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## Tequilas and Mezcals: A Margarita for Everyone

It's Margarita season! The origins of the Tequila-based cocktail are hazy, but it likely evolved over time from the basic formula of spirit, dilution, citrus and sugar. *Esquire* named it 'Drink of the Month' in 1953, which no doubt helped its footing.

After the Weber blue agave plants used to make Tequila are harvested and stripped of their leaves, they're cut, steam-roasted, pressed, fermented and distilled in copper pots. Tequila *blanco* is unaged; *reposado* is aged 2 to 12 months and *anejo* is aged 1 to 4 years, all in oak barrels. It becomes richer and deeper with more aging. Whether you prefer a traditional Margarita or one with some richness, spice or smoke, we have the answer for you with a lineup of Tequilas and Mezcals.

**Traditional:** For a classic Margarita, try it with Tequila blanco. Unaged, it offers citrusy, peppery notes, ideal for lime's perfume. **Espolòn Tequila Blanco** is aromatic with tropical flavors and lemon zest. \$25.99

**Curamia Tequila Blanco Premium** has aromas of orange blossom and mango with pineapple flavors. Its bright finish of jalapeño and white peppercorns will balance a Margarita's acidity and sweetness. \$37.99

**Rich:** For something a little richer, consider a reposado



and the citrusy warmth of orange liqueur, either Cointreau or Grand Marnier. Cointreau is made from sweet and bitter orange peels and beet alcohol. Teamed with **Milagro Tequila Reposado**, aged 2 to 4 months and with vanilla notes, this gorgeous cocktail's layers of flavor unfold with every sip. \$28.99 Grand Marnier, made with Cognac and orange liqueur, is a wonderful partner to **DeNada Tequila Reposado**, silken and aged with notes of cinnamon, almond and caramel. The bittersweet richness of the liqueur and warm spiciness of Reposado DeNada create a luxurious Margarita. \$39.99

**Spicy:** And for spice lovers... **Tanteo Jalapeño Tequila** is a Tequila blanco infused with fresh jalapeños.

Fragrant with green pepper notes and faint sweetness, the palate is refreshing with cucumber aromas, sweet green peas, honeysuckle and spice. It provides balanced heat for a jalapeño Margarita. \$37.99 **Ancho Reyes Verde** is a liqueur made from poblano chiles, grown in Puebla's volcano-enriched soils and harvested while they're still green. A portion of them are fire roasted before being mashed and macerated with neutral cane spirit. The result is crisp and spicy... an excellent addition to Tequila blanco. \$34.99

**Smoky:** Intrigued by a smoky Margarita made with Mezcal? The agave hearts are cooked inside earthen pits lined with lava rocks and filled with wood and charcoal, giving Mezcal its signature

smoky taste. **Del Maguey's Vida Mezcal Artesanal** is made from agave Espadín, roasted, fermented and twice distilled in wood-fired copper stills. The smokiness is complimented by echoes of honey, tangerine, ginger and cinnamon. \$32.99

Organic **Montelebos Mezcal Artesanal** is also made from agave Espadín. After wild fermentation and distillation, it is bottled, unaged. Notes of fresh mown grass, honey and smoke make it an exquisite sipper all on its own or lend a delightfully heady touch to a Margarita. \$30.99

Grill season is here, and with it, the time for outdoor gatherings. A Margarita tasting would be fun! Grab a few of these bottles and check out the recipes on the back. Margaritas and friends are an ideal pairing. ♦

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**Did you know?** All Tequila is Mezcal, but not all Mezcal is Tequila. Tequila is made in any of five specific districts in Mexico using only the Weber blue agave. Mezcal is made in any of nine districts and can be made by more than 25 different types of agave. Both are fantastic.

## Salsa for Margaritas

*The co-star of your Memorial Day fête*

2 jalapeños, halved and stemmed  
2 c cherry tomatoes, halved  
1 white onion, quartered  
1 T extra-virgin olive oil  
1 ¾ tsp kosher salt, divided  
Ground black pepper  
3 large tomatoes, quartered

3 cloves garlic  
½ c fresh cilantro  
Juice of 1 lime  
½ tsp ground cumin  
Pinch of red pepper flakes

Preheat oven to 400°. On a large baking sheet, toss jalapeños, tomatoes and onion with oil. Season with half teaspoon salt and pepper.

Roast until slightly charred, 20 minutes. In a food processor, add roasted vegetables, tomatoes, garlic, cilantro, lime juice, cumin and a pinch of red pepper flakes. Season with remaining salt and pepper, then pulse a few times until slightly chunky. Serve with warm tortilla chips to compliment your Margarita tasting.

## The Grand Margarita

.75 part Grand Marnier  
1.5 parts Milagro Tequila Reposado  
.75 part fresh lime juice  
.5 part agave syrup  
Sea salt for rim of glass, optional  
Lime wheel for garnish

Add first four ingredients to a cocktail shaker, add ice, and shake. Strain into a rocks glass rimmed with sea salt. Garnish with a lime wheel.



## The Spicy Margarita

1 part Tanteo Jalapeño Tequila  
1 part Ancho Reyes Verde  
.75 part fresh lime juice  
.5 part light agave nectar

Add all ingredients to a shaker with ice, shake and strain over fresh ice into a rocks glass with half its rim salted. Garnish with a lime wheel.



## The Black Salt Margarita

2 parts Espolòn Tequila Blanco  
1 part fresh lime juice  
.5 part agave nectar  
Black salt  
Lime wheel for garnish

Add first three ingredients to a shaker filled with ice, shake until chilled and pour into an old-fashioned glass, rimmed with black salt. Garnish with a lime wheel.



## The Mezcal Margarita

1 part Del Maguey Vida Mezcal Artesanal  
1 part Ancho Reyes Verde  
1 part fresh lime juice  
.5 part simple syrup  
Lime half-wheel for garnish

Combine first four ingredients in a shaker and mix well. Serve over fresh ice in a rocks glass. Garnish with lime and toast to the onset of outdoor gatherings.



## May 2022 Staff Wine Picks

**Sheila: 2018 Lucas & Lewellen Chardonnay** (Monterey) **\$12.99** (reg \$14.99) This wine blends Chardonnay grapes with a small amount of Viognier to provide textural balance. From cooler vineyards, tropical guava and citrus aromas combine with caramel notes and a creamy texture to enhance the lingering finish. *\*Fish tacos with pineapple salsa*

**Ian: 2019 Chateau Les Granges Rouge** (Bordeaux) **\$13.49** (reg \$15.99) Blended from Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, it has a deep garnet color with aromatics of ripe red fruit, subtle blackcurrant and toast. The round palate and full body have a hint of freshness and clean fruit. *\*Lamb kebabs with pita and rice pilaf*

**Brian: 2019 Decoy Cabernet Sauvignon by Duckhorn** (Napa Valley) **\$23.99** (reg \$27.99) Blended with 14% Merlot, it's aged in new and seasoned French oak for 12 months, Rich flavors of raspberry, ripe plum and blueberry carry the wine to a long, luxurious finish, with nuanced hints of oak and sweet baking spices. *\*Duck breast skewers with blueberry au jus*

**Bill: 2018 Crossbarn Pinot Noir by Paul Hobbs** (Sonoma Coast) **\$29.99** (reg \$34.99) **92 JS** Sustainably grown fruit is fermented with native yeasts and aged nine months in seasoned and new French oak barrels. Aromatic of red fruits, tea and cinnamon, it has elegant flavors of ripe red berries and fennel with balanced acidity. *\*Pork tenderloin with morels*

**Ben: 2018 Crocus L'Atelier Malbec** (Cahors,FR) **\$15.49** (reg \$17.99) **92 WS** Fermented in stainless steel tanks with no barrel aging, the nose sings of violets, cherry blossoms and wild flowers. The palate is smooth, giving black cherry, fresh raspberry and ripe blueberry flavors, with firm tannins and bright acidity. *\*Grilled steak with chimichurri*

**John M: 2019 A to Z Pinot Noir** (Oregon) **\$19.99** (reg \$23.99) Organically grown, this Pinot Noir is a blend of fruit from across Oregon. After primary and secondary fermentation, a single cuvée is blended to highlight classic Oregon Pinot Noir's exceptional qualities. Mouthwatering acidity, well-integrated tannins and a silken finish. *\*Broiled swordfish with olive tapenade*