americas*, 163





ANCHO • DRIED POBLANO

SCOVILLE UNITS 500 – 1,500 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Añejo

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Vanilla / Cacao Nib / Mexican Oregano

Ancho—a dried poblano—is a popular staple in Mexican cuisine, making up one-fifth of all chiles consumed in Mexico today.⁶⁰ When dehydrated, the fresh poblano darkens into a rich, rust-brown color, and produces a more pronounced sweetness and fruit-forward flavor notes, akin to pomegranate and raisin. For these attributes, they are known as being one of the key ingredients in many types of mole (See ‘Chiles in Mexico Today’ for more).⁶¹ Anchos are constantly produced in Mexico to meet demand, and are excellent in syrups, cordials, and shrubs for drinks, thanks to their richness and sheer bulk.

⁶⁰ Andrews, *Peppers*, 95

⁶¹ DeWitt, *Chile Peppers*, 102

PASILLA • DRIED CHILACA

SCOVILLE UNITS 500 – 2,500 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Reposado

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Hibiscus / Cucumber / Plum

The word ‘pasilla’ translates to “little raisin,” referring to its darker appearance and flavor notes; true pasillas are also called *chiles negro* or simply *pasas* in Guatemala. Recognized as a chilaca in its fresh form, this chile is almost exclusively dried, a process that turns the chile from a deep olive green to a dark mahogany brown with an almost violet tinge. Noticeably darker than anchos and with stronger notes of red fruit and wine, pasillas appear most frequently in tandem with anchos in recipes, and are crucial in *chalupas de chile pasilla*.⁶²

⁶² Andrews, *Peppers*, 111



GUAJILLO • DRIED MIRASOL

SCOVILLE UNITS 2,500 – 5,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Reposado

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Blackberry / Tomatillo / Violet

Made by drying larger, longer mirasols, guajillos are easy to distinguish by their satiny skin and deep reddish tint. They appear to most closely relate to what Nahuatl-speaking Mesoamerican peoples referred to as the *chile chilcoztli* from pre-Colonial times.⁶³ Unlike anchos and other popular dried chiles, they contribute considerably milder flavors when used in drink-making and food, with a tendency to impart a pleasant yellow hue when rehydrated. Their vibrancy and delicacy makes guajillos a great choice when making chile-based infusions, particularly in base spirits, bitters, or even tinctures to extract more of their shades.

Along with pasillas, guajillos aren't incredibly spicy but are incredibly fruit-forward and add an insane amount of color and flavor to any beverage or dish you fold them into. I personally love eating these chiles with seafood, especially if they're fried up and served alongside brighter dishes. In drinks, guajillos are excellent when matched with tropical fruits and berries that highlight this inherent fruitiness in them—I'm thinking of blackberries, watermelons, papayas, and prickly pears, just to name a few—or when used to accentuate richer beverages like aged tequilas and fortified wines that pull out more of their smokiness and confectionary, wine-like notes.

CLAUDIA ALARCÓN, AUTHOR

⁶³ *Ibid.* 110





CASCABEL • DRIED BOLA

SCOVILLE UNITS 1,500 – 3,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Reposado

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Pineapple / Almond / Tamarind

The small, incredibly pungent cascabel is named after the jingling sound its rattling seeds make once the peppers are dried. Derived from the aforementioned mirasol chile, it is known as a bola in its fresh form—referring to its globe-like shape. Cascabels, like pasillas, are also encountered much more frequently dried than fresh. These chiles bring a rich, nutty profile with a wisp of smoke when blended into recipes.

MORITA • DRIED JALAPEÑO

SCOVILLE UNITS 2,500 – 10,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Añejo

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Tamarind / Raspberry / Honey

While the unripe, fresh jalapeño is famous in its own right, it is also quite common to allow this fruit to ripen fully and dry it via smoking. This process produces several forms of ‘chipotle’ chiles, notable of which is the morita (also recognized as the ‘chipotle morita’). Unlike more extensively-smoked variants of larger jalapeños, moritas are made from the smaller fruits, and develop delicate flavors reminiscent of raspberries, cherries, and blueberries, thanks to a shorter time spent being dried.⁶⁴ This also allows them to preserve some of their softness, making them excellent in candied applications and syrups where their flavor notes can shine.

64 Floyd, *101 Chillies*, 99





CHIPOTLE • DRIED JALAPEÑO

SCOVILLE UNITS	2,500 – 10,000 SHU
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TEQUILA PAIRING	Patrón Reposado
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FLAVOR PAIRINGS	Cinnamon / Cactus / Chocolate
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The version of the chipotle more familiarly known is referred to as the ‘chipotle *meco*,’ which is made by smoking and dehydrating larger, fully-ripened jalapeños for longer than chipotle moritas. The additional time spent being smoked and dried allows chipotles to take on robust flavors of ash, firewood, tobacco, and chocolate. Their richness grants them a different role in Mexican cuisine than jalapeños or moritas—often paired with other smoked ingredients and in particularly savory applications.

CHILE DE ÁRBOL

SCOVILLE UNITS 15,000 – 30,000 SHU

TEQUILA PAIRING Patrón Silver

FLAVOR PAIRINGS Corn / Jicama / Tomato

While beautiful, the *chile de árbol* is not for the faint of heart. *Chile de árbol* translates directly to “tree chile,” but these chiles are also referred to as ‘rat’s tail chiles’ and ‘bird’s beak chiles.’⁶⁵ About five times hotter than the average jalapeño, they offer a slightly nutty flavor and a sharp, clean heat. While it is not impossible, finding fresh *chiles de árbol* is rare, even in Mexican markets, as they are often grown to be dried and consumed (and retain their scarlet vibrancy even through the process). 🌶️

65 *Ibid.* 121







CHAPTER 07

CHILES IN COCKTAILS





FLOR DE LA SIERRA

RECIPE BY **BEN ZAPIÉN**
RAINES LAW ROOM • NEW YORK CITY



INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 oz. [45 mL] Patrón Reposado
- 1 oz. [30 mL] licor de elote
- 0.75 oz. [22.5 mL] fresh lime juice
- 0.25 oz. [7.5 mL] falernum syrup
(see pg. 110)
- 2 dashes celery bitters
- 5 ea. serrano slices
- Kosher salt and pepper

METHOD

- 01. Rim a rocks glass with a mix of one part pepper to three parts Kosher salt.
- 02. Muddle serrano slices and falernum syrup gently in a cocktail shaker.
- 03. Combine the remaining ingredients and fill with ice.
- 04. Shake vigorously for 10–15 seconds to dilute and chill.
- 05. Strain into the rocks glass and fill with ice.
- 06. Garnish with a lime wheel.



VAMPIRITO

RECIPE BY **PEPE GUTI**
PATRÓN AMBASSADOR • LATIN AMERICA



INGREDIENTS

1.5 oz. [45 mL] Patrón Reposado

3 oz. [90 mL] Sangrita tradicional
(see pg. 121)

1.5 oz. [45 mL] grapefruit soda

Kosher salt and pepper

METHOD

01. Rim a highball glass with a mix of equal parts pepper and Kosher salt.
02. Build all ingredients in the highball glass and fill with ice.
03. Top with grapefruit soda and stir gently to combine.
04. Garnish with a jalapeño and a tomato wedge.



PARA EMPEZAR

RECIPE BY **ROBERTO NÚÑEZ MORENO**
PATRÓN NATIONAL AMBASSADOR • USA



INGREDIENTS

2 oz. [60 mL] Patrón Reposado

1.5 oz. [45 mL] carrot juice

1.5 oz. [45 mL] fresh orange juice

0.75 oz. [22.5 mL]
fresno oleo-saccharum
(see pg. 111)

0.25 tsp. citric acid

METHOD

01. Combine all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker and fill with ice.
02. Shake vigorously for 10–15 seconds to dilute and chill.
03. Strain into a rocks glass over a king cube.
04. Garnish with a carrot curl and fresh orange zest.

UNCLE FRANCISCO

RECIPE BY **HABA FLORES**
LEAN THE BAR • GUADALAJARA



INGREDIENTS

1.75 oz. [52.5 mL] Patrón Reposado

0.5 oz. [15 mL]
fermented chile and honey cordial
(see pg. 111)

0.5 oz. [15 mL] fino sherry

1 tbsp. citric solution
(see pg. 109)

METHOD

01. Combine all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker and fill with ice
02. Top with a Hawthorne strainer and throw 3–4 times to chill and aerate.
03. Strain into a chilled coupe.





TEQUILA
100% DE AGAVE

AÑEJO
PATRÓN.

MADE IN MEXICO 40%
ALCOHOL BY VOLUME (80 PROOF)

LUPITA

RECIPE BY **ELI MARTÍNEZ**
TLECÁN MEZCAL • CDMX



INGREDIENTS

1 oz. [30 mL] Patrón Añejo

1 oz. [30 mL] ancho-infused Campari
(see pg. 105)

1 oz. [30 mL] sweet vermouth

0.5 oz. [15 mL] ancho shrub
(see pg. 106)

METHOD

01. Combine ingredients in a mixing glass and stir with ice to chill.
02. Strain into a rocks glass over a king cube.
03. Garnish with an orange twist.

SAN MIGUELITO

RECIPE BY **CARLOS PINTOR**
BACARDI AMBASSADOR • RIVIERA MAYA



INGREDIENTS

1.5 oz. [45 mL] Patrón Silver

1 oz. [30 mL]
Anaheim and agave syrup
(see pg. 105)

1 oz. [30 mL] cucumber juice

0.66 oz. [20 mL] fresh lime juice

0.5 oz. [15 mL] blanc vermouth

1.5 oz [45 mL] tonic water

METHOD

01. Build all ingredients in a highball glass and fill with ice.
02. Top with tonic water and stir gently to combine.
03. Garnish with an Anaheim.







RENDÓN Y ROVIRA

RECIPE BY **HABA FLORES**
LEAN THE BAR • GUADALAJARA



INGREDIENTS

1.5 oz. [45 mL] Patrón Reposado

0.75 oz. [22.5 mL] coconut syrup
(see pg. 109)

0.75 oz. [22.5 mL] aquafaba

0.5 oz. [15 mL] fresh lime juice

0.5 oz. [15 mL]
pasilla-infused red wine
(see pg. 119)

METHOD

01. Combine all the ingredients except the wine in a cocktail shaker and fill with ice.
02. Shake vigorously for 10–15 seconds to dilute and chill.
03. Strain into a rocks glass filled with ice.
04. Gently float the wine over the drink using the back of a barspoon.
05. Garnish with a strip of pasilla.



SE DICE Y NO PASA NADA

RECIPE BY **KAREN BARRADAS**
EL GOBERNADOR • PLAYA DEL CARMEN



INGREDIENTS

1.5 oz. [45 mL] Patrón Silver

1.5 oz. [45 mL]
jalapeño and pineapple marmalade
(see pg. 116)

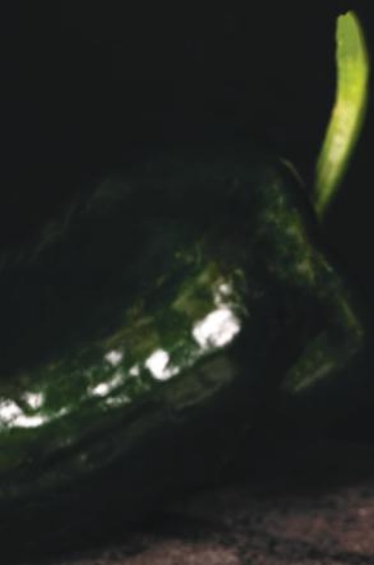
1 oz. [30 mL] fresh lemon juice

1 ea. egg white

Black mint salt
(see pg. 108)

METHOD

01. Rim a rocks glass with the black mint salt.
02. Combine all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker.
03. Shake without ice for 10–15 seconds to combine.
04. Add ice and shake vigorously for 30–45 seconds to dilute and chill.
05. Strain into the rimmed rocks glass and fill with ice.
06. Garnish with a dehydrated pineapple wheel.



TEQUILA EN NOGADA

RECIPE BY **ÓSKAR MURILLO**
LA CASONA PATRÓN • ATOTONILCO EL ALTO



INGREDIENTS

1.5 oz. [45 mL] Patrón Silver

0.75 oz. [22.5 mL]
poblano and honey syrup
(see pg. 120)

0.5 oz. [15 mL] fresh lemon juice

0.5 oz. [15 mL] pomegranate juice

0.25 oz. [7.5 mL] ancho chile liqueur

1 ea. egg white

METHOD

01. Combine all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker.
02. Shake without ice for 10–15 seconds to combine.
03. Add ice and shake vigorously for 30–45 seconds to dilute and chill.
04. Strain into a chilled coupe glass.
05. Garnish with pomegranate seeds.



GÜERITA

RECIPE BY **HABA FLORES**
LEAN THE BAR • GUADALAJARA



INGREDIENTS

1.5 oz. [45 mL] Patrón Silver
1.5 oz. [45 mL]
banana pepper and apple syrup
(see pg. 107)
1 tbsp. elderflower liqueur
3 oz. [90 mL] sparkling water

METHOD

01. Build all ingredients in a highball glass and fill with ice.
02. Top with sparkling water and stir gently to combine.
03. Garnish with a dehydrated apple chip.



SIMUERO

RECIPE BY **ISAAC GARCÍA**
COSME • NEW YORK CITY



INGREDIENTS

1.75 oz. [52.5 mL] Patrón Reposado

0.5 oz. [15 mL] peach liqueur

0.25 oz. [7.5 mL]
guajillo and carrot-infused vermouth
(see pg. 112)

0.25 oz. [7.5 mL] guajillo-infused soju
(see pg. 113)

1 dash guajillo and carrot bitters
(see pg. 112)

METHOD

01. Combine ingredients in a mixing glass and stir with ice to chill.
02. Strain into a chilled coupe glass.
03. Garnish with three drops of carrot oil.



RAÍCES DEL DESIERTO

RECIPE BY **JESÚS ARCEO**
BRUNA • GUADALAJARA



INGREDIENTS

1.5 oz. [45 mL] Patrón Silver
3 oz. [90 mL]
dragonfruit and prickly pear syrup
(see pg. 110)
0.5 oz. jalapeño and mezcal syrup
(see pg. 115)
1 ea. basil leaf
Jalapeño black salt
(see pg. 114)

METHOD

01. Rim a rocks glass with the jalapeño black salt.
02. Muddle basil and mezcal syrup gently in a cocktail shaker.
03. Combine the remaining ingredients and fill with ice.
04. Shake vigorously for 10–15 seconds to dilute and chill.
05. Strain into the rimmed rocks glass over a king cube.
06. Garnish with a dragonfruit sphere.



MORENA MIA

RECIPE BY **HABA FLORES**
LEAN THE BAR • GUADALAJARA



INGREDIENTS

1.75 oz. [52.5 mL] Patrón Reposado

1 oz. [30 mL] Averna

2 bsp. morita and raspberry jam
(see pg. 117)

0.5 oz. [15 mL] fresh lemon juice

Himalayan pink salt

METHOD

01. Rim a rocks glass with Himalayan pink salt.
02. Combine all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker and fill with ice.
03. Shake vigorously for 10–15 seconds to dilute and chill.
04. Strain into the rocks glass and fill with ice.



MEXICAN SAZERAC

RECIPE BY **ÓSCAR OLVERA**
PATRÓN PERFECTIONISTS MÉXICO CHAMPION 2018 • CIUDAD JUAREZ



INGREDIENTS

2 oz. hazelnut-washed
Patrón Extra Añejo

0.5 oz. pasilla and coffee syrup
(see pg. 118)

2 dash Peychaud's bitters

2 drops black truffle oil

METHOD

01. Combine ingredients in a mixing glass and stir with ice to chill.
02. Strain into a rocks glass over a king cube.
03. Garnish with a chocolate-covered hazelnut.



CHILES IN COCKTAILS

SUPPLEMENTAL RECIPES

ANAHEIM & AGAVE SYRUP

SAN MIGUELITO PG 86

INGREDIENTS

660 mL agave syrup

265 mL water

6 ea. Anaheims,
split and deveined

METHOD

01. Combine all the ingredients in a small container and muddle the chiles.
02. Transfer to a pot and bring to a boil.
03. Simmer for 5 minutes or until the chiles have fully softened.
04. Rest the syrup for 6 hours.
05. Strain the finished syrup through a fine strainer.

ANCHO-INFUSED CAMPARI

LUPITA PG 85

INGREDIENTS

350 mL Campari

10 ea. anchos,
split and deveined

METHOD

01. Combine all ingredients in a small container.
02. Allow to infuse for 12 hours.
03. Strain the Campari through a chinois.

ANCHO SHRUB

LUPITA PG 85

INGREDIENTS

250 mL apple juice

100 mL
apple cider vinegar

200 gms.
light brown sugar

100 gms.
Pink Lady apples,
finely diced

80 gms. anchos,
split and deveined

20 gms. prunes,
pitted and sliced

METHOD

01. Rehydrate the anchos in the apple juice for 2–3 hours and strain.
02. Combine the hydrated anchos, apples, and prunes in a small container.
03. Cover with brown sugar and leave at room temperature for 2 days.
04. Add the vinegar, stirring well to combine.
05. Leave at room temperature for 6 days.
06. Strain the finished shrub through a fine strainer.

BANANA PEPPER & APPLE SYRUP

GÜERITA PG 95

INGREDIENTS

150 mL water

600 gms. white sugar

500 gms. fresh
apple, *finely diced*

300 gms. fresh
pear, *finely diced*

0.5 gms. malic acid

3 ea. banana
peppers,
split and deveined

METHOD

01. Slice the peppers and combine them with the fruit and sugar.
02. Allow to macerate for 24 hours under refrigeration, turning the produce over every few hours to ensure maximum contact with sugar.
03. Add the water and malic acid to adjust the cordial
04. Strain finished syrup through a chinois.

BLACK MINT SALT

SE DICE Y NO PASA NADA PG 91

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp. dried mint

2 tbsp.
Himalayan salt

2 ea. masa tortillas

METHOD

01. Dehydrate the tortillas for 24 hours.
02. Deeply roast the tortillas over an open flame until fully blackened.
03. Break up the tortillas and combine them with the mint and salt in a molcajete.
04. Grind all the ingredients using a pestle until finely ground and combined.

CARROT OIL

FLOR DE LA SIERRA PG 77

INGREDIENTS

60 mL vegetable oil

4 ea. carrots, *grated*

METHOD

01. Combine the oil and carrots in a small pot.
02. Heat over a low flame for 45–60 minutes or until the oil turns a dark orange.
03. Strain the oil using a cheesecloth-lined fine strainer.

CITRIC SOLUTION

UNCLE FRANCISCO PG 82

INGREDIENTS

450 mL water

25 gms. sugar

20 gms. citric acid

10 gms. malic acid

2 gms. Kosher salt

1 ea. lemon

METHOD

01. Peel one lemon entirely, avoiding the white pith.
02. Rub the salt, sugar, and peels together in a container and leave for 2–4 hours.
03. Add water and stir to dissolve the sugar and salt before straining out the peels.
04. Add acids and stir well to combine.
05. Strain the finished solution through a fine strainer.

COCONUT SYRUP

RENDÓN Y ROVIRA PG 89

INGREDIENTS

200 gms.
coconut water

200 gms.
white sugar

50 gms.
coconut cream

METHOD

01. Combine all ingredients in a pot and bring to a simmer.
02. Stir to combine the sugar until fully dissolved.
03. Strain the finished syrup through a fine strainer.

DRAGONFRUIT & PRICKLY PEAR SYRUP

RAÍCES DEL DESIERTO PG 99

INGREDIENTS

150 mL water

300 gms.
red prickly pear

150 gms.
red dragonfruit

70 gms.
white sugar

METHOD

01. Dice the prickly pear and dragonfruit.
02. Blend all the ingredients together in a Vitamix for 45 seconds or until smooth.
03. Strain the finished syrup through a chinois.

FALERNUM SYRUP

FLOR DE LA SIERRA PG 81

INGREDIENTS

400 mL cane syrup

100 mL
pimento rum

50 mL fresh
lemon juice

50 mL fresh
lime juice

METHOD

01. Combine all ingredients in a small container.
02. Stir thoroughly to combine.

FERMENTED CHILE & HONEY CORDIAL

UNCLE FRANCISCO PG 82

INGREDIENTS

700 mL honey

110 mL water

2 ea. manzanos,
split and deveined

4 ea. moritas,
split and deveined

METHOD

01. Poach the manzanos for a few seconds in hot water.
02. Chop all the chiles and place in a jar with the honey and water, stirring to combine.
03. Cover with cheesecloth and leave at room temperature for 2–3 days until the chiles sink to the bottom.
04. Strain the finished cordial through a fine strainer.

FRESNO OLEO-SACCHARUM

PARA EMPEZAR PG 81

INGREDIENTS

150 gms.
white sugar

5 ea. fresnos,
split and deveined

METHOD

01. Slice the chiles finely.
02. Combine them with the sugar in a mason jar.
03. Macerate for 24 hours at room temperature, turning over every few hours to ensure maximum contact.
04. Strain the finished oleo-saccharum through a fine strainer.

GUAJILLO & CARROT BITTERS

SIMUERO PG 97

INGREDIENTS

90 mL
blanc vermouth

2 ea. guajillos,
split and deveined

2 ea. carrots,
grated

METHOD

01. Combine the guajillos and carrots in a small pot.
02. Stir on a low flame constantly for 10–15 minutes until the carrots fully change color.
03. Combine with the vermouth in a small container, cover, and rest for 48 hours.
04. Strain the bitters using a cheesecloth-lined fine strainer.

GUAJILLO & CARROT-INFUSED VERMOUTH

SIMUERO PG 97

INGREDIENTS

180 mL
sweet vermouth

4 ea. guajillos,
split and deveined

4 ea. carrots,
grated

METHOD

01. Combine the guajillos and carrots in a small pot.
02. Stir on a low flame constantly for 10–15 minutes until the carrots fully change color.
03. Combine with the vermouth in a small container, cover, and rest for 24 hours.
04. Strain the vermouth using a cheesecloth-lined fine strainer.

GUAJILLO-INFUSED SOJU

SIMUERO PG 97

INGREDIENTS

120 mL
grapefruit soju

1.5 ea. guajillos,
split and deveined

METHOD

01. Combine the soju and guajillos in a small container.
02. Allow to infuse for 24 hours.
03. Strain the finished soju through a fine strainer.

HAZELNUT-WASHED PATRÓN EXTRA AÑEJO

FLOR DE LA SIERRA PG 77

INGREDIENTS

350 mL
Patrón Extra Añejo

400 gms chocolate
hazelnut spread

METHOD

01. Use a spatula to paint the inside of a small glass container with the spread.
02. Carefully fill with the Patrón Extra Añejo.
03. Allow to infuse for 12 hours.
04. Carefully filter off the tequila and strain through a coffee filter.
05. Repeat the process two more times.

JALAPEÑO BLACK SALT

RAÍCES DEL DESIERTO PG 99

INGREDIENTS

10 gms.
maguey worm salt

5 gms.
chicatana ants

5 gms. Kosher salt

3 gms. cacao nibs,
finely chopped

2 ea. jalapeños,
split and deveined

METHOD

01. Deeply roast the split jalapeños over a direct flame until the flesh turns to ashes.
02. Combine the chiles and all remaining ingredients in a Thermomix.
03. Blend for 5–10 seconds until homogeneous.

JALAPEÑO & MEZCAL SYRUP

RAÍCES DEL DESIERTO PG 99

INGREDIENTS

120 mL
espadin mezcal

120 gms
white sugar

2 ea. jalapeños

METHOD

01. Roast the jalapeños over a direct flame until the skins are fully blackened.
02. Split and devein the jalapeños before chopping them roughly.
03. Combine the mezcal, jalapeños, and sugar in a small pot.
04. Stir over a low flame for 5–10 minutes until the sugar is dissolved.
05. Allow to infuse for 30 minutes.
06. Strain the finished syrup through a fine strainer.

JALAPEÑO & PINEAPPLE MARMALADE

SE DICE Y NO PASA NADA PG 91

INGREDIENTS

800 gms. pineapple

600 gms.
white sugar

8 gms. butter

5 gms. Kosher salt

2 ea. jalapeños,
split and deveined

METHOD

01. Combine the pineapple, sugar, and jalapeños in a blender
02. Blend on 'high' for 60 seconds or until smooth.
03. Melt butter in a small pot and combine with the blended chiles and pineapple.
04. Stir in the salt and simmer for 5–10 minutes on a medium flame until slightly thickened.

MORITA & RASPBERRY JAM

MORENA MIA PG 101

INGREDIENTS

500 gms.
raspberries

500 gms. sugar

40 gms. moritas,
split and deveined

10 gms. butter

METHOD

01. Soak the moritas in a quart of lukewarm water for 1–2 hours.
02. Strain the moritas, reserving 50 mL of the water for the jam.
03. Combine raspberries and 50 mL of chile water in a pot and bring to a boil.
04. Simmer the berries for two minutes before adding the moritas and sugar.
05. Stir until the sugar is fully dissolved before bringing back to a rolling boil.
06. Cook on a medium flame for 10–15 minutes, skimming the foam periodically.
07. Remove from heat and finish by whisking in the butter.
08. Strain the jam through a fine strainer, using a small ladle to push the solids.

PASILLA & COFFEE SYRUP

MEXICAN SAZERAC PG 104

INGREDIENTS

500 mL water

500 gms.
white sugar

25 gms. medium-
roast coffee, *ground*

2 ea. pasillas,
split and deveined

METHOD

01. Combine the water and honey in a small pot
02. Stir over a medium flame until dissolved.
03. Combine with the coffee ground and pasillas in a small container.
04. Allow to infuse for 30 minutes.
05. Strain the finished syrup through a fine strainer.

PASILLA-INFUSED RED WINE

RENDÓN Y ROVIRA PG 89

INGREDIENTS

750 mL red wine
(preferably Syrah)

12 ea. pasillas,
split and deveined

3–4 ea.
orange peel strips

2 ea. star anise

1 ea. bay leaf

0.25 ea.
cinnamon stick

METHOD

01. Toast the pasillas and spices together on a medium flame for 10–15 seconds or until lightly aromatic.
02. Combine the wine, pasillas, spices, and orange peels in a small container.
03. Allow to infuse for 12–24 hours.
04. Strain the wine using a cheesecloth-lined fine strainer.

POBLANO & HONEY SYRUP

TEQUILA EN NOGADA PG 93

INGREDIENTS

500 mL water

250 gms. honey

5 ea. poblanos,
whole

METHOD

01. Combine the water and honey in a small pot. Stir over a medium flame until dissolved and reserve.
02. Roast the poblanos over a direct flame until the skins are fully blackened.
03. Transfer the roasted poblanos to a Ziploc bag. Seal and rest for 10–15 minutes.
04. Peel the skins off the poblanos, leaving only the cooked flesh.
05. Split and devein the poblanos before chopping them roughly.
06. Blend the poblanos and honey syrup in a Vitamix for 45 seconds or until smooth.
07. Strain the finished syrup through a fine strainer.

SANGRITA TRADICIONAL

VAMPIRITO PG 79

INGREDIENTS

400 mL tomato juice

250 mL fresh
orange juice

150 mL fresh
grapefruit juice

100 mL fresh
lime juice

35 mL
Worcestershire sauce

10 mL Maggi
seasoning sauce

55 gms. mirasols,
split and deveined

Kosher salt and
pepper (*to taste*)

METHOD

01. Combine all the ingredients together in a blender.
02. Blend for 60 seconds on 'high' or until smooth.
03. Strain the finished mix through a fine strainer.
04. Rest the mix for 5 minutes.





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